

From: [jamie ziemba](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Concerning Measure 899
Date: Friday, October 28, 2022 1:34:06 PM

Hello,

I want to share my voice in the conversation regarding creating large encampments for houseless individuals to stay on rather than dispersed camping throughout the city of Portland.

While I can appreciate this attempt at taking a new approach to the problem of houselessness, as a professional in the mental health field I feel there are some very grave oversights that are going to cause this proposal to go to shambles quickly.

Living outside without access to resources IS traumatic and dangerous. It is important that we work towards affordable PERMANENT housing for those living on the street in this city. This requires privacy, safety, and dignity. The biggest issues of this proposed housing camp is that complete lack of consideration of the autonomy and dignity of the individuals who will be living in these spaces. In Wednesday's city council hearing, Skyler Broucker-Knopp spoke on connecting individuals on the street with what she called "client-centered" healthcare, but as someone in the field I can tell you with utmost certainty: none of this is client centered. It is not possible to center a client's needs when lawmakers have forced their choice between living in close quarters with others who are experiencing all sorts of traumas and crises, or breaking the law by staying on the street. The lack of autonomy that will be forced on these individuals will exacerbate any currently existing traumas and create an even larger problem for those health and behavioral caretakers who will be doing the difficult work of helping to stabilize these people, our neighbors.

I understand that the crisis of insufficient housing is overtaking Portland in ways most cities never see. I am glad that people are paying attention, but herding humans into camps is not a solution. I would highly propose diverting any budget slated for this project and using it instead to increase development of permanent affordable/free housing and increase the access to mental and behavioral health services for those on the street.

Please do not allow council members to throw around phrases like "client-centered" when their message so clearly lacks any amount of true empathy.

Thank you.

Jamie Ziemba