

# Toni Ketrenos

**#278982 | March 25, 2021**

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

Dear of the Council and others, I write to ask that you remove City Parks and the Open Space Zone from the Shelter to Housing Continuum. While I support efforts to find housing for those experiencing homelessness, city and Metro parks, natural areas, trails, golf courses, and parks-related parking lots and community centers their associated parking spaces are not the appropriate areas for housing. These areas should remain open to their intended uses. I've lived next to Mt. Tabor park for more than 20 years, and I've never seen so many of my fellow Portlanders enjoying it as I have in the past year. Families, groups of teens, runners, walkers, bikers, skateboarders, and children of all sizes have been filling the park. It makes me so happy to see so many others enjoying this space that I love. Now more than ever, we need the space to be out of our houses and move our bodies. How many parents would continue to feel safe letting their children run if there were a line of tents along the reservoir? If there were syringes and human feces scattered everywhere? (These things are there now because of transient people, I'm quite aware.) The increased appreciation of our City Parks and open spaces has been the same throughout the city. I wish that homeless camps and family use of parks could co-exist. Unfortunately, my experiences have underscored that they do not. I have had to stop riding my bicycle along the the I-205 corridor and the Greenwater corridor after having transient people threaten me and my child as we rode by. On one occasion a man tried to stick a branch into the spokes of my son's bike as we rode past his tent. Thankfully my son was strong enough to pedal fast enough to get away from him. Another time I was riding along and a man tried to grab me. What would have been next if I hadn't gotten away? We need to rethink "emergency" and "temporary" housing when it comes to homelessness. There needs to be a thoughtful placement where proper sanitation can be situated and where people can stay for the weeks or months needed with dignity. The plan must also address the impact to the space itself and what it will take to restore when permanent solutions are developed. We need to maintain the investment we've put into our parks and open spaces, and we need to maintain safe spaces for our city's children, seniors, and others who enjoy outdoor recreation within the city. Thank you for reading, Toni Ketrenos

Testimony is presented without formatting.