



Short-term Family Housing in Ward 1 **Questions & Answers**

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About Short-term Family Housing

What is Short-term Family Housing?

Short-term Family Housing provides dignified, service-enriched temporary housing for families with minor children who are experiencing homelessness. Each program will serve up to 50 families a night and will provide the services and supports that families need to obtain permanent housing.

Who will be served in the Short-term Family Housing program? Who will my new neighbors be?

The program will serve families with minor children experiencing homelessness. Based on demographic information from other family shelter programs in the District, we estimate that approximately 40 percent of children in Short-term Family Housing will be infants and toddlers, 50 percent will be in elementary school, and 10 percent will be in middle or high school. The majority of the families in Short-term Family Housing will be headed by a single parent.



Site Information about 2500 14th St NW

Why did the location for the Ward 1 site change?

Under the Homeless Shelter Replacement Act of 2016, the DC Council authorized the Mayor to acquire property at 2105-2107 10th Street, NW as the Ward 1 site for Short-term Family Housing. However, the District could not come to an agreement with the property owner. The District then identified the parcel of District Government-owned land at 2500 14th Street, NW as the best Ward 1 location for Short-term family housing, as it meets all the requirements for the project.

How did the District select this site?

Legislation passed by the Council in May 2016 required the District to own or acquire each of the Short-term Family Housing sites. The law also selected 2105-2107 10th Street, NW as the Ward 1 site for Short-term Family Housing. However, the District could not come to an agreement with the property owner of 2105-2107 10th Street, NW. The District then reviewed the portfolio of District-owned sites in Ward 1. The parcel at 14th St NW and Clifton St NW was selected as the optimal location to serve families because of its proximity to transportation, services, and community amenities, and the opportunity the site presents the District to enhance and maximize municipal use.

For a full list of sites that the District considered for Short-term Family Housing in Ward 1 please visit:

<https://mayor.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/mayoromb/publication/attachments/Attachment-7-Proposals-Received%20.pdf>

Will the Rita Bright Family and Youth Center, which is next door, be closed?

No. The District will not close the Rita Bright Family and Youth Center. In fact, the District will provide improvements to the Rita Bright facilities, and will be working with the families and youth who participate at Rita Bright to identify which improvements are needed. The District will develop the parcel of land at 14th St NW and Clifton St NW, a current parking lot that is adjacent to the Rita Bright Family and Youth Center. The existing 13 parking spaces that service the Rita Bright Recreation center will be maintained as part of the final building design.

Will redeveloping this site disrupt the Rita Bright Family and Youth Center?

The District is committed to ensuring that Rita Bright continues to provide services in the Ward 1 community. The Department of Parks and Recreation, with support from the Department of General Services, will work closely with Rita Bright's leadership, staff and stakeholders on a plan to continue operations throughout development of the Short-term Family Housing program. In addition, as upgrades are completed inside Rita Bright, the Department of General Services will coordinate DPR to minimize the impact that upgrades have on daily programming.

This site has a lot of potential for the District. Are you maximizing the use of the site? Why not build more units and maximize the FAR?

In total, the plan calls for 50 new apartment units to be developed on the site: 35 short-term family housing apartment units, and 15 permanent supportive housing (PSH) apartments for seniors. The number of Short-term Family Housing units that we will develop on this site is

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driven by the needs of the homeless services system. Homeward DC, the District’s strategic plan to end homelessness, maps out the number of emergency shelter units the District anticipates needing once the plan is fully implemented. District law also requires that the Department of Human Services have in their inventory a minimum of 121 apartment-style shelter units. This site helps the District achieve that mandate. Furthermore, in order to develop emergency shelters that feel residential and achieve economy of scale, our plan calls for Short-term Family Housing programs to be no larger than 50 units. The District is also conducting a feasibility study for the site, which will provide more details about what is possible for the site.

Why doesn’t the District build a mixed use building with private retailers to offset the cost of development?

The current plan does not call for mixed use development on the site. The District is conducting a feasibility study for the site, which will provide more details about what is possible for the site.

What is the process for approving this project?

Both the Short-term Family Housing program and the permanent supportive housing units are by-right projects. That means that the planned development complies with existing zoning regulations and does not require any relief from the Board of Zoning Adjustment. The Council of the District of Columbia will also hold a public hearing on the proposed site. Also, the District, in partnership with ANC 1B, will establish an Advisory Team in this community as a process to engage community stakeholders and collect feedback throughout the design and construction phases of the project. These are programs that will be assets in Columbia Heights for a long time, so we want to ensure significant and robust community input.

What is the budget for this project?

The Council appropriated \$23 million for the construction of the Short-term Family Housing program. Additional funds will need to be appropriated for the construction of the additional 15 Permanent Supportive Housing Units and to facilitate upgrades to the existing Recreation Center. Once the feasibility study is complete, DGS will use this information to create a solicitation package for a Design/Build Contractor. Once this Design/Build contractor is engaged they will work with DGS and its sister agencies to develop the final program and design. This will be done in partnership with the Advisory Team with the goal of producing a final design that has the support of the community.

Construction

How will parking be impacted during construction? Will the neighborhood be losing the parking spots currently on the site?

Currently there are 14 parking spaces allocated for the recreation center on this site. This level of parking will be maintained as part of the new design. The 50 apartment units will also require parking and this will be provided in line with current Zoning Regulation. As part of the feasibility study, the parking requirements will be reviewed for both the final building design and the construction period. The result of this study will be shared and discussed with the community for feedback in the aim to minimize any disruption to the local community.



The vast majority of families in the homeless services system do not have cars and utilize public transportation. Proximity to public transportation - both buses and the Metro - gives residents a number of transportation options. For on-street parking, the current zoned parking regulations apply.

Will construction be disruptive for the other programs that operate on the site? Will you need to move any programming into swing space?

The goal and challenge for our design team will be to minimize disruptions to the existing programs at the Recreation Center. As part of the feasibility study, DGS has requested a review of the existing Recreation Center and a plan on how we can maintain the existing services on site for the majority of the construction.

In addition, some upgrades to the Recreation Center are planned to ensure that the Rita Bright Family and Youth Center continues to be a vibrant community space. These upgrades may have some short-term impact on daily programming at the Recreation Center. The District will work with the Ward 1 Advisory Team and key stakeholders to ensure changes to programming schedules (if required) are well communicated and carefully planned to minimize impacts to those that use the Center.

Community Feedback

Were neighbors consulted about the selection of this location?

Once the District identified 2500 14th St NW as the optimal site in late 2018, the District immediately reached out to ANC 1B's leadership. ANC 1B voted unanimously to pass a resolution of approval for the site in December 2018. A Town Hall was held on January 18 to share information with neighbors and other stakeholders. Moving forward, the District will continue community outreach by launching a Ward 1 Advisory Team and convening community meetings as advised through the Advisory Team process.

How do I join the Advisory Team? Who decides who sits on the Advisory Team?

The Advisory Team is comprised of representatives from both the government and the community, and is staffed by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services (DMHHS). DMHHS is coordinating with ANC 1B to form the Advisory Team. ANC 1B will nominate several community members as representatives for this group to ensure that we are including key community stakeholders. If you are interested in joining the Advisory Team, please let your ANC representative know.

Additionally, and the District will select representatives from DHS, DGS, and the Mayor's Office on Community Relations and Services. The Advisory Team will be co-chaired by an ANC 1B Commissioner and the DC Interagency Council on Homelessness Executive Director (and ANC1B Resident) Kristy Greenwalt.



What is the time commitment for serving on the Advisory Team? How frequently does it meet?

The Advisory Team will meet on a monthly basis for approximately one and a half hours on a designated weeknight evening. Once construction on the site begins, Advisory Team meetings will shift over to a quarterly meeting schedule. Advisory Team members are expected to help with community outreach and soliciting feedback from residents in addition to meeting time commitments.

Neighborhood Impact

How will this project impact my property values?

Research suggests that there is no clear link between adding this type of program to a neighborhood and depressed property values or increased crime. In some cases, adding a program in a vacant space has increased adjacent property values and decreased crime. For reference, you may find relevant studies here:

- <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/TheQuestionofPropertyValues.pdf>
- https://shnny.org/uploads/Project_HOME.pdf
- https://www.huduser.gov/Publications/pdf/support_1.pdf
- http://furmancenter.org/files/publications/Impact_of_Supportive.pdf

In addition to making these buildings great for the families that live there, we want to make sure that they are great for our neighborhoods. That's why we are committed to designing high-quality buildings that match the character of the neighborhood. La Casa, a permanent supportive housing site also in Columbia Heights for formerly homeless men, has won several architectural awards. We expect to achieve the same with this site.

What happened to the property values of the homes surrounding the other ward level shelters that have already been built?

Construction has begun at the Short-term Family Housing programs in Wards 3 through 8. Sites in Wards 4, 7 and 8 will be completed in September 2018 and sites in Wards 3, 5 and 6 will be completed in Summer 2019. We will not have an accurate understanding of impact on property values until construction is complete and the programs are up and running, but we do not expect to see any negative impact on property values. In addition, many similar programs already operate throughout the Ward 1 community in locations where surrounding property values continue to rise.

What are you doing to mitigate loitering, littering, and excessive noise at this site?

Short-Term Family Housing programs have program rules that address these issues. In addition, the Advisory Team will have an opportunity to lay out community expectations for the operation of the program through the Good Neighbor Agreement.



Will the building be attractive looking and preserve green space?

In addition to making these buildings great for the families that live there, we want to make sure that they are great for our neighborhoods. That’s why we are committed to designing high-quality buildings that match the character of the neighborhood. La Casa, a permanent supportive housing site in Columbia Heights for formerly homeless men, has won several architectural awards. We expect to achieve the same with these new sites. With regards to preserving green spaces, this will be a consideration during the design process and the design team will work on preserving as much open space as possible. The design for the building and site will commence once the design build team is hired. This team will work with the Advisory Team to develop a site plan that compliments the local community.

Program Operation

Who will operate the services on-site after it is completed?

The service provider for the Short-term Family Housing building will be selected through a competitive procurement process led by the Department of Human Services. A Technical Panel will score proposals based on a number of factors, including past experience and responsiveness to the needs of the programs. The most competitive proposal will be awarded the contract. This competitive contracting process will occur closer to the time that the construction of the building is complete.

What are the parameters for selecting the provider that will be running the building? Can we open it up to organizations outside of the DC area to make sure we get the best operator possible?

The service provider for the Short-term Family Housing building will be selected through a competitive procurement process led by the Department of Human Services. Organizations outside of the DC area are welcome to respond to the Department’s solicitation, but must meet the District’s CBE requirements. Small and local businesses are critical to the District — they drive economic activity across all eight wards, employ District residents, and invest in our neighborhoods.

Will security be a visible presence 24/7?

Yes, the Short-term Family Housing sites will have 24-hour security personnel and staff on-site. District-owned facilities are maintained and secured by the Department of General Services (DGS) in partnership with the service provider, who will be selected through a competitive procurement process.

Will the Recreation Center be combined with the shelter into one building?

No. The new Short-term Family Shelter units and Seniors Permanent Supportive Housing units will be in a separate building from the Recreation Center. Once the final design is approved a common life safety system may need to be installed across the campus to meet building codes. This is being investigated as part of the feasibility study.



Which agencies in District government are responsible for this project?

The Department of Human Services (DHS), through contracts with providers, offers emergency shelter for families experiencing a housing crisis. DHS is responsible for developing the program onsite and for oversight of the contracted provider who will be selected to provide services.

The Department of General Services (DGS) is the real estate arm of the District government, responsible for managing the construction of the building and providing building management services for facilities owned or operated by the District.

The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services (DMHHS) is responsible for coordinating the multi-agency plan to close DC General and open Short-term Family Housing programs in all 8 Wards. DMHHS is also responsible for staffing the Advisory Teams. In Ward 1, the Advisory Team is led by Kristy Greenwalt, Executive Director of the Interagency Council on Homeless (ICH). The ICH is responsible for facilitating interagency, cabinet-level leadership in planning, policy making, program development, provider monitoring, and budgeting for the Continuum of Care of homeless services. Director Greenwalt is also a Ward 1 resident.

Why are we doing housing for seniors and not a different population?

The District's largest need for Permanent Supportive Housing programming is for single adults. There are many different subpopulations of single adults that require the depth and intensity of support provided by PSH, including seniors. Based on past experience, we have found that there is a nice synergy between young families with small children and seniors. (See, for example, [Genesis](#) in Northwest DC.) Although the buildings and programs will be separate in this case, the proximity allows us to potentially leverage informal support networks between these two groups.

Schools

What are the in-boundary schools for the Ward 1 Short-term Family Housing program?

Marie Reed (grades PK-5), Columbia Heights Education Campus Middle School (grades 6-12) and Cardozo High School (grades 6-12) make up the feeder pattern for residents of 2500 14th Street NW.

Columbia Heights Education Campus (CHEC) Middle School has a geographic boundary and feeder pattern, so it is a guaranteed right in 6th through 8th grade for students residing in the boundary or promoting from one of their feeder schools (eg: Marie Reed). At the high school level, CHEC is a selective, citywide high school without a boundary or feeder pattern. All students must apply for admission. Because the 8th graders at CHEC Middle School are not guaranteed admission into CHEC for 9th grade, DCPS has a guaranteed high school option, which is Cardozo. However, many 8th graders from CHEH do apply to CHEH for high school and attend high school there.

The educational rights of children experiencing homelessness are protected in federal law. What does that mean for DC Public Schools?

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires all school districts to provide children and youth experiencing homelessness, including unaccompanied youth, a free and appropriate



education. The District of Columbia Public Schools' (DCPS) Office of Youth Engagement (OYE) Homeless Children and Youth Program (HCYP) works with students and families, schools, shelters, and community organizations to ensure that their basic educational rights are protected. These rights include:

- Immediate enrollment in school
- Confidentiality regarding disclosure of homeless status
- Continuity of educational program at the school of origin or placement in a school that is in the best interest of the student
- Transportation assistance
- A challenging, rigorous education equal to that of their peers

Where do students at DC General attend school now?

In the 2014-15 school year, students experiencing homelessness attended 205 different public schools across the District. Historically, most families experiencing an episode of homelessness have chosen to maintain continuity for their children, keeping them enrolled in the same school while they work to regain housing stability. For example, at a single point in time last school year, school-aged children living at DC General Family Shelter attended 56 different schools, and only ten percent of elementary-age students were attending the in-boundary elementary school.

Will impacted schools receive additional resources for serving these students?

Typically, 9-10 months prior to any given school year, DC Public Schools (DCPS) begins to work on school enrollment projections. This involves working with each school leader and community on determining what the expected student population will be the upcoming school year. During this time, community factors like new housing and school openings/closings will be considered as it relates to the impact on enrollment. DCPS works closely with the Department of General Services (DGS) and other relevant agencies to ensure the space and programs are ready for students, including making any necessary facility accommodations for an increase in enrollment. In addition, DCPS continuously monitors enrollment increases with respect to staffing needs to ensure they provide additional staff allocations on an ongoing basis should a school experience an unexpected influx of students at any point during the year.

Finally, the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF), which is the formula to allocate local funding to all DC public schools, includes an “at-risk” category, which was created to direct additional funds to students considered at-risk of academic failure. The at-risk definition includes students who are: experiencing homelessness, in the foster care system, participating in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and over-age high school students. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) calculates the number of at-risk students at each public school by comparing current students against the public assistance rosters, as well as collecting data on students who are experiencing homelessness, are in foster care, and are over-age. DCPS then uses those percentages to allocate additional staff and resources to address the needs of at-risk students. If a school were to serve additional at-risk students, their budget would be increased to reflect that change.

