



VENTURES IN COMMUNITY...
Advocating for those in need

April 6, 2021

Statement in Support of Constructing a Replacement for the Kennedy Shelter at Beacon Hill Rd.

Ventures in Community represents three dozen faith communities and non-profit service organizations with thousands of members and constituents working in the Route 1 Corridor to advocate for those in need.

We fully support the new shelter for people experiencing homelessness to replace the Kennedy Shelter. The site at Richmond Highway and Beacon Hill Road is eminently suitable, easily reached by public transportation, and next to areas of Richmond Highway where many homeless people are located. The property is large enough to collocate a new Penn Daw fire station, an updated modern replacement for the Kennedy Shelter, permanent supportive housing, and additional affordable housing.

VIC has, since the 1970s, provided a forum where those in Fairfax County who struggle every day to survive can be heard. Our members have been pioneers in advocating for homeless people in Mount Vernon and along Richmond Highway, being instrumental in the 1980s in establishing the Kennedy Shelter, providing continued support for our housing and homeless services organizations, and staffing the hypothermia shelter at Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church.

VIC member organizations regularly engage with those facing housing crises, food insecurity, joblessness, and homelessness. We wish for these members of our community what we wish for ourselves: meaningful work, a living wage, nourishment, and a home. More so, all need human connection and care. Since the body of humankind is one and indivisible, each member of the human race is born into the world as a trust of the whole. There will be individuals who are homeless. Will we choose to do nothing? Will we push them away to undesirable locations? Or will we provide care and services here in our community? Given the developed state of Mount Vernon District, any new location near transit will be near a residential neighborhood. The Beacon Hill Road site is, we are convinced, the best available location found for the replacement to the Kennedy Shelter. The sooner it is constructed, the sooner will we be able to provide services in a modern and safe facility.

For the Ventures in Community Steering Committee

William P. Collins, Co-facilitator

Joe Fay, Co-Facilitator

Our Mission: to unite the faith communities of Southeast Fairfax County to advocate for and serve those in need.

Our Vision: a diverse and welcoming community with essential and adequate resources that reach all segments of the population.