

From: [Equitable Giving Circle](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: written testimony about housing crisis
Date: Wednesday, November 2, 2022 4:37:42 PM

Hello Portland City Council,

My name is AJ McCreary and I am the executive director of a local direct service nonprofit: [equitable giving circle](#), as well as on the leadership team of a mutual aid group: mxm bloc, and earlier this year I ran for city council against Dan Ryan and came in second cuz only 36% of our city came out to vote. I bring up these points because I am very involved in the collective happenings of our city and actively am creating solutions and support.

As someone who now lives downtown (NW 17th and Flanders) **I am unable to not see this crisis daily as there are folks camping all over my area because they don't have options, there are no resources for them, and they feel forgotten.** This is inhumane, far from progressive, and it doesn't vibe with our city motto: the city that works. This is not working, this is not ok to have thousands of unhoused folks left to rot on the street. This is awful. We can do better!

I listened to most of the testimonies last week while waiting til 9pm to testify and had to leave before it was my turn. **I might have been able to speak if the beginning of the meeting had not been stacked with real estate folks and white community leaders that Mayor Wheeler and Council Member Dan Ryan bumped to the beginning.** This type of nonsense should never happen. I am embarrassed that yall represent the city and do this type of nonsense, it's unethical and harmful. For two individuals who love to say you care about equity, inclusion and progress your behaviors never align and you stay throwing your colleagues under the bus with this mess. The ONLY person who spoke up about this issue was Council Woman JoAnn Hardesty, who ALWAYS speaks up for community and for council to not be doing sneaky things. Mapps and Rubio silent yet again.

My thoughts on this ongoing housing crisis.

- We need housing first, look at Houston's model. Maybe we can learn from their wins and implement them
- We can not ban camping, this is inhumane and just moves the saga around. It is a waste of money and energy. Let's get folks housed in permanent housing
- We need to be actively working with houseless folks, it was slightly refreshing to hear council members ask to follow up with some of the folks directly last week. I had to step away but heard at least three attempts to follow up with folks who have been or are actively houseless. This should be more of

the norm. With this said, yall loudly wanted to follow up with more yt folks with ideas vs BIPOC folks who folks with lived experience and that needs to shift.

- We must get to the root causes, so that means other things like childcare, food, transportation, medical care, wages all need to be addressed/included to act as a stop gap
- In general I heard nothing about stop gaps being put into place so that we can alleviate the issue getting bigger
- long term funding, we need solutions now and for teh long term and so for the immediate we need to fund folks who can quickly get supports rolling and that doesn't mean more money to the FAILING safe rest villages that have failed from inception.
- Putting people in camps is wild, inhumane, has proven problematic and **is not a long term solution. It is not even a short term solution, its literally a way to pretend you are doing something while moving folks out of general visibility.**
- Solutions for the volume of the crisis: those camps aren't helping the 5-8K (depending on which data report you look at via metro, Portland state or multnomah county) people who are actively unhoused.
- Utilize available resources- in all this we still talking to be talking, we need to utilize resources now. We need to make funds available to get folks into housing, we need to work with agencies, landlords, other gv entities to get people housed now. while this won't work for everyone it could work for a good half of these individuals.

Some tangible solutions:

- Fund folks getting into housing and house folks in stable real housing, camps and shelters are not permanent solutions. Also there are tons of units available. Figure out how to utilize them.
- Create actual affordable housing, and that means 2-4 bedrooms units for families and they need to be in the city center and not 700 sqft. This matchbox vibe doesn't work.
- We need a rent/eviction freeze or this saga will continue to grow
- Work with culturally specific orgs ONGOING, robustly who can help build the repair from decades of harm from city gov to citizens. We need more resources for individuals in crisis and it's your job to make that happen.

I pray we start making some actual moves to resolve this. Fiscally speaking the camps, ignoring these issues, refusing to address them at the root is irresponsible, negligent and cruel. This is a waste of tax dollars to be shuffling folks around and not helping them. From a city leadership yall just failing up with this or you blame JoAnn who is not even in charge of housing and has implemented real community solutions to issues. Street Response is incredible and no one on this council has

done anything even comparable to her successes with that program. Maybe she should be in charge of housing, then we would have some actual solutions.

Myself and many will be following up as this is out of control, the lack of solutions speak volumes of your leadership both collectively and individually.

In disbelief,
AJM

AJ McCreary

Executive Director

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We give no strings attached.

Email: info@equitablegivingcircle.org

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