

From: [Jacob Williams](#)
To: [Clerk General](#)
Cc: [Tom Karwaki](#)
Subject: Testimony: Addressing houseless in Portland
Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2022 11:53:00 AM

The issue of houselessness is a complicated fabric of underlying variables with no easy solution. I recognize the difficulty the issue presents alone for the council, notwithstanding the compounded factors added by the COVID-19 pandemic. That said the greatest issue in addressing houselessness in PDX may lie within the council itself. The simple fact that the council has not to this point collaborated as professional elected officials of all citizens of Portland is unacceptable. This lack of professionalism was encapsulated on May 5, 2022 city council meeting. At 56:14 (<https://youtu.be/d-1P2DReidA>) Commissioner Hardesty responds to the reporting citizen "why are you asking Commissioner Hardesty and Rubio to clean it up?" Commissioners are elected to represent all citizens and work for what's best for the city. While there are commissioners who oversee specific bureaus, the issues of the city should be the purview of the entire council, with a goal to work together to determine how best to solve the problems. It is myopic and frankly adolescent for commissioners to feel anything city related is not their responsibility. The issue discussed in the video was focused on the situation occurring along the Peninsula Crossing Trail. The people who live along this trail have had their lives upended over the past 4 years because of lawless behavior that has become an everyday constant. Let me be clear, the issue is not simply the existence of houseless citizens. The issue is lawless behavior of people who have taken residence and frequent the established camp on public property. For an elected official to dismiss this unimaginable impact upon citizens lives as "not my problem" is unconscionable.

Secondly, related to houselessness, the council has recently decided to place several Safe Rest Villages around the city. This process has been heavy handed, with no community input, and no published plans or reasoning for made decisions. This lack of transparency and input breeds distrust. Being fully aware of the negative impact of the lawlessness behavior associated with the existing camp along the Peninsula Crossing trail, to mandate an SRV at that site, without a single instance of a public official gaining input/insight from those who live in houses and in tents currently at the site is an explicit abstention of duty. We're many months past the announcement of the PCT SRV. On Monday I attended a University Park Neighborhood Association meeting. Commissioner Ryan was scheduled to attend this meeting, it had been advertised, but he canceled just day's prior. The reason for the cancellation provided was that the SRV team was not ready to attend along with the commissioner to answer questions. In return, the UPNA board officials took the brunt of citizens earned frustrations. How is it that the SRV is moving forward but the team behind it is not prepared to answer questions? How is that an elected commissioner who oversees the SRV program is not prepared to meet with citizens regardless of the presence of other staff. If our city officials wish to implement plans, they at minimum should engage and collaborate frequently with those most impacted by the plans. None of this occurs. In response I ask that each commissioner and the mayor schedule a time to meet with the residents most impacted by the lawlessness along the PCT and the pending SRV. At these/this meeting, I ask that one simple issue be addressed: "Why should the residents impacted by the PCT lawlessness and SRV have any faith that the existing plans or future actions of city officials will improve upon the poor current quality of life?"

Sincerely,
Jacob Williams