

June 23, 2020



Dear Members of Pasadena's Planning Commission:

I presently have the honor of being the CEO of Union Station Homeless Services, the largest homeless service agency in Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley.

All of us are aware of the crises of homelessness that is affecting our community. It is for this reason that I am encouraged and hopeful to see the item on the agenda that would "allow ancillary structure[s] or trailer[s] on church property for affordable housing."

We know that we have an affordable and supportive housing crisis in our City. Hundreds of individuals and members of families are unable to find permanent housing, waiting for months, and often years to move into a place of their own. Now we have the added crisis of COVID-19, which has shown, more than anything in recent history, that home equals safety.

While we continue to advocate for and work towards more permanent housing, we have a desperate need for interim and bridge housing in Pasadena. Union Station runs the only all-year shelters in our City. Prior to COVID-19 we already had a severe shortage of shelter beds in the City. Now, with the pandemic, we have been forced to drastically reduce the numbers in our shelters even more. We have been informed, by the Department of Health, that we will not be able to move everyone back to previous numbers for many months, if not years to come.

Please be in no doubt that we have a desperate need in the City for interim/bridge housing solutions. We work with many faith groups in the City, and feel strongly that to allow ancillary structures, including trailers, pallet shelters, tiny homes and other such buildings on their property, would be an excellent way of temporarily housing our local citizens experiencing homelessness, while we work with them to find a permanent home of their own.

We are already engaged in conversations around how to provide quality services and security to some of these temporary interim housing buildings and communities. With proper security and case management, we believe these will be well-run and will be a bridge to permanent housing. We know that receiving services in a safe and controlled environment is crucial to successfully ending homelessness for most individuals and families. This is a far better way of handling our homelessness crisis than to leave people living on the streets or under bridges.

I strongly urge the Committee to amend the zoning code in Pasadena, to allow faith groups to place interim housing structures on their property, to allow safe parking as well as to allow a density overlay zone on faith organization properties to allow them to build affordable housing.

I am happy to discuss further with anyone, and to provide examples of how our City can be a model of best practices in interim housing models.

Respectfully,


Anne Miskey

ENDING HOMELESSNESS AND HELPING INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES REBUILD THEIR LIVES

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