

Christa Gutschenritter

#277707 | March 16, 2021

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

To our City Commissioners and the initiators of this proposal: I am a third generation Portland resident, multiple business owner, mother of 3 young children and current resident of East Portland. I am writing because of my growing concern over this proposed measure. The proposed amendment to the code allowing “unlimited stay” permanent “outdoor shelters” continues to draw from the same tired playbook and does nothing to address the lack of mental health treatment and drug abuse problems at the root of this crisis. More handouts, more costly services funded by Portland tax dollars is hardly motivating homeless singles to confront their drug habits and is essentially incentivizing homelessness. If the city passes this revision, what happens? We concentrate criminal activity in one location. The direct result is the local community around these shanty towns are directly and catastrophically impacted. Theft, arson, lewdness, public drunkenness and blatant drug-activity sky-rocket, becoming routine occurrence near any tent enclave. Our neighborhoods refuse to accept the brunt of supporting these camps. - The parking lot of the local elementary school off Belmont, near Laurelhurst Park, has become a tent community and a hot bed of theft. The residents in the apartment building across the street have had their storage units looted repeatedly and found their stolen goods across the street in the tent encampment. - The Spring water corridor: once a calming oasis is now a dangerous path for young mothers with strollers and vulnerable little ones. The well known headline of the meth addict who tried abducting a 6 year old near the trail comes to mind (2019). - The 205 bike trail is now infested with an endless trail of tents, used needles strewn the path. My 65 year-old mother, and avid biker, refuses to bike there any longer due to the hazardous garbage and mentally ill shouting obscenities as she pedals by. -The Quesinberry camp in North Portland- aside from open drug use, has been a haven for car theft. In an interview with Willamette Week, Raafat Famad- a small business owner, says NINE cars were stolen from his dealership on Heyden island, two of which turned up at the tent city. With no ability to prosecute Famad is forced to absorb the loss. - Property value in the inner city is dropping as residents are moving out of the city into the suburbs to escape the growing filth. As citizens of this city we love, we demand aggressive action. Homeless do not deserve special rights or exemptions from established law, regardless of whether it's on city property. Stop turning a blind eye to the drug and mental health problems and provide better support for the community detox centers and require rehab if necessary for repeat offenders. Enable the police to enforce consequences for heroin and meth possession. Bring the other non-profits to the table, the para-religious organizations that have proven the most effective in long-term assistance. You are considering legalizing a policy that will

affect the next decade. Will the oncoming decay in our communities be worth the cost? Hoping for a better future, Christa Gutschenritter

Testimony is presented without formatting.