

Statement Regarding SLC Homeless Resource Center Text Amendment



April 4, 2023

Dear Salt Lake City Council Members,

The Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness (SLVCEH) has appreciated the opportunity to offer its expertise and provide feedback throughout the Homeless Resource Center (HRC) Text Amendment process. Once again, we would like to take this opportunity to comment, as you thoughtfully consider the proposed amendments. SLVCEH is supportive of the text amendments, but would like to offer additional important considerations for the process to be viable.

- **Timeline:** the proposed zoning map amendment application outlines a series of steps with the zoning amendment process taking between 6-12 months to complete. SLVCEH proposes a specific timeframe for the process with a total period limitation of 6-9 months in order to mitigate the challenges the applicant is navigating in purchasing real estate and securing financial resources. A zoning map amendment application without a timeframe will severely limit the ability of the project applicant in negotiating a purchase. This process needs to take into consideration all stakeholders including applicants and landowners.
- **Size:** the proposed zoning map amendment application may only apply to facilities serving a capacity of over 40 and up to 200. SLVCEH recommends the zoning map amendment application be the process for facilities of all sizes, thereby expanding the relevant locations for a proposed facility.
- **Siting a Location:** Clarity is needed regarding where HRCs can be sited. Potential applicants need information such as a map and/or specific guidance from the Planning Department as to where HRCs can be located prior to conversations with landowners and prior to the work of putting together a zoning application.

Reiterating our comments shared with you when the process started in January, 2022, the SLVCEH recognizes the importance of communities across Salt Lake County needing to increase deeply affordable and supportive housing and services, and reduce instances of people becoming homeless, thereby decreasing the number of emergency shelter beds needed anywhere in the county.

Ordinances regarding homelessness should include zoning and related funding and incentive policies that improve and expand the availability of both deeply affordable (housing affordable to those making less than 30% Area Median Income) and supportive housing (housing with wrap around services). Zones for homeless resources, including proximity to complementary behavioral and physical health services, should also take into account the transportation needs of people with limited means.

While we recognize that housing is the priority, we also recognize that our homeless services system will require temporary and other HRC type shelter until ample housing stock is available to people making less than a living wage in Salt Lake County and for those who will require supportive services long-term. We also recognize that over the last several years, the need for emergency shelter has increased, and the need to care for unsheltered individuals, especially during the winter and during extreme weather conditions is critical.

The SLVCEH is committed to working with partners, including the state, regional, and local communities, including Salt Lake City, to identify workable zones and areas where these lifesaving shelters can go, so that we can all work together to create the comprehensive and service rich system required to help people in crisis with safety and a path to stable housing. Working together, to consider all potential implications, and unintended consequences is important, will help ensure our collective success in caring for all members of our communities. This has been evidenced by the efforts with the current HRCs and the winter overflow planning the past several years.

We appreciate SLC's effort to utilize collaborative processes in order to develop these proposed zoning policy changes. In addition to the required public hearings, we appreciate your efforts to solicit input from the community of service providers, partners, advocates and those with lived experience to help guide these important decisions. Including voices and perspectives that are often underrepresented and overlooked is critical to its long term positive impact throughout our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rob Wesemann, CMHC
Co-Chair, SLVCEH
Executive Director



Shawn M. McMillen
Co-Chair, SLVCEH
Executive Director

