

CHAPTER 9: RECOMMENDED NON-ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

There are many aspects of Marion County’s transportation system, besides roads, that move people and goods. This section describes the needs and recommended improvements on those elements of the transportation system. Opportunities abound for improvements in these areas, and many of these potential improvements would be very cost-effective and beneficial to the residents, businesses, and visitors of Marion County.

The recommended improvements are organized into six components as shown below. Each of these components is discussed in detail in this section.

1. Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements
2. Public Transportation
3. Air
4. Water
5. Rail
6. Pipeline

9.1 OFF-ROADWAY BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

There are several off-roadway bicycle or multi-use paths throughout the County. Some of these are shown on figure 5-3. Some of these facilities are in State parks, and many provide excellent opportunities for recreational cycling and for new cyclists to develop their ability. However, few of these paths provide a feasible option for trips of substantial distance. Thus, while they provide excellent recreational cycling opportunities, they are not likely to be used instead of roadways for trips of substantial distance where the purpose is transportation rather than recreational riding. Thus, the current off-road paths are not expected to reduce the number of vehicle trips made.

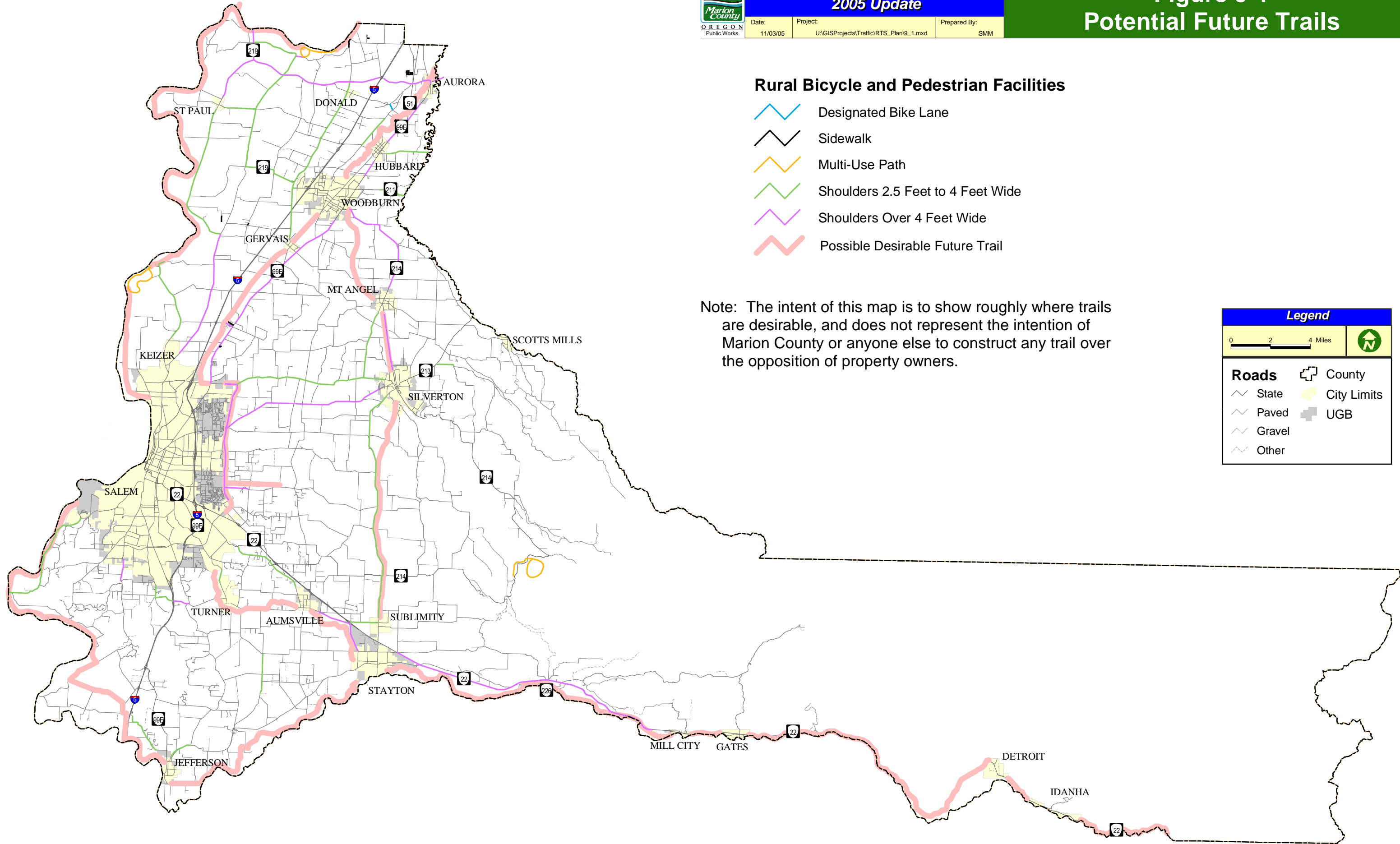
It is the goal of Marion County to develop a better system of multi-use paths throughout the County. This can best be done along existing corridors, such as unused rail lines, under power lines, along rivers, and along roadway rights of way. In the development of this TSP, effort was made to decide where trails would be appropriate. This resulted in **Figure 9-1**, the ‘Potential Future Trails Map,’ which indicates roughly where trails might be desirable. The intent of the map is to show where trails are desirable, and does not represent the intention of Marion County or anyone else to construct any trail over the opposition of property owners.

There is an effort underway in the North Santiam Canyon area to develop a trail from Mehama/Lyons, through Mill City and Gates, to Detroit, extending as far as Idanha. This trail would provide good scenery and substantial economic development potential, and would also provide cyclists a valuable alternative to riding along Oregon 22. This project may include a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the North Santiam River into Linn County. Further analysis and planning of this trail is recommended, and the County







generally supports the trail for the transportation, recreation, and economic development opportunities that come with it, provided that its impacts can be appropriately mitigated.

There is also an effort coming together to develop a trail along Mill Creek from Woodburn to Hubbard to Aurora, with possible connections to other destinations in northern Marion County. This trail would provide good scenery, community connectivity, and economic development potential. Further analysis and planning of this trail is recommended, and the County generally supports the trail for the transportation, recreation, and economic development opportunities that come with it, provided that its impacts can be appropriately mitigated.

Marion County will also be on the lookout for other opportunities that arise to develop good trails and paths. In particular, the County will be looking to take advantage of opportunities that arise on unused rail lines, under power lines, and along rivers and creeks.












Rural Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

-  Designated Bike Lane
-  Sidewalk
-  Multi-Use Path
-  Shoulders 2.5 Feet to 4 Feet Wide
-  Shoulders Over 4 Feet Wide
-  Possible Desirable Future Trail

Note: The intent of this map is to show roughly where trails are desirable, and does not represent the intention of Marion County or anyone else to construct any trail over the opposition of property owners.

Legend

0 2 4 Miles 

 Roads	 County
 State	 City Limits
 Paved	 UGB
 Gravel	
 Other	

9.2 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

For background in this section, we provide an excerpt from the 1998 Rural Transportation System Plan (RTSP). Text reproduced from the 1998 RTSP's description of the study and results is shown in *italics*.

One of the policies from the Marion County Comprehensive Plan is to encourage bus service to communities and areas presently not being served. Since it would be difficult to provide bus service to all of these areas, the County determined that a transit feasibility study should be conducted to look at the feasibility of developing public transportation services in the County. In 1996, the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments was contracted to perform a study to identify transit needs and determine areas that could be efficiently served by transit. The results from that study were instrumental in developing this section of the plan.

9.2.1 Public Transportation Needs

As part of the study, a limited survey was taken from citizens at open houses and from members of the Citizens Review Committee and Technical Advisory Committee to obtain input on the types of public transportation services needed in the County. The survey revealed two primary types of service that needed to be looked at: inter-city transit service and para-transit service. The general response from the public and the committees indicated a strong desire to reduce commuter congestion and to help the transportation-disadvantaged. Both of these desires were considered in determining an appropriate plan for public transportation.

Inter-City Transit Service

An inventory of existing (1996) public transportation providers (from Section 5.4), showed that there are currently two fixed-route transit systems in the County: the Salem Area Transit System and the Woodburn Transit System. However, neither of these systems provided inter-city service to link surrounding communities, such as from Salem to Silverton or from Salem to Stayton. With the growing popularity of these "bedroom" communities as desirable places to live and the County's desire to avoid strip development along major corridors, an inter-city transit service is needed to provide a more efficient means of transportation between urban communities.

Para-Transit Service

A review of the public transportation inventory also revealed an emphasis on transportation for the developmentally disabled population. This transportation extends not only to medical needs, but also to training and work locations. Private programs in retirement communities are similar to government programs in that a large part of providing transportation is for medical needs. However, retirement centers also use transportation to shopping and recreational areas. It is anticipated that these programs (government and private) will continue to generate a need for transportation services.

One of the most important trends that supports the need to continue these services is the growth in the number of elderly. (The elderly population is commonly defined as individuals 65 and over.) Significant growth has occurred in recent years in the elderly

population of Marion County, and this trend is expected to continue. Based on Census data and projections, in 2000, 12.4 percent of the population of Marion County was over the age of 65. The elderly population of the State of Oregon is expected to increase from 13.6% in 2000 to 24.2% in 2025, which would result in a 125% increase in the number of elderly persons to over 1,000,000 Oregonians over the age of 65 by the year 2025. Marion County is expected to experience growth in the same proportion. The growth in the number of elderly is expected to accelerate due to improvements in medical care and the aging of the “baby boomer” generation. This generation of individuals will start turning 65 in about 5 years, and the rate of residents passing their 65th birthday will continue to grow for over 20 years (data updated based on 2000 census).

Growth of the elderly population is significant because they are more likely to need public transportation than younger individuals for a number of reasons. One reason is to save on expenses. Another reason is the gradual decline of physical abilities. In addition, studies show that many rural elderly are immigrants to the community and less likely to have the informal social network of long-term residents and therefore cannot rely on friends, relatives, and neighbors to provide transportation. These factors, combined with more free time, make public transportation attractive to the elderly.

9.2.2 Recommended Public Transit Service

Based on the two types of public transportation needs, the most practical strategy to pursue is one that can provide a viable commuting alternative to the single occupancy vehicle, while at the same time, provide service for the elderly and other transportation disadvantaged groups. The strategy that appears to be capable of accommodating both inter-city service and para-transit needs is a shuttle service along major commuting corridors in the County. The primary purpose of the commuter shuttle service is to reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles during the commute hours. In the initial phases, there is an opportunity to remove up to 180 single occupancy vehicles from peak hour traffic. An inter-city shuttle bus service operating during the morning and afternoon peak hours will provide a viable alternative of transportation to workers commuting to and from Salem. At the same time, the elderly and other transportation disadvantaged groups can use the service to conduct essential and leisure activities, such as medical appointments, shopping, or dining.

Based on projections of continuing growth, three corridors appear capable of generating the needed ridership to support a commuter shuttle service:

1. *Silverton Road from Silverton to Salem*
2. *Highway 22 from the Stayton-Sublimity area to Salem.*
3. *I-5 or Highway 99E from Woodburn (or Aurora) to Salem.*

Because Salem is the largest city and employment center in the County, all three corridors involve service to Salem. Coordination with Salem Area Transit District to provide timely transfers to Cherriots buses will expand the function of the commuter shuttle operation.

In addition to commuter shuttle service, the County also recommends that Salem Area Transit look at expanding the existing Cherriots system to serve future peripheral park-and-ride lots and explore the feasibility of linking to existing services in Woodburn and Wilsonville.

In accordance with the recommendations of this earlier study, the Chemeketa Area Regional Transportation System (CARTS) program has since been started, and provides this inter-city transportation on a fixed-route basis. The program is operating somewhat similarly to the suggestions from this study, and has been relatively successful. It includes service along the three recommended corridors, as well as service between Woodburn and Silverton.

The program seems to have been more successful in attracting the transportation disadvantaged for errands, medical, and shopping trips, than it has attracted commuters. The existing routes include many stops, which increase travel time, and run relatively infrequently, often with a few hours between buses. In order to attract more commuters, faster and more frequent service would be necessary. For this reason, we recommend consideration of adding express service along the three main corridors (Salem to Woodburn, Silverton, and Stayton).

There are also a few more corridors where new transit service could be beneficial. Based on review of Transportation System usage, Census transportation planning data, and considering potential demand for transit trips, the following recommendations have been developed:

9.2.3 Current Recommendations for Service Corridors:

The following corridors are worth exploring as potential or expanded transit corridors:

- 1) Express service from Woodburn to Salem, Silverton to Salem, and Stayton to Salem, connecting with Cherriots, Woodburn Transit, and fixed route systems that develop in Silverton and Stayton.
- 2) Oregon 99E from Woodburn (through Hubbard, and Aurora) to Canby and Oregon City, perhaps continuing to downtown Portland. This would connect with Tri-Met and/or SMART. If a future MAX line is constructed in the area, this service should then also connect with one of the southern MAX stations. Extending this service to Gervais, Mt. Angel, and Silverton might also be worth consideration.
- 3) Interstate 5 from Woodburn (through Hubbard and Aurora or Donald) to Wilsonville, Tualatin, and Portland (with possible express service from Woodburn to the downtown Portland Transit center). This would connect with Tri-Met and/or SMART. If a future MAX line is constructed in the area, this service should then also connect with one of the southern MAX stations. A connection would also be appropriate to any commuter rail line established in the area (such as a Wilsonville to Beaverton commuter line). Extending this bus line to Gervais, Mt. Angel, and Silverton might also be worth consideration.
- 4) Salem to Portland
- 5) Newberg, through Keizer, to Salem.

- 6) Salem to Albany and Corvallis, connecting with both Salem Area Transit, Albany Transit, and Corvallis transit.
- 7) Jefferson to Millersburg and Albany, connecting with Albany Transit.
- 8) The County also supports increased transit opportunities for circumferential travel around the Salem Area. While most origins and destinations of these trips would be within the Urban Growth Boundary (and service thus provided by the Salem Area Transit District), Cordon Road is a potential route for these transit vehicles. This increased circumferential service could also connect with CARTS routes.

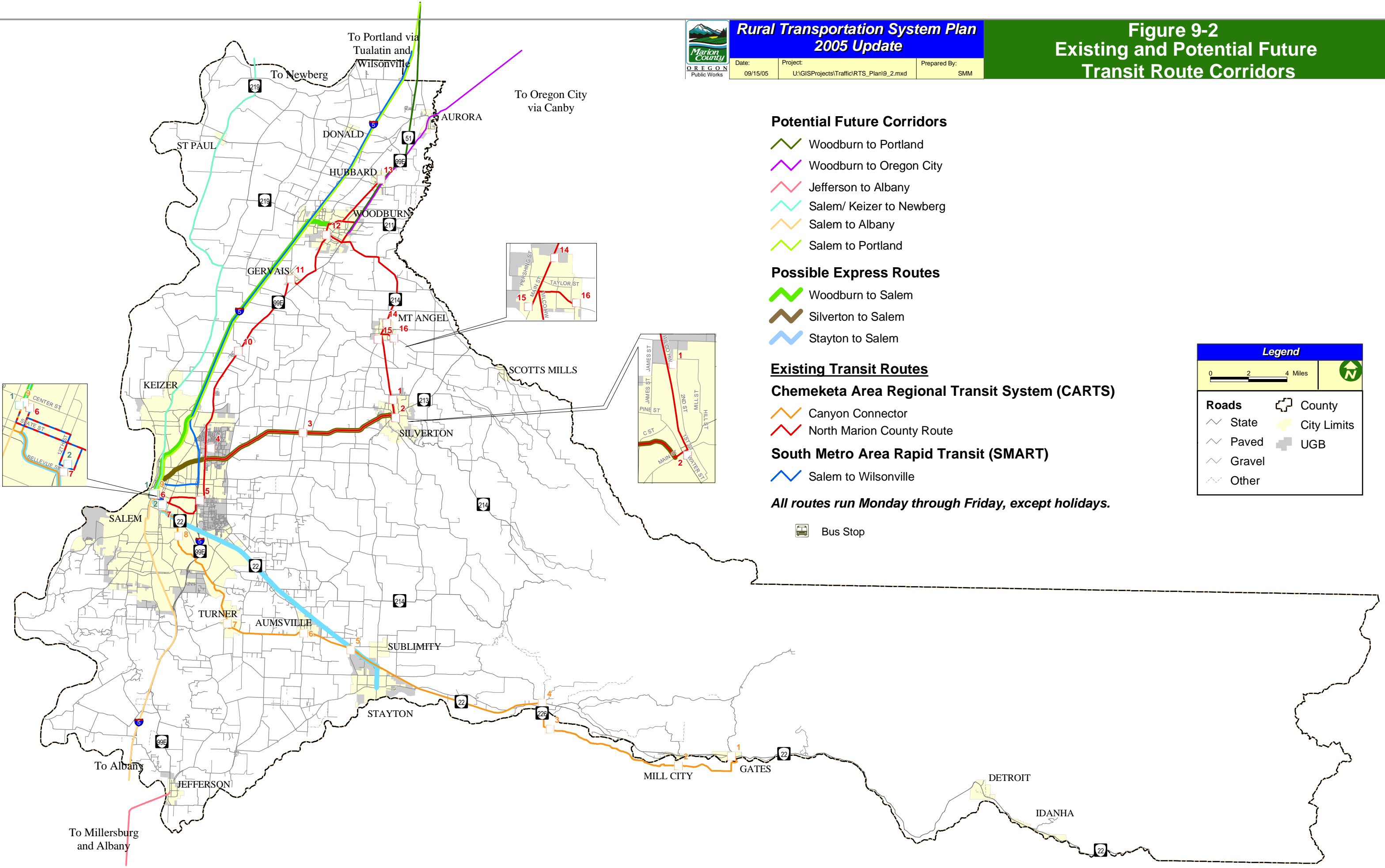
Figure 9-2 shows these corridors for which further study is recommended to determine their feasibility as potential transit corridors – and to determine who the logical transit providers would be. The first three recommendations would also work towards the Woodburn TSP’s goal to “Develop a plan for providing travel options between Woodburn and Portland and/or Salem, including intercity bus service and potential bus/carpool park-n-ride facilities.” Vanpools along these corridors could be a good precursor to their use as transit routes.

It should be noted that Marion County is not a public transportation provider, and thus is not in a position to operate service along these corridors. However, the County will support and work with local service providers towards implementing programs similar to those outlined. The County has been working with the WHEELS Community Transportation Program (including CARTS) run by Oregon Housing and Associated Services (OHAS) and intends to continue to do so.

Recognizing human nature – that a person is more likely to use a facility or a mode of transportation if it feels ‘safe’ and ‘nice,’ the County supports provision of amenities at transit stops in small cities and rural areas. This may include security measures such as lighting, and may also include amenities such as shelters, benches, landscaping, and artwork. Opportunities for businesses (such as espresso and pastry stands, for example), adjacent to these transit stop locations may also be beneficial.

9.2.4 Park-and-Ride/Pool Lots

In addition to the recommended inter-city commuter transit corridors, the County is looking for opportunities to develop park-and-ride/pool lots for shuttle service users and car pools. In some instances, particularly near intersections of key roads and highways, the County will look at acquiring right-of-way to set aside for developing park-and-ride/pool lots. In other instances, the County will look at making arrangements to allow the use of existing parking lots as informal park-and-ride/pool locations. These locations could include lightly used parking lots at office sites, churches, parks, schools, and shopping centers. (Possible locations for park-and-ride/pool lots are shown in Figure 7-1.). Recognizing human nature – that a person is more likely to use a facility or a mode of transportation if it feels ‘safe’ and ‘nice,’ the County supports provision of amenities at these locations. This may include security measures such as lighting, and may also include



Potential Future Corridors

- Woodburn to Portland
- Woodburn to Oregon City
- Jefferson to Albany
- Salem/ Keizer to Newberg
- Salem to Albany
- Salem to Portland

Possible Express Routes

- Woodburn to Salem
- Silverton to Salem
- Stayton to Salem

Existing Transit Routes

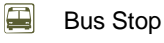
Chemeketa Area Regional Transit System (CARTS)

- Canyon Connector
- North Marion County Route

South Metro Area Rapid Transit (SMART)

- Salem to Wilsonville

All routes run Monday through Friday, except holidays.



Legend

0 2 4 Miles

Roads	County
State	City Limits
Paved	UGB
Gravel	
Other	

amenities such as shelters, benches, landscaping, and artwork. Opportunities for businesses (such as espresso and pastry stands for example), adjacent to these park-and-ride locations may also be beneficial.

9.2.5 Para-transit Improvements

Para-transit providers throughout the County are doing a good job of providing services to a select group of transportation disadvantaged. However, it is anticipated that these services will continue to grow in the future and existing para-transit providers will likely find funding difficult to obtain. To enhance para-transit services, there exists a need to organize and coordinate para-transit providers on a sub-regional basis. The purpose of organizing and coordinating different para-transit providers is to overcome operating differences and to maximize resources by exchanging and coordinating services. In addition, the County has adopted a policy in its Comprehensive Plan to coordinate with other jurisdictions in the area to promote the development of integrated and improved transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged. Currently, there are three sub-regions that would likely benefit from organizing para-transit providers in order to provide future service. These three sub-regions are:

1. Salem/Keizer metropolitan area
2. Silverton/Mt. Angel/Woodburn area
3. Stayton/Sublimity/North Santiam Canyon area.

9.2.6 Regional Transportation Enhancement Plan (2005 Update)

In 1998, the Salem Area Mass Transit District completed a Regional Transportation Enhancement Plan (RTEP) for Marion and Polk County. An update of this plan is currently being prepared by Salem Area Transit, in conjunction with Regional Advisory Committees. Quoting from a preliminary introduction of the plan:

“The plan was developed to improve transportation for the residents of Marion and Polk Counties. It will bring CARTS closer to operating as a centralized system with regional coordination while still allowing local independence. The plan supports rural communities in reaching their individual goals and objectives with continued collaboration among regional and local governing bodies.”

“The ten goals of the plan will move rural transportation forward in providing stability, ensuring community involvement and coordination, increasing service, increasing ridership, and improving quality. The rural area includes Marion and Polk counties outside of the Salem-Keizer Transit boundary, but services do interact with Salem-Keizer Transit services.”

New components of the plan include the volunteer program that will provide rider assistance and training for seniors and people with disabilities. The program will empower riders to get into the community on their own thereby increasing access to socialization, vital medical services and basic life-sustaining activities. Another new aspect of this plan is the development and implementation of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) methods. The ITS will maximize efficiency of operations, planning, and administrative functions. The RTEP’s ten goals are:

1. Increase transportation choices
2. Enhance local community transportation
3. Ensure community involvement in planning and development
4. Keep the regional system accountable
5. Promote regional solutions through coordination and cooperation
6. Promote regional transportation program to increase ridership
7. Develop an Intelligent Transportation System to maximize efficiency of operations, planning, and administrative functions
8. Leverage resources to stabilize funding
9. Implement a volunteer program to provide rider assistance and training to increase independence and socialization.
10. Expand the success of the Medicaid Brokerage

The 1998 RTEP resulted in many action plan items that have since been implemented. The CARTS system was one result, as is better coordination between the various transit providers in the region, and securing additional funding for transit service in the region.

Marion County supports the findings and work program of the RTEP. If called upon for assistance, the County intends to take appropriate actions to help facilitate its implementation.

9.2.7 Marion County Urban Growth Management Framework (2002)

Marion County's Urban Growth Management Framework (document summarized in Chapter 3) contains policies and guidelines to improve County/City Coordination on transportation system and planning issues:

Policy #3: Coordinate the enhancement or addition of transit connections within and between cities.

Policy #1: Marion County shall jointly plan with communities to meet the transportation needs in the future.

9.3 AIR PLAN

There are currently two public airports in Marion County: the Aurora State Airport northwest of Aurora and the Salem Municipal Airport (McNary Field) in Salem. At this time, there are no immediate plans to use either the Aurora State Airport or the Salem Municipal Airport as a “reliever” airport to Portland International Airport. Both airports are currently being used by both corporate and civilian aircraft.

9.3.1 Aurora State Airport Master Plan Update

This plan was completed in 1999, and is summarized here. See the Plan (copies can be obtained from the Oregon Department of Aviation) for details regarding proposed projects.

Aurora State Airport has a single asphalt concrete runway with a full-length parallel taxiway. The runway is 5,000 feet long by 100 feet wide, and is equipped with Medium Intensity Runway Lights (MIRLs) with Visual Approach Slope Indicators (VASIs) at both ends. Runway pavement strength is rated at 30,000 pounds for aircraft with single wheel landing gear and 45,000 for aircraft with two wheels per landing gear. The following projects are planned for construction by 2018:

- Plans to expand runway protection zones and aviation easements (easements for planes to fly over land)
- Construct fuel facility
- Conduct noise study
- Obstruction removal
- Reconstruct and expand central ramp
- Reconstruct hangar taxilanes
- Construct Runway 17 hold apron
- Construct additional corporate hangars and potential corporate hangar taxilane
- Construct potential 10-unit T-hangar and taxilane
- Construct perimeter fencing and gates
- Replace MIRL (Lighting)
- Replace Runway 17 and 35 VASIs with PAPIs (Lighting)
- Replace lighted wind cone
- Overlay and rehabilitation of runway and taxiways
- Relocate parallel taxiway slightly farther away from runway
- Install taxiway lighting

9.3.2 Salem Municipal Airport

The Salem Municipal Airport does not currently have regularly scheduled air carrier service. (Seattle-based Horizon Airlines discontinued service to Salem in 1994.) However, the airport accommodates regular cargo service from the United Parcel Service (UPS) contract carrier, Sport Air Travel. Although UPS and Federal Express do not operate their own aircraft at the Salem airport on a regular basis, both companies maintain operations facilities on, or near, the airfield. The airport also accommodates several charter flights that provide service to Reno, Las Vegas, or Laughlin, Nevada. The Salem airport also serves as a joint-facility with the Oregon National Guard.

One of the primary issues in the airport master plan is whether the airport expects to accommodate commercial air service. At this time, the airport is not expected to attract commercial traffic in the near future. The prospects for direct air service will improve when three conditions are met:

1. Congestion on Interstate 5 leads to unpredictable travel times from Salem to Portland.
2. Further population growth in Salem or between Salem and Portland.
3. Congestion at Portland International Airport, slowing aircraft turnaround times.

(Taken from the McNary Field Airport Master Plan Draft Report)

These conditions could be reached in 10 to 15 years. At that time, the most likely commercial air service will be provided by regional jets seating up to 70 passengers. Markets between Seattle and San Francisco would likely be served. With this type of service, an estimated 20,000 passengers per year could potentially use the Salem airport.

Some of the other key issues addressed in the airport master plan pertain to facility requirements, land use compatibility, and zoning designations. The issues include:

- X Improvements to the runways, taxiways, hangar areas, lighting, and instrument approaches.
- X Possible development of the west, south, and eastern areas of the airport to provide for aircraft hangars, industrial land development, and other airport related facilities.
- X Increase in airport-generated revenues to maintain an effective program of facility maintenance and improvement.
- X Airport zoning designation.
- X Forecast of types and levels of activity expected at the airport for the next 20 years.
- X Airport noise.

The remaining airstrips and heliports in the County are limited to private aircraft. The private airstrips still serve as valuable resources to the County, especially for providing emergency services. A list of these facilities is provided in Chapter 5, Table 5-18.

9.4 RAIL PLAN

Marion County supports continued and increased freight and passenger rail service along the existing rail lines in Marion County. The County generally supports improvements that would increase the efficiency of rail transportation (freight and/or passenger) as long as the impacts of these improvements can be appropriately addressed. The County also supports continuation and expansion of the existing passenger rail service through Marion County. Improvements to maintain and/or improve track speeds for freight and/or passenger service are encouraged.

The County recognizes the importance of rail freight transportation to many of the industries in Marion County, as rail is sometimes the most efficient mode for them to transport their raw materials and products. Marion County encourages and supports the maintenance and improvement of these rail lines in order to facilitate continued and improved freight transportation for these industries. Recognizing that railroads need a certain amount of business for a line to remain viable, efforts are encouraged to recruit additional companies that would ship and receive goods via rail. In addition, cities with developable land along rail lines (particularly the Portland & Western Railroad and the Willamette Valley Railway) are encouraged to take steps to promote use of these parcels by entities that would make use of the rail line.

Marion County encourages the establishment of a cost-effective rail passenger service connecting the heavily populated urban centers of the Willamette Valley. In addition, the Oregon Rail Passenger Policy and Plan calls for the future development of high-speed rail between Eugene and Portland with trains reaching top speeds between 79 and 110 mph. At this time, it appears likely that a new rail line would need to be constructed (an expensive proposition) in order for high-speed passenger rail service to be implemented. Marion County will continue to support the concept of a high-speed rail line in the Willamette Valley. Specific locations for rail improvements would be identified as high-speed rail gets closer to implementation.

As noted in Section 5-5, commuter rail service is planned to start along the Portland & Western rail line from Wilsonville to Beaverton in 2008. This line extends south from Wilsonville into Marion County, and goes through Salem. Extending this service south to Salem would be a logical extension of this commuter service, linking major trip generators and attractors in the mid- and northern Willamette Valley. According to the 2001 Oregon Rail Plan: “During the process of conducting the Beaverton-Wilsonville study, a number of people at the public hearings suggested that the service be extended southerly to Salem. The Beaverton-Wilsonville Steering Committee indicated that they did not want to entertain the suggestion at this time. They were concerned that the increased costs for this extension would make the overall project so large that funding would be even more difficult to obtain. They suggested that a more appropriate time to discuss the extension was once the Beaverton-Wilsonville project was fully funded. A preliminary look at the costs associated for this 27-mile extension seemed to indicate that capital costs for such an extension would be approximately \$88 million. This included both track improvements and the necessary equipment.” After commuter rail service has started between Wilsonville and Beaverton and operated for a couple of years, the feasibility of this commuter rail service extension from Wilsonville to Salem should be evaluated to determine if it would be a cost-effective investment. This would likely also include some form of shuttle service between the Salem rail station and key Salem destinations. A stop near Oregon 219 west of Woodburn would also merit consideration. Marion County generally supports implementation of this service, provided all issues can be addressed to appropriate levels.

The Willamette Valley Railway between Woodburn and Stayton is considering use of its line for passenger and excursion-type service. There is a Cascade Scenic Railway Inc. group looking at the feasibility of starting and operating a short-line rail service between Silverton and Woodburn. Future stops could include Mt. Angel, Stayton, and possibly east Salem. Marion County generally supports this to the extent that it would provide quality of life and economic benefit to the community. As this line currently operates in 'excepted track' (freight only with maximum speed 10mph) status, improvements to the track are recommended to enable the line to be used for passenger transport.

The identified funding needs (in the 2001 Oregon Rail Plan) should be met by the appropriate railroad, with possible assistance through grant funding. These needs include rail renewal, bridge repair, cross tie renewal, and turnout renewal on the Portland & Western line, and rail, cross tie, and turnout renewal on the Willamette Valley Railway.

Freight transport along rail lines is expected to continue and grow in the future. Rail often provides the most efficient way to transport freight, and the County encourages investigation of increased service for freight transport by rail. However, while freight transport by rail offers many benefits, including cost-effectiveness and removing trucks from roadways, it is important to ensure that the benefit of increased operations will outweigh any adverse effect on the surrounding environment and communities. Construction of new rail spurs will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and is encouraged where they result in overall benefit to the people. Marion County generally supports improved freight rail transportation in the County.

A new east-west rail spur has been constructed just north of Brooklake Road to connect a Morse Bros. gravel pit to the Portland & Western Railroad line. The new rail spur is currently in use, and some rock that would otherwise be shipped by truck is now being shipped by train. The County generally supports similar rail spurs when their merit can be demonstrated and the increased transportation efficiency would offset the negative impacts of the spur.

Marion County also generally supports the development of intermodal freight transfer facilities, in which goods can be transferred from other transportation modes (particularly trucks) to rail. This could increase the viability of rail lines, improve the efficiency of transportation of these goods, and potentially reduce the number of truck miles traveled and the resulting impact of these trucks on the County Road system. Development of these transfer facilities is supported as long as the impacts of these facilities can be appropriately addressed. These transfer facilities could be particularly useful for shipping of agricultural commodities or industrial goods. However, care should be taken to avoid placing these transfer facilities where they would cause trains to block crossings on busy roadways.

9.5 WATER PLAN

There are currently two ferry services in operation in the County: the Buena Vista Ferry and the Wheatland Ferry. Both ferries are operated by Marion County and provide service across the Willamette River. (A complete description of the ferry service is provided in Section 5.7.) It is anticipated that both of these ferries will continue to operate over the next 20 years. The Buena Vista Ferry was rehabilitated in early 1995. The improvements included an enclosure system, new operator cabin, new controls, and a new generator. The new Daniel Matheny IV ferry was recently put into service at Wheatland in 2001.

At this time, no additional ferry crossing routes are planned.

The locks in Oregon City (to get around Willamette Falls) are very important to the viability of continued ferry operation. When it becomes necessary to do major maintenance on or replace one of the ferries, it is typically taken up the Willamette River to the Portland area or beyond. Because of the size of the ferry, it needs to travel on the river, as it is not practical to transport by any other means. The locks need to remain operational so that the ferries do not become landlocked.

The question occasionally arises as to the feasibility of using the Willamette River for transportation, particularly the feasibility of shipping goods by barge. The current regulatory status of the Willamette is an authorized six-foot channel of unspecified width extending from Oregon City to the mouth of the Santiam River (South County Line). All of the County's frontage lies within this section. While the authorized channel indicates the potential for navigability, this channel has not been maintained for quite some time. Dredging ceased many years ago because its cost was greater than the resulting benefit. Extensive additional sedimentation has occurred since then, making dredging even more costly. There are presently no immediate plans to use this portion of the Willamette River for commercial navigation, although there is an existing authorized Federal Navigation Channel extending as far as Corvallis. Although dredging the river could bring economic benefits to the region, it would be quite costly and could also have undesirable impacts to the environment. At this time, the County has no plans to pursue river dredging. Thus, while the potential does exist for the Willamette to be used for freight and passenger transportation, such navigability is not likely to be maintained by a government agency.

However, the possibility of waterborne freight and passenger movement on the Willamette does exist. It is possible that, during the timeframe of this plan, one or several commercial operations may become interested in the economic benefits that barge transportation offers. It is also possible that one or several commercial operations may become interested in operating excursion boats on large portions of the Willamette. It is possible that these economic benefits and opportunities may outweigh the costs of dredging such that maintaining a channel on part of the Willamette along Marion County becomes cost effective for them. Marion County would be supportive of such efforts to privately fund channel maintenance, provided environmental and other issues can be reasonably addressed.

It is very important that the Oregon City locks (to get around Willamette Falls) remain operational in order to preserve the option of using the Willamette River for transportation by boat or barge. They also need to remain open so that vessels operating on this portion of the river can get to repair facilities in Portland and beyond.

A volunteer and non-profit group effort has recently developed a water trail (a canoe/kayak trail route) along the Willamette River from the Buena Vista Ferry past Independence, Salem, and Keizer, to the

Wheatland Ferry. This trail involves maps of the river and signs directing boaters to public lands along the river for landing points, and could include some amenities at these sites. This trail provides good scenery and economic development potential, and a glimpse into the historic use of the Willamette as a transportation corridor. Further analysis, planning, and development of this trail is recommended, and the County generally supports the trail for the recreation and economic development opportunities that come with it, provided that its impacts can be appropriately mitigated.

Recognizing that a significant amount of freight is shipped to and from Marion County via the Columbia River, Marion County supports efforts to deepen the Columbia River shipping channel from the Pacific Ocean to Portland and the Willamette River shipping channel from the Columbia River to Portland.

9.6 PIPELINE PLAN

The County encourages the use of underground pipelines that minimize the need for surface shipping and that are compatible with established land uses. Two major pipelines currently run through the County: a petroleum distribution line belonging to Sante Fe Pipeline Inc. and a natural gas distribution line belonging to Northwest Pipeline Corp. These companies are expected to continue operating the pipelines over the next 20 years. The Sante Fe Pipeline Inc. may add another line running from north of Salem east to Bend, depending upon future demand. Northwest Pipeline Corp. currently has no plans to expand its natural gas pipeline network.

Northwest Natural has recently completed a pipeline carrying natural gas across portions of northern Marion County. This pipeline is now in the beginning stages of use.

Marion County is generally supportive of pipeline transportation as long as local, environmental, and land-use issues are reasonably satisfied.