



## **IAMP: I-5 Interchange at Chemawa Road Stakeholder Interview Summary**

### ***Overview***

Interviews were conducted with twenty two individuals representing business, residents, property owners, local governments, interest groups and other organizations with an interest in the I-5 Interchange at Chemawa Road. Participants were asked how the interchange impacted them or the members of their organization and generally about concerns related to the interchange. They were asked if they had any unique access issues that they were concerned about. Each person interviewed was also asked about their experience working with the project's partners (Cities of Keizer and Salem, Marion County and ODOT).

### ***Interchange Operations***

Generally, participants reported that the interchange currently operates quite well. Several interview participants said that the interchange works better than it did previously. Bonneville Power Administration service vehicles and visitors to the Volcanoes baseball stadium have found that recent improvements, designed with the Keizer Station development, has really improved the function of the interchange. Even when there is a freight train in the area, visitors can still get into and out of the stadium area for a game. So far, the Volcanoes management reports that customers of the businesses at Keizer Station do not cause traffic conflicts with activities at the stadium. Concerns were expressed about what full build out at Keizer Station might bring in terms of traffic.

### ***Transit and Bicycle access***

Participants in the interviews said that transit should be considered in the future.

The area was described as "complicated" for bikes. The Keizer Bikeways Committee, a group sponsored and supported by the City of Keizer, reported successes for cyclists in the Keizer Station Development Plan including an underpass for bikes and pedestrians under Chemawa Road. On-going construction has made the road a rough one for cyclists, but generally the north-south movement has improved in the area. Crossing I-5 or traveling east-west, on the other hand, is very difficult for cyclists. The southbound and northbound off ramps are wider than they used to be. They report that many people have stopped riding in the area because of safety concerns.

One interviewee mentioned that a new interchange at Quinaby Road would benefit cyclists because they cannot currently cross I-5 at Brooklake Road.

### ***Importance for the Keizer Community***

This is an important access point for the City of Keizer. Although it was reported that some of Keizer's residents currently use the Brooks interchange, the Chemawa interchange provides Keizer's main access to I-5. As one interviewee said, "Chemawa Interchange is critical to the livability and economic vitality of the city. Keizer is very invested in the interchange's proper function." A couple of specific reasons were mentioned for its importance. Many people in Keizer use the I-5 corridor to work in Wilsonville and Portland. A representative of the Gubser neighborhood, just west of the interchange said that people

choose to live in this community because of the convenient access to I-5. The Keizer business community considers this access point critical to their success. In addition, industrial uses on Salem Parkway rely on this interchange for the movement of goods. One participant pointed out that not only is this interchange important to the Keizer Community, but Keizer is the northern gateway to the entire Willamette Valley and this interchange represents that gateway. Some in the Keizer community are working now to create a visitor center for travelers at the Keizer Station development.

The retail businesses at Keizer Station draw a considerable portion of their market from West Salem that is connected to this area via Salem Parkway. For them, access along Salem Parkway and into the Keizer Station development is critical to their success.

The focus of traffic into Keizer via Chemawa/Lockhaven Road has driven some to identify a need for a new interchange on I-5. The location mentioned in these interviews was at Quinaby Road. It was explained that growth boundary discussions in Keizer lead to the identification of this need, but that it was a necessity even without a northern expansion of the City. Several of those interviewed shared concerns about focusing traffic on the Chemawa Interchange because of the impact to Keizer if the function of the interchange were to deteriorate over time. A few of those interviewed mentioned Woodburn as a mistake they didn't want to see replicated here. The Brooks and the Hayesville interchanges (north and south of the Chemawa Interchange) were said to be important to the function of the interchange at Chemawa—participants said they didn't want to see this area examined in isolation, and they also didn't want to see all of the area's traffic funneled into Chemawa alone. Quinby Road is a preferred location for this new interchange because it has good connections to Salem Parkway and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The new interchange was needed, some said, because of a basic concern about safety. The Brooks interchange is used heavily by trucks carrying freight and the interchange is not designed well to accommodate that freight traffic plus additional passenger vehicles (cars, buses, bikes). A concern was shared that new uses in the Brooks interchange area, including Chemeketa Community College, that bring more people into this interchange, will mean more dangerous conflicts between trucks and cars.

One participant from Keizer expressed concern about changes to the interchange caused by future development on the eastside of the interchange. They were very concerned about development on that side damaging the function of the interchange and because of Keizer's reliance on this one access point, negatively impacting the Keizer community.

### ***Salem Concerns and Issues***

It was pointed out that "there is tremendous potential for growth" east of the interchange on Hazelgreen Road east to Cordon Road. As mentioned previously, participants from the west side of the freeway who had already participated in a high level of transportation planning for the future of the interchange expressed the desire that development on the east side of the interchange be subject to the same level of work and sacrifice that they were.

Although a lot of questions remain in participant's minds about the potential for changes in this area, one significant development that was mentioned in the interview process was an approved 500+ unit subdivision on Hazelgreen Road 1.5 miles east of the interchange. Concerns were expressed about how much land around the interchange might develop and what the impact to the City of Salem may be. The President of the Marion County Farm Bureau expressed concern about the loss of prime farm land for urban development. He reported that this area contains some of the highest quality land for farming in the entire country.

Specific access concerns were shared by the Northgate Neighborhood Association. They reported that the access provided from Indian School Road onto Lockhaven Drive was important to neighbors. They also shared a concern about congestion on Portland Road at Hazelgreen/Chemawa Road. The intersection gets bottlenecked today and that could get worse in the future with new residential, retail and transit demands.

The City of Salem is concerned about intercity bridges that take people through Salem to reach other places. They City expressed worry about the impact this type of cut-through may have on Salem's neighborhoods. That concern has been an issue for them in the Salem River Crossing process. Other interviewees mentioned this project, also referred to as the "Third Bridge" project. They thought there may be opportunities for information sharing between that project and this one, specifically, transportation data. It was also pointed out that this project, if constructed, would have a major impact on traffic volumes at this interchange because of the new connection provided, via the Salem Parkway to I-5.

### ***Concerns about Project Partners***

Very few concerns were shared about the partners involved in this process (ODOT, City of Salem, City of Keizer). Most interviewed reported very positive working relationships with each group. One interviewee expressed concern about ODOT's lack of transparency, particularly in terms of project funding. Another shared concern about how long it takes ODOT to "get things done." The following are a couple of the statements heard about ODOT, "their projects seem to start and stop." It is "hard to get ODOT to do things." Although no one specifically mentioned it as a concern, it was pointed out by more than one interview participant that the process to reach agreement on the transportation improvement required as a result of the Keizer Station development was hard fought and emotional. One interviewee said, "all parties had to give."

### ***History of the Interchange***

Some participants in the interviews shared stories about what has occurred in the past at this interchange.

The property in the northeast quadrant of the interchange area, just to the east of the interchange was recently annexed into the City of Salem. At the time, the property was owned by Coleson and Coleson Construction and has come to be known as the "Coleson and Coleson" property. When the annexation

request was made, a transportation plan was provided by the applicant that proposed a loop road through a property south of Hazelgreen Road owned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This property is occupied by the Chemawa Indian School, and the loop road was proposed through their historic campus which they report is on the US Register of Historic Places. Board members and staff from the Chemawa Indian School opposed this proposal. A new owner is negotiating the purchase of this property. That owner is interested in developing retail and auto sales on the site.

***Public Involvement Resources***

One participant shared ideas about how to reach the public to encourage their participation in the process. Ideas mentioned included coordination with the City of Salem and Keizer, Newspapers (Statesman Journal and Keizer Times), Salem and Keizer Chambers of Commerce, Neighborhood Associations.