

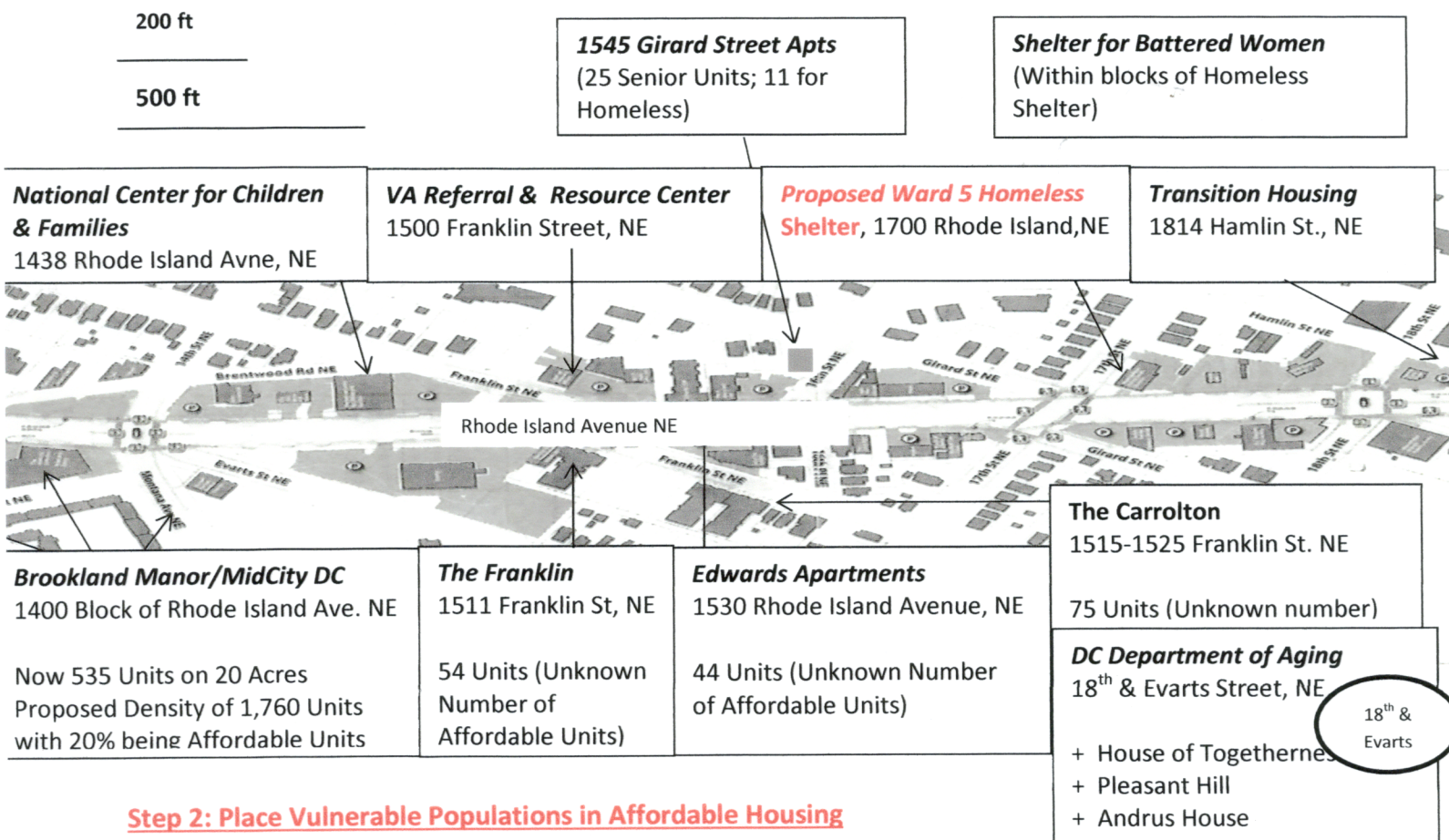
Ward 5, Proposed Shelter Site

DC Council authorized “up to 50 units” for homeless (DC Code 4-753.01(d)(5). Residents are expected to stay 90 days with “wrap-around” services and be placed in permanent housing.

Step 1: Provide Immediate Shelter to Homeless Families

The proposed facility “shall not have an adverse impact on the neighborhood because of the number of similar facilities in the area.”

Board of Zoning Adjustment, Subtitle U, Section 513.1 (b)(4)



Step 2: Place Vulnerable Populations in Affordable Housing

“The **severe concentration** of community-based residential facilities in the Northeast quadrant ...[creates] a *de facto* service district which undermines the ability of **community residents** to achieve the goal of normalization and community integration.”

Department of Housing and Community Development
FY 2016 Comprehensive Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)
to HUD, p. 12 (Emphasis added)

Similar Facilities in Line with BZA Subtitle U, Section 513.1 (b)(4)
Near 1700 Rhode Island Avenue, NE

Emergency Shelters and Referral Services for Homeless Individuals and Families

1545 Girard Street Apartments [new \$11.2 million construction]

Advertized as “Affordable Luxury Apartments for Seniors,” this 25 unit building is now occupied by 10 or 11 “formerly chronically homeless individuals.”

1814 Hamlin Street, NE [formerly a neighborhood motel]

A Careco Mental Health facility described as “transition housing.” Outpatient clinic for an uncertain number of residents, but building is large enough to hold 15 to 20+ residents.

VA Referral and Resource Center [formerly Dieners Flooring store]

1500 Franklin Street, NE

A regional VA facility that serves as a “24/7 hub to combat homelessness among veterans.” Services include showers (for homeless vets who live in cars), several beds (daytime only), housing assistance, medical referrals, claims assistance, and employment and job training.

National Center for Children and Families [formerly a grocery store]

1438 Rhode Island Avenue, NE

A non-profit charitable organization which serves “homeless families, victims of domestic violence, and children and adolescents.”

Andrus House, House of Togetherness and Pleasant Hill

18th & Evert Street, NE

These three Seabury Home First Residences provide 24-hour/ day “community supported, intergenerational housing programs for formerly homeless and low-income seniors.” Two facilities provide independent living for Ward 4 and 5 seniors, one provides 24-hour care staff.

Community/Affordable Housing for Vulnerable Populations

Brookland Manor/Midcity-DC

Fronts on 1400 Block Rhode Island Avenue, NE

Depression-era garden apartments, 535 current units including 1-5 bedrooms. Will be replaced by PUD with 1,760 units plus streets, small park, large grocery store and first floor retail space. Builder will retain 200 senior and 265 low-income units, or about 20% of residential space per Inclusionary Zoning program. Construction will begin later this year.

The Edwards, Franklin and Carrolton Apartments

1530 Rhode Island Avenue, NE

1511 Franklin St. NE

1515-1525 Franklin St. NE

These 44 unit, 54 unit and 75 unit “flat apartments” all participate in DC’s Section 8 and housing voucher programs. The first two were built as the Depression began (1929, 1931), while the Carrolton was build during WWII (1942). All three properties recently were purchased and rennovated by a developer who rents them to Section 8 and low- to moderate-income tenants.

The Washington Post

All Opinions Are Local

A fight for Brookland's soul

By Tom Kirlin February 24

The District's homeless rate increased 34.2 percent between 2009 and 2016, "the highest rate of homelessness" among 32 major cities, according to the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Last year, D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) presented a humane way forward: build 50-family facilities in all eight wards. Unfortunately, the D.C. Council selected 1700 Rhode Island Avenue NE, a former police station, after Langdon Park rejected a shelter next to warehouses and bus facilities.

It may seem like a rational choice: The District owns the land, a Metro station is a mile away, buses pass its front door, a library and park are a block away. But the proposed building will be 70 feet tall (20 feet higher than zoning regulations), has three of 22 needed parking spaces and abuts an electrified cell tower. So the District needs Board of Zoning Adjustment "special exceptions" for this 150-bed, 47,000-square-foot shelter for height, lot occupancy, bed number, floor area ratio, parking, loading dock and its rear, side and courtyard widths.

The Board of Zoning Adjustment hearing is Wednesday. But the fight over *this site* is not, at heart, a zoning battle, nor a rejection of the homeless. It is a development fight, a fair housing fight, a fight for Brookland's soul.

Decades ago, D.C. residents created an "Emergency Committee on the Transportation Crisis" to stop a six-lane freeway from being built from Interstate 495 into downtown. The city drew up elaborate plans, exercised eminent domain, purchased 64 houses and proudly marched forward — to defeat. That concrete runway does not exist. Instead, people ride the Red Line that serves Brookland, Fort Totten, Silver Spring and beyond.

Today, bullet points and bayonets fly in Ward 5's shelter fight — lot size, bed numbers, height, who parks where, agencies bullying agencies. And across Brookland's sleepy hills, citizens are waking to fight city hall and developers (who make campaign contributions) so that we may experience our legal right to “the quiet enjoyment of our domicile.”

That challenge grows more formidable. By 2020 more than 4,300 apartments and condos will have been built within a mile of the Rhode Island Metro station. If built, the 1700 Rhode Island shelter would be 550 feet from the 1545 Girard Street Apartments, advertised as 25 “affordable luxury apartments for seniors” and which will house “10 formerly chronically homeless individuals.” They will live 205 feet from the Violet Project at 1515 Rhode Island Avenue NE, a 23-unit residence now under construction, that includes at least three low-income units. It is 415 feet from the 1500 Franklin Street Veterans Administration Community Resource and Referral Center, a “24/7 hub to combat homelessness among veterans.” That is 280 feet from the National Center for Children and Families at 1438 Rhode Island, a referral facility that serves “homeless families, victims of domestic violence, and children and adolescents.” And that is 450 feet from Brookland Manor at 1331 Rhode Island Avenue NE, a 20-acre, 19-building site with 535 low-income housing units, soon to be replaced by 1,760 residential units, including 200 senior and 265 low-income housing units as its developers set aside 20 percent (instead of the required 10 percent) for “affordable units.” And 1814 Hamlin, Pleasant Hill, House of Togetherness, Andrus House and other community-based residential facilities all lie within a four-block radius of the proposed shelter.

The city's own Department of Housing and Community Development best describes our plight: “*the **severe concentration** of community-based residential facilities in the Northeast quadrant . . . [creates] a de facto service district which undermines the ability of community residents to achieve the goal of normalization and community integration.*”

Already a Department of Motor Vehicles office, District Family Court, Family Resource Center and probation office occupy that block. Next proposal? A 300-bed shelter for recently released male prisoners four blocks away, between two elementary schools.

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Citizens for Responsible Options, a local group, will argue to the Board of Zoning Adjustment that the District cannot legally build a shelter there because the Council failed to prove that “no other reasonable alternative [exists] to meet the program needs of that area of the District.”

No one wants the Board of Zoning Adjustment to make 70-foot-tall tall buildings the new normal next to bungalows. Whatever the Board of Zoning Adjustment's ruling, Citizens for Responsible Options will continue to fight, not because we lack charity — Brookland embraces the living and the dead with seminaries, cemeteries, monasteries and mortuaries — but because we're charitable, stubborn cousins. We don't tolerate abuse.

We challenge the district and the Board of Zoning Adjustment to comply with the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Citizens for Responsible Options will help officials find a "reasonable alternative" to this "severely concentrated . . . service district."

Why jeopardize federal funds for needed D.C. homeless housing? Why force one more project on a crowded few blocks of Rhode Island Avenue?

Tom Kirlin is a member of Citizens for Responsible Options.

COMMENTS

TKirlin

2/27/2017 10:19 AM EST [Edited]

I agree with the social and personal value of most service organizations but want a balanced and diverse use of RIA as city planners envisioned it, not a SEVERE concentration of service organizations. That condition has turned our area into a de facto service district that jeopardizes community connections.

FYI, I try not to hit Veterans every day as I drive up 16th or along Girard where there are no sidewalks, which forces Vets to walk in the street. I also tried to give the VA unused medical supplies about 18 months ago when a tenant died in one of my group houses. She called from a DC shelter where she was living and wanted affordable housing. I rented her a studio apt at a lower rate and she enjoyed it for more than four years. When she died, neither the VA nor Catholic Charities, which was in a building a half a block away and now occupied by the National Center for Children and Families, which also provides housing referrals and medical support to the homeless, would take the unopened bandages, syringes, gauze and the like. After her sister who came from California and I tried for two hours but failed to locate ANY LOCAL service organization willing to use these unopened supplies, a pharmacy disposed of them as hazardous medical waste.

So I am happy we have service organizations, sad they don't interact more intelligently with neighbors who are doing some of the same charitable things, and am strongly opposed to adding more service organizations in THIS SMALL AREA of RIA, given the vast size of Ward 5.