

My name is Bob Weathers and I live at 14 Copeland Ave.

We are appealing to the City and County to work together to provide a compassionate short-term solution for the unsheltered population. The Pathways Home project is a great long-term solution but does little to help with the current situation.

Although unintentional, we find it disturbing to witness the state the unsheltered population is living in. Legitimate complaints have been voiced regarding the impact the encampments in the marsh are having on public health, safety, and the environment, but there has been little dialogue addressing the known and untenable conditions under which these individuals are living.

In total, the City and County own over 1,000 tax parcels. Knowing this, we find it difficult to believe that there are no suitable interim sites.

We are aware that these efforts have not been successful in the past but know that part of the reason was due to overcrowding. Designating multiple locations, instead of only one, could provide space for a limited number of people at each site, thus ensuring greater safety and supervision. You have information on other cities who have successfully implemented plans using this model. Their results have been effective, more economical, and more humane, since they eliminate the periodic displacement and clean-up of the undesignated sites we have here.

Implementing this type of interim plan, similar to the one proposed by Council members Kahlow and Janssen, would enable the city to designate the marsh parcels as no camping zones. It would help ease the pressure on city resources by having sites that are accessible, safer, and require fewer emergency services. It would benefit the unsheltered while at the same time end the current destruction of the marsh and restore it as a safe, quiet, and beautiful city resource. In contrast, the 24-hour camping limit proposed by the Mayor would change nothing and be difficult to enforce.

Finally, the county needs to step up. They have the financial resources, facilities, and organizations that are necessary for an interim solution. County residents share our city's amenities, so this is their responsibility as well.

Thank you.

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