

Nina Barnhart

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

While I understand that the city needs to find housing for homeless people, Gabriel Park and similar residential areas are not the right call. Firstly, the area does not have the resources to support a large homeless population. It is a small neighborhood with very little public transportation to get from one area to the next and aside from a small neighborhood food pantry for residents there are no public resources, including access to career or other public services. Additionally, Gabriel Park is a safe place for children to play, recreational area for sports and a spot for trails and other activities that the neighborhood will no longer feel safe using. Bringing a park in the middle of a neighborhood isn't going to help the homeless find resources but it will make the entirely residential area feel unsafe. While I understand the crisis and know not all people who are houseless are criminals or drug addicts (my mom was once in a similar situation and she didn't even drink), the areas with a large homeless population tend to be littered with stolen property, drugs and trash. In addition to a nearby elementary school this is quite literally in people's backyards among children and the elderly who aren't in the city because they don't feel comfortable. Children will no longer feel safe nor will their parents feel comfortable taking them to the park to use the play equipment I'm sure the city paid for. Residents are not going to feel comfortable using the nearby trails for fitness that the city developed. There are other areas that are not in the backyard of peoples homes in an area used for neighborhood recreation. While Gabriel Park may be appealing because of its large size it is large for the sake of having a neighborhood recreation area that nobody is going to use. There are other open areas within the city in non-residential areas where the homeless have access to resources. Bringing them from the city to a neighborhood park where there are very few resources is not the best solution for the houseless nor the residents.

Testimony is presented without formatting.