



Staff Report

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TO: Urban Renewal Agency Board

THROUGH: Steve Powers, Executive Director

FROM: Kristin Retherford, Urban Renewal Director

SUBJECT:

Salem Downtown Focus Group

Ward(s): Ward -1

Board Member(s): Board Member - Bennett

Neighborhood(s): CANDO, Grant

ISSUE:

Summary of stakeholder comments from Downtown Focus Group Meetings

RECOMMENDATION:

Information only

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND:

On February 14, 2011, the Urban Renewal Agency Board adopted the Downtown Strategic Action Plan. The intended purpose of the Action Plan was to provide the Downtown Advisory Board (DAB) with tools to determine how best to use Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Funds (RDURA) to facilitate private investment and accomplish projects identified in the Riverfront Downtown URA Plan. The Action Plan identified key areas and projects within the URA and proposed a project budget based on funding estimates for 20 years. Since 2011 the Action Plan has been used by the DAB to inform annual project recommendations to the Agency Board.

Over the last five years the economy has changed and significant private investment has occurred in and near the downtown area. With the retirement of the Convention Center debt scheduled for 2018, bonding capacity will increase to an estimated \$30M. Staff wanted to check-in with downtown stakeholders to revisit the goals and projects of the Action Plan and solicit their input on existing or other project priority ideas for the RDURA. The attached PowerPoint presentation summarizes comments received from sixty-nine individuals who attended the meetings (Attachment 1).

Individuals from nine stakeholder groups (property owners, downtown residents, major stakeholders, artists/events/tourism, retail/commercial, restaurants, anchors, service providers, and university students) were given an overview of the Action Plan, proposed/completed projects, and opportunity to rank or add new project ideas. They also discussed challenges and high priority areas for housing, streetscape, and RDURA investment.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Information gathered from the Downtown Focus Group meetings reaffirms the community's interest in prioritizing urban renewal funds to support housing of all types, streetscape improvements, and safety, as well as projects that include public spaces, performing art and concert space, and a grocery store.

Next Steps:

The Focus Group Meeting PowerPoint presentation will be shared with the DAB at the October 27, 2016 meeting. Project priority information will be integrated into FY 2017-18 budget discussions, including identification of short and long term project priorities.

Sheri Wahrgren
Downtown Revitalization Manager

Attachments:

1. Downtown Focus Group PowerPoint Presentation.

9/29/2016