

# Vote 'yes' for new police facility in Salem, with an exception

Ballots will be mailed to Mid-Valley voters Wednesday seeking approval of a bond measure to fund a new police facility among other items. We're inclined to recommend a 'yes' vote with one exception.

In a rush to get this on the May ballot, the city has yet to release actual architectural plans for the new police headquarters.

And we understand why Salem moved with such haste. The 2017 fall ballot is likely to be crowded with outstretched hands.

First, the Salem-Keizer School District is studying whether to add a bond measure to the November ballot to fund district needs, and second, the mayor himself vowed at a work session to include a bond measure for seismic upgrades to the library.

This means there is a strong likelihood that Salem voters will be faced with taxing themselves three times in 2017.

Believing that voters rejected the police facility in November 2016 because of its price tag, the city scaled back the cost of the new police headquarters from \$82 million to \$61.8 million.

But in the rush to get the price down, the city jettisoned plans to add the 9-1-1 call center to the new police headquarters. We believe this is a serious omission, and one that will have the city coming back to taxpayers soon asking for more money to add 9-1-1 communications to the assumed new police facility.

Donors have raised huge sums to ensure the bond measure passes, \$89,950 as of this week. We think their efforts are better spent convincing the

city, since it's still in the conception phase and renderings haven't been released, to add a shell for the call center to the existing plans.

Television commercials and online ads promise that the reduced-sized and priced facility will meet the community's needs for decades to come. But we're skeptical.

It makes sense to have the call center in the new headquarters as it was in the defeated fall bond measure.

Rough it in, as they say in the building and remodeling industries. Site the call center, pour the foundation, frame it, lay out the basics without all the interior details. Then wait until more funds can be secured to complete it. But it gets built at the same time as the new police headquarters and saves taxpayers money in the long run by allowing for easier modification later.

City leaders argue, and we don't disagree, that our community's police officers can no longer do their jobs well from the cramped quarters they currently occupy. For instance, the police department is so confined, equipment for the bomb team and S.W.A.T. are stored off site and space for the crime lab is rented. Victims and alleged criminals pass each other in the halls.

Name an overcrowding problem and it exists at the current Salem Police Department facility.

If voters are going to tax themselves for a new police headquarters, they should get a facility that fulfills the city's needs for decades. Taxpayers shouldn't have the city in its rearview mirror, coming back again in a half dozen years looking to build the call center.

Call city officials and tell them to add a roughed-in version of the call center back into the plans.

And then vote "yes."

