

7 Minute Opening Statement by Brian Hines

Why Vote “NO” on Measure 24-399

Salem City Club Debate, September 23, 2016

(remarks as written; spoken remarks were somewhat different)

My Salem Community Vision colleagues and I have closely followed the police facility planning saga for three years.

We know there is a better way than the wasteful, poorly-planned, \$82 million bond measure on the November ballot.

A way that makes City Hall and the Library earthquake-safe AND gives Salem a perfectly adequate new 75,000 square foot police facility — all for \$20 to \$30 million LESS than what taxpayers now are being asked to pay for a supersized police facility alone.

Here’s why **we know Salem can do better.**

(1) SALEM ISN’T A RICH TOWN

Our per capita income is
15% less than **Oregon** as a whole
12% less than **Eugene’s**
28% less than **Portland’s**

Salem has many problems that need money — affordable housing, homelessness, safe bike paths, deferred maintenance on City buildings.

Needlessly spending tens of millions of dollars on a police facility that can be built for much less will markedly hurt our ability to deal with these problems.

If Salem was a palatial town, it might be OK to build a Police Palace. But we aren’t. And it isn’t OK

(2) THE \$82 MILLION POLICE FACILITY PLAN IS A “FULL MEAL DEAL”

At the City Council meeting where the police facility go-ahead was given, Councilor Steve McCoid said, **“I’m convinced that a full meal deal is the way to go.”**

Wow.

What else in Salem gets the full meal deal?

First class treatment. No expense spared.

What other need in Salem gets not only what was requested by advocates two years ago, but **double that request?**

The police facility is a unique “full meal deal.”

The disturbing image this brings to mind is of those **hungry other unmet needs** in Salem **pressing their faces to a window**, watching the Police Department **gorge on** a \$82 million building that’s **way larger and way more expensive** than it needs to be.

(3) SIZE OF THE POLICE FACILITY HAS DOUBLED IN PAST 2 YEARS

CHART. POINT TO CURRENT AND 2014, 2015, 2016

After several years of planning, as late as 2014 City officials were **pushing for a 75,000 square foot** police facility.

Back then Mayor Anna Peterson, Police Chief Jerry Moore, and other City officials were **totally on board** with a 75,000 square foot police facility.

A 2014 City of Salem FAQ document said **this was the right size**, allowing **room for growth** over the next 30-40 years

The Police Facility Task Force that Mr. Sullivan chaired recommended a similar size in its final report: **75,000 to 106,000 square feet**. Both consulting firms that spoke to the Task Force said the same thing.

But after **Chicago’s DLR Group** got a contract from the City of Salem, the size ballooned to 148,000 square feet — double what City officials had been saying was the right size.

And nobody on the City Council except **Tom Andersen** challenged this.

Andersen questioned why the building is being constructed to house future police officers added at an assumed rate of **2.4 a year**, when the historical average since 1977 has been **1.3**, half that rate, and has been just **.8** in the past 21 years, a third of the assumed rate.

So the police facility is being built to house **a large number of PHANTOM OFFICERS** who almost certainly won’t be added to the force.

Andersen also questioned the need to use **25,000 square feet and \$11 million** for a new 911 Center when the current one is **fine where it is in leased space** for at least another ten years, and over the next 30 years it costs less to lease than build.

The Center serves 22 communities, but Salem taxpayers would pay the whole construction cost. **So our plan doesn't include a new 911 Center.**

Plus, why the need for a very expensive parking structure, \$26,000 a space, when hundreds of spaces are available in the Marion Parkade, just a block away?

Police Department officials told Andersen it would be **unsafe for their staff** to walk from the Parkade to the new facility at night. Which shows that a new police headquarters won't even make the immediate surrounding neighborhood safer.

(4) COST PER SQUARE FOOT IS DOUBLE WHAT IT SHOULD BE

CHART — POINT

This chart shows the **cost per square foot** of four Oregon police facilities that have been built between 2012 and 2016 and two proposed facilities.

Salem's Police Palace is **more than double the cost** of the Canby, Eugene, and State Police facilities. And it is **43% more costly** per square foot than the proposed Beaverton police facility.

So not only are Salem taxpayers being asked to pay for a police facility **that is double the size** it needs to be, they're being asked to pay **double per square foot** for that Police Palace.

(5) EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS BEING IGNORED

The City of Salem's previous 75,000 square foot police facility plan included money to make **City Hall and the Library earthquake-safe.**

Which made sense.

The Police Department currently is in City Hall, **which will collapse** when the next Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake hits, the Big One.

The Big One will be the greatest disaster in the history of North America. It is a **geological ticking time-bomb** that **WILL go off.** Just a matter of when.

In October 2013 the City Manager at the time, Linda Norris, said, “The way it is, right now, city employees **wouldn’t even be able to get out of the building alive**, much less use the building.”

So a Public Safety bond that included money for **BOTH** a new police facility and seismically retrofitting the Civic Center was in the works.

Yet the **supersized plan** citizens will vote on this November asks for \$82 million — \$22 million more — **JUST** for a police facility.

This is **SO, SO wrong**.

If you saw people **being led OUT of a building** that was going to collapse, you’d think “**Wonderful!**” But if you went around to the back and saw other people **being led INTO the building**, you’d say “That’s **crazy! EVERYBODY** needs to be gotten out of the dangerous building!”

Moving the police department out of City Hall because the building isn’t earthquake-safe **is crazy** — because the current plan is to move other city staff into the same space so **THEY** now will be crushed to death when the Big One Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake hits.

Which is just **ONE of the very good reasons** I’ve shared **to vote NO** on the police facility bond measure.

The current estimate of City staff is that seismic upgrades to the Library and City Hall would **cost \$27 million**. But Salem Community Vision’s architect and design-build specialist think \$20 million is more likely.

Regardless, **\$60 million, or less, would buy Salem BOTH a perfectly adequate new 75,000 square foot police facility AND seismic upgrades** that will save lives when the Big One earthquake hits.