

From: [Alex Korsunsky](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: don't end camping at Wallace Marine
Date: Monday, May 24, 2021 9:06:41 AM

I live in West Salem and often walk and bike through Wallace Marine. It makes me sad to see how many of my neighbors have no other place to live - but until the city is prepared to offer an appropriate alternative for everyone living there, there is no justification for moving them. In my many visits to the park, I have never experienced any trouble with the homeless residents, nor witnessed them doing anything but minding their own business. Generally, the camps I pass are kept relatively tidy (considering the lack of modern services etc). The site is near downtown and social services. They're not harming anyone. If you clear those camps, people who already have very little will lose many of their belongings, and many will wind up downtown where they're sure to upset business owners and be displaced over and over. Leave them alone.

Alex Korsunsky

865 Kingwood Dr NW
Salem, OR

From: [amber McClelland](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#); [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Public testimony
Date: Sunday, May 23, 2021 7:57:54 PM

Dear city council,

As you discuss homelessness in Salem, Please note the math:

With Community Action's upcoming ending of their motel program that is currently sheltering 290 individuals, and with the City ending its temporary permission for people to camp in undeveloped parts of Wallace Marine and Cascade Gateway parks where 500 to 600 people are estimated to be camping, there will be an additional 790 to 890 individuals with nowhere to go as of June 1st. Many projects to help are in planning or development stages, yet even if all of the planned projects are able to happen, the combined capacity would still leave 790 to 890 people with nowhere to go initially, and hundreds and hundreds of people will still have nowhere to go even after some planned options become available.

Displacing so many people at once will be like a balloon where you squeeze one end, and another end pokes out further because the air has to go somewhere. People will go wherever they can - downtown, joining existing camps on city, state, and county land, and creating new camps on city, state, and county land. If we want camping to be less visible, the current plans will result in more people, being more visible, in more places.

Service providers and advocates are already seeing huge numbers of people struggling to exist with significant health issues and physical and mental disabilities. Many are elderly citizens who struggle just to stand up and walk. Dozens have already died on the streets.

Whatever you think about homelessness and people who are homeless, we have already reached the point of homelessness being a humanitarian crisis, and it is going to get much much worse as 790 to 890 more individuals will be displaced as of June 1st. People will be dying in the streets more than ever. Fear, anxiety, and desperation are already huge, and with June 1st evictions looming, desperation is immense because we have no place for people to go. It will be a trail of tears.

People cannot just cease to exist because they don't have shelter. Displacing such a massive amount of people with no plan for where they will go will cause a hardship like we have never seen before in Salem. Where will they rest? Where will they use the bathroom? Where will they store what few belongings they have left? Do not make the same mistakes that you made in December of 2019. Allow Project Turn Key and the other temporary housing/shelter solutions to get their footing before ending the camping exception. If you don't, you risk hindering their future success and causing undue harm to our community in more ways than one.

Please do the right thing!

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: [Bob Elliott](#)
To: [citycouncil](#)
Cc: [Rep Evans](#); [Lyle Mordhorst](#); [Jim Lewis](#)
Subject: Recent WSNA Facebook input
Date: Thursday, May 20, 2021 6:34:53 PM

Please take some time and look at the recent input from the zoning meeting. This will give you the feelings from many West Salem residents. We are used for our taxes and that seems to be it. Two sides to every story but I'm sure you have heard this before, one is moving out, comments about wasted money on the third bridge etc... Schools are full, traffic is heavy around the Roth's intersection and Wallace Marine Park is a "no go area" for Police and Citizens. As you will read if you look many citizens again are hitting the frustration level like me. If you move the Wallace Marine Park homeless community to other areas (Parks) of Salem you will hear a ton of complaints from your citizens. No easy fix, but share the homeless housing around and give us back our park (after you spend a ton our City funds to clean it up). Someone else's turn to host the mess and let WS citizens use their "local" park this Summer and Fall. Oh, maybe when we get close to the Ironman event some action will take place? Please read the Facebook comments. Bob Elliott, upset WS tax payer

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Barbie smith](#)
To: [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Public testimony
Date: Sunday, May 23, 2021 7:03:29 PM

City Councilors
citycouncil@cityofsalem.net
Gretchen Bennett
gbennett@cityofsalem.net
05/23/21

As you discuss homelessness in Salem, Please note the math:

With Community Action's upcoming ending of their motel program that is currently sheltering 290 individuals, and with the City ending its temporary permission for people to camp in undeveloped parts of Wallace Marine and Cascade Gateway parks where 500 to 600 people are estimated to be camping, there will be an additional 790 to 890 individuals with nowhere to go as of June 1st. Many projects to help are in planning or development stages, yet even if all of the planned projects are able to happen, the combined capacity would still leave 790 to 890 people with nowhere to go initially, and hundreds and hundreds of people will still have nowhere to go even after some planned options become available.

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Please do the right thing!

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From: [Cathy and Paul](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: City Council May 24 Agenda Item 5.a., extension and amendment of the emergency declaration related to COVID-19
Date: Sunday, May 23, 2021 8:22:36 AM

Re: May 24 agenda item 5.a.

Mayor Bennett and Salem City Councilors:

As you consider the adoption, implementation, and enforcement of Resolution No. 2021-21, particularly Section 5 and the decision to end camping at Cascades Gateway and Wallace Marine parks, please continue to take it slow and be compassionate.

The individuals who are being displaced from the parks need somewhere to go that is safe and where they can access services. I was encouraged to hear that there are alternate sites under consideration, including the UGM site at 345 Commercial Street. The recent news about Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency and Center for Hope & Safety purchasing motel properties is great news – but it's not enough, and it won't happen soon enough. I am hopeful that with the collaboration of City staff, property owners, service providers, and advocates, more options will become available soon.

In the meantime, please keep in mind the humanity and the dignity of the individuals who have no other place to be.

Thank you,
-Cathy Ostrand-Ponsioen

From: [Pat Donenfeld](#)
To: [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Eviction of houseless neighbors
Date: Saturday, May 22, 2021 3:15:33 PM

I'm concerned about evicting our houseless neighbors PRIOR to having a real plan for where they will go. I understand some things are in the works with MWVCAA/Arches and Center for Hope & Safety purchasing motels but those programs will take awhile to get going and only serve a small proportion of the population being evicted.

If the "plan" is to just have them move back onto the downtown sidewalks, that is a horrible plan. Our small downtown businesses will be heavily impacted and Salem residents will become even more angry with the City for the back & forth shuffling of the situation.

I would request that any eviction of our houseless neighbors be delayed until there is a solid plan for where the houseless can move to that is near the services they need.

Pat Donenfeld
Ward 7

Sent from my iPhone

From: noreply@cityofsalem.net on behalf of Gregorygregg1@gmail.com
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: City meeting public comment
Date: Sunday, May 23, 2021 7:22:45 PM
Attachments: [ATT00001.bin](#)

Your Name	Gregory Gregg
Your Email	Gregorygregg1@gmail.com
Your Phone	5037793189
Street	1390 1/2 Elm St. NW
City	Salem,
State	OR
Zip	97304
Message	<p>Every year it is the same story. The City of Salem is unable to tolerate homeless people in the downtown area. We enact policies and regulations that exclude them from public places, primarily because the business community feels they are bad for business. Criminalizing homelessness and enacting ordinances that make them “disappear” does nothing to solve the problem. For years our city council has treated the symptom, and not the cause. In the meantime the homeless die every winter from exposure and related health consequences that result from living without shelter. Individuals and church organizations have done what they can to provide housing or emergency shelter, but without the help of city, county or state government, zoning laws, and ordrdinances make those efforts more costly which is a waste of individual resources that could be reduced with thoughtful government actions. The State of Oregon is currently in possession of almost \$2 billion in unexpected revenue. This is the time for the City to petition for assistance in dealing with homelessness. \$2 billion would go a long way toward solving this problem, not only in Salem, but other cities as well.</p>

This email was generated by the dynamic web forms contact us form on 5/23/2021.

From: [Gloria Gordon](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Homeless
Date: Monday, May 24, 2021 10:06:56 AM

You have destroyed two beautiful parks by allowing this on top of turning down town and Salem in general into a sewer. Try reading the book Toxic Charity. There is no incentive to these people to clean up their lives or better themselves if you keep giving hand outs. Stop pandering and enforce laws of loitering etc. Also ask yourselves all these people here are not all homeless Oregonians. Where are they coming from and the why is probably for the free handouts. End it.

Sent from my iPad

From: [John Comments](#)
To: [citycouncil](#)
Cc: [CityRecorder](#); [Jaken Garcia](#)
Subject: Salem's unsheltered community
Date: Monday, May 24, 2021 12:50:27 PM

I was homeless in Salem for over three years. My experience taught me a lot about how to climb back out of the deep pit of that situation. The biggest daily struggle I experienced was meeting basic needs and constant moving, the latter greatly effected my ability to meet these basic needs (i. e. Food, shelter, clothing and personal hygiene). Every day was a struggle to meet these needs. Getting out of that situation and becoming a productive member of society as opposed to a burden, for me, required a job. The difficulty in obtaining employment while homeless is something that cannot be fathomed unless experienced. I can offer this basic sense of it; it requires stability, regular meals, a clean appearance and an assurance that upon returning to home base all will be in place for the next days struggle. This is never a given for the employed unsheltered. Any modicum of stability that might be offered to our homeless community will lessen these struggles and encourage self sufficiency. I beg members of the council try and imagine these struggles, a stable homeless community benefits all our city. I realize the scope of this issue and associated complaints from citizen and businesses and I do not envy the decision City Council members are faced with. I write to offer the perspective of a person who has experienced it first hand and managed, by a short lived stability, to achieve employment and maintain self sufficiency for almost five years now.

Sincerely,
John Dockham

From: [Jaken Garcia](#)
To: [citycouncil](#); [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: A letter regarding the extension of unsheltered camping at Cascades Gateway and Wallace Marine parks
Date: Thursday, May 20, 2021 9:45:26 AM

Dear Salem City Council and Mayor Bennet,

Hello, my name is Jaken Garcia and I am a substitute teacher for the Salem-Keizer School District and volunteer with Church at the Park. I am writing this letter to be entered into public record and to request that the Salem City Council extend its motion, set to expire on June 1st, which allows the unsheltered to camp in city parks.

First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to every member of the Salem City Council and to Mayor Bennet. What a blessing it is to live in a city where the thoughts of all its constituents, even those from humble backgrounds such as my own, may still be heard. Know that I am appreciative to all of you for the volunteer service you provide in seeking to improve the wellbeing of Salem and her citizens.

As for the tone of this letter, please understand that I am writing with neither a sense of anger or judgment. To embrace such postures would go against both my beliefs as a Christian and all sound principles of rhetoric as an effective strategy. I have watched enough Parks and Recreation to know that the last thing a government official needs is another ranter and raver. My sole desire in this letter is to articulate my position on what action the Salem City Council ought to take in order to provide the best outcome both for housed and unhoused people in Salem alike. I admit this is a rather long letter, but the problem before us is complex, and a complex issue will always require a detailed analysis and a thoughtful solution.

With all that being said, I do not want to take up your valuable time any longer than necessary. After having read through all of the work session documents attached to the May 17th work meeting, my understanding of the present dilemma is that, barring a policy change, on June 1st it will once again become illegal for people to live in the city parks around Salem. According to Resolution No. 2021-21, the reason for such a decision is as follows: "The conditions in the unmanaged camping areas in the unimproved areas of Cascades Gateway and Wallace Marine parks have become unsanitary and unsafe for continued habitation and constitute a public nuisance. The potential of illness and harm to

public health and safety from the conditions in the camping areas and increases the likelihood the individual campers may contract COVID-19.”

As someone who has been to both Wallace Marine and Cascades Gateway and talked with their residents, I would agree, to a certain extent, that this assessment is true. The parks certainly have more litter now than they did before human habitation; theft, violence, and abuse are tragically all-too common; COVID has spread and is likely still spreading among the unsheltered; and the city parks, in large part because of the descriptions just listed, have certainly lost the appeal they once had as a place to go jogging or watch a soccer game.

However, while I agree with the fact that city parks are not intended nor fit for human habitation, I disagree with the argument that says, therefore, that the parks ought to be shut down. I disagree with this rationale because the negative symptoms currently plaguing Salem parks (uncleanliness, danger, disease spread, and public disruption) are not symptoms of the type of homelessness found solely in parks, but rather symptoms of the type of homelessness found everywhere. The truth is that for a human being, homelessness will never be a safe and clean way to live. Science and common sense both teach us that shelter is a basic need, and when a person lacks shelter, in whatever context, a whole host of negative effects will result. Using descriptors of homelessness everywhere as a reason to move an unsheltered population from one place to another is missing the point-- a certain level of uncleanliness, danger, disease spread and disruption will always exist as long as there are people living without shelter.

With this in mind, it becomes clear that both of the options available to the Salem City Council, to extend or not extend the camping ordinance, are relatively bad ones. They will both produce negative effects because they will both still result in a situation with numerous people lacking formal shelter. But still, just because both options are bad does not mean both options are equally bad. We must not ask ourselves, “Are the city’s parks a good place to live?” but rather, “Are the city’s parks a better place to live than the current alternative?”

And what is the alternative? Where are the unsheltered in Salem to live if not at the parks? The answer, according to the *Sheltering and Housing Update* document from May

12, is unknown. There is no listed place for the unsheltered to go once the camping ordinance expires. The aid on its way, a new UGM building and a city outdoor managed camp, is still months out from arrival and, even upon completion, will still not fill the demand for shelter. So the question remains, with shelters at capacity, what will happen to all the people at the parks should the ordinance end? Where will all the evicted campers go on June 1st?

There is no way of knowing for sure, but gauging by my conversations with campers it seems most likely that the unsheltered population will cluster around areas where they can find food and supplies, places like Arches, Church At the Park, Northwest Human Services, and other non-profits. Campers will stay close to spaces where public restrooms and cover are available, so most will likely not leave the city proper. Should park camping be ended, what Salem will be left with is what I can only describe as city camping. And city camping will have the same problems that park camping has. We have seen it before.

Waste once left to compile under trees will compile under highways; violence and abuse relegated to the darkened woodline will shift into the shadowed alley; complaints from Paradise Island retirees will be replaced by complaints from downtown store owners. Covid will still spread. Evicting campers from the parks will not solve any problems but only serve to spread them around, to move the inevitable symptoms of poverty from one part of the city to another.

But city camping will not only cause the same problems as park camping-- the reason it is a worse option is because it will add additional problems to an already bad situation. First of all, the transition will not be smooth. As with any eviction, there will be conflict and potentially violence as people are moved, by force when necessary, to scrap out a new existence somewhere off in the city. There will be theft and panic all around as people are forced to abandon what they cannot carry in a backpack and a shopping cart. Even the police will be put in a vulnerable position as the unpopular message bearers and enforcers of this policy change.

However, the larger problem with city camping for the homeless community (the reason why most people are now staying in the parks) is that it is a transient and unstable existence unbefitting progress. In the city every rest stop is a potential loitering violation,

every pitched tent an overnight trespass. In the city, conflict between police and unsheltered persons will inevitably rise as calls for removal from the community increase, a harm that will cut both ways. The unhoused will find themselves living in a perpetual state of crime simply because of the fact there is nowhere legal in the city to stay for an extended period of time. A fight to progress will become a fight to survive, a far more stressful and costly daily existence. Should city camping become the new normal, the current homeless crisis will go from bad to worse.

Still, I understand that I cannot only depict in painful detail just what will happen should the parking ordinance expire and the transition to city camping occur. A negative argument is insufficient (and depressing) and so I will now explain how and why I envision park camping to be at least a survivable strategy in the short term and a tactic to be built upon in the long term.

First of all, again, I do not mean to act like tent camping in the parks is a perfect solution. It is not. It is a necessary evil by which to progress to a more lasting good. To move forward with the city parks will be like attempting to build upon the foundation of an abandoned house; debris will need to be cleared and more work will need to be done, but at least with the parks there are a few advantages that can be built off of. For example, in the current system personal property can be somewhat protected and kept somewhere. Living in a tent means that a person does not need to fit all of their belongings into a backpack and a shopping cart, and so more food can be stored. There are also nonprofits close to both Wallace Marine and Cascades Gateway, places like Church at the Park and Arches, where an unhoused person can routinely find food and supplies. Social workers don't have to search all around town in order to find their clients because their clients are less migratory. From what I have been told by those who have transitioned successfully out of homelessness, to have any type of home base, even one as imperfect as a tent in the woods, is crucial. As far as future city policy goes, building upon the unfinished and unattractive foundation of camp parking still remains a better option than building upon the shifting sands of street living.

However, an extended ordinance to allow tent camping is still just a short term solution. To be successful, any short term tactic needs to be effectively integrated into a

long term strategy. I have already gone on long enough, so I will keep this as brief as possible.

The truth is that homelessness is not a crisis that can be killed with a silver bullet solution. It is too complex and too rooted. But just because this issue cannot be defeated in one blow does not mean it cannot be weakened by a savvy government body. Homelessness is less like a towering and impenetrable monolith and more like a jungle wherein the unsheltered are caught up in its tangled vines for various reasons and to varying degrees. I admit that the City Council is limited in what it can do to reach those caught up in the furthest darkness of this jungle (those with severe mental illness and drug addiction) but that does not mean that the city council cannot still cut away what vines it can in order to, at worst, make life better for those in and around the parks and, at best, give a hand up to those ready to re-enter the housed workforce.

First of all, if the city council makes a few small changes to the current park system I believe it could drastically reduce uncleanliness, danger, covid spread, and civil disturbance. For example, by my personal count there are only six porta potties and two garbage dumpsters (plus a smattering of trash cans) to serve the needs of over 250 unsheltered people living at Wallace Marine Park. If the city council were to increase the amount of toilets and dumpsters, as well as perhaps extend the current Cash-for-Trash program from one to two days a week and expand it to both parks, the uncleanliness of the parks could be severely reduced.

As far as helping people escape homelessness goes (a long term need), my advice is that we remove the easiest barriers first. There are those who are unsheltered largely because of just three simple things: They lack transportation, access to daily showers, and a laundry service. In order to get *any* job in the modern context, all three are needed. If the city could figure out a way to expand its busing system, give people showers, and provide access to laundry services, we would begin to see those people caught in the outermost layer of homelessness start escaping. The results would not be immediate, some people would not take advantage of the new resources (as is the case with any offering), but again, noticeable improvement would start to be made.

With all that being said, it is now time to bring my argument to a close. I strongly and

respectfully advise that the city council extend its current camping provision in order to provide the best outcome for both the housed and unhoused people of Salem. I understand that such a decision will likely bring upon the council unfounded criticism, and so I recognize the difficulty of your situation. However, I also believe that such criticism is doomed to occur regardless of the decision made. And while that is both unpleasant and unfair, I believe there is a certain freedom to be found in this sort of unavoidable unpopularity because it frees up a person to focus simply on making the best decision. And while the best decision may not always be popular in the short term, it will always bear good fruit (and steadily become more popular) in the long term. Therefore, I ask again that the City Council extend the city camping ordinance. May God bless each and every one of you with the necessary measure of wisdom, empathy, and discernment as you ruminate on my proposal.

Sincerely,

Jaken Garcia

From: [Kendra Tibbot](#)
To: [citycouncil](#); [Gretchen Bennett](#); [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: PUBLIC TESTIMONY
Date: Sunday, May 23, 2021 7:07:12 PM

City Council and Mayor Bennett,

City Councilors

citycouncil@cityofsalem.net

Gretchen Bennett

gbennett@cityofsalem.net

City Recorder

cityrecorder@cityofsalem.net

05/18/21

As you discuss homelessness in Salem, Please note the math:

With Community Action's upcoming ending of their motel program that is currently sheltering 290 individuals, and with the City ending its temporary permission for people to camp in undeveloped parts of Wallace Marine and Cascade Gateway parks where 500 to 600 people are estimated to be camping, there will be an additional 790 to 890 individuals with nowhere to go as of June 1st. Many projects to help are in planning or development stages, yet even if all of the planned projects are able to happen, the combined capacity would still leave 790 to 890 people with nowhere to go initially, and hundreds and hundreds of people will still have nowhere to go even after some planned options become available.

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Service providers and advocates are already seeing huge numbers of people struggling to exist with significant health issues and physical and mental disabilities. Many are elderly citizens who struggle just to stand up and walk. Dozens have already died on the streets.

Whatever you think about homelessness and people who are homeless, we have already reached the point of homelessness being a humanitarian crisis, and it is going to get much much worse as 790 to 890 more individuals will be displaced as of June 1st. People will be dying in the streets more than ever. Fear, anxiety, and desperation are already huge, and with June 1st evictions looming, desperation is immense because we have no place for people to go. It will be a trail of tears.

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Please do the right thing!

Sincerely,

Kendra Taylor Executive Director of Kindness Closet of Salem

From: noreply@cityofsalem.net on behalf of lindsaybigelow@outlook.com
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: City meeting public comment
Date: Sunday, May 23, 2021 6:02:10 PM
Attachments: [ATT00001.bin](#)

Your Name	Lindsay Bigelow
Your Email	lindsaybigelow@outlook.com
Your Phone	5035761687
Street	2087 Baxter Rd SE
City	Salem
State	OR
Zip	97306
Message	<p>Good Evening Councilors and Mayor Bennett, This email is to ask that you strongly consider a gradual or planned approach to the removal of campers at Wallace Marine and Cascade Parks. Recognizing there are several projects that may be able to provide additional shelter beds over the next several weeks or months, this approach may allow for those moving from the parks to actual shelter beds rather than just forcing them out with no plan. We know the campers will end up downtown on the sidewalks and under the Market St overpass. The Market St camp is becoming more and more volatile and adding to that will lead to more violence, substance use and criminal activity. There is nowhere for people to go. Please, do the humane thing and allow campers to stay where they are for the time being. Please.</p>

This email was generated by the dynamic web forms contact us form on 5/23/2021.

From: [lorrie walker](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#); [citycouncil](#)
Cc: [sen.petercourtney@oregonlegislature.gov](#); [Rep.Clem](#); [Rep.TinaKotek@oregonlegislature.gov](#); [Jimmy Jones](#); [Stephen Goins](#); [Pamella Watson](#); [Lynn Takata](#); [Dave Maceira](#); [delana beaton](#); [Cory Poole](#); [Gretchen Bennett](#); [Irma Dowd](#); [Trevor Womack](#); [commissioners@co.marion.or.us](#); [lorrie walker](#); [Saphara Harrell](#); [Mooney Emily](#); [sen.debpatterson@oregonlegislature.gov](#)
Subject: City Council Testimony
Date: Monday, May 24, 2021 1:16:33 AM

All,

As you all face the dilemma of where does Salem go now? You are not alone. You have many opinions to shift through. You have big decisions to make. I will respectfully add my opinions to the growing list.

I am concerned with closing areas to unsheltered campers in tents, cars, RV's prior to having approved areas for people to move to.

I am concerned about the damage that has been done environmentally to the parks, waterways and bird migration. I understand the issues of neighbors living nearby Cascade Park and elsewhere. I understand the issues unsheltered campers have. Safety. Shelter. Survival. Fear. Desperation.

As a long time advocate for unsheltered in Salem and citizen of Salem, I understand the issues. I believe we, the city, the people of Salem have learned from the way the current camps have operated. There were a few hundred more people that moved into parks than anyone ever imagined when camping was approved and since.

There have not been any assigned or organized marked areas to track who is camping where or how many. There is no accountability, rules or responsibility for camp areas. Camping away from waterways. Everyone is in agreement that we need to do better. We are in a crisis. Lack of housing. Pandemic. Fires. Substance abuse issues. A statewide broken mental health system.

We have a housing crisis. We need homes for people. We need housing. We need treatment options. We need mental health care. We need more than band-aids. We need Marion County & the State of Oregon to step up. Not silence as we have had. We need community involvement. We need experience, knowledge, compassion, Restrooms. Navigation centers.

I don't know all the answers. I know all of the people in camps are someone's loved one. Children, siblings, parents. We need to do better. Living in a tent a half mile or more from restrooms isn't ok in Salem, Oregon or America.

Campers are scared, worried, fearful. They don't know where they can go. All involved, Gretchen Bennett, advocates, organizations, unsheltered, have accomplished much. It is appreciated.

We know this isn't going to be a easy task for anyone. We need well thought out plans for how to move forward from here. No more band aids. We can't spend money on things that only last weeks. We need long term vision. Transparency.

We need Salem PD involvement. We need their input. They are well aware of what is going on, more than most in Salem. We need to listen to managers of Fred Meyer, Walmart, Lowe's, Cory Poole, businesses, Salem's unsheltered & sheltered residents. These issues are affecting everyone. We've had a few task forces. We have plenty of people who know what we need. Best wishes.

Respectfully,
Lorrie Walker
Advocate, Legal Guardian,
Concerned Resident & Citizen of Salem

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Lynelle Wilcox](#)
To: [citycouncil](#); [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [Gretchen Bennett](#)
Subject: PUBLIC TESTIMONY for May 24, 2021 City Council meeting
Date: Monday, May 24, 2021 2:57:14 PM

To: City Council

I am very grateful for the many projects that are in the works that will enable more homeless people to get out of the weather. Thank you for your support of those projects and thank you so much to the many people and agencies that are working so hard to build, create, develop, and implement multiple projects to provide alternate camping and shelter options for people who are homeless.

Yet the math is concerning. Please extend the date, and please document that the plan is to implement the ban gradually, as other options become available.

With the City ending its temporary permission for people to camp in undeveloped parts of Wallace Marine and Cascade Gateway parks where 500 to 600 people are estimated to be camping, and with Community Action's upcoming ending of their motel program that is currently sheltering 290 individuals, and **there will be an additional 790 to 890 individuals with nowhere to go as of June 1st.**

The City's staff report for last week's City Council Work Session reflects that upcoming camping and shelter options accommodate up to 330 additional people by August 1st:

- Community Action's new hotel: up to 120 beds by August 1, 2021
- UGM's new shelter: up to 150 additional beds by mid June, 2021
- City managed outdoor camp: 60 occupancy by mid-July, 2021

That leaves 460 to 560 people still with nowhere to go after August 1.

Even if other camp and/or shelter options develop between now and August 1, it would be hugely unlikely that any combination of options can accommodate 460 to 560 people.

Having so many people displaced during just a few months will be like a balloon where you squeeze one end, and another end pokes out further because the air has to go **somewhere**. People will go wherever they can - downtown, joining existing camps on private, city, state, and county land, and creating new camps on private, city, state, and county land. If we want camps to be less visible, the current plans will result in more people, being more visible, in more places.

Service providers and advocates are already seeing huge numbers of people struggling to exist with significant health issues and physical and mental disabilities. Many are elderly citizens who struggle just to stand up and walk. Dozens have already died on the streets.

It has taken decades to get to this point of homelessness being a humanitarian crisis, and it is going to get much much worse as 460 to 560 people will still have nowhere to go by summer's end.

People will be dying in the streets more than ever. Fear, anxiety, and desperation are already huge, and with June 1st and summer evictions looming, desperation is immense because we

have no place for people to go. It will be a trail of tears.

Please extend the date, and please document that the plan is to implement the ban gradually, as other options become available.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lynelle Wilcox
1785 Norway Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

From: [Morgana Erazo](#)
To: [citycouncil](#); [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Public testimony
Date: Monday, May 24, 2021 12:47:37 PM

City council members,

It has come to my attention that you will be voting tonight on whether or not to extend the temporary camping protections at some of our local parks for the unshelled community. The possibility of 700-800 people facing a sweep with no other options in place, is shocking and deeply disheartening.

I've been a Salem resident for 30+ years and the current housing crisis is like nothing I've ever seen. And of course, COVID has exacerbated an already dire situation. Please ask yourself what good would come of choosing to end the camping exception? Forcing people to move from one area, where a small amount of stability is in place, to other areas across the city (also areas where they "can't" be) only to cause the following:

- The loss of essential items (tents, sleeping bags, propane tanks, clothing, meds, and medical equipment)

- trauma and decline in mental stability (where do I go now? How will I get my belongings moved? I'm a throw away person. My community does not care about me or my well-being)

There are plans underway to provide more emergency shelter and transitional housing programs in our community. Now is not the time to do this! What is the more humane and fiscally responsible thing to do? If these people are displaced, there will be more ER visits, police calls and mental health crises.

I plead with you as someone who works with this population, hears their stories and sees their suffering, please wait until other options are in place.

-Morgana Santos, MSW, LCSW

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [Michele Slazas](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Letter to Council pertaining to hotel 6 purchase
Date: Monday, May 24, 2021 11:48:36 AM
Attachments: [Letter to council.docx](#)

I am sending the attached letter for the council meeting tonight to be read concerning housing projects and the homeless issue.

Regards

Michele McKimmy

May 24, 2021

To: City Council and Representatives

Re: Housing and Homeless Shelters

I am writing in reference to the recent announcement for the acquisition of the Motel 6 on Hawthorne Rd.

I have lived in the Salem area now for 3 years and in those 3 years have seen little or no action pertaining to the homeless population until recently.

My concern is that it seems like NE and N Salem are now the dumping grounds for a burden that the whole city should share. Since the homeless issue has increased so has crime and dilapidated neighborhoods and housing. When homelessness becomes prominent in a neighborhood it takes a lot of resources and money to recoup and recover these areas. I personally have had enough.

Why is it that the only solutions are a motel in NE Salem and the building of pallet houses on Portland Rd again in a NE neighborhood?

Why is there not any solutions or camps being distributed to other areas? Why is it that all of the solutions that the city comes up with are in one area. This is not a N/NE Salem issue but a city wide issue and we are not the cities dumping ground for the homeless and the less desired despite what the city council and other representatives of the city has done in the past.

I am personally fed up with the solutions that the city has come up with and the continued degradation of N/NE Salem neighborhoods. We do not want nor should we have to carry the burden of this problem. I feel that all of Salem should carry a percentage of burden and resolution to the issue of the homeless camps and housing the homeless.

Where is there a housing project in S Salem or W Salem for the homeless?

Is it because these neighborhoods are more desirable and have higher property values? Is it because they don't have commercial buildings dumped in among housing? Is it because their neighborhoods haven't been destroyed by roads built to accommodate state workers? Is it because these neighborhoods are demographically whiter? Why it that these neighborhoods do not have pallet houses or camps in them? Why is it that N/NE Salem is the only area that the city looks at when they look to resolve the problems facing homelessness?

There are many of us that have tried to work through the Neighborhood Associations and such to get the city to improve N/NE Salem neighborhoods but it does not seem to be a priority and because of this we are now the cities dumping ground. We do not want your homeless in our backyard on our streets and in our parks. We do not want to be your dump. We deserve the same appreciation and respect for our neighborhoods that is given to West and South Salem.

Enough is enough!

The city needs to find a better solution or a shared solution but quit sending your problem into our neighborhoods.

The city needs to come up with other solutions other than the hotel and the pallet housing all being dumped in our neighborhood and if this is their solution than what are they going to do about the increase in crime and dilapidation of the neighborhood? What are you going to do about the garbage and the shopping carts and the needles and the other issues that come with these facilities?

N/NE Salem deserves more there are a lot of people that work hard, own our homes and deserve to have better form our city council and leadership.

Sincerely

Michele McKimmy

Michele McKimmy
3027 Hammel St NE
Salem OR 97301

From: [Susan Graves / Lloyd Chapman](#)
To: [citycouncil](#)
Cc: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Public Testimony
Date: Sunday, May 23, 2021 8:27:59 PM

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

I understand that the camping exemption is set to expire. I am writing to ask you to extend the camping exemption.

Until more options are developed, there are way too few options for the 700+ unhoused folks currently finding shelter in the designated parks. Project Turn Key and other options are being developed and are an important piece of the puzzle and if you wait till they are up and running that would help a lot.

People will lose their belongings and end up in inappropriate places all over the city. Downtown, parks, neighborhoods, sidewalks..... Unsafe for those displaced there, unsafe for the rest of the community trying to use those spaces as well.

As a community we can wait on the use of those parks until better options are found.

Thank you

Susan Graves
1240 Hillendale SE

From: [Sarah Rohrs](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#); [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Public comment on Salem's homeless camping issue
Date: Monday, May 24, 2021 11:27:31 AM

May 24, 2021

Salem City Councilors

I am writing to you to express concern about the fate of hundreds of Salem's homeless individuals as the city's ordinance allowing camping in Wallace Marine and Cascade Gateway parks expires on June 1.

Without adequate provisions in place, it's estimated that approximately 900 people could have nowhere to go. Many may end up downtown, or in neighborhood parks. Displacing so many people at one time is wrong, and will create additional hardship among people already living in crisis. Compounding this problem is the upcoming end of the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency's motel program.

Some of these homeless people are elderly citizens who have difficulties walking and standing. Some, like the woman living under Market Street overpass, have already died. Sickness, hunger, mental health issues already abound. Evicting them from the parks will add to the desperation, plus could create additional health problems during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Please allow camping in city parks to continue, thereby giving adequate time for service providers to work out details on various temporary housing and shelter options.

Thank you,

Sarah Rohrs
Salem, Oregon