



# **Alternative Land Use and Transportation Scenario Planning Analysis**

*A Review of Six Case Studies in Oregon*

*Prepared for*

**Oregon Department of Transportation**

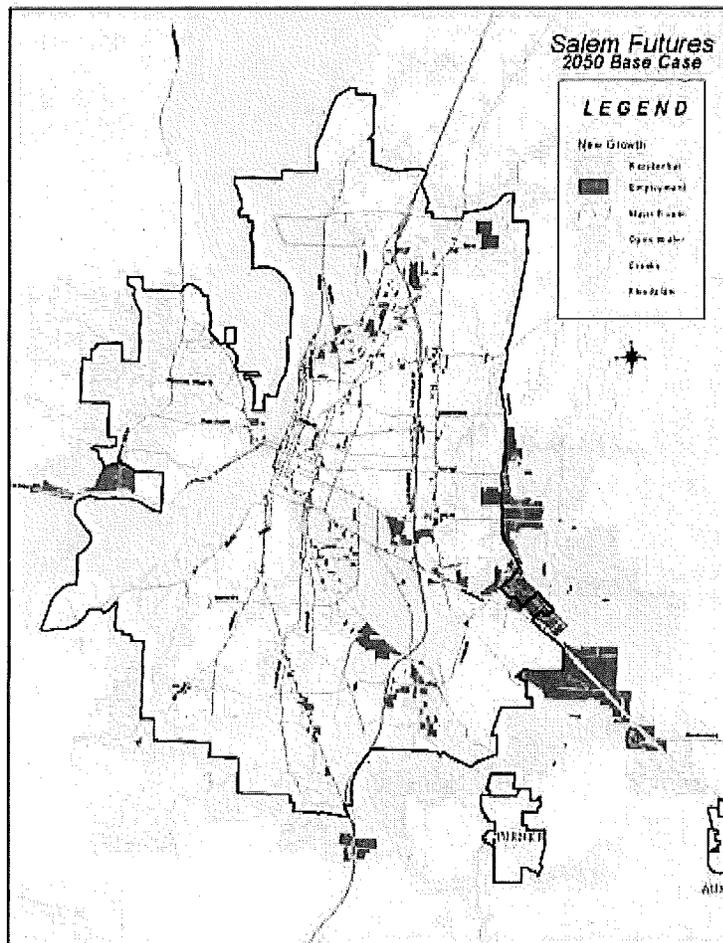
*Prepared by*

**Fregonese Associates**

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## 7.0 Salem Futures

Salem Futures was a long-range planning effort to develop an integrated land use and transportation plan to guide future development in Salem. The project was conducted by the City of Salem with support from the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments. The planning effort started in late 1998 and extended through 2002. The city staff selected a preferred alternative land use and transportation scenario and recommended its adoption. The Preferred Alternative Future Scenario never became the articulated vision for Salem's growth management strategy due to a failure to adopt the vision. Ultimately, Salem Futures resulted in the adoption of policies most similar to the Base Case Scenario when the City of Salem updated its comprehensive plan in 2009.



## I. MPO CHARACTERISTICS

Salem Futures was conducted by the City of Salem Community Development Department with participation and support from the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MVCOG). MVCOG is a voluntary association of over 40 local governments including Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties, 31 cities, 7 special districts, and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

The City of Salem shares an urban growth boundary with the City of Keizer. Although Salem Futures was concerned with the future of Salem, they included the joint Salem-Keizer Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) as their study area.

The following demographic data is provided for the city of Salem, for which data was most readily available, unless otherwise noted. Data for the larger study area of the Salem-Keizer Urban Growth Boundary was unavailable.

- **MPO:** Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments
- **Study area:** Salem-Keizer Urban Growth Boundary
- **Study area population (2000):** 207,229;
- **Study land area (2000):** 68 square miles;
- **Population density (2000):** 3047 people per square mile;
- **Median household income (2000):** \$38,881 (Salem MSA);
- **Persons 18 years old and under (2000):** 27 percent;
- **Persons 65 years old and over (2000):** 12 percent;
- **Daily vehicle miles traveled per capita (2001):** 16 (Salem MSA);
- **Mean travel time to work (2000):** 22 minutes; and
- **Average weekday transit trips (2000):** 14,102 (Salem Area Mass Transit).

*Source: Federal Highway Administration, National Transit Database, Salem Futures Thinking About Tomorrow Today 2001 Pamphlet, U.S. Census Bureau*

## II. SYNOPSIS OF LAND USE TRANSPORTATION SCENARIO PLANNING

### **Primary Reason(s) for the Project**

The primary reason for the project was to establish a growth management strategy for Salem based on a comprehensive planning process that engaged the community in a discussion about how to manage growth, guide future development, and maintain the city's quality of life over the next 50 years. Salem

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Futures represented the city's response to Statewide Planning Goal 12 on Transportation and the Transportation Planning Rule (OAR 660-12). Both strive to improve the livability of urban areas by promoting changes in land use patterns and the transportation system that make it more convenient for people to walk, bicycle, use transit, and drive less to meet their daily needs. As such, the city wanted to use Salem Futures to reduce car dependence and car-oriented development patterns and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The interest in reducing VMT was not due to a concern for climate change but rather an interest in improving community livability and reducing the amount of requisite time people spent in the car.

### **Schedule and Timeline for Implementation**

The Salem Futures planning effort started in late 1998 with an initial growth visioning process. The project's second phase included the creation of a series of alternative land use and transportation scenarios and the selection of a preferred alternative to guide future development. Staff recommended adoption of the Preferred Alternative Future Scenario but implementation broke down due to a lack of consensus and support. Instead, the Preferred Alternative Future remained mired in a city periodic review process from 2002-2005.

Ultimately, the City of Salem amended the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan in 2009 after several years of periodic review with the State Department of Land and Conservation (DLCD) over how to meet compliance with the Transportation Planning Rule. In the end, the future vision for the City of Salem as submitted to DLCD and described in the comprehensive plan update most closely resembled the Salem Futures Base Case Scenario with some small adjustments.

### **Transportation Modeling**

During the neighborhood workshop process of phase two, the consultant team used a land use projection visualization tool, called I-PLACE3S, to conduct a real time evaluation of land use choices at neighborhood design charrette meetings. The consultant team used the PLACE3S model to generate immediate results on the impact of choices participants made when rearranging different conceptual land uses, such as mixed-use development or town homes, in each of the neighborhood study areas. At the end of the charrette, each table presented their conceptual neighborhood design based on the type of future development they wanted in their community. The input provided by the three neighborhood charrette meetings helped create the alternative land use and transportation scenarios that were evaluated in the transportation modeling process.

The transportation modeling was conducted by the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments for the Salem-Keizer UGB study area using the EMME/2 model. The model generated results on the impacts of the different alternatives on transportation mobility, the environment, the economy, neighborhoods and the community.

### **Modeling of VMT and Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

MWVCOG did forecast VMT when they modeled the transportation impacts of each of the Salem Futures scenarios. The transportation modeling and evaluation revealed that land use scenarios in the year 2050 all showed an increase of approximately 4-22 percent in VMT compared to travel in the year 2000. However, the alternatives showed a large decrease in VMT per capita compared to the 2050 Base Case Scenario. In particular, the Preferred Alternative was found to substantially reduce VMT per capita compared to the 2050 Base Case Scenario.<sup>6</sup>

Although the City updated their comprehensive plan based on a future development pattern most similar to the Base Case Scenario, the City concluded it would limit the increase in VMT per capita to less than five percent by the year 2030 based on measures, benchmarks, and targets that the City had already implemented. The measures included increasing the number of dwelling units near high capacity transit stops, increasing the number of dwelling units and jobs within activity nodes and corridors, improving access to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities, and expanding the region's successful rideshare program.<sup>7</sup>

### **MPO, Other Agency and Consultant Hours and Costs**

- A joint program of ODOT and DLCDC provided \$500,000 in Transportation Growth Management (TGM) funds for phase two.
- The City of Salem hired McKeever Morris (acquired by Parsons Brinckerhoff in 1999) as the lead consultant for phase two. McKeever Morris subcontracted Davis and Hibbits for \$20,000 to conduct public involvement; Robert Foster Consultants for \$5,000 to provide growth concept illustrations; ECO Northwest for \$36,000 to provide cost analysis of the scenarios; Urban Design Collaborative for \$42,000 to conduct design charrettes and develop illustrations; and Fregonese Calthorpe Associates for \$96,000 to evaluate the base case scenario, conduct a land use analysis of the alternatives, develop graphics, and illustrate the preferred alternative scenario.
- The City of Salem dedicated 2.5 full time employees (FTE) to the project for one year. The City dedicated 1.0 FTE for another three years to work through the attempt at implementation.
- During phase two, the McKeever Morris consultant team dedicated approximately five 0.5 FTE for approximately one year. The sub consultants to the consultant team likely spent the equivalent of 2.0 FTE for one year on the project.

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<sup>6</sup> Vickie Hardin Woods, Memorandum on Land Use and Transportation Strategies and Alternative Standard, Benchmarks, and Targets, 27 June 2005, Community Development Department, Salem, Oregon.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

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## **Funding**

Salem Futures was funded, in part, through grants from:

- Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program with ODOT
- Portland General Electric
- NW Natural

## **III. AUTHORITY**

### **Legal Authority and Legislative Requirements of the Scenarios**

The Preferred Alternative Future selected within the Salem Futures process was never implemented. Instead a scenario most similar to the Base Case Scenario was adopted in the City of Salem Comprehensive Plan update in 2009. The comprehensive plan guides local land use decision making and sets policy for future development. Legal authority occurs through zoning regulations and development requirements based on the policies of the comprehensive plan.

### **Legal Authority of the MPO**

The Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments provided transportation modeling and analysis of the scenarios and participated in the process but had no legal authority in the implementation of Salem Futures.

### **How did this Relate to the Regional Transportation Planning Process in Context of LRTP?**

The Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization designated by the Governor to develop and implement a coordinated, comprehensive, and continuing planning process for the Salem-Keizer region that addresses issues related to the transportation system of regional significance in the urban area. When SKATS was updated in 2005 and again in 2009, the plan incorporated the City of Salem's existing comprehensive plan, ultimately implementing elements of the Base Case Scenario.

## **IV. POLICY FRAMEWORK/ ENVIRONMENT**

### **Range of Land Use Alternatives Analyzed**

1. **Base Case**—a projection of existing conditions that would result in an expansion of the Salem-Keizer Urban Growth Boundary by 12,300 acres by 2050.
2. **Alternative 1A**— significant UGB expansion with growth in city centers and areas that have historically experienced growth.

3. **Alternative 1B**—less UGB expansion and a focus on growth in areas that could support new development.
4. **Preferred Alternative Future**—the city developed a final scenario that was a hybrid of the other scenarios with a focus on growth in centers and corridors.

#### **Public Outreach Component**

The Salem Futures outreach process included the following components:

- The establishment of a large, diverse 35-member Salem Futures Citizen Advisory Committee.
- Selection of neighborhood study sites where workshops were hosted to solicit neighborhood input and develop concepts for the land use and transportation alternatives.
- The hosting of focus groups of randomly selected residents to examine how people felt about growth.
- Public surveys conducted by Davis and Hibbits that asked participants their preferences on UGB expansion, opinions on current conditions, and their ideal travel time to reach critical services and resources.
- Presentations to neighborhood associations and civic organizations.
- A series of public hearings held by the Salem Planning Commission and the Salem City Council that included all-day work sessions.
- Numerous community-wide town hall meetings and the distribution of citywide newsletter providing updates on the process.

#### **Summary of Project Objectives Met**

The Salem Futures project objectives were to evaluate base case conditions, examine different land use and transportation alternatives, work with neighborhoods and the community to get their input, and develop a growth management vision. Ultimately, the project aimed to implement that vision.

The project did evaluate the impact of projecting base case conditions into the future and did develop a series of alternative growth, land use and transportation scenarios for analysis and consideration. The project was successful in meeting with neighborhoods and providing the community with a discussion about the impacts of growth. The project was unsuccessful at building consensus around implementing policy that would lead to a different future than what the base case indicated.

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## V. OBSERVATIONS

Salem Futures succeeded at engaging the Salem community in a planning process and bringing issues of growth management into the public spotlight. The project never implemented the Preferred Alternative Future Scenario, as recommended by the Salem Planning Commission and the Council Committee. Despite the failure to adopt the preferred alternative, the city of Salem continues to experience a significant amount of infill and redevelopment. Although the Base Case Scenario called for a large expansion of the urban growth boundary, it (the boundary) has not moved since its inception. Currently, the city is undergoing an economic opportunities analysis that may result in a recommendation to increase the UGB. However, existing policies in Salem seem to contribute toward new development and reinvestment within the central city area. This is due in part to the city's designation of an urban service area within town that the City has determined to exhibit the proper amount of infrastructure needed to support infill. Development proposals within the urban service area receive permits readily and promptly, while proposals outside this area must pay for additional infrastructure improvements as determined by the City before receiving permits. This powerful tool has been in place for 30 years.