



Salem Chamber

Convener | Catalyst | Champion

06/27/22

Salem City Council
555 Liberty Street SE
Salem OR 97301

Dear Mayor Bennett, Mayor-elect Hoy, and Members of Council,

At the Salem Chamber, we believe in helping businesses prosper, so our entire community may thrive. As an organization, committed to a prosperous community, we feel it is vital that we provide our thoughts on the Salem Community Improvement Bond which will be on the ballot in November. A major component to our mission is ensuring that our community is built upon a robust economic foundation which allows for positive growth long into the future.

Earlier this month, our organization held our monthly Public Policy Committee meeting where we invited key city stakeholders to present to our members on what may be included within this bond. The key takeaway amongst our membership was an enthusiastic recognition of the needs from the Salem Fire Department, with funding requests for new public safety apparatuses to allow response times to be held flat or reduced. Within our conversation, our membership expressed a collective agreement that funding is necessary to provide new firetrucks and subsequent equipment which Salem Fire Chief Mike Niblock outlined in his presentation to the Salem Chamber. In addition, the need for funding additional identified future fire station locations within incorporated areas of the City of Salem was also widely accepted as a priority within the small business community.

The two areas which drew the most scrutiny within the bond consideration were funding for protected bike lanes and road "improvements", which would ultimately decrease the amount of vehicular lanes for cars in essential road arterials in Salem. Our organization recognizes the need for Salem to address climate concerns and supports ways to incentivize Salem residents to find alternative diverse transportation mediums to reduce Salem's carbon footprint. Salem serves as an employment hub for countless individuals throughout our region who utilize our interconnected streets and bridges system for efficient and safe roadways for vehicular transportation throughout Salem and with adjacent communities, including Monmouth/Independence, Dallas, Rickreall, and out towards the Oregon coast.

Our organization shares caution that a bond measure trying to take on so many individual projects may lose steam while trying to be a solve-all for a variety of interests and projects, rather than being laser-focused on a solitary public safety bond measure in November in support of Salem Fire Department fleet replacement and support equipment. Our recommendation would be to split up the bond into two sperate initiatives. One which will provide proper funding for the Fire Department projects and the cyber security projects for the City of Salem. A separate bond could address the specialty infrastructure projects reflecting the infrastructure components across the city, including roads, sidewalks, and proposed/considered bike lane development and expansion.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tom Hoffert, IOM
Chief Executive Officer
Salem Chamber of Commerce

Salem Area Chamber of Commerce

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Chief Executive Officer

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