

Briana Weatherly

#267715 | March 15, 2021

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

As a resident, home owner and mother living in East Portland I have significant concerns with the Shelter to Housing Continuum Project. East Portland already bares the brunt of the houseless crises and Portland's mismanagement of it. East Portland has almost 50% of the City's shelter beds and now you want to construct more in our neighborhoods, while the affluent neighborhoods stay shelter free. The houseless crisis is a Portland issue and all of Portland should have to participate in the solution, not just certain zip codes. East Portland is already stretched to breaking, our community cannot carry this weight for Portland. There must be an equitable distribution of shelters across ALL of Portland. It has become unsafe to go for a walk along many of our neighborhood streets for fear of having to walk through camps that have overtaken our sidewalks and are littered with used hypodermic needles, feces, and hazardous waste. I believe that all people deserve humane living conditions and to have their basic needs met, but that is not occurring in Portland and this proposal will not solve that. This code change would allow these unsafe encampments to remain permanently, with no plan for wrap-around services (e.g mental health, addiction treatment, access to food, human waste management, trash management, etc.). These conditions are inhumane for those living in them and a public safety hazard to the larger community. Furthermore, the taxpayers of Portland have voted over and over to fund recreation programs, park services and protection of natural areas within our city. Opening these areas to homeless camps and shelters would not only go against the will of the people, it would forever change the landscape of Portland. Those spaces would no longer be accessible to the community for their intended purposes; recreating, playing, walking, bird watching and just being in nature. All one has to do is walk through the countless Portland parks that currently have homeless encampments in or around them. It is not a safe environment and there is significant environmental damage being done. Mr. Wheeler and the City Commissioners need to go back to the drawing table. It is time for a comprehensive and equitable plan to address the houseless crisis in Portland. We are well past the time for band-aids and S2HC is a band-aid.

Testimony is presented without formatting.