

Work Plan Outline
for the
**Food and Sundries Distribution to the
Homeless Community Task Force**

January 23, 2019

Preface

Food and sundries permitted¹ distributions to the homeless have been taking place at Marion Square Park since 2015. These permitted distributions, on average, occur six times per week, and are sponsored by individuals and organizations in an effort to provide nourishment and comfort to Salem’s homeless population. While the distributions are well intentioned, they create significant impacts to the park. These include extensive trash and litter throughout the park, graffiti, and drug use—as evidenced by the 300+ hypodermic needles found in the park.

Because of the continuing impacts to the park, the City has stopped issuing permits for this activity, and has canceled existing permits. Public Works Department staff has committed to convene a group of stakeholders to discuss the issue and see if a solution can be developed that both assists the homeless and reduces —or eliminates—the impacts to the parks system.

Name

For the purposes of this effort, the name of the stakeholder group will be:

Food and Sundries Distribution to the Homeless Community Task Force.

Goal

The proposed process for the Task Force will be to schedule a few formal meetings to identify the community need being addressed by the distributions, its impacts to the parks system properties and its users, and possible solutions to address these. The Task Force’s goal will be:

To develop a policy and procedure that allows distribution of food and sundry distributions to the homeless community in Salem Parks while significantly minimizing its impacts to the properties and its users, and to identify alternatives to the use of Parks for these programs.²

¹ Staff is aware of distributions occurring in the park system without required permits.

² It is not the intent of this process to allow—or find ways to allow—distributions in areas posted for no trespassing.

By conducting a formal conversation on this issue it is hoped that the recommendations of the Task Force will be well thought out and sustainable in the long-term.

Stakeholders & Facilitator

It is understood that there are many stakeholders that can be invited to participate in this conversation. However to develop a solution, or a list of solutions, in a timely manner, it is necessary to limit the list of people formally invited to participate in this process. The following is the list of stakeholders to be invited.

1. Distributors/Permittees (4)
2. Neighborhood Associations (2)
3. Homeless Advocate (1)
4. Salem City Manager's Office (1)
5. Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (1)
6. Salem Parks Operations and Recreation (2)
7. Salem Police Department (1)
8. Salem Urban Development Department (1)
9. Social Service Agencies (2)

A person who is not a member of the Task Force will be appointed to facilitate the meetings. The facilitator's role will be to schedule and convene the meetings, assure that the discussion stays on topic, and that all participants are afforded an opportunity to speak. The facilitator will develop the meeting agendas, provide note taking services, and summarize the meeting's key discussion issues and recommendations.

Meetings

It is anticipated that the Task Force will hold two to four meetings in quick succession to complete their work. The meetings will be posted and open to the public. An opportunity for public comment will be provided at the meetings, but the Task Force will not hold a public hearing. Public comment will be invited when and if the recommendations are scheduled for formal adoption by the City.

Discussion Topics

As one of the first topics of discussion, the Task Force members will be asked to affirm the goal of the group's work and the discussion topics. As a starting point, the following questions are provided. For the sake of organization the questions are listed by category; however, all Task Force members will be invited to discuss each topic.

1. Distributors
 - a. Why are public food distributions needed?
 - b. What do distributors need to be successful?

- c. How often should food distributions occur?
 - d. Why do distributions need to occur in parks?
 - e. How can impacts to parks due to distributions be mitigated?
 - f. Are there other areas outside of parks that are suitable for distributions?
2. Social Service Agencies
- a. What feeding services are provided to the homeless community?
 - b. How does public food distributions affect your services?
 - c. What do agencies recommend with respect to public food distributions?
 - d. Are there other areas outside of parks that are suitable for distributions?
3. Parks Operations/SPRAB
- a. What are the City's adopted policies regarding the use of parks for distributions?
 - b. Why are permits required for food distribution in parks?
 - c. Should food distributions be subject to Marion County food handling requirements?
 - d. What are the impacts to parks caused by distributions?
 - e. How can impacts be mitigated?
 - f. Are there other City locations that could be used for distributions?
4. Salem Police Department
- a. What are the impacts of these distributions?
 - b. What does the SPD recommend?