

Darryl Fowler

#277949 | March 16, 2021

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

Dear Councilmembers: Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I am not going to post alarming photos of used needles, the story of the man in the tent who draws Nazi symbols with chalk on the sidewalk or the wandering, sometimes shouting, outpatients that populate the sidewalks that we travel on to and from the grocery store. That is just one part of life on the Eastside. Instead, I want to tell you how much my family and our friends (other families, seniors, our kids friends from school) love and depend on Portland's public spaces. For our area, this is Grant Park, Wilshire Park and Laurelhurst Park. We have gathered for meals, for birthday parties, soccer games, hide and seek, kindergarten meetups, exercise classes, tennis, swimming, dog walks, scavenger hunts, movie nights and concerts. Our parks are sacred spaces for the community and we as members feel not only a connection, but a responsibility to keep them in good working order, available for all. To allow camping in the park, you are essentially allowing an activity that brings so much baggage, risk and impact that the shared space will be forever changed. The activities that it would prevent and the long term impact (precedent) would more than outweigh the short term benefit. Why not instead use one of the many pieces of land or buildings that already exist? Choosing the parks as a viable site amounts to a zero sum game. Choosing under utilized properties, however, are smart choices that don't impact children, seniors and families and still help the folks on the streets that need places to sleep. Please, let's go THAT direction so that we can start to get people OFF the streets and CLOSER to viable options and real help. Thank you for your consideration.

Testimony is presented without formatting.