

Margaret Glascock

#267755 | March 15, 2021

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

Dear Commissioners and Mayor Wheeler, Please do not allow camping in parks and natural areas. Having worked for Parks and Recreation for 30 years, I know how hard it is to “get back” a park when the soil is compacted and the plants are broken down from camping or even one big party. It is hard to find and clean up the syringes and broken glass in play area chips. It is hard to find all the areas where people “hide” needles, with the potential for staff and park visitors to get poked. What happens to the roots of ancient trees when fires are set on them? Furthermore, the S2HC plan does not address the issues that are at the root causes of people finding themselves camping at the park. Nor does it require the people staying there to follow any rules for safety and security for themselves or the public. Nor does it address what to do when the end of the camping era is over. When would that be? How would that work for people who like camping there? I am one of the leaders of the Friends of Laurelhurst Park. Having worked at Laurelhurst Park as a Horticulturist, and as a volunteer, it is tragic to see what the southeast end of looks like right now. There have been different times when the park has had damage and more security problems over the years. It has never been this bad in my knowledge – since 1981. We have not volunteered there partly due to the problems with campers. We have had conflicts before, when our work parties came near to campers. One time a couple of drunk men in a tent yelled obscenities at a 5 year old child, working next to his mother. I know people are calling the Laurelhurst Park protectors elitist or overly protective, but our group is not like that. We just want to keep up our historic park , to maintain its beauty, and to maintain some of the history of the City. We see a park that we have worked on for 15 years denuded of shrubs and full of syringes and toilet paper. We want to get back to work taking out ivy and blackberry. We want to weed and prune. We want to be able to walk with our grandchildren in the main park and play on the playground with them in the Annex without fear of seeing weird nudity and all kinds of bad behavior. Lots of places in Portland do not have a beautiful park like Laurelhurst. That is why it was designated an historic place in 2001. It is a regional park where folks from all over town visit and come for picnics, an have weddings - in the beauty of this award-winning park. It was protected because of how special it is. But all parks are important for the neighbors, for the ability to see trees and grass and play, picnic and relax in them. It is healing for children and parents and anyone. Please do not let people ruin our parks. With budget reductions we will never get them back from the damage that will be done. There has to be a different approach. Different places for camping. Different ways to help the people who are camping there. Please.

Peggy Glascock

Testimony is presented without formatting.