



July 31, 2017

Honorable Mayor Darrell Steinberg and Sacramento City Councilmembers
915 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814



MIDTOWN
ASSOCIATION



THE RIVER DISTRICT



GREATER
BROADWAY
DISTRICT



THE Stockton Boulevard
PARTNERSHIP



FRANKLIN
BOULEVARD
BUSINESS ASSOCIATION



LETTER OF CONCERN – Relating to Temporary Residential Shelters

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers:

On behalf of the region’s Property and Business Improvement Districts, we are writing to express our concerns related to removing locational language from City Code relating to temporary shelters (Section 17.228.610).

As community partners in your effort to advance solutions to end homelessness, we appreciate the challenge of finding workable solutions. Often, we are the boots-on-the-ground in this fight and as a result, we also are all very familiar with the unintended consequences that even the most well intentioned of actions can create in our neighborhoods.

In the case of temporary shelters, much of the existing City Code is designed to protect our most utilized and sensitive locations, including neighborhood parks, schools, and family residences. Amending the city’s planning and development code to permit by-right small temporary residential shelters at any church or faith congregation removes these protections as well as the right for community input.

Before removing locational language for temporary shelters, we urge you to explore:

- How it will define a church or faith congregation?
- How it will ensure neighborhoods and schools are notified in advance?
- What oversight measures will be in place to ensure locations are properly equipped to deal with unforeseen impacts that may arise?
- What requirements for support and wrap around services will be in place to ensure this is a step toward ending homelessness?

Any changes to the City Code should continue to promote the public health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the city. Removing locational language relating to temporary shelters only makes it easier for organizations to bypass these requirements.

We’ve seen first-hand the unintended impacts rogue operators providing homeless services can have in our neighborhoods as well as on the very population they are intended to serve. It is the stark reality businesses, residents and visitors in our districts encounter on a daily basis. Requiring a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is one very necessary tool to ensure both the opportunity for community input and necessary oversight.

The CUP approval process exists to allow for the thoughtful assessment of the location, site development and conduct of certain land uses. It is a process which protects against developments that may have unanticipated impacts on an area or create special problems for bordering properties. Developing a fast track approach that circumvents the CUP process or other regulations sets a dangerous precedent.

We whole-heartedly believe that addressing homelessness must be a priority for Sacramento. There is no question that new approaches and initiatives should be

explored to make progress on this issue, but not at the cost of measures created to protect our community.

Sacramento must focus on the solutions that will bring an end to homelessness while providing the tools and effective oversight to address its immediate impacts. We've seen an unmatched rise in aggressive and belligerent activity within our districts and the lack of a unified response. Police, code enforcement, planning, and other city staff need enforcement tools that will keep our community safe.

We know there are many interconnected reasons why people experience homelessness, but there is one crucial first step to make change: permanent sustainable housing. We applaud the city for embracing the Housing First model – with strong ties to wrap around services – and encourage you to continue to make this the cornerstone of any coordinated effort to solve homelessness. This nationally recognized best practice works. As an example, Sacramento Steps Forward housed 2,232 individuals and families last year.

Housing First is also a critical component of HUD regulations and requirements to ensure ongoing federal funding. We encourage you to continue to work with governmental, non-profit, corporate and faith-based partners to advocate for restored and expanded funding from Sacramento County, the State and HUD to make sure individuals experiencing homelessness get the housing they need as well as any necessary mental health and/or drug addiction treatment.

We must help those who are most vulnerable in our society while ensuring the health and safety of our entire community. We look forward to continuing to partner with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Michael T. Ault, Executive Director
Downtown Sacramento Partnership



Emily Baime Michaels, Executive Director
Midtown Association



Michelle Smira Brattmiller, Executive Director
Greater Broadway District



Nathan Ulsh, Executive Director
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The River District



Michelle Smira Brattmiller, Administrator
R Street Partnership



Bill Knowlton, Chairman
The Stockton Boulevard Partnership



Tracey Schaal, Executive Director
Power Inn Alliance



David Plag, Executive Director
Del Paso Boulevard Partnership

cc: Howard Chan, Sacramento City Manager
Planning & Design Commissioners