

STATE OF HOUSING, OCT 2015 REPORT

IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, PRINT YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

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Moore-Love, Karla

From: wayne wignes <waynewignes88@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 25, 2015 9:13 AM
To: Moore-Love, Karla
Subject: Public communication request
Attachments: affordable_housing.docx

I was hoping I could present the idea of de-partitioned housing to the city council next week or the week after. Simply put it is packing a large enclosure full of bunk-beds and renting them. See attached document for specific details.

Thanks.

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DE-PARTITIONED HOUSING



Why not just **pack a warehouse/ large enclosure full of bunk beds and rent them** for \$200 per month? Physically this is similar to a mission (cleaner and potentially nicer though??), but it is unlike missions in the sense that you have:

- A place to be during the day
- The autonomy to come and go as you please
- No all-day lines and curfews for grown adults
- A place to store your stuff
- A place to be during the day = connection = ability to create community without it being broken up by cops

Next to food and warmth, the ability to connect to others and create community is most important factor in homelessness as it provides

- Safety in numbers and reduces the need to constantly look over ones shoulder at night
- A sense of community which can make the difference between a humane and inhumane experience
- Eliminates the shame of being homeless

MYTHS:

- **People do not get along in situations like this:** People get along fine so long as they have their own place to sleep. If outside this translates to not actively being broken up and herded around by cops and therefore having the autonomy required to come together so as to create community yet to disburse in ways that do not create pressure on one another. This is what made Portland unique for the homeless before the street sweeps in 2013; random strangers had the ability to connect with and take refuge in each other in large groups outside without being broken up as is routinely done in larger cities. When this ability is disrupted and these connections are broken homelessness becomes shameful and the sense of community and peace between people is destroyed; the streets quickly became un-peaceful, fights started

every other night, and people started pulling knives. To this day that is why you see the yellow tape under the Burnside Bridge - it all happened quickly after this policy shift.

Few give credit to the simple fact that we keep each other in check when the walls separating us are no longer present. The un-peaceful violent criminals and street punks constitute a small minority of the homeless population and this becomes clear when a community is allowed to grow. Yet consistently it becomes the policy in cities to either institutionalize such community into a mission where people must sacrifice autonomy or if it is outside then it is routinely broken up by cops. What is left is the degenerate and un-peaceful crowd usually witnessed in downtown areas.

- **Ensuring safety requires restricting autonomy:** This is simply not true. Many missions have peace every night with nothing more than a single dejected and half asleep volunteer in the hallway who is likely homeless themselves. It is entirely possible to have safety/ respect rules, have staff on board, to install video cameras, and to even conduct background checks for specifically violent offenses if needed and still not restrict people's autonomy. This would then attract a whole new crowd of homeless or even non-homeless who do not want to be institutionalized.
- **Everyone needs privacy:** It is commonly assumed everyone wants or needs their own privacy, but is it isolated privacy or impersonal environments that are so needed? Two people in a room is an awkward silence waiting to happen, but 100-300 people in an open structure is very impersonal as the social expectation to interact is equally divided among each other. Neither is there a feeling of intruding into another's space because the property does not belong to any one specific resident. When weighed against the social and economic benefits of de-partitioned housing, isolated privacy is at some point in many people's lives a disposable thing for some amount of time as they transition or just need to live tightly for a while - however long or short that may be.

BENEFITS FOR THE CITY/ MIDDLE CLASS CITIZENS:

- **Rather than spending more and more money on affordable housing, de-partitioned housing would likely make money for the state.** Walls cost money. Journeyman drywallers, electricians, plumbers, and door/ cabinet companies are not cheap. When only one or two people are paying rent per X amount of square footage. It is inevitable that these affordable housing units will need to be subsidized, the rents will be increased, or the places will rot; they are called halfway houses. Furthermore, the sometimes extremely minute size of these places is claustrophobic and undesirable to many people.
- **De-partitioned housing would pull rental prices down for the surrounding area.** There will always be some struggling college student, hobo, minimum wage worker in between jobs, newly relocated transplant, or someone going through some other tribulation who will desire such a thing were it made available as an alternative to constantly striving to keep up with the need to pay an arm and a leg for their own private place to live. Currently there is little beyond government intervention to give citizens leverage against property development which displaces them, but it is the primary purpose and role of

government to implement policies which protect the rights to property ownership, not necessarily to protect people from each other's ownership of property. We can however ask the city to build their own property which is capable of returning leverage to us.

- **Students!!!** Where such set-ups not always ran in an institutionalized manner and residents were allowed their autonomy in exchange for a truly affordable rental fee then many students would find benefit in this. It is difficult for some to imagine giving up their privacy, but you may surprise yourself and warm up to it were you to try such a thing. Even if it is just a couple of nights per week to save a commute or to take a break from another living situation or person, it may still be of benefit economically or socially.

RUNNING IT AS AN INSTITUTION DOES NOT WORK!

- Any place like this currently out there is in some way or another actually a mission, sometimes designed specifically to help those in recovery from substance abuse/ addiction. There is no reason to assume these people are any different than you in the sense that they do not want enforced chapel service or curfews, they want autonomy. Furthermore associations share habits and no one wants to see nothing but themselves in a mirror when in that situation, i.e. there needs to be a full community for which they can gravitate to and nothing but recovering alcoholics and addicts does not constitute a whole community.

It needs to attract the college student struggling to make ends meet, the worker hitting the day labor spots looking for work, or the guy going through a separation with their kids all grown up and no one left- these are the people who will become acquaintances/ friends and who give positive energy and something to look forward to other than drinking a beer or getting high. To attract these people it needs to be a straight forward and honest rental agreement with no strings attached.

Being on and off the streets over the years I've wondered why I have never seen this type of set-up in any town within the northwest or anywhere else really. I once heard of ONE place in Los Angeles which by one person's account worked great and people loved it, but even so making 500 beds available to 50,000+ homeless people in L.A. is not nearly enough. When we develop affordable housing all we can think of is to bring our own way of partitioned and separated lifestyle to those in need at a smaller and lesser scale, but for many homelessness is a different way of life altogether and they need something which is simply conducive to that. I've met hundreds of people who do not look forward to returning to the standard way of life we've constructed- it does not and it has not worked for many out there. A different option needs to be put on the table. **We will not learn anything new or achieve any new results until we try something new.**

** For a copy of this document: <http://theencasing.blogspot.com/>