

From: [Sermin Yesilada](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Agenda item 899-903 testimony
Date: Tuesday, October 25, 2022 12:53:37 PM

Dear Mayor Wheeler and City Commissioners,

I am writing in response to the proposal for creating 500-person emergency shelter campgrounds for the City of Portland's homeless population. While I appreciate the urgency behind this proposal and the political will to address this as a humanitarian crisis, I am concerned about the process and logistics involved.

First, I do not support criminalizing unsanctioned camping. Arrests further traumatize the houseless, punish people for mental illness and addiction, which is a disease, and make it all the more difficult to find housing and work due to criminal records. We need mental health workers, addiction treatment centers, and social workers, not more interaction with the criminal justice system for people suffering on our streets.

Second, while I support the efforts to increase shelter capacity, sanctioned and supported camping, and affordable housing supply, I strongly disagree with the plan to congregate hundreds of people in mass campsites. While mass shelters work for some, many of our houseless community have spoken out about how unsafe they feel in mass shelters and about the traumatic experiences they have had at them. Instead, I urge you to listen to the organizations that serve the houseless and the people with lived experience. Support the solutions they have already identified that work. We need a network of smaller scale emergency housing types such as:

1. Sanctioned RV parking lots for temporary/emergency living
2. Self-governed villages like Dignity Village
3. Managed villages like the Kenton Women's Shelter, Beacon Village, Agape Village, and more
4. Safe Rest Villages - let's get these finished and operating! The Multnomah Safe Rest Village is working well
5. Additional warming shelters for winter and cooling shelters for summer
6. Motel and vacant building conversions to transitional housing

These need to be located equitably around the city to meet people where they are and to bring all our neighborhoods together in addressing this crisis. Let's work with the communities, service providers, and people experiencing houselessness in each area directly to identify the solutions that work best.

We also need funding that supports the groups working on establishing these sites. The process for applying for these grants is slow and cumbersome. I support calls to streamline the Joint Office of Homeless Services's contracting, procurement, and grant processes.

I would like to add that in our efforts to increase the affordable housing supply that you consider Tiny House on Wheels RV camping as an additional typology for household and group living. Existing non-profits are working to build the supply of quality Tiny Houses on Wheels. We just need land to place them. Vacant and underused parking lots can be easily converted into small scale RV campgrounds. Just like we have food cart pods, land owners could rent space to create Tiny House on Wheels villages. Mobile home parks are one of the

fastest disappearing forms of affordable housing as landowners sell or redevelop their lots into more profitable developments. I urge the City of Portland to consider infill Tiny House on Wheels parks as an option to help replace the lost stock of mobile home parks.

Thank you,

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