

Kathleen J Davis

#279132 | March 26, 2021

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

Friday, 26 March 2021 Dear Mayor Wheeler and the Commissioners, I am writing as a part of testimony and statement gathering concerning the proposed zoning changes for city parks and open spaces. I have read several accounts of the proposed changes, have looked on line at the zoning changes and looked at the city map of the proposed areas. I am aware of some of the testimony before you on March 17, which leaves me with many questions and frustration. I am very sympathetic and concerned for our citizens who find themselves in the awful situation of houselessness. Though retired now, I spend 36 years serving families who were impacted economically by many personal and financial changes as well as the financial burden that Covid 19 has placed on people's overburdened shoulders. I also have worked with medically and emotionally fragile youth and adults. I applaud the attention to our vulnerable citizens who need help. And it appears your desire when crafting these zoning changes are another step to solve a very large issue. If I read it correctly, this is a first step to provide more places for people to shelter, receive services while providing some basic services for daily living, such as garbage removal, hygiene care and other supports. However, I also have a lot of unanswered questions and concerns. I will be brief and to the point.

- I am not in favor of using any parks in our current established park system for the project. As a homeowner and tax payer, I have paid to preserve and protect our park system. I believe unaffected people need to retain their recreation areas in the city.
- I am not in favor of any shelter being located around our schools. By "schools" I specifically mean preschools, K-12 schools, 18–21-year-old transition programs operated by our schools, alternative schools, religions schools, colleges, universities and vocational schools.
- I am not in favor of open spaces being located in sensitive natural resource areas being used for houselessness. Take a look at the Columbia Slough and the Johnson Creek area as two examples of sensitive natural resource areas that are being overrun, damaged and heavily polluted by current camping.
- I do expect that placement of these areas be equitably distributed in all parts of the city taking into account the areas that currently exist and the current impact. The north and northeast parts of town are overrun currently so initial placement needs to be in the southwest and westside. This is long overdue.
- I do not believe there should be or needs to be permanent zone changes. Rather, I would suggest a "pause" during a trial implementation with significant data collection through involved agencies and citizen input following your published and stated goals.
- I would like to see a highly visible and published 5-year plan with stated goals and aligned budgets for this and future projects. What is the City of Portland and Multnomah County doing with the forthcoming funds dedicated by the Biden Administration as

part of our rebuilding America? • In November, the voters overwhelmingly approved Measure 26-213 which provides \$45 million dollars annually to the parks system. I would like to see an accounting of those funds. Have those funds been moved to this project? I remember when “Occupy Portland” occurred in the park area near the Justice Center several years ago. That occupation costs the city millions to clean up, reseed and repair following the removal of the occupiers. How is the current impact on our parks being addressed and budgeted? • Has the Portland City Council looked at any vacant motels, hotels or other properties for short term rental to house our vulnerable citizens? What about the huge property where the Red Lion was in the Jansen Beach area? What has the use of Wapato provided to our vulnerable citizens? Where is that data and budget? • Are there any plans for retraining and job placement on a large scale? Currently the Concordia University campus sits vacant. There is a cafeteria, dorm area, a preschool, library and other amenities that could house and provide training opportunities for many persons. Treatment centers, both day treatment and housed treatment, could be provided. Mental health agencies could have offices, treatment centers all within a beautiful area with proximity to public transportation. • How are the chronically medically fragile and mentally ill being addressed with permanent housing and continued care being folding into their plan. Has anyone looked at the way the City of New Orleans addressed their houseless crisis following Katrina? They developed a wide reaching and practical approach to houselessness which appeared to be successful. They did recognize that a certain percentage of their houseless population would always need supports throughout their life span. Do you take that into consideration? Have you budgeted for long term care? • And finally, once these proposed sites are established and people are moved off the streets into the areas, how do you plan to address the remaining campers that I would assume are therefore “illegal”? Who will enforce their removal from those areas? How will those damaged areas be restored? How will that be paid for and what have you allocated as a proper budget for this process? I have other questions and will continue to do my reading and research. I hope to see some tangible evidence to address the concerns and questions that I have stated. Thanks for reading this. Kathleen J. Davis NE Portland

Testimony is presented without formatting.