

Implementation Plan Recommendations Downtown Homeless Solutions Task Force

In August 2018, the Downtown Homeless Solutions Task Force appointed by Mayor Chuck Bennett approved eight recommendations for addressing issues relating to homelessness impacting downtown Salem.

The following recommendations are presented in priority order as established by the Task Force.

I. Provide public toilet facilities that are available 24/7.

Most issues with public urination and defecation downtown occur overnight when there is no access to public restroom facilities. There is certainly a need for overnight and weekend restroom access. However, such access should not be expected to eliminate or even significantly reduce public defecation and urination. The City receives reports of individuals urinating and defecating downtown in public during business hours when multiple public restrooms are available within fewer than four blocks of the activity. While lack of restroom availability contributes to this issue, it is not the only contributing factor and providing additional restroom access will not prevent public urination and defecation. According to service providers and first responders, mental health, physical health, and addiction conditions are significant factors in where and when an individual may relieve themselves.

While public urination and defecation are criminal offenses, it is rare and impractical for an officer to be present at the time the offense occurs, or able to respond immediately to a non-emergency situation. Should 24/7 restroom access be established, it should be with the expectation of meeting the needs of those individuals who desire to make use of such facilities, but not as an end to public urination and defecation issues.

Implementation Options:

1. Partner with an existing service provider in the downtown to provide 24/7 restroom access.

Timeframe: Six to nine months - restrooms already exist at ARCHES and dayroom and sobering center improvements will be under construction in the first half of 2019. A partnering agreement will need to be in place along with budget approval to subsidize operations. Additional staffing will be required to provide 24/7 access.

Resources needed: Additional allocation of budget to fund services. A feasible mechanism for funding such services with minimal impact on the City's general fund would be to acquire the property using urban renewal funding. This would allow the Urban Renewal Agency to underwrite lease costs to free-up the

organization's operating capital in exchange for 24/7 access to restroom facilities. Projects in support of the City's Strategic Plan goals of addressing homelessness have been added to the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Plan by amendment in 2018.

Risks: As this would be a contracted service, risk to the City would be lower than if overnight restroom access was operated by the City.

2. Keep restrooms in Marion Park and Riverfront Park open 24/7. This option presents security, safety, and maintenance challenges. Service providers and the Salem Police Department recommend that 24/7 restrooms be staffed.

Timeframe: Six months - restrooms already exist, however budget approval will be required for additional operational hours and staffing.

Resources needed: Additional allocation of staff resources for cleaning, maintenance, and monitoring. Ongoing resource needs would have budgetary implications. The City would either need additional staff or would need to contract with a social service provider to provide overnight staffing, monitoring, and maintenance.

Risks: Based on past experience and input from police, social service providers, and parks staff, unsupervised overnight access is expected to result in illegal and/or inappropriate behavior that would lead to health and safety risks as well as property damage.

3. Include public restrooms available 24/7 in the new Salem Police Department building.

Timeframe: 2 years—Dependent on construction of the police station.

Resources needed: Additional allocation of staff resources for cleaning, maintenance, and monitoring.

Risks: Behavioral risks may be less than operating 24/7 restrooms in parks but can still be expected. These risks would be best mitigated with controlled access to the facilities, which would have staffing and operational impacts.

4. Construct Portland Loo type facilities on highly visible public property in the downtown that are designed using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles that allow limited privacy at the top and bottom of the structure.

Timeframe: 1 to 2 years—Dependent on budget, site identification, procurement and construction.

Resources needed: Budget for design and construction, additional allocation of

staff resources for cleaning, maintenance, and monitoring. Projects in support of the City's Strategic Plan goals of addressing homelessness have been added to the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Plan by amendment in 2018. Based on experiences in other communities, construction of such facilities ranges from \$200,000 to \$250,000 with annual maintenance and operating costs of approximately \$20,000, not including overnight staffing and monitoring. Urban renewal funds cannot be used for maintenance and operations.

Risks: Behavioral risks may be less than operating stand-alone 24/7 restrooms, but can still be expected. These risks would be best mitigated with controlled access to the facilities, which would have staffing and operational impacts. These risks would also be mitigated by the design of the facilities.

II. Endorse a simplified point of contact system individuals may call for support in dealing with issues related to homelessness and provide the community with easy to understand guidance on when to call 9-1-1 versus when to call the non-emergency number or the point of contact number.

Implementation Options:

1. Partner with Northwest Human Services and other social service providers to endorse and promote the iCarol system as the go-to resource for issues related to homelessness.

Northwest Human Services (NWHHS) has recently purchased and is implementing a product called "iCarol" into their Crisis and Information Hotline. When completed, NWHHS will be able to provide up-to-date resource and referral information via phone and internet for Marion and Polk Counties 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This information will exceed the 211 system in its accuracy of up-to-date data, as well as potentially serve as a single phone number to field calls from business owners seeking help or direction in dealing with issues that arise with downtown visitors.

Timeframe: Immediate, but contingent on establishing an ongoing partnership and meeting structure with service providers and the private sector. NWHHS has indicated that the establishment of an ongoing organizational structure to bring the City, service providers, and other stakeholders together in ongoing dialogue must be in place prior to moving forward with this recommendation.

Resources needed: An ongoing committee or other structure which would require City staffing commitment in terms of participation, and potentially in standing up a board or commission. If the City stands up a board or commission, further staffing resources will be required to comply with public meeting and public records law. Risks: Leadership in the sphere of social services and health care has typically been a role of county governments. There is a risk in the City stepping further into the role of social service funder and provider in that it would be difficult to step out of this role and associated financial responsibilities in the future.

Consequently, Marion County may be better suited as a convener of this type of ongoing meeting structure. The Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments which houses the regional Homeless Initiative Program Coordinator position or the United Way are additional organizations that may be suited to the role of convener for these ongoing discussions. There is also a risk to the community should the City not function in this leadership capacity and no other entity fills the gap. There is potential upside benefit in continuing dialogue and coordination with the private and non-profit sectors to achieve better coordinated response to issues and increased coordination of services.

2. Develop communication materials to share with downtown businesses and residents and the broader community that provide guidance on when to call 9-1-1 versus when to call the non-emergency number or the point of contact number.

Timeframe: Underway. Service providers are interested in seeing the creation of an ongoing partnership and meeting structure with the City and private sector prior to moving forward with publishing these resource materials.

Resources needed: Staff resources to develop the materials. This is being absorbed within existing staffing levels and an initial draft has been prepared. There will be a nominal cost for printing and distributing materials. Establishing an ongoing committee, board, or commission would require a City staffing commitment in terms of participation, and potentially in standing up and staffing a board or commission.

Risks: There is a potential to increase confusion if partnerships are not in place and if the messaging is not clearly constructed.

3. Encourage and facilitate ongoing dialogue between the Salem Police Department, other City staff, social service providers, and downtown businesses, property owners, shoppers, and residents on issues relating to homelessness, including periodic updates on community efforts and resources.

Timeframe: Immediate to 1 year, dependent on organizational structure.

Resources needed: This communication has started at the staff level with ongoing dialogue regarding approach and greater coordination of resources. At the downtown and city-wide levels, needed resources depend on the organizational structure and will require a City staffing commitment in terms of participation and convening, or a more significant commitment if the structure is to stand up a board or commission. If the City stands up a board or commission, further staffing resources will be required to comply with public meeting and public records law.

Risks: There is a risk in the City stepping further into the role of social service funder and provider in that it would be difficult to step out of this role and associated financial responsibilities in the future. Yet there is also a risk to the

community should the City not function in this leadership capacity and no other entity fills the gap. There is potential upside benefit in continuing dialogue and coordination with the private and non-profit sectors to achieve better coordinated response to issues and increased coordination of services.

III. Establish a Downtown Good Neighbor Partnership for those who live, work, shop, and visit downtown Salem that supports appropriate behavior and ongoing dialogue with stakeholders. In conjunction with the establishment of a Downtown Good Neighbor Partnership, City staff to assess Salem codes and ordinances to ensure that the City is appropriately balancing the rights of those who live, work, and shop in our downtown, and providing the City of Salem with the tools they need to address behaviors that negatively impact others.

Implementation Options:

1. Consider examples of similar behavioral policies already used by our social service providers, such as the UGM and NWHS.

Staff recommends not pursuing this option as it is best left to the non-profit service providers as such policies are not enforceable by the Police. The Union Gospel Mission (UGM) is working on a Good Neighbor Partnership Agreement to implement at their new location and have been reaching out to nearby businesses and the neighborhood association.

2. Develop a card or flyer that can be shared with business owners and with homeless individuals to inform them of alternatives for seeking services and shelter during daytime hours.

Timeframe: Underway. This response will be similar to Recommendation II, Option 2 above. Service providers are interested in seeing the creation of an ongoing partnership and meeting structure with the City and private sector prior to moving forward with publishing these resource materials.

Resources needed: Staff resources to develop the materials. This is being absorbed within existing staffing levels and an initial draft has been prepared. There will be a nominal cost for printing and distributing materials. Establishing an ongoing committee, board, or commission would require a City staffing commitment in terms of participation, and potentially in standing up and staffing a board or commission.

Risks: There is a potential to increase confusion if partnerships are not in place and if the messaging is not clearly constructed.

3. Revise Salem's ordinances to provide restrictions to camping or storing personal items on downtown sidewalks during business hours. The Task Force was not in consensus on this option and some felt it should not be included.

Timeline: Underway. The City's legal department processed code changes in 2017 and early 2018 to remove outdated code tied to panhandling and loitering from the Salem Revised Code. Staff has begun internal conversations about the need, if any, for changes to benefit and streamline affordable housing development. Staff has also analyzed recent court rulings to determine what impact, if any, they may have on current or future camping restrictions in public spaces and erecting structures on public sidewalks and on public property. Resources needed: These efforts are being absorbed within existing staffing levels.

Risks: The City must consider any future code changes in the context of existing and emerging case law.

4. Require site cleanup by campers who camp overnight on downtown sidewalks.

Staff recommends not pursuing this option as it is not enforceable.

IV. Pursue options for expanding downtown cleaning services.

Clean Team services are not dispatch services. The City does not operate a dispatch service to respond to cleaning needs. The Clean Team focuses on monitoring and emptying public trash cans when they are full after normal scheduled trash pickup (collecting about 70 bags of garbage a day), cleaning up tree wells, blowing down sidewalks to remove debris, cleaning public furnishings such as benches, and signs, and assisting with cleaning public parking garages. They work a set schedule and route, do not function as a dispatched response team to assist individual property owners, and they do not provide services on private property.

The current budget for operating the Downtown Clean Team is approximately \$94,000. This program is funded by Downtown Parking Tax revenue which can only fund services within the Downtown Parking District. This fund is subject to a revenue cap of the lesser of the Portland CPI or 2% per year. Since 2016, CPI increases have exceeded 2%, topping 3.5% in 2018. Construction Cost Index forecasts for 2108 are projecting 6-8% increases for 2018. This index is a better reflection of the rising costs for maintaining City parking facilities which are operated under this fund. Consequently, this fund does not currently have adequate revenue to absorb additional cleaning services without eliminating other funded expenditures. Additionally, contracting for cleaning services must comply with City procurement policies.

Implementation Options:

1. Explore replacing the Downtown Clean Team with a dignity of work model used in other parts of the country where the City partners with service providers to employ homeless individuals to assist in clean-up efforts.

Timeline: One to two years. Under state and local procurement rules, the City cannot contract directly with social service providers for these services. The most feasible option would be to establish a grant program to social service providers to provide additional services with the goal of also providing job training and mentoring, rather than replacing currently contracted services. The recommended option would be to add cleaning capacity through a grant program for peak demand hours and/or on days not currently covered by contracted services.

Resources needed: A grant program could not be funded entirely from the Parking Fund and allocating any Parking Fund resources to a new program would require reallocating funds from existing budget items. Through the budgetary process, staff could explore establishing a pilot project with a \$30,000 budget, to be funded in part by the Parking Fund and in part by a portion of the \$400,000 general fund allocation that has historically been budgeted each year for grants to social service providers. Administering an additional grant program and the services will require additional staff time and oversight but as a one-year pilot project, could be absorbed within existing staffing levels.

Risks: The City would need assurance that any grant recipients would provide adequate health and safety training.

2. Business outreach to and mentorship of homeless individuals to create partnerships which would encourage homeless individuals to clean up spaces where they camp in front of businesses prior to business hours.

Timeline: One to two years. This effort needs to be primarily led by the private sector with the City's role limited to that as a potential facilitator and convener. Given new leadership at the Chamber of Commerce, implementation of this recommendation may be longer term, and should be revisited if and when the City, service providers, and the private sector develop and ongoing structure for collaboration.

Resources needed: None at this time.

Risks: None at this time.

3. Ensure there are sufficient trash receptacles and methods for disposing of hazardous materials, such as needles.

Timeline: One to two years. Staff has been working on the development of a downtown streetscape project and concepts will be shared with the City Council in February, with a goal of adopting the baseline plan in the spring of 2019. New street furnishings will be selected after the baseline concepts are adopted, and will include new trash receptacles and benches, as well as a consideration of the

best way to handle hazardous materials such as needles.

Budget: Funding for the design and construction of streetscape improvements and furnishings will be included in the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Budget.

Resources needed: None at this time.

Risks: None at this time.

V. Support the development of additional storage for homeless individuals in need of a safe place to store their possessions during the day.

Social service providers are increasing storage capacity for their clients. Some of this added capacity has recently become available. Additional capacity will be available after the UGM develops their new men's shelter. Social service providers have made the intentional decision to not accommodate or condone the use of shopping carts and instead encourage the use of backpacks and luggage. They have also shared the need for bike storage for their clients.

Implementation Options:

1. Partner with one or more social service provider in the downtown to provide additional storage for clients.

Timeframe: Six months to a year. Projects in support of the City's Strategic Plan goals of addressing homelessness have been added to the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Plan by amendment in 2018, however a grant program or other mechanism to fund and implement these projects must still be developed.

Resources needed: Funding for capital projects associated with implementing the City's Strategic Plan will be proposed in the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Budget in 2019.

Risks: As this storage would not be City operated, risk would be low.

2. Provide storage facilities on City property.

Staff does not recommend this option due to the potential risks to the City and the lack of an organizational structure to administer and monitor this kind of storage program.

VI. Provide a hygiene center with showers and laundry facilities to serve homeless individuals in the downtown.

Implementation Options:

1. Partner with an existing service provider in the downtown to provide showers and laundry facilities.

Timeframe: Six months to one year – In early 2019, laundry and shower facilities will be in place at ARCHES, but will not be accessible 24/7. A partnering agreement along with budget approval to subsidize operations could increase hours of operation and increase accessibility to these services.

Resources needed: Additional allocation of budget to fund services. A feasible mechanism for funding such services with minimal impact on the City's general fund would be to acquire the property using urban renewal funding. This would allow the Urban Renewal Agency to underwrite lease costs to free-up the organization's operating capital in exchange for 24/7 access to laundry, showers, and restroom facilities. Projects in support of the City's Strategic Plan goals of addressing homelessness have been added to the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Plan by amendment in 2018.

Risks: As this would be a contracted service, risk to the City would be lower than if the City operated these services.

2. Provide grant funds to social service providers to operate shower and restroom facilities city-wide.

Timeframe: Six months to one year.

Resources needed: Funding to a non-profit to develop and/or operate these services. The most feasible option for supporting these services would be to designate for this use a portion of the \$400,000 of general fund revenue the City allocates for grant funding to social services agencies. In the upcoming 2019 grant application, the program could set aside \$10,000 in funding for applicants seeking to provide shower and/or laundry services. Should the City not receive any grant applications seeking funds for this purpose, the funds could be awarded to an applicant seeking funding to provide other services.

Risks: Low.

VIII.a. Support alternative ways of giving.

Implementation Options:

1. Reinvigorate the Giving Hope Not Help Campaign to educate the public on alternate ways to give.

Timeframe: One year. This effort should not be led solely by the City, but developed as part of any ongoing partnership and meeting structure with social service providers, the City, and the private sector.

Resources needed: Community resources to develop and market the materials. There will be a nominal cost for printing and distributing materials. Establishing an ongoing committee, board, or commission would require a City staffing commitment in terms of participation, and potentially in standing up and staffing a board or commission.

Risks: There is a potential to increase confusion if partnerships are not in place and if the messaging is not clearly constructed.

2. Repurpose coin parking meters downtown to be donation stations with proceeds used to fund downtown cleaning work programs.

Staff does not advise moving forward with this recommendation. Repurposing coin meters for this purpose would add additional elements to our downtown streetscape just as the City is developing new streetscape design concepts to enhance our downtown. Additionally, elsewhere in the City, parking meters are being transitioned to pay stations and smart meters due to the cultural shift from using coins to using cards, as well as the administrative expenses of collecting and processing coins.

3. Establish a text to donate program modeling the Salem, MA program to encourage alternate ways of giving, with proceeds used to fund downtown cleaning work programs.

Timeframe: One year. This effort should not be led solely by the City, but developed as part of any ongoing partnership and meeting structure with social service providers, the City, and the private sector.

Resources needed: Staff resources to develop the tools or funding to contract out development of the tools. Establishing an ongoing committee, board, or commission would require a City staffing commitment in terms of participation, and potentially in standing up and staffing a board or commission.

Risks: There is a potential to increase confusion if partnerships are not in place and if the messaging is not clearly constructed.

AND

- VII.b. Encourage property owners to make building and site modifications that implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and provide Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Area grants for improvements that meet grant criteria.**

Implementation Options:

1. Provide property and business owners within the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Area with information on what types of CPTED improvements would qualify for a grant through the Urban Renewal Agency.

Timeframe: Six to nine months

Resources needed: Projects in support of the City's Strategic Plan goals of addressing homelessness have been added to the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Plan by amendment in 2018. Staff will be developing a new grant program in early 2019 and proposing a funding to support the new program as a part of the 2019 budget development process.

Risks: Low.