

Les Wardenaar

#267321 | March 14, 2021

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

A close up of a sign Description automatically generated March 5, 2021 City of Portland Commissioners c/o Mayor Ted Wheeler Re: Shelter to Housing Continuum (S2HC) Project Dear Mayor Wheeler: We are writing on behalf of the Interfaith Alliance on Poverty, comprised of 14 faith congregations in the Portland metro region. We believe public policies and budgets are moral documents and should move us toward a more just and equitable society. As members of the greater Portland community, we feel that an essential task before us is to move unsanctioned camping off our streets and improve the quality of life for our most vulnerable citizens. The current crisis is showing no signs of easing; in fact, when the eviction ban is lifted, even more individuals and families will likely become unhoused. The Alliance supports the proposed zoning changes included in the Shelter to Housing Continuum (S2HC) project and acknowledges the work of the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and of the Planning and Sustainability Commission. However, having followed this process since its beginning, we know that adopting these code changes will not eliminate our housing emergency, and that moving forward we can, and must, do better. We strongly urge you, as our Portland City Council, to: Adopt the recommended zoning changes in the Planning and Sustainability Commission's transmittal. While not perfect, they represent a toolkit that will increase shelter options. Renew the emergency declaration, set to expire this April, to ensure flexibility in tackling this crisis. Take advantage of that time to further investigate best practices around the country regarding options for shelter including, but not limited to, self-governing tent camps, tiny houses, yurts, and recreational vehicle parks. Acknowledge that congregate shelters do not work for all and seek more direct input from the unhoused community. Continue to view the zoning code as a living document that can be further amended as new solutions are uncovered. Keep in front of you the goal of reducing bureaucracy and eliminating barriers. For example, the Conditional Use review process is cumbersome, lengthy, and expensive. It could be used as a weapon of opposition to siting of new sanctioned shelters and could affect the number and distribution of new shelter sites.? Challenge all Portland bureaus to aggressively work together toward affordable solutions for our houseless population, including, but by no means limited to, removing restrictions on tiny houses on wheels and RVs included in Title 29. We cannot overstate the urgency before us all. Please act swiftly and with conviction to address this crisis. Sincerely, Les Wardenaar, Chair Sarabelle Hitcener, Vice Chair

Testimony is presented without formatting.