



SouthWest Improvement Council – SWIC

Health and Human Services for Everyone

SouthWest Neighborhood Housing Corporation

Quality Affordable Housing for Everyone



January 4, 2021

Denver City Council Finance Committee

RE: Statement of Vendor/Contractor SouthWest Improvement Council Directors
Resolution Request: RR21 0011
Contract control number: FINAN-201951760
Location: 1000 S Lowell Blvd

Dear Members of the Denver City Council Finance Committee:

For 33 years the SouthWest Improvement Council (“SWIC”) has successfully served the Denver community from the Westwood Community Center at 1000 S. Lowell Blvd. The Hancock Administration is ending our lease at the end of 2021. They have not stated a reason. They have no plans for the property. The termination will harm the community. We ask that you investigate this termination with the objective that the Administration agree to a four (4) or more year lease.

SWIC is one of Denver’s oldest human-service nonprofit organizations. SWIC serves mostly Latino, Native American, and Asian American elders. SWIC has operated from 1000 S. Lowell Blvd since 1988. SWIC serves the entire City. Most clients come from Westwood, Mar Lee, Barnum, Barnum West, Valverde, and Athmar Park. SWIC hosts the Denver Public Library and the Mile Hi Early Learning Center. SWIC is a neighborhood institution, identified as a Stakeholder and Partner in the 2016 Westwood Neighborhood Plan.

Council should hear more about SWIC’s Westwood Community Center and advocate for a longer lease term. A four or more year lease will give SWIC stability to continue to serve the community and work with the Administration on an orderly plan for the future.

The Administration has no plans for the building. The Administration finally, though we have been asking for transparency for years, just told us they don’t even plan to start planning for a year:

“At the end of this lease term on December 31, 2021, Real Estate plans to undertake an RFP process to provide an opportunity for community-based service providers to lease and operate the space. SWIC may be a bidder in this process, as well as complementary or competing organizations.” (Resolution Request 21-0011)

Forcing SWIC to move and then allowing SWIC to bid on coming back to an emptied building is oppressive and unjustifiable.

SWIC is a stabilizing factor against displacement and gentrification. SWIC enables elders to remain secure and comfortable in their homes. SWIC provides free daily meals, activities, social and educational programs for senior citizens, a food pantry, and essential home care and hygiene products. SWIC provides gymnasium space for adult, youth, and Denver Public School programs and community event space. SWIC is a lifeline for people facing foreclosure and eviction. SWIC is providing COVID relief services.

SWIC has significant investment in the property and pays most of the maintenance and operating costs. SWIC led the Citizen’s Neighborhood Bond Project in 1998 and built the Westwood Community Center in 2007. In 2010 this Council approved a Lease with \$10.00 purchase option. The Real Estate Division denied SWIC’s attempt to exercise the option. The Real Estate Division has kept SWIC on month to month lease for years, but they never before said they were kicking us out.



SouthWest Improvement Council – SWIC

Health and Human Services for Everyone



SouthWest Neighborhood Housing Corporation

Quality Affordable Housing for Everyone

SouthWest Improvement Council Directors
January 2, 2021
Page 2

The SWIC Board of Directors respectfully requests the Finance Committee postpone action on the Consent Resolution to investigate this termination with the objective that the Administration agree to a lease term of at least four (4) more years so SWIC can have stability and continue to serve the community while the Administration and SWIC make orderly long-term plans.

Members of the SWIC Board are available to testify and answer questions from the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

The SouthWest Improvement Council Board of Directors:

Tony Oum, Chair	David Fogel, Board Member
Gustav Achey, Treasurer	Francis Navidad Coleman, Board Member
Ray Ehrenstein, Secretary	Mary Lou Vigil, Board Member
Benjamin Cheang, Board Member	Larry Ambrose, Executive Director

Cc: Daniel Markofsky, Esq.
(Timothy Sandos, Board Member abstains from this matter)