

# Alice Knouff

**#267641 | March 15, 2021**

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

We are very concerned about S2HC sanctioning homeless camps in parks, nature areas and golf courses. These areas are vital as designated areas for everyone to use and enjoy. When camps move in, as has already been demonstrated throughout the city, unsafe conditions exist, including unsafe conditions for campers. PLEASE CONSIDER 1. Encampments produce health hazards: used needles, feces, urine, trash, verbal and physical assaults within and towards pedestrians, fires, etc, etc. Portable toilets and washing stations help but are often inadequate and shunned by many campers. Citizen and business taxes pay for these open areas which are very important for urban population health and recreation. 2. If these areas became sanctioned, where in this code is the structure to keep them marshaled, clean and at proper size? And where is the exit strategy after 6 months or longer of taking over these areas? City park employees are already overworked and burdened with reigning in (illegal and covid-risky) activities and should not be subjected to this ongoing. 3. Encampments should not be situated near playgrounds, schools, and neighborhoods. New camp placements should consider how many camps/shelters already exist in an area so that no neighborhood or city area is oversaturated. For example, currently Southeast Portland has 82 reported camps versus 40 reported camps in Northeast Portland and fewer than 25 reported camps in North, Northwest and Southwest Portland. 4. Blocking right-of-way sidewalks or streets is against all livability and ADA standards. Where are wheelchair and walker users supposed to go? This is a step back 30 years in “progressive” Portland. 4. Portland needs creative permanent solutions to address this economic and health crisis. Securing organized car and RV camp parking lots is one idea. Keeping warming shelters open during warmer weather another. Expanding proven Right 2 Dream/Dignity Village models is another. These sanctioned camps should provide residents with resources to meet their basic hygiene needs and make social services available to help with mental health and addiction problems, as well as job counselors to assist those seeking employment. If passed as currently written, S2HC will worsen our inability to keep our neighborhood parks clean and safe for everyone's use and accelerate Portland's deteriorating livability. Please consider all stakeholders and amend the S2HC proposal to exempt city parks, school and playground areas, and golf courses from camping. Alice Knouff and Mike Chewning

Testimony is presented without formatting.