

Summary of Public Outreach and Comments

The City conducted three public forums to share information and receive input on the proposed ordinance. These forums were held from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. on September 4, 2019 at the Union Gospel Mission, from noon to 1:30 p.m. on September 13, 2019 at Loucks Auditorium at the Salem Main Library, and from 9:00 10:30 a.m. at the Salem Housing Authority. Forums were conducted in a variety of formats at different times and different locations to encourage broad participation. Oral and written comments were received. Written comments were provided in a variety of formats, including City-provided comment forms and two different types of pre-printed forms prepared and distributed by community members.

Comments on City-provided forms were split: twelve in support of the ordinance, twelve in opposition to the ordinance, and two were not specific.

One version of pre-printed form was submitted by six individuals, all opposed to the ordinance.

The other version of pre-printed form asked how the proposed restrictions would affect them or people they know, and provided space for people to comment about specific components of the ordinance. Seventeen of these forms were received. Six of these supported all aspects of the ordinance, with one supporting all aspects with the exception of potential escalation to a trespass offense. Ten opposed the ordinance and one was unclear.

Comments on City-forms in support of the ordinance spoke to the negative impacts certain behaviors have on business: odors, property damage, urination and defecation, panhandling, litter, and aggressive or threatening interactions. Comments also addressed businesses who want to move out of downtown due to these behaviors. Many comments in support of the ordinance also identified the need for more and better mental health care and addiction treatment options, and the impact these behaviors have on police resources.

Many of the comments opposing the ordinance did not speak specifically about the ordinance, but rather told personal stories of challenge and hardship.

Several comments spoke broadly and generally to issues of fairness or unfairness, and basic rights and needs. Specific needs identified include:

- More services and resources such as dayroom space, toilets, shelter, and storage
- The need for low barrier shelters, shelters for couples, and shelters that will accept pets

Attachment 3

- More housing
- The need to sleep during the daytime for safety reasons
- The need for outreach and education to the public on how to interact with unsheltered individuals
- The need for dignity and respect
- The need for trauma-informed education
- Public space with sanitation amenities and storage where people can camp

Those comments that provided specific objections to elements of the ordinance identified the following concerns and opinions:

- The ordinance would create an additional barrier to receiving services
- Applying for a waiver to an exclusion would be a hardship for those who can't read, write, articulate, or have the capability to understand what needs to be done
- Challenges with the proposed hours of 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. and gaps in service hours or available alternative locations. Many comments propose alternate hours of 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- There is not enough capacity to accommodate the needs
- Dawn to dusk park hours
- The ordinance would result in harassment
- The ordinance could result in arrests and incarceration
- The ordinance is against the law/unconstitutional
- The ordinance targets the homeless and is prejudicial
- The likelihood of inconsistent and prejudicial enforcement
- The scope is city-wide while the Downtown Homeless Solutions Task Force was downtown. This will further displace people and limit where they can go.
- The City should wait to see if current and upcoming collaborations and efforts have a positive impact.
- Temporary shelter or structures to protect from the elements is needed
- The City should establish specific rules and consequences for specific behaviors rather than a broad prohibition that impacts the need to rest
- Implementation details are unclear
- Property shouldn't be banned from sidewalks without the provision of adequate storage as there are a multitude of reasons that people may need to leave their possessions unattended
- The ordinance discriminates against people with disabilities

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Advocates for the City's residents experiencing homelessness propose that the ordinance be delayed until more recommendations from the Downtown Homeless Solutions Task Force are in place creating more places for people to go and until more collaboration occurs through the Good Neighborhood Partnership to determine if it is still needed. Advocates have also proposed a compromise that would keep the camping and property elements of the ordinance, but which would strike the sit-lie provisions of the ordinance.