

February 5, 2017

Mr. George Scarola
Director of Homelessness
Office of the Mayor
Seattle City Hall
7th Floor, 600 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98124-4749

SUBJECT: Homeless Encampment - 8620 Nesbit Avenue North

Mr. Scarola:

The Aurora Licton Urban Village (“ALUV”) neighborhood alliance has discussed the planned Low Barrier Homeless Encampment to be located at 8620 Nesbit Avenue North and offer the following comments, including expectations and conditions for its implementation.

In making these comments, ALUV recognizes the need to address the growing degree of homelessness in the City. We see homeless people every day in the Aurora Licton Springs Residential Urban Village. Like other citywide residential urban villages, the Aurora Licton Springs residential urban village is intended to accommodate higher residential density under the Mayor’s Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA). The Aurora Licton Springs Residential Urban Village business district also is in much need of organization and transformation. These issues, combined with the existing historical Urban Village issues of open drug use, addiction, and sexual exploitation raise particular challenges in implementing an encampment.

Given this, our specific comments are as follows.

- 1) **Drug and alcohol use should be allowed on site.** If this is not possible, an official safe usage site should be provided. This will not only save lives, but address existing problems in the neighborhood where drug and alcohol usage occurs in alleys, on sidewalks, and in backyards. On-site needle disposal boxes also should be provided to help alleviate existing issues.

- 2) **At least fifty percent of the available space should be dedicated to homeless individuals from the Aurora Licton Urban Village or its immediately surrounding area.** There is a significant number of homeless residents in the immediate Aurora Avenue area. We would like encampment space allocated to help them.
The Community Advisory Committee, hopefully including Elizabeth Dahl from the Aurora Commons (whether she serves on the Community Advisory Committee or not), can be tasked with defining what constitutes an appropriate “immediately surrounding area” geography outside of the Aurora Licton Urban Village and how that can best be documented.
- 3) **Additional police patrols and resources should be dedicated to the homeless encampment area and to address potential public safety impacts.** A City Police Department representative should be made available to attend all meetings of the Community Advisory Committee upon the committee’s request to discuss enhanced public safety measures and metrics over time.
- 4) **Perimeter sight-obscuring screening of the encampment.** Sight-obscuring screening, such as fence slats that are currently present on the Aurora Ave side of the property, needs to be provided. This may ease the concerns of nearby businesses and residents. We think this would also present an opportunity to integrate art into perimeter screening. We would like to discuss this with the City.
- 5) **Site access via Aurora Ave only.** Pedestrian and, as applicable, vehicular access into the site should be from Aurora Avenue North only, and not Nesbit Avenue. Nesbit Ave is a residential area. Residents on Nesbit Avenue are concerned about increased pedestrian and motorized traffic on their street.
- 6) **Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC).** ALUV has several members that have expressed interest in serving on the Community Advisory Committee and requests that ALUV be a stakeholder represented on the CAC. In addition, we also recommend Elizabeth Dahl with Aurora Commons (if she is interested) to serve on the Community Advisory Committee.
- 7) **Community Advisory Committee Website.** There has been mention of the Ballard homeless encampment website that offers information about meetings, minutes, and opportunities for the public to offer comment and concerns. A similar website should be set up for this encampment.

8) **Support for local organizations.** The low barrier encampment may place increased demand on certain local organizations, such as Aurora Commons. The City should identify neighborhood human service organizations whose service levels may be impacted by the homeless encampment, discuss impacts with them and, if appropriate, provide funding or other support to assist them to meet this demand.

ALUV hopes that the encampment will be a model for future low barrier encampments in the City. Given this, we are prepared to use our resources (e.g. website, social media, email lists) to publicize opportunities to volunteer, donate goods and/or otherwise welcome the encampment into the neighborhood. We are also open to hearing from the City other ways in which ALUV can assist. You may contact us anytime for this purpose.

Sincerely,

Aurora Licton Urban Village

Cc: Honorable Mayor Ed Murray
Councilmember Deborah Juarez, District 5
Councilmember Rob Johnson, District 4
Councilmember Mike O'Brien, District 6
Councilmember Lisa Herbold, District 1
Councilmember Bruce Harrell, District 2
Councilmember Kshama Sawant, District 3
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw, District 7
Councilmember Tim Burgess, District 8
Councilmember Lorena Gonzalez, District 9
Sharon Lee, Executive Director, Low Income Housing Institute
Elizabeth Dahl, Aurora Commons
Licton Springs Community Council
Aurora Merchants Association
North Seattle Chamber of Commerce