

SALEM CIVIC CENTER ALTERNATIVE

TOPIC: Civic Center Remediation and Remodel

REGARDING: Benefits of Alternate Vision

PROVIDED BY: Salem Community Vision

OUTLINE BY: Gene Pfeifer

The following outline presents the primary repairs, improvements and remodeling that are beneficial to the area Community; the City of Salem as a public body; the Salem taxpayers; Staff; and Consumers.

I. BACKGROUND

METHOD:

The process is defined as open public forum discussions of “wants” versus “needs”

- Prioritizing “needs” with a budget relevant to the appetite and ability of the Public as to bond impact;
- Establish the general scope with a budget limit;
- Focus on the design premise that, “Form follows function”;
- Use “micro” solutions, fix what needs to be fixed, rather than “macro”, tear down and rebuild;
- Provide an RFP for a “design and build” process, all the responsibility in one contract, that must conform to and foster the “needs” and budget expectations, similar to the benefits and outcome gained by the Courthouse Square Remediation;
- Award the contract based on local professionals as an important part of the design and build team;
- Only award the contract subject to the defined scope meeting the budget expectation, with no loopholes for changes for predetermined conditions.

NEEDS:

Police Headquarters:

The police headquarters function would be best if relocated. The Police Chief has defined his mobile police squad as being always ready and available, and function as many fully manned “substations” around the City. Most of the active police force units being on the road, it is unnecessary to have their perpetual presence at City Hall.

When needed to testify in Municipal Court, there would be a break in their other police responsibilities regardless. However, placing the Municipal Court in the same relocation of the police could reduce costs as well as time.

As to a police presence for the benefit of the elected officials, or staff, envision one full time policeman at the “Security-Visitors’ Information Center” at the base of the new elevator to Council Chambers. A second would be on duty any time the Municipal Court would be in session.

Structural Integrity:

All sections of the current Civic Center are in urgent need of deferred maintenance, structural and weatherization repairs, and seismic upgrading. Some of this work should have commenced four decades ago. To save the integrity of the functional assets of the Civic center, this work can no longer be delayed. This speaks strongly towards not just the reasonable continued use of the asset; but the assurance of safety to the public, even the public servants, who are unmindful that a hazard could occur at any moment; big earthquake, or not.

PROBABLE BOND FAILURE OF CITY'S PROPOSAL:

Should a bond election move forward with the city's present proposal, it would probably fail. That interprets to the reality that most of the funding that continues to be directed towards the current path will be wasted. The worst reality is that the "needs" will be further procrastinated. All then to further damage facilities in need of repair, exposure the public to unsafe conditions and the inability to implement the improvement of the Police Public Safety Facility into a more appropriate and safer location.

II. ALTERNATE VISION

Public Access and Reception:

- New east walkway from South Liberty
- Covered bench area along open landscaping into the Atrium
- New signage close to Liberty entrance
- New one way west bound driveway flow to the right from current S. Liberty approach that flows directly onto Vern Miller Plaza
- New elevator at the NE corner of the Council Chambers
- New glass enclosed "Security-Visitors' Information Center" at base of elevator
- Police attendant: security awareness
- Staff attendant: visitor information and bill drop off
- Elevator lobby at Council Chamber level
- Elevator landing and lobby at Vern Miller Plaza level
- Direct access to street level parking on "Plaza", alternating with Plaza functions
- Two unisex handicapped restrooms on Council Chamber level
- Use of Vern Miller Plaza for Saturday Market and other public use functions
- More public awareness and appreciation for the "Mirror Pond"
- Direct accessible access from Council Chambers to Vern Miller Plaza for Council related open air functions

Council Chamber Improvements:

- Rearrange presentation
- Council common seating and view direction
- Common direction for Council and Public audiovisual presentations

Mirror Pond:

- Add new aquatic plants.
- Fix and improve aeration system.
- Consider natural livestock for pond maintenance and esthetics.
- Seed other life forms.

Existing North Parking Structure:

- All 215 existing parking structure spaces will be saved.
- Remove all concrete finish caps on weather-exposed areas.
- Replace all membrane and drainage systems.
- Remediate structural water damage.
- Replace large concrete planter boxes with system segregated from primary membrane.
- New smaller planter assemblies to integrate with alternating plaza function and parking stalls.
- Consider possible expansion design planning over the same lower level north parking structure footprint for Vern Miller level parking; for needs in the future.

The Atrium, a Valuable Asset:

If the atrium was to be removed, it would be a very expensive process and hazardous to all occupants.

- Correct all the flashing problems.
- Put the skylights on a regular maintenance and cleaning program.
- Seismic remediation with large architectural bracing complimentary to the mass of the Atrium artistic assembly
- Atrium cover could allow for future office space expansion if necessary.

Remodel Space Vacated by Police:

28,000 sq ft to be remodeled for repurposing

- Remodel would be for new department needs, not redecorating.
Per staff, \$543,000.00 will be saved by relocation from other Salem lease locations.

Seismic Upgrades Throughout:

- The following areas will be upgraded in respect to current Code expectations; with emphasis on occupant safety and secondly, for building longevity:
 - North Parking structure;
 - Council Chambers;
 - Atrium;
 - Primary Office building;
 - Library;
 - Library parking structure.
- The expansion and contraction problem relevant to the connection between the North Parking-Council Chambers structure and the Atrium-Office will be segregated with an assembly consistent with the different modulus of expansion.

Disruption of Staff and Consumers:

- Less intrusive with “micro” solutions
- The completion of the police facility on a separate site will be accomplished without interruption of the Civic Center employees or the current police functions.
- After the Police have relocated, work may begin on the 28,000 sq ft for “micro” seismic and remodeling solutions.
- Personnel may be relocated without moving to other outside lease locations.
- The 28,000 sq ft to be utilized by the current City staff population prior to completion of the whole facility and then relocation of other off site City personnel.
- Some staff may have to temporarily use a portion of the Library.
- During work on the North Parking structure, parking will need to be at the “window to the west” and at the Library.
- Prior preparation for installation of prefabricated structures for the seismic improvement of the Atrium will allow highly technical completion in a matter of a few days.
- Police efficiency and City process not interrupted one hundred percent as it would be in the City’s proposal to keep the Police at the current location.

Natural Disasters:

- The “micro” solutions prevent any new construction in the lower, less stable alluvial materials in the Mirror Pond area.
- The existing structures on the toe of the South Salem highlands should experience less liquefaction in a seismic event.
- No new construction will occur in the flood hazard zone next to Pringle Creek; such area is only about 25 ft higher in elevation above the summer gravel bar in the Willamette Slough.
- The Mirror Pond location is one of the lowest in the core area of the City of Salem and exposed to a possible 150-year flood.
- Salem’s key public safety facility will then not be located in an environment subject to flooding in an inappropriate manner, as now is Salem Memorial Hospital.

III. CONCLUSIONS

1) This alternative is more sustainable.

By use of “micro” solutions, only a specific portion of exiting buildings will be renewed. There will hardly be any new construction. That means that far less new manufactured materials will be necessary, less natural resources, less fossil fuels, less manpower and less valuable revenue. This would be a great example of sustainable conservation of our Oregon resources.

Also, there will be about 300 parking spaces available by simply utilizing current assets. That also means that there are 300 spaces available for City staff and Consumers, rather than only 135 if the Police stayed on in this location. Therefore, there is room for office personnel expansion into the future and much less confusion than if the Police presence remained.

2) The Police Safety Facility relocates elsewhere.

- Relocation in a more expandable location will allow a long-term commitment without relocating or truncating the growth of the general City staff or the police needs.
- A separate building location would allow it to be expandable.
- A building set back farther from the street would be safer.
- A building with no parking under it would be safer.

- A facility with a perimeter fence, like our State Police and Armory, would make the vehicles and structure safer.
- Location on a wider, more open arterial would make faster access to crime and disaster events, and a safer perimeter.

3) This Alternative Solution provides great savings to the Public.

This alternate repair and remodel method of the Civic Center may cost \$20 million. The relocation of the Salem Police, and possibly the Municipal Court, by example of cost comparison to the Eugene Police relocation, assumes a cost goal of \$20 million.

That is a **\$40 million** combined cost **goal**; with the Police Facility and Civic Center repairs and upgrades as separate projects, and potentially separate financing or bond solutions.

The City currently acknowledges that the Civic Center and Police Facility, if built on the same current “Urban Island,” would cost in the neighborhood of \$80 million. This, however, has no regard to the probability that the entire staff will need to be located relative to disruption, safety hazards, and just the logistics of where is everyone going to have space when all the parking, the Atrium, the demolition are in the “macro” mode and all the employees need the same space?

Relative to the experiences apparent in the ODOT remodeling and the Courthouse Square displacement, relocation costs will be in the millions. Therefore, the current path may cost \$90 million or more.

The same could be said for this alternative model, but it is less disruptive. So, using \$90 million for the City’s current proposal, and \$45 million as the alternate, the ultimate bond costs over 20 years at 5 percent or so, may be a relative \$135 million to \$67.5 million. This is a difference in savings of \$67.5 million.

The notion that building on property that is now private and subject to property taxes, should not be considered, needs to be corrected. A site appropriate for an alternate police location may cost \$1.5 million. Let’s use \$2 million. So, the current rate per thousand for property taxes is just under \$20.00. Using \$20.00, if this property went off the tax rolls it would be a loss of public funding equal to \$20 times 2,000, or \$40,000.00 per year, or, compared to the same bond period, times 20 years, or \$800,000.00. Even if the City purchased a \$10 million dollar building to remodel, it would be 10,000 times \$20 equals \$400,000.00, times 20 years, or \$4,000,000.00.

These lost property tax numbers are very small in comparison to the additional property taxes of \$67.5 million that may be resultant from the City’s current proposal.

Additionally, we know that the City would save \$543,000.00 per year by no longer paying for lease space that the City currently occupies off site and will be moved into the space made available when the Police move out of their current 28,000 sq ft at the Civic Center.

Note two things. This outside lease issue means the City apparently is currently leasing outside space for \$1.62 per sq ft costs. And the \$543,000.00 shall be saved whether the Police build at the current Civic Center Urban Island, or elsewhere.

4) This Alternate Solution for a bond is more likely to be approved.

It seems abundantly apparent that the Citizens of Salem may pass a bond that costs them as much as \$67.5 million less over 20 years and does a better job functionally, socially and fiscally; for them as Owners of the public assets, as Property Tax Payers and as Consumers.