

## The Oregonian

### As Springwater Corridor sweep continues, Portland tallies cleanup results

*By Emily E. Smith*  
09/10/2016

Since the start of an immense sweep last week along the Springwater Corridor, where hundreds of homeless people once camped, contract crews have finished cleaning up a notorious stretch of tents and conflict near Southeast 82nd Avenue.

But the clearing that started at daybreak Sept. 1 continues, now with a focus on other parts of the trail, including Beggar's Tick, near Southeast 111th Avenue and Foster Road.

Within the first five days of cleaning, the city said, about 100 people have moved from the trail, following many others who left in the days before the cleanup began. Some estimates this summer put as many as 500 campers in the area.

Brian Worley, a spokesman for Mayor Charlie Hales, said he did not know how many of the displaced campers had moved into shelters.

Crews also have been sharing a grim tally of the work involved in cleaning entrenched campsites amid a regional dearth of shelter space and affordable housing: 1,875 hypodermic needles, 25 gallons of urine, 16 gallons of fecal matter, 10 pounds of dried feces and more than five 40-yard dumpster loads of garbage.

Ree Karhuus, a volunteer homeless advocate, said the sweep has been hard on the homeless people who've been displaced and have nowhere to go. She also said the cleanup has made outreach more difficult because so many campers have been scattered.

The main result she's seen among the homeless: "Just a lot of stress on an already stressed-out population. And a huge expense to the city that is no doubt going to be repeated at the next sweep."

But, she said, the plan has been carried out with compassion.

Outreach workers have spent hours helping people, she said, and cleanup crews have been methodical and given people time to collect their belongings and move.

So, where have homeless people living along the trail gone?

"They've been going here, there and everywhere," Karhuus said.

Worley, the mayor's spokesman, said complaints to the city's One Point of Contact, a system for reporting homeless camps, did not appear to be up since the trail cleanup began

The mayor, acknowledging the city needed a more humane approach, unilaterally began allowing tent camping across Portland early this year. This summer, he ended the policy as a lawsuit loomed and problems ballooned.

Some campers have returned to the places they lived before the trail – beneath freeway underpasses, in neighborhoods.

The sweep may have improved conditions for some residents in Southeast Portland's Lents neighborhood whose houses lined the Springwater Corridor. But it's unclear whether the rest of the neighborhood has seen much relief.

Jennifer Young, who lives in Lents, said she and her neighbors are still seeing homeless camps on the streets, squatters in abandoned homes and vehicles with people living inside.

"It is a constant game of whack-a-mole and reporting and we are at wit's end," she said.

## **Group championing public money for Portland elections isn't calling for public vote**

*By Brad Schmidt*

*09/10/2016*

One of the main proponents of a plan to give public money to Portland political hopefuls isn't pushing for a public vote.

Instead, Common Cause Oregon wants the City Council to approve the controversial subject on its own.

But whether the City Council is willing to do so -- despite voters' decision to kill off public campaign finance six years ago -- may be the final big political question of the year.

Over the past week, Portland Commissioner Amanda Fritz officially unveiled a proposal to revive a public campaign finance system -- this time with a matching system to encourage candidates to raise private money to secure more public funds.

Common Cause Oregon spent much of the spring lobbying inside Portland City Hall on the topic, reporting more than 20 meetings.

And Common Cause was so excited about Fritz's proposal that the group sent out a press release Thursday night, 15 minutes into a scheduled 90-minute forum, declaring that voters attending the forum were "loud and clear" in support of reforms.

Daniel Lewkow, the group's political director, defended the timing of the press release.

"Voters were clear throughout the entire process," he said in an email to The Oregonian/OregonLive. "Voters showed support for reforming elections before the meeting, throughout the meeting, in public commentary, and after the meeting. Portlanders are excited for opening our democracy to everyone."

The City Council unilaterally approved Portland's first iteration of public campaign finance in 2005 but agreed to send it to voters in 2010 for judgment.

When that happened, voters ended the program by a margin of 1,600 out of more than 210,000 ballots cast.

Asked if Common Cause would support sending Fritz's proposal to voters, Lewkow didn't provide a yes or no response.

When pressed, he responded:

"We have a chance to move this reform through the legislative process," he said. "Should that fail, we would explore alternative options, which could include posing the question to voters. This reform is fully within the scope of the City Council's responsibility and power."

The appeal of a City Council decision is obvious -- and it's the same one Mayor Charlie Hales used in 2014 when pursuing a street fee: it requires only three "yes" votes. Compare that with the costs and challenges of running a citywide campaign trying to convince hundreds of thousands of voters.

Fritz is also pushing for a City Council vote.

Fritz, of course, won election in 2008 using the city's old public campaign finance system. She's the only member of the City Council to do so.

Fritz wants the City Council to approve her plan this year, and she doesn't like the idea of sending it to voters -- even years later, as the City Council did with its 2005 approval conditioned on a 2010 public vote.

"I think that was a mistake," she said.

## **Willamette Week**

### **Should City Council or Voters Decide Whether Portland Adopts New Public Campaign Financing?**

#### **Commissioner Amanda Fritz seeks City Council approval**

*By Beth Slovic*

*09/11/2016*

There's a big question hanging over Portland Commissioner Amanda Fritz's proposal to reintroduce public campaign financing for city elections.

Should the Portland City Council or Portland voters approve any new measure to give candidates public money?

Portland voters in 2010 narrowly rejected Portland's previous system of public campaign finance, which gave council candidates who collected 1,000 signatures and \$5 contributions \$145,000 for the primary. Voters dismantled the system, enacted in 2005 by the City Council, after abuses and amid a recession.

Fritz has said she's seeking city council approval for her proposal, which included (when it was unveiled Thursday) a 6-to-1 matching system that would give greater weight to contributions under \$50. (She also has said she's seeking community input that could change the proposal.)

Three years ago, when she first started talking publicly about revamping public campaign finance, she said she'd pursue a ballot initiative.

As of now, Fritz expects her proposal to cost the city about \$1 million a year, according to what she told OPB.

Mayor Charlie Hales, through a spokesman, refused to say whether he supports enacting a new system through a vote of the council—or the people.

Commissioner Steve Novick, who's in the midst of a campaign against an opponent who supports Fritz's proposal, was similarly coy.

"I support the concept of public financing," he wrote in a statement from his spokeswoman. "I haven't focused on the question of council action versus referral; my big question has been, how would we pay for it without having to make cuts to housing, fire, police and parks. I think we need to figure that out first."

Whether Fritz can pass her proposal at City Hall without putting it to voters appears to hinge on what Hales and Novick do.

Commissioners Dan Saltzman and Nick Fish in 2014 and 2015 supported putting Novick's ill-fated "street fee" to Portland voters.

Saltzman's chief of staff, Brendan Finn, said Friday that Saltzman hadn't seen details of Fritz's proposal and couldn't make a call about how to proceed yet.

If history is any guide, Saltzman will lean toward a public vote.

Fish is already willing to say he supports a referral to voters. He also hasn't seen any proposal and says he can't address its merits, but he's mindful that voters rejected the last system after City Council put it in place.

"It seems reasonable we should refer any proposal to voters for their approval," he says.

## **Airbnb Donates \$5,000 to Portland's Affordable Housing Bond Campaign**

Yes for Affordable Homes campaign says the company is just one of many who've donated—and they'll accept the check

*By Rachel Monahan  
09/10/2016*

Short-term rental company Airbnb, facing scrutiny for its role in adding to Portland's housing crunch, has donated \$5,000 to the campaign to build more affordable housing in Portland.

The company's PAC, the Committee to Expand the Middle Class, donated to the Yes for Affordable Homes on Friday.

The bond measure on the November ballot will raise \$258.4 million over the next 20 years, according to backers' estimates.

Bond measure backers downplayed the significance of the Airbnb donation.

"It's one of more than 375 contributions from individuals—supporters have hosted more than 20 house parties to-date—and businesses large and small," Yes for Affordable Homes spokeswoman Amy Ruiz tells WW.

"We welcome contributions from people and businesses interested in addressing Portland's affordable housing crisis by supporting Measure 26-179, which would build 1,300 permanently affordable homes for those who need them most."

Only 18 other companies or individuals besides Airbnb have given at least as much to the campaign, according to campaign-finance records released by Friday.

"The Committee to Expand the Middle Class is one part of our efforts to help strengthen communities that Airbnb hosts and guests call home," says Airbnb spokeswoman Laura Rillos in a statement. "We're proud to support a proposal that will create safe, affordable housing and strengthen the Portland community."

The donation comes as Airbnb faces a growing spotlight on the impact its short-term rental marketplace has on Portland's housing stock.

According to Portland Housing Bureau, Airbnb and other short-term rental companies have taken 1,000 previously affordable rental units off the market, effectively turning them into hotel rooms. That's worth an estimated \$380 million, according to housing bureau estimates.

The city has been slow to enforce the rules on short-term rentals, as *WW* reported last week and last month.

The donation is not the first time Airbnb has donated to Portland campaigns. City Commissioner Steve Novick and Mayor-elect Ted Wheeler received donations earlier this year.

"We look forward to doing more work with policymakers in Oregon and across the country," Rillos told *WW* when asked about those donations.

Update: This post has been updated to include a new statement from Airbnb.