

December 18th, 2022

City-County Homeless Issues Committee  
215 MLKJ Blvd. #300  
Madison, WI 53703

To the members of the City-County Homeless Issues Committee,

I have been a resident in Madison, WI for the last five years, and love this city for its dedication to addressing social justice issues. However, I would like to express my frustration and concern regarding the lack of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) in Madison. I am aware that Dane county's efforts have focused on the development of men's shelters, the creation of a tiny shelter campground, and supplemental support (ex: temporary hotel housing), but I feel that the long-term approach to homelessness is underdeveloped.

Because Permanent Supportive Housing is an evidence-based housing intervention coupled with supportive services (i.e.: case management, tenancy support, employment services), I feel this would be an effective way to address the chronic lack of affordable housing in Madison. PSH has been repeatedly shown to improve mental health outcomes, promote conservation of healthcare resources through appropriate use, establish housing stability, and improve overall quality of life for residents.

Due to the complex crisis of homelessness, I believe that expanding Permanent Supportive Housing would be an excellent way to further Dane county's future, considering the persistent housing wait lists reported by the Dane County Homeless Services Consortium. Further, the Community Needs Assessment released by Healthy Dane Collaborative indicated that 15.5% of those in Dane County experience severe housing problems. When we look to our struggling neighbors and to the data that confirms what we see, the need for upstream change in our community is undeniable. As a student receiving my Master's in Social Work, I have worked in community support programs to hospital settings that have allowed me to be a first-hand witness to the pervasive, lived implications of this shortage.

Addressing homelessness via Permanent Supportive Housing is contingent on support and funding offered by the City-County Homeless Issues Committee. I consider your ongoing and past efforts and view them as vital commitments to nurturing change in the troubling landscape of homelessness. We must refuse the notion that homelessness is inevitable - through the intentional decisions that we do or do not make, we can (and should) bear witness to the progressive influence that community stakeholders possess.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Taylor Witthuhn  
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Social Work, B.A | Accelerated MSW Student