

From: david@comedytricks.com
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: testimony on 899 Establish key actions to increase affordable housing construction
Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2022 12:58:39 PM

Dear Mayor Wheeler and City Commissioners,

My father Edward Lichtenstein, 88 years old, and a friend 82 years old, were assaulted randomly and viciously by a homeless person in downtown Portland June 25th. His companion and best friend Donald Pierce died of his injuries. My father is doing fine now, his injuries have been resolved. The police arrived on the scene quickly, (luckily they were passing by, servicing another call) The assaulter has been arrested and the DA office is going to put them away.

Levels of homelessness have been very high in Portland for many years but I see that since Covid hit two and half years ago there is a crisis level of suffering and craziness in the streets of Portland and I wish the city government would act as if there was a crisis. I do not understand why there has been so little action in the last 2 1/2 years but I commend you that a comprehensive plan is on the table, even if it is unfunded and imperfect.

I have specific comments on the resolutions:

1. Ban homeless camping on public property (i.e.: sidewalks, city parks, etc.) within 18 months of the city securing funding to create three large “designated camping sites” with space to hold at least 150 people. (If the city wants to increase this number, they'll need a council vote.)

****I am against banning homeless camping on public property until much more infrastructure is in place. This seems to me unrealistic and inhumane. There are several thousand people camping on public property now! The random sweeps of the last year have been inhumane and not been helpful. I would be supportive of a narrower ban on sidewalk camping, we have to clear the sidewalks to bring commerce back downtown and in the central Eastside. But all public owned space? Not feasible. Not humane.**

****Yes, let's create designated camping sites. I am glad that you are putting in writing that we need to create large designated camping sites. And when homeless people create their own self-regulated camps that are relatively regulated and safe —such as Right 2 Dream Two— let's bless those encampments and allow them to exist.**

2. Build 20,000 units of affordable housing within ten years—by 2033.

Well, there's the really difficult one. Yes, let's commit all resources to this goal!

****First we need to define affordable housing in a way that it really is affordable for low income people. In the past, low-income housing as been defined so loosely that developers have been able to collect on subsidy's without creating any housing that homeless people, people at minimum wage jobs can actually afford.**

****I call on the city to stop building bikes lanes, bio-swales, fancy corner curbs, etc. and concentrate their money for at least four years on housing and homelessness. I'm a bicyclist and an environmentalist but priorities, please.**

****I believe in the housing first model. The city needs to get fully behind this model as Houston has. People cannot solve their problems of poverty, mental illness, and addiction while living on the streets. Put them in housing so they can wrestle with their demons in a home like normal people. Putting people in housing is how you solve homelessness.**

****The city needs to build low-income housing. The city needs to tax businesses and people enough to build that low-income housing. Where does the money collected by Prosper Portland go? Does that money still into subsidizing urban development without providing any real low-income housing like it did when it was called the PDC? Does Portland still allow the huge federal tax “opportunity zone” tax breaks from the 2017 tax overhaul go to anybody building anything big in the center. Can these tax breaks be focused toward affordable housing?**

OK, that's all I have time to address for now.

Thank you for taking on long-term and crisis-mode solutions to the homeless problem,

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