

From: [Jacob Simoneau](#)
To: [Commissioner Hardesty](#)
Subject: Fwd: N Columbia Blvd & N Columbia Way - Please help us
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hello,

Per the suggestion below from the front desk staff, I am reaching out to you directly. For more than a year, this area has been used as a base and hiding space for stolen vehicles by car thieves. It has already been cleared twice. The first time it was not cleared for months, even after dozens of reports of stolen vehicles and violence. When it came back the second time, it quickly deteriorated into the same situation as before. It wasn't until people whose vehicle was stolen came to retrieve it armed with baseball bats, that it was cleared again. This area is directly adjacent to my house, meaning every time I look out the window, I can see the stolen vehicles well enough to get their details and confirm they are stolen.

Now, a few weeks have gone by since the last clearing, and it is starting again. I have been pleading for someone to take some preventive action, because I knew it was only a matter of time, but so far it seems everyone seems determined to sit on their hands. It will soon be just as bad as it was before, and will need to be swept for a third time this year. If it is going to keep happening and keep requiring sweeps, as history has shown it will, does it not make more sense to prevent it from happening in the first place?

What I gather from the email below, is that there is apparently an unwritten policy where PBOT's hands are tied, and cannot do anything at all to help stop this from continuing to happen. Apparently, PBOT cannot even restrict vehicle access, which would essentially solve the problem. I find this odd, because other government agencies can and have done this for areas they are responsible for. For example, just across the street, concrete blocks and a gate were used by Parks & Recreation to prevent vehicle access to the north end of the Peninsula Crossing trail. That was done there for the exact same reasons I am requesting it be done here. The only difference is the agency in charge of the space. If it can be done there, why not here?

If this is because you do not wish to restrict access to the public right of way, I would argue that:

- 1) The space is not connected to anything, it is not used or necessary to get to between any two locations by foot.
- 2) Restricting access only to cars does not interfere with any foot traffic that does exist.
- 3) Allowing the area to be a home base for thieves effectively removes the public right of way anyway.

I am asking you to please reconsider this policy of leaving the area open for use to car thieves. Installing concrete blocks or some other method of stopping vehicle access would not restrict foot traffic through the public right of way, and in fact would not even prevent camping in the area (although, I believe this is a high crash corridor area, directly adjacent to Columbia Blvd and without even a barrier in between, so camping is supposed to be banned). All this would do is ensure that the criminal activity stops. My neighbors and I could finally have some level of peace of mind, and the city will not need to continue paying to have the site cleared every time it gets out of control.

We need help from someone with the power to make a change. Please let me know if you would like to discuss further, or if you need any additional information from me.

Thank you

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **PBOT Front Desk** <PBOTFrontDesk@portlandoregon.gov>

Date: Fri, Sep 30, 2022, 12:40 PM

Subject: RE: N Columbia Blvd & N Columbia Way - Please help us

To: Jacob Simoneau <simoneaujt@gmail.com>

We don't place concrete blocks, structures, or signage in the right-of-way to deal with any issues related to campsites. You would still need to reach out to the elected officials to make that type of request.

Thank you,

Front Desk Staff

Portland Bureau of Transportation

1120 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 1331

Portland, OR 97204

Phone: 503-823-5185

PBOTFrontDesk@portlandoregon.gov

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From: Jacob Simoneau <simoneaujt@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 30, 2022 11:58 AM
To: PBOT Front Desk <PBOTFrontDesk@portlandoregon.gov>
Subject: Re: N Columbia Blvd & N Columbia Way - Please help us

Not installing fencing to prevent camping is one thing, and that I understand. But surely it is within reason to at least use concrete blocks to cut off vehicle access so that the blatant car theft can no longer occur here, a literal stones throw from my front door. It will continue as long as it is possible to drive in there.

If PBOT does not have the ability to do this, can you tell me who if anyone could?

Will forward this conversation to both of the email addresses you suggested.

Thanks

On Fri, Sep 30, 2022, 11:00 AM PBOT Front Desk <PBOTFrontDesk@portlandoregon.gov> wrote:

Hello,

Installing fencing in the public right-of-way to prevent camping is not something that the Portland Bureau of Transportation does. If you would like to suggest a change to that, you would want to reach out to the elected officials. The commissioner in charge of PBOT is Jo Ann Hardesty. You can contact her office directly by email at joann@portlandoregon.gov or by phone at 503-823-4151. You can also contact any elected official by using the webpage here: <https://www.portland.gov/contact-elected-official>.

The City's One Point of Contact handles all reports of campsites, and they have several open reports for this location. If you would like to follow up with them for more information about their process for addressing campsites, you can contact them directly by email at reportpdx@portlandoregon.gov.

Thank you,

Front Desk Staff

Portland Bureau of Transportation

1120 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 1331

Portland, OR 97204

Phone: 503-823-5185

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From: Jacob Simoneau <simoneaujt@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 27, 2022 7:31 PM

To: PBOT Front Desk <PBOTFrontDesk@portlandoregon.gov>
Subject: N Columbia Blvd & N Columbia Way - Please help us

Hello,

I have been trying to get in contact with someone at PBOT in regards to a small piece of land in North Portland. The area I'm referring to is the circular plot of land inside of the ramp that connects N Columbia Blvd with N Columbia way. PBOT crews mow it, and I do not see any other owner listed, so please correct me if I'm wrong but I believe the area is your responsibility. I am including an exact location on Google maps below. The person who answered my call a week or two ago took my name and phone number but I have not heard back. Twice since the beginning of the year, this area has been used as a car thief headquarters. Broad daylight, 24/7. There has been violence, there has been rampant theft and drug use, mountains of garbage, and one two separate occasions, victims of car theft have come here armed with baseball bats to take their vehicles back. I have pictures of more than 50 cars here. I have called in several that I was able to confirm were stolen myself, and those were just the ones that still had license plates.

I called recently because the camp was cleared for the second time this year. However, because it is right next to my house, I have daily experience with the camp, and I knew if it was not blocked off, it would happen again. And now, as predicted, they are coming back. I know this is likely to fall on deaf ears, but it WILL get just as bad again, and the city will be forced to clear it for a third time. At what point will someone accept that it makes more sense to prevent them from coming back at all, than it does to keep sweeping the camp every time they steal one too many cars?

My neighbors and I have laid out all our grievances with literally hundreds of PDX reporter submissions and calls to the police. We can't keep doing this. My ask is that you please make this area inaccessible, at least to vehicles, in order to put an end to this nightmare for good. I don't know how much each sweep costs you, but I can't imagine the two previous sweeps and all future sweeps will cost less than just blocking it off for good.

I apologize if this email comes off as curt, but I haven't been able to feel safe in my home for more than a few weeks at a time for the last year. I don't know what else to do, and it just feels like no one is listening.

I would very much appreciate to hear back from someone on this, ideally before it deteriorates into the horrifying state it that it did both previous times. Please let me know if you would like to see any of the many pictures of crime and dangerous situations I have collected over the past year. There are far too many to send over email.

Dropped pin

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/EMpPcpVyMzctzKMQ9>