

CITY OF OAKLAND



CITY HALL • 1 FRANK H. OGAWA PLAZA • OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

Date: September 29, 2022

To: Members of City Council and Members of the Public

From: Councilmember Fife

Re: **Access To The Undesignated Eight Acres On The North Gateway Parcel**

Dear Colleagues and Members of the Public,

The City of Oakland is in the middle of an unprecedented homelessness crisis. According to the 2022 Point-In-Time Homeless Count, the number of individuals in Oakland experiencing homelessness has swelled to 5,055 and nearly 50% of the unsheltered population in Alameda County live in Oakland. With this rise in homelessness, the number of encampments and tent communities around the City, particularly in Council District 3, has increased exponentially.

The Wood Street encampment located in West Oakland is the largest encampment in our City and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) announced the closure of the Wood Street Encampment on their right of way in late August, beginning evictions on September 9, 2022. Caltrans will continue the process of removing people and their belongings until the site is cleared, which places hundreds of unhoused individuals in an even more precarious position and unfortunately, the City has a very limited number of shelter beds available to accommodate residents of the encampment who have been displaced.

The actions the City has taken thus far with regards to Wood Street residents are not reflective of the humanitarian crisis that will result from the removal of people without offering immediate alternatives while formal shelter interventions are being developed. While the closure of this site and evictions are being conducted by Caltrans, we have a responsibility to our residents most in need to explore all options and take urgent action to address this crisis. The large and unutilized public land located at the former Oakland Army Base, the North Gateway parcel, can serve as an emergency solution.

The North Gateway parcel is approximately 22 acres but the Council has already authorized the Administrator to enter into a Lease and Disposition and Development Agreement with California Waste Solutions (CWS) for approximately 14 acres of the property. However, there is no Lease and Disposition and Development Agreement for the remaining 8 acres and this undesignated acreage can be used to address the humanitarian crisis spurred by the large-scale removal of individuals from the Wood Street encampment and addressing the overall growing issue of homelessness. To this end, this resolution 1) directs the City Administrator to immediately allow access to the undesignated eight acres on the North Gateway Parcel to serve as a place to be for up

City Council
October 4, 2022

to 300 individuals displaced from the Wood Street encampment; and 2) the resolution further directs the City Administrator to develop a plan, in collaboration with unhoused community members as well as leaders from the State and Alameda County, to establish a stable housing solution with supportive services at the stated site to serve unhoused communities from various encampments throughout District 3, with priority to residents from the Wood Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Way encampments.

In June 2022, the Council received a report from the Administration, which concluded that use of the North Gateway parcel is not feasible due to environmental concerns, the need for remediation of the land to meet state regulatory requirements, and high operating costs. While we understand the limitations identified by staff, we are stating that this emergency requires urgent action and we believe the identified concerns are not insurmountable but we need to have the courage and will to do what is necessary. Addressing homelessness and improving the quality of life for all of our residents requires us to explore all options and take bold steps, including utilizing available public land for displaced people.

I respectfully request your support for this resolution.

Sincerely,



Councilmember Carroll Fife