

June 30, 2021

Word Count: 246

Attention editors
and producers:

Cascade Commentaries are provided for reprint in newspapers and other publications, with credit given to author(s) and Cascade. Contact Cascade to arrange print or broadcast interviews on this commentary topic.

Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900
Fax: (503) 242-3822

www.cascadepolicy.org
info@cascadepolicy.org

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900
f: 503.242.3822
info@cascadepolicy.org
www.cascadepolicy.org

QuickPoint! – Portland Cannot Ignore “Low-Impact” Camps

A proposed ordinance aims to deprioritize some homeless camps considered “low impact”

By Mia Tiwana

This week, Portland City Council will consider new rules for homeless camp clean-ups. If approved, the city will “deprioritize” camps considered “low impact.” But, what makes a camp **low impact**?

The city says a camp is low impact if it’s 150 feet away from a childcare facility, preschool, or primary school. That’s a 30-second walk. I’m sure most parents would think having a sprawling homeless camp less than a minute from their kids’ school isn’t low impact.

Once kids hit high school, the Council’s new rule says a camp is low impact if it’s only ten feet—or just 20 seconds away.

But, it gets worse. The city won’t clear camps more than ten feet away from a residential or commercial building. In front of your home is a no-no. But, across the street from your house is okay in the city’s eyes.

The proposed ordinance turns a blind eye to the devastating toll the camps have taken on Portland. They’re more than just a visual blight, they’re a public health and safety nuisance. When camps pop up in a neighborhood, they bring garbage, crime, and violence. They are a danger to the community and to the campers themselves.

There is no such thing as a low-impact camp because small camps can grow into sprawling camps in a matter of days. Ignoring low-impact camps only redistributes the problem, it doesn’t solve the problem.

The city must find enough shelter space to begin cleaning up *all* camps.

Mia Tiwana is a Research Associate at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.

Cascade Policy Institute is a tax-exempt educational organization as defined under IRS code 501 (c)(3). Nothing appearing in this Cascade Commentary is to be construed as necessarily representing the views of Cascade or its donors. The views expressed herein are the author’s own.

