

# Steve Brown

**#267618 | March 15, 2021**

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

We clearly need to do something to address the homeless problem in Portland. Our city is at a crisis point and has been for some time. But changing the zoning laws to allow camping in Portland's public parks is ill-advised and a recipe for disaster. Such a change will contribute to an additional sharp decline in Portland's livability. Parks are an important part of urban life. They are places we can come together to exercise, walk the dog, relax, sunbathe, read a book, let our children play, and get a little closer to nature. They are especially important during the pandemic when we need safe outdoor spaces to come together. Unrestricted camping will make many of our parks unusable, particularly the smaller ones that could quickly become overwhelmed with campers. Portland's livability has already been hit hard with businesses closed or boarded up against the protesters and tents strewn all over our streets. Some (not all) of the adhoc campsites that have sprung up all over our city are filled with trash and harbor drug use. We shouldn't turn our parks over to this too. They should be places where our kids can play safely. Our parks should be sanctuaries where friends and families can come together to enjoy a clean, safe environment. This zoning proposal is a well-intentioned but bad idea and should be removed from any legislation. Portland parks are a significant part of what makes Portland great. We risk changing the character of our once beautiful city for many years to come if we take this poorly considered step. Thanks for listening.

Testimony is presented without formatting.