

# Amy Wood

**#277953 | March 16, 2021**

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

Dear Portland City Council, Our city's homeless issue is a crisis threatening to send this once thriving city into a downward spiral that we will not be able to recover from. I don't envy your position and the difficult decisions you face as you attempt to navigate us through this crisis. Portland's residents aren't just passively complaining about this crisis, many of us are attempting to "roll up our sleeves" as Sam Adams has asked. We love our city far too much to watch it continue to decline as it has in the past year. Last year we passed a historic new tax to fund homeless services. That said, the new S2HC proposal is taking a step too far by suggesting that our public parks be used as temporary camps. City planner Eric Engstrom was quoted saying to KGW-TV: "I don't think there's an intent to convert parks to camps." That kind of murky statement is not fair to residents. Either the provision allows tent cities to takeover public city parks or it doesn't - which is it? Eric was also quoted saying: "You can't be perpetually in a state of emergency. We have to find a new normal at some point." Unfortunately, that's exactly what I fear will happen if this proposal is passed. Tent cities, trash and needles in parks will become our new normal. Our parks will no longer belong to the entire city, but to temporary groups of campers who have no desire to reside in shelters. I've spent the last year wondering why I continue to live in Portland. Please restore my faith in this city and help us get back to the city we once were by providing more protections around the use of our public parks, sidewalks and streets – not less. I urge you to amend this proposal to make clear that our city's parks will be protected from camping. Thank you, Amy Wood

Testimony is presented without formatting.