

Brooke Best

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

I'm opposed to these zone changes as proposed. The S2HC proposal has several good ideas in addressing such a complex issue, however, the negative effect far outweighs any possible benefit to the homeless. The City needs to do its job and figure out better, more effective means of helping people who are suffering from this housing crisis. My specific concern is the recommendation to allow temporary shelters in public Open Space. Allowing shelters in public Open Space removes that space from its intended use – parks belong to everyone. Allowing some people to make their home in a park is contrary to these principles. This is an open invitation for anyone outside of the city to move in and worsen the situation. I fully endorse former Councilmember Fritz's public testimony, "A dozen reasons why allowing outdoor living in parks and natural areas is a really bad idea" (3/16/21). In the midst of the pandemic, Portland voters approved the Parks levy to address inequities in access to these public spaces. The ballot measure stated as the primary purpose: "Enhance and preserve parks, rivers, wetlands, trees, and other important natural features for the benefit of all Portlanders and wildlife." The levy promised more access for more people, and better maintenance. There was no mention of outdoor living in the ballot measure. If this measure passes, can Portland residents get a tax relief from PP&R? Adequate alternatives exist and should be considered, not public parks, natural areas, and trails. The Buildable Lands Inventory shows that there is available land to meet the City's housing needs. This is just another misguided policy that will worsen the situation, not improve things. The City's handling of this crisis will impact home values, livability, and desirability of our city as a tourist destination. Sadly, it will also reinforce our growing reputation as an irresponsibly mismanaged city, not a compassionate one. Please reconsider the proposed recommendation to allow temporary shelters in public Open Space.

Testimony is presented without formatting.