

Nick Christensen

#267543 | March 15, 2021

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

Thank you for your support for streamlining efforts to place new shelters in our city. Three new shelters have been built within a couple miles of my house already in the past few years. They got online relatively quickly. They've been good neighbors! They have helped our community and we are proud that they are our neighbors. I have lived in East Portland for 12 of the 25 years since it was annexed. And there's a common theme in discussions like these: "Just trust us." "Just trust us" that flag lot zoning reform will improve your communities. It wound up being described by the Oregonian as "the land of cheap, dense housing crammed into a community that still lacks basic public improvements such as paved streets, sidewalks and nearby parks." "Just trust us" that your homes will be better off connected to the sewer system. A rush of fly-by-night sewer operators half-assed construction and left a mess that has to be rebuilt after only a couple of decades. "Just trust us" after Prosper Portland built a commercial space and refused to rent it out and it's sat vacant for 4 years. "Just trust us" that transportation safety efforts will help East Portland. That's led to a bunch of road diets that have lengthened commutes and hasn't actually improved safety, particularly on the eastside. "Just trust us" that we will address justice reform, improve outcomes for people of color, and make for a safer community... when we have had dozens of shootings in Lents already this year. So no. "Just trust us" doesn't work out here anymore. And there's such an easy fix! Just add a 600 foot buffer. That's 12 houses. 2 apartment complexes. If you want to increase the number of shelters in Old Town, then do an overlay in East Portland. Alternately, just take a look at the last big "upzoning" in East Portland. See the aforementioned Oregonian story. The city jammed density into East Portland, which is not necessarily a bad thing. But it did not invest to compensate for that. And that has been a cardinal sin. Urbanists want you to think that this is a simple, YIMBY-vs-NIMBY discussion. But it's so much more complicated and it's time to hit pause until appropriate services can be offered.

Testimony is presented without formatting.