

My name is Henry Kraemer and I am a homeowner in the Eliot neighborhood of northeast Portland. I urge you to vote YES on the Shelter to Housing Continuum and adopt the amendments proposed by Portland: Neighbors Welcome to provide greater flexibility for the siting of housing and shelter options.

Our city is in the throes of a housing and homelessness crisis, with an unconscionable number of Portlanders living without safe, stable shelter. When we talk about houseless people, we are talking about human beings – somebody’s children – who are living in constant desperation and mortal danger. This is unacceptable in a city that prides itself as a compassionate community. We have a moral responsibility to find safe, stable shelter for our houseless neighbors, and to use every tool at our disposal to do so.

The Shelter to Housing Continuum legalizes a powerful set of tools to support houseless Portlanders and create greater safety, security, and community across the city, for housed and unhoused people alike.

S2HC’s expanded group living options and legalized RVs and tiny houses on wheels provide pathways for low-income and very poor Portlanders to get and keep a roof over their heads.

S2HC’s legalized Outdoor Shelters build on the proven, successful model of the Kenton Women’s Village to create stable, clean communities that offer dignity, health, and stability.

By removing or reducing artificial barriers to opening shelters across the city, S2HC will make it easier to get people off the street and into safe living arrangements.

Whether due to compassion or a grimmer set of emotions, nobody wants to see people living on the street in our city. But we cannot wish homelessness away. We cannot ethically (or even practically) ban houseless people from any Portland community. We can only get people off the street by providing them viable places to live. This is why we need the Shelter to Housing Continuum.

City Council must enact S2HC and reject any calls to water it down. Indeed, the City should embrace solutions like those proposed by Portland: Neighbors Welcome, that offer greater flexibility to provide shelter and housing options:

- Allow Outdoor Shelters to be sited in Open Space zones and the right-of-way on a case-by-case basis, so long as each site is approved by a vote of City Council,
- Allow churches, faith-based organizations, and community organizations to site Outdoor Shelters in low-density residential zones by right, and
- Allow RVs and tiny houses on wheels on residential lots without a sewer line, if other approved sanitation options are available.

We cannot delay enacting the Shelter to Housing Continuum. Please vote YES on the S2HC and on the proposed amendments from Portland: Neighbors Welcome. Thank you very much for your consideration.