Dear Council Members,

As you may be aware, the City is planning a sweep of all the encampments from 20th to 23rd, from Welton to Curtis - there are about 300 people without housing living at these encampments.

On March 24th the Mayor's office replied to an email stating it was "correct" that the city "would not be displacing people or their property" during this state of emergency. We are still in a state of emergency with a pandemic spreading across our City. It appears the Mayor's office lied straight out. How are people on the streets supposed to trust our government when they are lied to like this?

The sweep is scheduled for April 30th. The stay-at-home order has just been extended to May 8th. How are people living in tents at these encampments supposed to "stay at home" when the closest thing they have to a home, their tent, is being evicted from public space with no where to go?

The CDC guidance clearly states the following,

"Unless individual housing units are available, do not clear encampments during community spread of COVID-19. Clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. This increases the potential for infectious disease spread." <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/unsheltered-homelessness.html>

So our question is this:

Where are the individual housing units available for the 300 people living at these encampments?

As of yesterday there were 95 tents in the area planed to be swept. There are between 1 and 5 people staying in each tent, meaning there are about 300 people living outside in this area. In order to follow CDC guidance, stay-at-home orders, and care about human beings, individual housing (i.e. vacant apartments or hotel rooms) must be provided to every person in these encampments before they can be swept. Either housing needs to be found for all 300 people or the sweep needs to be called off.

If this housing is going to be found in the next week, we need to get on the ball right away identifying the units, ensuring an appropriate housing situation for each person's particular needs, and helping them transport their property to their new house.

In case you did not see our recent survey, a quick survey of 64 people who are homeless found that 87% would choice a hotel room as a first option. Tent camping was the second best option chosen, and shelter was last. Residents of these encampments want housing.

Please help us ensure no one is swept unless appropriate individual housing is available for all 300 people at these encampments. Contact the Mayor's office and ask where the 300 housing units are for these residents. Inform the Mayor's office you do not support these residents being swept unless the can offer real housing for all.

If there are not 300 housing units ready for folks to move in, the sweep must be called off immediately due to lack of housing options.

Sincerely,