

# Toren Orzeck

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

Turning our city's parks into homeless camps is a terrible idea for multiple reasons. I believe the homes population is made up of 3 distinct groups of people: 1. Economic and domestic violence refugees ( people who have lost their homes for economic reasons) or because they had to flee an abusive partner and had nowhere else to turn) 2. Individual with substance abuse problems 3. Individuals with mental illness In my opinion the people in group 1 need a some financial help and this should be provided so they do not turn into group 2 or 3. This group should be subsidized and integrated into the community as fast as possible. People in group 1 can easily turn into group 2 or 3 as they get further disconnected from society. Given this mix of population, turning the parks into homeless camps will wreck them. Portland is fairly dense and the parks provide individuals and families the space To recreate and enjoy the beauty and community. The parks are for everyone and if you start to provide even temporary camping at the parks you will have effectively denied the the no camping residents the opportunity to enjoy the parks. A homeless camp requires certain life support systems like bathrooms and trash removal. Then when you add the mix of groups earlier mentioned you've created a dangerous place for both residence in the camp and nearby non homeless neighbors. A couple elections ago portland passed some bill that had a 275 million dollar price tag. Was the is an administrative boondoggle? If not why not build some housing and house groups 2 and 3 mentioned above. Build in the recovery services these people need at these new places. Help these people back into society. Build it like an Israeli kibbutz where everyone has purpose. Residents work the land and learn valuable life skills. This place for most will be temporary and help people get on their feet. If we need to pass a sales tax to help pay for some of this then what are we waiting for let's have a sales tax! Another reason to not turn the parks into homeless camps, is this will destroy the city current future opportunity. Who will want to live near a potential dangerous homeless camp? That's right, no one. Property values will drop, the tax base will dry up and new companies that can provide jobs will avoid Portland like the plague. This is totally unfair to citizens that have most of their capital in their homes. Failure to maintain property values leaves the people that pay taxes in the cold. If you lose them you have o revenue to do anything. Driving down front street or parts of NW 23rd is ke a dystopian future but it's now. What businesses will want to deal with this? They won't. The hygiene factor alone make this a public health emergency. Charley Hales May have been compassionate but it was ridiculous and irresponsible to allow people to camp on city streets with no facilities for hygiene, let alone the economic damage it causes. Banaid solutions like what's being proposed do not work and are

detriment to all residents. Thank you.

Testimony is presented without formatting.