

To: City of Gresham Planning Commission

From: Justin Douglas, Economic Development & Urban Renewal Director

Memo Date: July 3, 2025

Meeting Date: July 14, 2025

Subject: Recommendation to City Council on Gresham Downtown/Civic Urban Renewal Plan

Attachments:

1. Draft Gresham Downtown/Civic Urban Renewal Plan
2. Draft Report Accompanying the Gresham Downtown/Civic Urban Renewal Plan

RECOMMENDATION

At the July 14, 2025, City of Gresham Planning Commission meeting, staff will seek the Planning Commission's recommendation that City Council adopt the Gresham Downtown-Civic Urban Renewal Plan (UR Plan). This recommendation, which is a requirement of Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter (ORS) 457, would be based on the Planning Commission affirming findings that the **UR Plan is in conformance with the Gresham Comprehensive Plan.**

If adopted by Gresham City Council on September 2, 2025, the UR Plan will generate approximately \$380 million in capital resources to invest in the Downtown-Civic neighborhoods over the next three decades.

BACKGROUND

On May 20, 2025, the Gresham Redevelopment Commission (GRDC), took unanimous action to propose adoption of the draft UR Plan. This was the first formal step in a process governed by State statute that requires the GRDC “forward [the] urban renewal plan and the accompanying report to the planning commission of the municipality for recommendations before presenting the plan to the governing body of the municipality for approval.”

The public purpose of the draft UR Plan is to provide a funding source to enable projects to be undertaken that will develop, redevelop and connect the Downtown and Civic areas of Gresham. The projects include funding for parks, civic functions, private development leverage, streetscapes, streets, and utilities. The community outcomes will be job and business growth, new residential uses, and a thriving and unique entertainment, nightlife, and shopping district.

The plans listed below have community-based visions, goals, and specified projects for Gresham and the proposed urban renewal area, but do not come with financing to implement the plans. The UR Plan has tax increment financing to provide the Gresham Redevelopment Commission with funding to complete projects specified in the following plans and included in the UR Plan.

- Gresham Comprehensive Plan
- Gresham Transportation Systems Plan
- Civic Neighborhood Plan

- Downtown Conceptual Framework
- Gresham Capital Improvement Plan
- Imagine Gresham
- Gresham Strategic Plan 2022-2025

PLANNING COMMISSION ROLE

At the July 14, 2025, meeting, the Planning Commission will be asked to recommend City Council adopt the UR Plan given the UR Plan is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan, in particular Volume 2, Section 10.314, Downtown Plan District; and 10.318, Gresham/Civic Neighborhood.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONFORMANCE

Attachment 1 UR Plan contains conformance findings for Gresham's Comprehensive Plan. These findings are located in Section XI: Relationship to Local Objectives. Key findings are excerpted below:

Volume 2, Section 10.314, Downtown Plan District

Downtown Vision Goal: Downtown will be the recognized center of Gresham, and will include most significant civic and governmental functions, including public parks and the Center for the Arts. It will include large numbers of professional sector jobs, medium and high-density residential development and a thriving and unique entertainment, nightlife and shopping district.

*Finding: The intent of the Plan is to provide a funding source to enable projects to be undertaken that will develop, redevelop and connect the Civic and Downtown areas of Gresham. The projects include funding for parks, civic functions, private development leverage, streetscape, streets and utilities, all of which will help to increase professional jobs, residential uses and develop a thriving and unique entertainment, nightlife and shopping district. **The Plan is in conformance with the Downtown Plan District section of the Comprehensive Plan.***

Downtown Land Use Goal: Make Downtown the recognized business and social center of Gresham as a thriving, unique, mixed-use part of the Regional Center with connection to the Civic Neighborhood.

*Finding: The Plan will facilitate a mix of land uses within the Area by providing funding for projects in the categories of Private Development Leverage, Community Identity, Transportation and Utility projects that will include parks, office buildings that will provide professional sector jobs and support the commercial businesses, residential development to complete a mixed-use neighborhood. The Transportation and Community Identity projects will help create a thriving, pedestrian friendly Downtown core. **The Plan is in conformance with the Downtown Land Use Goal of the Comprehensive Plan.***

Downtown Transportation & Connections Goal: Develop a transportation system that supports the vision of a vibrant Downtown and provides for the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, automobiles, bicycles, transit and emergency vehicles.

Finding: The Plan will facilitate transportation projects that will provide new connectivity, improve existing connections, provide streetscape amenities, provide enhanced bicycle facilities, complete minor intersection improvements, analyze parking strategies and evaluate potential

*future parking structures and create an improved transportation system for the Area. **The Plan is in conformance with the Downtown Transportation & Connections Goal of the Comprehensive Plan.***

Volume 2, Section 10.318, Gresham Civic Neighborhood

Civic Neighborhood Vision: Gresham's Civic Neighborhood is a distinctively urban mixture of uses and people with convenient places to live, work, and shop right next to Downtown. Inviting, tree-lined streets lead past high-quality buildings and lively storefronts, next to parks and plazas to meet and play, all designed around an active transportation network, with great public transit, well-connected streets and trails.

Finding: *The Plan's main goals are to provide improvements to and connect the Civic Neighborhood with Downtown Gresham. The projects in the Plan are intended to provide the resources to facilitate development and redevelopment within the Area spurring economic growth, high quality buildings, lively storefronts next to parks, and plazas designed around an active transportation network. **The Plan is in conformance with the Gresham Civic Neighborhood Section of the Comprehensive Plan.***

Civic Neighborhood Connections Goal: Interconnected streets, sidewalks, transit routes, and trails form a transportation network to and within the neighborhood that is convenient, safe, and accessible by multiple modes of travel. Streets support multi-modal users, are scaled appropriately for their location, and include frontage designs which support active and engaging public spaces at the pedestrian level.

Finding: *The Plan provides funding to undertake projects within the Area that include bicycle transportation improvements, parks and plazas and streetscape improvements and analyze parking strategies and evaluate potential future parking structures. **The Plan is in conformance with the Gresham Civic Neighborhood Connections Goal of the Comprehensive Plan.***

NEXT STEPS

After the Planning Commission recommendation, next steps are as follows:

- City Council will host a public hearing on the UR Plan on August 19/26, 2025.
- City Council will vote by non-emergency ordinance on the UR Plan on September 2, 2025.
- If the UR Plan is approved by City Council, public resources will become available to invest in the Downtown-Civic neighborhoods in fiscal year 2026-27.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Staff contact: Justin Douglas

Staff email: Justin.Douglas@GreshamOregon.gov

Telephone: 503-618-2418

Website: <https://www.greshamoregon.gov/urban-renewal/downtown-civic/>