

Section 1:

#1 "We see them on our streets, under our overpasses, and huddled in doorways. They are not faceless statistics; they are our neighbors, our fellow citizens, and they deserve more than the apathy and indifference we often offer. We see the tangible results of policy failures and societal cracks, overflowing bins scavenged for scraps, the haunted eyes of individuals struggling with addiction and mental health, and the precarious shelters made of cardboard and dreams."

Strengths:

- Your use of vivid imagery creates an emotional impact
- You humanise homeless people effectively by calling them "neighbours" and "citizens"

Wordiness → Your writing becomes repetitive with the phrase "We see" appearing twice in close succession. This creates a monotonous rhythm that weakens your argument. A more varied sentence structure would maintain reader interest and strengthen your message.

"They exist beyond statistics—they are our neighbours, our fellow citizens deserving more than our collective apathy. The results of policy failures surround us: overflowing bins scavenged for food, the haunted eyes of those battling addiction, and makeshift shelters constructed from cardboard and broken dreams."

#2 "Consider the discarded needles in our parks, a stark reminder of the desperate measures some take to cope with their pain. Consider the increased strain on our emergency services as they respond to medical crises exacerbated by exposure and lack of access to healthcare. These are not isolated incidents; they are symptoms of a system failing those who need it most. Ignoring these issues is not only inhumane, it is fiscally irresponsible, leading to increased costs in the long run."

Strengths:

- You effectively connect social and economic concerns
- Your argument about fiscal responsibility is compelling

Repetitive phrasing → Starting consecutive sentences with "Consider" creates a repetitive pattern that diminishes impact. This paragraph contains strong points but loses momentum

through predictable sentence structure. Varied sentence openings would maintain reader engagement.

"Discarded needles in our parks reveal desperate coping mechanisms. Meanwhile, our emergency services strain under preventable medical crises caused by exposure and healthcare barriers. These interconnected problems reflect systemic failure, and ignoring them isn't just inhumane—it's fiscally irresponsible, costing us more over time."

#3 "Elara is 16, though she looks older, her face etched with worry and hardened by the streets. She used to live in a small apartment with her mother, a single parent struggling to make ends meet. When her mother lost her job, they were evicted. One missed paycheck turned into a descent into desperation. Now, Elara sleeps in the alley behind the old bakery, wrapped in a tattered blanket she salvaged from a discarded pile."

Strengths:

- Your personal story creates emotional connection
- You show homelessness can happen to anyone through concrete details

Underdeveloped connection → While you present Elara's story compellingly, you don't clearly connect her situation to specific policy solutions. The narrative feels somewhat isolated from your call to action, missing an opportunity to directly link her struggles with the changes you're advocating for.

"Elara, just 16 but aged by hardship, represents countless vulnerable citizens failed by our current systems. Her journey from a stable home to sleeping behind the old bakery after her mother's job loss demonstrates how quickly housing insecurity can strike. Without accessible housing support and emergency assistance programs, more young people like Elara face similar fates daily."

■ Your letter shows passion for addressing homelessness in your community. You've created emotional impact through Elara's story, but your message would be stronger with more specific local context. Your opening paragraphs effectively establish the urgency of the problem, yet they could benefit from clearer focus. Try tightening your third paragraph to better highlight consequences of inaction. Also, consider restructuring your solution paragraph with clearer priorities—what should council tackle first? Your personal story about Elara is moving but feels disconnected from your specific requests. Try linking her situation directly to one or two concrete actions the council could take. Your conclusion would be stronger with a specific next step rather than general appeals for action.

Overall score: 43/50

Section 2:

To the Hono[u]rable Members of the City Council,

I am writing to you today with a heavy heart, a heart burdened by the visible and growing crisis of homelessness in our city. It is a crisis that cannot be ignored, a blight on our collective conscience, and one that demands immediate and compassionate action.

#1 We see them on our streets, under our overpasses, and huddled in doorways. They are not faceless statistics; they are our neighbours, our fellow citizens, and they deserve more than the apathy and indifference we often offer. We see the tangible results of policy failures and societal cracks, overflowing bins scavenged for scraps, the haunted eyes of individuals struggling with addiction and mental health, and the precarious shelters made of cardboard and dreams.

~~#2 Consider the discarded needles in our parks, a stark reminder of the desperate measures some take to cope with their pain. Consider the increased strain on our emergency services as they respond to medical crises exacerbated by exposure and lack of access to healthcare. These are not isolated incidents; they are symptoms of a system failing those who need it most. Ignoring these issues is not only inhumane, it is fiscally irresponsible, leading to increased costs in the long run.~~ [The discarded needles in our parks stand as stark reminders of the desperate measures some take to cope with their pain. Our emergency services face increasing strain as they respond to medical crises exacerbated by exposure and lack of access to healthcare. These are not isolated incidents; they are symptoms of a system failing those who need it most. Ignoring these issues is not only inhumane, it is fiscally irresponsible, leading to increased costs in the long run.]

We can no longer afford to simply "manage" the problem. We need to address the root causes of homelessness: poverty, lack of affordable housing, addiction, mental illness, and domestic violence. We need to invest in comprehensive solutions that provide not just temporary shelter, but pathways to permanent housing, job training, mental health services, and addiction treatment.

Let me share a story, a composite of experiences I have witnessed firsthand in our city, to put a human face on this crisis:

#3 Elara is 16, though she looks older, her face etched with worry and hardened by the streets. She used to live in a small apartment with her mother, a single parent struggling to make ends

meet. When her mother lost her job, they were evicted. One missed paycheck turned into a descent into desperation. Now, Elara sleeps in the alley behind the old bakery, wrapped in a tattered blanket she salvaged from a discarded pile. She spends her days searching for food, navigating the maze of shelters, and dodging the dangers that lurk in the shadows. Her dreams of becoming a writer, once bright and vivid, are now clouded by the daily struggle for survival. She is bright, intelligent, and resilient, but even her spirit is beginning to fray under the weight of her circumstances. One cold morning, I saw her trying to mend a hole in her shoe with a piece of cardboard. Her eyes held a mixture of defiance and despair that will haunt me for a long time. Elara is just one of many. She represents the untold stories of young people whose potential is being squandered on the streets.

We, as a city, must do better. We must offer Elara, and countless others like her, a chance to rebuild their lives.

The time for complacency is over. The future of our city, and the well-being of our most vulnerable citizens, depends on our willingness to take bold and decisive action. Let us work together to create a city where everyone has a place to call home, a city where Elara and others like her have the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to prioritize this critical issue and take meaningful steps to address the crisis of homelessness in our city.

Sincerely, Louisa