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

I am a city of Portland resident. I congratulate the city and planners who are looking at various alternatives to housing the homeless. Clearly this is a complex problems and easing zoning restrictions for various types of properties to allow homeless camps with services is a good idea, with the exception of parks. 1. City parks are a lifeline for families and kids during the pandemic. Particularly since kids will not be vaccinated any time soon, they need a safe, outdoor space to play. Having homeless camps in public parks threatens their safety due to the unfortunate prevalence of mental illness and drug abuse amongst this population. 2. Opening the parks to homeless shelters would have a disproportionately negative effect on low income families, who generally do not have the same access to private yard space and are even more dependent on safe, public, outdoor spaces during the pandemic. 3. This sets a dangerous precedent. We are not going to solve homelessness in the next 180 days, and if we open up public parks to homeless shelters, it will be very difficult to reverse this decision. Thanks for your service and continued efforts working on complex issues affecting our city.

Testimony is presented without formatting.