

To: Corvallis City Council

October
September 5, 2015

From: Jan Napack

Corvallis, OR 97333

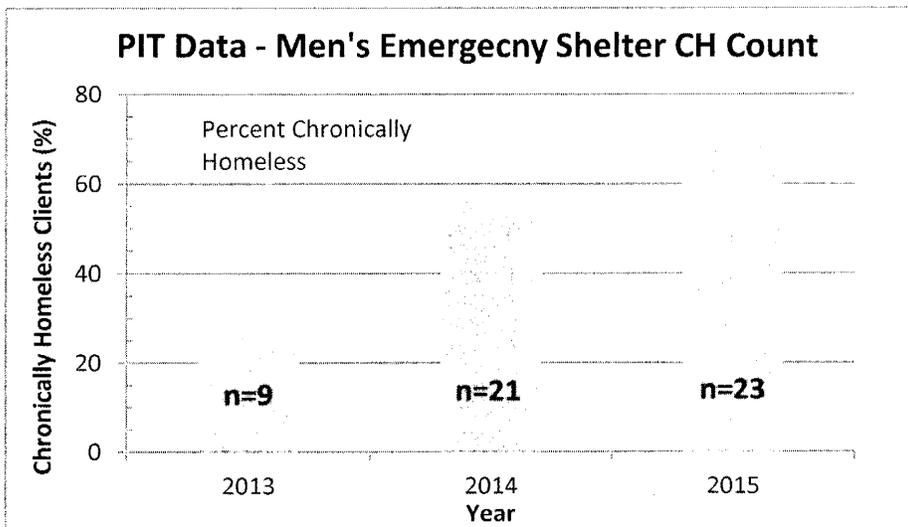
Subject: Evidence Based Policy Decision Making to Reduce Homelessness

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

On my last visit to the council I spoke of my hope that evidence be used to arrive at public policy in regard to reducing homelessness and siting shelters. Further analysis of the same Point-In-Time (PIT) data I presented on 9/8/2015 shows that the Men's Emergency Cold Weather Shelter has seen an increase in chronically homeless counts every year since 2013. Last year these individuals comprised 72% of the census, up from 30% two years prior.

Men's Emergency Cold Weather Shelter Point-In-Time Data ^a

Year	2013	2014	2015
Census	30	37	32
Chronically Homeless (CH)	9	21	23
CH Disabled	9	21	23
% CH	30%	57%	72%
% CH Disabled	100%	100%	100%



Note that 100% of these chronically homeless are designated as disabled, the majority due to substance abuse, mental illness, or both.

It may be reasonable to assume that individuals with untreated addictions or mental illness are prone to unpredictable behaviors. The occurrence of erratic, offensive, and sometimes dangerous behaviors has created concerns and reports by neighborhood residents and business owners. In all fairness however, correlation is not proof and we cannot outright assign blame to the shelter clients. But until it can be proved otherwise we can't logically go forward with plans to build a permanent and larger facility.

The chronically homeless are entrenched in the emergency shelter system. "Housing First" is, at this juncture, the gold standard at reducing homelessness. Corvallis Housing First's 'Partner's Place' is to be commended for its effectiveness. We need more! But increasing the number of chronically homeless for which we need to find supportive housing is simply filling the pipeline.

The interventions needed to "cure" these chronically homeless and disabled folks are expensive, intensive, long-term, and specialized. But it is a false charity to place them in emergency shelters year in and year out. It is a false charity to allow them to destroy themselves. It is a false charity to site a homeless shelter holding recovering alcoholics within a few blocks of a liquor store. It is a false charity to continue to increase the number of these types of shelter beds when our community has no viable long-term solution for dealing with their deeper problems.

Sincerely,

Jan Napack

