



CITY OF SALEM DOWNTOWN PLAN BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE

First Draft Now Available Online

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The first draft of the Downtown Plan is now available on the City of Salem's website for public review and comment. During the past 11 months, city staff and a number of citizens have worked side-by-side to get the plan to this stage.

"This plan is about taking control of the story of our community," says Kevin Boggess, Salem City Manager. "We will make certain that Downtown Salem has a bright future ahead of it, and that it will be the type of downtown that Salem deserves."

This citizen-driven process officially kicked-off with a public open house on January 20. Shortly thereafter, Salem launched the website downtown.salemva.gov to promote the planning process and to keep the public informed. A Downtown Retail Survey also was mailed to every utility customer in Salem and more than 3,400 comments were received about Downtown Salem. In addition, a list of stakeholder groups was established and city staff consulted with the individuals in these groups to ensure that their voices were heard. This wealth of information was then processed into the Themes, Goals, and Strategies that now form the body of the plan.

"I'm personally very excited about this plan," says Bob Rotanz, owner of long-time downtown business Mac and Bob's. "It's very thorough and addresses all the issues, and I'm looking forward to implementing our game plan. This is going to help our image, and help the city, and I would like to personally volunteer to assist in any way I can."

A second Public Open House will be held on Tuesday, November 17, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Salem Museum, located at 801 East Main Street, near Longwood Park. Information on the plan will be available for review and staff will be on hand to accept public comments. The draft is also available online at downtown.salemva.gov.

"This plan provides a road map for Salem's downtown future, and I would like to sincerely thank the business leaders and members of our community who have played such a large role in making it happen," says Boggess.

For questions, please contact Benjamin Tripp, Planner, or Melinda Payne, Director of Planning and Development, at 375-3007 or through email at btripp@salemva.gov or mpayne@salemva.gov