

BC Elcie

#278761 | March 23, 2021

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

Those who are experiencing homelessness need homes, not camps. Permanent structures that protect against extreme cold, heat, violence, and where medical, dental, addiction, and social services can be provided by on-site teams of specialists. Dispersion into hundreds of camps in residential neighborhoods is not an efficient way to bring stability and protection to the unhomed, as is already evidenced. It does not provide dignity or permanence. Portland should be following the city of Philadelphia's lead where it comes to urban lots: a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Society has created hundreds of climate-resilient habitats for pollinators and created wildlife corridors. The LandCare project showed, as documented in a 2018 study published in the JAMA Open Network, a 29 percent drop in gun violence in neighborhoods that participated. The program now encompasses 12,000 lots in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. Nonsanctioned camps in east Portland are creating environmental disaster areas. A win-win for the unhomed and the urban environment would be to participate in the LandCare Program. Use bond money that has been approved by Portland voters to create permanent, housing throughout Portland in large service-oriented locations in commercial areas where services can be provided at central sites adjacent to the residents. At the same time, save the urban environment by restoring community pride and environmental justice.

Testimony is presented without formatting.