

BACKGROUND: The City has conducted a community planning process to prepare design standards for Downtown Springfield that will support City priorities and outcomes as identified in the Council goals, Downtown Refinement Plan, and comprehensive plan policies. At City Council work sessions on June 13th and July 18, 2016, the Council reviewed early draft concepts prepared by a consultant and requested more information from staff to address concerns about some of the scale, height, massing, exterior materials and architectural features of potential buildings depicted in those concepts. Council directed staff to place stronger emphasis on how new structures and alterations of existing structures will “fit in” with Springfield’s existing human-scale, walkable “Main Street” pattern in ways that are responsive to and respectful of the character and scale of Downtown’s walkable blocks, landmark buildings and the adjoining Washburne National Historic District. Council requested more work sessions and visuals on this topic. The Council also directed staff to bring back a less complex overall organization of the design standards, while maintaining and increasing the degree of flexibility provided to the developer — such as a “menu of options” approach incorporating numerous illustrations. The results of public involvement and Council’s comments also indicated strong community interest in pursuing design standards that will guide construction of smaller infill buildings in addition to larger scale mixed-use projects throughout the Downtown Mixed-Use area.

At their April 10, 2017 work session, the Council reviewed visuals prepared by staff, and agreed with staff’s recommended approach to creating design standards that are more closely based on Downtown’s characteristic physical attributes and patterns. These characteristics are easily identifiable by the public and clearly communicate “where Downtown is.” Since then, the City Project Team has worked with the Downtown Citizen Advisory Committee, a Technical Advisory Group, interested parties and stakeholders to prepare draft amendments to the Springfield Development Code (SDC) and Municipal Code Downtown Sign District. In addition to site and building design standards, the proposed amendments to the SDC address streetscape elements such as sidewalks, street trees, alleys, café seating and other streetscape furniture. Adding the streetscape standards to the Code (as recommended by the City Attorney) increases the overall length of the Code, but also will facilitate understanding of City standards applicable to Downtown rights-of-way and how those standards support and are supported by the abutting site development and building design.

PROCESS/CITIZEN & DEVELOPER INPUT: The Downtown Planning web page has been updated regularly throughout the multi-year planning process to provide timely information about this project. The page also provides a sign-up portal to join the Interested Parties email list to receive updates. Notifications of CAC meetings and project updates have been sent to the Interested Parties email list, with invitations to meet with staff individually or in groups. Interested Parties provided input as the standards were developed by participating in CAC meetings, by meeting with staff individually, or by providing comments via email. For example, staff received and incorporated suggestions from interested parties to:

- *Don’t limit dimensions for new buildings/but require facades to be broken up to retain proportion and scale; let market forces dictate building dimensions other than established standards for height, etc.;*
- *Add offset requirement every 20 feet;*

- *Prohibit certain materials (e.g. Capstone);*
- *Look at Orenco Station for ideas;*
- *Roll out the streetscape design standards that were displayed at the open house;*
- *Include architects in the building design discussion;*
- *Require "Active Use Standards" on other downtown streets, not just Main Street;*
- *Require standards that will improve bike facilities connections between Eugene and Springfield;*
- *Require signs designed for pedestrian orientation;*
- *Allow flexibility in sign design standards to address different uses and locations;*
- *Allow back lit signage;*
- *Require shielding of interior lighting in parking structures;*
- *Allow Waterfront site orientation flexibility;*
- *Allow as much flexibility as possible to allow repurposing of sites.*

The Draft Code includes commentary (blue boxes) to explain how the proposed design standards differ from existing standards to address these suggestions. As directed by Council, staff asked participants to comment on the construction costs associated with the existing/proposed design standards and the degree that these costs (e.g. % of windows on a building façade) influence the feasibility of development in Downtown Springfield. Staff heard:

- *Accommodate small, more affordable infill building projects in addition to larger projects;*
- *Sprinkling a building (for fire protection) drives developer cost up far more than windows;*
- *Allow as much flexibility as possible to support developer repurposing of buildings and sites;*
- *Better standards will improve downtown's ambience to support development projects;*
- *Consult architects to review practicality of building design standards.*

To date, staff continues to meet with interested parties at their request to discuss the proposals moving forward.