

# Kelsee Thaten

**#279109 | March 26, 2021**

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

I care deeply about the state of this city I love. I feel grief when I see communities of houseless people struggling. I encourage and support plans to help get them shelter and support. However, that support should not compromise the cleanliness and safety of places that are used and loved by the greater community of Portland. Parks, schools and natural areas should absolutely be off limits for houseless sheltering. It is not just a matter of appearance, but safety. We've already seen how many in the houseless community feel comfortable degrading parks with trash, drugs and violence. I truly don't feel safe or comfortable visiting most Portland parks anymore, not to mention taking my child. This is a tragedy, as Portland has so many beautiful parks that are already being taken over and destroyed. Additionally, there need to be restrictions on how close these shelters can be places next to major residential areas. Again, it's a matter of safety above all. My neighbors and I have been victims of petty thefts, vandalism as well as finding trashed items tossed over the neighborhood, including drug paraphernalia (as pictured.) Giving someone shelter doesn't magically make their addictions or mental illnesses go away, so these groups need to be places further from schools and residential neighborhoods for safety. For those that choose to use their shelter and resources for positive change, there should be a program helping them find affordable housing closer in, so they can re-integrate with society. I feel a great sense of loss and grief seeing the condition that Portland is in. I feel unsafe and honestly embarrassed by the condition of things. I think allowing houseless populations to continue taking over our parks and residential areas will be the demise of the city, and all tourism. Please find ways to care for these people in need without harming the city as a whole.

Testimony is presented without formatting.