

## INCREASING FEES vs. CONTROLLING THE COST OF HOUSING

I submitted this write-up to the Corvallis, Oregon, City Council on June 3, 2024, for their consideration in deciding to approve the FY24-25 budget.

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Looking at the general fund financial forecasts in the Corvallis FY23-24 adopted budget and the FY24-25 proposed budget, it appears that Corvallis is going to keep raising fees residents see on their water bills to keep up with the increasing costs of government. It also appears that fees will be raised next year to cover a shortfall of almost one million dollars in the FY25-26 budget. Obviously these increases will increase the cost of housing in Corvallis to the detriment of citizens with lower fixed incomes.

An alternative to raising fees is to cut the budget and do without some services and the overhead supporting those services. The City Council needs to recognize the effects fee increases have on low income residents and cut the FY25-26 budget by one million dollars. Such a cut would preclude raising fees next year. Not cutting the budget is tantamount to saying that low income people are not welcome in Corvallis.

The last study I found on city priorities and program funding is a Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall survey conducted in 2010. A lot has changed since then. Corvallis needs to do a new study so future cuts can be made using current data.

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