

S. Rodman BUS 8/23/2022 # 19 L20

## Board of Supervisors, 23 Aug 2022

Comments: Sue Rodman El Dorado County Resident

The Placerville Police Chief's report makes it very clear that the homeless people in El Dorado County are our neighbors, not some imports from elsewhere.

This is an ongoing situation with a long history. The ideal situation would be that everyone has a home, a job, and contributes to our community.

However, this is not ideal, it is reality, where there are people living in conditions that would be considered animal abuse if they were livestock.

Every attempt to improve this situation has been met with resistance and negativity. There are always those my mother called "Againers." Those who are against everything but have no solutions to offer. The Perk's Court navigation center is no different.

From the early attempts at Hangtown Haven to the present there have been those who have attempted to thwart every effort to help these unfortunate people.

This "Republican" flyer is a disgrace to the Republican Party and full of lies. It needs to go in the trash where it belongs. While the Sheriff's proposal looked good, it could not be funded, so it is not a viable option. It is dead, let it go people.

The Perioz Road site has been evaluated and found not viable. Stop stalling by making the same decisions over and over. Let this one go too. Stop stalling.

It is way past time to take action and move forward. In case you haven't noticed, Fire season is here, it has been here since June, and probably will still be here until November. We have already had several winters with rain and cold, it would help if there were shelter before we have another winter.

Perk's Court is probably not perfect, but it is a vast improvement over doing nothing. The county staff have done the analysis, and put together a feasible plan. The money is available now.

We owe it to ourselves, if no one else, to at least give it a try and learn by doing instead of watching more homeless people die on our streets. This is the best chance we have had in a long time to help our homeless neighbors, and we just need to do it.

Placerville Mayor Taylor's letter puts the issues well, and she has my support. There have been enough endless meetings and postponing decisions, it is time to get this navigation center done.

K. Nakwaja

BUS 8/23/2022

#19120



Amani Sawires is the COO of the shelter on X Street in Sacramento, photographed at the facility on Monday, Sept. 20, 2021.

Andrew Nixon / CapRadio

Sawires said that people often didn't want to leave their encampments, because they didn't want to leave their communities, their belongings and their pets, who can be like family.

To Marcie Pompeii, 60, who has five dogs — two of which are hers, three of which are her mother's — leaving her pets to go to a shelter wasn't a decision.

"I can't go," she said. "This is a family."



Marcie Pompeii rests with her dog, Pepper, near the new X Street Shelter, on Monday, Sept. 20, 2021.

Andrew Nixon / CapRadio

Pompeii has been unhoused for 3 years and was born and raised in Sacramento. She's currently living near the new navigation center and said that its outreach team has talked to her.

"For me, I would love to go in there — I'd love to help and work, I mean, take care of the animals," she said. "But I mean, they said they [the animals] had to be in a cage, which these dogs are kind of used to, but I can't sleep without them."



The kennel at the shelter on X Street in Sacramento, Monday, Sept. 20, 2021.

Andrew Nixon / CapRadio

While pets onsite will receive veterinary care, they aren't allowed to sleep in the dorms with guests.

Even so, Pompeii can't think of other shelters that allow people to take their pets.

Sawires said the X Street facility is meant to be transitory. There will be social workers onsite, substance use services, mental health services and a culinary skills academy with the facility's training kitchen and a partnership with American Legion High School, among other services.

Their hope is to serve 200 people in the first year — 100 every six months or whenever housing is found.

"It is our goal to get the majority of those people housed — some people aren't going to be ready, and we will have planted a seed and they'll go do something else, but the seed will be planted," she said.

Since the shelter is referral-based, Volunteers of America has been doing outreach within the surrounding encampments with help from other advocacy groups and the newly-created Department of Community Response, which oversees the city's response to homelessness.

Sawires and Bridgette Dean, the director of the Department of Community Response, both stressed the importance of building relationships and trust in the process of working with unhoused residents to find a housing situation that works for them.

"It really is about building relationships, rapport and trust," Dean said "We have a lot of individuals who have been disenfranchised from systems, and because of that, the trust isn't there."

Joe Smith, the policy director at Loaves and Fishes, said the navigation center is an "evolution of what previous shelter models have been."

"It's all going to be about results," he said. "If they demonstrate in the neighborhood that people are being helped, that people are safe and that people are getting a chance to move on to a more stable environment, more people are just going to gravitate."



The bathroom at the shelter on X Street in Sacramento, Monday, Sept. 20, 2021.

Andrew Nixon / CapRadio

## City's approach to addressing homelessness remains contested

A lawsuit leveled against the city's broader homelessness plan also cited concerns on the health of unhoused people who would be sheltered at the tiny home sites underneath the W-X freeway, alleging that the city wrongly determined that those sites were exempt from an environmental impact review under the California Environmental Quality Act.

The lawsuit, first reported by the Sacramento Bee, noted the dangers of exposing hundreds of unhoused people to noise and air pollution and said the sites went against air agencies' recommendations for siting residential buildings.

City Attorney Susana Alcala Wood said in an email statement to CapRadio that the complaint demonstrates the "complexity of the homelessness crisis" while underscoring the importance of the "multi-dimensional approach" by the City Council in addressing homelessness.

"The City is using all its available resources to respond to the needs of its residents and will continue to address the hardships encountered by unsheltered individuals while working to protect the health and safety of all our communities," she wrote.

Other community members remain concerned about the city's attempts to address homelessness, too.

The Sacramento Bee reported that a property owner in North Sacramento — who lives near the Railroad Drive shelter operated by Volunteers of America — filed a lawsuit against the city last week.

The lawsuit alleged that the owner suffered property damage and had to hire a private security firm, and though they asked the city to relocate the homeless and clean up the area, there was no action taken.

It alleged that the property was located in a "containment zone" developed by the city that isolated homeless people in less affluent neighborhoods. Wood said that there was no effort to keep homeless residents within specific parts of the city.

The California Homeless Union, along with its Sacramento chapter, denounced the siting plan when it was made public. Crystal Sanchez, president of the Sacramento Homeless Union, compared the X Street Shelter to a jail or internment camp. She said in an email to CapRadio that those who were institutionalized might not go there because it could trigger PTSD.

"I would ask the community: Would you live in a jail-like setting with 50-100 other people from all walks of life, knowing that in reality there aren't services for you to actually go

to?" she wrote.

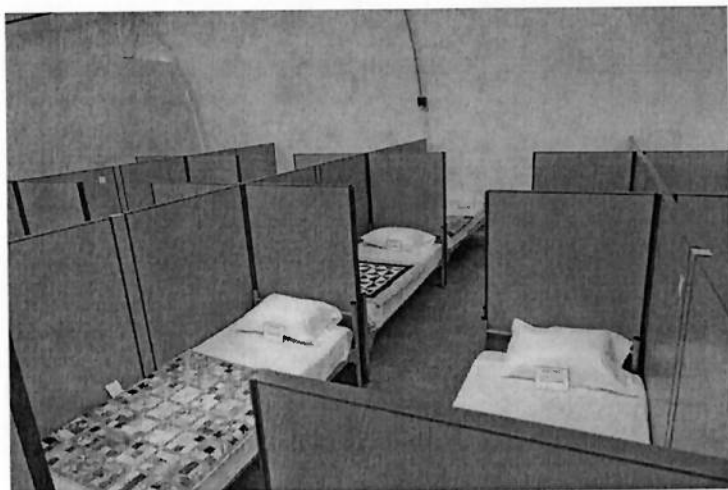
She added that she believed the city needed to create permanent housing and should allocate the money for the siting plan toward that end.

"A good neighbor policy won't hold up because people are being displaced and that means they end up back in front of businesses and residents," she said. "This is our tax dollars being disingenuously used to appropriate their own political agenda. This isn't about people."

Richard Hernandez, president of the Newton Booth Neighborhood Association, said he recognizes the navigation center is a good structure and that people in his neighborhood are excited and supportive of the endeavor. But he also feels unheard by the city.

While the plan was being drafted, he shared his concerns about the overconcentration of sites with Councilmember Katie Valenzuela. He felt betrayed when her assurances that the plan would change weren't reflected.

"There were some neighborhoods that were on the W/X corridor, and all in the Midtown area, but there were some, some neighborhoods and some portions of Sacramento that didn't even get patched, and we felt they should have had their fair share, if you will," he said.



The dorm at the shelter on X Street in Sacramento, Monday, Sept. 20, 2021.

*Andrew Nixon / CapRadio*

Concerns about inequitable distribution of sites were also brought up when the plan was first made public, with Faye Wilson Kennedy from the Poor Peoples' Campaign noting most of the existing recently built shelters were in areas with high populations of people of color. She said that follows a historic pattern of wealthier communities not wanting to shoulder the provision of services to low-income, Black and brown folks. She said that "solutions needed to be spread throughout all communities."

Hernandez said he was also concerned about whether the city had thought through the implications of building homes under a freeway.

"They're going to live there 24/7, 365 days a year, they're going to have noise, they're going to have pollution," he said. "Maybe some of the structures could prevent some of that, but if you're living there all the time — and many of these folks may have underlying health issues — that can further impair them. It feels like no one ever really thought about that, [they] believed they would just build the buildings and everything would take care of themselves."

If granted, the lawsuit would stop city construction on any current projects in the siting plan until the city complied with CEQA.

*Chris Nichols contributed reporting.*

Follow us for more stories like this

CapRadio provides a trusted source of news because of you. As a nonprofit organization, donations from people like you sustain the journalism that allows us to discover stories that are important to our audience. If you believe in what we do and support our mission, please donate today.

[Donate Today](#) > .

RELATED CONTENT





**Sacramento took nearly a year to create a new 'safe ground' homeless shelter. We look at why it takes so long.**

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

City leaders pledged by January they would open two new Safe Ground camping sites and a permanent respite center, in addition to various other shelters that are part of a larger homelessness plan. By the end of the month, none had opened.



**Sacramento to open warming centers Thursday and Friday nights**

Thursday, December 9, 2021

The city will open two centers starting Thursday night to provide shelter for homeless residents and those without heat as a cold front arrives.



**Janelle Salanga**  
Northern California Reporter



**Sign up for ReCap and never miss the top stories**

Delivered to your inbox every Friday.

Email

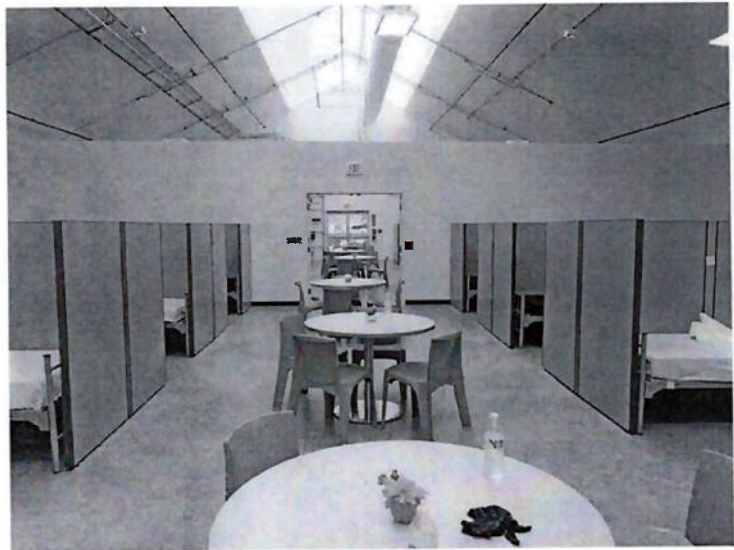
**SIGN UP**

[Check out a sample ReCap newsletter.](#)

We Get Support From:

# As Sacramento Opens New Navigation Center For Unhoused People, A New Lawsuit Threatens To Block Other Shelters From Moving Forward

Janelle Salanga  
Wednesday, September 22, 2021 | Sacramento, CA



The dorm at the shelter on X Street in Sacramento, Monday, Sept. 20, 2021.

Andrew Nixon / CapRadio

### Updated Sept. 23

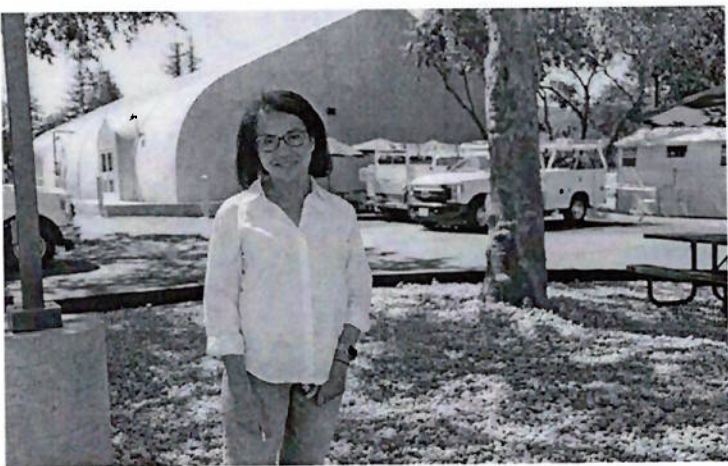
Pets, possessions and partners can come with homeless people who are referred to the city's newest navigation center on X Street, a shelter for unhoused people that opened Tuesday.

It's part of the city's continued effort to address homelessness, which includes the city's Comprehensive Siting Plan, passed in August. But that plan could stall, after a group filed a lawsuit last week citing environmental and health concerns around five tiny home sites planned under the W-X freeway.

The referral-only X Street center can house up to 100 people at a time and is intended to be a low-barrier shelter: people can come as they are, with their pets, possessions and partners, and there are no criminal background or sobriety checks they need to pass.

Still, there are some basics, said Amani Sawires, the Chief Operating Officer of Volunteers of America, which runs the center.

"You can't have weapons, you can't do anything that's going to harm the community here," she said. "But we really are about harm reduction, we don't have a zero tolerance policy on anything...The rules that we have here are really around safety."



The Veterans Hill Project 8401 Ascension Ln. Pilot Hill Ca. 95633

Serving Homeless Veterans and their Families

916-717-4477

? Who Replied? ?

---

Mr. George Turnboo, Supervisor District 2

Mrs. Lori Parlin, Chair Supervisor District 4.

330 Fair Lane Placerville ca. 95667

Request: Reparations / Zoning fee waver 40ac / Hardship housing / Pandemic relief for Perry Mike Williams, local 100% disabled Veteran.

Dear Supervisors,

My name is Mike Williams, I graduated El Dorado High in 1971 and was drafted in the military for service during the Viet Nam war. Before I was drafted, I was ready to attend UCLA under a track and football scholarship directed by my coach Mr. Gary Kenworthy. I still hold school records lasting over 50 yrs. Like many young men, I never got to live my dream of professional sports and forced into a war that made no sense to me and many of my fellow soldiers.

I was proud to serve my country with honor and respect for America.

The war was not kind to me and I suffered many conditions so bad I never talk about it. Today I'm a 100% disabled Veteran, 1 of only 1180 veterans in the entire USA. My disability has been hell to live with and during the bad times I went homeless hoping God would take me. I guess God is not done with me because my 3 kids and 3 grand kids get to have their father and grandpa...now my calling in life is to help our homeless veterans and love them as my own and I need your help.

My request to you and my community comes from my heart for other veterans who have no place to call home or even a good friend to count on in times of need.

I'm asking for something never asked of you , Reparations in wavers and support to continue to do what God has me to do...HOUSE AND SUPPORT OUR HOMELESS VETERANS ON MY 40 ac. In Pilot Hill. WEVERS: Employees Housing for 6 Ag workers, Temp housing for Veterans and workers, and all permits and fees required for my land zoned Agricultural and Rural.

Thank you and bless all of you,

God Bless America

Mike Williams, Founder of the Veterans Hill Project.



4/5/22





8-10-21

Mr. Fawad Bey, Owner

8401 Ascension Ln. Pilot Hill Ca. 95664

Sir, Dear Friend

As you know, I'm the founder of [The Veteran's Hill Project] established to serve and support our local Veterans through The El Dorado County Foundation a 501c3. We are also blessed and supported by Home Depot, local supermarkets, food & clothing banks as well as many local Veterans and families.

Our mission is bold and far reaching but someone needs to seriously address our homeless and displaced Veterans in our community, and your offer to let us establish our prototype base camp as an AG community on your property is a major blessing for all of us.

I know 1<sup>st</sup>. hand the pain and suffering of being homeless in the streets of Sacramento for 5 years...I'm lucky to be alive! I know you and I don't need to do this, but when God calls you listen, and I'm still listening even though I'm now a 100% Disabled Veteran almost 70.

Our 1<sup>st</sup>. step is to work under existing codes as an AG/ Rural project of 20 ac. at your site. We intend to setup a prototype base camp where we will have our office and I will live on site PT to always be on call as needed for Media/ News and donation visits. We will use all Home Depot products and promote them for supporting us along the way.

I hope to visit you at your land to go over our proposed site.

Bless you and your gift!

Sincerely yours,

Mike Williams, Founder of The Veteran's Hill Project