

From: [Carney Incorporated](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Work session comments July 21, 2025
Date: Monday, July 21, 2025 2:58:59 PM

Patrick Carney- 401 High St Salem, OR 97301- partner in Macy's, Salem Center Mall, Movie Theater. I, along with many other property/business owners downtown are asking for more police presence/enforcement in the downtown core of Salem, really considered the living room of Salem. The addiction issue downtown is still a daily battle. Currently, it is known to all, there are zero consequences for misdemeanors or crime escalating to felony charges. The time to act is RIGHT NOW, we can not afford the time for focus groups or public venting sessions...we simply want and need action- bike cops would be a great start; getting back to proactive policing and engaging with the public on a daily basis. There is exciting progress in downtown with the Forge, JC Penny, Macy's, Mall & movie theater...ALL our national clients ask..."what are the leaders doing about cleaning up downtown?" There is apprehension/no interest from national well known tenants until there is action and effort in cleaning up making safe our downtown again!

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](#)

Please include for tonights work session.

Kathleen Thorpe
2943 Tess Ave NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-510-0127
Kathleen@cleanyourdirt.com

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



On becoming an Advocate

City of Salem – City Council
Agenda Item 8
Public Comment

Kathleen Thorpe
2943 Tess Ave NE
Salem, OR 97301

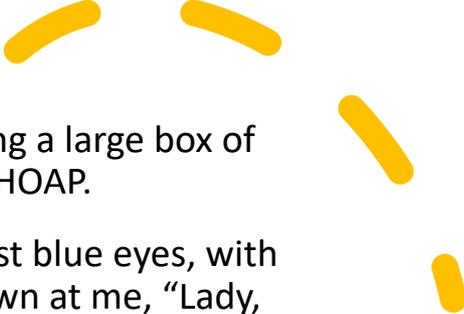
July 14, 2025

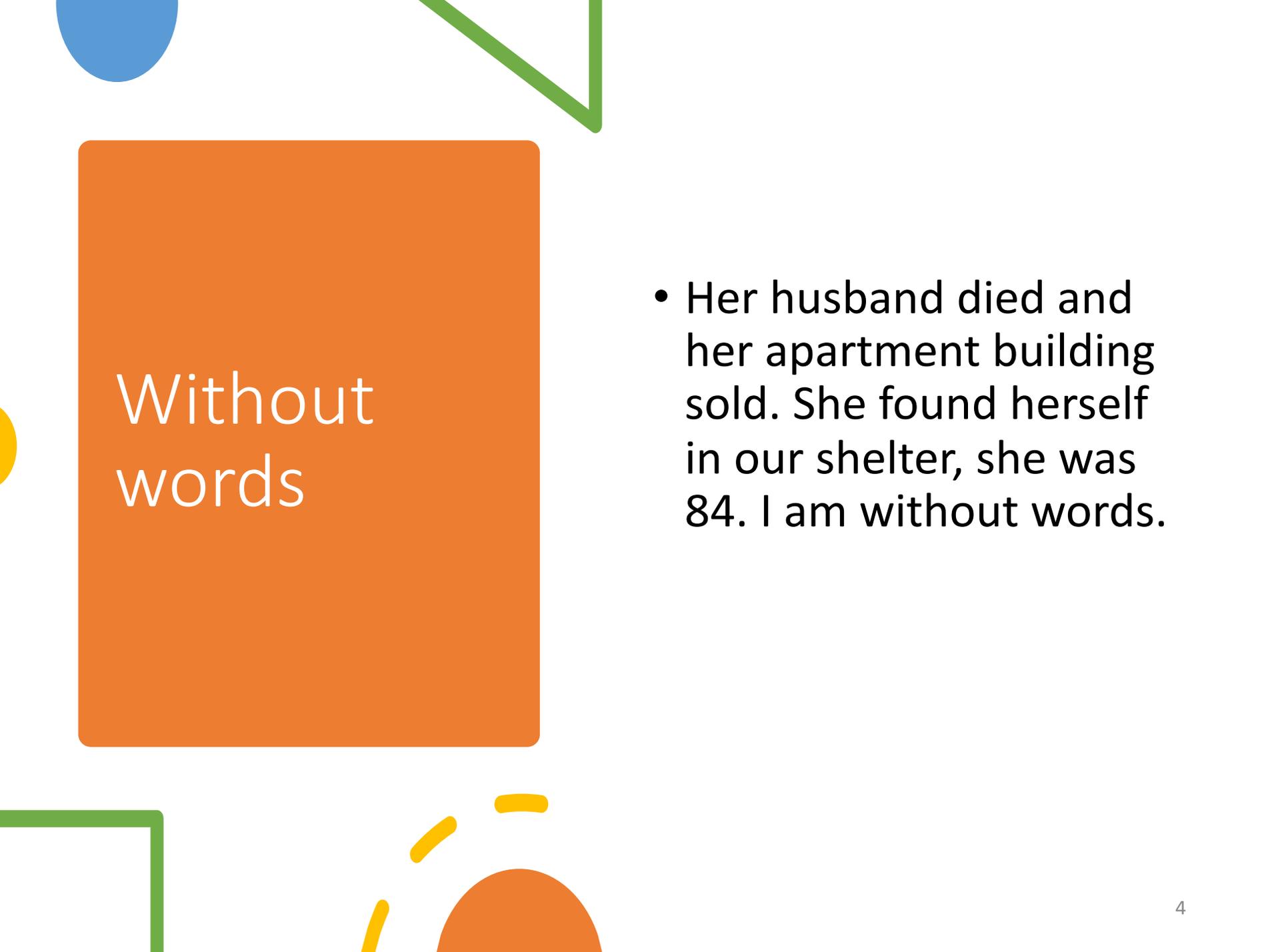
Really
cold
outside

- 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.

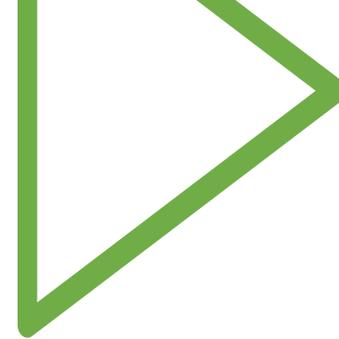
The homeless guys outside said she was schizophrenic.

I was a
Small
Business
Owner in
Salem
30+years

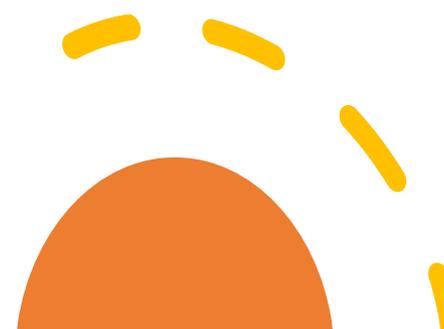
- I did Environmental Consulting and Cleanup
 - Walk into many shuttered businesses
 - Found many signs of folks living in the most desperate of circumstances. Abandoned food, clothing.
 - And, I had to understand, I wanted to understand.
 - My upbringing had not prepared me for this –
 - I knew about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

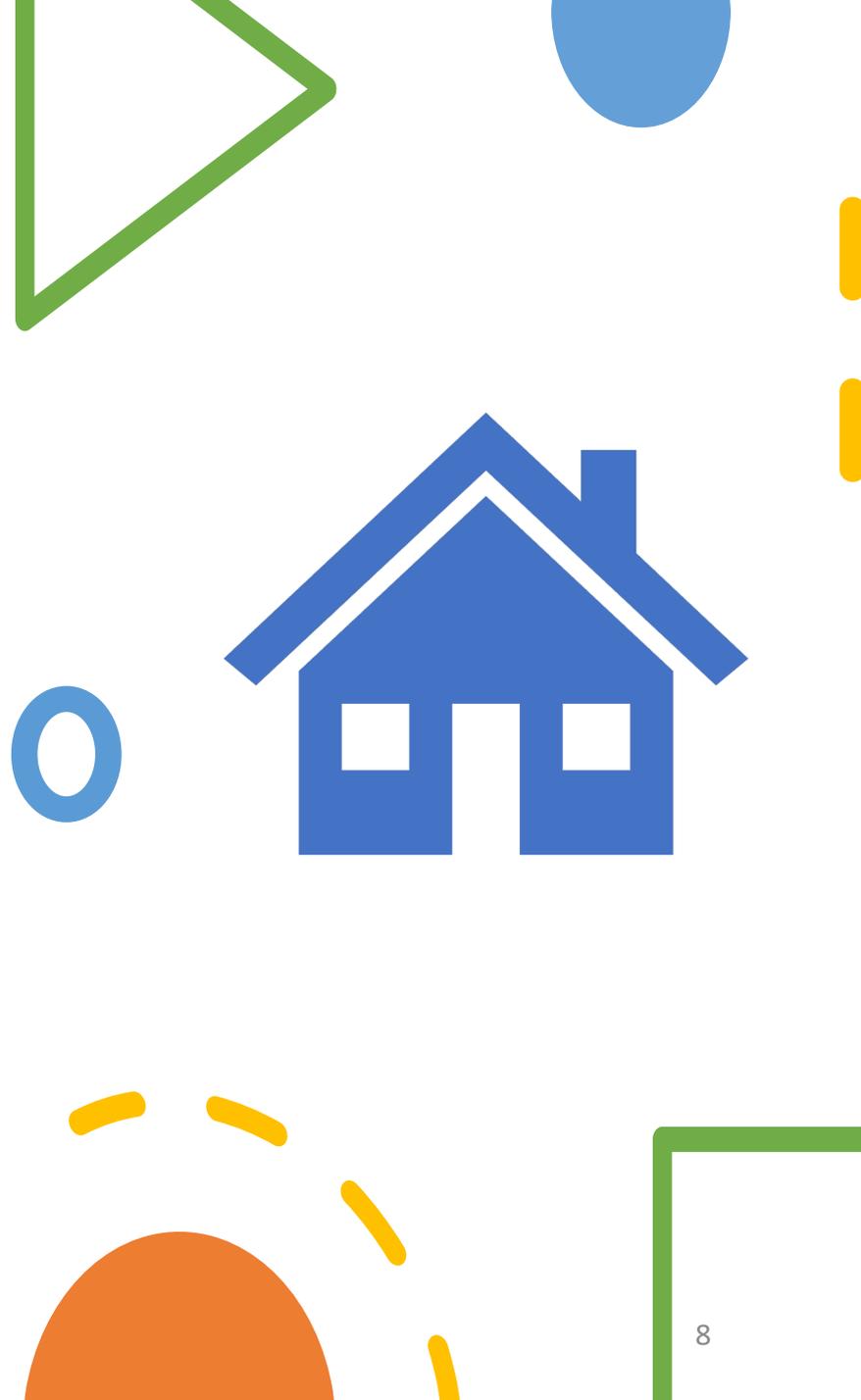


BOOTSTRAPS



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



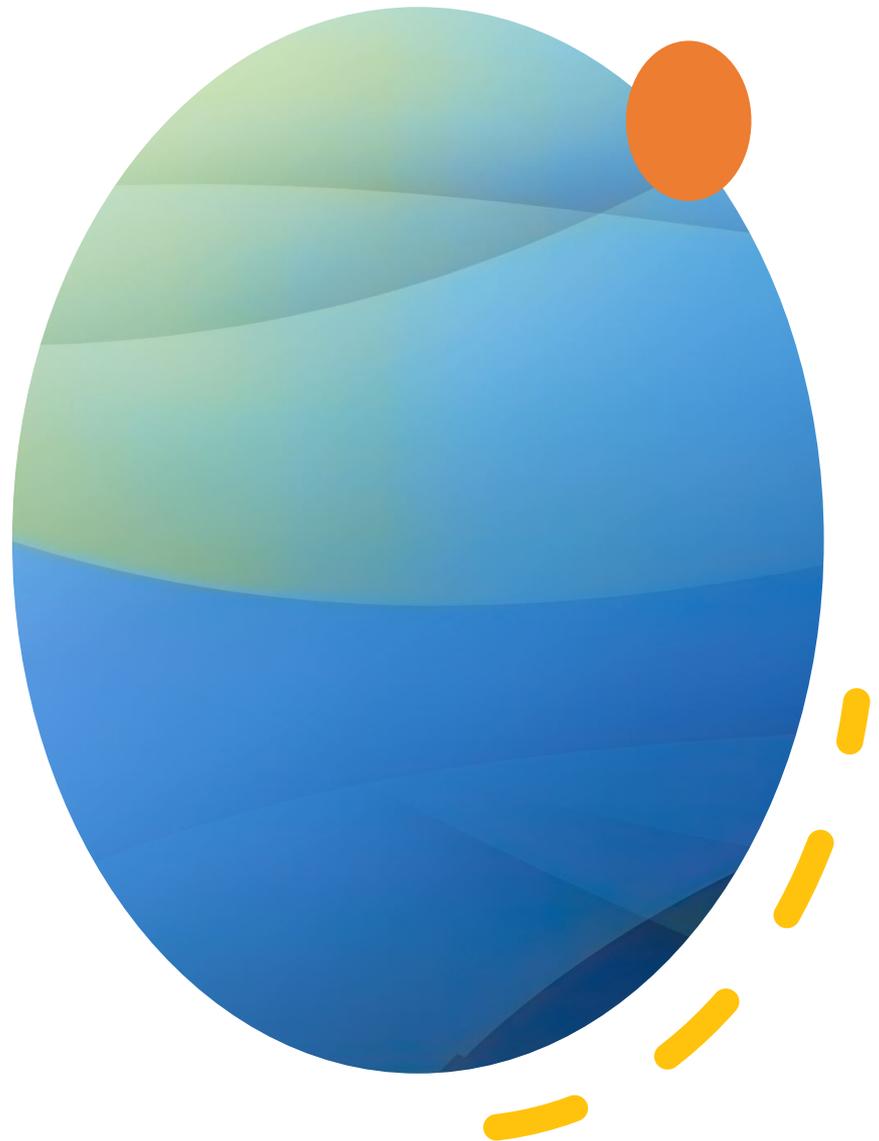
Advocacy

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

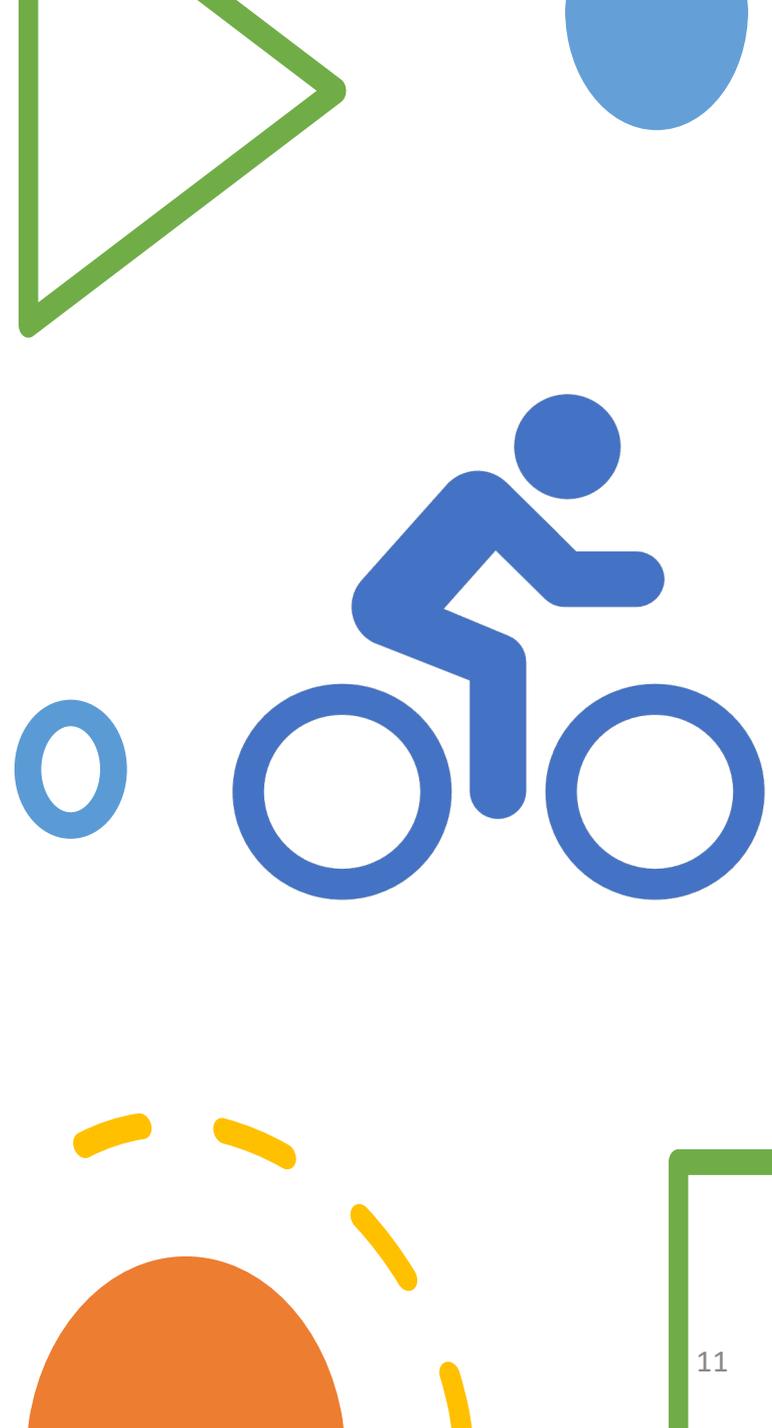
Collaboration

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.

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

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