

January 20, 2023

ATTN: City of Albany Planning Board Members
200 Henry Johnson Blvd
Albany, NY 12210

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

I am writing as a strong supporter of Capital City Rescue Mission and it has come to my attention that there is an urgent need to accommodate the homeless population in the South End of Albany.

The proposed addition to the Rescue Mission will be a great asset as it will provide for men and women who have been displaced by other local shelters that have been forced to close their doors. This expansion will allow those individuals to have a warm bed and a secure locker instead of a mat on the floor and a trash bag for their belongings. There will be more space to keep men and women off of the streets as well as more opportunities to get them into long-term solutions – addiction recovery, supportive/permanent housing.

All would agree that homeless individuals deserve more than a bed for the night and a meal. That is precisely what the Rescue Mission does – the meal and the bed is just the first step. The Mission not only provides safe shelter and nutritious meals free of charge, but also clothing and medical services. And *all* are encouraged to participate in their longer term drug/alcohol recovery programs. Then, through their on-site education center, they are assisted as they gain employment and move into a supportive housing situation, with the ultimate goal of independent living.

Concerns have been raised about the safety of the community, specifically the Giffen Elementary school students. However, please take into account the large bus stops and bodegas that are located in closer proximity and facilitate drinking, drug dealing, loitering and other nefarious activities by individuals who have been proven not to be Mission guests. Also, please know that the Mission takes great care in keeping a 2 block radius of its buildings free of trash (including Giffen Elementary). A Mission Ambassador can be seen seven days a week picking up garbage off the streets.

Capital City Rescue Mission operates with absolutely no government funding – just the donations provided by individuals, churches, and businesses who are interested in helping the people of Albany. I would strongly urge anyone to take a tour of their facilities to get a true picture of how this place is making a difference to the less fortunate in the South End, and how this proposed expansion will better enable this wonderful work.

Sincerely,