

# David Groff

**#267260 | March 13, 2021**

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

My name is David Groff. I live in the Woodstock Neighborhood at 4205 SE Ramona Street. I am a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Northeast Portland and the Interfaith Alliance on Poverty. The Alliance is a group of fourteen congregations, Catholic, Jewish and Protestant. Most are located in Northeast Portland but three are on the westside. All our member congregations are acutely aware of the houselessness crisis our city has been experiencing for some time. We all encounter people seeking shelter on our property and we all participate in programs serving the houseless providing both volunteers and financial support. Our faith traditions tell us in no uncertain terms that no one should have to live without shelter. Every human being deserves a decent place to live, and I appreciate the efforts underway by the City and County to ramp up the production of affordable housing. Unfortunately, however, we cannot build ourselves out of the present crisis any time soon. In the meantime, we need to find as many creative interim solutions as possible. For that reason, I strongly urge you to adopt the Shelter to Housing Continuum measures. More specifically, I urge you to take the following actions:

- Pass the recommended zoning changes in S2HC and consider additional amendments that will add tools and flexibility to our unhoused community.
- Renew the Housing Emergency Declaration due to expire in April.
- Incorporate innovative shelter and housing options—including sanctioned villages, tiny houses on wheels, and RV parks—into our city and regional plans and allocate enough resources (land, funding, technical assistance) to help meet the needs in our community, centering the voices of those who are experiencing houselessness.
- Take the lead in helping community organizations and service providers site villages throughout the City, including on publicly-owned land. As a person of faith, I regard the zoning code as a moral document that should reflect our community's most important values, including the imperative to lift the poor and improve the quality of life for our most vulnerable. It is impossible to overstate the urgency of the present situation in our city. The level of human indignity currently on our streets must be addressed as effectively and humanely as possible.

Testimony is presented without formatting.