

**From:** [Lifelong Learners PSU](#)  
**To:** [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** Resolutions 899, 900, 901, 902, and 903  
**Date:** Thursday, October 27, 2022 10:02:13 AM

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Dear Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners Hardesty, Mapps, Rubio, and Ryan:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Resolutions 899, 900, 901, 902, and 903. I appreciate everyone's hard work in trying to find solutions to our homeless situation.

My husband and I fell in love with Portland after I worked here on a long term assignment in 2007. Portland became our "forever home" after moving here in 2015. We love Oregon and we especially love Portland. There's no place in the country that we'd rather be. It breaks our hearts to see what's become of downtown Portland and to other neighborhoods in our fair city. We are not members of a special interest group, lobby, or are affiliated with the "industrial homeless complex". We are taxpayers, homeowners, and try to be good neighbors and citizens. We feel it's our duty to be engaged and to be involved in community and civic matters. That's how we fulfill our part of the "social contract".

My husband was not able to listen to the testimony today. So I did that for him. I had not planned to listen to all the testimony, but after several hours, I felt compelled to do so. What I heard confirmed much of what I've previously heard, read, or know firsthand about the homeless situation in Oregon and in many other states. It's a very complex issue with many, many underlying causes that will take a multi-faceted approach to solve. What I did not expect was to be so moved by the testimony of the lady affiliated with the Gray Panthers of Portland. I had previously heard on the local news about tenants at The Prescott and other multiple-unit limited tax exemption (MULTE) properties facing up to a nearly 50% rent increase in 2023. This rent increase, although legal, is not moral in my humble opinion. It is unconscionable that the lady who testified will have her rent consume 80% to 90% of her income in 2023. Because she and others like her are at severe risk of becoming homeless next year, I believe those in this situation should be given top priority by the City. Perhaps a separate resolution should be drafted to specifically address this issue. I feel that the City should activity attempt to purchase these properties, keep the current tenants, and only increase rents based on actual costs and expressly exclude a profit component. If this is not feasible, provide rent subsidies or vouchers to the affected tenants. I would rather my tax dollars (which are quite high by the way) be spent helping folks in this situation stay in their homes.

Living up to my credo, "don't gripe, fix it", I humbly submit the following suggestions to help "fix" our homeless situation. Most are not original ideas--just ideas that I think can be implemented in a timely manner.

1. Institute a moratorium or heavily regulate "stand alone" short term rental properties such as Airbnb, Vbro, etc.
2. Levy a vacancy tax on properties that are not owner occupied, including vacation homes, that are unoccupied after a certain period of time
3. Purchase FEMA trailers or mobile homes. Establish mobile home parks in vacant lots around the City. The trailers could also be housed in vacant warehouses.

4. For houseless people who truly want to stay in tents or RVs, create sites for long term camping similar to what's offered by our wonderful Oregon State Parks.

5. Purchase some of the downtown Portland hotels that are approaching foreclosure. Occupancy could be somewhat immediate, with remodeling or room expansions done later. Living arrangements could be structured in a manner similar to senior communities such as the Mirabella. Those requiring mental health services or have special needs could live for example, on the lower floors. Families could live on the next several floors. There could be quiet floors or floors for those who wish to be sober and/or drug free, and so forth.

6. Along with rent subsidies or vouchers, provide financial assistance for deposits (including pet deposits), fees, and first/last month rent for those unable to amass those funds on their own. Rent deposits should be refundable to the City.

My concern with suggestions 3 through 5 is whether houseless people would accept these options. Will they be perceived as "ghettos" or vertical "internment camps"?

In closing, until every houseless person finds their "forever home", there is no perfect solution. My husband and I hope the City of Portland, however, can find a solution with the best possible outcomes for all the stakeholders. We wish you luck.

Best regards,

Joe and Lois Haley  
October 26, 2022