

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE— March 6 , 2020

Prepared for Mayor and Councilors. Please contact Steve Powers, City Manager, for additional information.

At Your Service

From grateful residents,

—One evening last week, a neighbor called to my attention that water was bubbling up in the parking strip in front of my home. I called the emergency number for the City Water, and within a half hour a truck pulled up front, and the driver assessed the situation. Before long another truck pulled up, and in the dark they dug, found the problem, and made the repair (a cracked water main). Before long, another truck then pulled up and filled in the hole. They were all done shortly before midnight. The next morning, I heard another truck out front, and a gentleman was spreading grass seed over the area. I just want to take a moment to thank the dispatch and all the workers for their prompt and diligent service.

—My house got broken into this morning. A neighbor called me so on route I called 911 and when I got there your SPD was already there and caught all three in the act! I just wanted to drop you a note to let you know how impressed I am with their rapid response - (as were and all the neighbors watching) - and their thorough attention to detail. They even brought in a dog to sniff out if anyone was hiding! They were amazing. One car stayed behind to make sure the two not arrested didn't return. Plus, your SPD were SO nice and informative - as was the woman with 911. Sure glad I voted for their new building!

—The new lighting in Englewood Park looks great! All the paths in the park are now well lit at night and the park feels much safer. NEN really appreciates the excellent improvements for our neighborhood by the City of Salem.

Policy Agenda Issues

The Climate Actions Audit will be shared with the public through social media and FlashAlert and is available at [here](#) under Climate Action with a link to the document. The Climate Actions Audit documents the City of Salem's work over the past decade to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through City projects, practices, programs, and plans. The report includes an in-depth review of climate action plans adopted by 12 other cities, identifies elements to include for a Salem-specific climate action plan, and recommends steps for the City to undertake in developing a climate action plan. A comparison of City of Salem actions and policies to other cities with climate action plans shows that Salem has completed 26 percent of actions and policies. Salem is progressing in non-motorized transportation, green spaces and improved park connectivity, clean power and energy use reduction at city buildings, water infrastructure, and increased mixed-use zoning opportunities. Salem's actions and policies are lagging in building quality, parking restrictions, mass transit, electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure and encouraging local renewable

energy production. The Climate Action Plan will use Salem’s 2019 Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory to set targets for emissions reduction and be well coordinated with *Our Salem* Comprehensive Plan to ensure Climate Action Plan actions and policies are incorporated into the comprehensive plan. Per Council direction at the policy agenda work session, work on developing a Climate Action Plan for the City of Salem will begin immediately.

The Marion County Solid Waste Management Advisory Council (SWMAC) makes recommendations to the Marion County Commissioners. It is a 16-member board made up of non-elected stakeholders and citizens at large. There is currently an open stakeholder position for a someone from a “community organization.” Ryan Zink, the City’s franchise administrator for solid waste, has been asked by County staff to apply for this open position. Having a City of Salem staff member on this board would provide Salem an opportunity for input into Marion County’s policies and decision making regarding solid waste management. There are a quite a few issues at both the local and state level that will likely have an impact on solid waste management in Salem. Ryan would bring policy issues to City Council for direction.

The City’s annual recycling report has been submitted to the DEQ. The report is a technical document required by the DEQ. If interested in a copy, please contact [Tami Carpenter](#) or [Ryan Zink](#).

Upcoming Issues

The March 16 Council work session will be on economic development and the airport. In preparation for the work session, the Salem Municipal Airport Strategic Business Plan is a Future Report on the [March 9 agenda](#) to provide extra reading time for Council and the public.

Extension of the unsheltered residents emergency order will be recommended at the March 23 Council meeting. The extension is needed to provide additional time for the United Way SafeSleep shelter to complete a required land-use process and for the vehicle-camping pilot program.

The Historic Preservation Plan update project is on track for completion in June 2020. The Salem Historic Landmarks Commission and Historic Preservation Plan Update Stakeholder Advisory Committee have held public open houses and invited participation from neighborhoods with historic districts.

The Planning Commission is recommending to Council an amendment to the sign code to allow two signs per drive-thru food establishment. The changes will be included in a larger code amendment package begun in 2017 that will be ready for Council consideration this summer after the budget. The sign code amendments include cleanup of the standards for temporary signs. Community Development is proposing a new sign code inspector position funded by permit fees.

Communications

The City's social media accounts, primarily Facebook, are getting more and more use. Our usual reach is 1,500, with a high of 4,000 to 5,000 on cool images or content. For homelessness issues, we have reached 8,300 people.

We will be updating our drinking water communication in March, in preparation for Council actions on the ozone treatment improvements.

Economic Development

To fund upcoming economic development projects and to increase the Urban Renewal Agency's capacity for projects to assist non-profit agencies serving individuals who are homeless, staff are analyzing and researching the feasibility of a \$15 million bond issue. At an interest rate of five percent, for a ten-year term, payments would be about \$1.9 million a year. We receive approximately \$7.5 million a year in increment. The bond amount can increase or decrease based on the project list the Urban Renewal Agency Board approves.

According to a national website, LendEdu, Salem netted one of the highest numbers of business openings out of any place in the country. Salem ranked #27 in the country and #1 in the state of Oregon with a net 150 business openings between 2015 and 2016. This data comes from the U.S. Census Bureau and was released on July 31, 2019, the most recent report available. Specifically, Salem saw 796 businesses opened and 646 businesses closed over this period. The full report is [here](#).

LendEDU also analyzed a variety of socioeconomic factors like recent income growth, population changes, and educational attainment levels for hundreds of cities in the United States and ranked each based on how well positioned it is for economic advancement in the new decade. The list estimates places in the U.S. that will experience the most profound economic changes, whether for better or worse. The higher the ranking, the better positioned a city is for positive economic change. Salem ranked 40th, the second highest in Oregon. Portland is ranked 11th. The data to develop this report came from two data sources: The U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Almost all of the data that came from the U.S. Census Bureau was pulled from the American Community Survey.

Amazon provided a courtesy request to the City for permission to fly the City flag. Nothing in *Salem Revised Code* restricts or governs how private entities fly or sell the City flag.

Parks

Now four years into the Park Ranger Program, staff will be discussing with the Salem Parks and Recreation Board on March 12 how to increase the position's impact. The park ranger provides a wide variety of customer service, engaging and educating the public, while enforcing minor code violations, such as smoking in parks, dogs off leash, and unlawful parking in Minto Brown Island, Riverfront, Wallace Marine, and

Bush's Pasture parks. Most complaints received regarding parks are for littering, graffiti, vandalism, noise violations, abandoned vehicles, unlicensed vendors, damaging plants or trees, and disturbing restricted natural areas. These complaints are often for parks outside of the park ranger's assignment. Expansion of the ranger's responsibilities would include enforcement of additional *Salem Revised Code* Chapters that impact the parks. Having the ability to assign the park ranger to respond to incidents at additional parks would increase the customer service provided to residents without taking away from the critical responses to the four main parks. The park ranger would be expected to spend most of his time in the four main parks.

Revenue

The City has produced videos about the value of Police and Fire service in our community. The videos will be used on social media and through the City website. CCTV will play them on their channels.

The videos may be found here for [Police](#) and [Fire](#).

The videos have been provided to the Secretary of State. The City needs approval from the State to continue use of the videos after the March 17 filing of the payroll tax ballot measure with Marion and Polk counties. The Secretary of State provides a safe-harbor review of informational materials to ensure staff are not advocating for the ballot measure.

Staff are responding to questions and making presentations regarding the operations fee and the employee payroll tax. Recent presentations include neighborhood associations, Home Builders Association, and the Latino Business Alliance.

Development

The City had a very busy 2019:

- 9,656 permits issued
- 426 houses
- 570 apartments
- 996 total units

More multifamily:

- 1,396 units in the past three years
- 1,062 single family residential
- 31% more multifamily than single

The Building and Safety Division (Building Codes) received a great rating from the Insurance Services Office (ISO). ISO is an independent statistical, rating, and advisory organization that serves the property/casualty insurance industry. ISO analyzes a community's building code program and assigns a classification from 1 to 10. Salem has been classified a 2. Specifically, Salem received a 91/100 on residential and 86/100 for commercial. The lower commercial score is due to some recent code changes that we, and every other building code program in the state,

are catching up to. Strong ISO ratings are indicative of better loss experience from natural disasters. Minimizing catastrophic-related damage can ultimately lower insurance costs for residents and businesses.

Upcoming Issues

Prior to the April Council work session on Our Salem, there will be three public workshops.

- **Monday, March 16:** 6:00-8:00 p.m., Court Street Christian Church, [1699 Court Street NE](#)
- **Tuesday, March 17:** 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Courthouse Square Building, [555 Court Street NE](#)
- **Tuesday, March 17** *(in Spanish only in collaboration with Enlace):* 6:00-8:00 p.m., McKay High School, [2440 Lancaster Drive NE](#)

At the workshops, staff will be sharing what community members have said about their vision for Salem. Attendees will have an opportunity to share feedback on different scenarios for future growth. The scenarios reflect ideas that the community has provided through previous workshops, surveys, meetings, events, and discussions that began last year. The Our Salem project is a multi-year project to update the [Salem Area Comprehensive Plan](#), which guides future development in the Salem area. Salem is expected to add 60,000 people by 2035. With this growth comes the chance to better plan for how and where we want to grow.

Affordable Housing

The Salem Housing Authority is monitoring the status of apartment developments that are considering opting out of affordable housing restrictions and moving to market-rate rents. SHA is exploring how to keep the developments affordable, including the option of purchase by the SHA. The owners do NOT have to sell, but SHA will make sure the owners know of the SHA’s interest. Two complexes in Salem - one 234 units and the other 47 units are indicating opting out of affordable housing restrictions.

Drinking Water

Work is beginning on improving the water aquifer system in Woodmansee Park that supplies supplemental drinking water. The project will improve the water treatment system, increase the backup supply of drinking water, and address requirements from the Oregon Health Authority. A new building will be constructed to house the water treatment improvements.

Fiscal Health

Moody’s Investor Services has assigned a bond rating of Aa2 for the upcoming \$60 million water and sewer revenue bond. According to Moody’s, the Aa2 rating reflects the system’s large size and a service area characterized by moderate

socioeconomic levels though the local economy is strengthened by the presence of the Oregon state capital. The utility enterprise is further supported by adequate debt service coverage. The rating cites stable management and policy leadership that has raised rates steadily with robust capital planning. Aa2 is the third highest rating available from Moody's.

Safety

Over the past few years the City's Risk program introduced new processes and resources, new personnel, and celebrated several successful years in safety with fewer accidents and injuries. All of this helped translate into a safer work environment, financial savings for the City, and a lower than expected injury rating. In 2019, the City's experience rating, as calculated by the State, was the lowest on record—going back over 20 years! (Ratings below 1.0 represent programs that have incidents and accident less frequently than other similar industries. Salem has reached .68—indicating we're now 32% below industry or peers average.) Litigation expenses in the workers compensation program have been reduced by 2/3 over the past five years.

The Fire Department had only 12 paid liability claims in the past five years! Considering the nature of the work, the number of miles driven, the expertise required, and required risks, this is a remarkable statistic. The current data reflects a strong culture of safety and professionalism. The average claim cost is \$1,702 - the lowest of the City's three main departments (Fire, Police, Public Works).

Library

The library retrofit project enhancements that the Salem Library Foundation will be funding:

Remove West Side (Commercial St) Concrete Walls in 3 Niches, replace with floor to ceiling windows. This enhancement will allow Library users an open and light filled interior space with outdoor views to the west. It will also allow passersby on Commercial Street a clear view into the Library to see the activity and presence of Library users, reinforcing the community hub function of the Library as a vibrant place where everyone is welcome. **Cost estimate** \$117,917. This includes concrete removal, added header/storefront glass, and roller shades.

Remove West-Most Stair (Main floor to 3rd floor, in non-fiction stacks), Add New Stair. This enhancement will save many from confusion about how to access the ground and 3rd floors, removing bulk and adding natural light with an airiness not currently felt. Increased visibility of the new stair from the main entrance will allow people to find their way with ease. This will make it easier for librarians to move between floors and keep oversight over patrons; enhancing safety and allowing for better customer service at the point of need. It will also make the layout of the main library space more efficient by rotating the stair out of the main space. The stair will land at the top of the stair leading to the Plaza level, further helping to

connect the three floors. **Cost estimate** \$125,080. This includes removal of the existing stair and guardrail and addition of new stair and guardrail.

Remove Concrete Stair (2nd-3rd floor) near Administration and Infill on 3rd Floor. Administration and Teen Scene will swap locations. This enhancement allows the third floor to be exclusively Youth Services, integrating Children's and Teen creating a clear transition path for services as users grow older. With the added efficiency of the new stair in Option #2, the existing concrete stair becomes redundant. If removed, it could provide significant additional floor space for youth materials and activities, creating a connected, cohesive, inviting, more useful space. It would also provide a nice entry to the Storytime room and a place for parents to gather and wait. It would make the ground floor much more open and connected, again making it safer and easier for librarian oversight. **Cost estimate** \$124,550. This includes temporary scaffold, removal of stair structure and guardrail, infill structure/concrete, ceilings, carpet, and lighting.

Discovery Room Relocation adjacent to Story Rooms. Enhancement will provide a more functional space for the Discovery Room with additional adjacent storage and natural light and views to the trees. It will create a stronger visual connection between the main library space/teen space and the children's area making it easier for librarian oversight. Relocation will eliminate the cave-like feeling of the main entrance and create a welcoming and expansive view of the main floor as people enter from the parking garage. This project restores the integrity of the original 1972 architecture making the main library space feel more open and larger. The hope is it will serve more children and have longer hours than are currently possible. **Cost estimate** \$118,872. This includes removal of floor added in 1991, new location glazing, pony walls, doors, and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing modifications.

Total estimated cost of Options: \$486,419. We'll have firm costs in March when we get the Guaranteed Maximum Price from the contractor, Howard S. Wright.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

LendEDU (I like this website!) is also recognizing the Salem region for shrinking the gender pay gap at one of the fastest rates in the country over the last decade. [Here is the full research report.](#)

LendEDU used earnings data from the U.S. Census Bureau to analyze nearly 1,000 cities. In 2010, the gender pay gap in Salem was 19.94%, while it improved to 15.49% in 2018. This gender pay gap change of -4.46% ranked Salem #259 in the country, and #7 in the state of Oregon.

Deputy Fire Chief Gabe Benmoussa has been appointed to the board of directors for the Northwest Fire Diversity Council. Gabe will represent the Fire Department and organization at a regional level in diversity recruitment.

Partnerships

Marion County Sheriff Kast has informed the Willamette Valley Communications Center (9-1-1) of his intent to continue the intergovernmental agreement for dispatch services through June 30, 2021. The Sheriff's Department was considering leaving WVCC. WVCC's planned upgrades to computer-aided dispatch have mitigated the Sheriff's concerns. The Marion County Sheriff is dispatched by two dispatch centers, METCOM for northern Marion County and WVCC for the remainder of Marion County.

The City is participating in the Jason Lee Public Archaeology Project. The City will be working with the owners of the Jason Lee House to recover artifacts from one of the most significant sites in Oregon's early Missionary period and the greater history of Euro-American settlement in the Pacific Northwest. The Salem Historic Landmarks Commission has adopted the project in its 2020 workplan. Other partners include the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, Willamette University, and the Willamette Heritage Center. The City is providing expertise and funding the removal of asphalt to allow excavation and repair after the excavation is completed.

Mountain West Investment Corporation has donated \$50,000 to the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance, the newly formed Continuum of Care for the Marion-Polk region. The donation will help the Alliance complete projects to reduce chronic homelessness through a coordinated community approach.

Salem is one of ten Oregon cities to receive a grant from Oregon Community Trees. A record-breaking number of grant applications were submitted. Also, Salem has been recognized as an Oregon Tree City for the 44th year, the best in the state. Salem is one of 67 Oregon cities to achieve or maintain Tree City USA recognition from the Arbor Day Foundation.

City stormwater staff presented to the Glenn-Gibson Watershed Council on restoration of Goldcrest Brook. The presentation covered hydromodification of urban streams with Goldcrest Brook as the example. Staff also highlighted current stormwater practices and policies.

Falck Ambulance has settled with its employees represented by the International Association of EMTs and Paramedics and EMTs. Falck provides ambulance transport services in Salem through a contract with the City.

Travel Salem responded to a request from *Sunset* Magazine for information about Salem. Travel Salem took the lead in compiling a response to the 2020 Dream Towns Survey. Salem has been selected by *Sunset* as a Dream Town! Dream Towns are some of the best towns in the West for people to live and visit. The selection was based in part on the nomination compiled by Travel Salem – with input from the City of Salem – that demonstrated the city's commitment to sustainability, support for the arts, historic preservation, outdoor recreation, cultural offerings and other key factors that contribute to overall livability. The article will be published in the March/April issue of the magazine.

Homelessness

The HRAP outreach team conducted a survey the morning of March 6 of the blocks surrounding Rite Aid. There were 24 persons by 10:30 a.m. that morning. This number continues to go down even though the number of personal items appear to be growing. SHA contacts the shelters for availability. For the week of March 3, Safe Sleep had five beds Wednesday and four beds open on Thursday night.

The Homeless Rental Assistance program has an 82.99% success rate. Nicole Utz will continue to provide HRAP updates at Salem Housing Authority Commission meetings. SHA received a check for \$99,400 from Willamette Valley Community Health Organization. They are the former Coordinated Care Organization that is now Pacific Source. They indicate this will be the first installment and there will be more support coming. HRAP received a personal donation for \$10,000 and notice of a pending donation of \$5,000. Outreach efforts for this programming are really helping to bring attention to the public on the necessity for this program in our community. SHA is thrilled with receiving the additional funding.

A prevailing rumor is that other communities are sending unsheltered persons to Salem. (Although an email this week from Lincoln City asked Salem to stop sending homeless persons to Lincoln City) In checking with the Mid-Willamette Community Action Agency, it is factually incorrect that it is a common practice for communities to send unsheltered individuals to other communities but is something that is widely believed by service providers everywhere. The Mid-Willamette Community Action Agency does serve Department of Human Services 25-35-year-old females with children who were living elsewhere and have come back home to live with family. MVWCAA has funding to assist the DHS clients.

The tentative point in time (PIT) count is indicating higher numbers of homeless persons than 2019.

In response to concerns from the Gilbert House Children's Museum, staff researched the possibility of designating the area around the Gilbert House Children's Museum a school zone. The museum does not meet the criteria for a school zone. City staff worked with the Oregon Department of Transportation to clean up stormwater detention areas near the museum. City staff continue to work with the Gilbert House Children's Museum's executive director on issues of concern.

Projects

The Riverfront Park north restroom project will be underway and completed this summer. The project is being funded through the Oregon State Parks and Recreation's Local Government Grant Program with City matching funds. The estimated design and construction cost for the eight unisex stall restroom is \$406,000.

Municipal Court

Within existing budget, the Municipal Court has started a community court. The community court in partnership with community service providers will be an alternative disposition program to assist with housing, addiction treatment, transportation, and support. Types of offenses that will be addressed in Community Court are alcohol in parks, alcohol in public, trespass, urination in public, and disorderly conduct.

Upcoming Events

March 14 - Library Opening and Pi day

April 6, 7 or 8 – ozone project groundbreaking. Exact date being confirmed with legislator availability.

April – Library seismic retrofit groundbreaking.

April - Riverfront Park north restroom and Rotary amphitheater construction starts

May – Redwood Crossing congregate housing project grand opening. Exact completion date is weather dependent.

June – Cogeneration Facility at Willow Lake Wastewater Treatment Facility opening.

Fall – Police Station public tours and ribbon cutting!

Council Follow-up

Staff will be following up to keep the process moving on the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde's offer of a carving donation to the City.

The citycouncil email account received an email from a Eugene resident regarding a Land Use Board of Appeals accessory dwelling unit decision. Staff have reviewed the case and don't think there is any impact on Salem. Salem's accessory dwelling unit standards are much better than Eugene's. We also do not have any concerns with Salem's ability to implement HB 2001, the middle-housing bill that requires duplexes, triplexes, and four-plexes on lots zoned single-family residential.

The speed zone investigation requests for 45th and 17th have been submitted to ODOT. We have requested that the speeds be reduced to 20 mph. ODOT does all the data collection and analysis work on speed reduction requests. So, we await their response.

The buyer interested in City property at Kuebler and Trelstad completed their due diligence and determined the site is too expensive to develop.

Salem was not selected for the federal air service development grant. The air service committee will likely request the City reapply in the next cycle later this year.

The Save the Salem Peace Mosaic has met the terms of the grant agreement with the City. The mosaic was saved and is currently safely and appropriately stored at the City's Public Works yard until it is installed at the Carousel. The mosaic wall was vertically cut into nine sections, approximately 5'6" tall x 6'5"- 7'6" long x 17" thick. Each wall section or panel weighs +/- 6500 lbs. The corner of the building with the mosaic was preserved in one piece and weighs approximately 8,900 lbs. CD Redding fabricated a protective metal brace to protect the mosaic panels during transport. The metal brace will be retained and used later to transport the artwork to Riverfront Park. CCTV is producing a documentary on the mosaic.

Thanks for reading,
Steve