

Laura Moulton

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

Dear Portland City Council: Street Books is a bicycle-powered mobile library lending books to people who live outside and at the margins in Portland. After a decade in operation, we have seen a number of “solutions” to the housing crisis come and go. It’s clear that in order for people to receive the care and support they need, a new vision around housing is required. We support the Shelter to Housing Continuum’s proposal to amend City code to allow greater flexibility for people to find lodging in our city. We have run regular shifts at organized villages like the R2D2 rest area and currently operate at the C3PO Villages in northwest and inner southeast. In that capacity, we’ve observed the way people experiencing hardship are able to come together to organize, guard belongings and create a space where people can get a full night’s sleep and help form a community. This community aspect is integral to the work we do at Street Books and we believe it’s essential for people who are transitioning from the streets. Too often a person gets into housing and then struggles to stay there because they are cut off from the community they have known and might lack access to vital mental health and treatment support. The pandemic has offered a stark look at how inhospitable the street can be for humans – responding to this crisis means being creative about the spaces we create for people to live and thrive. We need to embrace new village models, offer easy access to hygiene facilities, garbage collection and the aforementioned mental health and social services for those who need that support. There are many dispiriting scenes on the streets of Portland right now in the form of garbage, battered tents and people struggling to find the food and support they need. Changing City code and envisioning a new way of living and being together is a first step toward building a place where everyone belongs, is cared for and has a sense of stewardship in a community. Thank you for the work you do on behalf of Portland and thanks for your consideration. Sincerely, The Street Books team & Laura Moulton, Executive Director laura@streetbooks.org
<http://streetbooks.org>

Testimony is presented without formatting.