

From: [Alyssa Cokinis](#)
To: [Paul Tigan](#); [Julie Hoy](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Micki Varney](#); [CityRecorder](#); [SALEM Manager](#)
Subject: Livability Levy - 2/10 Council
Date: Monday, February 10, 2025 9:57:28 AM

Hello City Council,

My name is Alyssa (Ward 1), and I'm a library worker testifying as a private citizen on my day off, so all thoughts expressed are my own. I cannot stress enough that **the community deserves its library, parks, and Center 50+**, and I'm sure by the countless testimonies you're receiving that you're seeing the same (and if you're not, then you're not reading). Though I wish we could instead bolster community services by reducing the bloated police budget, that doesn't seem to be the direction Council wants to take, even though a safer city does not mean a surveillance city. (Why do we need to have military-grade vehicles?) Anyway, if the levy is our only chance to save our city's beloved community services, then **please refer the Livability Levy at either the \$0.98 or \$1.09 amount to the May 2025 special election ballot**. Ideally, it could be a levy that is tiered and more accommodating to working class people if possible.

Libraries were a lifeline to myself as a child/teen being raised by a single mother, and they were where my friends and I could go after school to hang out in a safe space, use the computers and printers for classwork, and browse the manga collections that our school libraries didn't have and that we couldn't afford to go buy. They were also a lifeline to me as a younger adult when I was teaching students online and had no excess money to buy learning materials; Libby/Overdrive gave me the means to teach my students books like *Magic Treehouse* and *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, and *Who Is Stan Lee?*, among others. Today I'm happy to give back as a public employee to provide the same, if not better, services than I received throughout my whole life in libraries.

In addition, the City of Salem's employment retention rate is abysmal--will it really get better if these services need to be shuttered and you need to lay off copious amounts of workers? I believed when I took a job at the Salem Public Library that it was a job I could envision working at for a long time, maybe even retire at. The jobs in these departments are vital and require actual humans to do the work and to be paid to do it--volunteers alone cannot sustain a library of our size, our multiple parks, and Center 50+, though the volunteers we have are certainly much appreciated, as they're helping keep us afloat.

A livable city is not livable if it doesn't have a funded library, well-maintained parks, and a robust senior center. Shuttering these services will only make the community distrust you more as public officials because they will feel you're out of touch with what the community needs in a time of major uncertainty. Salem needs free and accessible third spaces for all ages.

The little girl you deny the library to? Who knows, maybe she'll run to take one of your council seats one day. But right now, **you are the policymakers. Please do something.**

Alyssa Cokinis
Ward 1

From: [Marie Mueller](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Liveability
Date: Sunday, February 9, 2025 2:30:08 PM

Count me in as being in favor of a bond levy to support:

1. The Salem Public Library
2. The Salem Public Parks
3. Center 50+ and its outlying branches

All three do wonderful things for people from birth to old age. I use the library (at least once a week, plus meetings of AAUW) and parks (several times a week) regularly, and I support Center 50+ and am there weekly.

And I will vote YES for the levy.

Eleanor Marie Mueller
6156 Rolletti Dr. SE
Salem, OR 97306

From: [Hannah Lee](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Comment for Public Record 2/10/25
Date: Monday, February 10, 2025 10:59:50 AM

Hello,

This is a comment for the public record for the February 10, 2025 city council meeting.

To the council:

My name is Hannah and I am a 26 year old living in West Salem. I am writing in my support of putting Levy Option 2 on the May ballot.

I spent the majority of my childhood here in Salem, and as a homeschooling family, the library was essential for our education and enrichment. The library provides free resources for homeschooling families that are unique and accessible, and my siblings and I would not have nearly as strong an education without it.

As someone who loves reading, research, and works in education, the library remains a staple in my adult life. I work in the library at a local high school, and the small space we have is a third place for our students—a space where they can come read, discuss books with others, do homework, or even just exist in between classes. We know the Salem Public Library is that third space for many as well, young folks with unsafe home environments, older folks who seek some community through book clubs and events, and many others. The library is, and should be, a safe space for all.

There are very few third places that exist that are free to the public, even fewer so with the free resources the library provides. Increasing hours to 53/week at the main branch and 25/week at the West Salem branch would provide opportunities for some of our most vulnerable populations to find community, resources, and encourage education in Salem.

I implore the city council to consider the benefits our community would reap in increased funding for the library, as well as for parks and creation and Center 50+. Thank you.

Regards,
Hannah Lee

--

Hannah Lee (she/her/hers)
B.A. Communication Arts '21
hmeilee.337@gmail.com | 503-550-6984 | [LinkedIn](#)

From: [Joseph Whitson](#)
To: [citycouncil](#)
Cc: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Public Comment for the February 10th Council Meeting regarding our Salem Livability Levy -
Date: Saturday, February 8, 2025 10:58:46 AM

Dear City Council Representatives:

I am writing to encourage you to pass the Livability Levy on May 20th. I feel strongly that our public library is an invaluable asset to our community that should not be compromised.

Thank you very much,
Joe Whitson, DO, MPH

8626 Royer Rd, S
Salem OR 97306

From: [KAREN R. HEUBERGER](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Written Public Comments for City Council
Date: Monday, February 10, 2025 7:26:40 AM

The following are my comments for the Salem City Council issues for February 10, 2025 meeting:

The city libraries are essential services, in my opinion. It is civic duty to have the libraries open and available for use. Currently, the two afternoons per week (Tuesday, Saturday) at the West Salem branch are a joke. The meeting room there has now become virtually unusable, due to the extremely limited hours. I recall learning that the West Salem library branch, as a donation from the Roth family, had a caveat that if the library was no longer operating, the property would revert to the Roth family. How stupid it would be for Salem to allow this to happen! The main branch library also has the Loucks Auditorium; which has become unusable for Sunday events due to the library closure on Sunday and Monday. And limited hours per open days. Taxpayers were recently urged to pass levies for building additional library branches. Yet current library branches---main and West Salem--- have extremely limited hours.

Please expand library hours at both branches; do not limit even more---or worse: close down branches.

I appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Thank you.

K. R. Heuberger

ejkroheub@comcast.net

From: [Keith Norris](#)
To: [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Micki Varney](#)
Cc: [CityRecorder](#); [Scott Archer](#)
Subject: Livability Levy Rate
Date: Saturday, February 8, 2025 10:30:10 PM
Attachments: [SPRAB Revenue-Levy Support 2025.01.14.pdf](#)

Dear Councilors --

I am attaching a letter that you've seen previously as a reminder of the Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board's support for the proposed Livability Levy. The Board views this levy as a critical part of an effort to ensure adequate funding for parks and recreation programs, alongside other essential city services that make Salem such a great place to be, and we are pleased to see you are considering it further on Monday.

I understand that Monday's discussion will likely focus on the particular rate for the levy proposal. SPRAB has not discussed nor taken any position on a particular rate.

Speaking for myself, I ask that you consider the following:

I suspect a large portion of the discussion will focus on the idea that we want -- need -- this measure to pass, and that the proposed \$0.98 rate seems like it is more passable by the voters simply because it is cheaper.

That may be true. But, I suspect that 11 cents in the rate is likely not to have too large of an impact on whether or not the levy is ultimately approved by the voters who submit their ballots in May. The revenue debate for the city has not focused on the margins of the funding levels that may be needed, but rather whether or not any additional revenues are needed at all.

By putting it on the ballot, we have to assume it will pass. And if it passes, we need to be certain that it will generate enough funding to fully cover the costs of existing services -- and really, to restore/enhance services across the libraries, parks, and Center 50+. That is what will show the voters the City has been responsive to their wishes expressed in this levy's passage.

I encourage you to consider what happens if we pass the levy at \$0.98 per \$1,000 and in 2-3 years our costs are outpacing the projections and we are once again in a place of having to cut services to remain within the available revenues. This will sit very poorly with the voters -- to be paying a particular levy and still be losing services. With the revenue and cost projections provided by staff for your meeting, I'm concerned about this potential.

Thus, I lean toward selecting a higher rate for the levy (whether that is \$1.00 or \$1.09 or something else). I view that as likely to have a limited negative impact on ultimate passage of the levy (albeit, with no data), while providing the greatest flexibility to ensure we are able to meet the need in the face of uncertain costs (and costs outside of the city's control), and can adapt our services to meet the mandate from the voters that ultimately will approve this levy -- ensuring a vibrant community with all of the essential parks, recreation, library and Center 50+ services.

Thank you for your service to the City in diligently considering and debating these tough, critical questions that will carry our community forward.

Sincerely,

Keith

--

Keith Norris He | Him | His

keith.norris.salem@gmail.com

217.855.6324

Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

(SPRAB)

January 14, 2025

Dear Mayor Hoy and City Councilors:

I write to express the Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board's **emphatic support for the City to pursue additional revenue streams, including a possible levy, to provide funds for parks and recreation programs, Center 50+ and the public library.** We strongly recommend you explore ways of generating new revenues in support of these community services.

The Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board provides recommendations and guidance to the City regarding our park and recreation lands, facilities and programs. Our eight volunteer board members, appointed by the City Council, receive input from the community to guide our recommendations aimed at enhancing Salem's >90 parks and the natural resources and recreation opportunities they provide across their 2,500 acres.

We know that the City has few options for correcting the short- and long-term financial projections caused by limitations in state law and constitutional amendments. We appreciate the Council's attention to this matter and the creative efforts implemented last year to help minimize cuts in the short-term. Unfortunately, these short-term methods will no longer be available or adequate to maintain the City's services.

Our board remains concerned about the projected budget shortfalls facing the City's general fund and the effect of budget cuts on parks and recreation programs. Potential cuts could drastically impact existing access to our parks system, reduce services and available infrastructure in our parks, and limit the availability of recreational programming. These cuts would have disproportionate impacts on families and youth, and degrade the overall value of the Salem community.

We urge action to ensure that Salem's parks and recreation programs, Center 50+, and the public library can be sustained and provide for our community. **A levy, like the proposed "Community Livability Levy" will help generate revenues that will enable the City to provide these essential services and opportunities for our community.** These services are a critical part of making our community more welcoming, livable, and enjoyable. We strongly urge you to consider this levy and move forward with plans to generate revenues that will support our community.

Sincerely,



Keith Norris

Chair, Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Member, 2024 Revenue Task Force

From: noreply@cityofsalem.net on behalf of thee.devastator@gmail.com
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Submission
Date: Monday, February 10, 2025 2:04:19 PM
Attachments: [Barton - Salem City Council Public Comment - Feb 10 2025.pdf](#)

Your Name	Paige Barton
Your Email	thee.devastator@gmail.com
Your Phone	971-330-0592
Street	4652 Cherrytree Ct SE
City	Salem
State	OR
Zip	97317
Message	<p>Dear Salem City Council, I'm Paige Barton, and I'm a resident of Ward 2. I'm writing today to offer public comment relating to Agenda Item 5d, Consideration of a Five-Year Operating Levy. I'm urging you to refer a local option levy to Salem voters at the rate of \$0.98 per \$1,000 of assessed value. I've lived in Salem since 2023. It brings me no joy to write in favor of raising costs on Salem residents like myself and my neighbors. My own family experiences some financial instability. I understand how difficult it can be to stomach higher expenses. I arrived at my position on the levy by considering the type of city I want to live in. Although I understand this situation has been compounding for many years, I find it deeply embarrassing that Salem is now in a position to restrict or close its libraries. My support is driven by the radical idea that Salem youth should have the same services that were available to me, and that resources are worth protecting. Growing up in Gladstone, I had three libraries within a five-mile distance from my home to choose from. The library is a place where anyone in our community can access reliable technology and information. As a union representative for AFSCME, I worked with library workers in Multnomah County and the City of Hillsboro. Both of these library systems are funded more robustly than ours. For better or worse, the library has an important role as a resource hub in our community. I've read on social media that a wealthy political action committee called "Marion+Polk First" is rallying public sentiment akin to "one dollar more is one dollar too much." Maybe these are people who have never relied on library services. Maybe they don't know what it's like to not have an internet connection at home, maybe they don't love to read, or maybe they've never found purchasing books cost-prohibitive. Maybe they want our parks to be more like Portland, with hypodermic needles discarded with other trash, painting and other maintenance has been deferred. Maybe they haven't experienced a beloved family member who is an isolated senior, desperate for community, activities, and purpose. These are what our libraries, parks maintenance, and Center 50+ provides to Salem. They're important services for vulnerable populations who stand to be harmed the most by an irrational refusal to lean into our community, to accept a small temporary hardship for the greater good. When I say small, I will share that I purchased my home for \$370,000, and the assessed value is \$172,000. Please don't let people</p>

convince you this is a greater fee than it is - look up your address on the Marion County Assessor's website to determine your own potential rate. For me, at \$0.98 per \$1,000, I will pay \$168.56 extra when the levy passes. With other bonds & levies sunsetting within the next five years, I'm optimistic that this will be an overall negligible increase to the vast majority of Salem, while protecting vital livability services. We are genuinely at a crossroads in our city, where revenue has to temporarily increase to avoid radical changes to city services. I hope this levy turns into an effort where we choose Salem, and that it enjoys broad support from many groups and residents. I support a payment in lieu of taxes from our state government to ease the structural deficit in our budget going forward. For the immediate future, it will require everyone in our community to also vote for the Salem they want to live in. I want to live in a city with libraries, with a senior community center, and with well-maintained parks. Please allow voters to weigh in on this issue. To increase the likelihood that my neighbors will join me and choose Salem's community services for the next five years, I urge you to refer only \$0.98 per \$1,000 of assessed value. With the economic uncertainty we're experiencing in our communities, \$0.98 is easier for Salem voters to calculate and rally behind. Thank you for reading my statement. Sincerely, Paige Barton 4652 Cherrytree Ct SE Salem, OR 97317

This email was generated by the dynamic web forms contact us form on 2/10/2025.

Dear Salem City Council,

I'm Paige Barton, and I'm a resident of Ward 2. I'm writing today to offer public comment relating to Agenda Item 5d, Consideration of a Five-Year Operating Levy. I'm urging you to refer a local option levy to Salem voters at the rate of \$0.98 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

I've lived in Salem since 2023. It brings me no joy to write in favor of raising costs on Salem residents like myself and my neighbors. My own family experiences some financial instability. I understand how difficult it can be to stomach higher expenses.

I arrived at my position on the levy by considering the type of city I want to live in. Although I understand this situation has been compounding for many years, I find it deeply embarrassing that Salem is now in a position to restrict or close its libraries. My support is driven by the radical idea that Salem youth should have the same services that were available to me, and that resources are worth protecting.

Growing up in Gladstone, I had three libraries within a five-mile distance from my home to choose from. The library is a place where anyone in our community can access reliable technology and information.

As a union representative for AFSCME, I worked with library workers in Multnomah County and the City of Hillsboro. Both of these library systems are funded more robustly than ours. For better or worse, the library has an important role as a resource hub in our community.

I've read on social media that a wealthy political action committee called "Marion+Polk First" is rallying public sentiment akin to "one dollar more is one dollar too much." Maybe these are people who have never relied on library services. Maybe they don't know what it's like to not have an internet connection at home, maybe they don't love to read, or maybe they've never found purchasing books cost-prohibitive.

Maybe they want our parks to be more like Portland, with hypodermic needles discarded with other trash, painting and other maintenance has been deferred.

Maybe they haven't experienced a beloved family member who is an isolated senior, desperate for community, activities, and purpose.

These are what our libraries, parks maintenance, and Center 50+ provides to Salem. They're important services for vulnerable populations who stand to be harmed

the most by an irrational refusal to lean into our community, to accept a small temporary hardship for the greater good.

When I say small, I will share that I purchased my home for \$370,000, and the assessed value is \$172,000. **Please don't let people convince you this is a greater fee than it is - look up your address on the Marion County Assessor's website to determine your own potential rate.** For me, at \$0.98 per \$1,000, I will pay \$168.56 extra when the levy passes.

With other bonds & levies sunsetting within the next five years, I'm optimistic that this will be an overall negligible increase to the vast majority of Salem, while protecting vital livability services.

We are genuinely at a crossroads in our city, where revenue has to temporarily increase to avoid radical changes to city services. I hope this levy turns into an effort where we choose Salem, and that it enjoys broad support from many groups and residents.

I support a payment in lieu of taxes from our state government to ease the structural deficit in our budget going forward. For the immediate future, it will require everyone in our community to also vote for the Salem they want to live in. I want to live in a city with libraries, with a senior community center, and with well-maintained parks. Please allow voters to weigh in on this issue.

To increase the likelihood that my neighbors will join me and choose Salem's community services for the next five years, I urge you to refer only \$0.98 per \$1,000 of assessed value. With the economic uncertainty we're experiencing in our communities, \$0.98 is easier for Salem voters to calculate and rally behind.

Thank you for reading my statement.

Sincerely,



Paige Barton
4652 Cherrytree Ct SE
Salem, OR 97317

From: [Paul Meuse](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: support for levy
Date: Monday, February 10, 2025 11:24:50 AM

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to voice my support for the proposed levy to support the library. I think the levy is a good idea and a necessary one. I have lived in Salem for over 10 years and have visited the library often during that time. I raised my 8 year-old son on books I've checked out from the library and continue to utilize the book and dvd resources there for myself week to week. My son and I have been enriched by the resources the Salem Public Library has to offer and I expect and hope the same amount of resources (if not more) will be provided for us as residents of Salem. I offer my full support to the proposed levy.

Best,
Paul Meuse

From: [Peter Stafford](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [Joan Stafford](#)
Subject: Five Year Local Option Levy--we support
Date: Sunday, February 9, 2025 4:34:54 PM

Good evening, Councilors:

My wife and I reside in West Salem, and we both use the library and senior center on occasion.

We are in favor of the City putting on the May ballot a five year local option levy at either the \$1.09/\$1K assessed value or \$0.98/\$1 assessed value.

Although we can afford to pay the \$1.09/\$1K rate, I suggest that the board instead proposed the \$0.98/\$1K levy on the May ballot, for the reason that keeping the levy rate under \$1.00 per \$1,000 assessed value makes it psychologically more palatable to voters, even if the difference between the two levy rates is relatively insignificant in terms of overall total dollar difference.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Peter and Joan Stafford

From: [Randall Wimmer](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Live Within Your Means Bond Measure
Date: Sunday, February 9, 2025 8:02:26 AM

Perhaps the only thing halfway humorous about the proposed bond measure is how it's referred to as the "Livability bond measure". The real implication to tax payers rings of an oxymoron.

A \$240 - \$260 per month bump to a family budget is equivalent to a weeks worth of groceries in many cases.

We should be voting on a "Live Within Your Means Bond" that includes a program with a compressed work week to reduce the number of days employees work until financial conditions improve. Combine that with a realistic bond measure asking that most of us can afford.

But special interest groups were loud and couldn't be told "no".

Since city councilors were only given three options, I can't support voting for either of the two bond options if they are put on the ballot.

Randall Wimmer
1940 Popcorn Street NW
Salem, OR 97304

Sent from my iPad

From: [Stephen Brownfield](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [Hibler Claire](#)
Subject: Support of park, library, center 50+ resolution
Date: Monday, February 10, 2025 3:05:37 PM

I would like to document my support for the City of Salem resolution to refer a five year local option levy to voters on May 20 at the levy rate of \$1.09 per \$1000 of assessed value.

My interest is primarily intended to support park facilities located within the City of Salem but I also support continued financing of litter pickup and cleanup of homeless camps, support of Salem library facilities and support of Center 50+.

The availability and maintenance of restrooms as well as other maintenance within our city parks is critical to my continued use and enjoyment of our fine park facilities.

Please consider my support when referring this resolution to voters.

Stephen Brownfield
Faye Wright Neighborhood

From: [Sam Powell](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Public Comment for the February 10th Council Meeting
Date: Monday, February 10, 2025 9:18:34 AM

Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for being supportive of the Livability Levy concept at the January 21st work session. It really means a lot to me personally as well as many other Salem City residents. These public programs do so much for the community and do great work to bring us all together in a time when so many things are working towards driving us apart.

In regards to how much to ask for for the levy, it's incredibly important to secure all the needed funding at \$1.10/1,000 which when applied to the median home value breaks down to about \$257 a year or only \$21 a month. That price is only a couple dollars more than a basic netflix subscription without ads. Considering the value attached to these programs, it is a worthwhile price.

-Sam Powell

From: [Vanessa Ellison](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Property tax increase
Date: Saturday, February 8, 2025 10:28:23 AM

I am urging you to not implement another tax increase on home owners. We can hardly afford living as it is. If you keep increasing our taxes how will we survive at retirement? As of now in my small 2 bedroom house I pay almost \$250 a month JUST for my property taxes. And that is a small amount compared to many others.

Stop giving tax breaks to every new development.

I also do not agree with your lackluster committee that was put together to review where money can be saved.

If the drug camps are taking all our money then use the money the state collects from us for that. Or ask them for more. I am not paying more for parks we cannot safely use. We are asked for more and more money with no transparency of where all the millions from lottery, medical marijuana or any other source are going. I'm done. And will never vote again for a civil servant or lawmaker who proposes more costs for the tax payers.

Work with what you have like we all are. I have had up to a 40% increase on EVERY SINGLE bill and every item I buy. I can not afford more.

Work for us not against us.

Thank you,
A single mom barely surviving.

From: [William Wherity](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Comment on Levy.
Date: Monday, February 10, 2025 1:52:44 PM

In the future it would be much more sustainable to find other ways to fund vital services such as parks, libraries, and community centers. One way would be to have corporations pay their fair share by limiting tax abatements. And we all hope the State of Oregon will soon pay its way for the services it uses, so that Salem can continue to be a livable city.

However, we have to act now, and our choices are to put a levy on the ballot for the May election, or not. I ask the council to choose the levy, but I also ask them to be aware that this is only the beginning of this battle. It will be critical for all the council members to be leaders in the campaign for a yes vote.

I fear that we are in very dark times in this country. Tech brologarchs and billionaires are transferring the nation's wealth to themselves, and are in the process of privatizing everything. Our commons and our public services are under threat, and we need to fight like hell to keep them.

William Wherity
Ward 3