

August 10, 2020

Dear Seattle City Councilmembers,

We are writing to urge you to oppose legislation to eliminate the city's Navigation Team. Defunding the city teams charged with coordinating and performing outreach, shelter referrals, sanitation and cleanup of homeless tent encampments in Seattle will have severe negative impacts on parks, neighborhoods, businesses and the unsheltered population. The vote in committee last week to dismantle critical city services comes with little public engagement and with absolutely no plan for how to deliver services to individuals living outside or address the growing public health and safety impacts of tent encampments across the city.

Encampments create significant health risks for individuals and surrounding communities. Earlier this year, an encampment in Ballard was the site of a Hepatitis A outbreak. Last week a suspected Hepatitis A case was reported at an encampment downtown.

This legislation, if adopted, will provide no plan for engaging individuals living in tents to offer safer and healthier living options and no city services to manage the significant sanitation and public health impacts that result from people living unsheltered in Seattle.

As we work together to recover from the health and economic impacts of COVID-19, it's critical that you take the time to understand the effects of your actions on our communities and those who are experiencing homelessness. This reckless decision is not good for Seattle.

We urge you as councilmembers to listen to the community and vote NO on Monday to cutting Navigation Team resources without a plan to serve Seattle's neighborhoods and homeless population.

Sincerely,

Lisa Howard, Executive Director
Alliance for Pioneer Square

Mike Stewart, Executive Director
Ballard Alliance

Johan Hellman, Executive Director of Public Affairs
BNSF Railway

Rod Kauffman, President
BOMA Seattle King County

Monisha Singh, Executive Director
Chinatown-ID Business Improvement Area

Mei-Jun Lin, President
Chong Wa Benevolent Association & Education Society

David C. Sharp, President
Columbia City Business Improvement Area

Howard Anderson, Chair
Denny Triangle Neighborhood Association

Jon Scholes, President & CEO
Downtown Seattle Association

Betty Lau, Chairperson
Friends of Japantown

Heidi Hughes, Executive Director
Friends of Waterfront Seattle

Historic Waterfront Association

Jan Johnson, President
Japanese American Museum of Seattle

Dave Gering, Executive Director
Manufacturing Industrial Council

Thatcher Bailey, Executive Director
Seattle Parks Foundation

Nora Chan, Founding President
Seniors in Action Foundation

Erin Goodman, Executive Director
SODO Business Improvement Area

Tom Norwalk, President & CEO
Visit Seattle

Lora Radford, Executive Director
West Seattle Junction Business Improvement Area