

December 19, 2019

Christine Elwell, PhD
Greater Richmond Regional Collaborative to End Sexual and Domestic Violence
6 North 5th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dr. Cynthia Newbille and Members of Richmond City Council
City Hall
900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Madam President and Members of City Council,

As a member of the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (GRCoC) Board, a small business owner, an employee of a local nonprofit and a resident of the City of Richmond, I am writing in support of the special use permit application for 1900 Chamberlayne Avenue, filed by The Salvation Army Central Virginia Area Command. The proposed expansion of The Salvation Army's existing emergency housing program, which will include up to 30 beds for emergency cold weather shelter use and wraparound services at this location, aligns with our community's strategic priorities and endorsed by the GRCoC Board in October of last year.

The GRCoC and the Salvation Army partner to provide housing and services to people experiencing homelessness in Greater Richmond. Our region lacks sufficient emergency shelter capacity to meet the needs of unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness. By adding at least 40 additional housing-focused shelter beds to our community for families and single adults, this project is an important step towards addressing this crisis. It will directly reduce the number of people sleeping outside, streamline housing-focused case management support, and ultimately help more people to exit rapidly to permanent housing.

The lack of access to emergency shelter beds also correlates to increased pressure on the domestic violence shelters in our region, which were established to serve those who are in imminent danger. The Salvation Army proposal ensures that emergency resources for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking remain available to serve the most critical needs, and that survivors will not have to make dangerous choices because there are no other options.

I write to urge your support of The Salvation Army's special use permit request. This partnership with the Salvation Army will increase the availability of housing and supports while filling a critical gap in our community's collaborative network of homeless services and resources. I thank you for your support of our work for those who are most in need and for your public service to the City.

Regards,

Christine Elwell, PhD

Regional Manager

Greater Richmond Regional Collaborative to End Sexual and Domestic Violence