Staff Report

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Date: 1/24/2022
Item #: 7.2a.

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager

FROM: Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director

SUBJECT:

Amending the criteria for a major, City-initiated comprehensive plan map amendment.

Ward(s): All Wards
Councilor(s): All Councilors
Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods
Result Area(s): Safe, Reliable, and Efficient Infrastructure

SUMMARY:

Ordinance Bill No. 17-21 amends the criteria for a major plan map amendment in *Salem Revised Code* 64.025(e) to clarify what constitutes a significant effect on a City-owned transportation facility as a result of a major plan map amendment.

ISSUE:

Shall City Council pass Ordinance Bill no. 17-21, which amends the criteria for a major plan map amendment in *Salem Revised Code* 64.025(e)?

RECOMMENDATION:

Pass Ordinance Bill no. 17-21, which amends the criteria for a major plan map amendment in *Salem Revised Code* 64.025(e).

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

A major map amendment is an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan map affecting multiple properties, the urban growth boundary, or general land use map of a neighborhood plan. It is a legislative act of the City Council and may only be initiated by Council. It is not an applicant-initiated change to the comprehensive plan designation for a single property or small grouping of properties

under common ownership, which are defined as "minor" plan map amendments in *Salem Revised Code* (SRC) Chapter 64.

When a jurisdiction like Salem considers a Comprehensive Plan map amendment (whether the amendment is a major or minor amendment), it must follow the Transportation Planning Rule (TPR). This rule requires that a jurisdiction use adopted standards for identifying when a proposed Comprehensive Plan map amendment will have a significant effect on a transportation facility (*Oregon Administrative Rule* (OAR) 660-012-0060(1)).

The code amendment proposed in Ordinance Bill No. 17-21 seeks to establish the thresholds to use when determining transportation effects associated with major plan map amendments (Attachments 1 and 2).

City Council conducted first reading of Ordinance Bill No. 17-21 on December 13, 2021. As part of reviewing this matter for public hearing, a punctuation error was corrected at SRC Section 64.025(e)(1)(B). A public hearing was scheduled for January 24, 2022. Notice of the public hearing was provided as required by SRC Section 300.1110.

The Our Salem project includes a major plan map amendment. It proposes comprehensive plan map changes throughout the city, potentially affecting large portions of the City's transportation system.

For the Our Salem project, the City used the Regional Travel Demand Model to analyze transportation impacts associated with the proposed map amendments. The Regional Travel Demand model is developed and maintained by staff for the Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS), which is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Salem area. As of 2021, the Regional Travel Demand Model reports volume to capacity (v/c) ratios for links, but not for intersections.

The decision to use this tool for the Our Salem project was made in consultation with staff from the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Department of Land Conservation and Development.

The TPR (OAR 660-012-0060(1)) defines what constitutes a significant effect on a transportation facility for the purpose of evaluating plan and land use regulation amendments. OAR 660-012-0060(1)(c)(B) and (C) refer to when an existing or planned transportation facility fails to meet the performance standards identified in the *Salem Transportation System Plan*.

The *Salem Transportation System Plan*, Street System Element, Policy 2.5, establishes the performance standards for operation and design of City streets. This includes the provision that the City shall allow its existing streets and intersections to function at a Level of Service (LOS) E, where traffic volumes generally are approaching or at 100 percent of the street's effective capacity.

The code amendment proposed in Ordinance Bill No. 17-21 establishes a threshold for when a major plan amendment would fail to meet this adopted performance standard. The Regional Travel Demand Model is a broad model of transportation performance and as such, has a lower level of

precision than would be provided through a more detailed and focused traffic engineering analysis. To account for this and for the associated margin of error embodied in the Regional Travel Demand Model, code language is proposed to define when a transportation facility would fail to meet the defined performance standard as follows:

(ii) *Determining significance*. For the purposes of determining whether a proposed major plan map amendment will degrade the performance of an existing or planned transportation facility for OAR 660-012-0060(1)(c)(C) and (D), the following will not be considered significant:

(aa) The plan map amendment increases average daily trips on a facility by fewer than 200 daily vehicle trips, or

(bb) The calculated volume to capacity ratio with proposed plan amendment is within 0.03 of the volume to capacity ratio with existing plan map designations.

These provisions are modeled after the *Oregon Highway Plan*, Action 1F.5 (Attachment 3). Action 1F.5 establishes a threshold for small increase in traffic and recognizes a calculated v/c ratio that is within 0.03 of the adopted target as consistent with the target.

The threshold for significance also mirrors the City's adopted standards for when an increase in traffic would trigger a traffic impact analysis. These standards, contained in SRC 803.015, require a traffic impact analysis when a development will generate 200 or more daily vehicle trips onto a Local street or Alley, or 1,000 daily vehicles trips onto a Collector, Minor Arterial, Major Arterial, or Parkway. Using the lower threshold of 200 daily trips accounts for major plan amendments on any classification of street.

In addition, establishing the proposed thresholds for significant effects on transportation facilities is consistent with the community's input during the Our Salem project. Specifically, the proposed thresholds would allow the City to accept small increases in traffic without needing to consider potential road widening as mitigation. Community input during the Our Salem project generally prioritized bicycle, pedestrian, transit improvements, and safety over road widening. In addition, the City anticipates updating the *Salem Transportation System Plan* after the Our Salem project is completed, and that update is expected to include a review and prioritization of bicycle, pedestrian, and other transportation improvements to advance the goals of the Our Salem project.

Criteria

SRC Chapter 64 is a land use regulation. As such, the criteria for amending SRC 64.025 is that it be consistent with applicable Salem Area Comprehensive Plan (SACP) policies. The following policies are applicable to the recommended amendment to SRC 64.025.

SACP Policies Plan, Urban Area Goals and Policies, J. Transportation:

System Efficiency - 13. The implementation of transportation system and demand management measures, enhanced transit service, and provision for bicycle and pedestrian facilities shall be evaluated as a first choice for accommodating travel demand and relieving congestion in a travel corridor, before widening projects are constructed.

Finding: The proposed amendments to SRC 64.025 establish thresholds for what are considered small increases in daily traffic volume and a threshold for defining when a change in the calculated v/c ratio is consistent with the adopted performance standard for the purpose of evaluating major plan map amendments. This amendment allows the City to accept small increases in travel demand and, therefore, supports efforts to implement transportation system and demand management, enhanced transit service, and provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities before pursuing roadway widening projects. The proposed amendments to SRC 64.025 are therefore consistent with this policy.

Salem Transportation System Plan, Street System Element

Policy 2.5 Capacity Efficient Design and Level of Service (LOS) Standards
The City of Salem shall apply the street design standard that most safely and efficiently provides motor vehicle capacity respective to the functional classification of the street. The City shall design its streets and intersections to the following LOS criteria:

1. *Definition of Capacity Deficient. A street or intersection shall be determined to be capacity deficient when traffic volumes exceed its peak hour design LOS. A street or intersection shall be determined to be over-capacity when traffic volumes exceed its effective peak hour capacity.*

2. *Peak Travel Periods*
    a. *The City shall design its streets and intersections to function at the lower end of LOS D (where traffic volumes approach 90 percent of the street's effective capacity) during the peak hour.*
    b. *When the peak hour LOS exceeds LOS D on existing streets and intersections, the City shall first employ transportation system management measures, where feasible, to alleviate congestion. (See Transportation System Management Element.)*
    c. *The City shall allow its existing streets and intersections to function at LOS E (where traffic volumes generally are approaching or at 100 percent of the street's effective capacity) during the morning and evening peak travel hours. However, traffic impacts created by new development, as identified in a traffic impact analysis, must be mitigated to maintain peak hour LOS D or better.*
    d. *When existing streets and intersections experience, or are expected to experience, extended periods of LOS E or instances where the street is at LOS F (where traffic volumes exceed the effective capacity of the street) despite the aggressive use of transportation system management measures, the City shall consider designing and constructing additional physical capacity.*

e. Regardless of its peak hour operating LOS designation, both transportation system management measures and additional physical capacity shall be considered for the effective mitigation of violations of regional air quality standards.

Finding: The proposed amendment to SRC 64.025 implements the performance standard for existing streets and intersections established in the *Salem Transportation System Plan*, Street System Element, Policy 2.5(2)(c). Therefore, the proposed amendment to SRC 64.025 is consistent with this policy.

BACKGROUND:

City staff-initiated conversations in 2020 with staff from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development and the Oregon Department of Transportation regarding application of the TPR to the Comprehensive Plan Map amendments proposed through the Our Salem project. This code amendment implements direction provided by the two agencies that are involved in administering the TPR.

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Assistant Public Works Director

Attachments:
1. Ordinance Bill No. 17-21
2. Ordinance Bill No. 17-21, Exhibit A
3. Excerpt from Oregon Highway Plan, Action 1F.5