

Deborah Scott

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

While I appreciate the heart of Commissioner Rubio's amendment, it still allows siting of camping/housing on parks/community center parking lots. Compassionate care needs to be provided, but splitting the use of a parking lot between its intended use (once the facilities are open again, which should be this summer) means park/community center users will be disrupted and the use fees that support those facilities will further evaporate. When parks and community centers do have parking, it is generally provided near entrances (ADA access being one meaningful need). Teaching and showing compassion is important, but do you really want to walk your children by homeless camps on their way to the center--for months and month? Siting camping areas in the same area as building entrances is a poor idea as the uses are not compatible. Mayor Wheeler made it clear that the housing emergency now in effect will be reinstated. This means that any outdoor shelter placed in a park or dedicated parking lot, and any mass shelter in a community center, can remain in place for an unknown duration. This is unacceptable. Permanent or temporary shelters should be prohibited from park and recreation property except in the event of a natural disaster. Parks and Recreation parking lots should not be considered separate from the park itself and should be included in the OS prohibition. The code should be changed to exempt Community and Cultural facilities from serving as mass shelters for the houseless community. In natural disasters and emergencies, the current code already allows activities needed as the result of a natural disaster or other health emergency. Community Centers have traditionally been kept open as warming and cooling centers in extreme weather conditions. When COVID hit, Community Centers were required to close to the public and, as a result, were available to shelter some of our most vulnerable homeless citizens during the pandemic. No code change needed to continue to allow these temporary activities. They are totally consistent with the current language of the code. The proposal to allowing camping in park/cultural center parking lots is short-sided and continues to be a poor idea for a larger issue that requires real solutions.

Testimony is presented without formatting.