

Feedback from the August 20, 2025 Stakeholder event

On Wednesday, August 20, 2025, from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., approximately 60 people largely representing personal or professional experience with Salem's unsheltered population gathered to share their perspectives on Salem's safety and livability.

Interim City Manager, Krishna Namburi, opened the meeting, appreciated people coming to the listening session, and recognized City Councilors who were in attendance. In addition to Councilors Brown, Gwyn, Mathews, and Nishioka, members of both Salem Police and Fire Department leadership were present.

The majority of those present spoke with passion and sought opportunities to work collaboratively with each other, existing service organizations, and the City on a broader solution. A variety of perspectives were shared including from those with lived experience of being homeless, and those who provide direct service to those living unsheltered in our community. Many cited proposals before City Council to increase Police presence, pilot health and mental health response to calls for service, and stabilize funding for cleaning. Some offered ideas for additional supports and observed potential benefits of providing additional services to people living unsheltered, those visiting downtown, and to the businesses and property owners of the proposals.

Several shared their perspectives on currently un-met needs for people living unsheltered, recognizing some of these additions could benefit others in the community, including:

- pilot a mental health and health co-response
- greater Police presence with goal of trust building and reducing harm to people living unsheltered
- cleaning and stabilizing existing cleaning programs
- restrooms
- access to trash cans or dumpsters
- cellphone charging stations
- benches for resting
- access to drinking water
- storage for personal belongings
- more housing and sheltering options, including places to park a trailer
- more partnerships and pathways to better connect people with existing resources, and serve individual in need
- more collaboration among partners
- improving conditions of streets and sidewalks
- more mental health care in our community
- serving medical needs
- shelter outreach

Several spoke to their concern for the safety of those living in encampments and others living adjacent to them, worried about increasing housing instability and insecurity, and recognized youth and children as among those living unsheltered in Salem. Some spoke to a tension around services **as** being helpful or enabling, and sound accountability or enforcement of the "few bad actors." Others asked for more coordination among service providers and a greater emphasis on proven strategies for making change.