



## Staff Report

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**TO:** Urban Renewal Agency Board  
**THROUGH:** Steve Powers, Executive Director  
**FROM:** Kristin Retherford, Urban Development Director

### **SUBJECT:**

Downtown Salem Streetscape Plan

Ward(s): 1

Board Member(s): Kaser

Neighborhood(s): CANDO

Result Area(s): Reliable and Efficient Infrastructure; Welcoming and Livable Community.

### **ISSUE:**

Shall the Agency Board approve the City of Salem Downtown Streetscape Plan?

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the City of Salem Downtown Streetscape Plan.

### **SUMMARY:**

The Downtown Streetscape Plan (Plan) provides a guide to transform the downtown public realm into a cohesive, attractive, and inviting environment that benefits all downtown users. The Plan examines a specific portion of the public realm (sidewalk itself) between the curb and the face of the buildings.

### **FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

Streetscape improvements include electrical, water, and fiber optic infrastructure. In addition, sidewalk enhancements such as pedestrian lighting, landscaping and alley entrances are eligible projects in the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Plan Project #1105 Core Area Redevelopment.

The Streetscape area as defined in the Plan is the public realm between private property lines or the exterior of buildings and the curb or street. The sidewalk design concepts outlined in the Plan were based on input received through four public meetings, surveys, walking tours, focus groups, a City of

Salem internal department technical advisory group, and in-person outreach. More than 1,200 people offered some feedback during this process.

The goal of the Plan is to provide consistent design elements. Every streetscape includes these elements: 1) furnishing/planting zone; 2) pedestrian zone; and 3) frontage zone. In addition, pedestrian light poles, social seating arrangements, and adequate space for healthy trees and low-maintenance plants will create a high level of quality and consistency in downtown Salem. Because the sidewalk widths vary throughout downtown, the design for each streetscape type will be adjusted based on what is possible at each location.

The design concepts were based on a careful review of existing conditions, feedback from community meetings, discussions with stakeholders, and other community input. Implementation of the Downtown Streetscape Plan will be phased over time based on available funding each year and to minimize business disruption. When possible, implementation will be coordinated with new development proposals in downtown.

Streetscape furniture styles and materials were not included in the Plan recommendations in order to allow an opportunity to review the needs of the streetscape users and, if possible, try out different styles of streetscape furniture in different areas of downtown prior to making final decisions and purchases.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On February 14, 2011, the 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 Area (RDURA) funds to facilitate private investment and accomplish projects identified in the RDURA Plan.

One of the recommended Priority Projects to Activate City Streets in the Action Plan is the "Streetscape Improvement and Design Program". Streetscape improvements can provide a variety of economic, social, and environmental benefits including improved community livability, increased retail sales, new development/redevelopment, and increased property values. During spring and summer of 2016, Streetscape improvement was ranked as a high priority during the 12 Focus Group meetings at which time the projects in the Action Plan were reviewed for current relevancy and prioritization of projects to be funded with RDURA funds. A Streetscape Work Group, comprised of business/property owners, Main Street and Downtown Advisory Board members, and downtown stakeholders, provided input on the framework for the goals of the Streetscape Plan, which were incorporated into a Request for Proposals (RFP). Walker Macy Consulting firm was selected to facilitate a variety of meetings and surveys to develop a Plan based on the input received. In addition, meeting invitations and opportunities to provide input were available on the City website, City e-newsletters, City boards/commissions, postcard mailings, and postings on social media.

The goals of the Plan and the resulting improvements for downtown include:

- Transform downtown public realm
- Make improvements consistent, cohesive, unique
- Make downtown attractive, inviting, fun
- Benefit downtown businesses + property owners
- Attract tourism
- Create a world-class urban environment
- Create a more livable Salem

During the Plan development, five streetscape types including Promenade (Liberty Street), Civic (State and Court Street), Parkway (Union and Church), Front Street, and Urban were identified in downtown. Each of the five types have streetscape have unique conditions that were taken into consideration when developing the Plan, but share similar elements to create consistency regardless of the type to provide a unified design to downtown. Alley entrances were also identified as landscape opportunity areas to enhance the pedestrian experience in downtown.

Future projects could include Art placement, Front/State Street Riverfront-Park crossing enhancements, Mid-Block landscaping, and development of a parklet/dining platform program.

The Streetscape designs are flexible, but adherence to the guiding recommendations of the Plan should be the main goal in order to achieve a quality and consistent downtown streetscape.

Sheri Wahrgren  
Downtown Revitalization Manager

**Attachments:**

1. Salem Streetscape Plan