

From: [Bryce Donovan](#)
To: [Commissioner Mapps](#); [Commissioner Rubio](#); [Wheeler, Mayor](#); [Council Clerk – Testimony](#); [Commissioner Hardesty](#); [Commissioner Ryan Office](#)
Subject: Mass Camps for the Unhoused is a Terrible Idea
Date: Thursday, November 3, 2022 1:15:52 PM

Dear Portland City Council,

I am writing as a housed person on behalf of the unhoused community of Portland and the tri-county area to say that I vehemently oppose the idea of creating mass camps/shelters. As a volunteer with Hygiene4All, I see first-hand the amazing return on investment that comes with treating the unhoused community with respect, dignity, humanity, compassion, and care. The unhoused community knows what it needs better than any of us not experiencing homelessness, and H4A is a great example of what results when we take their opinions seriously.

Mass camps and shelters seem more like a desperate attempt to appease a weak-willed, lazy, and ignorant society that views the houselessness crisis as intractable and would rather imprison, sweep, and hide away this problem rather than address it as the internally displaced refugee crisis that it is. What the unhoused need is a seat at the table, not a top-down savior mentality that only ends up making their situation worse. It is strange that instead of directing millions of dollars toward rental assistance, housing placement, existing structure retrofits/reno's, and wrap-around services, we default to a punitive approach that will end up costing more in the long run.

This problem won't go away unless we do the very basic thing that we need to do: get people into safe and stable housing. Consolidating a highly diverse population of people with wildly varying needs will result in major safety, security, and financial costs that will ultimately wreak more havoc on the city than is already occurring. How would such a camp even work in the first place? I spent six years working in an emergency department - a highly controlled indoor environment with its own police department - and found it challenging to manage 30 or more patients during a shift, even with highly trained and capable staff. Yet you somehow think there are enough people to manage a large camp? This is lunacy at its finest and clearly, an attempt to pacify Portland NIMBYs, suburban developers, and business people so they feel like the city is finally taking tough action.

Isn't it bad enough that people are living on the streets in the first place? Why perpetuate this problem with what will inevitably become a disastrous feedback loop for those who need housing, compassion, and indeed their opinions heard the most? One would think that the housed community - with all its higher education levels, its home comforts, and indeed all of its material wealth (read: garbage) - would be a well of great thinking to address what is ultimately a systemic crisis wrought by capitalism. Instead, it is clear that local leaders would rather tap into their fears so they can further their regressive, violent, and costly policies.

I stand in solidarity with the needs of the unhoused and ask that the Portland City Council not continue with its dead-end, time-wasting proposal, and instead seek [real solutions](#) that will actually help those in need.

Sincerely,

Bryce Donovan

