

To whom it may concern,

Thank you in advance for your time and considerations.

Let me start by saying how much I love Portland and am fully committed to making Portland a place for all people to feel safe and valued. My name is Ed Hutson I am a life long Portland resident and small business owner in downtown Portland. I currently own The Multnomah Whiskey Library on SW 12th and Alder. We employ 50 plus people and have been in business since 2013. We have over 2000 local members with an average age of 37 and over 25,000 people on our monthly newsletter with a 70% open rate from all over the world. We are very proud to originate from Portland and are committed to help promote all the wonderful talent we have here within our hospitality and creative community. The Portland restaurant and creative scene was a major tourist attraction pre-covid and I want to help get it back to it's prime as it was the biggest wow factor to Portland's image and needs to be revitalized and supported. We cannot continue losing these folks.

I recently attended a meeting hosted by commissioner Carmen Rubio, attendee's included an amazing small business group of West End and downtown business owners at City Hall. I also have attended and hosted Reimagining Portland meetings at MWL and Weiden and Kennedy along with meeting numerous times with multiple business owners and operators in downtown over the last few years. These discussions all have a common thread and have finally inspired me to share my struggles with Portland in its current state. To be honest I was afraid to speak out for the fear of being cancelled, but hearing from many people in my same situation now is the time.

It is clear to me in my experiences since measure 110 has passed it has caused great damage to Portland, my business and all those surrounding me. As you know owning a small business with rising inflation, covid, lack of employees, lack of tourism and consumer fall off is all hard enough. Throw in the mentally ill and drug users roaming the city almost unchecked it is very bad for Portland, employees, residents and business.

Here is one real life anecdote I like to use, almost 4 times a week I walk from 12th through the Pearl along the waterfront and up and down different downtown streets- I almost always stop to ask a homeless person if they need help and where are you from...I have yet to meet anyone from Portland. It seems to me we have created a drug haven or drug tourism for those wanting to do drugs and not be bothered. In fact we are helping them along enabling them and allowing the traffickers and dealers to thrive. It is unfair that Portland taxpayers are taking care of the nations drug users...We have built it and they have come. Our great empathy and progressive values are being taken advantage of. I have even heard other cities bussing folks to Portland versus helping them there. We have clearly just made it too easy for this type of behavior. This is not good for anyone including the addict and mentally ill. Show me someone employable and not on drugs I'm sure the city will have multiple avenues to help them, drug user and mentally ill not so much. They also are the ones that don't want housing or help, but this shouldn't mean we just let them do whatever they want.

I have a very personal story I will share. My sister was a heroin addict and died on the streets in her early 30's. One saving grace for our family is when she was actually arrested. Once arrested she could detox and we as a family could provide her help and support to get her to a

facility. Even though she still succumbed to the drugs we were always thankful for the chance for her to be arrested. Now this is gone- now it's just take more drugs and oh by the way we will help you with whatever you need...needles, foils etc... It's almost like hospice or saying go ahead and die. The result is we see record breaking overdose deaths to date with no slow down in sight- when is too many too many? This it is simply not right nor is it working. This is bad parenting 101...enabling at its worst. No one wants to walk around and see death.

Here are some of my direct revenue losing experiences since measure 110 was passed:

-Daily I have to remove graffiti, human feces and garbage from my street door openings.

-Daily my employees have to leave work at night using the buddy system due to fear of drug users and mentally ill harassing them or worse. They also are afraid to use public transit especially in the late hours.

-Daily we talk about how bad it is and are traumatized by the problems and it is hard for people to be upbeat at work, mental health days are soaring by employers who feel helpless and afraid. Hearing of so many other restaurants closing is also wearing down hope.

-We are open to the public but also have a membership base, it has decreased from a 90% renewal rate to 70% with the biggest reason for the decline is #1 not feeling safe to come downtown #2 moving from Oregon. We do exit interviews with all members and they flat out are scared to come downtown and citing Oregon as too expensive.

-We had to add valet parking at a considerable cost as an option for customers to battle the image of not wanting to park vehicles on unsafe streets.

-My member waitlist used to be over 5000 and it has dwindled to below a 1000.

-Overall business is down 30%. This % is echoed by every business owners I talk with, some much worse.

-Loads of employee and manager training time of how to deal with not only traumatized employees but drug users and mentally ill as well.

-I track tourist traffic by way of out of town reservations requests and it is off by 75%. Just ask hotels what their occupancy rate is, I don't know anyone around me over 40%.

-We are losing the bar crawl, foodie tourism we once had that made Portland so great.

-Finding full time employees that want to work downtown is now becoming difficult, part time forget about it -not only is it unsafe it is expensive to park and live. The only affordable places are over 30 minutes away and public transport becomes much more difficult at those distances along with it being unsafe especially at night.

-The gross taxes on my business are staggering development and investment in my business and employees. There is little in actual perceived results for what we pay on the gross taxes levied. Hospitality profits are in the single digits and taxes on Gross revenues are extremely unfair.

-If you are a victim of car theft, any theft or harassment there is no follow up from the city and no empathy for the working victims- it is all considered non-emergency. You are almost made to feel that you are the bad guy for reporting. This also feeds into the idea of helplessness and giving up. More trauma added.

-No one talks about the environmental damage that is occurring. This is an environmental disaster, our parks and open spaces are in some areas unusable and unsanitary causing long term damage we can't even project. These conditions promote disease and decay. Dogs are literally dying by eating things off the ground laced in fentanyl. Who knows how many other non domesticated animals are being affected, let alone the aquatic species in streams and rivers next to these camps.

-I travel all over the US promoting my employees and the spirit business and everyone cringes and says "how are you doing?" when I say I'm from Portland. That never used to be the case.

Fixes:

-Please allow the city of Portland commissioners plan that they have had for over two years be implemented. Unleash the funds we have paid into the gross homeless tax.

-Starting with the repeal or major overhaul of measure 110. We cannot wait another 18 months for 110 to go back on the ballot for a repeal fix it now. The unintended consequences are driving small business, tourism, employees and local consumers out of downtown and we need help to change this.

-Please reach out to FEMA as this is a humanitarian crisis and should be treated as such. We have unwittingly become the nations ground zero for drug users and human traffickers. If other states are sending folks to us we should be subsidized federally.

-Give downtown business owners any tax break you can- hindsight being 20/20 the gross taxes that passed a few years ago sounded good when times were good but now are just another problem crippling business and thwarting investment, growth and sustainability. Raise the threshold for when to pay and consider single digit margin business be exempt.

-Make it safer then-- Invest in a **PR campaign** celebrating all the small and big victories of how Portland is getting safer- hire local influencers to strategize on how to do this in a grass roots way...(ie-Kimiko and others)

-Allow for downtown employees (especially part time) that are under x number in wages to park free. Without part time and full time employees we cannot have business and no business no taxes.

-I am happy to meet with any leaders and provide tours around my area.

-No more long term drug use studies, spend the money we have and trust our city leaders to do so wisely-just PLEASE HELP! It's time to stop this cycle we are in.

- I would like to see an environmental impact acknowledgment and then a plan on how to mediate damage done by encampments and any space people are gathering- the amount of garbage, hazardous run off and disease is not safe for people or wildlife.

-End or reform 110 and it's unintended drug tourism consequences.

-Crack down on drug sellers and human traffickers.

-Fund the justice system and public defenders, invest in affordable housing, drug detox centers, **add police quicker**, invest in rehabilitation centers and stop policies that enable.

Thank you again! I appreciate you listening and I look forward to continuing the discussions.

Cheers,
Ed Hutson
MWL Owner
W. 503-954-1381

Multnomah Whisk{e}y Library
1124 SW Alder St. PDX, OR
www.mwlpdx.com