



CITY OF *Salem*
AT YOUR SERVICE

Planning Commission 2022 Annual Report

Commissioners:

Dan Augustyn
Ronald Eachus
Kaley Fought
Daisy Goebel
Chane Griggs, President
Lisa Heller
Casey Kopcho (through April 2022)
Ian Levin, Vice President
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Staff:

Lisa Anderson-Ogilvie,
Deputy Community Development Director
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Thomas Cupani, Deputy City Attorney
Shelby Guizar, Administrative Analyst



Overview

The Planning Commission consists of nine members appointed by the City Council. The Commission acts as an advisory commission to the City Council with a broad scope of concern in promoting the growth and orderly development of the City. Salem Revised Code Chapter 6 states that the Commission shall make and file a report with the City Council of all transactions of the Commission for the preceding year.

In the last year, the Commission has had public hearings on eleven quasi-judicial land use applications including Comprehensive Plan/Zone Changes, Subdivisions, Appeals and Council Remands. The Commission had public hearings on numerous updates to the Unified Development Code covering various items as well as the Our Salem project.

Additionally, the Commission held three work sessions on the draft updates to the Sign Code. The work sessions refined the draft code language while serving as open forums for public involvement.

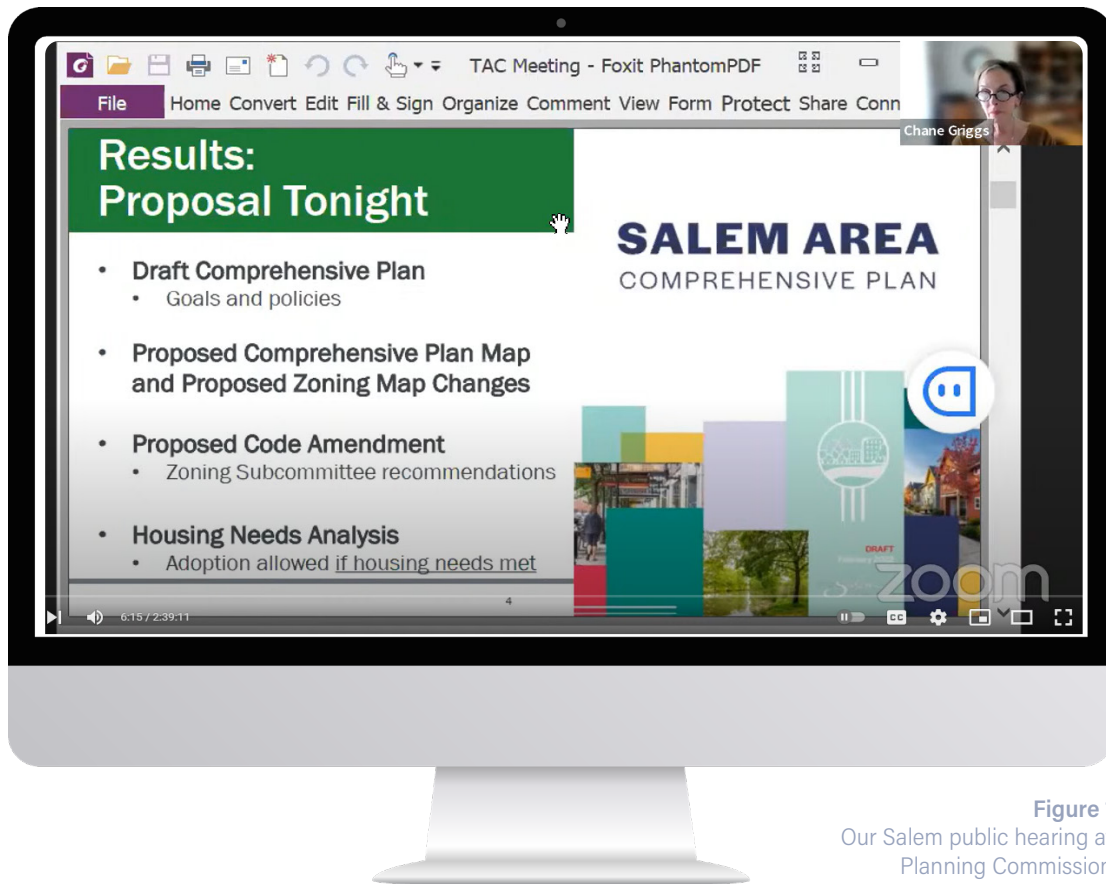


Figure 1
Our Salem public hearing at
Planning Commission

Our Salem



The Our Salem project, which included three years of community-wide engagement, culminated this past year in adoption of an updated Salem Area Comprehensive Plan, changes to the Comprehensive Plan Map, zoning map, and zoning code to guide future growth and development in Salem. The Planning Commission held numerous hearings on the Our Salem proposal before ultimately recommending that the City Council adopt the proposal with minor changes. Our Salem was adopted by the City Council in July of 2022 and is now effective.

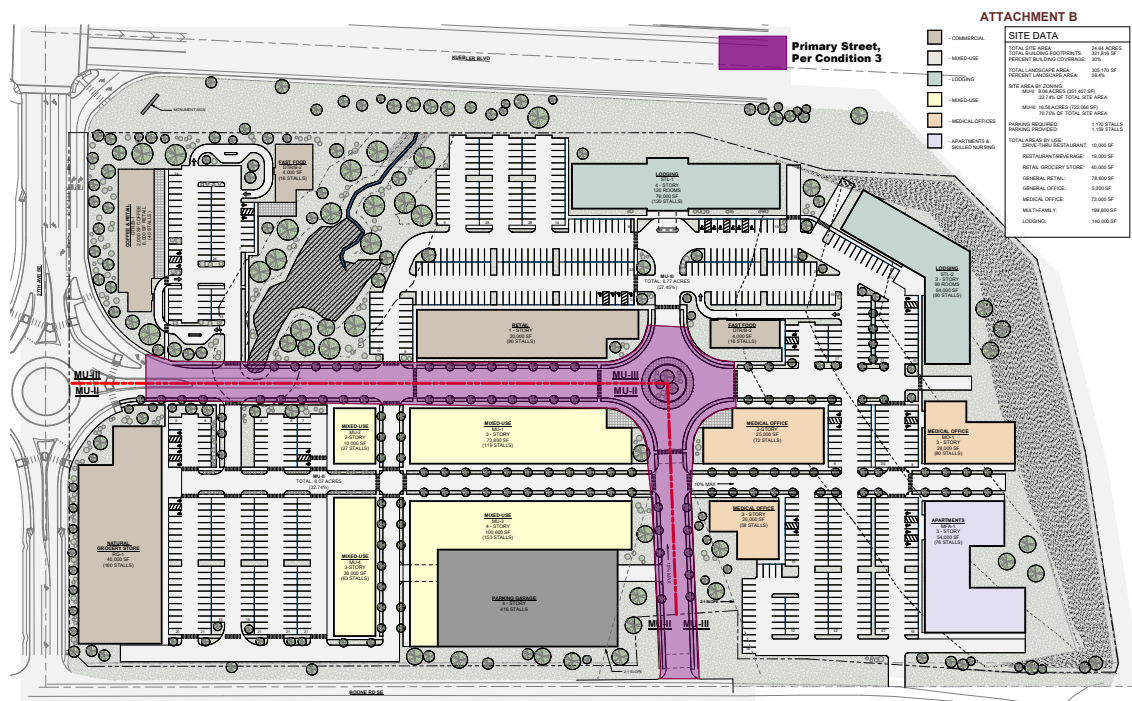


Figure 2
Kuebler and I-5 Conceptual Plan

Comprehensive Plan Change and Zone Changes (Kuebler and I-5)

The Planning Commission considered a proposed Comprehensive Plan Change and Zone Change for the property located on Kuebler Boulevard, between 27th Ave SE and Interstate 5, at numerous meetings that spanned two years. Through the Our Salem project, staff had recommended a Commercial Office (CO) zoning for the property. The applicant had a different vision and requested a combination of zones on the property. After six public hearings, the Planning Commission approved the request, subject to extensive conditions of approval. The City Council held their own public hearings on the proposal and ultimately remanded the request back to the Planning Commission for further consideration. The applicant, working with City staff and the neighborhood association, further revised their proposal and eventually returned to the Planning Commission with a mixed-use zoning proposal that was approved by the Commission. The final approval utilized existing mixed-use zones and new mixed-use zones created through the Our Salem project.

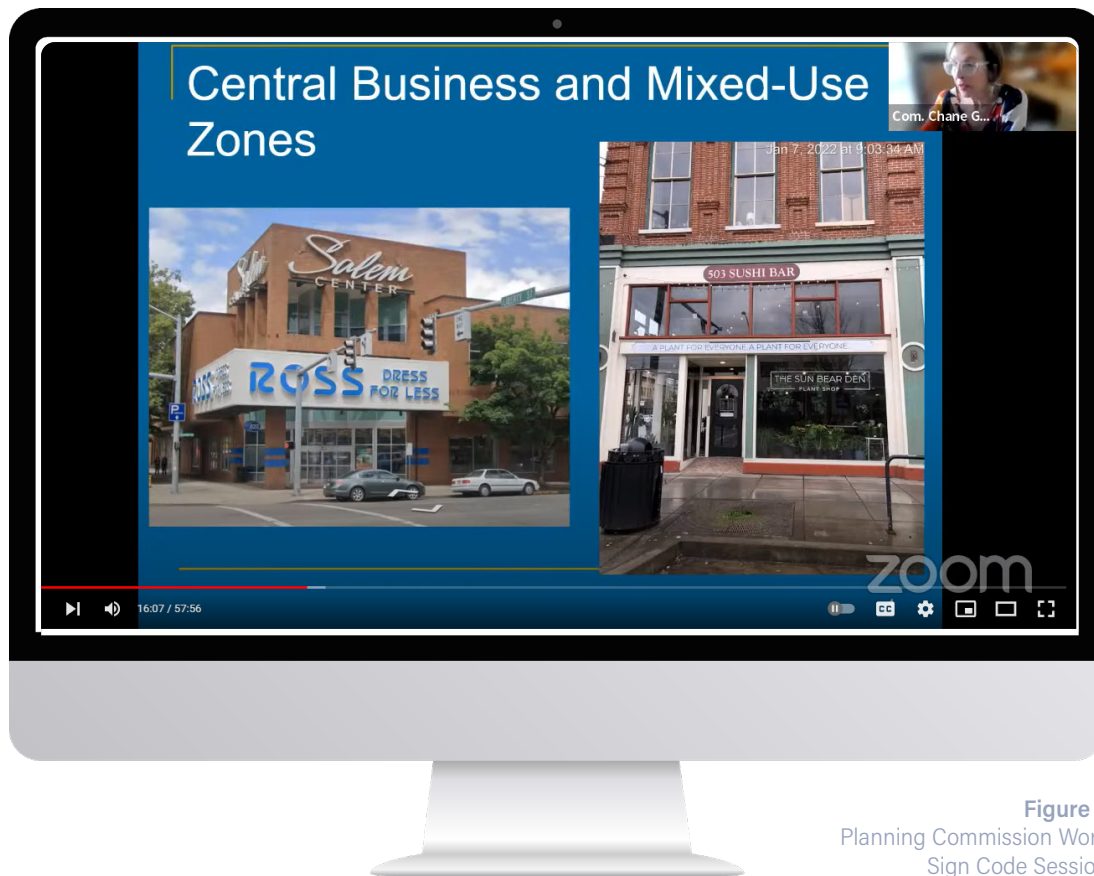


Figure 3
Planning Commission Work
Sign Code Session

Sign Code Work Sessions

The Planning Commission held three work sessions on a proposed overhaul of the Sign Code. The work sessions were advertised and open to the public and the Commission received testimony on the proposals and directed staff to further research options. The sign code was last comprehensively updated in 2012. Since then, changes to technology, zoning and community desires are necessitating updates to the sign code. The proposal seeks to streamline the code from its current length of 70 plus pages to around 40 pages. The proposal will further address the mixed-use zones created in Our Salem, create a better process for limited deviations from the sign code, provide a better way to regulate sign brightness and generally limit the size and number of signs allowed across the city to limit sign and light proliferation. The sign code will return to the Planning Commission in early 2023 for a public hearing and recommendation to City Council.

Sign Code Work Sessions (cont.)



Figure 4
Flutter flag signs in Salem



Figure 5
Temporary signs in Salem



Figure 6
Walking in Salem

Future Work

Now that Our Salem is adopted, the next projects related to planning for our future are beginning. As a first step, an update to the Transportation System Plan (TSP) will begin in 2023. This project is anticipated to be a multi-year project that engages the community and examines numerous aspects of our transportation system from design, speed, funding, and climate impacts. Other plans tied to the Comprehensive Plan are updates to the Comprehensive Parks System Master Plan, a Goal 5 Inventory for Natural Resources (recommended by the Planning Commission), a Housing Production Strategy, and an Economic Opportunities Analysis. Implementation strategies to support the Climate Action Plan are also linked to the Comprehensive Plan. All this future work will be informed by the rules from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development's Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities rules (CFEC).



Figure 7
Pedestrian crossing Portland Rd NE

Future Work (cont.)

The CFEC rules aim to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution from transportation while increasing housing choices and creating more equitable outcomes for Oregonians. They came in response to Governor Kate Brown's Executive Order 20-04, which directed State agencies to reduce climate pollution. The new rules require Salem to update its land use and transportation plans and regulations and to bolster the City's equitable engagement work in the community. The City has started this work through Our Salem, and will continue with the projects listed above over the next few years. It is expected that the Planning Commission will be involved in all of these projects in the future.



Figure 8
Two of the four units at 2140 Trade St SE



Figure 9
Two of the four units at 2140 Trade St SE



Figure 10
New six-plex at 488 Strand Ave SE

Housing Developments

While land divisions and permits for housing do not regularly come before the Planning Commission, the Commission monitors housing land supply through bi-annuals staff reports, when considering site specific Comprehensive Plan Map and Zone Changes and when reviewing appeals. The Commission has long recognized the need for more multi-family units in Salem, as documented in the City's Housing Needs Analysis. Land supply issues have been addressed through site specific zone changes and through adopted zone changes in the Our Salem project.

In 2022, the City Council, on recommendation from the Planning Commission, adopted new Middle Housing code amendments. Middle Housing includes townhouses, two-family, three-family, four-family, and cottage clusters. Since then, the City has been processing permits for middle housing and we are beginning to see these new units be built and occupied. An example of new middle housing can be found in Figure 8 and 9 which show a four-plex currently under construction at 2140 Trade St SE.

In 2020, updated multi-family design standards were adopted, with the intent of providing flexibility in how the design standards can be met and to reduce the number of standards that would apply to smaller-scale multi-family developments. An example of a new, small-scale multi-family development is a 6-plex unit recently built at 488 Strand Ave SE, as shown in Figure 10.