

# Melissa Toledo

**#278369 | March 17, 2021**

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

Hi Everyone, As a mother, during a recent homeless camp cleanup I saw some things that disturbed me to my soul. So I took pictures and have distributed these links to public officials. But, as I've been doing this for almost a year, I know it's not enough. Please review my image galleries (whose links I have provided below) and decide if you agree with me, that in the name of safety and livability, homeless camps need to be removed from school zones and residential areas now. Even those under 10 tents. Here's what's happening: Since March of 2020, the City's moratorium allowed a homeless camp to grow by the Cleveland High School Athletic Field on SE 33rd Ave. As we'd been reporting this camp, the City's response was to send out contractors to "clean up" trash piles and the random abandoned tents. During a normal walk I saw two "clean-ups" happening at the camp, so I decided to take a closer look. On Thursday, Feb 25, 2021, by the back gate around SE Waverleigh Blvd, cleaning crews LEFT BEHIND over two dozen needles EXPOSED and STREWN all over the pavement. The photographs show the actual cleaners and the area after they left. I stood there and contacted many folks immediately, including CHS, and someone managed to get a hazmat team to pick them up later that afternoon. BUT, I don't think this immediate follow-up needle cleanup would have happened had I not said something. I know CHS checks inside the gate, but not necessarily outside, as security had been told to stay away from the aggressive campers. (The city previously told me that needles don't really pose a risk to students. I can provide that thread should anyone wish to pursue that) On Friday, Feb 26, 2021, from a different abandoned tent site and trash pile closer to Powell Blvd, crews uncovered, and I photographed, a real-enough-looking gun, knife, a MOUNTAIN of used needles, and countless objects of drug paraphernalia. You can view these items in the photo gallery. This camp has now been cleaned up and the families of Cleveland High School and community members are once again enjoying this precious sidewalk and being able to watch their students safely from this side of the field. We thank the City for accomplishing this tremendous task. However... Several of these same campers have decided that this neighborhood is now their home and simply moved 320-feet around the corner onto Waverleigh Blvd...on the same block and just over 30-ft from homeowners. This is simply half a block from where the tents used to be. On top of pandemic issues, due to this homeless camp, this has been our community's truth since last March 2020: - A homicide and memorial to the slain - Stray bullets - Syringes - Drug use - Prostitution - Verbal confrontations with neighbors - Aggressive intimidation towards community neighbors - Dangerous crowding of car traffic - Destruction of Cleveland's High School perimeter fence - Homeless proximity to students - Blocked gates to the school's field - Vandalism of public property - Obsessive littering - Trash-dumping piles - Blocked sidewalks If these year-long campers met the threshold for removal from SE33rd, why don't they still meet that threshold? And how is this considered a truly successful cleanup when the same campers are now deeper in our community and closer to our homes? I submit the following PHOTO GALLERIES as visual testimony to some of what I, my family, and community have encountered just 1 block from my home: -

Feb25\_Needles\_by\_ClevelandHS\_field\_left\_after\_trash\_cleanup-Camp\_is\_growing\_up\_WaverleighBlvd\_202  
<https://bit.ly/2QgzRko> - Feb26\_Gun-Knife-Needles\_uncovered.\_Camp\_is\_relocating\_on\_WaverleighBlvd:  
<https://bit.ly/30OYh6u> - Feb10, 2021 Tents/garbage/Cleveland HS blocked gate Corner SE33rd Ave PDX:  
<https://bit.ly/3r51V7b> - SE Richmond homeless camp. Sept 2020: <https://bit.ly/3cX2Ph1> Thank you for your  
attention to this matter, -Melissa

Testimony is presented without formatting.