

Attachment 2

Feedback from the June 18, 2025 State of Downtown event sponsored and organized by Salem Main Street

Salem Main Street hosted a “State of Downtown” event on Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at the Reed Opera House. Approximately 70 people were in attendance, representing downtown businesses, property owners, employees, and service providers.

Main Street organized the forum and offered staff key issues to address, based on frequent questions and topics of interest. The staff panel included Interim City Manager Krishna Namburi; Fire Chief Dave Gerboth; Assistant Director for Urban Development, Dana DeKlyen; and Police Chief Trevor Womack. In addition, during the program, Marion County District Attorney Paige Clarkson was invited to address questions from the audience about barriers to enforcement.

The group was deeply engaged in the conversation, displayed a strong commitment to a thriving downtown Salem business community, and sought out tangible opportunities to come together and take action to improve conditions in downtown.

Participants shared concerns about safety and cleanliness of downtown including:

- Personal experience of threats to personal public safety,
- Community perceptions of public safety concerns linked directly to the health of local businesses and the vitality of downtown, and
- Concerns of increasing and aggressive threats of violence and violent behaviors.

Specific suggestions for improvement from the group included:

- Increase presence of security at parking structures, such as staffed entrances, and conduct marketing campaign about safety in parking structures
- Increase enforcement of people camping in doorways, move people and trash from sidewalks to keep them passable
- Develop concrete plan with timelines, take action on proactive solutions, report back
- Provide more Police presence, bring bike team back
- Reconsider civil penalties accruing to local businesses and property owners which may be consequences of behaviors stemming from untreated crises occurring downtown
- Look into opportunities to advance Salem Revised Code’s Crime Prevention District
- Consider adjustments to paid parking program such as offering reduced or no cost employee permits, staging program in phases to allow first hour free during an adjustment period, offer some type of validation program
- Provide more frequent and direct communication, including positive developments in downtown, consider news sheets door to door
- Better communicate how Parking District funds are being used

Staff will return in one month, in consultation with Main Street as host, to provide updates and receive feedback on progress.