

# Chet Orloff

**#279182 | March 28, 2021**

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

March, 28, 2021 Dear Mayor Ted Wheeler and Members of the Portland City Council: Along with many other citizens, I am writing to you regarding the pending decision to exclude the open-space zone from consideration (except in disaster-related emergencies) for houseless shelters. Portlanders currently own or control approximately nine acres of "usable" land for every acre of "preservable" parkland within the City. That may seem like a lot, but, when you take into account (1) what Portlanders have said they would like for parkland, (2) how much is required for healthy wildlife reserves, and (3) what people need for a healthy urban lifestyle, it is, actually, not enough. Recent (2010 and, perhaps, more-recent) research by BPS and PSU into how much land is available for development indicates that there are significant amounts of land available for development and redevelopment. Through taxes, zoning codes, and residential-development requirements, Portlanders are investing heavily in houseless space and services. I urge you to exclude parks and open-space, and their affiliated parking lots and structures, from places you choose for the houseless. Doing otherwise would be a short-term and short-sighted solution, especially in light of what Portlanders have now demonstrated they are willing to invest to house those needing shelter. The houseless need to be protected and sheltered in our community, but not in or adjacent to parks. They, too, are owed protection and preservation. Having made the decisions to run for elective office and having been elected, you are encumbered to make decisions for our community on finding and making the places available for those who need housing. The resources to do so are becoming available and, with the renewed efforts of former Mayor Sam Adams, becoming even-more achievable. I encourage you to make the decision to preserve Portland's parks for their intended purposes. I won't burden you by enumerating all the values of our parks, but I can assure you that no leading advocate for parks—from the Rev. Eliot and L.L. Hawkins of a century ago to those working today—would recommend their occupation by human beings. In our city, you can find and create the space for that. You are being given the tools to do so. Thank you for your leadership in using them appropriately. Chet Orloff Historian President & Director, Museum of the City Principal, Oregon History Works Director Emeritus, Oregon Historical Society Adj. Professor, Urban Studies & Planning, PSU (ret) Instructor, School of Architecture, UofO (ret) Mail: P.O. Box 10829, Portland, Oregon 97296 Telephone: 503.805.5461 Email: chetorloff@gmail.com

Testimony is presented without formatting.