

OPEN LETTER TO SAN DIEGO CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS REGARDING MONDAY JULY 17 Agenda Item 151
– Approval to Purchase the Super 8 Motel at 1788 Palm Avenue for the San Diego
Misdemeanants At-Risk Track (SMART) Program

Dear Councilmembers Alvarez, Bry, Cate, Cole, Gomez, Kersey, Sherman, Ward and Zapf:

As a neighbor and fellow Councilmember in the City of Imperial Beach, I request that you vote “no” and *disapprove* this item and thereby protect neighboring Imperial Beach from the negative impacts that will clearly follow from this program.

As you no doubt are aware, Imperial Beach has successfully fought for the last 20 years to achieve one of the lowest crime rates in San Diego County. Along the way, we have dramatically improved the quality of life not only for our own residents but also for the tens of thousands of visitors that enjoy our beaches, restaurants, and hotels, including residents from the southern portion of the City of San Diego.

Not long ago, we suffered from high crime rates, complete lack of new development, run down properties, and the poorest reputation of any municipality in the County. We have reversed those trends in recent years and need your help, and your “no” vote to maintain this positive momentum for our community.

This proposed SMART project which is anything but that from our community’s standpoint, is by its own terms experimental, hence risky – and it is only a mile from our city limits, along the main transport corridor into our community. Moreover, the Super 8 motel is a viable low cost accommodation for many visitors to Imperial Beach. Its replacement with a half- way house for convicted criminals removes this establishment from the very limited inventory of hotel rooms serving visitors to Imperial Beach.

Finally, at no point in time did your project management team invite, inform or present this project to our City Council and/or community. This does not seem like a good standard for community development/engagement for border or near border projects, particularly given the great example of collaboration between our two cities on the Palm Ave/Route 75 master plan.

Looking at all the factors involved here, the relative impact on Imperial Beach of a vote in favor of this item will be quite negative for us compared to the impact on San Diego. For these reasons, I request that you oppose this measure.

Sincerely,
Ed Spriggs
Councilmember
City of Imperial Beach