

Charles Olsen

#267509 | March 15, 2021

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

I write in opposition of the proposal to allow homeless camps in parks and golf courses. Please find attached a document distributed in my neighborhood that shows photos of the trash and drug paraphernalia that collects around homeless camps throughout Portland. These images are not unique. Go almost anywhere in the city and you can see the numerous examples of this problem. My wife and I have lived a few blocks from Laurelhurst Park for almost 40 years. There is a homeless camp on Oak Street between Caesar Chavez Blvd. and 37th Ave. The Laurelhurst Neighborhood Association has documented and referred to the city government numerous instances of problems because of the camps including but not limited to: property crimes, drug use, panhandling, aggressive behavior, and shigella (a feces born disease). For the first time in our lives, we are afraid to use the park. Legalizing camping in the park will not fix these problems. Also in the attached document is a quote from Commissioner Hardesty saying: "Parks are for everybody, and I don't think having a few camps in a park will somehow make the park unavailable for people to jog, or play golf, or do all the other stuff that people do in parks". Yes, parks are for everyone. But I strongly disagree with the idea that, if allowed, only a few camps will spring up in our parks. They will be overrun, the restrooms will be overwhelmed, trash will pile up and the grounds will be destroyed. We will not be able to do "all the other stuff people do in parks". Our parks and golf courses were not designed for campers. Once they have been destroyed, they will never come back. My suggestion is to use Multnomah County's share of the \$250 million per year tax approved by voters last year to establish a large centralized camping site separate from our parks that can provide proper sanitation, food services, drug counseling, medical care, etc. Sincerely, Charles Olsen

Testimony is presented without formatting.