

# David Libby

**#278075 | March 16, 2021**

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

Hello Commissioners, My name is David Libby and I am a tenant in St. Johns. I am a youth climate organizer with Sunrise PDX and I urge you to vote YES on the Shelter to Housing Continuum with the recommended policy amendments proposed by the housing justice organization Portland: Neighbors Welcome. S2HC will allow our houseless neighbors to have safe, stable places to live. I want to live in a city that has the courage to defy destructive market logic and defend safe, stable housing as a basic human right - that is why we must pass the Shelter to Housing Continuum. In addition to passing the policy, we must allow outdoor shelters on some open spaces, as a blanket ban could make certain established camps and villages, such as Right 2 Dream Too, illegal. It is also important to maintain existing RV and tiny house housing that would be made illegal without the amendments to this policy. You must do everything in your power to guarantee that the already unhoused do not face additional instability due to this code change, especially in the midst of a global health crisis. The systems that seek to grow profit above all else ignore and blame human suffering on the individual when in reality it is these systems that are flawed. These systems affect frontline communities disproportionately compared to communities that perpetuate the systems. In passing S2HC, the City of Portland will make it clear that it intends to put people and the planet before profits and the status quo that has devastated both the climate and the stability of our communities. Housing justice is racial justice is climate justice - we cannot have one without the other. I am a pastor at St. Johns Church. Over the past 2+ years, we have been hard at work implementing the St. Johns Village, a transitional tiny-home village for houseless folks in north Portland. There are hundreds of houseless folks throughout north Portland alone, and the housing barriers in the city of Portland make it seemingly impossible for many people to move from homelessness to housed. We have been hard at work providing opportunities for people to find second chances in life, as well as dignity and safety. I would find it devastating if the momentum that sheltering and housing projects in the city was put to a halt. I am aware that homelessness is a divisive issue, but my faith as a Christian and my ethics as a human call me to side with and support those who are in dire need. We have the opportunity in Portland to do a lot of good for a whole lot of people. I would urge you, Commissioners, to care for your fellow human beings, and support all sheltering and housing proposals. The Shelter to Housing Continuum will help keep people from sliding into homelessness and offers them safety and dignity if they already lack housing. As the climate crisis unfolds, Portland will have an influx of climate refugees coming into our region, and vulnerable Portlanders will have to navigate worsening floods, fires, heat waves, and droughts. The

City, region, and its residents must be proactive in planning for the climate crisis, as there is no time to waste in expanding housing and shelter options to meet present and future needs. S2HC is a good step in the direction toward a sustainable future for everyone in our communities. I urge you to vote YES and include all amendments recommended by Portland: Neighbors Welcome. Thank you,  
David Libby Pastor, St. Johns Church

Testimony is presented without formatting.