



**Homeless Voices for Justice Candidate Questionnaire 2021**  
**Answer from Jon Hinck**  
**Candidate for Portland City Council District 2**

**Introduction: Can you tell us why you are running for City Council and what you will do, if elected, to address homelessness in our city?**

I seek election to the city council to use my skills and experience to help Portland to have good government that works effectively and gives all residents the best opportunity to live well and achieve success here.

Housing is a human right. Our city, like others, should respond to the circumstance presented by those who are unsheltered or otherwise in need of a secure, safe, and comfortable place to live. The City should hold to a goal of getting people housed successfully and offered other resources to support their health and wellbeing. I understand the needs and would accept the challenge to help build and sustain and multi-faceted response.

**Shelter Referendum: Portlanders will vote this November on whether they want to cap the size of homeless shelters. What is your position on the Shelter Referendum question and why?**

At this stage I would support moving ahead with a well designed and constructed Homeless Service Center on Riverside. I would do that so that the city can move forward expeditiously with getting housing and services in place for those in need. I respect for the process followed by the City Council and the Planning Board but will vote 'C' precisely because that is the only option that would allow the next city council to make improvements on what has been initiated.

**Low Income Housing: Before and during the COVID19 crisis, we have seen rents skyrocket in Portland, which is pushing more and more people into homelessness. What would you do to combat the housing crisis in Portland and how would you make housing more accessible for low-income Portlanders?**

The affordable housing challenge calls for dedicated efforts by the Housing Committee and the rest of City Council, along with city staff and community leaders. I would come prepared with proposals for policy initiatives that I have worked elsewhere. I previously help gain passage of the inclusionary zoning ordinance as a start. Some possible initiatives include:

- 1) Creation of a universal safety net voucher program.
- 2) Rezoning to make it easy for current homeowners to build accessory dwelling units from tiny houses or to larger residences.
- 3) Incentives from housing linkage fees on commercial developments to support low cost housing.

Affordable housing is safe, clean, well-insulated and well-ventilated housing. Substandard housing is substandard cannot be the outcome.



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**COVID19 & Shelter: Right now, Portland is sheltering hundreds of families and individuals experiencing homelessness, including many asylum seekers, in hotels throughout the Greater Portland area. The federal funding that pays for those hotel rooms is scheduled to end on December 31, 2021. What is your plan to provide shelter for these people once this funding goes away?**

I do not currently have a plan to replace funding now being provided by the federal government. Such funding should be included in the current city budget and also may require fundraising from private foundations and individual. These efforts should be underway already and should not wait until three new councilors are sworn in on December 6, 2021.

**Racial Equity: We know that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color experience homelessness and poverty at disproportionate rates, including here in Portland. Where do you see systemic racism in our city government or city services? How do you plan to incorporate racial equity, access, and inclusion in your policy making as a City Councilor?**

Systemic racism is part of the institutions of society and government in the USA, the state of Maine and the City of Portland. Concerted ongoing efforts are needed so that BIPOC and all those who have been historically marginalized are fully engaged and have all the opportunity afforded to others. There are structural barriers woven throughout government and in the private marketplace that minority households and individuals face when trying to access employment, services and home ownership or rentals. A recognition and response to systemic racism and prejudice should be part of all decisions and all programs made and executed by city government.

**Inclusion: How do you plan to incorporate unhoused people and people in poverty into your decision-making as a City Councilor?**

I would intend to maintain contacts with people who are unhoused and others living in poverty, along with city staff and nonprofit organizations who work with low-income residents. This includes Homeless Voices for Justice who I have seen at work for more than a decade. These contacts would inform my decision-making. I would also want to make sure that city government is open and transparent and that conscious efforts are made to seek out input from those who are not traditional insiders.

**Shelter Access: If you are elected to City Council will you work and vote to uphold the city of Portland's long standing (35 year) commitment to provide emergency shelter to every person in our city who needs it?**

Yes.