

Candace Cunningham

#279160 | March 26, 2021

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

I am writing to express my concerns about the Shelter to Housing Continuum zoning code changes. While I appreciate the recent amendments to not permit shelters in natural areas and parks, the remaining elements of the S2HC hold no promise for meaningfully addressing our homeless crisis. Instead, they simply move the ubiquitous tents to different locales, and codify the acceptance of these circumstances. This is not a service to the homeless population of our city, nor is it a service to the citizenry as a whole. Instead, all efforts and funds need to be put toward a substantive, specific, and permanent plan to immediately move people from outdoor living to indoor living—nothing less. The Council has taken one step in the right direction with the proposal to allow more flexibility for Group Living configurations in dormitories, SROs, and the like. Beyond that, the proposal must be reworked to serve our communities. In particular: * Temporary outdoor shelters would still be permitted in paved parking lots of Open Space zones. This aspect is troublesome, as limits access to the Open Space zones by the wider populace. Further, there would be an undeniable impact on the non-paved Open Space zones. The residents of these outdoor shelters would, presumably, want to travel beyond the paved parking area, which means the city would be implicitly endorsing the kinds of environmental destruction and widespread refuse problem we've been seeing throughout our underpasses, right-of-way spaces, and open spaces for many months. * The Council would retain the authority to site temporary shelters in any location during a declared emergency. This, too, is troublesome, as a declared housing emergency has been in effect since 2015. This provision seems like an end run around the community's strong objection to allowing shelters in parks and natural areas. The Council should not have open-ended powers granted by phrasing such as "in any location." More specific (and more restrictive) language is needed here. Thank you for your consideration, and your dedication to serving all of Portland's citizens.

Testimony is presented without formatting.