

Neighbor Comments on Proposed Salvation Army Expansion

Updated August 30, 2019

William McGrath-E Dayton St

I'm opposed to any more expansion of high needs housing for individuals or families in the Lapham area. This Population is causing multiple problems in the neighborhood.

Karla Handel-E. Mifflin St.

Since I will not be able to attend a meeting on July 1, I just wanted to make a couple of points that I was also not able to make at the larger meeting held at Lapham.

1. I think that the Salvation Army needs to have their own security. We were clear about the need for security at Steering Committee meetings regarding the Beacon and I think for similar reasons it is needed here as well.
2. The Salvation Army staff have made the point that a new design will remedy existing problems. If the Salvation Army continues to not allow "guests" of the residents to come inside the building I see the problems continuing. A change in design isn't going to change drug use that is happening on Mifflin St.--I don't believe residents will decide to use drugs inside because they have a new building. A change in design will not change the visitors that hang out with guests on the Mifflin St. sidewalk and in the parking lot which I think results in the most problems of arguing, violence, etc. Guests should be allowed to visit inside the building where they can be properly supervised by staff and have more oversight. Of course some will choose to be away from the eyes of staff which is reason to extend better oversight to the parking area and sidewalk area.

Thank you for taking time to read about my suggestions

Kyle Ripple--Dayton Row

Good Morning. I was unable to join my spouse at the listening session last night regarding the expansion of the Salvation Army and I wanted to share my concerns. My husband and I just purchased a townhouse at Dayton Row. Over the past few months we've observed many issues related to the Salvation Army which I believe stems from the poor operation on the site. Regularly there's loitering on east Mifflin outside the building. Many of times there's drug use and consuming of alcohol which leads to fighting, loud arguments, littering and an unsafe environment for neighbors. In addition to these issues there's trespassing, theft of property and littering of neighbor's property. I understand that there is a population of people that require services, but the Salvation Army hasn't demonstrated the ability to adequately manage their current facility nor shown a willingness to be a good neighbor to residents in this district. I don't think an expansion of the Salvation Army is good for me and my spouse, the neighborhood or the City of Madison. Please let me know if there are additional actions I can take to share my stance with you and other Alders as this project is considered.

Richard Freihoefer

I will say that I was at the first meeting several weeks ago and I think the residents near the shelter sent a clear message that we do not want an expansion as the salvation army has proven to be a very irresponsible neighbor over the years. Not to mention that a big expansion would doom our local school which already was one of the highest rates of homeless students. The best solution would most likely be to move the shelter to the Huber building near the Alliant Energy center.

I am not sure how much work I want to expend fighting this proposal but I think it will be stopped just as we got the day shelter moved. I would appreciate being kept in the loop on this issue.

Woody Barfield

I attended the community meeting and given how packed the meeting was with community members who emotionally and strongly opposed the idea of dramatically increasing the population to be served by the Salvation Army, I did not have the chance to publicly speak (and neither did many others). My sense of the meeting and through conversations with my neighbors that would be affected by the development, is that we are not in favor of the project going forward. While we were vocal in support of the Salvation Army's agenda, we are currently experiencing a level of crime that makes the dramatic increase in population that would be housed at the Salvation Army facility, cost prohibitive to the community. Your email seems to suggest, its a done deal, in light of what I thought was strong community opposition. If so, I am very disappointed. By helping one set of victims, others would be created as a result of the increased crime, and make no doubt, there would be a surge in crime as the presenters admitted they lacked the resources to adequately police the current population. I think other Madison communities should share this responsibility, this community has done enough. Personally, as a retired person, I am tired of being harassed and looking over my shoulder as I take my dog for a walk, the community shouldn't have to live this way. Please provide the community every opportunity to oppose the proposal. We support the agenda of the Salvation Army, and with more policing help, we can live with the current Salvation Army population, but it would be extremely unfair to subject our community to the definite increased crime that would result from basically tripling the number of people served by the Salvation Army. Let another community step up and share the responsibility of helping others.

Kevin Schnell--Madison Store Director- Festival Foods

I wanted to provide you with my thoughts. We do quite a lot to support the Salvation Army across the state, including allowing bell ringers in our lobby and having our cashiers solicit donations during that time frame. Unfortunately, for this store in particular, we have had to make quite a few changes to protect our business and our associates because of the increased homeless population in the neighborhood which increased with the opening of the Beacon and would only be amplified with an expansion of the Salvation Army site. A few key issues have been increased theft, increased public intoxication, a revision to our liquor license demanded by the ALRC, associate safety concerns, and changes in our open and close times. While it would not be fair to pin all of this exclusively on the Salvation Army, we feel the issues we have seen will only get worse. I appreciate you hearing me out on this issue.

Jacqueline Iribarren—Landlord, E. Mifflin Street

As a landlord from an E. Mifflin Street building, across the shelter and parking lot, I would like to share my observations to you since I was not able to attend the meeting last week Thursday.

1. You will see lots of waste-loitering from the people and their friends & family around the ground on the 600 E. Mifflin block.
2. You will see people, families, strollers, cars with people inside waiting, grocery carts--units of people hanging out waiting outside the parking lot, spilling over to the streets, especially on again on the 600 block. You can see these clusters of people from daytime to past 6:00pm during the week and its ongoing. Now that the weather is nicer, more people and more clusters of families/friends, etc. are hanging out in parking lot and street--thus, more loitering.
3. We have found people from somewhere (good guess is shelter and/or their friends/family) sneak in to our building. A tenant found a man wandering inside (we have security locks so somehow he got in).
4. Our porch has been used for people to sleep in, store their belongings and even take some of our porch furniture.

So in sum, these are the main complaints of the current situation from the people currently living or visiting the current Salvation Army building. The outside premises are seeing loitering, loafing, malingering, etc. Our neighborhood serves attending students and young professionals. This neighborhood has an appeal with the new Festival Foods in the area, parks, lake vicinity, etc. Additionally the neighborhood is a "historical neighborhood" as it has been dedicated/designated. Any additions of affordable housing will most likely bring the housing value in this neighborhood down. This is a concern. I invite you to visit the outside grounds on the Mifflin side.

Jordan Allen—Dayton Row

My spouse and I are new additions to the Tenney Lapham neighborhood, as we recently purchased a townhouse at Dayton Row. We are really enjoying living in our new place and love it's proximity to downtown and the many events and activities that make Madison such a great community to live in.

One thing I currently do not like is the Salvation Army, more specifically, the way that the SA is operated. I attended last week's meeting at Lapham Elementary and agreed with many of the concerns that were voiced by other frustrated members of the neighborhood.

Over the past few months, my spouse and I have witnessed loitering, fighting, incredibly loud & vile language (even while young children are present), drug use, littering, trespassing, and most recently, graffiti on the Dayton Row premises. To say that the SA is a horrible neighbor would be a gross understatement.

I understand that the SA provides services that are needed to the homeless in Dane County, however, their operation of the East Washington facility comes at a great cost to the Tenney Lapham neighborhood. I have not personally witnessed any positive attributes of their services and only see their premises as a danger to me and my neighbors.

As a tax paying resident of the neighborhood, I cannot support an expansion (or even their presence) if things don't change.

Please let me know if there is additional action that I can take to share this important feedback with City of Madison officials, City Committees, and/or other Alders as this project is considered.

Ilana Bryne -- N Baldwin St

I know you've received a lot of negative feedback and concerns from our neighborhood about the possible Salvation Army expansion, so I wanted to say something in favor of it.

I'm no fan of the Salvation Army as an organization. They have a horrible record regarding LGBTQ people in need of their assistance. In general, I am wary of most religiously-oriented charitable service organizations.

But, I also know that as a society we don't prioritize caring for the least fortunate and most vulnerable among our neighbors. Public, ostensibly secular options that would provide the services the Salvation Army offers are underfunded... if they exist at all. If the Salvation Army can provide the services we won't then let's give them what they need when they ask to serve more of our neighbors.

I'm further down the street at Baldwin and E Washington so I won't feel the immediate effects, positive or negative, of this expansion. But it is still my neighborhood, and I will speak in support of anything in my neighborhood that supports our neighbors who are struggling. From Mifflin Manor and other affordable housing, to the proposed (but ultimately defeated) homeless shelter where the Valor veterans housing will be built, to the men's shelter run by St Vincent De Paul... all of these are my neighborhood (even if some aren't in my district) and all of those who live there are my neighbors.

I know them, I speak with them, I intervene when other neighbors or the police approach them. They are struggling and they are surviving and yes, that involves issues like addiction and violence, but they are welcome here because they are no less deserving of shelter and support than those of us with better fortune, social privileges, and access to influence.

This is their neighborhood too; this community is comprised of all of us. We have invited the young and the affluent into this neighborhood, accepting the issues that gentrification brings. Can we not do the same for our neighbors at the Salvation Army shelter?

Bill McGrath-E Dayton St.

I am against the expansion of the salvation Army site. The salvation army has done a very poor job over the years with handling the people they serve & neighborhood concerns.

Justin Riedel-The Colony Condos

Thank you for the email updates and comprehensive notes on the attached link. I unfortunately was not able to make the steering committee meeting last week. It appears there were some positive developments in their plans with the research on security and the driveway entrance being moved to Blount.

I shared the attached link with Patrick prior to the June meeting and attaching for your reference. I live in the Colony Condos right next to the SA, so I have a pretty good feel for how things are working. I don't think I need to get into all the crime/vandalism/loitering/abuse issues as that was hit pretty hard in the previous meetings. What I do want to bring to your attention is the data I gathered below.

Data as of December 2018:

1. City currently has 1,149 total affordable housing units
2. Salvation Army currently has approximately 40 beds for single women and 22 rooms for families
 - a. They want to expand those to 60 beds and 40 rooms.
 - b. Along with that expansion add 25 single rooms and 40 studios/one bedroom apartments allocated as affordable housing
 - c. Total would bring 165 total units for affordable housing
 - d. Breese Apartments currently has 55 units allocated as affordable housing
 - e. Total within 3 blocks would be 220
3. Salvation Army/Breese would represent 15-20% of all affordable housing in 3 block of E Mifflin St.

This is likely outdated and I am sure you have newer figures, but the fact I want to convey is there is way too much concentration of affordable housing and/or homeless services concentrated in one area, exacerbated if this is approved. My recommendation is that they can move forward with any construction, but any apartment building be free of or provide very little (10%) affordable housing. If approved as they propose this would create a Tree Lane Apartments on steroids. We have all seen the news recently of the increased crime in the City (most recently State St.) and I think a lot of that is how much services, handouts, and developments have been focused on affordable housing by the City. What it seems to be doing is attracting people from outside of Madison creating a need for more and more of it, and unfortunately is resulting in more crime.