

# Minor Report for Salem

## For the 2025 reporting year

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Salem submitted this report to meet the requirements of Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 660-012-0900(6) for the 2025 reporting year. The Department of Land Conservation and Development has reviewed the submittal as provided in OAR 660-012-0915(1) and deemed it complete. The department generated this document using information submitted by Salem.

### **OAR 660-012-0900(6)(a)**

*(a) A narrative summary of the state of coordinated land use and transportation planning in the planning area over the reporting year, including any relevant activities or projects undertaken or planned by the city or county;*

- Salem participated in the Regional Scenario Planning project in partnership with ODOT, DLCD, Marion County, Keizer, and Cherriots. This included project management team meetings, advisory committee meetings, community meetings, and the review of project documents. This work concluded with the completion of the Regional Scenario Plan in November 2025.
- Salem participated in negotiations with ODOT and selected consultant team for the update to the Salem Transportation System Plan.
- Salem continued to assist ODOT and the consultant team in developing the multimodal inventory project. This included serving on the project's statewide technical advisory committee. Salem was a pilot jurisdiction, and GIS staff provided local data and reviewed ODOT's methodology. Salem received the majority of the multimodal inventory data in December of 2025. Intersection and corresponding data is pending.
- Salem completed a project to develop a historic equity context, which will inform the TSP update.

## **OAR 660-012-0900(6)(b)**

*(b) The planning horizon date of the acknowledged transportation system plan, a summary of any amendments made to the transportation system plan over the reporting year, and a forecast of planning activities over the near future that may include amendments to the transportation system plan;*

TSP planning horizon date: 2035

Summary of amendments to the TSP:

None

Forecast of future planning activities:

-Salem is launching a major update to its TSP to address the CFEC requirements. The City worked with ODOT to negotiate a contract for this project. The City will also enter into an IGA with ODOT to support the work.

## **OAR 660-012-0900(6)(c)**

*(c) Copies of reports made in the reporting year for progress towards centering the voices of underserved populations in processes at all levels of decision-making as provided in OAR 660-012-0130 and a summary of any equity analyses conducted as provided in OAR 660-012-0135; and*

Any included reports are attached to this document.

Summary of equity analyses:

See report above

**OAR 660-012-0900(6)(d)**

*(d) Any alternatives reviews undertaken as provided in OAR 660-012-0830, including those underway or completed.*

None

# City of Salem Historical Research Report on Policies Impacting Underserved Populations

Prepared for:  
City of Salem



City of Salem Researchers and Contributors:  
Kimberli Fitzgerald, Historic Preservation Program Manager  
Julie Hanson, Transportation Planning Manager  
Eunice Kim, Long Range Planning Manager, City of Salem  
with  
**Salem's Equity Roundtable**

Prepared by:  
Historical Research Associates, Inc.  
Libby Provost, editor  
Moya Moses  
Madeline Hagan

Salem, Oregon  
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HISTORICAL  
RESEARCH  
ASSOCIATES, INC.



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We are anxious for you to know that we want to be and insist upon being considered a part of our American Democracy, not something apart from it.

—Mary McLeod Bethune

# Glossary of Terms

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AAA	American Automobile Association
APA	American Planning Association
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color
BPR	Bureau of Public Roads
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
CDBGs	Community Development Block Grants
COG	Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
DEIA	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
DLCD	Department of Land Conservation and Development
EHAP	Experimental Housing Allowance Program
EIS	environmental impact statement
ELNA	East Lancaster Neighborhood Association
FEPC	Fair Employment Practices Commission
FHA	Federal Housing Administration
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
HHFA	Housing and Home Finance Agency
HOLC	Home Owners Loan Corporation
HRA	Historical Research Associates, Inc.
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
IJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
LCDC	Land Conservation and Development Commission
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPC	Metropolitan Planning Commission
MPD	Multiple Property Document
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHI	National Highway Institute

NHP	National Corporation for Housing Partnerships
NIRA	National Industrial Recovery Act
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
O&C	Oregon and California Railroad
OAR	Oregon Administrative Rules
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
OPA	Office of Price Information
OPR	Office of Public Roads
OPRI	Office of Public Roads Inquiries
ORI	Office of Road Inquiry
ORS	Oregon Revised Statute
OSHD	Oregon State Highway Department
OTC	Oregon Transportation Commission
OTIA	Oregon Transportation Investment Act
PD & R	Policy Development and Research
PDC	Portland Development Commission
PLSS	Public Land Survey System
PWA	Public Works Administration
RFC	Reconstruction Finance Corporation
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible Transportation Equity Act
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SATS	Salem's Area Transportation Studies
SCAN	South Central Association of Neighbors
SEI	Social Equity Index
SRC	Salem Revised Code
STAA	Surface Transportation Assistance Act
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
TIF	Tax Increment Financing
TSP	Transportation System Plan
UGB	Urban Growth Boundary
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
WPA	Works Progress Administration

# 1. Introduction

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The City of Salem (the City) seeks to develop a Historical Research Report on Policies Impacting Underserved Population to inform and support the City’s Transportation System Plan (TSP) and the City’s 2020–2030 Historic Preservation Plan, both of which are part of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. This report seeks to assess, document, and acknowledge where current and past land use, housing, and transportation policies have harmed underserved populations.

The Historic Research Report on Policies Impacting Underserved Population will lay the groundwork for an equity analysis that will be undertaken as part of the City’s update to its TSP. The Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR 660-012-0135) require cities like Salem to develop an equity analysis to determine whether their land use and transportation plans improve outcomes for underserved populations. An equity analysis is intended to determine benefits and burdens on underserved populations, as identified in OAR 660-012-0125. This includes traditionally marginalized populations, such as communities of color, people with disabilities, and lower-income residents.

## 1.1 Report Organization

The report starts with a discussion of methods to define and explain research parameters (Section 2). Next, the report provides a general historical context of federal and state policies from the mid-eighteenth century through the present (Section 3). This establishes a framework to better clarify the City’s policies regarding land use, transportation, and housing, and how they benefited some populations and adversely impacted others (Section 4). The report culminates with a case study of five marginalized communities, examining the impact of government policies on these communities (Section 5). Lastly, the report concludes with recommendations for future study of topics that were beyond the scope of this report but will serve to better inform the City’s policies and ensure improved outcomes for underserved populations throughout our community (Section 6).

## 2. Methodology

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The historic context builds on research of federal, state, and local policies regarding land use, transportation, and housing, using primary source documents such as the *Federal Register*, the Oregon Constitution, and the City Charter.<sup>1</sup> Other primary sources include governmental laws, codes, ordinances, and minutes, as well as adopted plans dating back to 1860. Secondary sources consulted include newspapers, academic journals, and digital histories.

Due to the small populations of people of color historically living throughout Salem as well as the limitations of the data available, it was challenging to identify planning policies specific to Salem related to these populations before the 1940s. Additionally, as small populations developed, individuals were often dispersed throughout the city, rather than congregating in specific areas, making study areas hard to locate. This report is intended to provide a broad assessment of the City’s planning trends, which were divided into four subgroups: land use, housing, urban renewal, and transportation. For each subgroup, authors reviewed a plethora of city plans, reports, and historical newspaper articles. Some groups had more historical documentation available than others, resulting in varying levels of coverage in this report. For all groups, authors applied the following research questions, with additional specific investigations among the different subgroups noted below.

- What is the enabling ordinance of the plan/program?
- Are policies solving a specific City problem or are they reflecting federal policy?
- What is the guiding “mission” of the plan/program?
- Were people displaced by this plan/program?
- If, and how, were the mentioned minority groups impacted?

While there are numerous underrepresented groups within the city, the City identified five main groups that have been historically impacted by federal, state, and local legislation within Salem: Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, Black people, Chinese people, and Latine people. The City identified these groups based upon current population estimates. The 2023 American Community Survey determined that of the total 177,423 population in Salem, the majority of Salem’s population is White, with the following ethnic groups identified: Hispanic: 46,698 (23.4 percent); Asian: 6,564, with 2,311 Chinese (3.5 percent); Black: 3,049 (1.6 percent); and American Indian: 2,924 (1.2 percent).<sup>2</sup> According to the 2023–2024 Oregon Blue Book, the State of Oregon is the largest employer within the city. Currently Salem houses approximately 73 state agencies, boards, and commissions, within 35 buildings constructed between 1883 and 2021, employing over 19,949 people.<sup>3</sup> Institutionalized people with disabilities were also identified as a higher-than-average group historically living in Salem, due to the presence of multiple state agencies being located within the state capital.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Salem, “City Charter,” accessed June 10, 2025, <https://www.cityofsalem.net/government/laws-rules/city-charter>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “2023 American Community Survey,” accessed June 10, 2025, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2023.DP05?q=Salem,+ORegon>.

<sup>3</sup> Oregon Secretary of State, “State Buildings,” *Oregon State Blue Book*, accessed June 10, 2025, <https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book/Pages/state-buildings.aspx>.

For each group, Historical Research Associates, Inc. (HRA), consulted secondary sources and historic-period newspapers to produce: a context statement; population information; geographic information; and a list of local, state, and federal policies that impacted the group.<sup>4</sup> The number of sources reviewed varied, as more historical studies are available for some groups than others. This resulted in varying levels of coverage in this report. For all groups, HRA applied the following research questions:

- When, how, and why did this group come to live in Oregon?
- What challenges did they face in trying to live in Oregon?
- How did local, state, and federal legislation impact them?

City staff provided the research and background for the temporal context in the early settlement period, prior to Oregon becoming a state, as well as providing the overall historic context for federal and state policies adopted throughout the period of study, which impacted the development of the City's policies towards marginalized populations. The temporal boundary of HRA's research for each group generally began with the group's first habitation in Oregon; the exception to this is the Indigenous population, which has been here since time immemorial. HRA tracked policy and population information through the 1970s, when possible and applicable.

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<sup>4</sup> While there is a wealth of primary sources available in physical and digital archives, that was outside the scope of this effort. One exception was historic-period newspapers, which HRA reviewed primarily for information on policies, specifically local legislation.

# 3. Historical Overview of Government Policies Impacting City of Salem’s Approach to Underserved Communities

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Policies from the federal government and the State of Oregon established the framework within which the City’s policies developed. This section of the report provides a historical overview and context of the evolution of these governmental policies and how they framed the policies adopted by the City.

## 3.1 Federal Policies

### 3.1.1 Land Use, Non-Indigenous Settlement, and Housing Westward Expansion

In the early nineteenth century, the federal government was focused upon colonization via westward expansion and acquisition of the Oregon Country, which was jointly occupied by both the United States and Great Britain. The removal of Indigenous peoples from their homelands had begun during the Revolutionary War period, after a number of military engagements between Indigenous peoples and the colonial militia, and continued throughout the early growth and establishment of the United States under Presidents George Washington and John Adams. President Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, held an ideal of an agrarian nation wherein he believed that all Americans should have the opportunity to have their own land to farm and become self-sufficient. Jefferson’s ideal required the removal of Indigenous peoples to succeed. Jefferson’s first address to Congress, in 1801, emphasized the importance of introducing farming to their “Indian neighbors” in order to facilitate assimilation of Indigenous peoples into American society.<sup>5</sup> Jefferson believed that encouraging Indigenous peoples to abandon hunting and gathering and instead adopt the Euroamerican way of farming and raising stock was for their own good. Jefferson believed that this approach was key not only to their peaceable assimilation, resulting in their removal from their lands, but also to ensuring the successful colonization of the United States.<sup>6</sup>

This foundation of beliefs was the backdrop for a series of federal actions that shaped colonization of much of the western United States. Information in Section 3 details federal involvement in religious missions in the 1830s, followed by establishment of the Oregon Territory in 1848, the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850, and the forcible removal of Indigenous peoples to reservations. Together, these actions served to expand the United States and to enable non-Indigenous settlement.

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas Jefferson, “First Annual Address,” December 18, 1801, U.C. Santa Barbara The American Presidency Project, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/first-annual-message>.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Jefferson, “Jefferson’s Secret Message to Congress Regarding the Lewis & Clark Expedition,” January 18, 1803, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/jeffersons-secret-message-to-congress>.

## Emergence of Zoning

As cities grew in the United States in the late nineteenth century, conflict emerged centering on land use priorities. Development during the Industrial Revolution led to rapidly growing urban environments that cities needed to manage. Cities first began limiting locations of noxious industrial uses. For example, the New Orleans Ordinance of 1869, requiring that butchering take place down river of the city, was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1873, and established a key precedent for cities implementing land use regulations.<sup>7</sup> Zoning began with two legal concepts used by local jurisdictions: first establishing policies to manage community safety by establishing fire zones (where no buildings could be constructed of wood) or restricting the location of nuisance uses to ensure the overall health and safety of the community; and second using their police power to implement these policies to regulate how land is used.<sup>8</sup> As urbanization increased, and taller buildings were constructed, some cities, like New York, adopted height and setback ordinances. However, many found this was not enough to manage the challenges of their growing cities, and they soon determined that it was necessary to create areas where industry and commercial uses were separated from residential uses. The City of New York adopted the first comprehensive zoning ordinance in 1916, which regulated the use of property, defining prescribed areas of the city where specific uses were allowed. While the ordinance was appealed for violating private property owner rights (the taking of private property without compensation), the Supreme Court of New York State upheld the ordinance and stated it was a proper use of the City's police power.<sup>9</sup> Local jurisdictions throughout the country began following the model of New York City and adopted their own zoning ordinances. The village of Euclid, Ohio, became a significant test case, in that the appellant argued that their ordinance violated the United States Constitution.<sup>10</sup> The United States Supreme Court determined that zoning, if reasonably exercised, is within the "Police Power" of municipalities, for the general welfare, and not a violation of the federal or state constitutions.<sup>11</sup>

Zoning became a way for jurisdictions to segregate people. Real estate developers used racially restrictive covenants on residential properties, which were passed from developer to homeowner, excluding non-White, marginalized people from purchasing homes.<sup>12</sup> Some local jurisdictions used their police power to adopt zoning ordinances establishing who could live where, believing that segregation protected home values for White homeowners by limiting their exposure to "undesirable" racial and ethnic groups. The country's first municipal segregation ordinance was adopted in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1910. The "West Ordinance" forbade any African American from moving into or using as a residence, a house or apartment on a city block where the majority of residences were occupied by White people. Another 27 cities, primarily in southern and border states, adopted similar ordinances between 1910 and 1917.<sup>13</sup> While there is no evidence of

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<sup>7</sup> Allison Shertzer, Tate Twinam, and Randall P. Walsh, "Zoning and Segregation in Urban Economic History," *Regional Science and Urban Economics* 94 (2022): 2, [https://www.allisonshertzer.com/static/ShertzerAllison\\_RSUE.pdf](https://www.allisonshertzer.com/static/ShertzerAllison_RSUE.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> James Metzenbaum, "The History of Zoning- A Thumbnail Sketch," *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 9, Issue 1 (1957), <https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/caselrev/vol9/iss1/6>; and Spencer Gardner, "History of Zoning in Three Acts- Part I," *Strong Towns* (2017).

<sup>9</sup> Metzenbaum, "The History of Zoning," 39.

<sup>10</sup> *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*, 272 US 365 (1926).

<sup>11</sup> Metzenbaum, "The History of Zoning," 40–41.

<sup>12</sup> Shertzer, Twinam, and Walsh, "Zoning and Segregation," 2.

<sup>13</sup> Shertzer, Twinam, and Walsh, "Zoning and Segregation," 3. In 1917, *Buchanan v. Warley*, 245 US 60 (1917), found the Louisville, Kentucky, segregation ordinance invalid.

segregation zoning ordinances in the Pacific Northwest, early land-use and zoning ordinances, along with racially restrictive covenants and the race restrictions in Oregon's 1857 constitution did have a significant impact upon where non-White marginalized communities lived and worked in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## Great Depression

Herbert Hoover became president of the United States in 1929, during a time of prosperity and optimism throughout the country. However, when the stock market crashed in October of that year, people throughout the country suffered significant financial and personal losses. Industrial production fell by nearly 47 percent between 1929 and 1933, and millions of people lost their jobs and homes. Hoover worked with Congress to provide relief by increasing public spending for the construction of public buildings, dams, and highways, in order to stimulate employment. In 1932, Hoover established the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) to make emergency loans to businesses in danger of default, and he worked with Congress, which adopted the Emergency Relief Construction Act, allowing the RFC to lend \$300 million to states for relief programs and \$1.5 billion for public works projects. In 1932, Congress also adopted the Federal Home Loan Bank Act, which created a network of 11 government-sponsored banks that were able to provide low-cost mortgages to the public.<sup>14</sup>

Upon signing this Act on July 22, 1932, President Hoover stated, in part:

I have today signed the home loan bank bill . . . It is the outcome of the national conference on homeownership which represented every part of the country . . . The purpose of the system is both to meet the present emergency and to build up homeownership on more favorable terms than exist today . . . A considerable part of our unemployment is due to stagnation in residential construction . . . Thus the institution should serve to immediately increase employment. In the long view we need at all times to encourage homeownership and for such encouragement it must be possible for homeowners to obtain long-term loans payable in installments.<sup>15</sup>

The 1932 Federal Home Loan Bank Act resulted in the establishment of the mortgage system used by banks throughout the country, and still in use today. While the program made it feasible for many people throughout the country to purchase homes, restrictions emerged on who qualified for the loans.

## Federal Housing Administration and Redlining (1934-1960)

Franklin Delano Roosevelt became president of the United States in 1932, and he furthered the work began by Hoover relating to housing reforms. Roosevelt worked with Congress to adopt the Home Owner's Loan Corporation Act in 1933. This Act's purpose was to help existing homeowners refinance mortgages that were in default, to prevent foreclosure. Congress adopted the National

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<sup>14</sup> National Archives, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, "The Great Depression-1929," 2025, <https://hoover.archives.gov/exhibits/great-depression>.

<sup>15</sup> Herbert Hoover, "Statement About Signing the Federal Home Loan Bank Act," July 22, 1932, U.C. Santa Barbara The American Presidency Project, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/statement-about-signing-the-federal-home-loan-bank-act>.

Housing Act in 1934, which created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), whereby the federal government insured banks and mortgage companies.<sup>16</sup>

By insuring mortgages for housing, FHA was responsible for ensuring home loans were “economically sound.” Therefore, FHA staff developed underwriting policies to assess the risks of these loans. Ultimately, FHA determined that a loan could not be economically sound if a property was located within a neighborhood that was occupied by non-White people or immigrants, as property values within those locations might decline over the life of the 15- to 20-year loans they were insuring.<sup>17</sup> FHA worked with the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) to develop loan risk maps for over 200 cities throughout the United States. The maps were designed to classify neighborhoods based upon their perceived lending risk, with different colors representing the potential for default or higher risk. The riskiest grade was “D” and was a red color on these maps, which became known as “redlining” neighborhoods. The impact of these evaluations typically meant that no mortgage funds were made available to any residents living within these neighborhoods. On the other side of their scale were homogeneous neighborhoods of White people with already established deed restrictions prohibiting any persons of color or immigrants from owning property. Alternatively, neighborhoods that were zoned single-family residential, with deed restrictions in place, and no foreign-born or Black residents, commonly received an A (green) grade and a recommendation for ample availability of mortgage funds to purchase housing.<sup>18</sup> The underwriting policies of FHA resulted in the federal government disproportionately supporting home ownership for White Americans throughout the country while further marginalizing communities of color.

The disproportionate advantage of home mortgages for some people did not go unnoticed by federal government officials. In 1937, in Roosevelt’s second inaugural address, he spoke of the urgent need to address the housing crisis, which was disproportionately impacting lower income people and marginalized communities throughout the country: “I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished . . . The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.”<sup>19</sup>

## Urban Renewal

Following the end of World War II, there was a need for more housing in the United States. The federal government addressed the housing crisis emerging in some parts of the country by enabling the United States War Department to provide support and funds for local jurisdictions to repurpose Army barracks as housing for returning military personnel and their families. In 1944, Eric Johnston published *America Unlimited*, which emphasized America’s exceptionalism as a country with unlimited potential and growth, where any American citizen could achieve prosperity through hard work.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) “HUD’s Historical Timeline: 1930,” accessed June 2025, [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/hudtimeline\\_1930.html](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/hudtimeline_1930.html).

<sup>17</sup> Federal Reserve History: Consumers and Community, “Redlining,” 2023, <https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/redlining>; and Federal Housing Administration, *Underwriting Manual: Underwriting and Valuation Procedure Under Title II of the National Housing Act, With revisions to February 1938* (Washington, DC: Federal Housing Administration, 1938).

<sup>18</sup> Federal Reserve History, “Redlining.”

<sup>19</sup> FDR Library and Museum, “FDR and Housing Legislation: 75th Anniversary of the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act of 1937,” September 2012, <https://www.fdrlibrary.org/housing>.

<sup>20</sup> Eric Johnston, *America Unlimited* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1944).

Johnston wrote: “it is a simple demonstrable fact that the United States of America is the wealthiest, healthiest, freest, best-educated country in all human history.”<sup>21</sup> Home ownership became tied to the new “American Dream,” something that any American could achieve if they only worked hard enough.

Under President Harry Truman, Congress adopted the Housing Act of 1949, establishing the first urban renewal programs to clear urban “blight” (slums) in cities and to authorize federal financing for urban redevelopment projects, building new public housing units for low-income families.<sup>22</sup> Upon signing the act, Truman stated: “This far-reaching measure is of great significance to the welfare of the American people. It opens up the prospect of decent homes in wholesome surroundings for low-income families now living in the squalor of the slums. It equips the Federal Government, for the first time, with effective means for aiding cities in the vital task of clearing slums and rebuilding blighted areas.”<sup>23</sup> The act declared that the general welfare and security of the nation required establishment of a national housing policy to ensure “a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.”<sup>24</sup>

The law converted the public housing program from its war and defense focus and authorized loans for up to 810,000 additional units of housing.<sup>25</sup> The program provided federal grants to local jurisdictions initially through the Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA), which managed the program through 1965 (until the Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD] was established). Overall, from 1949–1974, the federal government awarded funds for 2,100 urban renewal projects around the country.<sup>26</sup> Local agencies used their powers of eminent domain to clear and redevelop land in “blighted” urban areas. Many local jurisdictions identified blighted areas within their downtowns and worked with downtown commercial property owners and businesses to redevelop these areas, often displacing low-income residents. In the period after World War II through the 1960s, there was a national suburbanization trend where many White middle- and upper-class Americans left urban centers to live outside the city limits. This trend resulted in increased disparities between economic classes and marginalized races. For example, in Detroit, Michigan, growth after World War II increased dramatically, along with the growth of the automobile industry, making Detroit the fifth largest city in the United States by 1950.<sup>27</sup> Approximately 16 percent of Detroit’s population was Black by 1950, and this ratio only increased with the development of new subdivisions outside of the city, as White residents relocated. By 1960, the Black proportion of Detroit’s population had almost doubled to 29 percent.<sup>28</sup> Many of Detroit’s industrial firms began to relocate to the suburbs in the 1960s, as well. A number of factors

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<sup>21</sup> Johnston, *America Unlimited*.

<sup>22</sup> William Collins and Katharine Shester, “Slum Clearance and Urban Renewal in the United States.” *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 5, no. 1 (January 2013): 239–73, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43189425>. For a definition and discussion of the term “blight,” see Urban Renewal in Salem (1949–2001) in Section 4.2.1.

<sup>23</sup> Harry S. Truman, “Statement of the President upon Signing the Housing Act of 1949,” Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, July 15, 1949, <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/public-papers/157/statement-president-upon-signing-housing-act-1949>.

<sup>24</sup> Truman, “Statement of the President upon Signing the Housing Act of 1949.”

<sup>25</sup> Housing Act of 1949, Public Law No. 81-171 (July 15, 1949), <https://uslaw.link/citation/us-law/public/81/171>.

<sup>26</sup> Collins and Shester, “Slum Clearance and Urban Renewal,” 239–73. Grant funds in the amount of \$53 billion (in 2009 dollars) were awarded.

<sup>27</sup> Chris Bertolini, “1967 Detroit Riot,” *Vulcan Historical Review* 26, Article 5 (2022): 15–21, <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/vulcan/vol26/iss2022/5>.

<sup>28</sup> Chris Bertolini, “1967 Detroit Riot,” 16.

prevented Black workers from relocating to the suburbs. Discriminatory housing practices prevented Black families from buying houses, and commuting was difficult, as affordable public transportation did not extend outside of the city, and economic disparities between Black and White workers left many Black people unable to afford private vehicle ownership.

In 1963, Lyndon B. Johnson became president of the United States following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Johnson's presidency led to the largest expansion of federal government-supported social programs in American history, known as Johnson's Great Society programs (Figure 3-1). On May 22, 1964, Johnson gave a speech at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor where he presented his detailed plans and vision for America's Great Society. Johnson stated, in part:

For a century we labored to settle and to subdue a continent. For half a century we called upon unbounded invention and untiring industry to create an order of plenty for all people. The challenge of the next half century is whether we have the wisdom to use that wealth to enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization.<sup>29</sup>



Figure 3-1. Election poster for Lyndon B. Johnson, issued by the United Auto Workers in 1964.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson, "Remarks at the University of Michigan," May 22, 1964, U.C. Santa Barbara The American Presidency Project. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/239689>.

<sup>30</sup> Heritage Auctions, "Lyndon B. Johnson: Great Society Poster with John F. Kennedy," 2025, <https://historical.ha.com/itm/political/posters-and-broadsides-1896-present-/lyndon-b-johnson-great-society-poster-with-john-f-kennedy/a/6189-43864.s#auction-description>.

A core part of Johnson's Great Society program included adoption of legislation expanding civil rights and access to health care, education, and housing. Building upon the work that had been started by Martin Luther King Jr. and President Kennedy, who had urged the nation to guarantee equal treatment of every American, President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination in public places and made employment discrimination illegal.<sup>31</sup> In 1965, Johnson signed the Housing and Urban Development Act and established the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a cabinet level agency to oversee the newly established housing programs established by this Act.<sup>32</sup>

In 1966, Congress adopted and President Johnson signed the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966. This Act, known as the "model cities" program, was administered through HUD and was intended to replace the Urban Renewal program, which had been managed by HHFA since the late 1940s. Through this program, the federal government provided funding to local jurisdictions for the demolition, renovation, and redevelopment of urban buildings in conjunction with social service programs that provided health care services, education, and food assistance.<sup>33</sup>

On January 12, 1967, President Johnson established the National Commission on Urban Problems in order to carry out the purposes defined in Section 301 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, Urban Renewal. Congress found there was a need to study the success and impact of the urban renewal programs established in 1949, as well as the implementation of local housing and building codes, zoning, tax policies, and development standards. Congress wanted to understand how to better ensure the prevention of slums, blight, and sprawl so every American could have the opportunity to have decent housing and a suitable living environment. Paul Douglas headed this Commission, which was known as the Douglas Commission.<sup>34</sup>

That same year, on June 2, 1967, President Johnson appointed the President's Committee on Urban Housing to study how private industry could better support the production and rehabilitation of housing for low-income families. He appointed Edgar Kaiser as chairman, and the committee became known as the Kaiser Committee.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the significant amount of federal legislation meant to address ideal urban development across the country, throughout the 1960s, there was an urban crisis with conflict and unrest throughout America's urban areas. In the summer of 1967, there were race riots throughout the country, including in Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan. To better understand the reason for this disorder and unrest, in 1967 Johnson signed Executive Order 11365, establishing the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to investigate the cause of this violence. Governor Otto Kerner of Illinois headed this commission. The commission's report provided an

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<sup>31</sup> National Archives, Milestone Documents, "Civil Rights Act, 1964," accessed June 2025, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/civil-rights-act>.

<sup>32</sup> Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, Public Law No. 89-117 (August 10, 1965): 451–508. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-79/pdf/STATUTE-79-Pg451.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966, Public Law No. 89-754 (November 3, 1966): 1255–96, <https://www.congress.gov/89/statute/STATUTE-80/STATUTE-80-Pg1255.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, 451–508.

<sup>35</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson, "Statement by the President Upon Receiving Report of the President's Committee on Urban Housing," January 18, 1969, U.C. Santa Barbara The American Presidency Project. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/statement-the-president-upon-receiving-report-the-presidents-committee-urban-housing>.

overview of disorder in eight cities across the country between 1963 and 1967, including Tampa, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Newark, and Detroit. It further identified serious problems in urban centers, including the existence of racial ghettos where many low-income Black people and marginalized immigrants lived. The commission summarized their findings as such: “This is our basic conclusion: Our Nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white- separate but unequal. Reaction to last summer’s disorders has quickened the movement and deepened the division. Discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of American life; they now threaten the future of every American.”<sup>36</sup>

Johnson continued to work with Congress to move ahead his agenda and his Great Society Program, and in 1968, he signed the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, also known as the Fair Housing Act. This Act prohibited discrimination based upon race, color, religion or national origin. In Section 2 of this Act, Congress included a statement of policy, which affirmed the national goal of the Housing Act of 1949: for every American family to have a decent home and a suitable living environment.<sup>37</sup> Congress found that this goal had not been realized for many of the nation’s lower income families, which they stated was a matter of concern. Section 2 of Public Law 9-448 stated, in part: “The Congress declares that in the administration of those housing programs authorized by this Act which are designed to assist families with incomes so low that they could not otherwise decently house themselves . . . the highest priority and emphasis should be given to meeting the housing needs of those families for which the national goal has not become a reality.”<sup>38</sup>

The Kaiser Committee’s report, titled *A Decent Home: Report of the President’s Committee on Urban Housing* was presented to the President in December 1968. One of their major recommendations was to establish a National Housing Partnership to encourage private investment into the construction of low- and moderate-income housing. The National Corporation for Housing Partnerships (NHP) was established under the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968.<sup>39</sup> In 1969, the National Advisory Commission on Urban Problems (also known as the Douglas Commission) presented their report, titled *Building the American City*, to Congress and President Johnson.<sup>40</sup> The 548-page report built upon the earlier report spearheaded by Kerner, further documenting significant systemic racial discrimination and economic disparities between White middle-class and non-White marginalized communities across the country. For example, the Commission found that nationally, about 20 percent of all Black people made no economic gains between 1947 and 1966. Additionally, the report documented that as of June 1967, approximately 400,000 residential units had been demolished in urban renewal areas, while only 10,760 low-rent public housing units had been built on these sites.<sup>41</sup> The Douglas Commission urged the President

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<sup>36</sup> Otto Kerner et al., *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Washington, DC: National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, February 1968).

<sup>37</sup> Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, Public Law No. 9-448 (August 1, 1968): 476–611, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-82/pdf/STATUTE-82-Pg476.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, 476.

<sup>39</sup> Edgar F. Kaiser et al., *The Report of the Presidential Committee on Urban Housing: A Decent Home* (Washington, DC: The President’s Committee on Urban Housing, December 1968).

<sup>40</sup> National Advisory Commission on Urban Problems, *Building the American City: Report of the National Commission on Urban Problems to the Congress and to the President of the United States* (Washington, DC: United States National Commission on Urban Problems, 1969), [https://archive.org/details/buildingamerican00unit\\_0/page/n13/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/buildingamerican00unit_0/page/n13/mode/2up).

<sup>41</sup> Marc A. Weiss, “The Origins and Legacy of Urban Renewal,” in *Federal Housing Policy and Programs: Past and Present*, ed. J. Paul Mitchell (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Center for Urban Research and Education, 1986), [https://globalurban.org/Urban\\_Renewal.pdf](https://globalurban.org/Urban_Renewal.pdf).

and Congress to expand federal data collection about housing and other urban problems, specifying that HUD's role should be expanded in order to ensure that the actual impacts of adopted legislation could be continuously studied to ensure their efficacy. As a result, under the 1970 Housing and Urban Development Act, the HUD Office of Policy Development and Research (PD & R) was founded in 1973.<sup>42</sup> This early PD & R office was focused upon how best to achieve the national housing goal first established by Congress in 1949, and reinforced again in 1968, which was to establish a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family. They realized that it was necessary to define three distinct focuses for how to achieve that goal: first to test ways to improve the production of new houses, second to ensure the adequate and decent rehabilitation of existing housing, and last to provide ways to give resources to families in need so that they could then live in these houses.<sup>43</sup> The 1970 Housing Act authorized the Experimental Housing Allowance Program (EHAP), which was another recommendation from the 1968 Kaiser Committee's report, that provided families in need with a housing allowance so they could choose where to live.

## Housing and Community Development (1974-Present)

HUD's PD & R research staff found that most families in need lived in substandard housing and had high rent burdens. Their research and data collection contributed to the passage of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. This Act authorized Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) to local communities, as well as Section 8 Housing Vouchers. This Act shifted a majority of the oversight and control from the federal level to local jurisdictions. CDBGs not only funded housing but also funded public facility and improvement projects, including infrastructure improvements like sanitary sewer and water, safe streets, community centers, and public parks. Housing vouchers were provided to low-income families to allow them the ability to move out of high poverty neighborhoods.<sup>44</sup>

In the decades following, HUD has continued to work with local public agencies, private partners, nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations to expand the availability of affordable housing, to improve structural and living conditions in HUD-insured and -assisted rental housing projects, to promote wider affordable rental housing opportunities, and to stabilize and sustain communities. In 1986, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit was established, subsidizing development of low-income housing units.<sup>45</sup> In 1990, the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act was adopted by Congress and the Home Investment Partnerships Program was established. This program is a federal block grant allocated to state and local governments by HUD to assist with funding affordable housing for low-income households.<sup>46</sup> It funds not only building, buying, and rehabilitation of affordable housing but also allows funds for rental assistance.

Additional legislation was adopted in the 1990s under President Bill Clinton. The 1992 Housing Community Development Act implemented reforms to existing HUD public housing programs, and

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<sup>42</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research [HUD], "PD & R: A Historical Investigation At (Almost) 50," January 2016, <https://www.huduser.gov/hud50th/HUD-Historical-Investigation-Report.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> HUD, "PD & R: A Historical Investigation," 12.

<sup>44</sup> HUD, "PD & R: A Historical Investigation," 16.

<sup>45</sup> HUD, "PD & R: A Historical Investigation," 25.

<sup>46</sup> Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act, Public Law No. 101-625 (November 28, 1990), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-104/pdf/STATUTE-104-Pg4079.pdf>.

the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 1996 created the Indian Housing Block Grant program.<sup>47</sup>

The history of housing and community development from 1974 to the present is characterized by a shift towards local control, a focus on affordable housing, and ongoing efforts to promote equitable development and combat discrimination. Key legislation and programs, such as the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, the Section 8 voucher program, and CDBGs and the Home Investment Partnerships Program continue to shape the landscape of housing and community development policy at the state and local levels.

### 3.1.2 Federal Transportation Policies and Planning

#### Transportation in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, waterways were the primary transportation systems people used for travel and commerce. Turnpikes were located on canals and rivers and consisted of long poles that stretched across the river that were opened (or turned) after travelers paid a toll. Roads and horse paths extended from these waterways, and few were improved.

Federal spending dedicated to transportation from the time the United States was originally established through the late nineteenth century was solely dedicated to the establishment of postal and military roads.<sup>48</sup> Postal roads were developed for post riders to carry mail by horseback. The maintenance of the postal roads, initially the responsibility of the local government, was inconsistent. The United States Army constructed military roads at the edges of the United States' land holdings, many of which were along footpaths established by Indigenous peoples and later used by traders and trappers. Emigrants used these roads, which oftentimes were no more than wagon tracks.<sup>49</sup>

The Pennsylvania Legislature adopted the first transportation plan in 1791 to establish consistent policies about road maintenance and improvements. After 1800, most states within the union had adopted policies about financing road maintenance through turnpike tolls. Turnpike roads soon operated in the same way as waterways had, where travelers were required to pay before being allowed to pass through a toll gate.<sup>50</sup>

The first federally funded public (free) national road was the Cumberland Road. In 1806, President Thomas Jefferson approved an act to design and build a road from Cumberland, Maryland (at the head of the Potomac River), west to the Ohio River, to be funded by sales of public land in the new state of Ohio.<sup>51</sup>

In 1807, United States Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin completed The Gallatin Report, the first national inventory of transportation resources. The report included a comprehensive accounting of all roads and canals in the United States at this time. Gallatin also included

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<sup>47</sup> Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act.

<sup>48</sup> Federal Highway Administration [FHWA], *America's Highways: 1776-1976 A History of the Federal-Aid Program* (Washington, DC: US Department of Transportation, 1976), <https://archive.org/details/americashighways00unit/mode/2up?view=theater>.

<sup>49</sup> FHWA, *America's Highways: 1776-1976*.

<sup>50</sup> FHWA, *America's Highways: 1776-1976*, 10–13.

<sup>51</sup> FHWA, *America's Highways: 1776-1976*, 19.

recommendations to Congress for a national program of roads and canals to be completed in ten years, along with financing (appropriation) recommendations. Gallatin's proposal was for the government to construct a series of great canals along the Atlantic Coast and between Atlantic rivers and western rivers, connecting natural waterways into one continuous waterway for the primary purpose of transporting freight. Congress never adopted any policies or allocated any funding toward any of Gallatin's recommendations regarding improvements to waterways.<sup>52</sup>

As the United States continued to expand to the west, this National Road was extended, using funds from the sale of public lands. The ongoing maintenance of the Cumberland Road became problematic, and in 1822, Congress passed a bill authorizing the collection of tolls in order to fund road repair. However, President James Monroe vetoed this act on the grounds that this amounted to taxation without representation, which violated states' rights and the basis of the federal constitution.<sup>53</sup> By 1831, the vision of the United States having a National Road had dissipated. Congress had turned segments of the Cumberland Road over to the states for them to manage and maintain, and many sections were converted to turnpike roads with tolls.<sup>54</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century, the only federal funding allocated to transportation was for the construction of military roads and the establishment and maintenance of transcontinental mail routes. During the overland migrations associated with westward expansion in the 1850s and 1860s, the Army had improved and marked most of the early wagon trails used by the public, as well as postal carriers like the Pony Express and Butterfield Overland Mail. As people settled in the western states, transportation continued along waterways and along older Indigenous trails. The federal government passed an act in 1866 that granted free rights-of-way for public roads over unreserved public lands. Some western states adopted legislation making all section lines (along the boundaries of surveyed Township/Range/Sections) public roads that were 66 feet wide. Estimates show that between 1850 and 1900, more than 1.5 million miles of rural roads were constructed in the United States. Many of these roads were unimproved and not maintained.<sup>55</sup>

Railroads provided key transportation routes in the United States. The first private commercial railroad charter was granted in 1827 to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to operate in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. In the mid-nineteenth century, commercial railroads received federal land grants and began to expand throughout the East Coast and the central United States. These railroad companies often established their railroad lines close to the previously established turnpikes. By 1842, the Ohio Railroad established a line that ran through to Maryland.<sup>56</sup> Travel by rail was much smoother and more predictable than traveling by waterway and wagon road; soon travel by the turnpikes on both waterways and roads was so reduced that turnpike and horse transportation companies went into bankruptcy and these roads could no longer be maintained. By the time the Civil War began in 1860, about two-thirds of the established railroad lines were located in the north, giving the Union Army a sizable advantage over the Confederate Army in their ability to transport soldiers and supplies.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> FHWA, *America's Highways: 1776-1976*.

<sup>53</sup> FHWA, *America's Highways: 1776-1976*, 20.

<sup>54</sup> FHWA, *America's Highways: 1776-1976*, 22.

<sup>55</sup> FHWA, *America's Highways: 1776-1976*, 36.

<sup>56</sup> FHWA, *America's Highways: 1776-1976*, 14.

<sup>57</sup> FHWA, *America's Highways: 1776-1976*, 29.

Railway travel in the United States increased dramatically through the development of transcontinental railroads after the end of the Civil War, following the Railroad Act of 1862. This called for federal government subsidization for the creation of the Union Pacific Railroad, which subsequently joined with the Central Pacific Railroad, linking the country together.<sup>58</sup> Congress authorized federal land grants, which amounted to 130.3 million acres to support construction of railroads extending west across the central plains and the Rocky and Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Northwest. Additional lands were granted for railroads to be constructed from Southern California north up through Washington State. By 1900, there were 260,000 miles of railroads in the United States.<sup>59</sup> By in large, foreign-born Irish, German, and Chinese immigrant laborers built this railroad. Between 1865 and 1869, approximately 12,000 Chinese immigrants built the western section of the transcontinental railroad. They worked for low wages and did the most dangerous parts of construction, such as dynamiting mountain tunnels. It is estimated that up to 2,000 Chinese immigrants died constructing the railroad.<sup>60</sup>

## The Good Roads Movement

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, many state legislatures authorized local jurisdictions to assess local taxes for any work determined to benefit the safety and welfare of the people living in their community. As a result, many jurisdictions began financing city street improvements by issuing bonds that were paid for from general local tax revenues. Cities hired civil engineers and were able to construct and maintain their streets with paid labor.<sup>61</sup> However, those who lived in rural areas did not have this benefit. As a result, there became a great disparity between the roads within cities and the roads in rural areas, which began to adversely impact the ability of farmers to get their goods to the cities in an efficient way. And one of the strongest factors that ultimately shaped the push to improve rural roads was the delivery of mail. In 1883, the first state road convention was held in Iowa to address the condition and maintenance of rural roads. Ultimately, the Iowa legislature passed an act in 1884 authorizing (but not requiring) counties to levy a property tax to pay for rural road maintenance.<sup>62</sup> Other states soon followed suit, but adoption by local counties was inconsistent, and rural roads did not significantly improve. There were no standard road-building methods, and, by 1904, only 7 percent of the nation's roadways had been improved with gravel, shell, oil, or other substances.<sup>63</sup>

In addition to the push by farmers, bicyclists developed a "Good Roads" campaign that was launched in 1890 by the League of American Wheelman, a bicycle club. Bicycling had become an exciting new option for personal transportation, and many cyclists enjoyed biking on rural roads. The League of American Wheelman published a magazine called *Good Roads Magazine* in 1892, which was distributed nationwide and included the principles of good roadbuilding and the economic

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<sup>58</sup> Library of Congress, "History of Railroads and Maps, 1828-1900: The Transcontinental Railroad," accessed June 2025, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/railroad-maps-1828-to-1900/articles-and-essays/history-of-railroads-and-maps/the-transcontinental-railroad/>.

<sup>59</sup> FHWA, *America's Highways: 1776-1976*, 34.

<sup>60</sup> Meera Munoz Pandya, "The Transcontinental Railroad and the Asian-American Story," Smithsonian National Postal Museum, November 2019, <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/the-transcontinental-railroad-and-the-asian-american-story>.

<sup>61</sup> FHWA, *America's Highways: 1776-1976*, 34.

<sup>62</sup> FHWA, *America's Highways: 1776-1976*.

<sup>63</sup> Wayne E. Fuller, "Good Roads and Rural Free Delivery of Mail," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 42, no. 1 (June 1955): 67-83, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1898624>.

benefits of good roads, with pictures of roads in various conditions (Figure 3-2). The first “Good Roads Association” was established in Mississippi in 1891, with other states soon establishing similar organizations, which were influential in helping the public understand the need to create and maintain quality roads throughout their states and not just within their cities.<sup>64</sup>

Congress established the Office of Road Inquiry, later renamed the Office of Public Roads, under the Agricultural Appropriation Act in 1893. This authorized Secretary of Agriculture Sterling Morton to make inquiries regarding systems of road management across the United States. Morton appointed Roy Stone as his first chief. Stone was a former Union Army officer in the Civil War and one of the leaders of the Good Roads movement.<sup>65</sup> The first national road conference was held in 1894, with representatives from 11 states attending. At this conference, attendees passed resolutions urging state legislatures to create plans for state funded and managed roads. Subsequently, the first State Highway Department was established by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1894.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Fuller, “Good Roads and Rural Free Delivery of Mail.”

<sup>65</sup> Transportation History, “1893: The First Federal Road Agency in the United States is Established,” October 2024, <https://transportationhistory.org/2024/10/03/1893-the-first-federal-road-agency-in-the-united-states-is-established/>.

<sup>66</sup> Transportation History, “1893: The First Federal Road Agency,” 42.



Figure 3-2. May 1902 cover of *Good Roads Magazine*, produced by League of American Wheelmen.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>WorthPoint, "May 1902 League of American Wheelmen Good Roads Magazine," 2025, <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/1902-league-american-wheelmen-roads-1980981142>.

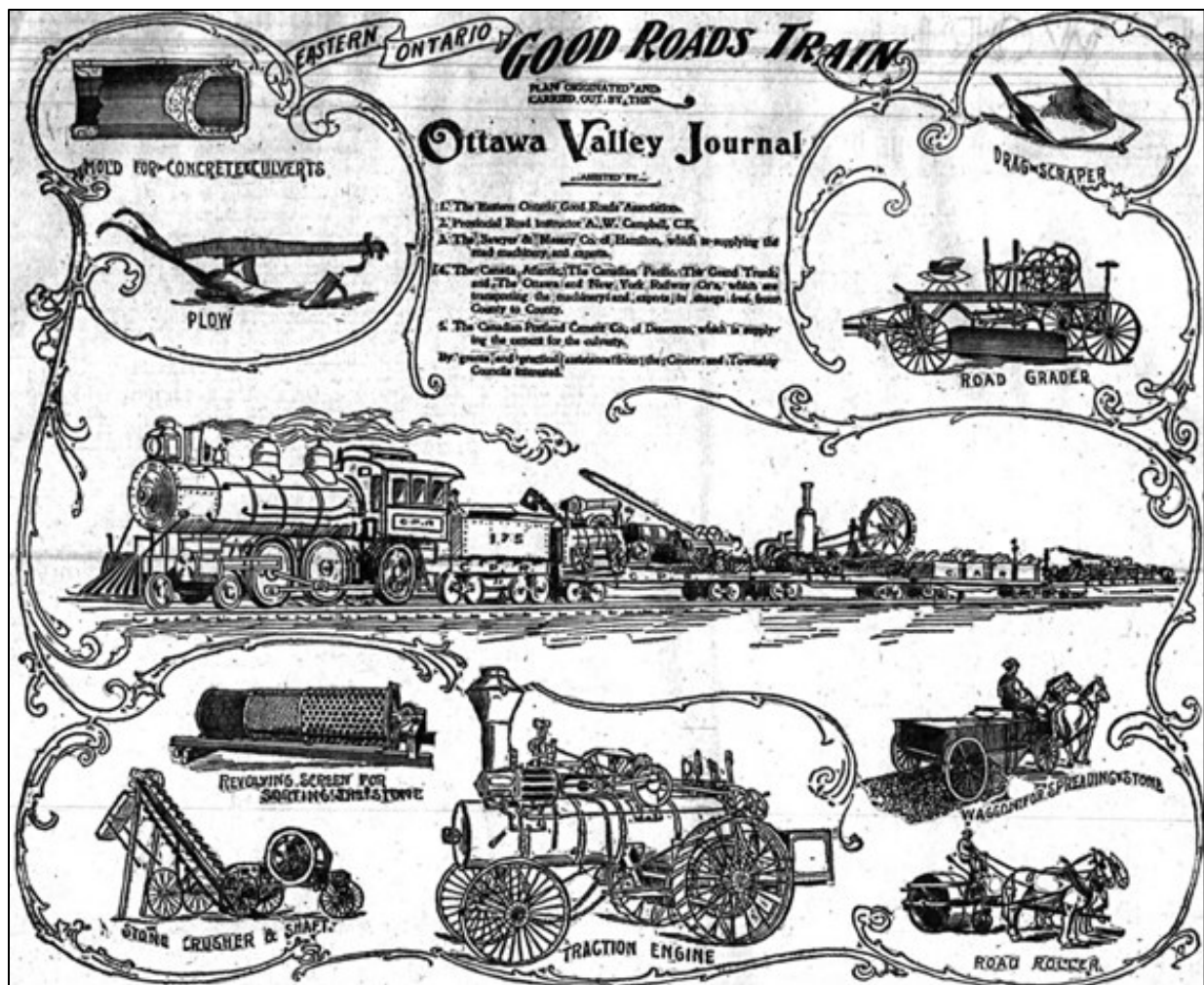


Figure 3-3. June 1901 advertisement for the Eastern Ontario Good Roads Train.<sup>68</sup>

## The Federal Aid Road Act and The Motor Age (1900-1929)

At the turn of the twentieth century there were roughly 8,000 automobiles in the United States, primarily within large urban centers.<sup>69</sup> These new modes of transportation were first introduced at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, when Karl Benz presented his Velocipede.<sup>70</sup> In 1899, Martin Dodge was appointed director of the Office of Road Inquiry (ORI) and changed the name to Office of Public Road Inquiries (OPRI). He worked with railroad companies and Good Roads groups to sponsor "Good Roads Trains" (see Figure 3-3). These trains toured the country from 1901–1903 and demonstrated road building techniques.<sup>71</sup> Dodge also completed the first inventory of rural

<sup>68</sup> Colin Churcher's Railway Pages, "Details of Railway Incidents in the Ottawa Area," 2024, <https://churcher.crcml.org/circle/Wreck%20Details/1901GoodRoadsTrain.html>.

<sup>69</sup> Transportation History, "1893: The First Federal Road Agency," 54.

<sup>70</sup> The Henry Ford Museum, "1893 Benz Velocipede," accessed June 2025, <https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/12651>.

<sup>71</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline," accessed June 2025, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/candc/timeline.cfm>.

roads in the United States and discovered that of the country's 2,151,570 miles of rural road, only 153,662 miles had any kind of surfacing.<sup>72</sup> Motor clubs began forming in communities across the country as part of the Good Roads movement in order to advocate for better roads, and on March 4, 1902, in Chicago, nine of these clubs joined together and founded the American Automobile Association (AAA).<sup>73</sup>

Under the Agriculture Appropriation Act of 1906, signed by President Theodore Roosevelt, OPRI became the Office of Public Roads (OPR), housed within the Department of Agriculture. Logan Page, a geologist, was appointed the new director of OPR.<sup>74</sup> In 1908, Henry Ford introduced the Model T as the first mass-produced automobile in the country, making it more affordable for some.<sup>75</sup>

In 1911, Page published a map showing OPR's 12 proposed transcontinental interstate and truck line roads to demonstrate how transportation of goods and people could be significantly improved with the construction of quality interstate roads.<sup>76</sup> In 1914, Page helped to coordinate the establishment of the American Association of State Highway Officials, which was founded with the purpose of establishing a uniform system of interstate roads across the United States.<sup>77</sup> In 1915, OPR became the Office of Public Roads and Rural Engineering, reflecting its focus on the design of rural roads, and the following year Congress adopted the first Federal Aid Road Act for the construction of rural post roads. Upon signing the act, President Woodrow Wilson stated that he took great pleasure in signing the bill because it would have the effect of threading the various parts of the country together. However, Wilson made clear that the role of the federal government was secondary to that of each state, whose state highway department would have the decision-making power about the use of any federal aid for road building. While the federal government would be providing funding to cover a portion of road construction costs, they would only be provided to states that had established highway departments and designed roads that met established design standards.<sup>78</sup> Wilson was the first president to join AAA, and he took his automobile daily on a chauffeured ride throughout Washington, D.C. In 1910, there were approximately 180 people per vehicle in the United States. This ratio reduced to approximately 14 people per vehicle by 1920.<sup>79</sup>

Following the United States' entry into World War I in 1917, it became clear that the implementation of federal funds through the Federal Aid Road Act was not being consistently implemented and there was little focus upon interstate roads or state line connections with adjacent states. Congress adopted the Federal Highway Act of 1921, signed by President Warren G. Harding, to address these issues by requiring that states receiving federal aid use 60 percent of this aid to

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<sup>72</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>73</sup> American Automobile Association [AAA], "A Century of Service: AAA History," accessed June 2025, <https://newsroom.aaa.com/aaa-history/>.

<sup>74</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>75</sup> Corporate Ford, "The Model T," accessed June 2025, <https://corporate.ford.com/articles/history/the-model-t.html>.

<sup>76</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>77</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>78</sup> Alan Pisarski, "Woodrow Wilson 1913-1921: Building Roads and Starting the Federal-State Partnership," Eno Center for Transportation, October 2024, <https://enotrans.org/article/woodrow-wilson-1913-1921-building-roads-and-starting-the-federal-state-partnership/>.

<sup>79</sup> Pisarski, "Woodrow Wilson 1913-1921."

improve or construct roads to link to other states.<sup>80</sup> Under this act, the Secretary of Agriculture adopted a uniform method of signing interstate highways with numbers presented in the form of shields, which state highway agencies then put into effect. In 1926, the National Road (aka the Cumberland Road), became part of US 40, the first coast-to-coast highway, running from Atlantic City, New Jersey, to San Francisco, California. The National Road had been the first federally funded road, authorized by Congress in 1806.<sup>81</sup> In 1913, the Pacific Highway was constructed as a joint project between California, Oregon, and Washington. In 1926, this highway was incorporated into US Route 99.<sup>82</sup>

## Road Building During the Great Depression: The New Deal (1930-1940)

After the stock market crash in 1929, the United States plunged into an economic downturn that resulted in high rates of unemployment. In 1932, Congress passed the Emergency Relief and Construction Act to create jobs for the unemployed. The following year, in 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), expanding this initial 1932 program to further stimulate employment as part of Franklin's New Deal policies. This act created the Public Works Administration (PWA), which was a large-scale public works construction agency that worked to construct interstate highways across the country. The PWA built thousands of miles of roads, employing 1,714,797,910 person hours from 1933–1939, the equivalent of 137,404 people employed continuously for six years.<sup>83</sup> In 1938, Route 66 was one of these interstate roads completed under the New Deal program. Route 66 became one of the country's major interstate thoroughfares, and it became the first paved interstate highway in 1938.<sup>84</sup> In 1939, Roosevelt signed the Reorganization Act of 1939, which gave him authority to reorganize existing agencies to achieve improved efficiency. Under this Act, Roosevelt created the Federal Works Agency, which included the Public Roads Administration (formerly the Bureau of Public Roads).<sup>85</sup>

## Road Building During World War II

In 1941, after the attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States' entry into World War II, federal funding for state and interstate road improvements was suspended. Road engineers and those enlisted in the Army were assigned to road construction associated with defense projects, such as the Alcan Highway, the Inter-American Highway, and the Pentagon Road network.<sup>86</sup> During World War II, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) constructed a highway as an important military land route through Canada to Alaska. Many of the troops constructing this highway were Black soldiers

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<sup>80</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>81</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>82</sup> George Kramer, "The Interstate Highway System in Oregon: A Historic Overview," Oregon Department of Transportation, May 2004, [https://www.oregon.gov/odot/GeoEnvironmental/Docs\\_CulturalResource/Oregon\\_Interstate\\_Highway\\_Overview\\_2004.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/odot/GeoEnvironmental/Docs_CulturalResource/Oregon_Interstate_Highway_Overview_2004.pdf); and George Kramer, "Interstate 5 in Oregon," Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated August 4, 2022, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/interstate\\_5\\_in\\_oregon/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/interstate_5_in_oregon/).

<sup>83</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>84</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>85</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>86</sup> FHWA, "Federal Highway Administration: History- WWII," accessed June 2025, <https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/about/history>.

who had been drafted into the Army, and who worked in rough terrain and arctic temperatures. The Alaska Highway was completed in 1942, the United States turned it over to Canada in 1946, and it opened to the public in 1948.<sup>87</sup>

## Interstate Highway Development (1944-1961)

For more than 20 years after the end of World War II, Congress passed legislation that provided federal funds to develop a national system of interstate highways. Beginning with the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944 and subsequent acts adopted in 1952 and 1954, Congress allocated hundreds of millions of dollars to construct interstate highways across the country. After World War II, the leaders from the Good Roads movement, businesses, and political groups supported building interstates constructed with controlled access and grade separation to facilitate safer and faster transportation of goods and services between states. The federal government established the Federal Interstate and Defense Highways program, signed into law by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956. This program funded Interstate 5, the major north–south interstate on the West Coast. The federal Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) managed the funding and development of the national interstate highway system and the standardization of road designs. While initially funds required a 60/40 matching ratio, with states required to contribute significant funds, in 1956, Congress adopted the Highway Revenue Act (aka the Highway Trust Fund), which provided that the federal share of interstate highway construction would increase to 90 percent of costs.<sup>88</sup> In 1958, under President Eisenhower, Congress increased funding for the Interstate System to \$800 million for fiscal years 1959–1961, and the Highway Trust Fund was increased to \$2 billion.<sup>89</sup>

While the construction of interstate roads in rural, undeveloped areas of the country proved to be straightforward from the perspective that little to no demolition of existing structures or neighborhoods was needed, within urban areas, it was quite different. Oftentimes transportation engineers made decisions with little to no engagement with the local population, and choices were made to demolish existing neighborhoods. Their work correlated with the principles of urban renewal, and often targeted low-income, “blighted” slums where marginalized communities lived.<sup>90</sup>

## Early Transportation Planning (1962-1966)

Under President John F. Kennedy, Congress adopted the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, which required for the first time that state transportation departments adopt cooperative, comprehensive, and public planning processes for federal-aided transportation projects. This act required that after July 1, 1965, Metropolitan Planning Organizations be established in urban areas with populations greater than 50,000, and ensure that transportation projects were planned transparently, with public engagement.<sup>91</sup> In 1964, Congress adopted the Urban Mass Transportation Act, signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson. This act provided \$375 million for large-scale urban rail projects distributed by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (now the Federal Transit Administration).<sup>92</sup> In 1965

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<sup>87</sup> FHWA, “Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline.”

<sup>88</sup> FHWA, “Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline.”

<sup>89</sup> FHWA, “Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline.”

<sup>90</sup> Walter K. Johnson, “The 1962 Highway Act: Its Long Term Significance,” *Urban Law Annual* 57 (1970): 57–59, <https://journals.library.wustl.edu/urbanlaw/article/7953/galley/24786/view/>.

<sup>91</sup> FHWA, “Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline.”

<sup>92</sup> FHWA, “Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline.”

and 1966, Congress adopted the Highway Beautification Act and the Highway Safety Act, which regulated outdoor advertising, encouraged roadside enhancement, and established highway safety standards.<sup>93</sup>

## Federal Highway Administration and Planning and Support for Equitable Accessible Multi-Modal Transportation (1966-Early 2000s)

Congress established the U.S. Department of Transportation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as an agency on October 15, 1966, and began operations on April 1, 1967. In 1966, Congress adopted the National Historic Preservation Act, establishing requirements under Section 106 for federal agencies to take into account impacts of their projects upon local historic and cultural resources.

The early work of FHWA included issuance in 1973 of a *Handbook of Highway Safety Design and Operating Practices*. The following year, in 1974, Congress adopted amendments to the 1973 Federal Aid Highway Act, which created a national bridge inspection program. This act also required that states hold two public hearings for site planning and design for any new planned roads in order to allow the public to provide input on the economic, environmental, and social impacts of federal highway construction. It further required that federally funded highway construction projects must comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964.<sup>94</sup> In 1970, President Richard Nixon signed the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) into law. The NEPA process defined under this act required agencies receiving federal funds to evaluate the environmental effects of federal projects by creating an environmental impact statement (EIS). In 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12898, which directed federal agencies to identify and address any identified adverse effects of federal projects to the health and environment of minority and low-income populations.<sup>95</sup> In 1970, the National Highway Institute (NHI) was established as the training and education arm of FHWA. NHI focused their early education on safety and road design. NHI's mission continues to be to improve the conditions and safety of our nation's roads, highways and bridges.<sup>96</sup>

Congress adopted the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973, which authorized states to withdraw urban highway segments from the Interstate System. This allowed local jurisdictions a way to remove problematic highways which were having (or going to have) adverse impacts on their local communities without losing federal funding. Under this act, states and local jurisdictions would be able to redirect these federal funds to support the development of mass transit, bikeways, or pedestrian walkways.<sup>97</sup>

In 1982, Congress adopted the Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA), which was signed by President Ronald Reagan in 1983. This act established a Mass Transit account within the Federal Highway Trust Fund.<sup>98</sup> In 1991, Congress adopted and President George H. Bush signed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), which focused federal transportation

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<sup>93</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>94</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>95</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>96</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>97</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>98</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

funding upon intermodal approaches, requiring Metropolitan Planning Organizations to develop transportation plans which included planning for multiple transportation modes accessible to a wider range of the public.<sup>99</sup> In 1998, Congress adopted the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), signed by President Bill Clinton. This act allocated \$198 billion in federal funds to states to invest in highways, public transit, and intermodal transportation projects. The Act required that local metropolitan areas develop regional transportation plans that focused upon ensuring equity and accessibility for both motorized and non-motorized users.<sup>100</sup>

This trend of focusing upon equity and multi-modal transportation planning has continued into the 2000s. In 2005, Congress adopted the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU), signed by President George W. Bush. This act authorized \$244 billion in funding for highways, highway safety, and multi-modal public transportation.<sup>101</sup> Following the Great Recession of 2008, President Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009 to stimulate the economy. This act provided \$28 billion for highway and bridge construction and \$12 billion for mass transit and rail projects.<sup>102</sup> Between 2012 and 2015, President Obama signed several other acts authorizing billions of dollars to construct and repair highways, railways, and public transportation. These included the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act.<sup>103</sup> On November 15, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which authorized \$550 billion from 2022–2026 to fund the repair and construction of roads, bridges, and mass transit.<sup>104</sup>

In January 2021, President Biden issued Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, which stated, in part:

It is therefore the policy of my Administration that the Federal Government should pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. Affirmatively advancing equity, civil rights, racial justice, and equal opportunity is the responsibility of the whole of our Government. Because advancing equity requires a systematic approach to embedding fairness in decision-making processes, executive departments and agencies (agencies) must recognize and work to redress inequities in their policies and programs that serve as barriers to equal opportunity.<sup>105</sup>

In compliance with this order, in June 2022, the U.S. Department of Transportation issued an Equity and Access Policy Statement mandating equity and access in all aspects of transportation planning and implementation.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>100</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>101</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>102</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>103</sup> FHWA, "Highway History: Contributions and Crossroads – Timeline."

<sup>104</sup> Federal Highways Office of Policy & Government, "Surface Transportation Reauthorization," February 2025, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/olsp/reportspubs.cfm>.

<sup>105</sup> "Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government," January 2021, <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/equity/>.

<sup>106</sup> FHWA, "Equity and Access Policy Statement," June 2022, <https://highways.dot.gov/media/33606>.

On January 21, 2025, President Donald Trump signed several orders directed at revoking policies regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA), including Executive Order 14151 titled “Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing” and Executive Order 14173 titled “Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit Based Opportunity”.<sup>107</sup> According to President Trump, these diversity and inclusion programs have been both wasteful and shameful:

Pursuant to [President Biden’s] Executive Order 13985 [Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government] and follow-on orders, nearly every Federal agency and entity submitted “Equity Action Plans” to detail the ways that they have further DEI’s infiltration of the Federal Government. The public release of these plans demonstrated immense public waste and shameful discrimination. That ends today. Americans deserve a government committed to serving every person with equal dignity and respect, and to expending precious taxpayer resources only on making America great.<sup>108</sup>

Trump further clarified under Executive Order 14173 his belief that DEI and DEIA policies undermine America’s national unity as they deny and undermine traditional American values of hard work and individual achievement. Trump argues that DEI policies promote racism against White Americans, who have been shut out of opportunities they have worked hard for, because of their race. Trump states the primary purpose of his Executive Orders relating to reversing DEI programs is to restore merit-based opportunities for all Americans: “Hardworking [White] Americans who deserve a shot at the American dream should not be stigmatized, demeaned, or shut out of opportunities because of their race or sex.”<sup>109</sup>

## 3.2 Oregon State Policies

### 3.2.1 Land Use, Non-Indigenous Settlement, and Housing

#### Westward Expansion (1834-1900)

The Methodist Mission to Oregon Country brought several successive waves of missionaries to the Oregon Country in the 1830s and 1840s, primarily to establish infrastructure to convert Indigenous peoples to Christianity. The United States government, which was interested in gaining political control of the Oregon Country rather than sharing it with Great Britain, supported the Methodist Mission’s efforts.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Donald Trump, Executive Orders, Washington DC: The White House, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-orders/>.

<sup>108</sup> Donald Trump, Executive Order 14151: Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing, Washington DC: The White House, January 20, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/ending-radical-and-wasteful-government-dei-programs-and-preferencing/>.

<sup>109</sup> Donald Trump, Executive Order 14173: Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit Based Opportunity, Washington DC: The White House, January 21, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/ending-illegal-discrimination-and-restoring-merit-based-opportunity/>.

<sup>110</sup> Kimberli Fitzgerald et al., “National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for Oregon Country Methodist Mission Sites: 1834–1847,” 2025, on file at the City of Salem, Oregon.

A primary reason the Methodist Episcopal Church chose to establish a mission in the Oregon Country in the early nineteenth century was due to the policies of the federal government of the United States, which were focused upon Westward Expansion. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, the federal government offered financial incentives to religious organizations to convert and westernize Indigenous peoples living within territories adjacent to the lands held by the United States. These policies were part of the larger efforts to remove Indigenous peoples from their lands and assimilate them into American culture, paving the way for non-Indigenous colonization of these lands. Whether or not the Methodist Missionaries stationed in the Oregon Country were fully aware of it, they played a key role in the government's policy of removing Indigenous peoples from their traditional homelands and assimilating them into American culture.<sup>111</sup>

The peoples the missionaries encountered were diverse and reeling from a catastrophic epidemic. During the late 1700s and early 1800s, fur trading companies had established outposts in the Pacific Northwest and many French Canadian, Métis, British, and Scottish fur traders had married Indigenous women and started families and farms in the Willamette Valley. Subsequently, an epidemic killed, by some estimates, nearly 90 percent of Indigenous people in communities along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers, leading to huge social changes for the peoples who had called this place home since time immemorial. The largest geographical cluster of Methodist missions during this period was located in the Willamette Valley (Figure 3-4). In addition to working to ensure their own survival, missionary work consisted of preaching and conversion, as well as the operation of a boarding school for Indigenous children and orphans located in present-day Salem.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Fitzgerald et al., "National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for Oregon Country Methodist Mission Sites," E-3.

<sup>112</sup> Fitzgerald et al., "National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for Oregon Country Methodist Mission Sites," E-3–E-5.



Figure 3-4. 1848 lithograph of the Willamette Valley by Henry J. Warre.<sup>113</sup>

On July 5, 1843, the Organic Act was passed, establishing the provisional government in the Oregon Territory. The act gave up to 640 acres of land in the Oregon Territory to qualifying individuals, provided the land was occupied and improved within six months. The Organic Act banned slavery, but it also excluded Black people. The provisional legislative committee also established the Rangers, which were a militia whose main purpose was to police the Indigenous population by ensuring they did not interfere with new colonization.<sup>114</sup>

In 1846, Great Britain and the United States signed the Treaty of Oregon, ending the joint occupation of the two countries, and in 1848, the Oregon Territory was established. On September 27, 1850, the 31st Congress of the United States adopted the Donation Land Claim Act, which outlined the circumstances under which primarily White men could acquire land in the Oregon Territory. Men who had been living in the Oregon Territory for at least four years were eligible for 320 acres, and a married man was eligible for 640 acres, or 1 square mile of land. Through this act, the federal government appointed a Surveyor General to the Oregon Territory, who was responsible

<sup>113</sup> Oregon Historical Society, “Lithograph, Valley of the Willamette River,” OrHi 49030 (1848), <https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/lithograph-valley-of-the-willamette-river/>.

<sup>114</sup> *Amended Organic Laws of the Territory of Oregon, as Adopted by the People of That Territory on the Last Saturday of July, 1845* ([Washington, DC]: Ritchie & Heiss, [1846]); and Barbara Mahoney, “Provisional Government,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated February 7, 2023, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/provisional\\_govt\\_conference\\_in\\_champoeg\\_1843/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/provisional_govt_conference_in_champoeg_1843/).

for surveying the territory using the Public Land Survey System (PLSS). This system was originally established by the federal government through the adoption of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which codified the sale of public lands as they became part of the United States. All people claiming land under this act had to file a patent with this Surveyor General.<sup>115</sup> The PLSS system is the basis of our current system of land-use management, which utilizes Township, Range, Section, and tax lot to identify property.

While the Donation Land Act was clearly intended to benefit White people, Section 4 of this act did provide the opportunity for “American half-breed Indians” to also be eligible for 320 acres of land. However, Section 5 of this act limited land to only White men over the age of 21 (new emigrants arriving between 1850 and 1853 to the Oregon Territory were eligible for 160 acres and 320 acres if married).<sup>116</sup>

Between 1850 and 1856, in response to the incentives offered through the Donation Land Claim Act, the non-Indigenous population in the Willamette Valley and the Oregon Territory increased significantly. The federal government appointed Anson Dart as Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs to facilitate treaties with the Tribes and ultimately to coordinate the forcible removal of Indigenous peoples to reservations, in order to ensure that non-Indigenous people would have ample land to colonize.<sup>117</sup> Dart worked closely with former Methodist missionaries, such as Josiah Parrish, to negotiate with Tribes in the Willamette Valley. The federal government sent the military to assist with these treaty negotiations. On April 13, 1851, the chiefs of the Santiam Kalapuya met with Colonel Beverly Allen at Champoege. Colonel Allen stated:

For the good of your people it would be better for you to be entirely separated from the whites, and for that reason it will be better for you to remove to a reserve beyond the Cascade Mountains that would be selected for you or you might select. Then your people would be furnished with teachers to teach your children and teach you how to farm with plows, tools, etc. necessary in farming, building houses, etc, and blankets to keep you warm. There our Government would protect you both from encroachment by whites and of neighboring tribes of Indians. Whereas, if you remain among the whites, it will inevitably end in your annihilation as a people.<sup>118</sup>

The treaty between the United States government and the Santiam Kalapuyans was signed the following day, on April 14, 1851, and the other Willamette Valley Indigenous bands followed soon after.<sup>119</sup>

Oregon was accepted as the thirty-third state of the Union on February 14, 1859. However, two years before this, in November 1857, non-Indigenous men living in the Oregon Territory approved Oregon’s first Constitution. This constitution went into effect at the time Congress admitted

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<sup>115</sup> Ed Redmond, “Surveying: The Art of Measuring Land, Part II,” Library of Congress, December 18, 2019, <https://blogs.loc.gov/maps/2019/12/surveying-the-art-of-measuring-land-part-two/>.

<sup>116</sup> “Public Acts of the Thirty-First Congress of the United States,” Session 1, Chapter LXXVI (September 27, 1850): 496–500, <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/l1/l1sl/l1sl-c31/l1sl-c31.pdf>.

<sup>117</sup> Ronald Spores, “Too Small a Place: The Removal of the Willamette Valley Indians, 1850-1856,” *American Indian Quarterly* 17, no. 2 (1993): 171–91, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1185526>.

<sup>118</sup> Spores, “Too Small a Place,” 176–77.

<sup>119</sup> Spores, “Too Small a Place,” 178.

Oregon into the Union.<sup>120</sup> Oregon’s constitution included a Bill of Rights in Article I, outlining 33 rights. Article 31 specifically stated that White foreigners who were or might become residents of the state would enjoy the same rights as native-born citizens.<sup>121</sup> At the time of adoption, the voters added two more provisions to this Bill of Rights: The first outlawed slavery in Oregon, and the second stated that “No free negro, or Mulatto, not residing in this state at the time of the adoption of this constitution, shall come, reside, or be within this state, or hold any real estate.”<sup>122</sup> On January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation took effect, freeing enslaved people in the Confederate States. On January 31, 1865, Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery. Congress’s passage of the Fourteenth Amendment on June 13, 1866, granted equal protection under the law for all citizens. On February 26, 1869, Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment, granting the right to vote to citizens regardless of race. Despite this progress at the federal level, the section relating to Black exclusion in Oregon’s Constitution was not repealed until 1926.<sup>123</sup>

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, primarily due to the PLSS method of surveying the land, once Oregon became a state, surveyed land within the state of Oregon was subsequently sold and redeveloped. While initially agriculture and farming were the primary use of most of the land in the Pacific Northwest, after the Civil War and the completion of the railroads, industrial growth began transforming American urban centers throughout the state of Oregon. Mills and other industries were often near waterways or railroads. Innovations in agriculture, including canning and the use of electricity and light bulbs, along with the improvements in transportation, such as electric trolley cars, changed not only land use, but also housing and settlement patterns. Those who had the economic means were able to make choices about where they lived within urban areas, usually away from the noise and pollution of industrial centers and commercial areas, as they could afford the costs for daily transportation to their workplaces. Many lower-class workers or marginalized people did not have a choice about where they could live, and therefore settled where they could afford, which was often near these industrial and commercial areas, near to where they worked.<sup>124</sup> Many local jurisdictions across the country adopted early zoning codes to ensure the development and settlement of homogeneous residential neighborhoods, which even included specialized zones for Planned Unit Developments. The National Association of Real Estate Boards developed a template for racial restrictive covenants that could be used by developers. As a result, in many areas of the country, developers included these restrictive covenants, stating that only White people could own property within these planned residential communities.<sup>125</sup>

## Segregated Housing and Exclusion

Oregon’s local communities developed with clearly segregated housing patterns from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. Oregon’s Constitution did not allow Black people or

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<sup>120</sup> “Constitution of Oregon,” *Oregon Blue Book: Almanac & Fact Book*, accessed May 21, 2025, <https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book/Pages/state-constitution.aspx>.

<sup>121</sup> “Transcribed 1857 Oregon Constitution,” Oregon State Archives, 1857, 4.

<sup>122</sup> “Transcribed 1857 Oregon Constitution,” 25.

<sup>123</sup> Greg Nokes, “Black Exclusion Laws in Oregon,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated May 17, 2024, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/exclusion\\_laws/#.Y9a5VOzMI-Q](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/exclusion_laws/#.Y9a5VOzMI-Q).

<sup>124</sup> Library of Congress, “Rise of Industrial America,” accessed June 2025, <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/rise-of-industrial-america-1876-1900/>.

<sup>125</sup> Michael Jones-Correa, “The Origins and Diffusion of Racial Restrictive Covenants,” *Political Science Quarterly* 115, no. 4 (2000): 541–68, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2657609>.

foreign-born Chinese people to own property. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act further restricted the rights of Chinese immigrants. In 1937, the HOLC mapped the City of Portland; these maps reflect the racial discrimination in housing during this period (Figure 3-5).<sup>126</sup> For example, the assessment of the neighborhood located on the central eastside, near the Lone Fir Cemetery, was given the lowest grade possible, a “D - ”. The reviewer identified 25 percent of the population within this neighborhood as ‘foreign-born subversive races,’ which included: 125 Japanese, 30 Chinese, 35 Filipinos, and 85 Black people. The reviewer further identified that many of these people were utilizing some form of government relief. The summarizing remarks by the reviewer stated:

Zoned multi-family residential with business permitted on and north of Sandy Blvd., Burnside, Ankeny, Belmont, Stark and twentieth Streets. This is one of the oldest sections on the east side of Portland. Many years ago, the old town of Sunnyside occupied the southern portion of the area. The area was never high class and has lately declined rapidly. The eastern part somewhat better than the western part. Lot sizes vary greatly, many being 30' x 50', and land values are low. Subversive population which included colored races as shown above, also consists of a relatively large proportion of low class foreign born of many races. The apartment and lodging houses are of low grade and quality and there is little promise of increased land values for higher use purposes. The northwest corner may develop into a medium class apartment house district. The area is accorded a low red D grade.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Home Owners Loan Corporation [HOLC], “HELOC Residential Security Maps,” 1937, Record Group 195: Records of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, 1933–1989 [RG195], National Archives, College Park, MD [NA-CP], <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/archival-collection/records-federal-home-loan-bank-board-6751>.

<sup>127</sup> HOLC, “Central East Side and Sunnyside. City of Portland, Oregon. Area Descriptions. HELOC Residential Security Maps,” October 1937, 88–89, RG195, NA-CP, <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/archival-collection/records-federal-home-loan-bank-board-6751>.

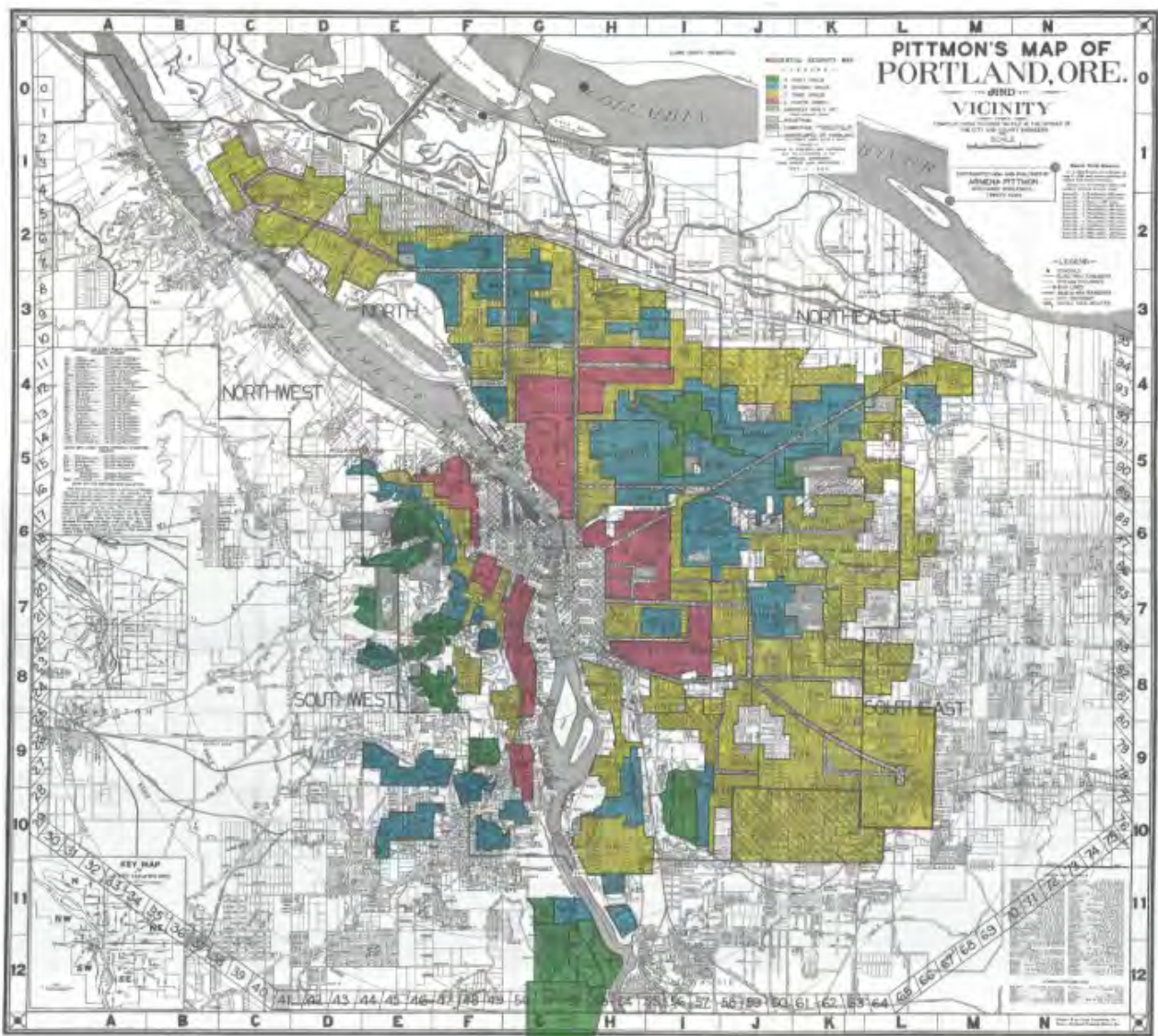


Figure 3-5. 1937 Residential Security Map of Portland with color-coding by the HOLC. Coloring key: Green = best; blue = still desirable; yellow = definitely declining; red = hazardous.<sup>128</sup>

The assessment further recommended that no mortgage funds be made available to any residents living within this neighborhood. On the other side of their scale were homogeneous, White neighborhoods with already established deed restrictions prohibiting any persons of color or immigrants from owning property. For example, the Alameda neighborhood, zoned single-family residential, with deed restrictions in place, and no foreign-born or Black residents, received an A

<sup>128</sup> Jola Ajibade, Sasha Burchuk, Heather Day-Melgar, “Redlining and Climate-Related Heat,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated February 21, 2024, <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/redlining/>; and “Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America: Portland, Oregon,” accessed June 2025, [https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/map/OR/Portland/area\\_descriptions/D3#loc=12/45.52/-122.5855&adview=full](https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/map/OR/Portland/area_descriptions/D3#loc=12/45.52/-122.5855&adview=full).

(green) grade and a recommendation for ample availability of mortgage funds to purchase housing.<sup>129</sup>

While Portland was the only city in Oregon where HOLC maps and neighborhood assessments were created, the underwriting policies of FHA resulted in the federal government disproportionately supporting home ownership for White Americans throughout Oregon while further marginalizing communities of color.<sup>130</sup>

During World War II, the Portland Housing Authority managed more than 18,000 units of housing for wartime workers. Vanport was a large public housing development that was constructed by Henry Kaiser and the U.S. Maritime Commission in 1942 for shipyard workers and their families. Residents were a diverse population of nearly 40,000 people, including a significant Black community.<sup>131</sup> The Portland Housing Authority segregated Vanport, requiring Black people to live in specified zones. While Vanport was initially called “The Miracle City,” it was destroyed by flood in 1948, displacing its residents, including about 5,000 African Americans.<sup>132</sup>

## Emergence of Zoning and Land Use Planning (1919-1974)

Oregon’s first statewide planning law was adopted in 1919 and granted local jurisdictions the authority to zone private land and adopt zoning ordinances. There were no state mandates in place for review of zoning ordinances adopted by local jurisdictions.

In 1947, the Oregon legislature passed legislation that authorized counties to plan, zone, and form planning commissions that could adopt recommended development patterns.<sup>133</sup> In the 1960s, Oregon had begun to experience adverse impacts from uncontrolled suburban growth. In particular, significant growth occurred in the Willamette Valley, encroaching into productive and valuable farmland. In 1961, the Oregon legislature established “Exclusive Farm Use” zones, which authorized special tax assessments for land used for farming and to incentivize the preservation of farm and agricultural use.<sup>134</sup>

In 1969, the Oregon legislature adopted Senate Bill 10, requiring every city and county in the state to have a comprehensive land-use plan that met state standards. Any local jurisdiction that did not have a plan with associated zoning regulations by December 31, 1971, would be subject to the governor’s authority to administer zoning regulations and comprehensive planning on their lands. Two years later, in 1973, Senate Bill 100 was adopted and signed by Governor Tom McCall, establishing the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) and the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD).

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<sup>129</sup> William G. Robbins, “Oregon in Depression and War, 1925–1945,” Oregon History Project, last updated 2014, <https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/narratives/this-land-oregon/oregon-in-depression-and-war-1925-1945/hard-times/>.

<sup>130</sup> Daniel Aaronson, Daniel Hartley, and Bhashkar Mazumder, 2021, “The Effects of the 1930s HOLC “Redlining” Maps,” *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 13 (4): 355–92.

<sup>131</sup> Carl Abbott, “Vanport,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated September 26, 2023, <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/vanport/>.

<sup>132</sup> Sarah Griffith, “Vanport Residences 1947,” Oregon History Project, 2002, <https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/vanport-residences-1947/>.

<sup>133</sup> Edward Sullivan, “Urbanization in Oregon: Goal 14 and the Urban Growth Boundary,” *The Urban Lawyer* 47, no. 1 (2015): 167, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26424253>.

<sup>134</sup> Sullivan, “Urbanization in Oregon.”

In 1974, LCDC adopted the first 14 Statewide Planning Goals, which included specific goals related to land-use planning, housing, and transportation. Goal 10 required local jurisdictions to provide for the housing needs of citizens of the state and specifically required that local jurisdictions inventory buildable lands for residential use. Goal 10 further required that local land-use plans encourage the availability of adequate numbers of needed housing units at price ranges and rent levels that were affordable and accessible.<sup>135</sup> This goal established guidelines for implementation, which required local jurisdictions to establish a methodology for stimulating the rehabilitation of substandard housing without regard to the financial capacity of the owner.<sup>136</sup> Between 1975 and 1976, the legislature adopted five more statewide planning goals.<sup>137</sup> Unique in Oregon was the use of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) to manage growth and control urbanization and urban sprawl. Goal 14 required that UGBs be established to identify and separate urbanizable land from rural land, in order to “serve the goal’s purpose to provide for an orderly and efficient transition from urban to rural use.”<sup>138</sup>

## Great Depression

Like those in other parts of the country, Oregonians suffered economic hardships after World War I through the 1930s. For example, the region’s major trade organization, the West Coast Lumbermen’s Association, announced in August 1931 that its mills were operating at only 38 percent of capacity.<sup>139</sup> Tens of thousands of unemployed Oregonians became unhoused and began living in camps known as “Hoovervilles” within urban areas throughout Oregon. These camps of unhoused individuals were named after President Herbert Hoover, who was president in 1929 at the start of the Great Depression. After Franklin Roosevelt was elected in 1932, the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 formed the PWA, which provided jobs to Oregonians who built post offices, libraries, and federal buildings across the state. Additional New Deal programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), provided work relief for young men who built bridges, roads, and other public projects throughout the state. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) employed Oregonians who worked as writers, teachers, lawyers, historians, and artists.<sup>140</sup>

## Urban Renewal (1949-1974)

The Oregon legislature passed its first urban renewal law in 1951 after the federal government began offering federal funds in 1949 under the 1949 Housing Act through the federal Housing and Home Finance Agency.<sup>141</sup> The 1951 Oregon statute authorized housing authorities to act as urban renewal agencies. At that time, only the City of Portland and the City of Salem had previously established housing authorities, which both cities had implemented after World War II. Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) Chapter 457, “Urban Redevelopment Law,” established requirements under which local jurisdictions (cities and counties) in Oregon could accept federal urban renewal funds. The related

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<sup>135</sup> Sullivan, “Urbanization in Oregon,” 167.

<sup>136</sup> Sullivan, “Urbanization in Oregon.”

<sup>137</sup> Sullivan, “Urbanization in Oregon,” 165–202.

<sup>138</sup> Sullivan, “Urbanization in Oregon.”

<sup>139</sup> Robbins, “Oregon in Depression and War.”

<sup>140</sup> Robbins, “Oregon in Depression and War.”

<sup>141</sup> Nina Johnson and Jeffrey Tashman, “Urban Renewal in Oregon: History Case Studies, Policy Issues and Latest Developments,” Portland Development Commission, 2002, 5.

ORS Chapter 456 established the framework under which local jurisdictions could establish local housing authorities to implement urban renewal projects. The statute declared that throughout the state, there existed a significant number of blighted areas or those in the process of becoming blighted, and that such areas impaired the economic values and tax revenues of the state. Furthermore, the statute indicated that such areas caused an increase in disease and crime and constituted a menace to the health, safety, morals and welfare of the residents of the state.<sup>142</sup> ORS 457.010 defined “blighted areas” as “areas, including slum areas, with buildings and improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, deleterious land use, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals and welfare of the community.”<sup>143</sup> This statute empowered local jurisdictions to establish a housing authority, which could acquire blighted areas and clear these properties for redevelopment and construct (or reconstruct) streets, utilities, and site improvements essential for any uses identified in an approved redevelopment plan.<sup>144</sup> ORS 457.050 required local jurisdictions to adopt a redevelopment plan, which included identification of methods for temporary relocation of people living within the area to be redeveloped.<sup>145</sup> In 1953, the Oregon Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of Oregon’s Urban Redevelopment Law in the landmark decision, *Foeller et ux. v. Housing Authority of Portland*.<sup>146</sup>

Some Oregon counties and cities did receive assistance through other avenues. For example, in 1955 President Eisenhower designated ten counties in Oregon (including Marion and Polk) hit hard by flooding as major disaster areas, and authorized the HHFA to expedite all possible urban renewal and planning assistance. One of the first large-scale grants from the HHRA to Oregon communities was provided to the Oregon State Board of Higher Education in 1957 in the amount of \$39,400 to give urban planning aid to ten communities of less than 25,000 residents, and included Albany, Beaverton, Hood River, Forest Grove, Klamath Falls, Lake Oswego, Seaside, Stayton, Sutherlin and Sweet Home.<sup>147</sup>

Most local jurisdictions in Oregon did not have full access to available federal funding until 1957, when the Oregon legislature adopted legislation authorizing city councils, county commissions, or separate boards to facilitate urban renewal programs. The Oregon legislature struggled with adopting legislation expanding local jurisdictions’ ability to accept federal funds, as some representatives in the House objected to the lack of state oversight and the unlimited power it could potentially give to local jurisdictions to issue bonds and undermine zoning standards. However, the bill was ultimately reconsidered, passed, and adopted in May 1957.<sup>148</sup>

The City of Portland formed the Portland Development Commission (PDC) in 1958, and that same year, the City of Eugene formed its first urban renewal agency. One of the challenges to local jurisdictions was the requirement for a local match for any federal urban renewal funds. Portland’s PDC director, John Kenward, had recently moved to Oregon from Sacramento, California, where

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<sup>142</sup> Oregon Revised Statute [ORS] Chapter 457, “Redevelopment of Blighted Areas,” 1955, [https://archives.oregonlegislature.gov/ORS\\_Archives/1955-Chapter-457.PDF](https://archives.oregonlegislature.gov/ORS_Archives/1955-Chapter-457.PDF).

<sup>143</sup> ORS Chapter 457, “Redevelopment of Blighted Areas.”

<sup>144</sup> ORS Chapter 457, “Redevelopment of Blighted Areas.”

<sup>145</sup> ORS Chapter 457, “Redevelopment of Blighted Areas.”

<sup>146</sup> Johnson and Tashman, “Urban Renewal in Oregon,” 5.

<sup>147</sup> “Grant Given to Education Board,” *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), March 1, 1957, p. 11.

<sup>148</sup> Paul Harvey Jr., “House Turns Down Urban Renewal Bill,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), April 17, 1957 p. 1.

he had become familiar with use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a way to fund the required local match for federal funds within urban renewal areas. Kenward drafted a proposed constitutional amendment modeled upon California's system for Oregon voters to consider. This would authorize Oregon's local jurisdictions to use TIF for urban renewal. In 1960, Oregon voters approved this amendment and the following year, in 1961, the Oregon legislature enacted implementing legislation. Oregon became just the second state in the nation to authorize TIF for urban renewal.<sup>149</sup>

Subsequently, the City of Salem formed their urban renewal agency in 1961. Throughout the 1960s and through the early 1970s, additional local jurisdictions throughout Oregon established urban renewal agencies, including Cottage Grove, Albany, Coos Bay, Newport, Beaverton, Toledo, Lincoln City, and Tualatin. Cascade Locks formed one of the smallest urban renewal programs in the country.<sup>150</sup>

Some of the first urban renewal projects in Oregon were university-related projects and included developments at Portland State University in Portland, the University of Oregon in Eugene, and Willamette University in Salem. Other urban renewal projects during this early period focused on slum and blight clearance, which resulted in the demolition of large urban areas, such as the South Auditorium project in Portland and Eugene's downtown project. These urban renewal projects resulted in the widespread displacement of residents and businesses and the demolition of historically significant buildings.<sup>151</sup> The impacts to lower income, marginalized communities were high, and the relocation assistance available at the time was often insufficient.<sup>152</sup>

## Housing and Community Development (1974-Present)

After Congress passed the Housing and Community Development Act in 1974, federal funds were no longer distributed to urban renewal agencies for specific projects. Instead, federal funds were distributed as CDBGs directly to local governments. By 1977, in Oregon, the legislature identified several significant problems with the existing work of local jurisdictions related to urban renewal and appointed a task force to further investigate the issues. Concerns included lack of citizen participation in development of urban renewal plans, inadequate fiscal accountability to the public, the use of TIF for economic development instead of for slum clearance, and the large size of some urban renewal areas in smaller jurisdictions like Lincoln City and Toledo.<sup>153</sup> In 1979, the Oregon legislature substantially rewrote Oregon statutes related to urban renewal to address these identified concerns. New requirements included improved public participation and notice. Of note is that the legislature rewrote the definition of the word blight to include a broader definition, which allowed urban renewal plans to address issues of economic development and the highest/best use of land. Other changes included requiring improved and transparent financial reporting that required local governments to prepare annual detailed financial reports and restricting the overall percentage of a municipality's land that could be placed within an urban renewal area.<sup>154</sup> These changes enacted in

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<sup>149</sup> Johnson and Tashman, "Urban Renewal in Oregon," 7.

<sup>150</sup> Johnson and Tashman, "Urban Renewal in Oregon," 6.

<sup>151</sup> Johnson and Tashman, "Urban Renewal in Oregon."

<sup>152</sup> Curtis W. Berner, "Enjoining Urban Renewal--Inadequate Relocation Facilities: Western Addition Community Organization v. Weaver," 21 UC LAW SF L.J. 433 (1969), [https://repository.uclawsf.edu/hastings\\_law\\_journal/vol21/iss2/6](https://repository.uclawsf.edu/hastings_law_journal/vol21/iss2/6).

<sup>153</sup> Johnson and Tashman, "Urban Renewal in Oregon," 8.

<sup>154</sup> Johnson and Tashman, "Urban Renewal in Oregon."

1979 continue to be the core of Oregon's urban renewal law and practices today. Urban renewal in Oregon has changed from a program of clearing blighted, low-income areas to a program grounded in public participation with a more neighborhood planning focus intended to ensure local municipalities have the tools they need to stimulate development in areas that are not otherwise developing according to adopted comprehensive plans.

## 3.2.2 Oregon Transportation Policies and Planning

### Transportation in the Eighteenth & Nineteenth Century

The first roads in the Oregon Territory were often constructed along Indigenous trails and fur-trapping trails and consisted of cleared obstacles and wagon ruts. These roads were not publicly owned or maintained, and people traveling to the Oregon Territory had to pay a toll to reach their destination. In 1843, Oregon's Provisional Legislature granted Thomas McKay the right to build a toll road across the Cascade and Blue Mountains, to charge \$5 for wagons and ten cents a head for cattle and horses.<sup>155</sup> The United States military constructed military roads as needed in areas where they had established forts near the reservations where Indigenous peoples were forced to relocate.

After Oregon became a state in 1859, the first legislation passed by the Oregon legislature related to roads was a statute that required those petitioning for construction of county roads to perform one days' labor (at least eight hours) and provide their own tools and a team of horses/oxen to build their road, or they had to pay \$2.<sup>156</sup> In 1860, the Oregon legislature authorized counties to assess an additional annual poll tax of \$5 on people of color, which included every Negro, Chinaman, Kanaka (Hawaiian) or Mulatto who used county roads within their jurisdiction. The added penalty was that if they were unable to pay, they would be imprisoned. Those imprisoned would be able to earn freedom by working off the \$5 tax at the rate of fifty cents a day of labor constructing the county roads.<sup>157</sup> By the turn of the century in Oregon, more than 25 percent of county roads were constructed with convict or statutory labor, with the rest funded by the tax and voluntary labor.<sup>158</sup>

In 1866, the Oregon legislature authorized counties to tax property owners to pay for the development of county roads. This remained in effect until 1893, when the legislature authorized counties to levy a property tax along with a \$2 poll tax to fund the construction of county roads and bridges.<sup>159</sup> In many of Oregon's urban areas during this period, local jurisdictions constructed plank roads and wood plank sidewalks to keep wagons and people out of the mud. However, wood was not a long-term material for roads or sidewalks in Oregon due to the climate, and by the turn of the century, jurisdictions were looking to try different methods and materials. For example, in 1904, the City of Portland initially tried to pave 4th Street with wood blocks, but these swelled, causing water to seep under the blocks and destroying the road surface, and they determined stone ballast blocks (cobblestones) were more appropriate for Oregon's climate.<sup>160</sup> Many people in the nineteenth

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<sup>155</sup> Hugh Myron Hoyt, "The Good Roads Movement in Oregon: 1900-1920," thesis, University of Oregon, Eugene, June 1966, 1.

<sup>156</sup> Oregon Department of Transportation [ODOT] History Committee, "Oregon on the Move: A History of Oregon's Transportation Systems," 2009, 8.

<sup>157</sup> Hoyt, "The Good Roads Movement in Oregon," 18.

<sup>158</sup> Hoyt, "The Good Roads Movement in Oregon," 20.

<sup>159</sup> Hoyt, "The Good Roads Movement in Oregon," 9.

<sup>160</sup> Hoyt, "The Good Roads Movement in Oregon," 35.

century relied upon horse and carriages, water (ferries), streetcars, and the railroads for their transportation. By the end of the nineteenth century, Oregon had an extensive interurban railroad system, and many cities had developed their own streetcar systems that allowed Oregonians to begin living farther away from urban centers. After automobiles became more available after the turn of the century, there was a greater need for improved roads. Oregon's early roads were not uniform and were often graveled or muddy versions of earlier transportation routes (i.e., the Old Oregon Trail Highway), connecting small communities with adjacent residential development and roadside businesses.<sup>161</sup>

## The Good Roads Movement

The national Good Roads Movement, which was formed by the League of American Wheelman in 1880, initially advocated for better roads across America for the use of bicycles. They soon advocated for uniform road bills to be adopted across the country, as well as the classification of roads by their use. They also encouraged the standardization of road design.<sup>162</sup> Farmers across the country, including in Oregon, objected initially because they already felt overtaxed and were concerned about additional taxation. In response, in 1891, the League of American Wheelman published "The Gospel of Good Roads: A Letter to the American Farmer."<sup>163</sup> This booklet was widely distributed across the country and excerpts published in 34 newspapers nationwide, making it one of the most widely read pieces of road literature of its time. In this pamphlet, the group advocated for states to take a leadership role in constructing roads, and argued that the costs should be more evenly distributed among all residents.<sup>164</sup> Subsequently, in 1902, the Good Roads Association was founded in Oregon, under the leadership of John Scott, a Marion County judge.<sup>165</sup> By 1908, Oregon's Good Roads Association had a 10-person executive committee and 33 vice-presidents, representing each of Oregon's counties.<sup>166</sup> The association worked to develop a harmonious plan for developing a system of roads for the entire state of Oregon and to work with the legislature to campaign for improved funding and design standards across the state. This group reorganized in 1911 and was renamed as the Oregon Association for Highway Improvement.<sup>167</sup> By 1913, the work of this group resulted in the Oregon Legislature creating the Oregon State Highway Department (OSHD) to "Get Oregon Out of the Mud" (Figure 3-6).<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move."

<sup>162</sup> Hoyt, "The Good Roads Movement in Oregon," 37.

<sup>163</sup> Isaac B. Potter, "The Gospel of Good Roads: A Letter to the American Farmer" (New York: League of American Wheelman, 1891).

<sup>164</sup> Potter, "The Gospel of Good Roads."

<sup>165</sup> Hoyt, "The Good Roads Movement in Oregon," 48–49.

<sup>166</sup> Hoyt, "The Good Roads Movement in Oregon," 55.

<sup>167</sup> Hoyt, "The Good Roads Movement in Oregon," 56.

<sup>168</sup> Hoyt, "The Good Roads Movement in Oregon," 48–49.

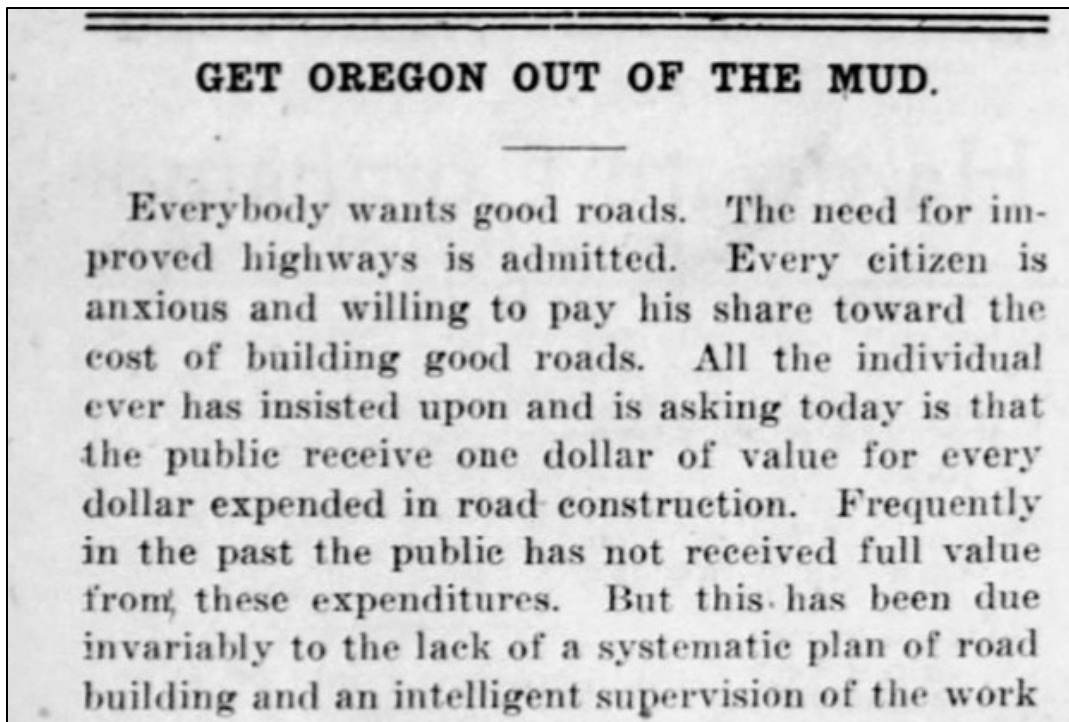


Figure 3-6. Clipping from the *Oregon Statesman*, 1917.<sup>169</sup>

## The Motor Age (1900-1929)

In 1905, the Oregon legislature passed its first vehicle registration law, with a one-time, \$3 registration fee, with funds dedicated to road construction. This first year, 218 motor vehicles were registered in Oregon.<sup>170</sup> Also in 1905, the Portland Auto Club was founded. By 1911, over 6,428 motor vehicles had been registered in Oregon, and the legislature changed the vehicle registration laws to require an annual vehicle license renewal with fees based upon the vehicle's horsepower. All collected revenues from the registration fees were dedicated to road construction and maintenance.<sup>171</sup> In 1913, the legislature created the Oregon Highway Commission and the OSHD, appropriating \$10 million for operating expenses. Additionally, the legislature authorized a property tax with funds going to this new commission. In 1913, there were 25 miles of paved roads in Oregon and 13,957 registered motor vehicles.<sup>172</sup> The following year, in 1914, the commission adopted its first State Highway Plan, which identified priorities for construction of highways in Oregon, including the Columbia River, Oregon Beach, Pacific and Capitol Highways (present-day Oregon 99E and 99W), and Central Oregon Highways.<sup>173</sup>

After Congress adopted the Federal Highway Act of 1916, Oregon received federal funds in the amount of \$206,481 to construct rural highways. By the end of this year, Oregon had 33,917 registered motor vehicles. However, due to the differences in the management and implementation

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<sup>169</sup> "Get Oregon Out of the Mud," *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), April 19, 1917.

<sup>170</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 10.

<sup>171</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 11.

<sup>172</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 12.

<sup>173</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 13.

of rural road construction across the state, with the exception of Multnomah, Jackson, and Clatsop Counties, Oregon had no complete paved sections of rural roads.<sup>174</sup> Due to difficulties in securing consistent funding for road development and maintenance, in 1917, the Oregon Highway Commission approved the sale of \$38.7 million in general obligation bonds to fund road improvements throughout the state between 1917 and 1923.<sup>175</sup> During World War I, the United States military took over development of the Oregon Beach Highway, renaming it the Roosevelt Coast Military Highway (now US 101). In 1919, Conde B. McCullough became head of the new Oregon Highway Bridge Department. One of his primary responsibilities was to design and construct nearly 160 bridges along the Roosevelt Military Highway (US 101).<sup>176</sup>

In 1919, Oregon became the first state in the nation to adopt a gas tax to fund road construction. The revenue collected from the one cent per gallon tax raised over \$342,000 to be used for road construction and maintenance.<sup>177</sup> In 1921, Congress adopted the Federal Highway Act of 1921, which established the United States Highway System, requiring that states receiving federal aid use 60 percent of this aid to improve or construct roads to link to other states. Subsequently, the State Highway Commission took over the maintenance and construction of Oregon highways from counties, and the gasoline tax was increased to two cents per gallon to offset state costs.<sup>178</sup> By the end of 1923, the Pacific Highway was completed, and Oregon became the first state west of the Mississippi to have a paved highway extending the entire length of the state.<sup>179</sup> By the end of 1926, Oregon State Highway Road maps first showed the U.S. system of numbers in compliance with the signage requirements adopted under the Federal Highway Act of 1921.<sup>180</sup>

## Road Building During the Great Depression: The New Deal (1930-1940)

During the Great Depression, as with the rest of the nation, Oregonians suffered a severe economic downturn, which resulted in significant unemployment. In response, the Oregon legislature repealed the property tax adopted in 1913 to fund the State Highway Commission. However, they increased the gasoline tax to four cents per gallon. In 1930, the Highway Commission authorized a \$2.5 million increase in funds to hire unemployed workers to cut and burn trees and dig ditches to assist with clearing areas for road construction.<sup>181</sup> Oregonians benefitted from the federal government's New Deal programs beginning in 1931–1932, and OSHD was able to use federal funding to pay unemployed workers to perform road construction work. In 1933, the Oregon legislature authorized the Highway Commission to contract with the PWA to construct bridges and roads throughout Oregon.<sup>182</sup> In April 1935, the Oregon State Capitol Building burned, impacting the operations of the State Highway Commission, and particularly the processing of driver's license

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<sup>174</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 15.

<sup>175</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 16.

<sup>176</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 16–18

<sup>177</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 19.

<sup>178</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 21.

<sup>179</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 23.

<sup>180</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 25.

<sup>181</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 28.

<sup>182</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 33.

renewals. By the end of 1935, there were 302,476 registered motor vehicles in Oregon.<sup>183</sup> By the end of 1940, Oregon's state highway system comprised 7,131 miles of state roads, 1,035 miles of which were paved; 1,140 surfaced with macadam; 2,998 surfaced with oiled macadam; and 1,125 surfaced with rock or gravel.<sup>184</sup>

## Road Building During World War II

After the United States entered World War II in December 1941, the federal government halted all state and federal road construction projects not essential to the war effort. Approximately 26 percent of the skilled workers employed at OSHD were either drafted or enlisted, reducing the capacity of this department to implement existing plans for road development in the state. Additionally, the federal government required gasoline rationing, which decreased revenues for the operations of OSHD. In 1942, Oregon voters approved an amendment to the Oregon Constitution establishing a Highway Trust Fund to be dedicated toward the operations of OSHD.<sup>185</sup> Over 99 miles of roads were developed to support military activities in Oregon during the war, including roads to Camp Adair north of Corvallis and Camp White near Medford.<sup>186</sup> This military redevelopment resulted in the displacement of primarily low- to moderate-income Oregon farmers and also resulted in housing shortages for these families, as inadequate arrangements were made in compensation for the taking of their properties and homes. For example, in order to establish Camp Adair and build the associated military roads, the government seized 60,000 acres of agricultural land and displaced over 750 people (Figure 3-7).<sup>187</sup> These farmers lost not only their land and homes, but their tight knit community and their livelihood. Many did not want to complain because they did not want to appear unpatriotic, but given that fair compensation for their loss of property sometimes dragged on for years, some landowners resorted to bringing lawsuits against the government.<sup>188</sup> After WWII ended, the government returned the lands to the farmers. Even though the damage caused by the Army was severe, families took up farming again. In 1951, when the Army considered reactivating the camp and displacing these farmers once more, the landowners banded together and wrote letters to their congresspeople objecting to the reactivation of Camp Adair.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 35.

<sup>184</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 39.

<sup>185</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 42–43.

<sup>186</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 44.

<sup>187</sup> Salem History, "Farewell Picnic for Farmers Displaced by Camp Adair Installation in Oregon, 1942," Oregon Historic Photograph Collection, June 7, 1942, <https://www.salemhistory.net/digital/collection/max/id/4640/rec/20>.

<sup>188</sup> "Here Come the Servicemen: Oregon Military Facilities," Life on the Home Front: Oregon Responds to World War II, <https://stage-sos.oregon.gov/archives/exhibits/ww2/Pages/life-military.aspx>.

<sup>189</sup> "Farmers, Veterans Protest Reactivation of Adair Lands," *The Capital Journal* (Salem,OR), January 10, 1951, p 10.



Figure 3-7. Picnic for farmers displaced for development of Camp Adair, 1942.<sup>190</sup>

## Interstate Highway Development (1944-1961)

Beginning with the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944 and subsequent acts adopted in 1952 and 1954, Congress allocated hundreds of millions of dollars to construct interstate highways across the country. In Oregon, however, after the end of World War II, there was a shortage of asphalt and timber, which limited OSHD's efforts to adequately maintain and construct Oregon's highways.<sup>191</sup>

In 1950, after Congress passed the 1950 Road Act, Oregon's legislature was able to issue bonds for road construction. The first bonds issued by the Oregon Highway Commission were in the amount of \$32 million to repair U.S. Highways 101, 99, 97, 30, and 20. Communities along the U.S. 99 corridor contained more than 70 percent of Oregon's population by the late 1940s, and this was one of the most commercialized corridors, with business and property owners using their location along this roadway to their economic advantage. However, transportation engineers and planners believed this type of development created dangerous conditions and reduced the efficiency of the road systems. To respond to this need, the Oregon legislature passed SB 121 in 1947, creating the

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<sup>190</sup> Salem History, "Farewell Picnic for Farmers."

<sup>191</sup> ODOT History Committee, "Oregon on the Move," 45.

framework for the creation of controlled access highways, which would ultimately result in adversely impacting many of these businesses and communities.<sup>192</sup>

In 1949, Oregon raised its gas tax to develop funds for road improvements, and between 1951 and 1953, the state authorized over \$70 million in highway bonds. To further assist states across the country, in 1952, Congress allocated \$25 million to states to implement the goals of establishing interstate highways, and in 1954, an additional \$175 million was allocated.<sup>193</sup>

The Salem–Portland Expressway (R. H. Baldock Freeway, later I-5) runs south from Barbur Boulevard near Tigard and continues to Salem. Language in the 1953 highway bonds identified this road as one of the highest priorities, and it was one of Oregon’s first expressways. This freeway was intended to be a key transportation corridor serving the Willamette Valley by connecting two of Oregon’s most populated cities. Another priority, and one of the first interstate highways completed, was a portion of Interstate 84 (Banfield Expressway), in 1955.<sup>194</sup>

During this same time, the Federal Interstate and Defense Highways program was established (1956), and construction on I-5 began. The development of I-84, as well as the development of I-5, resulted in the demolition of more than 1,000 homes and the displacement of thousands of people from the Albina neighborhood in Portland, a majority of whom were Black. This neighborhood had been previously redlined and identified as blighted, and therefore road engineers and transportation planners saw this as a priority for redevelopment, which disproportionately displaced low-income people of color.<sup>195</sup> Additional displacement occurred through the construction of I-405. By contrast, the early planning of these interstates ensured that the routes avoided higher-income, homogenous, and White neighborhoods, like Portland’s Alameda, Grant Park, Laurelhurst, and East Moreland neighborhoods.<sup>196</sup>

## Early Transportation Planning (1962-1966)

After Congress adopted the Federal Highway Act of 1962, jurisdictions with populations of over 50,000 were required to create Metropolitan Planning Organizations to adopt comprehensive transportation plans for federally funded transportation projects, which included adequate public engagement to better address issues of disproportionate impacts to marginalized communities.<sup>197</sup> Oregon’s larger jurisdictions had already begun to establish regional planning agencies in the metropolitan areas, and these agencies were well suited to address these federal requirements.

Established in 1945, the Lane Council of Governments is one of the oldest government councils in the nation. Originally organized under the name Central Lane County Planning Commission, this group’s mission was to provide initial planning services to jurisdictions in Lane County, Oregon, including transportation planning.<sup>198</sup> In 1957, the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments

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<sup>192</sup> ODOT History Committee, “Oregon on the Move,” 46–49.

<sup>193</sup> ODOT History Committee, “Oregon on the Move,” 49–53.

<sup>194</sup> ODOT History Committee, “Oregon on the Move,” 49–53.

<sup>195</sup> Rob Davis, “Whitewashing Albina’s Destruction,” *The Oregonian* (Portland, OR), May 30, 2023, <https://projects.oregonlive.com/publishing-prejudice/whitewashing-destruction>.

<sup>196</sup> Davis, “Whitewashing Albina’s Destruction.”

<sup>197</sup> Kramer, “The Interstate Highway System in Oregon.”

<sup>198</sup> Lane Council of Governments, “Who We Are,” accessed June 2025, <https://www.lcog.org/about/page/who-we-are>.

(MWVCOG) was established to receive federal funding and to provide planning services to Marion and Polk Counties, the City of Salem, and the South Salem School District. In 1959, these four agencies (Marion and Polk Counties, the City of Salem, and the school district) signed an agreement to work together to establish policies to address common challenges. The document was also signed by the State of Oregon and President Dwight D. Eisenhower.<sup>199</sup> The Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) was established in 1957 in the Portland Metropolitan area by representatives of Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas Counties, and the City of Portland, to receive and use federal funds made available for regional planning under Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954. However, in practice, these organizations served more of a statewide purpose. The Oregon legislature had authorized the State Board of Education to accept and administer these federal grants, under the Oregon's Bureau of Governmental Research and Service. Between 1957 and 1966, under this bureau, the MPC utilized \$540,000 in federal funds to provide support to local planning departments, and to develop base maps, gather land use data, and make population projections throughout Oregon.<sup>200</sup> By 1963, the legislature created the Portland Metropolitan Study Commission, whose purpose was to focus upon the issues solely within the Portland Metropolitan area and to systematically define regional problems and issues, and to engage the public in the development of solutions, including transportation (in compliance with the Federal Highway Act of 1962).<sup>201</sup>

Oregon had adopted its first State Highway Plan in 1914, and in the twenty years after World War II, the State Highway Commission in collaboration with the federal government identified the major routes for its interstate highway system, which included: I-5 (running north–south) and I-84 (running east–west). Smaller connecting sections included interstates I-205, I-105, and I-405, providing increased access within the cities of Portland and Eugene.

Oregon did have in place several regional planning agencies in Eugene, Salem, and Portland, which assisted with the development of transportation plans and the review of transportation projects. These agencies reviewed plans and determined there were positive impacts due to the construction of these interstates, which had resulted in increased connectivity. However, the planning processes did not adequately address negative impacts, which included the increased sprawl of development and the bypassing of smaller communities, which adversely impacted small businesses in Oregon. Construction of these smaller connecting interstate segments (I-205, I-105, and I-405) resulted in the demolition of predominantly Black neighborhoods and the disproportional displacement of Black families.<sup>202</sup>

## Federal Highways and the National Environmental Policy Act (1967-1994)

Congress established the U.S. Department of Transportation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as an agency on October 15, 1966. FHWA began operations on April 1, 1967. Subsequently, Congress adopted the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1968, which required states

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<sup>199</sup> Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, "History," accessed June 2025, <https://www.mwvcog.org/about/page/history>.

<sup>200</sup> Carl Abbott and Margery Post, "A History of Metro," 1991, Urban Studies and Planning Faculty Publications and Presentations, 109, p. 3, [https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/usp\\_fac/109](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/usp_fac/109).

<sup>201</sup> Abbott, Carl and Margery Post, "A History of Metro," 1991, Urban Studies and Planning Faculty Publications and Presentations, 109, p. 4, [https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/usp\\_fac/109](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/usp_fac/109).

<sup>202</sup> Kramer, "The Interstate Highway System in Oregon."

to hold public hearings for site planning and design of any new public roads. In order to better comply with federal requirements, the Oregon legislature created the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) in 1969.<sup>203</sup> After the federal government passed NEPA in 1970, ODOT staff worked to ensure that the construction of any roads complied with both Section 106 of the NHPA (1966) and NEPA requirements mandating that road projects complete EISs detailing the impacts of proposed work. By the end of 1970, Oregon had completed 4,887 miles of county roads and 3,524 miles of state highway roads with federal funding managed by ODOT staff and in compliance with these new federal regulations. However, by 1971, ODOT established a separate environmental division to focus exclusively on preparation of EISs for projects using federal funds.<sup>204</sup> In 1972, the legislature adopted the Statewide Land Use Planning Act, wherein Goal 12 required cities, counties, and the state to create transportation system plans that took into account all relevant modes of transportation, in addition to roads and streets (e.g., mass transit, air, water, rail, bike, pedestrian).<sup>205</sup>

## Planning and Support for Equitable Accessible Multimodal Transportation (1973-Present)

In 1973, the Oregon State Highway Commission was renamed the Oregon Transportation Commission, marking the beginning of the refocus of transportation planning to comply with Goal 12 of the Statewide Planning Act, as well as the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973, which authorized states and local governments to remove segments of interstate roads and redirect funds toward mass transit. In 1979, one of the first actions taken in Oregon as a result of this act, President Jimmy Carter approved the decision not to build a federally funded freeway through northwest Portland, because it would have adversely impacted the community. Instead, funds were redirected toward mass transit and, in 1987, the first light-rail (MAX) began operation from downtown Portland to the eastside.<sup>206</sup>

In 1991, Congress adopted the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), which focused federal transportation funding upon intermodal and multimodal approaches, like light-rail, bus, train, bike, and pedestrian alternatives, and specifically identifying how people can connect to and use different modes of transportation to get from one place to another. This change resulted in requiring development of transportation plans to include planning for multiple transportation modes. In 1992, the Oregon Transportation Commission adopted the first comprehensive, multimodal transportation plan for Oregon. Subsequently, the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) adopted the Transportation Planning Rule, creating a partnership between the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) and ODOT to integrate land use and transportation planning, and, in 1993, the Transportation and Growth Management Program (TGM) was formed by DLCD and ODOT. That same year, ODOT restructured their organization to establish a separate division for public transit, and in 1995, ODOT proposed a comprehensive

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<sup>203</sup> ODOT History Committee, “Oregon on the Move,” 62.

<sup>204</sup> ODOT History Committee, “Oregon on the Move,” 63–65.

<sup>205</sup> Oregon Planning, Department of Land Conservation and Development [DLCD], “Goal 12: Transportation,” December 27, 1974, <https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/op/pages/goal-12.aspx>.

<sup>206</sup> ODOT History Committee, “Oregon on the Move,” 75.

transportation funding package that included allowing new automobile registration fees to fund public transportation.<sup>207</sup>

In 1997, the Oregon legislature established the Oregon Transportation Infrastructure Bank with an initial allocation of \$5.51 million, as a revolving loan fund to support alternative funding for transportation projects for cities, counties, transit districts, and Tribal governments. In 1998, the westside light rail MAX began operations between Portland and Hillsboro, however, the Oregon legislature failed to pass transportation funding packages in 1997 and 1998, and Governor John Kitzhaber asked the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) to put 22 active projects on hold due to lack of funds.<sup>208</sup>

Due to the work of the OTC, the Oregon legislature adopted the Oregon Transportation Investment Act (OTIA) in 2001, along with an allocation of \$400 million (through increased driver and motor vehicle fees and bonds) for road and bridge projects. In 2002, the legislature added \$100 million in bonding capacity to allow ODOT to maintain and repair roads and bridges throughout the state.<sup>209</sup> ODOT worked with local governments through an extensive public input process to recommend to the OTC which key projects should be prioritized.<sup>210</sup> As a result of the passage of two subsequent OTIA acts, ODOT spent approximately \$3 billion over the next decade to repair and replace hundreds of bridges and roads.<sup>211</sup>

In 2005, the legislature adopted the Connect Oregon program, as proposed by Governor Ted Kulongoski, to create a Multimodal Transportation Fund using \$100 million in proceeds from lottery bonds. The program still provides funding today for non-highway multimodal transportation projects. The OTC awarded \$48 million in 2024 toward 19 aviation, marine, and rail projects.<sup>212</sup>

In 2020, ODOT created an Office of Social Equity. ODOT and the OTC jointly developed the 2021–2023 Strategic Action Plan (SAP), which identified social equity as one of three priorities for ODOT. In 2021, ODOT issued a Social Equity White Paper (Paper) that defines both process equity and outcome equity, as well as best practices and tools for ensuring social equity throughout the process of transportation policy making.<sup>213</sup> ODOT acknowledged the historic impacts of transportation policies on underserved communities, stating: “Social Equity in transportation recognizes the role that transportation plays in affecting people’s overall health and quality of life, and the unique history of barriers that historically excluded and underserved communities face.”<sup>214</sup> ODOT further clarified the importance of establishing a framework for any future transportation project development by prioritizing inclusion throughout the planning and implementation process. Process equity ensures that there are no barriers to engagement during the development of the transportation plan and outcome equity requires the Agency to continue measuring, evaluating and

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<sup>207</sup> ODOT History Committee, “Oregon on the Move,” 90–94.

<sup>208</sup> ODOT History Committee, “Oregon on the Move,” 98–100.

<sup>209</sup> ODOT History Committee, “Oregon on the Move,” 112.

<sup>210</sup> ODOT History Committee, “Oregon on the Move,” 116.

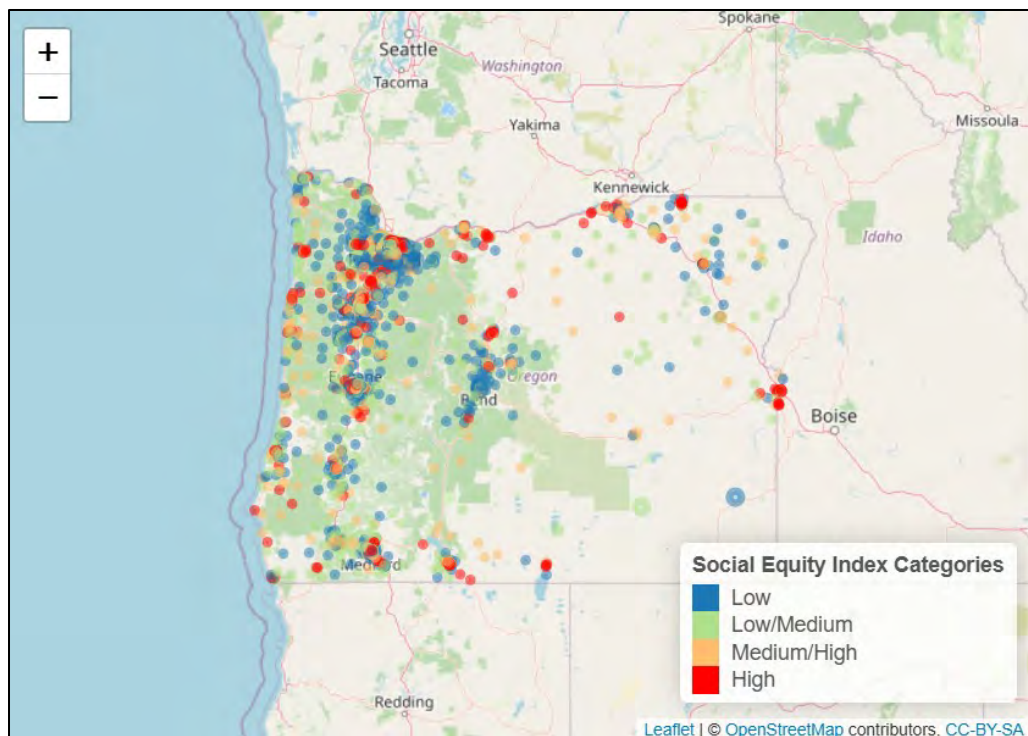
<sup>211</sup> ODOT History Committee, “Oregon on the Move,” 129.

<sup>212</sup> ODOT, “Connect Oregon,” accessed June 3, 2025.  
<https://www.oregon.gov/odot/programs/pages/connectoregon.aspx>.

<sup>213</sup> Sumi Malik, “Social Equity White Paper” [“Paper”] (Salem: ODOT, September 2021).

<sup>214</sup> Sumi Malik, “Social Equity White Paper” [“Paper”] (Salem: ODOT, September 2021), 6.

monitoring social equity as the plan is being implemented.<sup>215</sup> As a part of recognizing social equity as a core priority, the agency developed the Social Equity Index (SEI) to help agency staff and leadership understand where communities of concern are located throughout Oregon (Figure 3-8). ODOT's Paper acknowledged that their agency has historically perpetuated systemically racist transportation policies, resulting in unequal accessibility to transportation resources and infrastructure, especially for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC). ODOT further acknowledged that the State of Oregon and the OSHD implemented public investments in the highway system throughout Oregon that were ultimately used as a segregation tool, enabling more affluent White people to live farther away from city centers and concentrating BIPOC communities within lower-income urban areas.<sup>216</sup> ODOT's White Paper identifies best practices and tools based upon their latest efforts and the experiences of other agencies to operationalize equitable processes and outcomes.<sup>217</sup> One of the key tools identified within ODOT's Paper is the Social Equity Index Map, which highlights where concentrations of vulnerable populations live, such as those who are non-White, over 65 years of age, and live in poverty (Figure 3-8).<sup>218</sup> Tools like this help local communities work to identify and acknowledge the distinct barriers that historically excluded or underserved marginalized people within their communities and to develop clear solutions to address these barriers.<sup>219</sup>



<sup>215</sup> Malik, "Paper," 15-20.

<sup>216</sup> Malik, "Paper," 4-5.

<sup>217</sup> Malik, "Paper," 10.

<sup>218</sup> Social Equity Index Map. Oregon Department of Transportation. <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/state-of-the-system/pages/equity.aspx>

<sup>219</sup> Malik, "Paper," 12.

Figure 3-8. Screenshot of ODOT’s Social Equity Index (2017–2021). The colors represent the relative concentration of vulnerable populations, with red indicating a high concentration, yellow indicating a medium/high concentration, green indicating a low/medium concentration, and blue indicating a low concentration.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Josh Roll, “Oregon Department of Transportation Social Equity Index 2023 Update,” 2023, [https://rpubs.com/ODOT\\_Research/ODOT\\_SEI\\_2023](https://rpubs.com/ODOT_Research/ODOT_SEI_2023).

# 4 Historical Overview of Salem Policies Impacting Underserved Communities

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In general, the City of Salem adopted planning policies impacting minority groups that mirrored the overall national and state level policies impacting marginalized populations. These policies were adopted to benefit the White decision makers and tended to exclude and marginalize non-White people of color. Tribes were forcibly removed to make way for Euroamerican settlers and Oregon's constitution excluded blacks and Chinese from owning property. Oregon was an exclusionary state, beginning with the enactment of the state's first constitution, which specifically restricted ownership of land to White men. As a result of decisions made by Salem City Council, in certain cases entire non-White populations, like the Chinese population, were displaced from their homes and businesses in downtown Salem. At different points throughout history, there were very few non-White people living in Salem and this was actually a selling point for the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses in Salem. For example, according to the 1935 Salem City Directory, which provided highlights of the benefits of living in Salem, it stated the following: "Salem is known as the most all-American city of its size in the United States. More than 93 per cent of its people are American born and others are citizens. There is absolutely no foreign element."<sup>221</sup> Additionally, in the 1940s, a Salem sign read "Welcome to Salem – 99.9% Native Born White."<sup>222</sup>

The following section provides a historical overview of Salem's policies relating to land use, housing, and transportation, identifying areas where the impacts to underserved communities are clear. Section 5 includes cases studies focusing upon five different populations and an examination of their experience in Salem. All five groups experienced similar displacement or discrimination due to racist or exclusionary policies established by the government.<sup>223</sup>

## 4.2 City of Salem Policies

### 4.2.1 Land Use, Settlement, and Housing Westward Expansion & Establishment of Salem (1840-1900)

Methodist missionaries from New York were the first non-Indigenous people to settle permanently in the Willamette Valley and in Salem. Reverend Jason Lee and the first group of Methodist Missionaries arrived in the Willamette Valley in 1834 and established their first mission station at Mission Bottom, ten miles north of the present-day City of Salem. In the early nineteenth century, the area comprising the present city of Salem was known as Chemeketa, the name of the Kalapuyan Village that had been there since time immemorial.<sup>224</sup> In 1840, the Methodists relocated their central

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<sup>221</sup> R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk's Salem City and Marion County Directory: 1935*. (Portland, OR: R.L. Polk and Co. Publishers), page 11

<sup>222</sup> "Take Steps to Banish Racism from Our City," *Statesman Journal* (Salem, OR), February 1999, p. 30.

<sup>223</sup> Due to the small populations of people of color living in Salem, it was challenging to identify clear planning policies specific to Salem related to these populations prior to the 1940s. Additionally, as small populations of people of color did arise in Salem, the individuals were often scattered throughout the city as opposed to enclaving together, making study areas hard to locate.

<sup>224</sup> Fitzgerald et al., "National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for Oregon Country Methodist Mission Sites," E-3.

mission station to Chemeketa, ten miles south, at the present-day city of Salem. Here they established a mill, parsonage and residences as well as the Indian Manual Labor Training School for indigenous children. Reverend George Gary arrived at the Central Station on June 6, 1844. Gary's goal was to assess the operations of the Mission. His first task was to assess the school and determine whether it should remain open. Gary found many of the children sick and that many had tried to run away due to the strict regimen at the school. Gary discovered that runaways were severely punished: "Runaways have been punished as criminals. The most of them have taken their stolen budget and when found have been brought back, put in chains, severely whipped, &c., &c, guarded and kept within a high enclosure, like prisoners."<sup>225</sup>

The Indian Manual Labor Training School was closed in 1844, and the mission closed. The school was converted to a boarding school for the children of Euroamerican settlers.<sup>226</sup> Subsequently, Methodist William Willson recorded the first plat of the City of Salem in 1846 with the Territorial Legislature selling off lots to settlers on behalf of the Methodist Church to benefit the school (the Oregon Institute) they had established here, which ultimately became Willamette University.<sup>227</sup>

Oregon's Provisional Government first met at Champoege in 1843; however, in 1844, the Provisional Government temporarily met at Oregon City.<sup>228</sup> On August 14, 1848, Congress proclaimed Oregon a territory of the United States. In March 1849, General Joseph Lane took over as territorial governor. Lane convened the first territorial legislature on July 16, 1849, at Oregon City. At their second regular session, on December 2, 1850, the territorial legislature decided to convene the next session in Salem.<sup>229</sup> On January 13, 1851, the Legislative Assembly of Oregon passed a law moving the capital to Salem.<sup>230</sup> The session of 1851–1852 was held at the Oregon Institute building (the former Methodist Indian Manual Labor Training School).<sup>231</sup>

After the Legislative Assembly established Salem as the capital of the Oregon Territorial Government in 1851, the first Statehouse was constructed in 1854. This building was constructed on Block 64 at the head of Willson Avenue in Salem at the center of the original plat of Salem, laid out by William H. Willson, the Methodist missionary who donated the land for this use. This building burned the following year, in 1855. The fire started in the unfinished northeastern corner of the building, destroying many of the territory's early records. The cause of the fire was never officially

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<sup>225</sup> Charles H. Carey. "Diary of Rev. George Gary," *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, Mar., 1923, Vol. 24, No. 1 (March 1923), 84.

<sup>226</sup> Fitzgerald et al., "National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for Oregon Country Methodist Mission Sites," E-38-E46.

<sup>227</sup> Fitzgerald et al., "National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for Oregon Country Methodist Mission Sites," E-38-E46

<sup>228</sup> Barbara Mahoney, "Provisional Government," Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated February 7, 2023, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/provisional\\_govt\\_conference\\_in\\_champoeg\\_1843/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/provisional_govt_conference_in_champoeg_1843/).

<sup>229</sup> Marianne Kadas, "Historic Context Statement: Salem, Oregon," City of Salem, August 1992, 18.

<sup>230</sup> Kylie Pine, "Why is Salem Oregon's Capitol," Willamette Heritage Center, 2016, <https://www.willametteheritage.org/salem-oregons-capital/>.

<sup>231</sup> Henry J. Brown, "Sketches of Salem from 1851-1869," *Marion County History* 3 (1957): 18.

determined, however newspaper reports allege that it was due to controversy over the location of the Capitol building, which some Territorial representatives wanted to move to Corvallis.<sup>232</sup>

In 1857, when Oregon's government was initially established under the State Constitution, the constitution authorized the election of three full-time administrative officers (a governor, secretary of state, and a state treasurer). Under these officers, initially ten state administrative offices (agencies) were established. By 1890, the number of state agencies had increased to 51.<sup>233</sup>

Once Oregon became a state in 1859, and Salem was confirmed as the state capital, the governor and other State offices rented space in buildings in downtown Salem. The building known as the Holman Building on Commercial Street was occupied by the legislature and the State Library of Oregon. A new Capitol building was not constructed until 1873, and not completed until 1892, when the dome was added. During this period, several State facilities were constructed in Salem and included the State Penitentiary (1866/1871), Oregon School for the Deaf (1870), Oregon School for the Blind (1872), Oregon State Hospital (1883), and the State Institution for the Feeble Minded (Fairview Training Center) (1908). By 1900, the State of Oregon had 62 state agencies, and by 1937, there were 106 agencies, with most of their administrative offices based within the city of Salem.<sup>234</sup>

Salem, platted by Willson in 1846, grew rapidly. Thomas Cox, an immigrant who arrived in Oregon in 1847, built a two-story house at the corner of Commercial and Ferry Streets in Salem. His store was the first building put up in Salem after the town was surveyed and was also the location of the first Salem post office.<sup>235</sup> This first plat was not recorded until four years later, on March 22, 1850. Streets were 90 feet wide, and the plat consisted of two blocks. "The sale of these lots not only brought people closer to the Institute but also enabled the trustees to fund an endowment for their school."<sup>236</sup> The first block was bordered on the west by the Willamette River, on the south by Mission Street, on the east by Cottage Street, and on the north by State Street. The second block was bordered on the west by the river, on the south by State Street, on the east by Capitol Street, and on the north by Division Street.<sup>237</sup>

In 1869, Salem's population was 1,139. Within this original plat, there were 700 private residences and 32 brick stores.<sup>238</sup> The year 1869 was one of transition for Salem. It was transforming from a small village of non-Indigenous settlers to a more developed town. In 1869, no Salem residential or commercial building had running water or indoor plumbing. Salem's downtown streets were unpaved and dimly lit. There was no hospital. On January 14, 1869, a special meeting of the City

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<sup>232</sup> Kylie Pine, "Why is Salem Oregon's Capitol," Willamette Heritage Center, 2016, <https://www.willametteheritage.org/salem-oregons-capital/>, *Oregon Statesman*. 30 Dec 1855; 1 Jan 1856, 2:3, and Tobias Read, *Oregon Blue Book: 2023-24, Almanac and Fact Book* (Salem: Oregon Secretary of State, 2023), <https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book/Pages/local/cities/capital.aspx>.

<sup>233</sup> Morris S. Isseks, "Summary History of State Administrative Agencies in Oregon, 1843-1937," Oregon State Planning Board, 1939, 4-5.

<sup>234</sup> Isseks, "Summary History of State Administrative Agencies in Oregon," 4-5.

<sup>235</sup> Lewis Hubell Judson, "Sketches of Salem..its History from the Date of Its First Settlement," *Marion County History* 2 (1956): 52. Also noted by James W. Cox in *Marion County History* 3 (1957): 37: "my mother's stepfather- Turner Crump came in and the new name was 'Wm. Cox and Co.' Mr. Crump was appointed the first postmaster of Salem, the office being in this store."

<sup>236</sup> Judson, "Sketches of Salem," 52. Also noted by Cox, p. 37: "my mother's stepfather- Turner Crump came in and the new name was 'Wm. Cox and Co.' Mr. Crump was appointed the first postmaster of Salem, the office being in this store."

<sup>237</sup> "Original Plat of Salem 100 Years Old this Week," *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), March 1950.

<sup>238</sup> Kadas, "Historic Context Statement," 23.

Council convened to discuss the spread of smallpox throughout the city. A health committee was established, which discussed building structures for people in need to protect the community. These included constructing a place where people infected with contagious diseases could quarantine while they recovered (a “pest house”), and constructing of a building for people with disabilities or the elderly who needed assistance with tasks of daily living (i.e. an invalid’s home) 1.5 miles northeast of town. J. W. Souther, who owned the store called City Drug, provided free medicine to people who could not afford it, provided they had a doctor’s recommendation stating their need. William Graves became the first undertaker, who offered coffins and a hearse at reduced prices.<sup>239</sup>

Agriculture was a central industry in the 1860s, and comprised a majority of Salem’s trade at this time. The Minto family settled in Salem and built their first house in 1869 at 841 South Saginaw, south of downtown. The family acquired what is now known as Minto Island, where they developed a hops and sheep ranch. John Minto became the first secretary of the State Agricultural Society, which held the first State Fair in 1861, in Gladstone. Minto served as the editor of the *Willamette Farmer*, an agricultural newspaper.

In Salem, development within the platted city also included the development of grist, lumber, and woolen mills, and in the later part of the century, canneries. In addition to its main role as the State of Oregon’s government center, Salem became a center for processing agricultural products from the outlying Willamette Valley. Salem mills, canneries, and factories processed crops and made and sold supplies and services. Joseph Watt established a woolen mill in 1857, and by 1860, the mill had 100 employees and was producing \$100,000 worth of cloth. By 1871, the Salem Woolen Mill was flourishing, producing 56,000 yards of cashmeres, 52,000 yards of flannels, 16,000 yards of tweeds and 500 blankets a year.<sup>240</sup> This mill burned in 1875 and was not rebuilt. However, in 1889, Thomas Kay constructed another woolen mill, the Thomas Kay Woolen Mill. This mill burned in 1895, but Kay constructed a new one immediately. Kay’s mill employed 88 people and made National Guard uniforms, blankets, and other fine wool woven materials. Watt’s Mill (aka Willamette Woolen Manufacturing Company) store opened on Commercial Street in the late 1890s.<sup>241</sup> The two largest flour mills in the state at this time were located in Salem: the R. C. Kinney & Company Flour Mill and the North Salem Flouring Mill. The Salem Flouring Mills incorporated in 1870 and sold flour under the “Wild Rose Flour” label. Other industries in Salem included the Salem Iron Works, Capital Lumbering Company, and Salem Bag Factory.

Many of Salem’s workforce lived in small houses constructed near the mills north and east of downtown, as there were no restrictions against building residences adjacent to mills. Salem’s Chinese community had been living downtown since the mid-1860s, and several blocks along State Street between Liberty and High Streets had become known as Salem’s Chinatown, however by the turn of the century Salem’s downtown had become a prime area to locate new businesses. Chinese people did not own their downtown property, which was prohibited under state law. Subsequently

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<sup>239</sup> Ben Maxwell, “Salem in 1869: A Year of Transition,” *Marion County History* 3 (1957): 27.

<sup>240</sup> Maxwell, “Salem in 1869,”; 27; Fitzgerald, “National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for Fairmount National Register Nomination-Draft Manuscript.” 10; Judson, Lewis Hubell. “Sketches of Salem..its History from the Date of Its First Settlement,” *Marion County History Vol 2. 1956* (Marion County Historical Society, Salem OR) 52.

<sup>241</sup> Elaine Rohse, “Joseph Watt (1817–1890), Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated December 14, 2022, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/watt\\_joseph\\_1817\\_1890/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/watt_joseph_1817_1890/).

the Salem City Council made policy decisions which ultimately displaced the Chinese community, eliminating Salem's Chinatown.<sup>242</sup>

Indoor plumbing became possible in Salem beginning in 1871, when the Salem Water Company incorporated. The first water was taken from a point 75 feet out in the Willamette River. A water tower was built on property owned by W. F. Boothby and H. Stapleton, which was located west of Front Street between Court Street and State Street. In 1878, the area between Mission Street and Fairmount Hill was first platted. In 1889, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 183, which granted the Salem Street Railway Company a thirty-year franchise to construct and operate streetcars throughout the city. The first streetcars were powered by horses and were later electric, and with access provided by the streetcar, many wealthier residents chose to locate in south Salem in the later part of the nineteenth century.<sup>243</sup> This area first developed in the 1850s with the construction of a sawmill and a flour mill located at the foot of Owens Street. Timber was originally harvested from Fairmount Hill and cut at the mill or rafted to a channel off the Willamette River near Minto-Brown Island (i.e. the Willamette slough). The mill was purchased by David Miller (after whom the street is named). In 1865, the mill was bought by Witten and Roork; they sold the sawmill to the Moore family, which then moved it to the foot of Ferry Street.<sup>244</sup>

By 1880, Salem had over 2,500 residents. The population was mostly Euroamerican White, American-born migrants, and German and Chinese immigrants.<sup>245</sup>

## Aldermanic/Mayoral Form of Government (1846-1946)

From its incorporation in 1857, through the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the City of Salem had a Mayoral/Aldermanic form of government. Voters elected aldermen to represent wards and the mayor at large. The mayor had a wide range of responsibilities. The city charter mandated a yearly report from the mayor to the Salem City Council (aldermen), intended to “state to the council the condition, financial and otherwise, of the city, and recommend such measures for the peace, health, improvement and prosperity of the city as he may deem expedient.”<sup>246</sup>

The aldermen on the Salem City Council made decisions about everything from public health to fines during this period, and to make their work more efficient, they appointed Council members to Committees, such as the Public Health Committee. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the City's policies toward marginalized communities mirrored policies at the national level. Ordinances were adopted singling out both Chinese and Japanese people under the umbrella of the Council's Police and Health Committee.

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, this Committee was renamed to be the Police and Health Committee and was the source of many recommended policies to the City Council related to the enforcement of property laws occupied by marginalized communities, such as

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<sup>242</sup> Kimberli Fitzgerald, Kirsten Straus, and Kylie Pine, “Searching for Salem's Early Chinese Community,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 122 vol 4, Winter 2021, [https://www.ohs.org/oregon-historical-quarterly/back-issues/upload/Fitzgerald-et-al\\_Salem-Shrine\\_OHQ-122\\_4\\_Winter-2021\\_web.pdf](https://www.ohs.org/oregon-historical-quarterly/back-issues/upload/Fitzgerald-et-al_Salem-Shrine_OHQ-122_4_Winter-2021_web.pdf).

<sup>243</sup> Ben Maxwell and Clarence Pugh, “Streetcars Line: Salem's First Streetcar Line,” 2006, Willamette Heritage Center, <https://www.willametteheritage.org/streetcars-line/>.

<sup>244</sup> Kadas, “Historic Context Statement,” 30–40.

<sup>245</sup> Kadas, “Historic Context Statement,” 30–40.

<sup>246</sup> City of Salem, “City Charter,” accessed June 10, 2025, <https://www.cityofsalem.net/government/laws-rules/city-charter>.

the Chinese people. This Committee, comprised of only white Euromerican men, recommended to the City Council that Chinatown be condemned based on the premise of public safety and health.<sup>247</sup>

After the United States entered World War II, the City took several steps to contribute to the national war effort. In January 1942, the Mayor appointed a ten-person committee for the purpose of conducting a housing survey, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, to identify available housing for military personnel who would be in the area training at Camp Adair.<sup>248</sup> Soon after, the City Council appointed a Civilian Defense Committee, which cooperated with the military to remove 244 Japanese Americans and people of Japanese descent living in Salem to incarceration centers in Tulelake, California, after President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 in February 1942.<sup>249</sup>

President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Office of Price Administration (OPA) in 1941 by executive order. He intended the OPA to control rent costs during World War II. The OPA received complaints from Salem residents in 1942 about excessive charges and increases in rent, which in some instances were reported as high as 30 or 40 percent. The complaints originated from smaller apartment houses near downtown in North Salem. Representatives from the OPA warned the City that if they did not take action, the OPA would step in and establish rent controls in the area, and further, all landlords in Salem would be required to submit a report each month to the OPA. In response, the mayor established a “Rent Control Committee.”<sup>250</sup> The committee worked with local realtors and rental property owners to first educate them regarding fair rental practices and advise against charging excessive rents. The committee worked to draft an ordinance requiring that all landlords roll back their rents to the amount they were as of January 1 of the previous year, and further recommended establishing a Fair Rent Committee to hear any future complaints.<sup>251</sup> The Rent Control Ordinance (# 4103) was adopted on November 1, 1943.<sup>252</sup>

In 1945, the Salem City Council approved a request from the Women’s Ambulance Corps to establish a first aid room at the North Salem Fire Station, in order to provide aid to underserved people in north Salem.<sup>253</sup>

## Zoning and Land Use Planning

The State of Oregon granted local jurisdictions the authority to zone in 1919, but it was not until 1925 that the Salem City Council adopted an ordinance establishing the Planning and Zoning Commission and a zoning law. Both the zoning law and Planning and Zoning Commission ordinance were modeled after Portland’s laws that had been adopted a year earlier. In 1926, before any zoning maps were proposed, the Planning and Zoning Commission were focused primarily

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<sup>247</sup> “Salem’s Chinatown,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), 1903, p. 4. “Stolz of the Council Committee on Health and Police, reported concerning Salem’s Chinatown that 2/3rds of the district have been condemned due to the class of tenants and conditions are reported to be a menace to the health of the community.”

<sup>248</sup> Salem City Council Minutes, “Civilian Defense Committee,” January 1942, 6.

<sup>249</sup> Virginia Green, “Japanese Americans in Salem,” Willamette Heritage Center, August 25, 2005, <https://www.willametteheritage.org/japanese-americans/>; and “244 Salem Japs Off for Tulelake,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), June 3, 1942, p. 1.

<sup>250</sup> “Salem Rent Ceiling Looms,” *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), August 1943, p. 10.

<sup>251</sup> “Realtors Plan for Rental Control,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), October 1943, p. 7.

<sup>252</sup> Salem City Council, “Rent Control Ordinance #4103,” November 1943, p. 2.

<sup>253</sup> Salem City Council Minutes, “First Aid Room,” January 1945, p. 2.

upon addressing concerns related to protection of homogeneous residential neighborhoods in the community. For example, the City Council rejected a proposal to locate a junk yard and a laundromat in order to protect the residential character of the neighborhoods.<sup>254</sup> Later that same year, community members raised concerns over a separate laundromat creating a “little Italy” in an established residential neighborhood.<sup>255</sup> Concepts of zoning and land-use planning were being developed during a time when exclusionary and racist policies such as redlining and exclusionary covenants were prevalent throughout the country. These early impulses to react to community outcry and protect homogenous residential neighborhoods set the precedent for planning decisions.

In 1947, after Oregon passed legislation authorizing local jurisdictions to adopt long-range plans, the Salem Chamber of Commerce’s Long-Range Planning Commission drafted Salem’s first such plan. At the time, the City of Salem comprised about 40,000 people, contained within 8.7 square miles.<sup>256</sup> In 1957, the City of Salem, Marion County, Polk County, and School District 24-J joined together to form the Mid-Willamette Valley Planning Council. This Council developed a preliminary comprehensive plan for the Salem Urban area in 1962 and served as a basis for management of development until the early 1970s. This plan identified areas for single-family residential neighborhoods, which were away from the downtown core and clearly separated from major industrial or commercial use areas. On the other hand, areas for multi-family residential use were located close to the downtown core, were on or near major streets, and were buffer zones between single-family areas and other use areas (i.e., commercial/industrial).<sup>257</sup> By 1970, the city had grown to 68,296 people within 25.5 square miles.

The City of Salem was one of the first local jurisdictions in the nation to have organized and recognized neighborhood associations. In 1972, the City initially developed a pilot program as part of the neighborhood planning initiative to help facilitate the organization of these associations. One of the first associations to be organized was the Northgate Neighborhood Association, which immediately voiced concerns over a planned road connecting Portland Road to Keizer Road.<sup>258</sup> The total number of recognized neighborhood associations grew to 19, and a majority of these developed their own neighborhood plans. Of note were policies these neighborhood associations developed, specifically in relationship to the protection of single-family housing and the limitation of any encroachment of multi-family housing. The 1984 East Lancaster Neighborhood Association (ELNA) Neighborhood Plan included a policy stating that “Existing and future single family residential areas should be protected from encroachment by multifamily developments and commercial land uses through careful site layout and natural vegetative buffers”<sup>259</sup> This Plan also had a housing goal to “encourage single family home ownership in order to provide for neighborhood

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<sup>254</sup> Salem Breakfast on Bikes, “Salem’s First Zoning in 1926 Grapples with Laundries, Junk Yards, and Signs,” December 2019, <https://breakfastonbikes.blogspot.com/2019/12/salems-first-zoning-in-1926-grapples-with-laundries-junk-yards-signs.html>.

<sup>255</sup> Salem Breakfast on Bikes, “Salem’s First Zoning in 1926.”

<sup>256</sup> Mid-Willamette Council of Governments, “Salem Area Comprehensive Plan,” Salem Planning Department, 1973, p. II-2.

<sup>257</sup> Mid-Willamette Council of Governments, “Salem Area Comprehensive Plan,” III-4

<sup>258</sup> “Citizens Uneasy over Route Plans,” *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), February 9, 1972, p. 12; and City of Salem, “Neighborhood Associations,” accessed June 2025, <https://www.cityofsalem.net/community/neighborhoods/neighborhood-associations>.

<sup>259</sup> East Lancaster Neighborhood Association [ELNA], “ELNA Neighborhood Plan,” 1984, <https://www.cityofsalem.net/home/showpublisheddocument/5128/637798385685330000>; and Grant Neighborhood Association, “Grant Neighborhood Association Plan,” 1983, <https://www.cityofsalem.net/home/showpublisheddocument/5130/637798385689400000>.

stability.”<sup>260</sup> However, the Salem City Council did not always concur with the policies adopted by these neighborhood associations. For example, the Grant Neighborhood Association adopted a policy to oppose any conversion of single-family housing; however, the City Council did not follow suit in adopting this policy.<sup>261</sup>

The Salem City Council adopted the City’s first comprehensive plan, the Salem Comprehensive Plan (1973 Plan), in 1973. The 1973 Plan included goals and policies for the following: housing, residential, commercial, and industrial development; public facilities, parks, agriculture and natural resources; and transportation, bikeways and trails.

The 1973 Plan highlighted population demographics reflecting the nature of Salem as a state capitol. In the document, planners noted that the labor force in Salem was unusual when compared with the rest of Oregon because Salem was the state capital. Over one-third of the workforce was directly employed by a local, state or federal government agency in Salem. The remainder of the labor force was predominantly employed in the canning or freezing industries associated with the processing of fruit and vegetable crops harvested in the surrounding Willamette Valley. The 1973 Plan indicated that the populations utilizing the multi-family housing tended to be lower income, young, or elderly, and recognized the disparity in Salem between the single-family and multi-family neighborhoods, established goals for housing where there was no clear distinction between single-family and multi-family residential neighborhoods, and suggested that they should instead be combined with a mixture of uses (i.e., within a planned unit development).<sup>262</sup>

With the 1973 Plan, the City adopted goals and policies for housing, specifically, “To assure that all people have the opportunity to acquire safe and sanitary housing.”<sup>263</sup> The 1973 Plan documented 6,850 people residing in public and private institutions (approximately 10 percent of the population of Salem).<sup>264</sup> The Plan documented a very small percentage (1.7 percent) of non-White people in the 1970 census, with just 340 Black people and the remainder identifying as Indigenous or Asian.<sup>265</sup> Planners noted that in 1970, Salem was predominantly a single-family residential community, with multi-family dwellings accounting for one-fourth of the housing units in the city.<sup>266</sup> In 1968, the City of Salem Planning Department completed a detailed land-use inventory for 300 square miles around Salem as part of developing Salem’s 1973 Comprehensive Plan, and it was documented that 13,442 acres were used for residential purposes, 933 acres for commercial uses and 1,332 acres for industrial uses.<sup>267</sup>

The City’s Comprehensive Plan has been amended and updated many times since it was first adopted in 1973. Most recently, an update was completed by the City of Salem Long Range Planning Division after a visioning project completed in 2020 (Our Salem Vision). Additionally, Salem’s City

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<sup>260</sup> ELNA, “ELNA Neighborhood Plan”; and Grant Neighborhood Association, “Grant Neighborhood Association Plan.”

<sup>261</sup> ELNA, “ELNA Neighborhood Plan”; and Grant Neighborhood Association, “Grant Neighborhood Association Plan.”

<sup>262</sup> Mid-Willamette Council of Governments, “Salem Area Comprehensive Plan”; and “Council Adopts Plan for Salem,” *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), March 13, 1973, p. 1.

<sup>263</sup> Mid-Willamette Council of Governments, “Salem Area Comprehensive Plan,” III-27

<sup>264</sup> Mid-Willamette Council of Governments, “Salem Area Comprehensive Plan,” II-3

<sup>265</sup> “Salem Area Comprehensive Plan,” Salem Planning Department, 1973.

<sup>266</sup> “Salem Area Comprehensive Plan,” Salem Planning Department, 1973.

<sup>267</sup> “Salem Area Comprehensive Plan,” Salem Planning Department, 1973.

Council adopted a Strategic Plan, recently updated in March 2021, articulating the mission, vision, values, and goals of the City. Of note is Goal 3, the commitment to be inclusive and to ensure equity and accessibility across city services:

Goal 3: Increasing Equitable Delivery of City Services: Diversity Equity and Inclusion: Ensure that City services are provided equitably to all residents; and

Service Accessibility: Increase accessibility of key City services by providing online options and extending services to underserved residents; and

Financial Stability: Strengthen the City's long-term financial position to ensure ongoing provision of core services to all residents; and

Community Engaged Policing: Increase police engagement with all communities within the city to enhance crime prevention and to facilitate trust when a police response is required<sup>268</sup>

## Segregated Housing Patterns and Exclusion

Within some marginalized communities, Salem became known as an unsafe and unwelcoming city for people of color in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The City of Salem had adopted restrictive covenants or deed restrictions as part of recorded plats. In 1945, the subdivision for a neighborhood called Pioneer Heights included a deed restriction that stated “No one but members of the caucasian race shall be the owners of or reside on any of these lots.”<sup>269</sup> In 1948, the United State Supreme Court ruled in *Shelley v. Kraemer* that racially reactive covenants violated the Fourteenth Amendment and therefore were legally unenforceable.<sup>270</sup>

Following the end of World War II, the U.S. War Department established a housing office in Salem to address the housing shortage for returning military personnel. At the January 7, 1946, Salem City Council meeting, William Braun, a federal representative, addressed the Council, stating that the federal government would be making available former barracks from nearby Camp Adair, and asked permission to place these at the Salem Airport in order to provide adequate temporary housing for returning military personnel. Braun also requested that the Salem City Council consider establishing a local housing authority as authorized under federal and state law to better deal with this housing crisis.<sup>271</sup> Subsequently, the Council adopted Resolution #5339, establishing Salem's first Housing Authority, comprising five commissioners:

Whereas, there exists in the City of Salem as well as throughout the United States of America, an acute housing shortage, especially among those persons or families who lack the amount of income necessary to enable them to cope with the housing shortage, as a result of which thousands of persons including many returning servicemen are unable to find any type of living quarters in which to house their

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<sup>268</sup> City of Salem, “City of Salem Strategic Plan: 2021-2026,” March 2021, 12. <https://www.cityofsalem.net/home/showpublisheddocument/5752/637804422145870000>.

<sup>269</sup> “Pioneer Heights Subdivision,” *Plat Recorded Marion County Assessor*, Volume 334, Deed Records, March 29, 1945, p. 175.

<sup>270</sup> U.S. Supreme Court, *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 1948, [https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/shelley\\_v\\_kraemer\\_\(1948\)](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/shelley_v_kraemer_(1948)).

<sup>271</sup> “Salem City Council Minutes,” City Recorder, January 7, 1946, 2.

families and themselves; . . . That the Common Council of the City of Salem does herewith declare there is a need for a “Housing Authority”.<sup>272</sup>

While this first Housing Authority worked throughout the 1950s to assist returning servicemen in finding existing housing or purchasing new housing available through federally subsidized programs, marginalized communities were not supported equally. This type of unfair treatment was contested by some groups in Oregon and Salem. The Oregon legislature passed its first civil rights law establishing the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) in 1949. Oregon was one of only six states in the nation to have this kind of civil rights protection in the workplace. Beginning in the 1950s, the FEPC began hosting an annual conference called the Annual Forum on Intergroup Relations. Martin Luther King Jr. visited Portland in November 1961. Speaking to Oregonians, he said: “Americans must rise above the narrow confines of their individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity. They must rid themselves of the notion that there are superior and inferior races.”<sup>273</sup>

By the 1960s, the Salem City Council had received multiple requests for a formal commission to advise the City Council on racial discord or even intercede in cases of discrimination, in particular related to housing. In January 1963, a group of citizens approached the Salem City Council with a request that the Council form a civil rights group. In 1963, Salem’s Mayor Willard Marshall appointed the Human Rights Temporary Advisory Committee to research this issue and determine the feasibility of creating an ordinance for the City Council that would prohibit racial discrimination. This committee was made up of 20 members and was chaired by Gerry Frank. They studied an ordinance recently adopted in Louisville, Kentucky, to promote health, safety, and welfare of all persons, including minority groups. They explored establishing penalties for any discriminatory practices because of a person’s race, color, religious beliefs, ancestry, or national origin. The Civil Rights movement continued to grow throughout the nation, and in August 1963, after the March on Washington, Martin Luther King Jr. gave his “I Have A Dream” speech. In Oregon, the Oregon Human Relations Council hosted the 12th Annual Oregon Forum on Intergroup Relations on October 29, 1963. The theme of the conference that year was “A Sense of Urgency: Conference with Government Leaders on Civil Rights and Equal Opportunities.” Keynote speakers were Mark Hatfield and Dr. Arthur Flemming, University of Oregon president.<sup>274</sup>

In 1964, the Salem Area Community Council submitted a formal recommendation to the City Council through the *1964 Public and Private Social Services Agencies: Organization, Funding, and Financing Report*.<sup>275</sup> In this report, the authors expressed a need for a Human Rights Council to combat prejudices through education-based programming. This recommendation was as a direct response to an increase in migrant farm laborers and African Americans settling in Salem and experiencing social and housing discrimination. The report stated that “the settlement of ex-migrants has not been met

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<sup>272</sup> “Salem City Council Minutes,” January 7, 1946, 2.

<sup>273</sup> Kimberli Fitzgerald, “Salem’s Human Rights Commission Grew out of Civil Rights Movement,” *Salem Reporter*, January 16, 2023. <https://www.salemreporter.com/2023/01/16/column-salems-human-rights-commission-grew-out-of-civil-rights-movement/>; Douglas Perry, “Martin Luther King Jr. Challenged Oregonians 60 years ago to find a way to live together,” *Oregonian*, January 18, 2021, <https://www.oregonlive.com/history/2021/01/martin-luther-king-jr-challenged-oregonians-60-years-ago-to-find-a-way-to-live-together-or-perish-as-fools.html#:~:text=%E2%80%9CAmericans%20must%20rise%20above%20the,%E2%80%9Cbetween%20nonviolence%20or%20nonexistence.%E2%80%9D>.

<sup>274</sup> Fitzgerald, “Salem’s Human Rights Commission;” “Forum on Race Relations Due in Salem on October 30” *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), September 18, 1963, 10.

<sup>275</sup> Salem Area Community Council, “Public and Private Social Services Agencies: Organization, Funding, and Financing Report,” February 1964.

with overt opposition, but the [African American] population has had difficulty in finding housing and employment.”<sup>276</sup> An article from 1968 expanded upon the difficulty of living in Salem for African Americans:

There are more than 200 [African Americans in Salem], but it isn't obvious. Part of the reason it isn't obvious was explained by Ken Thomas, Seattle, vice president of the newly formed Black Student Union at Willamette University. Thomas reported experiences he and others of the 12 black students at Willamette had suffered. He said he had been accosted and insulted in the street, “warned” by passing motorists and fears for his safety when he must walk the streets alone. Black people also reported on “Salem’s very bad reputation” with regards to acceptability of African Americans. One young man, Randy Sampson, said other blacks won’t move to Salem because there are so few here. Afterward, the commission approved a motion to ask the City Council to undertake a program to encourage black families to move to Salem. The motion passed on a close voice vote.<sup>277</sup>

In April 1964, the first case testing Oregon’s Civil Rights Law was tried in Salem at the Marion County Courthouse. It involved a Black couple, the McKenzies, who had tried to rent a West Salem apartment but were denied due to their race. They won the case, the first of its kind in the United States, and it would be a model for future cases involving housing discrimination (Figure 4-1). On August 24, 1964, Gerry Frank forwarded the Salem Human Rights Advisory Committee’s recommendations to the Salem City Council, which included establishing a commission and naming it the Salem Human Relations Commission. The City adopted the final ordinance on September 28, 1964. In a letter to the editor published on October 2, 1964, in the *Oregon Statesman*, Marguerite Wright praised the work of the Salem City Council in adopting the ordinance. Wright specifically acknowledged the leadership of Justice A. T. Goodwin of the Supreme Court; managing editor of the *Capital Journal*, James G. Welch; and Reverend Henry Haines of the First Methodist Church. She further acknowledged the work of Mayor Willard Marshall. Wright stated: “With wise and responsible leadership of the caliber that has brought the past’s endeavors to fruition, the Commission can permanently erase Salem’s one time rather dubious reputation as an unfriendly and bigoted town.”<sup>278</sup> James G. Welch, managing editor of the *Capital Journal*, was elected the first president of the Human Relations Commission with Maurice Saffron, of Saffron Supply Co. as the vice president. Rev. Henry L. Haines stated that: “Racial disputes in other parts of the country have produced a sense of urgency here, therefore the Commission determined that they would take the initiative in promoting racial harmony in the City as opposed to just responding to incidents as they occur.”<sup>279</sup> In 1965, Compton McKenzie, who had won the racial discrimination housing case, reported to the Salem Human Relations Commission that he had been invited to the Salem Elks Club by an Elks member and then asked to leave by employees of the club. The Elks bylaws restricted membership and attendance only to White people. Marguerite Wright, at this point a member of the Salem Human Relations Commission, sponsored a resolution recommending that

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<sup>276</sup> Salem Area Community Council, “Public and Private Social Services Agencies.”

<sup>277</sup> “Rights Commission Uses Skit to Combat Housing Prejudice,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), November 1968.

<sup>278</sup> Marguerite Wright, “Local Leaders Praised for Civil Rights Work,” *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), October 2, 1964, p. 4.

<sup>279</sup> Marguerite Wright, “Local Leaders Praised for Civil Rights Work,” *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), October 2, 1964, p. 4.

the Salem City Council direct the City Attorney to join with Marion County officials to explore legislation that would take away tax exemptions from private organizations that carried racial discriminatory clauses in their bylaws, which were inconsistent with Oregon statutes relating to equal opportunity and civil rights.<sup>280</sup>



Figure 4-1. Clipping from the *Oregon Statesman*, 1964.<sup>281</sup>

## Urban Renewal in Salem (1949-2001)

After the initial establishment of housing authorities by the U.S. War Department just after World War II, urban renewal in the United States formally began with Congress passing the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954. These acts established federal programs to fund the redevelopment of “blighted” areas. Salem’s first urban renewal project was the Hollywood Urban Renewal Project in 1966. This study assesses four urban renewal plans: the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Plan (1975), North Gateway Urban Renewal Report (1990), Pringle Creek Urban Renewal Plan (1991), and West Salem Urban Renewal Plan (2001; Table 4-1). Comparisons between the four plans yield a sense of the purpose of urban renewal policies and City actions of the time.

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<sup>280</sup> Fitzgerald, “Salem’s Human Rights Commission;” “Salem Elks Club Refuses to Admit Negro to Building,” *The Capitol Journal* (Salem, OR), July 31, 1965, p. 2.

<sup>281</sup> “Couple Test Oregon’s Civil Rights Law,” *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), January 25, 1964, p. 5.

For the purposes of this report, it is important to better understand and define blight. Additional research questions posed to discover any biases in the revitalization process included 1) How was blight defined? and 2) Were people displaced? While federal and state legislation referred to the concept of blight, it was rarely clearly defined. The American Planning Association (APA) defines the urban renewal process as “the development or improvement of an area that was developed at some time in the past but presently suffers from real or perceived physical deficiencies such as blight or environmental contamination or is developed for uses that have become obsolete or inappropriate as a result of changing social or market conditions.”<sup>282</sup> In other words, when cities decide an area is blighted, the city acts, through the improvement of private properties and city infrastructure, to raise property values in the designated area. There are advantages to urban renewal, including economic growth, improved infrastructure, improved public spaces such as neighborhood parks, and general increases in livability. However, there are also drawbacks to urban renewal. Urban renewal often results in higher costs of living that can lead to displacement, loss of community spaces, and loss of cultural identity. Common urban renewal project conditions that can exacerbate this process include the use of vague or moral terminology about rehabilitation areas, unclear goals outside of economic development, and lack of direct community involvement.

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<sup>282</sup> American Planning Association, “APA Policy Guide on Redevelopment,” December 11, 2003, <https://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/redevelopment.htm>.

Table 4-1. City of Salem Urban Renewal Plans.

Document/Author	Year Adopted	Mission Statement	Defintion of "Blight"	Acquisiton?
Pringle Creek Urban Renewal Plan/ Urban Renewal Agency	1971	"Primary objective: improve the overall appearance, condition, and function of the Project Area. This can be accomplished by eliminating substandard structures, removing all blighting influences and incompatible land uses, providing land for expansion of public agencies and major institutions, and preserving natural greenbelts for public use."	N/A reference to aesthetics	Yes 65 properties
Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Plan/ Urban Renewal Agency	1975	"The city of Salem hereby finds there exists conditions of blight, deterioration, decline of property values and business vacancies, conflicts between vehicular and railroad traffic, and other factors which constitute a detriment to the health, safety, morals and welfare of residents of the City and people frequenting the area."	N/A reference to morals, and deficient structures	N/A
North Gateway Urban Renewal Report/ Salem Planning Commission	1990	"In order to correct the blighted conditions existing in the Urban Renewal Area, a variety of public works projects and other activities are required to correct conditions and allow the areas to be developed and redeveloped so that their capacity to pay taxes and support the cost of public services is realized."	N/A reference to heightened crime and inability to develop job producing industries	Yes 66 households
West Salem Urban Renewal Plan/ Urban Renewal Agency	2001	"Eliminate blight and depreciating property values and in the process attract aesthetically pleasing, job producing private investmtnets and public improvements that will improve and stabilize property values."	N/A reference to lowered economic productivity of properties	Yes 65 properties

The mission of all four plans—Riverfront-Downtown, North Gateway, Pringle Creek, and West Salem—all centered around eliminating blight (Figure 4-3 through Figure 4-5). In Oregon, to designate an urban renewal area, blight must be found. Blight is defined in the Oregon Revised Statutes 457 and is generally described as areas which are underdeveloped, deteriorated, or underperforming.<sup>283</sup> The definition is not explicitly stated in any of the plans; however, blight is characterized differently in each plan by other descriptors. In the plans, blight seems to be a moral issue, connected to criminal activity, deteriorating aesthetics, and low economic productivity. This narrative can be counterproductive to equitable redevelopment. Moralizing physical spaces or classifying neighborhoods as “right” or “wrong” can lead to simplification of the neighborhood’s residents or create a negative stereotype of the very people urban renewal seeks to help.

Urban renewal programs in Salem historically targeted working-class/lower-income neighborhoods. Blight was determined by “windshield surveys,” systematic observations made from a moving vehicle to assess general community conditions. This technique was used by those compiling the Pringle Creek plan, which determined that all but one of the structures in the study area were not up to code. While windshield surveys are a common practice, without engaging with the community, there could be confusion and opposition to how and why properties are chosen for acquisition. Before the 2000s, multiple complaints from the general Salem community were raised about being left out of the process or the design of the renewal areas. For example, in 1970, in response to the Riverfront-Downtown process, “Donato Amaya, a representative of the Mexican-American residents in the area, asked the City Council to help establish better lines of communication between minority groups and the city.”<sup>284</sup> In 1990, a Salem resident with arthritic knees described her struggle to walk to the new Riverfront park, saying that “editorial writers didn’t consider the disabled.”<sup>285</sup> Community engagement is not explicitly referenced in the four urban renewal plans researched.

In three of the four urban renewal areas—North Gateway, Pringle Creek, and West Salem—the plans explicitly outlined acquisitions. In North Gateway, 66 households, vacant lots, rundown stores, a tavern, and a vacant building were noted as potential acquisitions. The cleared land was planned for road expansion, a community center, and public parks. In Pringle Creek, 65 properties were noted as acquisitions, with an additional 35 potential properties. The City identified these properties as sites ideal for public agencies. In West Salem, 50 properties were chosen for acquisition along with a right-of-way. The City’s plan for this land was to redevelop the land for commercial/industrial uses. Across these three projects, there was a minimum total of 216 properties cleared for urban renewal. The destruction of housing associated with urban renewal was a complaint among Salem residents. In an article titled “Downtown Apparently Not Good for Housing,” the following observations were made:

housing has been left out of renewal work and might be left out again with the redevelopment of the downtown core. But in three renewal projects, bulldozers took out more housing than has been put back in. In the Hollywood project, 95 households were relocated to make way for a neighborhood shopping center that was never built. After several years of commercial developer interest, the plan died, and 40 units of low-and-moderate-priced units of privately developed apartments

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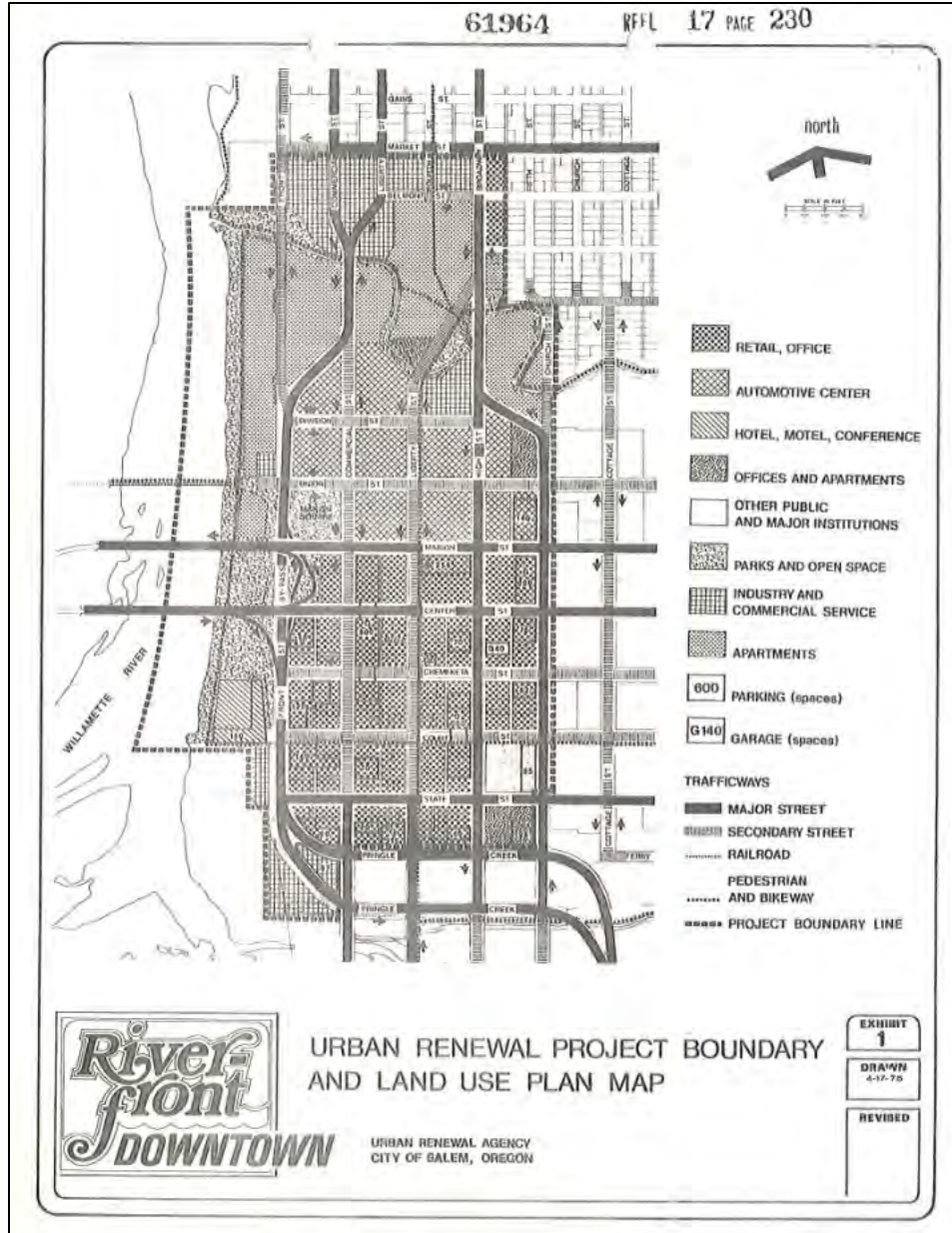
<sup>283</sup> City of Lake Oswego Redevelopment Agency, “Urban Renewal FAQ,” <https://www.ci.oswego.or.us/lora/urban-renewal-faq#:~:text=To%20create%20an%20urban%20renewal,administers%20an%20urban%20renewal%20area?>

<sup>284</sup> “Independence Council Hears Plan,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), March 1970.

<sup>285</sup> “Editorial Council Didn’t Consider Disabled,” *Statesman Journal* (Salem, OR), September 1990.

were located there. In the Pringle Creek urban renewal area, 85 households were relocated to make way for a project which listed housing as its top priority. The original plan showed 210 “garden apartments” on a site just north of Pringle Creek. But the plan was changed to accommodate a proposed Hilton Hotel and convention center.<sup>286</sup>

These kinds of decisions surrounding housing reflect the City Council’s commitment to economic development, historic preservation, and transit-related safety and connectivity, often at the expense of increasing Salem’s housing supply.



<sup>286</sup> “Downtown Apparently Not Good For Housing,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), January 1975.

Figure 4-2. Riverfront Downtown Urban Renewal Area map.<sup>287</sup>

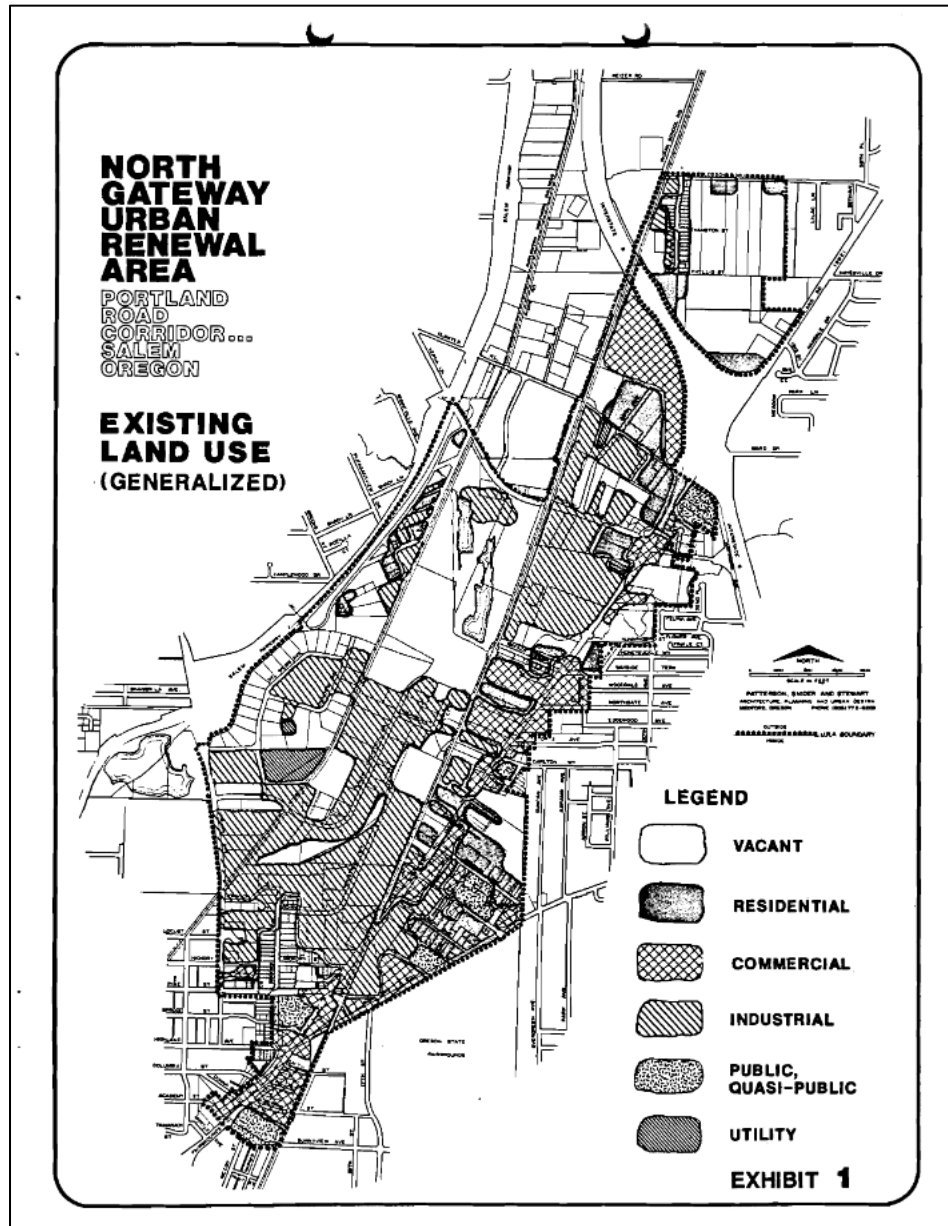


Figure 4-3. North Gate Urban Renewal Area map.<sup>288</sup>

<sup>287</sup> Urban Renewal Agency of the City of Salem, "Urban Renewal Plan for the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Project," 1975.

<sup>288</sup> Salem City Council, "Report on North Gate Urban Renewal Plan," 1990.

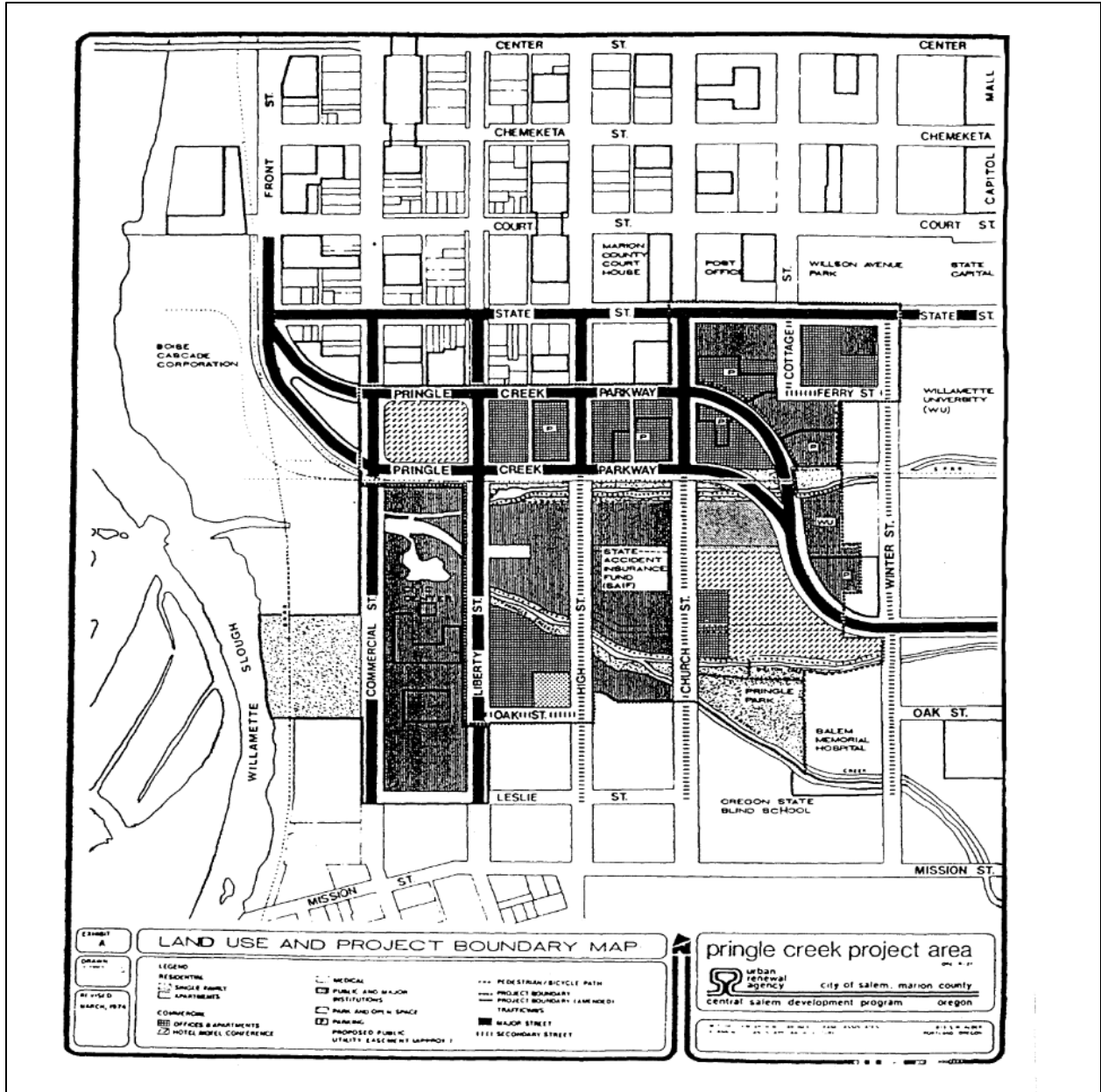


Figure 4-4. Pringle Creek Urban Renewal Area map.<sup>289</sup>

<sup>289</sup> Urban Renewal Agency of the City of Salem, "Pringle Creek Urban Renewal Plan," amended 1991.

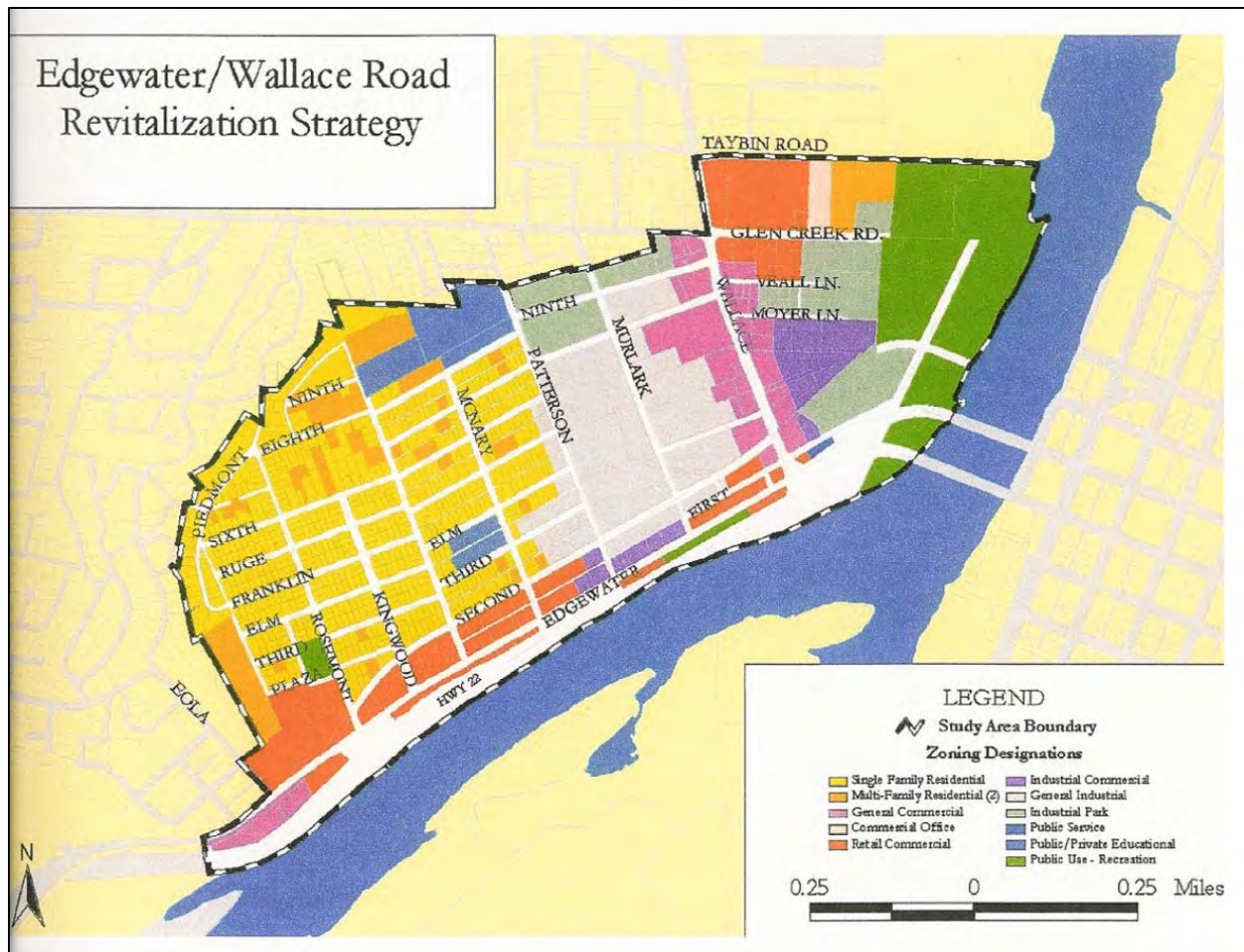


Figure 4-5. West Salem Urban Renewal Area map.<sup>290</sup>

## Housing and Community Development in Salem (1969-Present)

The Salem City Council established the Salem Housing Authority in 1969. The first board consisted of nine locally elected Salem City Council officials.<sup>291</sup> Due to federal restrictions, the City was previously limited to administering the federally funded leased housing program. However, groups such as the Community Conservation Committee, Salem anti-poverty groups, and city staff cautioned the council that leased housing alone would not meet the needs of Salem’s low-income residents. The need for affordable housing was projected to exceed demand.<sup>292</sup> Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, there were differing housing priorities between Polk County, Marion County, the City of Salem, and West Salem. Where the City of Salem wanted to slow their development of low-income housing to avoid saturation and overcrowding of schools, Polk County and West Salem continued to encourage projects.<sup>293</sup> This led to some tension surrounding the best use of federal funds and long-range planning. During the 1980s, there were conflicts within the council over their

<sup>290</sup> Urban Renewal Agency of the City of Salem, “West Salem Urban Renewal Plan,” 2001.

<sup>291</sup> “City Council Approves Housing Program Expansion,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), October 1969.

<sup>292</sup> “City Council Approves Housing Program Expansion,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), October 1969.

<sup>293</sup> “Salem Housing Authority Minutes: 1971,” Salem Housing Authority.

broad philosophies surrounding affordable housing. Some officials believed that the Salem Housing Authority should focus on rehabilitating properties as opposed to creating new low-income housing. These same officials also typically believed that the authority had become too reliant on federal funding and that low-income housing should not surpass the quality of market housing.<sup>294</sup>

After its establishment, the Salem Housing Authority in the 1970s grew to have two multi-family buildings and 79 sites under their management.<sup>295</sup> The authority's responsibilities largely consisted of approving "turnkey" sites, Section 8 housing, renovations/maintenance of government-owned properties, and monitoring social programs related to housing. Turnkey projects, as they are referenced by the Salem City Council, were public housing built by private contractors and purchased by the housing authority upon completion. Section 8 housing is a federally funded program that subsidizes rents for eligible participants, who rent units in the private market. Both programs are aimed at providing housing for low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled.

The Housing Authority tried to evenly disperse affordable housing throughout the Salem area, to avoid clustering and "disruption" of neighborhoods. Their choices were often limited by land availability, zoning, public reception, and different county jurisdictions. One example that included many of these factors was the preliminary plans for a project at 2715 Sumner Street SE. The property was chosen because it was occupied by a substandard dwelling, was large enough to accommodate three dwellings, was zoned for single-family dwellings, and was located in a neighborhood that had the lowest instance of subsidized housing. Members of the Housing Authority staff met with South Central Association of Neighbors (SCAN) Block Grant Committee for an informational hearing. SCAN residents expressed their opposition to the properties, citing a dislike that the housing was HUD housing, and fear that the character of their neighborhood would be changed. A previous turnkey project had already been opposed and rejected in this area by the neighborhood association, this project was no different.

Most Housing Authority projects were targeted to benefit low-income people and elderly people. The best documented project in Housing Authority minutes ranging from 1969 to 2000 was housing for the population of residents with mental disabilities.<sup>296</sup> Salem has a high population of people with mental disabilities, as many State institutions are located in the city (Figure 4-6).

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<sup>294</sup> "Salem Housing Authority Minutes: 1979," Salem Housing Authority.

<sup>295</sup> Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance Continuum of Care (CoC), "Evergreen Project Application," 2024 [https://mwvhomelessalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Website-Link\\_CoC-Builds-Evergreen-Project-Application.pdf&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1748366481883919&usg=AOvVaw0GvIjoQRR2Kv7NPTp\\_ontc](https://mwvhomelessalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Website-Link_CoC-Builds-Evergreen-Project-Application.pdf&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1748366481883919&usg=AOvVaw0GvIjoQRR2Kv7NPTp_ontc).

<sup>296</sup> "Salem Housing Authority Minutes: 1975," Salem Housing Authority.

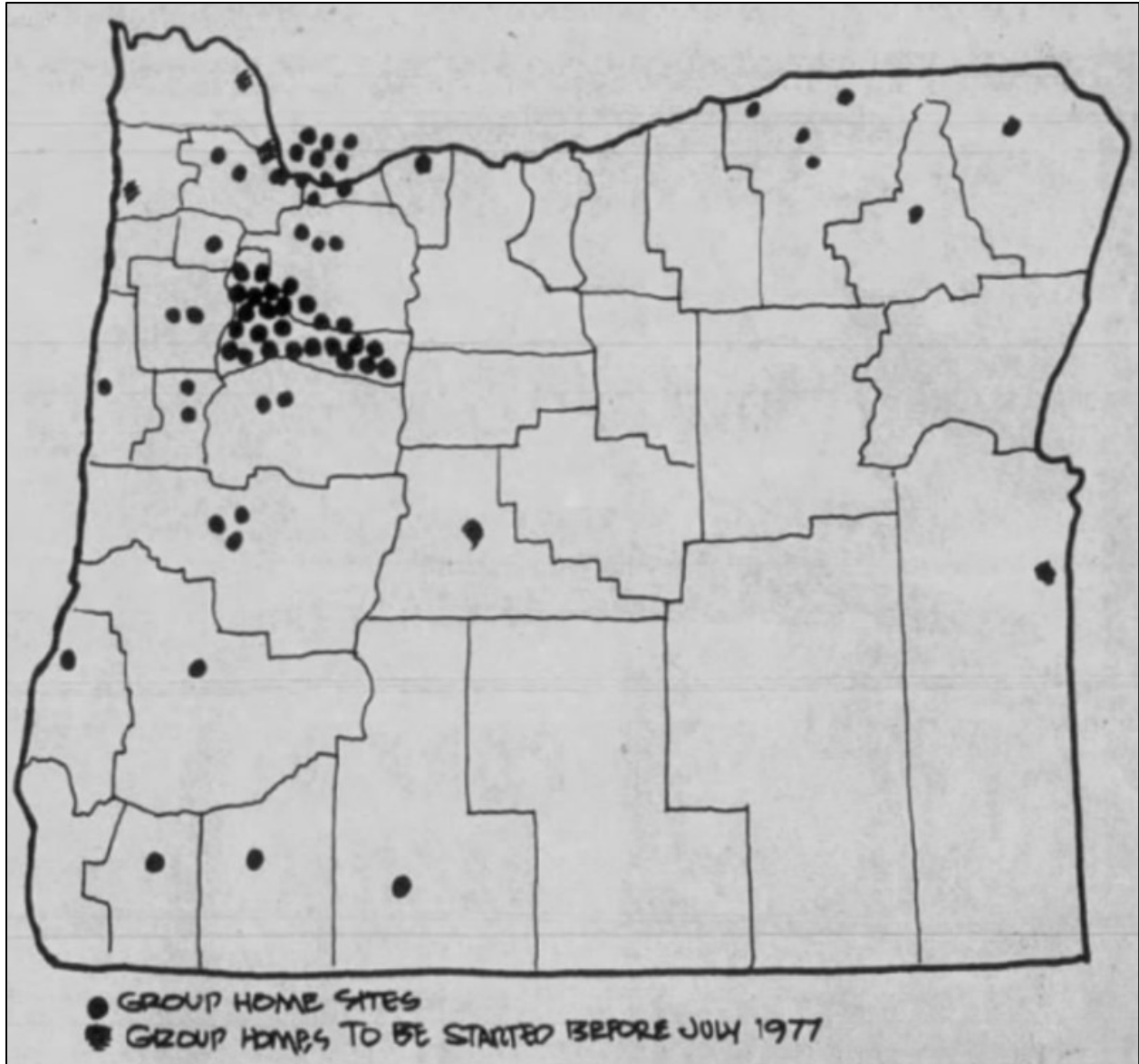


Figure 4-6. Clipping from the *Capital Journal* in 1977, showing locations of group care homes in Oregon, with the highest concentration in Marion County.<sup>297</sup>

In 1975, the Salem Housing Authority approved the establishment of Spruce Villa, a transitional residential facility designed for young women exiting the Fairview Hospital and Training Center—a state-run institution serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The creation of Spruce Villa was part of a broader movement aimed at deinstitutionalization and the reduction of social stigma associated with disability.<sup>298</sup>

In 1977, the *Capital Journal* published a four-part investigative series examining the emergence of group homes for individuals with mental disabilities in Salem. The final installment of the series explored community responses to these facilities, revealing a range of public opinion. One resident,

<sup>297</sup> “Opinions Vary Widely Among Care Homes’ Neighbors,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), March 1977, p. A47.

<sup>298</sup> “From Institution to Independence,” *Statesman Journal* (Salem, OR), October 1973.

affiliated with the Northeast Neighborhood Association—an area that hosted seven group homes, the highest concentration in the city—expressed a pervasive sense of discomfort. He noted a “general unease” among residents and claimed that “neighborhood women who like to ride bikes have been increasingly alarmed about the number of mentally deprived people showing up in the neighborhood.”<sup>299</sup> In another neighborhood, opposition was more explicit; a man reportedly distributed leaflets at a local supermarket in an effort to rally resistance against a nearby group home.<sup>300</sup>

Nevertheless, not all community feedback was negative. A woman residing between Spruce Villa and another facility, Cedar Hall, characterized her experience as “seventh heaven.”<sup>301</sup> Others highlighted a mere tolerance for people with disabilities, remarking, “The people don’t get in anyone’s way. They walk down Center Street. They ride buses. They do what we all do.”<sup>302</sup> This range of perspectives highlights the complex social dynamics surrounding the integration of group homes into residential neighborhoods during the late twentieth century. The divergent responses underscore both the persistence of stigmatizing attitudes toward people with mental disabilities and the potential for inclusive community engagement.

## 4.2.2 Salem Transportation

### Transportation in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century (1850-1920)

In 1850, L. H. Judson and J. B. McClane laid out and recorded North Salem, which contained 29 blocks. At this time, William H. Willson also laid out the area east of Church Street to Capital Street and north of State Street. In 1851, the passenger steamboat provided access from Salem to Portland. Plank sidewalks were constructed, and there was regular stage service between established local communities like Salem and Albany.<sup>303</sup>

On November 27, 1860, the Salem City Council founded several standing committees, including a Street Committee.<sup>304</sup> These committees comprised three councilors to complete work on the main issues of concern, defined as fire, streets, finance, claims, licenses, and ordinances. The first ordinance passed by the City Council in 1860 was to authorize the council to create bonds to pay for needed infrastructure improvements, like sidewalks, and street improvements within the city limits. The second ordinance adopted by the council adopted the Salem city plat (noted as the original townsite).<sup>305</sup> In the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century, the Salem City Council continued to make decisions about streets and transportation based upon recommendations from the council’s Street Committee. Early recommendations by the Street Committee to the City Council were related

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<sup>299</sup> “Opinions Vary Widely Among Care Homes’ Neighbors,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), March 1977.

<sup>300</sup> “Opinions Vary Widely Among Care Homes’ Neighbors,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), March 1977.

<sup>301</sup> “Opinions Vary Widely Among Care Homes’ Neighbors,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), March 1977.

<sup>302</sup> “Opinions Vary Widely Among Care Homes’ Neighbors,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), March 1977.

<sup>303</sup> Kadas, “Historic Context Statement,” 30–40.

<sup>304</sup> City Recorder, “Salem City Council Minutes,” November 27, 1860.

<sup>305</sup> City Recorder, “Salem City Council Minutes,” November 27, 1860; and City Recorder, “Salem City Council Minutes,” November 30, 1860. General Land Office patent #20 was initially recorded by William Willson and wife.

to health and safety, such as requiring the Marshall to remove dead animals from the street.<sup>306</sup> The first ordinance recommended by the Streets Committee to the Salem City Council limited fast riding down city streets.<sup>307</sup> This ordinance read in part:

Any person or persons who shall ride or drive, within the corporation limits, at a rate liable to endanger life or property, or to infringe upon rights and citizens or others, shall, upon conviction thereof before the City Recorder, be fined in any sum not more than twenty dollars.<sup>308</sup>

In the next decade, the City Council established licensing requirements for independent private commercial operation of ferries across the Willamette River, as well as authorizing railroads to construct tracks on city streets. In 1870, the Oregon and California Railroad (Southern Pacific) provided Salem easy access north to Portland and south to Eugene and beyond.<sup>309</sup>

Transportation in Salem improved tremendously in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The first bridge was built across the Willamette River at Salem in 1886. In 1888, electric lights were installed downtown, and horse drawn streetcars provided local public transportation around the city. In 1890, two electric streetcars began operating, making a 2.25 mile circuit around the downtown area. The wood sidewalks throughout downtown began being replaced with cement sidewalks. In 1891, the City Council adopted the first ordinance establishing standards for street paving, including curbing and gutters within the city limits. That year, the City Council debated about the type of materials to be used, including brick, macadam, and bitumen.<sup>310</sup> In September 1891, the City Council authorized the paving of 25 blocks of Salem's main streets and the installation of concrete and stone gutters.<sup>311</sup>

## The Good Roads Movement in Salem

As with many places throughout the country, the City of Salem had been authorized to issue bonds and to assess local taxes for any work determined to benefit the safety and welfare of the people living within the city limits. As a result, Salem's City Council began financing city street improvements by issuing bonds which were paid for from general local tax revenues as early as 1860. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Salem City Council began receiving petitions for street improvements, which cost more than they had available. By the turn of the century, the charter was amended to require that if there was a petition for road improvements, after ten days' notice, if there were no objections, the City would make the street improvements at the expense of the abutting property owners.<sup>312</sup> While there are records of homogenous White neighborhoods, primarily in south Salem, petitioning for roads, there are no records of lower-income working-class

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<sup>306</sup> "Special Notices," *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), January 21, 1861, p. 3.

<sup>307</sup> "Special Notices," *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), January 21, 1861, p. 3.

<sup>308</sup> "Special Notices," *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), January 21, 1861, p. 3; and "Special Notices," *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), December 17, 1860, p. 2.

<sup>309</sup> Kimberli Fitzgerald, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for Fairmount National Register Nomination-Draft Manuscript," 2006, p. 3, on file at the City of Salem, Oregon.

<sup>310</sup> "Still Wrestling with the Problem of Street Paving," *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), May 27, 1891, p. 2.

<sup>311</sup> "Bids for Street Work," *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), September 22, 1891, p. 4.

<sup>312</sup> "Good Roads for Salem: the Government Road Building Train May Come Here Next Year," *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), October 19, 1902, p. 5.

neighborhoods in north Salem filing petitions, therefore the records appear to demonstrate that higher-income neighborhoods had more street improvements than lower-income neighborhoods.<sup>313</sup>

Many Salem business and property owners were supportive of the Good Roads Movement, which had taken hold across the country. In 1902, Martin Dodge, the director of Public Road Inquiries with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and R. W. Richardson, the secretary of the National Good Roads Association, came to Salem to meet with Salem's Mayor Charles Bishop, along with other local business and political leaders.<sup>314</sup> They visited a rock quarry south of the city, and discussed the possibility of the Good Roads train visiting Salem in 1903.<sup>315</sup>

By 1904, South Salem business and property owners organized a Good Roads League to work together to help build (and fund) improvements to Commercial and Liberty Streets within the city limits south of Mission Street SE, which had been extended south to Hoyt Street SE in 1902 after this area had been annexed.<sup>316</sup> They also discussed the feasibility of working with Marion County to adopt a tax to pay for the improvements of this road that ran south of Hoyt Street SE. The City Council did not fund any street improvements outside of the city limits, even though suburban expansion began occurring to the south of the downtown area, as large farm-estates were divided and platted within Marion County.<sup>317</sup>

Working-class mill laborers tended to settle to the north of the city center, closer to the mills where they worked. The area north of downtown had also been annexed in 1902, up to Locust Street NE (to include the Oregon State Fairgrounds), but there is no record of any coordinated efforts to fund street improvements within these newly annexed areas during this same time period.<sup>318</sup>

## The Motor Age (1900-1929)

The first automobile featured at Oregon's State Fair was in 1901.<sup>319</sup> In the early decades of the twentieth century, the City Council chose to prioritize improving many streets in the city center and these paved, cement sidewalks were constructed to replace the boardwalks, and additional streetlights were added throughout the city. The *Oregon Statesman* reported in 1913 that motorists in Salem were pleased: "With the paved streets making any kind of automobiling easy . . . That the automobile is supplanting the horse is readily apparent from figures in this city alone. Salem has sixteen delivery wagons and seventeen trucks run by motor power, and some of the larger department stores are seriously considering making all their deliveries by these machines."<sup>320</sup> In 1913, the legislature created the Oregon Highway Commission and the Oregon State Highway Department (OSHD), appropriating \$10 million for operating expenses. The following year, in 1914,

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<sup>313</sup> City Recorder, City Council Minutes 1900-1940. (Salem, Oregon).

<sup>314</sup> "Good Roads for Salem," 5.

<sup>315</sup> "Good Roads for Salem," 5.

<sup>316</sup> "Good Roads League: Organized for Business in South Salem," *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), February 1, 1904, p. 6.

<sup>317</sup> "Good Roads League: Organized for Business in South Salem," *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), February 1, 1904, p. 6.

<sup>318</sup> City of Salem, "Salem Annexations. Dataset," accessed June 9, 2025, [https://data.cityofsalem.net/datasets/4b433cfdee164f3c8a090341090c3dcd\\_2/explore?location=44.955462%2C-123.004203%2C12.59](https://data.cityofsalem.net/datasets/4b433cfdee164f3c8a090341090c3dcd_2/explore?location=44.955462%2C-123.004203%2C12.59).

<sup>319</sup> "First Automobile Will Appear at State Fair," *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), September 18, 1901, p. 3.

<sup>320</sup> "Motorists Pleased," *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), January 1, 1913, p. 21.

the commission adopted its first State Highway Plan, which identified priorities for construction of highways in Oregon, including the Pacific Highway (present-day Oregon 99W). In anticipation of construction of this highway, George F. Rodgers, from the Marion County section of the Pacific Highway Association, said: “Automobilists look forward to completion of the ‘dream road’; or at least the Marion County portion of it.”<sup>321</sup>

As motorists were waiting for the roads to be completed, the streetcar service had expanded, and transportation in Salem continued to improve. The streetcar provided service to South Salem out along Commercial Street to the cemetery. The Oregon City Transportation Company offered passage to Portland every other day, as well as service to Corvallis and Independence. The city was also served by Southern Pacific and the Oregon Electric Railway. By 1913, the Southern Pacific Railway offered seven mainline passenger trains. Oregon Electric made ten trips per day between Portland and Eugene, running on tracks down the center of High Street in Salem.<sup>322</sup>

The City of Salem did not directly benefit from federal funding from the Federal Highway Act of 1916, as these funds were to construct rural highways. However, many unimproved rural roads became the responsibility of the City because the population of Salem tripled between 1900 and 1914, largely due to the annexation of large areas within North, South, and East Salem.<sup>323</sup> Regardless, overall, during this period, the development of an expanded transportation network improved access to other communities for many Salem citizens.

During this period, the leisure activity of taking a “Sunday Drive” also came into vogue for those in Salem who could afford it. At the turn of the century, in Salem’s local paper, advertisements for a Sunday drive in a buggy or even a bicycle were common, such as the ad “Sunday Drive with Your Best Girl,” by Mitchell, Lewis & Staver Co. (Figure 4-7).<sup>324</sup> By 1929, ads exclusively featuring automobiles for Sunday drives were seen in Salem’s local paper, such as the Miller Tire ad, which suggested taking a Sunday drive to Triangle Lake (Figure 4-8).<sup>325</sup> This prosperity continued into the 1920s, especially in the period right after World War I. The services and facilities improving the quality of life in the city continued to expand during these decades, which, in turn, caused further growth.

After receiving approval from the voters in June 1927, the Salem City Council issued a bond in the amount of \$350,000 to fund construction of concrete bridges throughout the city.<sup>326</sup> These bridges were designed and constructed throughout Salem by bridge engineer R. A. Furrow, a colleague of Conde McCullough. Furrow left the City of Salem in September 1929, and after the stock market crash in October 1929, the design and construction of Salem bridges came to a halt.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> “Getting the Latest,” *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), January 1, 1913, p. 21.

<sup>322</sup> Fitzgerald, “National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for Fairmount National Register Nomination-Draft Manuscript.” 3.

<sup>323</sup> Fitzgerald, “National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for Fairmount National Register Nomination-Draft Manuscript.” 4.

<sup>324</sup> “A Sunday Drive With Your Best Girl,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), June 4, 1904, p. 3.

<sup>325</sup> “For Your Sunday Drive: We Suggest a Trip to Triangle Lake,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), May 4, 1929, p. 8.

<sup>326</sup> “Bridge Costs Figures Show Cement is Best,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), May 16, 1927, p. 1.

<sup>327</sup> “Little Chance for Building City Bridges,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), April 7, 1930, p. 1.

# A Sunday Drive

## With Your Best Girl

THAT'S THE THING—  
NOTHING LIKE IT

You furnish the horse (and the girl, of course), and we will furnish the rest, consisting of

**A NATTY RUNABOUT  
OF LATEST STYLE  
A TOP BUGGY OR  
BIKE WAGON**



An up-to-date harness, whip and robe thrown in with every job we sell.

**HUNDREDS OF SAMPLES AT  
PRICES TO SUIT ALL POCKET-  
BOOKS—TERMS TO SUIT YOUR  
CIRCUMSTANCES.**

If you haven't a horse, and can't afford one, we'll sell you a Bike.

**THE SNELL IS SWELL**



Our new line of Mitchell & Snell wheels are in and we can please you in anything from \$25.00 to \$40.00.

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## Mitchell, Lewis & Staver Co

F. F. CARY, Manager Salem Branch.

Figure 4-7. Clipping from the *Capital Journal*, 1904.<sup>328</sup>

<sup>328</sup> "A Sunday Drive With Your Best Girl," *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), June 4, 1904, p. 3

For Your Sunday Drive

—We Suggest a Trip to

**Triangle Lake**

It is a wonderful trip. Leaving Salem on the west side highway to Corvallis which is 27 miles—then on 17.4 miles to Monroe, next is Junction City 9.1 miles further. Here you leave the Pacific highway and travel to the west 24.5 miles to beautiful Triangle Lake—78 miles from Salem. Those desiring a longer trip will find themselves well repaid by driving down the hillside to Mapleton 108.3 miles from Salem. Then returning to Junction City and home by way of Albany. You will find this a most delightful trip.

BEFORE YOU GO PUT ON A SET OF NEW

**MILLER TIRES**

GEARED TO THE ROAD

Your trip will not be marred by tire trouble if you have Miller's on your car.

**Miller Tire Service Co.**

"RUSS" SMITH

197 So. Commercial Street—PHONE 313

Figure 4-8. Clipping from the *Capital Journal*, 1929.<sup>329</sup>

## Road Building During the Great Depression: The New Deal (1930-1940)

The first address made by Mayor Thomas Livesley in January 1930 was related to transportation and building projects in Salem. Livesley confirmed that while less than \$300,000 of the total amount authorized by the voters to build bridges in Salem had been spent, the City was committed to developing an updated bridge program to build additional bridges in the city, despite the challenges

<sup>329</sup> "For Your Sunday Drive," *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), May 4, 1929, p. 8.

of the economy and the loss of Furrow.<sup>330</sup> Livesley further recommended an annual policy of reconstructing one bridge a year:

Beyond this, in the matter of bridges, I urge that the policy of building nothing but permanent concrete structures be perpetuated in the interests of economy and civic beauty. To this end I would suggest that a portion of the monies derived from the special two mill tax levy for street and bridge maintenance be set aside annually and that a maintenance and repair policy of reconstructing at least one bridge each year be carried out. With types and specifications already standardized in the bridges built, such a program would not entail the prolonged continuance of a special bridge engineer.<sup>331</sup>

Because of the diversity of its economic base, Salem fared better than many small cities during the Depression. Its stable economic drivers—state and county governments and essential industries such as food processing and lumber and paper processing—kept the city afloat.<sup>332</sup>

In 1929, Salem citizens passed a \$50,000 bond issue for construction of an airport. By 1930, McNary Field, southeast of downtown Salem, had four runways and hangars for 12 planes.<sup>333</sup> During the Great Depression, federal relief programs also employed local laborers to pave roads, which by 1930 connected Salem with McMinnville, Portland, and the coast. Salem benefited from federal relief through New Deal Programs, such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which set up a local office in Salem in 1938. In January 1939, the WPA began five federally funded projects, including a street improvement project that involved grading and surfacing unpaved parts of Jefferson and Madison Streets. For the street work in Salem, the WPA employed two crews of 15 men each.<sup>334</sup>

## Road Building During World War II

In January 1942, just after the United States entered World War II, the Salem Streets Committee and the city engineer, J.H. Davis, submitted their annual report to the City Council, reporting on the activities of 1941, which included the issuance of 178 sidewalk permits and 118 driveway permits, as well as the construction of one new bridge on north 18th Street over Mill Creek. Five streets had been paved with concrete and two with asphalt. Over 5,000 square feet of sidewalk had been constructed and paid for by abutting property owners.<sup>335</sup> After the United States entered World War II, no public works or construction activities could be completed by local jurisdictions unless they were related to the war effort. Mayor I.M. Doughton addressed the Salem City Council and the community on January 2, 1945, and recommended that the City prepare for postwar improvements:

Throughout my entire tenure of office, so far, our nation has been at war, a war which has required and which will demand the united efforts of all our people before

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<sup>330</sup> City Recorder, “Salem City Council Minutes,” January 6, 1930.

<sup>331</sup> City Recorder, “Salem City Council Minutes,” January 6, 1930.

<sup>332</sup> Kadas, “Historic Context Statement,” 30–40.

<sup>333</sup> Fitzgerald, “National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for Fairmount National Register Nomination-Draft Manuscript.” 5.

<sup>334</sup> “WPA Projects to Get Start on Monday,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), January 27, 1939, p. 10.

<sup>335</sup> City Recorder, “Salem City Council Minutes,” January 5, 1942, p. 4.

victory can be attained. Our city affairs must necessarily be subordinated to the war effort, and it would be presumptuous for your mayor to propose an imposing list of suggested improvements during these times . . . After the war it is likely that Salem, in common with other localities, will go through an unsettled period of reconversion and readjustment. Although we have little war industry here, yet the curtailment of war industries in areas near Salem, and the return of military personnel will necessitate employment readjustments in the lives of many of our citizens . . . I suggest that the Council keep in touch with the postwar development program and that the program be planned in detail and kept up to the minute so that immediately progress may be made at the most propitious time.<sup>336</sup>

After the end of World War II, there was indeed a period of readjustment, with road improvements initially just consisting of maintenance and repair. However, soon the city began to feel the positive impacts of federal funds, as well as the establishment of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

## Interstate Highway Development Impacts (1944-1961)

The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944 and subsequent acts allocated by Congress resulted in the construction of interstate highways across the country. In Oregon, after the end of World War II, there was a shortage of asphalt and timber, which limited the OSHD's efforts to adequately maintain and construct Oregon's highways. In 1945, a group of Salem citizens attended an Oregon State Highway Commission meeting in Portland to request that the commission complete its plan for arterial highways serving Salem and West Salem, so that the City of Salem's Planning Commission could develop its own plans to identify which streets needed improvements in order to meet future traffic needs in Salem. The Oregon Transportation Commission agreed that their highway engineers would make extensive studies in the area before recommending highway development in the Salem area.<sup>337</sup>

In May 1946, Salem voters approved an amendment to the Salem Charter authorizing the change to an administrative (city manager) form of government. Salem hired their first city manager, J. L. Franzen, in December 1946. Franzen had previously worked as the city manager in Oregon City. In 1949, West Salem, which had been its own independent jurisdiction since its incorporation in 1913, was annexed to the City of Salem, primarily due to their public infrastructure needs.<sup>338</sup>

The largest local transportation infrastructure improvement funded with federal funding and managed by the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) during this period was the replacement of the 1918 Center Street Bridge, redesigned to carry only eastbound traffic, and the construction of the new Marion Street Bridge, designed to carry westbound traffic. In July 1952, property owners in downtown Salem who owned property between Front and Commercial Streets filed suit against the Oregon State Highway Commission because the commission authorized rebuilding the bridge approach so that traffic would bypass their properties causing adverse effects to their businesses. One property owner, owning an apartment house, indicated that the proposed design of the elevated bridge would damage their property due to the noise and restrictions on sunlight. The bridges were

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<sup>336</sup> City Recorder, "Salem City Council Minutes," January 2, 1945, p. 7-8.

<sup>337</sup> "Commission to Finish Salem Highway Plans," *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), August 31, 1945, p. 1.

<sup>338</sup> Lynn Mack, Debra Meaghers, and Kimberli Fitzgerald, *Images of America: West Salem* (Mount Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011).

completed in 1954, and the property owners were not successful in forcing the State to do a redesign of the bridges.<sup>339</sup>

In 1954, the *Capital Journal* reported on the relocation of houses in Hayesville to prepare to move them to make way for the new Salem–Portland freeway. In this case, the *Capital Journal* reported that R. H. Baldock, state highway engineer, worked at the direction of the State Highway Commission to design a slight detour of the freeway around Chemawa, so as not to impact any portion of the Chemawa Indian School. The four-lane route stretching north 26 miles from Hayesville, at the north end of Salem, opened to vehicles on November 1, 1955, with the remainder of the freeway completed by 1961.<sup>340</sup>

## Early Transportation Planning

In a *Capital Journal* article from 1966, reporters discussed highway development and street planning in Salem. Experts at the time were advocating for long range planning arterial roads as a way to offset future transportation-related costs. Belt routes, limited-access arterial roads, and road widening projects were identified as necessary traffic solutions, but these solutions all bypassed existing urban centers.<sup>341</sup> These ideas were reinforced by Salem’s Area Transportation Studies (SATS), which were data collection reports that would lay the groundwork for Salem’s Transportation Plan.

The City of Salem adopted a separate Transportation Plan on August 25, 1969, which included policies and goals related to the design and function of Salem’s street network. The Transportation Plan comprised three volumes and established a street classification system. The work on this Transportation Plan began in 1961 with the development of the SATS under the direction of a Coordinating Committee comprising members of the OSHD, the Council of Governments, the City of Salem, Polk and Marion Counties, FHWA, and the State of Oregon.<sup>342</sup> Both the Transportation Plan and the general Comprehensive Plan include goals and recommendations for bikeways, pedestrian trails, and sidewalks.

The 1973 Plan established 10 Transportation Policies. These were notable for including policies addressing social costs and people with disabilities: “Differences in the social costs and environmental impacts of the various modes of transportation should be recognized; and Transportation facilities and the street network should be designed to meet the needs of the physically handicapped people and the elderly.”<sup>343</sup>

## Street Expansions and Development (1970-1984)

The City of Salem has issued numerous transportation and street projects, including the Oregon State Highway Plan (1951), SATS Volume 1 (1964), SATS Volume 2 (1966), SATS Volume 3 (1968), Y2K Transportation Plan (1977), Front Street Bypass Final Environmental Impact Statement (1978), Mission Street and 17th Extension (1984), Salem Parkway and Corollary Projects Report (1982; Table 4-2). City of Salem transportation documents include minimal mention of marginalized

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<sup>339</sup> “Suit Looming Over Property Affected by Bridge Approach,” *Oregon Statesman* (Salem, OR), July 25, 1952, p. 1.

<sup>340</sup> “Preparing for Freeway,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), March 1954, p. 9.

<sup>341</sup> “Arterial Planning: Get Started,” *Capital Journal* (Salem, OR), September 1966, 17.

<sup>342</sup> Mid-Willamette Council of Governments, “Salem Area Comprehensive Plan,” III-14

<sup>343</sup> Mid-Willamette Council of Governments, “Salem Area Comprehensive Plan,” III-12

groups. The SATS of the 1960s make only one mention of minority groups, in reference to the Highway Act of 1962, which required that “care should be exercised in selecting locations for new transportation facilities so that neighborhoods are not disrupted. To the maximum extent possible, cutting through school districts, ethnic groups, fire station districts, etc., should be avoided.”<sup>344</sup> Despite this federal guideline being referenced in the plan, the City of Salem was not always aligned in its execution.

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<sup>344</sup> Oregon State Highway Commission, *SATS Vol. 2*, 1966, p. 78.

Table 4-2. City of Salem Transportation Plans.

Document/Author	Year	Mission Statement	Location	Acquistion?	Minorites Impacted?
<b>SATS Vol. 1</b> Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, Oregon State Highway Dept, Bureau of Municipal Research and Service	1964	"Gather data on traffic behavior through reviewing geography, population, land use, and topography, forecast future transportation system requirements, and devise a long range plan of improvements within the Study Area."	Salem Urban Area defined by Mid-Willamette Valley Planning Council (Salem is 23% of the total study area)	No	No
<b>SATS Vol. 2</b> Oregon State Highway Commission	1966	"Develop an integrated plan of principal highways and streets in conjunction with public transportation that will serve the projected land uses and meet the travel demands of the community."	Salem Urban Area defined by Mid-Willamette Valley Planning Council (Salem is 23% of the total study area)	No	N/A
<b>SATS Vol. 3</b> Oregon State Highway Commission	1968	"Develop a transportation planning process which will provide the background and facts required in making decisions affecting the entire study area and beyond."	Salem Urban Area defined by Mid-Willamette Valley Planning Council (Salem is 23% of the total study area)	N/A reference to routes involving 'controversial' locations	N/A
<b>Y2K Transportation Plan</b> Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments	1977	"Develop a long-range, multi-modal transportation plan for the Salem area. This revision resulted from several factors." Namely, clarifying different planning document's authority to the federal government.	Salem Urban Area, located within the Salem Urban Growth Boundary	N/A	N/A
<b>Front Street Bypass Final</b> Environmental Impact Statement Federal Highway Administration and Oregon State Highway Division	1978	"The need for this project is based on developed plans and on street capacity deficiencies in the downtown area. The purpose of this project is to provide a major traffic facility to on the periphery of downtown Salem in order to reduce traffic volumes in the downtown core."	Downtown Area of Salem	Yes Approx. 7 properties	No
<b>Salem Parkway &amp; Corollary Projects</b> Federal Highway Administration and Oregon State Highway Division	1982	"Provide additional traffic carrying capacity in northeast Salem and the community of Keizer, where substantial residential and employment growth is expected."	Northern portion of the Salem Urban Area	Yes Approx. 80 properties	No
<b>Mission Street and 17th Extension</b> Federal Highway Administration and Oregon State Highway Division	1984	"Relieve existing and future traffic congestion on Mission St, one of the major entranceways to the City of Salem."	Immediately southeast of the city of Salem's Central Business District. Links the CBD with the North Santiam Highway.	Yes Approx. 54 properties	Yes

The 1984 Mission Street and 17th Street Extension Project plan noted displacement of neighborhoods with high concentrations of minority groups, despite their small overall percentage of the population.<sup>345</sup> The project proposed the displacement of 54 multiple- and single-family residences, affecting approximately 164 residents, 17 businesses, and approximately 50 jobs.<sup>346</sup> The project area was immediately southeast of the City of Salem’s Central Business District. Within this area, the planners conducted a “social profile” of the residents and found that the neighborhood housed a higher-than-average percentage of persons of Spanish origin and other minority racial groups.<sup>347</sup> Using census block data, the planning agency approximated that in the western portion of the study area, where the majority of the residential displacement would occur, 103 people would be displaced, 4 of whom would be Black, 4 of whom would be Indigenous, and 2 would be from other minority categories. They also generalized that of the persons displaced, approximately 11 would be of Spanish origin, and 9 would have household members with some type of mental or physical disability.<sup>348</sup> This project area also housed a higher-than-average low-income population. Of the proposed displaced housing units, 80 percent were rentals.<sup>349</sup>

Most of the 1984 Mission Street and 17th Street Extension Project relied on funding from the federal government, which meant that the project would be reviewed by multiple agencies. Debates between the federal government, Salem City Council, and the Northeast Neighbors Association surrounding the routing of this project stalled proceedings for many months.<sup>350</sup> The City of Salem favored the Mission Street route for its smaller price tag. However, federal regulations threatened to block improvements unless the City was able to show that a Hines Street alternative was not prudent.<sup>351</sup> Federal agencies were in favor of preserving the Depot Addition Neighborhood, 20 percent of which would be destroyed by the Mission Street project alignment.<sup>352</sup> In 1983, the Depot Addition neighborhood had the local reputation of “Felony Flats,” according to the *Statesman Journal*. However, the federal government saw historic significance in what they described as the “blue collar ambiance”<sup>353</sup> of the area, raising the sentiment that the history of working class people is just as important to Salem’s history as “outstanding architectural remnants often associated with historic neighborhoods and wealthy properties.”<sup>354</sup> This argument did not hold against the City Council’s wishes, and the original route along Mission Street was selected after further economic studies.

## Planning and Support for Equitable Accessible Multimodal Transportation (1973-Present)

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Salem’s transportation infrastructure was unintentionally multimodal, with pedestrian-oriented sidewalks and unimproved and improved roads

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<sup>345</sup> “Mission Street Final Environmental Impact Statement,” Oregon State Highway Division, 1984.

<sup>346</sup> “Mission Street Final Environmental Impact Statement,” Oregon State Highway Division, 1984.

<sup>347</sup> “Mission Street Final Environmental Impact Statement,” Oregon State Highway Division, 1984.

<sup>348</sup> “Mission Street Final Environmental Impact Statement,” Oregon State Highway Division, 1984.

<sup>349</sup> “Mission Street Final Environmental Impact Statement,” Oregon State Highway Division, 1984.

<sup>350</sup> “Opinion: Let Mission Work be Done,” *Statesman Journal* (Salem, OR), August 1983.

<sup>351</sup> “Opinion: Let Mission Work be Done,” *Statesman Journal* (Salem, OR), August 1983.

<sup>352</sup> “Opinion: Let Mission Work be Done,” *Statesman Journal* (Salem, OR), August 1983.

<sup>353</sup> “Opinion: Let Mission Work be Done,” *Statesman Journal* (Salem, OR), August 1983.

<sup>354</sup> “Opinion: Let Mission Work be Done,” *Statesman Journal* (Salem, OR), August 1983.

that accommodated horses, wagons, and horse-drawn trolleys. Soon the streetcar system was introduced, which increased access for those who could afford the cost. The streetcar service in Salem was discontinued in 1927, primarily due to the rise in popularity of the automobile. However, as the use of the automobile increased, so did the gap between those who could afford to purchase and maintain an automobile and those who could not.

In the mid-twentieth century, roads and highways continued to be improved and developed, often with bypasses and beltways, which excluded businesses and adversely impacted lower income and marginalized communities.

The first transportation plans were primarily focused upon improvements to roadways but also included focus on bicycle and pedestrian planning. Salem's mass transit district, Cherriots, was founded in 1979 by City of Salem voters who passed a measure creating the district.<sup>355</sup> Since that time, a focus upon developing a public bus transit system has been part of all subsequent Salem comprehensive plans. While there has been some interest from the public in re-establishing Salem's former streetcar system, after some consideration by transportation planners, it has been determined to be extremely cost prohibitive and has not been included in Salem's Transportation Plan.

In 2005, the Oregon legislature adopted the Connect Oregon program, as proposed by Governor Ted Kulongoski. The program's intent was to create a Multimodal Transportation Fund using \$100 million in proceeds from lottery bonds. In 2015, Connect Oregon funds in the amount of \$1 million were used to help pay for a new mass transit center in South Salem.<sup>356</sup>

The City of Salem is currently in the process of updating its Transportation Plan, "Salem in Motion," to address a variety of existing and emerging challenges and priorities, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and addressing equity in transportation investments and impacts.<sup>357</sup>

### 4.2.3 Human Rights, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Beginning with the early non-Indigenous colonization of Salem in the mid-nineteenth century, when Indigenous peoples were forcibly removed so non-Indigenous people could establish homes and businesses in Salem, and continuing into the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Salem's policies toward marginalized communities mirrored the policies at the national level. City of Salem adopted ordinances singling out both people of Chinese and Japanese ancestry under the umbrella of the Council's Police and Health Committee.

While Salem's land-use and transportation planning reflected the national trends of urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s, beginning in 1964, the City of Salem worked locally to address issues related to Civil Rights, reflecting the efforts throughout the nation. That year, the City established the Human Relations Commission (later Human Rights Commission), which still exists today. In 2002, the Salem City Council enacted Salem Revised Code (SRC) Chapter 97, which specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, marital status, familial status, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and source of income.

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<sup>355</sup> Cherriots, "History of Cherriots," <https://www.cherriots.org/history/>.

<sup>356</sup> "Coals Loss is South Salem's Gain," *Statesman Journal* (Salem, OR), March 20, 2015, p. A3.

<sup>357</sup> City of Salem, "Salem in Motion: Connecting People and Places," <https://www.cityofsalem.net/government/shaping-salem-s-future/salem-in-motion>.

The City of Salem’s Urban Renewal Agency and Housing Authority have worked to implement federal housing policies, which initially began with the redevelopment of blighted areas and the displacement of marginalized communities but now are focused upon ensuring that these communities have adequate access to housing in good environments.

Climate change has been identified as an issue which will disproportionately impact Salem’s most vulnerable communities.<sup>358</sup> Air quality can get worse because of climate change, and it is more likely to hurt communities that are already struggling. One example of bad air quality is ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), which forms in the summer when the sun and heat cause oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) molecules to change into ozone. This happens more often in places with factories, farms, busy roads, or near wastewater treatment plants.<sup>359</sup> Another air pollutant is Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>). These are tiny particles in the air that can be very harmful to health. PM<sub>2.5</sub> is smaller than 2.5 micrometers, and PM<sub>10</sub> is smaller than 10 micrometers but larger than 2.5. These particles can come from things like wood-burning stoves, wildfires, factories, and car exhaust. Climate change can make wildfires more common and intense, leading to more smoke in the air. In places like the Willamette Valley, where airflow can be stagnant, wildfire smoke can stay for longer periods of time.<sup>360</sup> Excessive heat and fire within the city will also result in the need for more water use; however, it may be necessary for people in the city to use less water because of the City’s Water Conservation Plan. Willamette Valley’s annual rainfall will be reduced during the spring and summer months, which will cause the ground to become drier and harder, which could lead to more flooding when the rainy season begins in the winter. Flooding in Oregon usually happens during the winter, especially in areas near rivers or in cities with lots of pavement that does not let water soak in. The City of Salem’s floodplain is centered along the city’s waterways adjacent to the Willamette River, in Salem’s downtown, and within the Mill and Pringle Creek watersheds. Within these areas, a majority of Salem’s lower- to mid-income populations reside.

People who are experiencing homelessness sometimes use open fires to cook or stay warm, which adds more pollution to the air. These types of fires can also cause serious health problems because people are exposed to the smoke for long periods. The bad air quality affects underserved communities more than others. For example, people living near busy highways, industrial areas, or farms are more likely to breathe in harmful air. In the Willamette Valley, the number of days with bad air quality is going up, and climate change is increasing this. People who already have health problems, especially older adults, children, pregnant people, and people of color, are at higher risk from this poor air quality. In short, climate change is making air pollution worse, and the people who are most affected are often those who already face health and economic challenges.<sup>361</sup>

Projected regional impacts of climate change in Oregon include projections that hotter and drier conditions will result in an increase of extreme heat days by 471 percent (an increase of the number of days where we have a heat index of over 90 degrees Fahrenheit), causing an increased risk of wildfires and potential droughts. Of higher concern are the vulnerable populations who are at greater risk of heat-related illness and death due to a lack of access to air conditioning. According to a recent study, in the Valley North Coast region in Oregon, which includes Salem, 23 percent of

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<sup>358</sup> Information on climate change in this section is adapted from research compiled by Julianah Douglas, City of Salem Climate Action Plan Manager.

<sup>359</sup> City of Salem, “Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan: December 5, 2023–December 4, 2028,” December, 2023, pp. 14–29, <https://cityofsalem.net/home/showpublisheddocument/21553/638404134501170000>.

<sup>360</sup> City of Salem, “Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan,” 14–29.

<sup>361</sup> City of Salem, “Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan,” 14–29.

households have inadequate air conditioning.<sup>362</sup> Salem and Marion County’s social vulnerability score is very high, tied with Linn and Yamhill Counties for the most vulnerable communities in the region. Populations with increased risk of heat-related illness include small children, the elderly, people with chronic illness, people taking certain medications, people with lower socioeconomic status, people who work outside or in unairconditioned spaces (farmworkers and construction workers), and people who are experiencing homelessness. Salem is particularly vulnerable to heat impacts; it has been estimated that 10 percent of the population would be displaced in an extreme heat event seeking shelter at cooling centers. This would stress community social networks.

Salem’s City Council worked on Salem’s Climate Action plan and the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan in December 2023 to address some of these concerns. The City Council recognizes homelessness as a critical issue and the commission is actively working with partners to reduce hardships that lead to homelessness and increase access to affordable housing for residents and families with children who are unsheltered or at-risk of becoming homeless.

Salem’s Long Range Planning efforts have incorporated equity into long range planning documents and plans and the Equity Roundtable was established after the adoption of Salem’s Comprehensive Plan Update in 2022 (Our Salem). The Equity Roundtable provides input on planning, housing, transportation, and other projects and programs to help ensure the perspectives of underserved communities are included in the City’s work. The roundtable comprises representatives of local organizations that serve or represent underserved communities, including low-income residents, communities of color, LGBTQ+ residents, people experiencing homelessness, youth, refugees, and people with disabilities.

Additionally, the Salem Historic Landmarks Commission has established as a priority the goal of understanding the history of Salem’s underrepresented communities. After completing a multi-year project “Searching for Salem’s Chinese Community,” in 2018, the City of Salem worked with Salem’s descendant Chinese community to re-establish their annual Chinese Qing Ming Celebration, which had been held annually in the late nineteenth century in Salem’s Pioneer Cemetery until 1920. The Chinese Shrine, which had been partially destroyed while under management of the City in the 1960s, was uncovered and restored, and the mayor has regularly read a proclamation and apology to the Chinese community for the City’s historic actions.<sup>363</sup>

In 2020, the Salem City Council signed the first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community, committing to establish a comprehensive archaeological compliance program, Tribal Roundtable, and establishment of regular Tribal Council and City Council communications.<sup>364</sup> In 2021, the Salem City Council and the Siletz Tribal Council also signed an MOU committing to the same efforts.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Oregon Department of Energy, “Oregon Needs Cooling Study,” December 2023, <https://www.oregon.gov/energy/Data-and-Reports/Documents/2023-Oregon-Cooling-Needs-Study.pdf>.

<sup>363</sup> Kimberli Fitzgerald, Kirsten Straus, and Kylie Pine, “Searching for Salem’s Chinese Community,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 122, no. 4 (Winter 2021): 456–85, [https://www.ohs.org/oregon-historical-quarterly/back-issues/upload/Fitzgerald-et-al\\_Salem-Shrine\\_OHQ-122\\_4\\_Winter-2021\\_web.pdf](https://www.ohs.org/oregon-historical-quarterly/back-issues/upload/Fitzgerald-et-al_Salem-Shrine_OHQ-122_4_Winter-2021_web.pdf).

<sup>364</sup> Dean Rhodes, “Tribe signs memorandum of understanding with city of Salem,” February 19, 2020, <https://www.smokesignals.org/articles/2020/02/19/tribe-signs-memorandum-of-understanding-with-city-of-salem/>.

<sup>365</sup> “Memorandum of Understanding – City of Salem,” *Siletz News*, February 2021, <https://ctsi.nsn.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Siletz-News-February-2021.pdf>.

# 5 Case Study: Five Underserved Populations of Salem

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The following section is a case study of five of Salem’s underserved populations, illuminating the impact of federal, state, and local policies upon these populations. As discussed in Sections 1 and 2, there are numerous other populations deserving of further study; however, the City selected these five groups based upon the percentage of each of these populations currently distributed throughout the city. See maps within each subsection showing the current distribution of these populations.

## 5.1 Local Indigenous Population

Since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples have occupied the Willamette Valley and what is now the city of Salem. For more than 5,000 years, the Kalapuya lived in the Salem area on a seasonal basis, typically in winter. Before the nineteenth century, an estimated 15,000 Kalapuya people resided in the Willamette Valley.<sup>366</sup> The first non-Indigenous people arrived in Salem and the Willamette Valley in 1812, consisting of fur trappers entering the area as temporary residents.<sup>367</sup>

The first permanent non-Indigenous population center in Salem started with Jason Lee and his Methodist Mission. Lee arrived at Fort Vancouver in September 1834 and colonized the Willamette Valley. His goal was to convert the Indigenous peoples of the Willamette Valley to Christianity, and he faced significant challenges in doing so. Not only were the Kalapuya facing dramatic population decline due to malaria and smallpox outbreaks, but they were also resistant to his paternalistic teachings. Lee decided to open a school, the Indian Mission Manual Labor School, and attempted to become financially stable through pleas back East and a small cattle herd. One plea resulted in Lee bringing back to the Oregon Territory 51 non-Indigenous people to establish the mission in a new location—present-day Salem. Lee and the new mission recruits built a granary, sawmill, gristmill, and a new Indian Manual Training School. Lee was released from his duties by the Methodist Board of Missions, as he was proclaimed to not be “focusing enough on the conversion of Native Americans.”<sup>368</sup>

In the 1850s, the federal government and Indigenous Tribes negotiated treaties that directly impacted the Kalapuya, particularly the 1851 and 1854–1855 treaties. In 1851, a meeting between the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Kalapuya Tribes was held at Champoeg, Oregon. The negotiation lasted five days. The Kalapuya Tribes followed the leadership of Santiam Chiefs Tiacan and Alquema, who advocated for their people to stay on their ancestral land. When asked if their Tribe would move east of the Cascades, Tiacan stated “their hearts were upon that piece of land, and they didn’t wish to leave it.”<sup>369</sup> Alquema seconded the opinion, stating “we don’t want any other

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<sup>366</sup> Don Macnaughtan, “Kalapuya: Native Americans of the Willamette Valley, Oregon,” Lane Library, accessed June 2025, <https://libraryguides.lanec.edu/kalapuya>.

<sup>367</sup> David Lewis, “Wallace House: Trading Post,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated November 23, 2022, <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/wallace-house/>.

<sup>368</sup> Dale E. Soden, “Jason Lee (1803-1845),” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated July 5, 2022, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/lee\\_jason/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/lee_jason/).

<sup>369</sup> David Lewis, “Willamette Valley Treaties,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated August 1, 2023, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/willamette\\_valley\\_treaties/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/willamette_valley_treaties/).

piece of land as a reserve . . . We do not wish to remove.”<sup>370</sup> In the treaties, the BIA designed small, temporary reservations within the traditional land of the Tribes. The treaties were sent to Washington, D.C., but were never ratified—White people in the Willamette Valley complained to Congress that the BIA had failed in its mission to “remove the tribes from western Oregon,” and that they did not want to colonize land still occupied by Indigenous peoples.<sup>371</sup>

In 1855, the BIA devised a new plan to develop a treaty with the Willamette Valley Tribes, which would confederate the Tribes. The treaty, known as the Treaty with the Kalapuya etc., or the Willamette Valley Treaty, was negotiated in January 1855 in Dayton, Oregon. New temporary reservations were established within the Tribes’ original lands. The Tribes stayed on these temporary reservations until December 1855, when the conflict between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous colonizers became violent. The BIA purchased land in the Grand Ronde Valley, approximately 30 miles northeast of Salem, for a reservation. The BIA brought Kalapuya chiefs to visit the reservation in 1856, telling them to communicate to their Tribes that the land was good, and that they should remove without threat or “unnecessary” force.<sup>372</sup>

Between January and March 1856, the Kalapuya and other Tribes in western Oregon were marched to the Grand Ronde Valley to inhabit the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation, which was officially established by President James Buchanan through an executive order in June 1857.<sup>373</sup> The event is referred to by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) as the “trail of tears.” Until at least 1875, the BIA provided services outlined in the Treaty with the Kalapuya etc., which included “a permanent reservation, food and money, payment for a school for twenty years, and opportunities to practice agriculture, and safety from attacks by white settlers.”<sup>374</sup>

The population on the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation declined, with many youth forcibly removed. Approximately 1,000 people lived on the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation in 1860. By 1900, only around 300 people survived. Additionally, children were removed from the reservation through the creation of the Chemawa Indian School, located just northeast of Salem at 3700 Chemawa Road NE. The school went through several name changes. Between 1885 and 1891, the school was the U.S. Indian Industrial and Training School at Salem. Between 1891 and 1893, the school was known as the Harrison Institute. Between 1893 and 1939, the name changed to the Salem Indian School at Chemawa. Finally, the school became the Chemawa Indian School and still bears this name. Students arrived in Salem in 1855 to find that no formal buildings had been built, and the land was largely unimproved. Students were tasked with clearing stumps and any other remnants from the property’s logging. Students lived in a farmhouse, stable, and impromptu sheds that were made from felled trees on site.<sup>375</sup>

Chemawa students were held to strict standards and were responsible for the upkeep of the school. Dependent on student labor, students were required to work as “laborers, servants, or cooks in

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<sup>370</sup> Lewis, “Willamette Valley Treaties.”

<sup>371</sup> Daniel Boxberger, “Willamette Valley Treaty Commission,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated August 1, 2023, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/willamette\\_valley\\_treaty\\_commission/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/willamette_valley_treaty_commission/).

<sup>372</sup> Lewis, “Willamette Valley Treaties.”

<sup>373</sup> Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, “Our Story,” accessed January 13, 2025, <https://www.grandronde.org/history-culture/history/our-story/>.

<sup>374</sup> Lewis, “Willamette Valley Treaties.”

<sup>375</sup> SuAnn M. Reddick and Eva Guggemos, “Chemawa Indian School,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated December 27, 2022, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/chemawa\\_indian\\_boarding\\_school/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/chemawa_indian_boarding_school/).

‘outing’ programs in local businesses, farms, and homes.”<sup>376</sup> As an industrial training school, the school taught students mechanical, industrial, agricultural, and domestic skills. The students’ training was intended to “civilize” them and for the students to eventually bring their “civilization” back to their reservation.<sup>377</sup>

In 1924, Chemawa “resembled a small town.”<sup>378</sup> At that time, the school’s grounds consisted of over 450 acres. The campus included gardens, orchards, agricultural fields, a dairy barn, and 70 buildings, including dormitories, school buildings, a gymnasium, an administrative building, a bakery, and a hospital. A cemetery was also present on the land. The school’s enrollment peaked in 1927 at 1,100 students, consisting of all 12 grades. Despite the school’s relationship with a traumatic past, by the 1960s, Chemawa was an integral part of the Pacific Northwest’s Indigenous culture. In the last few decades of the twentieth century, Indigenous culture was incorporated into the school’s curriculum and programing.<sup>379</sup> In 2012, Congress passed H.R. 3878, which gave the Chemawa Indian School and its property to nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon.<sup>380</sup>

The Willamette Valley Tribes lived under the Willamette Valley Treaty until 1954, when Congress terminated the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation in the Western Oregon Indian Termination Act. The law terminated Congress’s treaty rights with the CTGR. The CTGR was successful in their 1983 petition to Congress to restore the Tribe’s government and their rights under the nineteenth-century treaties. The Grand Ronde Restoration Act, Public Law 98-165, was signed in November 1983 and began the process of restoration of the Tribe’s treaty rights.<sup>381</sup>

### 5.1.1 Population Summary

Population information that is available is characterized by a massive decline in population after the arrival of non-Indigenous people in the early 1800s. As non-Indigenous people began to establish permanent residences in the Willamette Valley in the 1840s, the Kalapuya population dropped dramatically.<sup>382</sup> Those who were moved to the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation faced poverty, poor living conditions, and lack of support from the federal government. The Chemawa Indian School also removed children from their homes, contributing to population loss and a disconnect between Tribal members on and off the reservation. Because of these factors, the population of the CTGR dropped significantly by 1900 (Table 5-1). Recent population numbers are available on City mapping platforms (Figure 5-1).

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<sup>376</sup> Reddick and Guggemos, “Chemawa Indian School.”

<sup>377</sup> Reddick and Guggemos, “Chemawa Indian School.”

<sup>378</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, “Chemawa Indian School Trust Transfer and Self-Determination Act,” H.R. 3878, 112th Congress (February 13, 2012), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/house-bill/3878>.

<sup>379</sup> Chemawa Indian School, “History of Chemawa Indian School,” accessed January 13, 2025, <https://cis.bie.edu/our-school/our-history>.

<sup>380</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, “Chemawa Indian School Trust Transfer and Self-Determination Act.”

<sup>381</sup> Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, “Our Story.”

<sup>382</sup> Secondary sources do not identify consistent historical population statistics for the Kalapuya population in Oregon.

Table 5-1. Kalapuya Population Estimates.

Year	Population
<b>Kalapuya in Willamette Valley/ Salem Area</b>	
Pre-1800	+/- 17,000
1805–1830*	8,750–9,200
1849	600
<b>Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde</b>	
1860	+/- 1,000
1900	+/- 300
2000–2010*	5,500

\*Date range available in secondary sources.

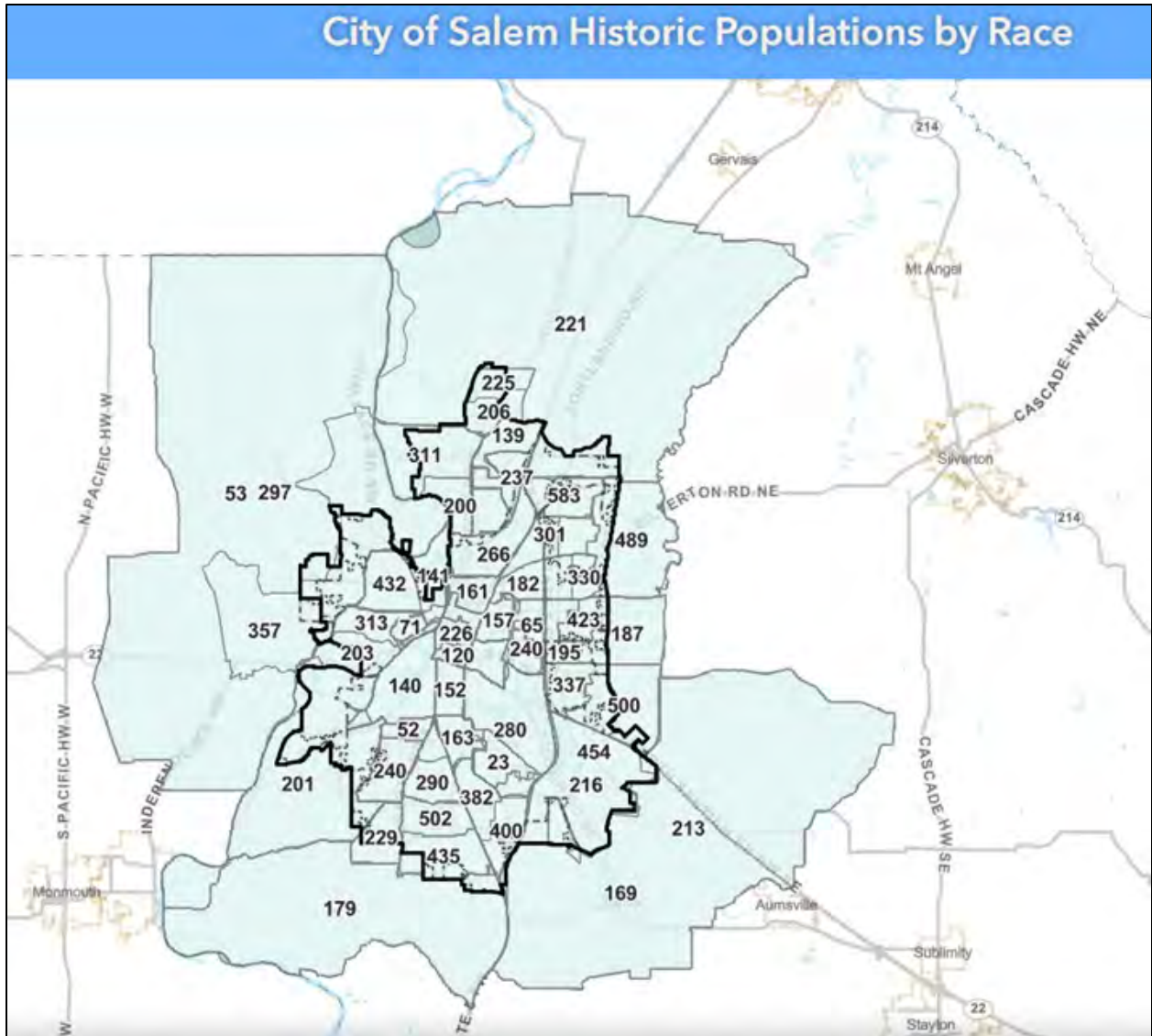


Figure 5-1. Screenshot of City of Salem map displaying the population of Indigenous peoples in Salem, 2020.

### 5.1.2 Policy Summary

Treaties, most significantly the Santiam Treaty Council and the Willamette Valley Treaty, along with the executive order establishing the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation, were the most significant policy developments in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Table 5-2). The termination of the CTGR was a debilitating blow to the community. The 1983 Grand Ronde Restoration Act marked the beginning of restoration and federal recognition of the Tribe.

Table 5-2. Summary of Policies Impacting the Indigenous Population of Salem.

Year	Legislation	Origin	Summary
1851	<b>Santiam Treaty Council</b>	Federal	Though none of the treaties were ratified, the Santiam Treaty Council consisted of negotiations between the BIA and Willamette Valley Tribes. The BIA designated small reservations within the Tribes' original homelands.
1854	<b>Treaty of Calapooia Creek, Oregon</b>	Federal	The Kalapuya and the Umpqua of the Umpqua Valley ceded their land to the United States, and a permanent reservation (the Grand Ronde) was prospected.
1855	<b>Willamette Valley Treaty (Treaty with the Kalapuya etc.)</b>	Federal	The Kalapuya and other Willamette Valley Tribes, including the Molallans, Clackamas, Cascades, and Multnomah, signed a treaty with the BIA.
1857	<b>Executive Order</b>	Federal	President James Buchanan established the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation by executive order.
1954	<b>Western Oregon Indian Termination Act</b>	Federal	Congress terminated treaty rights and federal recognition of the CTGR.
1983	<b>Grand Ronde Restoration Act</b>	Federal	Congress restored federal recognition, treaty rights, and Tribal government to the CTGR.
2012	<b>H.R. 3878</b>	Federal	Congress granted nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon the Chemawa Indian School and its land in trust.

## 5.2 People with Disabilities Treated by Oregon State Institutions in Salem

In 1843, the Oregon Territory's Provisional Government passed the Oregon Organic Law to establish rules and guidelines for those living in the territory. Within the law, the government planned for treatment of people with mental illness and disabilities. The Provisional Government required the court system to conduct inquiries into reports of "insanity."<sup>383</sup> If a jury of "intelligent and disinterested men of the county" determined that a person had a mental illness, probate courts would appoint three guardians to protect that individual's "person and property."<sup>384</sup> Courts had the authority to command sale of the property of any person determined to have a mental illness in order to fund their care and that of any dependents they may have had and to satisfy debts. In 1844, the Legislative Committee appropriated \$500 "for purposes of defraying expenses of keeping lunatic

<sup>383</sup> Terminology used by government authorities and institutional and medical professionals to refer to people with developmental, intellectual, and cognitive disabilities (e.g., feeble-minded, idiot, insane, mental defective) has changed over time. While routinely used historically, some terms are now understood to be demeaning and offensive. In this report, HRA will use people with mental illness and/or disabilities, as appropriate, outside of quotations from historical documents and the historical names of institutions for the care of people with mental illness and/or disabilities.

<sup>384</sup> Oregon Department of Human Services, Addictions and Mental Health Division (DHS), "Oregon State Hospital Administrative Overview," November 2009, <https://www.mentalhealthportland.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/OSH-Administrative-Overview-2009.pdf>.

or insane persons in Oregon.”<sup>385</sup> The law also indicated that if the Justices of the Peace concluded a person had a mental illness, they were instructed to “cause him to be let out publicly to the lowest bidder, to be boarded and clothed for one year.”<sup>386</sup>

As the Oregon Territory grew, so did interest in providing care for people with mental illness and simultaneously segregating them from the general population. Physician Dr. James C. Hawthorne settled in Portland in 1857 to treat people with mental illness, eventually opening the Oregon Hospital for the Insane, also known as the Hawthorne Asylum. By 1882, the Hawthorne Asylum, although private, often made up a third of the State’s budget due to its contract with the government.<sup>387</sup>

Wanting to provide a solution to the budget of the Hawthorne Asylum and establish an entirely State-run institution, the Legislative Assembly began discussing appropriations and locations for the hospital. The Oregon State Constitution, put into effect in 1859, required that State hospitals be built in the city of Salem. In 1880, the Oregon Legislature passed a law which permitted the Oregon State Insane Asylum, later renamed the Oregon State Hospital in 1913.<sup>388</sup> The State broke ground in May 1881 on a campus just east of downtown Salem on Asylum Avenue, now Center Street. It was designed with underground tunnels, narrow-gauge railways, and auxiliary buildings. Finished in 1883, the construction effort was designed to house up to 412 patients.<sup>389</sup>

Soon after the building’s completion, 261 male patients and 102 female patients were transferred from the Oregon Hospital for the Insane to Salem in the middle of the night. Salem residents rode trolleys from downtown to try and catch a glimpse of those interred in the hospital. By 1888, the hospital’s patient population reached 526, surpassing its capacity and stretching its resources. The Legislative Assembly set aside more than \$100,000 for hospital expansion, land purchases, and improvements to the grounds. The legislature also appropriated funds for hospital workers’ salaries and patient transport.<sup>390</sup>

Continuing to grow exponentially, the State continued to appropriate money for the expansion of the Oregon State Hospital. The State funded cottage construction in 1891 and acquired land in the 1890s to support agricultural ventures. The population of the hospital was almost 1,200 people by 1898. To mitigate population crowding, Oregon created several new institutions in the early twentieth century, including the State Institution for the Feeble-Minded in 1907, and the Eastern Oregon State Hospital in 1913. The State Institution for the Feeble-Minded, later known as the Oregon Fairview Home, Fairview Hospital and Training Center, and Fairview Training Center, was located on 670 acres just southwest of Salem. The first residents at the State Institution for the Feeble-Minded were transported directly from the Oregon State Hospital. The Eastern Oregon State Hospital, which was debated heavily in the Oregon Legislature because of the State constitutional requirement that public institutions be housed in Salem, was built in Pendleton via an appropriation

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<sup>385</sup> DHS, “Oregon State Hospital Administrative Overview.”

<sup>386</sup> DHS, “Oregon State Hospital Administrative Overview.”

<sup>387</sup> DHS, “Oregon State Hospital Administrative Overview.”

<sup>388</sup> Sue Bell, “State Hospital,” August 26, 2005, <https://www.willametteheritage.org/state-hospital/>.

<sup>389</sup> Sue Bell, “State Hospital.”

<sup>390</sup> DHS, “Oregon State Hospital Administrative Overview.”

of \$200,000. The debate was resolved by a vote in 1908, which amended the constitution. In 1913, 325 patients were transported from Salem to Pendleton.<sup>391</sup>

In 1913, the Oregon Legislature created the Board of Control to “coordinate the management of state institutions and construction of state buildings.”<sup>392</sup> At the same time, the legislature amended the “commitment standard” to require a judicial finding that a person is liable to be committed if they, “by reason of insanity is unsafe to be at large or is suffering from exposure or neglect.”<sup>393</sup> Oregon State Hospital Superintendent Dr. R. E. Lee Steiner petitioned the legislature to create a “parole law” to temporarily or permanently release “harmless” patients.<sup>394</sup>

In 1917, the State created a Board of Eugenics to systematically select patients for sterilization, a practice that the Board implemented at the Oregon State Hospital. The Board of Eugenics reviewed patient cases and decided, through a majority vote, who would be sterilized. Board members were required to act in the “best interest” of patients so that it would improve their “physical, mental, neural, or physical condition” and prevent the birth of additional “state wards.”<sup>395</sup> The Board was controversial, leading the State to revise its powers in 1923 to require a court order should an appeal be made to protest sterilization. The Board was renamed several times and was not abolished until 1983.<sup>396</sup>

Oregonians and Oregon politicians worried about the conditions at the Oregon State Hospital. In 1942, a patient who was working in the Oregon State Hospital kitchen mistook roach poison for powdered milk, which was then mixed into scrambled eggs that were served to patients and staff. Forty-seven people were killed, and over 400 became ill. The news story brought new attention to the hospital, with Governor Charles Sprague remarking in a speech to the Legislative Assembly that “the incident brought freshly into focus the distressing conditions” found there. Legislators allocated large appropriations to the hospital in their next legislative sessions.<sup>397</sup>

The hospital reached its peak number of patients in 1958 with 3,545 people. Though outpatient care was pushed by legislators and doctors during this period, reforms were also emphasized by the legislature. In 1961, the Oregon Legislature formed the Mental Health Division, which fell under the Board of Control. The Mental Health Division managed Oregon State Hospital and a number of other State institutions and was charged with making recommendations for policy development related to mental health. The Board of Control was abolished in 1969, and the Mental Health Division was transferred to the Governor’s Office and then to the Department of Human Resources in 1971.<sup>398</sup>

Changes in the political and social understanding of mental health and cognitive and physical disabilities in the second half of the twentieth century led to significant condition reforms that

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<sup>391</sup> DHS, “Oregon State Hospital Administrative Overview.”

<sup>392</sup> DHS, “Oregon State Hospital Administrative Overview.”

<sup>393</sup> DHS, “Oregon State Hospital Administrative Overview.”

<sup>394</sup> DHS, “Oregon State Hospital Administrative Overview.”

<sup>395</sup> Jenette Eccleston, “Reforming the Sexual Menace: Early 1900s Eugenic Sterilization in Oregon,” accessed January 13, 2025. <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/24d0fa36-6f6d-4f74-87c7-85789aafa7d8/content>.

<sup>396</sup> Jenette Eccleston, “Reforming the Sexual Menace.”

<sup>397</sup> Kathleen Carlson Clements, “State Hospital Poisoning,” August 19, 2005, <https://www.willametteheritage.org/state-hospital-poisoning/>.

<sup>398</sup> DHS, “Oregon State Hospital Administrative Overview.”

prioritized self-determination and individual rights. By 2006, the Oregon Legislature enacted the Oregon State Hospital Replacement Project, which implemented a \$450 million dollar budget to create new, state-of-the-art mental health hospitals to reflect growth in the psychiatric health field. In 2008, the Oregon State Hospital was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Despite the name of the 2006 “Replacement Project,” the Oregon State Hospital is still in operation.<sup>399</sup>

## Oregon School for the Blind

The Oregon Legislative Assembly apportioned money for the creation of a school for people who were blind or had low vision in 1872. The school opened the same year under the direction of William and Marie Nesbitt, who ran classes for their first two students out of their home in Salem. In 1874, the school moved to 13<sup>th</sup> Street between Court and Chemeketa Streets, and in 1883, the school moved to the Snowden building located at 12<sup>th</sup> and Ferry Streets. In 1895, the school moved to a 7-acre plot on Church and Mission Streets SE.<sup>400</sup>

The school aimed to educate children who were blind or had low vision in “ordinary branches of learning” and to supplement special skills to foster independence and quality of life.<sup>401</sup> Enrollment in the 1930s was about 74 students. Closing the school and integrating children with significantly impaired vision into standard classroom environments was debated extensively. Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975, which required that students with disabilities be educated in the “least restrictive environment” possible.<sup>402</sup> In June 2009, the Oregon Legislature decided to close the Oregon School for the Blind and “mainstream” the students still attending.<sup>403</sup>

## Oregon School for the Deaf

The Oregon School for the Deaf, originally named the Oregon Institute for Deaf-Mutes, was originally established in 1870 by William S. Smith, a teacher who was deaf. The Oregon Legislature approved an annual budget, and by 1872, the school opened in downtown Salem on the corner of Chemeketa and Church Streets. The school also occupied a building at Church and Mission Streets. By 1894, the institute solicited bids for the construction of a campus for the school. Construction began on a 321-acre farm just east of Salem. A “crusade” against the school’s location began soon after the commencement of class instruction due to the location’s isolation and proximity to Salem’s reformatory. The school then purchased 52 acres near the Fairgrounds in North Salem in 1910. The school continues to operate at this location.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>399</sup> DHS, “Oregon State Hospital Administrative Overview.”

<sup>400</sup> Sara Paulson, “Oregon School for the Blind,” Oregon Encyclopedia, August 24, 2005, <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon-school-for-the-blind/>.

<sup>401</sup> “Oregon School for the Blind”; Willamette Heritage Center, August 24, 2005, <https://www.willametteheritage.org/oregon-school-for-the-blind/>.

<sup>402</sup> Paulson, “Oregon School for the Blind.”

<sup>403</sup> Paulson, “Oregon School for the Blind.”

<sup>404</sup> Maria Carpenter, “The Oregon School for the Deaf: How a School Became a Community,” October 18, 2022, <https://www.ohs.org/blog/oregon-school-for-the-deaf-how-a-school-became-a-community.cfm>; and “Oregon School for the Deaf,” Willamette Heritage Center, August 24, 2005, <https://www.willametteheritage.org/oregon-school-for-the-deaf/>.

## 5.2.1 Population Summary

Secondary sources do not identify consistent historical population statistics for the population of individuals with disabilities in Salem. See Table 5-3 for periodic population counts at the Oregon State Hospital.

Table 5-3. Patient Population Counts at Oregon State Hospital.

Year	Population
1883	361
1888	526
1898	+/- 1,200
1958	3,545

## 5.2.2 Policy Summary

The Oregon Legislature passed many laws relating to the institutionalization of people with mental illness and disabilities in Oregon (Table 5-4). The following table is representative of significant laws that impacted the city of Salem and the people treated therein.

Table 5-4. Summary of Policies Related to People with Mental Illness and Disabilities Treated by State Institutions in Salem.

Year	Legislation	Origin	Summary
1843	<b>Organic Law</b>	State	Oregon Territory's Provisional Government stipulated that those suspected to have a mental illness would be reviewed in front of a jury, and if determined to have a mental illness, would be assigned guardians.
1857	<b>Oregon State Constitution</b>	State	The Oregon State Constitution required all State institutions to be located in Salem.
1880	<b>Creation of State Hospital for the Insane</b>	State	The Oregon Legislature appropriated funds for the creation of a state hospital.
1907	<b>Creation of the State Institution for the Feeble-Minded</b>	State	The Oregon Legislature appropriated funds for the creation of the State Institution for the Feeble-Minded.
1917	<b>Board of Eugenics</b>	State	The Oregon Legislature created a Board of Eugenics to oversee forced sterilization.
1961	<b>Mental Health Division</b>	State	The Oregon Legislature created the Mental Health Division under Board of Control.

## 5.3 Black Population

Until the mid-nineteenth century, the Black history of Oregon was defined by individuals who were part of exploratory expeditions, the fur trade, and religious missions. By 1843, White colonizers headed for Oregon Country were explicit: “No negroes or mulattos shall be allowed to accompany the expedition under any pretenses whatsoever.”<sup>405</sup> As more people crossed the Oregon Trail, a small but significant number of Black people made the journey either as free or enslaved people. During the period of immigration before the Civil War, at least 40 enslaved people were brought to Oregon by their enslavers.<sup>406</sup>

Akin to eastern territories in the antebellum period, Oregon’s early history was marked by debates around the expansion of slavery into new territorial acquisitions. The 2024 NRHP Multiple Property Document (MPD) “Black Historic Resources in Oregon Outside of Portland, 1788–2002” states that White Oregonians “were generally averse to slavery as an institution and enslavers were considered suspect for their role in bringing Black people to Oregon. While a minority were opposed on humanitarian grounds, many simply wanted to make Oregon into a place without Black people. Keeping the practice of slavery out of Oregon was a step towards that end.”<sup>407</sup> Because of this sentiment, a series of exclusion laws were passed to prevent Black settlement in the territory.

The first in a series of racist legislation, Oregon Territory’s Provisional Government passed the 1843 Oregon Organic Law. Though the Organic Law outlawed slavery and involuntary servitude and made no mention of Black people specifically, it did stipulate that the right to vote was only afforded to males of White descent. Additionally, the law allowed males of White descent to claim up to 640-acres of land—a privilege not awarded to people of color.<sup>408</sup>

In June 1844, the Provisional Government passed a Black exclusion law that reiterated the Organic Law’s slavery ban but extended the ban to include all Black Oregonians, free or enslaved. Enslavers were given a three-year period in which they had to remove their enslaved people from the Oregon Territory. The government stipulated that it would free and expel any enslaved people who were not freed by 1847. Free Black men were required to leave the territory within two years of their arrival date, and free Black women were required to leave within three years. If they refused to leave, they faced a whipping every six months until they departed. Championed by Oregon legislator Peter Burnett, the so-called “Burnett’s Lash Law,” was intended, in his words, to “keep clear of that most troublesome class of population. We are in a new world, under the most favorable circumstances and we wish to avoid most of those evils that have so much afflicted the United States and other countries.”<sup>409</sup> Voters rescinded the Lash Law in 1845 before anyone could be punished.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Kimberly S. Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon Outside of Portland, 1788–2002,” National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, March 1, 2022, [https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/OH/Documents/OR\\_Statewide\\_BlackHistoricResourcesInOregonMPD.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/OH/Documents/OR_Statewide_BlackHistoricResourcesInOregonMPD.pdf).

<sup>406</sup> Greg Nokes, “Black Exclusion Laws in Oregon,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated May 17, 2024, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/exclusion\\_laws/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/exclusion_laws/).

<sup>407</sup> Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon.”

<sup>408</sup> Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon.”

<sup>409</sup> Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon.”

<sup>410</sup> Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon.”

In September 1849, the Provisional Government passed another Black exclusion law that stipulated that “it shall not be lawful for any negro or mulatto to enter into, or reside” in the territory.<sup>411</sup> Though exceptions were made for those already living in the territory, it reflected White fear of a growing Black population that might result from seamen jumping ship or “intermixing” with Indigenous peoples. Only one person is known to have been expelled because of the 1849 exclusion law—Jacob Vanderpool, a sailor from the West Indies who arrived in Oregon in 1850.<sup>412</sup> Three other Black people had expulsion orders issued against them, but the orders were stayed due to White testimonials. The law was rescinded in 1854, but in November 1857, voters approved an exclusion clause to be added to the Oregon Bill of Rights. Although not necessarily enforced, and made moot by the Fourteenth Amendment, the exclusion laws on the books in Oregon “had their intended effect of discouraging Black people from settling in Oregon.”<sup>413</sup> The repeal of the 1857 exclusion law did not happen until 1926, which marked the end of explicit, *de jure* exclusion in Oregon.<sup>414</sup>

In 1862, Congress passed the Federal Homestead Act and allowed Black adults already residing in Oregon to claim up to 160 acres of land. The first known Black woman to settle in Oregon, Rachel Belden, eventually claimed about 144 acres on the Willamette River just outside of Salem. The ability to purchase property was an important opportunity for Belden and other Black Oregonians who wanted to establish themselves.<sup>415</sup>

In 1850, Marion County was home to nine Black residents. By 1860, there were 20 Black residents in Marion County, with 17 living in Salem—the county had the second-highest number of Black residents in Oregon. In the 1860s, Black residents in Salem were *de facto* enslaved people, formerly enslaved people, or children. There is no evidence to suggest that any of these people were impacted legally by the exclusion laws, but they certainly faced hostility and segregation. One place in Salem, the First Congregational Church, was a welcoming environment for early Black residents. The congregation was led by Pastor Obed Dickinson, an open abolitionist who convinced his largely White congregation to welcome new Black members. He and his wife, Charlotte Dickinson, advocated for the fair education of Black residents in Salem and protested Oregon’s school taxes, which Black Oregonians had to pay, despite the fact that their children could not attend the schools for which their taxes paid.<sup>416</sup>

In 1867, Black artist William P. Johnson opened a school for Black students in Salem. Some historians speculate that the schoolroom might have been located at the First Congregational Church. In 1868, a “Colored School” for adults was opened. Also in 1868, the Salem School District opened a new school, the Little Central School, at the southeast corner of High and Marion Streets. The Little Central School was a segregated offshoot of the Central School and was designated for

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<sup>411</sup> Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon.”

<sup>412</sup> “Jacob Vanderpool’s Story,” Oregon Remembrance Project, Accessed January 13, 2025, <https://oregonremembrance.org/vanderpool-project/jacobs-story/>.

<sup>413</sup> Darrell Milner, “Black People in Oregon,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated April 2, 2024, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/blacks\\_in\\_oregon/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/blacks_in_oregon/); and Nokes, “Black Exclusion Laws in Oregon.”

<sup>414</sup> Darrel Milner, “Black People in Oregon”; and Nokes, “Black Exclusion Laws ion Oregon.”

<sup>415</sup> Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon.”

<sup>416</sup> Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon”; and Virginia Green and Katherine Wallig, “African Americans in Salem,” August 25, 2005, <https://www.willametteheritage.org/africans-americans/>.

the education of Black students. The school was discontinued in 1871, and by 1872, the 15 students enrolled at the Little Central School the previous year were integrated into Salem public schools.<sup>417</sup>

In 1868, a celebration was held in Salem to commemorate the Emancipation Proclamation, a document issued by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 that declared enslaved people living in the Confederacy to be freed. The event was attended by both White and Black people, and featured speeches, a reading of the proclamation, a dinner, and a dance. Another known celebration was held in 1870, and it is probable that other celebrations were held by the Black community. As the “Black Historic Resources in Oregon” MPD notes, these celebrations were significant because they took place “in a time when the Oregon legislature was trying to curtail the freedoms of Black people . . . these events were some of the earliest occurrences of a group of Black Oregonians outside of Portland publicly demonstrating for equal rights.”<sup>418</sup>

Little additional information is recorded about Black Salemites until the 1920s, when racial tension was funneled into the organization of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in Oregon in 1921. Two years after its conception in Oregon, the KKK had approximately 35,000 registered members throughout the state. Oregon membership numbers were the highest per capita of any state in the United States, with one in every twenty Oregonians belonging to the organization. At least one Salem resident received a threatening letter from the KKK. Charles Maxwell, who owned a shoeshine shop received a letter reading, “We have stood you as long as we intend to stand you, and you must unload, if you don’t we will come to see you.”<sup>419</sup> Refusing to be intimidated, Maxwell remained in Salem and opened a successful restaurant, Fat Boy Barbecue, in 1928. Maxwell’s daughter, Maxine Maxwell, was denied a dormitory room at Oregon State University because of the color of her skin.<sup>420</sup>

Facing letters like the one Maxwell received, public KKK military-style marches through Salem’s city center, and violence occurring elsewhere in the state, many Black families moved to California. In 1936, an official with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) said that Salem “has no Negro population, except a few inmates in the Penal Institution and Insane Hospital. All the colored people who did live here, have all moved to Los Angeles. I know of no Negro living in Salem at the present time.”<sup>421</sup>

Between the 1930s and 1950s, the few remaining Black Salemites faced segregation and discrimination. In the 1930s and 1940s, hotels in the city of Salem had a “no Negro policy.” Despite statewide accommodations laws passed in the 1950s, Black Oregonians still faced segregation and hostile environments, as well as prohibitive practices in sectors like housing and employment. In 1949, the Oregon Legislature passed a resolution that established the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC).<sup>422</sup> In 1957, the legislature passed the Fair Housing Services Act, which outlawed racial discrimination against Black people when buying or renting homes. Also in 1959, the

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<sup>417</sup> Susan Bell, “Salem’s Colored School and Little Central,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated October 17, 2022, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/salem\\_s\\_colored\\_school\\_and\\_little\\_central/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/salem_s_colored_school_and_little_central/).

<sup>418</sup> Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon.”

<sup>419</sup> Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon”; and History & Social Justice, “Salem, Oregon,” accessed January 13, 2025, <https://justice.tougaloo.edu/sundowntown/salem-or/>.

<sup>420</sup> Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon”; and History & Social Justice, “Salem, Oregon.”

<sup>421</sup> Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon”; and Green and Wallig, “African Americans in Salem.”

<sup>422</sup> Kimberli Fitzgerald, “Local History: Civil Rights Have a Long Legacy in Salem,” *Salem Reporter*, September 14, 2022, <https://www.salemreporter.com/2022/09/14/local-history-civil-rights-have-a-long-legacy-in-salem/>.

Oregon Legislature ratified the Fifteenth Amendment, a symbolic move that acknowledged a past of racial discrimination.<sup>423</sup>

In 1964, a case which tested Oregon’s civil rights protections was heard at the Marion County Courthouse. The case details involved a Black couple who were denied an apartment in Salem because of their race. The Oregon State Bureau of Labor brought the case, arguing that the denial was based on racial discrimination, and Circuit Court Judge George Duncan required that the couple be allowed to rent the apartment.<sup>424</sup>

In 1964, the Salem City Council formed a civil rights group called the Salem Human Relations Commission to “improve racial harmony in the city” and fight unequal treatment under Oregon law.<sup>425</sup> Since the 1960s, Salem has remained a majority White community. Organizations like the Oregon Black Pioneers and the Salem-Keizer NAACP have championed the Black experience in Salem and advocated for increased understanding of Salem’s complex Black history.

### 5.3.1 Population Summary

Population metrics for Black people living in the city of Salem and the state of Oregon are sporadic. Secondary sources identify consistent population data on the number of Black people residing in Marion County. The Black population in Marion County has undulated over time, characterized by a decrease in the 1870s, an increase in the 1880s, and a drastic decrease between 1900 and 1920 (Table 5-5).<sup>426</sup> Recent population numbers are available on City mapping platforms (Figure 5-2).

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<sup>423</sup> Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon.”

<sup>424</sup> Fitzgerald, “Local History: Civil Rights Have a Long Legacy in Salem.”

<sup>425</sup> Moreland et al., “Black Historic Resources in Oregon”; and Fitzgerald, “Salem’s Human Rights Commission.”

<sup>426</sup> Kalia Flocker, “Salem, Oregon, Census Data: Marion County, Oregon,” 2013, <https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/44557/TCE408H-2013-Salem-FinalReport.pdf?sequence=1>.

Table 5-5. Population of Black Residents in Marion County, Oregon.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>
1850	9
1860	18
1870	61
1880	27
1890	729
1900	925
1910	58
1920	72
1930	63
1940	67
1950	138
1960	226
2000	1750
2010	2284

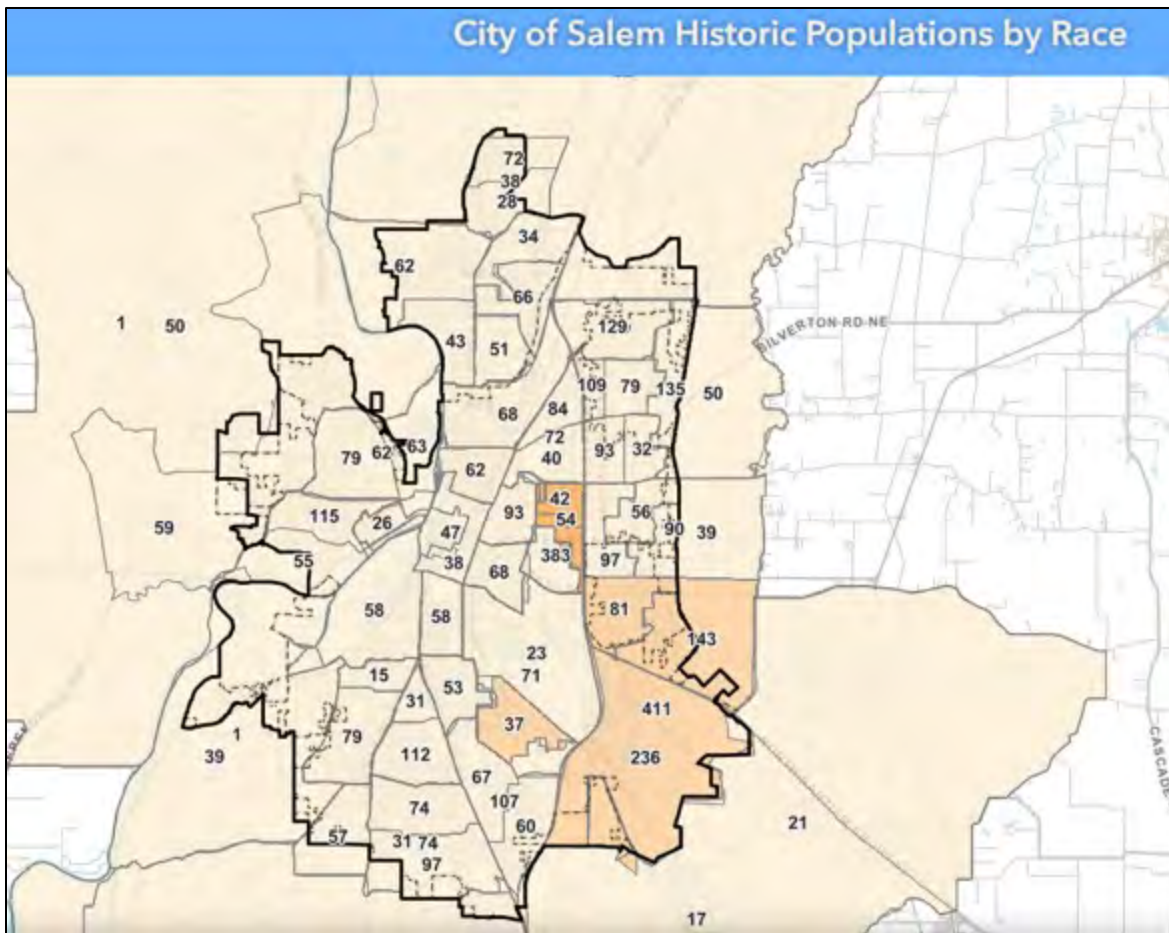


Figure 5-2. Screenshot of City of Salem map displaying the Black population in Salem, 2020.

### 5.3.2 Policy Summary

The following table highlights policies that significantly impacted Salem’s Black population (Table 5-6). Until the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified in 1865, State policy relating to Black people centered on exclusion. Between 1865 and the 1950s, Black Oregonians faced de facto segregation and discrimination.

Table 5-6. Summary of Policies and Actions Impacting the Black Population of Salem.

Year	Legislation	Origin	Summary
1843	<b>Oregon Organic Laws</b>	State	The Oregon Territory’s Provisional Legislature incorporated a provision established in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which outlawed slavery in U.S. territories, into Oregon territorial law.
1844	<b>Black Exclusion Law (Lashing Provision, also known as Peter Burnett’s Lash Law)</b>	State	The Oregon Territory’s Provisional Legislature passed a bill intended to prevent slavery within the territory, requiring all enslaved people brought to the territory to be freed within three years, or the Territorial government would free them. Free Black people were required to leave the state or face 39 lashes, repeated every six months, until they departed Oregon. The legislature

			adopted a lesser penalty months later, and voters rescinded the law in 1845.
1849	<b>Black Exclusion Law</b>	State	The Oregon Territory's Provisional Legislature excluded Black and mixed-race people from entering or residing in the Oregon Territory. Exceptions were made for those already established in Oregon. Voters rescinded the law in 1854.
1857	<b>Exclusion Law</b>	State	Oregon Territory voters added an exclusion law to the Oregon Bill of Rights.
1862	<b>Homestead Act</b>	Federal	Congress passed legislation that did not have restrictions on color of skin. Black Oregonians were able to acquire up to 160 acres of land.
1862	<b>Color Tax</b>	State	The Oregon Legislature passed an annual tax of \$5 on residents who were Black, Chinese, Hawaiian, and mulatto. Those unable to pay were required to perform road maintenance.
1865	<b>Fourteenth Amendment</b>	Federal	The states ratified an amendment that made Oregon's exclusion laws moot.
1950	<b>Public Accommodations Laws</b>	State	The Oregon Legislature prohibited discrimination against people based on race in public places.
1957	<b>Fair Housing Services Act</b>	State	The Oregon Legislature prohibited racial discrimination in the real estate business.
1959	<b>Ratification of Fifteenth Amendment</b>	State	The Oregon Legislature ratified this amendment as a symbolic move meant to acknowledge the history of racism within the state.
1964	<b>Salem Human Relations Commission</b>	Local (Salem City Council)	Following a 1963 request from a Salem citizen group and appointment of the Human Rights Temporary Advisory Committee, the Salem City Council created this civil rights group.

## 5.4 Chinese Population

The Chinese population in Oregon developed in the mid-nineteenth century due to the social and economic opportunities presented by new industries erupting in the West. The Oregon Gold Rush began in 1851, and by 1860, the U.S. Census recorded 425 Chinese-born residents living in the state, with most of the population located in the John Day and Powder River Basins in eastern Oregon, where gold had been discovered. The State of Oregon and the federal government developed racist policies as early as the 1850s, including the 1857 Oregon Constitution, which prohibited Chinese-born people from voting and purchasing real estate and mining claims.<sup>427</sup> Laborers, including Chinese immigrants, began work on the Transcontinental Railroad and the Oregon & California

<sup>427</sup> Kylie Pine et al., "Salem's Chinese Americans," Willamette Heritage, August 25, 2005, <https://www.willametteheritage.org/chinese-americans/>.

Railroad (O&C) in the 1860s.<sup>428</sup> Some individuals started businesses like restaurants, laundries, and apothecaries to service burgeoning towns. In Salem, only two Chinese men, both of whom listed jobs relating to laundry, were identified by the 1860 census. In 1870, Salem was home to 24 Chinese people, 4 of whom were incarcerated in the Oregon State Penitentiary.<sup>429</sup>

In 1882, the federal government passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which initiated a 10-year moratorium on the immigration of Chinese laborers from China to the United States. Individuals of Chinese descent living in Salem at the time understood the political severity of the legislation. George Lai Sun, local businessman and “mayor of Chinatown,” said in an 1886 newspaper article that “every Chinaman in Salem will stay here as long as he wants to stay and be protected in his rights.”<sup>430</sup> The federal government’s passage of the 1892 Geary Act extended the Chinese Exclusion Act by another 10 years and required the registration of Chinese residents to prove their right to residency. When the federal government came to Salem in 1893 to conduct registration of Chinese residents, Sun directed fellow residents not to comply. They were successful for almost a year.<sup>431</sup>

As mining and railroad work ebbed, Chinese people moved to the Willamette Valley in increasing numbers. By 1890, there were a total of 9,540 Chinese people recorded in Oregon, about 250 of whom lived in the city of Salem.<sup>432</sup> Salem developed a “Chinatown,” or a congregation of Chinese businesses and homes. In the 1880s, the population was concentrated between Liberty and High Streets. In 1895, Chinatown moved between State and Court Streets and, in 1915, between Ferry and High Streets.

Chinatown was the target of newspaper coverage and attention from the Salem City Council, which believed the area to be unsanitary. The City Council founded the Committee on Health and Police in the 1870s, which routinely surveyed, threatened, fined, and arrested people not in compliance with the City Code. The Salem City Council also believed Chinatown to be a nefarious influence on the youth of Salem, reflected in the passage of Local Ordinance No. 777, which prohibited minors from visiting “Chinese and Japanese noodle restaurants.”<sup>433</sup> By 1925, any evidence of a Chinese community in Salem’s built environment virtually disappeared. According to research undertaken by Kimberli Fitzgerald, Kirsten Straus, and Kylie Pine, no mention of the community is present in primary sources until 1953, when a Chinese altar was identified in Salem’s Pioneer Cemetery.<sup>434</sup>

## 5.4.1 Population Summary

The Chinese population in Salem saw a steady increase starting in 1860 (Figure 5-3 and Figure 5-4). Its peak reached 125 individuals in 1910, but numbers soon diminished. By the 1940s, population studies show no evidence of a Chinese community in Salem (Table 5-7).

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<sup>428</sup> William G. Robbins, “Railroads, Race, and the Transformation of Oregon,” 2002, <https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/narratives/this-land-oregon/political-and-economic-culture-1870-1920/railroads-race-and-the-transformation-of-oregon/>.

<sup>429</sup> Fitzgerald, Straus, and Pine, “Searching for Salem’s Early Chinese Community,” 460.

<sup>430</sup> Fitzgerald, Straus, and Pine, “Searching for Salem’s Early Chinese Community,” 467–68.

<sup>431</sup> Fitzgerald, Straus, and Pine, “Searching for Salem’s Early Chinese Community,” 468–69.

<sup>432</sup> Robbins, “Railroads, Race, and the Transformation of Oregon”; and Pine et al., “Salem’s Chinese Americans.”

<sup>433</sup> Fitzgerald, Straus, and Pine, “Searching for Salem’s Early Chinese Community,” 472.

<sup>434</sup> Fitzgerald, Straus, and Pine, “Searching for Salem’s Early Chinese Community,” 475–76.

Table 5-7. Population Statistics for the Chinese Population in Salem and Oregon.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Salem Population</b>	<b>Oregon Population</b>
1860	2	425
1870	24	3,300
1880	89	9510
1890	—	9540
1900	97	10,397
1910	125	7,363
1920	79	3,090
1930	28	2,075
1940	—	2,086
1950	—	2,102 <sup>435</sup>

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<sup>435</sup> Douglas Lee, “Chinese Americans in Oregon,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated May 18, 2023, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/chinese\\_americans\\_in\\_oregon/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/chinese_americans_in_oregon/).

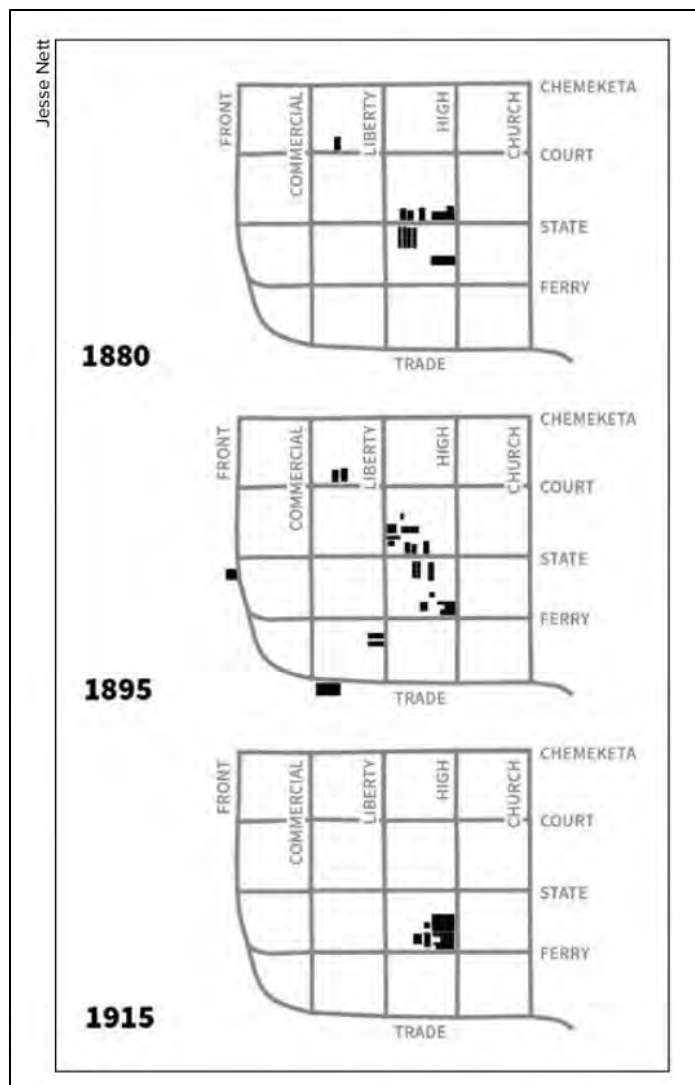


Figure 5-3. Chinese-occupied buildings in Salem between 1880 and 1915. Rectangles in black represent building footprints sourced from Sanborn fire insurance maps from respective year.<sup>436</sup>

<sup>436</sup> Fitzgerald, Straus, and Pine, “Searching for Salem’s Early Chinese Community,” 468.



Figure 5-4. 1892 E. G. Eagleson map of Salem with blue highlight overlaid to indicate the general location of Salem’s Chinatown from 1880–1895.<sup>437</sup>

## 5.4.2 Policy Summary

Policies relating to the Chinese population in Salem were largely restrictive. State legislation prohibited Chinese people from voting, purchasing real estate, marrying outside of their race, and more. By the 1870s, the federal government began passing exclusion laws that prohibited Chinese immigration to the United States and required those already in the United States to obtain certificates and prove the legality of their residency. Local law was defined by City Ordinances that sought to limit the presence of Chinatown in downtown Salem through sanitation crusades and ordinances related to nefarious environments (Table 5-8).

<sup>437</sup> Willamette Heritage Center, 1892 Map of Salem, <https://www.willametteheritage.org/1892-map-of-salem/>.

Table 5-8. Summary of Policies Impacting the Chinese Population of Salem.

Year	Legislation	Origin	Summary
1857	<b>Oregon State Constitution</b>	State	The Oregon State Constitution prohibited Chinese-born people from voting and purchasing real estate and mining claims in the state of Oregon.
1862	<b>Color Tax</b>	State	The Oregon Legislature passed an annual tax of \$5 on residents who were Black, Chinese, Hawaiian, and mulatto. Those unable to pay were required to perform road maintenance.
1866	<b>Miscegenation</b>	State	The Oregon Legislature banned all interracial marriages to prevent White people from marrying anyone who was one-fourth or more Chinese, Hawaiian, and one-half or more Native American.
1875	<b>Page Act</b>	Federal	Congress prohibited the importation of “unfree laborers” and women brought for “immoral purposes.” This legislation was primarily enforced against the Chinese population to restrict Chinese immigration.
1882	<b>Chinese Exclusion Act</b>	Federal	Congress initiated a 10-year moratorium on Chinese labor immigration.
1892	<b>Geary Act</b>	Federal	Congress extended the Chinese Exclusion Act another 10 years and required Chinese people to carry photo identification.
1902	<b>Chinese Exclusion Law</b>	Federal	Congress made the Chinese Exclusion Act permanent and required Chinese residents to register and obtain a certificate of residence or face deportation.
1910	<b>Ordinance No. 777</b>	Local (Salem City Council)	The Salem City Council regulated “Chinese and Japanese noodle restaurants,” which prohibited minors from going to noodle restaurants after certain hours and required all such restaurants to have clear-glass windows or doors.

## 5.5 Latine Population

The Latine presence in Oregon Country began with the arrival of Spanish explorers in the sixteenth century, entering as agents of the Spanish empire. When Mexico became independent from Spain in 1821, and when the United States acquired Mexico’s northern territories in 1848, more Spanish and Mexican people inhabited the area. Vaqueros, who worked as horsemen and cattle herders, and mule packers were hired by White ranchers to assist their operations. The U.S. Army employed Mexican mule packers to haul supplies to aid in the Army’s conflicts with Indigenous peoples within Oregon. By 1860, 20 Mexicans lived in Oregon City, but there was not a significant population expansion until the 1910s and into the 1920s, when Mexican immigration totaled approximately a million people throughout the United States. Oregon’s population of “foreign born” Mexicans totaled 569

people in 1920.<sup>438</sup> Oregon was home to seasonal workers and traqueros, or railroad workers, in the 1920s.<sup>439</sup>

During the Great Depression, people of Latine heritage were used as scapegoats for economic hardships and labor shortages. In the 1930s, about 500,000 people of Mexican descent in the United States were forced to leave or deported to Mexico, 250,000 of whom were U.S. citizens. Mexicans in Oregon moved to rural areas to avoid deportation roundups happening in urban environments such as those in Los Angeles and Detroit. Oregonians, including those in the state legislature, sought to rid the state of those with Latine heritage through what historian Jerry Garcia described as “economic rationalization, nativist rhetoric, and coercion.”<sup>440</sup>

Despite the xenophobia towards Latine people in the United States as a whole, Oregon’s agricultural fields were still places where people of Latine descent could work, as White laborers did not want to work the positions. As Garcia explained, “the Depression revealed the vulnerability of Latinos in Oregon . . . but it also reinforced the need for Latino labor.”<sup>441</sup>

In the 1940s, the onset of World War II caused a significant decrease in the labor force, which caused a particular problem for the agriculture and food production industries. Oregon sent more than 35,000 men employed as farm workers to join the armed forces. Industrial labor needs in the Portland area drew more laborers from Oregon farms, contributing to the overall shortage of agricultural labor. To solve the problem, the United States negotiated with Mexico. In August 1942, the U.S. and Mexican governments created the Mexican Farm Labor Program, commonly known as the Bracero Program. In April 1943, Congress passed Public Law 45, which acted as an emergency labor program sanctioning the use of the Mexican Farm Labor Program. In Oregon, the Oregon State College Extension Service implemented, among other labor programs, the Bracero Program. Oregon’s peak years implementing the Bracero Program were between 1943 and 1948, with some evidence of it being used in the 1950s.<sup>442</sup>

At this time, the recorded Latine population of Salem was small; one source reports only four families in the 1950s and 1960s. This was likely due, in part, to population fluctuations common for seasonal farm laborers. Salem and Oregon at large saw an increase in Latine populations between 2000 and 2010. In that time, the number of Latines in Oregon rose by 63 percent. Salem’s Latine population reached about 20 percent of the total in 2010, and approximately 24 percent in 2020.<sup>443</sup>

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<sup>438</sup> Jerry Garcia, “Latinos in Oregon,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated November 8, 2023, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/hispanics\\_in\\_oregon/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/hispanics_in_oregon/).

<sup>439</sup> “Salem History: The ‘Traqueros’ Who Helped Build Oregon’s Railways,” *Salem Reporter*, October 1, 2021, <https://www.salemreporter.com/2021/10/01/salem-history-the-traqueros-who-helped-build-oregons-railways/>.

<sup>440</sup> Jerry Garcia, “Latinos in Oregon.”

<sup>441</sup> Jerry Garcia, “Latinos in Oregon.”

<sup>442</sup> Jerry Garcia, “Bracero Program,” Oregon Encyclopedia, last updated November 8, 2023, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/bracero\\_program/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/bracero_program/); and “The Braceros,” Oregon Public Broadcasting, December 18, 2006, <https://www.opb.org/television/programs/oregon-experience/article/the-braceros/>.

<sup>443</sup> Saphara Harrell, “Census Shows Salem Has Become More Diverse, But Added Little Housing,” *Salem Reporter*, August 17, 2021, <https://www.salemreporter.com/2021/08/17/census-shows-salem-has-become-more-diverse-but-added-little-housing/>; and Garcia, “Latinos in Oregon.”

## 5.5.1 Population Summary

Secondary sources do not identify consistent historical population statistics for the Latine population in Oregon. Secondary literature reveals that about 570 foreign-born Mexicans lived in Oregon in 1920. Traqueros and braceros were a prominent but largely temporary population in Oregon. It appears that by 1950, four Mexican families lived in Salem. The early 2000s saw a large increase in residents of Mexican descent in Salem, rising by approximately 63 percent during that time, and making up approximately 24 percent of the total population in 2020 (Figure 5-5).

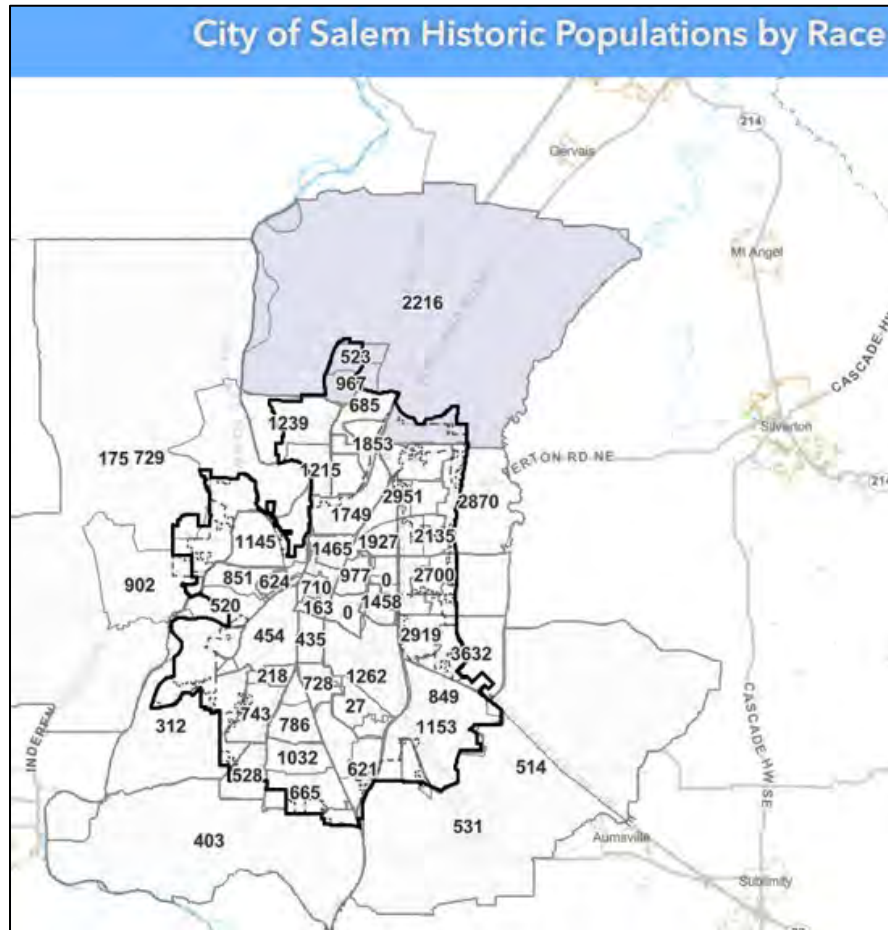


Figure 5-5. Screenshot of City of Salem map displaying the Latine population in Salem, 2020.

## 5.5.2 Policy Summary

The era of Mexican Repatriation was a time in which people of Mexican descent in Oregon faced de facto discrimination and hostility. There was not a significant policy impact on Latine people in Oregon and in Salem specifically. The Bracero Program brought Mexican laborers to Oregon, which dramatically increased the Latine presence (Table 5-9).

Table 5-9. Summary of Policies Impacting the Latine Population of Salem.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Legislation</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Summary</b>
1929– 1936	<b>Mexican Repatriation (Deportation Campaigns)</b>	Federal	The federal government deported about 500,000 Latine Americans.
1942	<b>Mexican Farm Labor Program (Bracero Program)</b>	Federal	The U.S. and Mexican governments negotiated an agreement that was designed to support the agricultural sector by hiring Mexican laborers
1943	<b>Public Law 45</b>	Federal	Congress passed an emergency labor program to kickstart the Bracero Program.

## 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

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The City of Salem's policies related to land use, zoning, housing, and transportation generally reflected national and state trends and throughout the mid-eighteenth and early twentieth century, during which time the City did not actively include certain populations as part of their decision making. More commonly people who owned property and were Euroamerican, White, and male were consistently in positions of power and making decisions to benefit people within the community with similar characteristics. The City did marginalize and exclude groups within the community due to their race, income, and other factors. However, the City was one of the first jurisdictions in the nation to empower neighborhood associations to develop neighborhood plans. In 1964, the City of Salem was one of the first jurisdictions in Oregon to establish a Human Rights Commission. In 2002, five years before similar laws were written for the State of Oregon, Salem's City Council approved revisions to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations (such as businesses, movie theaters, and restaurants) based on sexual orientation or gender identity. At that time, only 40 other cities in the United States had similar laws.

In 2017, the City adopted Salem Revised Code 97.005, which states that it is the policy of the City of Salem to eliminate discrimination based on race, religion, color, sex, marital status, familial status, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, housing status, and source of income. The City Council finds that such discrimination poses a threat to the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of Salem and menaces the institutions and foundation of our community.

The City has continued to work to identify and rectify unequal access to resources and opportunities caused by historic and current systems of oppression and exclusion related to race, income, ability, gender, sexual identity, and other factors. The following are recommendations for additional research to continue this effort.

- Additional research on where people of color lived in Salem, especially relating to migration when and where populations moved.
- Additional research on employment trends of people of color historically in Salem, the industries they were engaged in, and potential discrimination against these industries.
- City invest in primary source research to learn about the people and places in Salem that were important to the studied populations.
- Expanding the equity context to include information on other minority groups in Salem, such as the Japanese community, LGBTQ+ community, and incarcerated people.
- Additional documentation of the built environment related to Black and Latine people in Salem.

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