

From: [Autumn West](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: ADA person supporting ban on camping
Date: Tuesday, November 1, 2022 5:25:47 PM

My name is Autumn West and I am a disabled person living in Lents neighborhood of SE Portland. I use a mobility device like a walker and my 85 year old mother who has had a double hip replacement uses a cane. We are quite often unable to access the public sidewalks of Portland and in particular our own neighborhood. Sidewalks are blocked and unsafe.

I have been reporting ADA violations on streets near me for six years now. Occasionally sidewalks will be cleared only for the problem to return soon after. In Lents we pay the highest assessed taxes in the city yet I feel we get nothing in return. As a disabled person in Portland I can't even say I feel like a second class citizen, I feel more like I don't even rank in the cities priorities.

I would love to support businesses in my neighborhood but due to inaccessibility and dangerous circumstances I instead drive to Clackamas or Happy Valley to do my shopping where I have clear and safe access. I'm lucky I have a car, I don't know how I would manage otherwise. I have also been diagnosed with PTSD from previous physical assault and this disability is equally as devastating and ignored by the city of Portland. As a disabled person and a woman I feel like an easy target.

I and other disabled people deserve the basic human right to navigate public spaces and yet I feel trapped in my own home. As a disabled person the pandemic was actually somewhat of an equalizer with Zoom finally allowing me to participate in meetings such as this.

I often hear you talk about the cities most vulnerable, I would like to remind you that children, elderly and disabled are the cities most vulnerable. I challenge city council members to spend a day trying to navigate Portland's sidewalks in a wheelchair, using a walker or blindfolded. Experience what we must go through which I call running the gauntlet or in my case limping the gauntlet. I am asking for the equity and protection I deserve under the law. Disabled people deserve to participate in life as much as any other citizen.

I support the ban on camping for the following reasons:

As a disabled person to allow ADA access which is my human right protected by law.

As a Woman who suffers PTSD from being violently attacked , because children, elderly,

disabled, women and honestly in many areas no one is safe on the streets of Portland.

As a household that in Lents that pays the highest assessed value taxes in the city and feels we get absolutely nothing for our money,

As an environmentalist who is horrified at the destruction of our natural areas, waterways and dumping of human waste, garbage and drug needles on our streets.

As a law abiding citizen who can plainly see that legalization of hardcore drugs along with street camping has created a black market that has led to a crime and violence explosion and gang warfare.

And As a compassionate person I support the ban on camping because allowing people to live on the street in squalor with out basic sanitation is inhuman. I believe that this will finally be the first step in helping people access drug addiction and mental health services and start on the path to long term recovery and housing.

Mayor Wheeler you attended our Lents Town Hall in 2017 and made a pledge that you would not support policies to make our situation worse. You promised to work with leaders in our neighborhood and to strive toward community policing. You promised us you would not put any sanctioned homeless camps in Lents until you had made sure the entire city had stepped up to take on their share of the burden. You have failed on all these fronts, I hope that you will at least make sure that Lents and outer SE Portland is among the first areas to be cleaned up and insure that any sanctioned camps are located equitably.

The city council had the opportunity to use the Wapato (now Byebee) facility years ago and made the huge mistake of letting that opportunity go and instead allowing public sidewalks to be privatized and polluted. I encourage all city and county commissioners to support this proposed ban on camping and put Portland back on track to being the beautiful and thriving city could be. I encourage you to support this also in the name of humanity because people living on the streets in squalor is intolerable and horrific!