

# Janet Knipe

**#278316 | March 17, 2021**

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

RE: Shelter to Housing Continuum Zoning Code Changes: AMEND to Remove the Open Space Zone Dear Mayor Wheeler and Members of the Portland City Council: I am a Portland resident and strongly oppose the proposed Shelter to Housing Continuum Zoning Changes that include the Open Space Zone. There is a clear and present need for additional services and housing options for thousands of people struggling with no housing. I support a majority of the recommendations and believe they will do much to help Portland address our houseless crisis. After the difficult winter we have had and out of sheer humanity, I firmly believe we need to expand options for those folks so that people are housed and not sleeping on sidewalks or medians. But the answer is NOT to sanction additional spaces where they may continue to live outside in City Parks and Open Spaces that are designed for a different purpose. Parks and Open Spaces are for Day Use, not overnight camping. Campgrounds are for overnight camping because they include showers, bathroom facilities and trash pick-up. Additionally, housing options need to have mental health and/or social services attached to them to benefit those who require services – camping in an Open Space does not provide that. Allowing shelters in public open space removes that space from use for intended park purposes by everyone else and according to a BPS staff report to the PSC makes this abundantly clear: “The Buildable Lands Inventory showed us that we have plenty of land to meet the City's housing needs, for everybody.” The long-term impacts would be severe and the resources and time required for restoration would be extraordinary. Elected officials can and must do better than surrendering its parks, natural areas, and trails to any use that jeopardizes their primary purpose - now and into the future. Open Space must remain open and available for all Portlanders. Using Parks and Open Spaces for any other reason is a disservice to our community as a whole. Therefore, the Parks and Open Space Zone needs be removed from consideration for siting of either permanent or temporary shelters (mass camps or shelters) except in the case of natural disasters. Thank you for your consideration. Janet Knipe

Testimony is presented without formatting.