

## EDITORIAL

### Drug Impact Area's raise questions and concerns

Did you know that progressive Portland has a marijuana free zone? SR didn't either until a city official dropped by the office with neighborhood maps that outlined the new Drug Impact Area, formerly known as the drug-free zones.

We were shocked to learn that Portland tax-payer money may be used by law enforcement to potentially target and arrest marijuana users in the downtown core for possible exclusion on repeat offenses. The marijuana drug impact area is one of three areas targeting both repeat users, and dealers in downtown. (See article on page 3.) The other two areas are for cocaine and heroin.

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As many readers know – SR isn't crazy about drug-free zones, or drug impact areas. Simply put, we think they have the potential to create systematic profiling, and target people experiencing poverty.

The system can pat itself on the back around these issues all they want, saying they're getting individuals help through recovery programs, and people are

moving on. For the people that have moved on through recovery programs, that's fantastic. Unfortunately, that's not the reality for many.

We know that there is a direct correlation between the lack of education and employment opportunities for minorities and poor folk in Portland, and the uptick in gang violence and open-air drug dealing. Giving law-enforcement more tools to put people in jail, or to exclude them from certain parts of the city isn't the answer. In fact, it's a product of horrible policies that have been played out time and again for decades in urban cores.

Instead of innovative economic measures and harm reduction approaches on the ground – we are left with an ancient broken window philosophy that says you have to target the street level users and dealers. We can think of a million reasons, literally, sitting in jail cells in the United States that says that philosophy is wrong. Not to mention it's costly, and overwhelmingly slanted towards punishing minorities.

After seeing the maps for the drug impact area, SR made a public records request for a number of documents, guidelines, and protocols related to the new drug policy downtown. The problem is there's not a lot on paper that exists, in fact, other than an ordinance passed by the city to fund more police on the ground, and to pay for a special District Attorney to oversee the program – there's hardly anything. It's one thing for community organizations to respectively disagree with a policy, which we do. It's another to be left in the dark long after people are starting to be excluded before any kind of guidelines, public process, or education has taken place in our community. It feels yucky, because it is yucky. It's business as usual.

SR isn't just blowing hot air. We have outlined on several occasions how to target street corners through a variety of harm reduction models. The current policy will most likely become another embarrassment for the city. A judge (not the one signing the exclusions) will declare this unconstitutional, and/or we'll see that it targets almost exclusively minorities and poor people.

If we're wrong, we'll eat our words on these pages, and be glad to write an apology for taking such a harsh tone. If not, we hope Portland has the leadership to do the same, and change this policy.

### STREET ROOTS' EDITORIAL BOARD

The views expressed in the editorials in Street Roots are the consensus of members of the editorial board and contributing volunteers.

## Resource Guide on the streets

The Rose City Resource Guide will hit the streets next week. The program is supported by many organizations throughout the Portland area ranging from social service and health providers to area churches and local government.

The 104-page guide is the most extensive list of resources available for people on the streets and experiencing poverty.

The guide has become so popular among different groups interfacing with people on the streets that we have secured funding for 106,000 guides this year, up from 60,000.

Groups using the guide come from all ends of the spectrum – from local law enforcement agencies and first responders to emergency rooms and hospitals to neighborhood and church groups to local businesses and judicial system. Each group uses the guide to have a better relationship with people seeking help, but also to fast track individuals to the service they need and deserve.

Currently, SR works alongside 211 Info which does amazing work. We are constantly working with one another to improve communication and how people access services. It's important for both of our organizations to work together to diminish the red-tape many individuals and families have to go through, often times in crisis, when looking for a helping hand.

We are living in extraordinary economic times. SR continues to serve thousands of people trying to prevent homelessness or break themselves from its demonstrative chains. We see it day-in and day-out, like clockwork. People faced with the unimaginable. The resource guide is one tool, and offering of peace in a world that isn't kind or in many cases forgiving.

SR works hard to be the information arm of homelessness and poverty in the region. From our in-depth reporting on issues that matter to being a vehicle for other organizations doing important work and publishing people who otherwise would go completely ignored. The guide serves as a tool for local agencies and groups to save staff time, and to be able to build relationships on the streets. From the smallest grassroots non-profits to some of the largest institutions in the city – you will find the Rose City Resource Guide.

If you're in need of just one guide, or a small amount, local neighborhood vendors will have guides available. Last year SR vendors passed along more than 7,000 guides peer-to-peer on the streets. We hope to continue this trend. The majority of non-profits throughout Multnomah and Washington Counties along with others will have the guide available. It takes a village to make a difference, and we're glad to work alongside all of the groups to make our community a better place.



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### DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Israel Bayer

### Happenings



### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Street Roots encourages readers to submit letters and columns for publication. Send letters to the editor to the Street Roots office, 211 NW Davis St., Portland, OR 97209, or e-mailed to [streetrootsnews@gmail.com](mailto:streetrootsnews@gmail.com).

On Friday, August 5th Project Grow and The Gallery at Port City proudly announce Street Art: A Group Show. The opening reception will be held from 6pm to 10pm. This group show will feature local and national artists and will showcase and celebrate the art of the streets. The show will be held in The Gallery at Port City, an engaging space open to change, located at 2156 N. Williams Ave. Portland, OR 97227, for the month of August. Three-dollar suggested donation. Project Grow is a space for community collaboration where people can engage in conversation and action to advocate for human rights, the value of art in society, urban farming and the pursuit of passions. To learn more about Project Grow visit [www.growinginalldirections.org](http://www.growinginalldirections.org). The artwork above is by Travis Bonneau.

Our blog and our Facebook page are great ways to join the conversation. Visit [www.streetroots.wordpress.com](http://www.streetroots.wordpress.com) and friend us on Facebook to chime in!