

Ruth Stellmacher

From: Michael Slater <michael.k.slater@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 13, 2022 4:35 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Testimony on the Our Salem Project

June 13, 2022

Dear Mayor Bennett, Councilors, and Staff,

My name is Michael Slater and I've lived in Ward 7 for the past 16 years. I serve on the Salem Planning Commission, as well as the boards of Temple Beth Shalom and the Mission Street Parks Conservancy, which I co-founded.

I'm here tonight in support of the Our Salem Comprehensive Plan update. I've had the opportunity to participate in the Our Salem project on multiple occasions since its inception. I believe the plan, if adopted and implemented, will result in significant, desirable outcomes for our City, including:

- reduced greenhouse gas emissions;
- more housing units and an increased housing options;
- improved connectivity and more transportation options; and,
- more green space and better protection for our urban environment.

I know that there has been some criticism that the Our Salem plan is not aggressive enough in tackling greenhouse gas emissions. I disagree. The unfortunate truth is that land use policy—especially zoning—has only a limited ability to influence greenhouse gas emissions. This is especially true in a city, like Salem, that is mostly built out.

An Urban Land Institute analyzed three reports on land use policy and GHG emissions. While all three reports found that zoning policies could reduce GHG emissions, primarily by reducing vehicle miles, but estimates of the impact varied considerably. The most aggressive modeling indicates Salem could reduce GHG emissions by perhaps 32 percent but only if we more than doubled our population density.

The Our Salem plan does take aggressive action based on existing best practices to address several challenges we face: housing supply, climate change, and an outdated approach to transportation. It's just that these changes, unfortunately, have a limited impact on GHG emissions.

I'm not suggesting this plan is perfect.

I strongly support amending the zoning map to meet SCAN's thoughtful suggestion on how Commercial and Liberty should be zoned. It's also important to recognize that implementing the Our Salem policy recommendations is just as important, perhaps even more so in terms of climate change, than adopting the zoning map. Ultimately, we need the City to aggressively implement the Climate Action Plan to have a real impact on our own GHG emissions, knowing that changes that result from the Our Salem plan will provide a supporting but a modest boost.

Sincerely,

Michael Slater

Ward 7

MICHAEL SLATER

C 202.425.5493

E michael.k.slater@gmail.com

URL www.michaelkslater.com

Portfolio