

# Meg Merrick

**#278034 | March 16, 2021**

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

The issue of homelessness is both tragic and complex. It cannot be solved without significant resources that deal both with providing safe and adequate housing (that includes sanitation) and social services. To continue to tolerate temporary camping in our publicly owned spaces (owned by all of Portland's residents), including parks and natural areas (the Springwater Corridor comes to mind) not only doesn't solve the problem but creates significant new ones: the destruction of our precious natural areas with sewage and trash and the abandonment of these spaces by community members, including children – a significant loss to them. Serious environmental degradation has occurred in the Corridor since homeless camping began there. The fact that some parts of the city are park-poor doesn't justify their destruction. Unfortunately experience demonstrates that homeless camps are not benign places – even if “temporary.” Opening Portland's parks and golf courses to homeless camping should not occur at the expense of 665,000 Portlanders and our precious natural environment.

Testimony is presented without formatting.