

Pete Batten

#278962 | March 24, 2021

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

As a Portland resident for several decades, I see the increase in homelessness in Portland as a sad and growing problem that requires creative solutions. There are homeless populations in every country I've visited, but the increase in Portland has been shocking. We need more options, support, and services. The one portion of the proposal I see as very problematic is the provision to allow temporary 180 day permits for camping in public parks. I see the current map of reported camping and vehicle sites as significantly under-reporting actual sites. I don't report sites because I am aware there is no effective city support or enforcement now for people camping in our neighborhood underpass and park, and I know other nearby Portland residents fail to report camping and parked vehicle sites for the same reason. Our Portland Parks and open spaces should not become permitted campgrounds without significant public comment, regular sanitation, health, and rehab services, and enforcement oversight of camping activity and sanitation. The park and open space camping and vehicle parking I've seen does not represent a solid foothold for people to transition to more permanent housing. Permitting or otherwise sanctioning such uses will create tension for neighbors and park visitors and I am very worried permits will not be supported with adequate city services and personnel. I respectfully urge the Council to reconsider the park permit provision. There's far too little guidance provided to future decision-makers to honor the Council's intent. I do not believe park permits will provide an effective solution or transitional path to re-housing.

Testimony is presented without formatting.