



2309 Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404
612-874-0311 main | 612-874-0313 fax



January 27, 2023

Senator Wiklund
Chair, Health and Human Services Committee
Members of the Health & Human Services Committee

Dear Chair Wiklund and members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

Agate Housing and Services (The product of the merger of St. Stephen's Human Services and House of Charity) is writing to express support for SF388. We support this historic legislation in its entirety but are counting on shelter capital and the Emergency Services Program to meet the urgent need we are seeing in encampments and our full- to-capacity shelters.

\$150 million for Emergency Shelter Facilities

There is an urgent need for emergency shelter with 24/7 services designed to give people the safety, stability, and services they need. Agate's emergency shelters have operated at capacity for many years, and we need shelters with more personal space, storage, and other amenities to encourage people who have had bad experiences at shelters in the past.

We are excited to have the opportunity to remedy this situation in a neighborhood that is still recovering from civil unrest. The shelter and housing project will be built on three vacant lots at the corner 28th Street and 27th Avenue South, near Cub Foods and the 3rd Precinct.

The shelter capital funds will enable Agate to build a shelter that will be ready for future challenges that put people experiencing homelessness at risk. A \$1.5 million gift allowed us to close on the purchase of the property to be used for this shelter project on January 5th. Additionally, the Minneapolis City Council recently approved an award of 9% tax credits, which represents most of the remaining funding needed for the housing portion of this supportive housing and emergency shelter project.

The shelter's design was guided by the direct input of shelter guests who worked directly with architects and staff to learn from them about their needs for emergency shelter. Our emergency shelter will provide:

- Capacity for 54 individuals with overflow.
- A shelter sleeping layout with six person rooms versus a large, congregate, traditional shelter structure.
- Safe space that does not feel like incarceration.

- A facility built with durable materials designed to stay in good condition.
- Accessible rooms and service spaces.
- Good storage for guests' belongings.
- 24-hour staffing at a high enough level to support guests' needs for services.
- The shelter will be co-located with supportive housing on a property conveniently located near transit in South Minneapolis.

This is an opportunity to create an enduring resource that will meet the need for effective and safe emergency shelter. There are many other shovel-ready projects like ours and we are asking you to act quickly to make them possible.

\$40 million in 2024/25 and \$70 million in 2026/27 for the Emergency Services Program (ESP)

We are also thrilled that SF388 includes more funding for ESP. This funding will allow organizations and local communities to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness through supporting shelters, outreach, motel vouchers, and other key resources and services.

In addition to the above priorities, we support the remaining items included in SF388:

- The Transitional Housing Program
- Homeless Management Information System
- Homeless Youth Act
- Homeless youth; chosen family grants

We applaud the leadership for bringing this bill forward. Shelter saves lives and housing ends homelessness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kyle Hanson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kyle Hanson,
CEO/Executive Director
Agate Housing and Services