



Homeless Voices for Justice Candidate Questionnaire 2021
Answers from Travis Curran
Candidate for Portland City Council At-Large

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?

My name is Travis Curran, I'm running for the At Large seat on City Council because I'm going to represent everybody in the most beautiful city I know. I was born here, I've lived in Oakdale, Parkside and now Munjoy Hill, I rent an apartment now with roommates but I was unhoused in Portland twelve years ago. Through the goodwill of others I've been blessed to be where I am right now. I'm fully committed to directly supporting and elevating our unhoused neighbors to the full extent of my abilities. Smaller shelters are just the beginning. Improving staffing services, training, and harm reduction come next. Portland can be an example to the nation that we take care of each other.

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?

This is one of the most important things to me. I support the smaller shelters model and voted "A" on Question 1, because I believe it's the clear path to helping more people. Years ago I slept in the Oxford street shelter. I know our unhoused community and I've been there. We shouldn't be warehousing our vulnerable on the Westbrook line but it's going to happen. The wrap-around services are necessary but we also need smaller, safer shelters to both assist our unhoused neighbors efficiently and normalize communities with sympathy, empathy and a better perspective.

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?

My plans are to push zoning reform, removing single-family-unit only zones to allow more affordable multifamily and mixed-use units. Increase developers pay-in-lieu fees and generate more revenue with condo vacancy and hotel room annual fees. Most importantly, bolstering the Housing Safety Office to enforce restrictions on illegal STR's/AirBnB's. That immediately pushes more already existing affordable units back onto the market and into the Portland Housing Authority's inventory.

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?



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I'd prefer to use the ARP emergency funds to procure the buildings necessary to create smaller shelters with humane conditions. This might not happen because I'll be sworn in next year so City Hall may make different decisions. I will lobby for using city property to repurpose winterized spaces, and bring in organizations that will help. If worst comes to worst, we've used the Portland Expo before and we can use it again. There's options for the city beyond relying on federal funding, but I'll do everything possible to make sure the funding is available to help the unhoused.

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?

There is systemic racism everywhere, and Portland needs to be in the vanguard in addressing it. The Charter Commission will hopefully reformat and empower the Police Oversight actions committee and we'll see more accountability and positive growth. We need to staff our schools with more ELL and bilingual teachers, lighten the licensing and permit fees for small businesses, especially those owned by marginalized communities. A more accessible (free) press on public and political matters would help. The School Board has done an excellent job addressing this, and by carefully considering all voices, we can absolutely find solutions and action to bring our city together as a whole.

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

By talking to them directly. I engage daily with as many of our unhoused neighbors as possible- daily- with my voice, my heart and with my wallet. And if I have it on me, food. Over the last 15 years, I have walked up and down Congress Street, Preble Street, and Marginal Way more times than I can count. I let each individual brick of Portland's sidewalks inform my decision making process. Smaller and safer is only one small step in the direction I'd like to sprint towards- I envision a Portland that lives and breathes harm reduction, overdose prevention, and staffing services for all.

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?

Absolutely. This shouldn't even be debatable. Shelter is a human right, I believe I've indicated that this issue is at the core of everything I stand for. It's imperative that part of this Council's function is to use every option available to keep Portland alive and safe, and to extend that right to every individual who sets foot in our city.