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#277899 | March 16, 2021

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

Mayor Wheeler and Members of the City Council, The proposed Shelter to Housing Continuum Project, as written, is flawed and should absolutely NOT be pursued. Portland is in the midst of a massive homeless problem and the city parks are under historic budgetary pressure as is. Allowing them to become "temporary" shelters would overburden the already stretched Parks Department and facilities while doing nothing to address the root cause of the houseless problem. The goal of the city should be to combat the root causes of the houseless problem by offering addiction treatment, mental health services and incentivizing employment within the local business community. Opening the parks up to camping would do nothing but destroy the natural environment that we are trying to protect. Not to mention it would be in direct violation of Chapter 33.296 of the Portland City Code. Unfortunately houselessness is not a temporary problem. In the event of an emergency caused by a natural disaster, such as an earthquake, there is no question that public open space must be made available for temporary shelters. The humanitarian crisis related to our houseless community certainly qualifies as an emergency, but it is an emergency that is ongoing and manmade. It must fall into a separate category. The S2HC report acknowledges this fact in the 15.04 commentary: "Portland's housing emergency was first declared in 2015 and has been extended several times. These extensions have highlighted that the need for shelter is not an episodic emergency, with a discrete beginning and end, but is a continuing crisis." It is understood that the need to provide shelter options for our houseless population will be required long into the foreseeable future. The fact is temporary shelters placed in the Open Space Zone would most likely not be temporary at all. This is a dangerous proposal and should NOT be pursued.

Testimony is presented without formatting.