

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

DATE: JUNE 13, 2022

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: NORMAN WRIGHT, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR  
LISA ANDERSON-OGILVIE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT DEPUTY  
DIRECTOR AND PLANNING ADMINISTRATOR

FROM: EUNICE KIM, LONG RANGE PLANNING MANAGER

SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL TESTIMONY FOR THE OUR SALEM PROJECT

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This memorandum summarizes and addresses comments that the public has provided about the proposed amendments related to the Our Salem project between May 27, 2022 and noon on June 10, 2022. The City Council is holding a public hearing on the Our Salem project on June 13, 2022 (agenda item 4.a.)

**Additional Testimony**

The additional testimony has been summarized below.

1. A comment was received in favor of the proposed rezoning of 800 Highland Avenue NE to the proposed Neighborhood Hub zone to allow the existing building to be restored to house a market or coffee shop (Attachment 15 of agenda item 4.a.).
2. A comment was received from the West Salem Neighborhood Association requesting that the Council: 1) acknowledge that Wallace Road NW is congested and that the proposed map changes will further degrade it in the future, 2) direct staff to amend the Our Salem findings to acknowledge the impacts to the road, and 3) direct staff to address the traffic volumes during the pending update to the Salem Transportation System Plan (TSP). The testimony is attached in full.

**Staff Response:** Staff, working with the Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study staff and a consultant team, conducted a transportation analysis of the changes to the Comprehensive Plan and zoning maps proposed as part of the Our Salem project. This analysis compared traffic generation projected to 2035 under two future growth scenarios: the base scenario that forecasts growth under current Comprehensive Plan designations and zoning, and the proposed scenario that forecasts growth under proposed Comprehensive Plan designations and zoning. This approach was confirmed by the

Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

More details about the transportation analysis and its results can be found in Exhibit C of Ordinance 10-22, Goal 12 finding. ODOT supports the results of the analysis as it relates to all State facilities, including Wallace Road NW.

Staff acknowledges that Wallace Road NW is congested and is expected to continue to be in the future with or without the proposed map changes resulting from the Our Salem project. After the Our Salem project is complete, staff intends to address traffic issues on Wallace Road NW – including the Congestion Relief Task Force recommendations – in the upcoming update to the TSP.

### **Updated Links to Previous Testimony**

The City's website is being updated today, June 13, so two links in the Our Salem staff report under the heading "Testimony Received" may no longer work. The updated links, which provide public comments during and after the Planning Commission public hearing, are provided below:

<https://www.cityofsalem.net/home/showpublisheddocument/15588/637904588233130000>

<https://www.cityofsalem.net/home/showpublisheddocument/15576/637904588194370000>

Attachment:

1. Testimony from the West Salem Neighborhood Association



**To:** Salem City Council,  
**Fr:** Steve Anderson, West Salem Neighborhood Association Land Use Chair  
**Dt:** 9 June 2022

The West Salem Neighborhood Association (WSNA) has enjoyed working closely in partnership with the Our Salem team to facilitate the advancement of the Our Salem goals and resulting benefits for our community. We see the inclusion of more multi-family acreage<sup>1</sup> and the multiuse rezoning in the old industrial area of the Edgewater District as positive steps forward.

With this progress comes the need to **step up now** and make a commitment to address the traffic congestion along Wallace Road. Nowhere in the Our Salem Goal 12 (transportation) staff report findings is Wallace Road mentioned. This increased housing density, while needed, will further degradation traffic and congestion along Wallace Road. How much can be debated. The facts are that currently there is a broken transportation system so valuable for the economic viability of West Salem. Congestion relief for Wallace Road is an important community issue. Without a commitment for action, it will only get worst with no plan for fixing it.

The solution is amazingly simple. The WSNA is asking Council to recognize that Wallace Road will be impacted by the Our Salem proposed zone changes. The WSNA sees the mitigation details being worked out during the upcoming revision of the Salem Transportation System Plan. The WSNA ask Council to officially recognize the problem now (do not kick the can down the road), then instruct staff to make Council's instruction a priority using the four multi-modal transportation improvements from the Congestion Relief Taskforce Finding the foundation for effecting positive change for a broken transportation system, Wallace Road.

Therefore, taking the "balancing test" approach proposed by staff in the Our Salem transportation analysis and approved by Oregon Department of Transportation (see details below) coupled with the "solution package" recommendation from the Congestion Relief Taskforce, the West Salem Neighborhood Association requests that:

- (1) Council acknowledges that the approval of the Our Salem comprehensive plan changes will further degrade the West Salem transportation infrastructure, specifically Wallace Road.
- (2) that Council direct staff to amend the Our Salem adopted findings to acknowledge the impacts of the proposed Our Salem zone changes to Wallace Road; and
- (3) direct staff to address the Council approved increased Wallace Road traffic volumes during the pending updates to the Salem Transportation System Plan.

The implementation of said multi-modal transportation solutions to be accomplished when the Salem Transportation System Plan is updated later this year.

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<sup>1</sup> Details obtained from staff show the proposed Our Salem zone changes will result in a total of 335 acres of Multi-Family Residential (MF) land now in West Salem, a 23.2% increase in MF zoned acres for West Salem. This is 30.4% of the 207-acre deficit determined in the Housing Needs Analysis.



## OUR LOGIC & SUPPORTING RATIONALE

A review of the Our Salem Goal 12 draft staff report findings<sup>2</sup> and the Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) report supporting the conclusions offered found that staff conducted a detailed analysis according to prescribed methodology for such work. The TAZ report referenced in the proposed Our Salem staff findings for the West Salem zone changes projected an increase of 1,670<sup>3</sup> daily trips southbound and eastbound from Wallace Road and Highway 22 [(656 + 1,044) = 1,670 daily trips].

The TAZ Transportation Analysis Report is accurate within the limits of its methodology. However, we have clear evidence that the Our Sale proposed zones changes will **further degrade** transportation on the Wallace Road corridor. The WSNA understands that increased density is needed as Salem grows and have worked closely with Our Salem staff to accomplish this. The WSNA understand that the large land reserves in West Salem will need to be used to provide more supply of affordable housing to contribute to the economic growth of our community. This said, **nowhere** in the TAZ Transportation Analysis Report is Wallace Road addressed.

The WSNA supports staff's suggestion of a balancing test in that their analysis suggests that the identified significant impacts can be offset using the balancing test described in the Transportation Planning Rule Section OAR 660-012-0060(2)(e) which states that improvements to other modes or in other locations can be used to offset the impact. Oregon Department of Transportation affirmed this.

Reports like the Salem River Crossing and the Congestion Relief Taskforce Findings documented that congestion and mobility are issues along Wallace Road today without the additional proposed Our Salem zoning changes. In fact, these studies clearly show that without the proposed Our Salem Zone changes for West Salem, Wallace Road, which currently does not meet mobility targets, will continue to deteriorate into the future unless addressed specifically.

Additionally, in as much as the current Salem Transportation System Plan map, adopted by council in 2016, declares both Wallace Road and Highway 22 to be "capacity deficient," and the Oregon Department of Transpiration has limited development along the East side of Wallace Road, more evidence that transportation infrastructure mitigation is needed for Wallace Road with or without the zone changes proposed as part of the Our Salem project. Clearly, adding more housing density to West Salem through the Our Salem zone changes with further degrade the Wallace Road transportation system.

The WSNA recommends that Council look to the Congestion Relief Taskforce findings for reasonable solutions. The Salem Congestion Relief Taskforce Final Report offered

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<sup>2</sup> <https://salem.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=10906667&GUID=E6D919DF-A9CB-483E-A6C2-146459E61D80>  
Pdf pages 157-160

<sup>3</sup>The TAZ data provided one westbound segment, but no northbound segment daily traffic increases for the proposed Our Salem West Salem comprehensive plan update. Further, on a daily basis 22% of all new Our Salem daily southbound traffic on Wallace Road was projected to turn west onto 2<sup>nd</sup> or Edgewater Streets.



recommendations to significantly reduce congestion along Wallace Road. A set of capital projects were suggested and cited as “must be packaged together.” These “packages” of project ideas were called Solution Packages, each of which constituted potential major, long-term capital projects. These solution packages included those same multi-modal improvements suggested in the TAZ report in the form of bicycle/pedestrian, transit, and traffic signal in the vicinity of the impacted intersections for the balancing test (OAR 660-012-0060(2)(e)). In addition to those three, the Congestion Relief Taskforce included a fourth, the creation of a circulator/trolley program. The TAZ report assumed an 8% ridership increase. However, the Salem River Crossing study found that this level of ridership may be too optimistic. Therefore, the WSNA feels the inclusion of the circulator/trolley program offers four sound approaches to reducing congestion along Wallace Road. These four multi-modal improvements when incorporated into the future Salem Transportation System Plan update is cost-effective and provides clear direction for the future.

Taking the “balancing test” approach using the “solution package” recommendation from the Congestion Relief Taskforce, the WSNA offered the three specific requests of Council above (see page 1).

The WSNA has asked staff to support this request. We see no reason why not to recognize further degradation to the Wallace Road transportation system. It is simply a question of how much. The WSNA sees no reason for Council to not support the WSNA in its three specific requests to have actions now with specific, time certain, implementation dates to be agreed upon now. Our community is asking for your attention to our concerns and leadership to support it.