

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

The Public Transportation Council Work Group includes Mayor Bennett and Councilors Kaser, Lewis, Hoy. Julie Warncke, Transportation Planning Manager, serves as the lead staff person. Staff Ambassadors include Anthony Gamallo, Senior Transportation Planner, Marilyn Daily, Center 50+ Director, and Jennifer Halfman, Public Works Staff Assistant. The Work Group met on April 21 and May 1, 2017, to better understand the issues, existing actors and optimal role for the City of Salem, in support of the City of Salem Strategic Plan.

Policy Recommendations

- **Issue:** Transit service in Salem does not meet the needs of the community; particularly the lack of weekend service.
- **Recommended Goal:** Partner with Cherriots in their efforts to fund and provide a public transportation system that meets the needs of the community through the City's role as:
 - Owner of public infrastructure that supports public transportation (streets, sidewalks, bike facilities)
 - Regulator of development
 - Large employer
 - Community leader
- **Recommended Action Items:**
 1. Board/Council joint work session to identify common interests – 3rd party facilitator? Provide direction to an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)?
 - a. Could include developing better coordination among elected bodies
 - b. Could include consultation on funding proposals?
 2. Update IGA between City and Cherriots to address how Transit operates in City right-of-way, particularly as it relates to location of stops, shelters, and associated parking regulation.
 3. The City should initiate broader coordination with all involved governments. Marion County, Keizer, Polk County, Salem, State of Oregon, and Cherriots.
 4. Review development regulations, and as appropriate, propose amendments, that impact the ability of transit to provide effective service. These may include, but are not limited to, provision of transit stops and associated amenities, pedestrian access to and from public realm, sidewalk construction.

5. Funding: Identify possible roles for city involvement in future transit funding proposals.
 - a. City sources vs. supporting transit proposals?
 - b. Are there opportunities for joint federal/state advocacy for funding?
6. Consider bringing back subsidy, and identify funding, for employee bus passes as a tool to encourage employee use of public transportation.

Background

The Situation Assessment Report provided one finding regarding public transportation.

Finding 14: The City does not have a public transportation system that adequately serves residents.

The absence of night and weekend public transportation service was a top concern shared by interviewees, charrette attendees, and open house attendees. Cherriots, the public transportation service for Salem-Keizer, has been unable to fund these services since 2009. The Salem Area Mass Transit Board tried unsuccessfully to pass a 0.21% payroll tax on businesses in the Salem-Keizer Transit service area to fund the restoration of night, weekend, and holiday operating hours as well as free student passes during the school year. Since that ballot measure failed, neither the Board nor policy leaders have publicly put forward an alternative funding plan. Although public transportation is not under the City's jurisdiction, residents involved in this assessment think the City could play a role in developing a solution.

Since this was prepared, a statewide funding measure to support transit operations has been developed and is under consideration by the State Legislature. If passed, Cherriots would be in a position to fund expanded service both within the urban area and to outlying communities. The Council Legislative Subcommittee has recommended that Council actively support this component of an anticipated transportation funding package (item on Council agenda for May 8, 2017).

The *Salem Transportation System Plan* includes adopted goals and policies that are supportive of public transportation. In particular, the Transit System Element Goal is: "A public mass transit system that provides convenient and accessible transit services to the citizens of the Salem Urban Area." While the City strongly supports transit service through adopted policies, the City does not operate public transit. The Salem-Keizer Transit District (Cherriots), formed in 1979, provides transit and paratransit service to the Salem-Keizer area and Marion and Polk counties. Cherriots is a separate government entity with its own elected Board of Directors and taxing authority.

The City does play a role in the success of public transportation since buses operate on City streets; people get to and from transit by way of sidewalks, and the City regulates

where and how land develops. The City role in transit can be described by the following four categories.

- ***City as Owner, Operator, and Planner of Infrastructure***
The City controls streets, sidewalks, bike facilities, bridges, and parking. All of this infrastructure influences the ability of transit to operate effectively in our community.
- ***City as Regulator***
The City plans for and regulates land use, including where commercial and residential lands are designated, density, parking requirements, and other factors that impact transit. Street and sidewalk improvement requirements can support access to transit. Design elements of regulations impact how transit users get from the public right-of-way to their destination.
- ***City as Employer***
The City is a large employer, with over 1100 employees. As an employer, policies can support transit use. For example, charging for parking creates an incentive for employees to use transit. Participation in Cherriots' Emergency Ride Home Program helps remove a barrier to using transit.
- ***City Council as Influencer***
The City Council as a whole plays an important role in the leadership of our community. This leadership covers political, social, and cultural realms.

In developing the recommended action items, the Work Group discussed the following six approaches to supporting public transportation.

- ***Address Transit Needs in Project Planning:*** Planning for City projects can incorporate needs of the transit system, including items such as transit curb extensions or transit pull-outs. This approach could be considered status quo as the City currently engages with Transit District staff in planning for projects.
- ***Review Development Requirements:*** There are a number of areas where development requirements might be enhanced to further support public transportation. For example, code requirements could address provision of pedestrian access between the sidewalk and business entries. There may be the opportunity to create requirements for construction of transit stop improvements in conjunction with development.
- ***Renew Agreement with Transit regarding operation in the Right-of-way:*** The City and Transit District entered into an IGA in 2003 concerning placement of shelters and benches in public right-of-way. The City and Transit District also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in 2009 regarding coordination between

the two organizations. These agreements could be reviewed and updated to address areas of mutual interest.

- *Revisit Employee Incentives:* The City, along with the State of Oregon and Willamette University, used to subsidize bus passes for employees. These subsidies were eliminated in 2009, largely due to budgetary considerations. The State of Oregon recently reinstated a bus pass program for employees working in the Capital Mall area.
- *Support Transit Funding Proposals:* The City role in future transit funding proposals is complicated since the City does not operate transit service. The City Council can play a role as a community leader and influencer. There may also be opportunities for the City and Cherriots to work together to advocate for funding at the State or Federal levels.