

**From:** [Jim Scheppke](#)  
**To:** [Linda Nishioka](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Revenue Task Force Recommendations  
**Date:** Friday, July 12, 2024 1:44:37 PM

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Dear Council President:

I was sorry to see that there is no public comment period planned for the Council Work Session on Monday night. That being the case I wanted to share these observations on the Revenue Task Force report with my Councilor and copy them to the rest of the Council.

Page 3: I believe a local option property tax levy to prevent severe closures and reductions to the our library must be a “Near-Term Option.” The only reason the West Salem Branch is not closed today and the main library open 3 days a week is because of Mayor Hoy’s successful proposal to use leftover ARPA funds to avoid this. That will not be a solution in FY26. A solution can’t wait until the “Medium-Term.”

Page 13: The footnote on p. 8 indicates that the “Timeline to Receive Funds” is “the time between the date of implementing a revenue option and when the City would be receiving funds.” Using that definition the “Timeline to Receive Funds” for a local option property tax levy of “1-2 years” is overstated. We could have an election in May 2025 and receive the funds in November 2025 — less than one year. And I have been told by the City Manager in a meeting I had with him and the Mayor that if we could win a levy election for the library, parks and Center 50+ in May 2025, it would be possible for internal borrowing to support these services until the taxes were received in November. This needs to be the plan to avoid disaster for our library, parks and Center 50+ in FY26.

Page 14: The text on “Peer Usage” fails to note that 24 public libraries in Oregon are currently funded or partially funded by local option levies including libraries in Eugene, Hillsboro, Beaverton and Corvallis. For many decades Oregon public libraries have benefitted from local option levies. In most communities they have been relatively easy to pass. People love libraries! Even if they don’t use them, they realize their value, particularly for children. Salem Public Library has been partially funded by several levies in the past. The West Salem Branch Library was established after a local option levy (then called a “serial levy”) passed in 1956. The library benefitted for most of the 1980s from three levies approved by voters.

Page 44: When you hear the results of the Community Survey from DHM Research on Monday night please keep in mind that this was a random sample of all Salem residents. Had they surveyed likely voters the results could have been much different. You can’t infer from these results what the result would be if some of these revenue options went to voters. Please keep in mind that only 28% of Marion County registered voters bothered to vote in the recent May election.

Page 65: I hope the Council will take note of the fact that the library received the highest percentage by far of attendees at the Town Halls indicating they would “pay more in taxes” to provide better support. Please note too the high percentage of attendees who said they would not pay more for police. No, this was not a random sample, but the folks who turned out to town halls are certainly “likely voters.” The second highest percentage was for parks and recreation services. This bodes well for the success of a livability levy in May of next year!

Thank you for your service.

Jim

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