

Dear Ashland City Council and Mayor Stromberg,

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We still need urgent action from the City of Ashland for those who are already struggling the most and who have largely been left out of local and statewide COVID-19 relief so far.

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> **Ensure the city has laundry and shower options for houseless community members.** These basic personal hygiene resources are important for everyone trying to practice optimal hygiene to protect themselves and our community as a whole from the spread of Covid-19.

Thank you,

Michael Mesmer

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hygiene to protect themselves and our community as a whole from the spread of Covid-19.

Thank you

Joyce Ward

Mayor and City Council,

I too like so many other citizens in Ashland appreciate what you have done. However, this is not enough there is a serious sense of urgency. When business owners come to you with suggestions on how we keep the business going and rebound once we are out of the middle of this pandemic. Nothing is done no creative thinking or solutions. As someone who works in travel and tourism, I know that the funds from the tourism industry play a major role in funding the city. Why can't some of this money be allocated to support small businesses in Ashland? The economic is in critical condition and in need of resuscitation.

Jobs with Justice presented a very doable draft to the City Administrator in regards to housing our homeless. Only to receive a swift no from her. I understand that we need buy in from our partners, such as OHRA, and others. However, you our local government "can allow this to happen" to quote a dear friend. Perhaps we can take a page from Medford. I understand that this proposal can not be done in a week or a month. It can be done and is doable to happen looking at the big picture. I know that we have buildings and the ability to open them for temporary shelters now. I applaud and am grateful for all of the many volunteers who have given their time.

In conclusion, the people of Ashland are in need of leadership. I think all capital interest projects need to be put on hold and money needs to be redirected. Also we have a general fund how can that be utilized? We can do better!

Gina DuQuenne

Hello Ashland City Council members and Mayor Stromberg,

My name is Mariah McLaughlin and I'm a concerned resident of Ashland.

Our unhoused population is in grave danger during this crisis and need immediate housing. Please take action in any capacity you have to fill this need.

Thank you for your continued attention to this vulnerable demographic; who are our neighbors, too.

Sincerely,
Mariah McLaughlin

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Thank you,

Laurie McManus

I agree with the suggestions and ideas for helping the vulnerable people in Ashland, Please find a solution during this crisis and hopefully beyond.
Sincerely David and Cathleen Katz

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Dear Council Members and Mayor,

I am in appreciation of what has been done so far in town to assist people, follow health protocols, and care for vulnerable people right now. However, my observation is that the bulk of this work has been done by independent agencies, churches, and concerned individuals. And that the city, instead of being a bulwark and support to these people, is stifling, side-tracking and at times downright blocking their efforts.

We have an emergency situation in our entire country and it filters down to here, our little town. Many things need to happen to relieve the suffering of business owners, workers, students, elders, etc. My big concern at this moment is that we have a significant amount of homeless people who are in dire need of shelter, food, showers, laundry, medical care, safe places, charging stations, HOT water for washing hands, clean toilets with soap water and toilet paper. I shouldn't have to list these things, which so many take for granted. When will the city follow CDC guidelines and mandate the opening of motels for the shelter of homeless people? Why isn't red tape being cut to allow the opening of Pioneer Hall again so that the people who spent so much time and money making that kitchen pass regulations (kudos to SOJWJ) can now actually use it for cooking and feeding the homeless people they serve? Why isn't money being released to do the minimal repair and upgrades to that building and Windburn Way community center? These things could surely be accomplished quickly and expedited in light of current dire threats to our homeless population and the rest of our citizens. Now is the time for removing obstacles, not strengthening them!

There simply must be more done to shelter and care for people who remain without their basic needs met. If your hearts are not moved to aid these citizens, then at the very least consider the risk to yourselves and those you love by having people unhoused, unfed, cold, tired, with overworked immune systems, and without medical assistance at large right now in the midst of this pandemic.

This is a great failing of the city government. Where is our mayor? Where are the members of this council? Where is your leadership? You who remain invisible might look to the example of Julie, who is right here on the ground with the people she has been elected to serve.

We need to be hearing from you. We need more than simply being told to write an email to you. We need to see our mayor, our city councilors. We need leadership now. Please make it your promise to house every homeless person NOW, in motels, or the empty SOU dorms/housing or other potentially available spaces. Open the Grove for people to have time to rest and warm up. Take Leadership! Cut through needless red tape. Right now! Discourage the paranoia toward and the abuse of our homeless population by having a clear citywide stance on the dignity of all humans. Brainstorm like crazy to find safe places and safe ways to care for our homeless and then encourage the whole of the citizenry to adopt this attitude of being a community that values respecting the dignity of all. Promote this attitude actively via social media, newspapers, posters, radio spots, etc. Stop relying on 'the kindness of strangers' and use some of that city money to take this opportunity to care for the people and to build a strong, engaged, informed empowered citizenry here in this jewel of a town. Step Up. Now. Sincerely, Marian Spadone

Full Name: **Linda Reppond**

Subject: **Caring for our community**

Message: **Dear Mayor John and Council Members-- I can't imagine the weight on your shoulders as you try to find ways to keep our citizens, businesses and way of life in Ashland safe in the midst of all that is happening. I am writing, not to criticize, but to add my voice to support what must be done. Absolutely, top priority needs to be give to sheltering the homeless. Not only are they unable to shelter in place, when they have no place to shelter, but they become the ticking time bomb for the whole community, as they walk the streets all day, very likely carriers or sick themselves. Other cities are taking unprecedented steps that set aside policies or land use restrictions to find a way to provide shelter. When I read about cities that are converting their convention centers and city halls into housing, or are setting up tent cities with toilets and sanitary stations, I keep returning my attention to what we are not yet doing as a city. I think most of you know that I offered my hotel, Carlisle Garden Suites, as a housing option for the most vulnerable and ill guests from the Winter Shelter when it closed. It was a scary move, as I knew so little about what might happen. But with my entire business disappearing, every booking for the Spring and Summer cancelled, I knew that I needed to set aside my fears and concerns and simply be a decent human being. We are in week 3 of housing those 12 people, and it has gone amazingly well. None of my fears have materialized: damages, theft, garbage. None. Instead, what I have found is people who are so incredibly grateful to be able to rest safely as this pandemic continues, that they are weeding my gardens and offering to help in whatever I need. I say this to say that what I am learning is that for so many of the unhoused people in Ashland, simply a warm, safe place to land and a hot shower changes everything. We MUST find a way to provide this! I know that the Grove has been suggested, and that seems like a good option to me. I don't know the reasons why the Hardesty property was not an option, because it seemed like a good one to me. I will leave the solution to those who know the options better than I do. But I urge you to take strong,**

compassionate action NOW. As a community, we must protect our whole community by protecting those who are most at risk. Nothing binds us to long term solutions, as we reach beyond our traditional ways of operating to put something in place for right now. I believe the consequences of doing nothing or too little will cause incredible harm. Thank you for all you do. Linda Reppond owner Carlisle Garden Suites

Full Name: Miriam Reed

Subject: 5G Installation

Message: Dear Mayor & City Council Member, We ask that you impose a moratorium on ?small cells? and other wireless infrastructure permits process and deployment until the COVID-19 emergency is over. The wireless providers are using the COVID-19 emergency as cover to expand and cement their rapid and virtually unsupervised deployment of harmful wireless infrastructure. Our local leaders should not have to dedicate time and resources to policing whether the wireless companies are following local and state law, they have far more important things to do. The FCC wireless permit rules allow emergency moratoria. Homeland Security guidelines emphasize that maintenance of existing communications capability is the priority. New construction is not ?essential.? The COVID-19 emergency has led to a government shut down of non-essential activity. Hospitals, emergency response and local officials are overwhelmed and they must be allowed to focus on what is indeed ?essential?. Now is not the time to be dedicating resources to expanding, rather than just maintaining, our networks. The FCC has directly held a local jurisdiction can impose a temporary halt to deployment and permits during emergencies. In the Matter of Accelerating Wireline Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers, FCC 18-111, 33 FCC Rcd 7705, 7784-7785, ?157 (2018) (?We recognize that there may be limited situations in the case of a natural disaster or other comparable emergency where an express or de facto moratoria that violates section 253(a) may nonetheless be ?necessary? to ?protect the public safety and welfare? or to ?ensure the continued quality of telecommunications services.??) Homeland Security has declared that local government is on the forefront and can take control over determining whether to temporarily halt all non-essential activity. Homeland Security guidance documents prioritize maintenance of existing Communications Systems, and do not support ?essential? status for new construction. See Homeland Security Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency, Identifying Critical Infrastructure During COVID-19, <https://www.cisa.gov/identifying-critical-infrastructure-during-covid-19> (local control); e-Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources Support Annex, <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nrf/nrf-support-cikr.pdf> (focus on ?protection, response, recovery, and restoration?). Homeland Security, like the FCC, understands that it is essential in an emergency situations justify focusing on protecting, responding, recovering and restoring of existing systems, but new communications facilities construction is and should be deemed nonessential, and subject to lockdown for so long as we are under emergency conditions. Cities can and should impose a moratorium on deployment in their local area and freeze the permit process until the COVID-19 emergency is over.

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Thank you

Anora Vilella

To the Council and Mayor:

Hello Council and Mayor, Thank you for keeping our city functioning and supporting the health and safety of all of us. As part of the City's focus on the immediate pandemic crisis, I urge you to instruct the Public Works Department to withdraw the request for bids on the construction of the proposed Water Treatment Plant. This is not the time to pursue such a large and complex project when we have to focus on our day to day needs. There is no emergency requiring immediate action on the WTP, and in fact, Ashlanders are expecting an opportunity to have a community discussion regarding the WTP plan. So let's continue to focus on our immediate needs and set this very large and complex capital project on the back burner for now.

In addition, this would be a good time for the City to throttle back any and all expenditures that are not essential to the health, safety and welfare of Ashland residents. We need to circle the wagons fiscally and figure out what resources we have to weather a multi-year economic storm. I'm hoping that council members will also see that this is not the time to add to our City indebtedness via the proposed bond that will be on the ballot. My guess is that voters will reject the proposal as no one wants to increase costs at this time. The City must also address the needs of economically vulnerable residents wherever practical such as keeping utility rates capped and even reduced for the balance of the year. Rates are scheduled to increase in July, I believe, and that rate increase should be indefinitely cancelled. My hope is that our resilient community will eventually recover from the current crisis, but we must be realistic about our future. Ashland is likely to contract in population as a result of lost tourist activity and the need for many to relocate to more affordable places. Hopefully OSF and SOU will recover, but that will take time. It is both appropriate and necessary for the city to seek every wise avenue to reduce expenditures, budgets, projects, and staff in order to survive the next few years. Lower population, fewer tourists, reduced tax & fee revenue and overall reduced business activity should allow the city budget to shrink some giving us more flexibility to handle the medium term future. Hopefully we'll bounce back within a few years, but right now we have to act prudently to survive.

Larry Cooper, Ashland Oregon

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Thank you,

Kat Smith

Councilors and Mayor,

Please act now on behalf of the collective good of the town.



Does My County Have an Epidemic? Estimates Show Hidden Transmission

By [James Glanz](#), [Matthew Bloch](#) and
[Anjali Singhvi](#) April 3, 2020

Estimated chance of epidemic



Jackson County, Ore.



<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/03/us/coronavirus-county-epidemics.html>

With urgency and care,
Liza Maltzberger

Thank you, Pam, for at least responding to my e-mail. The entire Council, except Julie, continues to ignore me, as does the Administrator, although I heard we have a new one now, but I did submit a request for an ADA accommodation for parking to Kelly Madding probably 6 months ago and she never bothered to reply, and life has been crazy enough that I couldn't deal with trying to chase her down and get an answer. I am not used to being acknowledged by my supposed representatives, so thank you for that basic courtesy. Stromberg, you should know that your conspicuous absence is getting noticed right now.

First off, I acknowledge that this has been happening way faster than any of us expected. However, I don't believe a month of hemming and hawing is an adequate response to what's happening out here. You keep describing our experience as "overwhelming." That euphemism does not even begin to describe the total nightmare people are going through right now, and I think a big problem with the response is that you are not taking it as seriously as it really is. For instance, today on my post to Peeps I received this reply from a local homeless woman:

"I am one of the unhoused people here in Ashland. I was living on the Greenway but I have a very bad leg and ankle and bowel problems. there are NO bathrooms along the Greenway so I had to use a bag and throw it away every day- disgusting. The food they gave us can barely feed us. So I still would have to walk daily into town on my bad leg. Not to mention I'm a female out there all alone. So I made the bold move to move into town. I will be bouncing around trying to hide to sleep and find places to keep warm. I will have to accept any tickets I get because out on the Greenway is not ok for a female in my condition."

This woman has chronic bronchitis and is thus at high risk for the virus. Why is she going through this?! It has been a MONTH into this fiasco and she is still struggling out there on her own to survive. It honestly makes me cry.

I received another comment previously from a homeless man saying that he is sick and was run out of an empty storefront for trying to charge his phone. He was adverse to going to a homeless center because everyone is sick, and I detected some pride. This is a person who will continue to mingle with regular society hoping to make it on his own, because an independent "out" is not being made available to him.

If you want more testimonies of real experiences out there, talk with Julie. The situation is utterly extreme, and the drag of response is maddening!

OK, so I have 2 points I'd like to address in your reply:

The first is the obvious problem with the CDC recommendation of making motel rooms available for those testing positive for COVID-19. There is a terrible misstep being made here, not only because testing is lacking, but because it doesn't make sense to have a bunch of empty motel rooms hanging in the wind just WAITING for us to all get sick before isolating us! Jee, thanks! Can't wait to get helped, all I need is to contract a deadly virus first! Everyone else understands that they should "shelter in place" whether or not they have symptoms yet, because overall it prevents the spread of disease. This is the same for homeless people, we're not some other kind of species out here. (And please, Pam, when you say "If you hear of any individual who is homeless and has symptoms, OHRA should be able to get medical oversight and then testing," understand that nobody out here has the contact number for OHRA- are you saying go to the Resource Center? Also, to correct your information, OHRA now stands for "Options for Helping (not Homeless) Residents of Ashland- the change was not lost on me). Apparently this mistake is being made in other cities, including SF & Santa Cruz, from what I've heard (Santa Cruz at least expanded the qualifications to: positive with COVID-19, expressing symptoms, or having been in contact with the first 2), and it is a MAJOR misstep in policy. This is why we NEED to be listening to homeless advocates and the homeless themselves in this crisis, because we have a more immediate and complete understanding of the actual needs out here. The realization of this misstep by the CDC is being noticed, as well, as you can see in this link I will post below, pertaining to SF- they also argue that SF has the resources but is not applying the quickly or appropriately enough. Since there are so many parallels with how you're proceeding in Ashland, please take the time to read this article, full of common sense:

"There is a major problem, however. For those who have yet to test positive for COVID-19, Mayor London Breed and Gov. Gavin Newsom are **abandoning the unhoused in congregate shelters and camping outdoors—settings that the CDC warns will catalyze transmission and could fuel an early surge on hospitals, ICU's, and ventilators.** To make matters worse, a recent study out of the University of Pennsylvania and UCLA project that **the unhoused will require hospitalization and ICU's for COVID-19 at more than twice the rate in certain age brackets compared to the general population due to underlying health conditions.**

Rather than reactively housing the sick, we must get ahead of the curve and place all unhoused people as quickly as possible in hotels or comparable units. This may be more costly up front, but it will slow transmission, and will save lives and medical expenses down the line.

"...we should heed the advice of health professionals. They tell us that moving those currently unhoused into hotel rooms now, **prior to infection,** will do far more to free up hospital beds in the coming weeks and months."

[San Francisco has the authority, vacancies, and funds to house homeless people in hotels - The San Francisco Examiner](#)



San Francisco has the authority, vacancies, and funds to house homeless ...

By Chris Herring and Neil Gong

My second point, which is that you didn't read the CDC recommendations carefully enough or thoroughly enough. If you look more closely at the CDC recommendations, they actually recommended housing as the most important, and I consider the rest of the recommendations to be less ideal if housing cannot be found: I will quote my points below from the CDC website:

"Lack of housing contributes to poor health outcomes, and **linkage to permanent housing should continue to be a priority.** In the context of COVID-19, the risks associated with sleeping outdoors in an encampment setting are different than with staying indoors in a congregate setting such as an emergency shelter or other congregate living facility. Outdoor settings may allow people to increase distance between themselves and others. **However, sleeping outdoors often does not provide protection from the environment, quick access to hygiene and sanitation facilities, or connection to healthcare.** The balance of risks should be considered for each individual experiencing unsheltered homelessness."

The City should've been negotiating motel rooms (or City-owned properties) aggressively from the get-go as the best response to this crisis. Motels cannot be coerced, but with the backing of City funds and assurances for damages, it would be a lot easier to negotiate housing (even at fair pricing for these motels that are economically hurting, why are we niggling right now, especially considering we'll be

reimbursed?) than trying to do it as a rag-tag team of grassroots activists. Leaving people in their tents is pretty much only meant in certain severe situations, such as non-compliant homeless people, or way too many people to accommodate. From Vanessa's guess, there may be about 80 homeless people in Ashland. About half are in vehicles. OHRA is housing 11, Vanessa managed to get 4 inside, and some are couples. We're looking at 30-50 motel rooms, roughly. That is not impossible for the City to arrange, especially, once again, with a \$1 million emergency fund where the monies will be reimbursable. I asked a contact about this emergency fund and they clarified, "The city can loan itself money based on the Fed promise, FEMA as collateral. The city has loaned money to itself to save staff health care plans, to pay for overruns in projects, to hide its own deficits, etc. It is time to loan itself money to save lives." Why are you acting like money is such a barrier, when we have an emergency fund for exactly such an emergency, and the monies to be reimbursed? In fact, you're pretending like it's not even an option. What is the hesitation here about?

Also, camp sites are not limited to 10 people according to both the CDC and Governor Kate Brown, in the case of the homeless. Why are the car camping sites being limited to 10, and why are permits required, which creates an unnecessary barrier?

(CDC)"If toilets or handwashing facilities are not available nearby, provide access to portable latrines with handwashing facilities **for encampments of more than 10 people.**"

In lieu of housing, why is a tented site not being identified with nearby hygiene available, as advised by the CDC? (parks would be ideal- how about the one with the pool with showers? And this is just off the top of my head, it's not that hard to brainstorm this stuff!!!). The goal of the the CDC was to link people to nearby services, not to leave people willy nilly in the woods, railroad tracks and creeks during freezing weather and rain:

(CDC)"Ensure nearby restroom facilities have **functional water taps**, are **stocked with hand hygiene materials (soap, drying materials) and bath tissue**, and **remain open to people experiencing homelessness 24 hours per day.**"

Why are camps still being busted? I've heard of 2 different incidents now. Why are parking tickets still being issued downtown in order to discourage homeless car camping? This is exactly OPPOSED to the CDC recommendations:

"Unless individual housing units are available, **do not clear encampments during community spread of COVID-19.** Clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. **This increases the potential for infectious disease spread.**"

Finally, this should not have taken a month of equivocating and hemming and hawing, while meanwhile DISMISSING the cries of homeless advocates and putting the homeless at great risk the whole time. The CDC encourages (and I have yet to see this ever practiced by our Council, or for her to even ask me a single question):

"People experiencing homelessness themselves are an important resource to help navigate their communities and keep their friends and family members safe. **Consider developing an advisory board with representation from people experiencing homelessness to ensure plans are implementable in the community.**"

I have been saying this from Day 1! Instead, the homeless and our advocates are always fighting an uphill battle with our "representatives" dismissing, quickly saying "No", and often blocking our efforts to problem solve (not to mention, not acknowledging, and often taking credit for the work of these dedicated individuals). It appears to be a chronic habit around the country, nobody is listening to the advocates, neither in advance when infrastructure could've been implemented, nor now, when the need is so dire and all we're being offered are these lukewarm "efforts". This crisis is really showing the real lack of ability to respond appropriately to homeless needs in our local governing bodies. Your techniques are broken. You need some new methods, a way of thinking outside the metal safe that your red tape is kept in, and most importantly, a human compassion mixed in with your official (and inhumane) responses of old. We do not deserve the least possible you can give. The only other people suffering more right now are those dying of the virus.

Thanks,
Kate

On Monday, April 6, 2020, 8:32:17 AM PDT, Rep Marsh <rep.pammarsh@oregonlegislature.gov> wrote:

Hi Kate,

Thanks for your heartfelt email. This virus is disorienting and challenging for those of us in a brick and mortar home. I've no doubt it feels overwhelming for those living on the streets.

When we started trying to think about how to get through this and support people on the street, we used the CDC document you linked, which suggests keeping campers in place. That was the thinking behind the greenway program (and suspension of sweeps) and meal delivery. We also urged Public Health to do what is recommended to identify places for isolating those who become sick with COVID 19. I agree that the CDC guidance is extremely helpful.

You are familiar with the services that have been put in place, so I won't bother to list them. However, here are a few updates that may be useful.

1. Testing. I agree with you that homeless individuals should be a priority for testing. I made that point in a phone call with the head of the Oregon Health Authority last week. Clearly, we need to individuals into care ASAP when they have symptoms. I'm so sorry you couldn't get the care you needed a few weeks ago. Now testing is much more accessible. If you hear of any individual who is homeless and has symptoms, OHRA should be able to get medical oversight and then testing, if that's appropriate. If you hear of cases where that didn't happen, please contact me.

2. Isolation. Public Health has now placed at least one COVID 19 individual in isolation housing (i.e. motel housing). I understand the county is providing food and care to that individual, although the site and other details are withheld for confidentiality. The good news is that the system is starting to work.

3. Other money for housing. As you know, some local individuals have been placed in accommodations, thanks to funding from ACCESS (state shelter monies), United Way and the City of Ashland. I am working hard to make sure Jackson County gets its fair share of money from the state, the CCOs and FEMA. This money will probably flow through the existing shelter system, meaning that OHRA would be the access point in Ashland. We will know more by mid-week.

4. Motel sites. Several weeks ago I asked the governor's office to consider a statewide mandate requiring motels to take clients referred by local governments and/or the nonprofits under contract, because I believed it would be an issue here. That hasn't happened but could be revisited if this emerges as a statewide issue. However, we have no legal authority to require a motel or other accommodation to reduce rates. Clearly, the ideal solution is to identify facilities that want to work with us and our budget. The good news is that the county Emergency Operations Center has found at last two motels willing to participate, and in Ashland OHRA found a sympathetic innkeeper. I'm hopeful that we will find more facilities willing to assist without requiring coercion. However, that's an issue we need to continue to monitor.

I hope that is helpful, although I know I haven't addressed all of your concerns. While I don't monitor social media frequently, I check my email many times a day and will always do my best to get back to you. Vanessa, Michelle and Cass all have my cell number for any emergency.

Best,
Pam

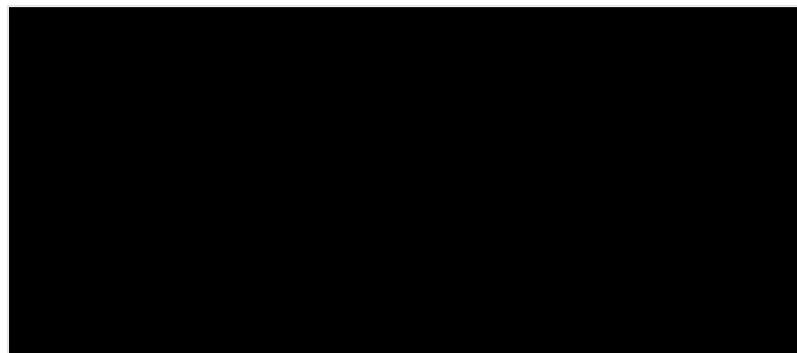
On Apr 6, 2020, at 3:00 AM, kate wenzell <katewenzell@yahoo.com> wrote:

I am going to try to keep this super basic (4 points) and address a few ways that you are not listening to the CDC or Governor Kate Brown in making these decisions of NOT housing the homeless and instead turning it into a Rube Goldberg maze of hoops to jump through, still leaving us out in the cold with unsanitary port-o-potties, lack of testing, and dragging this on so that we've been through freezing weather, rain and hell for a month now and you STILL haven't provided adequate housing during this unprecedented pandemic. I have shared all of this with the public over the past week in a desperate attempt to get real help for the homeless because time is pressing hard on us out here, it is an utter nightmare. In this e-mail, you will find real world testimony of what this experience has been like.

#1) Get us indoor into private rooms. Stop all this hustling and bustling about town to get a shower in Phoenix (take a public bus), to the South side of Ashland (take another bus, this endangers the public!), get your meal dropped here, get your port-o-potty there. This is insanity! The CDC knows that separate rooms with a bathroom and shower are the best way to manage this particular crisis. The City has an emergency fund of \$1 million and all the costs are reimbursable by federal monies recently allocated. The solution is quite straight-forward, why are you treating this like rocket science? Stop holding a bake sale for a month to enact life-saving measures (not just the homeless lives which are clearly worthless to you, but the lives of the whole community as well). You guys have been operating from an inhumane platform towards the homeless for years which is extra highlighted in neon and glitter since this crisis exacerbated everything, but you should have been doing the right thing all along, you need to stop making excuse after excuse after excuse. I am also hearing of camping tickets still happening?!? Unbelievable! We're in the middle of a pandemic! You are ignoring the CDC on no less than 2 counts, when it comes to the homeless. Please read up so that you can be educated prior to making such important decisions:

"The CDC issued [guidance](#) stating that the best public health approach in this crisis is to stop encampment sweeps and provide individual housing units, like hotel rooms, RVs, or modular homes, rather than communal shelters where the virus can be passed more easily," said Eric Tars, Legal Director at the Law Center."

[CARES Act Provides Some COVID-19 Protections For Homeless Populations, But There Is More To Do - National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty](#)



CARES Act Provides Some COVID-19 Protections For Homeless Populations, B...

CARES Act Provides Some COVID-19 Protections For Homeless Populations, But There Is More To Do FOR IMMEDIATE...

#2) Stop using this crisis as an excuse to not help the homeless in sensible ways. Kelly Madding wrote, "There are many reasons I did not approve the request for an unsheltered camp at the Hardesty location. First, and foremost the City supports the Governor's Executive Order both the letter and the intent. The letter and intent mandates or discourages assembly of 25 people or more unless social distancing can be achieved. There is no guarantee that this could be achieved in a camp and right now there isn't even the capacity of social service groups to monitor the car camps let alone a different type of camp."

Please note that Governor Kate Brown has added clarification to her Executive Order. Please read this clarification before continuing to make policy decisions that do not align with her "intent" while making critical life-saving decisions, having not read up all the information pertaining to this particular context:

Governor Kate Brown Issues Further Guidance on "Stay Home, Save Lives" Order

Guidance outlines exemptions for people experiencing homelessness and social service providers

"It is never acceptable to stigmatize or criminalize people experiencing homelessness. I want to be clear: Oregon's stay-at-home directives do not apply to shelters and social services. They were not intended to serve as an enforcement mechanism against Oregon's unsheltered population, and we would ask all local officials to follow that intent of the order."

- Social service agencies providing for basic food, water, shelter, and hygiene needs of any person who is unable to meet those same needs without the service provider should remain open and use social distancing guidelines provided by the Oregon Health Authority.
- Shelter providers are not expected to keep shelter residents from interacting within shelters or from leaving shelters, but should encourage residents to limit unnecessary travel, and to practice social distancing guidelines.
- People experiencing unsheltered homelessness are NOT subject to enforcement of Executive Order 20-12 simply due to the fact that they are in public and unable to stay at home.

[NEWS RELEASE: Governor Kate Brown Issues Further Guidance on "Stay Home, Save Lives" Order](#)

NEWS RELEASE: Governor Kate Brown Issues Further Guidance on "Stay Home,...

#3) This reassuring statement by Pam Marsh is, in reality, absolutely useless: "Public Health has identified motel and medical care options for individuals who do not have a home and are diagnosed with COVID 19. These folks can't be on the street, and they need to be somewhere safe. We haven't yet faced this situation, but I know Public Health and the county Emergency Operations people understand the importance of rapid action."

The reason you haven't "faced this situation" yet is because the barrier to getting tested is insane! I personally got sick and was told I couldn't go to ER because my symptoms were not bad enough. I had to suffer extreme stress trying to figure out how not to expose other people while still trying to live in public while all my options were getting shut down. I managed to get to BLM to self-quarantine for a week, but not before I was publicly shamed for being in Les Schwab to replace my balding tires so I could go on steep dirt roads, and not before I was permanently banned from ARCO for warning the pump attendant to

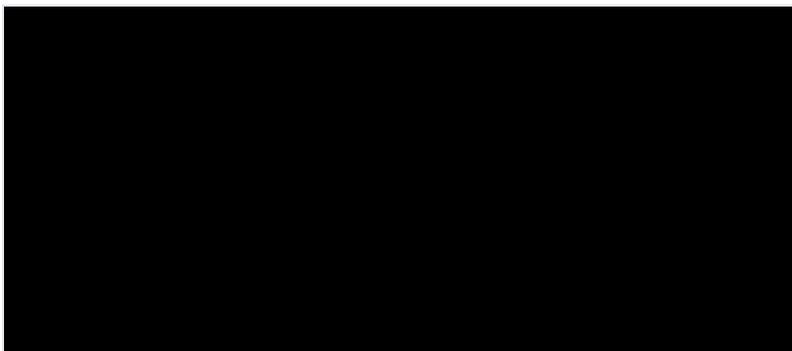
stay back because I might have the virus. And after a week of quarantine, I had to come back to town because it started snowing in the mountains. I came back to absolute disaster for the homeless, as the shelter had just been closed and the temps plummeted to the 20's. This is an example of how all your resources are failing. You should not even be waiting for people to test positive for COVID-19! By then, they have already gone to the ER (where they will be "housed") and they've spread the disease for days prior, because the tests are not available until you get to that point!!! So use those motel rooms to PREVENT the spread, as the CDC advises for exactly that reason, otherwise they are sitting there empty and useless.

To help really nail this reality home to you, I sent a message to my doctor at LaClinica asking if they could prioritize testing the homeless, even with mild symptoms (since we don't have an adequate way to self-quarantine). This was her reply:

"The testing is turning out to be problematic in that the testing criteria mandated by the state results in very few people being tested. Additionally and more problematic in a way is that the test seems to be not very sensitive resulting in about a 30% false negative rate. We are only taking the mobile to the senior center in Medford by Hawthorne park right now. We are having conversations with some community members in Ashland around how to serve that community but have not come up with anything so far. We will keep trying to bring something to Ashland. Open to ideas."

#4) Stop asking private citizens, half of whom have just lost their jobs, to donate to private groups to help the homeless. This is YOUR job. Only you have the clout and backing to negotiate with motels to assure expenses for a large number of people. This is why you are holding OUR community resources in the form of an emergency fund, for just such an occasion, just when the community is unable to do what needs to be done, they have trusted you with monies to do it, and you are acting like you're looking under the couch for spare change and holding a bake sale for a month?!? Asking people to donate tents and sleeping bags? OMG, too little, waaaaayyyy too late! And stop piggy-backing off the work of private citizens, taking credit for all their dedicated work, including Jason & Vanessa, who are at their wits end trying to get people into motels. Because of my own social media post, we were able to raise \$2000 and get 4 people into motels and it took way too long to do because we don't have your professional standing to assure motels. Meanwhile, you're asking people to donate sleeping bags and tents (chump change that the City could easily afford) and Ms. Madding has the GALL to say, "Please know that the City is doing what we can to balance all of the needs of our citizens right now and this is one segment that has received considerable City effort."?!? I really don't think this is considered considerable effort, I'd say you're doing just about everything you can NOT to house the homeless, either through motels or else City-owned properties that have been identified many months previously by former Councilor Voisin (and I also must mention that I literally "told you so" that this was coming in my previous e-mail to the Council, which none of you even bothered to reply to). Infrastructure could have been put in place long before this fiasco, but you operate off a platform of "no will, no way" when it comes to the homeless.

[California homeless advocate: 'We're moving way too slowly'](#)



California homeless advocate: 'We're moving way too slowly'

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Since the beginning of an international pandemic, experts have known one population is part...

Now, if you're still reading this, you can read a little about what it's like out here. Someone asked the question below on social media what difference are the homeless experiencing during the pandemic? Is it really any different than living on the extreme edge of society like every other day? I hope this helps you get an idea of the actual urgency, which nobody seems to be taking seriously, except the dedicated people out there serving the homeless, such as Julie Akins, Jason and Vanessa, and other people who go without credit or acknowledgement, because they genuinely understand between right and wrong.

"What precisely is more of a struggle now to be homeless than before? Seems like it would be mostly same same for the Ashland homeless population. Sincerely asking, as I've been wondering."

"OK, I am going to answer your question very precisely, but this whole post is a great point in showing society that what we consider "normal" on a regular basis is actually totally inhumane and we should've been doing these things long ago (which I've been advocating for 6 years now to no effect- in fact, it keeps getting progressively worse and inhumane). So thank you for pointing this out for everyone.

OK, so how this is worse. While we homeless manage to survive under pretty insane conditions that most people could not even imagine surviving, other than perhaps in war time or as refugees, we still have ways of getting by on the fringe of society. For instance, we rustle up recycling to make a little spending cash. I personally use the library every day it's open in order to charge my phone, use wifi, get warm and dry, use the bathroom and just chill without worrying about cops for awhile. When the library is closed, I go to fast food joints or cafes. I also personally require a lot of hot water every day to manage my digestive disorder, so what I do is I buy a cup of tea or hot chocolate (can no longer have coffee) and then I ask them to fill my thermos with hot water. If I can't manage my diet, then I get diarrhea at night, which living in a van without a bathroom nearby, because all my sleep spots have now been nixed by the cops, means total disaster. I personally cannot use wifi without plugging my laptop in because the battery in my laptop is dead and the lighter charger in my van is broken (and never worked well to begin with). I'm using my own examples, but everyone has their specific ways of getting by with barely anything.

Now when you shut down the structure of society, every little toehold we have to hang on and survive, it suddenly gets dire. Even with it's super freezing, snowing or raining out, being able to get indoors to warm up and dry off during the day before heading out into the elements at night makes a huge difference to survival. Not being able to get hot water because you can't bring your own thermos into 7/11 or pass it into the Dutch Bros window is a huge problem. Not being able to make money recycling in order to buy hot tea, food or whatever is a huge problem. Not having access to wifi, which is my way of staying connected to friends and family and community is scary. Not having access to bathrooms with running water is a major problem. I went to Albertson's bathroom and found some crazed person had ripped the TP dispenser off the wall and stolen all the TP out of it. Found that at another bathroom, too. I actually left my own TP roll out of my van behind so people could wipe their poopy butts. I'm able to store goods more than the people without a van. They closed the shower bus. I went 10 days without a shower before my friend got me into a motel. They stopped the medical bus. You can imagine how scary that is. I could go on, I think you get the idea. I mean, not to MENTION that there's a deadly virus going around, right?!

The scariest part of all is the behavior of regular people towards us, though. I have heard reports from homeless people in Ashland, in WA state, Santa Cruz, CA- all being scorned and treated like pariahs by regular people. The feeling that you've been completely abandoned, on top of the feeling that group is on the edge of turning on you, is exactly the thing that the homeless live in dread of. The psychological

abuse happening right now is quite frankly worse even than the physical deprivation. Most people on the streets already have PTSD, and now everyone's PTSD is highly triggered off the charts. It literally feels like a war situation.

I hope that helps answer your question a bit."

If you've gotten through this whole e-mail, then I thank you for taking me seriously enough to read it. You should be listening to homeless advocates and the homeless themselves before making policy, because you really can't understand what you're dealing with if you don't have boots on the ground out here. Therefore, I ask the entire Council, Pam Marsh and the City Administrator to please turn to Julie Akins for advice on this subject, as she is the most knowledgeable of you all. And of course, please reach out to ask me with questions any time you're interested in understanding the reality of homelessness from an authentic viewpoint.

Quite sincerely,

Kate Wenzell