

Michael Rosa

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

I oppose S2HC as written and the following must be incorporated/changed: 1) All public parks and open spaces must explicitly disallow as places of shelter. These places were never intended for people to live in, nor should they ever be. All property owners and businesses have overwhelmingly supported these places via taxes for decades for the explicit intent that they be used for their intended purpose, not as places for anyone to live. 2) An enforcement plan must be delineated and expressly coupled to this action so that as new managed shelters are established, random camps are shut down, cleaned up, removed and monitored so they are removed immediately. 3) A detailed management plan is needed for each site discussing who is the entity responsible for its implementation and day-to-day management and what are the remedial actions that will be taken to enforce any deviations. 4) Since the S2HC proposal will not bear fruit until a number of years out, a plan is required to address the immediate (i.e. today, if not sooner) relocation of individuals from hundreds of random, self-made camp sites throughout the city, to centralized, limited locations so that the city can better utilize limited resources to serve the houseless community and begin enforcing no camping laws everywhere and begin cleaning the city. In addition, Title 15 housing emergency must also be allowed to expire. Portland is seen as one of our country's greenest cities in large part because of our focus on protected green spaces. Public parks and open spaces are the heartbeat of our urban area: 1) They encourage active lifestyles and reduce health costs 2) They make cities more resilient: Helps manage stormwater and mitigate flooding 3) Helps clean the air and improve public health 4) Strengthen local economies and create job opportunities: Parks are a major reason why many choose to take up residency and conduct business in our city. 5) Parks attract tourists! What happens when a city takes upon itself to allow a public park or open space to be used for a purpose other than what was intended? Look no further than what was allowed to transpire in Laurelhurst Park since June 2020, with an unmanaged homeless camp. Those seeking shelter in the park critically damaged the park simply by using it as a living space, and in some cases purposely damaged park structures and fixtures to meet their own needs. Used syringes littering the children's play lot, using park property as a toilet (despite the availability of a porta potty nearby), uncontained camp fires in our driest of months, aggressive campers going after park visitors and motorists, tents and other structures blocking both pedestrian and car access. Quite honestly, why would anyone suggest individuals who are struggling with their own personal crisis, particularly in cases of mental illness and drug addiction, to shelter in places where our children enjoy being children and where we all expect to feel safe! Just look at the thousands of complaints logged into

the city's own campsite reporter as evidence or this being the reality. Again, immediately, ASAP, now... the city must open managed sanctioned camps, limit the number of these sites, and in areas deemed safe for both those sheltering and those in the surrounding communities. There must also be designated RV and motorhome parking areas to clear the blight of RVs on our city streets. The city must start enforcing "No Camping" and immediately move individuals sheltering in parks and schools into either existing shelters or managed sanctioned camps.

Testimony is presented without formatting.