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"April 28, 2026

To Whom It May Concern

RE: Locating Alcohol and/or Drug Rehabilitation Programs in Neighborhoods

My name is Lt. Colonel Daniel Starrett, and I have been a Salvation Army Officer for over 52 years. I have been located all over the Western United States and, for at least 10 years, in California. During that time, I have worked with substance abuse recovery programs for at least 40 of those years.

I was responsible for all Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Centers—alcohol and drug recovery programs—in the Western USA for over 7 years. During the years 1990–1994, I was responsible for the centers in Carpinteria, CA, and Seattle, WA. From 1994 until 2001, I was the Commander of all the Adult Rehabilitation Centers in the Western USA. At that time, there were 26 locations with a bed capacity of 3,200. We served both men and women. The length of our program was 180 days in a residential setting. The graduation rate was 32% during that time.

Over the years, we have discovered that the process of locating rehabilitation/recovery programs in residential areas has been among the most difficult challenges we have faced. Everyone wants the program, but not where they live. Of the 26 centers we operated, only about 3 were in residential areas, while the vast majority were in light industrial areas. We have found that these light industrial areas were the most productive and supportive environments for the clients as well as for the communities. Here is only a partial list of reasons for these locations:

The significant number of potential clients coming to be considered for entry into the program caused far fewer problems than if large numbers of men and women were present in residential areas.

Potential clients can be in various stages of active substance abuse and are of great concern in neighborhoods. These individuals may come and go or linger around the facilities at all hours of the day and night. They often arrive outside of intake hours and wait; may be discharged due to program violations at any time; and may attract both positive and negative influences, including friends, dealers, and others.

Having large numbers of people walking through local neighborhoods will result in many expected and unexpected issues: crime concerns, exposure of children, potential confrontations with residents, increased police involvement, and other challenges.

The local effect on property values with large facilities such as these is often negative. People rarely want to live next to or within a neighborhood where a large number of individuals in varying stages of substance abuse are coming and going. In light industrial areas, we did not have to contend with as many difficulties, as there were no schools, playgrounds, or residential homes nearby. In addition, these facilities were often closed at night and on weekends.

In spite of strict policies not allowing individuals in a current state of alcohol or drug use to be accepted into the program, many still attempt to enter at all hours or wait around until morning. This often results in people remaining in the area over weekends and holidays when admissions are closed.

There are also substantial issues involving individuals with long histories of interaction with the criminal justice system—situations that facilities can properly manage, but which are not well-suited to local residential neighborhoods.

There is also the challenge of family members, friends, and law enforcement bringing individuals at all hours of the day and night, often without knowledge of intake policies, as well as individuals being discharged after normal hours and walking directly into the surrounding area.

This list is by no means exhaustive. Nor is it meant to suggest that alcohol and drug rehabilitation facilities are not needed, wanted, or valuable. However, their proper location is among the most important factors in supporting recovery, ensuring that clients, families, and outside influences can be properly managed and monitored.

We have found that light industrial areas are often better suited for facilities, where they can be built, monitored, and remain supportive for all concerned.

In His Service,

Daniel Starrett, Lt. Colonel (Retired)

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