

February 5, 2021

Word Count: 201

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QuickPoint! – Take Stock, Then Take Action on Portland’s Homeless Crisis

By Vlad Yurlov

Since 2015, Portland City Council has declared continuous housing emergencies. We’re now into the sixth year, and the City’s housing and homelessness crises are still in full swing. Yet, nobody even knows where or how many shelter beds are available in the metro area. [Cascade Policy Institute released a new report](#) that offers straightforward solutions to the growing number of unsheltered homeless in the Portland region. It’s time to get back to the basics. And what is more basic than knowing where homeless people can go?

This means [tracking where shelter beds are available and distributing this information](#) to outreach workers and officers. If there really isn’t space, we need to know. But if there are available beds, we must offer every homeless individual a roof over their head.

Cities in both Washington and California use tracking systems to help more people get shelter. Meanwhile, Portland is behind the curve and paying for it. Instead of using shelter space more efficiently, the City Council pushed a housing bond that calls spending nearly \$300 thousand per unit “affordable.”

We can’t keep extending emergency declarations and borrowing forever. A shelter tracking system would allow Portland to finally take account of the homelessness crisis.

Vlad Yurlov is a Policy Analyst at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.