From:	Lindberg Chambliss
To:	City County Homeless Issues Committee
Cc:	Lim, Sarah; danecountyhomelessjustice@gmail.com
Subject:	Lindberg Chambliss Public Comment on Budget Recommendations
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Dear City-County Homeless Issues Committee Members,

Thank you for holding this listening session and for the opportunity to submit public comment.

I want to speak plainly: the City and County's current approach to homelessness is failing. We do not lack services—we lack housing. And until this government makes bold investments in publicly owned, permanently affordable housing, we will continue to cycle people through shelters, jails, and emergency rooms at great human and financial cost.

The number one driver of homelessness is unaffordable housing. The majority of our unhoused neighbors are not there due to personal choices or gaps in services; they simply cannot afford housing in our market. This is especially true for those living on fixed incomes or no income at all. Our continued reliance on private developers, layered subsidies, and "affordable" units priced out of reach will never solve this crisis. A market-driven system will always exclude those with the least.

I am speaking today as part of a growing community of advocates—including many of us in the Dane County Homeless Justice Initiative—who believe that it is long past time for local government to meet this crisis with the scale of response it demands.

The current approach is not only morally indefensible—it is fiscally unsound. We are already spending far more to manage homelessness through police response, emergency services, and temporary interventions than it would cost to ensure people have stable housing. Each day a person remains unhoused increases public costs and places their life at risk. This is not an efficient use of public funds, nor is it aligned with the values this community claims to uphold.

And make no mistake—this is not only about those currently experiencing homelessness. When our neighbors remain unhoused, the entire community bears the consequences: increased public costs, strained emergency systems, declining public health, and frayed community trust. Housing instability weakens neighborhoods and undermines the social fabric we all rely on. Stable housing for all makes for a stronger, healthier, and safer community—for everyone.

When political will exists, funding is found—as we've seen with the new jail, expanded shelters, and ever-growing policing budgets. Yet by continuing to fund these reactive systems, local government is reinforcing a cruel and costly cycle that perpetuates homelessness rather than ending it. The same political will must now be applied to building the public housing we know is needed—housing that provides stability, dignity, and long-term savings for the entire community.

To truly recognize housing as a human right, we must remove the profit motive from part of our housing stock. We need public housing—owned, operated, and maintained by the public or community itself. Other cities and countries have shown that this model works. Without it, our most vulnerable neighbors will remain locked out of housing. No amount of developer incentives or short-term subsidies will change this.

Too often, we hear budget constraints or regulatory challenges cited as excuses for inaction. I urge this committee to reject that framing. Budgets reflect priorities. If we cannot prioritize ensuring that every

member of our community has a safe place to live, then we are saying—through our budgets and our choices—that some lives matter less than others.

Every day that this community fails to provide stable housing is a day we place our neighbors in harm's way.

Housing is health. Housing is dignity. Housing is survival.

I urge this committee to advance recommendations that reflect this truth and to push our governments to make 2026 the year they finally begin treating housing as a human right—not just in words, but in the budget.

The resources exist. What we need now is the political will.

Sincerely,
Lindberg Chambliss
Dane County Homeless Justice Initiative