

Theresa Kempenich

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

Thank you for addressing this very difficult but absolutely number one priority for the City of Portland. I have reviewed the proposal and frequently asked questions. I strongly support the efforts to increase sanctioned shelters that have onsite services, such as hygiene facilities, garbage collection and, in some cases, wraparound medical, disability, and social services that help people get ready to rent. To that list of services, transportation services should be added. I also support the proposal that does not allow shelters to be permanently located in open space zones. This is because: Open space (OS) zones often include environmental resources that should not be disturbed. Parks and open space have often been purchased with bond money limited to specific purposes or were given to the City with deed restrictions, often stipulating they must be used for parks, recreation or open space purposes, which doesn't include housing, shelters or other types of development. I strongly disagree with the proposal to "allow temporary siting of shelters in parks and open space for no more than 180 days." It appears that the current housing emergency has been in effect for six years, since 2015. The "temporary" designation is quite inaccurate. If shelters are allowed in parks, open and green spaces are no longer that. They are no longer open, green, clean, serene, or available for the public if they are someone else's "home." Portlanders are passionate about their parks. It is unkind to propose diminishing this unique and absolutely essential public resource. Is there a significant percentage of homeless persons who actually prefer living in a tent, with no rules or constraints on their use of drugs and alcohol? How will this ever change? For some, the nicer the tent site, the less incentive there is to accept alternative housing. Can homeless people who need resources be employed to clean up the trash homeless camps have created? Temporary shelter locations should be on solid surfaces to allow access for service providers in keeping sites clean and safe. I suggest using parking lots, especially covered parking lots, sports arenas and football fields. Rivergate Park is a huge city owned resource that should be considered. I also strongly support Immediate Enforcement of prohibited informal camping. It is unkind to allow people to live without services, sanitation and safety. It is also unkind and unsafe to everyone in Portland to encounter the unsanitary and unsafe sites. Informal campers should not be given a pass to live on public rights of way and to create mountains of litter. Public camping must only be allowed as a truly temporary measure and as a precedent to imminent permanent housing and must be allowed only at sanctioned shelter sites with appropriate sanitation, trash collection and transportation options. Thank you for listening. Theresa Kempenich

Testimony is presented without formatting.

