



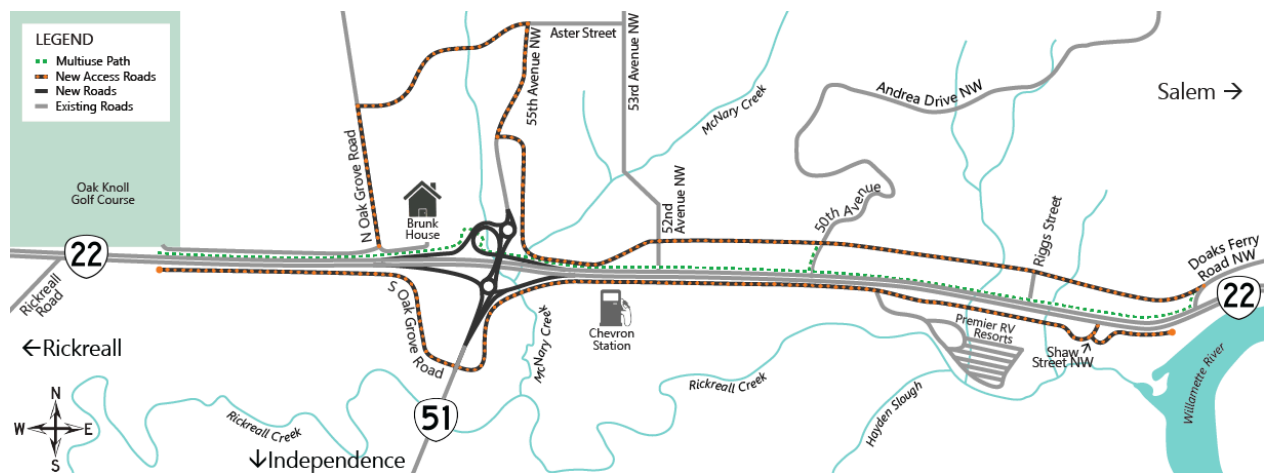
February 12, 2024

To: Oregon Department of Transportation

From: Phil Carver, Bob Cortright, 350 Salem OR

Subject: OR22: Rickreall to Doaks Ferry Project Status

A recent [facebook post](#) by the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments and press coverage at the [Statesman Journal](#) indicate that ODOT now has a "top option" for this project that includes a large loop interchange and series of frontage roads - illustrated below. The implication of this post and [ODOT project website](#) is that ODOT has made some formal decision that authorizes the project or otherwise concludes that the Northwest Loop Interchange option complies with relevant state policy requirements, including requirements of the Oregon Highway Plan (OHP). We hereby request that you confirm what formal decision, if any, ODOT has made on this project.



As you know, 350 Salem submitted detailed comments in November 2022, and March and April 2023 which explain how the interchange project fails to meet OHP and other requirements and proposed other options that would address transportation needs in this area at much lower cost and in a manner consistent with OHP policies and Executive Order 20-04. Our specific concerns and recommendations included the following:

- The project violates ODOT's Major Improvements Policy that requires cost-effective minor improvements and multimodal solutions before major roadway expansion.

- The project violates the Governor's Climate Action Plan (EO20-04) which directs ODOT to do everything within its power and authority to help reduce GHG emissions. The interchange project would induce additional travel (VMT) and development in this corridor and SOV commuting from Independence.
- Given that improving safety is such an urgent consideration for the 22/51 intersection, our recommendations could be implemented much more quickly. They are also much more affordable, and would carry out both the Major Improvements Policy and the state's Climate Action Plan.
- The project should be paused in favor of other alternatives including:
 - Expanding transit service
 - Providing alternative commuting incentives for Independence residents
 - Improving the OR22/OR51 intersection by:
 - o Reducing speed to 45mph
 - o Installing a smart traffic signal that would only operate in the afternoon
 - o Widening the OR22 left turn lane to OR51 to provide increased separation
 - o Improving left turn lanes to S. Oak Grove Road and Greenwood Road for additional capacity to Independence
 - o Encouraging Independence residents to use the OR22/OR99 Interchange at Rickreall as an alternative
 - o Restricting 52nd and 55th to right in / right out accompanied by a U-turn movement at Oak Grove Road.

We note that ODOT has yet to address or respond to these comments and recommendations.

350 Salem Request

350 Salem requests that you respond and clarify in writing the status of formal decision-making on this project as follows:

1. What, if any, formal decision has been or is being made now to authorize this project and determine whether it is consistent with applicable state policies and rules, including the Oregon Highway Plan?
2. If some sort of decision has been made, we request that you send or point us to written documentation of that decision.
3. If no decision has been made we request that you specify what decisions to authorize the project will occur to demonstrate compliance with the Oregon Highway Plan and the expected timing of those decisions.