

From: District 1 <district1@multco.us>  
Subject: Re: Petitions sent and received - no response  
Date: September 27, 2022 at 6:25:09 PM GMT+1  
To: info@n4safe.com

Greetings Michael,

Thank you so much for your emails and follow up. I read all of your correspondence and your petition, and I apologize for not getting back to you sooner! You mention that emails were rejected by my email system, and I am not sure what happened. If you could forward a copy of a rejection notice that would help my office remedy this barrier to communication. Usually when we receive emails we have a system that ensures all communications are responded to, and I try to follow up with people personally. I don't know what happened in this instance, but I hope you will accept my apology.

In terms of the content of your correspondence and petition, I share many of your frustrations. There has not been a defined, coordinated approach for creating a functioning system of shelters that are staffed appropriately, have appropriate security and safety mechanisms in place, and meet the needs of both people who are housed and unhoused. We have a public health, public safety and humanitarian crisis of unsheltered homelessness, and it has gotten worse despite hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars being invested in so-called solutions. What's missing is a plan, a goal, an understanding of what is needed to create a system at scale that meets real needs, and leadership that puts these things together. Instead, we see the City and County often working at odds, with no shared understanding or approach. The lack of leadership, collaboration and a plan to urgently address unsheltered homelessness is local government's failing. And residents in our city are suffering the consequences.

To understand the dysfunction and where we stand with SRVs, but NOT to excuse it, here is a brief breakdown of the responsibilities of city and county: The city of Portland is generally responsible for infrastructure, zoning, buildings, transportation, and law enforcement. The County is responsible for health and human services, including homeless services, mental health and addiction services, and public health issues such as rat infestations. The Joint Office of Homeless

Services is not a true "joint" office, but a County department, receiving some funds from the City, but with full oversight by the County Chair.

To make matters even more complicated, at the City, multiple bureaus, led by different commissioners, oversee different aspects of homelessness - trash, sidewalks, housing, urban camping, etc The Mayor does not have any special power over any of these, and so there is no overarching coordination or vision. The County is the opposite - the Chair's office has complete control over writing the \$3.3 billion budget and allocating funds, authority over all department heads, and control over access to information.

So with that background, here is the situation with SRVs. As I mentioned, we have been facing a crisis of unsheltered homelessness, with people living in squalor and dying in increasing numbers on our streets. Methamphetamine, fentanyl and other drug use has escalated, along with serious mental illness, and these have intersected with criminal behaviors and violence. The City has tried to step in where the County has failed in its core work of providing shelter and services, and has therefore tried to fill some of the gaps. Commissioner Dan Ryan established Safe Rest Villages in his role as the city commissioner overseeing the Portland Housing Bureau. His goal was to provide places where people living outside could be safer and healthier, receive services, and be on a path to housing. I believe in this vision, but the reality has been a challenge because, in my view, the County has not shown up and upheld its end of the bargain. And there is not an overarching plan that addresses the real issues at a scale that will make a difference.

I have a unique perspective on this as I am not only a commissioner, but an emergency room doctor, and a volunteer doing street medicine, going to encampments and meeting people where they're at to try to offer some medical care. My perspective not only gives me insight into the problems, but insight into potential solutions.

I believe we need a coordinated, holistic network of different types of shelters, including sanctioned campsites, meeting a variety of needs, that have safety and security enforced for both housed neighbors and unhoused individuals who are preyed upon. I have proposed this type

of system, and have the support of many neighbors, business owners, people who are unhoused, and direct service providers, because it addresses the needs of the entire community. I have worked closely with City commissioners, including Commissioner Ryan, who believe in this type of systems approach. But it has not been supported by current County leadership or the Joint Office of Homeless Services. And so we are left with one-off shelters, lack of true community participation and engagement, lack of GNAs that are meaningful, and things just get worse.

I do not oppose SRVs, but I strongly believe that they need effective services for people in the village, an effective security mechanism to keep people inside and outside the village safe, and a way to coordinate efforts to support the entire community. And they need to be part of a larger system with goals, transparency and accountability, rather than a one-off in a single neighborhoods

I would be happy to meet with you and others from your group to talk further about these issues. I am actually running for Multnomah County Chair because I am frustrated and disgusted with how our systems are failing to function, while people are dying in increasing numbers on our streets and health, safety and humanitarian crises continue to worsen. And as I alluded to already, the Chair has the power to make this difference. I hope this has been helpful. Even when we may disagree, it's essential that we listen to each other and communicate. It's actually even more essential to do this when we disagree. And again, I am so sorry for not responding sooner.

Thank you again for reaching out to me with your concerns. Please let me know if you would like to meet.

Kind regards,

Sharon

On Thu, Sep 15, 2022 at 2:46 PM N4Safe Webmail  
<[info@n4safe.com](mailto:info@n4safe.com)> wrote:

Commissioner Meieran:

I'm a volunteer working with neighbors4safesmartshelters.

On June 28, 2022 our coalition sent you a collection of opposition emails and again on August 12, 2022 a petition with hundreds of your constituents signatures all asking that you **oppose the proposed safe rest camp on NW Naito Parkway in your district**. Since then we have collected hundreds more signatures - all opposing the proposed safe rest camp.

It's now September 15, 2022 - we've never heard from you, none of your constituents have heard from you - no action, no response, just silence.

Unfortunately, this has been the standard from your office. Letters, emails and calls are never responded to in any meaningful way.

Commissioner - don't you care what your constituents have to say? Don't you care about public safety?

Read the petition, read the neighbors4safesmartshelters notes (below). We have the receipt for delivery to your office. Now it's your turn. What are you going to do to stop the proposed safe rest camp on NW Naito Parkway?

We await your reply.

s/neighbors4safesmartshelters

Michael Galizio  
Volunteer

[n4safe.com](http://n4safe.com)

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**Office of Commissioner Sharon Meieran**

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