

1 - Introduction

Overview

Description of the Problem

Since World War II, our travel choices and our land use actions have combined to produce a behavioral and development pattern that depends on the single-occupant vehicle (SOV) for meeting our daily travel needs. Over the recent past, the number of automobiles per person of driving age in our region has nearly reached a one-to-one ratio. In addition, the number of daily trips per person that we make driving alone in an automobile has been steadily increasing as our lives have become more complex and our opportunities more diverse. Compounding these trends, the region is expected to grow by nearly 39 percent (both in jobs and residents) over the next 24 years. As a result, future travel demand projections strongly indicate an ever-widening gap between the amount of vehicular travel demand and the physical capacity of the transportation system to adequately accommodate it, particularly during the morning and evening peak travel periods.

There are, however, several reasons why merely adding additional new highway capacity to our transportation system, and continuing to promote "automobility" at the expense of mobility, is probably not the best way to meet our overall livability goals. First, automobile emissions are a major polluter of our airshed even with recent improvements in technology. Second, even if vehicles did not pollute the atmosphere, there are significant right-of-way constraints associated with siting new and widened highway facilities and an increased reluctance in our neighborhoods to convert more land to pavement. Third, the negative impacts on our livability resulting from the disruption, dislocations, fragmentation, air and water pollution, and physical danger associated with new and expanded highway facilities are often unacceptable. Fourth, construction of new highway capacity is generally very expensive, and due to the increased costs necessary to maintain the system we already have, there are progressively limited amounts of tax dollars to finance and subsidize the capital expenditures associated with these types of projects. Finally, the increasing rate of growth in vehicle travel relative to the overall increase in the amount of total person and goods movement being provided (less people and goods being moved in each vehicle), produces a gradual, but noticeable, decline in the operational efficiency of our transportation system. All of these conditions are made worse by the expansion of automobile-dependent development patterns. As a consequence, we need to continue to diversify and balance our transportation system investments and land use actions so that we can:

- provide viable modal alternatives to the single-occupant automobile (such as transit, carpooling, bicycling, and walking);
- encourage the use of those alternative modes in our daily trip-making activities;

- maximize the efficiency of the transportation investments we have already made in our existing system;
- improve the connectivity and flexibility of our transportation systems; and
- increase our overall mobility and reduce transportation-related impacts that contribute to the degradation of our livability.

Why do we need a regional transportation plan?

The daily movement of people and goods in our region crosses several city and county boundaries and results in transportation problems that require cooperative and coordinated efforts to solve. In addition, the transportation facilities in our region are owned and operated by a complex mixture of different entities, such as the cities, counties, Salem Area Mass Transit District, and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). In order to ensure a seamless overall transportation network, it is critical that the planning for investments in our system be consistent and integrated. Furthermore, some activities, like rideshare promotion programs, need to be implemented on a regionwide basis to be most effective. Finally, the interdependence of mobility and the other aspects of the quality of life in our region, such as affordability, environmental considerations, and access to opportunities, require a broad and comprehensive approach to system planning and development. Often, changes in one area affect many others and we need to evaluate the impacts of transportation actions carefully in the context of our overall livability.

The development of the Regional Transportation Systems Plan represents a cooperative effort of the Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS), the cities of Salem, Keizer and Turner, Marion and Polk counties, the Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD), and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). Adoption of this Plan represents:

- endorsement by the affected jurisdictions of the level and location of transportation investments needed to adequately serve the land use patterns contained in the adopted local comprehensive plans and the expected growth in the region over the next 24 years;
- endorsement of a set of 10-year regional priority improvements to the regional transportation systems;
- endorsement of the interrelated roles of the individual modal systems (highway, public transportation, bicycle, pedestrian, rail, aviation, and maritime), as well as the regionwide goods movement, intermodal and efficiency management systems;
- endorsement of the definitions and functions of the transportation systems of regional significance;
- a commitment to cooperatively seek the necessary funding for the implementation of the investments called for in the Plan;

- fulfillment of federal and state requirements as a condition for the continued receipt of federal and state transportation funds.

What area does the regional transportation plan cover?

The SKATS Regional Transportation Systems Plan (RTSP) covers the cities of Salem, Keizer, and Turner and portions of Marion and Polk counties that are within the SKATS boundary. The SKATS area is shown in **Map 1-1** and can be described in general terms as being bounded on the south by Hyllo and Delaney Roads and the Turner Urban Growth Boundary and on the north by Brooklake Road. The eastern boundary is composed of Witzel Road, 72nd and 71st around Highway 22, then following 63rd north until the Little Pudding River. The western edge is just past the Highway 22/51 intersection, following Oak Grove until Orchard Heights and then north along Eagle Crest and Spring Valley to Oak Knoll.

What is the overall goal of the regional plan?

The goal of the Regional Transportation Systems Plan is to provide an adequate level of mobility for area residents and businesses while maintaining or improving the overall quality of life in the region.

In addition to identifying improvements needed on the regional transportation systems to provide adequate levels of mobility and increased safety, this Plan also embodies policies, programs, and strategies that serve to:

- make more efficient use of the transportation facilities we already have by increasing people and goods capacity, rather than merely vehicle capacity;
- develop a more balanced multimodal transportation system by providing viable options for mode choices other than just the single-occupant vehicle. This entails the improvement of transit service, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian amenities and can reduce our near-total reliance on the automobile for our mobility needs;
- improve the connectivity and accessibility of our system for the intermodal movements of both passengers and freight;
- recognize the impact transportation choices have on the environment, whether it be air or water quality, and the community around us and its livability;
- recognize the important interrelationship of land use patterns and transportation infrastructure and promoting land use, zoning, and architectural design choices that support a more balanced, efficient transportation system; and
- balance overall system costs and anticipated revenues. Currently, we can barely afford to operate and maintain basic levels of service on the systems that we already have. We must continue to develop extremely cost-effective solutions that do not require massive capital outlays or jeopardize our ability to preserve the system that is currently in place.

Content of the regional plan

To achieve these goals the RTSP identifies and evaluates current and expected problems and opportunities associated with transportation systems in the Salem-Keizer urban area, provides a recommended package of integrated, multimodal investments to improve these systems, and presents a financial analysis to ensure that the resources necessary to implement this Plan can be provided.

Why are we updating our regional plan now?

The Regional Transportation Systems Plan (RTSP) was last adopted by the jurisdictions in the region in 2005. Many changes have taken place in our region since that time that need to be incorporated in our long-range plan. In addition, we have begun to recognize the limits of our ability to merely build our way out of congestion and must continue to develop new strategies and programs to increase modal balance, emphasize system efficiency, and improve the coordination of land use, travel behaviors, and transportation planning. Furthermore, we need to reflect these plans and policies as well as updated federal and state regulations in our regional transportation plan if we are to remain in compliance and continue to be eligible for available transportation funds.

The Regional Transportation Planning Process: The Seven “C’s”

This plan has evolved through a process that ensures that transportation planning activities affecting the overall regional system are comprehensive, coordinated, cooperative, continuing, consistent, coherent, and cost-effective.

Comprehensive

- Together with the state and local transportation planning efforts, the process encompasses the entire transportation system needed to serve the land uses contained in the adopted local comprehensive plans in the region.
- The planning process is both multimodal and intermodal in scope; it addresses concerns related to all the transportation modes— automobile, truck, motorcycle, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian— as well as the connectivity between them.
- The process includes all the jurisdictions, agencies, and citizens that own, operate, regulate, and use the various portions of our overall transportation system.
- The planning process addresses the mobility needs of both people and goods on our transportation system.

- The process provides a forum to make decisions about adequate levels of mobility in the context of the effect on other important aspects of our overall quality of life, such as environment, affordability, and community character.

Coordinated

- The process ensures that the various planning activities and investments undertaken by the various jurisdictions fit together in terms of intent, timing, and effect.
- The regional planning process is intended to provide a transportation system that is "seamless" in the service that it provides, preventing situations where the "left hand" seems to have no idea what the "right hand" is doing, such as a five-lane arterial in one jurisdiction suddenly turning into a two-lane residential street as it crosses the boundary into another.

Cooperative

- The process embodies the understanding that the region's political jurisdictions, governmental agencies, and citizens are "all in this together." We need to develop a plan that addresses, and ultimately works, for all the members of our community.
- This type of planning process enables a plan to emerge from the process of its development, rather than dictating its design from the outset.

Continuing

- The process is ongoing and produces a plan that is flexible and designed to incorporate periodic updates to respond to changing conditions, opportunities, and priorities in our community.

Consistent

- The regional planning process serves as a framework for the development of uniform databases (both current and future) and a common set of assumptions to be used in our estimations of future travel demand, thereby ensuring that the various planning efforts all share a similar foundation.
- The process provides a basis for the development of common goals and objectives, as well as a common understanding of the problems we face and the opportunities we have available to meet those challenges, ensuring that we are not only all "on the same page," but also looking at the same "book."

Coherent

- The planning process provides the mechanism by which all of the various land use and transportation activities undertaken in the region can be seen to make sense when taken

as a complete whole and that our actions work together to complement and reinforce each other, rather than working at cross purposes or canceling each other out.

Cost-effective

- The cooperative process produces a blueprint for decisions and improvements that are prudent and cost-effective, maximizing the mobility available through existing facilities and leveraging as much benefit as possible from new transportation system investments.

Derived from this process, the integrated Regional Transportation Systems Plan provides the region with an affordable, coordinated blueprint of transportation investments and related activities over the next twenty years that can ensure adequate levels of mobility while maintaining or improving our overall quality of life in the region. The regional transportation planning process serves as a comprehensive framework within which to consider the various transportation and land use issues in our community, identify the opportunities and constraints associated with possible responses to those issues, and determine a coordinated and consensus course of action.

The Regional Transportation System Concept

This Plan addresses issues associated with the "regionally significant" components of the overall transportation system. Only certain portions of our total transportation systems, such as regional principal and major arterials and transit trunk routes in major corridors, serve "regional" travel movements. Most of the transportation system infrastructure is intended to serve fairly localized travel movements and is most appropriately planned for at the local level.

The underlying concept of the regional transportation system embodies the following three principles:

- There is a basic interdependence among all the elements of a cost-effective and efficient transportation system in the region: highway facilities; transit service and facilities; bicycle routes and support facilities; goods movement routes and support facilities; intermodal passenger and freight facilities; rail, aviation, maritime, and pipeline systems; pedestrian facilities; and efficiency management strategies and programs. (The latter include demand management activities such as ridesharing, carpooling, parking management, bicycling enhancements, and pedestrian amenities that promote alternatives to the use of the single-occupant vehicle; localized facility treatments such as channelization and access management, which can improve facility performance in a cost-effective manner; and transportation-related land use actions such as density increases, mixed-use developments, and building design and orientation requirements that accommodate modes other than the automobile);
- There is a desire for, and a need to provide, a transportation system that offers viable choices among alternative modes of travel to increase our trip-making options; and

- There are cost, efficiency, and convenience benefits associated with ensuring systemwide connectivity, coherence, and coordination among the various transportation facilities and services in the region.

Much as the load bearing beams and walls of our houses support most of the structure's weight, the regional elements of the transportation system should function as carriers of the heaviest and longest loads associated with the travel demand in our area. The SKATS Regional Transportation Systems Plan (RTSP) provides for adequate levels of service for regional travel movements through a balanced and prudent combination of strategic investments in each of the system elements of the overall regional transportation system. This Plan provides a policy framework for the encouragement of the implementation of pedestrian infrastructure improvements and the creation of a pedestrian-friendly urban landscape by the responsible local jurisdictions within the region.

Each of these system elements is expected to provide appropriate portions of the total transportation capacity needed to ensure adequate levels of mobility for the regional travel demand (see below), which is defined as the longer-distance movement of people and goods associated with the population and employment anticipated in the local comprehensive plans adopted by the jurisdictions in the SKATS area. The critical interdependence of these elements is such that a lack of investment in any individual element – and its consequential failure to carry its portion of the overall transportation load – will seriously overburden the remaining elements and result in not only a collapse of levels of service on the regional system, but a significant and inappropriate intrusion of regional trips onto the subregional and local systems, degrading the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

Transportation System of Regional Significance

The SKATS Regional Transportation Systems Plan specifically defines and addresses the transportation system of regional significance in the Salem-Keizer urban area. The regional components of the individual system elements are described in detail in the following chapters of the Plan. These regional components represent the transportation facilities and services that serve the mobility needs of the relatively longer travel movements of people and goods across, into, out of, and through the SKATS area – trips of a "regional" nature. Since SKATS, as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), does not have jurisdiction over any actual facility, the designation of regional transportation systems and the inclusion of the functional aspects of these systems in both the regional plan and in the transportation systems plans (TSPs) of the local jurisdictions ensures that these travel movements are accommodated in a coordinated, consistent, and connected manner across jurisdictional boundaries. As a result, the regional systems and improvements identified in this Plan must be included in the local TSPs, and the locally designated systems must be consistent with, and adequate to support the functional intent of, the regional systems.

Relevance of the Regional System Designations

The designation of the transportation systems of regional significance in the Plan is important for the following reasons:

- With the requirement that local plans be consistent with the regional functional classifications, a continuous, consistent, and coordinated functional system to accommodate regional travel movements of people and goods across jurisdictional boundaries is ensured.
- Levels of service can be differentially established for classes of facilities, particularly for the highway system, that relate directly to their intended function(s).
- Plan policies, improvement strategies, and project designs can be tailored to facility function and the nature of the particular movement of people and/or goods to be emphasized and/or preferentially accommodated.
- For the highway system, rather than associating function solely with current and projected traffic volumes and specific cross-section design, we can rationalize the classification system – and encourage design treatments and the provision of alternative modal opportunities – geared to the specific nature of the predominant intended movement of people and/or goods to be accommodated on the facility.
- The identification of the systems and facilities of "regional significance" are required to adequately comply with federal and state transportation planning and air quality regulations.

Local Transportation Systems Not Included in the Regional Systems

The remainder of the transportation systems in the area are intended to distribute trips from the regional systems, provide connections between and within neighborhoods, and serve direct property access needs.

While these facilities must provide adequate levels of transportation service to ensure that this more localized travel demand does not inappropriately hinder the regional system functions, these systems are addressed in the respective transportation systems plans of the various local jurisdictions in the region and are outside the scope of this regional Plan.

Policy, Planning, and Regulatory Context

There are several federal and state policies and regulations that affect our regional and local transportation planning process. These policies provide guidelines for determining specific issues that need to be addressed in the plan as well as some benchmark targets for evaluating plan performance. Among the more important federal and state policies and regulations are the following.

Federal Policies and Regulations

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, 1991 (ISTEA)

Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, 1998 (TEA-21)

Safe, Accountable, Fair, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users, 2005 (SAFETEA-LU)

SAFETEA-LU is the umbrella federal legislation that affects transportation planning, services, and funding nationwide. SAFETEA-LU continues the policy directions set in the ISTEA legislation. This legislation provides for the expenditure of the federal Highway Trust Fund revenues that represent a large portion of the funding used to sustain and improve the federal and state portions of the regional highway system (see Chapter 5). SAFETEA-LU requires the regional plan to address a series of considerations, including: financial constraint; environmental impacts; socioeconomic impacts; equity; multimodal systems; energy consumption; and consistency with federal, state, and local plans affecting transportation.

Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990

- Projects in the transportation plan must not contribute to worsening air quality or violations of standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Failure to show conformance with the standards will result in withdrawal of federal funds.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

- Mandates access of public transportation to persons with disabilities.
- Establishes requirements for paratransit services comparable to mass transit with an annual update of an ADA Paratransit Plan.
- Requires local review and integration of the ADA Paratransit Plan with the Transportation Plan.

State Policies and Regulations

Oregon Transportation Plan

- Sets policies for the state's transportation facilities and services for the next 40 years.
- Outlines the broad strategies the state has developed for implementing federal and state policies.

Oregon Benchmarks

- Establishes benchmarks to measure the state's progress toward the vision outlined in the state's strategic plan.
- Measures address air quality, reduced reliance on the single-occupant vehicle for commute trips, commute trip lengths, transit ridership, and roadway and bridge maintenance and preservation.

State Land Use Planning Goals

Oregon has adopted a series of statewide planning goals that are to be implemented through the comprehensive land use plans of each city and county in the state. These goals, and the plans which are adopted to implement these goals, address the manner in which the land, air and water resources of the state will be used and determine the need for improved public facilities. With the Goal 12 Transportation Planning Rule (TPR), SKATS must adopt a transportation systems plan consistent with the state plan (see above) and this rule (see below).

Transportation Planning Rule

- Promotes intent to provide viable alternatives to reduce our reliance on the single-occupant vehicle.
- Targets a reduction in vehicle miles traveled per person by five percent over the next twenty years and ten percent over the next thirty years, or the adoption of alternative standards.
- Targets a reduction in the number of certain types of parking spaces per person by ten percent over the next twenty years.
- Requires local governments to adopt transit, bicycle, and pedestrian-friendly land development and subdivision ordinances.

State Conformity Rule

- Regional emissions must not contribute to worsening air quality or violations of EPA standards.
- Regionally significant projects must also demonstrate conformity.

Local Plan Consistency Requirements

In addition to the consistency of the Regional Transportation Systems Plan with federal and state policies and regulations, the transportation systems plans (TSPs) produced by the local jurisdictions in the region must be consistent with this regional Plan. The TPR also requires that the local jurisdictions adopt the regional Plan as part of their local comprehensive plans. In the

SKATS area, the local jurisdictions plan to adopt the regional Plan concurrently with the adoption of the local TSPs.

In addition to the inclusion of the regional Plan in local comprehensive plans, the following principles of consistency between the local and regional plans are embodied in the RTSP:

- All transportation projects in the local public facility plans must be consistent with the RTSP, and improvements affecting the regional systems as defined in this Plan must be included in the RTSP.
- All projects must be shown to demonstrate consistency with the adopted RTSP prior to their inclusion in the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Local jurisdictions within the region must plan their local transportation systems to be consistent with the RTSP requirements and to adequately serve the nonregional travel demand so as to not overburden the regional systems with local trips.

SKATS will review local transportation systems plans (TSPs) and requests for the inclusion of projects in the regional Plan or Transportation Improvement Program for consistency with the adopted RTSP. Should inconsistencies arise, the SKATS Policy Committee may determine:

- that the inconsistency is significant and the RTSP should be changed; or
- that the inconsistency is significant, and the local TSP or project inclusion request should be changed; or
- the inconsistency is significant, and direct regional staff to work with the local jurisdiction to identify and implement a process to develop a consensus resolution to the inconsistency; or
- an inconsistency exists, but does not materially affect the integrity of the Plan or TIP and no further action on the part of SKATS or the local jurisdiction is required.

The Organization of the Regional Transportation Plan and Associated Documents

The remaining chapters in the Plan document and the additional materials related to the Plan are organized as follows:

Chapter 2, *Livability*, discusses issues related to livability and growth in the region.

Chapter 3, *Growth and Travel Demand*, discusses the linkage between growth in population and employment and the travel demand associated with that growth.

Chapter 4, *Safety and Security of the Regional Transportation System*, discusses the issues that surround ensuring that the transportation system is secure from disasters and enables a safe use.

Chapter 5, *Finance*, presents a financial analysis of the costs and revenues associated with the regional transportation systems and evaluates the ability of the region to maintain and operate the existing systems and to afford the investments called for in the Plan.

Each of the following 10 chapters of the Plan deals with a specific element of the overall regional transportation system and defines the regionally significant components of that system, examines the current and expected future-year (where possible) performance of that system, and identifies the investments called for in the Plan to provide adequate levels of mobility on that system.

Chapter 6, *Regional Pedestrian System*, discusses a regional policy framework for the pedestrian facilities of regional significance.

Chapter 7, *Regional Bicycle System*, deals with the bicycle facilities of regional significance.

Chapter 8, *Regional Goods Movement System*, addresses issues related to the regionally significant movements of freight on the regional highway, rail, aviation, maritime, pipeline, and intermodal freight system.

Chapter 9, *Regional Aviation System*, deals with the aviation services of regional significance.

Chapter 10, *Regional Maritime System*, deals with the ferry system in the region.

Chapter 11, *Regional Rail System*, discusses the regionally significant rail services and facilities.

Chapter 12, *Regional Intermodal Systems (Freight and Passenger)*, deals with issues related to the regionally significant intermodal movements of people and goods in the SKATS area.

Chapter 13, *Regional Transportation System Efficiency Management*, addresses the regionally significant programs and actions to reduce reliance on the single-occupant vehicle, achieve more balance among transportation modes, and improve system efficiency.

Chapter 14, *Regional Public Transportation System*, deals with the region's mass transit, ADA/Elderly-related, intercity public transportation, and private-for-hire transportation systems.

Chapter 15, Roads and Highways, deals with the roadway system of regional significance.

Chapter 16, Environmental and Cultural Review, contains a summary of the natural, historical, and cultural resources within the SKATS area and a description of how they may be affected by transportation systems and projects.

Chapter 17, Outstanding Issues, describes the regional transportation system problems that remain beyond the implementation of this Plan.

Appendix A, Population and Employment Forecasts, describes the procedures used to forecast the increases in population and employment that the region is to experience over the next 24 years.

Appendix B, Travel Characteristics of the Salem-Keizer Region, provides an overview of travel into, out of, and through the area, detailing all modes where data is available

Appendix C, Data Sources for Cultural, Environmental and Historical Resources, is a list of sources for data and other information used in Chapter 16.

Appendix D, Acronyms and Terms Used in this Document, is self-explanatory.

Supporting documents to this Plan, available under separate cover, include:

- *Air Quality Conformity Determination for the SKATS 2031 Regional Transportation Systems Plan and the FY 2008 – FY 2011 Transportation Improvement Program* (accompanies adoption), which provides the determination that the investments called for in the Plan meet federal and state air quality regulations.
- *Transportation Disadvantaged Populations in the SKATS Region, a Geographic Profile* (2005), which provides the analysis of census data necessary to evaluate equity issues associated with the Plan.
- *Public Participation Plan for the Regional Transportation Planning Process in the Salem-Keizer Urban Area* (2005), adopted by the SKATS Policy Committee, which sets forth the guidelines for the public involvement processes associated with the regional transportation planning process activities, including the RTSP, the TIP, and the annual Planning Work Program.

