

Timeline of City of Salem planning for a new police facility and Civic Center renovations. Prepared by Brian Hines. I added emphasis **in bold**. Source of information, when shown, is underlined. Quotes are, not surprisingly, in quotation marks. Annotations after **years** are, of course, my own. SJ = Statesman Journal

**2009.** City Council subcommittee directs staff to pursue building a new police facility at the Civic Center. Not even Council. Subcommittee.

**2010.** Council subcommittee formed. Students in University of Oregon Sustainable Cities Initiative prepare designs for new police facility at Civic Center. Architectural firms carry on with work.

**UO Sustainable Cities Initiative: Civic Center and Police Facility Options Council Subcommittee minutes, September 21, 2010**

Subcommittee Members: **Mayor Taylor, Councilor Dan Clem, Anna Peterson** [candidate for Mayor running against Bennett, **Councilor Laura Tesler**

[Mike McLaran takes Taylor's place at second meeting in October. Brent deHart of Chamber takes McLaran's place in February 2011, and Monty King of Community Policing Advisory Committee is added. Jason Brandt of Chamber takes deHart's place at next February meeting. McLaran replaces Brandt in March 2011, and Tesler departs.]

“Through Council goals, staff has been directed to prepare, for Council consideration, a **bond measure for a new Police facility**. To date, the **focus for siting a new Police facility has been within the existing Civic Center campus** to reduce costs for the project. **Through its partnership with the UO Sustainable Cities Initiative, the City is preparing a design for a new Police facility** and a long-term facility management plan for the remainder of the Civic Center facility.”

**SJ story, October 11, 2010**

[re. U of O Sustainable City Year] “A civic center and police facility redesign is one such goal. In 2009, **a city council subcommittee** directed staff to produce a police bond measure to build a new police facility in the civic center.”

### SJ story, December 13, 2010

“Now, **the two architectural firms continue the design work** started by the students and prepare several options for city councilors, who are looking into the possibility of a bond measure to support funding for the new public safety facility.”  
[Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Architects in Portland and Salem-based CB Two Architects]

**2011. Council subcommittee carries on. Council doesn't know what is going on. Alternative sites looked into after two years, by same group that has been planning Civic Center police facility.**

### UO Sustainable Cities Initiative: Public Safety Facility Council Subcommittee minutes, April 20, 2011

“Courtney **Knox reported Councilors' expression of concern regarding their lack of awareness regarding the status of the Civic Center/Public Safety Facility project**, culminating in a request for a work session on the topic.”

### SJ story, May 24, 2011

Salem City Council agreed to fund a search for a new public safety facility location at Monday night's meeting. No construction has been planned. The council agreed to spend up to \$40,000 to weigh the merits of building a new facility on the existing site or starting from scratch elsewhere.

**A council subcommittee, relying on input from the University of Oregon's Sustainable Cities Initiative, determined the police department's needs could be met by building a new facility on the campus of the Civic Center.** The group also agreed it would be useful to consider alternative sights [sic] before asking voters for an estimated \$50 million construction bond.

The issue was met with contention. Councilor Bob Cannon thought the council should move forward without a study, and **hiring someone to "observe the obvious" is wrong.**

"I think that we should not spend \$40,000 on a consultant to go out and find out if there is additional space. **There is additional space. It's currently available,**" he said. "This is pure and simply a waste of money.”

**2012. Void year. Nothing much, if anything, happens publicly.**

**2013.** City starts to inform citizens about proposal in fall, four years after planning started for police facility at Civic Center. “Outreach” basically is sales job for already-determined proposal.

**Salem Weekly story, October 17, 2013**

“For several years the City of Salem has believed it needed an upgrade and extensive redesign to City Hall. Officials and staff are concerned about seismic weaknesses and facility overcrowding, and **this week will launch a web page to inform citizens of progress making that expansion possible**, including tracking its hope that a bond measure in 2014 or beyond will pay the expense.

It was back then [2009] that the city conceived that a modern public safety facility might house all critical city functions and resolve seismic concerns at the same time. **The city decided to focus on using the land the city hall, police station and library already occupy**, so there would be no new city purchase and because the property still has room for expansion.

...It is never easy to get new projects going, so that although Knox Busch describes a staff tasked with “**renewing outreach**,” **many in the community currently feel confused and excluded.**”

**SJ story, October 18, 2013**

“Taxpayers soon will hear the city's pitch for a seismic upgrade and redesign of the Vern Miller Civic Center, headquarters for Salem's city government and police department. The estimated cost: \$70 million.

...No final decision has been made about putting the bond measure on the ballot, but **city officials have started a public outreach campaign**. They will meet with community groups and hold open houses **to discuss the new vision** for the civic center.

...But even before the first meetings with community groups, some Salem residents have voiced concerns. **They contend the public's ideas and concerns about the project have been ignored.**

"This is a big investment for Salem and I think the people should have a say," said Geoffrey James, a Salem architect. **For the past two years, he said, the city has**

**worked in a "secret process" to create one design without considering other possible alternatives.**

**"We have a right to be part of the decision making -- not the outreach after the decision,"** Salem resident Claudia Howells said.

The city's critics say other locations might be better suited for a newer, much larger police station than the civic center site. "We never had that conversation," Howells said.

**City officials maintain that plenty of public outreach has been done over the years. The city had a yearlong collaboration with the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Initiative in 2010-11, where architecture students worked with a local architect to determine the city's space needs."**

**SJ editorial, November 10, 2013**

"Salem officials have proposed partially rebuilding the Civic Center, including constructing adjacent facilities for the Police Department and for City Council meetings.

**So far, one flaw is that officials, despite their good intentions, did not do enough to get the public involved from the outset.** Civic leaders must think about what the public wants to know, not just what officials think they need to know. **That requires finding new ways to reach out to constituents early on,** rather than counting on them to read City Council agendas and other meeting notices."

**2014. Alternatives emerge. Citizens speak up. Five years after they should have been invited to.**

**SJ story, January 11, 2014**

"Plans for a new headquarters for Salem police have focused on a proposed three-story building at the Vern Miller Civic Center. But **some neighbors have suggested an alternative location:** a gritty area in northeast Salem that could use a boost.

Members of the Northgate Neighborhood Association voted unanimously to ask city leaders to consider vacant land at 3350 Portland Road NE as the future home of the Salem Police Department."