

From: [Haley Lehman](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Opposition to the proposed \$1.2 million in grants
Date: Sunday, May 10, 2026 10:38:35 AM

To the Urban Renewal Agency Board and Salem City Council:

I am writing to formally express my opposition to the proposed \$1.2 million in grants scheduled for a vote on May 11. Specifically, the allocation of \$470,000 for the downtown El Torito Supermarket project and the funds directed toward West Salem represent a recurring imbalance in how our city's resources are distributed.

While I understand the desire to fill vacancies in the downtown core, the residents of East Salem and the NE Lancaster area have been overlooked for far too long. Our infrastructure, community resources, and local businesses are in desperate need of the same level of investment that the city consistently pours into the Riverfront and downtown districts.

It is time for the city to stop prioritizing a single area and start focusing on the parts of Salem where the residents feel the lack of investment daily. I urge you to vote against these exemptions and instead redirect these capital improvement funds toward projects in East Salem and the NE Lancaster corridor. Our neighborhoods deserve to see the benefits of their tax dollars reflected in their own streets and local economies.

Thank you,

Haley Lehman

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From: [Tory Banford](#)
To: [Amy Johnson](#)
Cc: [Kristin Retherford](#); [Dana DeKlyen](#)
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL]Letter
Date: Monday, May 11, 2026 1:40:55 PM
Attachments: [ElTorito_CityGrant_Lily & Alfredo.pdf](#)

Hi Amy,

Lily Mendez is the grant applicant, and she provided a statement for the record related to item 3.3a. 26-82 of the Urban Renewal Agency meeting agenda.

Thank you,

- Tory | [503-540-2445](tel:503-540-2445)

From: Lily Mendez <toritomarket01@hotmail.com>
Date: Monday, May 11, 2026 at 12:43 PM
To: Tory Banford <tbanford@cityofsalem.net>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Letter

Hi Tory ,
Here is my letter for the meeting today. Sorry I couldn't be there today and thank you for helping me with this .

Thank you ,
Lily

Sent from my iPhone

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El Torito Supermarket

Meat . Grocery . Produce . Beer

May 11, 2026

The Honorable Mayor and Salem City Council

City of Salem
555 Liberty St SE
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: Grant Funding Request — El Torito Meat Market, 435 Liberty St. NE,
Downtown Salem**

Dear Mayor and Honorable Members of the Salem City Council,

My name is Lily Perez, and together with my business partner and husband Alfredo Mendez, We are the proud owners of El Torito Meat Market. We are writing to respectfully request the City of Salem's support and financial assistance as we prepare to open our newest location at 435 Liberty St. NE in the heart of downtown Salem.

We are deeply grateful for the City's vision in recognizing the need for fresh, affordable grocery options in the downtown core, and we are honored to be considered a part of that solution. El Torito has served the Salem community for many years across multiple locations, and this downtown expansion represents our most meaningful commitment yet — not only as a business, but as a family rooted in this city.

Our new downtown location will require significant infrastructure investment, including all-new lighting systems, HVAC upgrades, and major building improvements necessary to bring the former Rite Aid space up to full operational standards. These upgrades are essential to ensure a safe, welcoming, and functional environment for our customers and employees. The scope of this work represents a substantial financial undertaking,

and we are respectfully requesting the City's assistance in the form of grant funding to help make this vision a reality.

El Torito Meat Market has long been a trusted name for quality meats, fresh produce, everyday essentials, and authentic Mexican products — and we intend to bring that same standard of excellence and service to downtown neighbors, workers, and residents who currently lack convenient access to a full-service grocery store.

We are excited to become a staple of downtown Salem's growing community and to stand as an example of what locally owned, family-operated businesses can contribute to the City's revitalization efforts. We look forward to working alongside City leadership as a committed partner in the continued development of a vibrant, livable, and food-secure downtown.

Thank you sincerely for your time, your consideration, and your dedication to the people of Salem.

Respectfully submitted,

Lily Perez & Alfredo Mendez
Owners, El Torito Meat Market
435 Liberty St. NE
Salem, OR 97301