

Carol Cook

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

As a resident in Multnomah County for over 30 years, I am writing to support the removal of Open Space Zones (parks, natural areas, trails and bike paths, be removed from consideration for siting of either permanent or temporary shelters for the homeless. I have deep compassion for the homeless and have supported numerous tax initiatives to provide more services and assistance. As an avid user of the Parks, bike paths, and trails, I have seen an extreme deterioration of the cleanliness and the ability to use these public areas. It is apparent that homeless camps have taken over these areas without adequate restroom and garbage/needle disposal facilities as well as mental health facilities. I am often very fearful to bike the Springwater Corridor, hike in Forest Park, or run through the Tom McCall park and the Eastside Esplanade. I have supported numerous tax levies to support the parks but do not feel safe to use parks and natural areas as I once did. Outdoor activities have been vital to us all during the COVID pandemic; however, many of us have felt restricted from using public areas due to the homeless camps. If we continue to allow use of parks and natural areas for temporary shelters, not only will it will be impossible to control, reverse and cost the City more dollars to clean up the areas, but will attract an influx of homeless people from other states. Again, please do not use Open Spaces for the siting of temporary or permanent shelters. Please help us make Portland Parks a safe and desirable place for us all to enjoy.

Testimony is presented without formatting.