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

Mayor Wheeler and City Council Members, I strongly urge you to reject the Shelter to Housing Continuum Project. Not only does it not address any of the causal aspects of this profound Public Health Crisis, it addresses the symptoms in ways that potentially will do far more harm than good. Last year the citizens of Portland made two things very clear by voting to tax ourselves even more: Our parks and public spaces are extremely important to our collective health and well-being and that it is way past time to address the insanity of having people literally living in the streets. This proposal not only does not protect our public spaces, it “solves” the houseless situation by concentrating the problem in camps in our neighborhoods with no guidelines on where or how concentrated those camps can be. This feels like an enormous abdication of responsibility. Worst of all, the original maps that showed the vast majority of shelter “opportunities” east of 82nd Avenue, in the form of large parking lots and abandoned or underutilized businesses, willfully ignore that those very qualifications are evidence of profound disinvestment and neglect. Putting homeless camps in these areas is the opposite of what needs to happen here. It’s time to invest in East Portland, not continue dumping on it. I am proud to live in a city that seeks to find compassionate solutions to the homeless situation, but it is imperative that we extend equal compassion to the tax paying citizens that pay for the parks and infrastructure that we can no longer safely use. Let’s start over, think holistically, bring EVERYONE to the table from the start and make a commitment to have ONE unified city where we work together to solve these issues.

Testimony is presented without formatting.