

Lisa Abramovic

#278126 | March 16, 2021

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

Testimony to Portland City Council about the Shelter to Housing Continuum Project I am 63-years-old, a retired Portland Public Schools teacher, and have been a resident of Portland for the past 53 years. It is evident, by the vastly increasing amount of tents, tarps, and vehicles that have become shelters for Portland's houseless community, that this has become a crisis situation. I am encouraged to see that the city has started to make plans to address the situation and want to make sure you think deeply about the effect that the Shelter to Housing Continuum Project will have on our local parks and natural areas and that you will not allow shelters or camping there. Portland has prided itself on its green spaces and that is one reason many people find it a desirable place to live. For years, there has been great progress made in bringing back our natural areas, from desolation and invasive plant destruction, to thriving natural habitats in which animals, birds, and fish thrive and people can relax and rejuvenate from their busy lives. Also, in many areas this restoration has mitigated the flooding of nearby homes. We are now seeing these natural areas, which cost millions of dollars and hundreds of labor hours to restore, destroyed by illegal campers who are cutting down trees for fires, trampling tender plants under tents and piles of rotting garbage, and using Johnson Creek as a toilet and toxic materials dump. This hazardous pollution is now being carried by Johnson Creek into the Willamette River. Providing sheltering spaces for our houseless is necessary, but so is protecting, and now restoring, our precious, parks and natural areas such as Brookside Wetlands, Beggars Tick Wildlife Refuge, Johnson Creek natural areas, and Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge. Here is something found on the City of Portland's Environmental Services website, talking about the Johnson Creek Flood Plain area which includes several of the places mentioned above. "Because of the project's many community and environmental benefits, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) granted the City of Portland \$2.7 million through the Pre-disaster Mitigation Grant Program to help fund the project. Other funding came from federal community block grants and Portland stormwater funds." Please make it a priority to protect and restore our precious parks and natural areas. Sincerely, Lisa Abramovic

Testimony is presented without formatting.