

## Salem to pursue a runway extension

By Timm Collins

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The city of Salem is going forward with plans to extend the runway at the Salem Municipal Airport.

City councilors directed staffers to begin planning for the 1,200-foot extension project during a meeting Monday night. The project will allow the airport to potentially serve larger corporate jets and preserves the option for larger passenger service in the future.

The current 5,800-foot runway serves general aviation, military and corporate air service. SeaPort Airlines added nine-seat flights from Salem to Portland and Newport last month.

The council's action calls for completion of an environmental assessment and master plan which allows Salem to get in the queue for as much as \$14.4 million in Federal Aviation Authority funding during the next four years.

A similar funding combination of Connect Oregon II grants and FAA money paid for a recent terminal expansion project.

More FAA funding is needed for annual maintenance, sign improvements, and to improve the condition of the existing runway and taxiways.

The city plans to use part of the additional grant money to pay for maintenance to the runway electrical system and taxiway.

In other business, councilors voted to create a subcommittee to review the process of selecting an administrator of the Downtown Economic Improvement District.

For each of the past three years, approximately \$200,000 has been pulled from property owners downtown and used to market events downtown. Go Downtown Salem, previous administrator of the EID, used the money for First Wednesday events, flower boxes, holiday decorations and cleaning projects.

The deadline to apply for control of EID funds has passed with no takers, putting future of the district in question.

"There is no continuity in what the players downtown want to do," councilor Bob Cannon said. "I think the concept that is being proposed is to take some baby steps and get our arms around the people who are players downtown and have them arrive at a solution."

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