

Correspondence in opposition to proposed-rezoning – CASE: 24-24 “The Heritage”
1201 New York Ave NE

September 28, 2025

RE: Case 24-24 / “The Heritage”

Dear DC Zoning Commission Members:

I am writing in opposition to the re-zoning for the construction of the proposed homeless shelter at 1201 New York Ave NE.

I am a resident of Ivy City and live on the 1800 Block of Corcoran St NE, approximately 500 feet away from the location of the planned facility.

While there is a clear need for services for the unhoused, the community of Ivy City remains both over-burdened and under-resourced.

It is not appropriate to position a large shelter in a location that is isolated, in a community that already hosts a disproportionate number of social services facilities.

Ivy City is too often treated as dumping ground for projects others don’t want.

The community has too long been seen as the ‘easy answer’ by planners who know they won’t face much opposition, in a community where many residents have below-average incomes and may not have the time or means to object to planning decisions, if they’re even aware of them at all. For example, community notification for this project was limited to 2 signs posted at the property with no wider notice given to the residents who live just one block away.

These types of longstanding practices have contributed to the inequities of residents in the area.

The neighborhood is already home to multiple shelters, halfway houses, the Youth Services center, an animal shelter, the DPW yards and school bus storage for OSSE, while lacking basic services that actually benefit the residents.

Up until recently we did not even have proper street signs for many of the streets. We suffer from chronic illegal dumping of garbage. There are open drug markets and overdoses in the streets. We don’t get street sweeping. We can’t get DPW to mow and maintain spaces that are their clear responsibility.

Instead of working to solve these issues, the District is simply dumping more on us.

Arguably, the D.C. government actually hurts more than it helps, in an area where many people are hurting to begin with.

The District continues to be neglectful in management of its existing facilities in Ivy City, which result in significant spillover effects on residents.

Because there is little public transit to Ivy City, and the community is far removed from areas with services, users of the existing shelter at 1355 New York Ave NE are essentially stranded in the community.

There is a high level of open drug use, loitering, public intoxication, public defecation and urination, open alcohol use, high rates of vehicle break-ins, etc. from the users of the shelter in the direct vicinity.

This currently impacts the many businesses In the commercial area, but the new location will effectively drop shelter users in the residential area which is even further removed from the few public transit options and where there is no commercial landlord or private security who might try to rectify some of the problems.

The Department of General Services does not adequately manage its existing properties in Ivy City, placing a substantial burden on residents.

One such example is the existing Family Shelter at 1861 Corcoran Street NE.

The property has sat vacant for nearly two years. During this time, DGS has abandoned basic maintenance and upkeep. In late 2024/early 2025, people broke into the shelter building and began operating a drug operation out of the facility. DGS was unreachable and unresponsive despite multiple requests to secure the building.

There was open unfettered drug manufacturing and sales happening from DC government property, and no one could be reached to shut it down.

Ultimately, through contact with MPD, DGS Protective Services was engaged to evict the squatters and illicit activity. Even after that, DGS still had to be called to the property multiple times to secure it adequately because the drug users kept breaking in.

Since then, the broken windows have not been replaced, the lawn and grasses have not been tended to resulting in massive overgrowth, and exterior faucets have been left turned

on resulting in unhoused individuals wandering up and regularly bathing naked in the public street.

Again, DGS has been contacted about this numerous times and despite promising to resolve these issues has not – I have attached copies of this correspondence here.

Simply put, if DGS cannot manage a single family shelter properly to prevent negative impacts on the community at large, how can it be properly expected to manage the impacts of a much larger shelter.

Similarly, DGS does not adequately maintain sidewalks at the rear of the Youth Services Center on Fairview Ave NE, which are DGS property – resulting in trash/snow/overgrowth, while refusing to respond to resident calls to clean up the area.

The new shelter location is inappropriate for multiple reasons.

The lack of transit, the proximity to residential and the fact that ABCA has licensed multiple retail cannabis operations directly adjacent to the proposed shelter location. (One at 1135 Okie St NE and one at 2020 Kendall St NE.) None of this is compatible with the Ivy City Small Area Plan or the broader vision for revitalizing the community. Nobody is coordinating actual planning uses.

There is little reason to believe that the new, larger, shelter will have anything but a more substantial impact on the community, and given DGS' history of neglectful property management, it is reasonable to think that residents will suffer an unfair burden as a result of the new shelter. Furthermore, there is reason to question whether such an isolated inaccessible location will truly work to serve the best needs of homeless and vulnerable individuals.

For these reasons, I strongly object to the re-zoning and urge the commission to reject the proposal.

Thank you for your consideration,

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