

# Leah Hinkle

**#277699 | March 16, 2021**

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

Thank you for reading my testimony. I just moved to SE Portland. I moved to a quiet, clean, and so far, a safe neighborhood. One of the most compelling reasons for leaving my home in Clackamas, at the base of Mt. Talbert, was safety and sanitary concerns. The end of my street dead-ended at a trailhead to the Mt. Talbert Nature Park. Every day people camped in their cars along the street. Many houseless people made their way into the woods every day to their shelters in the park. The amount of garbage that accumulated at this dead-end and around my building was awful. No matter how often the managers or residents picked up garbage, it was never clean for more than a day. One night I heard noises outside my bedroom and I awoke in the morning to a torn open trash bag right outside my window. I lived in fear for the entire duration of my one-year lease. Non-residents walked by my sliding glass door every day into and out of the park. They negotiated drug deals at my neighbor's and law enforcement was often asking me if I'd see someone around. They hauled truckloads of stolen goods in and out of my building's parking lot. I am not exaggerating. I saw truck beds full of bikes, appliances, and items of all kinds several times. They were there for a day and then the trucks would return empty. My brand new mattress, cat food, and skin care products were all stolen from my front doorstep. I had to reroute all my packages to a friend's house in Milwaukie. She lives in a safe neighborhood and I could not wait until the day my lease was up and I could move into a similar environment. I have found that place and I want it to stay that way. I am not keen on the idea of allowing open camping anywhere, especially not in our parks. We must find solutions for houseless individuals and the problems that cause houselessness! Turning our green spaces that provide relaxation and refuge into unmanaged campgrounds, like on Mt. Talbert in Clackamas, is not the solution. I have friends who just bought a house in NE. It was a great house with an adorable white picket fence. Over the last year a massive camp has developed close to their house and since then they have found someone shooting up drugs in their bushes and have had the catalytic converter sawed off their car not once, but TWICE! They had to spend a lot of money on building a giant and ugly privacy fence. Allowing open camping in the city is quickly making Portland an undesirable place to live. My aunt and uncle, lifetime Portlanders, just move to get away from it. Please consider other forms of helping the houseless. I am happy for my tax dollars to go towards a better solution than free-for-all camping.

Testimony is presented without formatting.