

# Bill Leineweber

**#257091 | March 2, 2021**

## Testimony to **Portland City Council** on the **Shelter to Housing Continuum Project, Recommended Draft**

Dear Portland City Council, while we all agree that the objective of providing temporary housing and services to homeless persons is a critical social commitment of the city, the 'Shelter to Housing Continuum Project' does not achieve it, and in fact, it has provisions that introduces reverse discrimination and enables unsafe, unsustainable housing alternatives. For example, in the introductory summary of S2HC Draft 1, it states ‘...[S2HC] is part of a larger multi-jurisdictional effort to provide safe, decent and affordable shelter and housing to every Portlander that needs it.’ In fact, the project facilitates the propagation of sidewalk, makeshift housing including tents and makeshift structures. Everyone familiar with these encampments know they are neither safe, decent, nor sustainable. They are awash in garbage around them, and the residents pollute the public areas with debris, food waste, needles and even human waste. Also, confrontations, violence, and attempted murder are already features of the camps. The project legitimizes these encampments in highly used public areas, such as parks and boulevards, thereby rewarding the civic disobedience that are a hallmark of them. These campsites have been removed several times, and the residents were offered sheltered housing alternatives. However, a relatively small group, aided and abetted by activists, ignored the regulations reestablished the camps, and monopolize the use of large sections of the public areas which adjoin them. Enabling changes in civic regulations that prohibit camping on public property (e.g. Reg 03.18.030) is a compromise of the rights of the majority of citizens to use these recreational areas, in order to capitulate to the small groups of campers and activists that keep them. The 'Shelter to Housing Continuum Project' discriminates against the home-owners that pay for public areas and who deserve to enjoy their use. Rather, it embodies a city government that sacrafises the access and safety of these areas to a small group of people. The better solution is to maintain and enforce our existing regulations that prohibit campsites in all residential, public-use areas and emphasize the other investments in manageable financed shelters that provide safe, sustainable housing, The S2HC project documents state, ‘The City of Portland seeks social justice by expanding choice and opportunity for all community members, recognizing a special responsibility to identify and engage, as genuine partners, under-served and under-represented communities in planning, investment, implementation, and enforcement processes, particularly those with potential to be adversely affected by the results of decisions.’ Unfortunately, actions of this project rewards social disobedience, limits choices of homeowners and is taking terrible short-cuts by deregulating the ordinances that protect our environment, public safety, and recreational facilities. It rewards unsustainable campsites of a small group of people and discriminates against

the vast majority of citizens who proudly fund, preserve and use our city's treasures. Dear Council Members, do not approve this plan. Send it back to the 'multi-jurisdictional' authors with instructions to create a sustainable and equitable plan for all. Regards, Bill Leineweber

Testimony is presented without formatting.