

September 26, 2022

Re: Homeless megaplex planned next to the Chinatown International District

To the King County Council,

InterIm CDA has helped revitalize the CID for 54 years, especially on behalf of the low income, immigrants and refugees, elders, and small businesses who are the heart and soul of the community. We hold 2 contracts with the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA), for Diversion and for Homelessness Prevention. Our CID buildings house homeless and imminently homeless families. On the face of it, our values and goals align closely with those of the KCRHA.

You say King County government leads with racial justice and the KCRHA says they stand for racial equity and social justice, however, the proposed scheme for a homeless megaplex next to the CID, looks like an intentional ploy to keep the poorest people of color down, to concentrate them in one small area away from whiter more affluent areas, and to pit them against each other. How can you advance racial equity by focusing on one marginalized community, homeless people, at the expense of another, the CID community --Seattle's poorest BIPOC neighborhood?

20 shelters housing 2,500 clients already exist within a mile of the CID. Already, our neighborhood's many low income, limited English speaking, and elderly residents are struggling to meet their basic needs amidst a daily onslaught to their safety, well-being, and dignity. When the 270-bed Covid 19 emergency shelter was quietly established next to the CID with no community engagement, the neighborhood experienced a crushing erosion of public safety that has caused the closure of numerous small family owned businesses, the CID's last full service pharmacy and soon, the CID's major affordable grocery store which many senior residents rely on.

Please do not allow another expedient planning decision to perpetuate structural racism and add to the burden of historic harms that the CID already struggles with. Stand by your stated principles around racial equity and social justice. Take a step back, listen to the CID community, and consider disaggregated and alternative locations for the homeless megaplex.

Respectfully,



Leslie Morishita
Director of Real Estate Development
Submitted on behalf of InterIm Community Development Association