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February 4th, 2021

STOP THE SWEEPS!

As a group of local grassroots community organizations concerned with justice and human rights, we come together to publicly condemn the openly militarized use of force displayed in sweeping the encampment at 210 Lottie Street on Thursday, January 28th. We call on the Mayor to reverse the course of escalating violence and intimidation and immediately cancel the sweep of the encampment at Geri Fields that is scheduled to take place on or before Friday, February 5th.

We demand that the City abide by [CDC guidelines](#) for minimizing the spread of COVID-19 among people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, which state: “If individual housing options are not available, allow people who are living unsheltered or in encampments to remain where they are.” The guidelines further note that “clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. This increases the potential for infectious disease spread.”

Instead of compounding the harm that has already been done to the residents of the encampment by subjecting them to further violations of their basic human rights, we call on the City to offer them options for temporary shelter, either at their current location or at another location to be mutually agreed upon, with the provision of electricity, water, and sanitation facilities adequate to serve residents’ basic needs.

In summary, we request that Mayor Seth Fleetwood and the City of Bellingham commit to:

1. Halt all camp clean-ups and develop a permanent policy banning sweeps;
2. Offer all Camp 210 residents adequate public services and options for temporary and permanent housing that accommodates the needs of disabled people and those struggling with mental health issues and drug addiction.

Signed,



Please email whatcomhrtf@gmail.com if you would like to add your organization to this list.