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## 867-2023

Communication

### Request of Josh Wheeler to address Council regarding vehicle removal at parks

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A brief description of Communication: Removal of homeless RVs at parks

#### Agenda Items

867 Communications in [October 18, 2023 Council Agenda](#) (<https://www.portland.gov/council/agenda/2023/10/18>)

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#### Requested Agenda Type

Communications

#### Date and Time Information

Requested Council Date

October 18, 2023

City of Portland

City Council Testimony

October 18, 2023

Hello, my name is Josh Wheeler, I live in the Brentwood Neighborhood. I am here to talk to you about homeless impacts to my neighborhood as well as the lack of service and deficiencies within PBOT and other right-of-way infrastructure related projects.

Concerning homeless impacts, I walk my dog to Brentwood Park and Harney Park and use the Springwater Corridor trail. Since 2019, I have been reporting illegal camping in tents and RV/Car Camping. I worked with Clackamas County and the City for the Springwater Corridor with many campers leaving trash and debris near the food carts near Harney and the Springwater Trail. This has been cleaned and planted with trees to prevent campers. I then have been reporting RV camping at Harney and Brentwood Parks. I use pdxreporter.com, emails for pdxroads and pdxreporter as well as 311 or the pdxreporter app. It is unclear why there are so many options and which ones are best to be used. These reports do not result in any type of public facing website to show a site has been requested. Staff who monitor the email addresses provide a link to a public facing GIS site that only shows when a cleaning occurs. The public facing site needs to show when a site has been reported and when the site is scheduled for review and cleanup. This will prevent citizens like myself from reporting over and over again. It also will help us understand the effort the City is doing. Right now, I see one cleanup at Harney Park in March of 2023 after contacting the City countless times since 2019. The expectation is that more than one cleanup should occur in a 4-5 year period. It would be good to know what expectation the public should have. Last week, the City moved RVs, busses, and vans and cars parked illegally adjacent to Brentwood Park. Harney Park's illegally parked vehicles remain. Adding permanent signs of the rules for parks showing only a 2 hour parking limit is allowed need to be installed at both parks. All of these vehicles end up using the entire sidewalk as their home by storing all of their stuff on the sidewalk which blocks pedestrian access and ADA access in these areas, not to mention the destruction of the landscape area. Today, I am requesting a more vigorous response to Harney and Brentwood Parks, and ask that city staff such as Parks staff who notice illegally parked vehicles report these areas when they are doing park maintenance and install signs on landscape areas or fencing stating the ordinance, code, and rules with respect to parking adjacent to a park.

Secondly, as I am a Public Works official myself in another nearby jurisdiction, I am disheartened by the lack of maintenance, quality work, and work in general on City Streets. I have had requests in pdxreporter or the pdx roads or pdx graffiti emails go unnoticed with traffic signs damaged or graffitied, with potholes gone unfixed for over 6 months, to see my car drive over a manhole which has settled causing an abrupt edge to the pavement. Due to what I view as a lack of coordination between departments (or bureaus), we see painted lines for possible projects faded out before any crew ends up arriving to do any work, we see a waterline be replaced leaving gravel in place for over a month. Any reasonable public works official will tell you that those kind of timelines are inefficient, create extra costs, and are a general hazard to the public providing also a negative view of PBOT and the City.

It has recently been reported that PBOT has a funding shortfall. As revenue consists of items like gas tax (which is federal, state, and city) and parking fees....it isn't enough, and while no city in the US ever has enough funding, PBOT seems to be worse off than others. Citizens should be able to see potholes fixed, sunken utilities fixed and traffic signs remain upright and free from graffiti. One more example is the intersection of 62<sup>nd</sup> and Cooper. Cooper is possibly a private road (various staff seem to be conflicted on this definition). Cooper is a gravel road. There was a time back in 2019 and 2020, a representative for Stormwater was going to fix the intersection which significantly ponds with water every winter which then causes a massive bathtub where the gravel from Cooper is dragged onto 62<sup>nd</sup> and creates a skating rink of gravel and sometimes ice on 62<sup>nd</sup>. If Cooper is not a City street, the City needs to use Code Enforcement to require the owners of the road to maintain their gravel road. As the apron of Cooper would be inside the right of way of 62<sup>nd</sup>, the City could also simply pour a concrete apron to the Cooper where water may still pond, but gravel would no longer drag onto 62<sup>nd</sup>.

Back to funding, I strongly recommend the City seek a Pavement Maintenance Utility Fee which has been implemented in some Oregon Cities. It does not require a vote of the people, but it likely would benefit from a public process but one that lasts less than a year, not a 5 year pilot program with 5 more years of analysis. The programs already exist elsewhere. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. I understand this may have been considered or even rejected in the past, but it is the best way to ensure all users of the road who use gas, electricity and other means to use vehicles pay for their equal share of impacts to the roads. Clackamas County added a vehicle license registration fee a few years ago. Portland could start working with Multnomah County to implement something similar.

And lastly, there is clearly a lack of partnership with the City and Multnomah County. This has to improve. Whether collaboration and spending of homeless dollars, housing, or road maintenance, these relationships have to improve. I strongly recommend the Mayor and the County Chair start meeting on a much more regular basis.

Thank you.