

From: [Alan Comnes](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Portland City Council 10/25 Agenda Items 899-903 (ADA Violations on Portland City Streets)-- Comments of A. Comnes
Date: Tuesday, October 25, 2022 10:42:34 PM

To the Honorable Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners:

I have been a Portland resident for over 20 years. The unsanctioned camping that has been allowed under your leadership has caused great economic harm to the City and has deprived many residents from access to safe streets and recreation in parks. All Portlanders deserve access to Portland's common areas, not just a small segment of chronically homeless individuals who have been effectively encouraged by you to occupy large areas of the City.

The impact has been especially severe for residents with disabilities—for them denying access is not just an eyesore, increased fear and stress, or lost recreational opportunity, but a true risk to personal safety and a denial of civil rights as codified in the ADA.

The impact has been great and, sadly, avoidable, if the City would (1) create sanctioned, low barrier campgrounds for houseless people until such time as better options are available and (2) take sensible community and law enforcement measures to clear sidewalks and common areas for the use of all.

With the exceptions that the Mayor's proposal lacks concrete timelines and *insufficiently* relies on deterrence measures to clear, common areas, **I support Mayor's proposal to ban unsanctioned camping throughout the City and especially encampments which obstruct sidewalks. In particular,**

1. I encourage the Mayor to ensure that the City makes appropriate indoor shelter and sanctioned safe camping sites available to the homeless population as an initial alternative to City and County's current inhumane policies.
2. I expect the Mayor to acknowledge how his plan will prioritize the immediate relief to persons with disabilities who need to use the sidewalks to get from one place to another. Currently, he anticipates an 18 month plan based on Friday's press conference.
3. I encourage the City Council to refrain from making its November 1 payment to the Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) unless and until it receives written assurances that the County will be supportive of the City's efforts to ban unsanctioned camping on the sidewalks.

The City has the ample money to get this plan started. Let's stop wasting \$45 million a year on the County-run JOHS and use these City tax dollars to start implementing a plan that directly deals with the crisis on streets now. Portland also deserves to see a faster response to the crisis on streets with the \$250-million-a-year homeless services metro tax.

Regarding timing, the City needs a concrete timeline. This proposed 18 month plan currently lacks the timelines, deadlines and benchmarks that reflect the urgency and severity of this humanitarian and public safety crisis. Delaying enforcement of existing no-camping laws, will only further delay the policy changes required to create safe camping areas with access to services, more emergency shelters, more housing, and cleaner, clear sidewalks.

Name: A. Comnes

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