

# Jason Brandt

**#277984 | March 16, 2021**

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

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Council, The Portland Lodging Alliance (PLA), representing a cross-section of Portland hotel owners and operators, opposes the potential use of public, open space zones for "...opening of temporary shelters in temporary locations..." as envisioned in the Shelter to Housing Continuum (S2HC) proposal. S2HC further states that "These shelters would be allowed to operate for up to 180 days in a calendar year, and in certain zones, could be retained for longer periods...". Lodging owners and operators begin every day with the safety of their staff and customers top of mind. The impact of 'temporary shelters' being sited in iconic public spaces and parks would potentially put staff, guests and visitors at greater risk of harassment and harm. This, in turn, could have a negative impact on occupancy rates, conference business and traveler experiences. It should not be lost on any of us that a return to historical levels of tourism is part of the formula we all need to generate tax revenue to support regional programs including affordable housing and homelessness services. Travelers come to Portland for its parks, gardens, food, arts and culture and historical attractions. The S2HC proposal, specific to use of open spaces for temporary shelter, would interfere with the intended use of such space and would be an ineffective policy decision certain to do irreparable harm to the reputation of the City of Portland. Members of the PLA and the workforce they care deeply about have withstood a battering from COVID-19, business and travel restrictions, ongoing destructive protests, increased operating costs and labor shortages. Through it all, PLA members have continued their leadership and investments in Portland, actively partnering with SOLVE, Travel Portland, the Portland Business Alliance and other organizations committed to the City of Portland and its economy. Recently, the PLA supported the increased assessment of the Tourism Improvement District, a direct assessment on the hotel and lodging industry dedicated to increasing tourism, enhancing the tourist experience, and providing vital tax revenue to the City. The Portland Lodging Alliance and, by extension, the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association, recognizes the severity of the housing, homelessness and affordability crisis currently engulfing Portland. We remain committed corporate and private citizens in our dialogue and action. We urge you to withdraw the Open Space Zones provision from further consideration within the Shelter to Housing Continuum proposal.

Testimony is presented without formatting.