

Kayleen Kusterer

#278896 | March 24, 2021

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

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners Hardesty, Mapps, Rubio and Ryan, I am writing to register my opposition to the S2HC project. While well located, well managed sanctioned camps can help to alleviate the homeless situation in Portland the current proposal is extremely lacking for the following reasons: 1) S2HC does not establish any means of enforcement of a "well managed" sanctioned camp. Nor does S2HC cover enforcement of illegal camping outside of these sanctioned camps from the many resource-resistant campers across the city. Across the city we see the consequences of this; used needles, trash and human feces from unmanaged camps spilling into our green spaces, businesses and neighbourhoods. 2) S2HC does not address the underlying issues causing homelessness, nor does it cover provision of services especially around drug treatment and pathways to economic independence. Simply treating the symptoms of homelessness, not the causes is an inefficient use of scarce city resources. 3) Public parks must not be used for homeless encampments even "temporarily under a declaration of emergency" (we have been under a state of emergency since 2015 so this would hardly be a rare occurrence). Allowing camps for up to 180 days in parks will cause untold damage to these green spaces and further worsen the environmental situation in Portland. Study after study shows the benefits of city parks for all, but especially for the elderly, disabled, and low income residents. Used needles, trash and feces in the park, including children's play areas, and the surrounding streets prevent people from using these parks. 4) S2HC identified an overwhelming number of available lots in lower income neighborhoods. It is not right to further burden these communities with endless rows of badly, or unmanaged, camps and associated camper behaviour. 5) There is no "exit strategy". While there is lots of focus on how to create a camp, there is nothing around how it will be removed in the future. While it may not be your intention to create camps in parks, we do not know the stance of the next elected officials, and if this is approved you enable it to happen. Once again, in its current form this proposal will create a disaster for the city of Portland and must not be approved. Thank You.

Testimony is presented without formatting.