



November 5, 2021

To My Elected Officials:

I am writing to you today to urge you to devote some of your budget surplus to improve conditions downtown and financially support Portland's cultural institutions, particularly those located in Old Town.

To be blunt, I feel as if the city has abandoned downtown and the results of obvious: increased crime, excessive trash, vandalism and graffiti and boarded up buildings dominating what was once a vital and clean urban core.

Saturday Market has struggled this past season, not only because of the impacts of Covid, but also due to downtown's horrible reputation, a reputation that has only gotten worse in Old Town. We have been forced to cut our staffing and budget substantially over the past year, including shuttering on Sundays. We remain financially precarious, in spite of receiving substantial federal aid along with some support from our landlord, Portland Parks and Recreation.

Next year looks less dire but without bridge funding Saturday Market faces an unknown future. We a major tourist destination that draws thousands to downtown ten months a year and a potential closure would be a devastating loss not only for our independent vendors, but for the city, as well.

I ask that you use some of your budget surplus to financially support Old Town Cultural institutions like Saturday Market and the Lan Su Garden. This crisis needs immediate attention and bridge funding is vital to our future.

Sincerely,

H Bierbaum

Howie Bierbaum
Executive Director