



Department of  
Veterans Affairs

VHA FAX TRANSMITTAL 402-341-0203

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### VA NEBRASKA-WESTERN IOWA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

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TO: <i>Mitch</i>	FAX <i>312-243-6307</i>	No. Pages Attached <i>5</i>
SUBJECT: <i>Homeless Shelter</i>		
MESSAGE: If you have any questions, please let me know. Thanks!		
FROM: <i>Linda Summy</i>	TELEPHONE NUMBER: 402-599-2193	DATE: <i>9-16-10</i>

VA FORM 10-0114R  
MAY 2000

(Master on file in Media/Omaha/Forms/FAX master)

## **LIST OF QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS REGARDING THE HOMELESS SHELTER**

### **Public Safety and Security**

1. Please detail how you will control the homeless, other than those who are official residents, from being attracted to area?
2. What is your policy regarding sex offenders at the property.
3. Will any sex offenders be living at the facility?
4. Will any person convicted a violent crime be living at the facility?
5. The VA has proposed 24 /7 security. What does this mean in detail?
6. Who is patrolling the surrounding neighborhoods and trails during non office hours.
7. What assurances can the VA give that there will not be any issues on site and in the surrounding residential neighborhood?
8. What is the recourse for not meeting this procedures?
9. How has development of this type in other cities by the VOA affected surrounding neighborhoods? The neighborhood concerns are panhandling, loitering, homelessness, and public intoxication. What steps is the VA and VOA taking to prevent these issues at this facility? What is the recourse for not meeting this?
10. If there are concerns and issues with public safety who is the responsible party?
11. Is the VA going to patrol the neighborhood? Is the police department going to step up patrolling?
12. Police patrolling is limited in our neighborhood already, who is going to be ultimately responsible for the "a non office hours" issues of the facility?
13. What procedures are the VA going to take assure public safety?
14. What is the recourse if the conditions are not met?
15. The Project schematic drawings show proposed paved access to the field club trail: The field club trail is a well used trail and an amenity to midtown.
16. What assurances can the VA or VOA provide that the trail will remain safe for its users?
17. What is the lighting plan proposed for the project?
18. Is there going to be additional street lighting on the field club trail to promote a safe environment?
19. The security office seems to not be located on the west side of the building.
20. There is no visibility to the field club trail. Is this located correctly?
21. Who will be coordinating the enforcement of the state law requiring sex offenders to be registered with the Nebraska State Patrol data base? In other cities, most sex offenders are claiming they have no place of residence, hence not having to register. Will this facility allow such tenants? What procedure (back ground check, investigation, enforcement) will the VA have in place to follow state law in this regard to be sure it's

- users are currently updated on the registry? What is the recourse if this is not followed?
22. Fire Department Personnel Access: Mason Street is a dead end at the field club trail. Phase 1 drawings show a dead end also for the entrance to the facility. Does the site provide acceptable turn around radius's for fire department truck access? Is there adequate hydrant access to the facility?
23. What other city improvements will be needed to allow this type of development?

### Accountability, Management, and Responsibility

24. This is a joint venture between the VA and the non-profit, who specifically will be responsible for the facility and the residents?
25. Who will be the officer ultimately responsible for the facility and its residents, what is their job title and where will they be located.
26. How much of a bond do you propose offering to cover any incidents at the facility?
27. What is the expected average length of stay at the facility?

### Planning

28. When did you first decide on this location?
29. Where are your other facilities located?
30. Has there been any increase in crime or decrease in property values in these neighborhoods?
31. Have you ever built a facility on a public trail?
32. Have you ever built a facility in the middle of a residential neighborhood?
33. Aesthetic issues: Building preliminary plans and elevations do not seem to mesh in with the context of the surrounding neighborhoods. Most residences are 1 and 1 ½ story in type and are placed on small lots. It would seem fitting to provide the appearance of row houses, similar to The Towns Development located at 7<sup>th</sup> and Pacific Streets in downtown Omaha.
34. The plans features direct access to the Field Club Trail. The 100 plus proposed residents were previously homeless and presumably jobless. The plans do not call for adequate space for recreation or outdoor living space. Where are these residents to spend their "free" time during the day and evenings?
35. What are you plans to monitor this and keep them from congregating on the Field Club Trail.
36. The plans call for a 5 story building overlooking the trail. We have heard concern from residents who use the trail regarding 100 plus (presumably mainly male) rooms

overlooking a public trail. This raises serious questions regarding the safety of the users of the trail including families, bikers, joggers and the local children.

### **Zoning and Construction**

37. The planning waiver is to reduce the 1000 sq. ft / unit to 520 sq. ft. per unit thus allowing for less parking and other additional requirements. The preliminary plans call for efficiencies that measure 320 sq. ft. How is the 320 sq. ft. unit considering in the overall site development as it is not addressed in the numbers above? Shouldn't the number be 1000 sq. ft. per unit to 320 sq/ ft per unit?
38. If so, the density shall increase, making this site overwhelmingly too small for development of this type.
39. Site lighting: How is site lighting design going to be addressed? What will the parking lot lighting levels be per foot candle?
40. Light pollution (light transcending the boundaries of the building site) will cross into the R4 zoning, how will this be addressed to the neighboring residences along 40<sup>th</sup> St?
41. It seems landscape percentage should not be reduced to allow the light pollution to affect the R4 zoning. Will there be landscaped berms / fencing along 40<sup>th</sup> St to reduce this? What steps is the VOA and VA taking in this regard. This is a significant reason for not reducing the landscaping obligations and actually it is a argument to increase the landscaping percentages to provide acceptable light levels in the nearby R4 zoning.
42. The project drawings elude that this design is similar to a dormitory for male users and not a extended stay or long term lease facility. The facility does not address multi -family users and seems to be purely transitional housing. Although, the current plan addresses the potential future 2 bedroom studios and the future assisted living facility. Does this meet the standards for R7 zoning?
43. The densities of the units at 320 sq. ft. and 520 sq. ft seem to be relatively small and do not fit in the proposed R7 zoning. Is this property zoned correctly?
44. We do not see transitional housing even mentioned in project zoning variances. This would require special use permit for R7 zoning.
45. The reduction of the side yard requirements and landscape requirements do not mesh with the fabric of the surrounding residential neighborhoods. It would be assumed the landscaping requirement and set back's would increase as part of the variance and not be reduced. This is another point that the site is too small for the development of this type and the density being proposed.

### **Traffic, Transportation and Parking**

46. How do you expect the residents to travel to and from the shelter and to and from the Hospital?

47. **Parking requirements:** The existing VA hospital parking situation is very inadequate and does not meet the needs of its current users and at times parking is overflowing onto its green space or users are driving around for extended periods of time trying to get a parking spot. How can the VA say that most veterans using this service do not have access to a car? While it may be true, the current users do not own a car, how many of those users get driven to the facility by someone else and use more than the 5 stalls provided? Please provide this additional data.
48. **Parking Count:** Reviewing the preliminary plans and the VOA letter dated August 6, 2010 we have concerns about the parking count per occupant. The letter states: 1 space / 300 SF of office required for both the VA office use and Support Housing Office. A typical office space is 150 sq. ft. Your projected numbers seem low and are based on current program of space. It does not take into account future potential use. Occupant load of the 10,000 sq ft VA space should be considered at 100 sq. ft. per occupant. This could potentially add 100 occupants to your parking load. Also, there are meeting rooms, fitness room, resource center, and community rooms. The occupant load for these room types is based on 5 -15 sq. ft per person and 50 sq. ft for exercise rooms. Based on your preliminary plans you have approximately 2700 sq. ft of assembly type occupancy. The minimum allowable occupants would be anywhere from 180 to 540 occupants bases on 5 and 15 sq. ft per occupant. I don't see these numbers reflected in the parking counts. Please advise.
49. Will users and staff of this facility be allowed to use city streets for over flow parking?
50. What steps is the VA going to take to not allow this practice? The adjacent zoning is R4, and is not conducive to additional overflow parking. Due to the nature of the homes built back in the 1930's most adjacent homes do not have driveways or if they do are minimal in size due and require the street parking to provide access their homes.
51. What assurances the VA going to take to not allow this?
52. What are the residents of the neighborhoods recourse when there is an issue?
53. Please provide the total number of compact parking stalls on the proposed project for both phase I and Phase II? Does this meet the zoning requirements for total number of stalls, or does it dramatically exceed the amount of compact stalls allowed per current guidelines? Allowing more compact vehicular parking is a justification that site selection is not adequate for the density the VA is requiring.
54. Another concern is during the winter months, because city plowing of the streets has been very limited over the course of the last 5 years, how will access be maintained for fire and rescue personnel? Please provide data to address this issue.
55. **Site Access and Traffic:** Schematic drawings for Phase I show site access only off Pacific Street. Phase II build out shows access off of Mason St and Pacific Street and potentially 40<sup>th</sup> Street if a parking garage is required. Access from major arterial streets is from 42<sup>nd</sup> Street -North to South and Leavenworth Street- East to West. To get to the project site requires vehicules to travel down residential R4 zoned streets. Vehicular traffic ( including heavy truck traffic, delivery, public transportation, automobiles) have to transverse Pacific Street from 42<sup>nd</sup> to 40<sup>th</sup> east, 40<sup>th</sup> and Leavenworth south to 40<sup>th</sup> and Mason, and or 42<sup>nd</sup> and Mason St east to 40<sup>th</sup> and Mason. Pacific St. and 40<sup>th</sup> Street

currently have heavy truck traffic on those streets. What is the projected traffic impact due to the project?

56. Provide a traffic study of the area to determine future impacts. The Mason Street 42<sup>nd</sup> to 40<sup>th</sup> access path off the main arterial will incur major traffic increases. How will this be addressed?
57. Is the city going to limit access on 42<sup>nd</sup> Mason to the site? The increased traffic on Mason from 42<sup>nd</sup> to 40<sup>th</sup>, is a safety concern due to limited visibility due to the topography, and sheer numbers of future vehicles transversing that intersection at all times of the day.
58. Is it feasible to allow a major traffic flow pattern to tranverse the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street arterial to Mason Street R4 zoned residential area to the R7 zoned project site? Will the traffic issues lead to a future traffic light be installed at 42<sup>nd</sup> and Mason to access the project site? This will be a negative impact to the neighborhood.



## **Veterans Village of Omaha Summary of Answers to Frequently Asked Questions**

### **For additional information:**

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The Veterans Village is being developed as supportive housing for Veterans owned and operated by Volunteers of America. Volunteers of America is partnering with the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System to provide housing and supportive services to meet the needs of Veterans in the Omaha Metro Area. Providing supportive services will help and improve the lives of Veterans by promoting self-sufficiency, building new skills, creating strong support networks and integration back into community life-*Providing hope for our Heroes.*

These questions represent a large number of inquiries regarding the development of the Veterans Village. The responses to these questions are grouped in three keys areas which are 1) Services, Operation, and Safety; 2) Planning, Zoning, Design, and Construction; and, 3) Field Club Trail.

### **1) Services, Operation, and Safety**

Volunteers of America will be responsible for the management of the facility. The VA and Volunteers of America will determine resident qualification for the facility.

The facility will have 24/7 on site supervision. Volunteers of America will also have their property management and social services offices located in the building.

The building will not house sex offenders.

Volunteers of America will be responsible for screening Veterans and determining appropriateness for residential services. Persons with violent histories will not be admitted.

Volunteers of America and the VA have committed to providing security to support the project and the neighborhood including the adjacent sections of the trail. Although the security plan has not been finalized, this will include patrolling the area during off business hours and weekends, including the area of the trail adjacent to the Veterans Village. Local law enforcement will be utilized as a consultant in developing a security plan prior to construction.

Regarding individuals who may come to the area and are not living in the Veterans Village, Volunteers of America, the VA, and other service partners will provide outreach and identify services that these individuals will be referred to for assistance. Veterans may be directed to the Omaha VA Medical Center for immediate assistance.

Building plans will be reviewed by all appropriate City departments to help ensure building safety, including fire department access.

Volunteers of America will be responsible for the management of the facility. The VA and Volunteers of America will determine resident qualification for the facility.

Volunteers of America currently have \$1,000,000/\$3,000,000 liability coverage for all its operations.

## **2) Planning, Zoning, Design and Construction**

The site selection process was conducted throughout the past year. A final determination of the proposed site was made in August.

Volunteers of America's network of affordable housing facilities includes more than 300 properties in 30 states.

The proposed building will be a total of about 90,000 SF and will include approximately 10,000 SF of VA office space.

The total site area is about 3 acres with the site being subdivided by a minor plat, the south 1.75 acres (Lot 2) being rezoned from General Industrial to R7, and the north 1.19 acres (Lot 1) remaining General Industrial with the Kiewit building remaining on it.

The rezoning from general industrial (GI) to R7 for Lot 2 is effectively a down-zoning on the matter of allowable floor area and intensity of use.

The R7 zoning designation was recommended by the Omaha Planning Department after much review and discussion. The general area currently is zoned a number of ways, with GI directly to the east and north, R6 zoned farther north, R7 east of the GI and northwest of the site, R4 west of the site and a large swath of GO south of the site.

The dwelling units will house only single residents.

Low intensity of vehicular traffic is anticipated. Cars owned by residents will be limited. Office use will be primarily during regular business hours. Parking spaces will be provided for residents and offices with 72 parking spaces provided.

The residential component of the development consists solely of individual dwelling units. It is not “transitional housing” or a “dormitory” or a “shelter”. Each dwelling unit has its own kitchen, bathroom and living area. Residents will have lease terms and are not transient.

Dwelling units range in net area (conservatively measured at the inside face of unit demising walls) from 337 SF to 600 SF. This is typical for affordable housing unit sizes throughout the country. These sizes are allowed in R1 through R8 zoning districts.

Regarding the waiver request for a reduction in the site area per dwelling unit, this has no relevance to the size of said dwelling units. In the R7 section of the Zoning Ordinance, every 200 SF of general office use gets converted into a dwelling unit, although it is obviously not a dwelling unit. That results in 50 dwelling units being counted towards the maximum allowable under R7, though they do not exist. The proposed office space is critical to the functioning of the building as supportive housing for American Veterans.

Regarding office parking, it is anticipated there will not be more than 26 office workers on site at any given time.

Regarding the waiver request to reduce the required perimeter yard depths for R7 zoning, the proposed yard depth around the building are actually compatible or greater than what is permitted under the current General Industrial zoning. The building will be 15 to 17 ft. from the Pacific St. property line, while the parking will be 12 ft. from said property line. The parking is in a part of the site that is substantially depressed below sidewalk level and the adjacent residential zone to the west. The building is at least 250 to 334 feet away from any adjacent residential use and is setback an equivalent greater distance from the Pacific St. right-of-way than the nearest residential properties to the west and east. Furthermore, there is a desire to create a project that presents a strong street presence along Pacific in a manner that embodies the principles of urban design the City of Omaha has recently been advocating. A 35 ft. front yard does not enable the type of New Urbanism presence for the building that is being sought nor will it be consistent with the setback of the properties immediately east and west of the site.

The street side yard on the east side of the property actually does not border a street but rather a 54 ft. wide 39th Street right-of-way where there is no street present. Farther east of that is the Field Club Trail and a steep incline with an industrial property east of that. Reducing this yard by 9 ft. will not have an adverse affect on the adjacent area. In fact, 10,000 SF of existing pavement and fencing on the 39th Street right-of-way will be removed and landscaped, thereby improving the character of the area.

Regarding the requested waiver to reduce the required bufferyard between adjacent R4 zoning (west side of 40<sup>th</sup> Street) and R7 zoning from 30 ft. to 10 ft., the standard 10' landscaped bufferyard requirement is met. Furthermore, the building is situated on the site such that the nearest face of the building to the 40th Street property line is 187 ft. away (250 ft. away from the nearest 40<sup>th</sup> Street R4-zoned lot line). There is a total of 30 ft. minimum of landscape buffering that occurs in sections from the 40th Street property line to the farthest west face of the proposed building. Also, the proposed parking and building is substantially below the grade of 40th Street (over 11 ft.) and therefore the visual impact is not the same as if it were equal to or above the

grade of 40th Street which would result in greater visibility. The proposed plan provides a dramatic improvement over the current continuously paved semi-industrial site.

Regarding the requested zoning waiver to reduce the required percentage of street yard landscaping from 50% to 39%, the three frontages on the site create an unusually large overall street yard area of 50,307 s.f. or 90% of the entire site after deducting the building footprint. The number of trees provided is based on the requirements of Section 55-715, though they will be spaced more closely than required for greater visual impact. This will allow the central courtyard to be a densely landscaped focal point for Veterans Village.

Over 34,000 SF less paving, and consequently, 34,000 SF more landscaped green space will occur on the affected area of site development. This constitutes nearly one acre more green space than currently exists.

The building will be clad in high quality materials, primarily face brick and stone along with fiber cement panel bays and at the top floor. Cheaper and less durable materials such as vinyl siding or synthetic stucco will not be utilized. The building will also have numerous sustainable design features.

Over 500 lineal feet of old, decaying, timber retaining wall and chain link fencing on the south and west sides of the site will be removed. It will be replaced with new decorative concrete retaining wall and ornamental metal fencing, compliant with current Omaha design guidelines.

All sight lighting will be compliant with City of Omaha requirements and there will be zero footcandle light bleed over the property lines. Light fixtures will be pole-mounted, about 25 feet in height, and the fixtures will be shielded with full cut-offs. Light levels on the surface of the parking lot will be approximately between 2 to 5 footcandles.

Large patio areas are provided for resident use at both the east and west sides of the building. An outdoor, landscaped area of nearly 9,000 SF is provided at the rear of the building.

The building is located within the required 300 foot distance limit of existing fire hydrants. Emergency vehicles will access the property via Pacific St. Furthermore, the building will be of non-combustible construction and will be protected throughout with a sprinkler system and a fire alarm system.

The development's sanitary and storm sewers will be separated on site. The first ½" of storm water in an event will be treated before leaving the site. Discharge will occur into a very substantial existing 36" diameter sewer in the 39<sup>th</sup> Street right-of-way. Building roof drainage will be collected below grade or in rain barrels for reuse on the site and not allowed to become surface run-off. Due to the substantial reduction in impervious coverage on the site because of this development, it is anticipated there will be dramatically reduced contributory flow of storm water into the City sewers from this site than currently occurs.

### 3) Field Club Trail

We are cognizant of the fact that the Field Club Trail is an important amenity to the surrounding neighborhoods. Through the design of Veterans Village, we have taken numerous measures to try and improve the land area adjacent to the Trail.

New public sidewalks will be installed along 40th Street and Pacific Street, adjacent to the site, where there currently are none. In the process, the new Pacific Street public sidewalk will connect directly to the Field Club Trail; allow residents to the west to access to the Trail without walking either down the center of Pacific or on an unpaved parkway.

Over 10,000 square feet of existing, old, site concrete and chain link fencing will be removed from what is currently the 39th Street right-of-way adjacent to the Field Club Trail. This old material will be replaced with new landscaping that will be coordinated with the Omaha Parks and Recreation Department. We welcome community involvement in this design process. Please note that the building will be situated such that it is 45 to 60 feet farther west from the current fence boundary along the Trail. The east face of the building will be between 90 and 106 feet from the trail.

Volunteers of America takes very seriously the issue of building height and its impact on the existing context. Due to the hilly terrain of the immediate area, the building's 52 foot average height is minimized by being situated at a low point in the area. Volunteers of America intends to build a quality building for the Veterans to reside in and create an asset to the community in the process.

The building will be between 250 and 334 feet away from the front yards of the houses along 40<sup>th</sup> Street. It will also be over 300 feet away from the rear yards of the nearest homes along 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The parking will be depressed about 11 feet below 40<sup>th</sup> Street and therefore no headlights facing houses.