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

It's almost impossible to overstate the importance of parks to a community's physical and psychological well-being. Parks have proved to be nothing short of life-savers during the pandemic, allowing us to have access to greenery, to quiet, to beauty, and to safe places where we can exercise safely or simply be still. Parks need to stay parks. The proper way to address homelessness is through a comprehensive, long-term plan that provides easy access to mental health resources, not to mention other medical care. Expecting the homeless population to sleep, cook, and otherwise cope in a park setting without having easy access to addiction services or to social workers is a recipe for disaster. Please do not do this to them, and please do not turn Portland's greatest asset--its many, many parks--from life-affirming sanctuaries to unhealthy no-go areas for its residents.

Testimony is presented without formatting.