

# City of Salem narrows down possible police facility sites

Salem officials have narrowed the possible location of a new police facility to four sites.

After being presented with eight suggested locations by consultants, Salem Police Facility Council Subcommittee members directed architects to draw up preliminary plans and cost estimates for four sites.

Those findings will be presented during a work session tentatively scheduled for Jan. 21, 2016. Officials said they plan to hold a public hearing and make a final decision on the size, location and funding source (likely a general obligation bond on the November 2016 ballot) before spring.

This is the furthest officials have made it in the years-long process of getting the Salem Police Department into a seismically safe building, said Deputy Chief Steve Bellshaw.

In 2013, the city's plans for a massive upgrade to the civic center, at a price tag of about \$80.5 million, was met with resistance from Salem taxpayers. In October 2014, Mayor Anna Peterson appointed a blue-ribbon task force to explore other options. In May 2015, the task force recommended building the police station away from the Vern Miller Civic Center.

On Dec. 17, the task force's subcommittee, made up of the mayor and city councilors Warren Bednarz, Diana Dickey and Steve McCoid, met with representatives from DLR Group, a nationwide architectural firm that specializes in building police facilities.

The consultants recommended the new building be 148,000 square feet in order to house all of the police department's offices and dispatch center.

"It's quite a bit bigger than we had discussed in the past," said Allen Dannen, project manager and assistant city engineer.

There are currently no estimates for the cost of the project, Dannen said. When consultants present their plans in January, they will have a better idea of how much it would cost to acquire and build upon the properties.

"There's still a lot of things to be considered with those different sites," Bellshaw said.

Here are the four sites:

**O'Brien Auto Group**



## Buy Photo

**Property northeast of the intersection of Division and Commercial streets NE is among four possible locations being considered for a new Salem police facility. Photographed Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2015, in Salem, Ore. (Photo: DANIELLE PETERSON / Statesman Journal)**

This site, at 742 Commercial Street NE, topped the consultants' list of recommended sites.

It's 4.27 acres and made up of six parcels, the bulk of the site is already listed as being for sale. It's about 0.75 miles from city hall.

Dannen said pros for the site include its visibility to the community, the possibility it could be an anchor for development, it's in an urban renewal area and would be easy to acquire.

Cons are that a few small parcels would ideally need to be acquired and that there may be some environmental problems. Dannen said anytime construction is done in downtown Salem there's an environmental concern or something of historical or cultural value could be unearthed. That's because the area has been used for hundreds of years.

## Downtown Storage



## Buy Photo

**Property to the west of the intersection of Liberty and Broadway Street NE is among four possible locations being considered for a new Salem police facility.**

**Photographed Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2015, in Salem, Ore. (Photo: DANIELLE PETERSON / Statesman Journal)**

The site at 985 Broadway Street NE was ranked second by the city's consultants.

At 5.4 acres, the site is the largest on the list, but is an odd shape with 13 sides. It's made up of three parcels.

It's just less than a mile away from the civic center and next door to the O'Brien site.

Pros include its size, neighborhood compatibility and potential for urban renewal.

It's a bit tucked away, so it wouldn't be as visible as other sites, Dannen said. Consultants also listed potential environmental risk as a con.

## Windows to the West site





### Buy Photo

**Property west of Commercial Street SE, bordering Bellevue Street SE to the south and Oak Street to the north, is among four possible locations being considered for a new Salem police facility. Photographed Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2015, in Salem, Ore.**  
***(Photo: DANIELLE PETERSON / Statesman Journal)***

This is the only city-owned property in the final four. The property, at 500-696 Commercial Street SE, is just west of the current police station.

The property is made up of three parcels on 2.33 acres. There are still some sections of the site that would need to be purchased, Dannen said.

It's central location near other city offices, neighborhood compatibility and the ease in which people familiar with the civic center could find it are pros, Dannen said.

Since the site is small, it will drive up the cost of the project and could compromise efficiency of the new building, Dannen said.

### South of Civic Center



## Buy Photo

**Property between Commercial and Liberty streets SE, bordering Mission Street SE to the south and Leslie Street to the north, is among four possible locations being considered for a new Salem police facility. Photographed Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2015, in Salem, Ore. (Photo: DANIELLE PETERSON / Statesman Journal)**

Last on the list of top candidates is a block of 16 parcels located between Commercial, Leslie, Liberty and Mission streets.

At 2.3 acres, this is the smallest site. It's a half mile away from the civic center.

Pros for the site are its central location, community visibility and access to major arterial roads, Dannen said.

Cons listed by the consultants include the small site, high development cost and no potential for urban renewal.

Since the site is owned by multiple people and not all of the property is currently listed for sale, it would be more complicated to acquire, he said.

"We would negotiate with the owners," he said.

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