

Date: 9-8-25

To: Dickinson City Commissioners

Re: Opposition to Special Use Permit SUP-002-2025
United Way Group Living Facility

Hello, my name is Shelly Koppinger and I have lived in the North Hills Townhomes for the last 24 years. I live less than 300 ft. from the proposed location for this. I am writing to strongly voice my opposition to the location being proposed for this Special Use Permit.

My main objections to the Special Use Permit for this location are the actual LOCATION being VERY close to residential homes and for the SAFETY of this. While I do support United Ways wanting to bring a facility such as this to Dickinson to help people, this is just Not the right location. As I've mentioned, the building is 300 ft. or less from our townhomes. That a facility such as this including a homeless shelter would be allowed next to residential homes with families including children and grandchildren is just Not Acceptable! This location is way closer to residential neighborhoods than United Ways first location attempt and that got turned down. I am against this mostly for the safety of our homes and our families. I personally would never feel totally safe in my yard and I for sure would not feel safe letting my Grandchildren play outside in my backyard. I want each of you to honestly ask yourself if you would be comfortable with having this Group Living Facility (including a Homeless Shelter) in your own backyard, less than 300 ft. from your homes? I am suspecting that your honest answer would be no. Once again, I am not against helping people, but LOCATION for something like this MUST be the main consideration when voting on this. I honestly don't believe that the majority of Dickinson residents know much about what this vote is about. They don't realize that we aren't against the proposal, just the location. When United Way presents this proposal they never once mention that it is close to residential homes. Of course the people will be in favor of it, because it is needed, just NOT at THIS LOCATION or any residential area!! Over the past months, we have done lots of research on homeless shelters and have found that they are not allowed in other ND cities near any residential homes. I really do understand why they think this old Evergreen building would be the place, but it just IS NOT! There are Many residential homes and 2 schools within blocks of this location. Please keep in mind our safety and our neighbors and surrounding businesses safety. I also understand that it is very difficult to find the "right" location for a facility such as this, but I strongly believe that there is one and that they will find it.

Another disturbing consequence of allowing this Special Use Permit at this location would be what it will do to our property values. When anyone living here would decide they want to move, our home values would be quite significantly less than they should be. It would be a hard sell due to being so close to this type of a facility.

Along with my main concerns of Location and Safety, we must take into consideration the issues of traffic, funding and staffing if this were to pass, First of all, 21st St West is already a very heavily traveled street. Especially now with the Fire Department and Police Department located nearby. We are constantly hearing the sirens on this street and they need it to be open. There would be much more foot traffic and car traffic if this were to happen. As far as funding, I understand that United Way has a start up plan in place with most of it depending on grants. In our current economy, we all know that grants are not a for sure thing. Everyday grants are being cut and is out of anyone's control. This could lead to most of the funding to fall back on the City of Dickinson's tax payers, which includes you and I. I don't believe the city residents would be in favor of this part of it. Another very serious factor is staffing a facility like this. We all know how hard it is to find and retain good help for any business in Dickinson right now. If you look around you see help wanted everywhere. This facility would need specialized, trained help which would be even harder to find and retain. Please consider all of these points before you cast your vote. It can't just be an emotional vote because we all know that we have needs in our city for some of these issues, but Location and Safety must be the main considerations.

I'm hoping and trusting that each of you as Dickinson's voted on City Commissioners will consider all of these issues and protect us, your life long residents. As a part of your oath taken I believe it says you will protect and do what is best for the residents of Dickinson. As it stands now, the facility would hold a maximum of up to 60 people and yes those are people who need help, BUT please take into consideration us residents who have lived up in this location for a long time and love it here. Also keep in mind the over 400 residents who have signed our petition against having this Special Use Permit for this Location.

In closing, please keep in mind that this is NOT a matter of us not caring about other people who are having trouble in their lives right now – we really do care & understand. I deeply believe that United Way can find a suitable building in the future for this type of a facility, but NOT in the former Evergreen building, NOT in our backyard, a and NOT in any residential area

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns and hopes.

Sincerely,


Shelly Koppinger