

Dear Alders, Committee Members, and Mayor Rhodes-Conway,

You should support the purchase of the new homeless men's shelter at 2002 Zeier Rd. Having a more permanent and well-equipped facility will better address homelessness in Madison than what we're currently using. I volunteer working with homeless people - these are people who need help, not menaces to society as those opposed seem to believe. At the July 2019 point-in-time count there were 238 people unsheltered in the county, sleeping outside or in cars. A new shelter will help reduce this number. People need stability to get back on their feet. The concerns based on new real estate developments are unfounded – previously the shelter was hosted around Capitol Square, and there has been plenty of new development and tenants around there the past several years.

I read several of the public comments opposing this resolution. Some of them made me sick with their fearmongering and lack of empathy. Moreover, the lack of sound logic in these arguments compelled me to respond. These people suggest all manner of catastrophic outcomes will be assured should the shelter be placed at Zeier Rd. Most of these claims are not sourced or supported by any evidence.

Below I'd like to address some of the claims made by Tachbrook Management in public comments, because I don't believe their conclusions are supported by what they cite:

RAND/UPenn study on crime near shelters:

Claim: "When shelters open we find that within 100 meters of the shelter total property and mischief increases by 56.3%."

Analysis: This study¹ focuses on temporary winter-only shelters in the city of Vancouver, BC. The authors also suggest increased rates may be affected by increased policing in areas with shelters. Their confidence intervals on their estimates also strike me as extremely large: for "mischief", the estimated percent increase 100m from a shelter was 26.3%, with a 95% confidence interval from -9.7 to 76.7%. Also, this study actually shows a 33.5% decrease in commercial property breaking and entering near shelters, suggesting Zeier Rd is an ideal location. Perhaps nearby business owners should be welcoming this shelter? Regardless, I don't have to tell you that Madison is not Vancouver. Given the differences in resources, conditions, and type of shelter I would not expect the same results from a city like Madison or this men's shelter specifically.

Claim: "Approximately 38% of Vancouver's sheltered homeless population reported suffering from mental illness and 53% from an addiction."

Analysis: Okay... so we should do less to help these people? I fail to see how the commentor saw this as a point against the men's shelter, clearly people are suffering and we need to do something about it.

Property values: *Even if decreased property values were a certainty, people should come first. However, I haven't seen convincing evidence that property values would fall.*

Claim: "According to Realtors.com, property values will go down on average 12.7%."

Analysis: The article² does not say where that number came from. Further, the direct quote is this: "Shelter locations...are often limited to less prime areas in the city where home values are about 13% less." This implies that the shelters were placed in areas that were *already* valued less. If they provided some source on their data we could dig in some more, but with what's been provided they may as well have made up that number (but again, I'm not sure realtor.com was even making the same claim as the commentor).

Claim: "According to the NY City's Budget Office, 'Manhattan houses located near shelters lost as much as 17% of their value'."

Analysis: The New York Post article³ cited for this claim goes on to mention several groups contesting the methodology of this report, including New York City Hall. Note that the report in question⁴ appears to have been authored by a single person and as far as I can tell was not subjected to any peer review.

Public Safety:

Claim: "'homeless have a higher overall arrest rate, the majority of offenses for which they are arrested for public intoxication, followed by theft / shoplifting, violation of city ordinances and burglary.'"

Analysis: This is a direct quote from the study's abstract and is robbed of context (see below). It's weird that this is from 1989 - was there not something more recent available? Anyway, to start, this study⁵ is looking at homeless arrests in general (in 1984 Austin, TX), not localized to shelters. Homeless people will still be in our community whether or not this shelter is here - and having it can only help. Further, the structure of this sentence makes it seem like theft is a large proportion of this, here are the percentages for the things mentioned: public intoxication: 50.8%, Larceny-theft - 13.7%, violation or ordinances: 8.1%, burglary 5.7%. The authors of that article provide some analysis: "...while homeless males are arrested more frequently than non-homeless males, most of their offenses are relatively minor and victimless. While involvement in crime by the homeless is fairly extensive, the preponderance of it is **not the kind of crime that poses a direct threat to domiciled citizens.**" (emphasis mine) Ironically, the authors go on to lament public perceptions of criminality among homeless people, saying these inaccurate perceptions can lead to "a set of policies, ranging from criminalizing begging and scavenging to **blocking shelter construction**, that exacerbate the plight of the homeless and narrow their options for survival" (emphasis mine), noting that *these policies could lead to more serious crime*. It seems the authors of this study would actually support this men's shelter!

If a development company truly thinks so callously and ignorantly about homeless people, I don't want them involved in our community. When the claims they make of negative effects are so poorly supported, we cannot take them seriously. I would hope that these aren't their true thoughts, and implore them to resist their knee-jerk reaction to homeless people and seek to understand how to be part of the solution.

We should use our community resources to take care of people, and to help them when they need it most. Again, I encourage you to consider where the previous shelters in our city have been, last time I checked property values around the square were doing fine and many people still want to live there. A development company that acts with compassion to all members of the community would be welcome in my neighborhood. If the presence of a shelter causes them to cancel their development, so be it. I for one would gladly live next door to a shelter, because I'd know that was a community that cared about its most vulnerable members.

As it stands it seems the only reason not to purchase this property is because a development company is threatening to cancel a project that will bring tax revenue to the city (as explained above, I believe their reasons for this cancellation are unfounded). What good is extra tax revenue if we don't use it to help people? Can't we hold out for a developer who will seek to improve conditions for our community's most vulnerable? **Caring for our neighbors is a moral imperative, but even if it wasn't, the opposition to the Zeier Rd Shelter makes no sense.** Please, put people before capital, and don't give into demands based on dislike of homeless people and fear.

Thank you for your consideration,

Adam Kleman
District 4 Resident

References

¹ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11292-017-9320-4#Bib1>

² <https://www.realtor.com/news/trends/things-that-affect-your-property-value/>

³ <https://nypost.com/2019/09/25/homeless-shelters-drop-manhattan-property-values-by-up-to-17-study/>

⁴ <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/close-to-home-does-proximity-to-a-homeless-shelter-affect-residential-property-values-in-manhattan-2019.pdf>

⁵ <https://doi.org/10.2307/3096817>

From: [Joe Duperre](#)
To: [Common Council Executive Committee](#)
Subject: 63920 Agenda Item #9 ~ Proposed Men's Homeless Shelter 2002 Zeier Road
Date: Tuesday, March 16, 2021 2:23:30 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

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March 16, 2021

Common Council Executive Committee

Via email: CCEC@cityofmadison.com

Re: East Towne Mall, surrounding campus and proposed men's homeless shelter

Dear Committee Members:

We felt it important to provide documentation of our concerns regarding the proposed men's homeless shelter adjacent to East Towne Mall. We recognize that a lack of affordable housing is a nationwide issue and a shelter is a community necessity. However, we have serious concerns about what the proposed location would do to the long-term value of and redevelopment prospects for East Towne Mall and the surrounding area.

East Towne Mall generates approximately \$1.4 million in property taxes annually for the city of Madison, serves as a large employment base, and a center of commerce. The retail industry is already under immense pressure, the effects of which can be seen at East Towne Mall and malls across the country. The construction of this shelter within 100 yards of East Towne Mall will drive current businesses away from the property and deter new businesses from locating there.

We'd respectfully ask that you reconsider the proposed location of the shelter in order to preserve the long-term viability of the East Towne Mall area.

I have also included letters that have been sent to the Mayor and Alder Samba of concerned business owners as well.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Joe Duperre, General Manager
East Towne Mall

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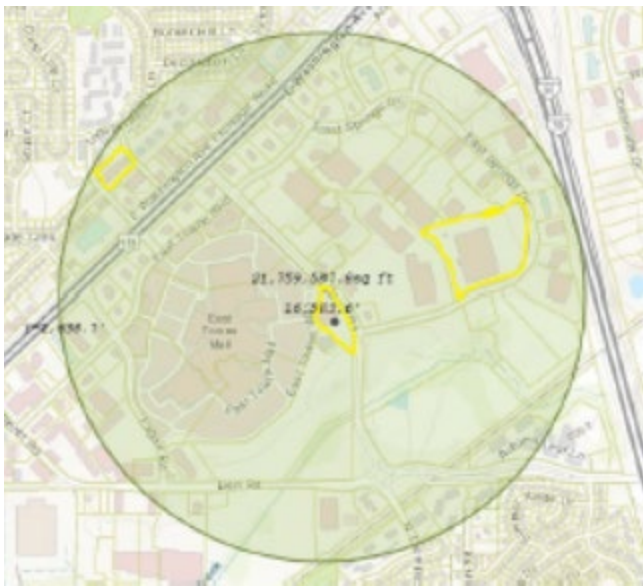
From: [Mick Conrad](#)
To: [Common Council Executive Committee](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 63920 - Purchase and Sale Agreement for 2002 Zeier Road
Date: Monday, March 15, 2021 5:33:30 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)

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Dear Members of the Common Council Executive Committee,

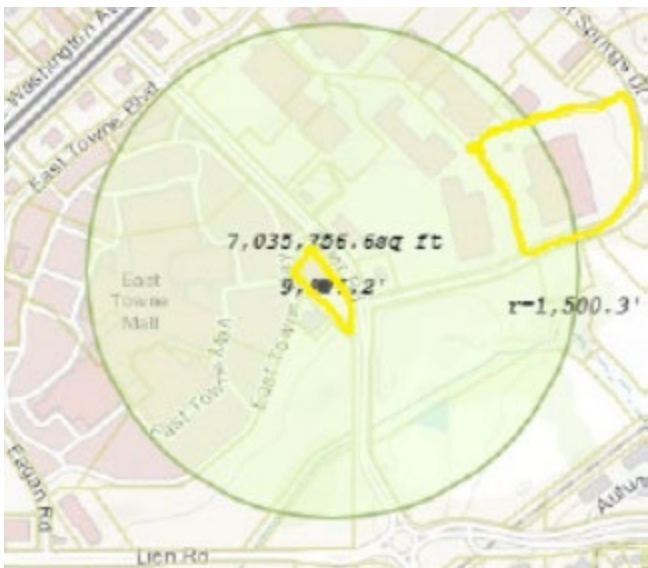
I really appreciate the City Council recognizing there is a need to assist men convicted of sex offenses with shelter at the City's permanent men's homeless facility. Some men come to a shelter because other housing options are simply not available to them. These men need a place to stay that does not cause them to violate state or local sex offender residency laws. I assume that is why the City included in its site selection criteria a requirement for the permanent Men's Homeless Shelter to be at least one-half mile away from any daycare facility. I applaud you for including such a requirement in your selection criteria. This requirement will allow the shelter to serve men who may have no other housing options available to them.

The 2002 Zeier Road site fails this one-half mile threshold test. First, the 2002 Zeier Road site is one-fifth of a mile from The Playing Field's planned 15,000-square-foot daycare facility at 2102 East Springs Drive. The City gave its official conditional use approval for this daycare facility on August 15, 2019. The daycare facility will serve 100 children. Many of these children are from low-income families. Second, The Playing Field now operates a daycare facility at 2255 Independence Lane. The City of Madison provides annual financial assistance in support of The Playing Field's mission to help children from low-income families. The daycare facility at 2255 Independence Lane is located less than one-half mile from the proposed Men's Homeless Shelter at 2002 Zeier Road. The 2002 Zeier Road site simply does not meet the City's own site selection criteria for a permanent Men's Homeless Shelter. If the City instead had decided to insert the same site selection criteria in an official request for proposals, a response for the 2002 Zeier Road site would have been found not to qualify by reason of its proximity to a daycare facility. The City needs to follow its own site selection criteria and choose a qualifying location. The map below shows that 2102 East Springs Drive and 2255 Independence Lane are both within one-half mile of 2002 Zeier Road.



One-Half Mile Radius from 2002 Zeier Road

Wisconsin law requires certain sex offenders to stay at a residence that is not less than 1,500 feet from any child care facility or youth center. See Wis. Stats., Section 980.08(dm)1.(a). The 2020 annual report published by The Playing Field, states that the 2102 East Springs Drive daycare facility will be opening in September 2022. The City tentatively plans to open its permanent Men's Homeless Shelter in October 2022 or later. The 2002 Zeier Road site would be off limits to this class of sex offenders because of its proximity being only 1,081 feet from a daycare facility. Does the City have a plan in place to assist them as well? The map below shows the location of the 2102 East Springs Drive and 2255 Independence Lane relative to 2002 Zeier Road.



1,500 ft. Radius from 2002 Zeier Road

I commend City Council for showing a strong interest in insuring that children feel safe in public places, as evidenced by Section 26.13 of the Madison Municipal Code, which states:

(2) Legislative Findings and Intent .

- (a) The Common Council finds that the increased number of child abductions from public places by known child sex offenders throughout the nation has become a public safety threat.
- (b) Individuals convicted of serious sex offenses against children pose a clear threat to children residing or visiting in the community. Further, there are no guarantees that these individuals will not re-offend. Convicted sex offenders are more likely than any other type of offender to re-offend for another sexual assault. This high recidivism rate results in an increased risk to the children in our City.
- (c) The City has a strong interest in insuring that residents, including children, feel safe in public places. (Am. by ORD-17-00030, 3-8-17)
- (d) In order to reduce the potential risk of harm to children in our City, there is a need to limit the opportunity for offenders of serious crimes against children from having an opportunity to have contact with unsupervised children. This ordinance covers locations that are primarily designed for use by, or are primarily used by children, namely: school grounds, playgrounds and daycare facilities.
- (e) For these reasons, the Council finds that a threat to public safety exists that affects the life, health and public welfare of children and that for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety of these children an urgency exists to require the adoption of this ordinance. The City enacts this ordinance pursuant to its power as set forth in Wis. Stat. § 62.11(5).
- (f) This ordinance is not intended to limit any persons from exercising their right to assemble or engage in any other constitutionally protected activity. The ordinance only applies to individuals with the requisite intent to induce or lure a child away from a child's location within a child safety zone.

As you weigh our vital need to assist men convicted of sex offenses with shelter along with our expressed decree for children to feel safe in our community, I respectfully ask that you choose a site for a new permanent Men's Homeless Shelter that is not by a daycare facility. Please follow your own site selection criteria.

Best regards,

Mick Conrad
(608) 622-7711