

# Sarah Carolus

**#278645 | March 19, 2021**

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

My name is Sarah Carolus and I'm a resident of northeast Portland. I strongly support adopting the zoning code changes in the Shelter to Housing Continuum recommended to you by the Planning and Sustainability Commission. I also agree with the commentary stated in their transmittal letter. I am co-chair of the Advocacy team of the Interfaith Alliance on Poverty. This organization of 14 faith congregations holds a strong belief in caring for our vulnerable neighbors and finding ways to remove barriers of poverty. Passing these code changes will offer a chance for stability, a place of transition off the streets and a better quality of life for our unhoused. I have been following the work of city officials and the PSC since last fall and applaud the proposed increase and diversity of shelter options made in the proposal. Congregate shelter does not work for everyone. Affordable housing buildings take years to build. Having a wide range of alternative options fitting multiple differing situations that will best serve the entire houseless population is a great step forward in addressing the houseless crisis in Portland. In addition to supporting the Title 33 zoning changes, I also support removing restrictions on tiny houses on wheels and RVs included in Title 29, especially the requirement of water and sewage connection, which is prohibitively expensive. In the past few days, I have been reading the public testimony about this proposal and acknowledge there is significant public opinion against it, particularly regarding camping in Open Spaces. I feel that these opinions are ill-formed and misguided. I find abhorrent the common thread of demonization of the houseless. I also feel that the public doesn't fully understand the difference between sanctioned and unsanctioned tent camping and that there is a specific siting process with all outdoor shelters being operated by government or nonprofit agencies. The misconceptions are deep however and so I support an amendment that will permit right-of-way land for outdoor shelter use to help increase potential sites. I also support specific protection of sensitive natural areas. Areas of public concern, such as playgrounds, recreational and picnic areas would also be specifically excluded. These exclusions would still allow unspecified, underused Open Space land for outdoor shelters but would address public concern. Finally, I hope that the City Council considers any other amendments that will allow flexibility in responding to Portland's houseless crisis. Please keep in front of you the goal of reducing houselessness in humane and productive ways.

Testimony is presented without formatting.