

**DC**DEPARTMENT *of*  
HUMAN SERVICES

## **The “Aston” Good Neighbor Protocol**

### **Background and Purpose**

The District of Columbia, as part of its efforts to create non-congregate bridge housing options, purchased the Aston to provide a dignified environment for District residents who are best served in non-shelter facilities. The Aston Non-Congregate Bridge Housing (NCBH) facility, located in Ward 2 at 1129 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, will serve:

- Residents who cannot be served in low-barrier shelters, or who would be better served in a non-congregate setting, such as those living in encampments.
- Families with adult children and couples.
- Individuals and families matched to a permanent housing resource through the District’s Continuum of Care for individuals and families experiencing homelessness and awaiting lease-up.

The Aston will be used for non-congregate bridge housing. It will not be used for low-barrier shelter.

The purpose of this Good Neighbor Protocol (GNP) is to outline the shared goals and responsibilities of the contracted service provider, Friendship Place (FP) (which was selected by the Continuum of Care (CoC) lead); The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness (TCP); the Department of Human Services (DHS); the Department of General Services (DGS); and neighbors (including both residents and businesses) in the surrounding area; in establishing and maintaining positive and productive relationships.

### **Shared Goals**

The parties to this GNP agree that our community is stronger when we support one another. The parties acknowledge the following goals of the GNP:

- To facilitate transparent, accurate and timely communication in all matters pertaining to The Aston’s impact on the community.
- To serve as a framework that allows the parties to work collaboratively to address concerns and solve problems.
- To maintain a peaceful, safe, and clean neighborhood.

### **Partners to this Protocol**

**The Department of Human Services (DHS)**, through contracts with nonprofit service providers, is the District government entity responsible for providing emergency housing for families and individuals experiencing a housing crisis.

**The Department of General Services (DGS)** is the real estate arm of the District government responsible for managing the facilities at the Aston and providing building system management services for the Aston throughout its operation as a city facility, either directly or through a contracted vendor.

**The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness (TCP)** is the continuum of care entity for the District, which, through its providers, is responsible for overseeing operations and management of the Aston. In addition, TCP will coordinate day-to-day maintenance services.

**Friendship Place (FP)** is the independent on-site provider and operator of the Aston, under a contract with TCP. FP is responsible for day-to-day management of the site, including the delivery of services. FP is also responsible for the enforcement of program rules, and for communicating with neighbors when questions or issues arise.

**The Aston Community Advisory Team (CAT)**, which is comprised of (A) members of city agencies, (B) representatives of the Ward 2 councilmember, (C) representatives of community organizations, and (D) representatives of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A (ANC 2A). The CAT is responsible for facilitating communication between the public and the District throughout the duration of the Aston's operations, unless the Mayor and Ward 2 councilmember direct its termination.

**Participant** means an individual staying at the Aston who has agreed to abide by the program's rules and expectations.

**Neighbor** means a resident, nonresident property owner, business owner, or business employee in the neighborhoods surrounding the Aston.

**Stakeholders** means all the above.

### **Terms of the Protocol**

The terms of the GNP below address responsibilities and commitments regarding (A) participant capacity, (B) maintenance of the property, (C) safety and security, (D) support staff for participants, (E) District agency response, (F) participant conduct and behavior, and (G) clear and timely communication and mutual respect between all stakeholders.

Note that DHS is responsible for oversight of all its contracted providers.

#### *A. Capacity*

DHS will limit the initial access to the Aston to 50 participants. Two months after operations begin, DHS will assess the facility's operations and, in consultation with the CAT, provide the community (during a properly noticed ANC 2A meeting) a report on the operations and outcomes of the program at that time.

If, after two months of operations, the Aston's opening has been successfully implemented, there are no verified and unresolved safety or operational concerns, and there is support from the CAT, DHS will aim to augment the operation by another 25 to 50 residents, with a maximum capacity of 100 participants at any given time throughout the operation of the facility.

Criteria to consider in assessing the program's successful implementation and capacity for increasing the number of participants (not to exceed 100 participants) will include:

- Effective case management, including access to mental health and other services to existing participants.
- Participant compliance with program rules.
- Prompt and appropriate response to any health, safety, or other concerns raised by participants and neighbors.
- Compliance with the terms of the GNP.
- Hiring capacity and funding availability to increase the number of case managers to satisfy reasonable resident-to-client ratios.
- Hiring capacity and funding availability to increase the number of case management on site seven days per week, with some categories of staff in the facility 24 hours per day.
- Hiring capacity and funding availability to increase security on any additional building floors.

The CAT will be informed about negative outcomes or feedback related to any of the above criteria, and DHS, TCP, and FP shall make reasonable efforts to resolve those concerns prior to increasing the Aston's capacity.

#### *B. Maintenance of the Property*

Clean, well-kept neighborhoods attract residents and businesses. Just as neighbors are expected to keep their property well-maintained, presentable, and within the design standards of the community, so shall the District keep the Aston presentable and in good condition.

To maintain the property at 1129 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, DGS commits to the following:

- Maintaining building management systems to allow continuous operation of the Aston.
- Making any necessary structural repairs to the building as quickly as possible, to prevent health or safety impacts on participants and on-site staff. In the short term, the city has committed to repairing the roof using funding allocated for this purpose in DHS's Fiscal Year 2025 budget.
- Remediating public health and public safety-related property issues.
- Developing and implementing a trash and recycling plan for the site that covers frequency of pick-up, timing, type of truck, etc., so that there will be no trash buildup up at the Aston.
- Developing and implementing an integrated pest management strategy for the site, the execution of which will be monitored on a monthly basis.
- Performing daytime testing of the emergency generator for noise control.

DHS/TCP/Friendship Place commits to the following:

- With regard to any written concerns submitted to DHS/TCP/Friendship Place or about the Aston or its operations:
  - DHS/TCP/Friendship Place will respond to the submitter within one business day to acknowledge receipt of the correspondence.
  - DHS/TCP/Friendship Place will respond to the submitter within three business days describing how the concern will be remedied, and outlining a plan and timetable for addressing the concern (while maintaining appropriate participant confidentiality).
- The property and sidewalks, tree boxes, curbs, and alleys adjacent to the property will be kept free of litter and other debris.
- Any necessary nonstructural repairs to the building will be made as quickly as possible.

### *C. Safety and Security*

All neighbors and participants deserve to feel safe and secure in their homes and businesses. Neighbors, participants, FP, TCP, DHS, and DGS will work together to create a safe and secure community.

All stakeholders will:

- In the case of safety emergencies, call 911.

Neighbors will:

- In non-emergency situations, notify on-site security at the Aston or contact FP via phone at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email at XX@XXXX.com.

TCP/FP will:

- Require participants to abide by program rules approved by the DC Department of Human Services.
- Conduct background checks and clearances for employees and onsite personnel as required by contract and District law to ensure safe and supportive services for participants.
- Provide de-escalation training to staff and security personnel.
- Contract security to be on-site 24/7/365, with security stationed on each floor.
- Require security to monitor the immediate area outside the building, subject to the relevant limitations under District law.
- Equip the Aston with a magnetometer to screen entry for participants and visitors.
- Ensure that the magnetometer is in working condition, and coordinate with DGS for prompt repairs as needed.
- Respond within three business days to any concern submitted in writing, without breaking client confidentiality.
- Complete and file an Unusual Incident Report, as required by DHS. (For example, any time MPD or FEMS is called to the site.)

DGS will:

- Ensure sufficient lighting on the grounds of the property.

#### *D. Support Staff for Participants*

FP/TCP will:

- Employ the necessary case managers to satisfy reasonable resident-to-participant ratios and facilitate and support participant access to mental health services.
- Ensure that appropriate staff are on site in the Aston seven days per week, with some categories of staff, including security as noted above, in the facility 24 hours per day.

### *E. Agency Responsibilities*

Clear lines of responsibility are important for transparency and accountability, and for ensuring that concerns can be addressed appropriately. This section provides clarity on which agency is responsible for each service provided at the Aston.

DHS will:

- Prior to beginning service, share with the CAT, ANC 2A, ANC 2B, and the Ward 2 Councilmember a document indicating each agency and/or partner responsible for each service provided to participants (e.g., DHS, TCP, FP, DGS, etc.).
- In the event of a change in service provider or agency responsibility, share an updated document with the CAT, ANC 2A, ANC 2B, and the Ward 2 Councilmember within 10 business days.

### *F. Conduct and Behavior*

Mutually respectful behavior is essential to the quality of life in a community. Neighbors and participants will strive to live together peacefully and respectfully. Similarly, the District shall promote good conduct and respectful behavior, and will ensure compliance with District laws and regulations.

To promote mutually beneficial behavior:

Friendship Place will:

- Give prompt and effective notice of its program rules to program participants, in accordance with District law, by giving every new participant a written copy of the program rules, reading and explaining the rules to the participant, and obtaining the participant's signature acknowledging their receipt of the program rules and indicating their awareness, understanding, and acceptance of the program rules.
- Enforce program rules that encourage respect inside the Aston and in the surrounding neighborhood, and quickly address rule violations.
- Enforce leash laws and ensure animal waste is disposed of appropriately when participants have service or support animals.

In addition, the program rules will:

- Require participants to work toward their housing goals in accordance with the individualized housing plan they develop with their case manager.
- Provide hours and days for visitation.
- Prohibit threatening language and behavior on the property.
- Prohibit alcohol and illegal drug use on the property.

- Prohibit weapon possession on the property.

TCP and DHS will:

- Review Unusual Incident Reports filed by any of the contracted service providers, including security and case management providers, to determine if any contractual changes or remedial actions are required, and keep the CAT apprised of general progress.
- Offer substance use disorder treatment to participants and strictly enforce a policy that prohibits alcohol and illegal drug use on site.

#### *G. Change of Use*

The District has committed to the community that the Aston will not be used as low-barrier shelter, and to maintain the Aston's use for bridge housing for the foreseeable future. The District also agrees to present to the Advisory Neighborhood Commission and the Community Advisory Team prior to any changes in use, including for other housing purposes by DHS, and including but not limited to the following:

- Use for any form of supportive housing that is significantly different in nature than the current Aston program, with regard to expected length of participant stay, and/or facility rules and expectations.
- Use for any form of housing that would invoke tenant's rights.
- Use for emergency housing, such as migrant housing or hypothermia shelter.
- Use as a shelter for participants under 18 years old.
- Use as a medical facility for unsheltered participants.
- Use as an inpatient drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility.
- Use as a criminal rehabilitation facility.

#### *F. Communication and Mutual Respect*

Communication between neighbors is extremely important in any community. In the spirit of mutual respect, if a concern arises, neighbors and participants will notify FP promptly and.

DHS will:

- Prior to beginning service, update the DHS website on an easily accessible webpage to include the Aston's service provider and program manager information, including information for who neighbors should contact with non-emergency health, safety, and other concerns, and share this

information in writing with the CAT, ANC 2A, ANC 2B, and the Ward 2 Councilmember.

- Create a publicly available website to provide updates and other information relevant to the project.
- Work closely with the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) to consider which populations can be prioritized and what service models offer the greatest efficacy to ensure the goals of the plan and the needs of our population are met.
- Respond to and strive to address concerns related to participants' and neighbors' quality of life during any building repurposing and/or construction, and during the Aston's operations.
- Provide annual written updates to ANC 2A, ANC 2B, the office of the Ward 2 Councilmember, and the CAT on facility function, using an agreed upon template, and provide in-person updates to ANC 2A and the CAT when requested.
- Report quarterly to the ANC 2A, ANC 2B, the office of the Ward 2 Councilmember, and the CAT on the impact of the property on the surrounding neighborhood, using the following data metrics:
  - Quarterly Facilities Data
    - Pest Control Code Violations
    - Trash Pick-Up and Special Trash Notices
    - Any New and/or Resolved Facilities Concerns
    - Status of Construction or Major Repairs
  - Quarterly Program Data
    - Average Number of Participants Monthly
    - Number of Neighborhood Concerns and Resolutions (including Noise Complaints)
    - Staffing Summary (including Average Daily Case Management Ratios)
    - Number of Program 311 Calls
    - Number of Program, Non-Medical Related 911 Calls
    - Participant Average Length of Stay
- Receive and coordinate opportunities for community feedback, through the CAT and ANC 2A meetings, on concerns related to the development of the non-congregate bridge housing services at the Aston.
- Directly apply lessons learned from PEP-V, as well as its work with the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH), which publishes the District's Strategic Plans, specifically Homeward DC (2015-2020) and Homeward DC 2.0 (2021-2025).
- Present to ANC 2A and the CAT, and notify the Ward 2 Councilmember, prior to any change to the Aston's use for a purpose other than non-congregate bridge housing, including for other housing purposes by DHS (noting that the District has committed to the Aston never being used as a low-barrier shelter).



Friendship Place will:

- Communicate transparently, accurately, and in a timely manner, with participants, neighbors, ANC 2A, ANC 2B, the CAT, DHS, and DGS.
- Provide a clear point of contact for participants and neighbors, with contact information easily accessible both online and in the Aston building.
- In response to any written concerns submitted to FP/TCP about the Aston facility or operations:
  - Respond to the submitter within one business day to acknowledge the submission.
  - Respond to the submitter within three business days to address how the concern will be remedied, outlining a plan and timetable for addressing the concern while maintaining appropriate participant confidentiality.
- Provide notification to neighbors when programming will have an impact on the surrounding neighborhood (for instance, if there is a block party that involves street closures). Notification shall be via written notice to the ANC 2A Chairperson, the ANC 2B Chairperson, the ANC 2A06 Commissioner, the CAT Co-Chairpersons, and the Ward 2 Councilmember's office, at least a week prior to the programming.
- Provide opportunities for neighbors to volunteer.

FP and DHS will:

- Host an open house event before the Aston begins operations to allow neighbors to visit the facility and learn more about the services offered to participants.

CAT members will:

- Encourage neighbors to attend Aston events.
- Actively welcome participants to the neighborhood.
- Encourage neighbors to treat participants as they would any other resident or patron of the area.
- Encourage neighbors to understand participants' need for privacy and confidentiality.
- Provide feedback on concerns related to neighborhood quality of life.
- Coordinate opportunities for community engagement, including feedback and input, on all issues and concerns related to the function of the Aston NCBH, and share information with FP and DHS.
- Support the success of the non-congregate bridge housing and related services delivered at the Aston.

## **Process for Amending This Protocol & Frequency of Additional Meetings**

The CAT shall conduct all votes in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order.

The CAT will be co-chaired by the ANC 2A Chairperson (or their designee) and a representative from Mayor Bowser's administration.

The composition of the CAT is as follows:

- **ANC 2A (4 participants):** The ANC 2A Chairperson (or their designee), the ANC 2A06 Commissioner, and 2 community members appointed by the ANC.
- **Civic and Neighborhood Association (2 participants):** The president of each of the two local associations or 2 community members appointed by the Associations.
- **Ward Councilmember (3 participants):** The Ward 2 Councilmember (or their designee) and two community representatives selected by the Ward 2 Councilmember.
- **Homeless Services Stakeholders (3 participants):** 1 representative of the homeless services provider charged with operating the Aston, 1 representative of a homeless services provider who serves the neighborhood surrounding the Aston under the District's outreach provider contract, and 1 homeless services consumer selected by the above homeless services provider.
- **DC Executive Government Representatives (3 participants):** 1 representative appointed by the Mayor, 1 representative appointed by DHS, and the DGS project manager.

The Aston Community Advisory Team (CAT) meetings for the remainder of calendar year 2024 will take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month at 5:00 p.m., except when changed to avoid conflict with holidays.

Those dates are:

- April 8<sup>th</sup>
- May 13<sup>th</sup>
- June 10<sup>th</sup>
- July 8<sup>th</sup>
- August 12<sup>th</sup>
- September 9<sup>th</sup>
- October 14<sup>th</sup>
- November 4<sup>th</sup>
- December 9<sup>th</sup>

These public meetings shall take place online via Microsoft Teams at:

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_NTJkNTUxNTMtOTJhZi00MGU3LWJhNmItZjdiNGZhY2YwOWM4%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%228fe449f1-8b94-4fb7-9906-6f939da82d73%22%2c%220id%22%3a%2217874027-69b9-468d-9372-e85bcf2c328b%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NTJkNTUxNTMtOTJhZi00MGU3LWJhNmItZjdiNGZhY2YwOWM4%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%228fe449f1-8b94-4fb7-9906-6f939da82d73%22%2c%220id%22%3a%2217874027-69b9-468d-9372-e85bcf2c328b%22%7d).

Meetings in 2025 and beyond will be scheduled by the co-chairs, in consultation with the full CAT membership.

The terms of this good neighbor protocol shall be reviewed annually by the contracted provider and the Department of Human Services and presented via a public meeting. Based on feedback solicited, DHS will determine if any updates to the agreement are needed. This protocol may be reviewed and updated by the CAT.

DHS POC(s): TBD

DGS POC(s): TBD

Friendship Place POC(s): TBD