

**From:** [Christina M. Ballard](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment 072125 Agenda Item 2  
**Date:** Monday, July 21, 2025 4:46:47 PM

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Dear Mayor Hoy and Members of the Council,

I am a resident of Ward 7 and I am writing to address some concerns I have surrounding the recommendations provided in the Information Report titled: Improving safety and livability in high response areas (File 25-261) and the ongoing public debate about improving safety and livability.

As a new member of the Salem community, I have felt incredibly welcomed and valued. Through my work as the Administrative Coordinator of the Oregon State Hospital Museum of Mental Health, I have been able to meet with and partner with other nonprofits and businesses. As I always want to make sure I am giving back to my community, I wanted to be involved and was appointed to the City's Human Rights Commission. I also teach Strategic Communication for Claremont Lincoln University. I say all of this so you can understand where I am coming from, I do not represent either employer or the HRC in this letter – this letter is from me as one of your constituents.

While I have been an advocate for marginalized people in some way or another throughout my life, I was glad that my friend Lorrie Walker could fill me in on the issues here and get me involved. I am by no means an expert on curing the myriad of symptoms we seem to be facing when it comes to making downtown a safe and livable community for all – businesses and citizens alike.

Where my expertise does lie is in analysis of rhetoric and bias. After reading the previously submitted written public comment, listening to fellow constituents make public comment, reading the various reports produced and looking at the data, I do support most of the recommendations suggested in the Information Report titled: Improving safety and livability in high response areas, but there are some things I'd like you to consider.

Over and over again, through all the comment and reports provided on this issue, we see that the problematic crimes are livability crimes, which are crimes that are reflections of people having nowhere to sleep, go to the bathroom, eat, or live. This comes from business owners, the statistical data and various anecdotes that have been provided. We also see potential solutions to the situations that create the environment in which these "crimes" are most likely to occur – that is a lack of proper housing – which, I realize you cannot solve; however, you can implement some of the other solutions that have been proposed.

There seems to be a lot of support for volunteer teams offering water, coffee, and

minimal basic living supplies. There are several calls for public restrooms, which seems like a great idea with all the complaints of feces and urine. I understand that would require funding and people to clean and funding for that, but if feces and urine are such a problem, why not provide the most practical solution?

In his letter, Patrick Carney, co-owner of Salem Center Mall, identifies that there are a small number of people creating most of “threats” but then he goes on to suggest that ARCHES needs to be moved out of Downtown – and that is what I think the dangerous rhetoric is. As I mentioned in my previous public comment on 7/14, during the June 23<sup>rd</sup> City Council meeting, TJ Sullivan suggested that certain members of the community are no longer welcome downtown. I see no one suggesting that the business owners go elsewhere if they don’t like it, but it is clear there is a sentiment that enjoyment of downtown is reserved for people of a certain nature and others do not belong.

The vitriol I can hear in the voices and feel from the words others have written is palpable. There are people admitting to throwing feces and urine on people, calling for “pauper’s prison,” the fact that the ACTUAL VIOLENCE that has occurred downtown has been visited upon the unsheltered is ignored and the incident at UGM is used as a convenient excuse to demonize the very people who were victims.

At the same time there is gang violence and shootings – yet we are not discussing that. We are discussing the livability crimes, because they impact all of us, from the people committing the crimes, to the people who have to clean them up.

Do we need more resources for people with mental illness and folks experiencing homelessness? Yes, can this council solve all of that? No. But what you can do is implement solutions that make sense, solutions that cure the symptoms of the negative perceptions of downtown.

I am frustrated with the word “perception(s)” which I see repeatedly used, mostly by the folks representing the business community. Cleaning up the perception of downtown also should include addressing the bias which leads to a misunderstanding of the core issues.

In his letter to you dated July 14<sup>th</sup>, Jimmy Jones, Executive Director of the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA) stated:

Over the past several months, concerns have been expressed to this government about who is welcome in our community and who is not. I am disappointed that the Council has not taken the opportunity to clarify to the public that everyone—rich or poor, housed or homeless, black, white, or brown—is welcome not only in the downtown but throughout all of Salem. Over the past year, there has been significant pressure to push homeless services and residents out of the

downtown area. People living in poverty, regardless of how severe that poverty is, are ultimately residents of Oregon and American citizens. They have the same rights to life, liberty, and justice as the rest of us.

I wholeheartedly agree. I encourage the council to clarify that everyone is welcome in Salem.

Between the calls for teams of volunteers, the proposal from Church at the Park for their new Clean Start program, and the successes we can see in action in other municipalities that address the livability issues by providing public restrooms, trashcans and showers, there are many things you can do besides providing more police. More police will not take away the feces and the urine, it will not alleviate the fears.

The Information Report titled: Improving safety and livability in high response areas calls for immediately increasing the number of police. How about saving those funds for the HST and SOS team members that are recommended for next year? Why not do that now?

Everyone from the police themselves, to the business owners, to the general public seems to think the bicycle team needs to come back. While I understand there are financial constraints – there must be some way to make that happen prior to 2027. If the crisis downtown is the emergency Patrick Carney and others say it is, providing the things we know will have a positive impact in the short term makes the most sense.

Respectfully,

Christina Ballard

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

## Rachael Gangelhoff

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**From:** Scott W. Cantonwine <swc@cwci-investments.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 21, 2025 4:21 PM  
**To:** CityRecorder  
**Subject:** Public comment - downtown livability topic

Salem City Councilors:

Please accept this written public comment pertaining to the downtown livability discussion.

CWC Investment Company is a local, family-held company that owns several properties in the general Downtown Salem area. We deal frequently with issues that fall into the “livability” realm.

We understand there is not a simple solution in hiding just waiting to be discovered. However, the city and related agencies need to admit and understand that what is currently being done is not working. Daily, we deal with issues such as littering, loitering, criminal mischief, and more. We are not unique in our experience among downtown area property owners.

I believe one paradigm shift that needs to happen is separating the status from the action; meaning, these issues aren't problems simply because they're being perpetrated by homeless people. These issues are problems because they're happening. Two things can be true at once — as a community, we can guide individuals to resources to improve their lives, while also insisting that rules and laws be followed and enforced as written. These things shouldn't be mutually exclusive.

If we had the keys to the magic solution, we'd share them. However, a shift in thinking is a great place to start.

Thanks, Scott

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Scott Cantonwine  
CWC Investment Company  
C: (503) 510-7620  
swc@cwci-investments.com

**From:** [Dan Farrington](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#); [danfarrington@comcast.net](mailto:danfarrington@comcast.net)  
**Subject:** Monday 7/21, Safety Downtown Salem  
**Date:** Monday, July 21, 2025 4:11:44 PM

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I have lived in Salem since June 19, 1993, I have seen many changes downtown and safety is number 1, and business development and stability of those business is number 2. We need both for a successful downtown. City of McMinnville downtown slogan is "Downtown should be like our living room, clean, comfortable, and safe. I'm on the board of Be Bold Street Ministries, the board of Valor mentoring, and I mentor at the UGM of Salem. I also hold a full time job as Business Development for small businesses in the Willamette Valley for BBSI, and previous business owner for 21 years in Salem-Keizer.

First, we need to move Arches to another location on the outskirts of Salem, it is a place where they enable people, people are doing drugs in the parking lot, and attracting people that don't want to change, they are abusing the services and making a mess of our town. Across the street is the UGM that helping Men get off the streets and into a program that will actually change their lives. We need to separate them! It is not good for either one to be next to each other.

We need to hire the bicycles Police, 8 of them, back to downtown, find a way to make it happen.

Absolutely no free loading in downtown, clean it up. I went to watch my granddaughter perform at the Elsinore in June, 1:30 pm in the afternoon, weather was warm and all I could smell was urine. The manager said they have to move someone every morning and hose off the urine and feces. It was very sad and I feel sorry for our business owners and our guests who try to come downtown and support, this kind of thing, discourages them from coming.

We need to support our police officers and get rid of catch and release from the state rules. Let our Police and Sheriffs do their job!

Make Salem Clean Again!

thank you,

Dan Farrington

503-930-5974 cell

**From:** [Jameson Gideon](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Courtney Knox Busch](#); [tom@saalemchamber.org](mailto:tom@saalemchamber.org)  
**Subject:** SACC Comments for City Council Work Session (7/21)  
**Date:** Monday, July 21, 2025 4:45:07 PM  
**Attachments:** [Outlook-5qewbspix.png](#)  
[SACC Comments Salem City Council Work Session 7 21.pdf](#)

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Good afternoon City Recorder Office,

Please find the attached comments for tonight's City Council work session.

Thanks always and let me know if you have any questions.

Best regards,

Jameson

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**Jameson Gideon, JD**

Director of Business Advocacy

Salem Area Chamber of Commerce | 1110 Commercial St NE

Office: 503-581-1466 x 310

[jameson@saalemchamber.org](mailto:jameson@saalemchamber.org) | [saalemchamber.org](http://saalemchamber.org)



**Salem Chamber**

Convener | Catalyst | Champion

July 21, 2025  
Salem City Council  
440 Church St. SE, Salem, OR 97301  
**RE: Salem City Council Work Session-Public Safety**

Mayor Hoy, and Members of the Salem City Council,

My name is Tom Hoffert, CEO of the Salem Area Chamber of Commerce located in Ward 1. Our organization represents over one thousand (1,000+) local businesses and forty-five thousand (45,000) employees in the Salem area. The Salem Chamber has partnered with the City of Salem since 1884 to help businesses prosper so our entire community may thrive.

Today, our downtown community is struggling to survive. Businesses are experiencing damage to their property, trespassing, littering, defecation, theft, open drug use, and dangerous activity making our downtown unsafe and unwelcome for customers and employees alike.

We understand the enormous challenges associated with our friends and neighbors on the streets including mental health issues and drug addiction. Our business community is proactive in supporting Salem non-profits addressing houselessness and their contributing factors. Additionally, our business community is committed to working together for the revitalization of our downtown.

These business owners have often risked everything, taking on massive financial obligations to provide employment opportunities for our residents and offering the amenities that make living in Salem so special. The pressure placed upon business owners to sign the front of a paycheck for their employees while forgoing a paycheck for themselves is hard enough without consistent illegal incidents driving away customers and employees. As we have empathy for those facing houselessness, we should also have empathy for our local business owners.

Together we can create a healthy and safe community where people can get the help they need, the job they want, and start the business they always dreamed of. Our organization supported the livability levy to safeguard our public safety budgets, because a vibrant downtown is intrinsically tied to Salem's livability. Strong businesses create prosperous cities able to provide the services needed.

I'm thankful the City Council is working to improve our downtown by addressing issues associated with houselessness along with increased public safety programs so our business community may continue to operate in Salem and contribute to the much-needed employment and tax base.

Sincerely,  
Tom Hoffert, CEO Salem Area Chamber of Commerce

## Salem Area Chamber of Commerce

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Ted Ferry • President  
*State Farm Insurance*

### Executive Committee

Brandon Blair • Secretary  
*Summit Wealth Management*

Ryan Dempster • Treasurer  
*Willamette Valley Bank*

Lucy Escobar • VP of Membership  
*Lucy Escobar Coaching & Consulting*

Rich Duncan • VP of Advocacy  
*Rich Duncan Construction*

Mike Herron • Past President  
*VIP's Industries Inc.*

Jim Vu • VP of Events & Programming  
*Core Consulting Solutions*

Angela Williams • President-Elect  
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*Saalfeld Griggs PC*

Jim Sparkman  
*HomeSmart Realty Group*

Zak Stone  
*Zak Stone Photography*

### Chief Executive Officer

Tom Hoffert  
*Salem Area Chamber of Commerce*

**From:** [Randi Holbrook](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Downtown Safety  
**Date:** Monday, July 21, 2025 3:56:44 PM

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Hello,

I go to a women's focused gym downtown and we have had a couple instances recently where while walking to and from the gym we have felt unsafe downtown. We had to call the police and they responded but unfortunately were not able to do much for us due to the mental mindset of the individuals involved. I feel that additional security would provide peace of mind for those of us that would like to enjoy our downtown area.

A lot of times I don't feel safe venturing out in our downtown area. Which is too bad because I know there are extremely hard working business owners that would love more regulars to stop by. I think it's extremely important to the future of our downtown community that everyone feels safe to venture out. If not I feel more businesses would feel the need to relocate, and that would be regrettable.

-Randi

**From:** [Ashley Cunningham Fitness](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Increase Security In Downtown Salem  
**Date:** Monday, July 21, 2025 3:13:26 PM

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To whoever it may concern,

My name is Ashley Cunningham. I have lived in Salem my entire life. After attending the local schools, I choose to stay here to raise my family of five. I love Salem. I remember in high school walking around downtown and spending an embarrassing amount of hours with my friends wandering the downtown mall.

Please hear me when I say this is coming from someone who cherishes this town.

I now own a women's only gym downtown off of Ferry street. This will be my third year in this location. The first year had minimal concerning interactions. However the past two years, and several months in particular, we have had an increasing number of to put it bluntly, scary interactions with sketchy individuals.

I created my business to be a safe haven for women. Many having been assaulted and no longer feel safe in traditional gyms. It goes directly against my entire mission statement to have to drive/ walk members physically into the building because it is not safe.

I've gotten phone calls when other instructors are teaching because a man is screaming outside our door. Or lying directly on someone's hood. Or sleeping in the bushes right next to our door. Or physically pressing their face into our glass door, cart in hand.

I have huge sympathy for the unhoused. However I have an even bigger responsibility as a business owner to ensure the safety of my members. I cannot in good conscience promote my space as safe, while simultaneously walking members to and from their cars.

And I cannot single handedly keep this area safe. I can continue to circle during classes, be available 24/7 to make sure no instructor or member ever has to leave the building alone. But I alone cannot keep the streets of Salem safe.

I was completely baffled to hear there are individuals saying we do not need increased security downtown. I would love to show them the amount of messages I have gotten from women saying they are too worried about the current state of downtown to even come try my classes. And it's pains me to say, they aren't unfounded.

I love downtown Salem and know what it's capable of. And I really don't want to have to move my business. However the loss of growth is undeniable. I'm basically hanging on in hopes we turn things around in the capacity I know we are capable of. Downtown is the heart of Salem and should be treated as such.

But things aren't going to get better if we keep pretending there isn't a problem.

Increased security is one of the ways to get there.

I am urging officials, please increase security downtown. Before there are no longer businesses to add security for.

Sincerely,

Ashley Cunningham

**From:** [Kathleen Thorpe](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Item 2 Improving Public Safety and Livability  
**Date:** Monday, July 21, 2025 3:15:03 PM  
**Attachments:** [Council 07142025 v3.pdf](#)  
[Council 07212025.pdf](#)

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Please include for tonights work session.

Kathleen Thorpe  
2943 Tess Ave NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-510-0127  
[Kathleen@cleanyourdirt.com](mailto:Kathleen@cleanyourdirt.com)



# On becoming an Advocate

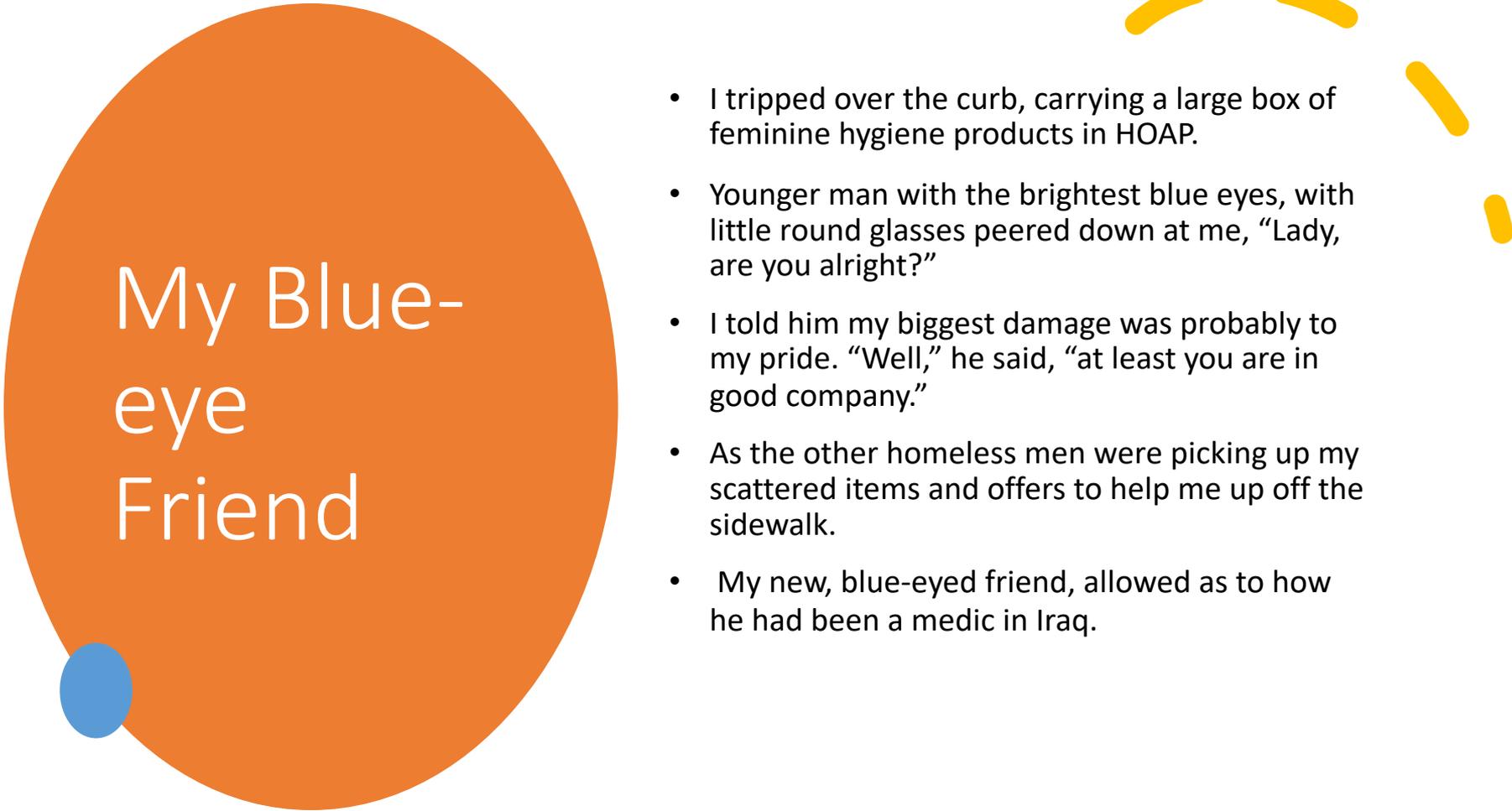
City of Salem – City Council  
Agenda Item 8  
Public Comment

Kathleen Thorpe  
2943 Tess Ave NE  
Salem, OR 97301

July 14, 2025

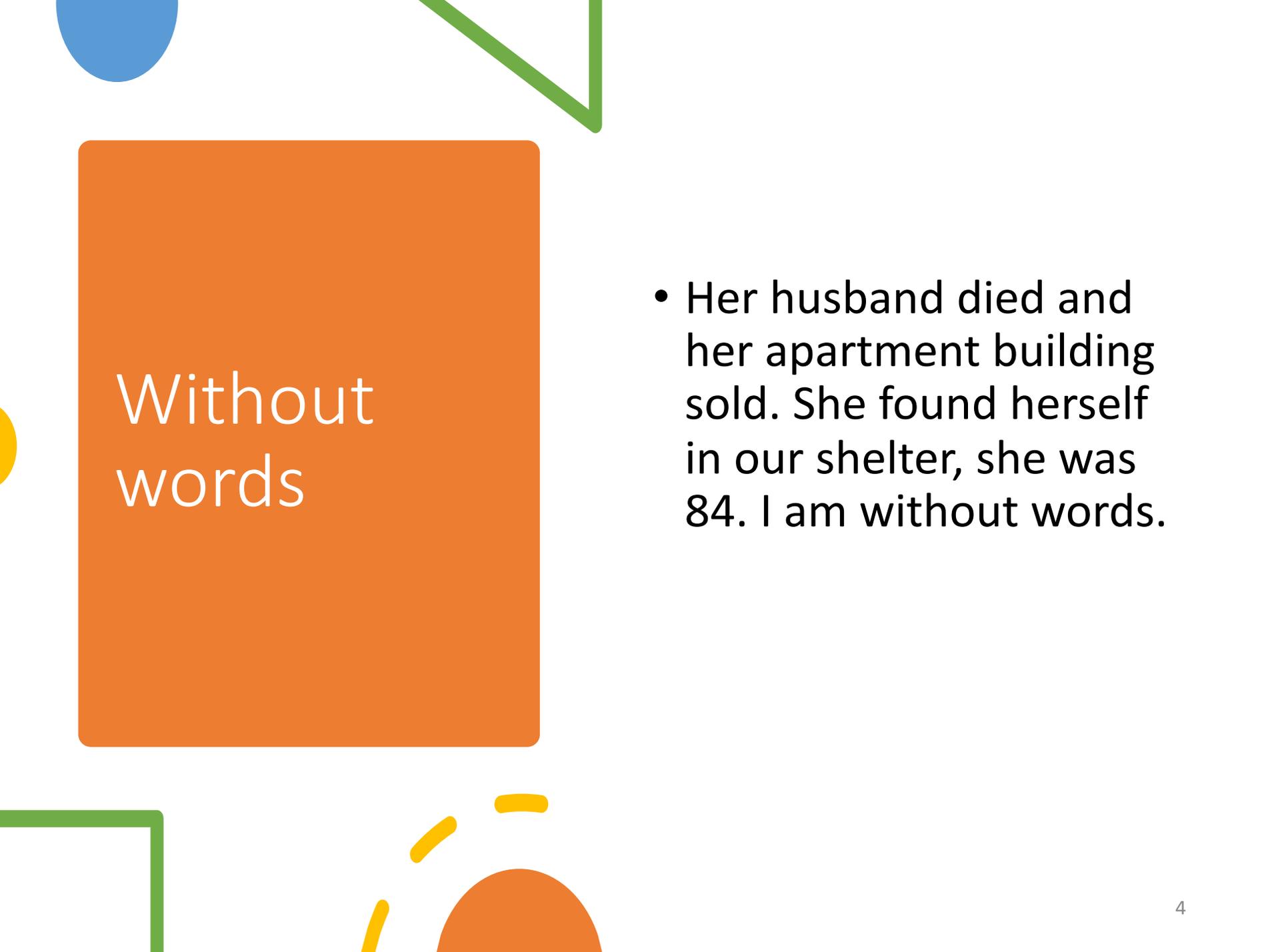
Really  
cold  
outside

- It was really cold outside. I walked into a building at my jobsite. Old nasty gas station to be torn down. I found children's toys scattered and the remains of a small warming fire.
- That broke my heart.
- Baby mom – what is going on?



# My Blue-eye Friend

- I tripped over the curb, carrying a large box of feminine hygiene products in HOAP.
- Younger man with the brightest blue eyes, with little round glasses peered down at me, “Lady, are you alright?”
- I told him my biggest damage was probably to my pride. “Well,” he said, “at least you are in good company.”
- As the other homeless men were picking up my scattered items and offers to help me up off the sidewalk.
- My new, blue-eyed friend, allowed as to how he had been a medic in Iraq.



Without  
words

- Her husband died and her apartment building sold. She found herself in our shelter, she was 84. I am without words.



- Young Women and mental health

Warming center, young woman comes running into the shelter to rescue the people screaming in the basement. There were no people screaming in the basement.

I chased her down – she wanted to save them, to take care of them. I wanted to save her, take care of her. She ran off into the freezing night.

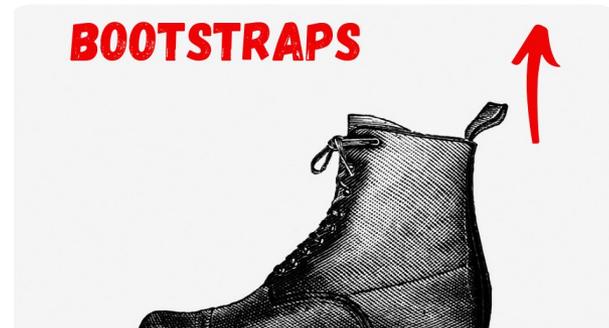
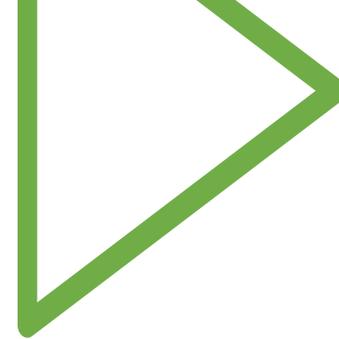
The homeless guys outside said she was schizophrenic.

I was a  
Small  
Business  
Owner in  
Salem  
30+years

- I did Environmental Consulting and Cleanup
  - Walk into many shuttered businesses
    - Found many signs of folks living in the most desperate of circumstances. Abandoned food, clothing.
    - And, I had to understand, I wanted to understand.
    - My upbringing had not prepared me for this –
      - I knew about Hobos
      - And making sure I was able to take care of myself

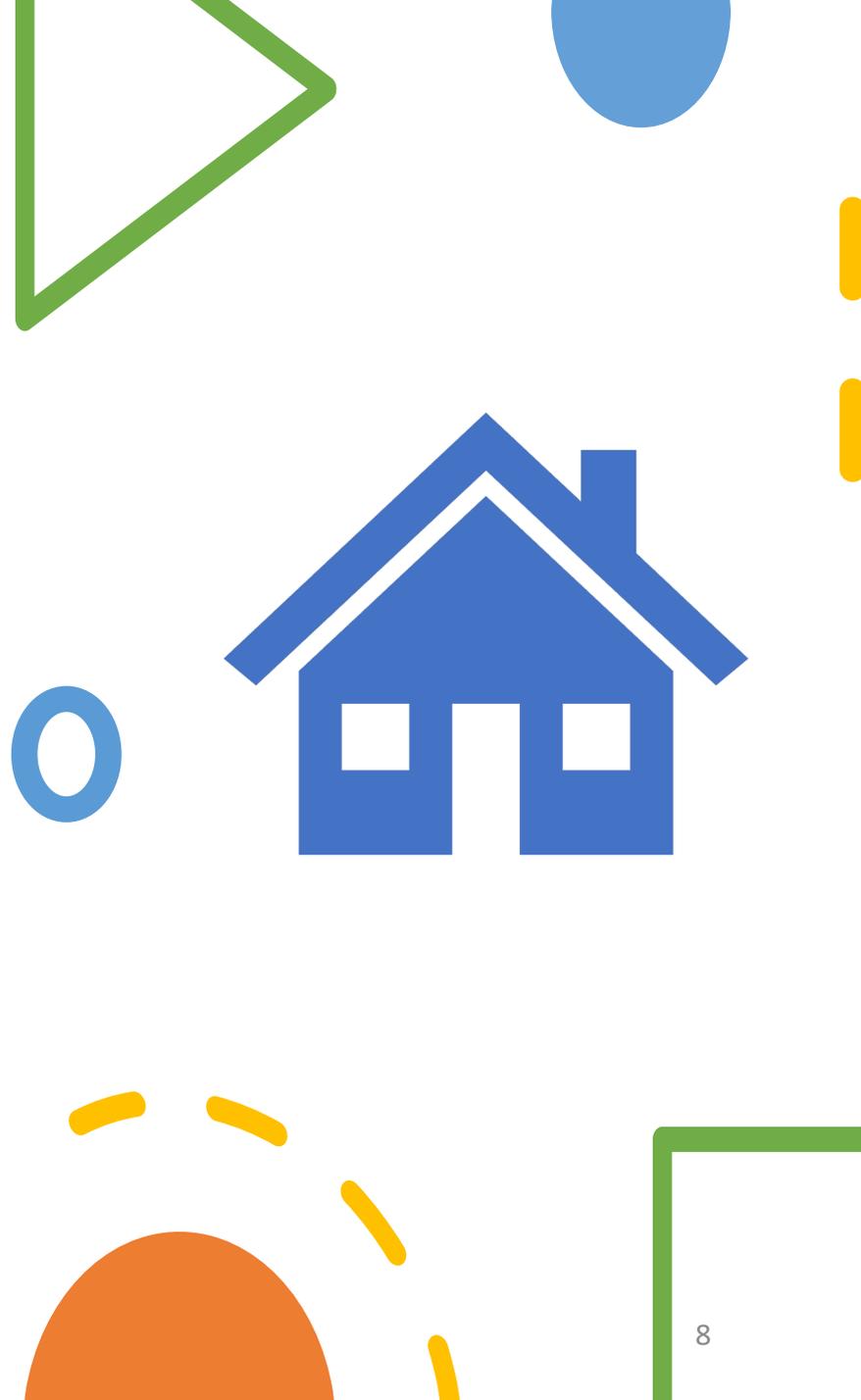
What are bootstraps? What do you do if you don't have any?

- a loop at the back of a boot, used to pull it on.
- get (oneself or something) into or out of a situation using existing resources.



# It is more that I will ever know

- Education – Understanding Homelessness
  - There is a lot to learn
    - Mental Health
    - Poverty
    - Aging
    - Illness
    - Domestic Violence
    - Addiction
    - Incarceration



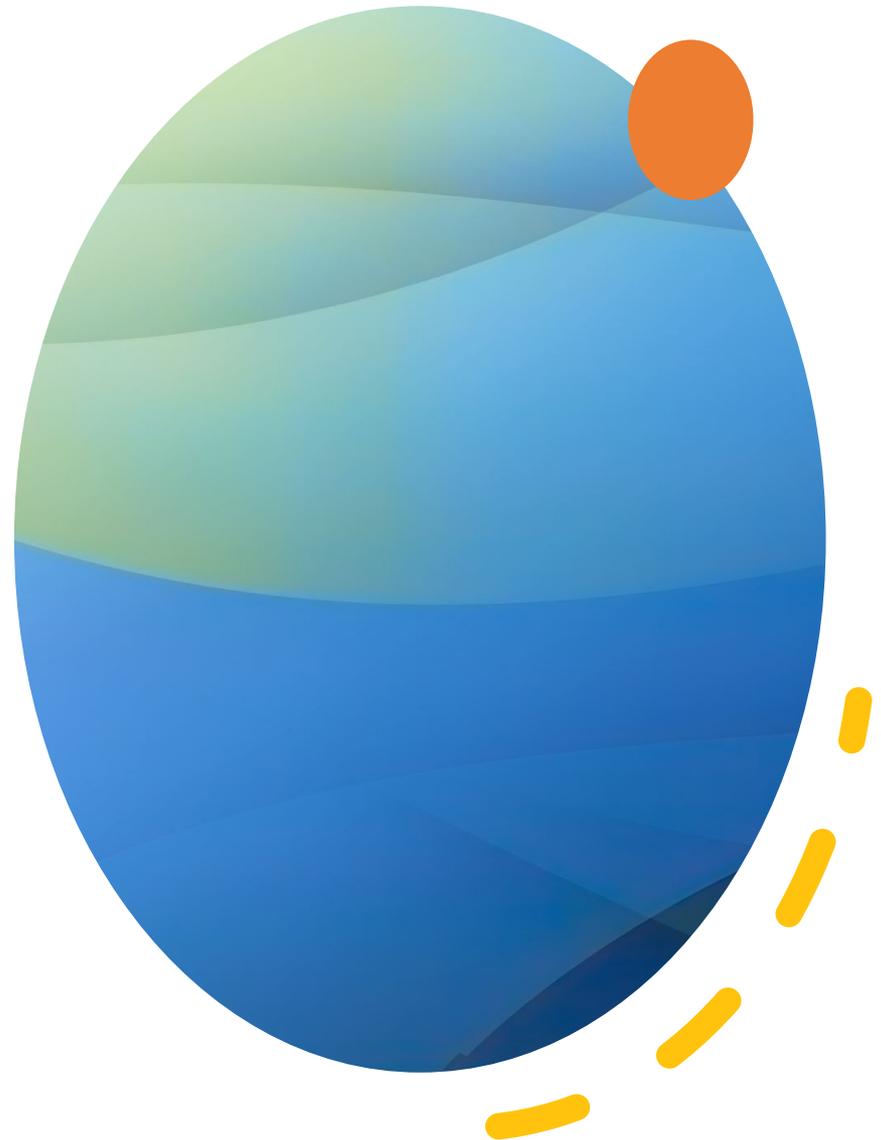
# Advocacy

Can we  
“fix” it?

- Kindness
- Listening
- Not one fix for all
- Community Support
- Silos are not helpful

Shelter  
Volunteer

- 15-years of advocacy
- “they” are people
- I have no fear but am sad when there are no pathways.



# Thoughts



## Focus on what we can do

Be kind

Value people



## Come together as a strong community

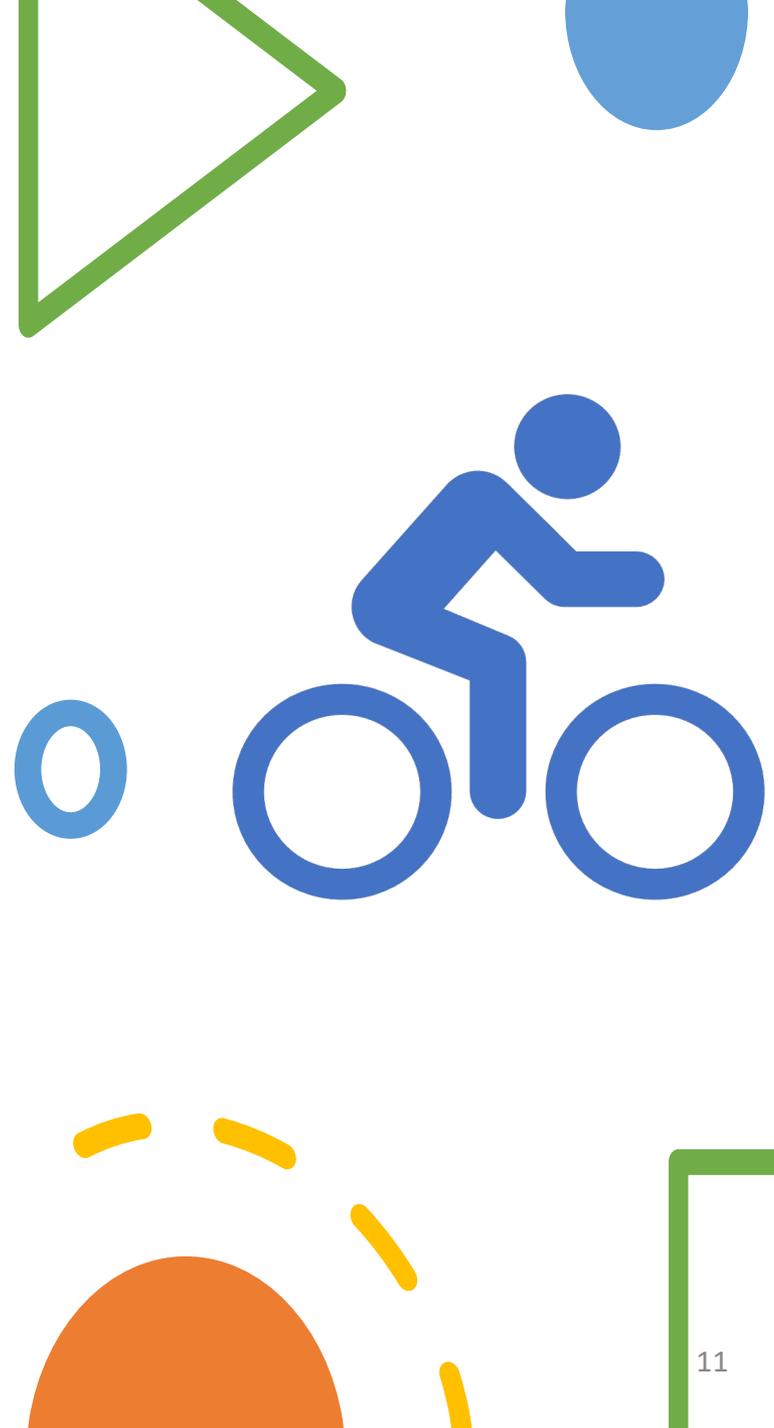
Collaboration

Creativity – SO many many rules severely limit even stop gap efforts

Focus on making Livability for ALL

# Enabling *livability* for ALL

- Continue what works:
  - Housing First with adequate supports
  - Re-activate SOS and bicycle police teams that focus on building relationships and offering supports
  - For mental health situations, create more first responder teams that include a mental health professional
  - Provide more basic human needs to enable more livability to people experiencing homelessness.
  - Enable more livability for ALL. It's a win-win.



It is going to get  
much worse  
over the next  
year -  
Economics

- As homelessness rates surge in Oregon, lawmakers have slashed funding for eviction prevention and affordable housing services in favor of temporary shelters.
- Oregon is facing one of its worst homelessness crises in decades. According to Portland State University's 2024 homelessness report, the number of people experiencing sheltered homelessness rose by 24% in a single year, the sharpest increase since 2007.

July 21, 2025

Mayor Julie Hoy  
Salem City Council  
440 Church St SE  
Salem, OR. 93701

RE: City Council Work Session –  
Downtown Public Safety  
Item 2. Improving Public Safety and Livability

Mayor Hoy and Salem City Councilors

Thank you for the opportunity for the community to comment on matters before the council. Livability and safety for all in the heart of our city has been a topic of interest and concern in our community for at least the past ten years. Eight years ago, the city proctored a series of discussions concerning livability and safety issues that mirror concerns that are shared today.

I had the privilege then, as I do now, to comment. Then, much as now, the unhoused advocates and service providers and businesses were working on finding solutions and common ground. The questions in the public eye at that time were finding shelter for unhoused, mental health services, medical services, garbage management and restroom use.

Today, the unsheltered population demographic has changed, the population has increased, mental health services have not been able to keep up and the general age of the unsheltered has increased.

This past week, the folks being sheltered at SafeSleep united included an eighty-three-year-old woman, and a badly injured seventy-two-year-old. Our injured guest had been staying at Cascades Gateway Park, was found two days after a fall, and taken to Salem Health. When she came to us, she was doing well with wound care, however one foot was so severely swollen that it was weeping, and she could not get a sock or shoe on. Staff was greatly concerned and discussed with her returning to Salem Health. Communications with Salem Health advised them that our emergency shelter could not care for her, as she needed to be able to perform acts of daily living, which include being able to walk and wear some type of foot covering.

I wish I had updates for you on both of our guests, but I don't. What I do know, is there are many unhoused with serious medical issues and they have no place to be. Our guest needed to keep her foot elevated, which was not possible as our shelter closes at 7:00 AM and all guests must leave the property and the area.

Being unhoused at any age puts a huge strain on physicality, for our senior unhoused population, the effects are compounded and have resulted in serious medical consequences including ICU care and death.

Lack of restrooms for public use, garbage cans, benches to sit, affect our downtown. People with mobility concerns unhoused or not simply cannot shop or go out to meals comfortably. These amenities were removed to limit a small number of unhoused from causing problems.

The July 14, 2025, article in the Salem Reporter regarding our downtown quoted Ken Haseltine, the owner of Olson's Fine Flowers, "he said waste in front of his business has been an issue. "Then you have the other ones who you come in, and there's sh— and vomit and food strewn all over. I pick it up and just dump it on them while they are sleeping," Haseltine said. Assaults on homeless have also included stabbings, eggs being thrown, and beatings so severe as to cause death.

It is clear there are concerns that need to be addressed and it is clear real solutions need to be found. We cannot continue to shove the unhoused around with "sweeps", nor expect the downtown businesses to tackle unsheltered on their own.

Community wide, concerns are rising regarding livability. Business and homeless service providers and advocates need to come together to provide solutions that work. No one can tackle these things alone. Mental health, aging, addiction, poverty, illness – and no place to "go", throw away trash, sit. Run an inviting business, appearance, sanitation.

There are things that can work and create better livability for all.

Sincerely,



Kathleen J. Thorpe  
2943 Tess Ave NE  
Salem OR 97301

503-510-0127  
Kathleen@cleanyourdirt.com

**From:** [Theresa Pugh](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public opinion for 7/21/2025  
**Date:** Monday, July 21, 2025 4:52:16 PM

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To whom it may concern,

I am most definitely in favor of a larger police presence in downtown Salem. As someone who has lived in and around Salem most of my life and has frequented downtown often for entertainment, shopping, and business over the years, it saddens me to my core to see what has become of the downtown city blocks. This community has worked hard to build a beautiful waterfront venue, to maintain parks for public enjoyment, and to entice visitors through tourism and exciting new food and beverage options. All of this, unfortunately, is going unnoticed and underused because people like myself, a young mother of three young children doesn't feel at all safe to use these spaces when I'm alone with my children or at certain hours of the day. I've witnessed with my own eyes homeless people checking car and business door handles as soon as people walk away. I've been accosted on the walking bridge by obvious drug addicts spewing hatred and jibberish. I've witnessed numerous fights in Marion park, not to mention the blatant drug use out in the open right next to a children's museum- since when is that okay for children to be exposed to?!?!? The the City of Salem politics thinks allowing this is humane for the people on the streets but it most certainly is not for anyone involved. Please provide more police presence in downtown Salem Oregon so law abiding, tax paying citizens can freely and happily use the resources that we have paid for.

Thank you,  
Theresa Pugh

**From:** [Jackie's Natural Cleaning INC](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public testimony 7/21  
**Date:** Monday, July 21, 2025 3:57:47 PM

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Good evening Mayor and Councilors,

My name is Jackie Roche. I live in Ward 4. I'm a lifelong Oregonian and have proudly called Salem home since 2016. I'm here tonight because I care deeply about our city, especially our downtown. Salem's downtown is the heart of our community and it's hurting.

Over the past several years, I've watched our downtown decline as accountability for unlawful behavior has weakened. I understand that certain laws made enforcement difficult. But as we begin to correct course, I want to emphasize how important it is to keep moving in that direction. We are not where we need to be.

After years of little accountability for theft, drug use, and disorderly conduct, it will take deliberate effort to rebuild expectations for what is, and is not, acceptable in our city. This cannot be done through compassion alone. It cannot be accomplished by removing law enforcement from the equation. It requires both accountability and support services working together.

I have friends who own businesses downtown. When I ask about their challenges, it's not always the homeless population as some might assume. Often, it's youth or repeat offenders who know there are no real consequences for their actions. They steal, they vandalize, and they return the next day. That must change.

Public safety measures deter crime. Police presence deters crime. We lock our homes and our cars for protection, we need to treat our city the same way. Law-abiding citizens should welcome law enforcement because it brings a sense of safety and stability.

Our downtown businesses are the backbone of our economy. They've risked everything to open and operate here. They shouldn't have to pay for the consequences of others' inaction. They shouldn't have to endure vandalism, theft, or escalating insurance costs because our systems fail to protect them.

We already have incredible service providers in this community, ARCHES, Be Bold, Church at the Park, Bridgeway, and others, offering resources and help to those ready to accept it. But when individuals refuse help and continue to commit crimes, our small business owners should not bear the cost.

As a business owner, this is very near and endeared to my heart, to see others who own businesses be successful. I am asking you, please increase accountability through enhanced police presence. Please continue supporting the outreach and mental health services already in place. We need both to make our downtown thrive again.

Thank you for your time,

Jackie

**From:** [Lisa Schneider](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Increased Downtown Safety  
**Date:** Monday, July 21, 2025 4:02:24 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[Vandalism1\\_08312024.png](#)  
[Vandalism2\\_08312024.png](#)

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Hello,

I am a property and business owner in downtown Salem. I understand that the city council is collecting comments/testimony in regard to downtown public safety.

I purchased my property at 437 Union Street, one block away from the police station, in April of 2022 and moved my business from its long-standing south Salem location to downtown in March of 2023. The issues that I've encountered with our unhoused population since relocating have been concerning, numerous and costly, with little to no recourse.

These issues have ranged from men and women exposing themselves to me, my staff and my clients by pressing their genitalia up against our building windows and fondling themselves, to frequent public urination and defecation, to constant littering, loitering, vandalism, and theft. I estimate nearly \$3k in property damage already to my building, not to mention the time it's taken to deal with these issues.

I've attached a picture(s) of one of the most disturbing vandalism events we've experienced in which a person stabbed our door keypads with a very large knife, resulting in over a \$1,200 in damage. To this date, I don't know if this person was ever held accountable, despite submitting a police report.

I urge you to please invest in the public safety of our downtown community.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or would like to connect in more detail regarding my experiences.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Lisa Schneider**

President | Principal Producer

Valley Insurance Professionals

437 Union St NE, Salem OR 97301

Office | 503.480.0499 ext. 8 ♦ Fax | 503.480.7596



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**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment 5: 072125 City Council work session - agenda item 2a  
**Date:** Monday, July 21, 2025 3:57:04 PM

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Mayor Hoy and City Councilors

My name is Lynelle Wilcox. I live on Norway Street in Ward 1.

I'm writing this 5th letter as public comment on Agenda item 2a: Improving Public Safety and Livability.

**Common ground:** As I read and talk to people on this topic, I think there is a lot of common ground. Most people understand that it is not fair and it's hard for businesses to need to spend time cleaning up after people. Safety and livability matters on all ends.

Most people seem supportive of re-starting the bicycle cop team, and/or Salem's Outreach and Livability Services (SOS) team. Most people are very supportive of any options that have mental health professionals as first responders to people experiencing a mental health crisis. I hope these common ground options can be implemented.

**Livability:** I hope people might also become supportive of more actions that enable more basic human needs to be met – restrooms open 24//7, trash cans, water fountains, places where people can charge cell phones. More livability reduces livability crimes and enables more safety and livability for ALL.

*(Side note: Many shelters, detox, recovery, and other programs and services require that people call daily, until an opening is available. Many unsheltered people who are ready to do the next thing to move forward are not able to call daily – there is not a way to keep phones charged. It can so easily look like someone isn't doing things to move forward, when it's often more true that the things aren't actually feasible when you have no place to live, sleep, or charge your phone.)*

**Perceptions:** Mental illness and homelessness can seem scary to many people. Yet homeless or not, many people experience mental illness. National statistics reflect that people experiencing homelessness are more likely to be the victims of violence than the perpetrators of violence against a stranger.

Curiosity, education, sharing kindness, building connections, and fixing aspects of our own fears and beliefs to align more closely with reality can make a huge difference. We each have the option to act with kindness and make changes in our own heads when our perceptions don't align with reality.

**Downtown:** I'm not sure why downtown is different than a broader goal of safety and livability in all of Salem. Yet focusing on downtown for the moment, a safe, thriving, livable, and bustling downtown seems like an easy common goal. As more people live downtown, there will be more people, more bustlingness. So some of this will build as more people move into the new apartments.

There are many factors in creating a safe, thriving, livable, and bustling downtown. Jim Scheppke shared amazing public comment with crime data. I hope you each read that and see that downtown is safer than some people are conveying.

Yet gang violence is an ongoing issue in Salem, and I don't know if the crime data separates that out. There are also times that gangs will accept a new member if they beat up a homeless person. And for THREE nights this week, some young adults were throwing eggs at people who are homeless. Men leaving bars have peed on homeless men as they are sleeping on the sidewalks. Women are raped and sex trafficked. Men and women are robbed, assaulted, and harmed. One teen beat a 64 year old homeless man to DEATH last year. So as we consider safety, I hope the violence against people experiencing homelessness is accurately weighted in comparison to livability crimes.

### **Some factors that affect downtown shopping:**

- **Online shopping:** Downtown and across the country, many malls and stores are struggling because online purchases have grown. This has nothing to do with homelessness.
- **Collateral damage:** And in Salem, we have the added aspect of collateral damage – as we removed benches so homeless people won't sleep on them, as we removed trash cans so homeless people won't sort through them, as we reduced public restrooms and reduced public restroom hours so homeless people wouldn't use them, we made things less and less livable for people experiencing homelessness.

AND we made downtown less and less accessible for people who have grown to an age or developed a health issue or disability that leaves them now needing frequent restroom breaks, water to stay hydrated, and/or benches to stop and rest before they can walk another block.

Many of these individuals loved downtown, and shopped and dined there often when they were younger. Many of these individuals were active and engaged community members, volunteers, and some even helped develop aspects of downtown.

Now many of these people and others are no longer able to hang out downtown to shop and dine and window shop because the very things we did to reduce the presence of equitable fellow human beings who are experiencing homelessness also excludes sheltered individuals who now need the very things we took away.

This is similar to the converse reality that when we increase disability access, we ALSO increase access to people who don't have a disability – families with kids in strollers, skateboarders, bicyclists, all benefit from curb cuts, graded entrances to stores, accessible restrooms, etc.

As we do things that will supposedly increase the safety, livability, and bustling-ness of downtown, it's crucial to also consider the collateral damage of our decisions. If we make things less livable for people experiencing homelessness, we are also reducing who ELSE can participate in downtown activities. Livability and safety for ALL reduces livability crimes and reduces collateral damage.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lynelle Wilcox

**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Julie Hoy](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Micki Varney](#); [Mai Vang](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment 6: 072125 City Council work session - agenda item 2a  
**Date:** Monday, July 21, 2025 4:00:11 PM  
**Attachments:** [CANDO Good Neighbor Guide \(1\).pdf](#)

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Mayor Hoy and City Councilors

My name is Lynelle Wilcox. I live on Norway Street in Ward 1.

I'm writing this 6th letter as public comment on Agenda item 2a: Improving Public Safety and Livability.

**Business support:** I care about livability and safety for all, and I have written mostly about the need for more safety, livability, and basic needs to be met for people experiencing homelessness. I come from that direction because like "Black lives matter", things are out of balance – all lives DO matter, but the inequity has been so deep for so long, that "all lives matter" doesn't reflect the imbalance.

Similarly, safety and livability for all does matter, yet safety and livability for people experiencing homelessness is so deeply lacking, that the disparity needs to be called out.

Yet I also care about businesses - I have helped to start up a few businesses, and I have invested deeply in most of my jobs. In past and current jobs, there is not enough time to get all the work done and to meet deadlines, and that's without also needing to ask someone to leave the doorway, and without having to clean up messes before doing the actual work I was there to do.

I've worked with/for some business owners who have invested so much time and money to build something, to create their dream, to serve the community, to create jobs, to contribute to the vitality of their town. I've seen them risk financial security and lose family time to create something. Those dreams and investments matter.

CANDO created a resource flyer, and advocates used to have that flyer, pasted below, to share with businesses, to offer ideas, resources, and support. In general, building relationships and offering kindness can make a huge positive difference. Yet the CANDO flyer shares specifics and resources that can also help.

I'd love to work with people to update that resource and to also see what other support we can offer. I look forward to opportunities to work together to enable more ease for all.

Thank you each for all you do.

Lynelle Wilcox

## THE BASICS

### Do

- Make eye contact and talk kindly to people.
- If someone appears to be struggling to meet basic needs, refer to **ARCHES (503) 399-9080** (9-4 M-F) or call Northwest Human Services **Crisis & Information Hotline 503-581-5535** (24/7).
- If someone is being disruptive, try to de-escalate the situation if comfortable.
- If someone is threatening harm to self or others, acting recklessly or violently, or having delusions, call 911.
- Install good lighting around your building; lock or turn off exterior power outlets.
- Let people know your property boundaries. If someone is doing something illegal and won't leave, call the non-emergency police line 503-588-6123 or 911 if the situation is dangerous.
- Keep the area in front of the business clean and well maintained. This encourages others to respect the area.

### Don't

- Don't assume people know your expectations.
- Don't offer food or money, unless you are equipped and willing to handle repeat requests
- Don't permit anyone to camp or store things on your property

## COMMON SCENARIOS:

### Someone is sleeping/loitering at your front door:

- Odds are, this won't be a one-off interaction, so it's good to establish a friendly relationship. Introduce yourself. Ask for the person's name.
- Politely and kindly ask them to leave in a way that deflects the request from yourself to a third party (e.g. the property owner asks them to leave, even if that person is you). This reduces the power dynamic, and will help in future interactions.
- Let them know where they can be, such as ARCHES , HOAP or Union Gospel Mission (limited hours/days), as opposed to only where they cannot be.
- If they are not cooperative, tell them you are going to call the police, *but would rather not*. Avoid confrontation and keep a safe distance if you feel threatened in any way. Call the non-emergency police line at 503-588-6123. If they become disruptive or dangerous call 911.
- If advice is needed on what to do about belongings, debris or potentially hazardous material left behind, call Public Works Dispatch (503-588-6333).

### Someone exhibiting disruptive mental health symptoms has walked into the business

- If they buy something, treat them like any other customer. If they don't, let them know this area is for customers, and politely ask them to leave, *only if you would do the same for any other customer not making a purchase*.
- If they are symptomatic and disruptive: Ask them to leave clearly and politely. Your safety, and the safety of your patrons is your priority. If they remain in the facility, call the non-emergency police line. If the situation feels dangerous, call 911.

### WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU WANT TO HELP SOMEONE:

- Get to know your neighbors living on the streets.
- Encourage/help them call services like Northwest Human Services or ARCHES.

### Northwest Human Services:

**503-581-5535** (24/7) Info/Crisis Intervention, Emergency Rent, Utility and Prescription Assistance, Access to Food Boxes, Cherriots Day Passes, Counseling Services

**ARCHES: 503-399-9080** (9-4 M-F) Referral Services, Drop-In Day Center (8:30-3 M-F), Housing Programs.

## KEEP IN MIND:

- Many organizations help people experiencing homelessness and work to increase affordable housing. Find an organization that you want to support, and ask them what they need.
- Salem's homeless service providers know how to help our homeless neighbors. The more you support them, the more they can help people get off the streets and into stable housing.
- Avoid perpetuating stereotypes, stigma and myths. People experiencing homelessness are not defined by their housing status. It's likely they've sought housing and/or shelter and there was none available. Likewise, people are not defined by any mental or physical health conditions, including addiction, they might be experiencing. It's likely they've sought treatment, but their conditions are made worse by their lack of stable housing.
- Advocate within your circle of influence to help make things better for neighbors who are homeless. This will help the business community, too.

- Your neighborhood association is here for you. CANDO meets from 6 to 7p the 3rd Wednesday of each month at First Christian Church on the corner of Marion and Cottage Streets. Here you can speak informally with your neighbors, your City Councilor, and members of the Downtown Enforcement Team, and weigh in on problems, plans, projects and trends.

- Follow CANDO's FB page, CANDO Archive blog and Twitter account to stay up on local news and politics affecting people experiencing homelessness downtown.

- Josh Lair and Matt Maciera with **Be Bold Street Ministries** have relationships with many who live downtown, and they are ready and willing to help you and your business when you have a difficult situation that doesn't warrant a police call. Josh can be reached at 503-576-9388, Matt at 971-273-8086.

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October 2019

## Downtown Salem GOOD NEIGHBOR GUIDE

In every city in the U.S., people are living outdoors and in places not fit for human habitation for extended periods. The vast majority are long-time residents of the area. Many suffer from addiction and poor mental and physical health. Legally, they are "homeless." They are also neighbors.

- \* Dos and Don'ts
- \* Common Scenarios
- \* How to Help



Download this Guide

<https://youcandosalem.blogspot.com/2019/10/cando-good-neighbor-guide.html>

**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment 072125 agenda item 2a  
**Date:** Monday, July 21, 2025 4:02:11 PM

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Dear Mayor Hoy and members of the Salem City Council:

Salem faces a crisis in homelessness. Where are the homeless to sleep, eat, defecate, urinate and bathe? Several unhoused people have told me “At least no one needs to starve in Salem.” This is largely due to the free dinners served daily at Arches. This is also due to the free food boxes provided by Marion Polk Foodshare.

We do have local heroes – Dan Sheets, Athena Gray, and Be Bim Bop Restaurant, which closes every Monday to prepare food for everyone in line at Arches. Also, there are Home and Host, which are two programs for teens, one through Arches and one through Northwest Human Services.

But the need is now growing dramatically, and the traditional providers are being overwhelmed. This is especially true as the Federal Government announces the elimination of the life-saving SNAP food stamp program.

Could Salem establish larger well-managed camps to provide low cost and safe shelter? Could Salem provide loo similar to those in Portland?

WE MUST.

Delana Beaton

1025 21<sup>st</sup> Street NE

**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment 072125 agenda item 2a  
**Date:** Monday, July 21, 2025 4:07:52 PM

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My name is Scott Russell and I work in Ward 1.

In the past 12 years I was homeless at the beginning for 5 years, and now I work at Arches for the last 6 years. During this 12 year period I have never heard of any acts of physical violence committed by homeless on sheltered folks, always the other way around, or homeless vs. homeless.

So why are we so afraid of homeless folks? They're humans, just like us, with their share of problems, addictions, mental illness, etc. A big difference is that these folks have no place of privacy to work out their issues, so they're left with working out issues on the streets in the public eye. Please consider this as you look at livability in the downtown area.

Thank you for your consideration.

Scott Russell