

September 10, 2025

To the City Commission:

The United Way request to approve a Special Use permit for the former Evergreen location is NOT an ask for approval of the programs or the project. It is very simply an ask to exempt this particular property from current zoning regulations.

Many of us whose families live and or work near the Evergreen facility have expressed concern regarding the United Way request for a Special Use permit regarding the Evergreen property. Over 400 people have already signed a petition in protest of this proposal. These petitioners have valid concerns regarding the safety of our neighborhoods and residents if this location would be used to house and manage the multiple needs of a rotating clientele that are under different supervisory and accountability requirements.

There has been increased vehicle, bike, and walking traffic on 21st St and its arteries in the past months. The safety of any new residential families, facility staff, permanent or emergency residents or guests at the facility, or for those providing emergency services if this Special Use permit is granted, is also of concern. Without close monitoring and a trained staff available at all times, anyone who uses this busy corridor would be vulnerable to the same easy facility access, trespass, accident, theft, or violence by others. None of the safety backstops suggested by United Way are sufficient or reliable enough to reasonably assure us that United Way could consistently manage and protect their own residents and staff on an ongoing basis, nor could they effectively protect the neighborhood and its surrounds.

Recent demand for law enforcement and medical/ambulance services has increased dramatically in our community. If additional populations are cared for at the Evergreen location, provider services will be further burdened. These providers primarily use 21 street west to respond to calls for assistance – additional travel to and from their outlying stations 24/7 would mean additional traffic and safety concerns.

Our medical providers have been challenged when attempting to recruit and retain the properly trained medical personnel needed to fill some 100 current vacancies. For United Way to assume they will be able to add the necessary needs-based staff on an ongoing basis to serve a multi-needs population at this location, is both unrealistic and impractical.

Location and safety are the primary issues to consider when evaluating and voting on the merits of granting this Special Use permit. While challenging, it is the responsibility of United Way to research and suggest an alternate and safer location for their purposes. The implementation or success of the programs they represent do not depend upon this specific location.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sam Kestete", followed by a stylized flourish.