

Phillip Long

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

Dear Portland City Council, I have recently written to all of you regarding this issue and was disappointed that only commissioner Hardesty's office responded. I will therefore make another go at it here. I am extremely disappointed at how you all are handling the houseless situation. That our beautiful city has turned into an open dump is truly appalling! I can only guess that you are attempting to allow the people doing this a certain amount of liberty and the civil rights all people are entitled to and deserve. Does the cost of this need to be absolute filth surrounding us all? Do people without a home possess the right to trash our city? Your current policies are denying the dignity and civility that the entire city and citizenry deserve. It seems to me that your policy, or seemingly lack thereof, assumes that most of the people inflicting the the destruction are merely average people who have landed on hard times. I would argue that if this were the case, then the proper use of garbage receptacles could alleviate at least much of the litter and filth. But this is not the case. The vast majority of these people are mentally ill or addicted to drugs. Those conditions explain the filth as well as the lack of their agreeing to be housed when offered. These people need genuine help, NOT enablers or policies that seem misguided by not recognizing that most of these mentally ill people require long term, consistent, and often, full time care. Your current policies appear to be helping almost nobody at all. Drug addicts deserve the help they need to stop destroying their own lives and our city, and the mentally ill deserve the help they need to live in dignity and safety. It is a real tragedy that your collective intention to respect the rights of these people only results in further harming them as well as our city. Do you believe the current situation to even be humane? I do not. I get it, its a tough issue, but you all signed up for this and you need to find a solution that works. We need a modern and humane facility in which to help these people. As of yet, it seems that you have refused to buy or build one. And our problem worsens. Meanwhile many citizens go on paying their taxes and parking fees etc. And resentment over this is mounting. Some people are even moving away because of this issue. I recently grudgingly paid the parking meter where very nearby the sidewalks were full of tents, litter, and various filth, only to have my vehicle suffer \$1000.00 worth of damage from a person there having some type of violent delusion and attacking my vehicle. My family and I also discuss leaving as we simply cannot bear to live in an open dump. Please, get these people off the streets. House them, care for them, and treat them. Yes, they have civil rights just like all of us, but they should NOT have the right to absolutely trash our city. Thank you for listening.

Testimony is presented without formatting.

