

From: [Gary Barth](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Agenda Items 899-903
Date: Monday, October 24, 2022 8:40:52 PM

I strongly support the proposed plan to ban camping on city streets and sidewalks. In fact, I would suggest the council go further and ban outdoor camping anywhere outside of sanctioned sites that provide sanitary services, garbage disposal and security.

The current situation is an environmental disaster and should not be allowed in a civilized society. We have codes and regulations to ensure that dwelling units are not built without basic plumbing and sewer connections and we have codes that require property owners to maintain their property so as not to cause harm or distress to neighboring property owners. Yet, somehow we have dismissed all those regulatory health and safety standards to accommodate the unhoused.

Not only is it the environmental devastation and sanitary issues but also the criminal activity that occurs unchecked in these encampments. The Big Four Corners Natural Area is a prime exhibit. This “natural area” has been devastated and will take years of focused remediation AFTER A SWEEP to restore to its native state and return this green sanctuary for residents. Reports indicate that over **150 STOLEN VEHICLES** were recovered during the recent sweep and clean-up. Who is looking out for those that lost their vehicle, their mobility and their sense of security. Commissioner Hardisty expresses concern with the perception of criminalizing homelessness. Being homeless is not a crime – but stealing and/or possessing a stolen car is a crime and this crime was clearly committed by someone associated with the homeless camp. And this example is replicated in hundreds of sights across this formerly great city. As Council for ALL Portlanders you have thousands of housed residents and property owners that are also “victims” of homelessness. People are now afraid to walk around their own neighborhood, use our fantastic public park system and are rightfully concerned about having their personal property stolen. What kind of quality of life is this? Long time elderly homeowners who are prisoners in their own home!

I would also like to call your attention to understanding just who the homeless are in our community and where they came from. It is my belief, supported by countless reports, that many of the unhoused are not from Portland and in many cases not from Oregon and have only recently arrived in our community. Why would the unhoused want to come to Portland, Oregon, one the more expensive places in the country to secure housing. The logical answer is they believe there are more public resources and LESS accountability for personal behavior than they might find elsewhere. The City of Portland and Multnomah County government – along with State legislatures who decriminalized drug use - have created this “incentive” for the unhoused and addicted to come to Portland. How can local residents possibly fund the needs of the unhoused from all over the county?

I am a native Oregonian, second generation and I LOVE this state and I did love this city but no longer. All I think about is having to leave my native state to go somewhere safe, clean and secure. And it saddens me deeply. This has always been my home and I feel that I am being pushed out of my state if I don't just accept the current conditions. I spent most of my career working in downtown Portland and it was fantastic. I traveled often on business and was always excited to return home to

my State and this City as the envy of the country. We can always do better in terms of equity, inclusion and diversity but not at the expense of uncontrolled homeless encampments, drug abuse, violence and lawlessness.

This is a crisis and needs to be managed as such. No more studies, no more committees, no more community outreach. The problems are apparent to all and it is up to those elected officials in power to take action now. Immediately. Stop giving deference to the homeless advocates who object to any reasonable solution and cast those of us who want our city back as lacking compassion. That is dishonest and divisive. I have always provided support for those less fortunate than me but I do expect something in return, some level of personal accountability. Please repair our city before it is unrepairable.

Gary Barth
9483 SE Wyndham Way
Happy Valley, OR 97086
(1/2 mile from Lents Neighborhood)