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

The Arnold Creek Neighborhood Association thanks the Portland City Council and the Bureau of Planning & Sustainability for working hard to address the difficult and important task of creating shelter and housing for the homeless and addressing the lack of affordable housing in our city. The S2HC proposed code changes acknowledge that those residents who already enjoy warm and dry permanent residences will need to make room for other less fortunate Portlanders to find housing or shelter within their residential neighborhoods, institutional and commercial zones. We support the land use changes that will make this easier. However, we do not support the proposed allowance of temporary or seasonal outdoor and mass shelters in city Open Spaces Zones for up to 6 months each year (code 33.296.030 H). These Open Space areas make up the critical network of our city parks and natural areas. They are not appropriate locations for housing shelters. The code proposal would allow these shelters in all city parks without exception and without requiring City Council to declare an emergency need. Portland residents have long been supportive of city purchases of open spaces for public recreation and natural area preservation. Much taxpayer money has been spent to buy, maintain and restore natural areas and to develop city parks for the use of all citizens. As taxpayers, we do not want to see our substantial investment in these Open Spaces squandered by misuse for purposes other than recreation and habitat resource preservation. City Parks that are repurposed for shelters will cease to offer the benefits for which they were designed. Sensitive natural areas will see permanent degradation when used as temporary camping facilities. Issues of tree cutting and removal of native plantings to create camping spaces, trash and sanitation problems, and camper's territorial disputes with recreational users are just a few of the issues that make camping incompatible with traditional recreational uses. Additionally, these Open Space natural areas are important not just for humans but for the wildlife that reside in our city. Campers would quickly displace resident wildlife. Most troubling is the proposed temporary use of these areas for mass shelters, which would require the on-site construction of buildings. In this time of Covid 19, we are especially aware of the value and necessity of our public outdoor spaces. Please reconsider this code change in light of the fact that the other proposed code changes will open up all residential, institutional and commercial zones for mass and outdoor shelters of varying types and sizes. BPS has identified extensive land areas of over 2000 vacant lots (over 1000 acres) of allowed and limited use land available for Outdoor Shelters and over 4000 vacant lots (nearly 5000 acres) of limited use land for Mass Shelters. Since mass shelters can be located in existing buildings, these are over 89,000 total lots available for this purpose. Obviously, we do not need to open up our valuable parks

and preserved natural resource areas for shelters, even on a temporary basis. Thank you for your consideration. I live in the Arnold Creek Neighborhood.

Testimony is presented without formatting.