

# Linda Nettekoven

**#278453 | March 17, 2021**

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

Dear Mayor Wheeler and City Council Members, My recommendations are based on my own observations as well as conversations with many friends and neighbors. Since other commenters have already laid out rationales for these ideas from many perspectives and in much greater detail, I will limit my testimony to the highlights. Support BPS' recommendation to not remove the city's ability to declare or extend a Housing State of Emergency. Our situation could worsen should the number of evictions increase even further due to unemployment and other COVID-related challenges. However, I ask that a transparent, appropriate evaluation take place at the time such a State of Emergency declaration is considered or renewed. 2) Waive permitting and Conditional Use fees for new shelters. Unlike COVID cases here in Oregon, the numbers in need of housing don't seem to be dropping. 3) If you consider a longer Allowed Initial Use period beyond 180 days for a new Outdoor Shelter, please keep the 180-day mark as a point for a thorough evaluation and problem solving session to increase the chances of a successful, longer term tenure for that shelter if needed. 4) Don't prohibit the use of all Right of Way land for Outdoor Shelter use. Please make these decisions on a case by case basis using reasonable criteria to protect health and safety for those that might live there as well as any near neighbors. Certain areas of existing, underutilized parking spaces might be used for small scale, scattered site permitted vehicle dwelling. (Eugene has successfully used a scattered site approach for vehicle dwelling for a number of years — I visited their program in 2019. Please see additional comments below re: arrangements with willing, private property owners.) 5) Tread carefully regarding the use of any Open Space for Outdoor Shelters. If this category of zoning does include left over areas from various State, Federal, and local transportation projects, which don't have sensitive natural aspects, then they might be given special consideration via a Conditional Use process or other vetting. However, please demand an evaluation of air quality issues for shelter residents when considering pieces of transportation project leftovers that are near well traveled vehicle roadways. 6) Ensure equitable placement of shelters. This is the best and only way to truly increase community acceptance and, hopefully, active support of this effort. Provide clear access to understandable data on potential sites and actively engage neighbors, community groups and neighborhood and business associations in making recommendations. Keep the community apprised of how each neighborhoods is rising to this challenge so there is a strong message that we are all in this together. This same effort could be devoted to locating sites for those living in vehicles as well as tiny home villages or micro housing. This should include public as well as private owner/partners. When considering willing owners with private, small sites for vehicles,

there is a need for staff support to ensure agreements are honored in terms of trash disposal, etc. As mentioned earlier, this approach has been used successfully in Eugene for a number of years under the auspices of St. Vincent de Paul, which employs a staff person to oversee the scattered sites. 7) Ensure regular, ongoing communication among shelter managers, houseless residents, community leaders and advocates during all phases of shelter development and occupancy. Use some form of Good Neighbor Agreement to establish reasonable expectations on all sides along with problem solving mechanisms to identify and handle problems as soon as they occur. This should mean additional staffing, but perhaps a well trained volunteer support team of neighbors, advocates, and houseless individuals could be assembled to provide additional support in this arena. 8) Support the PSC recommendation and don't require water/sewer connections for shelters, tiny home villages or mobile dwellings as a matter of course. Consider adaptable, sustainable autonomous systems for composting, greywater and solar energy management. Allow dwellings permitted under S2HC to innovate and use non-grid water, waste and electric systems. Treat the first sites wishing to use these approaches as pilot programs to demonstrate that the health and safety needs of residents and near neighbors are being adequately addressed. If successful, expand the approaches can be expanded. Again look to the approaches used by Eugene and other jurisdictions. 9) My final request is that houseless neighbors not be allowed to camp in parks or, with no supervision, near schools until we have exhausted every other possible location in our community. Unsupervised camping near schools has led to piles of needles, human waste, etc. as parents have been seeing near Cleveland High School, recently. Responses from City staff and City Council leave them feeling that our "village" no longer adequately cares for or cares about our children. Thank you for your consideration of my comments. Sincerely, Linda Nettekoven 2018 SE Ladd Ave Portland, OR 97214

Testimony is presented without formatting.