

From: [Alyssa Cokinis](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#); [SALEM Manager](#); [Chris Hoy](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Micki Varney](#); [Virginia Stapleton](#); [Jose Gonzalez](#); [Julie Hoy](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Trevor Phillips](#)
Subject: Prioritize Library and Parks Funding Over Police
Date: Monday, October 21, 2024 12:48:50 PM

Dear Mayor Chris Hoy, City Council, and the City Manager,

I am writing regarding the 10/21/24 work session for "Priorities for City Services and Preferences for Possible Future Funding." I ask that you prioritize funding sources for the Salem Public Library, parks, and Center 50+ over police.

Salem Public Library already has the least funding compared to peer libraries in Oregon; current library operations will no longer be functional if you make any further cuts to the budget and staff in the next fiscal year. As a current library worker, may I express that we are *so* tired and barely keeping up the work with our skeletal staff as it is. It is only thanks to our group of wonderful colleagues and library leadership that we are continuing to float along and support each other where I--personally--feel the City is failing us.

As a lifelong reader, libraries were always the place I could escape to as a child of divorced parents. My mother fostered my love of reading thanks to our local libraries in my home state, and books are how I learned to understand the world around me as I grew up. This wouldn't have been possible if I had to solely rely on buying books, which was frequently not possible. Even if I wasn't currently a library employee, I'd still be here, advocating for the Salem Public Library for the children and teens like me whose parents can't always, if ever, afford to get them books to read and give them a safe place to be after school and in the summers.

During the lockdown in the early pandemic days, the library reopened at the temporary Broadway location and was considered an "essential" service then. Why is it not essential to Council and the City Manager now?

In terms of Parks and Center 50+, gutting those services alongside the library is gutting services for lower-income individuals and families. The previously proposed payroll tax failed because of the huge burden it would have placed on anyone who wasn't wealthy, and any further cuts will eliminate spaces where little-to-no spending is needed to enjoy these spaces and services.

Please consider an alternative route. I do believe that you can find the funding from elsewhere. The Revenue Task Force has several other options for funding that you can consider, or perhaps a lower-cost livability levy could help sell it to voters.

As for the survey, I find it less disturbing that people don't want to pay for City services and more concerning that voter turnout for local elections, levies, and measures is so low. That should concern you as a City, as you're not truly hearing from all constituents then. I'm also confused why the livability levy included "Housing" options (homeowner vs renter) but the public safety levy did not from what I can see in the graphs.

I'll close this off with this: 26% of voters who support the livability levy according to survey say that the "library is essential for education/literacy." The next biggest category is 18% for "help[ing] maintain parks/keep them clean and safe."



Alyssa Cokinis
(now) Ward 1

From: [George Plaven](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: tom@saalemchamber.org; [Mike Erdmann \(mike@homebuildersassociation.org\)](mailto:mike@homebuildersassociation.org); [Lena Prine](#); [Jameson Gideon](#)
Subject: Public comment 10/21/24
Date: Monday, October 21, 2024 2:01:42 PM
Attachments: [FULL Collaborating for Budget Sustainability copy.pdf](#)

Good afternoon,

Please find attached public comments ahead of tonight's City Council Work Session on behalf of Tom Hoffert, CEO, Salem Area Chamber of Commerce, and Mike Erdmann, CEO, Homebuilders Association of Marion and Polk Counties.

Thank you,

	<p>GEORGE PLAVEN Director of Communications</p> <p>PO Box 12518 Salem, OR 97309 406-560-1655 pwlobby.com plaven@pwlobby.com</p>	 
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Collaborating for Budget Sustainability

Over the past year, the Salem business community has paid close attention to the City's budget shortfall and efforts to explore new revenue for services. The Salem Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) and Homebuilders Association of Marion and Polk Counties (Homebuilders) recognizes the need to provide sustainable funding for these services, especially as Salem's population continues to grow. We stand ready to work alongside city leaders toward solutions that will create a safe and prosperous community.

Our organizations have spent several months reaching out to members for their feedback. Shortly after the Salem Revenue Task Force completed its final meeting in June, we distributed a member survey to gauge support each revenue recommendation. Questions also focused on general opinions regarding the City budget. Following this, the Chamber hosted four industry-specific focus groups to gain further insight. The results of the survey and summary of focus group discussions are attached.

Broadly speaking, comments we received reflect a lack of trust in the City budget. According to our survey, 159 out of 185 respondents (~ 86%) either disagreed or somewhat disagreed that Salem has been a good steward of tax dollars, while 148 out of 185 respondents (80%) either disagreed or somewhat disagreed that Salem has been honest and transparent about its budget needs.

Members believe that, while the Revenue Task Force was charged solely with finding additional sources of revenue, not enough emphasis is being placed on finding efficiencies within the budget. Our suggestion is to convene a new task force with strong business representation to evaluate and scrutinize expenses. Our membership has expressed willingness to participate fully and thoroughly in such a process.

As indicated before, our organizations also offer our full weight and support in advocating for the Capital District Plan during the next legislative session. Such a plan would raise revenue from the State Government for services provided to its facilities. This was the only option proposed by the Revenue Task Force that gained a plurality of support in our member survey.

Our organizations strongly advise our partners at the City to not proceed forward with any revenue options, including a May 2025 property tax levy, until the city has completed a more rigorous examination of budget efficiencies. The City's own polling shows the majority of voters are also unlikely to support either levy currently being considered.

It is time to take a different approach, and we look forward to being partners in this process going forward. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us. Let's partner together on developing solutions that will work for all Salem residents and businesses.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tom Hoffert, CEO
Salem Area Chamber of Commerce
(503) 581-1466

Salem Chamber

Convener | Catalyst | Champion

Mike Erdmann, CEO
Homebuilders Association of Marion & Polk Counties
(503) 399-1500





Focus Group Summary

Pac/West Lobby Group conducted four focus groups with members of the Salem Area Chamber of Commerce between Sept. 30 and Oct. 8. Participants represented a cross section of business owners from multiple sectors of the local economy. The central objective of these focus groups was to gain a deeper perspective on how members feel about the approach of the City of Salem to advancing new sources of revenue for services, and to gain insight as to what drives those beliefs and convictions.

The results can help guide the Chamber in developing a plan of engagement with the City as it makes decisions on city services and the revenue to pay for those services.

There were a number of themes that reached a level of consensus among Chamber members regardless of the industry sector they represented.

City Falls Short on Transparency

Participants universally believed that the City has been less than forthcoming about the steps it has taken to ensure the current budget is as lean as possible. Without transparency on this issue, it erodes public confidence of whether the requested new revenue is justified.

One member pointed out that the Revenue Task Force conducted by the City did not allow task force members to look at expense options, but only at revenue options. The translation was that the City's mindset was that taxation was the only answer and projected an anti-growth perspective.

Rigor is Required in Identifying and Reducing Unnecessary Expenses

Members believe the City has not been dutiful in aggressively looking to reduce expenses without reducing services. Anecdotal evidence was offered about expensive fire truck accessories and other city equipment sitting idly when they could be sold and simply be rented when needed or contract such services altogether.

The homeless situation and the impacts it has on public safety and community livability of deep concern. Human services are the primary responsibility of the County not the City. There is a belief the City needs to do more to work collaboratively with the County on this issue to avoid duplication of expenses and develop and implement a comprehensive plan to restore City livability. The current City approach is more reactionary than proactive and needs to focus on achieving results.

City needs to Focus on Accountability

Focus group participants overwhelmingly believe the city needs to focus on accountability for the expenditure of dollars. What are the deliverables? What is the return on investment of those deliverables? Example: If fire officials refuse to respond to homeless campfires in the city and police refuse to intervene when windows are broken or human waste is left on doorsteps, then what value is there in having more police and fire personnel who simply refuse to act? Participants overwhelmingly cited a feeling that they do not feel safe downtown, especially in the evening hours. Throwing more money into the budget without accountability for clearly identified deliverables on solving this issue is a non-starter.

Citizens Lack Trust

The Focus group, participants believe there is a significant lack of trust in city government. Until that trust is restored, asking for more revenue is a non-starter. Trust begins by being more inclusive in the process with citizens, including the business leadership of the city. Participants believe that embracing input from and collaborating with the city's business leadership on scrutinizing 'wants from needs' in the city budget with a focus on accountability and deliverables is the key to restoring trust.

Recommended Action Steps

1. The City should convene a task force, with strong business representation, to evaluate and scrutinize expenses. To date, the City has focused efforts only on raising new revenue without the same rigor of citizen engagement in reducing expenses.
2. The City should vigorously advocate for the Capitol District Plan before the Legislature to compensate the City for public safety services provided the state for the Capitol footprint. Focus group, participants generally expressed a willingness to participate in active advocacy before the Legislature to advance that agenda.
3. The City should not advance any revenue proposal until such time as it has completed the budget evaluation from the recommended Task Force and until the results of the legislative effort are known.
4. If after the above steps are taken and a consensus arrived that additional revenue is still needed to meet essential public services, then the City will have a much stronger case to present to voters



Survey Results

Following a series of one-on-one interviews with Salem business leaders, Pac/West developed a 10-question survey to gather input about the Revenue Task Force recommendation and city budget shortfall. The survey garnered **119 submissions** from Salem Area Chamber of Commerce contacts and **67 submissions** from Homebuilders Association of Marion & Polk Counties contacts, though not every person who took the survey answered every question.

Key results are detailed below.

- When asked if Salem has been a good steward of tax dollars:
 - **114 out of 185 responses (61.6%) disagreed with that statement**
 - **45 (24.3%) somewhat disagreed**
 - **4 (2.2%) agreed**
 - **7 (3.8%) somewhat agreed**
 - **15 (8.1%) were unsure/neutral**

- When asked if Salem has been transparent and honest about its budget needs:
 - **94 out of 185 responses (51%) disagreed with that statement**
 - **54 (29.2%) somewhat disagreed**
 - **7 (3.7%) agreed**
 - **11 (5.9%) somewhat agreed**
 - **19 (10.2%) were unsure/neutral**

- When asked whether Salem has thoroughly scrutinized its budget, examined efficiencies, and verified any projected revenue shortfall:
 - **123 out of 185 respondents (66.5%) disagreed with that statement**
 - **31 (16.8%) somewhat disagreed**
 - **5 (2.7%) agreed**
 - **12 (6.5%) somewhat agreed**
 - **14 (7.5%) were unsure/neutral**

- Respondents were asked which of the eight options recommended by the Revenue Task Force they might be willing to support.
 - **86 out of 184 respondents (46%) selected Payment in Lieu of Taxes for State Government, including a majority of Chamber contacts (70 out of 117, or 59%)**
 - **60 (32%) stated they would not support any of the options.**

- **58 (31.5%) selected Intergovernmental Agreements & Entities and Tax Reform/Restructuring**

□ Respondents were then asked which of the eight revenue options they would not support under any circumstances.

- **162 out of 175 respondents (92.5%) selected Personal Income Tax, making it by far the least popular choice**
- **132 (75.4%) selected Business License Fees**
- **119 (68%) selected Local Option Property Tax**
- **101 (57%) selected Franchise Fee Increases**

□ When asked which of the eight options would have the greatest impact on their business:

- **81 out of 163 respondents (~ 50%) selected Personal Income Tax**
- **41 (25.1%) selected Business License Fees**
- **18 (11%) selected Local Option Property Tax**

□ Chamber and Homebuilders members were asked what the organizations' role should be advocating on behalf of the Salem Revenue issue.

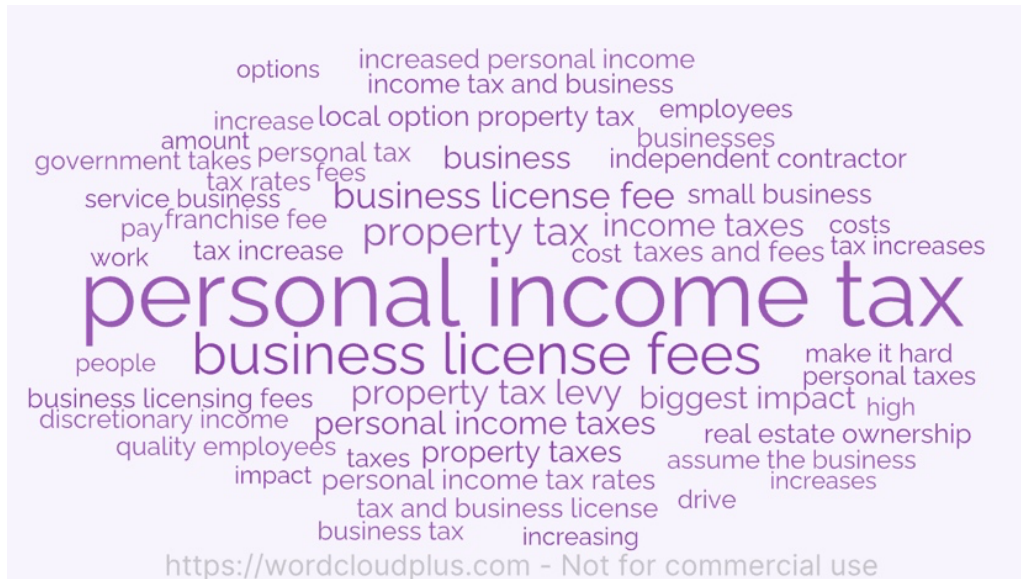
- **108 out of 183 respondents (59%) felt the organizations should advocate for ways to fund vital city services, while also looking for budget efficiencies**
- **54 (29.5%) stated they should oppose any new general fund revenue**
- **14 (7.7%) stated they should advocate for raising revenue to fund services while keeping up with inflation.**
- **7 (3.8%) answered "other.**

Pac/West also generated Word Clouds to correspond with three open answer survey questions. Those are included below:

1. In one or two sentences, share your overall opinion of Salem's budget shortfall.



2. Which of the proposed revenue options would have the biggest financial impact on your business, and why?



3. Is there another option for balancing the city's budget that hasn't been considered?



From: [Jim Scheppke](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Public Comment for the October 21st Work Session
Date: Friday, October 18, 2024 1:32:28 PM
Attachments: [a0e47c9d-3b65-ec7d-6e14-b03d4d3aa52f.png](#)
[614c9539-c8d1-5b7e-7abe-ccdf5861f2af.png](#)
[4b7a23f4-491b-1678-8ef4-c2439e445a03.png](#)
[52201696-0f43-d8a1-7e14-4d811cbcb4b2.png](#)

Dear Mayor and City Council:
Please accept this public comment for the October 21st Council work session.

Best,

Jim Scheppke
Ward 2

Salem-Keizer is Mostly a Library Desert and our Children Are Paying the Price

The Oregon Department of Education just released the latest 3rd grade reading scores from the last academic year and our school district's scores were the lowest of any district with more than 10,000 students. Only 24% of our 3rd graders tested "proficient" which was down 2% from the prior year.

Why are 3rd Grade reading scores important?

Many years of education research have shown that students who are not proficient readers in the 3rd grade are at high risk of failure in their schooling. A landmark study reported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that children who are not proficient readers in the 3rd grade are four times more likely not to graduate from high school. And Black and Latinx children who are not proficient readers in the 3rd grade are twice as likely as White children not to graduate.

There is a clear correlation between well-funded library services for preschool children and higher 3rd grade test scores. It is no coincidence that a city with the worst-funded major public library also has the worst 3rd grade reading scores.

Read on to learn more about how we are failing our children, most of whom are growing up without a library in their lives, like most of us can recall from our childhoods.

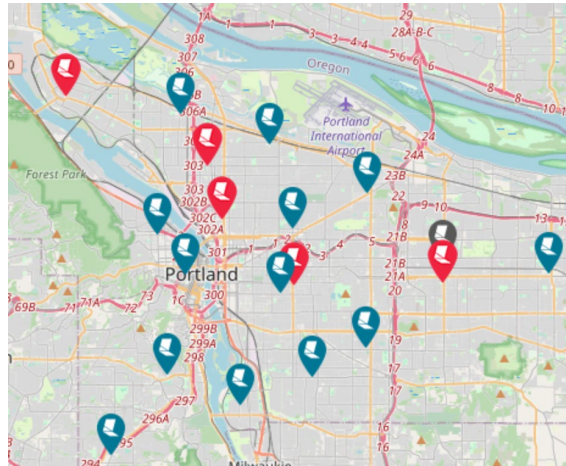
Here's How 3rd Grade Test Scores Correlate with Library Funding

Third graders in the Salem-Keizer School District had by far the lowest test scores among all districts with more than 10,000 students in 2023-24. Salem also had the lowest per capita public library funding by far (Keizer does not have a tax-supported public library which makes the situation even worse). The district with the highest test score had the highest per capita funding. Read on to see why this is more than just a correlation.

School District	3rd Graders Testing "Proficient" in 2024	Total Enrollment	Percent Free or Reduced Lunch	Per Capita Expenditures on Public Libraries, FY23
Portland	56%	44,393	96%	\$ 115
Beaverton	51%	38,975	39%	\$ 78
Bend-LaPine	51%	17,151	96%	\$ 71
Eugene	46%	16,291	43%	\$ 86
Tigard-Tualatin	45%	11,731	28%	\$ 122
North Clackamas	40%	16,293	26%	\$ 43
Medford	38%	13,796	96%	\$ 62
Hillsboro	37%	18,784	96%	\$ 74
Gresham-Barlow	30%	11,285	46%	\$ 115
Salem-Keizer	24%	38,720	96%	\$ 33

What May Explain Portland's High Test Scores

The Multnomah County Library in Portland, with the highest 3rd grade test scores, also has the highest per capita public library funding — an amount more than three times that of Salem's library. It is one of the best public libraries in the US with 15 branch libraries in Portland in addition to the Central Library downtown. There is a branch library within a few miles of every family in Portland and all are open seven days a week and some evenings. The Library places its highest priority on serving children, especially preschool children, with programs and parent training to promote early literacy. By the time they reach the 3rd grade most children in Portland will have benefitted from years of high quality early literacy resources and programs from their library.



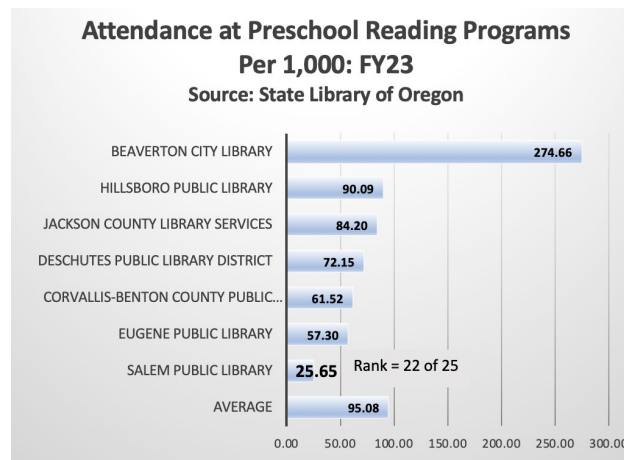
Compared to Portland, Salem is a Library Desert

Portland, with its 15 branches, is three and a half times the size of Salem. One might expect from that that Salem would have 4-5 branches. But no. Salem has only one branch in West Salem that is only open two afternoons (10 hours) per week. Except for families that are lucky enough to live a mile or two from our main library, Salem is a library desert. Here is a chart that shows the elementary schools with the lowest 3rd grade test scores and their distance from the main library. Except for a couple outliers (Highland and Richmond) most are miles away and a long bus ride from our main library. Also keep in mind that Portland's branches are all open seven days a week and in the evening. Our main library is only open five days a week and no evenings making it that much harder for working families to visit.

Elementary School	Percent of 3rd Graders Testing Proficient	Miles from the Salem Public Library	Minutes By Bus to Salem Public Library
Auburn	14%	4.1	33
Chavez	13%	5.4	47
Eyre	11%	5.1	40
Four Corners	7%	4.1	44
Highland	6%	2.0	25
Kennedy	10%	5.3	52
Lamb	8%	6.1	55
Miller	14%	5.0	48
Richmond	13%	1.8	28
Swegle	14%	4.2	32
Washington	14%	3.7	27
Weddle	11%	4.6	45
AVERAGE	11%	4.3	40

Lack of Branch Libraries is Not the Only Problem — an Understaffed Library Cannot Provide the Reading Programs Children Need

Libraries that are well-funded are able to offer a variety of reading programs for preschool children nearly every day the library is open and their staff can go to where the children are — preschools and childcare providers. In this chart you can see that our underfunded and understaffed library is not able to do this. The Beaverton City Library excels in outreach throughout their city which may explain their 3rd grade reading score that is more than twice that of Salem's. Only three libraries serving more than 30,000 had lower preschool program participation than Salem.



CONCLUSION

We believe that as long as Salem continues to have the worst funded major public library in the state, many thousands of our children will continue to grow up without a library in their lives. Many of you reading this have fond memories of the libraries in your life when you were growing up. You should reflect on how that experience made a difference in your education and your well-being. Then ask how we can deny the same experience to many thousands of Salem children who are at risk of becoming dropouts or worse? Go back and look at the test scores above and think about this. We believe it is our obligation to fund our public library adequately so that every child in every part of Salem can become a proficient reader.

Jim Schepke
jschepke@comcast.net
503-269-1559

From: [Lynne Marie](#)
To: [citycouncil](#); [Chris Hoy](#); [SALEM Manager](#)
Subject: City of Salem's Levy Survey
Date: Thursday, October 17, 2024 10:06:17 AM

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

The results of the City's levy survey are most striking in the fact that the responses are so evenly distributed. Please note that:

1. In the initial query (based on levy titles only), the percentages supporting a Public Service Levy and a Livability Levy are nearly identical.
2. When given the option of *reduced-cost levies*, support for both PSL and LL are nearly identical.
3. When asked to consider the levies independently, the results are within the margin of error, with a higher percentage of certainty among supporters of the Livability Levy.

In sum, the most credible conclusion from this survey is that respondents are evenly split when having to choose between these two levies, but they support a *reduced-cost levy for both*.

Therefore, I urge you to support:

- a single levy of 1.50 per 1000 assessed value, with
- 50% earmarked for Public Safety, *and*
- 50% earmarked for Livability.

Best Regards,
[Lynne M. Sullivan](#)
[Salem, Ward 1](#)

P.S. I must take issue with one of the Key Takeaways in the report. The writers state that:

When it comes to a community livability levy, voters prioritize keeping parks safe, clean, and green, and maintaining recreation services over maintaining and adding library services.

This statement draws an erroneous conclusion from the data. In effect, it stacks the useability of parks vs. availability of library services overall. Parks that are not maintained or safe are not useable at any time. However, libraries are identified as a core service for liveability in the survey *regardless* of their hours of operation. Therefore, the report forces a choice of parks (*yes or no*) vs. library services (*expand, decrease, or maintain available hours*).

From: [Rachael Atchison](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Priorities for city services
Date: Monday, October 21, 2024 12:59:16 PM

Members of the Council,

Thanks for meeting tonight and doing the hard work of budget development. I just wanted to add my voice to the choir in support of full library funding, and also to express my preference for prioritizing livability over policing. This city would be better off being proactive, with a robust library, beautiful public parks and community centers to meet people's needs, rather than reactive with an increased law enforcement presence. Libraries are also public safety!

Rachael Atchison
Ward 3

From: [Bob & Ruth](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Public Comment for the October 21st Council Work Session
Date: Wednesday, October 16, 2024 7:21:06 PM

We urge you to support a local option levy to fund libraries, parks and Center 50+ the so-called "livability levy."

Our Library Has the Worst Funding of Any Major Oregon Library

The latest data from the State Library of Oregon for 2022-23 shows the Salem Public Library dead last in per capita expenditures of all 25 public libraries serving populations over 30,000.

Our Library is Open Only Half of the Hours it Was Open Two Decades Ago

Today our main library is open only 38 hours a week and the West Salem Branch only 10 hours a week, a total of 48 hours per week.

Two decades ago, when our population was about 40,000 less than today, our libraries were open 96 hours per week.

And we also had a bookmobile making 27 stops a month throughout Salem.

Our Main Library is Open Many Fewer Hours Per Week Than at Our Peer Libraries and Even Less Than in Much Smaller Cities

The open hours at our main library do not even come close to those at our peer libraries.

And there are even 20 Oregon cities **with populations under 10,000** whose libraries are open more hours per week than our library.

Our Library is By Far the Most Understaffed Among Our Peer Libraries

With our substandard library funding it is no surprise that our library staffing is way below our peer libraries, and 23rd out of all 25 Oregon libraries serving more than 30,000 population.

Our Library is Much More Underfunded and Understaffed Than Our Police Department

The Salem Police Department's budget has nearly doubled since 2013 while the Library budget had been basically flat.

And the latest data from the FBI shows that Salem Police Department staffing (employee count, not including vacancies) is 80% of the average for peer cities.

Data from the State Library shows that the Library's employee count is not even half the average of its peers.

Our Children Are Not Learning to Read Because of Inadequate Library Services

It is no coincidence that 3rd graders living in cities with well-funded libraries score much better on the state reading test. These libraries are *prioritizing early literacy* with frequent library reading programs for preschool children and outreach to daycares and preschools. They have the staff to do this. Our library does not. The fact that only 24% of Salem-Keizer 3rd graders test "proficient" is an indicator of our failure to adequately fund our libraries.

There Are Better Ways to Better Fund Public Safety Than a Local Option Levy

The Salem Revenue Task Force recommended eight different options for increasing General Fund revenue in the City budget, in addition to reform of the Operations Fee which the Council is already planning to pursue. Many of these would make sense as a way to improve funding for public safety. Specifically, the Council should consider Payment in Lieu of Taxes

funding from the State, reform of the Operations Fee, and a Business License Tax before considering a local option levy for public safety.

111 Cities in Oregon Have Dedicated Funding From a Voter-Approved Levy or Taxing District. WHY NOT SALEM?

For many decades voters have said 'yes' to funding their public libraries with dedicated property tax funding from a levy or taxing district.

In 2024 that is true for 111 cities in Oregon. Why? Because Oregonians love their libraries. They want good libraries for themselves and their children.

Why would anyone think Salem is any different? Salem voters showed their love for our library in 2017 when 62% said 'yes' to an \$18 million bond measure to renovate our main library. It's time to ask them again for a modest tax increase so that we can once again have a full service library for Salem.

Ruth Schellbach
Robert Harmon

1720 Yew St SE, Salem, 97302

From: [Sadie Verville](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#); [Chris Hoy](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Jose Gonzalez](#); [Trevor Phillips](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Virginia Stapleton](#); [Julie Hoy](#); [Micki Varney](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [SALEM Manager](#)
Subject: Public Comment for 10/21/24 Meeting
Date: Thursday, October 17, 2024 5:11:36 PM

Dear Council,

I am writing in regards to the 10/21/24 work session for "Priorities for City Services and Preferences for Possible Future Funding." I ask that you prioritize funding sources for the Salem Public Library. Last spring demonstrated the love this city has for the library and its importance in our community. Funding this service is essential. I support the livability levy that was proposed, and I am confused as to who exactly was polled recently for this. I personally don't know a single person who received this alleged poll. I also want to express that I do NOT support the public safety levy. This does not prioritize the library at all and would be a much bigger expense for property owners in Salem. I would not vote for this option.

I encourage you to find revenue sources that do not disproportionately impact lower-income and even middle-income individuals and families in our city. The previously proposed payroll tax failed because of the huge burden it would have placed on anyone who wasn't wealthy. Get creative. Didn't the State Library offer to help create a separate library district? And tax the rich or something. You've got this!

Thanks,
Sadie Verville

From: [Victoria Timm](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Public Comment for the October 21st Council Work Session
Date: Wednesday, October 16, 2024 5:29:01 PM

Dear Council,

I am writing to urge you all to support our library by asking voters to vote on a so-called livability levy. Our library is in desperate need for more funding; to continue its existence with the threat of looming cuts allows unneeded stress to continue to weigh upon the people who run the library and the citizens of this great town. We can do better and we deserve better. For a town of our size, Salem has some of the worst funding for our libraries. And let us not forget the reduced hours that our libraries were forced to take last year- the West Salem branch is now only open a pitiful ten hours a week, on top of the reductions made to the main library. This is a great disservice to Salem. I hope you do your best to remedy it.

A concerned citizen,
Victoria Timm