

Patty Freeman

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

As we struggle with ever-increasing homelessness and the problems that accompany it, I am very appreciative of the effort and thought that is finally going into trying to solve it, and I recognize the need for varied measures to help people with the transition. However, the fact that our public open spaces are still on the table dismays me. We must not lose sight of the needs of the broader community in our desperate efforts to transition the homeless into housing. We can see the chilling effects of homeless camps in our public spaces at this time. We cannot allow this to displace the community from their spaces of play, relaxation, rest and solace, so essential in challenging times, especially to those living in higher density housing. We also must not ignore how fragile many of these spaces are. The damage caused by camping is clearly visible in public lands now. Allowing this to move into our open spaces which are already threatened by urbanization is short-sighted. As a long time Portland resident and a Parks employee for many years, I was witness to the thinking that went into the development of PPR's strategic planning. A central theme was the reality that as Portland grew denser rather than sprawling, our open spaces would grow ever more precious and essential to our health and survival as a community. I acknowledge the complexity of the problem, neglected by the last three mayors, when it was already an issue. I simply ask that you remove public open spaces and park facilities from your menu of options.

Testimony is presented without formatting.