

## The Oregonian

# Oregon's Homeless Population Grows 6 Percent in Last Two Years

*By Molly Harbarger  
August 23, 2017*

**Despite the roaring job market, more people are living on the streets or in shelters in Oregon than in 2015, according to data released Tuesday.**

Statewide, 13,953 people were homeless, 6 percent more than the last time the official survey was conducted two years ago. Unlike in Portland, where shelter capacity has expanded, more of those people live under bridges, in fields and along sidewalks than in 2015.

Lane, Marion, Deschutes and Clatsop counties follow Multnomah in having the highest numbers of homeless people. Clatsop was the lowest of these with 682 homeless people counted out of a population of 38,632.

The federally mandated point-in-time count was done in January. Workers from cities, counties and homeless service nonprofits surveyed people, both in shelters and out. Multnomah County's was delayed because of heavy snowstorms and cold snaps.

The homeless count -- also called the Point in Time Count -- is a snapshot only. For a week ending next Tuesday, outreach workers like Nelson, employees with social service agencies and volunteers divvy up Multnomah County and walk streets and search parks.

The results, compiled by the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department, don't account for every homeless person in the state but are meant to indicate trends that federal and local officials use to allocate funding and resources.

Officials at the housing department said rising rents are behind the statewide increase in homelessness.

Many communities don't have affordable housing to keep pace with the number of people who need it, they said.

"Tens of thousands of people are simply unable to afford these rising housing costs and have had to sleep in shelters, in their cars or on the street," the report says.

Racial and ethnic minorities are affected at a higher rate than white people, the statewide data shows. For example, 4.1 percent of the Oregon homeless population identifies as Native American, whereas only 1.1 percent of all Oregonians are Native American. Likewise, African-Americans experience homelessness at three times their proportion of the state's population.

Multnomah County's point in time results for 2017 showed nearly 10 percent growth in the homeless population.

With the increase come some signs of hope, city and county officials say: There are more people sleeping in shelters or transitional housing than outside for the first time since 2005.

However, only 14 percent of the state's homeless people said they suffer from mental illness and 12 percent say they abuse drugs or alcohol, compared to a majority of Portland's homeless people who told surveyers they have these issues.

All of Oregon is seeing more families with children move on to the streets. One in four homeless people throughout the state reported they are part of a household with children. Most of those families lived outside, in cars or RVs, or doubled up -- not in shelters.

Portland and Multnomah County pushed hard to create more shelter beds in the last fiscal year, and saw a dramatic increase in people using them. In 2016 to 2017, 8,500 people stayed in one of the county's emergency shelters, compared with about 6,650 the previous year -- a 28 percent increase, according to statistics made public Wednesday.

However, that success was local. The state only increased its sheltered population by 3 percent while the number of people without a roof over their head rose 8 percent.

In Multnomah County, the county government and that of the largest city, Portland, both committed tens of millions more to helping people without housing or on the brink of losing it starting in 2016 -- and it paid off, according to statistics backers of those efforts made public today.

Countywide, they said, 4,900 people without homes were helped to find one in 2016-17, usually with financial assistance. That was an increase of nearly 300 from the previous year.

And nearly 6,600 people were provided with help to avoid being evicted, county officials said. That was a huge increase from the previous year, with about 1,350, or 26 percent, more people helped.

Generally, both forms of help proved durable. Follow up reports submitted 12 months after people who were homeless got help to find housing indicated 74 percent of them still were housed. Similarly, 77 percent of residents who got help avoiding eviction reported 12 months later they still had a permanent place to live.

"We have helped thousands more of our neighbors off of the streets and into the safety of a shelter bed or a home of their own" said Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler. "We must continue to ensure our record investments in homeless services are being spent as effectively as possible."

## **Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler Hires Two “To Tackle Key Priorities”**

*By Jessica Floum  
August 22, 2017*

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler has hired two policy advisers to work on housing and emergency management policies, he announced Monday.

The mayor hired Cupid Alexander, a former senior policy analyst at the Portland Housing Bureau, to work on housing initiatives in the mayor's office. He also hired Elisabeth Perez to work on emergency management. Perez has a master's degree in Disaster Resilience Leadership from Tulane University.

The hirings come after critics questioned the mayor's commitment to affordable housing and noted a lack of housing expertise on his staff.

They also follow the mayor's takeover of Portland's Bureau of Emergency Communications from Commissioner Amanda Fritz in June, when he rebuked the bureau's poor leadership. Two reports revealed the bureau had knowingly reported inaccurate emergency call wait-times and failed to track or return tens of thousands of calls.

"This administration has ambitious affordable housing goals, and a responsibility to improve emergency communications," Wheeler said in a statement. "Cupid and Elisabeth bring a wealth of education and experience to their new roles and will help us get the job done."

## The Portland Tribune

# Lents Neighborhood Sees Improvements From Homeless Camping Impacts

*By Lyndsey Hewitt  
August 23, 2017*

**ODOT-owned I-205 Multi-Use Path still has problems though, residents say, due to gap in city and state rules.**

The Southeast neighborhood of Lents appears to have slowly recovered from the effects of what some have called the largest homeless encampment in the United States along the Springwater Corridor Trail last year.

The neighborhood attracted nationwide media coverage last September as residents complained of residual "livability" issues related to the encampments, including biohazards such as syringes, human waste and excess garbage, due to the large amount of campers who gravitated to the area.

A massive cleanup effort has helped.

"I mean you have some entrenched camps that continue to come to the area, but it's just remarkable the difference between last year and this year," says Jennifer Young, Lents resident and active member of the Lents Neighborhood Association.

Young had helped organize a town hall for the neighborhood in April, where City Council gathered to hear of residents' frustrations.

At that time, neighborhood residents declared themselves in a "livability crisis." Mayor Ted Wheeler responded by saying that the city had not treated the Lents neighborhood equally.

Neighbors also complained of abandoned cars and RVs in which homeless people were dwelling around Lents Park, problem "zombie homes" (long-neglected, unsafe houses abandoned by their owners) and an uptick in associated crime.

Neighbors and officials alike often point blame to former Mayor Charlie Hales' decidedly "relaxed" approach to homeless camping before his term ended, when it became legal for folks to camp along public pathways. The "Safe Sleep" ordinance ended in early August 2016.

Now, a year after the Springwater cleanup, and following the springtime town hall, Wheeler, the city and Multnomah County have apparently stepped up efforts in coordination to patrol and clean up the Lents area.

Portland Parks and Recreation hired two rangers to patrol the Springwater Corridor Trail area, and residents say it's curbed illegal camping.

"Springwater Corridor has been very, very clear. They hired two other rangers for this area, and with the One Point of Contact, they've been very responsive," Young says.

The One Point of Contact system, managed by the city's Office of Management and Finance, tracks homeless camps in the city and posts the reports each week online. They share them with

various social service providers and sort the camps by the agency whose land a homeless camp sits on. Their most recent report reflected 666 new complaints about campsites between Aug. 7 and 13.

One of residents' biggest complaints was the lack of coordination between agencies that own land that campers dwell on. Reporting which camp to the appropriate land-owning agency quickly became a confusing mess.

Neighbors are saying that city agencies are working better together, although it's been difficult to rope in the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Both ODOT and the city of Portland work under court mandates in how they clean up campsites, but the mandates have different requirements. The city is able to respond much faster than ODOT can.

"So it's not working perfect, but it's better than what it was because they're following through quicker than they ever have before," says Lents resident Char Pennie.

Several problems remain, including many campers along the Interstate 205 Multi-Use Path, and the ongoing lack of affordable housing and shelter space for those living outside.

'Big gap' in ODOT, city ability in homeless camp cleanup

Young says there are issues of "turfing" between the Portland Police Bureau and Oregon Department of Transportation. While the Springwater Corridor Trail has been maintained, ODOT's Multi-Use Path (commonly known as the MUP) isn't receiving as much attention.

"The MUP is completely occupied," Young says. Springwater, owned by the city, and the MUP, owned by ODOT, intersect near Southeast 92nd Avenue and Southeast Cooper Street. Children use the MUP to walk to Oliver P. Lent elementary school on the east side of Interstate 205.

"The state has a different set of rules and laws that impedes their ability to coordinate with us," says Sgt. Randy Teig, team leader of the police bureau's East Precinct. "That's a big gap. The most basic answer is that the state has a 10-day rule, which tells them that they have to wait 10 days to take action basically on a trespasser on their property."

The city, meanwhile, has to wait only 24 hours to clear out a camp after posting notification. Teig says that homeless campers have learned the various agencies' boundaries and who cleans up when, so they just move from area to area.

"They know on ODOT property that they're less likely to be moved frequently," Teig says.

"It's a frustration to (ODOT) because it looks like they're not doing anything. ODOT has crews on the streets, then homeless people pick up the stuff and move it about 100 yards away and watch these guys clean up the campsites," says Judy Low, president of the Lents Neighborhood Association.

Teig says there are conversations happening at the local level to figure out how to make the Oregon Legislature aware of the differences.

"It has to be corrected at the state level, because ODOT can't go around just violating state law."  
— Sgt. Randy Teig

"It has to be corrected at the state level, because ODOT can't go around just violating state law," Teig says, suggesting that the state could enact a law where the state could apply "local standard for property management." ODOT has said it doesn't deal with people, only with property.

Despite the gap, Teig says he doesn't "recall a time we've had a more organized effort." He says the bureau meets with the Joint Office of Homeless Services every Friday to talk about specific cases of homelessness. But ODOT spokesman Don Hamilton says the agency isn't involved with "any weekly meetings with police about some high-level holistic approach to this problem."

"We're not a social service agency, we're not a police agency, we have very limited things we can do," Hamilton says. He added that they do meet regularly with the police bureau to talk about "what we do and how we do it."

Teig says the police have a social service worker from the Joint Office of Homeless Services on call for the agency.

"Social services are using law enforcement as a method of information gathering, and basically our approach is services first," Teig says. But he adds that if people resist — "and there's a good amount of people who are service resistant" — then they could be arrested for trespassing. Recently police went out on two 16-hour missions, talked to more than 160 homeless people and made 18 arrests for outstanding warrants and crimes. Teig said they put out five wildfires from camps along the MUP.

"Currently the two things that are drawing the most outrage out of the community are the motorhomes and the dangerous camps on the MUP," Teig says.

'Stuck between a rock and a hard place'

While the city and state grapple with enforcement on the MUP, they have taken some steps to address the seemingly incessant inflow of motorhomes parked on neighborhood streets.

"I wouldn't go as far to say we're getting a handle on it, but we're making progress," Teig says.

Initially, the problem was tasked mainly to the Portland Bureau of Transportation, which informed neighbors that they weren't allowed to tow motorhomes when they were occupied — and their tow lots were full. The number of RV reports skyrocketed in past few years, with 27,000 reports to PBOT's abandoned auto program in 2016. PBOT has since doubled its abandoned auto staff and found more tow space, and the police bureau started a new effort called the "Community Caretaking" tow program — having so far inspected 150 motorhomes and towing 50, according to Teig. It specifically addresses motorhomes that people are living in, which go beyond the realm of what PBOT deals with. The program targets RVs that "present an immediate health and safety risk to neighborhoods."

Young says the first RV to be towed under the policy was occupied by a man who was exposing himself near Lents Park.

Teig says that not all RVs reported to their program meet qualifications for towing, but that "roughly half" of the people living in the motorhomes, when faced with the threat of towing, have family members to stay with. Some accept services and some don't. He says they've been working with the Hansen Shelter on Northeast 122nd and Glisan so that someone displaced from an RV could have a place to sleep.

All involved, including Young, Teig and Hamilton, realize there's a multitude of issues involved in addressing homelessness, especially while the city remains in an officially-declared housing emergency.

"We get such a variety of responses from the public, going from anywhere from, what can you do to help these poor people? To, this is horrible; can you clean this up in my neighborhood? And everything in between," Hamilton says. "I think most people seem to realize that this is a

very difficult social problem that is not resolved by any one agency such as ODOT, but rather as a whole series of disciplines that need to be brought to bear to help this."

Young, although concerned about crime, hopes for more long-term solutions to homelessness.

"We've long said that where the city is failing is with wrap-around services and follow-up," says Young, who also is a mental health therapist. "Advocates say not to sweep and keep them there forever, but what's really being achieved? They're just existing and living in these horrible conditions."

Pennie is hopeful that ODOT can change its policy to clean up campsites after 24 hours. But when asked what that would mean for the homeless campers, she realized the struggle.

"Hopefully they could change it to 24 hours like the Springwater, but I don't know what they'd do with them, because they'd be stuck between a rock and a hard place," she says.

## **Willamette Week**

### **Mayor Ted Wheeler Finally Hires a Housing Policy Staffer After Nearly Eight Months in Office**

*By Rachel Monahan  
August 22, 2017*

**After winning election on platform that promised to address the housing crisis, Wheeler has hired Cupid Alexander, who worked for the Portland Housing Bureau, as a senior policy adviser.**

After criticisms that Mayor Ted Wheeler has failed to move aggressively toward building affordable housing, Wheeler today announced the addition of a senior policy adviser for housing.

The mayor initially hired a policy director, Alma Flores, who was charged with overseeing housing — an issue that was central to the mayoral campaign. But Flores returned to a previous job in March. Since then, the work has fallen to lower-level staffers who didn't have experience in housing.

Cupid Alexander started today. His hiring addresses the lack of experience. He previously worked for the Portland Housing Bureau.

But the hiring won't speed up the city's decisions about spending the \$258 million in bond money approved by voters last November. Spending won't move forward for at least another six weeks. The mayor still plans to bring a framework for how to spend the bond money to City Council on Oct. 11.

Release from the mayor's office:

“ Mayor Wheeler Adds Staff to Tackle Key Priorities Cupid Alexander will focus on housing, Elisabeth Perez will focus on emergency communications PORTLAND, OR – Mayor Ted Wheeler announced today that he has appointed two new members of his staff to tackle key priorities. Cupid Alexander has been named Senior Policy Advisor, focusing on housing initiatives. He began August 22nd. Elisabeth Perez has been named Policy Advisor, focusing on emergency management, emergency communications, and Smart Cities. She began June 10th. “This administration has ambitious affordable housing goals, and a responsibility to improve emergency communications,” said

Wheeler. “Cupid and Elisabeth bring a wealth of education and experience to their new roles and will help us get the job done.” Additional information on Cupid and Elisabeth follows: Cupid Alexander. Prior to accepting the position within Mayor Wheelers staff, Cupid had been working as a Senior Housing Policy Analyst with the Portland housing bureau (PHB) after joining the bureau in 2015. As a member of the Policy team, Cupid has overseen the development and implementation of the Bureau’s North/Northeast Housing Preference Policy, worked as the bureau’s district liaison to Northeast Portland, and worked to help develop and staff both the Stakeholder Advisory Board and the Bond Oversight Committee associated with the General Obligation Bond. Prior to joining PHB, Cupid had worked for the Department of Housing Services of Washington County from 2003-2015. Cupid earned his high school diploma from Portland’s Wilson High School, his Bachelors in business from Warner Pacific College, and both his Graduated Certificate in Real Estate Development and his Executive Masters in Public Administration from Portland State University. In addition to his work experience, Cupid has a vested his interests in volunteerism and bettering the city of Portland. He has served as a board member of The ReBuilding Center, and the Trail Blazers “Make It Better” foundation Professional Board. He currently serves as the Executive Vice President of the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, and the President of the Urban League of Portland’s Young Professional’s Chapter. Elisabeth Perez Elisabeth Perez recently graduated from Tulane University with an M.S. in Disaster Resilience Leadership. As a Changemaker at the Phyllis M. Taylor Center for Social Innovation and Design Thinking, Elisabeth received The Victor C. Alvarez Spark Innovation Award as initial funding to start the MyNew Orleans Photo Project in 2016. The project aims to increase awareness and reduce stigma around homelessness in New Orleans. As the project enters its second year, Elisabeth is transitioning to a new role as a board member to build leadership and development capacity as the organization grows. In addition, she recently served as the Logistics Coordinator on the executive committee of the annual Building Resilience Workshop (BRW). Her work with BRW brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to discuss resilience issues related to housing, coastal deterioration, art, and water management. Her professional experience in strategic planning, training, and education has served as an ideal background for her work in the field of resilience. Elisabeth hopes to transfer her skills working with both marginalized groups and disaster professionals to make communities more resilient through engagement, training, and community informed and data driven decision-making.”

## **The Daily Journal of Commerce**

### **Portland Housing Bureau Readies Bond Spending**

*By Chuck Slothower*

*August 22, 2017*

The city of Portland, in slow and lurching fashion, is beginning to make a move toward increasing affordable housing.

A first City Council hearing of a framework plan for how to spend \$258 million in bonds approved by voters is tentatively scheduled for Oct. 11. A second hearing would be held Oct. 18, with a vote possible that day.

If the plan is approved by the City Council, the Portland Housing Bureau plans to open transactions on bond deals on Oct. 20.

“We’re close,” Housing Director Kurt Creager said.

Mayor Ted Wheeler had asked the Housing Bureau to hold off on spending from the voter-approved bond until a plan was in place.

Part of the plan is a \$50 million to \$80 million budget for a “turnkey projects” pilot program, Creager said. Developers would use their own lines of credit and working capital to build projects and then sell them to the Housing Bureau.

Creager said the program could serve as a “backup plan” for developers who are encountering a market with more supply than it has had in recent years.

“They could get their profit and overhead covered, and a reasonable developer’s fee, without coming up with more money to please their bank in a softening market,” Creager said.

The program needs to be well funded to work, he added.

“I don’t think it should be less than \$50 million, because it’s not worth people’s time and money,” he said.

As the Housing Bureau prepares for an influx of funds, private-sector nonprofit developers are finding a tougher time financing deals. Tax-credit equity markets have cooled since President Donald Trump’s election, and interest rates have ticked up.

The combination of more expensive loans and less equity has dented the ability of nonprofit developers to finance projects.

“We along with the entire industry have tried to figure out how to make up that gap,” said Cynthia Parker, president and CEO of BRIDGE Housing.

Nonprofit developers use a syndicator of tax credits – the National Affordable Housing Trust – that is owned by BRIDGE Housing and others. The tax credits are typically combined with bank financing. In July, BRIDGE purchased the Ramona, a 138-unit affordable apartment complex in the north Pearl District. Construction of The Abigail, a 155-unit mixed-income project with 128 affordable apartments, finished last year.

BRIDGE has other affordable projects under way in Hillsboro, the North Macadam neighborhood and the Eliot neighborhood.

The Housing Bureau’s bond money looms as an injection of funds into the affordable market.

Creager said the bureau has a “moral and ethical obligation” to build or preserve 1,300 affordable units with the bond dollars as promised. Portland voters approved the bond measure in November; property taxes increased as a result.

The bond funding should arrive at a good time, because the multifamily market is widely expected to slow, Creager said.

“We recognize that markets are dynamic and we have about four more years to put this money into service,” he said. “We’ll be liquid at the right time when the market recalibrates, instead of adding more froth to an already overheated market.”

While the Housing Bureau waits for the influx of bond money, it has made some opportunistic purchases.

In February, the bureau bought the Ellington Apartments in Northeast Portland for \$47 million. The purchase preserved 260 units, including 44 affordable ones.

The City Council recently approved a \$3.72 million purchase of a parcel at 3000 S.E. Powell Blvd. for affordable housing development. The property across the street from Cleveland High School is now the Safari Club, a strip club.

The site will be home to 100 to 300 affordable apartments, and could be used as an emergency shelter during development, Mayor Ted Wheeler said via Twitter.

The wide range of the number of units is due to different possible configurations for the site, Creager said. At maximum density, the Powell property could have up to 300 multifamily units, but the Housing Bureau is considering building townhouses along the southern edge of the property. That would help blend in with the neighboring homes, Creager said.

The Housing Bureau has been looking for a location to build affordable homes; if it goes this route, it may bifurcate the site, he said.

“It might be an appropriate place for it,” he said. “We’re not sure that maximum density is necessary. It sort of depends on the soil condition we find too.”

The townhomes could be three-level, no-lot dwellings sold to low- and moderate-income households at or below 80 percent of area median income, Creager said.

The lot was used at one time for dumping, and there’s a small landfill that must be excavated and disposed of properly, he said.

On Sept. 30, the \$3.72 million purchase and sale agreement will close and the city of Portland will take possession of the property. It’s expected to serve as a women’s and children’s shelter until development of affordable housing on the site can take place.

“Until we have an entitled project for development, we’ll probably keep the building in some active use,” Creager said. “Because it’s across from the high school, it’s probably most suited for families or women. The best possible outcome would probably be utilization as a shelter for 12 to 24 months.”

Construction on the site will likely begin in 2019, Creager said.

The Housing Bureau has also acquired a site at Southeast 60th Avenue and Stark Street, north of Mount Tabor.

The property at 511 S.E. 60th Ave. is a YMCA child development center. The YMCA will be able to continue operations in a nearby church during construction at the site, Creager said. The Housing Bureau aims to build 40 to 50 affordable units, along with a replacement YMCA facility and shared parking.

Portland paid \$1.2 million for the property, known as the Mount Tabor Annex. The YMCA’s existing lease means the organization has possession of the property until Oct. 22, 2019, for use as a child-care facility.

A developer will be chosen by the housing commissioner after an open, competitive process, Creager said.

# The Right To Appeal

*By Kent Hohlfield  
August 22, 2017*

The week of Aug. 8 was a rarity for Portland City Council, but some are concerned it may be a harbinger of things to come.

Two appeals of decisions by the city's Design Commission landed on the City Council's docket that week. While a quirk of scheduling was responsible for the timing of two cases in one week, the situation highlights what appears to be a growing tendency for architects and developers to appeal design decisions when they aren't satisfied with the outcome.

In the past eight months, for example, the City Council has seen four appeals of Design Commission decisions and one appeal of a decision by the Historic Landmarks Commission.

It's a trend that hasn't gone unnoticed members of those commissions

"We have gone years and not had an appeal," said Portland Design Commissioner David Wark. "There are definitely more appeals."

Because the Design Commission is the body that oversees many of the design decisions that happen in some of the fastest-growing areas of the city, it also has the largest number of cases that get appealed. Appeals can be filed by the applicant, owner or those who have testified at a hearing either in person or in writing.

The appeals run the gamut from appealing an entire decision to appealing conditions put on an approval. Decisions can also be appealed by neighborhood groups looking to stop or at least slow down a project.

There are many reasons cited for the increased numbers of appeals. The number of cases the commissions see has increased as Portland's construction boom has picked up speed.

"I don't think we are seeing a flood gate in terms of appeals," said City Commissioner Dan Saltzman. "We are seeing more appeals because we have more projects."

From the perspective of developers, several issues are driving the surge in appeals. Some developers feel that the commissions are taking too long to approve projects, changing guidelines from hearing to hearing and making arbitrary decisions that reduce height and density on projects. The longer it takes to receive approval, the more it costs developers. So rather than adjust a project, they decide to take decisions they don't like directly to the City Council via an appeal.

Landon Crowell, a developer who appealed a Design Commission denial of his Ankeny Apartments project, said he believed continually changing criteria hurt his project.

"Ankeny Apartments was more about stopping the development," he said. "(They were) spinning the design team around in circles to exhaust financial resources by changing the requirements each hearing."

The project went through five design hearings before being denied by the Design Commission in a unanimous vote. Crowell then appealed the decision to City Council, which held four hearings of its own in an attempt to reach an agreement between neighbors who opposed the project, Bureau of Development Services staff, and Crowell and his development team.

In the end, City Council overturned the Design Commission's denial and allowed the project to move forward. Several City Commissioners voiced concerns about the way the process worked.

“In future applications that go to the Design Commission,” said Commissioner Amanda Fritz, “I hope that things will get resolved there before five times because this is not the best use of the council’s time.”

City Council has to balance letting the commissions do their jobs and providing a fair process for developers that disagree with a decision, according to Saltzman.

“For the most part, most developers work with the Design Commission,” he said. “There are disagreements and it is fair and appropriate to bring those to council.”

It isn’t just denials that are being appealed. TMT Development appealed a Design Commission approval for the renovation of the Studio Building and Guild Theater because the development company didn’t like conditions related to the replacement of windows in the project. The required changes would have pushed up the project cost by \$105,000, according to TMT Development President Vanessa Sturgeon

Upon appeal, the City Council struck down the conditions by a 4-1 vote. In his prevailing argument, Mayor Ted Wheeler said a needed renovation of an old building shouldn’t be endangered by what a majority of the commissioners considered a minor improvement.

Saltzman agreed.

“I think you have to weigh (the cost of the change) against our city code,” he said.

Members of the Design Commission, however, point out that while those types of decisions by City Council can help move a needed project forward, they also increase the incentive for developers to appeal decisions.

“The (City Council) needs to let the (Design Commission) be its voice,” Wark said. “It’s kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy; the more appeals they (uphold), the more appeals they will get.”

The Design Commission has a different set of guiding principles than other city agencies and bureaus, according to Wark. As a result, City Council has the freedom to consider issues that the Design Commission can’t turn to in its decision-making process.

“Aspects like tenant standard and pro-forma are not in the purview of the (Design Commission),” Wark said. “We just look at it through the guidelines.”

Even when all parties at a design review or historic landmarks hearing agree on a decision about a project, it can still be appealed by a neighbor or neighborhood association dissatisfied with the decision.

The Goose Hollow Neighborhood Association, for example, appealed the approval of the Press Blocks project that would replace the former Oregonian building with three new buildings. The association was concerned by the height of the project’s residential tower, but saw its concerns shot down by City Council.

Given the city’s relatively open appeals process, reducing the number of appeals that land in front of City Council may be tough to accomplish. However, some solutions are already being tried.

Julie Livingston, who recently stepped into the role of chairwoman for the Design Commission, plans to start getting applicants’ views of conditions on the record. She said she and other Design Commission members were caught by surprise by TMT Development’s appeal of the Studio Building and Guild Theatre decision because the development team did not express reservations about the condition during the design review hearing.

“When we are negotiating conditions, I am going to check in with the applicant and I want the applicant to state on the record, ‘I am OK with this,’” Livingston said. “If it goes to (City Council), I want to be able to say that the applicant was OK with that.”

Changes coming to the design guidelines as part of the Design Overlay Zone Assessment (DOZA) may also help clear ambiguity.

“Some of the (current) guidelines are pretty general and pretty vague,” Saltzman said. “I hope it will put more flesh on the bones and define how it should be applied. I am hopeful it will help.”

The Portland Bureau of Development also is adopting a new process of problem solving that may help mitigate the number of appeals.

Ultimately, though, Design Commissioners say City Council has the most control over how many appeals it sees.

“The whole process can only happen with the political support of the city,” Wark said. “(If the City Council wants fewer appeals) the City Council needs to be consistent with its support of commission decisions.”

## **OPB**

### **Homeless Count: Oregon’s Unhoused Population Is Up**

*By Chris Lehman  
August 22, 2017*

A count of Oregon’s homeless population shows a 6 percent increase in the number of people living in shelters or on the streets. The tally takes place every two years in January and is meant to give a snapshot of a specific point in time.

The Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services released the numbers Tuesday.

The agency’s Ariel Nelson said the count turned up nearly 14,000 homeless people in Oregon, but the actual number of homeless could be bigger.

“That’s an important note to make about the point-in-time count, is that it’s critical information but it’s not going to tell the whole story about homelessness in each community,” Nelson said.

For instance, the homeless count doesn’t measure the number of people sleeping on couches or floors at the homes of relatives or friends, Nelson said.

One positive note from this year’s count: The number of homeless veterans decreased by 9 percent.

People of color, however, are disproportionately represented in the homeless population.

According to the report, “African Americans make up just 2 percent of the population in Oregon, but make up 6 percent of the homeless population in Oregon, and Native Americans make up 1.1 percent of the total population and 4.2 percent of the homeless population.”