

Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Tim Knapp to Supporting HB 2219:

Extension of WES from Portland Area to Salem Could Provide a Critical, Missing Transit Commute Option as Alternative to I-5 Traffic Congestion

Scheduled for work session on March 27, 2019, before
the Joint Committee on Transportation

Co-Chairs Beyer and McKeown and Members of the Committee:

As the operator of South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) and a partner with TriMet on the Westside Express Service (WES) commuter rail line, the City of Wilsonville is encouraged that the Joint Committee on Transportation is holding a work session to consider furthering HB 2219, which creates a task force to study extending WES commuter train service to Salem.

As a community with a substantial industrial-employment base that hosts over 21,000 jobs where 9 out of 10 jobs are filled by workers who commute into Wilsonville, providing transit commute options is crucial to employers for workforce recruitment/retention and in reducing single-occupancy vehicles that aggravate traffic congestion.

Because providing a transit commute option is so important to Wilsonville, the city formed South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) 30 years ago in order to focus on improving public transit service in the South Metro region. Wilsonville worked closely with Washington County and the Westside communities to develop WES as a transit alternative to the increasingly congested South Metro I-5/Highway 217 corridor. Wilsonville currently contributes over \$330,000/year to help offset the cost of WES operations.

Metro regional government in Portland is considering in collaboration with local area governments advancing a major transportation-funding measure for voters' consideration in 2020. As a member of the advisory Metro Regional Transportation Task Force and Clackamas County Cities Representative to Metro's Joint Policy Alternatives Committee on Transportation (JPACT), I have nominated both the existing WES Corridor (Wilsonville to Beaverton) and proposed WES Corridor Expansion (Wilsonville to Salem) as major transportation corridors worthy of study and potential improvements.

As the Portland metro region increases in population and jobs, the area's freeway arterials are reaching peak traffic-handling capacity. And as housing costs escalate in the Portland area, more workers are living outside the metro region, leading to increased commuting on highways such as the South Metro I-5 Corridor to the North Willamette Valley.

Everyday commuters who drive I-5 to/from the Portland metro area to Salem and points south jam the South Metro/North Willamette Valley I-5 corridor, with the Boone Bridge over the Willamette River acting as a major chokepoint. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) reports that in 2016 129,400 vehicles daily crossed the I-5 Boone Bridge — 10,000 more vehicles than just five years earlier in 2011.

The I-5 Boone Bridge carries nearly as much traffic as the I-5 Interstate “CRC” Bridge, but 30% more freight trucks, making the South Metro I-5 Corridor a crucial West Coast arterial for the movement of freight. Some estimates indicate that over 50% of I-5 traffic is attributable to single-occupancy commuter vehicles traveling between the Willamette Valley and Portland area. ODOT indicates the currently estimated \$80 million project to improve the I-5/Boone Bridge bottleneck is programmed to occur in 2040, when the cost estimate escalates to \$200 million.

ODOT’s 2016 Portland Region Traffic Performance Report shows that I-5 NB and SB during the PM peak-hours experiences some of the most unreliable travel times in the region. The report indicates that Daily Vehicle Hours Delay for the I-5 corridor has increased between 2013 and 2015 for both NB by 18% and SB by 24%, meaning that trips on I-5 are taking considerably longer now than just a few years ago.


The 2017 Washington County Transportation Futures Study show that the daily number of total person trips from Wilsonville and West Clackamas County to Washington County are estimated to increase by 199%—from 36,300 to 108,700—between 2010 and 2055.

Wilsonville’s SMART provides over 300,000 rides per year, with 40,000 of those rides shared with Salem-Keizer “Cherriots” Transit for Portland area-Salem commuters. SMART meets each WES train at the Wilsonville Transit Center, whisking employees to worksites in Wilsonville within 10 minutes of arrival—solving the ‘last-mile’ transit connection dilemma—and providing connecting service to/from Salem along with Cherriots.

If WES is extended to Salem, SMART maybe positioned to re-deploy assets to provide even more transit service to communities in the North Willamette Valley and South Metro Area that are located away from I-5 that parallels the Oregon Electric Rail line that WES would use, thereby extending transit service to an even larger area. Extending WES’ operation from Salem to Wilsonville would provide a public transit option that benefits commuting employees and their employers, thereby strengthening the Oregon economy.

The City of Wilsonville respectfully urges a Do-Pass vote on HB 2219. Thank you.

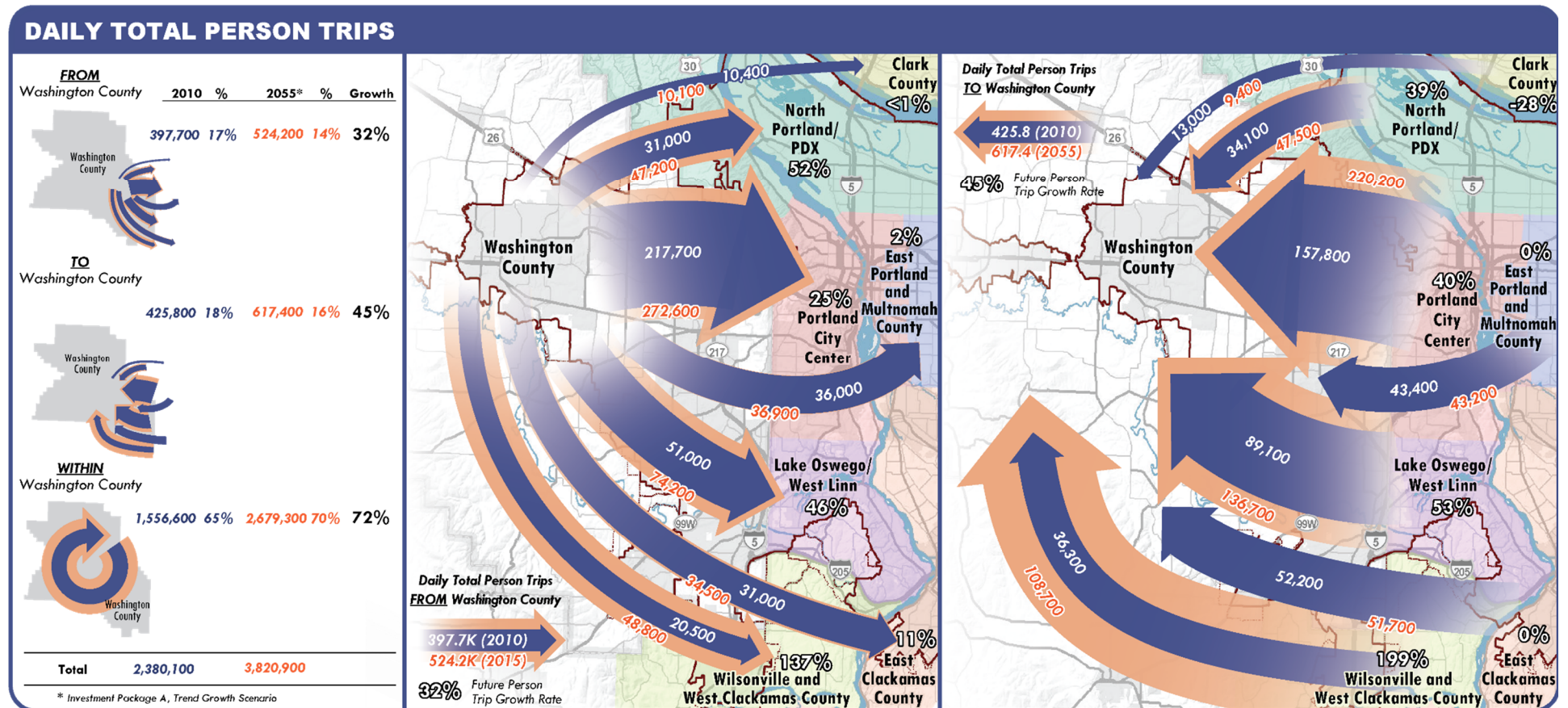
Sincerely,


Tim Knapp, Mayor
City of Wilsonville

Enc:

- Excerpts 2017 Washington County Transportation Futures Study, Figure 7-3: Daily Person-Trip Travel Patterns, Figure 7-5: Vehicle Travel – PM Peak, 2-Hour Period.
- Except of South Metro / North Willamette Valley Region from ODOT Traffic Flow Map 2016

Figure 7-3: Daily Person-Trip Travel Patterns – Washington County



- Total number of trips across all modes increases by over 60%.
- Share of trips that stay within the county is expected to increase from 65% today to 72%.
- More trips are expected *into* (425,800) than *out of* Washington County (397,700).

7.2 Evaluation Findings

The notable findings from the evaluation of the investment packages are summarized in the following five sections: (1) System Performance by Travel Mode, (2) Land Use and Community, (3) Health and Safety, (4) Environmental Sustainability, and (5) Cost. In each section, the Study impact categories are noted that correspond to the Study *Evaluation Framework* as outlined in Chapter 6.

7.2.1 System Performance

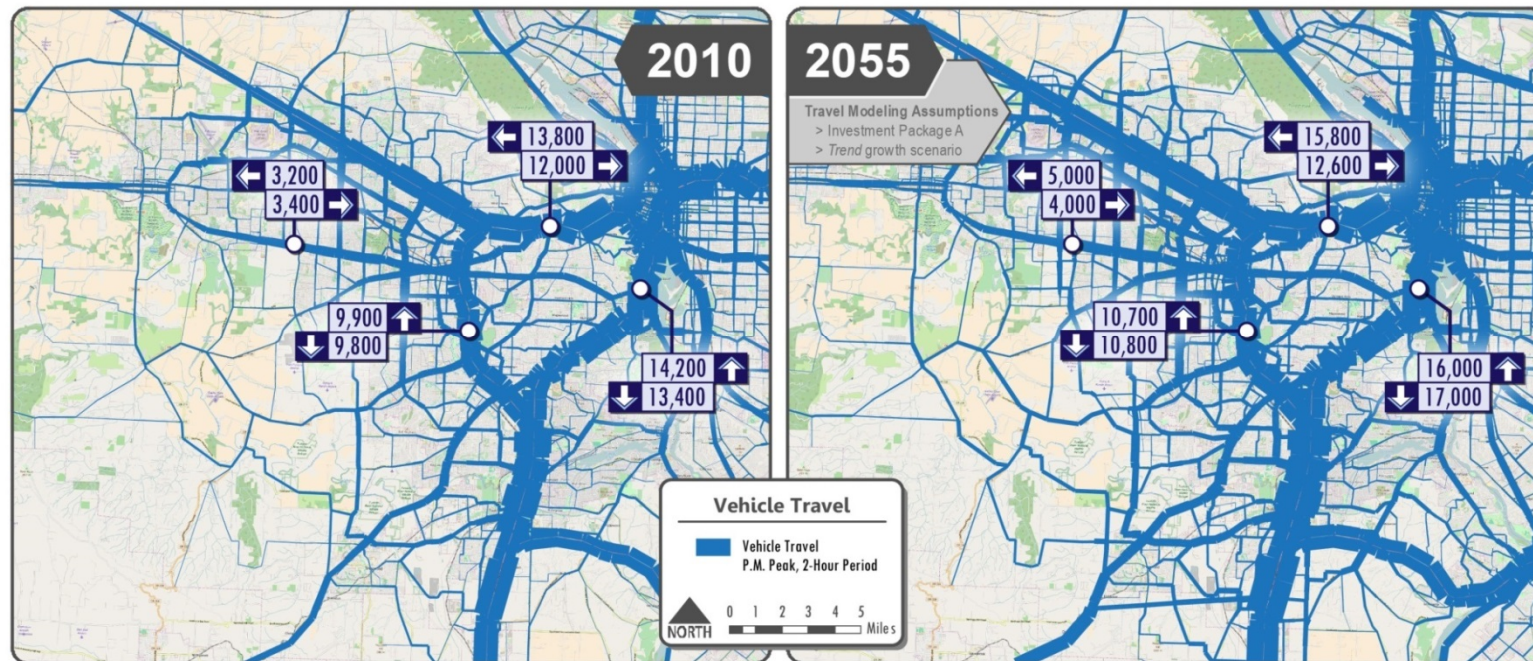


Roadway System Performance

Despite a shift to more non-auto travel, the future volume of vehicle trips will increase in Washington County by between 40% and 55%. As shown in **Figure 7-5**, significant traffic growth is expected on the county's highway, arterial, and collector street network during the PM peak, two-hour period.

Without additional roadway investments and demand management strategies beyond those planned, the county will experience increased traffic delay, reliability problems, and related effects such as cut-through traffic.

Figure 7-5: Vehicle Travel – PM Peak, 2-Hour Period



- Expect an increase of 105% to 165% in vehicle hours of delay compared to today (with Trend scenario).
- Traffic on US 26, I-5, I-205, and Highway 217 will experience severe congestion most parts of the day.
- This congestion will overflow onto major roads resulting in more cut-through traffic on local streets.

TRAFFIC FLOW MAP 2016

OREGON STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

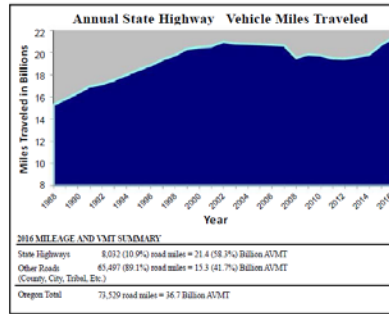
VOLUMES SHOWN ARE ALL VEHICLE
ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

- 6900 AADT Volume
- Automatic Traffic Recorder Station
- 24-016 Station Number

Traffic Flow Segments

- AADT**
- 0 - 1000
 - 1001 - 2500
 - 2501 - 5000
 - 5001 - 10000
 - 10001 - 15000
 - 15001 - 20000
 - 20001 - 30000
 - 30001 - 50000
 - 50001 - 75000
 - 75001 +

Interstate - US Route - OR Route



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Except of South Metro / North Willamette Valley Region

