

Lara Jones

#278465 | March 17, 2021

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

I am writing to oppose allowing camping in our city parks. No amount of time is acceptable! To enact such a rule will make it virtually impossible to roll back, and will have caused irreparable damage to our parks. Campers have caused tremendous damage and hazardous conditions with outdoor campsites throughout our public spaces over the past number of years. Many homes in our area do not have yards, and children need safe, local green spaces to play in now more than ever. Lair Hill Park, our local park, is located directly across from a school that uses it every day for recess (and many classes too during the pandemic)! Most all humans are suffering from stress/anxiety right now, and as an educator I will share that while I am sympathetic to this crisis and the many people affected by the economy and drug crisis - many of whom are not living outdoors, houseless people are an extremely common trigger for many children's anxiety. Not all children will be returning to in-person learning, and rely on the park as their classroom and/or recess space. We simply cannot use our parks if there are homeless people camping there. There has to be a better solution!

Testimony is presented without formatting.