

**VFW Facility Comments as reported on BeHeardCoMo from October 7-10.
No comments posted prior to October 7**

| Date of contribution | Q&A Question or Comment | BeHeardCoMo |
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| | | Login (Screen name) |
| Oct 07 22 08:36:37 pm | <p>I don't have a question. I want the City to know that I support 100% the use of the old VFW to be used for Room at the Inn and other charities until Opportunity Campus is opened. I couldn't think of anything better. Everyone wants to help but not in their backyard so where then? I say the old VFW makes perfect sense as is large enough to work at this time until Opportunity Campus is open and up and running.</p> <p>Sincerely, Dianna Douglas</p> | Dianna |
| Oct 07 22 09:04:41 pm | <p>I just want to show my support for the planned Opportunity Campus. I fully support using this space for supporting Room at the Inn, shelter for unhoused folks even outside of the winter season, transitional housing, meals available to unhoused folks and others who need them, and services to help lift people out of homelessness. I strongly support also having treatment for mental health issues and/or substance abuse, with a trained public health nurse and trained social worker, to also be a part of the Opportunity Campus. And I'm sure the public library may also be interested in getting involved (I worked there for 10 years) with outreach and literacy support.</p> | Rydue |
| Oct 08 22 07:20:27 am | <p>This is so needed! Our community members cannot wait 1-3 years in their current conditions while the Opportunity Campus is being built. They need shelter and consistent services NOW. Especially given the numerous recent deaths of unhoused people. It is cruel that our best solution right now is the bus station. This needs to be up and running this winter!</p> | mc312955 |

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| <p>Oct 08 22 08:46:24 am</p> | <p>I am very pleased to support the City in moving forward with this purchase. Our unsheltered neighbors and those in our community who provide services and supports are deserving of a temporarily permanent place for this work. The location is accessible via public transportation, is in proximity to the property being sought for the Opportunity Campus, and is large enough to provide space for not just RATI but expand to complimentary services from other providers (e.g., outreach, mobile aid, medical, food, housing services, behavioral health, addiction services, etc.). Having one location, potentially big enough to house people overnight and satisfy basic needs, a warming/cooling location and collaborative supports is past due for a city the size of Columbia. I am grateful the city is pursuing ownership of this property and enthusiastically support it's purchase as well as the exploration of other creative ways in which it can be used to help the continuum of unhoused neighbors. Thank you.</p> | <p>refriar</p> |
| <p>Oct 08 22 10:36:20 am</p> | <p>I whole-heartedly support the planned use of the VFW facility for sheltering unhoused individuals. There is such a great need for this in Columbia, and what a wonderful opportunity we have with the use of this facility. Let's step up and spread love and compassion to make our city-and our world-a better place!</p> | <p>Cinmuck</p> |
| <p>Oct 08 22 09:53:34 pm</p> | <p>I am a strong advocate for the unsheltered in Columbia and cannot see a better use of the VFW facility than as a "home" for Room at the Inn and affiliated services. This has been a long time coming (14 years) and I'd like to say thank you to City Staff and the Council. This building is close enough to the Business Loop to allow for bus access, but a bit off the beaten path and in a largely commercial, industrialized area. I can safely affirm that there is no perfect location for a homeless shelter, but this comes really close.</p> | <p>dkgraham3</p> |
| <p>Oct 09 22 11:21:20 am</p> | <p>I agree with the purchase and use of the VFW facility. After Opportunity Campus is constructed and open for operation, I would like to see this property continue to be used for our unhoused community members who may not benefit from the Opportunity Campus and need an alternative.</p> | <p>Srenee.carter58</p> |
| <p>Oct 09 22 11:49:46 am</p> | <p>Addressing Columbia's homeless population with this property is a win-win for the community.</p> | <p>JKOCHERT</p> |

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| <p>Oct 10 22 05:08:34 am</p> | <p>The plan to use the building as proposed will save lives this winter! The property is large enough to accommodate multiple services while the new Opportunity Center is being developed. Our unsheltered citizens are losing hope as the nights grow colder. This is an emergency! Human lives are at stake!</p> | <p>Deacon Beth</p> |
| <p>Oct 10 22 06:38:19 am</p> | <p>I'm thrilled that the city is finally making progress in taking responsibility for our vulnerable populations, especially our unhoused neighbors. The location is close to resources and hopefully a better bus line! I think allowing RATI and other social service orgs to utilize the space for now is a great step forward. Once Opp Campus is in place, the property could then be used as a Car Camp, creating a safe, monitored space for those who need it and a secondary seasonal emergency shelter.</p> | <p>Catsweet</p> |
| <p>Oct 10 22 08:46:01 am</p> | <p>I support the use of this facility to house and support the unhoused and to offer services to help them get on their feet.</p> | <p>brian_powell</p> |
| <p>Oct 10 22 08:56:08 am</p> | <p>Using this site for Room at the Inn until the Opportunity Campus is completed seems like a great idea! In walking distance for many of our unhoused and not close to many residential communities this seems like a good location. Not having to move Room at the Inn every couple of weeks during the winter will make it better for patrons and volunteers alike. Having more room will make a large number of folks staying together more manageable and less troublesome. I'd like to see this happen!</p> | <p>JeanBG</p> |
| <p>Oct 10 22 09:07:20 am</p> | <p>I would like to express my support for the use of the VFW facility for Room at the Inn. I am a team lead with Operation Safe Winter, and I have also been a weekly volunteer for both RATI and Loaves & Fishes for the past 5 years. I have had extensive engagement with the homeless community during this time period. The location of this facility is ideal and having a permanent location for RATI will be an incredible improvement for both guests and staff! Once the Opportunity Campus is operational, I hope this facility will continue to be utilized to provide social services. I think its proximity to the Opportunity Campus makes it well-suited to continue to provide related support in some capacity.</p> <p>I believe that investing in systems of care and support for vulnerable members of our community is a wise and worthy investment of our resources. These support systems do not just benefit the people who utilize them, but everyone in our city. We all win when we take care of others, and our whole community is a safer and healthier place.</p> | <p>rmaxwell</p> |

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| Oct 10 22 09:35:09 am | I'm so glad we, as a city, are arranging shelter for our neighbors. It's necessary, it's important, and it's the right thing to do. Let's use this land to build our community by making sure all of us have a place to be. | Margaret McConnell |
| Oct 10 22 10:13:42 am | I am so happy to see that the city is moving forward with this project. As someone who works in Columbia at a Walmart, we see several homeless people who do not use the RATI in winter because they have a dog. As a person with mental health training, I understand the bond that they need with their animal. Does the city have any plans perhaps in the future to include a way to accommodate the homeless who have a dog companion? The homeless do not have the protection of right of access with what the general public should see as a service dog, so perhaps an area of the shelter where dogs can be accommodated on a short term basis? Buy in from a local vet or non profit like Spay/Neuter Program who can assist? Anyways, I am very supportive of RATI and am very happy to see the project moving forward. | Carterka |
| Oct 10 22 10:20:52 am | Columbia desperately needs a facility to house the homeless population. Providing a permanent location for Room at the Inn (RATI) is a step in the right direction. Providing a permanent site for RATI should be followed by consolidating other services such as Loaves & Fishes and Turning Point. | ercunningham75 |
| Oct 10 22 05:28:22 pm | This is the answer to so many hopes that we would do better by our unsheltered community members. It will be a place to shelter from the weather, get a meal, learn about services, and make friends. I only hope it will not exclude people with substance or mental health issues. They deserve our care. | pplacier |
| Oct 10 22 06:48:04 pm | Year round low/no barrier overnight shelter | Sarahj |
| Oct 10 22 07:40:01 pm | I appreciate the city making this facility available while the Opportunity Center is being planned and implemented. After the opportunity center is open this site should be used for job training. The old bar could be turned into a restaurant, teach Opportunity Center residence job skills. Classrooms could be placed in the main hall. | jtrapp |
| Oct 10 22 07:58:34 pm | Please Use this building to shelter the homeless. | Judidiane1 |