

# Gray Campbell

**#279185 | March 28, 2021**

## Testimony to **Portland City Council** on the **Shelter to Housing Continuum Project, Recommended Draft**

The city of Portland doesn't have a clear vision for addressing the homeless crisis. The citizens of Portland have agreed to be taxed to help solve the problem, yet little action is done. In fact, it appears that the city is looking to expand areas to short-term camp, instead of finding long term solutions to designate safe places OUTSIDE of Residential areas. Trash and dumping and a whole host of increased crime (theft) is continuing to plague our streets. We are just allowing this to happen by encouraging illegal camping in residential areas. For example, trash has been building on the parking strip by my home on 57th and SE Powell for at least the last few months. It is an eyesore, but also a potential breeding ground for pests, including disease-carrying rodents. What is the city's response to this? I have called the mayors office and sent an email too. NO RESPONSE. What is currently on the city codes that allows garbage to build in a residential area? A very large part of my concern about this relates to the degradation of the neighborhood. When the city looks the other way, and garbage builds, then our community gets used to it and the livability of my neighborhood suffers and eventually the whole city suffers as our tax base declines because tax payers will leave the city. I believe you see what I see and don't need to be told that what is happening here on Powell Blvd because it is happening all over the city. From my perspective, the city leaders are not owning up to their duties as our elected representatives in local government. I can spend all the time in the world pointing out what you already know, but what I really want to do is focus on solutions. From the way I see it, the mayor's office and members of the city council have allowed way too much deterioration to occur since the beginning of Covid and the summer civil rights movement. You are not taking ownership of your roles as leaders and frankly, I'm not seeing any action from you to solve these problems. I know that covid has been very difficult, and budgets are strained, and we have a lot of pissed-off marginalized groups right now.- but what are you doing to address this? Lastly, I want to know that I have had many frank conversations with the police in my neighborhood and I understand that there is a rift of sorts between your two entities. Isn't this a time where you should be coming together? The police shouldn't be used to assist the homeless, clean up the trash and find solutions to these problems. You cut their funding and violent crime is up. They have plenty to do. I want this to be a citizen (us) and leadership (you) driven solution. Let's leave the police out of it to do their jobs - to serve and protect. All the time you have spent to come up with untenable solutions like allowing camping near parks and open spaces is a huge waste. Why not designate larger zones in industrial areas, and establish rules that govern waste and sewage so the unhoused can come together - and the services can come to them? Instead, you allow illegal camping

all over the poorer neighborhoods (like mine), let the trash and crime build, and practically invite others to come by advertising free rv waste disposal. You might as well have a big sign when you come into Portland that says - go ahead, stay on our streets, throw your garbage anywhere. We don't care if our neighborhoods are full of trash and often times illegal vehicles and sometimes drug users. I suggest you designate a number of specific sites for specific folks whose needs varies. One area for homeless veterans. One area for homeless immigrants. One area for homeless families. One area for homeless drug users. One area for homeless teenagers. That way we can stop the spread of crime associated with some groups and truly protect and help the others. Mixing everyone up in little spots here and there all over the poorer neighborhoods of the city just brings crime and disillusionment to our children and young people. It's time for city hall to embrace big solutions to our big problems and really focus on the long-term. Band-aids aren't working. Quit letting the nefarious segment of the unhoused run amok on the streets of the poorer neighborhoods. Come up with a better solution.

Testimony is presented without formatting.