



*Active citizens supporting community involvement, prosperity, and fiscal responsibility*

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Contact: Susann Kaltwasser  
Telephone: 503-363-3998  
Email: [susann@kaltwasser.com](mailto:susann@kaltwasser.com)  
Web site: [www.salemcommunityvision.com](http://www.salemcommunityvision.com)  
Facebook: [Salem Community Vision](https://www.facebook.com/SalemCommunityVision)

### **Salem Community Vision firmly committed to making the Civic Center earthquake-safe**

Salem Community Vision strongly supports retrofitting buildings at the Civic Center – Library, City Hall, parking structures – to modern seismic standards. This is a must, not a maybe; a do-now, not a sometime-in-the-future. Saving lives when, not if, a major earthquake (the “Big One”) hits has to be a top immediate priority for the City of Salem.

At the April 28 meeting of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Police Facility, Susann Kaltwasser presented the Salem Community Vision position during the opening public comment period.

She made it clear that Salem Community Vision supports spending no more than \$50 million on building a new police facility (\$30 million) and seismically retrofitting the Library and City Hall along with making some renovations to City Hall (\$20 million).

A single bond measure for these public safety projects should be presented to voters by the end of 2016.

Money for the City Hall renovations, estimated at about \$5 million, needs to be included in the bond because of a longstanding failure by the City of Salem to properly budget for the maintenance of existing buildings. Steps need to be taken by City officials to reduce this backlog of deferred maintenance and make needed repairs to public infrastructure in a timely fashion without having to ask voters for special funding.

Two primary reasons have been offered for a new police facility: the inadequacy of the current cramped Police Department headquarters on the ground floor of City

Hall, and the near-certainty that the Department will be crushed under a “pancaked” City Hall when the Big One earthquake hits.

If it is imperative that the Police Department be moved out of City Hall because of the likelihood that the building will collapse in a major earthquake, Salem Community Vision believes it is equally important to protect others working at and visiting the Civic Center, including children, families, and the elderly at the Library.

Salem Community Vision opposes any attempt to seek funding for a new police facility that does not include money for seismically retrofitting the Civic Center. This was the original plan of City officials, but seismic strengthening of the Library and City Hall now has been dropped from the recommendations of the Police Facility Task Force, seemingly in an effort to reduce the cost of a bond measure.

This is wrong.

A new police facility can be built for much less than the City’s original plan proposed. Cost savings should come by eliminating unneeded police facility building features, such as underground parking or a parking garage. It also should be properly rather than excessively sized. Doing this will enable a \$50 million bond measure to be presented to voters that includes funds for both a new police facility and seismic retrofitting of the Civic Center.

It is important to note that when the Salem Community Vision representative on the Police Facility Task Force, Geoffrey James, voted for a motion that did not include seismic retrofitting, he was expressing his personal posture, not that of Salem Community Vision, which has been stated above.

All elements of the original City of Salem proposal – a new police facility, seismic retrofitting of the Library and City Hall, renovations to City Hall – must be included in a fiscally responsible bond that does not exceed \$50 million. This will maximize the chance that Salem voters will approve the bond.

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