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#278751 | March 23, 2021

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

I am writing to you, pleading for you to not open up our parks and open spaces to homeless camps. I understand and am in full support that we, as a city and community, need to find solutions to our current homeless problem. I appreciate the effort to find these solutions but I am in complete and total opposition to public park being considered for possible homeless encampment locations. I am asking you that on behalf of myself and my two young children who use parks and trails regularly that the city remove the recommendation to use open spaces, which would include parks, natural areas, trails, golf courses, and parks-related parking lots and community centers, as temporary shelter spaces, except in the case of natural disasters and short term emergencies. The use of these spaces should not be allowed during a Shelter Shortage as defined in the proposed code. Otherwise, you are taking away the option for people to use the parks safely. I can not allow my children to play in a park that will also most likely contain used syringes and human feces. Mayor Wheeler stated at last weeks hearing that there was no intent to site shelters at parks. But intent does not make law. If you have no intent to site shelters on parks or in natural areas, the code needs to reflect that intent. Also, on the contrary, on March 9th at her open house, Com. Hardesty said, " I'm gonna be really clear about that. Parks are for everybody, and I don't think having a few camps in parks will somehow make the park unavailable for people to jog, or play golf, or do all the other stuff that people do in parks." Com. Hardesty's statement does not recognize present reality. Have you been to Laurelhurst annex recently Com. Hardesty? A "few tents' has yet to be sustainable. The S2HC fails to establish any type of structured enforcement mechanism for desired conditions which means that they will get out of control just like every other encampment location. On a daily basis I drive down my street, driving to work from my house and count the new tents that have arrived. We are now up to 20 with more trash and rats. A homeless person knocked on my door while I was bathing my children. I don't know how else to convey to you that we do not feel safe in a city that has been home for 15 years. The beauty of the city is dwindling away and allowing this ordinance is just going to make the problem worse. If this is passed, there is no exit strategy. The proposed zone changes clearly state how encampments can be established but fail to address how they will be dismantled. Also, who is going to make sure that these camps are fairly distributed throughout the city? The proposed distribution for encampments is highly skewed for lower socioeconomic communities. The oversaturation of parts of the city with homeless camps is not addressed in S2HC. SE Portland has the over 80 reported homeless camps. The next closest is NE Portland with 40. Downtown is also over saturated with campers. This inequity is not addressed in S2HC. The S2HC fails to provide

services to address the underlining issues for homelessness, like drug abuse therapies or pathways for economic independence. It's not rocket science just common sense. You make parks available to camp and people will come. It's not the people who go to shelters or live in the tiny home communities because those people want help. The current situation with unsanctioned camps all over the city has led to the deterioration in livability for all of Portland. Things need to change. Unfortunately, as written, the S2HC is not answer. It is unbalanced is its remedies causing businesses, neighborhoods, parks and open spaces and schools to carry a heavy burden of all the negative consequences it imposes. This is already happening. It is our new reality. S2HC just legalizes it.

Testimony is presented without formatting.