

# sherri kaven

**#277914 | March 16, 2021**

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

Dear City Council members, As we all know, the city of Portland is in an immense crisis. Once Portland was looked at as an example of creative energy; amazing food; entrepreneurial spirit; a nationwide example of mass transit building; a clean and green city; “a city that works”. I have considered Portland my home since I was a teenager and have always taken great pride in this beautiful place. That is sadly no longer the case. Family and friends continue exiting Portland, many of which I do not want coming to visit due to the state of squalor that has spread in all directions. I live in North Portland and have had to smell the burning of plastic and garbage from campsites during soccer games. I have had to avoid human feces and needles on the footbridge that connects our home to the public elementary school my son attends. During those walks, have been verbally assaulted by people living under the bridge and have witnessed overdoses. Over the last few years, I have lost count as to the horrendous things witnessed, with my child seeing them as well - from full blown psychotic episodes to seeing a homeless man beat up a a homeless woman in broad daylight. My youngest son’s experience living in Portland is an entirely different one than his college age older siblings. It’s shocking how rapid the decline has been. The majority of the encampments around the city are filled with people experiencing mental health and addiction issues. (Others, who are experiencing poverty without a safety net, is a complete other category.) Amending zoning is not going to do anything other than make Portland potentially a more hospitable place to come to and a city of endless squalor. Portland needs to have a ZERO TOLERANCE camping policy EVERYWHERE and if one chooses that lifestyle, there are a SMALL number of designated areas/campgrounds in which they can camp. FEMA style creation of these spaces with sanitation and the ability for food and services to be provided ASAP. Piecemealing this with buckshot zoning changes is not the answer. Portland needs to gather the energy and follow-through to be an example for the nation in addressing this crisis and not the current example of a rotting city. Sincerely, SD Kaven

Testimony is presented without formatting.