

Kaia Sand

#278564 | March 17, 2021

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

Good afternoon, Mayor Wheeler, Commissioners. I am Kaia Sand, director of Street Roots. I appreciate the tremendous work that has gone into the Shelter to Housing Continuum Project. Here at Street Roots Vendors and Ambassadors have been digging to the details, filling in notebooks with notes, and you'll hear from some of them today I address you today with the strong conviction that updating this code is about facing the fact that we live in the midst of a humanitarian disaster. So when folks are splitting hairs, or advising maintaining zoning barriers to survival, I implore you to remember that since the Housing Emergency was declared in 2015, at least 492 people have died on the streets at the average age of late 40s. They die, regardless of the zoning classification. People struggle to get their most basic hygiene needs met in all city zones A man sought me out today, his body covered in scabies and, as a result, in blood. He's suffering, and feared leaving his bags to seek medical support. I know where he camps, so I looked it up. It's zoned as Open Space. People lose their toes to frostbite in all city zones. I know one man who lost a toe this winter sleeping in a tent soaked with rain. I looked up the zoning code. It's zoned as central Commercial. People age decades before their time, needing geriatric medicine at middle age, suffer alienation and violent attacks in all city zones. So my point is that people are already living and dying in all city zones. What this is about is allowing better organization within these city zones – for hygiene, for shelter, for life saving community living in villages – so people have better odds for survival. This is simply about removing barriers to the most basic levels of organization so people have a better chance to survive.

Testimony is presented without formatting.