

**From:** [Eugene Lewis](#)  
**To:** [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** 500 too many  
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Thank you for this opportunity. I am a housed individual who did spend almost two years unhoused and one year at C3PO's Queer Affinity Safe Rest Village. I volunteered at C3PO's BIPOC Village which was located across the road from QA. As an African American gay man, I felt comfortable navigating both camp identities.

Although somewhat supported by family and friends, the majority living out of state, the onset of the COVID pandemic coincided with a particular personal crisis that perpetuated a reality of houselessness and all the trauma and shame and fear that folk try to endure in such times. I never imagined being in that situation. I never imagined how pivotal having a relatively safe community with common experiences would be when the marginalized are hyper-marginalized due to a global viral pandemic.

If I was forced to be a resident of a 500 person campus of folk experiencing all levels of pain and all the unfortunate defences that come with such a state, I can't imagine surviving that experience as a whole and healthy person. It is very important to acknowledge our main goal in this crisis is to offer human beings housing. Housing is a public health concern. Not everybody is capable of living within a family household let alone a warehouse or field or parking lot of a large group of highly vulnerable human beings. The idea that this is the only and best plan is highly short sided.

Where has this worked before? How many trauma informed and experienced folk will be available and willing to take on staffing such an experiment? Would you want to live this way?

People need more than a fence around their bodies and belongings. Is there a way to consider solutions for smaller groups of folk depending on needs? Is there no surplus of unused buildings and infrastructure that could be converted to reasonable and dependable and sustainable temporary housing for human beings and their pets?

It is nearly impossible to address mental health and addiction without the body, and that includes the brain, having the assurance of safe accommodation and restoration. We know the statistics. It costs our communities more keeping things the way they are. People are dying in the streets. If you are targets of rage due to various shades of shame, your life is at risk. I have witnessed and experienced this in my very own experience. Humanitarian crisis demand humanitarian thinking. I worry in the desire to quickly solve the visual problems of the residue of houselessness and hopelessness we inadvertently destroy human beings. To compartmentalize is to protect but it is also easy to ignore the full picture, the factual reality: human beings need help and having proper housing is the first step. Campus of 500 or 200 or 100 can't substitute addressing the very complex nature of what and who we are.

Think about what we have and what we can offer. Is there a way for smaller segments of our city and county, like neighborhoods or districts for example, can offer specific models of assistance dedicated to address the needs of say houseless folk with disabilities, families, mental health support, transgender support, etc. To repeat: this crisis is a humanitarian crisis and every human is responsible for shaping his or her experience. In other words, if we want

folk off our beautiful streets, we must supply healthy and autonomy promoting alternatives.

The campus idea seems tragically inadequate. There is little to no humanity involved in such a scheme. Quite frankly, I am horrified at the notion of such a solution. Solving problems from a fear response usually means disaster. Nobody needs to feel anymore less than.

We can do this with compassion and ingenuity. We have no other choice that can endure.