

# Jessica Lorenz

**#278113 | March 16, 2021**

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

While I support the building of shelters to confront Portland's homeless crises, there are two areas of the proposed zoning changes that I do not support. The first has to do with the placement of shelters. It is stated, "There is more available land in outer East Portland because it has more vacant land and larger parcels." As a community we continue to use East Portland as a forgotten landscape for problems surrounding poverty. Each year we push the most under-served in our community farther east in the city, and when the residents of East Portland ask for help we do nothing. One must ask why there are so many more vacant lots in East Portland than the rest of the city. By not making sure that shelters are spread out within all of our neighborhoods we continue to disproportionately impact already struggling communities. The second area of the proposal that is cause for alarm is the allowance for temporary shelters in public parks and open spaces. Public parks are meant for day use, not overnight use. The allowance of temporary shelters takes away the taxpayer supported intended use. The provision that the "City also retains flexibility to site temporary shelters anywhere without a conditional use for longer periods of time in response to disasters" provides the City with a pass on limiting the temporary shelters in parks to 180 days. Given that we could see the economic impact of COVID for the next year or two, there is the possibility that this provision could be used to turn parks into permanent shelters.

Testimony is presented without formatting.