

Shelter to Housing Continuum Testimony

3/16/2021

City Commissioners,

I am writing in support of the Shelter to Housing Continuum (S2HC) proposal. I agree with the testimony submitted by Portland: Neighbors Welcome and I support the amendments suggested in their testimony.

While I support this project, we must not consider this a solution to our housing crisis in the region and in our city. This proposal removes barriers to providing shelter for people with nowhere else to go, but it must be part of a continuum for people experiencing houselessness that ends in stable and adequate housing. Moving people off the street and into shelter is not enough unless the city and region works harder to secure housing for very-low income households and individuals.

It is also critical that the city take bolder steps to prevent houselessness in the first place. When the Residential Infill Project was passed, there was a promise to pursue a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase policy and to develop funding streams for financing to help lower income homeowners and renters take part in the opportunities that infill can provide. What is happening with that policy?

These zoning changes will enable non-profits, churches, and the city itself to move more quickly and efficiently to address acute problems and provide more humane, stable, and secure options for people who are currently living outside. There are many people who are concerned about the impact this may have on their neighborhoods. Whether these concerns are based in fear and selfishness or other motives, the answer to these concerns must be to ensure that S2HC solves a temporary need. This cannot be a stage of acceptance, we can't give up on actually solving the housing crisis for good.

Vote yes on S2HC today, but tomorrow redouble your efforts to put our housing bond funds to their highest use and to further strengthen tenant protections and opportunities.

Thank you,
Tony Jordan