Brandon Narramore

#278187 | March 16, 2021

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

Dear City Council, I am writing in strong support of the proposed Shelter to Housing Continuum (S2HC). I also urge the city council to extend the Housing State of Emergency and consider the amendments proposed by Portland Neighbors Welcome, namely allowing sanctioned Outdoor Shelters in appropriate, approved sites in Open Space zones and in the right-of-way (ROW), and dropping the requirement for vehicles to have costly sewer connections. I am proud of this city and its leadership for taking steps to make Portland a more welcoming and affordable city to live in. I am proud of reforms such as the Residential Infill Project and Better Housing by Design. But those reforms focused on helping Portlanders with middle/moderate incomes. With the Shelter to Housing Continuum, we now have an opportunity to clear obstacles for those of us that are most vulnerable. There are many reactionary voices in the testimony I've read decrying the proposal as it will "destroy" our parks and even Portland itself. But the absence of shelter does not mean the absence of houseless people. We can take the approach of ODOT for example and put boulders in our open spaces rather than show the barest form of empathy, but erecting barriers will not end our housing crisis. The Shelter to Housing Continuum Project takes a realistic approach and meets our houseless neighbors where they are rather than seek to punish, evict, or criminalize them. Additionally, I urge folks to remember that we are in a global pandemic where a closed space with others is often the most dangerous place to be, in this context, it seems unimaginably cruel to forbid folks from seeking shelter in open spaces. Please pass the Shelter to Housing Continuum Project and extend the Housing State of Emergency until at-least the pandemic has subsided. Thank you for your time, Brandon Narramore

Testimony is presented without formatting.