

Safe Park Camping Unwind Plan

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Principles

Implement principles throughout each action and service outlined below. Plan implementation meetings will include each principle as an agenda item. Contracts for service resulting from the plan will include expectation to adhere to the principles. Further clarity on the principles will be provided upon request.

- Safety: Current [Center for Disease Control Guidance](#) includes importance of retaining connections with service providers, following safety protocols, having space for physical distancing, hygiene, health and housing resources. One local nonprofit employee observed, “if you start with safety, then they can go on a journey of healing.”
- Equity: Recognizing the historical impact of oppression on marginalized communities, lead with equity throughout.
- Trauma-informed: Recognizing the prevalence of adverse impact of trauma, adhere to trauma-informed approaches throughout.
- Individualized planning: meet people where they are, engage and work together to design shelters and resolve issues. “A cookie cutter solution is not viable,” one community partner observes.
- City Values: City values of Natural Environment Stewardship, Safe Community and Welcoming and Livable Community help convey what Salem seeks to uphold and balance throughout this plan.

Timeline of Actions

Throughout:

- Support street outreach partners who are at parks several times per week. Ask partners to collaborate to fill gaps and work with individuals, with recognition of

immediate same-day needs being top of mind. Utilize coordinated entry and HMIS data assessment systems through Community Action Agency leadership, training and coordination. Ensure all who are eligible and interested are enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan and other possible resources.

- Maximize enforcement resources to address reports of violent, person-to-person or property crime within and near the camps.
- Maximize utilization of:
 - Shelter beds
 - Warming network
 - Hotel rooms
 - Safe park vehicle spaces
 - Housing options
- Work with regional partners to find solutions for current gaps/needs:
 - shelter options for people with pets
 - population specific services such as particular communities or identities
 - sobering center
 - navigation center
 - increase in day center solutions
 - increase in overnight shelter solutions
 - increase in incentives to landlords to collaborate
 - increase in housing solutions, including support for more permanent supportive housing strategies
- Work with unsheltered neighbors in the parks and outreach providers to understand and solve for individual needs not addressed above. Work from the person's specific need to inform projects. Complete this table monthly:

Date	Estimate of number of persons camping at parks at beginning of month	Estimate of number of persons finding alternative shelter or housing this month	Estimated number remaining at parks at end of month
February			
March			
April			
May			

January 2021:

- Do not clear encampments or cause moving during January, unless each person relocates to a shelter or housing unit. This maximizes the ability to fully count

each person experiencing homelessness as part of the annual national Point in Time Count, scheduled for Tuesday, January 26, 2021. To maximize federal resources to the region, all who are homeless must be counted. The local Point in Time Count planning committee has made this request.

- Adjust emergency declaration to allow campers to seek higher ground at Cascades and Wallace during rainy months. This will include camping inside the berm of the developed area at Wallace and in the higher portion at Cascades. Camps are not permitted in the sports fields. There shall be no fires, terracing, or excavation and no damage to irrigation systems. Firewood is not provided by city staff. Getting to higher ground is important for safety for those needing time to evacuate should waters rise quickly.
- Proceed with allocation of sheltering dollars with area nonprofit organizations.
- Approve amendment to City Emergency Declaration relating to homelessness eliminating the cap on the number of safe park sites.

February 2021:

- If locations can be confirmed, open managed camp operations with Church @ the Park. Locations are currently under research. Assist interested campers with relocation.
- Support expansion of sheltering through Family Promise to support families experiencing homelessness.
- Achieve aspirational target of 10 additional managed safe park sites through Church @ the Park. Assist willing campers with relocating here.

May 2021:

- Assist interested, eligible campers with relocation to newly expanded Union Gospel Mission shelter.
- If enough additional shelter and housing options been provided, the camping restriction at Wallace Marine and Cascades Gateway parks may be reinstated
 - Engage remaining campers to find alternative location; provide all possible assistance.
 - Begin cleaning and environmental mitigation work.

If not, check in weekly on progress toward this end.

June 1, 2021:

- Allowance of camping at Wallace Marine and Cascades Gateway park ends unless extended by City Council.

Unintended Possible Consequences: work to mitigate

- Break of connection with service providers and campers (losing touch).

- Loss of safety and security for those who have experienced a regular and stable location to be and cannot find another as transitions occur.
- Increase in camping at other locations that are not permitted e.g. sidewalks, awnings, under overpasses, other parks and public right-of-way areas.

Communications

- Provide updates to the community and City Council at City Council meetings.
- Elements of communication with unsheltered neighbors at parks:
 - Accuracy is critical. Work with nonprofit outreach community partners and city resources to prepare written updates in accessible language(s). Stay in regular touch with street outreach providers to hear questions, dispel myths and resolve confusion.
 - Notice is needed. People need time to make alternative arrangements.
 - Relationships matter. Some who are camping at Cascades and Wallace are in regular contact with street outreach providers or community volunteers. Provide information to these persons to convey to the providers.
 - Use multiple media. Provide written simple signs, a telephone information number, material to share with nonprofit organizations and community volunteers, and social media posts to help convey accurate consistent information. Develop a resource card for city staff to provide to unsheltered neighbors.
 - Recognize technological and communication barriers. There is inconsistent and often poor access to mobile communication. One key challenge is the likelihood of losing touch with people; cell phones are lost, stolen or without charge often. Wi-fi strength varies or is not available for field submission of documents. Work with nonprofits to assist with reducing this where possible.

Alternative Housing and Sheltering Locations

The current shelter network generally provides:

300 general beds April - October

350 general beds November – March when temperature is not at or below 32 degrees

425 general beds November – March when temperature is at or below 32 degrees

15 domestic violence specific beds

An undetermined number of hotel rooms

48 safe park program spots serving approximately 96 people

The emerging shelter expansion may provide:

- Three managed camp locations, each serving 20-30 people, managed by Church @ the Park.
- An additional support for 70 families, managed by Family Promise.
- Shelter expansion at the new men's mission of an additional 150 men, managed by the Union Gospel Mission.
- An undetermined number of additional safe park sites managed by Church @ the Park.

Siting

- Site shelter or safe park locations in each neighborhood association area and ward within the City.
- Locations should also be near bus lines.
- Locations should provide a level of management.
- Locations can be strengthened with focus on particular populations.

Logistics

- Some are unable to leave locations due to unworking vehicles. A program is under development with NW Human Services to assist with vehicle repair to help people access safe park options without losing their vehicle asset.
- Transportation challenges may be present as we determine camping options. We will remain involved in the conversation to see what barriers to transport may be in place and how we can help.
- A dynamic experience is anticipated; as some people leave to access other sheltering or housing solutions, others are likely to arrive. Continued outreach is necessary.
- Work with Be Bold Street Ministries to increase cell phone distribution through the camps to strengthen connectivity.
- Research options to increase cell phone charging and Wi-Fi access; can "one-stop" spaces with these services be built at multiple sites to provide communication hubs?

Budget

- Costs outlined in the plan above are estimated to come from the existing City Council allocation for services.
- A significant sheltering gap remains which will impact the effectiveness of the plan. Emerging revenue strategy with regional partners will be needed. Further reports will develop detail as this work progresses.
- Costs to mitigate impact and clean at Cascades and Wallace will be determined following the conclusion of the camping program.