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

I applaud the City Council for the recommended draft, which I think is mostly excellent. However, there is one proposal in it that I would like to challenge. Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty said that, given the size and nature of the houseless crisis, we cannot hold some spaces sacred. I disagree. We are experiencing a long-term loss of collective space, as private wealth takes up more and more of the social and geographical map. Public parks are an essential part of our collective stake in society. The crisis is real and urgent, but must our ever-shrinking collective pay the cost. Parks are critical to quality of life, and it is important that all citizens have equal use of them. Let's get creative and find private open spaces that can be leased, and search out every other possibility before we further shrink our threatened collective ownership of space. I would like to make one other point. Public golf courses serve some of the same functions as parks. People walk on them, picnic on their verges, sled down their hills in the snow. They make what has become a rich man's game available to tens of thousands of Portlanders of modest means. In fact, in my sixty-some years in Portland, the public golf courses are where I have seen far more diversity than anywhere else. These public resources also need to be protected for the important values they already provide. Of course, it is easy to use public open space to address this challenge: it's there, and the city already owns it. A no-brainer, it might seem. But just because something is easy does not make it right. Let's notch up our creativity and address this problem using privately owned, or public unused spaces. We can do it!

Testimony is presented without formatting.