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

The proposed Shelter to Housing Continuum Project, as written, is flawed and should absolutely NOT be pursued for two reasons. 1. The plan to disperse economically internally displaced people to multiple sites throughout the city of Portland (Parks and Golf Courses) is inefficient. The current group of 'Homeless Services' not-for-profits who support this population in Portland will be challenged to deliver to so many different locations. I have many years of Humanitarian Assistance experience overseas and there is no doctrine that supports this approach. A better plan would be to consolidate this population in as few locations as possible and deploy the services to them on-site. The Salem Fair Grounds, as an example, is a great location. ALL of the Portland Services Partners could re-locate there in a semi-permanent manner and serve food, issue donated items, provide addiction counseling and whatever else is needed in a centralized manner. It is also closer to the Oregon State Hospital which could send counselors to this location for triage and decisions on longer term care. 2. The plan doesn't address the most important aspect of combating homelessness: employment. Helping this population become self sufficient through employment and creating the ability for them to remain in housing (assuming a successful transition from Shelters to Housing) is critical. Turning our parks into permanent homeless camps will not help these people end addiction, get mental health treatment and join the working world so they can SUSTAIN being housed. This should be the key. The current plan is focused entirely on housing in a welfare model, where Oregon tax payers continue to pay for the services being delivered with no plan to get these people employed. Use available dollars to train these folks and create financial incentives for businesses to hire them (like waiving employer payroll taxes for businesses that hire folks in this group). This is the path to creating a situation where the homeless population begins to decline as the healthy and trained move out of the services sphere into the working world.

Testimony is presented without formatting.