

# Please Don't Close the Georgetown Tiny Home Village

Honorable Mayor Jenny Durkan  
City of Seattle  
600 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Seattle, WA 98104

October 7, 2019

Dear Mayor Durkan,

As members of the Georgetown CAC we are writing to express our deep concern and fierce opposition to closing the Georgetown Village and request that the village remain in operation. We - the City HSD and DON, LIHI, the CAC, our community and the residents of the village have made so many great strides forward over the last 2.5 years in addressing a crucial piece of the solution to ending homelessness in our city. Closing this village would be a giant step backward.

All of us came to this innovative and challenging social experiment not knowing exactly how this would all go. It's taken all of us time to get up to speed and understand all the nuances of this important piece of the homeless challenges facing our city. That is always the case with any new and innovative experiment, program or process. We've had bumps and learned much. We've grown in understanding and effectiveness. People are finding safety, community and a path forward within the village. Neighbors have grown to appreciate many aspects of the village. Georgetown Village has been a model of success for LIHI and the City. We're all better for it - the City HSD and DON, LIHI, the CAC, our community and, perhaps most important, the residents of the village.

Specifically, LIHI has stepped up its effectiveness in oversight and case management, the City/HSD has recognized the value of the village model and has begun to communicate and listen better to our community. The village residents have perhaps done the best job of all: building a sense of safety and community within the village thereby enabling its residents to begin to address housing needs, job search, health and legal issues. They have done a fantastic job integrating into the greater Georgetown community, volunteering at our numerous annual events, doing frequent walks through the neighborhood doing clean-ups, participating in Georgetown Community meetings and listening to feedback and providing insight at the CAC meetings. The Georgetown Village residents are true and valued good neighbors.

Let's not take a step backwards. Closing the village instead of building more seems like a huge waste of tax dollars. According to your proposed 2020 budget it would cost \$630,000 to close and relocate our village.<sup>1</sup> According to stats from various Seattle Times Project Homeless reports just the cost of closing Georgetown would be somewhere in the range of \$300,000.<sup>2</sup>

That's the cost of building one more village, not losing one! Or it would provide salaries for 7.5 more Case Managers.<sup>3</sup> As all of us involved in the progress of the villages have learned over the past few years, more Case Managers result in more people moving up the housing continuum into permanent housing. Or these monies could go to housing 21 youth coming out of juvenile detention, according to state Department of Commerce data.<sup>4</sup> Surely our tax dollars can go toward better efforts.

**The Georgetown Village CAC requests that the Georgetown village remain in operation.** Together, the CAC and LIHI are exploring the options of church sponsorship. Councilperson Sawant, with support from Bagshaw and Juarez are proposing an update to the ordinance. Can the City work with us to see these options through by granting an additional extension of the permit? Of course, during this extension our community would want to continue the recent fruitful discussions with HSD and identify clear criteria for accountability for any ongoing permit renewal. All of us serving on the CAC are willing to continue to work with our partners in the City and LIHI to be the conduit to inform and discuss and come to a positive outcome for everyone in our community. The city will be better for it. Let's continue to work together to be the model for positive, compassionate and smart solutions for all.

Respectfully,

Georgetown CAC members:

Barbara Grace Hill, neighbor, formerly FareStart  
Erik Maus, Chair, St Vincent de Paul  
Bill Oliver, business owner Johnson Industries  
John Phillips, The Seattle Stand Down  
Peter St. John, neighbor, Starbucks

Cc:

Jason Johnson, HSD  
Liza Gustaveson, HSD  
Tom Van Bronkhorst, DON  
Sharon Lee, LIHI  
Andrew Constantino, LIHI Georgetown Village Site Manager