

From: [Michelle Owens](#)
To: [Commissioner Ryan Office](#); [Commissioner Hardesty](#); [Council Clerk – Testimony](#); [Commissioner Rubio](#); [Commissioner Mapps](#); [Wheeler, Mayor](#)
Subject: City Ordinance 901
Date: Thursday, November 3, 2022 1:43:06 PM

Dear City Commissioners and Mayor Wheeler,

I am writing in regards to City Ordinance 901. My name is Michelle Owens, I'm a certified peer support specialist, a community research associate, and I am a graduate student in public health at the PSU-OHSU School of Public Health.

I am gravely concerned with the notion of voting on this ordinance when so little has been established regarding the behavioral health care promised. The plan mentions easier access to mental health care and substance use counseling.

How? Ask anyone working in mental health in Oregon today, we are experiencing a critical shortage of mental health staff.

Where? There are months long waitlists for all residential treatment. Oregon has some of the longest waitlists in the country.

It appears the language in this proposal has the packaging of care without any concern for the practicalities.

We all can agree that more mental health care and recovery services are needed by Oregonians everywhere, beyond our houseless neighbors. So beyond paying that notion lip service, how does this council intend to accomplish these goals? Have they found a solution that the many, many of us already working towards this have missed?

I've heard it on social media, I've heard it from my houseless neighbors, I've heard it on the news, I've heard it from the ACLU: this is a Bad Idea.

I'm writing to uplift the following asks in order to ensure that the City does not condone and participate in a mass traumatization of members of an already traumatized community.

- Wheeler and Ryan must be transparent and democratic in this process and all other city processes
- We must fully fund [Move in Multnomah](#) style programs NOW as more permanent housing is built
- The city must create a plan for at least 5000 units of housing for those who are chronically unsheltered. Right now much of the affordable housing that is underway does not provide the

assistance and no income situations that chronically unsheltered people face. We will not solve houselessness on the streets until we get serious about creating long term housing that will allow people who have experienced chronic houselessness to go inside, stabilize, and recover from the extended trauma and poverty we have allowed in our City.

We can not allow good intentions and the right notions to paper over a lack of forethought or planning. I would request the council withhold approval until an actual outline is established.

Michelle Owens, PSS
Masters in Public Health Candidate