

August 6, 2021

Clatsop County Board of Commissioners
800 Exchange St., Suite 410
Astoria, OR 97103

Seaside City Council
989 Broadway St.
Seaside, OR 97138

Astoria City Council
1095 Duane St.
Astoria, OR 97103

Warrenton City Commission
225 S. Main Ave.
Warrenton OR 97146

RE: Systems Approach to Ending Homelessness

Dear Commissioners, Mayors, and Councilors:

I've heard it said that homelessness is such a difficult complex problem to solve. That sentiment can be used to justify throwing up our collective hands in frustration... or it can be a rallying cry to empower us to action. I vote for empowerment. My wife, Nelle Moffett, and I have spent the last few years collecting, sorting, weeding, and archiving information from across the United States (and beyond) on the topic of solutions to homelessness... strategies that work, strategies that don't work, and strategies still being tested. To me it just makes sense to learn from cities and counties that have actually driven homelessness to functional zero. And many jurisdictions have accomplished that goal. How? In a nutshell, success is built on a framework called a *systems approach*. This approach has recently been showcased by the *National League of Cities*.

What is a systems approach? The *National Alliance to End Homelessness* says "communities should take a coordinated approach, moving from a collection of individual programs to a community-wide response that is strategic and data driven. Communities that have adopted this approach use data about the needs of those experiencing homelessness to inform how they allocate resources, services, and programs."¹ To be clear, this is not about agencies meeting monthly and sharing ideas. Instead, this approach involves tools such as a coordinated entry system, a shared data system, jointly solving issues, and more. A full description and examples of the systems approach can be found via <https://FriendsOfTheUnsheltered.org/systems>.

Please use your power of convening and your resources to coordinate all governmental and social services agencies to work together based on an integrated systems approach. Working together we can solve homelessness as many cities across the country are proving. Let's stop talking and get in real, effective action.

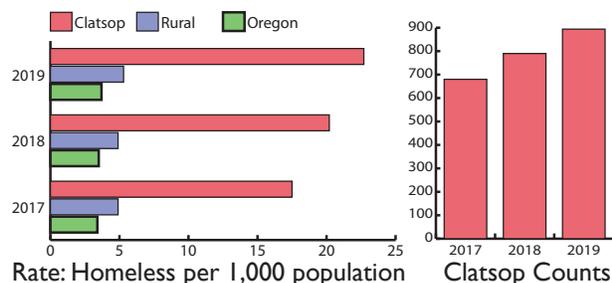
Sincerely,



Rick Bowers
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cc: Betsy Johnson, Oregon State Senator
Suzanne Weber, Oregon State Representative
Don Bohn, Clatsop County Manager
Linda Engbretson, Warrenton City Manager
Brett Estes, Astoria City Manager

Point in Time Counts



Mark J. Winstanley, Seaside City Manager
Derrick DePledge, The Astorian
Katie Frankowicz, The Astorian
R.J. Marx, Seaside Signal

¹ See <https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/solutions/creating-systems-that-work/>.