



Work Session Summary Minutes

OREGON

North Block Joint Work Session with Transit District

November 7, 2024. 4:15 PM

Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Salem

5th Floor, Suite 5232, Commissioners Board Room

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Kevin Cameron, and Colm Willis.

Board's Office: Matt Lawyer, Jan Fritz, Chad Ball, Chris Eppley, Shawnnell Fuentes, and Trevor Lane.

Legal Counsel: Steve Elzinga.

Cherriots: Bill Holmstrom, Ian Davidson, Sara Duncan, Sadie Carney, Maria Hinojos Pressey, Allan Pollack, Jaël Rose, Kirra Pressey, and Tom Dietz.

Community Services: Kellie Weese, and Sarah Coutley.

Business Services: Tamera Goettsch, Geogrey Bonney, and Terry Stoner.

Kevin Cameron called the meeting to order at 4:21 p.m.

Summary

The meeting focused on the development of the North Block in Salem, aiming to create a community gathering space that supports local businesses and economic growth. Key points included the need to validate the load-bearing capacity of the slab, currently estimated at 100 pounds per square foot, and the potential for a farmers market, night market, and business incubator. The project aims to enhance downtown pedestrian areas and attract more residents and visitors. The discussion also highlighted the importance of involving stakeholders, including the city, transit district, and local businesses, and the need for ongoing maintenance and revenue generation to sustain the project.

Outline

Project Vision and Initial Discussion

- The project's purpose is an economic development initiative to enhance downtown viability.
- The vision includes potential activities like a farmers market, night market, entertainment venue, and business incubator.
- The project aims to provide a pedestrian-centered event space, support job growth, and offer activities for downtown residents.
- Need to validate the load-bearing capacity of the slab and discusses the potential use of an on-call engineering contract for this purpose.

Stakeholder Input and Initial Reactions

- Important to secure bike parking in the area, considering the location's proximity to key bike routes and corridors.
- Potential loss of parking spaces for vendors and food trucks.
- The goal is to enhance the area without detracting from existing businesses.
- Load capacity concerns and need to verify the slab's load-bearing capacity before proceeding with any design.

Engineering and Structural Considerations

- The load-bearing capacity of the slab, estimated at 100 pounds per square foot, and potentially need for further engineering to validate this.
- Suggest considering a covered space with roll-up doors for flexibility and adaptability.
- Strong partnership and ongoing management to ensure the project's sustainability and avoid future liabilities is important.

Ownership and Operational Structure

- Ownership structure of the North Block has decisions typically made mutually by the owners.
- Important to involve the city of Salem in the discussions due to their ownership of a significant portion of the area.
- Potential impact on future transit needs.
- Possibility of future housing development.

Community Involvement and Design Considerations

- Suggest involving youth in the design process and a potential design competition to generate creative ideas.
- Consider input from people who work in the area during the day to understand their preferences and needs.
- Create a stakeholder list to ensure broad representation in the design process.
- Revenue generation needed to sustain the project in the long run.

Next Steps and Participation

- Forming work group of stakeholders to collaborate with consultants and develop design concepts.
- Include representatives from various organizations, such as Salem Urban Renewal, Salem Main Street Chamber, Willamette Workforce Partnership, and youth-serving organizations.
- Involve the community in the design process to ensure the project meets their needs and preferences.

Action Items

- Validate the load-bearing capacity of the North Block slab.
- Develop a list of key stakeholders to involve in the design process.
- Organize a visioning process with the stakeholder group to gather ideas and feedback on potential concepts for the North Block.
- Determine the ownership structure and management plan for the North Block after development.

Adjourned – time: 5:01 p.m.
Minutes by: Mary Vityukova
Reviewed by: Gary White

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