

**Central Union Mission's Responses to Neighborhood Questions
and Concerns Regarding Its Relocation to Georgia Avenue
August 16, 2007**

*The following text provides Central Union Mission's specific answers to the questions and issues raised by the United Neighborhood Coalition, PSA 302 Orange Hats, Luray Warder Street Neighborhood Association, Pleasant Plains Neighborhood Association, ANC1A Commissioners, and residents of Park View. The bolded and capitalized remarks ("**POLICY**" and "**RATIONALE**" text) are the questions or concerns originally submitted by these groups to the Mission (reprinted verbatim). The regular text is the Mission's response.*

Thank you for the opportunity to share ideas regarding Central Union Mission's operations on Georgia Avenue. As you know, the Mission has served the Washington D.C. community since 1884. It exists to transform the lives of the people we serve into Godly, productive members of society by meeting their physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. In all we do, we desire to display a gracious, sincere spirit of integrity and Christian love, and we seek to incorporate excellence in all aspects of the ministry in order to honor God and inspire the people we serve, our community, our donors, our volunteers, and our staff. We believe that the move to our new site will enable us to have an even greater impact, and we welcome and value the suggestions of our neighbors and the community at large. Indeed, we are committed to working closely with our neighbors at the Georgia Avenue site who will help us serve in the most effective way possible.

A few general points stand out before we go into specific issues related to policies to be in effect two years from now. One is our commitment to working closely with an appropriate group of neighbors who will help us serve in the most effective way possible from the Georgia Avenue site (an Advisory Committee). We have asked for such a committee in our conversations for many months. We will have senior Mission management representatives available, and it appears to us that ANC-appointed representatives would represent the community best, but that is certainly open to discussion.

In matters of dealing with the police, we will absolutely cooperate with them as we do today. The law must be obeyed, our overnight guests and program participants do have legal rights, which must be observed, and we believe the police are able to speak for themselves. We will meet with them whenever they desire and will welcome neighbors to join us in such conversations whenever it is appropriate.

The policies presented in this document are staff-level decisions, not for a governing board. The staff will work with our neighbors to affect the policies and practices necessary for the Mission to be a good neighbor. Just as flexibility is a key in our design of the building, so is flexibility in our work with the

neighborhood. What may be anticipated as a problem today may have no impact thirty or forty years from now. We have a very long history in Washington and the need to move forward to address the challenges that we face at any given point will require flexibility.

We are glad you have included references to the District's Homeless No More (HNM) Campaign. We were part of the planning for HNM and we are in support of its goals. In particular, there is a reference to the needs of Ward 1 on page 13, 4th bullet, which we believe is appropriate to our discussions. We anticipate being a partner in the system of Homeless Assistance Centers (HACs) that will still be required to house 1,700 people in 2014. The concept of "quick in, well served, and promptly into housing" is a good one and we will work with others to achieve it for all possible.

Please remember that these are plans. Much can change in two years and the District, the neighborhood and those we serve may have new challenges for the Mission by 2009. It is our goal to continue to work together to help people in need.

POLICY: Central Union Mission will limit the number of homeless individuals it serves to 40 emergency beds.

The stark reality in the District of Columbia is that the number of available emergency beds is shrinking while the demand for them is increasing. Many factors are influencing this trend but it is incumbent upon both public and private sectors to respond appropriately. Simply ignoring homelessness, or pushing it to another part of the city, is socially irresponsible. We are aware of the goals stated in *Homeless No More* (Mission staff were active participants in the study) but they remain just that; goals that have yet to see much progress in the last three years. Until such time that more affordable housing and wraparound social services become available in the District, we cannot in good conscience reduce our emergency shelter beds to 40. However, we are committed to a "not to exceed" capacity of 100 emergency overnight beds, which we have already publicly stated.

Although HNM calls for over 1700 emergency beds in the Homeless Assistance Centers in 2014, our ultimate hope is that no emergency beds will be needed in the future, and our plans incorporate a flexible design so we can convert the space dedicated to that program to long-term recovery and transitional housing.

RATIONALE: A homeless shelter should not operate as a flophouse for people who refuse to join long-term programs that will help them escape life on the streets.

"Flophouse" is an offensive term that degrades both those who are hurting and the life-changing work of Central Union Mission. The Mission is not a flophouse

and never will be; we are a faith-based, multi-service provider that offers a full range of social services to men, women and children at no cost to tax payers.

Much of the rhetoric surrounding the Mission's move to Georgia Avenue has centered on the overnight guest services or "homeless shelter." This program component is just one of the many social services we offer and it will occupy only 8% of the square footage in the new facility. The remainder of the space will be dedicated to other social services that are desperately needed in the District including:

- A large meeting space for Mission and community events.
- Distribution areas for food and clothing.
- A multi-purpose dining facility.
- A street-level café.
- Improved residential space for various programs including temporary, transitional and permanent supportive housing.
- Improved day room facility connecting overnight guests to wraparound services.
- Classrooms for skills training for clients and community members.
- Comprehensive social services for displaced persons.
- Increased capacity for partnership-based community outreach.
- Community medical, legal and dental clinics.
- Computer training center.
- GED/Literacy classroom and library.
- Administrative offices for its area-wide ministries.

There are many reasons why men choose to utilize the overnight guest program at Central Union Mission. The most-often stated reasons why they prefer our facility include:

- Building cleanliness
- Personal safety
- Treatment with dignity
- Spiritual encouragement
- Good food

Here is a brief snapshot of our clientele:

- 81% of our overnight guests spend 30 days or less with us.
- 75% of our men are over 40 years old and 40% are between 40 and 49.

There are also many men who refuse to stay at the Mission because they believe our policies and procedures are too strict. We do not believe they are. On the contrary, they are necessary to preserve each guest's human dignity, serve our

long-standing faith tradition, and provide the necessary control and structure required. Each overnight guest must:

- Be physically present to receive a bed.
- Eat meals at the scheduled times.
- Attend chapel or an approved evening alternative.
- Take a shower.
- Go to bed on time.
- Not smoke.
- Remain in the building once checked in.
- Avoid any physical violence.
- Not use vulgar or abusive language.

The long-term men (those usually staying more than 30 days) are evaluated to see if their age and disabilities justify our Extended Support Program (ESP). If they do not have special needs that warrant ESP care, and are not willing to accept such care, we are open to other solutions such as limiting the number of nights they may stay at the Mission. However, we must do this with the long-term housing goals of HNM in mind. While the creation of long-term affordable housing is a noble HNM goal, the reality is that such accommodations in the District are shrinking, not expanding. We are committed to working with other housing advocates to find successful solutions but everyone involved in the HNM process recognizes that there are no quick fixes.

RATIONALE: It is our belief that Central Union Mission has not proven their ability to effectively house and mentor 85 homeless men at their current facility at 14th and R Street NW. The facility is too large and is considered a source of quality of life crimes, and theft by the people living in the surrounding neighborhood.

We strongly disagree with such generalizations and take exception to this assertion. The Mission has successfully served this city for 123 years and has been recognized by Presidents and First Ladies, mayors, the District Government, pastors, and recovery groups for our services to the homeless community and for our success in transitioning men to recovery, as well as our work with women, children and families. Eighty-one percent (81%) of our overnight guests spend 30 days or less with us. Others advance to the life-changing Spiritual Transformation Program or the Extended Support Program for elderly and disabled men. After graduating from these programs, these men go on to become productive members of society. Some examples include: Phillip Ford, executive assistant, Ben Jones, construction, Don Watson, automobile sales, Clark Hymes, attorney, David Surles, chaplain, and Charles Barksdale, school bus driver.

RATIONALE: According to Mayor Williams *Homeless No More* initiative, Washington, DC is not suffering from a lack of emergency shelter beds. It is permanent housing that is most needed.

While you are correct that the HNM initiative reports a need for affordable permanent housing, it does not say that the District does not need emergency shelter beds. Quite the contrary, the initiative recognizes there is a shortage of overnight beds today, as well as a dramatic shortage of affordable permanent housing. In 2014, if all the new units are created as planned in HNM, the plan still calls for over 1700 emergency shelter beds needed in the HACs for an average stay of 45 days (p.23). That would mean 17 shelters/HACs needed to serve 100 people each.

Page 13 of HNM states: “In neighborhoods undergoing vital commercial redevelopment such as Ward 1 where the La Casa Shelter is located, the city will endeavor to capitalize on development to support the creation of better shelters and supportive housing.” It is our intent to provide a better shelter and supportive housing, plus many other services.

We are a HNM advocate and our executive director served on the Joint Committee -Transition and Housing Types, Sites, Locations, and Uses of the HNM Focus Group. We would absolutely welcome an end to homelessness, but we cannot achieve that by ignoring the fact that there is a shortage of overnight resources. Additionally, it is a rehabilitation naïveté to think men off the street can be immediately and successfully transitioned into permanent housing. As with any recovery effort – whether health, financial, or spiritual – time is needed for evaluation, treatment and care. This is where the Mission’s STP and ESP programs have significant impact.

The point in HNM is to provide readily available, quick-in, well-served, quick-out transitions to housing facilities. We believe 30 days is a very good length of stay and are pleased to have found permanent housing for 75 people last year.

POLICY: Central Union Mission will send a letter to the DC Metropolitan Police Department, PSA 302 substation (Sgt James Meagher, Insp. Patrick Burke) granting officers permission to enter any area of the shelter they need to when looking for individuals they would like to question or apprehend. There will be a sign posted at the check in area of the shelter that states “The Washington DC Metropolitan Police Department has been given permission to enter these premises at any time.”

The Mission places high priority on being a good neighbor and citizen so fostering respect, cooperation, and neighborliness with the police and all civil authorities is a continuing goal. Police and other civil authorities are always welcome at the Mission, which has former police and military officers on its staff. In rare instances where a police officer comes to the Mission with a search

warrant, or is in hot pursuit of a fleeing felon, the Mission staff is instructed to immediately assist the officer in full compliance with all lawful searches. In the more normal circumstance where a police officer is requesting to talk with a resident of the Mission, that individual would be brought to the lobby area for interviewing. In all such instances, the Mission staff members adhere to the following:

- 1) Overnight residents, guests, tenants, and boarders are fully protected under the 4th Amendment.
- 2) The Mission Director or desk clerk (supervisor) cannot give permission for police to enter space where there is a lawful expectation of privacy.
- 3) The room or living space of a resident, guest, tenant, or boarder is protected under the 4th Amendment.
- 4) "Hot pursuit" will permit warrantless entry to make an arrest where it involves the immediate or continuous pursuit of a suspect from the scene of a crime.
- 5) Where police have lawfully entered a residence to effect an arrest, warrantless, nonconsensual search of surrounding premises is reasonable in four limited situations:
 - Until they have located the suspect, police may search premises generally for the purpose of apprehending suspect;
 - In the course of arresting the suspect, police may search area(s) within arrestee's immediate control to prevent arrestee from grabbing a weapon or evidence;
 - Even after arrestee has been seized, police may in certain situations also undertake protective sweep of premises to protect against danger of attack from an accomplice; and
 - Both before and after an arrest, further search of premises, limited in scope, may be justified in emergency or exigent circumstances.
- 6) Where the kitchen, hallway and basement of a rooming house is not open to the general public, there is an expectation of privacy and a warrant is required to enter.
- 7) Residents have a legitimate expectation of privacy in the front hallway of the Mission, but emergency circumstances, as perceived by the officer at the time, may justify his limited entry in order to determine whether his assistance is needed by someone in danger of bodily harm inside the premises.
- 8) A person living in the Mission has a reasonable expectation of privacy beginning at the door to his room, rather than at the door to the entire building.

Our supervisors are instructed in these procedures and they work well. We will continue to encourage the police to stop by the Mission, meet with staff, tour the facility, and discuss areas where we can work together more closely.

RATIONALE: Residents who live near the facility at 14th and R Street have complained that there have been times when the police have been prevented from searching for suspects they have identified as having participated in a crime.

We have never received any complaint like this **ever** from any neighbor, MPD, or our ANC. It is very easy for someone who is opposed to the mission to start or repeat rumors like this. We need specific information in order for us to dispel such accusations. We welcome the opportunity to do so.

RATIONALE: One such incident, confirmed by police officers, involved denying the police access to questioning a suspect in a murder investigation

We have spoken with Lt. Robinson about this statement attributed to him. He informed us that he was not at the scene and only heard there was a problem. To recount the situation: the incident involved a murder on U Street (Ward 1) and officers were searching the area for a suspect based on a description from a witness. The officer entered the Mission and said that our supervisor on duty met the description he was looking for and he was going to take him to the station. Our Director of Overnight Guest Ministries was called in and several men present were able to verify that the supervisor had been present and on duty without leaving the Mission since long before the murder occurred. The officer persisted until told that the Mission's attorney would meet them at the station, at which time he chose not to pursue the matter. The actual murderer was apprehended shortly thereafter. The guilty individual had never been to the Mission in any capacity. When we explained our actions to Lt. Robinson, he agreed we had exactly the right procedures in place. We welcome the opportunity to put this issue to rest.

RATIONALE: Additionally, police officers have stated that it is very common for new paroles released from jail to list Central Union Mission as their address.

The Mission has learned that some ex-offenders who are seeking a DC "non-driver's license" identification card (which benefits their search for employment) inappropriately use Central Union Mission's address as their permanent address. We are cooperating with the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) officials to minimize inappropriate use of the Mission's address that may in turn be reflected in inaccurate crime statistics.

POLICY: Central Union Mission will obtain a list of items considered illegal weapons by the police department. Should an individual possess any item on the list, the item will be confiscated and the police will be notified.

RATIONALE: Public safety is at risk. Weapons among the homeless population pose a serious risk to both the homeless and general population. At a May 3rd meeting, representatives from Central Union Mission gave contradicting information on the current weapons policy.

The Mission has a clearly defined policy on what guests can bring into the building including:

Prohibited items that will be confiscated by staff:

- Illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Weapons
- Cigarettes or matches/lighters
- Pornographic material

Items that will be turned in and returned the next day:

- Tools
- Needles for prescribed medication
- Prescribed medication and pain killers (prescription is required)
- Significant amounts of money

All guests are required to store personal property overnight. These items are secured in a locked storage room that is accessible only by staff. Items are returned to guests as they leave in the morning.

To be clear, any weapon will be confiscated and not returned. If weapons are found, we will contact the police and follow their instructions on how to proceed. We agree that weapons in the wrong hands pose a serious public health risk. However, we are unaware of crime statistics or research that suggests that homeless individuals are more prone to possess and use weapons than others in the general population. Stereotyping this group as more violent, or prone to weapons use, is inaccurate and discriminatory. The average age of an overnight guest visiting the Mission is about 45 while according to statistics most violent crimes are committed by men under 30, an age outside our normal demographic.

POLICY: Central Union Mission will check the sex offender's registry on a weekly basis for offenders who are registering with their address. Central Union Mission will print the information obtained from the web site, and take that information to the principals of Park View Elementary School and the EL Haines Public Charter School that is to be built 1 block from 3510 Georgia Ave NW. If no new sex offenders have registered in a week, the

current list will still be provided. If Central Union Mission is sure the registered offender is not staying there, they will report it to the sex offenders unit immediately.

We have been children's advocates since 1917, including serving as one of the city's primary children's facilities for 60 years. We are committed to doing everything possible to protect children. We hope everyone in the Petworth/Parkview neighborhood, particularly its community and school leaders, feel the same way so a comprehensive neighborhood effort can be employed to combat the problem. The mission is very concerned about sex offenders being near children and will comply with all applicable laws pertaining to offender notification and monitoring.

Because our new facility will include more services for women and children, we are planning fundamental changes to our overnight guest policy including:

1. Not allowing registered sex offenders into the building. Due to the presence of women and children in our new facility, they will not be allowed to stay there or use our services.
2. Checking overnight guest logs on a weekly basis to determine if any individual is a registered sex offender. If any offender is found, his name will be added to our prohibited list.
3. We will also post our policy prominently to alert sex offenders that they are not allowed to use our facility. We will assist them in finding District-approved facilities and, where appropriate, provide transportation to the alternative site.
4. We will follow all District policies for dealing with sex offenders and work with the community to implement safeguards.

Our previously mentioned work with CSOSA will help clear up these false claims of Mission residency by sex offenders.

RATIONALE: A Freedom of Information Act request reveals that over the last 3 years Central Union Mission has regularly housed 3 or more registered sex offenders at a time. These individuals were still serving their sentence as official subjects of the parole system. Sex offenders have a very high rate of re-offending.

This is a concern for us. We checked the register and found four men listed as living at the Mission. Three of the four never stayed at the Mission. One other had been previously identified and placed under strict control in the Spiritual Transformation Program. Again, working with CSOSA will help eliminate this reporting problem. We will do the rest.

POLICY: Once a week, Central Union Mission will obtain a list of all recent paroles. If any parole is listing Central Union Mission as their address and

they are not residing at Central Union Mission then the mission will report that information to the police immediately.

As stated previously, we are committed to working closely with CSOSA and MPD to ensure accurate monitoring of parolees by all concerned.

As with the weapons and sex offender policies, the tone of the above description presumes that all the clients we serve are convicts, as well as violent and pedophilic. Such generalizations are grossly inaccurate and inhibit understanding of the Mission's primary purpose, which is to transform lives through the delivery of essential programs and services. It would certainly be naïve to think that we don't have individuals with criminal backgrounds but to stereotype them into such a category is an unfair overstatement.

RATIONALE: The Metropolitan Police Department reports that a large number of paroles list Central Union Mission as their residence. Some of these paroles do not actually reside at the mission. Officers sometimes need to pick someone up for parole violations, only to find out that the person they are looking for is not staying at the shelter. While this is no fault of the mission, this policy will help the police department identify and track the correct address for these individuals.

We are fully cooperating with the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) to help them solve this problem. It is good for all of us that it has been exposed so corrective action can be taken.

POLICY: Central Union Mission will make it a priority to have 2 or more representatives who live within ANC1A as members of their board of directors. One of these representatives will be a representative chosen and approved by ANC 1A. The other representative will be chosen by the ANC Commissioner from within the single member district that Central Union Mission resides (ANC 1A08).

RATIONALE: Residents of the neighborhood are the stakeholders who are most affected by the services offered by Central Union Mission. Having them on the board will provide a prospective that can help prevent the mission from becoming out of touch with the immediate community.

We welcome and have requested on several occasions a neighborhood advisory group to meet as regularly as it feels necessary to bring neighborhood concerns to the Mission leadership. Help from ANC leadership in selecting the participants would be appreciated. We have offered to host these meetings at the Mission, thus allowing committee members (business owners, residents, and community leaders) opportunities to view our activities first hand.

We are a Christian, faith-based organization and our Board is selected within the covenants of our charter and beliefs. A Board member from Ward 1 would be a welcomed addition provided he/she meets the requirements. We cannot promise that a Board member will come from Ward 1 but would certainly pass the name and information regarding an ANC-nominated candidate to the Board for consideration.

We must be clear regarding the purpose of our Board: It is charged with providing strategic leadership for the Mission's programs and services, many of which will be delivered away from the Georgia Avenue site. We require a tremendous personal commitment from them; they must be dedicated to engaging homeless and hurting people along a full spectrum of programs and services under the tenets of our faith values. These activities are not restricted solely to our main location, but extend throughout the city and into Montgomery County (Camp Bennett) and the DC metropolitan area.

Finally, we strongly encourage neighbors to participate in, or volunteer to help with, our programs and services. We are a community facility and hope that Petworth/Parkview residents will increase their use of our services.

POLICY: Twice a year Central Union Mission will hold a public meeting for business owners and residents of the community to discuss how the situation in the neighborhood has improved or deteriorated in regards to homelessness. A quorum of board members will be required for this meeting.

RATIONALE: This will demonstrate to the community a good faith effort to keep lines of communication open, and guarantee the community access to board members who have the most influence over issues they may be concerned about.

The Mission has been, and will continue to be, open to neighbors and visitors. We want people to visit us and encourage them to do so at their convenience. No formal meeting or invitation is needed.

We will be pleased to work with the Advisory Committee on this issue and will bring in additional business owners and residents if they feel it is needed. To reiterate, we would be pleased to host ANC, UNC, police, or other community meetings in our facility. Our new building will have wonderful meeting rooms that would be well suited for these purposes.

We also want to remind interested parties that there are other ways of staying informed about Mission activities including visiting our website at www.missiondc.org, subscribing to our newsletter, or contacting the Mission directly at 202-745-7118.

POLICY: The lower, ground level of the mission will be reserved for commercial uses.

RATIONALE: A garden shop, dry cleaner, bookstore, café, or neighborhood serving business defines commercial use. A cafeteria or kitchen with a dual use would not be considered a commercial use. This would give the mission a true stake in the success of Georgia Avenue as a viable commercial district, which is what C3A zoning intends to achieve.

We simply do not have adequate space to devote the entire lower floor to retail. Given real estate and construction costs, it is fiscally impossible to meet this condition, as well as all the other ones that have been articulated in previous engagements (i.e., sustainable design, green space, height, setbacks, exterior finishes, streetscaping, etc.).

We believe you are aware that we are planning a retail café for the first floor that will be separate, both in location and operation, from the main dining area. We are exploring having DC Central Kitchen (an independent third party) provide training, food preparation and service for the operation. The café will operate on an extended-hour basis and be complete with Wi-Fi access.

POLICY: Central Union Mission will limit the time that anyone can use their emergency shelter services to X number of months. They will place emphasis on finding permanent housing, and the proper institutional care for people.

RATIONALE: At a May 3rd meeting representatives from Central Union Mission acknowledged that several individuals have been using their emergency shelter services for years. Residents of Park View expressed that even though they don't live near 14th and R St NW, they could recognize some of these people (due to anti-social, dysfunctional tendencies). This policy will insure that Central Union Mission emphasizes permanent solutions to homelessness. The "X" number of months represents a realistic time frame to achieve this goal. The latest trends on treating homelessness involve an emphasis on permanent housing, placement into services for the mentally ill, and discouraging the meal and mattress model.

Eighty-one percent (81%) of our guests stay for 30 days or less, so we are not talking about large numbers of individuals desiring long-term accommodations. The 30-day stay is also expected to be the case in the new building. However, we are committed to the goals of HNM and this idea goes well with the HAC goal of being readily available and then moving the individual to transitional help precipitously. We fully agree with the concept of those who have no age or physical disabilities not taking advantage of our services, and even the elderly or disabled who refuse our help should be transitioned into other solutions. There is

some conflict here with HNM and all of us who serve the homeless will be seeking best practices for dealing with the “hard core” category of homeless people who simply want no restrictions at all.

POLICY: Central Union Mission will send workers and volunteers to walk around Park Road, Newton St, Otis, and New Hampshire Avenue several times during the day, and at night. Their purpose would be to perform outreach to individuals who are sleeping on the sidewalk or loitering. There will also be a hotline phone number for residents of the neighborhood to call when they see an individual sleeping or loitering that may be in the neighborhood due to the mission.

RATIONALE: This will help alleviate some of the problems that residents who live near 14th and R St experience in Logan Circle, and along the other streets.

There are legal issues that must be considered. Our concern is that there are people loitering in these areas today that are not related to the Mission. We will offer a positive alternative but we have no authority over them. People on the street have civil rights that must be respected. We do not allow loitering around our building. Every night Mission representatives make security walks around our block (not just our building) to deter improper behavior. This effort is directed towards people who are not our guests but do threaten our facility and our neighbors. We will continue to conduct security walks at our new location and will be pleased to join with others concerned about security in the neighborhood. If a man who uses the Mission’s services doesn’t cooperate, we can deny him access to our services and that does draw some cooperation. We encourage anyone who stays with us not to block the bus stop or otherwise inconvenience neighbors, but again there are limits to even what the police can enforce. We welcome the opportunity to provide neighborhood assistance and we have a convenient supply of labor to contribute to such tasks.

No hotline is needed. Anyone with a concern can call our main number 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We have hotline numbers for about thirty city agencies that do have authority to deal with almost any situation a neighbor may encounter.

We must remind you that not all of the neighborhood’s social concerns can be managed by or attributed to the Mission. We are fully committed to being a good neighbor and doing more than our fair share, but all residents and businesses in the neighborhood must be expected to assist as well.

Logan Circle itself is a good example of the issues. There are guests from the Mission who visit the Circle during the day. Each time we’ve checked there have been more men there who were not Mission guests, and the circle is overflowing with people walking dogs or pushing baby carriages, and even kindergartners

taking a break on their morning walk. It's a very dynamic and eclectic area of the city and by 5:00 p.m. there are no Mission guests there because they are in our building preparing for a delicious dinner.

POLICY: Central Union Mission will be responsible for finding funds to support additional police, fire, and rescue personnel to handle the added burden this will place on the infrastructure of the community.

RATIONALE: Two recent Freedom of Information Act requests show an abnormally high rate of police dispatching, and fire rescue dispatching within a 1 block radius of Central Union Missions location at 1350 R St NW. These requests showed the number of dispatches over a two-year period, and the reasons for the dispatches (we are still waiting for information related to arrests to arrive). This rate exceeds the rate for the same period of time for a 1 block radius of 3510 Georgia Avenue, NW.

Central Union Mission saves the city millions of dollars in the care of the poor through the programs and services it provides. We believe the city's leaders appreciate what we do to improve the social condition of its citizenry and will agree that our contributions are good for the city's bottom line.

POLICY: Central Union Mission will have a "three strikes, you're out" policy. This policy will include complaints about individuals from neighbors of the mission. Central Union Mission will also publicly provide clear and consistent rules for proper behavior of individuals using their services. Residents of the mission will be expected to follow this code-of-conduct both in and out of the shelter. If a resident who lives a block or more away from the mission has evidence of misbehavior by one of its residents, the mission will enforce this policy.

RATIONAL: This policy will provide supportive assistance to ensuring Park View/ Eastern Columbia Heights is a clean, safe place to live.

We encourage neighbors to bring any concern, complaint, or question to our attention so we can determine if the issue is attributable to Mission clientele. The Mission has well-established rules of behavior, which we view as vital to our success. Accordingly, we are diligent in enforcing these rules and have a tolerance of less than three strikes for most infractions. In fact, we have a "one strike" policy for many offenses. We will work with the Advisory Committee and other social service providers to keep our rules up to date. It is important to remember, however, that not all neighborhood issues result from the Mission's presence; many other social forces impact neighborhood concerns.

POLICY: Central Union Mission will work with other service providers, and arrange transportation, to insure people who are turned away from the mission because it is full have a safe place to go.

RATIONALE: This policy will help the homeless and insure that business owners and residents are not negatively impacted by an influx of people with no place to go on nights when the mission is at capacity.

This is a reasonable request and assumes that we will be at full capacity. To the extent our resources allow, we will work with the Advisory Committee to develop a transportation plan, as soon as this becomes an issue. One factor will be that some men and even families will turn down reasonable alternatives and choose to go their own way. For example, we have offered to transport men to available shelters and they have refused because they only feel safe at Central Union Mission. At other times, families have refused to be separated by gender at different facilities.

POLICY: When individuals are asked to leave Central Union Mission for behavioral reasons, representatives will call the Metropolitan Police Department and give a full explanation of why they were asked to leave, and a description of the individual. This includes people who are turned away during check in because they are intoxicated, are found with contraband, or any reason involving illegal behavior.

RATIONALE: This policy will provide supportive assistance to ensuring Park View/ Eastern Columbia Heights is a clean, safe place to live.

We will cooperate with the police and other District service providers. Certainly where there is a threat to the community the police will be called but some individuals have issues more appropriate for other District agencies.

POLICY: Central Union Mission will actively seek volunteers and employees from within the Park View/Columbia Heights neighborhoods, for all areas of operation.

RATIONALE: Volunteers from this community can insure that the mission is following the procedures they have promised to follow, and provide the community with access to first hand accounts of their successes.

Regarding employment and volunteer opportunities, we welcome neighbors. It's always preferable to have both volunteers and employees from the immediate area, if possible. We are a creedal organization so employees must agree with our faith statements and values. Volunteering and access to our services are open to all.

Due to its values and vocational purpose, the Mission holds itself, and expects to be held by others, to a higher standard. We simply ask that the expectations others have of us be consistent with those applied to other organizations and businesses in the neighborhood.

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to your concerns. We look forward to continuing the dialogue.