

SALEM-KEIZER TRANSIT



Photo courtesy of Ron Cooper

Keizer Transit Center

Environmental Assessment December 2009

Prepared by the Federal Transit Administration and Salem-Keizer Transit.



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration



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SUMMARY

Transportation and land use planning efforts over the past decade have identified the need for a more balanced transportation system that offers alternatives to the automobile, including transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. To meet this need the Salem Area Mass Transit District (**SAMTD**), also known as Salem-Keizer Transit (**SKT**), has been working with the City of Keizer to identify a site for a new Keizer Transit Center. SKT operates the “Cherriots” bus transit system in the Salem-Keizer urban area and has led the transit center study

The public has been engaged in the site selection process and has provided valuable input throughout the study. Several public meetings have been held and public input has been instrumental in selecting the proposed transit center site. Public input will continue to be sought as the project moves forward through design and construction.

This Environmental Assessment (**EA**) Summary provides a brief overview of the Keizer Transit Center (**KTC**) Project. The purpose of an EA is to consider and document potential effects of a proposed Project on the natural and built environments, and to address the requirements of Federal, state and local regulations (such as the National Environmental Policy Act or **NEPA**). If you have more detailed questions or specific concerns you should review the complete EA.

What is the Keizer Transit Center Project?

SKT proposes to build a new transit center and small park-and-ride lot in the north part of the transit district to improve transit service for their customers. The proposed transit center site is in the Keizer Station commercial center and generally located west of Interstate 5, north of Chemawa Road NE and west of the BNSF Railway line. It would have access from Keizer Station Boulevard NE. The new transit center would accommodate transfers between bus routes and other modes while fostering pedestrian and bicycle access to the Keizer Station commercial center. It would include bus bays, passenger waiting areas, transit information kiosks, operator break facilities, park-and-ride spaces, carpool drop-off and pick-up areas, and bicycle storage. The park-and-ride lot would include approximately 70 parking spaces. Some transit complementary retail space may also be included in the future, such as a newspaper stand or coffee kiosk. The transit center is planned to be completed by the end of 2012.



For additional information on the Keizer Transit Center Project please contact:

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The entire Environmental Assessment is available at:
<http://www.Cherriots.org>

What is the purpose of the Project?

The **purpose** of the Keizer Transit Center is:

To construct a transit center in Keizer that consolidates local and regional interconnected transit services and other transportation functions at a single location, implements the “3C” concept as refined in the “Strategic Transit System Re-design” adopted by the SKT Board, and provides user-friendly transitions between public transit services, pedestrians, bicyclists and other transportation modes. It will serve as a gateway to Keizer for transit users and visitors, and be a catalyst for implementation of broader City of Keizer land-use and economic development goals.

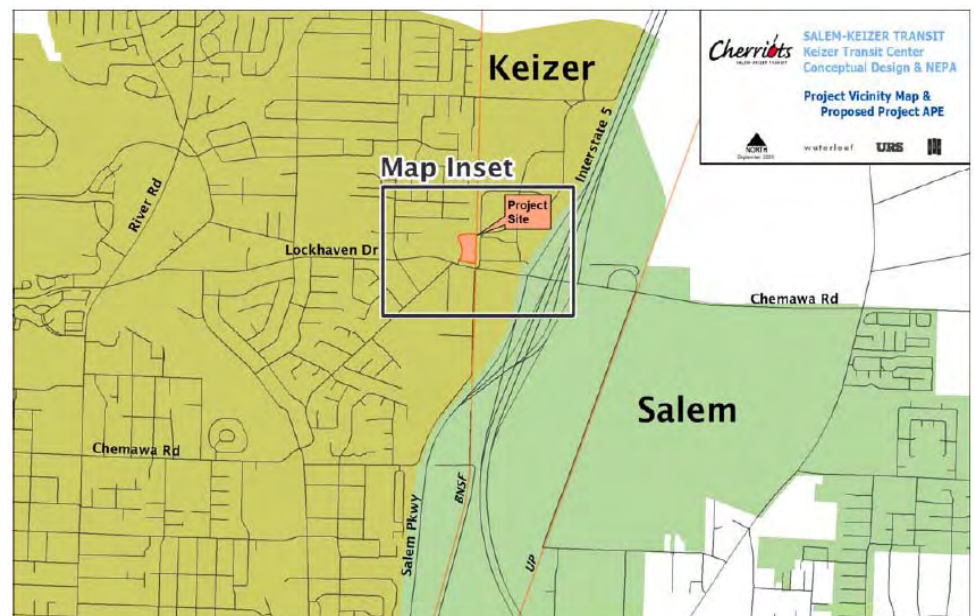
Why is the Project needed?

The **need** for the Keizer Transit Center results from:

- The community desire to connect the range of local and regional transit and transit-related services in Keizer in one location
- The agency desire to accommodate the changing pattern of trips in the Salem-Keizer area, whereby residents are making more non-downtown Salem trips, by further implementing its “3C” operating concept
- The projected population and employment growth in the Salem-Keizer metropolitan area
- The increasing levels of traffic congestion and travel delay within Keizer resulting in continued deterioration of travel conditions for transportation modes within Keizer and traveling to downtown Salem
- The demand for improved, more efficient, effective and easily understood transit services in the Keizer area
- The agency desire to plan for possible future commuter rail service in Keizer
- The adopted regional and local transportation and land-use plans that encourage a cost-efficient, innovative and effective multi-modal transportation system

Have other sites been considered, and where would the proposed transit center be located?

The Keizer Transit Center Study was initiated in the summer of 2007. Over the course of the next two years the SKT staff and support team examined possible transit center sites in central Keizer (over 14 different sites) and the Keizer Station commercial area (4 different sites). The site selected by the SKT Board of Directors to consider further is shown on the figure to the right.



What has been evaluated in the EA?

The EA examines two alternatives: the **No-Build Alternative**; and the **Keizer Transit Center Alternative**. The No-Build Alternative assumes that transit service in Keizer would continue as operating currently, and that no new transit center would be constructed in Keizer. The No-Build Alternative also serves as a reference point to gauge the benefits, costs and effects of the Keizer Transit Center Alternative.

The Keizer Transit Center Alternative is planned to include the following features:



With the No-Build Alternative, bus service in Keizer would continue as it is today.

- Boarding/parking bays for 8-10 buses
- Pedestrian waiting platform that is lighted and weather protected
- Break room, restrooms, lockers for customer service personnel, operators and operations supervisors
- security features
- Park-and-ride lot with approximately 70 parking spaces (the program calls for a range of 50-75 parking spaces)
- Future customer service information counter
- Future passenger waiting area that is enclosed, lighted, and heated with passenger restrooms
- Future small leasable retail space

How much would the Project cost, and how would it be paid for?

Based on the current level of definition of the proposed Project, the Project cost is estimated at approximately \$8.1 million (2009 dollars). The Project would include the transit center, the busway, bus bays, passenger waiting areas, operator facilities, transit information, bicycle parking, public restrooms and park-and-ride lot.

The public funding for the transit center would come from a combination of Federal and State of Oregon funds. Federal funds are anticipated to include a “2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Grant,” along with current and future “Section 5309” grants. State of Oregon funds are anticipated to include a “Connect Oregon II Grant.”

Would there be any significant impacts from the proposed Project?

Project studies have determined that neither the No-Build Alternative nor the Keizer Transit Center Alternative would result in any significant environmental impacts. However, the alternatives would still have some effects, sometimes positive and sometimes negative as briefly described on the following page. Chapter 3 of the EA has a more detailed description of the expected effects and an explanation of how they were determined. The following page provides an overview of project effects.

- Transit – Ease of use for transit riders would be improved with the Keizer Transit Center Alternative by improving access and transfers between routes in the north portion of the SKT district. The adjacent rail line will be evaluated separately for a possible future Willamette Valley rail transit project.
- Traffic – Compared to the No-Build Alternative, the Keizer Transit Center Alternative would not have a significant effect on traffic in the Keizer Station commercial area or on the I-5 interchange area.
- Parking – The proposed project would add approximately 70 park-and-ride spaces, improving access to transit for commuters and other transit users in the area.
- Pedestrians & Bicycles – Pedestrian and bicycle access to the Keizer Transit Center Alternative would be good because sidewalks and bike lanes serve the proposed site. Bicycle parking would be provided at the transit center. Pedestrian safety would be incorporated further into the site design as the design progresses.
- Freight – Buses and auto traffic accessing and leaving the Keizer Transit Center Alternative would not significantly affect freight traffic in the area.

- Biological Resources – Because the proposed Keizer Transit Center Alternative would be located in an urbanizing area, no adverse effects to biological resources are expected.
- Water Quality and Hydrology – The Keizer Transit Center Alternative would provide for on-site retention of stormwater runoff. Options could include bioswales, a green roof, working with existing wastewater infrastructure, or ponding/retaining within the proposed impervious surface area. The Conditional Use Permit process required by the City of Keizer would ensure compliance with the city's storm water regulations.

- Land use – The area surrounding the proposed Keizer Transit Center site is undergoing a city master planning process. The project would support the adopted City of Keizer land use and transportation plans and policies. The proposed transit center would be required to obtain a conditional use permit from the City of Keizer and a design review approval for the project.
- Economics – The Keizer Transit Center Alternative would result in a relatively small and short-term economic effect from construction of the project. The \$8.1 million project cost (2009 dollars) for the transit center would result in a small number of short-term jobs during construction. Operations of the KTC would not result in a significant long-term increase in jobs in the area.
- Neighborhoods and Environmental Justice – There is a small residential population in the vicinity of the proposed site of the Keizer Transit Center Alternative. No low income or minority populations have been identified in the vicinity of the proposed project, and none are expected to be adversely affected by the proposed project. Transit improvements frequently benefit both low income and minority populations by improving access to transit.
- Noise – There would be no significant noise impacts from the Keizer Transit Center Alternative. One residence located approximately 200 feet west of the proposed project would not experience a significant increase in noise from the proposed transit center.
- Air Quality – The Keizer Transit Center Alternative would meet air quality conformity requirements. Compared to the No-Build, the project effects would be minimal on intersection operations; therefore there would not be a significant air quality effect.
- Visual – The Keizer Transit Center Alternative would add a new transit center and park-and-ride lot in an urbanizing area. Keizer's design review process would ensure that it blends into the existing and emerging urban visual environment.
- Historic and Archaeological Resources – The Keizer Transit Center Alternative would have no effect on any historic or archaeological resources in the project area. The adjacent BSNF Railway line (the former Oregon Electric Railway) is a significant historic resource. The Keizer Transit Center Alternative would have "no effect" on it, and no additional archaeological research is recommended.
- Hazardous Materials – No hazardous materials have been identified on the proposed transit center site. A Phase 1 site assessment would be performed prior to property acquisition. If contaminants are discovered, then steps would be taken to safely manage the contaminated materials.
- Safety and Security – The project design for the Keizer Transit Center Alternative would include measures addressing pedestrian and vehicle safety. Safety and security would be coordinated between SKT and the City of Keizer and would include regular security visits and monitoring.

Has the public been involved in the Project?

The site selection process has extended over a two year period. Public input was valuable and a significant factor in the site selection process. Public and business outreach included:

- Six public meetings and/or open houses in the Keizer area, hosted by SKT to share information about the project, the evaluation of various sites and encourage public input and feedback.
- Six SKT Board of Directors Meetings with public hearings, where the transit center siting study was discussed and public input was encouraged.
- Work sessions between the SKT Board of Directors, the Keizer City Council and Keizer Planning Commission.
- Staff outreach to residents and businesses in the areas that were being considered for the new transit center.



The site selection process was longer than initially planned, in part due to public concerns about sites initially identified in central Keizer. After extensive public comment, the study team added sites in the Keizer Station area and eliminated the sites in central Keizer. Following the July 2009 SKT Board Meeting that included a public hearing and significant public support for the preferred Keizer Station site, the SKT Board of Directors directed staff to move forward with a transit center on the site known as B1 located in the Keizer Station commercial area.

How can I get more information about the Project?

The full Environmental Assessment is the best source of additional information. If you are interested in further details refer to the full EA or the supporting documents. Requests for a copy of the EA or other documents may be submitted in writing, by email or by telephone. The full EA is available from SKT and at the following website or via the contact information below:

<http://www.Cherriots.org>

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How can I comment on the Project and EA?

Comments on the EA should be submitted in writing or via email and must be received at SKT no later than 5:00 PM on January 29, 2009. Comments should be submitted to SKT, to the email or mailing address below:

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