

# Paddy Tillett

**#278883 | March 24, 2021**

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

S2HC WRITTEN TESTIMONY ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ZONING Paddy Tillett, 1317 NW24th Ave., Portland 97210 Many employers are worried about ‘burnout’ among those who have worked from home in apartments and condos for a year with no private open space. For them getting out into the Park is essential to their wellbeing; to their sanity. For the past year especially, Portland’s ‘green infrastructure’ has proved to be one of its most treasured assets for thousands. Public parks can fill this vital city-wide need for respite from working at home because they are safe and companionable places, and for most Portlanders, there is a park just a short walk from home. To allow even temporary homeless encampments in public parks would be to drive away many of those needful citizens. Some camps are tidy and respectful; most are not, prompting people to give them a wide berth. BPS’ Buildable Lands Inventory has demonstrated that there is sufficient land for immediate accommodation of the homeless without compromising public parks. Many of those sites are close to the services that the houseless need. Finding safe places for the houseless both in the short and long terms is vitally important as signaled by voters willing to tax themselves to do so. Welfare of our citizens is important too, many of whom rely on parks to relax or exercise out of doors. That a majority voted in favor of the Parks Levy in November is a measure of the importance that Portlanders ascribe to parks in our quality of life. Camping in our Parks would dramatically increase the need for maintenance. Not just clean-up, but replacement of plants, restoring compacted soils, repairing physical damage to trees and structures. As you know, unfunded deferred maintenance in our Parks already exceeds \$500,000. There are no funds to enable PP&R to undertake any additional maintenance. So, our parks would remain disfigured for years to come. Although motivated by the best of humane instincts, enabling temporary housing in our parks would effectively deny access to many regular park users and would impose significant unfunded costs resulting in deterioration of parks that is likely to remain unaddressed for years. Another solution is at hand as the BPS inventory has demonstrated. Please protect our green infrastructure and instead use undeveloped land close to the services that are so necessary to those trying to return to permanent homes as fully functional members of our community. Please do not sanction camps or shelters within the boundaries of our public parks. Thank you.

Testimony is presented without formatting.