

Staff Report

File #: 23-511**Version:** 1**Date:** 1/22/2024**Item #:** 5.b.

TO: Mayor and City Council**THROUGH:****FROM:** Keith Stahley, City Manager**SUBJECT:**

On November 20, 2023, the City Council held a Work Session to consider an annual community report on priorities from the 2023 Policy Agenda, and possible adjustments to priorities for inclusion in the 2024 City Council work plan, the annual policy agenda.

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Result Area(s): All Result Areas - Good Governance; Natural Environment Stewardship; Safe and Healthy Community; Safe, Reliable and Efficient Infrastructure; Strong and Diverse Economy; Welcoming and Livable Community.

SUMMARY:

Through its annual Policy Agenda, City Council makes its priorities for action clear to staff and the community and provides direction on aligning resources towards the Strategic Plan Policy areas through the City's budgeting process. The 2023 City Council Policy Agenda was adopted on February 13, 2023. In addition to furthering objectives of the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, the City Council's policy priorities for 2023 are concentrated in four areas:

1. responding to our sheltering crisis;
2. planning for our future;
3. engaging our community; and
4. sustaining infrastructure and services.

Each fall, as the City Council begins to develop a framework for its policy priorities for the coming year, staff prepare an update on major initiatives in an annual Community Report (Attachment 1).

ISSUE:

Consider approval of the City Council and community priorities outlined in the 2024 Policy Agenda.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the City Council and community priorities outlined in the 2024 Policy Agenda.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Through its annual Policy Agenda, City Council makes its priorities for action clear to staff and the community and provides direction on aligning resources towards the Strategic Plan Policy areas through the City's budgeting process. The 2023 City Council Policy Agenda was adopted on February 13, 2023, progress reports were received throughout the year, and the City Council provided feedback to staff at a November 2023 Work Session to begin preparing the 2024 Policy Agenda.

In addition to furthering objectives of the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, the City Council's policy priorities for 2023 are concentrated in four areas:

1. responding to our sheltering crisis;
2. planning for our future;
3. engaging our community; and
4. sustaining infrastructure and services.

As part of the conversation at the November 20 Work Session, Council heard about progress including activities underway and major initiatives completed including opening of Salem Housing Authority's 52-unit affordable housing at Yaquina Hall, the 75-Bed Navigation Center, and the one-stop Customer Service Center at Salem's Civic Center. In June 2023, City Council adopted the Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan. At a July 2023 Work Session, Council received a briefing on the Strategic Engagement and Communications Plan findings and recommendations.

At the Work Session, Council asked staff to capture the following in the 2024 Policy Agenda:

- Re-order priorities from 2023 to reflect pressing issues for 2024 and limited resources
 1. sustaining infrastructure and services
 2. engaging our community
 3. planning for our future; and
 4. Responding to our sheltering crisis.
- Expand housing options to prevent homelessness
 - Advance housing that is more affordable and protect mobile homeowners (also a priority of the Legislative Committee)
- Preserve services for most vulnerable in our community (behavioral health and addiction)
- On sheltering,
 - Merge accountability and compassion into the strategies
 - Reflect desire to better understand what community is seeking, how all the actors are working together in a deliberate way, and preserve SOS Team
 - Bring partners together to the table to share what we're doing and learning about:
 - Who is homeless in Salem (need a better census, lean into HMIS)
 - What is/are the key cause(s)

- What we're doing together to address it (organizations working on this issue, sheltering beds and services available)
- What we're learning (how well it is working)
- Expand civic engagement
 - Overhaul boards and commissions, remove barriers to participation and bring more voices to the table. This work is anticipated to begin in February 2024.
- Expand feeling of safety and security
 - Convene partnership with community to reduce gun violence

This feedback has been incorporated into a draft Policy Agenda for 2024.

Proposed 2024 Policy Agenda

Priority 1: Sustaining infrastructure and services.

- **Convene community conversation about increasing revenue to continue community services.** Empanel a Task Force on revenue options to help stabilize the budget. Continue to explore grants and legislative support for Policy Agenda priorities.
Doer, Convener
- **Deliver projects in Community Improvement Bond and report progress** to the Steering Committee and community at-large.
Doer
- **Continue to pursue opportunities to lower expenses, improve efficiency and effectiveness of our work.**
Doer

Priority 2: Engaging our community.

- **Improve engagement and communications, expand conversations and voices in decisions.** Increase civic engagement and diversity in participation, enhance our volunteer base, expand Neighborhood Associations, advisory boards and commissions, and benefit talent acquisition and recruitment strategies. Continue to expand services and program offerings in other, accessible formats to make it easier to do business with the City.
Doer, Convener, Partner
- **Expand neighbor to neighbor communications.** Build communication strategies with Neighborhood Association Boards to expand engagement and recruit additional members.
Doer
- **Incorporate equity in delivery of Salem programs and services,** assuring City services are equitably available to and accessed by all. Use performance indicators for measuring external and internal equity.
Doer

- **Conduct review of City Charter** to ensure it reflects an efficient and effective government, principles of equity, and is relevant to today's Salem. Beginning in February 2024, look at opportunities to streamline and simplify advisory board and commission structure.
Doer
- **Continue investment in Community-Engaged Policing.** Increase police engagement with all communities within the City to enhance crime prevention and to facilitate trust when a police response is needed. Continue the commitment in this work through the Salem Police Department Strategic Plan.
Doer, Convenor, Partner
- **Strengthen our community's resilience and emergency response** by continuing to support community preparedness efforts. Community resilience to natural hazards and those brought on by accelerating climate change, as evidenced by recent fires, ice storms, and flooding.
Doer, Convenor, Partner

Priority 3: Planning for our future.

- **Connect people and places, advancing Salem In Motion.** The Transportation Systems Plan is a major undertaking and includes substantive community outreach. Funding for this work is expected from Transportation System Development Charges.
Doer, Convenor, Partner
- **Advance Housing Production Strategy.** In Oregon, Housing Production Strategies are plans crafted to address unmet housing needs that explore tools, policies and actions a city may take to support a variety of housing options to provide fair and equitable housing for all.
Doer
- **Further Climate Action Plan.** Support briefings of Council Committee to prioritize actions in Climate Action Plan.
Doer, Convener, Partner
- **Prepare Solid Waste Policy.** Work is underway on an interim priority, development of a solid waste policy, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the collection, transportation, and disposal of solid waste are considered within the Climate Action Plan.
Doer, Partner, Convener

Priority 4: Responding to our housing and sheltering crisis

- **Expand housing options to prevent homelessness in our community.** Continue to offer incentives for affordable housing through tax exemptions, management agreements and Urban Renewal grants.
- **Respond to community complaints for clean up at scattered unmanaged tent, car, and RV camping sites, and clean up accumulated trash.** Continue to work with area non-

profits and the Salem Outreach and Livability Services (SOS Team) to maintain contact and regular communication to increase the chances individuals will connect with available services, keep conditions cleaner and healthier, and remove as much accumulated garbage as possible, on a regular basis.

Doer, Partner, Convener

- **Pursue partnerships and funding support for our most vulnerable, including funding to keep micro-shelter village communities and Navigation Center open.** Secure funding to sustain Salem's three micro-shelter village communities and Navigation Center. Explore partnerships to ensure continued expansion of behavioral health and addiction services to those in need.
Doer, Partner, Convener
- **Transition more households into supportive housing.** Continue to assist households and families in transitional housing.
Doer
- **Build more permanent supportive housing.** Complete construction of Salem Housing Authority's Sequoia Crossings (60 units) property.
Doer, Partner, Convener
- **Support regional efforts: Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance.** Invest in Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance to develop regional capacity for those who are un-housed.
Partner

BACKGROUND:

Through its annual Policy Agenda, City Council makes its priorities for action clear to staff and the community and provides direction on aligning resources towards the Strategic Plan Policy areas through the City's budgeting process. Each fall, City Council begins to develop a framework for its policy priorities in the coming year and receives an updates on major initiatives in an annual Community Report.

Courtney Knox Busch
Strategic Initiatives Manager

Attachments:

1. 2023 Community Report