

Linda Robinson

#267247 | March 12, 2021

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

I have three primary concerns about the Shelter to Housing Continuum proposal. First, as a long-time park advocate (especially for more parks in East Portland), I am extremely concerned that this measure would allow, with few if any restrictions/guidance, for outdoor shelters to be erected in our parks for up to six months at a time (and, apparently, indefinitely if the mayor declares another Housing Emergency after it's passed, and there is nothing that says he can't do that). I have no problem with temporary shelters being set up in parks if/when there is a major NATURAL disaster (e.g. earthquake). The parks need to be open and available to ALL RESIDENTS -- and many of our housed residents will be very reluctant to use the parks if there are homeless shelters in them -- especially our many immigrant residents who are often the target of prejudice and intimidation. Second, I'm concerned that East Portland will be forced to absorb more than its fair share of shelters (temporary and permanent, outdoor and indoor). Why? Because the map prepared by the Bureau of Planning & Sustainability clearly shows that a very large percentage of the properties where such shelters could be erected are in East Portland, especially the Hazelwood neighborhood (Gateway area). Also, because one of the criteria that will apparently be used for siting the shelters is availability of social services -- and the city has been allowing more and more of those services to be located in East Portland. Another reason East Portland is likely to get more than its fair share is because the cost of land here is less than elsewhere in the city. Finally, I'm concerned that there seem to be no criteria within the proposal (or references to such criteria elsewhere) that would assure that the shelters (especially the outdoor ones) must have certain basic public health standards (especially adequate toilet facilities and trash pick-up services). I'm also concerned that these outdoor shelters are not likely to provide essential services like places to bathe, to do laundry, to prepare meals, etc. If these criteria cannot be part of the code change, then there should at least be a reference to other city code that would apply. I urge that you NOT approve the proposed code change plan, as is.

Testimony is presented without formatting.