

# Michael Lowes

**#278146 | March 16, 2021**

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

My name is Michael Lowes, a Portlander through and through, and I am writing this in opposition of the proposed Shelter to Housing Continuum Project. Multnomah County has become one of the highest effective taxed counties in the country, and yet those taxes are being discussed as paying for homeless people to live for free? Portland parks and golf courses are an amenity that tax payers get to enjoy, and to open that up as living spaces for homeless negates that incentive. If I wanted to pay additional money to fund people to live I would focus on growing my family - not supporting someone else's. Fueling this homeless lifestyle with constant giving and turning the other way is what is fueling the problem within our city. We need to work on limiting the problem, not fueling it. Our city is being ignored by outside capital investing here - because they see the slum like downtown that was once a thriving metro. Local business, which we as Portland love to hype up, are deterred from opening here because of constant break ins, trash, and vandalism caused by those living on our streets. We shouldn't have people questioning "is Portland where I want to conduct my business?" We should be welcoming and doing what we can to bring those businesses here. And if business isn't something that motivates you, how about families who live here and have to navigate these disgusting streets, parks, and sidewalks within our city. Kids playing in parks shouldn't have to fear for dirty needles and human feces - rather they should be carefree enjoying the amenities of our city. We are throwing away something that is so beautiful - Portland. I look back at my years growing up in this city, and never would have thought that I would question or even consider not spending my adult years here. But, when I walk around our downtown, our parks, or even some of our public golf courses and see the absolute mess they have become I start to think maybe Portland isn't where I want to be. We had a thriving city here in Portland - note the "had" and not "have"...we've hit a speedbump, but one we can bounce back from. We need to quit pushing businesses away, and start attracting them - there is no way of coming out of this okay if we keep going down this path any further. Sure, there is the approach of get them help and resources, and yes, that is what we need to do. "But they don't want it, or it's not enough"...that's not an excuse anymore. If they don't want the help, then they are giving up their rights to keep acting the way they do. Providing clean needles is one example of how we turn the other way - do we forget that utilizing these drugs are illegal in the first place? Did we forget these are non-taxpaying people who are (and yes I'm generalizing here) consistently breaking the law with drugs, disorderly conduct, open container, public intoxication, public urination/defecation, the list goes on. I've started seeing porta potties in the streets saying "This is a human right", sure it is - but letting those live rent free,

tax free, and polluting our parks with who knows what is far from a human right. This isn't how we change a city and help it grow, it is how we ruin something that was once so great. Let's shift our focus to cleaning up the problem, not just moving it around. If we can get children to eat their food rather than just make it look like it from moving their broccoli from one side of the plate to another...then I am sure the elected officials of this major metro area can take a step in the right direction to fixing this ever-growing problem...and SH2C is not the answer.

Testimony is presented without formatting.