



Staff Report

File #: 22-416

Version: 1

Date: 9/19/2022

Item #: 2.a.

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Keith Stahley, City Manager

FROM: Courtney Knox Bush, Strategic Initiatives Manager

SUBJECT:

Update on planning and coordination related to the Salem Area Mass Transit District Long-Range Transit Plan, the Salem Climate Action Plan, and implementation of Our Salem and recently adopted Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities state rules.

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Result Area(s): Natural Environment Stewardship; Safe, Reliable and Efficient Infrastructure; Strong and Diverse Economy; Welcoming and Livable Community.

SUMMARY:

The City of Salem and Salem Area Mass Transit District are engaged in several major planning initiatives today, which serve as a new foundation for the future of how our community develops. Each of these major initiatives requires collaboration and coordination to successfully achieve the vision put forward.

At the staff level, routine reports of progress on planning initiatives are shared with planning committees, Salem City Council, and Salem Area Mass Transit District Board. At a governance board level, collaboration toward mutual goals is also occurring on planning committees and at the Salem Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS) Policy Committee. Most recently, as part of their adoption of the FY 23 Budget, the Salem City Council added \$150,000 to fund youth bus passes for one year.

ISSUE:

Update on coordination of City of Salem and Salem Area Mass Transit District planning projects.

RECOMMENDATION:

Information.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

The purpose of this Work Session is to provide an update to both boards on planning and coordination related to the Salem Area Mass Transit District Long Range Transit Plan, the Salem Climate Action Plan, implementation of Our Salem, and efforts to incorporate the recently adopted Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities state rules.

Our Salem. On July 25, 2022, Salem City Council approved the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan project, known as [Our Salem <https://www.cityofsalem.net/government/shaping-salem-s-future/our-salem-planning-for-growth>](https://www.cityofsalem.net/government/shaping-salem-s-future/our-salem-planning-for-growth). All the changes to Comprehensive Plan, Comprehensive Plan Map, zoning map, and zoning code became effective on August 24, 2022.

The Our Salem project began in 2018 and involved community-wide engagement for more than three years. Overall, staff hosted or attended roughly 260 in-person and virtual meetings and events and engaged with more than 80 community groups. Throughout the planning and adoption process, project updates were issued. A Technical Advisory Committee consisting of staff from all City Departments and partner agencies - including the Salem Area Mass Transit District, the Salem-Keizer School District, Marion County, Polk County, the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, and the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments - provided input at key milestones.

Salem Transportation System Plan. With the adoption of the updated Comprehensive Plan, other infrastructure plans must be updated for consistency with that plan. Work updating the Transportation System Plan (TSP) is underway with preliminary steps of updating the City's Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan and collecting other data and information. Funding to support the update to the Salem Transportation System Plan (TSP) is included in the FY 2023 budget. The work program identifying phases, tasks and schedule for the TSP Update should be completed by June 2023. Additional State funding will be sought to meet the requirements of the new Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities rules, which will impact Salem's update to the TSP. The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) has a [webpage <https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/CL/Pages/CFEC.aspx>](https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/CL/Pages/CFEC.aspx) that provides an overview of the [Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities <https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/CL/Pages/CFEC.aspx>](https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/CL/Pages/CFEC.aspx) (CFEC) rules and implementation guidance.

Initial Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities planning, to which Transit input is critical and anticipated, will focus on prioritizing future scenarios that reduce greenhouse gas emissions (see discussion of Next Steps: Regional Scenario Planning). Once complete, the scenarios will be incorporated into the City's comprehensive plan and SAMTD's Long Range Transit Plan. In order to comply with the new state rules, the City's TSP will need to be financially constrained, meaning that cost implications and available funding will need to be considered as part of the schedule of projects.

Climate Action Plan. The City of Salem [Climate Action Plan](https://www.cityofsalem.net/community/natural-environment-climate/climate-action-plan-for-salem) <<https://www.cityofsalem.net/community/natural-environment-climate/climate-action-plan-for-salem>> includes 183 strategies to increase the community's resilience to climate change and to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Salem. Following City Council acceptance of the Climate Action Plan in February of 2022, a Climate Action Plan (CAP) Committee was convened to review early implementation efforts under this new plan. The subcommittee of City Council includes Mayor Bennett and Councilors Gonzalez, Hoy, and Phillips.

The Climate Action Plan Committee meets monthly to discuss and make recommendations on strategies for early implementation of the plan. Many of the strategies generally focus on those that will have high potential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and provide community equity co-benefits with relatively low cost to the City. Other potential early strategies demonstrate leadership by the City, establish governance for the Climate Action Plan, are in-process or ongoing actions, required by new and pending state rules, or are already planned to start within two years.

Within the Climate Action Plan framework, there are several areas in which transportation, transit service, and land use intersect and speak to the need for continued collaboration with SAMTD to achieve goals set forth in the Climate Action Plan. In July, City staff provided the [Committee with an update on the regional framework and strategies](https://www.cityofsalem.net/home/showpublisheddocument/16335/637922861529400000) <<https://www.cityofsalem.net/home/showpublisheddocument/16335/637922861529400000>> related to new Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities rules. In August, Cherriots staff gave the Climate Action Plan Committee a presentation on the planning work going into the Long Range Transit Plan (see below).

To develop the Climate Action Plan, City staff worked with a 41-member Task Force over 18 months, and received input from multiple stakeholders and Salem residents to produce the final Climate Action Plan with the framework established by City Council on October 12, 2020:

- By 2035, greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) Salem emissions shall be reduced to 50 percent of the citywide greenhouse gas emissions for the baseline year of 2016, and
- By 2050, Salem should be carbon neutral.

Long Range Transit Plan. In August 2021, Cherriots kicked off a project to develop their first ever 20-year planning document. Called the [Long](https://www.cherriots.org/LRTP/) <<https://www.cherriots.org/LRTP/>> <<https://www.cherriots.org/LRTP/>> [Range Transit Plan](https://www.cherriots.org/LRTP/) <<https://www.cherriots.org/LRTP/>>, this work will guide the Cherriots transit network and regional transportation options as the region grows and the demand for public transportation increases. Completed for the project so far are an existing conditions snapshot report, a winter 2022 outreach summary report, transit network scenario modeling, and a second round of outreach conducted this summer. The next step is to produce a draft plan. The final plan is expected to be presented for adoption by the Salem Area Mass Transit District Board in November 2022, but the intention is to work with SKATS in their update to the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which will include the new Our Salem comprehensive plan, as adopted.

The goals and expectations of the 20-year LRTP for the local and regional transit system are to:

- Find strategies for implementing the Cherriots vision, mission, values, and brand promise

- Take Climate Action Plans being developed by Cherriots and the City of Salem into consideration
 - Remain consistent and compatible with local, regional, and state transportation plans
 - Provide a thorough long-range market analysis in order to serve as a transit market assessment not only for Cherriots, but for partner jurisdictions as well
 - Be able to adapt to new trip generators, transit network changes, and new technologies
 - Guide future vehicle procurements
 - Increase the awareness of and accessibility to other transportation options within the region.
- The LRTP will be a living document that gets revisited and updated on a regular basis in order to meet the needs of the community and align with the overall direction of governance as these things change over time.

Other Transit Initiatives

- *Electronic fare system and real-time bus tracking.* Cherriots continually looks for ways to attract new customers and expand the availability of public transit. To improve the customer experience, Cherriots will implement new technologies and strategies, including an electronic fare system and real-time bus tracking. Targeted marketing campaigns will make potential Cherriots riders aware of the advantages of public transit and that it is an attractive alternative to traveling by personal vehicle.
- *South Salem Transit Center.* Cherriots [has identified a preferred site to evaluate for consideration as](#) a site for a future South Salem Transit Center. This new mobility hub will allow for better service coverage in South Salem. [The site selection study was completed in June of 2022.](#)

Ongoing City and Transit staff collaboration. Since 2019, staff from the Salem Area Mass Transit District and Salem's Public Works, Community Development, and Urban Development departments have met monthly to coordinate on a variety of plans, projects, and ongoing work. In addition, staff from both agencies regularly collaborate as part of the Salem Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS) Technical Advisory Committee on regional transportation planning, and staff have participated in dedicated planning efforts, including:

- *Our Salem.* Transit staff participated in the Technical Advisory Committee during the development of the City's Comprehensive Plan Update, Our Salem.
- *Climate Action Plan.* Transit Board leadership participated in the 41-member committee which developed the Climate Action Plan.
- *Long Range Transit Plan Update.* City staff participated on the Technical Advisory Committee for the transit planning underway.

Next Steps: Regional Scenario Planning. Beginning in June 2023, the City will be working on a regional plan to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets, establish regional performance targets, and local performance measures. The regional scenario planning will be the first phase of updating the Salem TSP and will be coordinated with the Salem Area Mass Transit District. The regional scenario planning will take into account current and future investments in active transportation, fleet and fuels, transit, pricing, parking management, education and marketing, and roads. Within this planning framework and in response to the Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities goals,

priorities are placed on connected, safe and complete networks; bicycle, pedestrian, and public transportation infrastructure; climate friendly areas; neighborhoods with underserved populations; and access to key destinations.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Salem and Salem Area Mass Transit District are engaged in several major planning initiatives today, which serve as a new foundation for the future of how our community develops. Each of these major initiatives require collaboration and coordination to successfully achieve the vision put forward.

Courtney Knox Busch
Strategic Initiatives Manager

Attachments:
None.