

KATE SNYDER (MAYOR)
PIOUS ALI (A/L)
APRIL FOURNIER (A/L)
ROBERTO RODRÍGUEZ (A/L)



ANNA TREVORROW (1)
VICTORIA L. PELLETIER (2)
REGINA L. PHILLIPS (3)
ANDREW ZARRO (4)
MARK N. DION (5)

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP

Proposal to Increase Homeless Services Center Capacity by Emergency Order

September 26, 2023 at 5:00 PM in Council Chambers

The City Council will conduct this meeting from Council Chambers, located on the second floor of City Hall. This meeting will be held in-person and [live-streamed on the City's website](#) for viewing only. There will be no remote participation via Zoom.

Public comment will be accepted in-person for a 90-minute period during the meeting, or in writing. To submit written comment, email publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov before 12:00PM Monday, Sept. 25, 2023.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Introduction (Kate Snyder, Mayor)

Proposal to temporarily increase capacity at the City of Portland Homeless Services Center

Staff Presentation

Council Questions

Public Comment (90 minutes)

Please limit public comment to the proposal to expand capacity at the HSC via an emergency order.

Council Discussion and Guidance

Next Steps

ADJOURNMENT:

City of Portland | Executive Department

Danielle P. West, *City Manager*

To: Mayor Snyder and Members of the Portland City Council

From: Danielle P. West, City Manager

Date: September 22, 2023

Re: September 14, 2023 Encampment Workshop Follow-up



As was discussed at the September 14, 2023 workshop of the City Council, a potential way in which to address the encampment/unhoused crisis in our City is by temporarily increasing capacity for at the Homeless Services Center (HSC). The proposal involves declaring a temporary limited emergency at the HSC in order to allow for a temporary increase in shelter beds (up to 150 beds) at the facility, and thereby provide emergency housing to the individuals at the various encampments throughout the City.

Attached to this memo is a schematic showing the layout of the shelter and how the additional beds would be accommodated at the HSC, and a draft emergency proclamation/order that would create the additional capacity. The draft order specifically would do the following:

- 1) Establish that a temporary emergency exists due to the current unhoused crisis within our City;
- 2) Limit the emergency to the HSC in order to temporarily increase capacity/shelter beds to address the crisis, and not trigger city-wide hazard pay under the City's minimum wage ordinance;
- 3) Relax the requirements of Chapters 6, 10, and 14 in order to allow for this temporary increase in capacity at the HSC to be implemented;
- 4) Allow the number of additional beds available at the HSC to be decreased based on the opening of the shelter at 166 Riverside Industrial Parkway; and
- 5) Set a timeframe for this Order to be brought back to the Council in order to review the continued need for it.

The cost of this increase in capacity has been estimated to be \$134,762 (see attached).¹ We have spoken with the State about potential sources for those funds, which are still being

¹ Please note that this estimated cost does not include the cost for additional showers or bathrooms that may be needed at the HSC depending on the capacity added. Staff will be prepared to address this issue in more detail at the Council Workshop.

explored, and the City's Finance Director will also be available to discuss potential places within the City budget where we may have the funds necessary to pay for this proposal.

Staff and I look forward to discussing this all further with you at our scheduled workshop on Tuesday September 26, 2023.

KATE SNYDER (MAYOR)
APRIL D. FOURNIER(A/L)
PIOUS ALI (A/L)
ROBERTO RODRÍGUEZ (A/L)

**CITY OF PORTLAND
IN THE CITY COUNCIL**

ANNA TREVORROW (1)
VICTORIA L. PELLETIER (2)
REGINA L. PHILLIPS (3)
ANDREW ZARRO (4)
MARK DION (5)

**ORDER DECLARING A STATE OF
LIMITED EMERGENCY AT 654 RIVERSIDE STREET**

WHEREAS, as the result of many factors, the City of Portland experienced an upswell in its unhoused population in 2023; and

WHEREAS, some of these factors include, among other things, the conclusion of federal Emergency Rental Assistance program benefits, an increase in the number of asylum-seeking individuals and families seeking assistance from the City of Portland, and a shortage of affordable housing in the City and region; and

WHEREAS, the new City of Portland Homeless Services Center (HSC) reached capacity within one day of its opening on March 27, 2023, with each of its 208 beds being occupied every night since; and

WHEREAS, this confluence of factors has resulted in an overwhelming increase in unsheltered individuals sleeping outside, in places not meant for human habitation; and

WHEREAS, on June 4, 2023, City staff observed 168 tents on public and private property in Portland. An increase in the number of tents in Portland has been observed nearly every week since, such that, from June 4 to September 15, the number of tents in the City increased by over 42%; and

WHEREAS, on September 15, 239 tents were observed throughout the City; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, the City has received many requests to address the health and safety hazards at and near encampments within the city, including requests to address trash, conditions, domestic violence, criminal conduct, sexual assaults, stabbings, theft, overdoses, and even fatalities; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, seven fatalities have taken place so far at encampments, one a homicide, and six fatal overdoses; and

WHEREAS, on May 31, 2023, the City held the first meeting of its Encampment Crisis Response Team (ECRT), which was established to help unhoused individuals living at encampments transition to shelter or housing prior to the scheduled

resolution of that encampment. An estimated 30 social services and housing nonprofits have joined the ECRT in support of its housing-focused mission; and

WHEREAS, the ECRT worked to transition unhoused individuals at the Fore River Parkway Trail encampment for three (3) months, coordinating the delivery of regular meals and providing restroom facilities and water, and working to find housing for all who were there; and

WHEREAS, costs associated with the ECRT's work at the Fore River Parkway Trail encampment included the delivery of basic services to individuals; the removal of abandoned materials and debris after the encampment's resolution, and mitigating hazards such as human waste and hypodermic needles so that the public could safely access the public trail once more; and

WHEREAS, ECRT work at the Fore River Trail Encampment over the summer of one-on-one contact and at the end during its clean-up in September cost the City more than \$65,000 for various services, which does not include staff time; and

WHEREAS, City staff and elected officials have received numerous expressions of concern, fear, and outrage related to the dangerous and illegal behaviors commonly observed at encampments, as well as direct threats to their personal safety and negative impact on small businesses;

WHEREAS, a Homelessness Information & Listening Session was held by the City and City Council on June 13, 2023 at Ocean Gateway attending by approximately 300 people, many of whom brought questions and suggestions, and in a follow-up Frequently Asked Questions document, published responses to some of the ideas expressed, available here - <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/e10a1c0c-c3ed-4f90-a593-bcd0d89184b5>; and

WHEREAS, on June 29, 2023, the City Manager and Mayor sent a letter to Governor Janet Mills requesting help housing some of the more than 1,500 asylum seekers who had arrived at the City in 2023, many of whom are housed in the City's family homeless shelter and its Homeless Services Center, suggesting the Maine National Guard could help set up temporary facilities to come to the City's aid; and

WHEREAS, while some state funding has been provided to the City, no housing proposals have been received to date, leaving the City and its leaders on their own to figure out a solution to the problem of homelessness as the weather grows cold and the homeless need indoor shelter to survive;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED, that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Portland, do hereby declare and order that a civil state of limited emergency exists within the City of Portland at the site of its Homeless Services Center at the property located at 654 Riverside Street; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that, within the property contained at the Homeless Services Center, the laws and rules outlined in the Land Use Code, including, but not limited to, the Site Plan, Subdivision, and other procedures applicable to the City planning and land use application and review processes contained in Chapter 14, as well as the requirements in the Homeless Services Center Site Plan Approval and Management Plan, to the extent, among other things, that they impose limitations on the number of shelter beds, amount of time permitted for the holding of public hearings, the certification of applications, the submission of recommendations, any required or necessary voting, the taking of final actions, and the issuance of determinations, are suspended, and any such time limitations are tolled for the duration of the limited emergency established by this Order; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that, within the property contained at the Homeless Services Center at 654 Riverside Street the rules and laws relating to Buildings and Building Regulations (Chapter 6) and Fire Prevention and Protection (Chapter 10) are suspended for the duration of the limited emergency established by this Order; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the City Manager is hereby authorized to implement an increased capacity of the HSC by an additional One Hundred Fifty (150) beds, according to the schedule of the installation of beds and any other necessary facilities needed to provide adequate housing for clients in need of shelter, in increments of Fifty (50) beds, or as otherwise is made possible by work to be done at the HSC and following consultation with the Landlord of the facility, DC Riverside LLC; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the City Manager is hereby authorized to decrease the number of beds available at the HSC according to the schedule of the opening of a second homeless shelter at 166 Riverside Industrial Parkway, which will house many of the present inhabitants of the Homeless Services Center at 654 Riverside Street, again following consultation with the Landlord of the facility, DC Riverside LLC; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that this Order shall remain in effect until _____; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that if any provision of this Order or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, then the remainder of the Order, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and effect and to this end, the provisions of this Proclamation are severable.

Fund	0100
Org	10044306

			208 beds Capacity	350 beds Capacity	68% bed Capacity Incr	
Rollup	Object	Description	FY24 BUD	FY24 BUD	Increase (6 mos)	Comment
Revenue	335030	GA State Reimbursements	(4,464,096)	(5,987,898)	(1,523,802)	142 beds * \$84 *70% for 6 months
	398000	MSHA Incentives & (ARPA-PD)	(1,260,069)	(1,260,069)	-	
	398400	Grant Reimbursements	(1,564,794)	(1,564,794)	-	
Revenue Total			(7,288,959)	(8,812,761)	(1,523,802)	
Payroll	400110	Salaries	4,879,868	5,058,566	178,698	See salary breakdown above
	400130	Temp	622,719	1,273,193	650,474	25 SA per diem @ \$18/hr + 68% bed capacity increase
	400140	Overtime	490,414	657,155	166,741	Increase based on bed capacity incr @ 68%
Payroll Total			5,993,001	6,988,914	995,913	
Benefits	400260	Workers Compensation	-	-		
	400271	Wearing apparel	-	-		
	400274	Cell Phones	1,200	1,800	600	2 additional cell phones for 6 months
Benefits Total			1,200	1,800	600	
Administrative services	402000	Admin. Services	-	-	-	
	402010	Postage	-	-	-	
	402020	Travel, trng,mtgs	4,000	5,360	1,360	Increase based on bed capacity incr @ 68%
Administrative services Total			4,000	5,360	1,360	
Contractual services	403500	Contractual	133,550	140,228	6,678	10% increase - most contractual costs are fixed
	403530	Auto exp. Reimb	1,000	1,340	340	Increase based on bed capacity incr @ 68%
	403545	Interpretation	17,200	17,200	-	NA
Contractual services Total			151,750	158,768	7,018	
Maintenance and Repairs	404010	Maint/Cleaning	50,000	67,000	17,000	Increase based on bed capacity incr @ 68%
	404020	Other equipt	-	-		
Maintenance and Repairs Total			50,000	67,000	17,000	
Rentals	404510	Rent	2,701,000	2,701,000	-	NA
	404530	Equip rent	2,139	2,866	727	Increase based on bed capacity incr @ 68%
Rentals Total			2,703,139	2,703,866	727	
Supplies	405520	Other supplies	212,095	284,207	72,112	Increase based on bed capacity incr @ 68%
	405560	Minor Equipment	5,000	85,783	80,783	bunk beds, mattress, pillows
	405565	Computers/technology	4,000	4,000	-	NA 2 Repl computers already budgeted
	405570	Office supplies	12,000	16,080	4,080	Increase based on bed capacity incr @ 68%
	405549	Food	1,080,948	1,448,470	367,522	Increase based on bed capacity incr @ 68%
	405540	Fuel - Veh	18,890	25,313	6,423	Increase based on bed capacity incr @ 68%
Supplies Total			1,332,933	1,863,853	530,920	
Utilities	406310	Gas	-	-	-	
	406320	Electricity	275,000	275,000	-	NA
	406330	Water	50,000	67,000	17,000	
	406340	Telephone (63-41)	4,652	4,652		NA
	406350	Internet Data	12,228	12,228		NA
Utilities Total			341,880	358,880	17,000	
Client Expenses	403034	Client supplies	47,205	63,255	16,050	Increase based on bed capacity incr @ 68%
	403076	Client Transp.	30,000	40,200	10,200	Increase based on bed capacity incr @ 68%
Client Expenses Total			77,205	103,455	26,250	
			-	-		
Total Expenses			10,655,108	12,251,896	1,596,788	

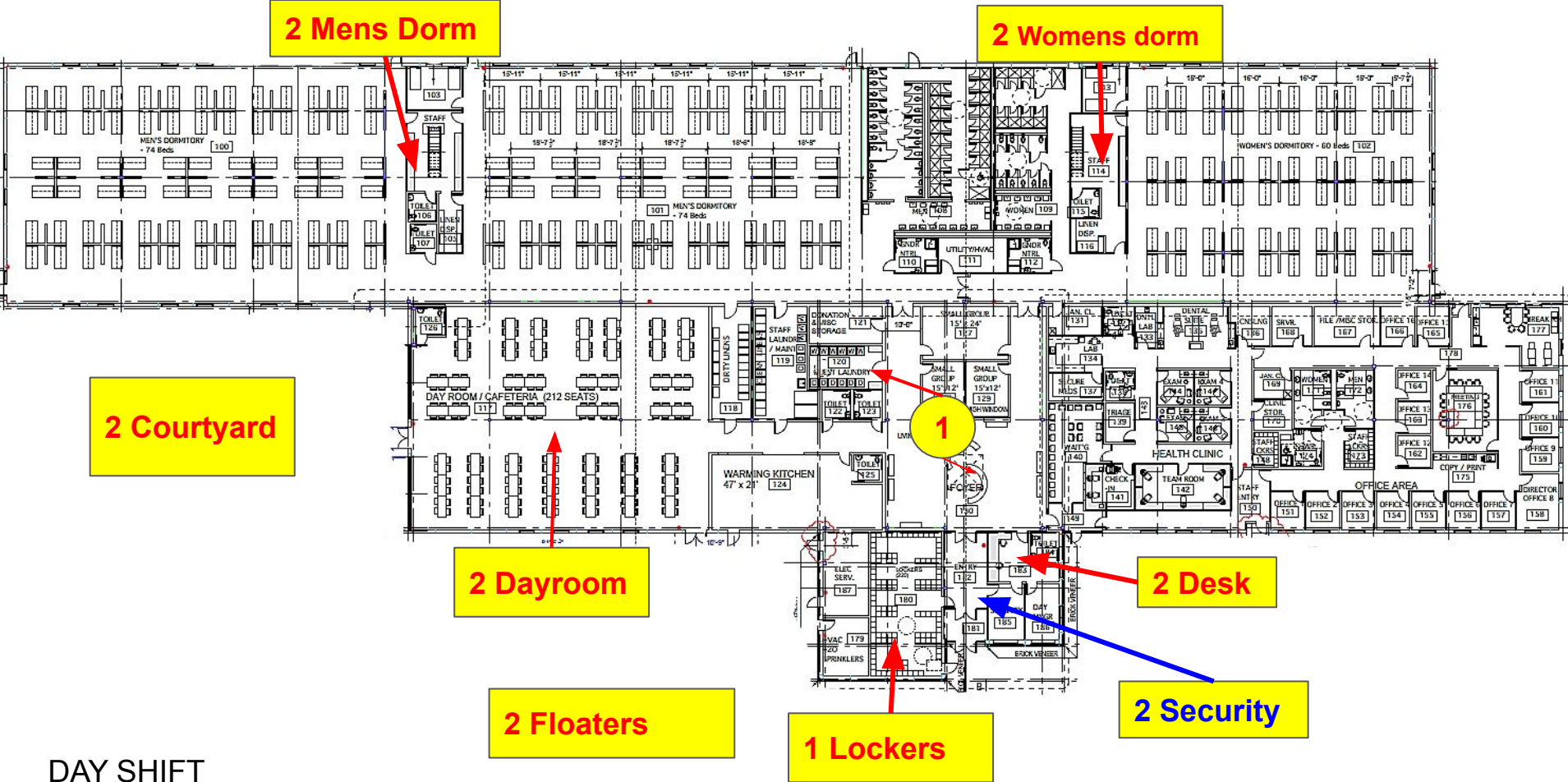
61,776 Fringe @ 34.57%

Net City Ask	134,762	Total Expenses (including fringe) less GA revenues
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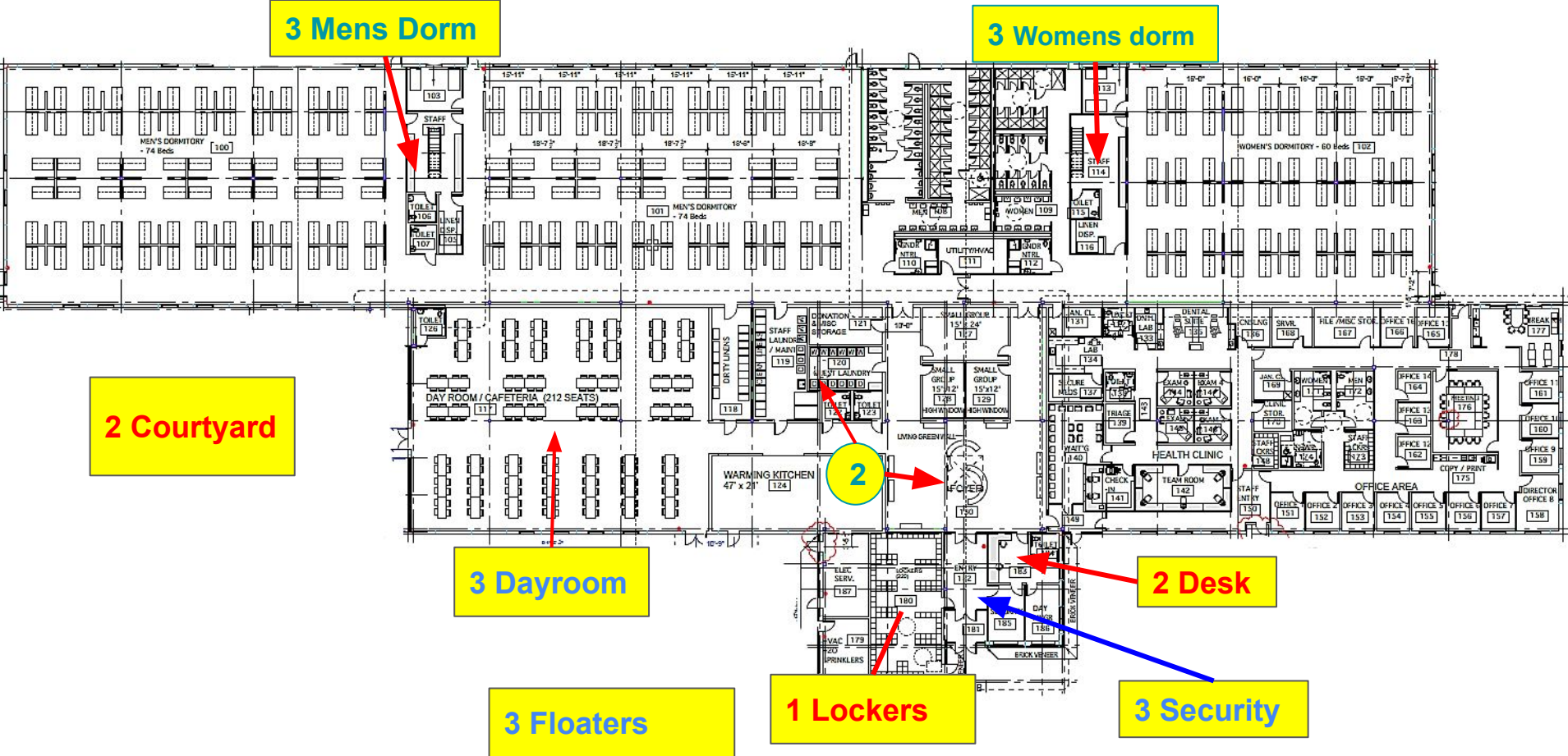
Salary breakdown				
	Salary	FTE's	Annual	6 months
HSC	45,279	4	181,116	90,558
HSS	44,070	4	176,280	88,140
		8	357,396	178,698

Fringe @ 34.57% 61,776

SA per diem	35,100	25	877,500	438,750
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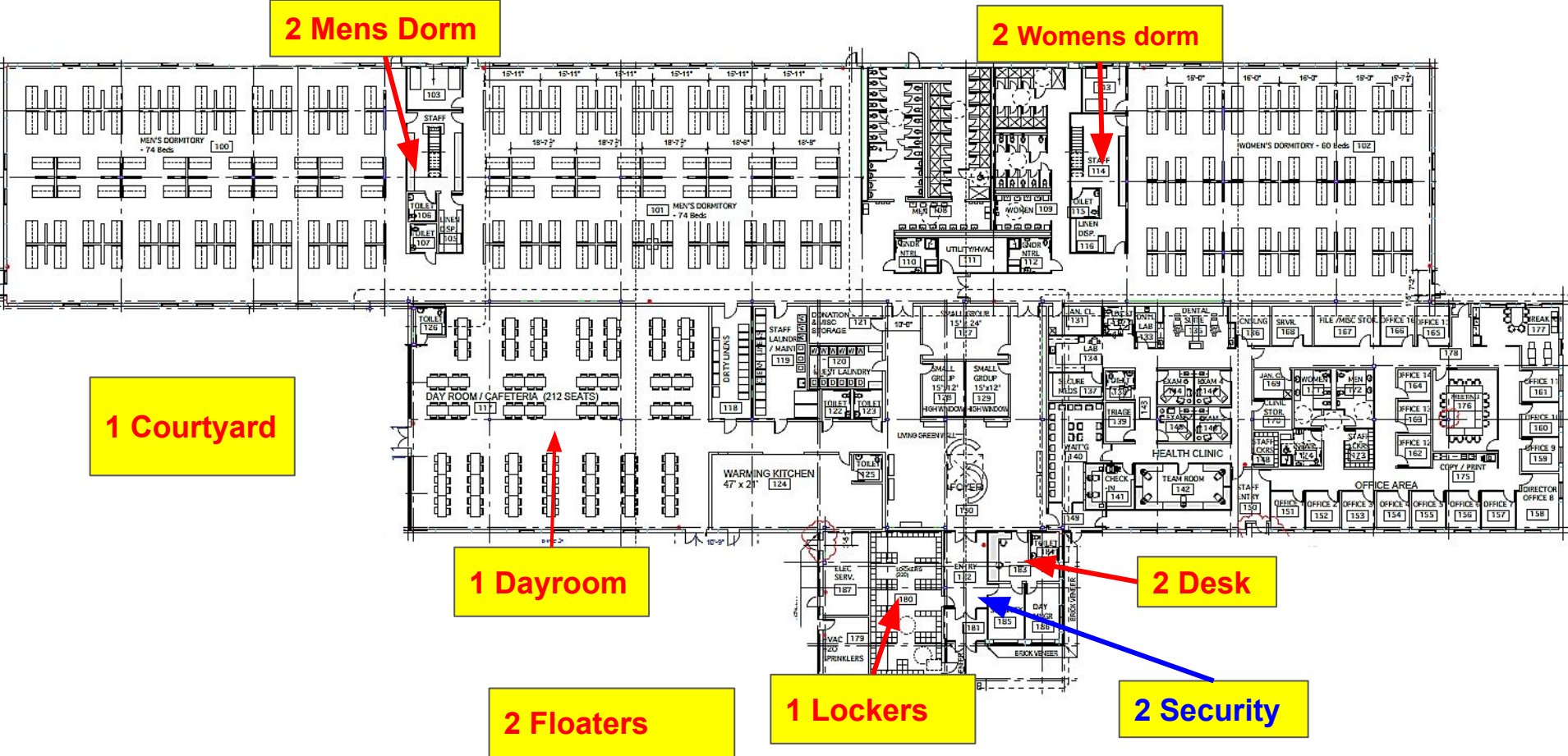


DAY SHIFT

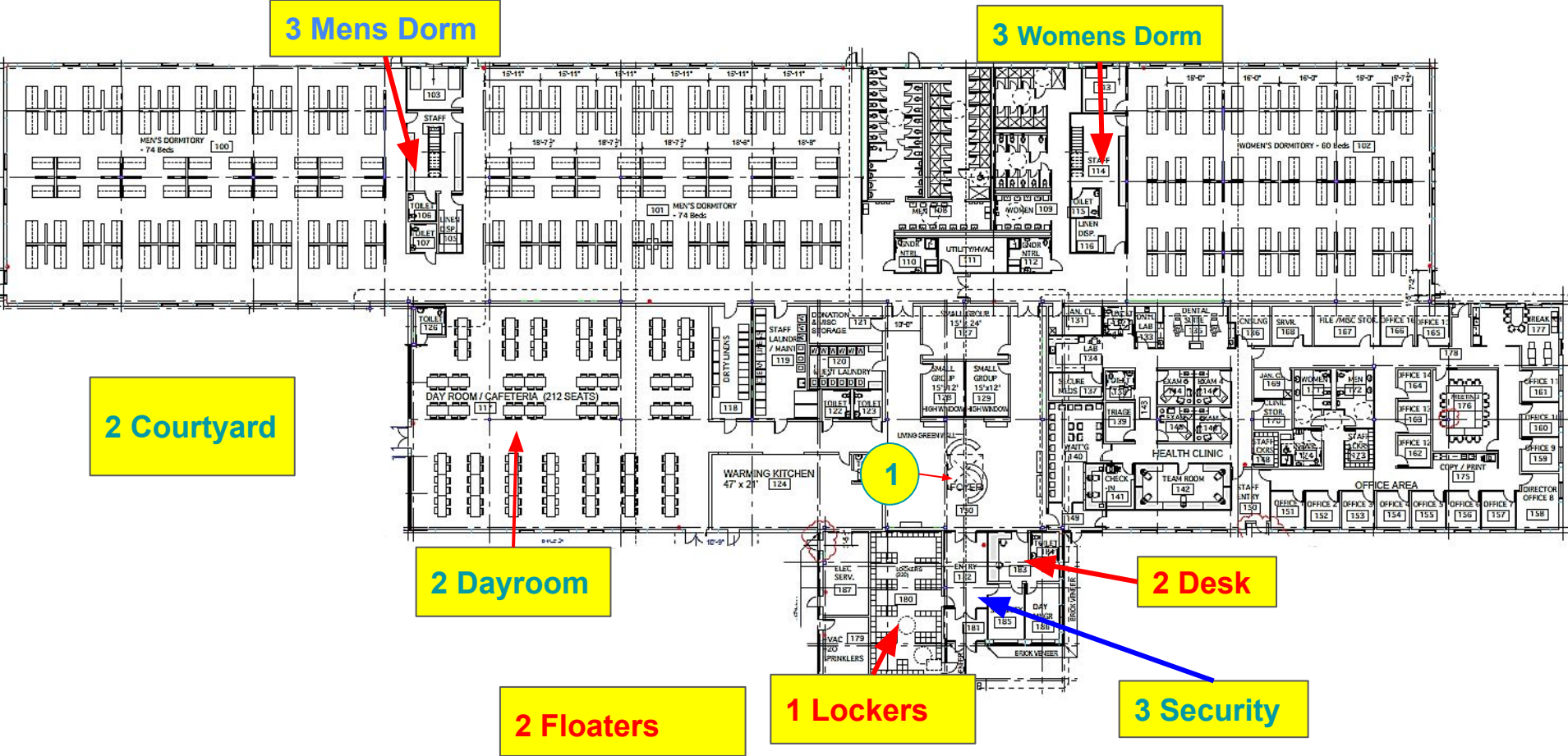


DAY SHIFT
Increased Capacity

6 Staff Increase



NIGHT SHIFT



NIGHT SHIFT
Increased Capacity

6 Staff Increase

Good evening, Mayor Synder and members of the Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Bob Avery, and I am a Portland resident and Preble Street outreach caseworker. I have worked closely with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness over the past two years, providing food, clothing, and assisting with accessing community resources including shelter.

I want to start by saying I feel increased shelter capacity for Portland is important. There is not enough shelter for people around the city. I work with folks daily who ask me where to go and where they can sleep, and I receive phone calls from folks asking where they can spend the night. I work regularly with the city to help people access the Homeless Services Center. As a Portland resident, I hope that we can provide more shelter for folks in crisis and support our most vulnerable members of our community.

Increased shelter beds will expand capacity at the Homeless Services Center but will not increase accessibility. Speaking with folks in the encampments there are significant concerns with the shelter that prevent them from going.

Many people I talk with continue to feel the distance from Portland, and shelter culture discourages them from spending time at the HSC. The nearly five-mile distance and format makes coming into Portland to meet with case management and for doctor appointments and treatment a challenge. Many people I've talked to spoke about how the culture remains similar to the Oxford Street Shelter, where they felt they couldn't have conversations with staff to resolve issues and the culture was more punitive. Experiences being criminally trespassed from Oxford Street continue to keep people from reconnecting with the new shelter and long intakes present a challenge for anyone whose mental and physical health prevent them from navigating the intake process. I have observed this firsthand.

In spite of these accessibility challenges, the city has continued to sweep encampments, forcing people around the city to pick-up and move with no immediate support in place. Attempting to hide our unsheltered citizens is not a solution. People sleeping outside need greater healthcare access, food resources, and supportive services. They need consistency as well and sweeps force people to new areas further hindering connections in the community, cutting supports, and impeding progress towards housing.

We have a housing crisis in Portland and additional "emphasis areas" across the city only hurt the work outreach workers are doing with people living in tents. The cycle of take down, move, and loss drives out any work towards long term housing. By giving folks in tents more time to stay in one place, they will begin to connect with resources and support. Most people I connect with do not feel safe sleeping outside, but stopping forced relocations is a big step towards finding stability to access supports and reach for some of the goals they carry with them.

More shelter beds are a crucial resource, but bunk beds in the HSC are not the answer to the accessibility challenges of the unsheltered community. I hope that the city will consider further changes to address the barriers to shelter and look to grow in their capacity to connect with the hundreds of Portland residents

sleeping on the street. This is a crucial time for progress, I hope the city of Portland will step up and meet the needs of some of its most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you.



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

9/26 encampment policy public comment

1 message

Brent Adler <brentadler@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Tue, Sep 19, 2023 at 9:14 AM

Hello. Thank you for providing this public meeting. Has the City considered creating an overlay zone that would address some design standards for the tents in the approved encampments? Would these design standards include any safety concerns going into winter. Such as fire and life safety?

Sent from my iPhone



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

City Manager's Order

1 message

Jenna Simmons <sjenna067@gmail.com>

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 12:02 PM

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

To the City Council:

I am a member of First Parish Portland. I strongly oppose the order to add more bunk beds to the Homeless Services Center. I urge you to vote against the City Manager's proposal. This proposal is limited and does not address the underlying issues. By increasing the amount of people staying at the center and not increasing the amount of workers or shuttles, you are increasing the odds of people not reaching out for help, people staying in unhealthy situations, and people reverting to unhealthy behaviors as a result as stress.

Stop the sweeps. It causes more trauma to already-traumatized people. They are people; they are not statistics. They have been through hell and have come through it. We NEED these people. They are resilient and they have grit. Help them begin to start their healing journeys by reaching out and giving them your hand, not emptying their homes and belongings in the trash.

Thank you for your time.

-J.Simmons

Dartmouth Street, Portland Maine



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Comment for the Encampment Policy Solutions 9/26 Workshop

1 message

Katie Bove <katieriley427@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 9:47 AM

Dear Portland City Council,

My name is Katie Bove and I am writing to express a few comments and ideas for consideration regarding the homeless encampments.

I am an LCSW, practicing social work since graduating with my MSW in 2011. The majority of my social work practice has been in homeless services and I have worked in both the Portland, Maine and Boston communities. I am currently a resident of Cumberland county and have lived in Maine since 2010.

The complexities regarding the social issue of homelessness cannot be understated. We know there is no singular simple solution. There is the obvious need of affordable housing and more housing first models. For purposes of brevity, I will not delve deeper into that topic and believe it will be discussed in detail by other providers and community members. In addition to working on the affordable housing solution, I believe that looking into the following five areas may help forge a path forward.

1. Needs assessment - Administering a current needs assessment of the individuals living in the encampments would be a crucial first step. There is a relatively static population at the camps which would make gathering data achievable. Local service providers who have relationships with the population could work to develop a brief questionnaire and complete the assessment tool with individuals willing to do so. The initiative can be presented to the populations as: "With the colder months quickly approaching we are trying to gather information on what you need to seek safe shelter." Questions on the needs assessment would ideally gather information that sheds light on what is keeping individuals from seeking shelter right now. The data gathered would hopefully serve as a client-centered guide on what the main barriers are and give the community partners direction as to where to start to dismantle these barriers.

2. Clinical support staff in shelters - I cannot advocate enough for social work and clinical staff positions to be embedded in the city shelter as well as other local service agencies and outreach teams. In Boston, there are shelter clinician positions in all of the emergency shelters as well as day service centers. It can make all the difference. Social work trained staff are critical in helping create a trauma informed environment, outreaching and engaging hard to reach clients, assessing for needs, triaging cases and advocating for appropriate level of care, coordinating with hospitals and adult protective services, and mitigating risk. I personally spent years working in the position of shelter clinician role in Boston and know first hand how valuable these positions are. Particularly in street outreach services, clinical staff can be very impactful in all the aforementioned areas. I believe having a clinician at the HSC doing outreach in the encampments and building relationships with the clients would make some individuals more likely to successfully transition from sleeping out to accessing shelter services.

3. Increased access to substance use services - There are many substance use service providers in the Greater Portland area who have capacity for clients but do not accept MaineCare for detox, residential and outpatient services. Engaging with these providers to work on this barrier, come up with scholarships or free care beds etc is critical. We know there is a significant amount of individuals living in the encampments struggling with substance use, often co-occurring with mental health and/or acute medical issues. As a services provider, it is difficult to engage with clients in change talk or help support them in the goal of recovery if there are no available options. Or, if the process (calls, information, waiver requirements and wait times to only potentially get a week of detox covered) is too convoluted and difficult for someone to manage without significant frustration and distress. Not all individuals are ready to access recovery services thus harm reduction should be the key approach across the board. However, if anyone living in the encampment is interested in accessing substance use services, regardless of insurance, they should have priority and a streamlined process to make this possible. Limited availability of methadone clinics and long waitlists for existing clinics is also a current barrier in terms of accessibility of substance use services.

4. Accessibility in shelter - We need to ask the individual sleeping outside why they are not interested in taking a shelter bed (needs assessment), listen to their reasoning, and work to make adjustments based on this feedback. Looking at ways to make shelters more trauma-informed, examining curfew and personal belonging policies, bed lottery systems and staff attitudes and approaches are all critical. As I mentioned previously, having a social work staff at the shelter who is able to go out and make connections with those in the encampments and encourage them around taking a tour or having

a trial night at the shelter would be key. Relationships can make all the difference and having connections with the shelter staff doing the outreach can be a deciding factor in getting someone in. I have seen this first hand in my years of work. Again, ideally more affordable and supported housing options would make it possible for individuals to bypass emergency shelter and move right into housing from the streets. However, with the limited housing opportunities right now, making shelters more appealing and accessible is key.

5. Cooperation in community - I think it's important for all community providers to approach conversations and meetings on this topic with a level of understanding and compassion rather than competition and criticism. We should all be working for the same cause. Not letting pre-existing rifts or egotism cloud the work.

Thank you sincerely for reading these comments and for your hard work on this important problem in our community!



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

DSA steering Committee Public Comment- Sept 26th, 2023

1 message

sophie garner <sophiegarner13@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 9:40 AM

Hello,

My name is Sophie and I am submitting a public comment for tomorrow's City Council Workshop on Encampment Policy Solutions. Here is my comment:

My name is Sophie and I'm a district 2 resident of Portland repressing the Maine DSA today.

Our unelected city manager, Danielle West, has ordered to use city resources to displace dozens of people, destroying their belongings and leaving them no place to go. Our city's shelters are at capacity almost every single night, and during these sweeps, city staff handed out housing information lists that included housing programs that have years long waiting lists.

This latest "encampment sweep" occurred less than twenty-four hours after three democratically-elected city councilors (the entire Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee) called on the city to halt the evictions while a better plan was developed—a call that was openly rejected by the unelected City Manager Danielle West.

As a Portland resident, I have been horrified by the encampment sweeps that have occurred over the last few months. We are in the midst of a severe housing crisis in Maine, and specifically in Portland, where not only is there a lack of housing, but a lack of affordable housing. I can't understand why our city government chooses to evict people from their homes, instead of working to find viable solutions to help our most vulnerable population of Portland first. There is no place for these people to go, and our city continuously treats our unhoused neighbors as if they aren't human. This is a public health and safety issue, and we should be working to establish solutions before forced evictions, or "sweeps" take place.

That is why today we are presenting a list of demands that have been signed by over 200 residents of Portland. These demands are:

- End all raids on encampments and work with the outreach workers and the social service community on humane solutions.
- Pass a \$50 million housing bond to develop the housing we need.
- Keep those with homes *in* homes by enforcing rent control to ensure tenants are not paying more in rent than they already are, and strengthen the rights of tenant unions to organize on their own behalf.
- Reduce the number of Airbnbs taking much-needed housing off our market.
- Expand Portland's property tax/rent relief program to all ages to make it easier for renters and young families to afford our city.
- Impose a vacancy fee on property that is bank-owned, condemned, or otherwise uninhabited/unused for more than 6 months out of the year to encourage the rehabilitation and development of housing.



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Encampment Policy Solutions

1 message

Rebecca Strauss <rebstr54@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 3:24 PM

Hello Portland City Council,

I appreciate this opportunity to share my thoughts about the encampment situation. I understand how complicated the situation is and I am hopeful we will find an elegant and workable solution.

I find myself torn. As a Portland resident I am appalled that we find ourselves in this situation. I walk around Portland and I have seen people defecating and urinating outside their tents. I have seen a growth in the rat population at my home which is in Bayside not far from a few of the encampments. I am concerned for the health of the people in the tents as well as for the long term health of people who happen to live near encampments. I understand services have been provided and then those services have been destroyed. I would support a situation where there are specific rules that need to be followed for people to live in encampments. If the rules are not followed - there needs to be consequences. Possibly fines, or removal of the folks who can't obey the rules. When I go tenting, I have to comply with rules about sanitation, noise and respecting others' property. Maybe a two tiered system could work. The encampment within Portland City limits and another place further removed for the people who can't comply. I wonder if there might be help available from the State of Maine or the Federal Government for hiring the necessary "policing" of the encampments and for sanitation services and rubbish collection.

These encampments are an eyesore and I believe it does everyone a disservice to continue to call these encampment homeless alternatives. It is clear this has occurred as a direct result of the opioid fiasco. Again, I understand the situation is complicated. It is my hope that help can be offered to anyone who wants to get clean.

I hope this situation can be addressed adequately before winter arrives. Freezing to death is one solution, but certainly a horrible one.

Rebecca Strauss

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Rebecca Strauss, IFS Level 1, CLC
IFS Practitioner & Certified Life Coach
<https://rebeccastrauss.com/>
Portland, Maine
207-233-5147



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Encampment policy solutions

1 message

Ariel Linet <ariel.linet@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Sat, Sep 23, 2023 at 9:16 AM

Hello,

I'm writing to urge you to adopt the recommendations created by Preble Street and other stakeholders:

<https://www.preblestreet.org/2023/09/13/take-action-to-support-our-unsheltered-neighbors/>

I'm a city resident and I don't have the expertise or lived experience to know how to solve this crisis. But I want to support those who do. It's clear to me that we need to be doing something different than sweeping encampments and displacing our unhoused community members from the only makeshift home they have. Please put resources towards these proposals. You'll never please all the people who live in Portland, or who camp out in the comments section of the Press Herald website, but this is the right thing to do. We can make Portland a leader in compassion and creativity. Please seize this opportunity.

Thank you,

Ariel Linet
261 Maine Ave



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

encampment solutions

1 message

Gretchen Greenberg <gretch1949@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 9:19 AM

Mayor and Councilors,
Homelessness is complicated. It seems to me that it is a 4 legged chair with housing, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, and food security.

I am not an expert and cannot offer solutions that experienced case workers can provide, but there are a few thoughts:

- I understood that when the homeless shelter was built, there would be camping on those grounds, where there possibly be less restrictions. Is that still an option?
- Allow small encampments on the grounds of existing housing programs that serve homeless individuals like Logan Place, Florence House, Houston Commons, and Elena's Way. These facilities already have case managers that are trained in working with the homeless population.
- Triage people in most need - families, teens, veterans. This is likely already in place.
- Continue to advocate on the state level for mental health and substance abuse treatment centers. These do not have to be in Portland. Indeed, this is a statewide issue.
- Prioritize services for those who live in and work in Portland. This may be unconstitutional since anyone can choose where they want to live but I am tired of people coming to Portland who are from other communities in the state and neighboring states and having this be Portland's problem.

What is not working are the encampments. They are a public safety hazard for everyone - those who live there and those residents and businesses who live nearby. I do not think the city should allow encampments at all on public property in Portland. Homeless people deserve care and many chances, and they certainly deserve to have their belongings stored if there is a sweep. They deserve time and better notification before an area is cleared out. At the same time, people who live and work in Portland also deserve to feel safe. I know too many people leaving Portland because it doesn't feel safe.

There are no easy answers. I am willing to be part of the solution if solutions are developed.

Gretchen Greenberg
[165 Delaware Court, Portland](#)



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Encampment Workshop

1 message

Greg Gould <greggould1000@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 9:09 AM

Dear Members of the council and city staff,

There are a number of things wrong with the plan to expand the Homeless Services Center (HSC) but I am going to focus on two: The optics of betrayal, and the cruelty of the program

Many residents in District 5 collaborated with city staff, outreach workers, and building developers to construct the wonderful new HSC. Our city councilor voted for this shelter, and its cap on beds, with the apprehensive blessing of the neighborhood. We said yes, we can help people. Now, for the second time in six months, the city manager wants to pass an emergency order nearly tripling the number of beds in the neighborhood. No community consideration or input, just ramming it through an emergency order.

Every community in Maine, across the nation, is going to see this and say "I will never allow even one shelter in my neighborhood". We will never get help or relief. Across the country this will hit the news and there will be a dramatic increase in opposition to shelters. Less will be built. We will never see a shelter in Westbrook. We will never see a shelter in Yarmouth. And I think it's likely towns will start to push back on us placing people anywhere because Portland lies.

Adding bunk beds to the HSC doesn't send a message of compassion, but desperation. It sends a message that any neighborhood who approves even one shelter, will rue that decision. That government officials and outreach workers are liars or incompetent. That no matter how much you give, it's never enough.

My next point is adding 150 beds to the HSC, putting the 200 people staying there at risk, is inhumane. Lowering the barriers to entry? Changing curfews and structure that is actually working for people? That's not caring at all. It's certainly not equitable.

Look at relaxing codes elsewhere to set up smaller emergency shelters throughout the city for the winter. Separate the populations of those who need mental health and rehabilitation services, from those who may need less guidance, putting less strain on spreading out staff. Allow the police to do their job, protecting those who are harmless from those who harm others and the land.

No matter what, the city must start to bolster homeless services staff by offering \$21 throughout the city. If the city can create a very limited state of emergency zone for hazard pay in D5 you can do it anywhere, including encampments.

Even in the heart of winter, only a monster would approve this plan. Harming one vulnerable population to house another is wrong and is the exact opposite of equitable. Adding even one bunk bed to the homeless services center is morally bankrupt. It's a danger to the people staying at the shelter. It's a betrayal to the neighborhood. And it sends a message no one in the city wants to hear: Unity was right.

Thank you
Greg Gould

168 Milton Street



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Encampment workshop

1 message

Carl King <cking78@maine.rr.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 10:15 AM

I am writing in regards to the encampments and the current "hands off" approach that the city is currently taking. I do not disagree that someone should not be arrested for solely being homeless. However, I strongly disagree that being homeless makes you immune to the law.

We have a police department to serve and protect. To enforce laws that are in place to govern human behavior and interactions. Laws are designed to apply to ALL. I believe the current city council prides itself in viewing all people as equal and creating an equitable community. The city cannot continue to turn a blind eye to the open drug use, theft, and assaults occurring at the encampments. The city needs to enforce the same laws to everyone within the city.

I urge this council to engage Police Chief Dubois, the DA, and the Sheriff's department and allow them to do what is needed to restore law and order within Portland. Long time residents are leaving, residents do not feel safe, and they do not feel heard as they bring these issues up over and over with no enforcement taking place.

If this council wants Portland to be an equitable community, it must start by holding everyone accountable for following basic laws and providing a safe community.

Carl King
36 Veranda St
Portland, ME 04103

Sent from my iPhone



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

encampments meeting for this Tuesday the 26th

1 message

FRAN THOMAS <fthomas911a@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 5:52 AM

Awakening

I was in California 5 years ago, enjoying San Francisco, when I took notice that a big front loader was putting trash in a dump truck. I realized quickly that it was a sweeping, My friend said not to get involved, As she knows I can't tolerate people being treated less because they have less. I was left with a heavy heart!

I worked in human service all my life, Mainly with the older population. In my last Job, I was a health care administrator at a psychic geriatric home. Many of the residents lived on the streets at some point in their lives.

About four months ago I started seeing posts about Hope Squad Maine on FB. I thought this was great! I go to Portland often and have seen what seemed to be more homeless people than in the past. I started to notice them more and it was breaking my heart! I started talking to many of my friends and they made many negative remarks about them. The more I read watched TV and saw with my own eyes what was happening in the world, I knew I had to get involved. I was not sure how but I was getting a calling.

I took a friend to a doctor's appointment and was looking out the window. I saw trucks doing a sweep on the marginal way. I felt sick to my stomach!! It was not long after I found myself crying every time I came to Portland. I kept seeing what Hope Squad was doing and decided the collection that we do at the West End social for people in need should go to Hope Squad Maine. This is how I first got to learn more about them and how committed they are to helping our homeless brothers and sisters.

In communication with Nancy, I felt I wanted to do more, so I did. I went to the sweep at Fore Rivers and boy was I in for an awakening. I found the Hope Squad ambulance and introduced myself. I went for a walk in the camp and was stunned at what I was seeing. People were frantic and trying to get what belongings they could save. Social workers, police, and city workers were everywhere. I will never forget the looks on people's faces as they were being told to move it along, I was pissed!

I was told the bikes would be re-purposed and the city had a trailer for them. I made my way through the camp with some great folks from Hope Squad. They were asking people if they needed help but most were proud and refused. It was thought that the city was going to start sweeping at one end. people were helping each other so they could stay ahead. Well, they were wrong, the city workers were coming in full FULLFORS on both ends. Making it even harder for people to collect their belongings and tents. Some of the police were kind and knew many of the people. The others were not that kind, they were just about pulling people from their tents and saying not to kind things to them. They were trying to demoralize them, I thought to myself how big can you be threatening people because they have to scatter to get their belongings? I was able to help take down two tents and carry a few light things. Hope Squad was moving fast trying to help people. They were using the ambulances to transport people to new locations. Many people were just walking around in a daze not knowing what to do and where to go. Mobile Med came and was told the people who wanted to be seen had to come out of the camp to them. Hell, some of the people were too sick to move. As we were standing around waiting for Matt to come back with the Ambulance. I witnessed a city worker steal a bike. I thought how pathetic, stealing from the homeless, how low can you go?

Someone must have said something to him. He came back and moved his truck over a few spaces, took the bike out of the back of the city truck he was driving, and slammed it into the ground. I heard City workers bullying people. Matt came back to help more people move and was told he could not park it where it was. He and the team had to carry belongings up the road.

I saw where they were having a rally at City Hall in Portland to stop the sweepings. I went and learned a lot about what it is for real, not the crap you see on TV or hear on some streets. I see many people who want to help and who have great ideas. I feel Governor Mills should come and meet with some of the people who are learners for our homeless population. We need real solutions, not bullshit talk with empty promises. I plan on helping with Hope Squad and hope to help make a change at the State level. We need affordable housing, mental health services, more drug rehab, and temporary shelters until affordable housing is available. The state has the capability and must address this immediately. This is a crisis, people never understand how hard it is to be the working poor. we need an awakening in this country and we need it now.

Frances Thomas

9/25/23, 9:54 AM

City of Portland Mail - encampments meeting for this Tuesday the 26th

199 Governor Hill Rd
Eliot, ME 03903
207 752 1814

Staying at 25 Tate St.
Portland Maine 03903

God bless you all! 🙏👉💙

Sent from my iPhone



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Encampments workshop

1 message

'Joan Gildart' via Public Comment <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 10:10 AM

Reply-To: Joan Gildart <gildartjoan@yahoo.com>

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

*Thank you to our city staff for the extraordinary job they are doing in trying to keep all the known and hidden encampments clean and safe while balancing the needs and expectations of Portland's residents, businesses and visitors. Thank you!

*We are not confident increasing capacity at our homeless shelters or wrap around services is a positive solution. Encampments on public trails, parks and green spaces are illegal and our city is already overwhelmed. Portland has reached its limit and is rapidly heading to crisis status. It's way beyond time for our state government and leaders and those in surrounding communities to step up to their responsibilities regarding the unhoused. This is not solely Portland's problem and the more our city takes on; the more state and local municipalities ignore or defer aid for the homeless.

Other communities in Cumberland county did not see their parks, green spaces, walking and biking trails turn into unsanitary and unsafe places to enjoy with families this past summer. Their public services were not taking on all the extra hours the encampments required.

This is not about lacking empathy ; it is about the reality of one city and its residents trying to manage everything regarding the homeless population.

Thank you,

Joan Gildart

Roger Gildart

Glenwood Ave. Portland ME

Sent from my iPhone



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Encampments

1 message

Tracy Townsend <tracy.m.townsend@gmail.com>

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 10:46 AM

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Cc: Regina Phillips <rphillips@portlandmaine.gov>

Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for coming together to grapple with the issue of the encampments in the city of Portland. It's my hope that we can begin to address the problem in a creative and meaningful way. Obviously, this is very complicated with no simple solutions. I so appreciate your request for input from community members.

While we have all noticed the significant rise in the encampments and the simultaneous decline in hygiene and general respect for clean space here in Portland, this is not unique to our city. It appears to be a trend in many urban areas throughout the US - a quick google search shows this problem with pretty consistent similarities (stark drug use, lawlessness, and squalor) across the country in urban areas. . My first thought is, what are other cities doing to address these problems creatively and effectively? Can we learn from them? I also wonder what federal resources are available to address the problem?

My sense is that the encampment situation will not be solved with additional beds, though they may be needed for the winter months if shelters have been at capacity. It looks to me like there is a pretty serious epidemic of addiction (and untreated childhood trauma/mental illness) that underlies these encampments. The level of squalor and lawlessness is frankly shocking and something I have never before witnessed despite living in much larger cities. Many of the people around the encampments and panhandling on the streets look like the walking dead and really just don't seem able to function as responsible adults. It would seem that basic hygiene and civil conduct are not even on their radar and that they have completely given up on all but drugs. Just this week, I saw a clothes line strung between two signs, a man standing on a corner with his hands in his pants looking lost and confused, and trash strewn all over the street. I have also noticed piles and piles of bikes and can only guess that they have been stolen and are now being stored at the encampment. A friend told me that she rode her bike through human feces on a public bike path. I have personally witnessed shoplifting in stores where clerks have told me that they have no choice but to let the shoplifter take things. I am positive you're hearing many more examples of this and understand the out of control nature of the situation,

While I do not advocate enabling drug addiction or making Portland an appealing place to be for addicts to come to, this problem is very real and seems to only get worse - moving them around obviously does not solve the issue. Rather than pretending that this is simply about homelessness (a separate problem that needs to be addressed with housing and wrap around services, in my opinion), let's call this what it is, a fallout from the opioid epidemic, and try our best to deal with the reality in front of us?

I wonder about putting resources toward some kind of park ranger system where people are held accountable for keeping areas clean and safe. There needs to be bathroom access and trash collection, and rules that are enforced. Is it possible to stop the panhandling and other forms of accessing money for drugs and offer methadone/suboxone treatment within the camps? What do the experts on addiction and recovery suggest? Can we consult with folks in Alanon/NA/AA, Portland Recovery Community, etc.? Allowing illegal behavior is not acceptable - police (or park rangers) need to be empowered to hold people accountable when they break laws like stealing, destroying property, behaving in disorderly ways, etc.

Finally, in my opinion, there has to be a way to slow down the number of refugees coming into Portland until we have the resources to fully support them. Seems to me like we need to have a better handle on this encampment situation and the current unhoused population before we can sustain more refugees/asylum seekers.

I sincerely appreciate the work you are all doing to address this problem and hope you can come up with an elegant way to target the real issues that face Portland and our country.

Tracy

Sent from my iPhone



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Encampments

1 message

Dolores Hogle <deehogle1@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 9:45 AM

Why can't the encampment folks camp behind the shelter on riverside street, they would have the resources that are needed and I'd like to know what the fire chief 's reason for not allowing this to happen if it's a safety issue the folks in tents would have the same safety issue no matter where they are moved to within the city and there is a fire department in the Riverton neighborhood thank you for your time



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

For Sept. 26 Encampment Workshop

1 message

rgraef@gwi.net <rgraef@gwi.net>

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 11:01 AM

To: Publiccomment <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Dear Mayor Snyder and Councilors -

You don't need to be told that the encampments are a continuing crisis for the people living in them and for those residents and businesses in close proximity to them. You also don't need to be told that it is incumbent upon you to do something to effectively address the problems without making them intractable or causing some other harmful or undesirable situation.

Having followed this issue closely over the past year, especially since the establishment of the ECRT, I suggest that you carefully consider adopting some standard protocols, developed by City staff and approved by the City Council, to be used by all community partners in evaluating the circumstances of the individuals in the encampments and getting them into at least transitional secure, safe and sanitary shelter as soon as possible. Organizations that do not follow the protocols, including data gathering, offering shelter and determining reasons for refusal, should be identified and terminated as partners.

As the temperature drops, the process of sending the ECRT to one encampment at a time is inefficient and unfair. Every encampment should be canvassed to establish a list of those individuals who are willing and ready to accept shelter so they can move quickly.

All public parks should be identified as "emphasis areas" where camping, public consumption of alcohol and drugs, and other 'quality of life' misbehaviors are not allowed and those rules are enforced. Any public parks, such as Harbor View Memorial Park, where there are current encampments should have first priority to be resolved and included in the emphasis areas.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication in serving the City of Portland.

Respectfully,

Rosanne Graef
30A Salem Street



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Harborview Park Encampment (The Impacts)

1 message

Steve Morrison <steve@morrisonrealtors.com>

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 9:36 AM

To: Portland Public Comments <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Cc: Danielle West <citymanager@portlandmaine.gov>, Portland City Council <Council@portlandmaine.gov>, Ethan Hipple <Ehipple@portlandmaine.gov>, Alex Marshall <Amarshall@portlandmaine.gov>, Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

All,

Im not sure that you all will have time to read this before the Council meeting, that said, please read it at some point and ACT!

I know this is a very difficult situation for everyone, from the unhoused right to the City Council & Mangers Office.

We own 4 properties, a parking lot, and run a business at 158 Danforth at the head of Tyng Street. All These properties and businesses are within 100 to 200 yards from Harborview Park. Here are some of the tangible impacts since the encampment started:

- I or my property manager are patrolling the grounds & parking lots, for needles, trash, and trespassers, we do this daily.
- The business owners in the buildings are "concerned" and "what can I do about it" is the question I get.
- Some residential tenants are talking about not renewing their leases. These are long term residential tenants , they want out of Portland as they feel unsafe. This is really scary; the reputation of Portland as such a cool and have to be place that took decades to build will vanish quicker than you can imagine. So When I hear this kind of talk from the everyday person ,our cities reputation IS ACTUALLY deteriorating and will never come back to what it was!
- It will cost us thousands of dollars to install security cameras at our properties but i feel that is probably necessary and with the rent control hand cuffs we cant recoup that money in any reasonable length of time, it comes out of our retirement monies, it hurts.
- We have been landlords in Portland and done business here since 1983 and are seriously considering selling all and leaving. We are not the kind of stable individuals and long time business owners you want to lose and we don't want to go, that said, we may be forced to!

Thank you for your time and consideration.....please ACT quickly.

Steve Morrison - Owner/Broker
steve@morrisonrealtors.com

Morrison Real Estate
 158 Danforth Street
 Portland, ME 04102

C 207-671-2523
 O 207-879-0303 x101
 F 207-780-1137

Thank You

Steve Morrison - Owner/Broker
steve@morrisonrealtors.com

Morrison Real Estate
158 Danforth Street
Portland, ME 04102

C 207-671-2523
O 207-879-0303 x101
F 207-780-1137



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Homeless at Dougherty Field area

1 message

Rachel W. <w89545891@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 7:59 AM

There have been just a couple peaceful tents all summer. After the Fore River was cleared out, it's become unruly here. 24/7 shouting, daily visits to our outdoor hose, sometimes they don't turn it off. Trash building up. Concerned for my child.

Where is the camp located?

Exit 5b, Congress/Douglass/Dougherty Field trail



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Homeless encampment plans

1 message

'Kathy Buxton' via Public Comment <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 11:41 AM

Reply-To: Kathy Buxton <kbuxton21@yahoo.com>

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov, council@portlandmaine.gov

Dear Mayor, City Manager, City Council,

My name is Kathy Buxton and I live on Lane Avenue in the Riverton neighborhood of Portland. I want to start by recognizing the crisis we have in our City. One that I would say our elected officials over the last 25 years have had a hand in creating. None the less we are here, where people are living on the streets. Some of those with mental illness, others with substance use disorders, loss of income, loss of homes due to money or circumstance and others by choice. Although you may disagree with the later I have spoken to people on the street and yes, for varies reasons they are making a choice to make the streets their home.

While I agree that no one wants to see people living on the streets, especially as we approach cold weather I do believe we can't save everyone. When say "we" I mean the City of Portland. This crisis exists throughout the state and for that matter the country. "We" do not have enough money or resources. "We" need help from the other local, state and federal agencies.

I have been to the encampments, the amount of lawlessness is sickening. Drug use is broad daylight, they aren't even trying to be discreet. The amount of stolen property amasses, with no accountability. People being bullied, harassed and attacked. Trash everywhere with total disregard for others. This type of behavior should not be tolerated. The police are not doing their jobs because they believe their hands are tied. Thus creating a mindset of a certain population that they are untouchable. The city is being taken advantage of and it has to stop. Not having a home is not license to do whatever you want without consequences. None of you would allow the types of things occurring in these encampments to happen at your homes. We all grew up with rules and consequences this is how we have a mostly civil society.

The new HSC is doing great work at its new location. The clients are happy, morale is higher than it ever was at Oxford Street. There is hope. The staff is great and are working tirelessly to ensure that the HSC is a good neighbor to the Riverton community. There are 208 beds filled every night. There are rules. The guests are expected to follow those rules and they do or face consequences. It's working. Now you want to add 150 more beds? Where will the additional staff come from? Will the need for space force community partners out of the facility? How many people in one space is to many?

The HSC is not a low barrier shelter, the majority of people in the encampments desire a low barrier shelter. Combining the population of guests currently at the shelter with those that seek less accountability is a recipe for disaster. Many of the guests at HSC are there to get away from the trauma and substance use in the encampments. Please, I implore you not to combine the two. A low barrier shelter in Riverton is NOT the answer.

Ultimately, transitional and permanent housing is needed. I'm not sure how as a community/society we get there, I admit I don't have the answers. I have been a supporter of using hotels. At least there is individual space and security and allows for people to have a sense of independence and getting back on their feet.

I know from personally speaking with many of the human beings at Marginal Way, they do not want to come "all the way" out to Riverton. Is there a need for a low barrier shelter? Yes, there is. Should that be in Riverton where we have already have 2 shelters in the mix: 208 beds and 180 beds? I say No. When the HSC moved to Riverton I believe the narrative was that one neighborhood should not bear the brunt of this crisis. At the time that was the Bayside neighborhood. Now, I'm telling you it's Riverton. Please, look for other opportunities to have a low barrier shelter. I know that "the clock is ticking" on the arrival of winter. But we have a lot of very smart and creative minds working on this issue, there must be another solution. The solution might not be as easy as adding bunk beds to the HSC and walking away. It's going to take more work but ultimately it's the right thing to do for our homeless and our neighborhoods.

Thank you
Kathy Buxton
[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

homeless encampments

1 message

Jo Coyne <jocoyne@zwi.net>

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 9:52 AM

Reply-To: jocoyne@zwi.net

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Cc: Pious Ali <pali@portlandmaine.gov>, Mark Dion <mdion@portlandmaine.gov>, April Fournier <afournier@portlandmaine.gov>, Victoria Pelletier <vpelletier@portlandmaine.gov>, Regina Phillips <rphillips@portlandmaine.gov>, Roberto Rodriguez <rrodriguez@portlandmaine.gov>, Kate Snyder <ksnyder@portlandmaine.gov>, Anna Trevorow <atrevorow@portlandmaine.gov>, Andrew Zarro <azarro@portlandmaine.gov>, Danielle West <citymanager@portlandmaine.gov>

I am horrified by what is happening to our city.

Despite the best intentions of Health and Human Services, the number of tents in Portland's parks and other public spaces has more than doubled from an estimated 110 in early May to 260 in late August. There are now more than 50 tents in Harbor View Park alone, where open drug use and the threat of violence have created conditions so unsafe that even park rangers cannot enter without police escort.

As we all know, many campers struggle with drug addiction, mental illness and/or other serious physiological and emotional challenges. Some simply prefer life in an encampment community where open drug use is the norm and where non-profits provide food, fuel, bedding, clothing, tents, etc. Even after painstaking one-and-one support from the Encampment Crisis Response Team (ECRT), few accept shelter beds when offered. The response to such a refusal should be a firm "good-bye," not a license to continue to camp.

City ordinances prohibiting public camping were suspended more than a year ago because of a Ninth Circuit court ruling that does not even apply to Maine. It is way past time for city officials to stop hiding behind that decision and make it possible for police officers to enforce the law. It's also way past time to follow the lead of other communities in setting up a managed encampment where 24/7 staffing could provide a safe, secure and sober environment for those willing to work toward finding permanent housing.

If councilors prefer to increase the number of beds in the homeless shelter as the city manager has proposed, fine. Let's just not continue to pretend that having illegal encampments spread throughout the city is any less expensive or offensive than providing a central, supervised location of some sort.

I believe it is possible for city officials to develop workable solutions that balance compassion for unhoused individuals with the health and well-being of our citizenry as a whole. Please, let's get on with it.



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Homeless Encampments

1 message

David Kreisler <dkreisler97@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 7:37 PM

To the City Council:

I hope Portland will reconsider it's current policy of encampment sweeps. The practice is clearly ineffectual--predictably so--forcing the most vulnerable members of our community to move to another spot and wait for the next sweep. Please consider lowering the barriers at the Homeless Service Center so that it may better serve the people it was intended to serve. Portland's homeless need more comprehensive services, including medical services, case management services and most of all housing.

Thank you,
David Kreisler
office at
[482 Congress St.](#)
[Portland](#)



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Homeless expansion in District 5

1 message

Laura Grattan <lauracgrattan@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Sat, Sep 23, 2023 at 10:58 AM

Please consider alternative areas outside of the Riverton area. We have very limited service in the area and we have a large elementary school near the proposed sites. This creates concerns that have not been addressed. How will you ensure our children are safe, playgrounds clean and no offenders (violent or sexual) are within walking distance to the school? By increasing the number of homeless in the area and placing them closer to our school, we are asking for issues rather than solving for them. Please address for me the steps that will be taken to secure the safety of our children and schools. Please share with me more information about how we will reduce the homeless population by moving them away from services, by placing them in an area with limited housing (few apartments and affordable homes), and limited entry level jobs. Please consider smaller shelters near services and 20 miles or more from our schools. We need to keep Talbot safe for all (especially those children with disabilities or special needs).

Laura Gormley



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Homeless shelter expansion

1 message

Davi Smitti <smitti79@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov
Cc: Steve Campbell <SCampbell@aami.org>

Wed, Sep 20, 2023 at 1:37 PM

Dear city council members,

Please expand services at the homeless shelter. The tent cities are out of control.

You said that you would only allow tenting when there were no beds available in shelters. This has not been the case.

Allowing camping in places that were not designed as campgrounds is unsanitary and unhealthy. With the number of uncapped needles that are left laying around, it is unsafe for the homeless as well as we neighbors (including children and pets!) who would like to utilize our parks without fear or threat to our own health!

Please expand services at the emergency shelter, and only allow tent camping on the grounds right there, adjacent to all of the services which are already being provided. That would provide access to water for washing, to bathroom facilities, and presumably to the other services that are so desperately needed by many of our unhoused population.

Living adjacent to Harborview Park, I now look out my windows before I leave the house, to see if I need to call the police before I leave. There are many individuals who make me and many others feel unsafe leaving our own driveways!

While we understand that there are people who feel that clearing the camps is not a good thing, I doubt they are living with the major disruptions in the everyday life of we who live adjacent to one of these encampments.

Sincerely,

David and Elizabeth Smith
[24 Brackett Street](#)
[Portland](#)



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

homeless

1 message

dan grover <dgrover2@maine.rr.com>

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 1:25 PM

Reply-To: dan grover <dgrover2@maine.rr.com>

To: "publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov" <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

One of many reasons homeless people don't go to homeless shelters is lack of privacy. Privacy is an important "personal right". "I need a personal space" to protect my belongings because without a personal space I am nothing. Maybe instead of wide-open spaces in a shelter people need a little seclusion; temp partitions?

Packing more people in a wide open space is not the answer. Otherwise homeless encampments are going to pop-up as long as people are losing their housing

-Dan. future homeless?



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Homeless

1 message

Jacquie Delano <jacquiedelano@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Thu, Sep 21, 2023 at 7:39 AM

This is not a not in my backyard statement. But enough is enough. We do not need more homeless or any encampments in the Riverton area. We have lots of children and an elementary school in easy walking distance. Exposing these unsupervised people with known mental health and addiction problems doesn't even make sense. Plus another group of immigrants that are also being housed in the Riverton area. Enough is enough. Spread everyone around. This is exactly what we were told would not happen when the City voted to put the Homeless Shelter in this area!!!

Jacqueline Delano
111 Beverly Street

Sent from my iPhone



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

HSC

'Stephanie Neuts' via Public Comment <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 11:53 AM

Reply-To: Stephanie Neuts <sfneuts@icloud.com>

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Good Morning

I just wanted to voice my concern with the possibility of adding folks from the encampments to the HSC

When I started working on the homeless initiative myself and with several others, there were about 15-20 folks who had been homeless at one time. Their concerns of a large shelter were the following ...

Respecting that some had been trafficked, some were trying to stay straight and not be in the same living quarters as people using, and setting themselves a goal of being rehoused in a safe "state of the art" building with wrap around services for people who wanted to and could be successful in their transition. Although most wanted smaller shelters we all understood there was a vote that would take place and we would all move on and hope for the best. There were three choices on that ballot

Small scattered shelters

A shelter with a max of 209

A shelter of 150 that would house a larger number in times of need.

I realize nobody knew at the time (though it had started to some degree), that the city would be accepting hundreds of asylum seekers. That being said, it happened and the city of Portland is now paying for temporary housing in other towns and many are at the HSC. So along comes the 160 bed shelter on Riverside Industrial Parkway. Nobody was given a choice to accept or deny this, it was once again an emergency and it was happening. I understand and I may be somewhat incorrect in my full understanding but I believe it to be fairly accurate... but this is also to be used for any unsheltered guest upon empty beds, asylum person or not. I personally accept these demands from the city, to Riverton. However, I am appalled at the thought that now after the city of Portland tax payers (and non taxpayers whose demands seem to be better received or so it seems) voted on option B less than three years ago, that all anybody has to say is "it's an emergency" and those carrying the largest number of homeless guests, seem to be able to carry more. And that those who use, throw trash on the ground, steal from a business owner in the Oaks with zero consequences, and others, use the facilities on the ground and not port a potties, assault people latest on commercial street, etc are going to be given the use of the "state of the art" HSC in bunk beds next to people with mental health issues who are trying and who use the services appropriately. That Riverton, the community in which I live, is the adhesive part of a temporary bandaid. It should not matter we have the zoning you all need. It is wrong for our community, it is wrong for people trying to start over, and it is wrong for the people of Portland who voted for a shelter of 209.

One community I will use as an example is Nasons Corner and the the second is Libbytown. The Libbytown area around the jail has housing for many in need but both of the communities have said, thank god it's not us. Thank god we are not on their plan. One person I have worked with in the past, Damon has said, via text, what it happening to Riverton is pretty unfair. I am not sure what North Deering, Stroudwater, the West end, or Nasons Corner does exactly in numbers except be thankful they have money to fight for less services in their area. Riverton pulled it together accepted its responsibility and is now faced with "state of emergencies" and little by little there is more theft, more trash, and more emergency calls... why because we have the HSC and the right zoning.

One councilor had mentioned the wealthy condo owners on the hill do not want to see the encampments. We now have another encampment behind a neighbor off Lexington. The other day they refused to let community members walk by with their dogs on the Portland trails. When the encampments have all been forced here because that's what will happen when this "state of emergency" ends and these folks or most of them are back on the streets, will the Riverton community have the clout to call and complain...

Maines GA allows all to come. Maybe they can put a state of emergency on that and stop the influx until solutions have been met and the numbers even out.

I called Father Bills last week. No encampment folks in their shelters and when the HSC was being voted on, their policies mattered. I guess only things matter when it benefits the vote council wants to hear.

I see the rallies on the street from the asylum folks and most recently from those wanting encampments to stay. What about Riverton!! What about people who were trafficked, what about a location as before that was undisclosed so people in other neighborhoods had to share the services equally throughout the city of Portland as it mission statements reads?

I ask you all rethink this emergency situation at the HSC. It is wrong for so many reasons but especially because of the vote on 11/2021 and those who need not to be sleeping in a facility built with on recommendations for success and rules that clearly those looking to be moved (for a period if time), will not follow.

Then what

Thank you
Stephanie Neuts
Stephanie Neuts

Sent from my iPhone



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

Terry Sutton <tasutt@gmail.com>

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 9:16 AM

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

To the City Council:

I am a resident of Portland. I live at 113 Newbury St. We are only a block away from The Milestone Shelter so I am very aware of the state of the unhoused in my neighborhood. I am writing to express my support for delaying the sweeps of the encampments until the new shelter at Riverside is open and available. We've seen that the sweeps just shift the public health concerns of an encampment to a different location without providing real solutions. We would also like to express support for lowering the barriers at the HSC so that more of the unhoused are willing to shelter in that space.

Lower the barriers at the City's Homeless Services Center (HSC): By successfully addressing the operational issues raised by the people the shelter is intended to serve - including curfews, all gender dorms, nighttime lighting, and shuttle services - the City will ensure that those most in need of shelter can utilize it. Making operational changes at the HSC and adding new resources, including health care, case management, shelter, and housing will make a real impact and decrease the number of people in the encampments.

Delay any future sweeps until at least one week after the new Riverside shelter opens around

Thanksgiving: Right now, there are more than 220 tents throughout the City of Portland. By waiting until after the 179 bed Riverside shelter is open, we will better be able to meet the needs of the people who are unsheltered in Portland.

I hope you take a different approach to this crisis and adapt the strategy to be more humane and effective.

Sincerely,
Terry Sutton
Michael Reali



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

laurabrodin <laura.brodin@gmail.com>

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 8:52 PM

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Hello,

I am writing to you on behalf of my unsheltered neighbors here in Portland, and I implore you to stop the sweeps.

Destroying these sites are bringing harm to our most vulnerable neighbors. The City of Portland needs to lower barriers to shelter, decrease the need for tents, and absolutely stop plowing down unhoused people's tents and possessions.

Sincerely,

Laura Brodin

25 Parsons Road



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

Nancy Nickerson <nannickers@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 10:34 AM

Esteemed City Council members:

As a longtime Portland resident and taxpayer, I am deeply concerned about the worsening crisis of homelessness in our city. I have read about the sweeps of encampments, and I fear the result will be encampments popping up in alternative locations. I know Preble Street Resource Center staff are asking for changes that may represent a more compassionate and effective response to this problem, and I ask that you consider these.

Please lower the barriers at the City's Homeless Services Center (HSC): By successfully addressing the operational issues raised by the people the shelter is intended to serve - including curfews, all gender dorms, nighttime lighting, and shuttle services - the City will ensure that those most in need of shelter can utilize it. Making operational changes at the HSC and adding new resources, including health care, case management, shelter, and housing will make a real impact and decrease the number of people in the encampments.

Please delay any future sweeps until at least one week after the new Riverside shelter opens around Thanksgiving: Right now, there are more than 220 tents throughout the City of Portland. By waiting until after the 179 bed Riverside shelter is open, we will better be able to meet the needs of the people who are unsheltered in Portland.

Thank you for your work on behalf of all the citizens of our city, and for your attention to this urgent matter.

Nancy Nickerson



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

Kaleigh Schaal <kaleigh.schaal@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Sat, Sep 23, 2023 at 11:22 PM

- **Lower the barriers at the City's Homeless Services Center (HSC):** By successfully addressing the operational issues raised by the people the shelter is intended to serve – including curfews, all gender dorms, nighttime lighting, and shuttle services – the City will ensure that those most in need of shelter can utilize it. Making operational changes at the HSC and adding new resources, including health care, case management, shelter, and housing will make a real impact and decrease the number of people in the encampments.
- **Delay any future sweeps until at least one week after the new Riverside shelter opens around Thanksgiving:** Right now, there are more than 220 tents throughout the City of Portland. By waiting until after the 179 bed Riverside shelter is open, we will better be able to meet the needs of the people who are unsheltered in Portland.



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

Darlene Hersom <somturtle76@gmail.com>

Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 5:54 PM

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Good evening,

Stop the sweeps and lower shelter barriers. These tactics do not help anyone, rather, they only shift the problems and endanger the welfare of many people while putting up more barriers. It is inhumane treatment of the city's residents whom deserve fair treatment and assistance. This is not a solution!



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

Kathryn Price <kathryndprice@outlook.com>

Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 1:57 PM

To: "publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov" <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Hello,

I'm emailing as a Portland resident and absolutely insist the city stop the sweeps on unhoused encampments. It is embarrassing and egregious that the city has made it illegal to be unhoused meanwhile housing costs are so expensive.

Lower the shelter barriers and stop the sweeps.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Price



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

Linda MacDougall <linda.macdougall@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 1:25 PM

I am a long time volunteer @ Preble and retired PSYCH NP.

I hope that you delay any further encampment sweeps. I understand why these living situations are less than ideal for residents and members of the community. However move from one camp grd to another seems pointless.

I hope you will consider reassessing this practice until new shelter is online.

Thanks for your time and the work you do.

Linda D MacDougall
18 Deacon Rd
Yarmouth



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

Jill Guyot <candjguyot@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 1:05 PM

Please, Please do not sweep out the homeless encampments until you find a place for them all to go.

This is so awful for them to experience.

I volunteer at the Prebble Street Receiving Center organizing clothing donations, and it just breaks my heart to hear how horrible these sweeps affect the homeless.

There are abandoned buildings in Portland not used for anything now, why not let them camp out there until you can find a place for them to stay. And why not supply

port-a potty's and garbage disposal resources for them!

Thank you for listening to everyone who really cares about this problem.

Jill Guyot



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

'Jackie Moreau' via Public Comment <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 11:03 AM

Reply-To: Jackie Moreau <moreauann@ymail.com>

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Do what is best and recommended. Sr Jackie Moreau

Sent from my iPad



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

'Carol Hayden' via Public Comment <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 10:04 AM

Reply-To: Carol Hayden <sfocph@aol.com>

To: "publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov" <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Please tell me where these people are supposed to go. If you won't help them, at least don't harm them. Winter is coming. Please do the right thing, arrange for housing options, more sites for those who resist shelters. And porta potties. Seriously. Bathrooms are humane.



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

'Marion' via Public Comment <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 9:12 AM

Reply-To: Marion <marion_klickstein@yahoo.com>

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

As a concerned Maine resident I urge you to give dignity to the unsheltered and to post pone any more massive sweeps until after the Riverside Shelter's beds are available.

It is disruptive and chaotic and insulting to keep moving these unsheltered people to different places where it is very hard for them to access healthcare, case management and help in the housing crisis –

Thank you for this consideration for our unhoused community – marion klickstein

Sent from my iPad



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

Colin Vettier <colin.vettier@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Thu, Sep 21, 2023 at 5:49 PM

Hello,

As a Portland resident, I am heartbroken to see how we treat our unsheltered neighbor. Sweeps have never been a solution, and it only displaces people and further us from an actual solution to the underlying issue. How many more sweeps before we can collectively recognize that this is not a solution. It's just sweeping the proverbial dust under the carpet.

To truly resolve this crisis before the cold of winter, I ask our elected and non elected official to follow the recommendation of Preble Street:

- **Lower the barriers at the City's Homeless Services Center (HSC):** By successfully addressing the operational issues raised by the people the shelter is intended to serve - including curfews, all gender dorms, nighttime lighting, and shuttle services - the City will ensure that those most in need of shelter can utilize it. Making operational changes at the HSC and adding new resources, including health care, case management, shelter, and housing will make a real impact and decrease the number of people in the encampments.
- **Delay any future sweeps until at least one week after the new Riverside shelter opens around Thanksgiving:** Right now, there are more than 220 tents throughout the City of Portland. By waiting until after the 179 bed Riverside shelter is open, we will better be able to meet the needs of the people who are unsheltered in Portland.

I hope that together, we will be able to find the intellectual honesty to recognize that it is time to explore actual solutions to the unsheltered homelessness crisis.

Kindly,

Colin VETTIER

[Linkedin](#) - [iMDB](#)



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

Katie Rutherford she/her <krutherford@peabodycenter.org>
To: "publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov" <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Thu, Sep 21, 2023 at 5:23 PM

Members of the Portland City Council,

We stand with Preble Street in calling for reduced barriers at the Homeless Services Center and delaying sweeps until after the Riverside shelter opens.

As a provider of housing assistance and comprehensive services for people living with HIV/AIDS, we see the success and positive health outcomes that can be achieved when stable housing and shelter are in place. More and more people are left with no options as the shortage of affordable housing worsens; further threatening the health and well-being of our neighbors.

Shelter and housing first is critical to establishing a safe environment and opportunity for linkage to care, further services, education and employment. Especially as winter approaches, we need to provide compassionate solutions that will lead to stable housing.

Respectfully,

Katie Rutherford | Executive Director

pronouns: she, her, hers

FRANNIE PEABODY
CENTER
Comprehensive HIV & AIDS Services

30 Danforth St. Suite 309, Portland, Maine 04101

P: 207.619.8013 | krutherford@peabodycenter.org



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Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

Barbara Rich <rich@maine.edu>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Thu, Sep 21, 2023 at 3:57 PM

Please stop this sweep madness! It just shuffles the unhoused from one place to another. I am embarrassed at the views of our city with tent encampments everywhere. We should be better than this.



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Lower Shelter Barriers and Stop the Sweeps

1 message

Sophie Richards <richards.sophia.c@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Sat, Sep 23, 2023 at 4:28 PM

Emailing in support of the efforts to:

- **Lower the barriers at the City's Homeless Services Center (HSC):** By successfully addressing the operational issues raised by the people the shelter is intended to serve – including curfews, all gender dorms, nighttime lighting, and shuttle services – the City will ensure that those most in need of shelter can utilize it. Making operational changes at the HSC and adding new resources, including health care, case management, shelter, and housing will make a real impact and decrease the number of people in the encampments.
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Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

lowering barriers for the HSC and delaying sweeps

1 message

Solstice Psychotherapy <areedlcsw@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 8:13 AM

Hi there!

I am emailing you regarding the unhoused population in Portland.

I am asking you to lower the barriers at the City's Homeless Services Center (HSC) by: successfully addressing the operational issues raised by the people the shelter is intended to serve – including curfews, all gender dorms, nighttime lighting, and shuttle services – the City will ensure that those most in need of shelter can utilize it. Making operational changes at the HSC and adding new resources, including health care, case management, shelter, and housing will make a real impact and decrease the number of people in the encampments.

I'd also like you to delay any future sweeps until at least one week after the new Riverside shelter opens around Thanksgiving: Right now, there are more than 220 tents throughout the City of Portland. By waiting until after the 179 bed Riverside shelter is open, we will better be able to meet the needs of the people who are unsheltered in Portland.

Warmly,
Anmarie Reed, LCSW

--

Solstice Psychotherapy, LLC

Anmarie Reed, LCSW, CCS
(she/her/hers)

T: 978-254-1775

F: 207-230-6044

Website: www.solstice-psychotherapy.com

Client Portal: <https://areedlcsw.clientsecure.me>

Please send any emails with protected health information (PHI) to: solstice-psych@protonmail.com

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Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

OPPOSE the City Manager's Emergency Order re: Homeless Services Center beds1 message

Judy Micoleau <judymicoleau299@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov
Cc: Marcella Makinen <marcymakinen@yahoo.com>

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 1:49 PM

Dear Portland City Council members:

Please OPPOSE the City Manager's emergency order which seeks to increase the capacity of the Homeless Services Center by adding more bunk beds. This sounds like band-aiding to me and doesn't address the insufficient transportation issues to the shelter, insufficient staff (68% increase in beds, but only 40% increase in staff?!) It also seems to me that this issue should be in the hands of the Health and Human Services Committee whose members are trained in the areas needed to best address issues of homelessness.

Furthermore, please STOP the encampment sweeps until a better solution than the above is identified! People in the encampments have a sense of community. They are also nearer to services. In this interim period provide them with more portable toilets, ways to wash, trash bins, etc. I address you as a 45 year homeowner in Portland, wishing to add my tax dollars to assist the unhoused, and as a 45 year long member of First Parish in Portland Unitarian Universalist Church. We are a faith community of caring with a strong commitment to help and support those less fortunate than we.

I hope the City Council will act responsibly on this urgent matter.

Thank you.

Judy Micoleau
38 Coyle Street
Portland 04101



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Please lower shelter barriers and stop sweeping encampments

1 message

Jennifer Tibbals <jldoherty84@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Thu, Sep 21, 2023 at 3:50 PM

Hello,

I am unable to attend Tuesday's meeting but ask that you please stop sweeping encampments, at least until after the new Riverside shelter opens.

I also ask that you listen to the experts on homeless services and work on implementing the recommendations laid forth by Preble Street last week, particularly by lowering the barriers to the HSC (especially the curfew) and increasing the social work and case management services available there.

Thanks,
Jen

--
Jen Tibbals



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Policy Solutions Related to Encampments

1 message

Amy Bergen <bergen.amy@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 11:07 AM

Dear City Council members,

As a resident of Portland, I strongly encourage you to approve increased shelter and wrap-around services for people experiencing homelessness in the city -- as many services as possible and as many shelters as possible. There's no excuse for anyone to lack housing, food, or utilities here; there is plenty of wealth and plenty of space. Encampments are, essentially, people's homes. I love Portland so much but if you kicked me out of my home without a (better, upgraded) space ready, I'd be livid and I'd leave the city and tell everyone I know to follow me out. Take care of your people, please. Thanks -Amy

--

There is calmness to a life lived in gratitude, a quiet joy. - Ralph H. Blum



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Portland Encampments/ Riverton Homeless Shelters1 message

'janice shannon' via Public Comment <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Sat, Sep 23, 2023 at 1:02 PM

Reply-To: janice shannon <janishannon@icloud.com>

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Hello,

We have lived in the Riverton community for 40+ yrs. First, we'd like to give a plug to Mark Dion and his mayoral quest. He has been our councilor for this district and gave a gallant attempt to dissuade opinion for the current location of the city's Homeless Shelters here.

We believe that tenting in the Northeast corridor of our country is inhumane in the winter months. If our city is deemed a sanctuary city, doesn't that require the state to step in with any necessary funds to help with the solutions to resolve this crisis? One possible solution, as we see it, would be to set up small dwellings (mini homes) for these people with portable toilets out by the 151 Airport Blvd, Portland, ME where they should be able to get the services from MHHS division directly. Milestone will be relocating to that area soon and could provide some much needed recovery services as well. It is time for another district to step up and help out with a different location for the growing homeless populations arriving daily. Adding extra beds to a brand new facility that is just getting started doesn't seem like a good idea to us.

Please give this concern your consideration.

Thank you

Charles & Janice Shannon

30 Dayton Street

Portland, ME. 04103

207-318-4950

Sent from my iPad



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Portland Encampments/ Riverton Homeless Shelters

'janice shannon' via Public Comment <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Sat, Sep 23, 2023 at 1:02 PM

Reply-To: janice shannon <janishannon@icloud.com>

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

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We believe that tenting in the Northeast corridor of our country is inhumane in the winter months. If our city is deemed a sanctuary city, doesn't that require the state to step in with any necessary funds to help with the solutions to resolve this crisis? One possible solution, as we see it, would be to set up small dwellings (mini homes) for these people with portable toilets out by the 151 Airport Blvd, Portland, ME where they should be able to get the services from MHHS division directly. Milestone will be relocating to that area soon and could provide some much needed recovery services as well. It is time for another district to step up and help out with a different location for the growing homeless populations arriving daily. Adding extra beds to a brand new facility that is just getting started doesn't seem like a good idea to us.

Please give this concern your consideration.

Thank you

Charles & Janice Shannon

30 Dayton Street

Portland, ME. 04103

207-318-4950

Sent from my iPad



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Portland's unhoused population

1 message

Jill Osgood <osgood.jill@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 11:24 AM

September 24, 2023

Members of the City Council and Portland City Representatives;

My name is Jill Osgood and I live at [41 Brackett Street](#) with my partner John Clark, and our dog Chloe. I am an artist and an educator teaching integrated arts to Portland school children via the non profit Side x Side. I have lived on the west end of Portland since September of 1980, when I moved here to attend the Portland School of Art.

I am writing to urge you to do something immediately about the unhoused encampment in Harborview Park. We take our dog to the park twice daily year round, and have watched the tents increase from one stalwart soul who stayed through last winter (with multiple propane gas tanks outside his tent,) to the large number it is today, September 24. I don't even know how many there are, but I can see upwards of 15 from the top of the park.

However, I am not here to deride the inhabitants of these encampments. I am not here to blame them and claim that they refuse spaces in shelters and prefer to live outside in the elements. What I do know is that neither shelters nor these tent cities are safe nor sustainable for these people. Violence and sexual abuse and trafficking are prevalent. My partner and I had to verbally stop a man from beating a woman, just because she wanted to leave the tent with her belongings. This is not a blame game.

I don't know the answer, but I am sick to my stomach of seeing huge new hotels and multi million dollar condominiums pop up every five minutes in every corner of our city. As a young woman in my twenties, living, going to college, and working in Portland was truly a wonderful life. I could afford to rent a decent apartment. This is no longer the case.

We need truly affordable housing with support services NOW, not more hotels and ultra high end condos. The only way to give these people the help, support, and respect they need is to provide housing. Winter is coming and they cannot stay in the park.

Regards,
Jill Osgood
[41 Brackett Street](#)
[Portland, Maine](#)



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Proposal to Increase Homeless Services Center Capacity by Emergency Order

1 message

Selby Beebe-Lawson <selby@marysward.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 10:12 AM

Council Members:

Should the Homeless Services Center capacity be increased by emergency Order? Certainly yes.

In addition, it is time to abandon myopic vision and start forward thinking about housing people. Realizing that climate refugees, asylum seekers, and the chronically and newly unhoused are increasing in numbers, let us stop playing catch up and really think outside the box.

For example, the City of Portland recently announced the acquisition of the 24-acre parcel, which will be North Deering Park, boasting that this helps Portland draw closer to the goal of having green space within a ten-minute walk of all Portland residents' homes. How about a goal of having all Portland residents housed in a home from which they can take a ten-minute walk to green space? Portland's Parks and Recreation website boasts of 1000+ acres of recreational land. How about allocating just 6% of that, 60 acres, for 1200 .03-acre plots for campsites or tiny home sites?

The world is changing and we need to think in new ways.

Selby Beebe-Lawson, [308 Danforth Street, Portland, ME 04102](#)



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Public Comment - Homeless Encampment council Workshop 9/29

1 message

yak.rustic-0o via Public Comment <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 9:29 AM

Reply-To: yak.rustic-0o@icloud.com

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Dear Council,

Your proposal does not address how you will tackle the encampments in Harbor View Park and the Western Prom. Based on the volume of Portland 311 issues submitted over the past few weeks which include many, many, many examples of how these encampments are a public health and safety hazard - they should be at the top of your agenda.

We understand your approach is to offer housing to the unhoused/ housed people in these encampments, but as your progress reports have shown, the majority of these people do not accept the offer to moved into housing provided by the city. What is your plan to remove people who occupy these encampments and do not accept housing?

You've offered zero status updates in regard to your approach to clear the Western Prom and Harbor View Park encampments. Both of these encampments are in the middle of residential neighborhoods.

Children walk to school by these encampments. Children walk to their friend's houses by these encampments. Children used to be able to play by these encampments.

These encampments are a tragic accident waiting to happen. Let me rephrase, if something tragic happens, it won't be an accident because the citizens have pleaded with this council for weeks to do something about these encampments. It will be your fault.

Listen to your citizens, act for your citizens and communicate with your citizens. We needed you to do something yesterday.



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Public Comment for 9/26 discussion on encampments

1 message

Dana Rice <dStailing22@milestone-recovery.org>

Sat, Sep 23, 2023 at 1:56 PM

To: "publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov" <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

I am working at Milestone on September 26th, therefore, this letter will serve as my public comment. My opinions and reflections are my own and do not represent the organization I work for.

My name is Dana Stailing. I am a registered nurse. I work at Milestone in their detox and I work every Thursday with Milestone's HOME team doing outreach.

There were many harmful comments made against our unhoused community during the workshop on the 14th. There was a lot of back and forth amongst the councilors and the mayor about topics they were clearly not knowledgeable about. I would love to sit down privately and share what is actually happening in the encampments. Having firsthand knowledge on the living situation outside would greatly benefit the goals and interventions of the city. I understand there is a city task force, but from what I have seen and heard, they are not having the same experience as my colleagues and I.

First off, when looking at resolutions, understand the actions made thus far have been harmful and set us back. On September 14th, the city manager kept saying she wants everyone in shelter by the time snow comes. I would love that! But, it's not realistic. The city of Portland always makes these statements and never delivers. You should know that the city is known as unreliable, and when they say something like that, everyone knows it will not happen. The city said that everyone would have adequate options for housing before Fore River was swept. I know many of my clients were not offered shelter. I asked them myself, and many were not asked once. And what was the plan if all 100+ people said yes? Was there a plan to shelter everyone? The city loves to say they offered 170 beds at the HSC. The way it is phrased is very peculiar and reads like propaganda. There were 170 beds offered and 12 taken. There are not 158 open beds like it is interpreted by the average citizen. The shelter is at capacity every single night. They offered 1 or 2 beds 170 TIMES. There are usually ZERO empty beds every night. Please do not add bunk beds to the shelter. It is already noisy and cramped. Doubling beds will only increase the stress on those who stay there. It is not going to make it more desirable to stay by packing them in like sardines. In theory when you have never experienced homelessness, any shelter sounds good. But these are human beings who have standards and deserve dignity and respect. They're choosing to be outside instead of go to the HSC – adding double the beds is not going to improve that. Make the HSC a therapeutic space to be. Take down the barriers. Turn off the lights! More noise machines! It's not difficult to start with small steps to make it feel more like a home than a jail.

On the topic of heating, it appeared no one on city council or the city leadership knew how people were staying warm in the winter. The unhoused population stays warm and doesn't freeze to death because individuals who do outreach gather money through personal GoFundMe accounts and buy propane and heaters. I was told recently that someone in city leadership said the propane tanks are proof they are stealing. Nope. PRIVATE CITIZENS working through PRIVATE DONATIONS are making sure the unhoused don't die. I just wanted to make you aware.

This question was asked many times at the meeting last week, why may someone outside not seek shelter when offered? There are a myriad of reasons. The shelter conditions are very difficult. The lights are kept on ALL NIGHT. It echoes and is very loud. No dogs. No couples. No excess belongings. You have lived for 2 years in a tent and now a shelter bed is available? Great, now pack up all your belongings into a backpack or two and leave the rest behind. **We need to stop expecting human beings to conform to a system that is not working for them and help them in ways that are beneficial to them, not convenient for everyone else.** Sanctioned campgrounds provide stability for those living outside. It makes outreach work that much safer, as we know where our clients are and do not have to search for them after they are displaced by a sweep. Supporting our unhoused neighbors in a sanctioned campground promotes dignity and respect. I would invite the city to explore trauma informed solutions. Setting up showers and port-a-potties is great, but it's all about HOW. Making an area for drinking water and a separate area for showers. Having a small wooden

privacy area for the showers. Setting up port-a-potties at multiple locations in the encampment, just to name a few ideas. Imagine it was you, your child, your brother or sister. These human beings deserve basic amenities that promote dignity.

Mark Dion, I am looking at you. What was said on the 14th was disgusting and inhumane. Dion stated people who use will use "until their INEVITABLE death". Well Mark, I have no idea how THOUSANDS of people are graduating detox each year. Recovery is real, and for you to say all people using substances will inevitably die is ignorant. Its disrespectful to my friends in recovery and myself being sober. We don't all die, it's a disease we RECOVER from. It is people like Mark Dion that spread the misinformation that all people using are violent and dangerous. On the 14th, the police chief said that he wouldn't recommend going near an encampment without a police escort. Well, me and my partner are there all day and I know other outreach workers who go solo. And from what I know from talking to them, no one has felt unsafe. The propaganda that is being pushed makes the public feel that they are living amongst violent criminals, and they're not. They are living among human beings who are down on their luck and deserve compassion. And no, it's not all peaceful all the time. I know violent crimes have occurred at encampments, but that will happen anywhere people are congregated long enough. And its not to an extent that I would ever be hesitant to walk to see my clients. Mark Dion said he was "sandwiched" between two people using IV drugs and he couldn't get away from them. What does that even mean? They were bear hugging you while using? Saying things like this to the public who has no experience with the population is only for propaganda and to create fear.

Last but certainly not least, Mayor Snyder insinuated on the 14th that if we take supports out of the encampments then the people will be more likely to go to the HSC. Because if they get hungry enough, or thirsty enough, they'll conform to her plan of going to the HSC and leave their tents. The HSC that has zero beds at the end of each night?

There was a lot of talk on the 14th about outreach workers making the encampments "sticky". I am happy to make them "sticky". They used this word to describe workers giving them food, water, supplies, and compassion. The city wants to take away any ounce of comfort from our brothers and sisters outside. The HSC is full, as I have stated many times. Their only option right now is to tent. So you can bet me and my team are going to do whatever we can to keep them alive and provide any amount of comfort that we can.

Please consider allowing a sanctioned camping area. It is the only option that is safe and actually possible to achieve in the 2 months before winter.

Thank you,

Dana Stailing

Milestone RN and outreach worker

Danahrice@gmail.com



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Public Comment for 9/26 Session

1 message

Tyra Mazzer <tyrakmazzer@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Wed, Sep 20, 2023 at 2:09 PM

Hello,

I'd like to submit public comment for the 9/26 listening session regarding the city's approach to homelessness in our city and the proposed temporary expansion of the HSC.

We have seen evidence that this massive shelter is not the solution, yet the city keeps pushing it as one. People do not want to go to the shelter for a myriad of reasons, but proximity to downtown (meaning services, banks, post offices, potential employers, etc) is a major factor that cannot be changed via shelter policy, procedure, etc. this neighborhood is not designed to support projects such as this, and it's clear the populations meant to benefit most from it want nothing to do with it. So why does this continue being the solution? Not to mention increasing the bed count would exacerbate many of the concerns/reasons why folks don't want to be there in the first place. How is this the solution?

Don't pretend you need to investigate why the shelter isn't a success when you all know exactly why, and were given valuable, insightful feedback from folks that work closely with that population or are directly impacted themselves before the project was approved, yet chose to ignore it and gerrymander the ballot question so smaller shelters would not pass.

It's time to actually listen to the people impacted by these decisions across the city rather than continue aiming to only please the developers and wealthy homeowners across the city that have sway only because they have deep pockets.

To echo the comments from a fellow concerned neighbor:

Relaxing the rules and tax codes to overcrowd the shelter, and city officials going back on their word, is the nuclear option to manage this emergency. The housing/homeless crisis is actually not an emergency at all, it's the new normal. Homelessness and a lack of housing is an everyday challenge for any city that is gentrified, grows families, provides a strong safety net for residents and non residents, with hundreds of short term rentals and vacation homes. Everything is an emergency when you do not plan ahead and this move does nothing to address the next group of encampments or asylum seekers. District 5 already lacks the emergency services infrastructure to handle the number of individuals at the shelters in place now. Declaring a limited state of emergency in one geographic area is admitting District 5 is out of space to house the homeless. Needing to institute higher pay is the city admitting it cannot staff the shelters. I asked Dena Libner about staffing the new shelter for Asylum Seekers a month ago and after initially denying the city is running that shelter, I still have no answers who is staffing it and what happens if it's understaffed. Here is a list of alternative solutions. These are temporary solutions to be executed for the same exact time frame City Manager West is suggesting relaxing overcrowding and tax code rules for at the 654 Shelter. None of them include allowing encampments. This will also give the city time to come up with other solutions for next summer. 1. Immediately suspend all short term rentals and incentivize owners to participate in the Home Share program by doubling the amount paid. If the effects of the housing crisis subside in the spring, the city can lift the freeze and building owners will get their summer rental money. The city that is willing to change tax codes to house the homeless must step up and open doors to rooms that are so often empty the next 6 months or so. This is the best short term solution to place people into actual homes not shelters, a real housing first solution. 2. Utilize seasonal rentals and hotels, identifying those best suited to make the move into one. Plus renting a home can keep families together. 3. Immediately revisit the list of recommended shelter locations from 2019, that the 654 Shelter was taken from. a. Revisit the Barron Center for housing elderly people. b. Revisit the Cumberland Jail since the housing is temporary and there wouldn't need to be a land swap which was an issue before. 4. Convert community centers to temporary shelters. 5. Build smaller shelters throughout the city now. Eliminate barriers to their development. Temporarily relax space requirements, set backs, traffic studies, sidewalks, height limits, zoning, and other building issues, for every district and not just one. Allow developers to move to the front of the line for permitting and inspections to expedite the process, no matter how it impacts other projects. 6. Immediately institute a \$21 minimum wage throughout Portland for all shelter and homeless outreach workers, city employees or not, to bolster staff throughout the city. In times of crisis good leaders lead. City staff are struggling to find space and solutions. If the city is considering relaxing rules and tax codes, it must apply to all districts, including those with encampments. It is time for councilors to roll up the sleeves and get involved directly. Each councilor received thousands of votes by meeting people, knocking on doors, and going to fundraisers. You have contacts, connections, and donors. Open up your address book, make some calls, look around your district, drive or walk around town. Relaxing rules and tax codes gives the city unprecedented power over where homeless can be housed, With that in mind, I challenge each Councilor to come to the meeting on September 26th with two alternative, viable, ready to go solutions. I specifically challenge Councilors in districts with encampments to present 2

solutions in their own districts. Until March, District 5 had zero shelter beds. Passing a second emergency order in 3 months, fabricating an emergency where there isn't one, and the city going back on its own words, will take Portland from what was supposed to be a shining example of how to manage a housing crisis to a cautionary tale. A national news story about a city manager's failure, and a council's betrayal of residents in a quiet neighborhood to benefit neighborhoods with businesses and short term rentals. The moral of this story, of course, is that Unity was right. Fight with everything you have and never allow even a single shelter in your area. You have 8 days to come up with alternatives. Please do so.

Tyra Mazzer
79 Aldworth Street



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Public Comment on Encampment Policy Solutions

1 message

Samantha Taube <samantha.taube@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Tue, Sep 19, 2023 at 2:03 PM

Hello,

I would like to submit the below public comment. Thank you.

Best,
Samantha Taube
[73 Federal St, Portland, ME 04101](#)

Public Comment:

Hello. My name is Samantha Taube and I am a resident and home owner at [73 Federal Street](#) in Portland. I have been living in Portland for 3+ years. My husband and I moved to Portland because we loved the vibrancy of the community along with the diversity of thought, careers, experiences, and more. Unfortunately, in the time since we have moved here, we have seen a significant decline in public safety which we can directly attribute to the rise and growth of encampments across the city. I now call the Portland Police at least once per week where in the past it was ~1 per month.

Here are just a few examples of what we have experienced (most of which has happened in the last 6 months alone):

- Multiple incidents of trespassing into our backyard even though it is fully fenced in and gated
- Theft of items from our yard (again which is fully gated)
- Defecation on the front of our house
- Indecent exposure on multiple instances in front of or next to our property
- Destruction of property directly in front of our house

I understand that some level of crime or issues come with living in a city but the rise in issues is unprecedented and has made me start to reconsider if Portland is a city I truly want to live in. It is heartbreaking as I love living here but as I expect my first child, I don't want to have to deal with the anxiety and stress that these encampments are causing. I have lived in major cities across the country and never thought about my safety or security more than I do now. I know we often talk about the right to housing for all but it is starting to feel like the feelings/rights of the housed in Portland are being overlooked for the unhoused.

I do believe that we need long-term solutions for more affordable housing but only focusing on those ignores the immediate problems we are facing today. We need action today that eliminates encampments, restores a higher sense of safety to our city, and works quickly to identify additional housing/resource options.

I would like to propose the following:

1. Outlaw camping in the city of Portland period and enforce it. Allowing camping sets a bad precedent and isn't good for anyone.
2. We need to secure and utilize more new housing vouchers from HUD, Maine DHHS, and MaineHousing ASAP to be able to offer more people housing.
3. We need to open a shelter with reduced barriers to entry or change our policies at one of our shelters to better encourage those to seek shelter.
4. We need to ask for financial and housing support from surrounding towns and the state - this is not just Portland's issue to solve.
5. We need stronger action on those individuals found to be committing crimes and living in encampments

Thank you for listening.

--

Samantha Taube
781.492.7076
Samantha.Taube@gmail.com



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Regarding homeless encampment sweeps

1 message

Erin <erinlovesjacksonb@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Tue, Sep 19, 2023 at 5:14 AM

Dear City Council,

I'm hoping to hear back from you soon, regarding my question. Which city councilors are against the homelessness encampment sweeps and are trying to help with the situation, to the best of their ability? And, which members of the city council are pleased with these sweeps?

I was homeless for 5 years and my boyfriend and I finally got an apartment in April of this year. So, I know all too well how it feels to be homeless, and trying to hang onto what little you have left of your possessions. And, some of the things that others, like those clearing the encampments, see as just garbage, may be extremely meaningful to someone. It is painful enough to be treated less than human by letting us sleep outside, in the cold, without enough water or food. It makes you feel like a piece of garbage that others want to sweep under the rug. If you've never been homeless for a good year+, then you wouldn't have a clue about how it feels and affects your mind. It makes you older than you are, because it is not easy to be homeless, as it takes a lot of energy. I have not met a single homeless person that has said they want that life. They always long for a place to live again, not to stay homeless and SEEMINGLY lazy. I know that some homeless are not the greatest of people, because they steal and do lots of illicit drugs, instead of trying to get out of the rut of being homeless. But, the vast majority of homeless folks that I've met, want nothing more than a place of their own. I also don't think you are putting any emphasis on homeless couples. Often times, shelters separate the males and the females, couples or not. And, sometimes you'd rather just stay out in a tent with your significant other, than be separated. Also, what shelter bed are you offering these homeless people from the encampments?! We don't have much for shelter around here, when the asylum seekers are given the most help and they are offered beds first. I've experienced the bias against U.S. born and raised citizens, in the Portland and Greater Portland area. I've never seen anything like it before I moved to Maine from New Hampshire, in February of 2022!!! I am appalled that some of the city officials think asylum seekers deserve more than the actual citizens of this State! It may not be said verbally, but actions do speak louder than words. I would like to know if there is anything I can do to help? I can't help monetarily, but I can be a great inspiration to many and I care about these people, because they ARE PEOPLE. Not trash/garbage, not hopeless, and nobody with a house is any better than any of the homeless. It takes the smallest and sometimes most ridiculous or false reasons, for someone to become homeless. I'm really sickened about the way the city just threw people's things out, when they promised storage. It's like having a house fire. My house burned down when I was 12 years old and my family lost everything. We lost all of our possessions and memories, and that is one of the most painful things to go through. I imagine that is how those that lost items they cared about in the sweep, felt. When you have NOTHING, some of the things that mean nothing to others, can mean a heck of a lot more to the homeless, whom have probably lost most of what they owned when they lost their own place.

I appreciate those of you city councilors that are defending the homeless people and trying to resolve things in a better way. Thank you! And, please let me know if I can help you in any way?

To those on the city council that don't really care, they just want the homeless to be out of sight and out of mind: SHAME ON YOU!! You may be homeless next, so try to do unto others, as you would have them do to you.

Thank you for reading!!

Sincerely,

Erin Carr (603) 534-8489



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Statement on the treatment of unhoused Portland community members

1 message

Resa Redhunt <therese.redhunt@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 10:19 AM

Good morning,

The emotions currently surging in the community of folks who are unhoused in Portland, given the recent encampment sweeps, are those of fear, trauma, confusion, uncertainty, lack of safety, feeling discarded, unwanted, overwhelmed, and cornered with no options. It appears that there is a significant disconnect between the opinions and beliefs of policy makers, and the reality of those who are living outside.

There are numerous reasons why “just accepting a bed” is not an option for folks. To name a few,

- **Safety:** Every individual person defines safety differently, it is not as simple as the dictionary definition being applicable to everyone; think for a moment about your own definition of safety, does it differ from that of the person sitting next to you? I cannot pretend to know or understand the complexities of how a person with a history of living outside in our brutal Maine winters, substance use disorder, trauma, mental illness, and varying life experiences may define their own safety, and neither should our policy makers. Safety when living inside your own home or apartment may look like adequately locking doors; safety for those who are unhoused may look more like a sense of community, and knowing who is sleeping in the tent next to you.
- **Environment:** I have heard directly from several folks who have stayed at the HSC that it feels institutional and prison-like, I have visited myself and can validate these feelings. I can't begin to imagine the re-traumatization experienced by individuals with histories of incarceration and institutionalization when they are left no other options but to stay in a place that evokes memories of some of the worst days of their lives. Additionally, male and female beds are kept separately, and this presents a barrier for heterosexual couples who are accustomed to being with their partner each night.
- **Accessibility:** the HSC is not walking distance to the myriad of important and already established healthcare or support services folks access in the downtown Portland area. The metro prices have returned to higher rates, and catching the shuttle at the predetermined times is not always realistic given appointment times as well as autonomy to live independent lives.
- **Barriers:** The reality is that all shelters in Portland are full each night. Getting a one night bed at Florence House is a race against the clock to be the first person to connect their call exactly at 1pm – impeccable timing and access to a phone are necessary. Milestone is a wet shelter – individuals who are not showing up intoxicated are often turned away, and the space being full of people who are intoxicated is a significant deterrent for those trying to remain sober. In order to receive a bed at the HSC, you must have the organizational skills, resources, and timing to navigate the waitlist process. There are specific times to call; specific details to include; an accessible, working, and charged phone required; and a prompt “hop to it” follow through, in order to not lose your bed to someone else with faster access. These are the realities and barriers we face working with these individuals to support accessing shelter. A real life example: we had an individual in our space and were informed by the PD mental health liaison that there was a female bed available, and to call for that individual. Upon calling (around 10am, the time we are told to call because the number of empty beds for that day will be known) we were told that they didn't know about open beds and to call back after 11am. This individual had other tasks to complete and went on her way to complete them in the meantime. We received a call back roughly 5 minutes later stating that there is a female bed available and to send the client to GA promptly to claim the bed. We asked how long the bed would be held, and did not get a clear answer. This required us to engage in extensive outreach and search around town to locate the client and get her to GA in order to have a bed. Additionally, when putting someone on the waitlist, various team members have asked the question: how long does the waitlist remain effective for? The answers have been both contradictory and confusing: the waitlist remains the same and rolls over to the following day so there is no need to call multiple

days for the same person; the waitlist starts over fresh each morning, so it's important to call every day for the same person; and, concerningly, don't call every day for the same person because they will be banned. These intricacies are frustratingly difficult for us as providers to navigate, nearly impossible for folks independently trying to access a bed.

It bears repeating that the HSC is full every night, with hundreds of individuals sleeping outside still. When beds (infrequently) open up, it is generally not because that individual has accessed stable, permanent housing: it's because they have missed curfew, or cannot safely navigate the environment and have chosen to risk sleeping outside because that feels safer. Maine winters are brutal, what must it say about the available shelter options that some would prefer tenting and risk losing their lives from exposure over the HSC, Milestone, and Florence House? The question we should be asking is not "why won't people accept beds?" see above for just a few of those reasons; but "how can we improve shelter options so that they are more welcoming and safe for unhoused folks to access?" and "how can we create permanent, affordable housing solutions so that our long-term stayers can move into safe, accessible, permanent housing and we can free up space in the always-full shelters for vulnerable or newly unhoused individuals who are desperately seeking shelter?"

It is abundantly clear to those experiencing the reality of living in a tent, and those working closely with that community, that sweeping encampments is not the answer to either of those questions. Until a domino effect of long-term affordable housing solutions and shelter improvements are achieved, encampments will remain a reality in Portland. An important short-term solution is to increase the safety and cleanliness of these encampments with resources and ways to meet basic human needs:

- Dumpsters for disposing of garbage with scheduled emptying dates
- Sharps containers for safe disposal of needles
- Port-a-potties with regular cleaning schedules
- Portable sinks with running water (such as the ones used for concerts at Thompsons Point)
- Access to food and potable water

In solidarity with those experiencing unsheltered homelessness,

Resa Redhunt
24 William St Apt 4
Portland, ME 04103



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Stop the Sweeps!

1 message

bailey100@gwi.net <bailey100@gwi.net>

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 7:20 PM

Reply-To: bailey100@gwi.net

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

We are writing to strongly urge the City of Portland to Stop the Sweeps of the homeless people. Not only is it an inhumane policy it is also clearly a failed policy. These people have nowhere to go so they end up on the streets again. Please work on an actual policy:

1. Stop the sweeps entirely until the new shelter opens in November
2. Monitor and provide help to those currently living in the streets – security so everyone feels safe, counseling, bathroom facilities – if all the Construction sites can have them why not the homeless
3. Examine current shelter policies to see if they need to be adjusted so more people will want to use them.
4. Develop a policy to house this population – vouchers or whatever will help. Right now the City has no policy and it is not as though this problem just developed overnight – it's been building for years.

We are embarrassed at how Portland has chosen to deal with this problem. We understand that the current encampments are not a solution – but until there is a recognition that there is a failed policy in place, nothing will change.

Janice and Ken Bailey

59 Mountfort Street



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Tent strategy

1 message

Ash Salisbury <26Brackett@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 5:07 PM

Dear Councilors,

Thank you for your work addressing this complex challenge. The city's current strategy of whack-a-mole with the unhoused population has been counterproductive, spreading the issue out to more areas and creating a larger problem than if emergency space were thoughtfully allocated while a proper long term solution (housing first, etc.) is implemented. Emergency space should be designated, comprehensive support services provided, and other public spaces maintained for their original intended community use.

The massive increase in tents demands coherent action to protect the unhoused and to balance their needs against the public's need for safety, access to parks and public property, and fiscal responsibility in managing safety, health, and tax expenditures on police calls, city staff time, and other costs of allowing tents to be anywhere and everywhere.

Public treasures are being ruined because of the city's inaction. It is heartbreaking to see children no longer enjoying playgrounds like Tyng street and parks like Harborview. Families will leave Portland.

Portland, Oregon is a cautionary tale of what can happen when a city is REACTIVE instead of proactive in helping the unhoused while maintaining an environment that encourages tourism, livability, and the ability of businesses to operate.

Sincerely,
Ashley Salisbury
[26 Brackett Street](#)



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Tents

1 message

Newell AUgur <augur@twc.com>

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 10:48 AM

To: publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

There are eight tents on the Western Prom which have been there for months with all the attendant risks with which you are familiar (My outdoor security camera filmed a man trying to break into my car). This area is a public park used by the community-children, walker, visitors to MMC, etc. The tents violate the beauty and sanctity of this-a PUBLIC PARK. The tenters may not accept shelter even if available, but couldn't they be moved to some city lot or field which is not a public park. Please consider this request a high priority.

Thank you

Newell Augur M.D.



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Unhoused people in Portland

1 message

Nancy Walker <nancyluluwalker@gmail.com>

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 8:32 PM

To: Kate Snyder <ksnyder@portlandmaine.gov>, rphillips@portlandmaine.gov, mdion@portlandmaine.gov, Anna Trevorrow <atrevorrow@portlandmaine.gov>, azarro@portlandmaine.gov, pali@portlandmaine.gov, Victoria Pelletier <vpelletier@portlandmaine.gov>, afournier@portlandmaine.gov, rodriguez@portlandmaine.gov, publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov

Hello to all. I am a Portland resident, I live at 53 Sheridan St.

This email addresses my concern about the possible plan to put bunk beds in the Homeless Services Center so that the tent sweeps can continue. The plan seems unrealistic and counter productive to me. Bunk beds are probably not a safe option for many people and could result in falls and injury. Continuing to do the sweeps means that people lose their possessions and become more and more traumatized. This plan also doesn't address the real causes of homelessness in Portland.

There is so much work to do in Portland to increase affordable housing. It is hard to find rents that are accessible financially. The city continues to accept development plans that will put more people on the street. I have seen people that I know lose their housing when their buildings have been bought by developers who renovated and raised the rent so much that the people couldn't afford to live there.

I would like the city to take away the option for developers to just pay the fine for not producing the required number of affordable units in their buildings. The fine is way too insignificant to change the developers behavior and also not a significant amount to produce any new housing by itself. How many of these fines would be required to produce a building?

I would like the city to develop a plan such that all people in Portland would have a safe place to live. It's a lot to ask and yet is so essential. As soon as we identify with unhoused people so that we know it could be any of us in that situation we will become committed to start tackling the problem rather than looking for the next bandaid. Housing First is a model that has been successful in many situations. There are many other models in many cities that could help us, we just need to do the research and be committed.

Thank you. Nancy Walker



Dena Libner <dlibner@portlandmaine.gov>

Vote NO

1 message

Anne Heminway <anne.heminway@gmail.com>

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 at 9:40 PM

To: Portland City Government <council@portlandmaine.gov>, Portland City Government <publiccomment@portlandmaine.gov>

Dear Portland City Counsel members,

As a licensed social worker and a member of First Parish Portland UU Church, I STRONGLY URGE you to VOTE NO on the City Manager's emergency order to increase the capacity of the city shelter by 68%.

When the city "sweeps" the unhoused encampments, unhoused citizens scatter, lose their survival possessions, lose their supportive community, and lose connection to their care providers. Do you know that "sweeps" lead to a 151% mortality rate? You must be aware of the significant barriers these folks have in accessing the shelter. An obvious one is the inadequate shuttle transportation. Ask social workers and other care providers who have worked with this population to describe other barriers. They know why new bunk beds in the shelter may not be filled.

Please understand that this order will actually punish our unhoused citizens and not move us toward solving our unhoused crisis.

And please consider the following:

- 1) SEND the issue of encampments and the unhoused to your Health and Human Services Committee. Democracy works better when elected officials make decisions about the welfare of citizens. Not an appointed City Manager.
- 2) Put a band on sweeping clear the encampments of unhoused citizens.
- 3) Recognize that solutions may take years and will involve major funds for housing and services. Work on long term solutions.
- 4) Treat ALL citizens with care and respect.

Sincerely,

Anne Heminway LCSW

Sent from my iPad

Dear Portland City Councilors,

I am writing to urge you to vote against the City Managers proposal to institute an emergency order proposal. This is a move that will further traumatize unhoused people. The City Manager's order seeks to warehouse humans and continue forcibly displacing our unhoused neighbors with encampment sweeps. Yes, we need more housing that will address the housing crisis however, it fails to address the barriers that make shelter inaccessible to our unhoused neighbors. Unhoused people are human beings, we need to have compassion in dealing with this crisis.

I propose moving the decision making to the HHS committee and find humane solutions, fight poverty not the poor. As a member of First Parish church I am appalled at the way the city is dealing with the unhoused community. Our second principle addressed justice, equity and compassion in human relations. This emergency order gives too much power to the City Manager, a person who is appointed not elected. We need more compassionate efforts.

Sincerely,

Jake Kulaw
Governing Board member
First Parish UU/ Portland

Good evening, Mayor Snyder, and members of the Council,

My name is Andrew Bove. I am the Vice President of Social Work at Preble Street and I have lived in Portland nearly my entire life.

We are facing an unprecedented crisis of unsheltered homelessness in our community - but it doesn't need to be this way, and there are tangible steps we can take *right now* to resolve it.

Preble Street recently put forth seven recommendations to address the crisis we are facing. The most urgent for tonight's discussion is to ensure that the shelter services our community is providing are low-barrier, accessible, and evidenced-based.

Adding shelter capacity alone will not bring people inside. If we want people living in tents to access shelter, it is critical that the services provided are delivered with their needs and voices at the forefront.

This was exactly Preble Street's intent when we opened Elena's Way Wellness Shelter last fall, Maine's first and only shelter designed specifically for individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. We examined models across the country, reviewed all available research, but most importantly, listened to those living outside.

Elena's Way has proven to be incredibly effective, and individuals who for years were either unable or unwilling to access shelter in the Portland community have found stability. Elena's Way has no curfew, allows couples to sleep near one another, utilizes a flexible intake process which prioritizes people with complex physical and behavioral health needs, and employs countless other social work best practices in every program element. It's a model that works.

If we want our vulnerable neighbors to come inside, we need to make shelter as accessible as possible. One-size-fits-all approaches and black-and-white procedures do not work, and simply adding additional shelter capacity without a critical examination of the services being provided is misguided and inefficient.

If individuals living in tents are declining shelter, we need to understand why. Saying no to shelter should not be the end of the conversation, but the beginning. Through the existing mission of the Encampment Crisis Response Team, there is an opportunity for those with lived experience and providers to come together alongside City staff and examine accessibility challenges at the Homeless Service Center, so that the needs of our neighbors living outside can be incorporated into the shelter's design and operations and access to this critical community resource can be increased.

Whether there is one shelter bed open tonight, or 50 next week, or 150 beds in November when the new Riverside shelter opens, none of it matters if our neighbors living in tents are hesitant to go because of operational challenges that can be fixed. Adding more beds will not solve anything unless we lower the barriers to entering the City's Homeless Services Center, redefine the services being provided there in light of best practices, and elevate the voices and needs of those with lived experience.

As our community determines next steps in addressing this unprecedented crisis, Preble Street urges the City to address accessibility at the Homeless Service Center and postpone additional encampment sweeps until the Riverside shelter opens and more shelter space is made available.

As Preble Street's founder Joe Kreisler once said, "Part of being alive is making sure that others are, too." At this pivotal moment facing our community, let us choose compassion and understanding over stigma and judgement, and work alongside one another to resolve this crisis. Resolution is possible, if we work together.

Sincerely,

Andrew Bove, LCSW
Vice President of Social Work
Preble Street

To the City Council:

Esteemed leaders of this city, I write today in opposition to the city manager's plan to artificially build shelter capacity by installing bunk beds at the Homeless Services Center.

Even to my comfortably housed and highly privileged ears, this sounds like a disingenuous attempt to pave the way for further "sweeps" in which unhoused people's encampments and their meager belongings are torn up with backhoes. **Is cruelty to be the order of the day?**

Must we respond to a crisis by further harming the people who are at the bottom of the heap? Tearing up an encampment does not create any housing or shelter space. It does not get anyone into mental health or substance abuse treatment. It does not move anyone further toward a stable and productive life as a member of our community.

It just means they have to start over with another dangerous, unhealthy, outdoor living space, because (as the Christmas story reminds us) **there is no room at the inn**. The holidays are coming. Are you willing to let families spend them on the streets? Because I, a voter and active participant in this city, am not. And I'm not alone.

The Chamber of Commerce would like to present Portland to the world as a prosperous and idyllic city where visitors don't ever need to encounter icky homeless people. I'd like that too – but sweeps are not the answer. You can sweep dust under the rug, but you can't sweep away a **big shiny dog turd**, and that's what Portland's housing crisis is. Dealing with it will take time and effort and facing the unpleasant things.

If we want to add shelter space, it should come with adequate room to live and store belongings, along with staff and resources to help people in real and significant ways – not papering over the problem.

If we need more space for encampments, perhaps the members of the Chamber of Commerce would like to let unhoused folks use THEIR yards?

Sincerely,

Patricia J. Washburn
401 Cumberland Ave. #510
Portland, ME 04101
207-251-2143