

Sam Ferguson

#267140 | March 9, 2021

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

Dear Mayor Wheeler and members of the Portland City Council, Our parks and natural spaces must remain open to the public. As you consider the language for the Shelter to Housing Continuum Project, I strongly recommend the removal of Open Space Zones, including developed parks, natural areas, and trails, from consideration for the siting of either temporary or permanent houseless shelters EXCEPT for a declaration of emergency by the City Council due to a catastrophic natural disaster. You will hear testimony on this issue, and you should conclude that there is already vacant and underutilized land available. You can conclude that allowing shelters in Open Space Zones is inequitable as it disproportionately affects BIPOC communities living without yards or outdoor spaces. You can conclude that access to parks, natural areas, and open spaces is a fundamental necessity for the physical and mental well being of all Portlanders and should not be infringed upon. I do not want to raise my kids in a city where I cannot take them on a hike or to the local park because it has been overrun with tents and shelters, along with a laundry list of what I have personally seen comes with these shelters (drugs, human feces, violence, litter etc... just to name a few). The houseless crisis in Portland needs solutions, and this is not one of them.

Testimony is presented without formatting.