



CITY OF SALEM
Written Testimony
City Council

555 Liberty St SE
Salem, OR 97301

Tuesday, January 16, 2018

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

City Council Work Session - Council Policy

2.a. [18-8](#) City Council 2018 Policy Agenda.

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Recommendation: City Council direction for 2018 City Council Policy Agenda.

Attachments: [2017 Strategic Plan in Brief](#)

[City Council Policy Agenda, Budget Development and Operations](#)

[Sustainable Services: Core services and desired level of service through Priority Based](#)

[Vision for Growth and Development: Updated approach](#)

[Environmental Action: Greenhouse gas inventory](#)

[Affordable Housing, Homelessness and Social Services: Sobering center](#)

[Economic Development and Downtown: High speed internet downtown, market feasi](#)

[Written Testimony - Kaltwasser](#)

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To: Mayor Bennett and Salem City Council
From: Susann Kaltwasser
RE: City Council 2018 Policy Agenda

Comments on Strategic Goals and Plan for Action

While I am supportive of all the work being done on the effort by the City to develop Strategic Goals and to look at ways to implement them, I have a couple of comments.

Implementing Salem's Strategic Plan: City Council Policy Agenda, Budget Development and Operations

- I hope that the "How does the City achieve its strategic priorities ensure success" will include both input from the staff doing the actual work and supervisors, because research shows that people will resist doing things that they do not think work. They have to feel it is worthwhile to change their current actions. If they feel this is a 'top down' order, they will resist change... sometimes in very subtle ways.
- The methods need to be measurable in real terms. Not to include measurements in actual data will make it hard to judge over time whether you are making progress or just writing up reports that look good. I see a lot of that happening now. I would love to give examples in private if anyone wishes.
- Example: if the city decides to reduce the amount of water they use for all city operations, they could take measurements and then set a goal of perhaps reducing that by 5%. That can be measured. On the other hand, the goal is more citizen participation in neighborhood associations and all you measure is attendance and mailing lists, you may not know the work that is done via e-mail, social media or one-on-one interactions.

A Vision for Growth and Development Proposed Action:

This of course is long overdue, but the blueprint that is provided is so vague it looks like almost anything can happen. Also, it is too staff driven in terms of what THEY see as the needs. I would urge that you begin with a community dialog, going to neighborhood associations, and local groups to find out what they would like to see happen BEFORE developing an approach. From past experience the Comprehensive Plan process got scuttled, because too much work was done BEFORE asking the public for input. We do not need to do what we did with "Salem Futures" (the last attempt at a Comprehensive Plan review) and waste a million dollars and years of work to have to be tossed as it came to the public review steps.

Community Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Proposed Action

- While I think this is a good idea, it should not take a lot of effort. Companies that emit GHG or other pollutants are already required to get permits from the Oregon DEQ. These include emission data on a regular schedule. Someone just needs to go to the website for DEQ and look at the data. Knowing, of course, that you can't ask for data that is new or different than what the State requires, this should not take a long time.
- We already know that the incinerator at Brooks produces the highest amount of GHG (CO2) of any industry in the State and thus the area. It should be included because Salem is the

main contributor of garbage that is burned at the incinerator. It is in fact OUR GHG because we make it and deliver it to the polluter.

- The City cannot wait for the whole GHG Emissions Survey to be completed in order to make a difference with the incinerator. We already know that they produce as much CO2 as if they were burning coal. The data is already there for us to see and waiting a year won't change it. But waiting a year means that a new 20-year contract may already be signed meaning that Salem can't impact the situation.
- As you recall during the discussion of the garbage rate hike last fall you discussed with Commissioner Carlson the need for a work-session soon on the matter of the incinerator. You should not wait too long because that contract can be signed at any time. Commissioner Carlson is leaving her position soon and this is a favor project of hers. I do know that negotiations on the contract with Covanta are already underway, even though the current contract is not due to expire until next year. They often renew contracts early.
- Salem can use their influence to ask for a 5-year extension of the current contract that County has with Covanta. This would give time for Salem to have time to explore options and actually work on GHG emissions from the largest source.
- Did you know that the GHG emissions from the incinerator are equal to the amount from half of all the cars in Salem? To look at other sources is good, but to ignore this one source would mean you are ignoring the biggest source...beyond cars.
- I hope that the Council will direct staff to come back right away with some information on this topic and not wait for the full survey and to look into a work session with Marion County as soon as possible.

Affordable Housing, Homelessness, and Social Services: Salem Sobering Center

- Clearly Salem needs a Sobering Center, however, it looks like a very expensive project. I see that Salem Health will be a contributor to the costs. Are they shifting costs to other agencies or the City/County? Unless we can leverage federal funds, this looks like a big drain on our limited resources. "Salem Hospital estimated Medicaid (primarily the Coordinated Care Organization) spent \$3.9M on alcohol and substance abuse related services in their emergency department." Will this Center be able to access such funds?
- I saw where Corvallis, and I assume other cities, look to Salem resources for alcohol detox beds. How will the City/County deal with out of area patients? Will we be a dumping ground for when these patients are released?
- A lot of people are beginning to distract Mid Willamette Valley Community Action Agencies ability to deal with issues relating to homeless population. Is this a good partner?

Homelessness:

- Housing First is a good policy, but how will it be implemented? People are looking for leadership beyond just a Sobering Center.
- There needs to be more action items on this issue right away to show the public that the Council understands and is working the issues.
- Warming Centers need to be more under the control of the City and not an agency that is not as responsive as the community would like. There needs to be better coordination and revisit the criteria for when shelters are opened.

Affordable Housing:

I saw nothing that addressed this issue and yet it is the most talked about local issue on social media. People are suffering and getting angry with the City for allowing more high cost apartments to be built while what is needed is low-income apartments.

I met a family recently with 3 children living in a 2-bedroom apartment where the rent was \$1,000 a month and going up by 10% in February. The apartment had no amenities and was in disrepair. They were glad to be able to afford even that kind of housing, but were worried because the crime and violence in the apartment complex was increasing. They fear for their children who cannot be safe outside. It is no way to be raising children. They would like to move, but there is no housing available at that price that is any better in Salem.

The market is not yet addressing this situation and the public is looking for action by the City.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Susann Kaltwasser,
Salem Ward 8