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

I encourage the Portland City Council to carefully consider the option of siting S2HC shelters in open space zones, aka parks. I cannot agree with Commissioner Hardesty who believes that having a few camps in parks is not incompatible with the parks' original purpose: to provide open space for all citizens to play, rest, gather, and take a respite from urban living, which sadly now includes encountering people living in tents throughout the city. I am grateful that the S2HC proposal acknowledges this, as it states in a FAQ, "The current proposal does not allow for shelters to be permanently located in open space zones. This is because: [1] Open space (OS) zones often include environmental resources that should not be disturbed. [2] Parks and open space have often been purchased with bond money limited to specific purposes or were given to the City with deed restrictions, often stipulating they must be used for parks, recreation or open space purposes, which doesn't include housing, shelters or other types of development." Public parks are open to all citizens to recreate, relax, rejuvenate and reconnect. It is important to maintain them as green open spaces, not as sites for temporary shelters. Holding our parks as sacred places is a necessity for the well being of all of us. To call Portland parks a 'luxury,' as Commissioner Hardesty does reveals that either she has not taken the opportunity to experience our city's beautiful open spaces, or that she has never valued them at all.

Testimony is presented without formatting.