

Shelley McBride

#279025 | March 25, 2021

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

I am writing as a concerned citizen of our city. I just learned about the plan to allow houseless camps in the city parks on a "temporary" basis (being 6 months per calendar year). I watched the news report about this on Koin 6 News (March 25th) and then went onto the Portland City gov.com website to learn more. To be as succinct as possible, I hope that the city council will NOT allow our city parks or city park parking lots to be used for homeless camps. One of the reasons we chose to move back to Portland is because of the beautiful outdoor spaces and parks that public can enjoy year-round. We enjoy walking the paths, having picnics, recreating in the city parks. Turning them into homeless camps would prevent the public (and taxpayers) from using them. While I have been concerned about the increase of the homeless population over the past 5 years, and I realize that it is a complicated problem to solve (and I do volunteer in ways that I can to help the disadvantaged ongoing), I have been horrified this year by the mountains of GARBAGE EVERYWHERE in our city...on sidewalks, along highways and roadways, in residential neighborhoods, in on-ramps and off-ramps. It is unbelievable that this is allowed and not taken away! I don't understand WHY the city can't address the garbage problem immediately and continually by employing people to pick up garbage and trucks that will haul the garbage away every single day. This is not a job that can be solved by a small group of volunteers on foot with a plastic garbage bag once a month. This is a BIG job and needs to be addressed without delay. Please, please, please don't allow our city parks to be turned from places of beauty and solace to places of garbage and plastic tents. I want to take my grandchildren to play and my 88-year old mother to the parks for picnics and walks. These are treasured spaces that our property taxes pay for. Yes, the homeless problem needs to be addressed. But this is not the way to do it. Look at places in the city that are currently UNUSED and could be utilized for these types of camps. There are warehouse spaces and empty parking lots that sit empty every day, unused. Thank you for thinking of EVERYONE in our city...please protect the beauty of it and outdoors spaces that should be shared by all. Sincerely, Shelley McBride

Testimony is presented without formatting.