

Q&A: Safe Ground
District 4 City of Sacramento
Neighborhood Information Sheet

This sheet is designed to help inform neighbors and businesses surrounding the Safe Ground site at W/X & 6th Street. The goal is to increase communication and understanding. This sheet was created by the Land Park Community Association (www.landpark.org) in collaboration with District 4 Representative Katie Valenzuela and Director of Community Response, Bridgette Dean.

Safe Ground Management and Services

- **How long will Safe Ground be available at W & 6th?** *Safe Ground between 6th/8th Street will be open until construction finishes, which is expected in December 2021. We will relocate folks as we can into hotel rooms, transitional housing, or other sites (since this location next to the freeway isn't ideal for long-term living) but also want to move out in time for the Farmer's Market to resume without delay.*
- **Are all populations welcome (women, men, mentally ill, children, handicapped)? If so, how do you protect vulnerable groups from harm in the camp?** *All populations are welcome. There is on-site staff 24/7 to ensure everyone's safety, supported by security personnel that patrol the perimeter and nearby areas. Both sites have a supervisor who oversees staffing and management of the locations in addition to the 24/7 staffing. Staff are trained in de-escalation, communication and basic services response.*
- **Is there a limit to the number of campsites allowed at Safe Ground?** *The number of folks allowed depends on the size of their camp setup. One tent takes up much less space than a full RV with a vehicle. At this time, we are accommodating 38 people in 17 vehicles and 15 RVs/trailers at South Front Street, and 88 people with 68 tents and 8 vehicles and 8 RVs/trailers at 6th/W. At this point we are almost full space-wise at each site.*
- **How much space is required between campsites?** *We are keeping 6 foot spacing, but also working on vaccinations for folks on site to reduce the risk of COVID exposure.*
- **Who maintains water stations and toilets? Who maintains garbage disposal?** *The City maintains water/toilets/trash in partnership with First Step Communities, the service provider staffing the site. Maintenance schedule TBD.*
- **What services will you offer to help people move forward? i.e. Job training, mental health, drug rehab, work to connect back to families.** *Services will start with case management and housing counseling. No other services and support provided at the moment.*

Safe Ground Management and Services (continued)

- **Has there been a discussion of compulsory treatment/training as a condition of residency at the Safe Ground site?** *There has not been conversation about compulsory treatment/training at this time. We're hoping to assess needs as we establish case management with folks.*
- **What outreach groups are tasked with visiting Safe Ground residents and offering services?** *Our primary contract is with First Step Communities who manage the daily operations. Meals are provided by Volunteers of America.*
- **Case management** *is provided by First Step Communities. This team has case management and social work/service experience. We've also designated a case management supervisor from First Step. Case managers are well versed in partnering resources, county services and other supports. Additionally, all guests are entered into HMIS so they can be reconnected with current providers and programming that they may already be enrolled in and supports future housing options.*
- **Are you encouraging other organizations not affiliated with the City to visit the Safe Ground site and provide services?** *We are working with Bayside Church to help provide showers on site. There are community groups who stop by periodically to provide warm meals and clothing.*
- **Warming Centers closed on March 31, 2021; what is being done to ensure a safe transition from one area to another for those living at the warming centers?** *First Step is the same group who staffed the warming center, so they worked to ensure folks knew they could come to safe ground when that closed. We are also contracted with Hope Cooperative to do ongoing outreach as a city team. They've been making contact with folks and referring them into hotel rooms or Safe Ground as applicable.*

Safe Ground Rules

See the Safe Ground Rules sheet by First Steps Communities. Every resident of Safe Ground must agree to the rules and sign the sheet.

- **Who will supervise the Safe Ground area to ensure rules are followed?** *Staff are on site 24/7 as well as security to ensure safety and other needs are met.*
- **Will drug and alcohol use be allowed on the Safe Ground site?** *Drug and alcohol use is not allowed on site.*
- **What are the rules for personal management of pets?** *No Answer.*
- **What are the rules for cooking/barbecue and fire safety?** *No Barbecue or open fires allowed.*
- **How will food be provided or managed at the Safe Ground site?** *Food is two meals a day brought in by Volunteers of America*
- **If a resident is causing trouble for others at the site, do you have a plan to address this?** *If someone is causing problems, those are managed by First Step staff. There has been no need to call 911 at either site so far, and staff has successfully deescalated any conflicts. If someone continues to escalate and violate the rules, however, they will be asked to leave. However, if there is a true emergency or safety issue than 911 (Fire or PD) can be called.*
- **What are the plans to manage the surrounding area? For instance, those who refuse to follow Safe Ground rules but camp next to the site? What is the plan of engagement?** *First Step Communities is working with the City to manage near the site. We have had a few camps emerge near the site that we're working to move into the site itself. Dept. of Community Response outreach teams and First Step staff will continue to make contact, offer supports, connect to resources and encourage encampments outside of the safe grounds to relocate into the designated area or provide other options. We also work to reconnect individuals to family or other support systems if applicable.*
- **What are plans to manage people looking to take advantage of Safe Ground residents? For instance, selling drugs and other illegal and unsafe propositions?** *First Step Communities staff are on site 24/7 to monitor and prevent anyone from coming on site to take advantage or harm residents. See Safe Ground Rules – no drugs, alcohol or weapons are allowed on Safe Ground Sites.*

Organizations and Contacts

- Individuals who would like to volunteer and support the Safe Ground space, or contact someone about a problem or issue can reach out to First Step Communities:
Website: <https://www.firststepcommunities.org/>
Email: info@firststepcommunities.org
Office: 1-916-822-4900
- If a person witnesses any issue of concern at the Safe Ground site, they can email Bridgette Dean, Director of the Office of Community Response: Bdean@cityofsacramento.org
- Hope Cooperative is working to provide outreach and services.
website: www.hopecoop.org
- District 4 Business owners and Residents can contact D4 City Council Representative Katie Valenzuela with any questions or feedback about the Safe Ground site:
KValenzuela@cityofsacramento.org

Emails can also go to Katies' staff

Michelle Pariset: MPariset@cityofsacramento.org

Mikayla Taylor: MTaylor@cityofsacramento.org