



FORT WAYNE CITY COUNCIL

Office of the Common Council

200 E. Berry Street, Suite 120, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802

260.427.2977 (office) www.cityoffortwayne.org/city-council.html

August 25, 2025

Malak Heiny
City of Fort Wayne
200 East Berry Street
Fort Wayne, IN 46802

Via email, Malak.Heiny@cityoffortwayne.org

Dear Malak,

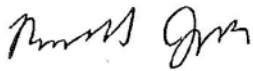
Homelessness is a topic we all deeply care about, but in recent years, it has taken a new focus as we see our downtown over-burdened with people on the streets, day and night, and hear countless stories about dangerous encampments encroaching on our neighborhoods. We've taken time to search out information regarding what Fort Wayne is doing, what other communities are doing, and if there are best practices around the country. We've listened to our constituents and community business owners who have provided nearly universal feedback about wanting to see changes in the current system.

Ideas that other communities have put into place are proliferating too. Things like working with non-profit partners to limit or be selective in services provided. Different sheltering opportunities. More coordination regarding non-profits receiving municipal funding. Focusing on reducing encampment options on public property. Focusing on these issues is now something that both sides agree on – both California Governor Gavin Newsom and President Donald Trump have offered paths for remedy. Although these two elected officials are philosophically opposed, they are similar in approach, and yet they have both identified this as an ongoing issue and have offered a tangible approach to address the community portions. Other Indiana cities like Bloomington and South Bend have begun to address this issue. Here, we are way behind.

Which approach should we take? Should we formally amend City Code to provide police with a clear path and tools to remove encampments? Should we work through the President's Executive Order and utilize the directives therein, such as pursuing federal grants and guidance on additional policing? We cannot continue to do the minimum that we are currently doing – and our existing code either does not provide the necessary tools, or we are not utilizing them to their maximum impact. Our expectation is there is a unique path for Fort Wayne to blaze, but for now we only have these starting points.

Enclosed is the ordinance draft and Executive Order put forth by both Governor Gavin Newsom and President Donald Trump. Please review the legality and render your opinion on their merits, potential effectiveness, and feasibility. We look forward to your focused response. Council has a member of the Administration coming to brief the body on homelessness initiatives on September 9; we hope to include any comments you may have on the questions noted herein in that discussion.

Sincerely,



Russell Jehl
Fort Wayne City Council, 2nd District



Scott Myers
Fort Wayne City Council, 4th District

Cc: Mayor Sharon Tucker, sharon.tucker@cityoffortwayne.org
Karl Bandemer, karl.bandemer@cityoffortwayne.org
Amanda Fall, amanda.fall@cityoffortwayne.org