



## Staff Report

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**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**THROUGH:** Steve Powers, City Manager

**FROM:** Chuck Bennett, Mayor

**SUBJECT:**

Creation of a Council Task Force to evaluate options for reducing traffic congestion and improving vehicular mobility around the Marion and Center Street bridges.

Ward(s): Ward 1, 2

Councilor(s): Kaser, Andersen

Neighborhood(s): CANDO, SCAN, West Salem

**ISSUE:**

I move that the City Council create a four-member Council Task Force to evaluate options for reducing traffic congestion and improving vehicular mobility around the Marion and Center Street bridges. I further move that City Council direct the City Manager to fund the Task Force's activities, and designate Public Works Department staff to support the Task Force with data collection and analysis, and contract consultant assistance.

**SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND:**

Over the past decade, regional transportation experts, City staff, and the community have been considering options and alternatives related to a new Willamette River crossing. The process has been lengthy and controversial. When completed, the process will yield a Final Environmental Impact Statement for a new facility, *not* the facility itself. We understand that even with a Final EIS in place, it may take another decade or more to fund, design, and begin construction of a new bridge.

In the meantime, congestion and vehicular mobility continue to plague the downtown and inner west Salem areas around the existing bridges. There is a need to address vehicular mobility and traffic congestion immediately and independent of decisions related to the Willamette River crossing. If approved by Council, the charge of the Task Force will be to study the issues and develop a list of short-, medium-, and long-term projects and a funding strategy that-when implemented-will reduce traffic congestion and improve vehicular mobility.

While acknowledging the importance of improving non-vehicular modes of transportation-including pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit-and the possibility that other travel demand management

measures-such as changed work hours-the work of this Task Force is to be directed primarily at identifying opportunities for improving vehicular mobility and ways to reduce vehicular congestion within the study area.

The Task Force, if authorized, will be a City Council committee. Member shall be appointed by the Mayor, pursuant to Section 22 of the Charter.

The idea was discussed with staff prior to developing the motion. Based on these discussions, the following work scope outline was developed. The work scope will be further refined when the Task Force gets underway.

1. Schedule, Study Boundaries, and Public Involvement
  - a. Project Schedule
    - i. Begin: December 2017
    - ii. End: June 2018
  - b. Study Boundaries
    - i. North: Union Street NE/Orchard Heights Road NW
    - ii. South: Mission Street SE/Edgewater Street NW
    - iii. East: 12<sup>th</sup> Street SE/NE
    - iv. West: Wallace Road NW
  - c. Public Involvement
    - i. Public involvement in this effort will be limited to attendance at the Task Force meetings. Robust public review and comment on recommended projects and funding will be expected when the recommendations are proposed for inclusion in infrastructure plans and the *Capital Improvement Program*.
2. Work Scope
  - a. Existing Conditions (Within the study area boundaries)
    - i. Compile studies and projects completed within the last 20 years.
    - ii. Compile active studies and projects with estimated completion dates.
    - iii. Compile active studies, projects, and proposals from private groups such as Main Street.
    - iv. Map all current traffic volume, speed, and queueing data.
  - b. Future Conditions (Using results from existing travel demand models and limited to the study area boundaries)
    - i. Map future traffic volume, speed, and queueing data.
  - c. Policy Analysis (Within the study area boundaries)
    - i. Review adopted policies in the *Salem Transportation System Plan* related to mobility, congestion management, and parking.
    - ii. Review adopted policies in the *Salem Comprehensive Parks Master Plan* related to parks and their uses.
    - iii. Review adopted policies, programs, and planned projects in the Riverfront/Downtown and West Salem Urban Renewal Area Plans.
    - iv. Review existing practices and policies related to providing on-street parking and alternate modes of transportation.
    - v. Recommend changes to adopted policies, practices, and projects that

- may facilitate improved traffic congestion and vehicular mobility.
- d. Idea Development (Based on the information developed above)
    - i. Develop ideas to reduce traffic congestion and vehicular mobility in the short- (within 5 years), medium- (within 10 years), and long-term (longer than 10 years).
    - ii. Select the most promising ideas for detailed traffic engineering analysis
    - iii. Conduct traffic engineering analysis on the selected ideas that include the following.
      - 1. Estimated immediate improvement in traffic flow, delay, and queueing.
      - 2. Estimated future improvement in traffic flow, delay, and queueing.
    - iv. Develop planning-level cost estimates for the selected ideas.
  - e. Financial Plan
    - i. Develop a funding strategy to implement the selected ideas.
  - f. Recommendations and Reporting
    - i. Develop a list of recommendations that includes the following:
      - 1. Changes to adopted policies, practices, and projects that facilitate improved traffic congestion and vehicular mobility.
      - 2. Projects that facilitate improved traffic congestion and vehicular mobility in the short-, medium-, and long-term.
      - 3. A funding strategy to implement the selected ideas.
      - 4. A prioritized listing of areas recommended for further research, presented in the form of questions to be answered.
    - ii. Draft a report to the City Council documenting the recommendations.

Attachment: None