



Staff Report

File #: 17-383

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Date: 8/14/2017

Item #:

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager

FROM: Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director

SUBJECT:

Commercial-Vista Corridor Plan Recommendations

Ward(s): 2, 3, and 7

Councilor(s): Andersen, Nanke, and Cook

Neighborhood(s): SCAN, SWAN, Morningside, and Faye-Wright

ISSUE:

Shall the City Council accept the recommendations contained in the Commercial-Vista Corridor Plan project report and direct staff to seek funding to implement the recommendations and to incorporate the recommendations into the *Salem Transportation System Plan* at the next amendment opportunity?

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept the recommendations contained in the Commercial-Vista Corridor Plan project report and direct staff to seek funding to implement the recommendations and to incorporate the recommendations into the *Salem Transportation System Plan* at the next amendment opportunity.

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND:

The Commercial-Vista Corridor project was initiated to develop a refinement plan for this commercial district located in south Salem. Attachment 1 is the project report summarizing the project and containing a set of recommendations. The boundaries of the project area are shown in Attachment 2. The purpose of this project is to identify ways to improve the visual character and the functionality of the circulation system within the project area and to strengthen the district's identity, character, economic vitality, and marketability. The project was funded in part by a grant from the Transportation and Growth Management ("TGM") Program, which is a joint program of the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

The Commercial-Vista Corridor commercial district, which is the focus of this project, is a distinct area of Salem where auto-oriented and other commercial development has evolved adjacent to unique residential neighborhoods. This commercial district provides a mix of both neighborhood services and businesses that have city-wide appeal. Commercial Street SE and Liberty Road S are the main transportation corridors connecting this district in south Salem to downtown, carrying an average of over 43,000 and 15,000 vehicles per day respectively. The two roadways converge in the project area, creating a complex street configuration that requires careful planning and design to accommodate all modes of travel.

The district developed at a time when non-automobile travel was a low planning priority. Accordingly, much of the area consists of commercial properties with a mix of parcel sizes, numerous driveways, few connections between the public realm and shop entrances, and room for improvement to better accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. This lack of an efficient, multi-modal, and inviting circulation system can be a limiting factor for reinvestment and growth.

Planning Process

The planning process to develop the Commercial-Vista Corridor Plan began in late 2014 and continued through 2016. During this period, public outreach and opportunities for input were provided through a Stakeholder Advisory Committee, a Technical Advisory Committee, and a project web site. Presentations were made to the four affected neighborhood associations (SWAN, SCAN, Morningside, and Faye-Wright); three public events were conducted; and presentations were made to the Salem Planning Commission and to other interested groups. Members of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee are identified on Page 2 of Attachment 1. An overview of the planning process is available on the project's web page at:

<http://www.cityofsalem.net/CityDocuments/commercial-vista-corridor-final-overview-booklet.pdf>

The final recommendations described in Attachment 1 were presented to the four neighborhood associations in March 2017 and to the Planning Commission in June 2017. An additional presentation was made to the Salem Association of Realtors, also in June 2017.

Recommendations

The primary recommendations in the Commercial-Vista Corridor Plan focus on creating a safer and more attractive multi-modal transportation system. These recommendations are described in Attachment 1 and are summarized below.

- *Commercial Street SE:* Buffered bike lanes, sidewalk infill, pedestrian crossing islands at three locations, new traffic signal at Ratcliff Avenue SE, protected left-turn phase from northbound Commercial Street SE to westbound Alice Street S, bicycle signal where Liberty Road S splits off, and possible transit stop relocations to align with pedestrian crossings.

- *Liberty Road S*: Enhanced pedestrian crossing at one location near Missouri Avenue S, interim improvement to add 10- to 12-foot-wide multi-use path, and long-term improvement to add bike lanes and center turn lane.
- *Salem Heights Avenue SE*: Sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and parking on the north side of the street.
- *Triangle Drive SE*: Sidewalks and a special cross-section to include angle parking on one side of the street.
- *Vista Avenue SE*: Special cross-section to include eastbound bike lane.

The review of land use requirements in the study area did not identify significant barriers to reinvestment in this area. The study does recommend a number of land use policy considerations, which are discussed on page 20 of the Plan (See Attachment 1). These considerations include, standards promoting improvements to pedestrian accessibility and safety, and streetscape enhancements. These will be considered in the upcoming amendments to the *Unified Development Code* and the next update to the *Salem Comprehensive Plan*.

Implementation

Salem Transportation System Plan Amendments: While most of the recommendations contained in the Commercial-Vista Refinement Plan are consistent with the *Salem Transportation System Plan*, there are a number of amendments that should be incorporated into the next set of amendments. An overview of the proposed amendments is provided in Attachment 3.

Funding: Most of the recommended projects can be constructed in phases and will require funding. Planning level cost estimates are provided on page 21 of the *Commercial-Vista Refinement Plan*.

The City was awarded funds to construct an initial phase that includes the following elements:

- Buffered bike lanes on Commercial Street SE from Oxford Street SE to Winding Way SE;
- Pedestrian crossing islands on Commercial Street SE near Waldo Avenue SE and Triangle Drive SE; and
- Bike signal on Commercial Street SE at the intersection with Liberty Road S, including adding protected left-turn phase from northbound Commercial Street SE to westbound Alice Street S.

This project is included in the adopted Capital Improvement Plan, Project Number 626, with construction anticipated in 2020.

Robert D. Chandler, PhD, PE
Assistant Public Works Director

Attachments:

1. Commercial-Vista Corridor Plan Project Report
2. Project Area Map
3. Potential Amendments to *Salem Transportation System Plan*