

# Erik Anderson

**#267425 | March 15, 2021**

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

I am a Portland resident, a member of Ainsworth United Church of Christ, and of the Interfaith Alliance on Poverty. I believe public policies and budgets are moral documents and should move us toward a more just and equitable society. I 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 and we must act boldly and swiftly to implement solutions. I support the proposed zoning changes included in the Shelter to Housing Continuum (S2HC) project. The proposals allow group living by right in residential zones; create new options for RVs and/or tiny houses on wheels on residential property; relax Conditional Use review for shelters in most zones; and allow outdoor shelters to include RVs, tiny houses, and other housing types. However, I believe that moving forward we can, and must, do better. I 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.
- Keep the door open to allowing outdoor shelters in appropriate open spaces, as approved on a case-by-case basis by the City Council. Acknowledge that open space zones include more than parks and sensitive natural areas. Many open spaces and rights of ways can be candidates for outdoor shelters.
- Reduce the time and cost of setting up outdoor shelters. 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 should be waived for faith based and non-profit shelters that meet size limits.
- Challenge all Portland bureaus to aggressively work together toward affordable solutions for our houseless population, including, but by no means limited to, removing hook-up and permitting restrictions on tiny houses on wheels and RVs included in Title 29.

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Testimony is presented without formatting.