

# lawrence gleeson

**#277879 | March 16, 2021**

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

I am writing to the PCC in opposition to a specific provision in the s2hc recommended draft that allows for use of Open Space Zones - which includes all city parks - for camping. I would like to ask that city parks - spaces specifically set aside for the community to rest and recreate - not be turned into camping zones. I am raising kids in Portland. I regularly encounter houseless folks who are mentally compromised or substance-addicted in campsites near and in parks in Northwest. Walking the streets is a calculated risk, so is visiting our parks. The mental math is simple and sad: is it worth the trouble to navigate discarded syringes and risk verbal and physical assault to use a public park? And that's before s2hc's proposed provision makes it ok to scale-up camping. Portland wants to be "A city designed for people" that "serves the needs and aspirations of all Portlanders, promoting prosperity, health, equity, and resiliency", and "encourage social interaction to create a healthy connected city". Making public parks higher risk zones for tax-paying local families doesn't seem to fit. If we make public parks risky for children and families, we drive people away from public spaces, not create welcoming ones. Requisitioning city parks as camping sites will limit their current and future use by the public, create new challenges for local families and add to existing garbage/sewage issues. We must help the houseless, and this s2hc proposal is full of carefully considered policies I fully support, but I don't believe opening public parks to camping is a well-thought through solution, and respectfully request it not be included as a provision of the s2hc project draft and proposed regulatory changes.

Testimony is presented without formatting.