



Subject: Response to Concerns Regarding Special Use Permit for 2700 Garland Avenue

Dear Residents of North Barton Heights, South Barton Heights, Brookland Park, and Battery Park,

We appreciate the opportunity to address your concerns regarding our proposed Special Use Permit (SUP) for the integrated treatment facility at 2700 Garland Avenue. We respect your dedication to maintaining a strong and supportive community, and we are committed to providing clarity about our project and its purpose.

Clarifying Our Role in the Recovery Continuum

We understand that your neighborhood already hosts numerous recovery residences, which play an invaluable role in the recovery process. Our facility is intended to complement—not compete with—those existing resources. When individuals experience relapse while living in one of those recovery homes, they require safe, short-term, intensive care before returning to their recovery home. That is exactly the role our integrated treatment center will serve. Our facility will ensure individuals receive focused treatment during vulnerable periods, strengthening their chances of long-term recovery and successful reintegration into the workforce and community.

Voluntary Nature of Treatment and Safety Considerations

Regarding “locked facility”, please allow us to clarify this language here. Individuals in our care willingly enter treatment with us because they want to focus on recovery in a safe, structured environment. While participants are encouraged to remain on-site to focus on their well-being, no one is forced to stay. Our emphasis on controlled access is not about restriction, but rather ensuring individuals are protected during their time of vulnerability.

To be extremely clear, no one is locked in the facility against their will. This is **100% voluntary treatment**. At any given time someone (as in any other voluntary treatment) can refuse treatment and leave. There is or never will be forced treatment. That is not our model. The people who enter this level of care do not leave our facility, because they are focused on engaging in intense around-the-clock treatment. This is not the phase of their journey where

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they are ready to work. Returning back to the workforce is the very next phase after leaving treatment with us.

Additionally, treatment centers similar to ours are commonly integrated into residential neighborhoods throughout Virginia. In fact, RBHA is one immediate example, as they are nestled in a neighborhood, offering some of these same services, on the northside of town at 1700 Front Street Richmond, VA 23222. Proving that this not only works, but in many cases is best practice.

The goal is to serve the community by offering support where it is most needed. Our residents will not be loitering or lingering around the neighborhood. For privacy and well-being, we are designing courtyard spaces that are enclosed and gated to ensure residents have safe outdoor access without interfering with neighborhood activity.

Addressing Concerns About Property Use

We understand that children have occasionally played in the field near 2700 Garland Avenue, but this is private property and would be subjected to risk of restricted access no matter which business chooses to make this location its home. While change can be difficult, our proposal will replace two deteriorating buildings with beautifully restored and modernized property that enhances the neighborhood's appearance and value. Our project will bring new life to these buildings while eliminating the risk of further decay or misuse of the space.

Clarifying Our Organizational Experience and Commitment

Our organization has nearly two decades of experience delivering healthcare services, both in facility-based and community-based settings. We have successfully supported thousands of individuals in their recovery journey from the Richmond city area alone, and Virginia as a whole. It is important to note that many Virginians statewide trust us to provide their care and intentionally seek us out specifically. A measurement and testimony of our impact. While this specific treatment model may be new to this neighborhood, it is not new to us. We are confident in our ability to provide effective, well-managed care with the same dedication and professionalism that has defined our work for years.

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Addressing Unanswered Questions

We regret that our previous meeting felt incomplete. When we met previously, we were trying to be very careful about stigmatizing language for this very reason and purpose; we did not want you to inaccurately judge the beautiful individuals we serve. Thus, resulting us choosing to protect them by saying “persons with disabilities”, as we truly believe it’s their right to have their disabilities protected. I have been serving this field for 22 years and have been a witness to how the services we offer and the population we service comes with stereotype judgement. Again, we try to be as careful as possible with language. We apologize if that gave the impression that we were not willing to engage fully. We are happy to clarify:

- **Our staff will NOT be armed.**
- **We do not receive “transfers” directly from prisons.** While we do not exclude individuals with non-violent criminal histories, our screening process ensures we only accept individuals who are committed to positive change. But please note that we do not accept individuals with a history of violence, nor do we accept sex offenders.
- **Our facility is voluntary; individuals cannot be "mandated" to attend.** We are not an institution; we are a treatment facility.
- **Our outdoor space will be developed with enclosed courtyards and decorative fencing to ensure both privacy for our residents and peace of mind for the surrounding community.**

We apologize if our communication was unclear in any way and are committed to helping to provide clarity wherever we can moving forward. We are open to further dialogue with residents who have concerns or questions.

Contributing to the Community’s Growth

While we respect suggestions that 2700 Garland Avenue be repurposed for alternatives, we strongly believe our proposed facility will provide lasting benefits to the neighborhood. By stabilizing individuals during critical moments of recovery, we will reduce the burden on emergency services, improve public safety, and contribute to community well-being. Our project is designed to uplift—not diminish—our shared environment.

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We are dedicated to being positive partners in this community. We invite continued conversation and look forward to finding common ground to support the growth, safety, and success of our neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Shiloh Jones, *QMHP, CSAC, R-CPRS*
CEO, Hype Counseling Services

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