

**To: City Council**

**From: Debbie Laurie**

**Date: December 5, 2024**

**RE: Encampment Closure Update**

As was shared when we announced the encampment closure date in October, we emphasized our commitment to an adaptive and responsive process that aligns both the needs of the individuals we seek to help and to the capacity of the partners we're fortunate to work with.

We recently received an update regarding the completion and lease-up process for Theresa's Place (formerly the Pine Tree Inn), a 41 unit permanent supportive housing project originally slated to open at the end of this year. The update indicates there will be a delay in the completion of the project, which will in turn delay the process of moving folks in. As we have stated from the beginning, the process of closing the encampment must be related to our ability to move people inside. This delay has caused a reconsideration in the closure date, currently effective on Dec. 31, 2024. We recognize that displacement of people who are unsheltered causes real harm, particularly when there aren't viable options for coming indoors. While we do not expect every encampment neighbor to lease-up at Theresa's Place, we know that the opening will assist in facilitating movement through the homeless services continuum thereby increasing access to traditional shelter spaces and transitional housing units. As such, based on the information available to us at this time, we propose pushing the encampment closure date to February 28, 2025.

The change in closure date is not an abandonment of the City's intention to close the encampment. For numerous reasons already outlined before Council, the encampment site poses significant risks to the health, safety, and wellbeing of the people residing there. As perhaps the most entrenched encampment in the state, the cycles that perpetuate homelessness are difficult to overcome without the kinds of relationships that emphasize trust, compassion, and the opportunities for positive change that direct service providers have diligently cultivated. There is incredible work being done by providers and residents every day and we are still seeing truly inspiring levels of engagement. This change in date is intended to provide a cushion and reprieve and it affirms the City's commitment to ensure we are making the best choices that will result in the best possible outcomes for people who need supports to get to their next right place and stabilize. The societal needs are great, but our resources and ability to assist are at capacity. In order to ensure our community partners have the space, time and support to continue to provide the necessary services, we will identify city resources to divert individuals from the site thereby ensuring the core group of residents with relationships continue to receive the services and support necessary to be indoors by the end of February.