

From: [Tabitha Boschetti](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony for Agenda Items 899-903 | 10/26/22
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 5:50:24 PM

Mayor and Commissioners,

I am writing in response to Mayor Ted Wheeler's announced plan with regard to our ongoing crisis of people lacking access to safe and affordable housing. While I support many of the longterm goals like continuing to create more housing and continuing to build better supportive services, it's clear that what is new here is the proposal to create large-scale encampments that people would ultimately be forced into and falling back into the practice of criminalizing living on the streets.

I think sanctioned camps can be a positive option among an array of options for people with nowhere to go, however, it's clear that this push is not being led by the people who know the most about how to run safe and effective autonomous camps that support the people living in them. Examples like Right to Dream Too and Hazelnut Grove should be examples the City looks to for establishing effective camps, and the people who had the most success in building and managing such communities should be the people who lead. I would support a measure to support more sanctioned camps, but our resources would be better spent paying the people who have lived experience with these camps to direct their design at a scale that is humane and manageable, and directing City funds to their management and maintenance. It would be the City's charge to create places that are worthy alternatives of parks and sidewalks first and actually support people.

What's on the table here with these mass encampments is not a meaningful solution, but a transparently cynical measure to do the bare minimum to check a legal box to be able to sweep people into the farthest corners of Portland. I urge Council to transform this cynicism into a more effective push for a greater number and diversity of sanctioned camping approaches with the same urgency, but centered on direction from organizations that have deep experience establishing services for houseless people in our region, and people who have experienced living on our streets.

Sincerely,

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