

## Letter: Community needs to have a say in site of new police station

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Mayor Peterson deeply shaded the truth at the March 24 City Council meeting.

After several people made public comments questioning the city's costly decision to build a new police facility at the Civic Center rather than saving tens of millions by building elsewhere in Salem, Peterson claimed this decision was made openly with plenty of opportunity for citizen input.

Untrue. I've researched this issue extensively. The lead staff person for the police facility project didn't disagree with my conclusion when I sent it to her, which is, the city of Salem decided to build a new police facility at the Civic Center without any public hearings or public discussion. City staff and the mayor made this decision.

The mayor should apologize for her misstatement. More importantly, she needs to rectify the previous lack of citizen involvement by forming an inclusive task force to examine alternatives to the city's \$80 million police facility and Civic Center proposal.

Facing justified community opposition, the city is backing off its plan for a November bond levy vote. This leaves the library and City Hall without essential seismic upgrades.

Salem Community Vision has a half-price \$40 million alternative. It's a better way.

Brian Hines