



Community Comments to City Proposal on the Benton Project

SafeSCC
04/25/2023

1

**Vast majority of the residents oppose the project.
SafeSCC strongly urge the City Council vote NO.**

2

2

This is an extremely short notice to the community

City proposal:

- *Was released to the public on Friday 04/21/2023 at 5 PM!*

Community comments:

- This is a new proposal which is totally different from the proposals the community has been engaged with.
- Community needs more time to read and think about it.
- Sufficient time should also be given to the city council before they can vote on it.

3

3

Site design and operation details are missing

City proposal:

- *Details are not included*

Community comments:

- Site internal and external design details are missing
 - E.g. size of each room, arrangement of buildings, site plans, fence, etc
- Operation details are missing
 - Program guidelines are vague and lacking details
- No mention of how LifeMoves' operation will be supervised
 - What if LifeMoves failed to accomplish their commitment like that in Mountain View?

4

4

The “Low Barrier” nature remains unchanged

City proposal:

- *Page 5: “Housing First principles and a low barrier placement process limit what screening criteria can be applied.”*

Community comments:

- No matter if it's families with children or singles, 30 units or 100 units, **if the low barrier nature doesn't change**, meaning no/little background check will be done, **the site remains a serious safety risk to the neighborhood as well as the tenants of the shelter.**
- **This is a major concern from the community.**

5

5

Site selection neglects neighborhood safety

City proposal:

- *Page 7: “the Homekey program is highly competitive and points are awarded to projects that are in proximity to essential services such as grocery stores, health facilities, libraries, pharmacies, and public parks.”*

Community comments:

- The site is selected because of how the Homekey points are awarded.
- Neighborhood safety is completely ignored in site selection.
- San Jose Branham just started construction last week. No data is available yet and can't be used to justify Benton site selection.

6

6

Program rules don't consider community safety

City proposal

- *Page 9: "Community Guidelines: specific rules around warnings, grounds for program termination, and grounds for immediate discharge including drugs or alcohol on premises, weapons, physical assault or threats of violence, sexual harassment, illegal activities, destruction, vandalism, or theft."*

Community comments:

- The guidelines are for the Benton site. There is no guarantee that such behaviors will **NOT** occur in the neighborhood. How can the city prevent crime from happening outside the site?
- If tenants are evicted due to violation of the guidelines, they may stay in the neighborhood and become safety threat to the community.

7

7

Tenant placement is questionable

City proposal:

- *Page 8: "to place these families with children (999 Hamlin Court, Sunnyvale) at the Benton/Lawrence site and set aside space at 999 Hamlin Court for singles and couples from Santa Clara"*
- *Page 9: "If at some point there were no unhoused households with children to place, the building would place single clients in dorm style "flex" units."*

Community comments:

- This demonstrates rules for tenant placement can be easily changed during operation.
- The site even though proposed as family only can place single clients in the future.

8

8

Interim Housing is not effective

City proposal:

- *Page 5: "63% of people served by interim housing programs found permanent housing"*

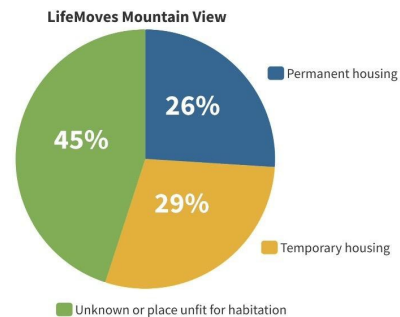
Community comments:

For the eight programs in Santa Clara County,

- **an average of 44%** of people found permanent housing,

For LifeMoves Mountain View:

- **only 26% people at LifeMoves Mountain View** found permanent housing
- Many didn't receive any supportive service and chose to go back to streets



<https://www.almanacnews.com/news/2023/03/30/lifemoves-mountain-view-promises-to-help-homeless-clients-find-stable-housing-in-three-months-the-vast-majority-dont>

9

9

Unit cost is TOO HIGH

City proposal:

- *Pages 10: \$34 Millions to construct 30 family units.*

	Estimated Construction Cost
Updated Proposal (30 family Units)	\$34,000,000

Community comments:

- More than **\$1 million** per family unit without land.
- For LifeMoves Mountain View site, it's **< \$95k/door** with land.
- Please breakdown cost estimate to justify.
- What if Palo Alto case happens again here?

10

10

Financial gap is unresolved

City proposal:

- *Pages 10 and 11: \$5.5M Operating Gap for the first 7 years.*

Community comments:

- If LifeMoves doesn't fill the gap, city will face **\$9M** operation cost in 7 years.
- Homekey requires operation duration for 30 years.
- How is the project going to be operated after year 7? If operation remains the same, there is a significant **operating gap for the next 23 years: \$4M-\$5M/year.**
- All these fundings assumed best scenario. Who will fill the gap if best scenario didn't happen?

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Homekey Operating Subsidy	\$ 1,080,000	\$ 1,080,000	\$ 1,080,000	
City of Santa Clara (PLHA Funds)	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000
City of Santa Clara (Other)				
LifeMoves Match Commitment	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 500,000
County Challenge Grant	\$ 368,371	\$ 394,193	\$ 526,091	\$ 1,789,355
County HHAP				
Totals	\$ 2,948,371	\$ 2,974,193	\$ 3,106,091	\$ 2,789,355
Operating Expenses	\$ 3,448,371	\$ 3,474,193	\$ 3,606,091	\$ 3,789,355
Operating Gap	\$ (500,000)	\$ (500,000)	\$ (500,000)	\$ (1,000,000)

	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
Homekey Operating Subsidy			
City of Santa Clara (PLHA Funds)	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000
City of Santa Clara (Other)			
LifeMoves Match Commitment	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000
County Challenge Grant	\$ 921,990		
County HHAP	\$ 968,007	\$ 2,088,828	\$ 2,122,874
Totals	\$ 2,889,997	\$ 3,088,828	\$ 3,122,874
Operating Expenses	\$ 3,889,997	\$ 4,088,828	\$ 4,122,874
Operating Gap	\$ (1,000,000)	\$ (1,000,000)	\$ (1,000,000)

11

11

Benton site is similar to White Oak Lane (rejected)

City proposal:

- *Page 2: "City Council members expressed concern about the financing gap for the White Oak Lane project which could end up needing a City contribution of approximately \$14MM over seven years. Councilmembers were also concerned with the shape and orientation of the site in relation to the nearby expressway, and the location which directly faces residential uses on White Oak Lane and Poinciana Drive."*

Community comments:

- City council rejected White Oak Lane in 2021
- If White Oak Lane shouldn't pass, why should Benton?

12

12

Report is full of false and misleading information

- Page 2: City of Mountain View attributes its 43% decline from 2019 to 2022 to a variety of City investments into homelessness services including the LifeMoves interim housing site.-> **True reason is MTV started to ban RV parking on streets from 2019 and fully forbidden in 2022.**
- Page 8:The County evaluated sites based on several factors, including lot size, accessibility for construction equipment, proximity to transit, and access to utilities, medical services, and grocery stores. -> **The site is not close to these facilities.**
- Page 6: The proposed site is vacant land located at the intersection of Lawrence Expressway and Benton Street near the Santa/Clara Sunnyvale border -> **Not vacant, more than 3000 families visited each year for holiday celebrations and used as church parking every weekend**
- Page 6: In addition, a project that receives funding under Project Homekey is exempted from local land use authority as well as CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) environmental review. -> **Could not be exempted**
- 30 units -> **30 modules, 90 families at most, could stay more than 120**
- Program participants typically stay in interim housing for three to twelve months depending on their needs while they stabilize their lives and look for permanent housing. -> **Could potentially stay longer.**
- Page 9: "The City's Police Department has confirmed there is not a shortage of uniformed police officers and that the Police Department will be ready to respond if there is an increase in calls for service."-> **PD is understaffed**

13

13

Conclusion

The proposal is rushed, flawed and poses safety and financial risks:

- **Short notice to the public**
- **Ignorance of community concerns**
- **False and misleading statements**
- **Missing design and operation details**
- **Financial risks**

SafeSCC strongly urge the City Council to vote NO.

14

14