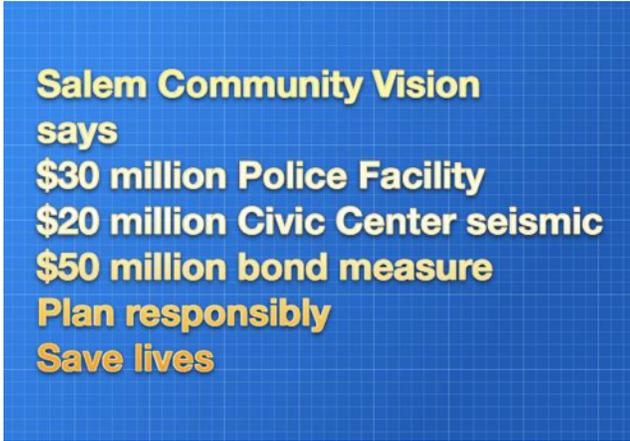


# SALEM'S NEW POLICE FACILITY: THE BEST WAY TO ACHIEVE IT

February 8, 2016

A Salem Community Vision Position Paper



**Salem Community Vision  
says  
\$30 million Police Facility  
\$20 million Civic Center seismic  
\$50 million bond measure  
Plan responsibly  
Save lives**

Salem needs a new police facility. There's no argument about that. Currently the Police Department is housed in cramped quarters on the ground floor of City Hall, a structure at high risk of collapsing when (not if) the Big One earthquake hits.

Members of the Salem Community Vision steering committee — which includes an experienced architect and a design/build specialist — have closely followed the City of Salem's efforts to plan a replacement police facility.

After five years, these efforts are nearing an end. Soon the City Council is expected to choose between one of two locations for a new police facility. Cost estimates for each site are being prepared. A November 2016 bond election is anticipated, where voters will be asked to approve money for construction.

We hope a police facility bond will be approved.

But we are concerned that it won't be, given the current plan for an overly expensive supersized police facility of 148,000 square feet, and a move away from essential seismic retrofitting of City Hall and the Library to save lives when the next major earthquake strikes the Northwest.

This is serious business. But not so serious as to stop us from including some wisdom from the Rolling Stones.

**“You can't always get what you want. But if you try sometime, you find you get what you need.”**

– The Rolling Stones lyrics

Wants versus needs — this distinction lies at the core of competing visions for a new police facility. The desire for a spare-no-cost design is understandable, given the justified high regard for our well-managed Police Department. However, as another saying goes, *best is the enemy of the good*.

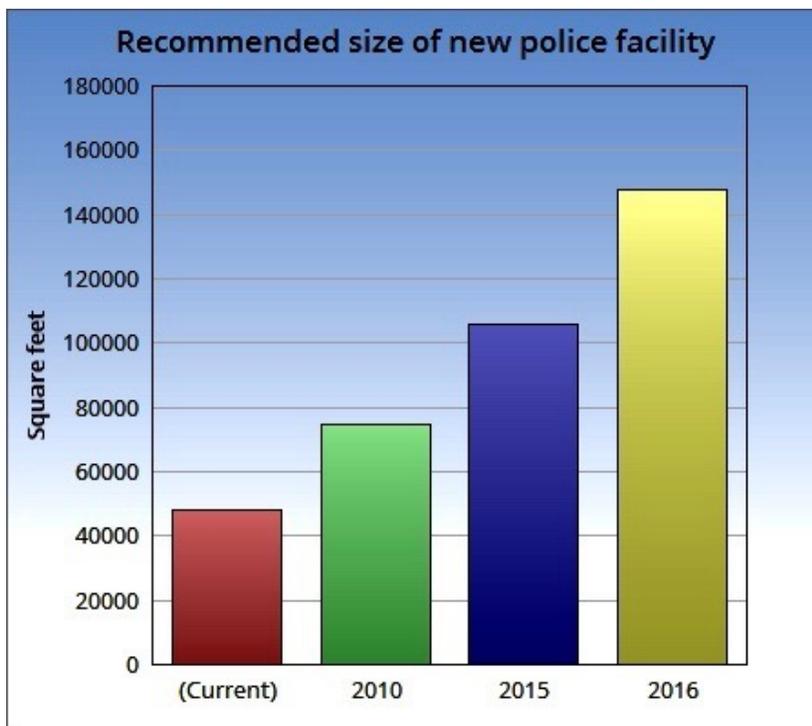
In this paper Salem Community Vision lays out our reasons for preferring a smaller, less expensive police facility that allows for meeting an equally important need: earthquake-proofing City Hall and the Library. Summed up in one sentence, we believe:

**Salem voters should be asked to approve a \$50 million bond measure that includes full funding for a \$30 million police facility at Commercial and Division streets, along with \$20 million for seismic upgrades and other renovations at the Civic Center.**

Because most of Salem’s citizens aren’t very familiar with this issue, we will use a Q & A format aimed at providing key information about past and present police facility planning.

Those who wish to dive deeper into the pool of information are encouraged to visit [www.salemcommunityvision.com](http://www.salemcommunityvision.com) (note the “Other Voices” page that has links to many newspaper stories and blog posts) and the City of Salem’s [Police Facility page](#).

## **(1) WHAT LED TO THE CURRENT 148,000 SQUARE FOOT POLICE FACILITY PROPOSAL?**



As shown in the figure above, planning by the City of Salem for a new police facility has gone through three distinct phases, with the proposed size of the facility steadily increasing.

**First Phase.** In 2010, a 75,000 square foot facility was recommended to replace the current 48,000 square feet occupied by the Police Department (that area includes the Willamette Valley Communications Center, a regional 911 center). This recommendation was made by architecture students from the University of Oregon, who worked with staff from the City of Salem and two consulting firms, Portland's Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Architects and Salem-based CB Two Architects.

A December 2010 Statesman Journal story said, "The police facility is in what would be considered the basement of the civic center — an unsafe place if there was an earthquake, an event where police officers will be needed in the community."

By October 2013, follow-up work on the student project resulted in a \$70 million proposal for (1) a three story, 75,000 square foot police facility on the Civic Center campus, (2) seismic upgrades to City Hall, and (3) other renovations to the Civic Center. Here's a quote from a Statesman Journal story about the need for seismic upgrades to City Hall.

"The way it is, right now, city employees wouldn't even be able to get out of the building alive, much less use the building," Salem City Manager Linda Norris said.

— October 18, 2013 Statesman Journal story

This proposal encountered strong resistance from Salem citizens. People didn't like the idea of constructing a building next to, and even over, Mirror Pond. They asked why seismic upgrades to the Library weren't part of the plan. Underground parking necessitated by the small size of the Civic Center site added millions to the cost.

**Second Phase.** After City officials failed to sell the \$70 million Civic Center plan to Salem citizens through a public outreach effort, Mayor Anna Peterson decided to shift course and form a Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Police Facility to get things back on track. An October 2014 Statesman Journal story said:

"Salem Mayor Anna Peterson has formed a blue-ribbon task force to review options for the Vern Miller Civic Center, a 41-year-old complex of city offices and a police station that need seismic improvements.

To date, talk of spending millions of dollars to make the civic center safer and build a 75,000-square-foot police station has produced a lukewarm response, at best, from Salem residents. Critics assert that the city settled on one plan for the civic center and excluded the public from the decision-making process— allegations the mayor strongly denies."

After ten meetings, in a May 2015 final report the task force said that a new police facility shouldn't be located on Civic Center property, and should be in the range of 75,000 to 106,000 square feet. Seismic upgrades to the Civic Center should be deferred, being viewed as a lower priority than construction of a new police facility.

The 75 to 106 thousand square foot size range is a "best practices" estimate provided to the Task Force by design and operations experts. We generally agreed that this is the size of building that Salem should be considering given the scope of our operations, program needs, and size of staff.

— From final recommendations of Blue Ribbon Task Force, written by T.J. Sullivan, Chair

The task force advised that the City of Salem hire an architectural firm to design a police facility and help determine the best site for it.

**Third Phase.** After issuing a RFP (request for proposals), in September 2015 the City of Salem signed a \$142,000 contract with DLR Group Architecture and Planning. A cover letter from Jake Davis, DLR Group Principal, was part of their application. It included this statement:

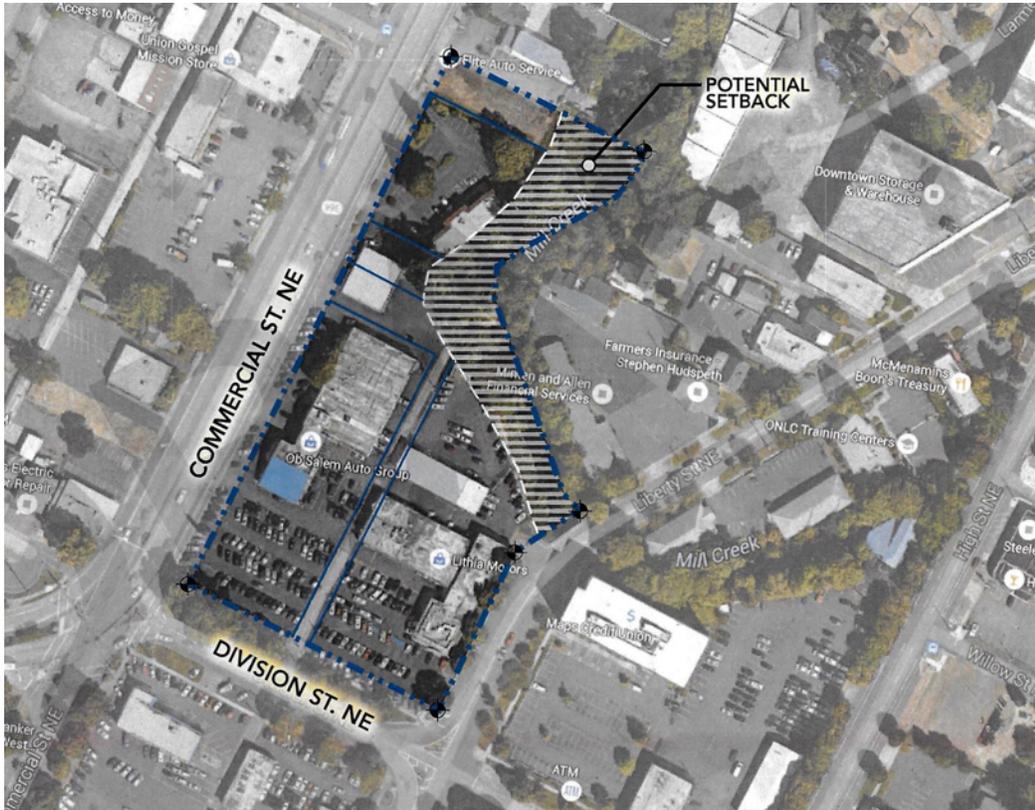
“In December of 2014, at your invitation, Justin Stranzl and I told the Police Facility Task Force that we believe a modern police facility for a large department like Salem's should expect to be closer to 90,000 square feet than the 75,000-square-foot floor.”

However, after conducting a space needs analysis in conjunction with City staff, DLR Group recommended to a City Council subcommittee that a new police facility should total 148,000 square feet, which includes a considerably larger Willamette Valley Communications Center (911 center).

Thirty potential sites for a Salem police facility were evaluated, with eight meriting a closer look. These sites were narrowed down to four, and then to two: a 4.3 acre site north of downtown at Division and Commercial that used to be occupied by O'Brien auto dealerships, and a 2.3 acre block just south of the Civic Center that currently is occupied by numerous homes and businesses.

For each site, the DLR Group is in the process of developing cost estimates for a 148,000 square foot police facility and associated parking. These estimates are expected to be discussed at a February 22, 2016 City Council work session.

On the next page are summary descriptions of the sites that were prepared by the DLR Group.



# SITE 13

**DIVISION & COMMERCIAL (O'BRIEN)**  
**ADDRESS:**  
 742 COMMERCIAL ST.

**186,437 SF (4.27 ACRES)**  
**NUMBER OF PARCELS: 6**  
**ZONING DESIGNATION: CB**  
**DISTANCE FROM CITY HALL: .75 MILES**

- PROS:**
- + CENTRAL LOCATION
  - + COMMUNITY VISIBILITY
  - + LARGE SITE
  - + NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY
  - + EASE OF ACQUISITION
  - + PUBLIC ACCESS
  - + REDEVELOPMENT CATALYST
  - + URBAN RENEWAL POTENTIAL

- CONS:**
- MULTIPLE PARCELS
  - POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL RISK



# SITE 2

**COMMERCIAL & LESLIE**  
**ADDRESS:**  
 315 MISSION ST.

**100,109 SF (2.3 ACRES)**  
**+ STREET**  
**NUMBER OF PARCELS: 16**  
**ZONING DESIGNATION: CR**  
**DISTANCE FROM CITY HALL: .05 MILES**

- PROS:**
- + CENTRAL LOCATION
  - + SERVICE TO CITY
  - + COMMUNITY VISIBILITY
  - + PUBLIC ACCESS

- CONS:**
- HIGH DEVELOPMENT COST
  - SMALL SITE
  - MULTIPLE PARCELS
  - NO URBAN RENEWAL POTENTIAL

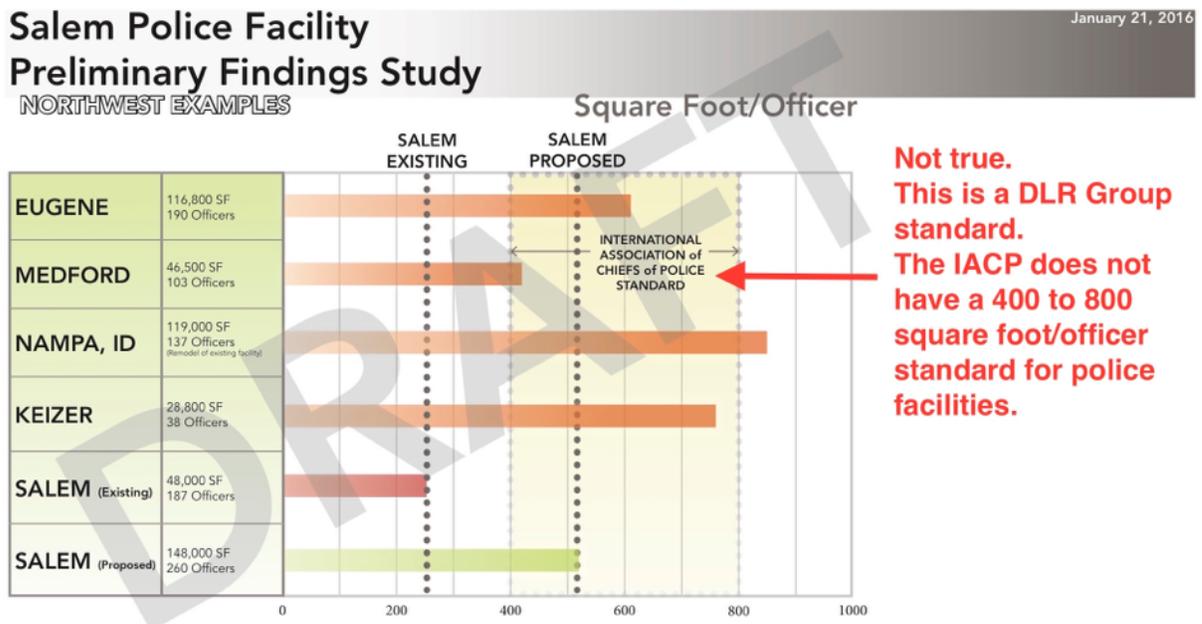
## (2) HOW IS IT THAT EXPERT CONSULTANTS HAVE COME UP WITH PLANS FOR A NEW SALEM POLICE FACILITY THAT RANGE FROM 75,000 TO 148,000 SQUARE FEET?

Simple answer: expert opinion differs. There is no objective “right” or “wrong” answer to the question, *How large should a new Salem police facility be?* There are only subjective judgements based on facts and values.

In 2013 and 2014, Salem’s Mayor, Police Chief, and other city officials argued in public meetings that a 75,000 square foot facility was right for this town. This figure came from expert consultants.

In 2015 the Mayor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Police Facility concluded that a 75,000 to 106,000 square foot facility was right for this town. This figure also came from expert consultants.

In 2016 a City Council subcommittee decided that a 148,000 square foot facility was right for this town. This figure came from expert consultants as well. So it doesn’t make sense to assume that the present preferred figure — 148,000 sq. ft. — is the correct number.



We need to point out that DLR Group, the current police facility planning consultants, incorrectly claimed in the figure above that an International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) standard supported their recommendation for a 148,000 square foot facility

## There are no absolute standards for offices, workstations, locker sizes, etc.

— International Association of Chiefs of Police “Police Facility Planning Guidelines” document

Noting that the IACP “Police Facility Planning Guidelines” document contains no mention of a 400 to 800 square foot/officer standard, we asked City staff where this came from.

The answer: from the DLR Group, based on their experience in implementing other guidelines from the IACP. So 400 to 800 square foot/officer is their own standard, not an accepted “industry” standard.

Further, this figure misrepresents the square foot/officer comparison with police facilities in Eugene and other places. The number of officers for the other cities reflects their *current* staffing, while the number of officers for a new Salem police facility at the bottom of the figure reflects the *projected* staffing in 2045.

A much more accurate “apples to apples” comparison between the cities is to use the current number of 187 Salem police officers, since this is close to the staffing level at the time a new 148,000 facility would be built, were funding for one to be approved by voters. This results in 791 square feet per officer, not 569 as shown in the slide — which would put Salem at the very upper end of a 400 to 800 square foot/officer standard (if such existed in the police facility planning literature).

The size of a new Salem police facility is a choice, not a given. It’s much like a family going to a homebuilder and saying, “Our house is too small. We need a larger one.” There is no single right answer to how big a house for a couple with two children should be.

It depends. Notably, on how much money the family can afford to spend on a new house. Yet to date the latest round of planning for a new Salem police facility has involved little consideration of how much it would cost.

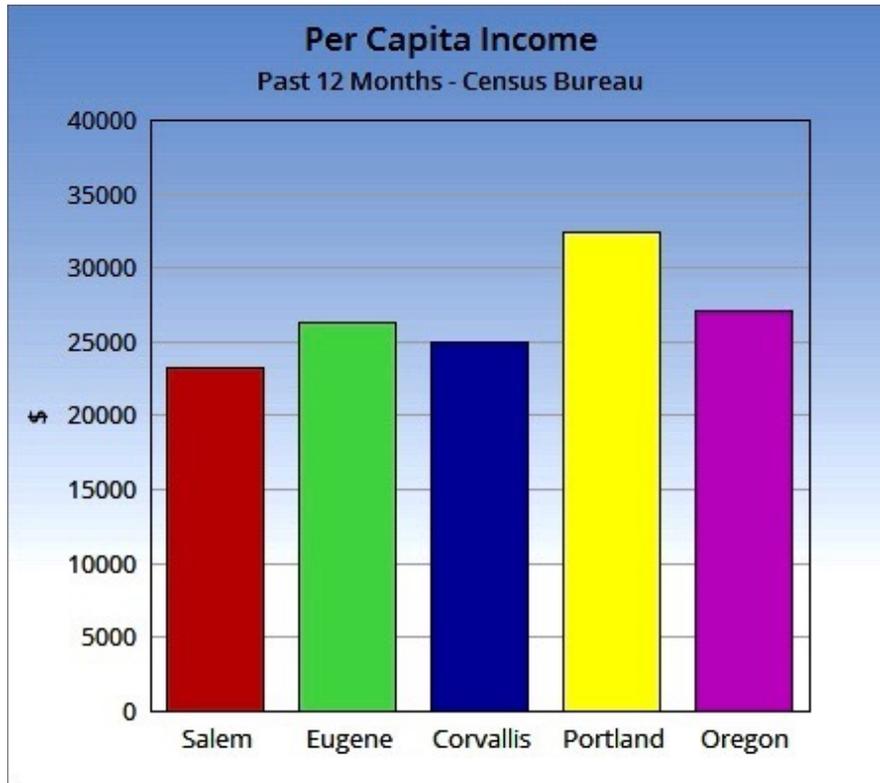
Development costs were part of the DLR Group criteria for site selection. However, to our knowledge construction costs did not enter into the decision to recommend a 148,000 square foot facility.

This would be curious in the case of a family interested in constructing a new home. One of the first things a builder would ask is, “What is your budget?” To answer this question, the family obviously would have to consider how much money they have, and how building a new house would affect their ability to meet other family needs.

Which leads to another question.

### (3) HOW MUCH CAN SALEM CITIZENS AFFORD TO SPEND ON A NEW POLICE FACILITY?

We'll tackle this tough issue by looking at it from several different angles. Naturally Salem Community Vision can only offer up our own opinion. But we'll support our \$30 million answer with some good reasons.



As background, Salem is not as well-to-do as other Willamette Valley cities and Oregon as a whole.

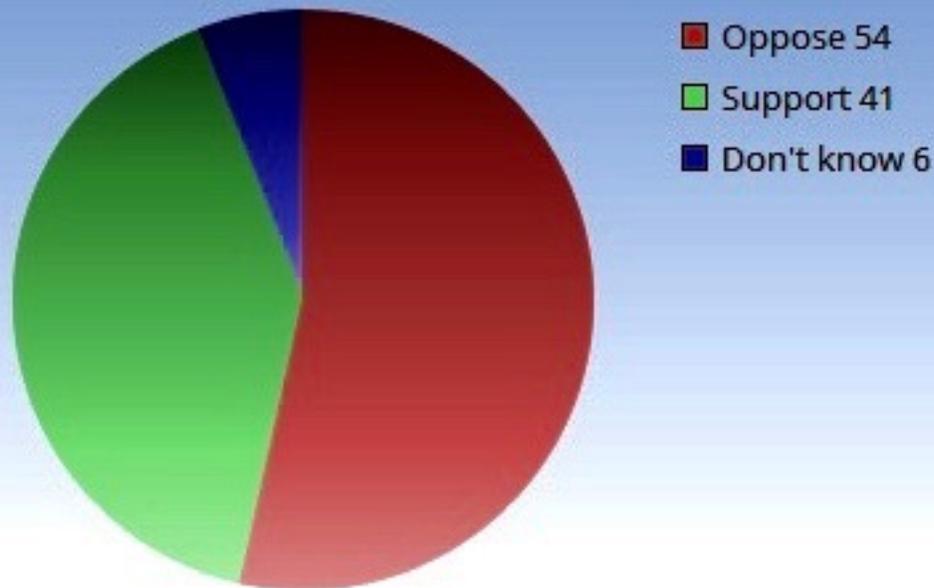
Salem residents have an annual per capita income of \$23,201 that is 12% less than Eugene's, 7% less than Corvallis', 15% less than Oregon as a whole, and a whopping 28% less than Portland's.

It is well known that while job creation has recovered since the 2008 recession, wage increases have been minimal. And most of those new jobs have been at the lower end of the pay scale. Economically, times are better here in Salem and elsewhere, but still tough for lots of people.

In 2009 the City of Salem commissioned Davis, Hibbitts, & Midghall to conduct a scientific sample survey of residents that included various questions about the Salem Police Department, including this one: "Considering what you've learned, would you oppose or support paying any more in taxes for a new police facility in Salem?"

## Pay more in taxes for new Salem police facility?

Nov. 2009 - Percent who oppose/support



Even though no dollar amount was mentioned, 54% opposed paying any more in taxes (34% strongly opposed, 20% somewhat opposed), while 41% supported paying more in taxes (16% strongly support, 25% somewhat support). So this shows that Salem's citizens lean against having their taxes increased for a new police facility. One would expect that the more they are asked to pay, the more resistance there will be to passing a bond measure.

The project cost the city \$17,000,000 to remodel the existing space. City officials project that the final price tag is half of the cost of building a new facility.

"We're living within our means at city hall and I think this is a good example of it." said Eugene's City Manager John Ruiz.

— KVAL News story, August 17, 2012

Eugene finished construction of a 74,000 square foot police facility in 2012. An existing building was renovated for \$17 million. City of Eugene officials estimated this was half the cost of new construction.

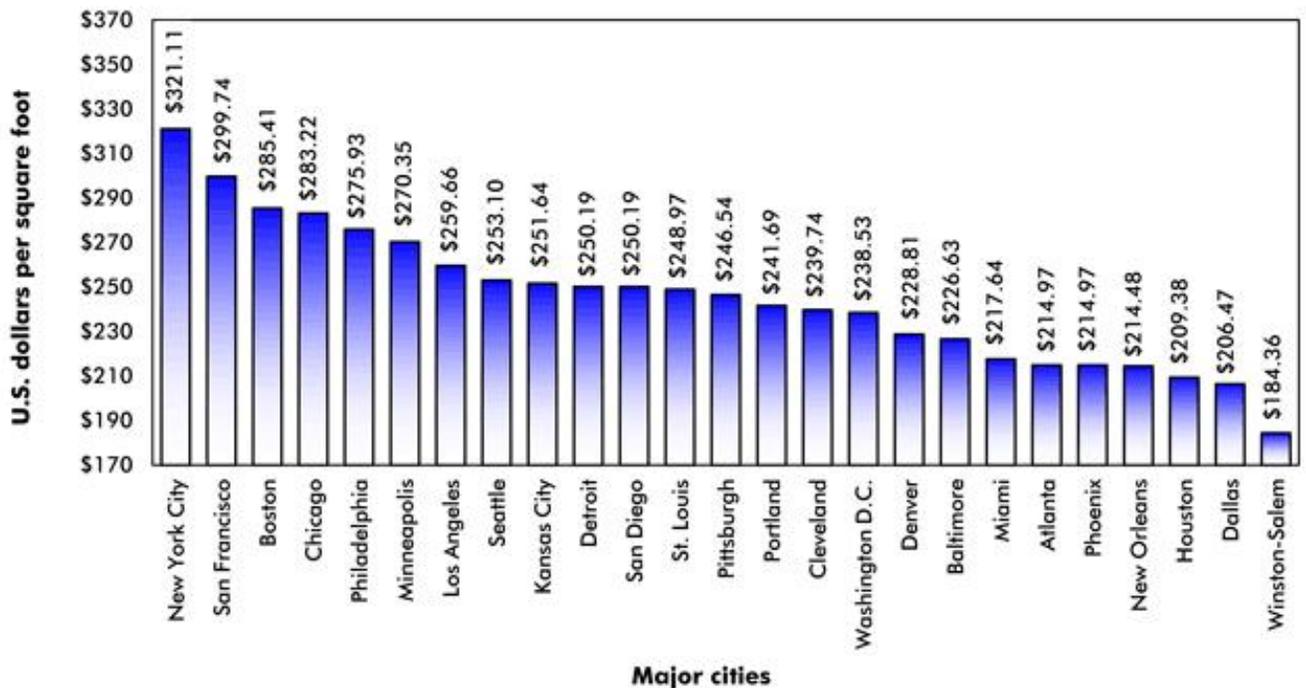
So this supports our contention that a 75,000 square foot police facility could be built in Salem for approximately \$30 million.

(The total square feet of space allocated to the Eugene Police Department is 116,800 square feet, including a 911 Center and other areas separate from the main 74,000 square foot headquarters.)

Eugene has 190 police officers, almost exactly the same as Salem’s 187. The 2014 population of Eugene, 160,561, also is very close to Salem’s population of 161,637. Thus we feel that Eugene’s recent police facility experience holds good lessons for us here in Salem.

Eugene officials planned for the future of policing in their city, not just for present needs. This also has been done in Salem, where the first two police facility planning efforts undertaken in conjunction with expert consultants resulted in recommendations for a facility between 75,000 and 106,000 square feet.

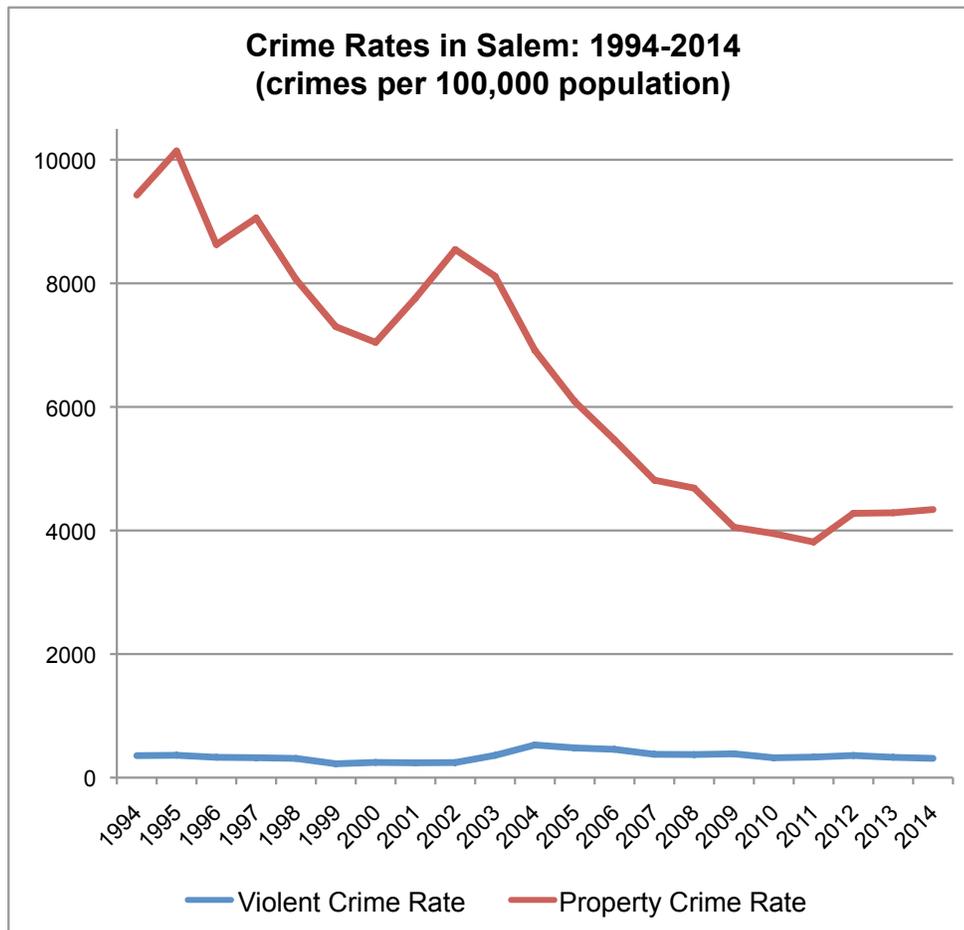
**Police station construction cost:  
February 2012 ranking of major U.S. cities**



The figure above shows 2012 data for police station construction costs in various U.S. cities from RS Means, a leader in construction cost estimating. Four years ago, the cost per square foot ranged widely from \$184 to \$321.

We believe a \$300 per square foot construction cost for a Salem police facility is reasonable, in line with a consultant to the Blue Ribbon Task Force quoting a cost range of \$250 to \$350 a square foot. This produces a \$22,500,000 estimate for a 75,000 square foot facility. Design, site acquisition, and other expenses would bring the total closer to our \$30 million recommended cost.

Regarding the need for growth in the size of Salem's police force, here's the local trend in property crimes and violent crimes per 100,000 population.



The property crime rate shows a marked decline over twenty years. The violent crime rate is relatively steady, and much lower. Thus it is reasonable to expect that while Salem's population will continue to grow (recently, at about 1.1% a year), a continued decline in the overall crime rate is quite possible.

Some growth in the size of Salem's police force should be planned for. However, productivity increases and technological innovations have changed staffing needs in virtually every sector of our economy, and this should occur in policing as well.

We don't know how many police officers will be needed in Salem thirty years from now, the time frame of police facility planning, nor what changes there will be in their activities.

Overspending for an uncertain Police Department future isn't wise, especially given the many other pressing needs in Salem and the pressure on taxpayers' pocketbooks.

#### **(4) WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CIVIC CENTER SEISMIC UPGRADES THAT WERE PART OF THE ORIGINAL POLICE FACILITY PROPOSAL? ISN'T PREPARING FOR THE BIG ONE EARTHQUAKE VITALLY IMPORTANT TO SAVE LIVES AND PROPERTY?**

In the Pacific Northwest, the area of impact will cover some hundred and forty thousand square miles, including Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, Eugene, Salem (the capital city of Oregon), Olympia (the capital of Washington), and some seven million people. When the next full-margin rupture happens, that region will suffer the worst natural disaster in the history of North America.

— “The Really Big One,” New Yorker, July 20, 2015

Let's answer the second question first... with a big YES!

And a passage from the New Yorker article that did a lot to raise awareness of the extreme danger our region faces from a Cascadia subduction zone earthquake.

Previously we included a quotation from the Salem City Manager in 2013, Linda Norris. It deserves repeating: "The way it is, right now, city employees wouldn't even be able to get out of the building alive, much less use the building,"

The building Norris refers to is City Hall. This is where the Salem Police Department headquarters is now. One of the key reasons for constructing a new police facility is getting officers and other department employees out of City Hall and into a building that is built to current earthquake standards.

Of course, that leaves other City employees, plus visitors to City Hall, at high risk of dying when the Big One earthquake hits, while Police Department staff would be safe. Other structures at the Civic Center also aren't built to withstand a major earthquake — the Library and parking garages. So add children enjoying a StoryTime session to those who “wouldn't even be able to get out of the building alive.”

In the original City of Salem 75,000 square foot police facility proposal, seismic upgrades to City Hall were included.

A 2011 estimate by engineering consultants put the cost at about \$5,250,000 (including “soft” costs). In 2014 the cost of making seismic upgrades to the Library, Auditorium, and parking structure was calculated: about \$10,000,000, assuming the same 70% figure for costs other than actual construction (design, contingencies, etc.).

But somewhere along the line — as the size of the proposed police facility steadily grew from 75,000 square feet to 106,000 square feet to 148,000 square feet — City officials stopped talking about the urgent need to protect lives and property at the Civic Center from the massive earthquake that could occur at any time, given the historic geological record.

The chair of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Police Facility, T.J. Sullivan, said in his final report: "Simply stated, there is a seismic need related to the Police facility and the Civic Center, but the seriousness of a seismic event as it relates to serving the critical community mission of our Police force, is our most serious problem."

In other words, supposedly it is more important to save the lives of members of the Salem Police Department, than to save the lives of those who work at, and visit, City Hall and the Library.

Salem Community Vision disagrees.

If it is vital to get the Police Department out of City Hall because it is at high risk of collapsing when the Big One earthquake hits, then it is equally important to protect *everyone* at the Civic Center from the same risk.

We disagree that saving the lives of children at the Library is a less serious problem than saving the lives of police officers. Especially since this isn't an "either-or" choice: *Either* a new police facility is built, *or* seismic upgrades to City Hall and the Library are made.

When the Mayor, City Manager, and other officials were encouraging Salem citizens to support the 75,000 square foot police facility proposal, earthquake-proofing City Hall was part of the package. (Salem Community Vision said that seismic upgrades to the Library and parking structures also needed to be made.)

Our position then, as now, is that the original idea of presenting a Public Safety bond to voters — which would include funds both for building a new police facility and making seismic upgrades to the Civic Center — is the best way to go. However, as the projected cost of the police facility grew along with its size, the seismic upgrades got left behind.

Yes, we have heard talk that someday voters will be asked to approve a separate bond for those seismic upgrades. But City officials have made no commitment to this. Recently the Mayor mentioned several bonds that likely will be presented to citizens after a police facility bond measure is voted on in November 2016. Civic Center seismic upgrades weren't mentioned.

The time to make those upgrades is *now*. When the shaking from the Big One earthquake starts, unacted-upon intentions will be useless.

Salem Community Vision is calling for a \$50 million bond measure: \$30 million for a new police facility, \$20 million for seismic upgrades to City Hall and the Library. This is eminently practical. And it is very close to the original proposal that City officials tried to sell to Salem citizens before the police facility got “supersized.”

Along this line, comments from Police Chief Jerry Moore were summarized in the April 1, 2015 minutes of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Police Facility:

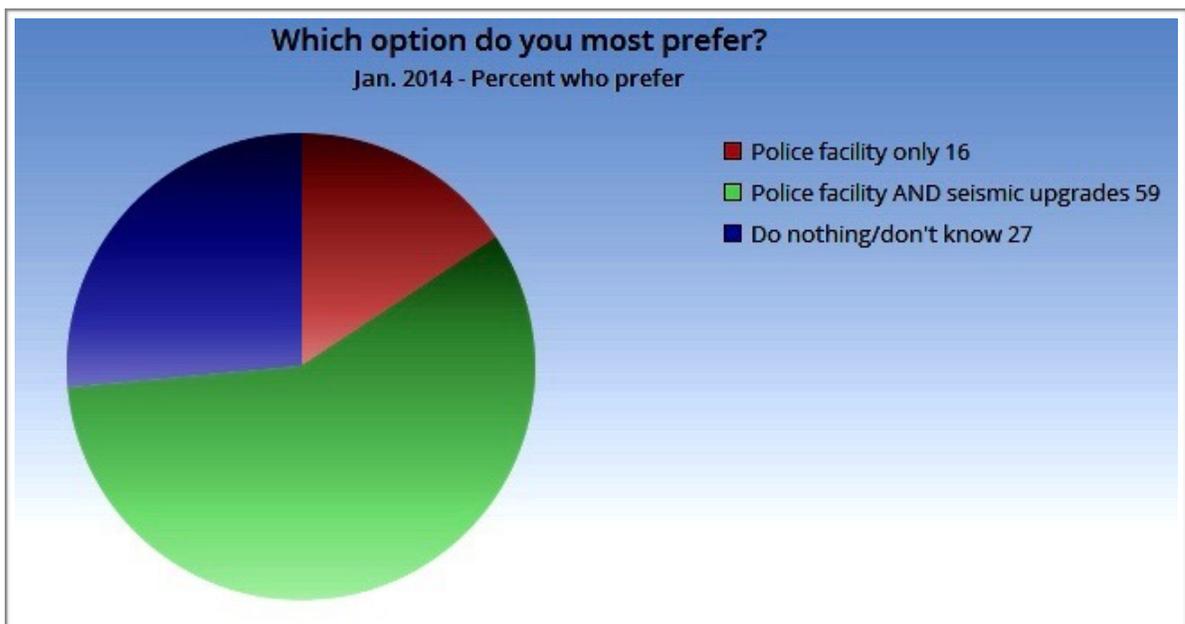
“The Civic Center does need seismic strengthening but, from what we’ve all heard, it doesn’t appear that this community will pass a bond for \$80M to do both.”

Probably true. But we believe Salem voters would pass a bond for \$50 million that does both.

If citizens knew that a “Yes” on the bond measure will save lives of people at the Civic Center, along with providing the Police Department with a much larger, but not extravagant, new police facility, this would improve the chance of the measure passing.

In January 2014 the City of Salem commissioned DHM Research to conduct a survey of 400 registered voters in Salem. One of the questions was, “Whether now or in the future, eventually, Salem’s Civic Center, police facility, and library will require seismic and other upgrades. With that in mind, which of the following options do you most prefer?”

The preferred answer of a clear majority, 59%, was to *do both*: seismically upgrade City Hall and the Library, *and* build a new police facility. This is the Salem Community Vision position. City officials need to respect the view of most Salem voters if they hope to pass a police facility bond measure in November 2016.



## (5) WHY DOES SALEM COMMUNITY VISION PREFER THE COMMERCIAL AND DIVISION (O'BRIEN) SITE FOR A NEW 75,000 SQUARE FOOT POLICE FACILITY OVER THE BLOCK SOUTH OF THE LIBRARY?

Our preference for the O'Brien site was shared by the DLR Group consulting firm in their evaluation of the top eight potential sites for a new police facility. The City of Salem asked them to come up with Location, Cost, and Suitability scores for each site, then identify the top three.

As shown in the Site Scoring Chart below, the Commercial and Division (O'Brien) site got a score of 129, considerably higher than the next two sites. The Commercial and Leslie site south of the Library didn't even make the top three. It is only being considered now because the City Council subcommittee voted to add it.

### Salem Police Facility Preliminary Findings Study December 17, 2015

#### SITE SCORING CHART

LOCATION  
COST  
SUITABILITY

Order	Criteria*	Category	Weighted	Site 1		Site 2		Site 12		Site 13		Site 15		Site 22		Site 27		Site 29	
				City Owned Property (Windows to West)		Commercial & Leslie		Church & Union (DOE)		Commercial & Division (O'Brien)		Liberty & High (DT Storage)		25th Street		Fairview Industrial		Portland Road (Epping)	
				Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted
1	Central Location, Proximity to Government Services (A)	Location	2.0	10	20.0	10	20.0	8	16.0	8	16.0	7	14.0	5	10.0	2	4.0	2	4.0
1	Property Acquisition and Development Cost (B)	Cost	2.0	3	6.0	2	4.0	1	2.0	4	8.0	5	10.0	5	10.0	10	20.0	6	12.0
1	Service to the City (C)	Suitability	2.0	5	10.0	9	18.0	8	16.0	7	14.0	7	14.0	2	4.0	2	4.0	3	6.0
2	Community Visibility (D)	Location	1.5	7	10.5	9	13.5	6	9.0	9	13.5	4	6.0	3	4.5	1	1.5	3	4.5
2	Co-Location Potential (E)	Suitability	1.5	2	3.0	2	3.0	2	3.0	8	12.0	8	12.0	10	15.0	10	15.0	10	15.0
2	Neighborhood Compatibility (F)	Location	1.5	9	13.5	7	10.5	7	10.5	9	13.5	8	12.0	8	12.0	5	7.5	7	10.5
2	Ease of Acquisition (G)	Cost	1.5	7	10.5	2	3.0	3	4.5	8	12.0	5	7.5	5	7.5	10	15.0	8	12.0
2	Public Access (H)	Suitability	1.5	8	12.0	10	15.0	8	12.0	10	15.0	7	10.5	3	4.5	3	4.5	2	3.0
3	Redevelopment Catalyst (I)	Location	1.0	5	5.0	5	5.0	6	6.0	10	10.0	7	7.0	5	5.0	2	2.0	7	7.0
3	Risk (J)	Cost	1.0	5	5.0	4	4.0	5	5.0	5	5.0	3	3.0	9	9.0	9	9.0	8	8.0
3	Urban Renewal Assistance Potential (K)	Cost	1.0	5	5.0	1	1.0	10	10.0	10	10.0	10	10.0	1	1.0	5	5.0	5	5.0
<b>TOTALS</b>				Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted	Raw	Adjusted
				66.0	100.5	61.0	97.0	64.0	94.0	88.0	129.0	71.0	106.0	56.0	82.5	59.0	87.5	61.0	87.0
Cost Average				5.00	7.17	2.67	3.67	3.00	3.83	5.67	8.33	4.33	6.83	6.33	8.83	9.67	14.67	7.33	10.67
Location Average				7.75	12.25	7.75	12.25	6.75	10.38	9.00	13.25	6.50	9.75	5.25	7.88	2.50	3.75	4.75	6.50
Suitability Average				5.00	8.33	7.00	12.00	6.00	10.33	8.33	13.67	7.33	12.17	5.00	7.83	5.00	7.83	5.00	8.00

\* Criteria shown in priority based on sub-committee recommendations (Nov. 16, 2015)



The O'Brien site was ranked higher than any of the other three sites on each of the key site selection criteria: Cost, Location, Suitability. Here is some discussion of why Salem Community Vision also considers the O'Brien site to be superior to the block south of the Library.

**Lower development cost.** The DLR Group noted this as one of the cons for the block south of the Library: "High Development Cost." It is a small 2.3 acre site, while the O'Brien site is 4.3 acres. This reduces (or eliminates) the need for expensive parking structures.

**Less impact on neighborhood.** The O'Brien site is unoccupied and for sale. The block south of the Library currently has numerous homes and businesses on it. Aesthetically, cramming a large multistory police facility into the small acreage in-between Mission and Leslie streets would be out of character with the surrounding neighborhood.

**Library unaffected.** Because the block south of the Library is so small, if a police facility is built there the top floor of the Library parking structure would be used for police purposes. This would push Civic Center staff who currently park there elsewhere, and potentially impact the ability of the Library auditorium to accommodate large crowds who park in the structure during the evening.

**Redevelopment catalyst.** This is one of the DLR Group pros for the O'Brien site. It makes much more sense to built a new police facility on property that isn't currently being used, as bringing Police Department staff and visitors to the vacant Commercial and Division acreage will help vitalize the area.

We are concerned, though, about the mention of "urban renewal potential" in the DLR Group site analysis for the O'Brien property. Using urban renewal funds to build a police facility on this site would be a poor use of the money.

The goal of urban renewal is to spur development that would not have occurred but for urban renewal...urban renewal can help change a blighted portion of a city into a valuable and productive contributor to the local economy.

— Lake Oswego Urban Renewal FAQ

Until 2015 the property housed BMW, Honda, and VW dealerships, so it hasn't been unused for long. After the O'Brien Auto Group was purchased by Lithia Motors in 2013, a decision was made to move the dealerships to the Salem Parkway.

A March 2015 Statesman Journal story says, "With Lithia Motors's recent relocation to a new facility off

Salem Parkway, a space that's ripe with opportunity has opened in downtown Salem. It's unknown what may come — or when — to the vacated space at Commercial and Division Streets NE. The property has only been vacant a few weeks."

Now the property has been vacant for only about a year, not exactly a sign that urban renewal is needed to "help change a blighted portion" of Salem, the goal of urban renewal projects.

Our concern is that the City of Salem may use urban renewal funds to reduce the cost of a police facility bond that will be presented to voters in November 2016. This would take money away from more worthy projects aimed at vitalizing the downtown



100,000 square feet: 75,000 sq. ft. for the new three story main building, and 25,000 sq. ft. in renovated buildings already on the site.

Salem Community Vision does not believe that a new Willamette Valley Communications Center should be part of the proposed police facility. This 911 center, which serves Marion, Polk, and Lincoln counties, currently is in space with a lease that expires in six years.

There is plenty of time to pursue an agreement with other agencies to share the cost of building a new 911 center. It doesn't make sense to ask Salem citizens to pay the full bill for construction, when the Willamette Valley Communications Center is a regional facility serving numerous agencies outside of our area.

The Salem Police Chief, Jerry Moore, has talking about creating an intergovernmental entity, which can be done under ORS 190. That would take the Willamette Valley Communications Center out of the City of Salem altogether, and would create a separate entity with its own board of directors representing the agencies that participate. Costs would be fairly allocated to all of the agencies.

Eliminating the proposed new 24,904 square foot Willamette Valley Communications Center would reduce the cost of a police facility by about \$7,500,000, based on the previously-mentioned estimate of \$300 per square foot (construction cost only).

Salem Community Vision is confident that our \$30 million estimate for building a properly-sized police facility on the O'Brien property is reasonable. After all, this is almost exactly the cost estimate consultants hired by the City of Salem came up with in 2013 for a 75,000 square foot police facility on the same site.

CITY OF SALEM PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY

## OPTION 1: [URBAN] REDEVELOPMENT SITE



PROJECT		TOTAL
A	POLICE HEADQUARTERS	\$22.9M
B	SITE WORK	\$2.9M
C	SITE ACQUISITION	\$4.4M
D	CITY HALL UPGRADES	\$15M
E	COUNCIL CHAMBERS (AT CIVIC SITE)	\$1.3M
CONSTRUCTION TOTAL		\$46.6M
SOFT COSTS		\$9.3M
PROJECT TOTAL		\$55.8M

### PROS

- On-grade parking
- Convenient location to City Hall
- Allows for optimum size and shape
- Good site access

### CONS

- Takes property off tax roll
- Displaces existing businesses
- Demolition cost
- Multiple site acquisition costs
- Higher potential for hazardous material abatement
- Lost productivity and security

The \$55.8 million total is close to the \$50 million Salem Community Vision considers appropriate to spend on a new police facility and seismic upgrades to City Hall and the Library.

**A right-sized and properly designed Public Safety facility for our community needs to be about 75,000 square feet in size spread over no more than three floors to function best in keeping Salem safe. At this size, the critical functions located in off-site leased spaces can return to a centralized facility with some room for growth over the next 30-40 years.**

— City of Salem FAQ about police facility

A year later, in 2014, City officials were still advocating for a 75,000 square foot police facility. The quotation to the left speaks of this as a “right-sized” building that will provide “some room for growth over the next 30-40 years.”

So we are not recommending anything radical. Our position on a new police facility and seismic upgrades to the Civic Center is very close to what City officials were calling for just two years ago, before plans for a new police headquarters doubled in size to 148,000 square feet.

## **SUMMARY**

Let’s revisit the one-sentence summary of Salem Community Vision’s position on a new police facility:

**Salem voters should be asked to approve a \$50 million bond measure that includes full funding for a \$30 million police facility at Commercial and Division streets, along with \$20 million for seismic upgrades and other renovations at the Civic Center.**

We hope this position paper has convinced you that this is the correct way to go. But the community conversation doesn’t stop here. New ideas, fresh facts, better arguments — bring them on. Open minds are the field where good decisions grow.

Email us your thoughts: [SalemCommunityVision@yahoo.com](mailto:SalemCommunityVision@yahoo.com)

Let the Mayor and City Council know what you think: [CityCouncil@cityofsalem.net](mailto:CityCouncil@cityofsalem.net)

Visit and “like” our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/SalemCommunityVision](http://www.facebook.com/SalemCommunityVision)

Together, we can make Salem a better place.

Building a reasonably priced and sized police facility, along with saving lives by seismically retrofitting City Hall and the Library, is just one step along the road that leads toward a Salem that could be, as our new City Manager (Steve Powers) has said, “the best city in the United States.”

