Dear Sammamish City Council and City Planning commission,

First of all, we thank City Council and Planning commission for undertaking a thorough process to put together a comprehensive and a detailed ordinance for temporary homeless encampment for city of Sammamish. We are also grateful to the planning commission for sharing all the information that has been researched up until now and being completely transparent about the data and information collected. The city has done a good job on putting together a detailed and a comprehensive first draft of the ordinance which is available at following location on city’s website.

However, we the undersigned feel that ordinance should go further then what it currently does at protecting the rights and providing adequate safety measures to the residents of Sammamish. The city also needs to ensure that the impact due to a recurring temporary encampment doesn’t fall on a small concentrated population of Sammamish and is well spread across the entire community. Also the ordinance should be built taking into account similar ordinances which are already in place by cities that are similar in size and demographics such as Mercer Island and discount the ordinances of bigger cities such as Seattle which have a very different demographics and size.

With regards to the above mentioned concerns we would like the City of Sammamish make following amendments to the proposed ordinance:

(1) The city should consider changing the time period mentioned in item#6 under Section C- General Conditions from 12 months period to 18 months period. The 12 month period is too short and has the risk of putting un-due burden on the same residents very frequently and the 12 month frequency is much shorter than the average duration limit other neighboring cities impose.

(2) The city should consider adding requirements for random warrant checks for people residing in the temporary encampment during their stay covered in item# 20 under Section C – General Conditions. Such strict rules are already part of other more responsible homeless encampments on the eastside such as Camp Unity. Also these requirements are must to ensure the safety of our kids first and foremost.

In addition we would like to ensure that the city doesn’t further lax the following restrictions already mentioned in the ordinance:

(1) We request the city should maintain the proposed 90 day max encampment duration mentioned in item#5 under Section C – General Conditions and not extend it to 120 days as suggested by the other party.
(2) We request city council to stick to the current proposal of not granting permission to the homeless encampment on a lot or lots within one-half mile of any lot that contained a homeless encampment. This is covered in item#6 of section C – General Comments.

(3) We request the city council to stick to the current proposal of the application process for temporary encampment permits as outlined under Section E – General conditions section and not relax any of the requirements.

Also City Council should duly note that these concerns and requests for strict ordinance are not based on stereotypical or just perception issues but rather based on real factual data from our respected Police Chief about the issues faced during the last 90 day stay in City of Sammamish. Just for everyone’s reference below is brief summary of the kind of issues faced.

During the last stay of TC4 in Sammamish, there were 8 arrests made at Tent City IV, and police responded to 30 calls in addition to the 119 regular rounds the City police made within the 90 days according to Sammamish Police Chief Nate Elledge. This included one case that “police and sheriff’s deputies arrested a Tent City resident Jan. 9 for felony possession of narcotics and the man claimed to have sold methamphetamine to 12 residents of Tent City 4 earlier that day”, and another case "Another man, age 22, will also be charged with felony narcotics possession. Also there is currently an open investigation case for a RAPE incident within TC4 during their stay in Sammamish.

We really hope that city council considers our request seriously and empathizes with the serious concerns expressed by the law abiding and tax paying residents and doesn’t sway to the pressure being built by a very small community who are interested in doing charity work at the expense of others.

Sincerely,
Lianfang xiao

(Resident of Sammamish since 2008)