

Katherine Kurtz

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

Portland has been plagued by the problem of how to respond effectively and compassionately to the needs of people experiencing homelessness. A side effect of this problem is that law-abiding citizens are forced to navigate unsafe and unsanitary conditions throughout the city. The idea that allowing people to camp in parks and golf courses won't affect citizens' enjoyment of these spaces is foolish at best, dangerous at worst. This is a public safety issue! Surely, Ms. Hardesty and others on the City Council are aware of the situation across the street from Delta Park. This green space is essentially serving both as a homeless camp and garbage dump. People living in homeless camps are often suffering from mental illness and/or using drugs. This creates an unsafe situation for people using the parks especially children. Rezoning will only exacerbate these problems. Jo Ann Hardesty says, "Parks are for everybody," but if people experiencing homelessness are living in our parks, they will not for be everybody. They will only serve a fringe group of people. Part of Portland's beauty is the thoughtfulness and compassion of Portlanders toward helping others, but rezoning the parks would serve no one. Please don't destroy our parks. Vote against allowing homeless camps in city parks.

Testimony is presented without formatting.