

Stephen Pao

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

Dear Portland City Council, Thank you for your work on the Shelter to Housing Continuum Project and what you do for our city. Living right here in the Pearl District, we see daily the impact of homelessness in our city, and we appreciate the spirit of the proposal. That said, we have a specific area of concern in allowing the use of Open Space Zones (including our city parks) for camping. Given the long term nature of this homelessness problem, we believe it is important to keep the parks available for city residents and to instead prioritize the use of vacant or underutilized land for shelters. As city dwellers ourselves, we do not have a backyard and make frequent use of our local parks. Our objection isn't about NIMBY. We appreciate the "tiny homes" and other nearby shelters in our area and recognize the need to house shelters across the city where space is available. At the same time, we would like to retain use of our open spaces over this longer period and being a site for shelters - whether permanent or temporary - impedes the use of these open spaces by the rest of the community. Of course, we understand there are short-term emergencies and appreciate proposed amendments we have heard to limit the use of open spaces to short-term relief brought on by natural disasters and to require a special declaration of emergency by the City Council. Thank you again for listening, and please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions of us. Stephen and Marsha Pao

Testimony is presented without formatting.