

Peter Kramer

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

I struggle with reviewing codes or policies dealing with homelessness here in Portland that continue to just be focused on 'where can we provide shelter for people who are homeless'. Too often I feel Portland continues to focus on the downstream problem of finding sites for shelter rather than dealing with the systemic problem of unaffordable living conditions and how people get to a place of not being able to afford a reasonable residence for their family. Portland, like nearly every city in the US that is facing these same homelessness crises, doesn't appear to have a city wealth problem, we have a community 'will' problem. There are extremely wealthy individuals that are literally residing right on the same street as homeless people. How can we (the greater Portland community) look at the conditions of the numerous homeless camps that can be found all over the city and feel this is, 'just how it is'. It just doesn't feel that enough time and attention is being given to truly understand and then work to change the systemic problems that result in people getting to a place where they are struggling so much they have to pitch a tent in a park or under a freeway to sleep; certainly not on the scale we are seeing it over these last 10+ yrs. Its unclear to me how the S2HC will impact the current mass urban camping that is occurring right now in Portland. I don't feel city parks with playgrounds or greenspaces for the community to recreate are appropriate places for individuals to reside in. If S2HC would provide more flexibility or accommodate camping in and around these parks, I would be strongly in opposition to the code changes. I want to fully support the many public agencies and shelter housing community partners in providing the affordable housing and services needed by our most vulnerable community members, but any proposal that doesn't provide dignified housing (which camping on public spaces and right of ways in extremely urban environments where there is high population density is definitely NOT dignified housing) I can not support. -Pete

Testimony is presented without formatting.