

Greg Block

#278947 | March 24, 2021

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

I respectfully urge the city to remove the recommendation to use open spaces, which would include parks, natural areas, trails, golf courses, parks-related parking lots and community centers, as temporary shelter spaces. The proposal has the potential to seriously impact livability in Portland at precisely the time when Portland's "brand" has been damaged by wanton vandalism and violence caused by a handful of opportunists taking advantage of thousands of legitimate public protesters concerned about racial and social justice. Already uncontrolled camping in public spaces presents an inhumane solution to a problem most Portlanders have been willing to spend their time and open their pocketbooks to try to solve. Allowing expanded access to parks, even on an emergency or temporary basis, raises serious health and safety concerns for the users of the parks and the homeless occupants. Further, this policy will have the unintended consequence of pitting Portland's energetic supporters of green spaces and public parks against homelessness advocates and homeless themselves, alienating the thousands of voters who we most need to advance compassionate and effective solutions. Finally, please be mindful that many hardworking citizens don't have the time to show up at public meetings to comment on critical proposals like this, but I can say that every single person I have talked to about this proposal -- predominantly liberal, progressive and tolerant residents, find it abhorrent. Use city and county property; rent nearby lands with multi-service capabilities, continue building affordable housing, but DO NOT shift the burden onto our green spaces and public parks, which provide solace, safety and relief to all citizens. Respectfully, Greg Block

Testimony is presented without formatting.