

Mary Dickson

#278891 | March 24, 2021

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

To the Decision Makers: While I understand that homelessness is a serious, and ever increasing, problem in Portland, the proposed changes do not address the needs of those of us who live and pay taxes in the city. I am one of those people, and I hope you would take my views seriously. I belong to an international friendship organization, where people travel all over the world to learn about other cities and cultures. Members stay in our homes for a few days, and we take them around the area so they can see the culture. I live in outer NE Portland. When I pick up people at PDX, there is not a single route I can take to my house that doesn't pass by piles of garbage and homeless people. Last week, I saw a man on the corner of NE 148th Avenue and Airport Way with his pants down, defecating. Luckily, I did not have any guests with me. (Our program has shut down during the pandemic.) When we open again for international travel, I am hesitant to invite people to my home. I used to drive guests all over the city, showing off our beautiful parks and green spaces. One of our members lives across from Laurelhurst Park, and is dismayed that her guests would have to see the mess of the camps. Has anyone from your project driven down Airport Way, Sandy Boulevard, 147th Avenue just south of Sandy? The piles of trash, including toilets and mattresses, grows by the day. I digress! Opening up "spaces" in NE and East Portland is a terrible mistake. I am concerned that my property values will go down since no one can come into my over 55 community from any direction without passing homeless people and their messes. Have you looked under the I-84 overpass on 148th Avenue? People there are going up the hill and into my community (Summerplace). We have found people sleeping under the overhangs of our community center. Quoting from your statement, shelters should be placed: " in those areas a safe place to sleep and access to the same kinds of amenities as people in housing, including libraries, transit lines, medical offices, and grocery stores." The parks and greenspaces you identify as available do not include any of these amenities, nor are they located near social services. I must admit that I do not have the answer to the problem, but it's pretty obvious that providing more and more services to these people have encouraged more and more people to settle here. My concern is what it is doing to our once-beautiful town that I have called home since 1976, when it was safe and livable. Obviously, the economic impact of having people spread all over is huge. There are places I refuse to shop because I don't like stepping over animal and human excrement. My dollars are not going into the local community, though I try to support local businesses struggling during the pandemic. I refuse to ride MAX or go downtown for fear of my safety. Moving people to the outer east regions of Portland is NOT a good idea, for them or for those of us trying to keep our neighborhoods clean, safe, and

attractive. Please come up with a better idea. I wish I had something to offer, but with all the bright minds dealing with the problem, I like to think there can be creative and fresh thinking that can help quickly and without raising my taxes to pay for the solution. Sincerely, wishing you luck, Mary Dickson

Testimony is presented without formatting.