



July 6, 2015

Mike Stewart
Ballard Chamber of Commerce

Tom Malone
Ballard Partnership for Smart Growth

Mike Kahrs
Central Ballard Residents Association

Eugene Wasserman
North Seattle Industrial Association

Dear Mr. Stewart, Mr. Malone, Mr. Kahrs, and Mr. Wasserman:

Thank you for writing about tent encampments on City-owned property in Ballard. I understand the concerns raised by communities surrounding potential encampment sites, particularly regarding public input and notification.

As you know, I directed members of my staff, the Department of Human Services (HSD), Department of Neighborhoods (DON), and Department of Planning and Development DPD to meet with you on Tuesday, July 7, 2015 to discuss the evaluation process for selecting City-owned properties and further community engagement. City staff will also be discussing how we can work together to ensure that operational concerns are addressed and any authorized encampment is a good neighbor.

Seattle and other West Coast cities are currently facing a crisis in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in our communities. The City of Seattle invests approximately \$40 million on homeless services annually, yet the crisis remains so large that a limited number of tent encampments are necessary to provide short-term solutions for some. My transitional encampment legislation provides an avenue to help those experiencing homelessness obtain safe, stable shelter in the near-term.

The identification of City-owned sites for encampments was only the first step in the process. Based on the strict parameters set forth in the ordinance, City staff identified City-owned locations that fit within those parameters and identified seven locations that seem to best fit the complex requirements.

Once the locations are finalized, there will be outreach and additional opportunities for the surrounding communities to engage. Prior to submitting a permit application, encampment operators must hold at least one public meeting for the surrounding community. Encampment operators are also required to form an on-going Community Advisory Committee that connects the community with the Department of Planning and Development (DPD), the Human Services Department (HSD), and the encampment operator.

I am committed to providing support services to our residents experiencing homelessness and creating a more organized model for managing tent encampments. Collaboration between DPD, Department of Neighborhoods, HSD, encampment operators, and the surrounding communities offers clear points of contact, operation expectations and standards, and more effective assistance for individuals to exit homelessness.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Murray', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mayor Edward B. Murray
City of Seattle