Dear neighbors,

If you go to <https://www.cabq.gov/family/services/homeless-services/community-feedback-gateway-center>, you can take part in adding your input to the community feedback form for Gateway Center. I have included a copy of the survey along with my personal responses to questionnaire. I feel strongly that as a city, we need some revision with our homeless service programs.

Community Feedback Form for Gateway Center

(**This is the introduction part of the survey)** We need your help! In November, city residents approved a bond measure to build a Gateway Center for housing and services in Albuquerque. This new shelter will include emergency shelter beds but will also serve as a gateway to permanent housing and other community resources needed to keep that housing, such as job training and behavioral health services. Please take a few minutes to share your criteria for this new facility and inform the plan to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness in our community.

Name:

Organization Name:

Email Address:

Zip Code:

Phone Number:

(The following are the questions asked by the city. I have included my response to these questions for your information? Entertainment? or however you wish to compute the input)

1. **What location is your location preference for the new Homeless shelter?**

I 40 and the second Street Area

Other location in Downtown Area

UNM Health Sciences Center south of the state Lab

NE Heights Areas

North Valley Area

SE Heights Area

South Valley Area

Current Location (westside Center/ Former Bernalillo County Jail) (**I chose the current site)**

Other location in the Westside Area

**Other-Please provide suggestions for a location in the box below:**

(**The following is my response)**

The city could save money by keeping the shelter at its current location. The investments should be spent on solving the problems with the present location. The current administration prides itself on being democratic and being environmentally conscious. Part of being environmentally conscious is about re-using what one has. Instead of a new project, why not make what one already has work. For example, the current homeless shelter on the Westside does not offer any services. Not even food is offered to recipients. This should change.

Furthermore, a truly democratic process also means that the administration should listen to the residents. The design of the ballot asking for funding for this homeless shelter was extremely misleading and almost deceiving. The choice to fund a homeless shelter was not a stand- alone vote. it was clumped together with funding for community centers, etc. It appears that his intervention was strategically implemented to assure votes in a particular manner. I respectfully request that the ballot questions become more transparent and clearly written out.

Finally, the Keller administration initiated a Homeless Task Force. However, the advice given by members of the Task Force were not implemented. This is very concerning for those of us who respect the democratic process.

1. **What criteria need to be considered in choosing a location**

Select all that apply

Easy access to support services for people experiencing homelessness (medical care, case management, mental health, etc.)

Easy access to employment

Easy access to public transportation

Walkable community

Other (open ended) Please provide priority suggestions:

(**The following is my response)**

Most of us can agree that as **compassionate, responsible residents, we need to implement solutions to end homelessness.** Therefore, we agree that we must implement *sensible solutions* that can also include monetary funding, to help with this national problem, that frankly, is not getting the attention it deserves.

*The theory of ending homelessness* by connecting homeless individuals with *easy access* to employment, healthcare, etc. can be *one solution* for reducing homelessness. However, this solution can only positively impact homeless individuals whose only issue is needing easier access to services.

When homeless individuals with **addiction problems** are also placed in the same category, many concerns arise, and rightfully so. Home-less individuals with active addiction problems should be given every opportunity to succeed. A powerful intervention to break the addiction cycle, is to create separation between the individual and the source of addiction. Physical barrier is a first line intervention to allow for the creation of healing spaces.

Therefore, individuals with active addictions, should be separated from the rest of the homeless community. They should be provided services **away from the cities,** **and away from their addictions**. This way, they can get a real chance at recovery.

The centers created for actively addicted individuals should be placed several miles from cities. They should be designed like basic camping cabins. The aim of such projects should be to offer truly innovative solutions to **break the addiction cycle**. For example, individuals should work on the land, such as *gardening*. They should be given the opportunity to build *adobe buildings*. They should have access to open spaces that allows them to observe and *interact with nature*, such as watching a sunset at its full glory, Religious organizations and other organizations can come and offer *inspiring programs* to assist with their recovery. So should others, such as the Native communities. They can offer assistance by teaching interested addicted individuals about the *Native ways* and corresponding *healing ceremonies*. *Yoga* and other healing modalities should be offered.

Individuals should also be expected to become *increasingly helpful in the community*. Jobs, such as *digging, gardening, building construction with adobe walls, etc*. should be considered as part process of healing and re-integration to society.

Most sensible individuals can agree that it is difficult, if not impossible, to break an addiction cycle with only one change: A roof over one's head. This is simply not enough to address the crippling issue of addiction since addiction is such a devastating issue. And, let’s face it. Most individuals will not succeed. The current model of placing roofs over heads of addicted individuals does not address the root cause of the problem: addiction.

*New Mexico* can utilize the *powers of its beauty and serenity to break addiction cycles*. Instead of copying solutions to addiction issues from other states, which frankly, have not yielded much successl, even in their states of origin, we can create successful and original methods to break addiction cycles.

Lastly, the concerns of **law-abiding residents** who **work**, **vote and pay taxes**, should be taken seriously by the city. The city should not label all individuals who have different ideas about how to deal with homelessness as just people who are out of touch.

1. **What needs to be considered to minimize neighborhood impact?**

Choices (Check all that apply)

Building design is consistent with the look and feel of the community.

Property has good security systems in place

Appropriate public safety presence

Construction does not adversely impact access to area businesses and services

Other: Please provide neighborhood impact suggestions:

(**The following is my answer**)

The IDO needs to be amended to include recourse for neighborhoods who take on pilot projects, such as the introduction of programs like the Santana Development or a new homeless shelter, a new methadone clinic, or even a marijuana or alcohol dispensary. The IDO (Integrated Development Ordinance) does not currently issue any recourse for their actions**.**

1. **What services need to be prioritized on site at the Gateway Center?**

Case management (connect people to services in the community)

Housing support (help people access stable housings)

Mental health and substance abuse treatment services

Job training and placement

Other: Please provide services suggestions.

(**The following is my answer)**

That depends on the need. The city should have performed a study to indicate the needs. The results from the study should be utilized to answer the most crucial issues first.

1. **Please share any other thoughts you have about the new Gateway Center’s location, services, and other concerns:**

(**The following is my answer)**

To summarize:

1. Individuals who are part of Task Forces should be listened to by the city.

2. The voting process about crucial issues should be straight forward and easy to understand. Certain issues deserve their own particular place in ballots. Mayors and other city officials should use the media to educate voters, but they should not use their seats to persuade votes one way or another.

3. Do not treat all homeless individuals in one big pile and assume all that is needed is easier access to services and employment.

4. Addicted populations deserve truly innovative solutions to end the cycle of addiction. We must come together to sensibly deal with this tragic and serious issue. Building homeless shelters in urban areas is only one solution. We must not put all our eggs in one basket.

**Neighbors, please take survey. Also, please share your opinions.**