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

Mayor Wheeler and members of the council: I have lived in Portland since before the annexation of unincorporated Multnomah County. I made Oregon my home in 1978, first living at NE 170th and Halsey. So, let me begin with what brings me to oppose S2HC as proposed. I completely sympathize and agree with the need to address the crisis of people that are unhoused and now trying to survive, in record numbers. But this proposal needs fixing. It is yet another policy that is inequitable for east Portland. First, some general history of east Portland inequities, without dates, that I am aware of since the late 80's and early 90's: The city and the county agreed on "who gets what" of the unincorporated Multnomah County area in in the 1980's-90's and the process of annexation began. The city promised to develop and care for parks, provide consistent police coverage, and bestow the benefits of being a part of Portland as they began their program of persuasion. East Portlanders were told they must hook up to the coming sewer system for environmental protection. If we signed a form agreeing to annexation to the city, the city would reduce the cost of installation and connection. Later, the Oregon Supreme Court determined giving a financial incentive to agree for the annexation was illegal, but that there was "no remedy." The annexations stood. Yes, the parks were mowed and we knew which police department to call. But unknown to residents, zoning changes were made across east Portland. Cherry Park Neighborhood Association first learned that their single family neighborhood had been rezoned when an apartment complex broke ground. Residents began to believe that the sewers were not for environmental protection. They believed the sewers were installed to allow massive rezoning and infill. City Commissioner Hales chaired a committee for visioning the future of east Portland; street cars, sidewalks, parks, community centers, businesses, jobs. (We did get one community center right away, making a total of 2 east of 82nd Ave for our 40% of the city's population. Still waiting for most of the rest...) After that, Mayor Katz made her first plan to funnel money to PPS. But no such plan was made to include the other school districts in Portland. Superintendent Ron Russell and the DDSB board chair met with Mayor Katz to request support for east Portland schools were rebuffed. Do you recall the Multnomah County tax Mayor Katz and County Chair Stein put in place for schools? It was initially designed so PPS received more per student than any other school district. Again, east Portland schools fought for equitable funding. I had a member of Mayor Katz's staff call me - pleading with me - to convince my fellow school board members to accept less per student than PPS would receive. I refused. Later, the city of Portland budgeted parks money to care for the playgrounds and athletic fields that were next to PPS schools, so that the school district could remove that item from their budgets. No such support was

proposed for the other school districts in Portland. A member of Commissioner Francisconi's staff came to David Douglas High School, saw the tennis courts, and said, "People HERE play tennis?" City staff came to David Douglas HS to talk about needed amenities in the district in the late 1990s. The administration said that housing people who lived here could afford to buy, was a priority. City staff reported "DDSD wants Affordable Housing." The school population exploded over the years. As people were forced out of the urban renewal areas to the housing in east Portland, the free and reduced lunch rate at David Douglas schools went from 30% to 80%, from 1995 to 2013. In approximately 2010, a new rental complex built at SE 122nd and Ramona was allowed occupancy with no sidewalks, no landscaping, and a falling over chain link fence. Kids navigated around foot deep puddles in front of it to go to nearby Alice Ott MS. The investigation of this substandard approval revealed that the code inspector for east Portland had not enforced city code in dozens and dozens of projects over the years. Sidewalks that were required were not installed. Road improvements were not made, apartment buildings have their back to streets instead of facing streets. The inspector retires. Some sidewalks and fencing issues are corrected. The design violations he allowed were not remedied. Affordable housing and infill have inundated east Portland. The supporting parks, grocery stores, transit, street cars, business development and community centers that are needed have not come to east Portland. The city has driven investment in central eastside, north Portland, downtown, OHSU, inner Division - with street cars, trams, etc etc. Land and housing costs have exploded west of 82nd. The city's population in north Portland, once the poorest area of the city, was systematically relocated to east Portland which was considered by many to be the least desirable area to live. Ironically, nationally renowned housing and segregation expert Myron Orfield came to Portland and spoke publicly about how the city "eliminated poverty" in Albina. Someone in the audience (me) said, "The city didn't eliminate poverty. They just moved it." Over not too long of a time, Portland west of 82nd became one of the wealthiest areas in the USA while the city east of 82nd became one of the poorest areas in the entire country. City of Portland policies and practice have created a socio-economically segregated city. The challenges of uncontrolled infill have gone to east Portland. The amenities of investment have gone to the rest of Portland. Is the land more expensive west of 82nd? Yes - and city policy has made it that way! The city has driven up the cost of housing disproportionately in all areas of the city, except east of 82nd. You are a new council. You have the ability to change this. You can stop the pattern and policy of socio-economic segregation and concentrated poverty in this city. The S2HC plan allowing a higher concentration of shelters in east Portland will perpetuate and exacerbate the current inequities. It will create an even clearer divide between the have and have nots of Portland. This policy makes it clear that the neighborhoods that can afford attorneys can be successful NIMBYs as long as they want. Someone, somewhere in planning should have read about the effects of concentrated poverty. It is devastating to a community, its children, and their future. But that is what the city has created and it will be etched in stone if you do not set up equitable distribution of shelters and sanctioned camp sites. The infrastructure is already inadequate to support all the residents of east Portland. So, you must first locate shelters and sanctioned camping to the neighborhoods that do not have them. Then, provide the needed infrastructure and supports for east Portland, before additional shelters and/or campsites

are located here. When I was a school board member in David Douglas SD, we made sure every one of our 9 elementary schools had the same assets. We made sure every one of our 3 middle schools had the same assets. Please make sure every neighborhood in Portland has the same assets. Ensure NO neighborhood in Portland is carrying more than their share of need. Then, we can ALL meet the challenges ahead with no one left behind.

Testimony is presented without formatting.