

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

At Your Service

A few examples of the City's work,

I want to express thanks to the utility crew and the meter repair person who found a leak in my water pipe at the meter. The first man discovered the leaks (one on city side and one on my side of the meter) then called the repair crew. They fixed the city's side in no time and gave me helpful suggestions on how to fix the leak on my side. Thanks to all three for a job well done! 

Ofc. Robert Acosta treated me with the upmost professionalism, respect and kindness as did all the law enforcement personnel. I would hope and I am encouraging you to recognize both Ofc. Cody Kyriss and Ofc. Robert Acosta for their commitment to community safety and OUTSTANDING interaction with this grandfather. I can't say enough, the amount of respect I have for two of the finest officers and human beings I have ever had the pleasure to interact with even if they, at one point, had their weapons pointed at me.

I wanted to take a moment from this hectic week to write thank you so much to the team who helped me when I discovered my water meter spinning like a top. I panicked and fixed the issue as soon possible and turned off the water line. I was at your complete mercy and paying the increased charges would have meant no groceries for the week. To whomever worked on promptly reducing my bill and showing grace I am forever thankful while you are anonymously known as paperless billing, I know a human showed compassion and I wanted you to know your job isn't thankless and it made a huge difference in my family's lives during the mega storm of the century. Thank you from the bottom of my now thawing cold lizard heart.

America's Rescue Plan

We don't have the details or guidance/rules of the final bill. The National League of Cities expects some tightening of the language regarding qualified projects for these funds. The City will receive \$32,876,000 in two separate installments within the next two years. The first half could be available within 60 days and the second half one year later. Funds must be spent by the end of calendar year 2024. Staff are compiling the City's actual fiscal year 2020 and projected fiscal year 2021 revenue losses attributable to the pandemic.

The timing is fortuitous with the preparation of the City's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget and the adoption of the Strategic Plan. The funding is an opportunity to offset the some of the impact the pandemic has had on the City and community. I will have an information report at a future

city council meeting with options for consideration and a process for guiding decisions on the allocation of the funds.

American Rescue Plan funds to local governments are available to support response to the COVID-19 public health emergency and may include costs incurred to provide premium pay to essential workers; offset lost revenues to provide essential government services; and improve water, sewer and broadband infrastructure. Specifically excluded uses include reducing taxes by legislation, regulation, or administration; and deposits into pension funds.

In addition to the direct payments to states, counties, and cities, billions more in pandemic relief and recovery funding is coming through federal departments and programs. One of the key responsibilities for the City will be to use funds that have the maximum flexibility on needs determined by City Council while pursuing other federal funding. Another consideration will be state and local governments and non-profit organizations' capacity to deliver ARP-funded projects and assistance. CARES funding, when combined with other federal funding, highlighted this capacity challenge. Staff have provided recommendations to the congressional offices regarding the importance of eliminating or streamlining federal restrictions.

Budget

The City Manager's Proposed Fiscal Year 2022 Budget is coming together for Budget Committee consideration followed by City Council approval. A few of the highlights include absorbing the revenue loss from the Salem-Keizer School District's cancellation of the school resource officer program and funding for a new City website. Since the pandemic closed schools, the school resource officers have been reassigned to other duties (six positions from YSU to Patrol, two positions to CIS Persons (Child Abuse)); the proposed budget would maintain the positions. Staff have completed the due diligence necessary for implementation of the new website if funding is approved. The selected provider, Granicus, had the best approach to integration and migration of content, with a detailed work plan to implement a new website platform. Granicus provided examples and references that were highly relevant and positive. They have an abundance of experience and evidence of government-specific skills and experience in preparing and maintaining websites.

Here are some very local examples of their work:

- <https://www.Hillsboro-Oregon.gov>
- <https://www.redmondoregon.gov>
- <https://www.bendoregon.gov>

Building Activity

In February, 61 permits for single family or duplex housing were issued, the highest month of any month in the past 10 years!

Marquis has submitted for approval a new design for their development at the vacant, fenced corner of Commercial and Front Streets. They will have a public hearing at the Planning

Commission on April 6th. They are still proposing a 72-bed post-acute rehabilitation facility and have approximately 3,940 square feet of ground floor commercial space.

Climate Action

Through a letter from the mayor, the City is supporting the Salem Area Mass Transit District's (SAMTD) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) FY 2021 Low or No Emission Grant Program application. The grant will provide funding to purchase five battery electric zero emission busses and the related charging infrastructure. This will provide a means for SAMTD to continue converting its aging diesel bus fleet to clean technologies. Expanded use of clean technologies will improve air quality in the Salem-Keizer urbanized area and support Salem's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 50% from 2016 levels by 2035 and becoming a net zero city by 2050.

Council Follow-up

We are working with the parkade tenants as authorized by City Council and have applied to the State for lost rent reimbursement through a commercial landlord program. This is a lottery program, so we don't know if we will receive funding. Urban Development, specifically Clint Dameron, has navigated this challenging situation and is working towards solutions that are reasonable and manageable for impacted tenants while also being a good steward of public funds. If we don't ultimately receive payments from tenants or state funds, some of this lost Leasehold Fund revenue may also be reimbursable through America's Rescue Plan funding.

Costco tree move:



COVID-19

The City has a minimum of two paramedics at Salem Health's fairgrounds vaccination clinic from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday from now until the end of April. Salem Health appreciates the cooperation:

I wanted to let you know how appreciative the community has been regarding having some of your paramedics here. I heard nothing but positive remarks from patients as they were sitting with your folks or afterwards while they were waiting on their monitoring time. They were wonderful teachers to the nursing students that I paired up with them. Thank you so much for sharing your fine staff with us. And I am excited to hear that it was approved for them to start working here more often!

COVID-19's impact on City services continues. A recent arrestee tested positive for COVID, creating possible exposure for up to 10 police officers. After verifying vaccinations and level of contact, the number dropped to four officers who were off on quarantine as tests are administered and monitoring for symptoms.

In consultation with county public health departments, City staff are researching and determining the City's responsibilities for events on City property and reestablishing permits.

Because of the lead time for purchasing and planning fireworks (the contractor required an answer by April 9), and with Marion County in the high-risk category, I directed staff to not proceed with the July 4th celebration and fireworks show.

The police station lobby will be opening to the public April 1.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

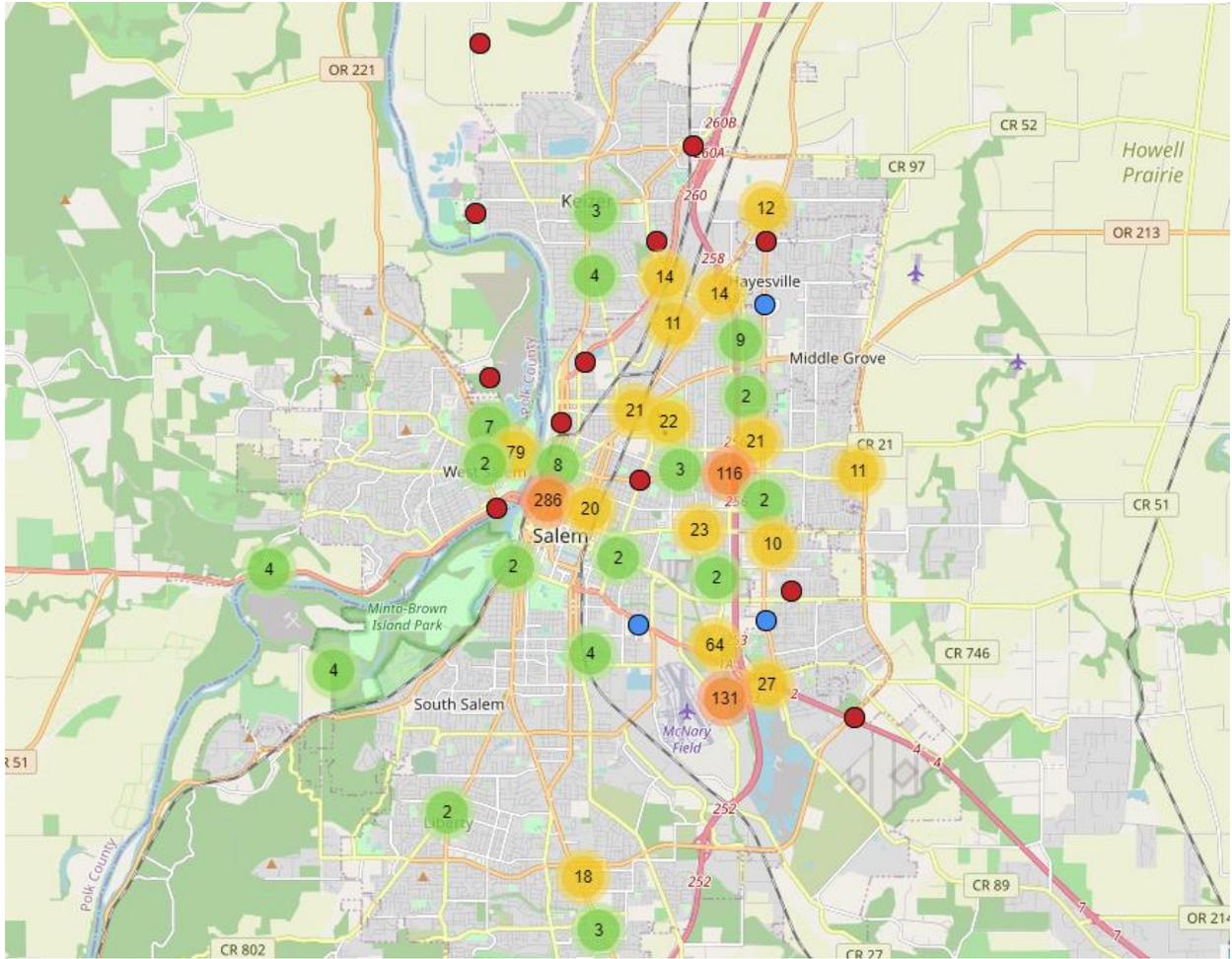
Salem for Refugees has an opportunity for the Salem area to be recognized by the US State Department as a resettlement area for refugees, joining Portland. Mayor Bennett and Police Lieutenant Debbie Aguilar will be joining a consultation group that is developing the application to the State Department. Recognition would allow Salem for Refugees to work directly with refugee organizations and bring federal and state resources to the Salem area. The application will be submitted this month, and a decision is expected by the end of the year.

Fiscal Health

Salem's bond rating from Moody's remains AA+, one level below the highest AAA. The rating results in lower borrowing costs and is a solid measure of Salem's overall financial and economic condition. The rating was reviewed for the \$25,575,000 City general obligation refunding bonds.

Homelessness

Below is a map of the number of unhoused persons outdoors either surveyed or observed in that area during the point in time count. While not verified for unduplicated counts, the map provides a good sense of locations.



The most recent large-scale unsheltered campsite clean-up was Wallace Marine Park. We took advantage of the low-water depth of the Willamette River and focused our cleaning along the riverbank and the areas that have been largely underwater this winter. It was slow going and workers had to pull garbage and debris from brambles, downed limbs/branches, and out of the mud, so the total amount of garbage collected was only 30 cubic yards (compacted). We have received several complaints forwarded to us through Oregon DEQ about keeping garbage out of the river – so this clean-up was important, even though we didn’t maximize our amount of garbage collected.

Staff are having difficulty in moving forward with the Portland Loo bathroom project. While there are urban renewal funds to cover the cost of procurement and installation, there is not enough general fund or parking tax resources to cover the cost of ongoing maintenance. Should we, at some point, move to paid on-street parking and see an increase in parking fund resources, we may be able to afford the ongoing operational costs of such a facility.

Ice Storm

The City has retained the services of an insurance consultant to assist the City in obtaining FEMA reimbursement and reimbursement from the City’s excess insurance carrier. The first meeting with FEMA, through Marion County Emergency Management, was last week.

We are running eight to ten contractor tree crews per day. About 85 percent of the service requests for trees have been inspected. Crews continue to concentrate on trees with hazardous hanging limbs. Areas receiving attention this week include:

- Neighborhood bordered by Union Street NE, Capitol Street NE, Madison Street NE and the Willamette River
- Neighborhood bordered by Pine Street/Salem Parkway, Madison Street NE, Fairgrounds Road NE, and the Willamette River
- Neighborhoods south of Kuebler Blvd. SE
- Ground crews making a second pass through the streets of West Salem for remaining piles of branches and debris

Work is also going to begin this week on repairing damaged sidewalks, curbs, and corner ADA ramps caused by uprooted trees.





A combination of crews are being used to address hanging branches and remove limbs and debris from parks. The areas receiving focused efforts are:

- Pioneer Cemetery (lots of work to do here and there has been some damage to headstones and markers)
- Bush's Pasture Park (spider lift being used for high height tree trimming)
- Geer Community Park
- McRae Park
- Woodmansee Park, including stream clearing

You should see many smaller neighborhood parks cleared as we finish the larger ones. Some of the high-height work with hanging branches and limbs and corrective trimming will literally take us months to finish. Work continues on a variety of streams and creeks.

Woodchip distribution sites will be restocked after weekend use

Residents should not be bringing yard debris to the curb expecting the City or the waste hauler to pick up the material. Residents should be using their green waste bins or hauling material to the transfer station.

Legislation

As approved by City Council's legislative committee, I have sent a letter to members of the House Committee on Judiciary regarding House Bill 3115. The letter highlights the City's active work with many in our community to reduce hardships that lead to homelessness of our residents and families with children and to increase access to affordable housing for those at-risk of becoming homeless. HB 3115 provides a framework for cities and counties to develop and update local ordinances with policies on public space management. The intent of the bill is to make more shelter available in local communities by 2023 and create a path forward for local governments to regulate sitting, lying, sleeping or keeping warm and dry outdoors on public property. The letter points out the bill as drafted is overly broad and unclear. Without amendments, the bill will require extensive litigation to clarify the scope. To avoid costly litigation which may restrict services to those most in need, amendments to HB 3115 would help to clarify the scope of the bill relating to the definition of public property, the type of laws the bill would affect, clarification of the reasonableness standard, and who has standing to bring a lawsuit against a local government under the law.

In anticipation of a federal transportation bill, staff are updating the McGilchrist Street project. We have submitted the project previously and have begun work on right-of-way acquisition. It is federally permitted and shovel ready. There will be formal process for members of Congress to submit requests for transportation project priorities. Representative Peter DeFazio chairs the House Transportation Committee.

Policing

For the hiring/selection interviews for the next police officers, Chief Womack added a community voice, a Western Oregon University graduate student. She participated on each interview panel. Of the 14 candidates who passed the interview step, eight are female.

Chief Womack has a three-phase plan for his first year. Phase One is complete. It was about building new relationships—meeting people, listening, learning, and observing. He held about 50 small group or one-one-one meetings involving more than 170 people and conducted 18 formal presentations with Q&A involving more than 300 people. The department is entering Phase Two, thoroughly assessing 10 key areas of how the department operates. Those have now been clearly identified and the assessment process is underway. In July, the department will begin Phase Three: strategic plan development.

Traffic Safety

We will be activating speed-on-green photo enforcement at the intersections of Commercial/Madrona, Commercial/Keubler, and Center/Hawthorne on April 1, followed by a two-week grace period to allow for community awareness. Our goal is to improve driver behavior and safety for everyone at high volume intersections. Changing driver habits will make Salem's roads safer for everyone who uses them.

Thanks for reading,
Steve