

# Linda Robinson

**#279381 | March 30, 2021**

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

I strenuously object to allowing temporary or permanent outdoor shelters (managed or ad hoc) to be set up in any of Portland's parks, trails, golf courses, community centers (AND THEIR PARKING LOTS) -- due to a Shelter Shortage. It was okay when these facilities (especially the community centers were required to close due to the pandemic) -- but it will NOT work when they open for their intended use, whether or not a shelter emergency has been declared. Of course, park facilities should be available for use in the event of a major natural disaster (e.g., major earthquake) and they should be available for short-term use as warming centers, cooling centers, refuge from serious air quality problems -- but these are VERY SHORT-TERM situations that usually do not involve overnight stays. Parks and park facilities that have parking lots have them for a reason. They provide physical and cultural activities that draw people from a wide geographic area (swimming pools, ball fields, concerts, movies, etc). In addition, they are usually located near the entrance to the park or building -- so park users have to pass by them to get into the park or community center. This can be extremely intimidating to our immigrant population and to all BIPOC residents who are already feeling vulnerable. It's also a problem for seniors and young children. I've heard rumors that the mayors office is particularly interested in the idea of siting an outdoor shelter in a parking lot in either Delta Park and/or PIR. Neither of these locations meets the siting criteria listed during the earlier presentation. They are NOT near easy, frequent transportation; nor are they near services that the homeless need. They aren't even near grocery store. They may not be full every day -- but they are filled to capacity at frequent intervals. Furthermore, it doesn't make any sense, to me, to change the zoning code to allow use of any OS paved parking areas -- if there are only two or three properties that MIGHT work. I urge you NOT to allow any shelters in the OS zone, at least not on any property that is designated as a park (even parking lots), owned/operated by Portland Parks or another park agency (e.g. Metro) -- at least not when those facilities can be used for their intended purposes. If the zoning needs to be modified a bit to make sure they can be used for major major disasters or for short-term weather conditions, then make the changes necessary to do that -- but do NOT include shelter shortages in that provision. Finally, it's my understanding that Parks was NOT involved in the two years of planning for this project -- because they were told that it would not impact parks. Nor were neighborhoods involved. It sounds like it was mostly just a bunch of advocates for the homeless talking to each other. If others had been included much earlier in the procoess, a lot of these issues could have been worked out before the package was sent to the Planning & Sustainability Commission, and before it went to City Council -- and the package would not have

created so much angst among the city residents.

Testimony is presented without formatting.