

Christine Kosonen

#267470 | March 15, 2021

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

As a long time Portland resident, Sunnyside homeowner, and parent, I am deeply concerned about the growing homeless population in PDX. I sincerely wish for all people to receive services that support their path to safe housing, HOWEVER I am very concerned with the significant impact and decrease in safety and quality of life for all Portlanders that these camps cause. Living in SE Portland, I now ON THE DAILY deal intimately with crises of mental illness and drug addiction on the blocks around me. As picking up needles, human waste, trash, and dealing with screaming and intoxicated people is now a regular occurrence, our family's quality of life has diminished significantly over the last 5 years. Unfortunately, a lack of housing is not the only issue with the encampments that block our sidewalks and cover our parks and public spaces; trash, untreated mental crises, increased crime, and open drug use are now in my child's eyes also daily. The current Portland response to homelessness is DYSFUNCTIONAL to protect the health, safety, and productivity for local homeowners, children, and business owners. While I am happy that City Council is finally facing this MASSIVE issue, I am very concerned that S2HC is not sufficiently and carefully detailed enough to prevent even greater damage to our communities from homeless issues. I ask for 1.) Careful revisions of the project to ensure protection of our public spaces and the safety of our citizens especially in SE where we have already been dealing with the brunt of this crisis for years and are not naive to the impact on neighborhoods and businesses. I ask for the creation of a revised map showing equitable distribution of potential shelter spaces in ALL Portland communities. Even if SE has more potential spaces, they should be removed from the map until a balance of ALL communities is shown. 2.) I ask that for any shelter to open, there are extensive clear lines of responsibility made available to all citizens to ensure the shelter's care and monitoring. Absentee owners should NOT be able to rent out property and then leave the problems to those nearby. 3.) I also want to see all random camping made illegal again -- especially camping in school zones, camping blocking sidewalks and right of ways, camping in store fronts, camping in public parks. These areas are created and maintained for the public at large and not for any individual shelter. And definitely are not appropriate places for defecation, open drug use, and piles of trash if we are to function as a healthy city. 4.) No permanent changes to the codes at this time. Let Title 15 expire so that random camping is no longer allowed and extend a new emergency declaration to allow these new codes to be enacted temporarily under the new emergency time frame (no longer than one year). 5.) I suggest the creation of a long term monitoring task force and trash removal task force to keep specific track of camps that emerge in Portland and efficiently clean up the trash

sprawl from all abandoned camps so that our green spaces (even those along highways, and especially along sensitive waterways) are once again safe for wildlife and families. Thank you for your care and assistance. I sincerely hope we can combine diligence with compassion to create a functional plan to care for the homeless WHILE ALSO investing in a clean, safe community for ALL Portland residents.

Testimony is presented without formatting.