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

Portions of the language in the Shelter to Housing Continuum recommendations from the Planning and Sustainability Commission boil down to allowing homeless tent camps in Portland parks for up to 180 days. This provision will essentially remove parks from public use. Experience shows that long-term homeless camps, coupled with drug addiction and mental illness, have a significant impact on the safety and livability of surrounding spaces. They bring accumulated garbage, safety hazards like open fires and discarded needles, and are associated with an increase in property crimes and even assault in nearby areas. The provision is not merely permission for people with no other options to use publicly available space along with other members of the public. It will make our public parks into a health and safety hazard and be a significant deterrent to their recreational use by both children and adults. We need to provide options for the homeless. Our public parks should not be one of them. The meaning of proposed changes should be widely communicated to the public in clear language and should not be considered without significant public discussion and input.

Testimony is presented without formatting.