

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING CONTEXT

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Oregon APA for
Marion County +
Mid-Willamette
Valley Council of
Governments

Key Findings / Takeaways

- A wide range of stakeholders along the Oregon Highway 22 corridor rely upon and benefit from the Santiam Canyon transportation routes including residents, business owners and employees, the Oregon Department of Transportation, Marion County Public Works, local cities, the Western Federal Lands, Oregon State Parks, utility companies, trucking companies/drivers, community advocates, and recreational organizations.
- Transportation rights of way are a heavily utilized and highly valued public resource. Projects affecting these uses - motorized or not - have high impacts on people's mobility and generate strong interest, particularly where rights of way intersect or abut natural and social resources /issues such as recreational access, tourism, affordability, and natural habitats.
- Some of the plans for the area were developed 10 years ago or more, and may not reflect some established and emerging trends, resources, and best practices. However, these community visions and solutions provide clear, well-researched projects to revisit as communities develop and prioritize investments for recovery.

Existing Plans, Policies, Projects, or Funding

Pre-disaster

Marion County Rural Transportation Plan

(<https://www.co.marion.or.us/PW/Engineering/rtsp/Pages/2013update.aspx>)

- Marion County updated classified roadways in the 2013 Transportation System Plan Update, which helps determine standard roadway design for planned upgrades and additions.
- Other than ongoing maintenance and transportation service programs, there are no projects for the Santiam Canyon area included in the 2013 plan.
- The County identified the need for more peripheral roadways - providing alternate non-highway local routes (slower speeds, pedestrian crossings, business access, etc.) for the local communities that have developed around highways; options for this appear limited in the Canyon.

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- The County identified the need for transportation systems to accommodate more people who may be working from home more often and thus living and working in more rural areas of the County (such as the Santiam Canyon). This is a trend that appears consistent with recent transportation trends and the COVID-19 pandemic upended some common employment conditions and transportation markets.
- Roadways in communities / cities are mostly owned by the local jurisdictions. Some of the Marion County classified roadways in the Canyon include:
 - Lyons local roads (Ferry, Grove and Jennie Roads).
 - Gates major collectors (Gates-Hill and Central Roads)
 - Mill City has major collectors (River and Alder Roads) and local roads (Hudel and Alder - West)
 - Detroit and Idanha have no county-classified roads.

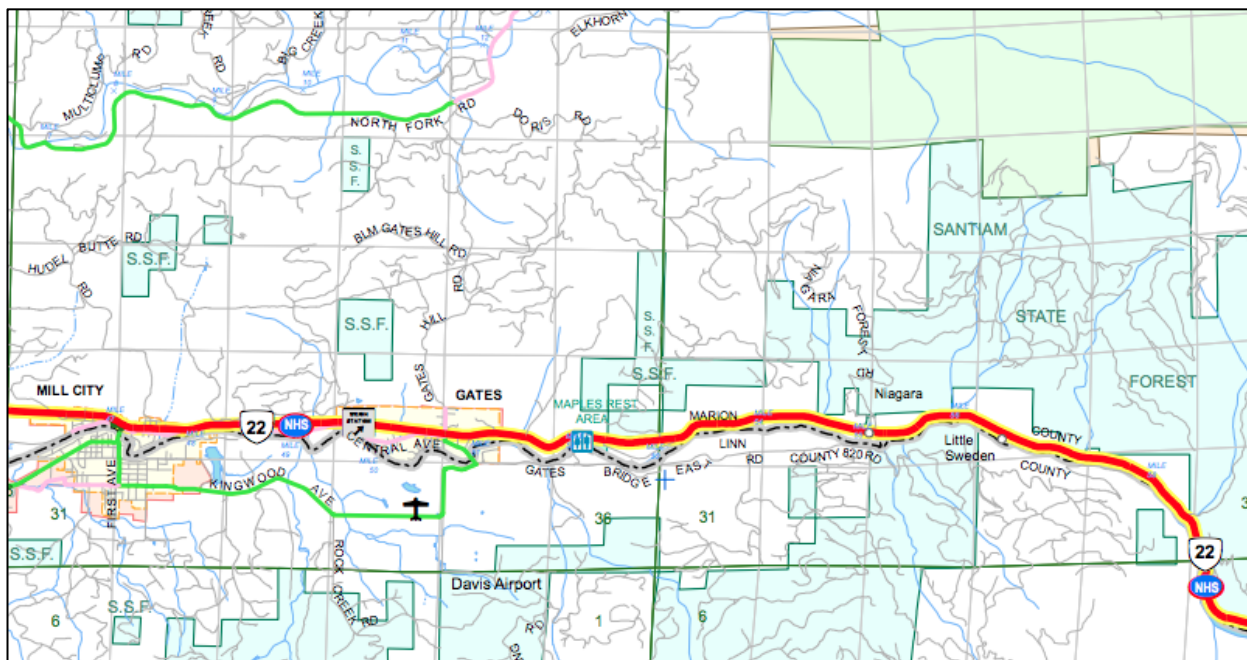
Highways and Roadways

(<https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Data/Pages/County-Maps.aspx>)

- Oregon Route 22 passes by/through each of the Santiam Canyon cities. It is maintained by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and ODOT has jurisdiction over improvement standards, access spacing and permitting, and similar policies.
- Route 22 is also a designated federal freight route and a portion, near Detroit, is part of the West Cascade Scenic Byway.
- The **Oregon Highway Plan** (<https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Planning/Pages/Plans.aspx>), adopted by the Oregon Transportation Commission in 1999 (and updated through 2015), established that the primary function of Statewide Highways is to “provide inter-urban and inter-regional mobility and provide connections to larger urban areas, ports, and major recreation areas that are not directly served by Interstate Highways. A secondary function is to provide connections for intra-urban and intra-regional trips. The management objective is to provide safe and efficient, high-speed, continuous-flow operation.” Note: ODOT is embarking on an update to the 1999 plan, with the planning process set to begin in 2021.

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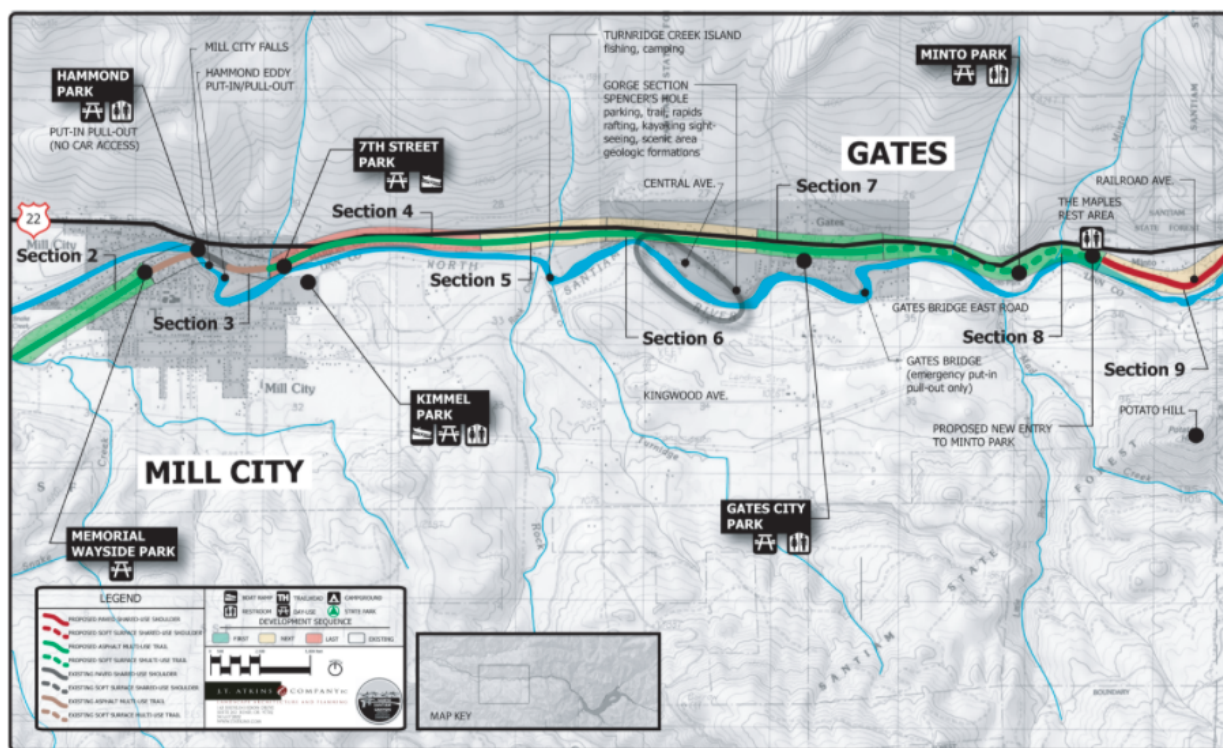
ODOT maintains maps of state and county/local roadways by type, including federal land and other jurisdictional boundaries. Federally classified roads in the Canyon include OR-22, OR-226, North Fork Road, Lyons Mill City Drive, Breitenbush Road, Main Street (Lyons), Kingwood Avenue (Gates and Mill City), Blowout Road (Detroit).



- **Canyon Journeys North Santiam Canyon Alternative Transportation Link Feasibility Study** (J.T. Atkins and Company, 2004). The feasibility study proposed a canyon-wide active transportation / multi-use path system, with goals to: Provide a safer, non-motorized local travel alternative; connect the Canyon's communities to each other and with the area's natural, recreational and cultural features; increase recreation and heritage opportunities; and Promote economic growth and diversity.
 - The proposed multi-use paths varied by segment, based on local conditions and topography; the plan outlined prioritized investments based on connections to existing trails, recreational opportunities and existing demand.
 - Unique recommendations of the plan include: a proposed water taxi linking areas on Detroit Lake and development of off-street trails in the powerline corridor to link Detroit to the Breitenbush River.

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Example trail and connector map from Canyon Journeys.



NOTE: THE INDIVIDUAL TRAIL SECTIONS SHOWN ON THIS FIGURE REQUIRE DETAILED DESIGN, REVIEW, AND COMMUNITY MEETINGS TO DETERMINE FINAL TRAIL ALIGNMENT, TRAIL CROSS SECTIONS, TRAIL ELEMENTS, AND TRAIL USER SAFETY.

CANYON JOURNEYS
Figure 4. Canyon Connectors - Sections 2-9

Public Transportation and Transportation Options

- Public Transportation is provided by the Salem Area Mass Transit District / Cherriots (<https://www.cherriots.org/>). The Santiam Canyon is outside the District boundary and properties are not assessed taxes for service.
- Cherriots Regional Route 30X Salem/Santiam Express stops in Lyons, Mill City, and Gates 4 times daily on weekdays (2 runs AM, 2 runs PM), twice on Saturday, and no Sunday service.
- Cherriots Rideshare offers regional carpool matching through **Get There** (<https://www.cherriots.org/carpool/>) online portal and **Valley Vanpool** (<https://getthereoregon.org/resources/vanpool/valley-vanpool/>) provides partly subsidized vanpools through Cherriots' coordinator for qualifying groups making trips together on a regular basis.
- On demand transportation may be available through Cherriots or its partners such as medical institutions and other care providers; availability and eligibility based on trip type and traveler needs as defined by the individual programs.

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Post-Disaster

- Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS), which is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Salem-Keizer area and region, anticipates updating the Regional Transportation System Plan in 2023. The plan requires updates every four (4) years.
- There was no other readily available information on future planning for local or County transportation systems.

Opportunities for Recovery

- Existing plans for active transportation, recreation, roadways and other services provide a good foundation of projects and policies for communities to update and build on as they undertake recovery projects.
- The State's recent focus on transportation issues such as pedestrian safety, climate change and natural hazard adaptation and mitigation, and economic development provide an opportunity to build back better as the communities of the canyon begin to repair and replace infrastructure.
- The hazard tree removal along state-owned roadways may provide opportunities to implement multiuse paths alongside the existing roadways as proposed in prior plans and studies.

Recommendations

- Marion County and cities in the canyon can update their Transportation Systems Plans (TSP) to respond to emerging trends and build resilience into their transportation systems; some small communities can work to create regional or joint TSPs to identify shared goals, resources, and solutions.
- Working with ODOT and Marion County, identify priorities and options to providing alternate non-highway and safer local routes (slower speeds, pedestrian crossings, business access, etc.) and intersections to provide greater mobility within Santiam Canyon communities while also increasing safety.
- The US Forest Service and US Bureau of Land Management maintain a significant road network in the canyon and surrounding areas. Traffic volumes are often low, but can be meaningful. The wildfire impacts of travel patterns on these forest roads (often used for logging equipment and trucks) is unknown but will presumably require some rerouting. It is recommended that local transportation planners work with public land agencies and private industries that use the forests to further understand the extent of damage to the federal transportation network and what impact that might have upon the state, county, and local transportation roadways.