

Alberto Quintanilla

From: Lisa Danz <lmdanz@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 6, 2022 9:54 AM
To: citycouncil
Subject: Public comment on item 8.A.1 on Sept 6 City Council meeting

Dear City of Fremont Council and Staff,

As item 8.A.1 notes, Fremont fancies itself a "compassionate city." Research can be good and useful, but when gathering data, it matters what questions you ask. I'm concerned that the phrasing of this agenda item unfairly blames our unhoused neighbors for problems that they're not the sole cause of, and that it centers the needs of wealthier residents and business owners over the needs of our unhoused community members.

The solution to homelessness is to house people. The growing size of our unhoused population is directly tied to the increasing cost of housing. If we're looking at how neighboring cities have succeeded, we should look at those who can give us examples of (1) increasing the availability and bringing down the cost of housing overall (so that fewer people fall into homelessness in the first place), and (2) providing permanent housing for formerly-unhoused community members on a large scale. Ultimately, success should look like seeing the size of the unhoused population decrease dramatically as people get access to decent, stable housing within their budget. I'm not sure if we can actually find any local examples of cities who have succeeded in solving homelessness by solving the root causes, but there are some cities that are heading more in the right direction than others. It may also be worth looking at more geographically-distant areas that have seen more success rather than limiting the research to neighboring cities.

When it comes to illegal dumping, unhoused neighbors get blamed unfairly. The US EPA has detailed guidance on illegal dumping

at <https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyNET.exe/2000CNVU.TXT?ZyActionD=ZyDocument&Client=EPA&Index=1995+Thru+1999&Docs=&Query=&Time=&EndTime=&SearchMethod=1&TocRestrict=n&Toc=&TocEntry=&QField=&QFieldYear=&QFieldMonth=&QFieldDay=&IntQFieldOp=0&ExtQFieldOp=0&XmlQuery=&File=D:%5Czyfiles%5CIndex%20Data%5C95thru99%5CTxt%5C00000009%5C2000CNVU.txt&User=ANONYMOUS&Password=anonymous&SortMethod=h%7C-&MaximumDocuments=1&FuzzyDegree=0&ImageQuality=r75g8/r75g8/x150y150g16/i425&Display=hpfr&DefSeekPage=x&SearchBack=ZyActionL&Back=ZyActionS&BackDesc=Results%20page&MaximumPages=1&ZyEntry=1&SeekPage=x&ZyPURL>. This includes a profile of who is illegally dumping which never once mentions unhoused residents. I'm sure there are some unhoused folks who participate in illegal dumping, but housed folks do it as well. Said EPA document mentions strategies for combating illegal dumping which largely center around making legal waste disposal more accessible. Addressing illegal dumping is a worthy goal in and of itself, but it's neither fair nor effective to characterize it as an "associated activity" of homelessness.

Overall, if Fremont proceeds with conducting this research, it needs to ask what's good for the unhoused residents -- what improves their quality of life and long-term housing prospects. If we're trying to emulate cities that have been effective at pushing their unhoused residents out of sight out of mind, then we'll be "compassionate" only in name.

Sincerely,
Lisa Danz

Alberto Quintanilla

From: Mac Madame <macmadame@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 6, 2022 2:13 PM
To: citycouncil
Subject: 8.A.1 "Homelessness Mitigation Policies"

Dear City Council

As the city looks into mitigation policies to help our unhoused residents and their neighbors, I would like to remind everyone that while breaking up encampments makes the immediately neighbors happy in the short run, it just means a new encampment will spring up somewhere else and makes those neighbors unhappy.

We need permanent solutions to get our unhoused neighbors into permanent housing. Everything else is just a band-aid. This is why projects such as the Housing Navigation Center and Project Homekey are so important.

In the meantime, City staff presented a three prong approach to dealing with the unhoused in Fremont more than a year ago. This proposal was accepted by the Council. To remind you, it consisted of:

- 1) Meeting the unhoused where they were — with sanitation facilities, dumpsters and a code of conduct
- 2) A "pilot" Safe Parking program using parking lots owned by non-profits
- 3) A permanent Safe Parking program on city-owned property that accepted a wider clientele and variety of vehicles.

The Safe Parking program in #2 is up and running, though in a much abbreviated form, but where is the rest?

Speaking of the Safe Parking program, I have been volunteering for a couple of months now and I have been surprised at how few services are being attached to it. My understanding is that the Clean Start Mobile Hygiene unit would be stationed at the monthly location at least some days and that wrap-around services to get people into permanent housing would be provided. I have not seen either of these and the participants in the program tell me that they are not working with anyone on City Staff to get into any programs.

The program as it stands doesn't provide much more than a safe-ish place to park and some snack bars and water.

I think there is a disconnect here and room for improvement. This is not even getting into the fact that families are not being served and RVs — the most popular form of vehicle living — are not part of the program either.

We need a city-sponsored program that addresses these issues and, in the meantime, an extension of the current program to provide more services and to be more welcoming to the participants.

We are all in this together and we need to step up for our less fortunate neighbors, both as a city and as individuals.

Marie Hughes
Niles Resident
Fremont for Everyone Leadership team member

Alberto Quintanilla

From: Jane Lin <jclin1225@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 6, 2022 4:04 PM
To: citycouncil
Subject: Homelessness Mitigation Policies

Dear Madam Mayor and Esteemed City Council Members,

My name is Jane Lin, and my family has lived in Fremont since 1974. I attended Centerville Jr High School and American High School, and returned to Fremont in the early 90's to raise my family here.

Much has been said about the reasons for a viable, permanent solution to our homeless crisis. I will not be adding to this list of factors.

Instead, I would like to take a Humans of Fremont approach to this issue, and remind our City Council that this should not be a "zero-sum" game.

When I was a student at American High School, I had a classmate who was considered an "oddball". In fact, he was voted Most Individualistic, and in our Eagles Flight '80 yearbook, he wrote that he never did know me very well, much to his misfortune, but that I was always a kind person to him, a "decent" folk.

Today, we would probably consider his behavior cause for mental health concerns, but 40+ years ago, people either tortured him or left him alone.

Imagine my surprise, when I left Fremont for college, to literally bump into him on the streets of Berkeley, his new home. I found out later that he had been kicked out by his family, and with nowhere else to go, he joined the great homeless migration to the city of Berkeley.

It is for young people like Carl that I continue my advocacy for a permanent solution to homelessness.

By working together to alleviate the physical and emotional suffering of our unhoused neighbors, I would selfishly like to believe that I am still a "decent folk".

Sincerely,
Jane Lin
FUSD Substitute Teacher
Fremont for Everyone

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The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.
MLK, Jr via Theodore Parker