



CITY OF MILPITAS

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

455 EAST CALAVERAS BOULEVARD, MILPITAS, CALIFORNIA 95035-5479
PHONE: 408-586-3059, www.ci.milpitas.ca.gov

April 6, 2020

County of Santa Clara
Board of Supervisors
County Executive, Jeffrey V. Smith

Via E-mail:
BoardOperations@cob.sccgov.org

**Re: April 7, 2020 Board of Supervisors Meeting Agenda
Item Number 10 – Establishing a Temporary Shelter Site**

Dear Supervisors Chavez, Wasserman, Cortese, Ellenberg, Simitian, and Mr. Smith:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Supervisor Cortese's referral to Administration regarding a temporary homeless shelter site in Milpitas, which is to be considered at your April 7, 2020 Board of Supervisors meeting as item number 10 on the agenda.

When the agenda packet was published by Santa Clara County late last week, the City of Milpitas was first made aware that a temporary homeless shelter program to be located at a site within the City of Milpitas would be under referral consideration by the Board of Supervisors at its April 7 meeting. The Milpitas City Council and staff would have preferred to have had discussions on the item prior to the item being placed on your agenda; unfortunately, this did not occur. This letter is being submitted to be incorporated into the record.

With the regional housing crisis, the City of Milpitas has been fully supporting the ongoing efforts to address the needs of the unhoused community and shares the urgency and priority in these efforts. This is even more so under the current public health emergency. While the Milpitas City Council also continues to support Santa Clara County's efforts toward housing options for the unhoused community, the City requests the Board not take any action on item number 10 on April 7 as it is premature at this time. Milpitas Mayor Rich Tran, on behalf of the City of Milpitas, respectfully requests that this item be deferred until robust community outreach and engagement can be conducted and due process ensured so that County representatives and Milpitas leadership can coordinate and work collaboratively toward exploring alternative sites and solutions.

Over the years, the City of Milpitas has continued to value partnership opportunities with Santa Clara County to serve our joint mission to produce housing solutions. After the successful collaboration between County representatives and City of Milpitas staff on a 100% affordable housing project, another City-County partnership was embarked in the past few months on the potential for another affordable housing project. These are just a few recent examples to demonstrate the continued collaboration and partnership between County representatives and the City of Milpitas.

The City of Milpitas' commitment to the community is further demonstrated with the 2019 formation of a City Council Housing Subcommittee and the City Council's continued strong advocacy to address the housing crisis. As such, we have embraced the three Ps – producing housing, preserving communities, and protecting tenants by developing and adopting a Pilot Rent Relief Program and Rent Review Program in 2019. Based on feedback from applicants, community, and experienced service providers, the Milpitas Pilot Rent Relief Program has contributed a positive impact on the community. The program has proven to be a critical component of our housing assistance under the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Regarding land use, the County-proposed site on Thompson Street north of Piercey Honda is within the Milpitas Midtown Specific Plan area. The Midtown Specific Plan provides a General Commercial land use designation for the proposed site and encourages larger-scale retail commercial or office development due to its high visibility from the adjacent I-880 Freeway. Two adjacent parcels to the south have similar General Commercial designations and support successful automobile dealerships, Piercey Honda and Piercey Toyota. An update to the Midtown Specific Plan has recently been acknowledged by the City Council in the form of adding revised land use designation incentive to the production of mixed-use and increased housing affordability with strengthened connectivity between properties along South Abbot Avenue and Thompson Court/Street, and preliminary analysis identifies the County-proposed site as a key economic development site.

Further, the existing land uses and the localized street grid in the area surrounding the County-proposed site are not compatible with the development of a temporary shelter facility for the unhoused community. Access to this area from nearby arterial streets (South Abel Street and Great Mall Parkway) is limited. Access from the north via South Abbott Avenue is similarly constrained. Medium-density townhomes overlook the County-proposed site from the east. A large linear park runs along the south side of the townhomes between Abel Street and Thompson Street. This public park features a children's playground, a paved walking trail, and other amenities. Direct access to the park by any potential residents on the County-proposed site would have an immediate impact on existing residents in the neighborhood, and the City is unaware of any outreach to the potentially impacted Milpitas residents.

The Milpitas City Council is committed to support permanent housing solutions. As the County-proposed site is in a predominantly commercial area with a lack of resources and services, including the lack of power/electrical, water, and sewer/sanitation utilities and services, any funding for the proposal may be better utilized to support other permanent supportive housing solutions rather than temporary, short-term options. The City of Milpitas looks forward to working with the County on a shared vision of creating permanent affordable housing solutions and supportive services.

It is critically important for the Milpitas City Council to create space and process for public outreach and for our community to fully engage in any proposal, including the proposed referral at the site in Milpitas under Board consideration on April 7, 2020. The City of Milpitas respectfully requests the County Board of Supervisors not to proceed on the proposed referral until robust community outreach and engagement can be conducted and that the County and City coordinate and work collaboratively toward exploring alternative sites and solutions.

Sincerely,



Steve McHarris
Interim City Manager