Dear Planning Commission members,

I’m writing to you with regards to the March 20th meeting on the homeless encampment regulations. I was at the meeting for the entire duration and spoke my concerns in person. However, I’d like to put in writing to address some of my concerns in the following points:

One, I am really concerned about safety and security. I would like the commission to know that the 8 arrests and various other calls made to the Sammamish police while TC4 was at Mary Queen of Peace were not isolated incidents in the camp. I’ve included a link to a Redmond Reporter article that outlined the crime within TC4 while it was at Redwood Family Church from July 13- Oct 19, 2013 (just prior to its move to MQP). [http://www.redmond-reporter.com/news/230242051.html](http://www.redmond-reporter.com/news/230242051.html). Direct quote from the article

“She said there were eight arrests for disorderly conduct, domestic violence, possession of drug paraphernalia, stolen property and outstanding warrants at the encampment. In addition, there were 11 911 calls for warrant service or fugitive arrest; nine calls for disturbances, assaults and intoxicated or disruptive residents; two medical or welfare checks; two trespass calls; one firearm found; and other miscellaneous calls for service.”

Here is another regarding instance in Kirkland.

Based on the experience in different cities, clearly crime is a problem at the camp. It is very important to note the fact that a very large percentage of the camp population were arrested while in Sammamish (8 out 45 residents is almost 20%). And our city do have a very low crime rate based on our police chief’s report and various internet resources, such as [http://www.neighborhoodscout.com/wa/sammamish/crime/](http://www.neighborhoodscout.com/wa/sammamish/crime/) and [http://www.securityguide.com/crime-reports/sammamish-wa/](http://www.securityguide.com/crime-reports/sammamish-wa/).

While members of the church may have felt safe with the camp nearby (as many of them stated at the commission’s meeting), many of the residents living in surrounding communities certainly did not feel safe. And we certainly became even more concerned when we learned
about the drug use and rape at the camp. There can be no denying that this is not a safe population. Crime statistics clearly show as much. I do think the draft is should set limit on proximity of the camp to the any public gather place such as park and library.

Two, I am concerned about the time and effort out police department spent to deal with the crimes at the camp. Whether it’s the self-generated check or the response to call, and even the arrest and investigation for the crime happened at the camp, it takes away our limited police resource from these law obeying and tax paying residents of Sammamish. If the tent city keeps coming back to Sammamish and surrounding areas, it will be a burden to our police department and eventually financial cost to the city.

Third, I would like to address the comments made by the lady from Issaquah who is a lawyer for tent city. I believe that she was trying to scare us into adopting the least restrictive codes possible. But I would urge the commission to ignore the opinions of one lawyer and look only to the codes that are currently in place in the surrounding cities. Bellevue has a 60 day limit for tent camps, both Mercer Island and Bellevue have an 18 month restriction on camps coming back to the same area. Most, if not all, of the cities have the 1/4 mile requirement from public transportation. These restrictions are all currently in place and have so far held up in court. We should be ab adopt the same code. If she wants to challenge that, well then they will have to challenge the codes of ALL the Eastside cities. Sammamish will not be alone in that fight. Please take into account the concerns of parents and nearby residents when crafting these regulations, not only the comfort and convenience of the homeless population.

I know that it’s not the Planning Commission’s job to solve or address the issue of homelessness in Washington. However, moving homeless people to suburban communities is the solution to the issue of homelessness. While the tent city’s organizers and the faith groups are busy working to find a place to host tent city, they are not looking at the big picture. How can a camp that by its very nature is unstable be a path towards stability for its residents? How is it that in 10 years of traveling the Eastside, there has been NO real movement towards a permanent housing solution for these residents? The various hosting churches, together with SHARE and the cities have accomplished nothing towards solving homelessness on the Eastside. If anything, they make the situation worse. They put people in desperate need of services out in the suburbs where they cannot easily access hospitals, jobs, job-finding services, mental health services, etc...

In closing, I would urge the commission to consider the concerns of parents and nearby residents. The strict codes currently in place in other Eastside cites are certainly appropriate
for Sammamish as well.

Thank you,

Jing Xu

1321 226th CT SE

Sammamish, WA 98075

425-557-4776