michael slater

planning / design / arboriculture

November 19, 2026

Mayor, Members of the Salem City Council, and City Manager
City of Salem
Salem, Oregon

Re: North Waterfront URA

Dear Mayor, Councilors, and City Manager:

I am writing in support of the revised North Waterfront Urban Renewal Area (URA) plan. As you know, I raised concerns in written and oral comments that the original plan failed to consider the north waterfront's most significant feature—the Willamette River—and overlooked many existing City plans and policies related to the river.

The revised plan includes several important additions. The City has:

1. Revised Goal D to read: "...support sewer, stormwater, water, environmental and riverfront infrastructure needs; natural-resource enhancement; public access; parks and open space; and coordinated planning..."
2. Allowed funds to be used for "...master planning for the Riverfront/Mixed Residential subarea south of Mill Creek and for parks and public open spaces within or serving the Area, including River Road Park..."
3. Recognized park and public space planning as an allowable use of URA funds.
4. Incorporated by reference the Willamette Greenway Plan, the Comprehensive Park Plan, and the 1997 North Downtown Plan.

I am pleased to say that the revised plan fully resolves my concerns.

I would like to thank the members of the City Council who shared my concerns, the City Manager for supporting revisions to the plan, and the city staff who considered these issues and drafted the revised plan. I believe the public has been well served by this process and that the resulting plan is stronger for it.

Sincerely,

Michael Slater

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