

D'andrea' Williams

#277681 | March 15, 2021

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

I moved to this city 8 years ago. I fell in love with the mix of city and nature. The feeling I got walking the streets of downtown was absolutely incredible. I was drawn in by the creative art scene and burgeoning food culture. It immediately felt like home. This was important for me since Hurricane Katrina had altered my home town forever. After being homeless for two years, my now wife and I saved up enough money to move to our dream city! The first 7 years of living in Portland was a dream come true. Since the pandemic, I've watched this beautiful city turn into a place that reminds me of my former hurricane ravaged city. Women and children are harassed constantly while in parks and on runs by houseless tenants. Our residents whom require wheelchair access are being forced from the safety of the sidewalks into the streets to navigate around tents and trash. People are openly abusing drugs in front of children in public spaces and parks. The small businesses that are the backbone of this city are constantly being vandalized and broken into. There is an unsurmountable amount of trash throughout the city from our houseless tenants. My wife was groped sexually by a houseless person right outside of our own building. This was two years ago. She still lives with the trauma of that horrific incident. She's afraid to walk the streets at night because she feels "Portland isn't safe" any more. Retailers are scared to call the downtown core home because of the tents, trash, break ins and open drug use. Traffic in the downtown core has dropped significantly because people are scared to shop in fear of being harassed by houseless tenants. Anarchists are terrorizing the streets at night. It's starting to not feel like home to us anymore. When will the city consider the thoughts and feelings of the residents that go to work everyday, pay taxes, and contribute to the city's economy. We feel like we are not being heard. We feel like our voices do not count. I agree there should be a solution to the homeless challenges we face in the city. I do not agree that it should come at the expense of disrupting the lives and safety of hardworking families. I do not agree with opening up more spaces in parks for people to camp where kids play and learn. Portland is on the fast track to becoming the next Detroit, Michigan. The difference is, is that an entire industry abandoned Detroit. What's happening here in Portland is very much self inflicted. Residents will soon grow tired of being ignored and shut out. The end result will be a devastating flight out from this beautiful city. We can only be ignored for so long. I hope we can meet in the middle and come up with a solution that benefits both sides. Not just one.

Testimony is presented without formatting.