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

Regarding the proposed zoning changes to allow public parks and golf courses to be used for homeless encampments: Please vote NO. This experiment has already been run in Seattle, so we know what the outcome will be: drugs, crime, trash, feces, needles, and the loss of the use of our parks by families and children. We should look to cities that are successfully managing their homelessness problems, rather than ceding our parks and public spaces to an ever-expanding problem which is worsening because of the incentives we provide. Allowing homeless encampments in parks and public spaces is not a permanent solution to this worsening problem, and would seriously degrade the quality of life in Portland. A city that is successfully managing its problem: Houston Houston has reduced its homelessness by 54% since 2011, according to its Point-in-Time counts, and has done this by focusing on permanent supportive housing, a coordinated approach to social services, and a zero-tolerance policy for street camping, panhandling, trespassing, and property crime. Meanwhile, cities such as Austin and San Antonio, which allow public camping, are experiencing increases in their homeless populations. Portland should slow down, avoid knee-jerk responses that feel like compassion but actually do nothing to improve the lives of the homeless, and look for solutions that have already shown success. Thank you

Testimony is presented without formatting.