



CITY OF SALEM

Written Testimony

City Council

555 Liberty St SE
Salem, OR 97301

Monday, May 17, 2021

6:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

City Council Work Session - Homelessness and Sheltering Update and Planning

1.2a. [21-221](#) Initiatives to reduce homelessness and increase sheltering

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Result Area(s): Natural Environment Stewardship; Welcoming and Livable Community.

Recommendation: Information Only

Attachments: [Resolution 2021 21.pdf](#)
[Sheltering Status Update May 12 2021.pdf](#)
[Zoning Matrix Frameword.pdf](#)
[Attachments provided by Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance.pdf](#)
[Public Comments received by 4:30 p.m. 5-17-21](#)

Add - Written Testimony.

From: [Hazel Patton](#)
To: [Chuck Bennett](#); [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Homeless in City Parks
Date: Monday, May 17, 2021 1:38:13 PM

Dear Mayor and City Councilors,

I am writing to ask you to let our homeless neighbors continue to camp in Wallace Marine and Cascade Gateway Parks. Asking them to move at this time seems unreasonable without a plan for a better option. And we can expect that many will return to our downtown area as well. We with Salem Main Street Association have been working with our merchants to keep our downtown vital and strong. Despite many unforeseen events many businesses have stayed and are trying to survive. Having to deal with an added population of homeless individuals at this critical time, may reverse what progress we and they have made. Our downtown defines who we are as a community. It is the heart of our City. We can clean up and restore our parks. Not so easy a task to rebuild a downtown.

As to our homeless citizens. I am wondering where we are with Yaquina Hall, the former nurses quarters on the old north campus of the State Hospital? Some of us lobbied hard to save the structure with the hope it would be used for low income housing. What has happened?

Also at a long ago City Council meeting (when we were meeting in the Chambers), I made an offer to pay for a porta potty for our parks to help with the rest room issues. While I never received a response from the City, I did get responses from some of my friends who said they would help too. So many of us do have compassion for the people who have no home. That includes our merchants downtown as well. I am sorry we are not asked to be a part of the solution in a tangible way.

Hazel Patton
1363 Court NE

From: noreply@cityofsalem.net on behalf of lindanishioka@comcast.net
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Comment for Meeting May 17 on Unsheltered
Date: Monday, May 17, 2021 1:25:14 PM
Attachments: [Letter to City Council and Mayor 5-17-21.docx](#)

Your Name	Linda Nishioka
Your Email	lindanishioka@comcast.net
Message	I would like to submit my comments for the meeting tonight on managing the homeless.

This email was generated by the dynamic web forms contact us form on 5/17/2021.

Linda Nishioka
735 Tillman Ave SE
Salem, OR 97302

A property owner of:
The Nishioka Building – 121 Commercial St
The condo at 295 Church St #508
Commercial businesses at 1210 13th St SE

May 17, 2021

To City of Salem Councilors and Mayor,

As a downtown property owner and resident of South Salem, I would like to submit my written comments for the City Council Work Session: *City Council Work Session - Homelessness and Sheltering Update and Planning* for May 17, 2021.

I appreciate all the work that has been done by the City Staff, Mayor and City Counselors. These are extremely difficult decisions to be made in finding ways to manage and care for the unsheltered. Upon reviewing the meeting's Agenda and documents, the City may not renew the emergency declaration that has been in place to allow camping in city parks. I am in favor of not renewing the emergency declaration. I would love to see and use the parks to their full beauty, but there must be a plan in place to manage all the homeless. Without a well-defined plan, and accountability the unsheltered will set up their camps along the city sidewalks, the parking structures, and in front of businesses' front doors. This would certainly not improve downtown Salem. Especially now, as we begin to emerge from Covid. The businesses and residents want the parks and the downtown to feel safe. To come downtown to shop and dine. Not to have to walk past campsites, human waste, and trash.

As a downtown property owner, I would like the city to find ways to reduce the amount of unsheltered in the downtown area. To ensure that downtown Salem can survive economically, there should NOT be further shelters or campsites permitted in the downtown core. Don't build more shelters or navigation centers in the city's downtown area. Consider areas outside the downtown core that could support the unsheltered. The City Council, the Mayor, and City Manager need to allow new developments and businesses to build, grow, and bring vibrance back to core downtown. With the homeless situation out of control, building a vibrant city is unlikely.

Things to Consider:

- Small managed shelters or campsites throughout the region, not concentrated downtown
- Managed shelters and/or campsites that permit family or companions to remain together
- Managed shelters and/or campsites that permit pets
- Laws and accountability restricting loitering and camping except in the managed shelters or campsite areas.
- Assistance and management for the mental health and addiction issues

Again, how to manage homelessness is huge, but it is so clear that something must be done. A plan must be in place. It won't be easy, but a long-term plan must be put in place.

Thank you,

Linda Nishioka