

Martin Slapikas

#278458 | March 17, 2021

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

FROM: Martin Slapikas, NE Portland TO: Mayor Wheeler Commissioner Rubio Commissioner Ryan Commissioner Hardesty Commissioner Mapps SUBJECT: Portland City Council Agenda Item 166: Amend City Code Health and Sanitation, Emergency Code, Public Improvements, Water, Property Maintenance Regulations and Affordable Housing to facilitate the provision of shelter and housing options for Portlanders in need. (Ordinance; amend Code Titles 8, 15, 17, 21,29, and30)

DATE: March 17, 2021 _____ Portland needs to be a city where no one sleeps in the streets or on the sidewalks. The use of public funds and resources to provide for this vulnerable population should be used. With that in mind, I am in agreement with: 1. The need to provide shelter, sanitation, and food for the vulnerable in our society. 2. A temporary change in the city code, with an expiration date, to allow time for the location or construction of more shelters, and the temporary relaxation of code to allow more density and similar changes to allow faster creation of shelters. 3. A temporary relaxing of code in reference to those providing food and other necessary support such as clothing to the homeless population. 4. The use of moveable, temporary, sanitary facilities in areas where the homeless population is living, pending shelter availability, with consideration for the safety of those using the sanitary facilities, but also of those living, going to school and working in the vicinity of those shelters. 5. The temporary relaxation of code to permit living in RV or “tiny house on wheels” and to increase the number of people who can inhabit a house consistent with safety and sanitation. 6. A policy decision that city parks and other open spaces should not now, or ever, be used to provide temporary or ongoing shelter to homeless. The people who live in Portland need and deserve, to have safe, clean spaces for children; for exercise and recreate; and for aesthetic beauty and mental relaxation, which is proven to improve quality of life, quantity of life and safety. Any suggestion to use parks or other open spaces for shelters for the homeless should be rejected. I recommend that as soon as possible, not only parks and other open spaces, but also sidewalks, and other city property, not even be available for temporary shelter – such as tents. The issues are the same. Safety and sanitation cannot be maintained, even with temporary toilet facilities. 7. The people of Portland need and deserve to have safe and clean parks and other city open spaces available to all the citizens. As experience has clearly shown, if the homeless temporary shelters are allowed to proliferate in, or on the borders of, parks and open spaces, sidewalks, parking lots, and other spaces, those spaces become unsafe (needles, excrement, behavioral problems, etc.) such that the people of Portland cannot use those areas safely. 8. The rapid location of, or creation of, shelters so that the problem of homeless in tents and other

temporary and unsafe conditions can be ended as quickly as possible. There should be full involvement with the recently passed legislation for multi county cooperation for care of the homeless population. In summary: I strongly recommend code changes include ways to assess, and enforce, the Health, Sanitation, Emergency Code, Public Improvements, Water, Property Maintenance Regulations and Affordable Housing, and to insist on improvements if necessary, or closure of a site if Health, Safety and Sanitation cannot be provided, assured and enforced. Portland needs to be a city where no one sleeps in the streets or on the sidewalks. The use of public funds and resources to provide for this vulnerable population should be used.

Testimony is presented without formatting.