

# EXHIBIT A

January 4, 2016

Ms. Mary Ellen Ponder  
Chief of Staff  
Office of the Mayor  
City of St. Louis  
1200 Market Street, #200  
St. Louis, Missouri 63103

Dear Ms. Ponder,

It is our understanding with great disappointment that the City of St. Louis plans to utilize the Biddle House for shelter purposes. We at the Carr Square Tenant Management Corporation and Urban Strategies recognize the significant need for shelter housing and can sympathize with the City's challenge. We are not opposed to a shelter, but oppose the proposed location. We oppose the location for several significant reasons that include the following:

- There is already a concentration of subsidized housing in the Fifth Ward. Adding a homeless shelter will only challenge a community that already has severe challenges and will only exacerbate our existing struggles. The neighborhood also currently houses four shelters. We are not in need of another.
- We are working to address these struggles. Since February of 2015 we have been partners in the Choice Neighborhoods Planning (CNP) effort on the Near Northside. The Plan calls for a number of revitalization strategies that will support economic growth, diverse housing and opportunity. Placing a shelter in the neighborhood does not align with these goals. The Plan had hoped to engage the City in conversations about a grocery store at the Biddle House site to address a desperate food desert issue.
- The Biddle House site sits next to our proposed new state of the art Jonas Hubbard Community Center which will house many of the services residents have proposed during the CNP process. We are currently in conversations with the Downtown YMCA about assisting in the operations of the center. Placing a shelter next to a new community center where children and families will play and congregate may pose challenges to membership recruitment and may create safety issues.

Urban Strategies intends to pursue a \$30 Million grant award from HUD in partnership with the City of St. Louis to revitalize the Near Northside. In order to submit a strong application we must demonstrate to HUD that we are all on the same page. Placing a shelter in a neighborhood that has the potential for great opportunity does not align with the community's transformation plan and undermines our efforts to show that we are of one accord.

Again, we are not against shelters to house the most vulnerable, but question the site selection. We encourage the City to not only identify an alternative site, but to explore strategies that will decrease homelessness and increase transitional housing opportunities. We would be happy to sit with you and further discuss our concerns. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Kendall, President  
Carr Square Tenant Management Corporation



Sandra M. Moore, President  
Urban Strategies, Inc.