

**From:** [Karen Hixson](#)  
**To:** [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** [User Approved] Written Testimony for 11/10/21  
**Date:** Monday, November 8, 2021 2:07:14 PM

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11/8/21

Public Testimony- Written. Please submit.

My name is Dr. Karen Hixson and I'm a Licensed Professional Counselor Portland. I am a small business owner and I live and work in East Portland in the Gateway/Hazelwood area.

I'm writing to express my objection to how the city council and Multnomah County plans to spend part of the business tax surplus.

The headlines look great and will likely garner support from large businesses and NIMBY Portlanders: "Portland, Multnomah County agree on \$38 million package for homeless services." The fine print is horrific. Using this money to increase homeless sweeps and add shelter beds is a long way from what Portland needs right now. Many Portlanders just want the houseless population to disappear. Essentially, this is what sweeps accomplish albeit temporarily. The rage and disgust houseless people in Portland are facing from business and landowners is horrifying.

***We need long-term, permanent solutions to houslessness in Portland.***

Go back to the drawing board and research better options than sweeps and temporary shelter beds. Portland needs innovative, humane solutions to this problem that don't disregard the dignity and human rights of houseless Portlanders. Prioritizing the optics of doing something about this problem will not achieve any long lasting change.

Here are some options:

1. Please engage and ask people with the lived experience of houslessness what they want. City policy and budget priorities should include the voices of people who

are living with the experience. This problem cannot and will not be solved from the top down. You may make the Portland Business Alliance happy, but they don't represent the values of most Portland business owners.

2. Use the valuable local research based initiative to explore options that are designed to reduce homelessness and the negative impact it has on our community as a whole. <https://www.pdx.edu/homelessness/>

### **3. Research Housing First**

Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. This approach is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues. Additionally, Housing First is based on the theory that client choice is valuable in housing selection and supportive service participation, and that exercising that choice is likely to make a client more successful in remaining housed and improving their life.

### **4. Research “Dynamic Prioritization:”**

*Dynamic prioritization* is a loose term for a specific prioritization process wherein all available housing resources for persons experiencing homeless in a given community are flexibly and immediately offered to the individuals who need them most acutely in that moment, regardless of whether the individuals might be better-served in the future by a type of program not presently available to them.

**Finally, please know that I will withhold my Portland City Business Taxes for the foreseeable future if this surplus revenue doesn't go directly to permanent housing.**

We have the money to solve this problem, now, we must find the political will to do it.

Thank you for reading ,  
Dr. K Hixson  
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