

8-25-2024

Dear Downtown Review Board,

As longtime neighbors and partners with the Pikes Peak Library District, we are in strong support of fencing the Penrose Library property.

Our Downtown Campus is located immediately west of the Penrose Library and together we face daily challenges presented by the Downtown unhouused: vandalism, crime, camping, drug use, trash, and defecation on our properties.

These severe challenges are making it increasingly more difficult to preserve and protect the environment in and around our buildings, provide safe and welcoming spaces; and perhaps most importantly achieve our organizational missions.

The status quo is unreasonable and untenable.

We recognize homelessness in our community is an excruciatingly difficult issue that impacts all of us in some way. For PPLD and PPSC, the impacts are profound.

During the past 12 years the PPSC Downtown Campus enrollment dropped from nearly 15% of PPSC's total enrollment to less than 2.5%. We have learned the primary reason for this dramatic decrease is that students, faculty, and staff report reluctance to attend class or work at our Downtown Campus because they do NOT feel safe in the area.

Our college and Penrose Library must have the flexibility and latitude to take measures that protect our work, our patrons, our students, and our mission.

I urge you to commend and approve the request from PPLD for fencing of the Penrose Library. Although it will not solve all the problems in the area, it will help. In fact, PPSC may soon take similar measures.

It is incumbent on our city and our community to find solutions to this crisis. Meanwhile both PPLD and PPSC must take the steps needed to preserve our mission and serve our community.

Thank you,



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