

# ALEXANDRA CLARKE

**#278677 | March 21, 2021**

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

As a fifth generation Oregonian born and raised in Portland, I support the removal of Open Space Zones from consideration in S2HC Proposed Open Space Amendments for either temporary or permanent houseless shelters EXCEPT for a declaration of emergency by the City Council due to a catastrophic natural disaster as advised in Former Portland Parks Director, Zari Santner's, letter sent to City Council earlier. This proposition is unfair to the general public, taxpayers, and volunteers who provide the funding to support our special public open areas. Portland voters generously passed a large PPR tax levy last November. The proposed amendment to this legislation will increase PPR budget expenses. This is not what the majority voted for when asked to pass the new Parks Levy. "Voters have chosen to help Portland Parks & Recreation become more equitable, to serve more Portlanders, and to appropriately care for our environment and natural resources," says PP&R Director Adena Long. "While we have a long road ahead, I look forward to building a sustainable parks and recreation system for all current and future Portlanders." The city appears to be shirking its responsibility to resolve the homeless problem by foisting it on the public innocence - again. This will be a devastating answer to a social problem that continues to go unresolved. My opinion is that voters have generously, repeatedly voted for bonds and levies to support the houseless community. Yet, it seems that the more money thrown at it, the problem does not abate. As a matter of fact, it seems to worsen. The evidence of garbage, filth, drugs, foul language, and nudity is all over downtown Portland and certain immediate surrounding areas for all to see and experience. The homeless being allowed in urban parks, natural, and wilderness areas spreads this "homeless effect" everywhere - possibly permanently. Once the homeless are allowed to live in our public urban parks, natural, and wilderness areas, will they enjoy certain tenant or land rights? Do the legal agreements for these areas allow the City to give the homeless such rights? Such a move could easily set precedence -- of course, these questions are best suited for a public land use attorney. The homeless are already camping illegally in Portland Parks and Open Areas. Past documentation of dangerous homeless incidents must be addressed. The cutting of wood and other vegetation, building of fires for cooking and warmth is bound to happen in open areas increasing the risk of wild fires where it will be difficult for fire resources to access the area. It is a given that the killing of animals (including domestic animals) for food will occur. Aside from the sanitation issue, these are serious concerns that City Council needs to be made aware. As well, the city is short on park rangers and our good police force is badly depleted. Compliance will be difficult - especially with the drug addicted populations. Our park areas and neighborhoods will be at risk of losses from serious

crimes. Innocent persons will be impacted. As such, homeless occupation in our parks and open areas will be devastating for neighbors and all other park users. It will be unsafe and should not be tolerated in any situation other than those emergencies as described in Ms. Santner's letter. Truly yours, Alexandra P. Clarke

Testimony is presented without formatting.