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

Owing to city policies that have resulted in harm to property owners/renters and owners of small and medium sized businesses, homeless encampments with attendant trash and antisocial behaviors disfigure our streets and ruin living conditions for neighbors who did not ask for their peace to be disrupted at night and their sidewalks to become impassable. The city should address this problem like other cities do. Instead, by permitting camping our city leaders have made Portland a magnet for the homeless. Thus far our parks have remained relative oases for people of all ages and types. If homeless encampments are allowed in parks I and my neighbors will lose incredibly important, safe spaces for rest, exercise, socializing and recreation. I am particularly concerned for children who have borne the brunt of needless isolation owing to the city's reaction to covid. Prioritize children for once, not a population with disproportionate levels of mental illness, addiction and criminality. I am also concerned for the many Portlanders who have little or no yard of their own. Where will they go to get a bit of sunlight, fresh air, beauty and a change of scenery? Those most impacted by what will be the loss of our parks' use will be the ordinary "little guy", not those fortunate people (like you?) who have your own private outdoor spaces to relax in and the financial wherewithal for pleasant "getaways" from the urban nightmare parts of our city have become. Make no mistake: you will drive ordinary people away from the parks if you permit homeless people to live there, and more permanently, you will give residents one more reason to seriously consider moving out of town or out of state. For many, it will be the last straw.

Testimony is presented without formatting.