

# Lynn Felton

**#267267 | March 13, 2021**

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

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners, Thank you to all those who have given their time and energy to the Shelter to Housing Continuum proposal. Your service is appreciated. I can not endorse this plan and I hope the Mayor and Commissioners come to the same conclusion because this plan, as it is written, leaves out equity. This city pledges equity - BDS has a mission statement of equity, but it is not in this proposal. All of the Portland city code will change and those with power tell us - Portlanders in Outer East Portland - that makes it equal. All Outer East Portlanders know what that equal looks like, it's equal until a partner agency looks at land cost, it's equal until services in the area are looked for, it's equal until transport is looked for, and then the answer becomes repeatedly, disproportionately... Outer East Portland. The "historic" affluent neighborhoods of Portland are no longer the answer because of ... land cost... transport... lack of services so even though the plan is equal, the reality is only certain neighborhoods get to help solve the homeless/housing crisis facing this city. The "historic"/affluent neighborhoods of Portland get to stay "historic"/affluent while the disinvestment of Outer East Portland continues. **ALREADY IN THE PLANS:** In fact - Outer East is already in the plans for playing a big part in the solution according to the Multnomah County Local Implementation plan METRO Housing services Program approved by Multnomah County Commissioners on December 17. There is 52 million to be spent this year on this project - it's funded and approved. The need it states is in East County ... it fails to mention Gresham, Happy Valley, Fairview - none of these city codes allows for the shelters that are in the S2HC proposal. So we arrive back at where will the outcome of this code change be placed? The only city it is allowed... Portland. And where in Portland is closest to the need according to this approved and funded Multnomah County plan? Outer East Portland. **OUTER EAST SOLUTION CENTRAL:** Outer East Portland is even more attractive because of the plethora of services the City, County and State have recently built on NE 122nd. We have Multnomah County Harm Reduction clinic, Hansen homeless shelter (since closed), State of Oregon Department of Human Services, Blackburn building run by Central City Concern a 175 bed housing and medical facility, New Narrative - a Behavioral health partner of Multnomah county, Wy'east Men's shelter - a 110 bed facility. Let's look at what services have not come to Outer East Portland - in fact they have closed down - grocery stores, no Trader Joe's, no Green Zebra for Outer East, nope, even Safeway/Target closed up and ran after a homeless shelter (Hansen) was opened across the street from it. That building remains empty to this day. The retail space at the bottom of the Blackburn building - empty. The US Bank in Menlo Park Plaza - the location of the Harm reduction clinic - closed - empty. **TRUST BROKEN:** So as we

watch our little corner of Portland far away from City Hall slowly die as private investment flees, we are told once again in the S2HC plan to trust those with power as our voice gets swept away by Non conditional use written into the code. There might have been trust before but then Multnomah County decided to put the only full time Multnomah County run Harm Reduction Clinic (Needle exchange amongst other services) five blocks from an elementary school (Menlo Park) and across the street from not one but three elderly care facilities. Yes, the people we are told to trust thought, addicts, the elderly and elementary school aged children are a good mix. So once again city officials are coming to us and saying trust us, but our lived experience tells us a different story. EQUITY IN PRACTICE: The population demographics of Outer East Portland - working class, BIPOC and immigrants. So while everyone talks a nice equity game, when it comes right down to it those old ways are just too darn convenient to let go. The County and JOHS tells us we have listened to those in Outer East and they have told us they want services in Outer East - never mentioning whose lived experience the county and city has chosen to listen to. Amazingly - those lived experiences, for the most part, line up with the most economically efficient solution. Economically efficient solutions are not equity, selective listening is not equity practice. Here's a possible solution - build an Equity Matrix into this proposal, use PBOT's as the base - add to it measurement scores for low income housing/homeless services/group homes that are already in the neighborhood. A high score - the neighborhood is already participating in the solution - a low score, not participating and the area should be considered for solutions - no matter the land price, transportation and available services. Please include an Equity Matrix in this proposal so all of Portland can truly be part of the solution, so Portland can truly demonstrate it is a city that practices equity and not only for the politically connected and those the city chooses to listen to, but equitable for all. Please vote no to the Shelter to Housing Continuum proposal.

Testimony is presented without formatting.