



Catherine Lester
Director of Human Services Department
Seattle Municipal Tower - 58th fl.
700 Fifth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98124-421

March 8, 2018

Cc: Mayor Jenny Durkin; District 1 Council Member Lisa Herbold; Chair: Council Member Kshama Sawant, Chair Human Services, Equitable Development & Renter Rights; homelessness@seattle.gov

Dear Ms. Lester,

As was noted in our letter to George Scarola, Director of Homelessness, on Dec 13, 2016, Highland Park Action Committee (HPAC) is requesting accountability from the City of Seattle to the neighborhoods surrounding Myers Way Parcel regarding homelessness and the continued sanctioning of Camp Second Chance.

One form of accountability we have requested from the City is a plan on how additional resources will be provided to mitigate the impacts of the encampment on the neighborhood. To date, we have not received any response from the City for our requests. With the possibility of an upcoming renewal and new administration at Camp Second Chance, we are hopeful that we can work with the City on solutions.

1) Understand the Impact of Stressful Environments on Neighborhoods. We request a neighborhood-wide plan that specifies best practices when an encampment is to be sanctioned: one which stipulates not just logistics for how the camp will be set up and what amenities will be provided to the encampment, but what the City will also do to provide additional resources and services for neighbors living around the encampment. **We would like the City to work with us to develop this plan.**

We have asked for the City to develop an encompassing *Neighborhood Protocols for Sanctioned Encampments*ⁱ (see appendix) for Highland Park and surrounding neighborhoods, and any other neighborhoods in the future, when establishing an encampment. This plan would prepare neighbors for what to expect in terms of additional resources, help build relationships, repair trust with the City, and reduce anxiety for neighbors, including our renters, homeowners, students, and elderly.

Highland Park residents seek acknowledgement and understanding from City officials, who request that our community continue to take on the additional burden of an encampment, that our neighborhood has been neglected with respect to infrastructure improvements and resources. Highland Park and the surrounding neighborhoods in the Delridge area suffer from underperforming schools, ever-increasing traffic, lack of sidewalks, being a food desert, and poor bus service. These issues have been raised for years (some for over 70 years) with little progress.

This is the third encampment Highland Park has hosted, not to mention having RVs and cars “staged” on Myers Way for 6 months for a potential safe lot. In 2007/2008, Highland Park and Myers Way were both identified as potential sites for a jail, which the neighborhood was not in favor of and organized against. Later in 2008, the first Nickelsville encampment started in Highland Park at the Glass Yard site. It was eventually moved until it returned in 2011.

The 2011 Nickelsville site grew too large and became unmanageable, prompting a long and documented history of the City either being unable or unwilling to address the safety concerns of the encampment. From not being able to evict Nickelsville’s problem campers, to those who *were* evicted proceeding to move into the Greenbelt across the street, to increases in petty crime in the neighborhood, neighbors expressed feeling trapped in an unsafe situation and ignored by City officials during this time. These same experiences and concerns are being raised about the encampments in the Greenbelt between Myers Way and 509 today, which have not been consistently addressed.

While Camp Second Chance may be operating with little incident, the issues that we faced with Nickelsville and the unsanctioned encampments spreading across the Greenbelt are occurring again in this area. Additionally, the presence of RVs on Myers way and the surrounding neighborhoods has not been addressed and is acting as a magnet for other derelict vehicles. For example, in Highland Park we have 1 homeless woman who now has a camper, 2 mini vans, and a truck parked across the neighborhood and she has been homeless for 2+ years.

2) We came together as a community to advocate that Myers Way Parcel be turned into a park/green space for the community. While we saved Myers Way parcel, there has been no timeline of when we will get a park. **We seek a timeline and plan on when to expect Myers Way Parcel to be turned over to Parks.**

3) Lastly, as you know, this site is surrounded by three communities of unincorporated King County which have even less resources, are burdened with the complications of jurisdiction lines between Seattle Police and the King County Sheriff’s office, and whose residents have no formal voice in this process due to living on those border lines. Issues raised by these jurisdictional complications have yet to be adequately addressed. **We would like a plan on how these jurisdictional issues will be dealt with.**

We firmly request that another site be found to host this encampment, as no other neighborhood in West Seattle has been requested to take on this burden as Highland Park has.

If no other site can be found, we ask that City of Seattle provide HPAC and the surrounding neighborhoods with a plan based off our suggested protocols within a reasonable time frame before granting another year to Camp Second Chance. We look forward to your timely response. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Sincerely,



Gunner Scott, HPAC Vice-Chair
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Suggested Neighborhood Protocols for Sanctioned Encampments

For the Neighborhood

1. Transparency:
 - A. Provide information what other sites were investigated and the reasons why that site was chosen.
 - i. For the Myers Way site – why no other site in West Seattle were viable.
 - B. Provide information on how the race and social justice tool was used in deciding upon the proposed site.
 - C. Identify and work with the neighborhood groups/committees to put together community info sessions including locations, dates, and outreach methods to present the plan for the neighborhoods and the encampment.
 - D. Develop outreach materials that are multilingual and provide language and sign interpreters at community meetings.
 - E. Utilize trained facilitators to run community meetings and have present the Dept. of Neighborhoods, Dept. of Health, Director of Homelessness, SPD, the non-profit charged with outreach and support of the encampment, and any other relevant Departments and decision makers that can answer questions and make decisions. Take our feedback and incorporate any additional needs/resources.
 - F. Publish final plan prior to encampment being permitted.
2. Accountability:
 - A. Provide a written agreement between Neighborhood Group(s) and the City on how long the site will remain, the size of the encampment, how the encampment will be constructed, and how it will be deconstructed.
 - i. For the Myers Way site – we are requesting the one year permit for the sanctioned encampment to be retroactive to when the camp was established in July 1, 2016. Therefore, a one year permit until July 1, 2017.
 - ii. That Highland Park, Myers Way or any other sites in the surrounding South Delridge/Westwood/Roxbury Hill/ Arbor Heights/White Center/North Highline area will not be chosen again for 10 years.
 - iii. The Myers Way encampment will not grow beyond 35 tents and up to 50 people and will continue as a clean and sober camp.
 - iv. Why is it tents and not tiny homes?
 - B. Provide a plan and outline the increase of police, fire, EMS, and other services.
 - i. Specific to Myers Way – outline of how situations will be handled that cross city lines between Seattle Police and King County Sheriff's office.
 - C. Assign a consistent contact person within the City to be a single point of contact for neighbors and businesses for specific issues related to the encampment, as well as the unsanctioned encampments/RVs in the area, outside of any emergency situations.
 - i. This contact person should coordinate any needs between other departments – such as SPU, SDOT, etc...
 - D. Implement programs to help reduce homelessness and crime such as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) and REACH
 - i. In Highland Park and South Delridge within the next 3-6 months.
 - E. Provide a timeline and plan for addressing existing unsanctioned encampments and RVs in the area and how any future unsanctioned encampments that may develop as a result of the sanctioned encampment being in the area will be handled.

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- F. Provide a timeline and plan for addressing existing abandoned homes/squatters in the area.
 - G. Evaluate and increase of lighting in the area – especially near any bus stops, residential and business properties and have regular trash/dumping pick up.
 - i. Provide regular trash/dumping pick up at least 2x per week for any problem areas that surround an encampment on Myers Way
 - H. Plan and execute regular public education sessions on issues of homelessness and substance abuse with the appropriate non-profits for the community at large.
 - I. Provide updates and feedback sessions via community meetings at least every three months in addition to the community advisory council.
 - J. Provide each of the local community groups the opportunity to each have a seat on the community advisory council.