CHAPTER 13: LONG TERM TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

The State Transportation Planning Rule, which outlines the minimum requirements for transportation plans, requires a minimum of a 20-year planning period. However, the intent of the rule is not to restrict agencies from looking beyond the minimum requirements. Marion County believes that it is necessary to take a longer-range view of transportation and land use issues if we are going to influence how the region will develop and function through the 21st Century. Although it is difficult to predict conditions that may impact transportation in the next 50 to 100 years, it is reasonable to assume that the County will continue to grow in terms of population and employment. Based on this assumption, it is logical to assume that the existing transportation system will not meet the long-term mobility needs of County residents. To address the need to provide a functional transportation system the County has identified issues that we expect to arise in the future.

These issues will hopefully create a starting point for consideration and development of a direction that will guide future growth in Marion County. The intent of this chapter is not to pinpoint exactly what will occur, but to create an awareness that initiates and maintains discussion that will allow us to preserve options and alternatives that the County may wish to pursue in the future. It should be understood that these long-term issues are only concepts at this time and still require extensive study before the County is ready to pursue implementing any of these ideas. This plan is not intended to serve as authorization for the County to begin construction on any of these concepts.

Within the 20-year horizon of this plan, the County will focus on facilitating intra- and inter-County mobility by maintaining the function of key transportation corridors that serve travel and freight movement internal to the County and to major links outside the County. By pursuing this strategy, the County addresses many of the commuting needs and farm-to-market issues of County residents and the needs of businesses to ship and receive products and materials. In addition, this strategy provides good connections with adjacent jurisdictions and supports the desire for an efficient regional transportation system.

To look past the initial 20-year period, we need to take a broader perspective. As identified in Section 2.3, two of the initial objectives in the development of this plan, we can move in this direction by:

- Influencing the future of the County through strategic transportation and land use planning. Conceptualize the infrastructure 50 to 100 years in the future and influence growth and development patterns in accordance with future planning goals.

- Preserving flexible infrastructure options and concepts, such as major corridors, grid and radial systems, circumferential arterials (beltways), park-and-ride facilities, etc., without necessarily identifying specific routes, locations, or design until deemed appropriate.

The long-term focus assumes continuation of the shorter-term philosophies of intra- and inter-County mobility. However, it seeks to take a more speculative view of how land use and transportation may change from what we see today. Marion County has a functioning, and reasonably efficient, road network today. It is reasonable to assume that our distant future network will look much the same with the exception of selective upgrading and enhancement as necessary to maintain an effective system for the

needs of the region within funding limitations. However, there are several factors that we feel may play a larger role after 20 years than they currently do. These factors include:

1. Peripheral Routes and Strategic Corridors
2. Passenger Rail Service with Supporting Access Network
3. Transportation Systems Management Strategies
4. Aggressive Transportation Demand Management Tools
5. Additional Connections to Interstate 5 and Highway 22
6. Additional Crossings of the Willamette River
7. Changing Land Use and Transportation Characteristics

It is worth noting that this represents only a preliminary list of possible long term issues and that others could be identified and included for consideration at any time. Also, the suggested actions or directions with regard to any of these issues will likely change as more information becomes available.

13.1 PERIPHERAL ROUTES AND STRATEGIC CORRIDORS

An issue that currently exists but will only become more complex in the future, is how to provide mobility throughout the County while preserving community livability in the urban centers, particularly in some of the smaller cities. Several of the 20 incorporated cities in the County have a major regional route, such as a County Arterial running right through the center of town. Some of these cities have already indicated a desire to redirect commercial truck traffic and non-local thru traffic around their city center. Their issues with this traffic include speed, safety, pedestrian mobility, major throughways that bisect and divide their community, and to a small degree congestion problems. The delays experienced in these cities (and the accident potential of driving through a city) can also be detrimental to the freight hauling industry. The idea of peripheral routes is to provide connections between strategic corridors that circumvent or bypass city centers.

The most obvious benefit to a community of a peripheral route is that it would facilitate the "neighborhood feeling" in the core areas which is so important to promote the pedestrian and bicycle friendly development and urban center concepts that are highly recommended in the *ODOT Strategy for Integrating Transportation and Land Use*. One of the best ways we can promote bicycle-friendly and pedestrian-friendly cities is to pull out regional traffic that has no interest in, or consideration for, the local community. On the other hand, it is the County's goal to provide a transportation system that promotes safe, efficient, and timely travel for all its users, and regional automobile and truck mobility is an important component of the quality of life and economic vitality of the region. These are obviously conflicting interests in these small communities, but both are in the best interests of the general public.

The concept of providing peripheral roads would not be appropriate for every urban community. The cost of providing such a route could vary from small improvements on existing roadways to requiring entirely new rights-of-way through valuable resource land or already developed lands. The cost to society, both in dollars and impacts, has to be evaluated carefully and weighed against the benefits. In urban areas, land use issues are less of a problem, but cost and impact to adjacent land uses may be insurmountable. In the rural areas, legal and land use issues may very well be insurmountable, but the overall impact may be less

to surrounding uses. In either situation, strict land use policies would be required to prevent development along these peripheral routes and to preserve their function as traffic-moving facilities.

Under existing land use policies and current levels of development, routes around urban centers are very much discouraged, if not outright prohibited. Some may be warranted, and some may not be. What will the situation be in 30 or 70 years? Who can really say? It is the County's view that the concept of peripheral routes, including those in rural lands, should be preserved as possible future options for the County. The best way to do this is to speculate on where these roads are most likely to be needed or considered, and to take appropriate action to prevent the options from being eliminated. Peripheral routes inside urban growth boundaries are allowed under current land use regulations and in some cases, are being addressed in the respective cities' urban TSPs.

To document current thoughts on locations where some degree of urban center bypass may be appropriate in the future, **Figure 13-1** was developed. These potential routes are very conceptual in nature, and do not represent an intention on the part of the County to pursue creation of any of these at this time. They will be considered as those communities develop, and be discussed as potential future options. Illustrated on the figure are existing routes that are already being used, or could be used, to avoid an urban center; possible peripheral routes that have been identified in various city TSPs; and other peripheral routes that the County has suggested may be advantageous in the future.

In addition to the concept of peripheral routes, there is also an expectation that certain of the designated strategic intra-/inter-County corridors may need extension and refinement in the future. **Figure 13-1** shows the designated intra- and inter-County corridors that we focused on in the 20-year plan and will continue to focus on for the longer-term strategy. It also shows those locations where changes to these corridors may need to be addressed in the future. Note that in most cases, a corridor extension or refinement would be accomplished using existing roadways. In addition, the County believes these corridors will need to be supplemented with future park-and-ride lots to promote and take advantage of transit and ride-sharing opportunities. Again, these concepts are illustrated on **Figure 13-1**.

13.2 PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE WITH SUPPORTING ACCESS NETWORK

The Oregon Transportation Commission has deemed the development of a high-speed rail system in the Willamette Valley as one of its strategic initiatives. Passenger rail service, in the form of light rail, commuter rail, and/or high-speed rail, is a viable alternative for the County in the future.

The Oregon Rail Passenger Policy and Plan calls for the development of high-speed rail between Eugene and Portland. The Union Pacific line runs through Marion County and is the leading candidate for high-speed rail service. If passenger rail service is developed, the County foresees a need to provide an access network to serve as a "feeder" system to the rail line. Providing an access network could involve improving grade crossings, constructing park-and-ride facilities, upgrading selected roads that service rail stations, or constructing new access roads altogether. High-speed rail would also require constructing several grade-separated crossings and improving tracks to handle speeds between 79 and 110 mph.

The concept of passenger rail service from Wilsonville to Beaverton is currently working its way through the planning process. This same rail line extends south from Wilsonville into Marion County, through

Donald, close to Woodburn, through Keizer, and into Salem. The possibility of extending passenger service to Salem is of interest to Marion County. The timeframe for developing this service may occur within the next 20 years, but could also extend beyond a 20-year time frame.

The County could also look at facilitating a public transportation system or organizing a fleet of vanpools to service the passenger rail line from outlying areas. This possibility, which would integrate nicely with any existing intercity bus service, will have to be evaluated further once passenger rail service gets closer to implementation.

13.3 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT (TSM) STRATEGIES

Another area that will play a larger role in the future is the use of TSM strategies to maximize the efficiency and safety of the existing transportation system. This could include access management strategies, land use controls, new or additional traffic control devices, and traffic control improvements such as coordinated signal timing or signal preemption for transit. The effectiveness and suitability of these strategies is highly a function of technological changes and advancements. It also is a function of society's level of commitment to solving transportation problems. Developments such as Intelligent Transportation Systems and Intelligent Vehicle Highway Systems will promote many changes in driver behaviors, incident management, capacity utilization, and general efficiency of the transportation network and all of its components. It is likely that some level of transportation systems management will be part of any long or short- term strategy.

13.4 AGGRESSIVE TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) STRATEGIES

As we progress in the 21st Century, the way we view transportation is rapidly changing. In the past, transportation generally meant moving or obtaining goods and services by roads, rail lines, or air. Now, transportation also applies to the movement of information, and more and more jobs involve "transporting" information from one site to another. Continuing advances in technology will make it easier and faster to move information through facilities other than roads. Phone lines, cable lines, dedicated Internet lines, microwave, and satellites represent the new, non-traditional facilities of the future transportation system. While most goods and many services will still require the use of roads for transport, a significant number of work and shopping trips can be made through modem lines and the Internet.

As a long-term strategy, the County should aggressively encourage and pursue the various options to reduce the demand for transportation on the roadways (see chapter 8 for a more detailed description). Success on a grand scale will require partnerships between public and private sectors to educate the public and make programs possible for things like telecommuting, trip reduction, flex time, parking management, ridesharing, employer based transit, etc. This strategy will be slow to mature given its dependence on public voluntary participation, thus making it pertinent in a long-term transportation strategy.

13.5 ADDITIONAL CONNECTIONS TO INTERSTATE 5 AND HIGHWAY 22

Interstate 5 is the Principal Arterial of the West Coast, linking Oregon with Washington, California, Canada, and Mexico. It also provides the connection to major East-West routes that link the West Coast with the rest of the country. About 30 miles of Interstate 5 pass through rural Marion County. There are several connections to and from Interstate 5 in rural Marion County: three in the 10 miles south of Salem, and three in the 20 miles north of Salem. Good access to Interstate 5 is expected to become more and more critical as the County grows, and as the economy becomes more global. As worldwide mobility becomes increasingly important, efficient shipment of goods and movement of people is expected to become increasingly important to the economic vitality of the region. Thus, good access to Interstate 5 is expected to become more and more important to the quality of life in Marion County as we progress into the future.

Access is a concern, especially north of the Salem area, because all three interchanges north of Salem currently have capacity issues, which are expected to worsen over time. A project to reconstruct the Woodburn Interchange (exit 271) will help traffic to and from Woodburn over its 20-year design life. However, much more will need to be done in the long term to continue providing acceptable access to and from Interstate 5. This will likely involve major improvements to both the Brooks Interchange (exit 263) and the Aurora/Donald Interchange (exit 278). The location of the Woodburn Interchange is problematic from a regional perspective because through traffic must pass through the center of Woodburn to use it. As Woodburn is expected to grow very quickly, getting through Woodburn will become more and more of a problem. A new connection to or from Interstate 5 could become necessary near Woodburn, likely south of the city. This new interchange could alter travel behaviors not only in the immediate Marion County area, but also reach into adjacent counties and even affect some statewide trips

Of course, this all is predicated on the continued viability of Interstate 5 as a transportation corridor and that ODOT, FHWA, and other agencies will have the resources to address the capacity, maintenance, preservation, and bridge replacement issues that are anticipated to arise on Interstate 5. Because Interstate 5 is critical to the regional, state, and national economy, investment to maintain the capacity, function, and safety of the interstate and its interchanges will continue to grow more and more critical. It is important that the County, as well as other transportation agencies, review the function of Interstate 5 and any proposed modifications to it from an intra-state as well as an inter-state perspective.

Oregon 22 is another important Oregon Statewide Highway that passes East-West through Marion County. It has recently been improved to four lanes with access at interchanges only between Salem and Stayton. Maintaining good access to and from Oregon 22 will be important for Marion County, particularly southeastern Marion County, well into the future.

13.6 ADDITIONAL CROSSINGS OF THE WILLAMETTE RIVER

Currently under study in the Salem metropolitan area is the feasibility of adding capacity to present Willamette River crossings or pursuing additional river crossings. A potential location (the Pine/Tryon corridor north of downtown Salem) has been selected for a new bridge, and authorities are seeking funding to undertake the detailed environmental and community study necessary before a bridge can be constructed.

Marion County, over the years, has also entertained many discussions with adjacent jurisdictions about the need to add or improve river crossings. Several members of the general public involved in the development of this transportation plan also suggested the need for additional river crossings, especially in the north end of the County. The whole idea of adding new crossings has been a hotly debated issue and will likely never disappear altogether. Like new interchanges on Interstate 5, new river crossings will have a far-reaching impact on transportation throughout the region. A regional evaluation, possibly combined with any major investment studies of interstate proposals, should be undertaken when the time is appropriate. It is expected that some study will occur in the near term, but the issue is quite complex and will certainly extend well into the long-range planning period.

13.7 CHANGING LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

The key factor in determining the future transportation needs of Marion County is how the County develops in the coming years. This development is shaped by many factors including land use regulation, the economy, sociological trends, technological development, the priorities of the people, availability of resources and fuels, investment in the transportation system, and even national security. Major changes in any of these areas (or a host of other areas) would necessitate a fresh look at our Transportation System Plan, and may take the County Transportation System in directions that we wouldn't imagine presently.

One area to particularly watch closely is land use regulation. Many legislative proposals (and ballot measures) have been made that would significantly affect Oregon's land use planning system. Any significant changes to Oregon's land use laws, especially the Urban Growth Boundary concept, will significantly affect Marion County's transportation system.

A second area to watch carefully is the rise of inter-city commuting and travel. Housing prices have seen a large increase in western Oregon in recent years, especially near the larger employment centers, such as the Portland metropolitan area. Land use regulations have contained the sprawl of the suburbs of these large cities, so in many cases people have moved to neighboring or outlying smaller cities, and commute across rural areas between cities to get to work. In many cases in Marion County, this essentially results in urban commute traffic pressure on the rural transportation system. In the future, Marion County and its cities will need to work towards providing a good balance of residences and employment in each city and region. In addition, there seems to be a trend towards driving longer distances more frequently for shopping and recreational purposes as well. As there are more and more products on the market, and as more and more niche markets develop for highly specialized products, and as consumer spending tends to increase, people are more willing to travel farther to get what they want. These all increase travel and the pressure on the rural transportation system. In the future, Marion County and its cities will need to work towards providing good shopping opportunities closer to where its people live, especially in the smaller cities. It will also help if people are made more aware of the true costs of their travel habits.

Another area that can affect the transportation system would be increased use of rural areas in ways that are not traditionally rural. For example, recent technology such as the Internet has made it much easier to run various types of businesses out of one's home. We have also seen a rise in businesses, such as retail nurseries, whose products are rural in nature but attract dozens or even hundreds of customers a day. For these and other reasons, we have seen significant growth in traffic to and from rural areas. Continuation of these trends would substantially affect Marion County's rural transportation system.

Planners are becoming increasingly aware of the cause-and-effect relationships between land use planning and transportation system planning. It is wise to continue and improve current practices of land use planning that maximize the effectiveness of the transportation system, and to continue and improve current practices of transportation planning that optimize the effective use of available land. This is anticipated to become increasingly important in the future.

Summary

In summary, the County believes very strongly that attention to the long term is essential to enhance the far-reaching value of the Rural Transportation System Plan and ensure that strategic considerations are given the treatment they deserve without detracting from the required elements of the plan. Needless to say, conditions in the future are impossible to predict with any degree of accuracy. Any of these long-term issues may become moot or critical, depending on how the future actually unfolds. Undoubtedly, many additional issues will also surface. Transportation and land use planning can not, and should not, be separated, and how effectively we approach the challenge of coordinating them will determine the legacy we leave for the next several generations of Marion County Citizens.

Rural Transportation System Plan
Draft 2005 Update

Marion County OREGON Public Works

Date:	Project:	Prepared By:
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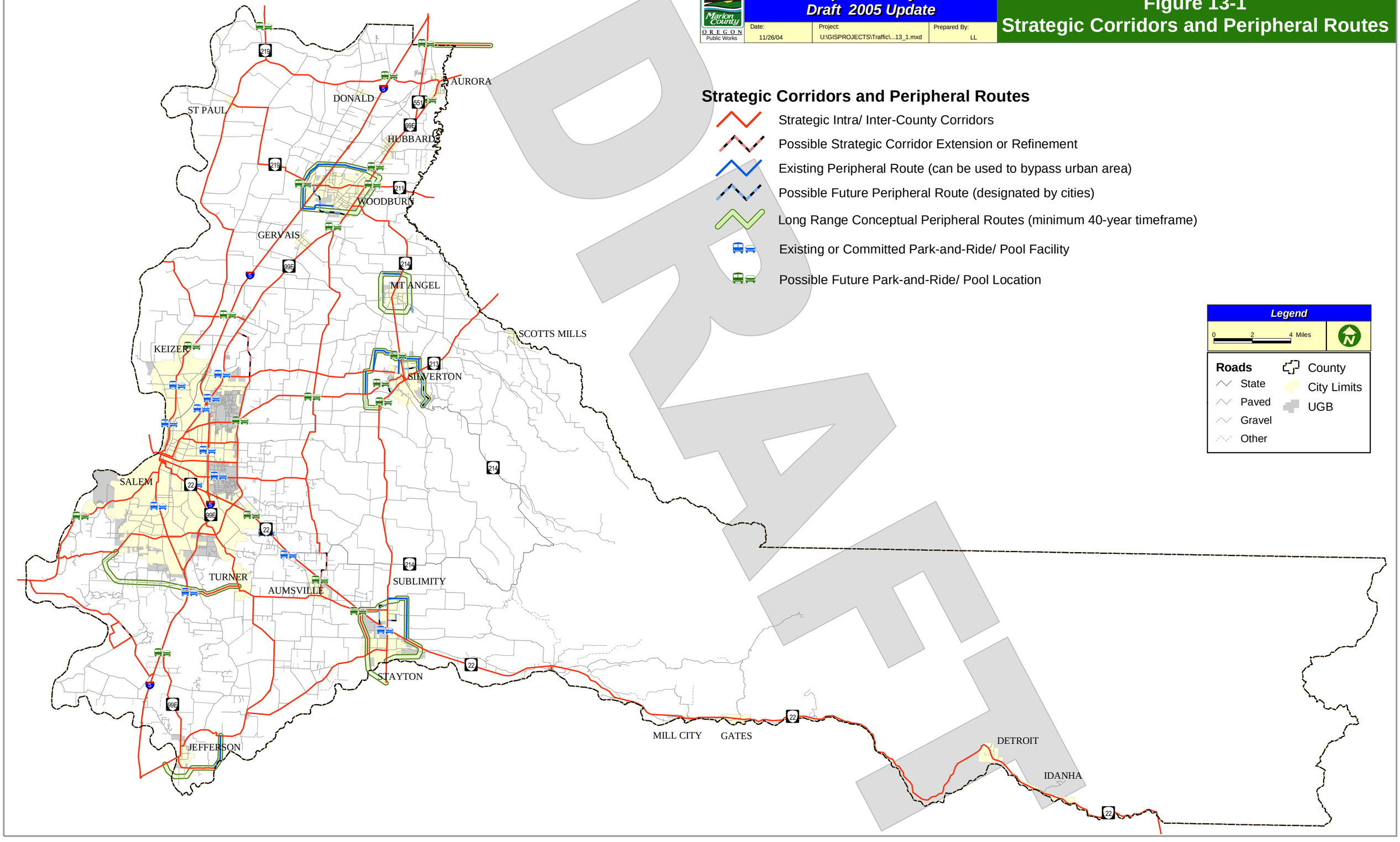
Figure 13-1
Strategic Corridors and Peripheral Routes



Strategic Corridors and Peripheral Routes

- Strategic Intra/ Inter-County Corridors
- Possible Strategic Corridor Extension or Refinement
- Existing Peripheral Route (can be used to bypass urban area)
- Possible Future Peripheral Route (designated by cities)
- Long Range Conceptual Peripheral Routes (minimum 40-year timeframe)
- Existing or Committed Park-and-Ride/ Pool Facility
- Possible Future Park-and-Ride/ Pool Location

Legend

0 2 4 Miles

Roads
- State
- Paved
- Gravel
- Other

- County
- City Limits
- UGB