

## **Problem Statement**

**(submitted to Bloomberg-Harvard during the application process)**

In Salem, we believe every resident deserves to feel safe, supported, and connected, but too many individuals are falling through the cracks due to systems that are strained and fragmented.

As a City, we respond to criminal activity, housing needs, and behavioral health emergencies by organizing around community violence reduction and traffic safety initiatives, engaging with businesses in efforts to reduce theft and society crimes, providing funds for emergency housing options, and working in collaboration with known service providers to connect individuals to available behavioral and mental health services.

These tactics have led to a cycle where our efforts manage the symptoms, but do not deliver the sustained, transformative impact our community deserves.

Salem lacks a unified framework to collaborate with county and state partners, community-based organizations, and residents in the community with lived experiences who can provide critical thinking to devise and deliver solutions that promote safety, belonging, and well-being.

The City alone cannot solve this.

Through the Collaboration Track, we will focus our collective energy to co-create a new approach, one that promotes shared responsibility and inspires action for a safe, livable, and vibrant Salem.

We will pilot this effort in Downtown Salem, where safety concerns, unsightly behaviors, business needs, and civic life intersect most intensely — with a goal to expand our successes to other neighborhoods across the city.

We look forward to advancing our learning to a collaboration in northeast Salem later this fall.

Problem Area:

