

City of Salem Strategic Plan

Salem Sobering Center

Proposed Action

Concept

Establish a safe, clean and supervised space to become sober and connect to treatment.

Department Director Sponsor

Steve Powers, City Manager
Jerry Moore, Chief of Police

Staff Lead

Courtney Knox Busch, City Manager's Office

Purpose and Scope of Initiative

The City of Salem's Strategic Plan (2017) recommended the City partner to establish a sobering and recovery center in Salem to help meet its affordable housing, social services and homelessness goals. A sobering station was also a recommendation of the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Initiative Task Force.

The purpose of a sobering facility is to provide a safe, clean, and supervised environment for acutely intoxicated individuals to become sober and eligible for further treatment and other services. In Salem, the framework would result in eight to ten beds for alcohol-only sobering with resources for discharge planning with individuals. The facility would be operated 24 hours a day, by a non-profit addiction treatment provider. Ideally, the facility would be housed in a building of 4,000 to 5,000 square feet in proximity to hospital and other treatment providers in order to ease connections to other services such as a detoxification, out-patient, or residential recovery facility.

Initial estimates suggest the cost of operating the sobering facility would be \$600,000 to \$700,000 on an annual basis, funded – in part – by operating grants and contributions from Marion County, the City of Salem, and Salem Health. The partners are in dialogue with the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency regarding the possibility of co-locating the sobering facility with ARCHES, at the recently acquired property at Union NE and Commercial NE. Construction cost estimates are being prepared to develop a dedicated space with a separate entrance on a portion of the first floor. This will be an ongoing effort to help transition homeless in our community to housing and other services.

Current Situation

Law enforcement, fire, parks and public facilities staff respond to complaints and concerns associated with the behaviors and activities of homeless in our communities. Public safety personnel report as many as 20 cases a day of persons too intoxicated to

be safe to themselves or others if left on the street. Officers are not able to directly place these individuals in addiction recovery programs. Without a facility dedicated to sobering, individuals are either: (a) admitted to area emergency rooms (via ambulance at their expense, if they volunteer) for sobering purposes, or, (b) if a crime has been committed, lodged in an already over-crowded jail facility, impacting both the facility and community by utilizing the space for an unintended purpose.

Salem Hospital reports processing as many as 300 cases of public intoxication through their emergency room for sobering purposes every month. Persons admitted to the hospital for alcohol intoxication generally stay for up to four hours or more, twice the length of time of a typical emergency room patient. In 2015, Salem Hospital estimated Medicaid (primarily the Coordinated Care Organization) spent \$3.9M on alcohol and substance abuse related services in their emergency department. In other Oregon communities, sobering facilities are a viable strategy to reduce public cost, crime, over utilization of high cost emergency resources, the impact on limited police resources, space used within the jail, and officer time lost due to processing non-criminal offenders. Salem City Council has received testimony from Salem Hospital emergency room physicians on the need for a sobering facility.

Subject Experts, Business Leads, Community Partners

- Marion County, Administration and Sheriff's Office (funder, law enforcement)
- Salem Hospital (funder)
- Mid-Valley Community Action Agency and ARCHES (property owner of preferred site with opportunity for co-located services to individuals)
- Bridgeway Recovery Services (possible service provider)

Checklist

- ☒ How does the proposal align with the mission, vision, values and desired outcomes of the Strategic Plan?

This proposal for a sobering facility in Salem is directly related to the City's mission, vision and values and was recommended as an initiative in the affordable housing, social services and homelessness goal.

- ☒ Is the City currently working on this?

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- ☑ Is this a new initiative for the City of Salem?
 - Is the activity wholly within the City's capacity to influence?
 - What are the consequences of inaction or risk of doing nothing?
 - Is this initiative to be addressed by Council?

This would be a new initiative for the City of Salem. To develop a sobering center in Salem, the City would rely on partnerships with existing service providers and funding from other local governments and health providers. Agreements to guide the collaboration and funding for the initiative may be addressed by Council.

Without a facility dedicated to sobering, individuals are either: (a) admitted to area emergency rooms (via ambulance at their expense, if they volunteer) for sobering purposes, or, (b) if a crime has been committed, to the already over-crowded jail facility, at a cost to the facility and at an opportunity cost to the community.

- ☑ Is this critical to developing the organizational capacity (funding or staffing resources) to deliver a Strategic Plan initiative or further mission, vision or values?
 - Will this effect more than two functional areas?

The sobering facility proposal will help local law enforcement, parks and public facilities staff better respond to behaviors and activities of the homeless in our community by giving them an option for placement of individuals in need of a safe place for sobering. There is no such facility in Salem or in the surrounding area.

Cost Estimate

- How many FTE are working on it, will be working on it?
Several staff are engaged in development of the partnership and proposal for funding from grants and other sources, on a limited basis. Implementation will occur through a local non-profit service provider at a non-profit owned facility.
- What are the other annual costs associated with the activity? Are these one-time or ongoing expenses, for how long?
To deliver the sobering facility, staff are anticipating a \$350,000 capital cost to transition the facility to this use. On an ongoing basis, the annual operating cost is expected to be \$600,000 to \$700,000. Several sources are assumed to meet the cost of the facility. The partnership is anticipating a contribution of up to \$200,000 from the City.
- Is there any off-setting revenue associated with this activity? Estimate annual offsetting revenue.
While there is no off-setting revenue associated with this activity, there is opportunity cost associated with the absence of a sobering facility in Salem. Law enforcement, fire, parks and public facilities staff will have a new option for a safe place for individuals in need of sobering.
- Can it be managed within the current budget?
No. This work will require new and ongoing resources.

Project Schedule, Estimated Time to Complete (from date of authorization)

The partnership is requesting \$367,000 from the Oregon State Legislature to build out the sobering center at the Mid-Valley Community Action Agency's newly acquired ARCHES property. Pending funding from the legislative process, construction could begin as early as July 2018.

The sobering facility will require ongoing support from the City through a grant. The approach may be adjusted as the grant comes up for review.

Project Support

- Is it supported elsewhere in the community?
In Salem, the City, Marion County, and Salem Health have come together to develop a framework for a sobering facility. The need for a local sobering facility was initially identified as part of the Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative Taskforce. The proposal recognizes the growing cost to our communities of chronically homeless who exhibit signs of substance abuse. The model is based on the experience of the sobering centers in other cities, which relies on partnerships with the State of Oregon, existing health providers, local law enforcement, and local government. Funding support for this proposal will rely on grants from the City of Salem, Marion County, Salem Health and other health providers in the area, and others.
- What is the community benefit of the project?
A sobering facility would provide local law enforcement with options for placement of people too intoxicated to be safe to themselves or others if left on the street. With the benefit of a safe place for sobering, these individuals will have exposure to and may choose other options, resulting in a reduction of complaints and concerns associated with behaviors and activities of these individuals in our community.

Other Project Considerations

- How many people will this impact? Can we estimate ROI?
In 2015, Salem Hospital estimated Medicaid (primarily the Coordinated Care Organization) spent \$3.9M on alcohol and substance abuse related services in their emergency department. The cost of working with these individuals instead of working on other law enforcement priorities, other needs in parks and at public facilities cannot be estimated.
- Can this outcome be achieved through some other method?
No. Members of the partnership are focused on how to deliver service to these individuals, relying on models of best practice in Oregon.
- What are the tradeoffs of doing this now? Are there other implications of doing this?
Funding this facility will be an ongoing effort. This funding need will need to be considered against other priorities and budget constraints.
- Is this being done by others in our community?

There is no such facility in Salem or in the surrounding area.

- Has this been attempted before? What was the outcome?
A source of sustainable funding has been the most significant barrier to success of similar facilities in the past.
- Is there an activity which must be concluded before this can be considered successful?
This will be an ongoing effort.
- Is there an impact on our business practice? Are there barriers internally to success?
A source of sustainable funding is the most significant barrier to success of this facility.