

# Calyn Hauck

**#278241 | March 16, 2021**

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

As a resident of North Portland, educator, parent, and community organizer, I am imploring you to resist the urge to make a few of our remaining “wild” spaces in Portland (public parks) into residential zones for houseless community members. The density and growth of urbanization of our city has already dramatically altered the green space and demographics of Portland, impacting education, neighborhood diversity, open space and tree canopy, and overall quality of life.

Short-term solutions to a housing crisis can lead to terrible harm for generations in Portland, and damage our leadership in the nation’s work for environmental protections. Please don’t do this to our parks. Parks, which bring recreation, beauty, and environmental benefits to cities, are also critical places to win the hearts and minds of citizens into protecting the environment. Our parks are critical ways we educate, raise awareness, and build interest in our young people. They also provide positive places of connection that children and adults will be asked to support and protect into the future. The data is easily available to support this: people of all ages, who have access to public, open spaces & recreational parks are more likely to engage in environmental protection and support policies that protect, preserve, and expand these kinds of green spaces. Portland offers many examples of public votes and survey of opinion to show the benefit of our long-standing commitment to green spaces. The research on young people who grow up with ample time in parks and open spaces is also clear: they are far more likely to support environmental protection policies, and willingly sacrifice mightily to do so. As an educator in our area for over a decade, I have facilitated countless nature studies, book groups, and community connections in our public parks. These are possible because Portland parks are traditionally clean, beautiful, safe, and inviting places for all ages to gather and learn. Public parks reduce the racial, cultural, and socio-economic comparisons and barriers that can create difficulties for connection in other public or private spaces. These precious outdoor parks are our gateway to connect people with nature - and one another. The current crisis of tents, trash, and environmental damage have made these kinds of educational and community outings more difficult, but we have been patient and supportive during the crisis of a pandemic. Now is the time to return and move back into protection and expansion of our parks - not worsen the conditions or build the costs of future repair. Please do not allow camping of any kind in public park space. We need every square inch available for ALL visitors to our parks - and we should only allow non-invasive plants and wildlife to take up permanent or migratory residence in our public spaces. Please, please don’t let a housing crisis further add to our environmental crisis and community disconnection. This is particularly important right now. Protecting safe and inviting parks of today is the primary way we

can keep our community (and particularly, the next generation) committed to the protection and improvement of parks in the future. Thank you.

Testimony is presented without formatting.