

DRAFT

TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager
FROM: Lisa Anderson-Ogilvie, AICP, Interim Community Development Director
SUBJECT: Growth and Development Work Group Discussion Summary and Recommendation

ISSUE:

Salem’s existing vision for growth and development, as encompassed by the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan, is out of date and has been developed over the years in a piecemeal fashion that has resulted in disconnected ideas for how the city should grow. The existing vision also lacks awareness and ownership by the community.

GOAL:

Develop a comprehensive long-term vision for future growth and development in Salem that has buy in and ownership by the community.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Conduct citywide visioning to determine the community’s goals and priorities for future growth and development
- Use the results of the visioning project to update the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND:

Definition and scale of the issue

The City lacks an updated, comprehensive vision for citywide growth and development that unquestionably reflects the community’s goals. The City is projected to continue adding residents and jobs over the next 20 years, and it is unclear how and where the community wants this growth accommodated. Without a distinct cohesive vision for the future, decision-making related to growth and development in Salem will be disjointed, will rely on potentially out-of-date policies, and may not be supported by the community.

Details on the causes and effects of the issue

Expected Growth

The Salem area (Salem’s portion of the urban growth boundary) is projected to add nearly 60,000 new people through 2035, which would increase the population to

269,274, according to the Salem Housing Needs Analysis (HNA). (The HNA determined Salem's land needs for housing over the next 20 years and recommended strategies to meet those needs.) The demographic trends expected to influence this growth include an aging baby boomer generation, aging millennial generation, and continued increase in the Hispanic/Latino population. Continued growth in employment is also expected in Salem. This includes new and expanded industrial and commercial businesses.

This type and amount of population and employment growth cannot be accommodated in the Salem area without new development. There is disagreement in the community, however, as to how development should occur. This is reflected in community reactions to City projects as well as private development proposals.

This lack of general consensus was also captured in the telephone survey conducted as part of the City's strategic planning process. For example, many people think multifamily housing should be added near already-developed areas, while others want Salem to prioritize single-family development at the City's edges. Similarly, many residents prefer the mixing of uses such as housing and shops, while some want development that separates commercial and residential uses.

The public input received through the strategic planning process revealed that there is much community interest in several issues related to growth and development. These issues may be broadly summarized as: Housing, Mix of Land Uses, Transportation, Business Support, Overall Vision, and Salem's Urban Planning Process. A natural place for the City to address all of these issues is in the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan

The Salem Area Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide development in Salem by providing goals and policies for how the community grows over time. The document consists of a variety of plans that have been updated in a piecemeal fashion over the years. The entire Comprehensive Plan has not been holistically updated since the 1970s, and many goals and policies are therefore out of date.

It is also unclear if the existing goals and policies – which drive decision-making about growth and development in Salem – actually reflect the vision and desires of the community. This creates challenges for policy makers as well as residents, who may or may not be aware of the Comprehensive Plan and who may or may not agree with the existing goals and policies.

It is important to note that even though much of the City's existing Comprehensive Plan has not been updated for a long time, the City has been actively working on other more focused planning projects in recent years. For example, in the past five years alone, the City has worked on at least 14 projects related to planning, growth, and development. All of these projects included some form of public engagement with the community. These projects are summarized in Attachment 1. These recent projects have tended to

be more narrowly focused in scope, however, either on a specific topic (e.g. Housing Needs Analysis) or a specific local area of the City (e.g. neighborhood plans).

Desired outcomes

The ultimate desired outcome is a comprehensive vision and plan for growth and development. That plan should address:

- Where and how expected growth should be accommodated in Salem
- The type and pattern of development desired in Salem
- Other specific policies on issues such as housing, transportation, community services, and economic development.

That plan would be implemented through a variety of methods, such as codifying land use policies into Salem's zoning and development codes, updating the City's capital improvement projects (e.g., roads, parks, and other City-built infrastructure), and utilizing economic development incentive programs (e.g., grants and urban renewal).

How growth and development fits within the City's business

Planning for growth and development is a primary function of the City. Citizens typically relate to a city first and most directly through its physical form. Therefore, the number of residents, their characteristics, and their service preferences are among the most important external factors to consider in a strategic plan. The City has legal authority to dictate the uses of the land within its boundaries and the legal obligation, as stipulated in the State constitution, to prepare a Comprehensive Plan as well as other analyses needed to forecast the needs of its residents. In fact, Oregon has a strong tradition of locally-led comprehensive planning, which takes place within the framework of the Statewide Planning Program.

City departments that might work on the issue

The Community Development Department has the primary responsibility for working with the community to create the long-term vision for growth and development in Salem. Completing this work, however, will require partnering and coordinating with many other City departments, including Urban Development and Public Works.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Possible actions

Option 1: Raise Awareness

- *Description:* The City would increase awareness of existing policies and projects. This could include greater efforts to publicize policies and projects online or in person at community events and neighborhood meetings.
- *Time:* This would be an ongoing process.
- *Staff:* Existing staff would implement this option.

- *Pros:* This is the least expensive option.
- *Cons:* This option would not create a comprehensive vision for how the city should grow and instead would continue the piecemeal approach to development in Salem. It also assumes that existing policies accurately reflect the community's goals and priorities for growth and development. This option would not create community buy-in, so decisions related to growth and development could continue to be contentious.

Option 2: Continue Neighborhood Plans

- *Description:* The City would continue to focus its long-range planning efforts on partnering with one or two neighborhood associations at a time to create neighborhood plans.
- *Time:* This would continue the ongoing process (one to two-year cycles per neighborhood plan).
- *Staff:* Existing staff would continue to produce the neighborhood plans.
- *Pros:* Neighborhood plans (or joint neighborhood plans in the case of two adjacent neighborhoods creating one shared plan) are comprehensive in their scope, covering issues such as housing, transportation, commercial and industrial development, parks and open space, etc.
- *Cons:* Neighborhood Plans are limited to just a relatively small geographic area of the city. Implementation of neighborhood plans is often difficult due to the aspirational and localized nature of their recommendations and limited City and neighborhood association resources.

Option 3: Strengthen Neighborhood Plans

- *Description:* The City would continue to focus its long-range planning efforts on neighborhood plans but would find ways to strengthen the policies and recommendations of these plans so that they carry even more weight in City decision making and are tied to clear implementation steps after the plan is completed.
- *Time:* This would continue the ongoing process, but with existing staffing levels, it would likely take longer to create each neighborhood plan due to the need for more upfront work deciding what policies and recommendations may be implemented and additional time to develop an implementation plan. (One to two-year cycle, or more, per neighborhood plan)
- *Staff:* Existing staff would continue to produce the neighborhood plans.
- *Pros:* This would implement the vision of the neighborhoods.
- *Cons:* Neighborhood plans are still limited to just a relatively small geographic area of the city. Planning for implementation steps would slow the process.

Option 4: Conduct Visioning

- *Description:* Conduct citywide outreach to learn the community's goals and priorities for growth and development.
- *Time:* One to three years
- *Cost:* \$100,000 - \$200,000
- *Staff:* One to two staff members and a consultant would be needed.
- *Pros:* It achieves community buy-in and is comprehensive in terms of the scope of issues covered.
- *Cons:* The cost and amount of time involved is significant.

Option 5: Update the Comprehensive Plan

- *Description:* Conduct citywide project to learn the community's goals and priorities and update the Comprehensive Plan. This would include a citywide visioning process.
- *Time:* Four to five years
- *Cost:* \$300,000 to \$500,000
- *Staff:* A core multi-disciplinary staff team plus consultants would be needed.
- *Pros:* It would achieve community buy-in, would be comprehensive, and would include a plan to implement the vision.
- *Cons:* This option has the highest cost and longest timeframe.

Recommended action

The city should conduct citywide visioning to determine the community's goals for growth and development. The City should then use the results of the visioning project to prepare an update to the Comprehensive Plan.

Attachments:

1. Summary of major City of Salem planning projects over past five years
2. Table comparing the possible options