



CITY OF SALEM

585 Liberty St SE
Salem, OR 97301

Staff Report

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Date: 11/5/2018

Item #: 2.a.

TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager
FROM: Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director

SUBJECT:

City Council Congestion Relief Task Force.

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

ISSUE:

City Council Work Session on the results of the Congestion Relief Task Force.

RECOMMENDATION:

Information only.

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND:

On November 13, 2017, City Council created a four-member Council Task Force to evaluate options for reducing traffic congestion and improving vehicular mobility around the Marion and Center Street bridges. The Task Force conclusions and recommendations are documented in the Recommendations Summary (Attachment 1) and the Congestion Relief Task Force Final Report (Attachment 2).

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

The members of the Congestion Relief Task Force were Mayor Bennett (Chair) and Councilors Kaser (Ward 1), Hoy (Ward 6), and Lewis (Ward 8). The consultant team assisting the Task Force was led by DKS Associates, a nationwide transportation planning and engineering firm with an office in downtown Salem. Cogito Partners provided facilitation services and Angelo Planning Group supported the review of past planning efforts and policies.

Congestion Relief Task Force Meetings and Topics

The Task Force met six times between February and September 2018. The meeting topics are listed below and materials from each meeting are included as appendices to the Final Report (See Appendices E - J). All meetings of the Task Force were open to the public and written comments were accepted.

1. February 23: Project Introduction
2. April 20: Future Conditions, Transportation Solution Ideas, Evaluation Criteria
3. May 18: Evaluation of Solution Packages - Tier 1 Screening
4. July 20: Evaluation of Solution Packages - Tier 2 Screening
5. August 3: Recommendations and Conclusions
6. September 14: Final Project Documents

Following the first meeting, staff solicited input from the community in the form of a questionnaire asking residents for their ideas to relieve traffic congestion in the project study area. The questionnaire was available between February 24 and March 10, 2018, and was provided online and in hard copy. Approximately 1,300 people provided input via the questionnaire. This input is summarized in Appendix D of the Final Report.

Congestion Relief Task Force Conclusions

Among the conclusions of the Task Force:

- Traffic congestion in the study area is directly related to vehicle flows to, from, and across the Marion Street and Center Street bridges.
- Given the lack of any other river crossing routes in Salem and an increase in projected traffic in the next 20 years, vehicle delays and travel times will continue to degrade if nothing is done to relieve the congestion.
- Because of the complexity and interrelationships of the roadway/bridge systems, there is no single project or set of major capital improvement projects within the study area that would make a significant, long-lasting difference in traffic congestion within the study area and around the Marion and Center Street bridges.

Congestion Relief Task Force Recommendations

The Task Force did not reach consensus on recommending any long-term major capital improvement projects inside the study area that would reduce traffic congestion and improve vehicular mobility around the Marion and Center Street bridges.

The Task Force recommended a number of short-term and medium-term projects, policies, and programs, which are listed below. If implemented, these could provide benefits at specific locations

or to a limited number of users. The complete Task Force conclusions and recommendations are documented in the attached Recommendations Summary and in the Final Report.

Short- and Medium-Term Recommended Projects, Policies, and Programs
(Not listed in priority order)

1. Optimize signal timing and investigate Adaptive Signal Timing.
2. Install travel time signs.
3. Develop and implement a commute trip reduction plan by working with employers to develop flexible or staggered work hours.
4. Work with employers to develop and implement incentives for employees to bike, walk, use transit, and carpool.
5. Improve guide signs leading up to and on the bridges.
6. Construct Marine Drive NW.
7. Limit left turns on Wallace Road NW by either installing a median barrier or by instituting peak -hour turn restrictions.
8. Add additional through and/or right turn lanes at the intersection of Wallace Road NW and Taggart Drive NW on the east and westbound Taggart Drive NW approaches. Consider prohibiting left turns during peak congestion periods.
9. Install electronic variable speed limit signs on Highway 22 approaching the bridges.
10. Provide park and walk/bike/shuttle services at Wallace Marine Park.
11. Implement downtown parking management strategies.
12. Provide a downtown circulator bus or trolley.
13. Improve response to emergencies on the bridges.
14. Close the north crosswalk at the intersection of Front and Court Streets NE.
15. Remove the barrier on Musgrave Avenue NW east of Wallace Road NW to allow traffic to access Wallace Marine Park.
16. Develop a Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.

Next Steps

Staff will submit the Congestion Relief Task Force Final Report to Council for acceptance and direction.

Robert D. Chandler, PhD, PE
Assistant Public Works Director

Attachments:

1. Recommendations Summary
2. Congestion Relief Task Force Final Report