

Saideh Haghighi

#267696 | March 15, 2021

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

Mayor Wheeler and members of the Portland City Council, As parks, natural areas, & trails supporters, we are writing to strongly advocate for an important change in the language of Shelter to Housing Continuum recommendations from the Planning and Sustainability Commission. We recommend the removal of Open Space Zones from consideration for either temporary or permanent houseless shelters EXCEPT for a declaration of emergency by the City Council due to a catastrophic natural disaster. We appreciate the consideration, research and thought that staff and commission members put into the S2HC report and its associated recommendations. The misery and distress that houseless people suffer in our community is a heart-rending consequence of decades of inequality, ill-considered policy and economic failures. Houselessness is not new to Portland but has grown rapidly in recent years and seems likely to continue to increase as we deal with the long shadow of this pandemic. We believe the majority of the recommendations will do much to help Portland address our houseless crisis. Our concern is focused on the recommendation that allows temporary shelters in public Open Space. We recommend that Open Space, including developed parks, natural areas, and trails, be removed from consideration for siting of either permanent or temporary shelters.

Testimony is presented without formatting.