

# Jana Panfilio

**#277832 | March 16, 2021**

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

As a proud long-time citizen of the Portland Metropolitan area, I've been appalled by the city's lack of action in cleaning up the mess caused by the growing homeless situation during Covid-19 shutdowns. While we've been sheltering at home to stay safe and healthy in 2020/21, I've seen our beautiful city turn into a ghetto. There's graffiti on walls on both sides of I-5 north to Delta Park, tent cities on offramp green spaces, clothes, mattresses and junk littering our city streets and highways. It's been growing worse day by day. It's an eyesore, but also a huge health hazard. I've personally witnessed "campers" injecting themselves with needles, defecating in public, having open fires, seen the charred remains of trees they've burned, and see food/trash all over. I've participated in at least two SOLVE cleanup events downtown, where we've removed debris only to have it reappear again in the following weeks. Homeowner taxes have increased exponentially over the years as people have been relocating to Portland for it's livability and outdoor lifestyle. No one has felt the tax pressure more than Multnomah County residents, yet this is where homeless camps are cropping up the most. I've heard stories in recent months about homeless campers threatening families in neighborhood parks. Our parks should be safe places for families and children to play. It's taxpayer dollars that fund resources to maintain parks all over our state, which are some of Oregon's greatest assets. The homeless community aren't paying for the use of these parks. The fact that our city officials have been allowing the homeless advocates to apply pressure through this initiative is unacceptable. Officials owe their first allegiance to taxpayers. I'm empathetic to the needs of our community members impacted financially by the Covid shutdowns and business closures. However, there's got to be another way to address the needs of the homeless community other than to give them access to our neighborhood parks. This puts an undue burden on our homeowner residents and resources to maintain health & safety. I'm extremely disappointed in the Portland Mayor, Oregon Governor and council people for not taking a stronger stance on maintaining the livability of Oregon's largest and most iconic city during this times. Opening city parks for homeless camping is NOT the answer. I strongly urge you to OPPOSE this proposed open space zoning plan. Thank you.

Testimony is presented without formatting.