

**From:** [Annette Adams](#)  
**To:** [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** Comment on Mayor Wheeler's proposed unsanctioned camping ban  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 26, 2022 9:09:24 AM

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Mayor Wheeler:

I want to state I am somewhat grateful something is finally being proposed that may have possibilities. Why it took so long, I cannot fathom (Although lawsuits and elections may have something to do with the timing of this plan) In my opinion, your primary responsibility is the safety of your citizenry; whether they are housed or unhoused. Your emphasis on the 3000 or so unhoused citizens (I think the number is much higher), at the expense of all other citizens is unacceptable. Whatever plan you implement has to take all others into consideration too.

The unhoused problem has always been there; got worse when Mayor Hales opened the door to allowance (Martin vs. Boise); and then blew way out of proportion during the Pandemic when the City allowed these 3000 or so people to do whatever they wished without (what seems like) any consequences whatsoever. These 3000 or so people were allowed to contaminate many natural areas, break many, many laws (including ADA rules) the rest of the citizenry were still required to follow; overburdened the fire department with (I am guessing) 1000's of transient related fire calls. They have turned the city of Portland into a garbage dump. Many of the unhoused have been involved in chronic theft, stolen vehicles, assaults, and other criminal activities. Their actions have caused many citizens (housed and unhoused) to feel chronic fear. It has caused countless businesses financial burdens (break-ins, vandalism, installation of security cameras and fences, etc.)

First and foremost, I think there is a strong need for the City to identify the types of houseless persons involved in unsanctioned camping. In my opinion, the City has refused to do this. One plan of action will not fit all. Many of the houseless do not desire to be housed: scrappers, drug dealers, addicts, mentally ill, and chronic transients. Some, not all, have been living unhoused for many years. Some have come to the State of Oregon due to access of services and lack of any type of accountability expected on their part. An example of this is Measure 110; basically decriminalizing many drugs this segment of the unhoused use. The State put forth Measure 110 without any real plan for implementation or a real clear understanding it would not work. The voters passed the measure (I think based on a very unclear understanding of what it could really do) and then Governor Brown put the brakes on getting the monies out to the agencies that would be participating in the plan. Addicts need a strong reason/motivation to enter treatment: a citation and phone call inquiring about treatment options just ain't going to do it. I worked in the criminal justice system for almost 20 years; in the Corrections department. I spoke to many incarcerated people who clearly stated they would be dead from their drug use if they had not come to jail. Jail, although not a perfect solution, may allow a person to choose treatment versus jail time for many types of charges. It can get an addict in the treatment door. Whether it works the first time or the 5th time, ultimately studies show it can work. Another example is disallowing police to do their job. If a crime is committed; it needs to be addressed even if the person is unhoused. Many of the unhoused do not fear police; there has been no reason for them to. That causes a major problem for all other citizens whether housed or unhoused.

Once again my question is this: A ban will be implemented; three camps will be opened. What is in place to move the unsanctioned campers to sanctioned camping? That is a key component to this working. If the unsanctioned refuse to move to sanctioned camps what will the consequences be: Towing of Vehicles, trailers, RV's? Removal of tents and property? Any lawful sanctions as arrests for trespass, etc? How will you stop the cycle that is already in place? Notification, clearance, and they once again just move to a new place? Will an inventory of persons be kept documenting who has been offered the sanctioned camping. I think that would be key in getting a true and accurate account of who is out there and who is being non-compliant/compliant. Of course, there are other ways the unhoused can move out of the category of unsanctioned camping. Many will return to what they were doing before unsanctioned

camping was allowed. Many couch surf, or will return to the using budget motels, or move to areas where they are not visable to most.

Several years ago, I attended one of the Mayor's forum's on the houseless. It was at Beaumont School. Some people were there with signs stating "Sweeps Kill". My thought then, as it is even more so now is "Allowing Unsanctioned Camps Kill". One example of this occurred in July of 2021 at about 119th and Sandy. I was attending a SOLVE clean up several blocks west around 108/Killingsworth (cleaning up Transient Trash and Illegal Dumped items). A storm moved in with lots of rain, thunder and lightning. We all moved for shelter. A few minutes later we heard sirens. What occurred was a lighting bolt hit an oak tree near the UP railroad tracks. This particular tree was located in an area that accommodated chronic unsanctioned camping and had already been severely damaged by one or more transient fires. A humongous branch broke off landing on a cyclone fence and then came down on the tent below it. Three people were in the tent sheltering from the storm. One (street name Supreme) died immediately. Another male was injured and the female made it out ok. Absolutely heartbreaking. Even more so because it was preventable. Unsanctioned camping should **NEVER** have been allowed. This is just one tree of many that have been damaged by the actions of unsanctioned campers. I don't think the tree was ever examined after being burned for it's safety. My opinion is it should have been taken down. It was not. How many other deaths, of people living in unsanctioned camps, have occurred? By violence, hypothermia, medical issues, accidents, etc. Too many. And most preventable albeit for unsanctioned camping.

What has really been bothering me is how much money has been spent (or at least taken in) regarding this issue in the last 7 plus years; to try and attempt to solve a problem for 3000 + people; approximately .005 % of the 2021 population count of Portland. And how many of these .005% people have caused so many others to feel fear and feel unsafe. Just not right. Please do your job and focus on your real priority: Safety for **ALL** citizens. If people do not feel safe; nothing else really matters.

In closing, I think the most important thing in any plan you will implement, is a plan that has actions and **CONSEQUENCES**. If there are not consequences, any plan implemented will not succeed.

Regards,

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