

Application Form

Profile

Joaquín

First Name

Lara Midkiff

Last Name

Middle
Initial

Email Address

Home Address

City

Suite or Apt

State

Postal Code

What Ward do you live in? *

Ward 8

Primary Phone

Alternate Phone

Capaces Leadership Institute

Employer

Job Title

Occupation

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Salem Planning Commission: Submitted

Which of the following City of Salem Board or Commission meetings have you attended? *

- Salem Human Rights Commission
- Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- Salem Planning Commission

Interests & Experiences

What do you feel you can contribute as a board or commission member?

The son of an Indigenous migrant farmworker and a devoted public servant, I was born and raised in the Willamette Valley, and have resided in West Salem for over 15 years. I began working directly in the Salem community as a community organizer with Causa of Oregon where I worked on migrant rights. I had the honor of being part of the effort to protect Oregon's long-standing sanctuary laws when they were under threat in 2017 and passing the Equal Access to Roads Act in 2019. My current role in the farmworker justice movement at the Capacities Leadership Institute, where I support our Indigenous communities and migrant youth, continues that work. When I was in college, I worked to bring nationally recognized changes in campus accessibility for students with disabilities and chaired the Native & Indigenous Association. I have subsequently worked in appointed office for Governor Kotek on the Oregon Disabilities Commission where I advise the state on disability policy and advocate for the needs of more than one million disabled Oregonians. Locally, I have engaged with city challenges in a formal capacity for the last two years through my service on the Human Rights Commission where I have provided testimony to council, worked closely and regularly with staff, and overseen the City's Community Belonging Survey, coming face to face with many of the structural challenges our community faces, especially the consequences of homelessness. I am currently serving my first term on the Board of Directors for Cherriots—a position I took on to advance community connection and accessibility—where the historical limits of our city's layout and infrastructure planning affect transportation for three million riders. My life and work have led me to more fully understand the need for beautiful, vital, accessible and connected community spaces. My experience with migrant communities, disability policy, mass transit and local human rights issues, prepares me to bring an informed and long-term vision for the city as we endeavor to promote the public interest, health, morals, safety, comfort, convenience, and welfare of Salem and its surrounding communities.

[Upload a Resume](#)

What prompted your interest in applying to serve as a board or commission member?

Ever since the advent of zoning during the Industrial Revolution in the United States, cities have been planned and built with things other than people in mind: cars, lanes, industrial plants, which families could live where and why. I have worked on behalf of my diverse communities (eg., Indigenous migrant farmworker communities, the disability community) in various capacities for nearly a decade. In recent years, my service on Salem's Human Rights Commission and the Board of Directors for Cherriots representing Downtown and West Salem has more fully informed my understanding of the vital role that planning plays in affordable housing, protecting our unsheltered neighbors, multimodal transportation, and mass transit, respectively. In that time, I have come to recognize that many of our conversations are reactive instead of proactive. Therefore, I am interested in finding ways to more explicitly braid people and communities (especially our most marginalized neighbors), housing, and a sustainable climate future into our city's planning practice.

Please explain how your education, professional, personal, or volunteer experience and knowledge qualify you to serve on the board(s) or commission(s) for which you are applying.

Creating beautiful, vital, accessible and connected community spaces aligned with the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan's vision to make Salem a "livable, equitable, carbon neutral city where everyone has access to affordable housing and safe mobility choices, families and local businesses are thriving, diversity and culture is celebrated, and open spaces and the environment are valued and protected" does not occur in a vacuum. It takes relationships, public service experience and lived understanding of the consequences of not doing that job with everyone in mind. I would enter this role with non-profit and public sector experience having worked as a community organizer and served on several local and state boards and commissions. Moreover, I would apply a lifetime of living in and working on behalf of the Willamette Valley's migrant community, not to mention being a wheelchair user in mass transit policy, to provide different perspectives on the central question to the Planning Commission: How do we develop a built environment that brings connection and meaning to as many people and environments as possible? I would approach this question as someone who trained in history and who worked as a research biologist at a natural history museum. Questions of a place's history and its legacy, how folks in the community occupy those spaces today, the relationships to the natural world and other living things that exist there, and how we bring all these considerations to bear in planning are of utmost importance to building a shared future.

List any experience you have with volunteering for the City of Salem or other organizations.

Human Rights Commission, City of Salem District Educational Equity Advisory Committee, Salem-Keizer Public Schools Oregon Disabilities Commission, State of Oregon Board of Directors, Cherriots

Briefly explain any experience you have working with your neighborhood association or other public bodies or committees.

I have a relationship with the West Salem Neighborhood Association. In particular, I have collaborated with Mike Freitas (Chair) and Steve Anderson (Land Use Chair) in the past on public comment and transportation-related issues. I have primarily been involved with the WSNA, including monthly meetings, in my capacity with Cherriots.

Can you commit to attending a minimum of 75 percent of scheduled meetings? (Please refer to the City's website for the meeting schedule. Failure to meet the attendance requirement may result in removal from office.)

Yes No

Please list up to three (3) references whom we could contact to learn more about your qualifications (name/email address or phone number/relationship).

Jaime Arredondo, e-mail: jaime@capacesleadership.org Maria Hinojos Pressey, e-mail: mariahinojos@pcun.org

Question applies to Salem Planning Commission

The Commission strives to make decisions that implement the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Please describe your affiliations within the community that could affect your ability to participate in land use decisions if you are appointed to the Planning Commission (i.e., familial or financial relationship with developers, builders, land use attorneys, land use consultants, etc.).

No connection or affiliation to report.

Question applies to Salem Planning Commission

Please state your profession

Non-Profit leadership

Demographics

Some boards and commissions require membership to be racially, politically or geographically proportionate to the general public. The following information helps track our recruitment and diversity efforts.

Ethnicity

Gender

Question