

City of Salamanca: Addressing Community Safety and Stability

Proposed Plan of Action: Combating Homelessness, Drug-Related Activity, and Public Disorder

The City of Salamanca remains committed to restoring safety, dignity, and well-being for all residents. Below is our initial plan of action with detailed updates on the steps taken to achieve these goals.

1. Collaborate with the Seneca Nation

We will work closely with the Seneca Nation to resolve issues that fall within their legal jurisdiction and affect our community. This partnership will explore collaborative solutions to maintain safety and address shared concerns.

Progress:

- **Property Cleanups:** On East State Street, the City and Nation worked together to clean up blighted property by removing unsafe structures, including a garage and a pool.
 - **Coordinated Communication:** Mayor Magiera has led a concerted effort to maintain contact between the Mayor's Office and counterparts within the Nation. This has streamlined problem-solving and improved efficiency in addressing shared challenges.
 - **Future Plans:** Discussions are underway to explore economic development projects that will benefit both the City and the Nation, such as the revitalization of Main Street, with the goal of fostering prosperity and safety across the community.
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2. Strengthen Code Enforcement

We will intensify our enforcement of local code violations, focusing on illegal dumping, unkempt properties, and housing infractions. This will improve neighborhood safety by holding property owners accountable.

Progress:

The City's Code Enforcement team has taken a proactive approach to addressing violations. Key actions include:

- Issuing an **"Order to Remedy"** for properties housing unauthorized RVs and campers.
- Collaborating with the Seneca Nation to address problem buildings and occupants.
- Beginning legal proceedings for two problem properties on State Park Avenue.
- Successfully boarding up and securing Front Avenue property to prevent further deterioration or misuse.
- Identifying additional properties with significant unsightliness concerns and initiating corrective measures.

These actions ensure that property owners are held responsible for maintaining community standards and improving overall neighborhood safety.

3. Demolish Problem Properties

The City and Seneca Nation will identify and demolish abandoned or unsafe homes that have become hotspots for illegal activity. This step will eliminate opportunities for crime and improve neighborhood appearance.

Progress:

Planning meetings have resulted in the identification of multiple problem properties slated for demolition. Several structures have already been inspected and deemed unsafe. The City is actively pursuing funding to support these efforts, ensuring sufficient resources to remove blighted homes and improve the visual appeal and safety of neighborhoods.

4. Community Solidarity Events

We will encourage residents to organize events, vigils, and rallies to bring the community together, showing a united front against these challenges. These gatherings will build community strength and engagement.

We recognize the power of community engagement and the positive impact it can have. We are actively seeking input and volunteers to help us plan meaningful events that bring residents together and foster a sense of unity.

If you're interested in getting involved or have suggestions for events, please reach out to the City. Together, we can create opportunities to build stronger connections and demonstrate that Salamanca stands united in facing its challenges.

5. Launch a Community Neighborhood Watch Program

In coordination with the Salamanca Police Department, we will launch a Community Neighborhood Watch program. This initiative will empower residents to actively monitor and report suspicious activity.

- **Progress:**
 - The **NextDoor App** has been introduced, providing residents with a simple and anonymous way to report suspicious activity in real-time.
 - The Salamanca Police Department has also partnered with the Seneca Nation Fish and Wildlife team to utilize drones in locating and monitoring potential homeless encampments, showcasing a high-tech approach to community safety.
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6. Youth Engagement and Activities

We will work with the Salamanca Youth Bureau and school district to expand opportunities for youth engagement by offering more activities that connect young people with positive community outlets, reducing the likelihood of exposure to illegal behavior.

Progress:

The Youth Bureau continues its successful collaboration with the Seneca Nation's Youth Employment Services Program, offering meaningful work opportunities for local youth. Additionally, events like the "**Shop with a Cop**" initiative, scheduled for December 20, will connect children with law enforcement in a positive, supportive environment. These activities foster strong relationships and provide children with valuable experiences.

7. Increase Police Presence in Problem Areas

We will increase police patrols in known problem areas, such as Hogan's Alley, to deter crime and ensure quicker responses to incidents.

Progress:

The Salamanca Police Department has increased its presence in high-crime areas, leading to several notable achievements:

- **Foot Patrols:** Officers now conduct regular patrols in Hogan's Alley, deterring crime and fostering community trust.
 - **Surveillance Cameras:** Cameras placed near identified drug houses have assisted in crime prevention and arrests.
 - **Impact Patrols:** In collaboration with the County Sheriff's Department, two-officer patrols have led to multiple narcotics arrests.
 - Homeless encampments on Front Avenue have also been removed, creating a safer environment for all residents.
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8. Encourage Private Property Protection

We will encourage residents to increase “No Trespassing” signs on their properties, helping to deter unlawful entry and assist law enforcement in taking swift action.

Progress:

Police patrols have actively engaged with residents to address trespassing concerns. While efforts to encourage homeowners to press charges have faced challenges, the City remains committed to finding effective solutions. Ongoing communication with residents aims to improve cooperation and deter future incidents.

9. Monitor and Enforce Electric Bike Regulations

We will monitor and enforce local ordinances regarding electric bike use, issuing tickets for violations to curb improper use linked to criminal activities.

Progress:

The enforcement of electric bike ordinances has resulted in several tickets, targeting individuals involved in drug-related activities. Although some cases have faced prosecutorial resistance, the City continues to explore additional measures, including potentially designating the Pennsy Trail as a city park to expand enforceable regulations.

10. Expand the Police Force

We have/will hire more police officers to enhance our ability to address crime and maintain public safety more effectively, dependent on funding.

Progress:

The City has successfully onboarded new officers through funding from the SAFER grant, boosting its capacity to respond to crime and enhance public safety.

11. Public Safety Notifications

The City will publish more frequent public safety notifications to keep residents informed about ongoing issues and the steps being taken to address them.

Progress:

The City has increased its use of social media platforms, ensuring timely updates on public safety and community events. Improved tagging of profiles has also broadened the reach of these posts, increasing community engagement.

12. Child Protective Services Involvement

We will collaborate closely with Child Protective Services to ensure the safety of children involved or impacted by drug abuse.

Progress:

The Youth Center continues its 20-year collaboration with CPS, bolstered by the involvement of retired CPS workers on the Youth Board. All staff members are mandated reporters, ensuring a safe environment for vulnerable children.

13. Advocate for Bail Reform Changes

We will advocate for changes to NYS Bail Reform laws by working with state politicians to implement reforms that better protect our community.

Progress:

- The City has launched a **Change.org** petition to gather community support for bail reform, sending a strong message to state officials about the urgent need for change. However, we still need more signatures to make an even greater impact. If you haven't signed yet, please visit [Petition to Revise NYS Bail Reform Laws](#) or scan the QR code located on the petition flyer.

- To make it easier for residents to get involved, we've also created a letter template that can be personalized and sent to state representatives. This is a simple yet powerful way to ensure your concerns are heard by those in a position to make legislative changes.
- Both the petition link and letter template will be shared on our website, social media, and through local distribution.
- Let us know if you need assistance with accessing the petition or sending letters to your representatives.

14. Anonymous Reporting Hotline

We will explore the possibility of establishing an anonymous hotline for residents to report violators without fear of retaliation.

Progress:

The anonymous reporting initiative is being integrated into the Nextdoor App to provide residents with a convenient and secure method of reporting.

15. Establish New City Ordinances

We will evaluate and establish new ordinances to give law enforcement more tools to address the specific problems facing our community.

Progress:

Discussions are ongoing to identify ordinances that will best address the City's current challenges and provide law enforcement with the necessary tools. Suggestions are encouraged at all future Common Council meetings.

16. Ongoing Problem-Solving Meetings

We will continue to hold regular community meetings focused on problem-solving and working together to create meaningful change.

Progress:

The Mayor continues to lead problem-solving meetings with City departments and stakeholders. A public forum will be held in January to refine and further this effort. Time and place will be announced prior to the meeting.

Addressing Homelessness

Homelessness is a complex issue that the City is actively working to address. Efforts include identifying potential collaborations with community organizations, exploring funding opportunities, and formulating targeted strategies. Updates will be shared as these plans are finalized.

Looking Ahead: A Plan in Progress

We know that the challenges facing Salamanca—homelessness, drug-related activity, and public safety concerns—can feel overwhelming at times. These are big, complicated issues, and we want to acknowledge the frustration and uncertainty they can bring to our community. That's why we're committed to doing everything we can to address them. This plan is just the beginning—a roadmap that will grow and evolve as we learn what works and what doesn't.

We're putting in the work now, but we also know that change doesn't happen overnight. This plan is a living document, and we're constantly looking for ways to improve it and expand our efforts. We want you to know that we're not stopping here. Whether it's building stronger partnerships, finding new resources, or trying fresh approaches, we are determined to make real, lasting progress.

To keep everyone informed and involved, we'll be holding a public feedback meeting in January. We know it's not easy to be patient when you see problems in your neighborhood or hear stories that hit close to home. But we're asking for your understanding and your trust as we take on these tough issues. Salamanca is a strong, resilient community, and we believe that by working together, we can overcome these challenges and build a safer, healthier future for everyone.

Thank you for sticking with us as we navigate this journey. Your support and involvement mean more than we can say.