

## **Railroad Relocation & Clean Up Success**

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**By Steve McShane, Salinas City Councilman**

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Homelessness along the Union Pacific Right of Way through Salinas has been a growing issue in recent years. Thanks to the dedication of a working group, humane and well-coordinated relocation and clean up began June 23<sup>rd</sup>. This marks a huge success.

It is estimated that more than 225 homeless had set up encampments along the railroad tracks. The tracks fall under Federal regulation and represent private property protected by a sworn police force. The homeless along the tracks have led to issues regarding theft, food safety and worker safety. Not to mention the safety of those on the tracks.

The cleanup marks a unique contrast from previous clean ups. This is because there was grass roots coordination with stakeholders including Community Homeless Solutions, Dorothy's Place, Community Human Services, Downtown Streets Team, County Supervisor Chris Lopez, Farm Bureau and the City of Salinas. Extensive preparation included additional resources for overnight accommodations, outreach and the availability of personal items for impacted homeless. Additional recognition in a smooth cleanup effort goes to Congressman Jimmy Panetta, Senator Anna Caballero, Assemblyman Robert Rivas, Mayor Joe Gunter and Salinas City Councilwoman Gloria De La Rosa.

The cleanup takes up to (30) days to complete and will include another (30) days of maintenance. A secondary working group is developing a plan for an on-going maintenance proposal. Under the proposal impacted parties would self-assess to work with Union Pacific on a local and ongoing maintenance solution.

The communities that organize around homelessness along the railroad right of way fair much better than those that don't. I will continue to keep our working group going and want to thank the many stakeholders for their part in this project. Feel free to reach out to me for more information at [steve@mcshaneslandscape.com](mailto:steve@mcshaneslandscape.com) or (831) 970-4141.