

# DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

---

*Goal:* Complete development projects that will create new jobs in the Salem metropolitan area by bringing new firms to the area and improving business opportunities for existing companies.

---

**Develop the Mill Creek Industrial Park.** Business and political leaders across the state have reached a consensus that attracting new businesses to the state and growing existing businesses will require increasing the supply of “shovel ready” industrial land. While projects are under review statewide, one of the best opportunities for industrial development lies within Salem’s urban growth boundary on surplus state land. Identified by the Legislature as one of 25 “Opportunity Sites” because of its superior potential for economic development, the 500+ acre parcel known as the Mill Creek Industrial Park could support significant industrial development that could bring up to 5000 jobs to the Salem area. The city, state, and SEDCOR have worked together to create a comprehensive plan for the site, and city, state and federal officials will need to partner to provide financing and build the infrastructure necessary for development, including water and sewer lines and transportation improvements. With warehousing and distribution expected to be major components at Mill Creek, it will be particularly important to provide the transportation infrastructure needed to move goods efficiently. Widening I-5 through South Salem and expanding Kuebler Boulevard are planned in the near future, and an interchange at Cordon Road and Highway 22 is on the drawing board; all will help facilitate easy movement of goods into and out of site.

*Responsibility:* City, State, Federal

**Revitalize Downtown Salem.** A downtown is the heart and soul of a city, a place where residents work, eat, play, enjoy cultural opportunities, and, ideally, live. Downtown is also the face of the city that visitors– tourists as well as workers and businesses considering relocation to Salem– see and experience. Consequently, having a vital downtown that provides opportunities for arts, culture, and dining is crucial in putting Salem’s best foot forward as we attempt to bring in tourists, workers, and new firms. With the conference center expected to bring thousands of visitors to Salem each year, the city has an opportunity to showcase its downtown, and resources are dedicated to revitalizing downtown. The City of Salem has established a downtown urban renewal district to finance improvements needed to revitalize the city’s core. The new conference center will be a centerpiece of this revitalization effort, and the city has also dedicated millions of dollars for various urban renewal projects, including increasing the supply of downtown housing, which will bring more people to the city’s core. In addition, the city has developed a “toolbox” that provides loans and grants that help downtown building owners improve their property and bring in tenants. A number of groups and city committees are continuing to work on important projects, such as promoting downtown, resolving parking issues, developing downtown housing, and even building a bike/pedestrian bridge from Riverfront Park to Minto-Brown Island Park. Regional leaders need to make these efforts a high priority and invest resources in a number of key projects.

- **Develop Arts & Cultural Opportunities.** As shopping opportunities outside of downtown cores have expanded in recent decades, downtowns have become less a place to shop than a place to experience the unique artistic, cultural, recreational, and culinary opportunities a city offers. Consequently, Salem should place an emphasis on developing arts and cultural experiences that will draw people downtown. Mary Lou Zeek has helped promote downtown art through a series of art walks in which art pieces are displayed in businesses throughout the area, and a small arts-oriented district has sprung up along State Street around Zeek's gallery. The recently-formed Salem Repertory Theater is enticing visitors to its shows in downtown venues, just as the Elsinore Theater, which recently underwent a major renovation that has preserved this downtown gem, has done for years. Willamette University has expressed a commitment to build a public performing arts center on underutilized land west of its campus, and other ideas are being discussed by groups of downtown stakeholders. City officials and business leaders should encourage these efforts and work to expand them throughout downtown.  
*Responsibility: Private Sector, City*
- **Develop Downtown Housing.** Downtown housing is important for creating a place with a vibrant street life that doesn't shut down after the work day ends. Downtown residents also provide regular patronage to downtown retailers and restaurants. Although Salem has suffered from a lack of downtown housing, several exciting projects are underway, including Bishop and Metropolitan buildings in the retail district and the mixed-use Salmon Run and Meridian complexes, which will combine housing with office space toward the southern edge of the downtown core. The YWCA recently announced plans to build a new headquarters in the north downtown area that will include offices, retail space, and 60 low-income apartments. Other projects are on the drawing board, but many will require public support. Public efforts should seek to create a good mix of both affordable and market rate housing units in the downtown area.  
*Responsibility: Private Sector, City*
- **Promote the Conference Center.** Salem's long-awaited conference center opened earlier this year and has already hosted dozens of conferences, meetings, and events. With a successful initial opening, local leaders should build on efforts to promote the conference center and continue plans to connect the conference center with downtown and the rest of the city so that visitors are drawn out to shop and play.  
*Responsibility: Private Sector, City*

**Develop Sustainable Fairview.** A group of local investors and developers has purchased the former Fairview Training Center in south Salem from the State of Oregon and is developing plans to create a mixed-use residential and commercial center that could serve as a national model for sustainable development. Sustainable Fairview will be an excellent opportunity to develop and showcase new methods of wisely using our natural resources in residential and commercial development. Located on 275 acres within Salem's urban growth boundary, Sustainable Fairview will seek to create numerous jobs on site, including retail and commercial employment, and the development will include housing for thousands of families as well as extensive community facilities. Fairview's uniquely comprehensive and integrated approach to creating an entire community founded on principles of sustainability could help attract and

## **Mill Creek Industrial Park Will Provide Thousands of Jobs for Salem**

The City of Salem, State of Oregon, and SEDCOR have collaborated on a plan that guides the sale and development of the Mill Creek Industrial Park (MCIP) in southeast Salem. MCIP is located entirely within Salem's urban growth boundary and has direct access to the region's transportation network, including Highway 22 and I-5 as well as the Salem airport and rail facilities.

The largest undeveloped industrial site along Interstate 5 in the region and perhaps the state, this major industrial site consists of 646 total acres, including 507 buildable acres. MCIP will offer a variety of employment and business opportunities, from large industrial parcels and an industrial park to a business park and service center. When completed, MCIP could accommodate over 5000 jobs. In addition, by converting state-owned property tax free land into tax-generating property, MCIP will increase Salem's tax base.

The City and State have created a MCIP Master Plan and Development Strategy to coordinate land use, natural resources, infrastructure, and public finance and guide the transformation of the site from empty land to a major employment center. The master plan proposes a phased development approach that will accommodate the limited resources available for infrastructure investment. Phase 1 of the development will begin in the eastern portions of the property that require the least infrastructure investment. Revenue generated by development of Phase 1 will be dedicated to infrastructure investments needed to develop Phase 2.

### **Components**

**Distribution Center.** With excellent access to the transportation network, MCIP will serve as a regional distribution hub. The master plan proposes 146 acres for industrial development that will accommodate warehouse and distribution uses as well as 267 acres for smaller general industrial uses.

**Industrial Park.** Approximately 80 acres of industrial park will serve manufacturers, light industry, and warehouses.

**Business Corporate Park.** A business park that will accommodate a variety of employment types, from light industrial to office space, will occupy 104 acres.

**Service Center.** A proposed 10 acre service center would be used to provide food, retail and service opportunities for employees working at the site.

**Open Space.** Open space will occupy a 111 acre natural resource network within the site that is designed to preserve and enhance wetlands and wildlife habitat as well as provide recreation opportunities.

*Source: Salem Regional Employment Center Master Plan and Development Strategy, October 11, 2004.*

incubate new businesses focused on sustainability and put Salem on the leading edge of this sector of the economy. The city should continue to facilitate this development, and state and federal grants might be available to help Sustainable Fairview develop and implement new approaches to development.

*Responsibility:* Private Sector, City, State, Federal

**Develop the Oregon State Fairgrounds and Surrounding Areas.** The Oregon State Fair and Expo Center's Master Plan calls for major improvements to this important site that will help draw tourists and other visitors to Salem. A new multi-purpose pavilion, which opened last year, has increased the fairgrounds' capacity to host trade and consumer shows, athletic competitions, concerts and entertainment, retreats, and seminars. Legislators are considering an innovative plan to turn the fair site into a state park, which would allow the fair to utilize lottery proceeds for development. The City of Salem is pursuing plans to redevelop land along Portland Road just blocks from the fairgrounds, improving the image of the area surrounding the Fairgrounds and providing an improved gateway to the site that will enhance visitors' experiences. The City is also exploring opportunities to better connect events at the fairgrounds to downtown.

*Responsibility:* City, State