

# Kate Merrill

**#278033 | March 16, 2021**

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

The following testimony was submitted during the first round of the S2HC Project considerations. The CEIC still maintains our support for S2HC with the concerns listed below regarding safety, capacity and public notification. The Central Eastside Industrial Council (CEIC) supports the efforts of the City to increase the flexibility around the types and locations of shelter spaces that the Shelter 2 Housing Continuum (S2HC) Project allows. We all have the same goal: access to housing. This is an important part of the path to permanent housing, providing more options to houseless and greater safety off of the streets. The Central Eastside Industrial Council and Central Eastside Together (CET) prioritize safety and humane solutions for all. This amendment allows for storage and restroom facilities to be placed in the right of way with revocable permits. Restrooms and storage support our efforts to keep our streets clean and walkable. S2HC also requires a conditional use permit for industrial land. This element is important to ensure the health and safety of those in outdoor shelters, as contaminants or hazardous materials may be in the soil or in close proximity. Our primary concerns in the S2HC as it is currently written also revolve around safety. There is no specific occupancy classification created for the outdoor shelters, and the shelters in the EXd have a 140 capacity limit. This puts too much of the onus on shelter operators to ensure basic safety. Fire and life safety should be a priority, and Portland and cities throughout the nation have, in the past, had to shut down large warehouse-type shelters run by irresponsible operators. The successful shelters in the Central Eastside have capacities of 90 and under, and the largest is an 120 person emergency shelter. We also would like to dissuade the City from citing large concentrations of shelters in one area, specifically burdening a particular neighborhood. Finally, while we acknowledge that the City has had difficulty introducing shelters into neighborhoods due to public disapproval, a public meeting should be required for any shelter coming into an area. This meeting would serve as a way for the community and the operator to meet, exchange their expectations and concerns, and learn how to mutually aid one another. Examples like the relationship between the Lloyd and R2D2, prove that this is possible and beneficial to all. More options for transitional shelter are crucial in the toolkit of solutions for houseless, but we know this isn't the end game. We need more navigators working on our streets building relationships and helping people get into shelters, and sufficient supportive services to help them move to more permanent solutions once they arrive in these shelters. Above all, we need a sustainable solution: affordable, permanent housing with supportive services. We need to accelerate the building or acquisition of affordable housing units for people earning up to 138% of the federal poverty level. Transitional shelters aren't and

shouldn't be the end game. Sincerely, Deane Funk and Kate Merrill CEIC Board President, CEIC  
and CET Executive Director

Testimony is presented without formatting.