

BEYOND THE REVANCHIST CITY, WHICH MANAGEMENT OF HOMELESSNESS? THE COMPASSIONATE INVISIBILIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS IN PORTLAND

ANTONIN MARGIER - UNIVERSITY OF RENNES

MANAGING HOMELESSNESS: BETWEEN CARE AND PUNISHMENT

The punitive city (Smith, 1996; Mitchell, 1997; Amster, 2003)

/

Urban landscapes of care (DeVerteuil, 2006; May & Cloke, 2014)

- “Coercive care” (Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2020)
- “Therapeutic policing” (Stuart, 2016)
- “Compassionate revanchism” (Speer & Hennigan, 2019)

The combination of punitive and supportive policies: an adjustment of policing?

CONTEXT

- Portland (Oregon): a progressive city and a sustainability model...
... which generates an uneven development (Goodling et al., 2015)
- Average rent climbs 63% between 2006 and 2015
- 38000 homeless individuals in 2017 (Zapata et al., 2019)
- 2015: State of emergency on Housing and Homelessness



A COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS

- Low barrier shelters equipped with social and health services
- Tiny homes villages
- The rise of outreach work in the police bureau
 - Homeless community liaison officer
 - Neighborhood Responses Teams
- A shift from a punitive to a compassionate approach to homelessness



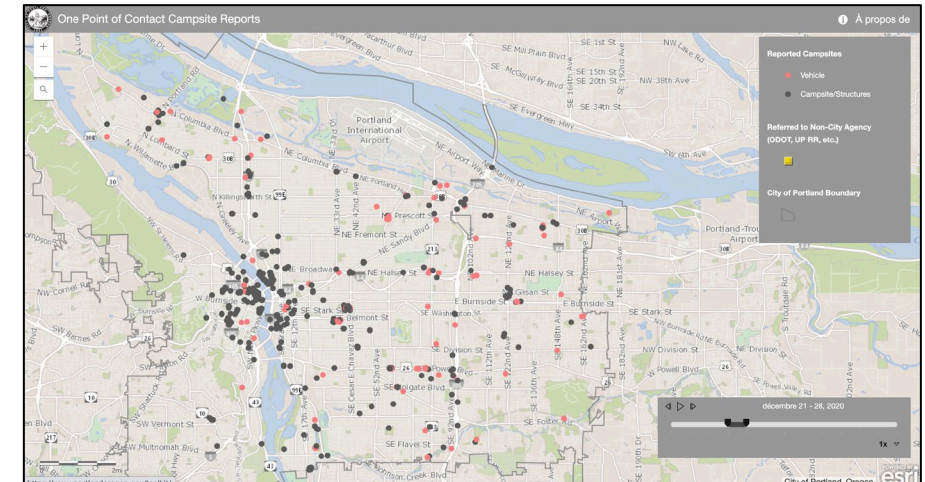
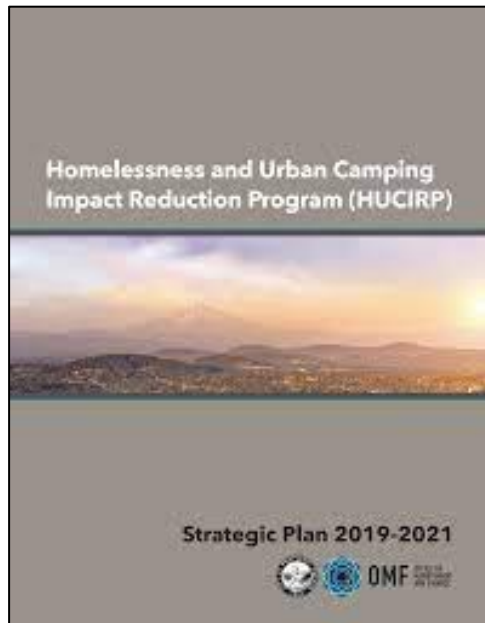
Dignity Village




The Navigation Center, a low-barrier shelter

OUTREACH WORK AS A DRIVER OF CLEANUPS

- Camp-related complaints : « Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program » (HUCIRP)





CITY OF PORTLAND
WEEKLY CAMPSITE REPORT
March 2 – March 8, 2020

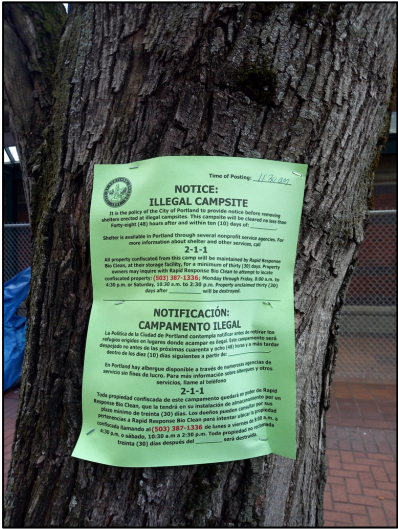
Last week, the Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program (HUCIRP):

- Posted and cleaned 64 campsites.
- Completed approximately 359 assessments—engaging with people living in camps, collecting garbage and biohazardous materials, and coordinating with service providers.

This week we received:
832 new campsite reports identifying 244 active campsites throughout the City.
Of these reports:

- 92 were reports of people living in vehicles.

OUTREACH WORK AS A DRIVER OF CLEANUPS



- The Navigation Team

HICURP: a 3-5 million-dollar-budget in 2020

# of individuals engaged (2019-2021)	#of individuals helded to into shelter	# of individuals given housing referrals
918	403	41

OUTREACH WORK AS A DRIVER OF CLEANUPS

« It is a **band aid at best and it is not a very big band aid**, it's . . . as I told you before, **it is a way to provide some momentary relief for the businesses and residents that are immediately affected by that specific camp**, and there is no guarantee that the camp is gonna to stay gone, there is no guarantee that the camp will not come back as soon as we leave. [. . .] When we drove by the last camp, there were tents back again » (police officer, *Neighborhood Response Team*).

Annual cost of the cleanups in 2019-2020: 3,6 million dollars
(4 million dollars in 2020-2021)

TOWARD THE INVISIBILIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS?

Toward a self-invisibilization of the homeless

- This work consists of “educating people on how they can reduce their impact and their visibility essentially with the people that are around them, be a good neighbor, I mean if you gonna camp, we know you gonna camp, there is a way to which you could draw less attention to yourself so . . .” (police officer, *Neighborhood Response Team*)

The low barrier shelters: support of the cleanups and invisibilization

- A seclusion space (Herring, 2019)

CONCLUSION

- On Sept. 4, 2018, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in the case *Martin v. City of Boise* that **cities could not prohibit homeless people from camping in public places unless they had adequate shelter available**
- Providing alternatives to sleeping in public spaces: a leeway to clear the streets?
- The rise of outreach practices in the management of homelessness comes out as an adjustment of policing to the legal context and external claims for more humane strategies to end homelessness