

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH
THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

----- X

January 19, 2017
Start: 10:22 a.m.
Recess: 1:46 p.m.

HELD AT: The Schermerhorn
160 Schermerhorn Street
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

B E F O R E:
STEPHEN T. LEVIN
Chairperson
JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
Co-Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Annabel Palma
Fernando Cabrera
Ruben Wills
Vanessa L. Gibson
Corey D. Johnson
Ritchie J. Torres
Barry S. Grodenchik
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Rosie Mendez
Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.

COUNCIL MEMBERS: (CONTINUED)

Mark Levine

Helen K. Rosenthal

Eric A. Ulrich

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Claire Sheedy
Vice President
Housing Operations and Programs
Breaking Ground

Daniel Tietz
Chief Special Services Officer
NYC Human Resources Administration

Kristin Misner-Gutierrez
Deputy Commissioner
Supportive and Affordable Housing
NYC Human Resources Administration

Michael Bosket
Deputy Commissioner
Customized Assistance Services
NYC Human Resources Administration

Craig Retchless
Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Customized Assistance Services
NYC Human Resources Administration

Jessica Katz
Associate Commissioner
New Construction
NYC Housing Preservation and Development

Myla Harrison
Assistant Commissioner
NYC Department of Health and Mental
Hygiene

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Gail Wolsk
Senior Director
NYC Department of Health and Mental
Hygiene

Rebecca Sauer
Director of Policy and Planning
Supportive Housing Network of New York

Tony Hannigan
CEO and President
Center for Urban Community Services

Jennifer Garris [sp?]
Tenant of The Schermerhorn

Joe Rosenberg
Executive Director
Catholic Community Relations Council

Jeff Nemetsky
Executive Director
Brooklyn Community Housing and Services

Giselle Routhier
Policy Director
Coalition for the Homeless

Josh Goldfein
The Legal Aid Society

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Catherine Trapani
Executive Director
Homeless Services United

Chloe Holzman
Staff Attorney
Mental Health Law Project
MFH Legal Services

Tabatha Renz
Assistant District Manager
Manhattan Community Board 3

Kristin Miller
Director
Corporation for Supportive Housing

Nicole Bramstedt
Policy Director
Urban Pathways

Moshe Sugar [sp?]
Resident
Ivan Shapiro House

Jaron Benjamin
Vice President
Community Mobilization
Housing Works

Rima Begum
Housing Coordinator
Housing Works

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Chad Gholizadeh
Senior Policy and Advocacy Associate
Economic and Housing Stability
Citizens' Committee for Children

Craig Hughes
Policy Analyst
Coalition for Homeless Youth

Madge Rosenberg
Co-Chair
Health and Human Services Committee
Community Board 7

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

7

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good morning
4 everybody. [background comments] I am Council
5 Member Stephen Levin, Chair of the Council's
6 Committee on General Welfare. I want to thank
7 Council Member Williams, who's going to be joining us
8 in a moment, Chair of the Housing and Buildings
9 Committee, for agreeing to hold this joint hearing
10 today on supportive housing. And I want to open this
11 morning's hearing by giving a special thank you to
12 everybody here at The Schermerhorn that is Breaking
13 Ground, our friends at the Actors Fund and everybody
14 who is employed here, for agreeing to host the City
15 Council hearing today at this wonderful, beautiful,
16 supportive housing building. Thank you very much for
17 working with us at the Council and I want to thank
18 all of the Council staff who put this hearing
19 together today. I want to thank you all for making
20 this hearing possible, and so with that I'm going to
21 turn it over to Claire Sheedy from Breaking Ground to
22 give this morning's welcome.

23 CLAUDE SHEEDY: Good morning everyone...
24 [background comments] Hear me now?

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

8

3 CLAIRE SHEEDY: Okay. Good morning, I'm
4 Claire Sheedy, Vice President of Housing Operations
5 and Programs at Breaking Ground and on behalf of our
6 partners, the Actors Fund and the Center for Urban
7 Community Services, we are very happy to welcome you
8 to The Schermerhorn.

9 I don't know if you noticed the giant
10 steel girders in the lobby on your way into this
11 theater; in case you were wondering, those girders
12 are integral to the building's structure. Directly
13 below us is a vast network of subway lines; The
14 Schermerhorn sits solidly above it in a remarkable
15 feat of engineering. But substantially more
16 remarkable is the tenancy within these four walls.
17 The women and men who call this building home have
18 faced incredibly difficult challenges.

19 Breaking Ground and our partners in
20 supportive housing are the girders, the supports on
21 which formerly homeless New Yorkers can build and
22 restore their lives. We see the results of our work
23 every day by offering consistent support that helps
24 vulnerable New Yorkers to achieve lives of dignity.
25 These results wouldn't be possible without the
outstanding commitment of our elected officials to

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

9

3 supportive housing. The Schermerhorn's 217
4 supportive apartments are part of 1,100 such units
5 located here in Brooklyn Community Board 2 and more
6 than 33,000 in New York City at large.

7 We're honored to host this hearing on a
8 topic of the utmost importance for nothing less than
9 the humanity and economic vitality of our great urban
10 community. We're extremely appreciative of the
11 City's ongoing commitment to our model through
12 creating an additional 15,000 units of supportive
13 housing that will improve neighborhoods and help the
14 most vulnerable New Yorkers find their way home.
15 Thank you again for all you do in support of
16 supportive housing.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you so much,
18 Claire.

19 I'm very proud to be able to say that
20 this residence is in my Council District; this
21 building showcases how much supportive housing can
22 bring to a community. Not only does this building
23 create much-needed permanent housing for formerly
24 homeless individuals, as Claire said; the remaining
25 units serve as affordable housing for both community
members and artists. This building also brought to

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 10

3 the community the theater that we are in today, the
4 Actors Fund Art Center.

5 I would like to thank my colleagues who
6 are here this morning and have joined us, Council
7 Member Mark Levine of the Housing and Buildings
8 Committee, Council Member Barry Grodenchik of the
9 General Welfare Committee and also Housing and
10 Buildings Committee... [interpose, background comment]
11 alright. [laughter] I thank you both for coming out
12 to Brooklyn, and we look forward to being joined by
13 other members of the committees as this hearing
14 progresses.

15 In November 2015, both committees here
16 today held a joint hearing on supportive housing
17 where we were presented with the de Blasio
18 Administration's plan to create 15,000 units of
19 supportive housing over 15 years. While not an
20 overnight solution to the current homelessness crisis
21 that gets a lot of attention here in New York City,
22 the announcement presented a long-term plan to create
23 new housing options as the final NY/NY III units were
24 in development. At that hearing we also heard a
25 resolution, No. 504, which I sponsored and was
adopted by the Full Council in January 2016. That

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 11

3 resolution called on the State of New York to match
4 the City of New York's commitment to create 15,000
5 units of supportive housing over 15 years and for the
6 State of New York and the City of New York to approve
7 a fourth NY/NY agreement to create permanent
8 supportive housing. Now, one year later, while the
9 City is moving ahead with its 15,000 units, the
10 State's plan for 20,000 units still remains unfunded.
11 There has also been no progress on coming together
12 between the City and the State to create a much-
13 needed NY/NY IV agreement. That failure to establish
14 a NY/NY IV agreement has been an unfortunate casualty
15 of the politics between the City and the State.

16 There are now over 60,000 homeless
17 individuals just the DHS shelter system. If you
18 counted people under the McKinney-Vento definition of
19 homeless, the number is much higher. If we consider
20 the homeless youth in the DYCD system, the domestic
21 violence survivors in the HRA domestic violence
22 system and the HASA clients living in emergency
23 housing; the unsheltered individuals living on the
24 street, there are an additional thousands more
25 individuals and families who are homeless and seeking

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 12

3 permanent housing. We truly cannot afford to wait
4 any longer for these resources and this coordination.

5 NY/NY III reduced chronic homelessness
6 among single adults by 47% over the first five years.
7 Additionally, 86% of NY/NY III tenants remain stably
8 housing after one year. We know we are facing a
9 homelessness crisis; we also know supportive housing
10 is one of the most effective tools to address it; now
11 we just need the units.

12 We are here today holding this hearing
13 not at City Hall, but at a supportive housing
14 residence to highlight the many benefits supportive
15 housing brings to a community, not only through
16 moving our neighbors out of shelter and into
17 permanent housing, but through creating affordable
18 housing units and bringing resources, like this
19 theater, into the community for everybody to enjoy.

20 I look forward to hearing from tenants
21 here today about how this building has enriched their
22 lives and from the Administration on what next steps
23 are in their plan.

24 You know on just on a personal note here;
25 you know this residence, as you saw, this is in the
middle of a bustling, vibrant downtown; this is a

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

13

3 community resource; this is something that is a great
4 benefit to this neighborhood and this community and I
5 think that it's important to show all of us, the
6 entire City of New York, what supportive housing is.
7 This is supportive housing, this building, these
8 resources, this coordination, this professionalism;
9 this is what supportive housing looks like in the
10 City of New York and this is something that we all
11 must have as a point of discussion; we cannot allow
12 for supportive housing to be the subject of Nimbyism,
13 of unfortunate and unfair characterizations; we need
14 to all step up and do our part and in doing so, we're
15 going to be able to increase the resources in every
16 community in New York City where supportive housing
17 goes into and so I want to make sure that this is
18 what we're seeing, so everybody that's watching
19 online or on TV, we welcome you to come here to The
20 Schermerhorn in downtown Brooklyn and see what they
21 do here.

22 I'd like to thank the Council staff for
23 their work today to prepare for today's hearing --
24 Policy Analyst Tonya Cyrus, Counsel Andrea Vazquez,
25 and Jennie Berger from our Community Engagement
Division. I'd like to also thank the Sergeant at

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

14

3 Arms who have put together today's hearing as well
4 and ensure that this is a safe and seamless hearing.
5 I'd also like to thank my Legislative Director Julie
6 Bero, Communications Director Ed Paulino, and Chief
7 of Staff Jonathan Boucher.

8 I'd also like to thank members of the
9 Administration who are here to testify -- Dan Tietz
10 of HRA, Kristin Misner of HRA, Kristin Misner-
11 Gutierrez of HRA, Jessica Katz, who's from New York
12 City Housing Preservation and Development, Craig...
13 sorry; last name? [background comment] Retchless of
14 HRA, Mike Bosket of HRA, and I think there are other
15 members who I've met before, but I don't have your
16 names on the cards here, but if you're going to be
17 testifying or answering questions, please identify
18 yourself for the record. And we are expecting Chair
19 Williams shortly, but we will begin with the
20 Administration's testimony; I think Mr. Tietz will be
21 testifying. Thank you very much for being here this
22 morning. I want to thank all of you that are here
23 today as well; we look forward to hearing from your
24 testimony as well.

25 DANIEL TIETZ: Good morning... [crosstalk]

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 15

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry, Dan; I have to
3 swear you in... [crosstalk]

4 DANIEL TIETZ: Sure. Alright, then.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do you affirm to tell
6 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth
7 in your testimony before this committee and to
8 respond honestly to council members' questions?

9 DANIEL TIETZ: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

11 DANIEL TIETZ: Good morning. Thank you
12 Chairman Levin and members of the General Welfare
13 Committee, as well as in absentia, for the moment
14 anyway, Chairman Williams and members of the
15 Committee on Housing and Buildings for giving us this
16 opportunity to testify today regarding supportive
17 housing in New York City.

18 My name is Daniel Tietz and I am the
19 Chief Special Services Officer of the New York City
20 Human Resources Administration. I am joined today by
21 Michael Bosket, Deputy Commissioner for HRA's
22 Customized Assistance Services; Kristin Misner-
23 Gutierrez, Deputy Commissioner for HRA's Supportive
24 and Affordable Housing and Services; and Craig
25 Retchless, Assistant Deputy Commissioner in HRA's

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 16

3 Customized Assistance Services. In addition, we are
4 joined by Jessica Katz, Associate Commissioner for
5 New Construction at Housing Preservation and
6 Development; Myla Harrison, Assistant Commissioner
7 for the Bureau of Mental Health at the Department of
8 Health and Mental Hygiene; and Gail Wolsk, the Senior
9 Director at DOHMH.

10 I also want to take this opportunity to
11 thank The Schermerhorn for hosting us today as we
12 discuss our progress with regards to supportive
13 housing. The Schermerhorn is a great partner in
14 working to end homelessness and addressing the
15 barriers that prevent stable housing for vulnerable
16 New Yorkers, such as those with mental illness,
17 substance use disorders and other chronic conditions,
18 as well as New Yorkers with HIV/AIDS, and young
19 adults aging out of foster care. This housing,
20 coupled with the on-site services provided by another
21 great partner, the Center for Urban Community
22 Services, provides supportive services to address the
23 needs of vulnerable and high-need residents and at-
24 risk populations for those housed in the 116 units of
25 stable and affordable supportive housing units. The
remaining affordable units are dedicated to low-

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

17

3 income working adults from the arts and entertainment
4 industry. The supportive services include both
5 mental and physical health care access as well as
6 alcohol and substance use programs. Breaking Ground
7 partners with CUCS and The Actors Fund to provide
8 case management, recreational activities and self-
9 sufficiency workshops to residents.

10 Supportive housing is a proven model and
11 this Administration's landmark commitment made in
12 November 2015 through NYC 15/15 builds on decades of
13 experience implementing the model along with
14 research, evaluation and lessons learned since the
15 first units were created in the 1980s.

16 The Mayor's NYC 15/15 plan to create
17 15,000 units of new supportive housing over the next
18 15 years includes more units than the combined number
19 of units from the three previous NY/NY supportive
20 housing agreements and is more than any other
21 supportive housing effort in the country. From
22 decades of research, we know that this sweeping and
23 comprehensive plan will benefit New Yorkers in need,
24 including homeless veterans, domestic violence
25 survivors and street homeless individuals.

3 This cost-effective approach to deliver
4 stable and permanent housing to New Yorkers
5 struggling with mental illness, homelessness, and
6 substance use is worth every penny of investment.
7 Supportive housing reduces our reliance on homeless
8 shelters, hospitals, mental health institutions and
9 incarceration.

10 Permanent supportive housing provides
11 individuals and families transitioning from a period
12 of homelessness with a continuum of care, integrated
13 services and quality affordable housing options that
14 address the immediate and long-term social, economic,
15 emotional and physical needs of some of the most
16 vulnerable New Yorkers. These residential apartment
17 buildings are in communities spread across the five
18 boroughs, are equipped with on-site case management
19 and supportive services and adhere to safety and
20 quality standards in accordance with local, state and
21 federal laws and regulations.

22 The low-income tenants sign a standard
23 lease and receive rental assistance payments to help
24 defray the high-cost of New York City rent. The
25 continuation of tenancy is not subject to any special
rules or participation in any particular or

specialized services; and tenants pay 30% of any
earned or unearned income toward rent.

The two primary types of supportive
housing are:

Single-site, (also referred to as
congregate), which is a designated building where
each individual or family has private living and
sleeping quarters and may share kitchens and/or
common rooms, recreational rooms or other facilities;
and

Scattered-site, which are units in
apartment buildings spread throughout a neighborhood
or community. These units are designated for
specific populations and accompanied by supportive
services.

The combination of affordable housing and
comprehensive support services is rooted in best
practices developed from evidence, data and outcomes
and is designed to help families and individuals
achieve stability and sustained recovery, as well as
lower the incidence of shelter reentry, following
periods of chronic homelessness, hospitalization,
incarceration or, for youth, aging out of foster
care.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 20

3 Support services are voluntary, strength-
4 based and customized to meet the individual needs of
5 each resident. A care management team is responsible
6 for implementing service plans and modalities,
7 monitoring client progress and adherence to
8 treatment, developing a person-centered assessment
9 and connecting residents to comprehensive support
10 services, including: case management; educational,
11 vocational, and other recovery-oriented services;
12 medication management and counseling; assistance in
13 gaining access to government benefits, such as food
14 stamps; referrals to medical services, mental health
15 care and treatment for drug and alcohol use; and
16 recommendations for other needed services, such as
17 legal support.

18 Following the historic announcement of
19 NYC 15/15, the Mayor assembled a 28-member expert
20 task force who developed 23 specific recommendations
21 on ways the plan could expand and improve upon
22 previous NY/NY agreements. Starting in January 2016,
23 task force co-chairs Steve Banks, the Commissioner of
24 the Department of Social Services; Vicki Been, the
25 Commissioner of Housing Preservation and Development;
and Laura Mascuch, the Executive Director of the

3 Supportive Housing Network of New York, and their
4 representatives, hosted meetings in which four
5 working groups focused on the following topics: data
6 review and target populations; the referral process;
7 service models; and streamlining development.

8 The recommendations of the task force are
9 the result of months of work carried out by leaders
10 in delivering housing and services to vulnerable and
11 homeless New Yorkers, including experts from City
12 agencies, nonprofit organizations, social service
13 practitioners, and clients. The task force's work
14 and recommendations were announced in December 2016
15 with the release of a public report. The results of
16 this research and these meetings have the following
17 recommendations:

18 From data and Evaluation: (1) target
19 units to three broad populations -- adults, families
20 and youth -- and incorporate a vulnerability index to
21 target housing to those most in need; (2) expand
22 access to the current application for supportive
23 housing (the HRA 2010e) to include a broad range of
24 referral sources, in addition to the Department of
25 Homeless Services; (3) proactively identify
applicants using data analytics to identify homeless

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 22

3 individuals and families using multiple systems of
4 care; (4) create a City Oversight Committee to
5 monitor NYC 15/15 implementation; and (5) develop a
6 cross-agency plan to evaluate the outcomes of NYC
7 15/15.

8 The referral process: (1) allow
9 additional professionals, such as licensed clinical
10 social workers and psychologists, to complete the
11 required mental health evaluations for the HRA 2010e
12 supportive housing application; (2) modify the
13 project-based Section 8 voucher approval process to
14 expedite placements of homeless clients; (3) align
15 public assistance and the housing process so that
16 individuals and families are not waiting in the
17 shelter system; (4) streamline the HRA 2010e
18 application to include automatic uploads of
19 supporting documents, such as the client's social
20 security card and income documentation; (5) create a
21 referral process to match homeless clients who do not
22 fit a NY/NY designation to appropriate housing that
23 has some support services, called general population
24 units; (6) align definitions of chronic homelessness
25 developed the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
Development and New York City; (7) create a

standardized assessment tool that matches tenants to
appropriate housing options; and (8) pre-populate an
existing HRA 2010e application using data from
various City agencies.

Service models: (1) utilize evidence-
based and evidence-informed practices and support
ongoing staff development across supportive housing
providers; (2) implement a holistic family approach
to delivery comprehensive services to the entire
family; (3) create supportive housing options for
youth that are not time limited and use the "Moving
On" model to help young adults transition to
independent housing; (4) develop a better assessment
tool to assist workers in determining which clients
will be most successful in scattered-site housing
programs; and (5) provide greater flexibility to
account for major life changes; standardize the
process for clients to transfer to other supportive
housing programs that may be better suited to their
current needs, for example, between family and single
supportive housing.

Streamlining development: (1) review
landlord incentives for scattered-site supportive
housing; (2) address issues in the rent stabilization

law and enforcement that affect scattered-site
supportive housing programs; (3) create a dedicated
and nimble pool of capital to use for down payments
on sites to develop supportive housing buildings;
(4) separate the rent from the services subsidy, with
HPD managing the rental subsidy at Fair Market Rent.
Increase the term of the rental subsidy to match the
15-year term for Low Income Housing Tax Credit, a
common tool to build affordable housing; (5) build-in
regular increases to the rental subsidy over the
course of 15 years; and (6) improve community
engagement for new supportive housing projects.

The role of DSS and HRA:

The New York City Human Resources
Administration, Department of Social Services is
dedicated to fighting poverty and income inequality
by providing New Yorkers in need with essential
benefits such as food assistance and emergency rental
assistance. As the largest local social services
agency in the country, HRA helps over three million
New Yorkers through the administration in more than
12 public assistance programs, with more than 14,000
employees and an operating budget of \$9.7 billion.

3 HRA also plays a critical role in preventing
4 homelessness and in rehousing those who are homeless.

5 In order to prevent homelessness, the
6 work of HRA is focused on providing supports to those
7 who are working but with income insufficient to
8 support a family. By providing temporary assistance
9 and training to those in search of work and providing
10 a safety net for those unable to work, HRA strives to
11 ensure that clients do not find themselves facing
12 homelessness. The agency now oversees Homebase,
13 which was formerly under the Department of Homeless
14 Services, thereby expanding our comprehensive
15 prevention services. Additionally, since the
16 beginning of this Administration, we have invested
17 over \$60 million in tenant legal services (targeting
18 eviction and landlord harassment) and the total City
19 commitment to fund civil legal services will exceed
20 \$100 million, the largest of any municipality in the
21 country.

22 It is worth noting that increasing the
23 availability of housing, and most critically,
24 affordable housing, alone will not address the
25 homelessness crisis the city is experiencing. Some
New Yorkers face challenges in securing and

3 maintaining employment and stable housing due to
4 psychosocial, intellectual, physical health, and/or
5 other conditions. For these New Yorkers, HRA plays a
6 vital role in connecting them to a continuum of care
7 and support services. HRA's successes are not only
8 moving these vulnerable New Yorkers into stable
9 housing, but ultimately to assist them in
10 transitioning to the workforce. However, this
11 stability in housing, and for some, the opportunity
12 to work, would be impossible without the cost-
13 effective intervention of supportive housing.

14 For those coping with mental health
15 challenges, substance use disorders, or other housing
16 barriers, they are eligible for stable housing,
17 accompanied as needed with an array of comprehensive
18 services. These services can include connection to
19 mental health and substance use treatment, employment
20 and education. Through this powerful intervention,
21 these vulnerable populations are able to address the
22 multiple barriers they face when trying to obtain and
23 maintain stable housing and to live with independence
24 and dignity.

25 The City's 15,000-unit plan expects to
create 7,500 newly-developed congregate units,

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 27

3 similar to that of The Schermerhorn's, and 7,500
4 scattered-site units. Let me just note that if they
5 were all similar to The Schermerhorn I'd be really
6 happy with that. [background comments] The plan
7 will cost \$2.6 billion in capital funds over the next
8 15 years to develop the 7,500 congregate units. Of
9 the total capital costs, approximately \$1 billion
10 will be a City cost and all but \$380 million has
11 already been budgeted through Housing New York. The
12 remaining capital costs -- approximately \$1.6 billion
13 -- will be offset with low-income tax credits and
14 other private sources. There is also approximately
15 \$96 million in net operating costs over the Financial
16 Plan (through Fiscal Year 19) -- starting at \$8.8
17 million annually in the first year and ramping up.
18 HPD's testimony will provide further detail
19 concerning the financing of this plan and supportive
20 housing more generally.

21 As we've testified in the past, a
22 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene study showed
23 that NY/NY III clients who were placed in supportive
24 housing used public benefits, Medicaid, psychiatric
25 institutions, jails, and shelters less than clients

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

28

3 not residing in supportive housing, resulting in net-
4 cost savings.

5 The City agencies before you today work
6 in close partnership to address housing insecurity
7 and homelessness, as well as to provide housing
8 options for vulnerable clients who are eligible for
9 supportive housing through this and other housing
10 initiatives.

11 The role of DOHMH:

12 The New York City Department of Health
13 and Mental Hygiene provides a lead role in
14 contracting, oversight and evaluation of services for
15 individuals in many of the City's supportive housing
16 units, including 3,850 of the total 9,000 NY/NY III
17 units and an additional 4,500 supportive housing
18 units developed over the course of the past 30 years.

19 To date, DOHMH has awarded provider
20 contracts to 99% of the 3,850 NY/NY III sites for
21 which we have responsibility. Some of these
22 contracts have been awarded in advance of completion
23 of the buildings. In terms of occupancy, 3,098 of
24 the 3,850 sites are now filled. The remaining 752
25 units are either currently being built or are

recently completed and are now accepting
applications.

In addition to overseeing services,
DOHMH's work includes a thorough evaluation of the
City's supportive housing services. As part of this
evaluation, DOHMH coordinates with other City and
State agencies to capture a broad range of
quantitative and qualitative data. DOHMH gathers
health, social service and the financial impact data
in addition to surveying providers and tenants on
their experience with the program. The NY/NY III
interim evaluation report showed a net savings to the
system of more than \$10,000 per year for housed
single adults.

DOHMH is also working in coordination
with HRA and the Mayor's task force on supportive
housing to develop the NYC 15/15 units. HRA will
procure the units and ensure the task force
recommendations are implemented while DOHMH will help
provide technical assistance and contract management
to programs to ensure that residents receive services
that are evidence-based and focused upon the recovery
of the family and the individual.

3 Since announcing a commitment to fund
4 15,000 units over the next 15 years, City agencies
5 quickly implemented a number of initiatives to keep
6 the pipeline going. First, we added 525 units to the
7 DOHMH open-ended congregate request for proposals so
8 that providers could continue to apply for and
9 receive services awards for congregate units. We
10 also added over 150 units to the HRA HIV/AIDS
11 Services Administration RFP.

12 Next HRA released an RFP for scattered-
13 site units. We reviewed and rewarded 550 units to 11
14 organizations in record time and are in the process
15 of negotiating those contracts and getting them
16 registered.

17 The City is also in the process of
18 implementing the aforementioned recommendations from
19 the task force.

20 Reforms to HRA's supportive housing
21 application eligibility process:

22 HRA supportive housing system permits
23 referring agencies to electronically submit the HRA
24 2010e through HRA's Office of Health and Mental
25 Health Services Placement Assessment and Client
Tracking Unit. In order to apply for supportive

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

31

3 housing, the HRA 2010e must be submitted by a service
4 provider who has been trained by HRA's Customized
5 Assistance Services program. Upon submission of the
6 supportive housing application, the provider receives
7 a username and password.

8 The HRA 2010e application packet is
9 designed to gather a comprehensive clinical and
10 housing history to determine if the individual
11 applicant meets the criteria for any category of
12 supportive housing. Relevant information submitted
13 as part of the application includes demographic
14 information, benefits history, current treatment and
15 service providers, history of hospitalizations,
16 housing and homelessness, health and treatment
17 history, an assessment of day to day functional
18 challenges, applicant housing preferences, and
19 recommendations for the level of housing support
20 needed. Additionally, the packet requires a current
21 comprehensive psychiatric evaluation completed by a
22 licensed psychiatrist or a psychiatric nurse
23 practitioner and a psychosocial summary, each of
24 which is to be completed within the last six months.
25 Service providers have the option to utilize the
comprehensive mental health report in lieu of a

separate psychosocial summary and psychiatric
evaluation. Supportive housing applications are
mostly prepared by a mental health professional from
a variety of referral sources, such as hospitals,
correctional facilities, homeless shelters,
outpatient programs, care coordinators, and
community-based organizations. Other individuals,
including family members, are also able to assist
with the application process.

One of the recommendations from the task
force was to streamline the HRA 2010e application
process to include automatic uploads for supporting
materials, such as an applicant's social security
card and income documentation. I am pleased to
report this enhancement has already been completed
and it should make the process easier for the clients
and providers. Additionally, the recommendation to
allow licensed clinical social workers and
psychologists to complete the required mental health
evaluations for the HRA 2010e will be implemented by
April.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
Development is urging localities to develop a
coordinated assessment and placement system to

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

33

3 streamline access to homeless services and prioritize
4 assistance based on an individual's assessed
5 vulnerability and the severity of service needs. New
6 York City has many and complex housing resources; 56
7 funding sources are available for capital, operating
8 and services for various types of supportive housing
9 and multiple rental assistance programs, from city,
state and federal resources.

10 Each adds a layer of complexity to the
11 process of placing homeless individuals and families
12 into permanent housing. Working with the New York
13 City Continuum of Care CAPS Steering Committee, HRA
14 has begun development of the coordinated assessment
15 survey which is the universal tool to assist case
16 managers and housing specialists working with
17 individuals and families in understanding the
18 different types of supportive housing and rental
19 subsidies for which their clients may be potentially
20 eligible.

21 The Coordinated Assessment Survey will be
22 the entry point to begin the process of assisting
23 homeless individuals and families to determine the
24 best fit in permanent housing. Survey results will
25 be used to inform the client's housing plan,

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 34

3 determine the best option for placement, and provide
4 guidance for pursuing the type of housing placement
5 chosen.

6 The survey will be accessed in the HRA
7 supportive housing system along with the HRA 2010e
8 application, which is available City-wide to 10,000
9 users, 3,000 programs, and 1,000 organizations. This
10 system is currently being piloted in seven homeless
11 shelter programs for individuals and families and the
12 feedback has been very encouraging.

13 HRA is also working with the CAP Steering
14 Committee to develop and implement a vulnerability
15 index in order to prioritize the highest need
16 individuals and families approved for supportive
17 housing.

18 Supportive Housing Utilization:

19 The largest challenge with supportive
20 housing in the City is that there simply is not
21 enough of it, which is why the Mayor made the
22 unprecedented commitment to provide 15,000 additional
23 units.

24 Based on HRA's data, in FY16, 23,629
25 supportive housing applications were submitted with
14,648 or 62% approved. There are currently

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 35

3 approximately 32,000 supportive housing beds in New
4 York City.

5 As of December 2016, HRA's HASA program
6 has a contracted supportive housing portfolio of
7 5,683 units of which 5,387 units are occupied. HASA
8 spends about \$135.7 million annually for these units;
9 2,672 scattered-site units, including NY/NY III and
10 non-NY/NY III, of which 94% (2,506) are occupied.
11 The average annual cost per unit is \$24,115. HASA
12 anticipates that this cost will increase due to
13 increasing rents; 2,181 permanent congregate units,
14 including both NY/NY III and non-NY/NY III, of which
15 96% are occupied. The average annual cost per unit
16 is \$22,620; and 830 transitional units, 95% of which
17 are occupied. The average annual cost per unit is
18 \$26,489.

19 In addition to supporting housing units,
20 HASA is expecting to spend about \$44,105,074 in this
21 year for clients residing in emergency housing. As
22 of December 2016, of the 2,614 units available, HASA
23 clients occupied 2,526 units, an occupancy rate of
24 97%.

25 We know that stable housing like
supportive housing is integral to improving health

3 outcomes, reducing re-incarceration among returning
4 offenders, and lowering costs for high-needs, high-
5 cost Medicaid recipients with serious behavioral
6 health and/or other disabling conditions. Moreover,
7 supportive housing can help avert preventable events
8 and health crises, such as arrest, incarceration,
9 relapse and hospitalizations, thereby additionally
10 reducing costs.

11 It took many years to reach this level of
12 homelessness and it will take time to reduce it. But
13 we can already point to several concrete successes
14 with our rental assistance programs with increasing
15 placements in affordable housing.

16 Since the beginning of the Administration
17 through the end of the last fiscal year, over 25,000
18 low-income households have received eviction and
19 anti-harassment legal assistance, including working
20 heads of households, and this level of prevention
21 services will increase to almost 33,000 households
22 per year, including well over 113,000 people.

23 We have also helped more people with
24 emergency rent assistance, keeping thousands of New
25 Yorkers in their homes. In FY15, HRA provided rent
arrears to 53,000 households at a cost of \$180

3 million. Comparatively, in FY16, HRA provided rent
4 arrears to nearly 57,000 households at a cost of \$206
5 million. The 14% increase in spending was due to
6 4,000 more households being found eligible as well as
7 rising rents. Another major driver was the increase
8 in Homebase and legal services enrollments to prevent
9 eviction and homelessness where clients are also
referred for assistance with rent arrears.

10 As a result of these prevention efforts,
11 evictions by Marshals have decreased by 24% since
12 2013.

13 I also want to reemphasize that these
14 programs are cost-effective. In FY16, the average
15 cost emergency rent assistance was \$3,608 per case,
16 and the average cost of a legal services case was
17 \$2,000. These investments were much less than the
18 average cost of almost \$41,000 per year for a family
19 in a homeless shelter.

20 No price can be put on the human and
21 social costs of homelessness. We know that an ounce
22 of prevention is worth a pound of cure and we are
23 diligently working to ensure that the tools of
24 government that can prevent and alleviate
25 homelessness are accessible and readily available to

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 38

3 those who are in need. We also know that investment
4 in these preventive and restorative services is money
5 well spent.

6 Moreover, the Mayor's historic
7 announcement of NYC 15/15 and its swift
8 implementation will provide permanent and stable
9 housing and essential social services for literally
10 thousands of eligible New Yorkers.

11 We have accomplished a great deal, but we
12 know that we have much more work to do and look
13 forward to partnering with you during the coming
14 year.

15 Thank you and I am happy to answer your
16 questions.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
18 Mr. Tietz. We're going to turn it over to Chair
19 Jumaane Williams.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you
21 Council Member, Mr. Tietz and everyone who's here;
22 sorry for being late; I did let my co-chair know
23 prior that I had an engagement and I would try to get
24 here right after, so thank you for that. I'm just
25 going to read my opening remark and then turn it back
over.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 39

3 Again, thank you Council Member Levin and
4 good morning everyone; thank you all for coming. My
5 name is Jumaane D. Williams; I chair the Committee on
6 Housing and Buildings; today, as Council Member Levin
7 mentioned, and as we heard in the testimony, we're
8 here in a supportive development to hold an oversight
9 hearing on supportive housing; honored to be here.
10 Supportive developments such as this one house some
11 of the city's most vulnerable individuals and help to
12 end and prevent homelessness among such individuals.

13 Through the NY/NY agreement, the State
14 and City have worked together to provide affordable
15 supportive housing to thousands of its residents; now
16 that the NY/NY III agreement has expired, we are
17 interested in exploring what the future of supportive
18 housing in New York City looks like.

19 At this point there has been no work on a
20 NY/NY IV agreement between the City and State, but
21 both the Mayor and the Governor have announced
22 funding for additional supportive housing units; of
23 course, I'm not sure what's going on with the
24 Governor, but that's another conversation.

25 Last year the Mayor also announced the
establishment of the Supportive Housing Task Force

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE 40
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

3 which was created to advise the City on implementing
4 its supportive housing plan. I'm interested in
5 hearing updates from the task force and in learning
6 more about the Mayor's supportive housing plan
generally.

7 I would like to thank my staff for the
8 work they did to assemble this hearing, including
9 Nick Smith, my Deputy Chief of Staff and Legislative
10 Director; Megan Chen, Counsel to the Committee;
11 Guillermo Patino and Jose Conde, Policy Analysts to
12 the Committee; and Sarah Gastelum, the Committee's
13 Finance Analyst. Thank you.

14 [background comments]

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
16 Chair Williams. Do any other members of the
17 Administration have testimony?

18 JESSICA KATZ: Hello. Chairman Levin,
19 Chairman Williams and members of the General Welfare
20 and Housing and Buildings Committees, thank you for
21 the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the New
22 York City Department of Housing Preservation and
23 Development on our efforts to create and preserve
24 supportive housing.
25

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 41

3 My name is Jessica Katz and I am the
4 Associate Commissioner for New Construction at HPD.

5 [interpose]

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I'm sorry; did
7 you hand in testimony?

8 JESSICA KATZ: Yes. I believe so.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

10 [background comment]

11 JESSICA KATZ: Do you have it?

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Try to locate it, but
13 you can continue.

14 JESSICA KATZ: I would like to begin with
15 my sincerest thanks to the Council for your ongoing
16 support, your leadership is critical for expanding
17 supportive housing which in turn will reduce
18 homelessness in the neighborhoods you serve.

19 Supportive housing is a cost-effective
20 solution to homelessness for disabled New Yorkers, it
21 is permanent, affordable housing combined with on-
22 site social services; it is a proven solution for
23 people with long histories of homelessness and other
24 challenges, including mental illness, addiction and
25 HIV/AIDS. Peer-reviewed research on supportive
housing found that for every unit of supportive

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

42

3 housing we build taxpayers save more than \$10,000 per
4 year in public resources, such as shelters, emergency
5 rooms, jails, and psychiatric facilities. In fact,
6 research has even shown that contrary to population
7 belief, supportive housing increases property values
8 in the surrounding area.

9 The projects themselves provide
10 amenities, such as community spaces and computer
11 rooms, the theater we're sitting here in today, and
12 all while incorporating innovative design elements,
13 making these buildings vibrant places to live. Most
14 importantly, supportive housing provides its tenants
15 with rent-stabilized leases and all the same rights
16 and responsibilities as any other tenant in a rental
17 apartment in New York City.

18 Anyone who has visited one of our
19 supportive housing projects can hear personal stories
20 of tenants who have previously lived in shelter,
21 often for many years, but who are now reconnecting
22 with family, addressing their health needs and
23 finding employment. There are many reasons why we
24 see such successful outcomes in supportive housing,
25 including the dedication of staff and their social
services delivery, but at its core, the model is

successful because the home is affordable and
provides the services that the tenant needs.

Supportive housing projects are almost
always a mix of supportive units and other affordable
apartments. A typical supporting housing project
includes a 60/40 split between supportive housing
units and other affordable housing units available to
any household that income qualifies. Typically,
incomes for a single-person household applying to
live in one of the general affordable units would be
capped at 60% of AMI or \$38,100 a year, an income
which encompasses a broad range of City residents in
entry-level or part-time jobs.

Supportive housing is the solution to
homelessness and the Council is a critical partner in
helping us build more of it. HPD is extremely
grateful to the Council Members here today for
helping us educate New Yorkers about the benefits of
supportive housing and for welcoming a number of
wonderful supportive housing developments throughout
the neighborhoods you represent.

When proposing a new supportive housing
project we often hear unfounded assumptions about how
the supportive housing project will impact the

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

44

3 surrounding neighborhood or questions about how we
4 chose a specific site and whether we are building
5 supportive housing exclusively in low-income
6 neighborhoods or communities of color. We need your
7 help to address these neighborhood concerns and
8 shatter any myths that supportive housing is bad for
9 communities or concentrated in certain neighborhoods.
10 Today I would like to highlight a few of the
11 supportive housing projects developed by HPD and our
12 nonprofit partners.

13 For example, today we are in Cobble Hill,
14 Brooklyn, in Chairperson Levin's district. The
15 building we are sitting in is a 217-unit supportive
16 housing project in the heart of Brownstone, Brooklyn
17 that opened in 2009. The building was created when
18 the developer of the luxury townhouses on this same
19 site approached Breaking Ground about a partnership.
20 The building blends into the neighborhood and is a
21 community asset. I was actually walking by this
22 building last summer with my new baby and my mother
23 and when I peeked into the lobby, my mom thought that
24 I was looking to buy a condo here [laughter] for my
25 growing family. As you may know, Breaking Ground is
the developer of The Schermerhorn; Breaking Ground is

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE 45
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

3 internationally recognized as a leader and innovator
4 in the supportive housing field, so its supportive
5 housing portfolio in New York City accounts for over
6 2,500 units across three boroughs.

7 All of their supportive housing buildings
8 contain a mix of supportive and general affordable
9 units and many of them are located in Committee
10 Members' districts, including The Lee, which is a
11 262-unit supportive housing project in the Lower East
12 Side, in Council Member Mendez' district, on the site
13 of a former boys' club.

14 The Prince George is a 416-unit
15 supportive housing project in Gramercy, also in
16 Council Member Mendez' district, that opened in 1999.
17 The building includes a rooftop garden, art studio
18 and computer lab and event space housed in the
19 restored Prince George ballroom. The ballroom on-
20 site has hosted events, including New York Fashion
21 Week and even a Real Housewives Reunion special.

22 [laughter] I won't tell you how I know that.

23 [laughter]

24 And the Times Square Hotel is in Council
25 Member Johnson's district; it's a 652-unit supportive
housing project that opened in 1991. The building is

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 46

3 listed on the National Register of Historic Places,
4 and if you've ever grabbed an ice cream cone at the
5 Ben & Jerry's in Times Square, you did so in the
6 largest supportive housing project in the country.

7 The Christopher is a 207-unit supportive
8 housing project in Chelsea. The building is on the
9 site of the original McBurney Y, the inspiration for
10 The Village People song that generations have danced
11 to. The project dedicates 40 of its units to the
12 Foyer Program, which serves young adults aging out of
13 the foster care system or who are formerly homeless.

14 We are proud to work with a range of
15 skilled development teams across the city with deep
16 roots, serving a range of different communities with
17 critical needs. Our development partners include
18 Community Development Corporation, serving local
19 neighborhoods; faith-based groups; veteran
20 organizations; and organizations serving LGBTQ youth.

21 In 2015, the Mayor announced a major
22 commitment of \$1 billion in City capital over the
23 next 15 years that will fund 15,000 units of
24 supportive housing; approximately half these units
25 will be new construction supported through HPD
financing.

3 The Administration is committed to
4 including supportive housing as an integral part of
5 our housing stock and fully embraces supportive
6 housing. This increased funding has allowed us to
7 ensure that a wide range of people who need
8 supportive housing will have access to it.

9 HPD's Supportive Housing Loan Program has
10 long been the primary financing tool for the City's
11 supportive housing production. Last week the Mayor
12 announced our recent achievements with respect to
13 housing development and I am proud to say that since
14 the beginning of Housing New York in January of 2014,
15 we have financed the construction or preservation of
16 approximately 2,430 supportive housing units.

17 While a typical affordable housing deal
18 depends on multiple sources of funding, supportive
19 housing deals often rely on even more sources; it's
20 not unusual to see five, six or more sources of
21 capital financing listed for just one project. Most
22 deals include a combination of City capital through
23 HPD's Supportive Housing Loan Program, low-income tax
24 credits and private debt. Rental assistance is
25 typically funded through HUD Section 8 Shelter Plus
Care or HUD-VASH vouchers.

3 I would like to reiterate our
4 appreciation for the Council for today's hearing and
5 for the ongoing attention to this important topic.
6 Supportive housing serves a critical need in New York
7 City and Council Members are critical partners in
8 bringing together all the pieces necessary to make
9 this housing a reality. I would be happy to answer
any questions that you may have.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
11 Ms. Katz for your testimony. I also want to note
12 that in this building Brooklyn Ballet has 2,000
13 square feet, so any student of Brooklyn Ballet who
14 come from all over Brooklyn are in this building as
15 well and their studio's right there on Schermerhorn
16 Street.

17 I also want to welcome my colleagues
18 Helen Rosenthal and Rafael Espinal as well to the
19 hearing today. And I'll start off with some
20 questions.

21 First off, I wanted to ask just about
22 kind of structurally, so supportive housing for the
23 last 25 years or so has been under a NY/NY framework
24 where the City and the State have participated and
25 jointly come up with an agreement on how supportive

3 housing units are going to be funded and financed.

4 Obviously that's not happening right now, and without

5 getting too much into kind of why that is -- I think

6 we kind of all understand tensions between the City

7 and the State -- what are the challenges that the

8 City is facing -- in other words, how is the

9 financing different; what is different from the NY/NY

10 III units, which we are just finishing building right

11 now, with the new either scatter-site or congregate

12 supportive housing facilities? What are the

13 challenges and how is the City kind of working to

14 address that in light of the fact that there's not

15 that partnership as we speak? And either of you can...

16 JESSICA KATZ: So for the congregate

17 housing, the financing fundamentally hasn't changed

18 much; most of these projects still incorporate a

19 combination of city and state financing sources.

20 What it does mean is that the social services and the

21 rental subsidy is... the City ends up having to pick up

22 the tab entirely for those projects. I think on the

23 staff level the supportive housing community is very

24 tight-knit and all of us who have worked in this

25 business for a long time continue to have very good

relationships with the staff level, so I think we

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 50

3 continue to do our best coordinating with our state
4 partners.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So what was the
6 arrangement in terms of the social services and
7 rental subsidy under NY/NY III? And then just
8 specifically how is it different under the new
9 arrangement?

10 JESSICA KATZ: Sure. Under NY/NY III,
11 the mental health units, which was the bulk of the
12 units under the 9,000-unit agreement, were paid for
13 entirely by the State and the other populations, such
14 as young adults aging out of foster care and HIV/AIDS
15 and substance abuse was a split between city and
16 state funding, so there was a substantial state
17 investment in the ongoing operations in social
18 services of the building that does not exist under
19 the current 15/15 plan.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And what is that, in
21 terms of annual expense dollars, under say NY/NY III,
22 how much is the state paying for NY/NY III annually?

23 DANIEL TIETZ: Yeah, I'm afraid that I
24 don't have that with us; we can get it for you; we
25 can give you their portion of I, II and III, and then

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

51

3 obviously, for NYC 15/15 it's all our cost...

4 [crosstalk]

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

6 DANIEL TIETZ: but I can... we don't have
7 the number on NY/NY III with us.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And it would be good
9 to know what it is in terms of real dollar amounts in
10 addition to what the percentages are, just so that we
11 as a -- you know obviously, we as a legislative
12 branch that approves the budget, it's important to
13 know what the budgetary impact is to the City of New
14 York vis-à-vis the State. And then do you have
15 insight into then how... [crosstalk]

16 DANIEL TIETZ: Just to... Just to make care
17 clear though, Council Member, the State is continuing
18 to own its portion of... [crosstalk]

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, yeah.

20 DANIEL TIETZ: their previous agreement,
21 so going forward we fully expect that they're going
22 to pay for the services costs, so their contribution
23 continues.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Oh on the NY/NY III,
25 NY/NY II... [crosstalk]

DANIEL TIETZ: Exactly.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

52

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: NY/NY I...

4 DANIEL TIETZ: It... it... they don't have a
5 contribution, apart from what Jessica said, with
6 regards to capital for the NYC 15/15, the Mayor's
7 plan, but they will continue with their previous
8 obligations.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And they are
10 proposing to do another several thousand units of
11 State-funded; I mean do you have any insight to how,
12 in terms of the social service provision and the
13 rental subsidies; does that mean in those units the
14 State is going to be picking up 100% percent of the
15 cost?

16 DANIEL TIETZ: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So there's going to
18 be, essentially, two separate systems that look
19 similar but are going to be one entirely funded by
20 the State and one entirely funded by the City?

21 DANIEL TIETZ: To some degree that's
22 right; however, I think our expectation, and I may
23 have to have my colleagues at DOHMH weigh in, but our
24 expectation I think generally is that they'll still
25 ask City agencies to have some role in this --

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 53

2 notably DOHMH -- with regard to OMH units, so we'll
3 see... [crosstalk]

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, 'cause DOHMH
5 is the local service provider... [crosstalk]

6 DANIEL TIETZ: Right, and in the previous
7 agreements they didn't, how shall we say, do their
8 own work in this regard... [crosstalk]

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure... right, OMH
10 doesn't have the staff to be a service provider in
11 New York City...

12 DANIEL TIETZ: Right.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: it's just the
14 locality's responsibility. Okay, so we're in January
15 of 2017; we had a hearing in late 2015 on this
16 matter; has there been any additional developments in
17 terms of discussions between the City and the State?
18 In other words, I mean is there... essentially, the
19 longer that we go on with two parallel tracks of
20 supportive housing, does that over time eliminate the
21 possibility of folding them into a new NY/NY
22 agreement or is there still a potential if there's a
23 rapprochement [laughter] for there to be greater
24 **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

25

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

54

3 DANIEL TIETZ: This isn't a cold war,
4 Council Member. [laughter] So... [crosstalk]

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: So says you.
6 [laughter]

7 DANIEL TIETZ: That's right, Council
8 Member, so says me. So I would say this; that we
9 are... you know we continue to speak with them with
10 great regularity, so at the staff level, there's a
11 lot of cooperation every day on serving New Yorkers
12 in need and that's true with regards to supportive
13 housing as well; I'd expect it to be true going
14 forward. I think nothing is off the table with
15 regard to how this could look going forward. We
16 fully expect that the City will have some role with
17 regards to the State's units, so I think all things
18 are open here. The good new would be that both City
19 and State are investing significant resources in
20 supportive housing in New York City, and that's a
21 good thing for all of us.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We've heard from some
23 advocates a concern that there are a number of
24 applicants for supportive housing that are being
25 turned away; that essentially once... the providers are
required or asked to accept one-third of the

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 55

3 applicants and two out of every three are not being
4 accepted into supportive housing programs; I don't
5 know if that's accurate, but the concern is that
6 those that are being turned away are being turned
7 away because either they are not showing up to their
8 appointments on time, they're not showing an adequate
9 understanding of their own mental illness perhaps or
10 they're not, you know, showing the kind of
11 wherewithal to go through the rigors of an
12 applications process and that is concerning obviously
13 because those that might need the help the most may
14 have the most challenges with going through the
15 rigorous process of an application. So can you speak
16 to that; is that happening; is... how do you ensure...
17 how do you track what is going on with those that are
18 not actually accepted into supportive housing units,
19 and is there any way to track whether those same
20 people are being rejected over and over and over
21 again, and are you tracking the reasons why people
22 are being rejected?

23 JESSICA KATZ: So I'll just start by
24 saying that from the houser [sic] side, the purpose
25 of supportive housing is that it's a voluntary
program and our nonprofits are landlords that are

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE 56
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

3 going to have a long-term relationship with these
4 tenants, so we've tried to find a balance and the
5 balance that we struck is sending three choices,
6 essentially, so that the landlord can find the right
7 match between the three. The three that we send all
8 need supportive housing very badly and so by
9 definition, there are going to be some folks who are
10 not selected of the one, two three, but we really do
11 want to maintain some amount of choice for the
12 provider and some amount of choice for the tenant as
13 well. So all three that we send very badly need
14 supportive housing and we do want to maintain some
15 amount of choice on both sides of the equation
16 because this is a long-term relationship and it's a
17 voluntary one. So I think that ratio of being able
18 to select a tenant does have... you know, it's
19 important to keep some aspect of that.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And that's been the
21 case through the previous iterations of NY/NY?

22 JESSICA KATZ: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, so that's
24 standard with supportive housing in New York City.
25 And now how do you track what happens to the two out

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 57

3 of three that are not accepted into that particular
4 unit?

5 DANIEL TIETZ: I'll explain.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And I mean is that a
7 concern that you have that it may be the ones most in
8 need that are the ones that are rejected because they
9 may not show a clear understanding of their mental
10 illness; they may not, you know, dress appropriately
11 for the interview; they might not show up on time;
12 they might miss appointments, you know they may be
13 afflicted with mental illness that they, you know, is
14 a major hurdle to overcome?

15 DANIEL TIETZ: Alright, so I would
16 probably characterize it somewhat differently than
17 you did, which is that yes; it is one in three, but
18 it's one in three who are similarly situated, so it's
19 folks with significant needs; on paper there isn't a
20 distinct difference among them. Folks need benefits
21 in place, some need greater assistance than others;
22 certainly there's an effort to match people to
23 provider type and unit type, so this is an effort to
24 look at what do folks need and then what programs
25 would they fit in, so they're not approved, if you
will, in general for all things. In the previous

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 58

3 agreements there were categories, as I think you may
4 know, and so you might be approved for a category or
5 two categories; there may be more limited
6 availability of units in some of those categories
7 than some other categories. An effort is made to
8 make an appropriate match both category-wise and
9 provider-wise, as well as unit type best [sic]
10 between congregate and scattered-site. Almost by
11 definition folks in scattered-site arguable can self-
12 manage a bit more if they're in units that are in
13 apartment buildings in the community with fewer on-
14 site services than something like The Schermerhorn
15 where it's a congregate setting where the services
16 are right here, so there's an effort to place folks'
17 greater needs in congregate units versus scattered-
18 site units. I think I may let Mike Bosket add more
19 to that.

20 MIKE BOSKET: Yes, just to build on Dan's
21 point that the referrals of the three individuals
22 that are made to open units, we would argue based on
23 the clinical criteria to make the determination which
24 types of units they've been determined eligible for;
25 they have similar presentation in terms of their
needs, but we also think going forward the

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

59

3 implementation of the coordinated assessment that Dan
4 spoke of in his testimony and the vulnerability index
5 that we're developing will help us better identify
6 and prioritize those clients who have greater needs
7 for placement in supportive housing based on criteria
8 on the vulnerability index.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So that's going to be
10 tracking client by client, so everybody's going... or
11 applicant by applicant, so everybody's going to have
12 a profile of sorts on the...

13 MIKE BOSKET: As we develop it, all
14 clients who go through the supportive housing
15 application process will have a coordinated
16 assessment and all clients will have a vulnerability
17 index. We're building that now; the hope is to have
18 it implemented by the end of this year, but that will
19 allow us to better identify those clients who are in
20 highest need.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And is there going to
22 be a space within that index to show whether somebody
23 has had repeated applications and not been accepted
24 into a supportive housing unit?
25

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 60

2 MIKE BOSKET: We are developing the tool
3 now and have some ideas as to what's onto [sic] the
4 tool... [crosstalk]

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

6 MIKE BOSKET: I can't say if that will be
7 one of the questions or not.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, I encourage you
9 to look at that issue. Again, I'm not... you know,
10 this wasn't generated from, you know, my assumptions
11 on the matter; this was reported to me by advocates,
12 so it's something that I think certainly I would
13 encourage you to look at and also work with the
14 provider and advocate community as something to flag
15 as you kind of move forward with developing that
16 criteria and implementing it.

17 JESSICA KATZ: I also think that the lack
18 of units themselves and the lack of a sufficient
19 number is the primary limiting factor here; I think
20 we've done a pretty job prioritizing and coordinated
21 assessment will help us target even deeper, but we
22 still don't have enough apartments for everybody who
23 needs it, so that's got to be our primary...

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right and that's the
25 context by which... and that might give rise to a

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 61

3 particular situation because of the scarcity of the
4 units, but I think that it's important to kind of
5 keep an eye out for that particular condition,
6 because we're not... you know, this is in fact a
7 uniquely vulnerable population to issues of that sort
8 in terms of -- because there's mental illness often
9 involved that there's... you know keeping... the issue of
10 keeping of appointments, showing up to appointments
11 out of sorts or disheveled or something like that is
12 something that we want to make sure is not
13 perpetually inhibiting people from getting into
14 apartments.

15 I want to ask I guess one more question
16 here and then I'll turn it over to my colleagues and
17 I'll probably come back for some.

18 With the previous NY/NY agreements it was
19 very prescribed how many units were going to be for
20 different categories of supporting housing in terms
21 of conditions that are being met; the 15/15 plan is
22 not as prescriptive; is that something that was done
23 by design and is that to allow more flexibility, and
24 how then do you make sure or ensure on an ongoing
25 basis that there's enough units being provided for
particular categories that may be more difficult to

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

62

3 achieve and so you know, what's in place to prevent
4 the City from just developing the easiest units to
5 develop?

6 JESSICA KATZ: So as you pointed out, the
7 recommendations from the task force was to target
8 towards three broad populations, so to get away from
9 these multiple, very prescribed units, which we're
10 finding, at the end of the NY/NY III, it's hard to
11 necessarily fill when you have just a couple here; a
12 couple there; at the moment it's not necessarily
13 meeting where the demand is. So I think there is a
14 lot of work and a lot of thought that went into
15 really figuring out what is the best road to go
16 moving forward; there was a lot of data analytics, we
17 really looked at what the need is; as you mentioned
18 earlier, the number of people in shelter has
19 increased significantly, and so I think the good news
20 is; there is a lot of overlapping need, right, and so
21 if you just take the three broad populations that
22 were recommended, right -- it's single adults and
23 adult families, families with children, and youth --
24 and within those populations there's a ton of need
25 and as Deputy Commissioner Mike Bosket mentioned
earlier, the City is moving towards finding a way to

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

63

3 create a coordinated assessment and a vulnerability
4 index, and so it's in our best interest, as I think
5 it's also in the client's best interest to really
6 target these resources -- they're scarce resources --
7 to those who are most in need, and so we'll be able
8 to figure out, you know on some kind of scale or
9 within a spectrum who are those people that could not
10 live in the community by themselves without having
11 supportive housing resource, and those are the people
12 we really want to make sure are going to be targeted
13 for these units. And so by creating a broader
14 flexibility and not making it as prescribed, that's
15 going to allow us to really implement that kind of
16 thoughtful, targeted approach as we look at those who
17 are in shelter at any given period of time.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Now that means though
19 -- I mean how are we going to ensure then that
20 medical family, substance abuse in recovery,
21 substance abuse active, that the people are fitting
22 those criteria, that we're still meeting the minimum
23 number of objective units without setting forward...
24 [crosstalk]

25 JESSICA KATZ: So all of those folks
would fall, right, within... so if they're single

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

64

3 adults and they're me... you know, substance user,
4 right, active substance users who are single adults,
5 they would fall within the category of people
6 eligible for the single-adult units. And so if they
7 are more vulnerable than somebody else, they would
8 obviously be prioritized.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So they would be
10 prioritized as being more vulnerable because of a
11 substance abuse issue?

12 JESSICA KATZ: Well because we're going
13 to create this vulnerability index, so we're going to
14 create a tool that's going to help guide us towards
15 understanding within that spectrum of people who need
16 these units who is going to need it the most.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So somebody with a
18 greater vulnerability will receive a higher priority
19 **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

20 JESSICA KATZ: Yeah, that's the direction
21 and the intent. It's not easy to do; it's not
22 something that's going to happen very quickly, but a
23 lot of the feedback we heard from the community; a
24 lot of the feedback that we've heard from providers
25 and clients and everyone trying to re-house, and it's

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

65

3 also within the City's interest to really try to make
4 sure that we are serving the highest-need.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I see.

6 DANIEL TIETZ: Yeah, if I could just add
7 -- the previous categories were genuine categories,
8 and I think as we each recognize people don't tend to
9 live in those small boxes... [interpose]

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. Yeah.

11 DANIEL TIETZ: so you know, if you only
12 had this thing apparently that you needed addressed,
13 then that's the only category for which you can get
14 approved and if we ran out of units, then you are
15 plum out of luck. And in this instance, taking a
16 whole host of vulnerability factors into account and
17 essentially assigning -- if you think about this as a
18 score to those -- then those with the greatest needs
19 would have the greatest access, because many people
20 don't have just one challenge in life; they have more
21 than one challenge and they have greater needs than
22 some others, and so that's the effort here.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So then... sorry; then
24 going back to the situation where if you have three
25 applicants that you're choosing from, under that
framework do you still have then the discretion to

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

66

3 choose somebody with a lower score on the
4 vulnerability index [background comments] or does the
5 person with the higher score on the vulnerability
6 index be the de facto choice for that provider?

7 JESSICA KATZ: So you would send the
8 three most vulnerable people on the list, right...
9 [crosstalk]

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: **[inaudible]**

11 JESSICA KATZ: the provider would pick
12 one... [crosstalk]

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

14 JESSICA KATZ: and then the next two, the
15 next available unit, you would take those two and
16 then a third one, so we would work our way down the
17 list.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Okay, I'm
19 going to turn it over to my co-chair and then we'll
20 be hearing from Council Members Rosenthal [sic] and
21 Grodenchik and then probably come back for some more
22 questions.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you very
24 much. Just want to make something... point that I
25 think Mr. Tietz said, which is -- I just want to make
clear that I believe that most of the staff -- city

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

67

3 and state -- actually are trying their best to help
4 the constituents of both, we normally say there's a
5 feud in city and state; there is a feud between the
6 Mayor and the Governor and that is what is causing
7 much of this problem; this is one instance where it's
8 having a direct effect, I believe, on the people who
9 need help the most and I would have to say, from what
10 I see, it is really on the Governor to put up what he
11 needs to do, because the Mayor has done so and is
12 providing a plan; the Governor has given no real
13 excuse as to why the \$2 billion is being locked up
14 and people need these [sic] services, so I think it's
15 on him at this point. But we often say city/state; I
16 want to make it clear; it's two people; it is the
17 Mayor and the Governor and it's very frustrating
18 'cause there are real lives being affected and in
19 this case it is the Governor who needs to put up,
20 because we have done so.

21 But thank you very much for your
22 testimony. I have some questions on -- Ms. Katz --
23 Every unit of supportive housing taxpayers save more
24 than \$10,000 per year in public resources, such as
25 shelters, emergency, jails, and psychiatric
facilities. I was confused about psychiatric

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

68

3 facilities; wouldn't someone need the services
4 anyway; where is the money being saved there?

5 JESSICA KATZ: So these are folks who
6 were living permanently in psychiatric hospitals but
7 really didn't need to be there and could thrive in
8 supportive housing, but a... [crosstalk]

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Oh I see.

10 JESSICA KATZ: psychiatric facility costs
11 so much more per night, per year [background comment]
12 than supportive housing does.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: And so we're
14 freeing up that space for someone who actually needs
15 those services. Can you describe how supportive
16 housing increases property values **[inaudible]**?

17 JESSICA KATZ: Sure. So the NYU Fuhrman
18 Center did a study, must have been six or seven years
19 ago now; we gave them our data on where all the
20 supportive housing projects that we've sited and what
21 year they opened and they took a look at the
22 surrounding census tracts and figured out whether, if
23 you were in a very small, of a 500 or a 1,000-square-
24 foot radius versus other properties that were in the
25 census tract but not immediately adjacent to
supportive housing, and it turned out that the

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

69

3 property values increased at a faster rate if you
4 were immediately adjacent. Part of that we think is;
5 many of our buildings have on-site security, so
6 there's some good eyes on the street, that kind of
7 helps the surrounding property values and the block
8 be safer; a building like this, as you've seen, is
9 gorgeous and so we try to always be the most
10 attractive property on the block, which also helps
11 the surrounding properties, and many times we're
12 replacing a blated [sic] project with something
13 gorgeous like this; this was a vacant lot for many
14 years prior to this building being built, so that
15 also has a great impact on property value.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. And
17 I appreciate you mentioning that; appreciate the
18 report; I do know that the vast majority of people in
19 the city **[inaudible]** still refuse to believe that and
20 with do everything they can to fight supportive
21 housing in spite of the facts, but I've learned in
22 the past two years that facts don't matter sometimes,
23 [laughter] but my hope is that if we can keep [sic]
24 at least... [crosstalk]

25 DANIEL TIETZ: I'm not sure what you're
referring to... [crosstalk]

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 70

2 JESSICA KATZ: **[inaudible]**, Councilman...

3 [crosstalk]

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: You have no
5 idea, do you? We're about to make America great
6 again in about a day. [laughter] But hopefully we
7 just keep pushing that information out there and
8 maybe it'll start to seep in.

9 Another part of testimony -- supportive
10 housing is a solution to homelessness. I was just
11 wondering if that is true; I think it is the solution
12 for a subset -- I just want to be clear, because I
13 know that another [sic] solutions are making sure
14 that people have legal representation, making sure
15 that people have assistance in paying for rent, so
16 not everybody needs supportive housing, so I wanted
17 to make sure we were clear...

18 DANIEL TIETZ: Right; that's exactly
19 right. So in my testimony I sort of listed the
20 things that HRA does and among them, which you just
21 mentioned with regard to legal services, rental
22 assistance; all the other things we do, there many,
23 many folks in shelter, for example, who work, they
24 just don't have enough to make the rent, and they
25 don't need supportive housing. So supportive housing

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

71

3 is an answer, particularly I think for those who are
4 chronically homeless and have significant health,
5 mental health, substance use and other needs; for
6 them to make it in the community, this is a good
7 answer; for others, they don't need this.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. And
9 just to follow up on something that that the Co-Chair
10 said; I'm not sure if I got a full answer, but there
11 was testimony in one of the answers about funding
12 that was shared between city and state with the
13 partnerships; do we have a number of how much money
14 we're losing with the partnership?

15 DANIEL TIETZ: Right. So just be clear,
16 in the existing NY/NY agreements, the City/State
17 agreements, the State's contribution continues -- or
18 so we're counting on... [interpose]

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Do you know how
20 much that is?

21 DANIEL TIETZ: No, and that's the number
22 we're going to get for you... [crosstalk]

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Okay.

24 DANIEL TIETZ: so that continues. In the
25 City's, you know the Mayor's 15,000 you know NYC
15/15, those costs, apart from some that Jessica

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 72

3 mentioned with regards to capital are the City, so
4 the operating costs, the service costs are City
5 costs. In that, of course, we save on shelter, we
6 save on, you know, jail time, we save on Medicaid, we
7 save in a variety of ways, but there are... frankly,
8 given the City's investment, there are also savings
9 to the State, so for example maybe most notably,
10 there are Medicaid savings for the State. If you are
11 serving folks well in supportive housing, then by
12 definition they will have fewer Medicaid costs at the
13 state. But the investment in NYC 15/15 is largely a
14 City investment.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: And I guess
16 it's safe to say that **[inaudible]** the number that
17 you're going to get for us would narrow what we're
18 losing if **[inaudible]**?

19 JESSICA KATZ: Yeah, so I think what we
20 can do is; if we were to assume the exact same rules
21 of NY/NY III funding applied going forward, we could
22 figure out what that number would be. I think we...
23 you know we would also be hopeful that if there was a
24 NY/NY IV that maybe it would be more favorable to the
25 City, but we can kind of model it on what the current
NY/NY III arrangements are.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

73

3 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: And for
4 clarity, our preference is to have a NY/NY agreement;
5 we're going forward with this because the Governor
6 has not told us what he's doing with the \$2 billion.

7 DANIEL TIETZ: No, not exactly. We're
8 going forward with this because the Mayor heard
9 Council Members and communities and advocates say
10 that supportive housing is a key answer to ending
11 homelessness for thousands of New Yorkers with
12 significant health, mental health and substance use
13 and other needs. So we heard that and the Mayor said
14 with our without an agreement with the State, we need
15 to act. So I think as Commissioner Banks testified
16 last year, we thought it was important to go forward
17 even in the absence of a new agreement.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Sure, and I
19 appreciate what you phrased; as the Chair of Housing,
20 I'm going to say I think we would've preferred that
21 the NY/NY agreement went forward; I'm happy that the
22 Mayor stepped up with his part... [crosstalk]

23 DANIEL TIETZ: We're always happy when
24 they're willing to pay...

25 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Sure. And so I
think we would've expected that the Governor would've

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

74

3 acted then and at least would've acted by now --
4 those are my words -- so I just want to make sure
5 that that's on the record. Just have a couple more
6 questions; then I'll turn it back to the Chair, who I
7 think is going to have colleagues ask questions.

8 In a December 2015 hearing on supportive
9 housing, the Administration testified that the first
10 scattered-site units will be available in 2017 and
11 the first congregate units will be in Fiscal Year
12 2018. In December 2016 the Administration announced
13 that contracts were awarded for the first 550
14 scattered-site units for chronically homeless adults
15 and adult families with a serious mental illness or
16 substance use disorder. Contracts have been awarded
17 for the first 550 scattered-site units; when do you
18 expect tenants to move into those apartments?

19 JESSICA KATZ: So we are in the process
20 now of negotiating with the nonprofit providers; we
21 are hopeful that we will be able to locate and secure
22 apartments and finalize contracts by the end of this
23 fiscal year, so we're targeting a July date.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Will all of
25 these tenants be coming from the DHS system?

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE 75
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

3 JESSICA KATZ: The tenants will, yes, be
4 coming from the DHS system and they will be filtered
5 through the 2010e process.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: What is the
7 plan for the next phase of the implementation?

8 JESSICA KATZ: The next phase is putting
9 out an RFP for congregate units and then putting out
10 the RFP for the remaining scatter-site units.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Are you still
12 on track to develop the first congregate units in
13 Fiscal Year 2018?

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: **[inaudible]** for the
15 record.

16 JESSICA KATZ: Yes.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you very
18 much.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, we're going to
20 turn it over to our colleagues; first up is Council
21 Member Helen Rosenthal.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you,
23 thank you so much. Thank you for holding this
24 hearing, to my colleagues, and thank you so much for
25 this helpful information. I work with two out of the
four of you and I find you to be very responsive,

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

76

3 very helpful in my district and I really want to
4 thank you publicly for that, because I know how
5 intractable these problems are.

6 I actually want to ask just very few
7 questions around, Dan, your testimony on page nine.
8 You know, it's interesting what you just said about
9 adding in the information about Legal Aid and sort of
10 one -- I still call them one-shots -- and whether or
11 not that has to do with supportive housing; I think
12 it very much has to do with supportive housing
13 because some of the clients who are being helped by
14 those services probably could use supportive housing
15 instead of being in their rent-regulated home, and I
16 think there's a client in particular that we've been
17 working with who I think would qualify for that, so
18 I'm glad you kept that information in here.

19 I'd be interested in knowing about the...
20 or going forward, how you're tracking or how you're
21 thinking about the success rate of using more Legal
22 Aid lawyers and giving -- is it still called one-
23 shots, you know where you... [interpose, background
24 comment] one-shots to assist with the cost of rentals
25 -- over a long period of time; in other words, are
people who were helping with lawyers -- yes, the

3 success rate, obviously; if they have a lawyer in the
4 courtroom, more likely than not they're going to win.
5 But I'm wondering over a long period of time whether
6 or not you track the individuals who you're helping
7 in both those regards to see if there's overlap and
8 to see if over time they're coming back and back
9 again. The reason I'm curious is because as I think
10 about my constituents who need that help, there are
11 different categories; one category, and the category
12 I'm most concerned about, are the ones who get the
13 help mostly with Legal Aid attorneys because the
14 building owner is actively harassing them out; they
15 see an apartment that they think they could monetize
16 and so they're just going to keep harassing them till
17 they're out, and it's those individuals that, you
18 know I really want to be helping because the right
19 thing to do is to keep them in their apartment.

20 DANIEL TIETZ: Yeah, so with regard to
21 the emergency assistance, it's tracked, we can see in
22 our system who we've given the emergency assistance
23 to, when and for what, and you know, over what period
24 of time and the same is true with regards to
25 referrals to legal services. So if that's the same
person, and it often is, so we referred you to legal

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 78

3 services; the legal services lawyer helped you in
4 housing court; you know the deal is that you have to
5 pay some amount of arrears and we're the ones who
6 will pay it. So we can see all of that in our files.
7 I would say that part of the advantage of or
8 usefulness of having these legal services contracts
9 is that, of course, the lawyers that we're assigning
10 these cases to will say to us the very thing you just
11 described; this is a landlord who's chasing all the
12 rent-regulated tenants... [crosstalk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yes.

14 DANIEL TIETZ: out of the building and
15 they all need lawyers and can you do something about
16 this. And there too I think there's a back and
17 forth, which maybe Jessica knows better than I do,
18 with regards to our state friends and what landlords
19 in rent-regulated properties, or properties that
20 should be rent regulated, are doing with their
21 tenants.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Exactly. And
23 then do you track, maybe in working in tandem with
24 Jessica, buildings that you might consider
25 opportunity for the City to take over in some way?
You know, in other words, what do you do with the

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

79

3 information that you get back? You know, I could
4 list three building owners that, you know, we're
5 working with to try to, you know, keep people in
6 their homes. How do you think about the next steps
7 once you start to see patterns of buildings that are
8 being systematically, you know, emptied out...?

9 [crosstalk]

10 DANIEL TIETZ: Yes, I think there's... I'll
11 start and then I'll let Jessica. So I think there's
12 some of what we each do, so I just mentioned refer
13 [sic] out to legal services for the individual
14 tenants; there are opportunities here, so speaking of
15 supportive housing, so there are opportunities for
16 owners with properties, of course, to speak to not-
17 for-profit partners, as some developer did for this
18 very project here, so there are other opportunities
19 for folks to, you know contemplate other affordable
20 housing uses for their property, but I think what
21 you're referring to in terms of harassment, I'm going
22 to let Jessica handle.

23 [background comment]

24 JESSICA KATZ: Thanks, Council Member
25 Rosenthal. So HRA has a very robust system of legal
aid for individual tenants, but HPD, as you know,

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

80

3 also has a litigation unit where as we can bring
4 suits on behalf of the City of New York against
5 landlords, which we do frequently, so if there's
6 particular buildings in your district, we'd be happy
7 to get back to you on those in particular.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Well for sure,
9 but I guess I'm wondering if internally at HRA you
10 could... you know, I'm not asking you to do it today
11 or... but that you have your go to list of, you know,
12 these are the building owners who are systematically
13 doing this and who we're pursuing and do you
14 regularly add to that list; could you tell me off the
15 top of your head how many buildings; how many
16 building owners; do you have enough resources to be
17 doing that work, because in my mind's eye, if we
18 could solve that issue, that's... you know, there are
19 500 units a year in my district where there's no
20 question that the building owners are simply
21 harassing and evicting out the tenants, and you know
22 we did that analysis using the Department of Finance
23 website, their information, and literally, over the
24 last five years, we've been tracking this since I've
25 been in office and two years prior, 500 units a year;
I mean that's 2,500 units that you could have tropped

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 81

3 [sic] up to preservation and I'm wondering, you know
4 how you're taking advantage of that information and
5 stemming the tide.

6 JESSICA KATZ: So I'd love to, you know,
7 bring you in and have you sit down with our
8 litigation unit to make sure that the strategy that
9 that team is putting forth is meeting the needs of
10 those buildings in your district.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay. Great,
12 thank you very much; I'll take you up on that.

13 DANIEL TIETZ: Yeah, I'll also just note
14 that there's a lot of back and forth between the two
15 agencies' staff, so if we're seeing something, then
16 we're pretty promptly in touch with HPD about this
17 landlord, this building, what do you know; we're
18 seeing this happen with our clients, we're seeing
19 people come to us all from this address.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay. And do
21 we then -- sorry, Chairs -- [background comment] do
22 you bring in Department of Buildings as well and is
23 there... the sense I get is that you can track a
24 building between DOB, HRA, HPD, and Department of
25 Finance, that there's a code so that you can see... for
example, if you put a violation on a building owner

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

82

3 you could, hypothetically, see whether or not they
4 ever pay; it goes through OATH and then -- do you
5 track that kind of information?

6 DANIEL TIETZ: Yeah, we can see...

7 [interpose]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I asked you
9 two questions, I guess about DOB and then tracking.

10 DANIEL TIETZ: Yeah, we can see much of
11 that information and if... again, if we ever have
12 concerns, if we're seeing a pattern, then we reach
13 out to our other City colleagues with regard to those
14 properties.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay. And do
16 you track it through the Department of Finance and
17 whether or not violations are paid?

18 JESSICA KATZ: That's o... [interpose]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I know we're
20 way off topic now.

21 JESSICA KATZ: That's often what the
22 litigation unit is doing is litigating to get those,
23 you know, to get some of those fines paid.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Right, but...
25 Okay, so we'll talk more offline. I mean the point
isn't so much as getting them paid; it's that it's an

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

83

3 indicator that this is a bad dude and we need to
4 perhaps step it up and I don't know if you use that
5 as an indicator; I don't see that happening. Okay,
6 thank you very much. Thank you chairs.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council
8 Member Rosenthal. Council Member Grodenchik.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you
10 Chair, thank you chair... [crosstalk]

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And we've also been
12 joined by Council Member Ulrich.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Good morning;
14 it's almost good afternoon, but good morning. The
15 numbers for supportive housing that you presented
16 this morning, are those just the City numbers;
17 they're not inclusive of anything that the State is
18 doing in the City of New York?

19 DANIEL TIETZ: These are the... some of
20 these are units from the previous NY/NY agreements
21 and then the units, the sort of new ones we were
22 mentioning are all the NYC 15/15 units; they are not
23 the Governor's new initiative.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay. Thank
25 you. I just want to ask you quickly, on the HRA
2010e, it sounds like a federal tax form, but

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE 84
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

3 [laughter] how long is that form? It must go on for
4 about a month.

5 MIKE BOSKET: It's about nine pages in
6 length, I mean clearly it's a psychosocial and a
7 psychiatric evaluation and some other components.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay. And
9 this would be done by a hospital perhaps or by...

10 MIKE BOSKET: It would be done by housing
11 specialist, hospitals... [interpose]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Nursing
13 homes, perhaps [sic]...

14 MIKE BOSKET: not usually a nursing home,
15 Rikers completes them, various institutions and
16 community-based providers.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: And do you
18 provide training sessions, you know because we hold
19 at the Council... it's very... these forms can be very
20 complicated, so there are training sessions and...

21 MIKE BOSKET: We absolutely for new users
22 have an orientation and training sessions.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay. And
24 could it theoretically be done by an individual or do
25 you need to have a sign-off by some kind of
professional?

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE 85
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

3 MIKE BOSKET: No, it has to be done by a
4 housing specialist or some other person like that.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay. And
6 just to educate me a little; on supportive housing in
7 general, what's a typical stay, is it many years, is
8 it... it's a long time?

9 MIKE BOSKET: Uhm-hm.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: You know I... I
11 mean my family moved into a NYCHA development in '56
12 and 50 years later we finally had enough of it and we
13 were gone, but I'm sure that's a long time.

14 DANIEL TIETZ: Yeah, I would say that... I
15 can get you an average length of stay if we maybe
16 even looked at it by category, if possible, but it's
17 a long time, it's usually years. I mean there is
18 certainly some turnover; I would say in some
19 categories more turnover than others. So for
20 example, you could see some turnover in some of the
21 HIV/AIDS units because people's health improved and
22 they wished to have more independence and they would
23 be fine with that; in other instances, youth, for
24 example, would move on, potentially, from those
25 units. So there is some turnover; I would say that
most though, it's years in length.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

86

3 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: That makes
4 sense to me; I mean it's just obviously,
5 unfortunately, the need for services sometimes
6 increases; it doesn't usually diminish, but I have
7 met individuals when I've toured transitional
8 services facilities in my district; one gentleman had
9 been living on the Creedmoor campus for over 50 years
10 and it just, it struck me, but he's doing well, so
11 that's what we want and it's a good outcome.

12 Mr. Chairs, thank you very much and thank
13 you for being here this morning and for being on
14 time.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council
16 Member Grodenchik. Council Member Ritchie Torres.

17 [background comments]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Good afternoon...
19 is it afternoon? [background comments] Good to see
20 you again; congratulations on your promotion,
21 Commissioner Katz.

22 JESSICA KATZ: Thank you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I have a
24 question; do we have an exact number on the gap
25 between the demand for supportive housing and the
supply? What's the demand and what's the supply?

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE 87
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

3 DANIEL TIETZ: I think I gave last year's
4 number, but I don't recall it offhand. [background
5 comment] Yeah, I think it's essentially four people
6 waiting for every one person who gets a unit, which
7 is a way to look at it.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: So what are the
9 number of supportive housing units we have in the
10 city?

11 [background comments]

12 DANIEL TIETZ: You're asking me the
13 total... the total the City...

14 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Yes, our total
15 supply of supportive housing units.

16 DANIEL TIETZ: [background comments] It's
17 32,000.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: And how many
19 people are on the waiting list and how many people
20 are thought to need supportive housing?

21 DANIEL TIETZ: I'm not sure about the
22 waiting list; I think in my testimony I gave last
23 year's applicants versus approved; I'm not sure that
24 I actually gave the number that have entered
25 supportive housing last year, but it's thousands,
thousands; I want to say about 23,000 applied last

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE 88
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

3 year and about maybe 14,000 were approved, which is
4 far more than we have available units.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: But we have no
6 aggregate number of people who require?

7 DANIEL TIETZ: I can... who require?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Yeah, supportive
9 housing.

10 DANIEL TIETZ: So we have estimates, just
11 based on the folks we have in shelter and what we
12 know is folks, for example, that we have in shelter,
13 just looking at shelter alone as opposed to any
14 others, we can come with estimates; otherwise, the
15 data we have is the numbers of folks for whom a 2010e
16 application has been submitted and has been approved.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I have a question
18 regarding the \$2 billion, although I'm not sure if
19 you would know the answer to this question, but do we
20 know what share of those dollars are going towards
21 supportive housing in New York City and the number of
22 units that would emerge as a result?

23 DANIEL TIETZ: So I don't know that the
24 MOU is done, so I don't think that that... [interpose]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: No, once signed,
once signed.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

89

3 DANIEL TIETZ: Yeah, so I... I... [background
4 comments] I don't know the number.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Okay. And under
6 NY/NY III, my understanding was that the City and the
7 State would split the capital costs, but the State
8 would absorb the full operating costs. Is that a
9 correct characterization of...

10 JESSICA KATZ: The State absorbed the
11 operating costs for all the mental health units,
12 which were... [crosstalk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Okay.

14 JESSICA KATZ: the vast majority; it was
15 probably two-quarters of it, and then the young
16 adults aging out of foster care, HIV/AIDS and
17 substance abuse the City and State split the cost of
18 the operating as well.

19 [background comment]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: And so under the
21 new framework, which is the City unilaterally taking
22 on supportive housing developments; we're absorbing a
23 100% of both the operating and the capital costs?

24 [background comment]

25 JESSICA KATZ: A 100% percent of the
operating and the social services; the capital is

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE 90
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

3 still a mix of sources, so on the ground any given
4 project gets financed with a mix of city and state
5 sources either way.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: And so we're
7 striving to create 15,000 units?

8 JESSICA KATZ: Fifteen thousand units,
9 half of which are scattered-site and the other half
10 are congregate, so the congregate ones are where you
11 need the capital dollars and the tax credit.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Okay. And once
13 the 15,000 units are in place, what's the operating
14 cost, the annual operating cost of operating 15,000
15 units of supportive housing?

16 DANIEL TIETZ: Yeah, I think our estimate
17 in my testimony is, at the end, \$96 million a year.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: \$96 million for
19 15,000 units?

20 DANIEL TIETZ: Yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: And the plan is...
22 [crosstalk]

23 DANIEL TIETZ: Oh... no, 19... I think in
24 [background comment] 1919... I think... I'm sorry, 2019
25 it's estimated to be \$96 million, so that's I guess

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE 91
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

3 what, four years in, but the cost will ramp up from
4 there once... [interpose]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Well the plan is
6 set to be complete... the Mayor announced... [crosstalk]

7 DANIEL TIETZ: Fifteen years.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: the 2015/15, so
9 2030?

10 DANIEL TIETZ: Yeah. So I think the
11 number that I have in my estimate [sic]... [crosstalk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: So by 2030, what
13 is the operating cost?

14 DANIEL TIETZ: I don't have that, but the
15 operating... [crosstalk]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: That's the number
17 I would want though; I'd be curious to know what's
18 the operating cost by 2030, if... [interpose]

19 DANIEL TIETZ: Yeah, we could certainly
20 chat with OMB and see if we can get you a number that
21 would be reasonably accurate.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I guess how do we
23 ensure the completion of a plan nine years after the
24 Mayor has left office? That's something I've never
25 quite understood. The Mayor is leaving in 2021, if
re-elected; this plan extends until 2030; how do you

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

92

3 lock in the commitment to 15,000 units nine years
4 after he's ended his term?

5 JESSICA KATZ: So I think as we've talked
6 about, the supportive housing community on the ground
7 has been working on this, you know, an administration
8 after administration, so even the NY/NY agreement
9 spanned a variety of mayors and governors, some of
10 whom got along better than others, but the social
11 service providers and the agencies on the ground and
12 some of the advocates here in the room today were
13 committed to making sure that happened and so they
14 persisted across administrations.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: But NY/NY was
16 something of a contract between the City and State,
17 so that has more security, whereas the latest
18 iteration -- **[inaudible]** of creating the 15,000 units
19 is based on one mayor and what's to stop the next
20 mayor from reversing it by **[inaudible]**?

21 JESSICA KATZ: So I would just again say
22 that the NY/NY I, II and III spanned a variety of
23 different mayors and governors across the ideological
24 spectrum and each one renewed a commitment to
25 building supportive housing in some way, shape or
form, so **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

93

3 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I don't think
4 we're understanding each other; this is not NY/NY,
5 but this is the Mayor's plan, right...

6 JESSICA KATZ: Correct.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: so it's not an
8 agreement with the State, which strikes me as much
9 more secure; it's the executive action of one mayor,
10 so what's to stop the subsequent mayor from going in
11 a different direction, right; there is nothing to
12 stop the subsequent mayor from going... it's a yes or
13 no question; I don't know.

14 JESSICA KATZ: I mean I would... the cost-
15 savings impact of doing that I think would give
16 anybody pause in the future.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: How has the
18 community reaction to supportive housing evolved over
19 time? 'Cause you know, when community boards are
20 first introduced to a supportive housing development
21 **[inaudible]** apocalyptic fears about declining quality
22 of life, which never come true, and it turns out that
23 the supportive housing development is the most
24 beautiful development on block and removes blight;
25 have you seen an evolution in the community response;
has it become more receptive, more supportive over

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

94

3 time, except for the occasional assemblyperson? That
4 is a joke that Commissioner Katz, she know what I'm
5 talking about.

6 [background comment]

7 JESSICA KATZ: Yeah, so you know, there
8 is two of us up on dais today who have spent time
9 living in a supportive housing project -- I won't
10 name either of our names today -- and I do think
11 there has been an evolution where now we hear, you
12 know, can it be this kind of unit; can it be that
13 kind of unit; can we vet the service provider, so I
14 think it is a more nuanced discussion, but there is
15 still, especially in this homelessness crisis, you
16 know, we do tend to see quite a bit of opposition. I
17 will say what hasn't changed is that all of that
18 discussion and all of that fear happens before the
19 building ever opens; I think what's been true across
20 the board, you know in the 15 years that I've been
21 doing this, is that when the building opens it's
22 quite; we don't hear much about it after that.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: And I worry that...
24 I guess our approach to creating housing is something
25 of a binary; that we either have housing with
intensive services, as in supportive housing, or

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 95

3 housing with no services at all, whereas there is a
4 spectrum in-between of residents who have service
5 needs that might not justify supportive housing, but
6 might justify some level of service intervention;
7 what do we do with that population, that gray area
8 in-between?

9 JESSICA KATZ: That's a great question;
10 it's something that we've spent a lot of time
11 thinking about as we work to place more homeless
12 families who are not in a supportive housing category
13 in apartment buildings throughout the Housing New
14 York plan. One strategy that's been effective so far
15 under Housing New York is we've created additional
16 strategies that allow us to do mixed use buildings
17 and so if you have a building that has a daycare
18 center in the first floor, a community center in the
19 first floor, those aren't services that are, you
20 know, on-site, integrated into the fabric of the
21 apartment building itself the way supportive housing
22 is, but having it so closely knit in the building
23 provides the tenants with a lot of the support that
24 they may need.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: And I just have
one more final [sic] question about the interaction

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 96

3 between supportive housing and DSRIP. I know the
4 core objective of DSRIP is to reduce preventable
5 hospitalization, which is something that supportive
6 housing could achieve, right; housing is health, and
7 so are there DSRIP dollars flowing into supportive
8 housing development in New York City?

9 JESSICA KATZ: I don't think there are
10 DSRIP dollars specifically flowing into supportive
11 housing... [crosstalk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I've heard about
13 the use of Medicaid Redesign dollars for housing and...

14 JESSICA KATZ: Right, so...

15 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I'm curious to
16 know if we've seen that here in New York City so.

17 JESSICA KATZ: So Medicaid Redesign
18 dollars have been used in supportive housing.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Okay, but not
20 district dollars...? [sic] [crosstalk]

21 JESSICA KATZ: not... not Medicaid; that's
22 not Medicaid dollars themselves, so. And what also
23 has happened with the Medicaid Redesign program is a
24 lot more tracking of specifically the Medicaid costs
25 of those particular tenants, and so as we see over
time what the savings are and where our best bang for

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

97

3 our buck is, we'll be able to better refine the
4 targeting for who needs supportive housing and who
5 provides the biggest cost-savings.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I mean do we know
7 now -- I don't know if there's been a study done
8 about the impact of supportive housing in reducing
9 Medicaid costs; I imagine it does, but.

10 JESSICA KATZ: It's too early for that,
11 but it's being tracked through MRT; the first MRT
12 units came along a couple years ago, so that's an
13 ongoing data collection effort that's taking place.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: That's the extent
15 of my questioning. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
17 Council Member Torres. Let's see; a few more
18 questions and then we'll move on to public testimony.
19 It's now noon and we do have to leave the room by one
20 o'clock, so we have about 15 people or so lined up to
21 testify, so I'll ask another question or two and then
22 I'll turn it over to my co-chair.

23 Do you have -- and you may have spoken to
24 this a little bit, but within the current 15/15 plan
25 you have specifically identified units that will be
developed for young people in general, other than

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE 98
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

3 youth that have aged out of foster care, but more of
4 a general population youth; is that part of the plan?
5 You know that youth that have aged out of foster care
6 is identified in the NY/NY III as is serious or
7 persistent mental illness youth as well, so are there
8 going to be set-asides for that?

9 JESSICA KATZ: So there will be
10 categories for youth and then within the youth
11 population one of the recommendations was really
12 expanding the categories to include other systems, so
13 not just youth aging out of foster care, but also
14 youth in the DYCD system and the runaway homeless
15 youth. So the expectation is to include more youth
16 and then be able to understand what are the needs of
17 the youth.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, so that's been
19 identified and that will be in scatter-site... is that
20 part of the initial 500 **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

21 JESSICA KATZ: So the 550 were only for
22 single adults and adult couples and so it will be
23 reflected in the next RFP for the scatter-site and
24 for the congregate.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And for the
congregate?

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

99

3 JESSICA KATZ: Yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. But you don't
5 know what percentage or how many units at this point?

6 JESSICA KATZ: I am not at liberty to
7 discuss it prior to the release of any RFPs.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. But it will be
9 in the RFPs?

10 JESSICA KATZ: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. In terms of
12 the recommendations from the task force, so do you
13 have like an overall timeline in terms of when they
14 will all -- I'm assuming they'll all be implemented;
15 if Commissioner Banks and Commissioner Been were the
16 co-chairs of the task force, I'm assuming then that
17 the Administration has fully endorsed all the
18 recommendations and has kind of a timeframe in terms
19 of implementation...? [crosstalk]

20 JESSICA KATZ: So the good news is, we've
21 implemented recommendation number four already, which
22 was creating a City Oversight Committee to monitor
23 the implementation... [crosstalk]

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uhm-hm.

25 JESSICA KATZ: and so we have a lot of
work going on to create project plans to implement

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 100

2 each one of these, and as you can imagine, they each
3 have different timelines, and so I think it would be
4 unfair to kind of give the longest timeline, 'cause
5 some of these are really data systems and so...

6 [crosstalk]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uhm-hm.

8 JESSICA KATZ: as you know, like creating
9 new data systems, like we're speaking about the
10 vulnerability index, those are really long and
11 complicated and there are other ones that really can
12 be done -- as we mentioned in the testimony, there's
13 a couple that have already been done, including the
14 Oversight Committee, including the licensed
15 clinicians being able to review, including the upload
16 of the HRA documents, so a lot has already happened,
17 and then there's a couple on there that are probably
18 going to take, you know a year or more, but we think
19 the bulk of them will be done within a year.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Okay. And
21 then there may be some outliers that may take long
22 than a year...? [crosstalk]

23 JESSICA KATZ: Yes.

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 101

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But you expect that
3 within, maximum, two years or so that all of them
4 will be implemented...? [crosstalk]

5 JESSICA KATZ: Yeah and I think the big...
6 the big... [crosstalk]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Steps are being taken
8 to imp... sorry; steps are being taken to implement all
9 of them?

10 JESSICA KATZ: Absolutely. And the
11 biggest emphasis I think is... all of this work, in
12 general, the biggest emphasis really is on
13 flexibility, so we want to be able to learn from what
14 we're doing... [crosstalk]

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uhm-hm.

16 JESSICA KATZ: and I think continually
17 improve upon it, so you know we may find halfway
18 through that something isn't working and then we want
19 to be able to change it, right, so I think there will
20 be kind of continuing process improvements as we go.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And the Oversight
22 Committee; what's... I'm sorry; what's the... who is the
23 Oversight Committee?

24 JESSICA KATZ: It's basically all the
25 City agencies that are involved in implementing this

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

102

2 work, so as you can imagine, it's everything from
3 HPD, DOHMH, HRA, DHS, OMB, Criminal Justice Office;
4 anyone that is involved in any of these
5 recommendations.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Now what role does
7 like Supportive Housing Network of New York then play
8 in an ongoing oversight role or ongoing partnership
9 role that their Executive Director Laura Mascuch is a
10 co-chair of the task force; what's role are they
11 going to then have -- just so that if -- there are
12 things that are coming up -- you know oftentimes
13 things percolate through providers, through the
14 advocacy or, you know, umbrella organizations and
15 then get over to you guys and so... and to us; how...
16 what's... [crosstalk]

17 JESSICA KATZ: So in this...

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: what's the strategy
19 for making sure that concerns are being raised in the
20 appropriate time?

21 JESSICA KATZ: Well besides their --
22 SHNNY is great at holding our feet to the fire and
23 making sure that we are moving forward, so in
24 addition to the constant informal communications, I
25 think the expectation really is that we would

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 103

2 continue to report out to the task force on some
3 routine basis to let them know how implementation is
4 going.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. You don't need
6 help with like enabling legislation for that, do you?

7 [laughter]

8 JESSICA KATZ: No... not at that moment,
9 but we'll let you know.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Alright, well we'll
11 review it on our end as well.

12 And then just as a... honestly, this is a
13 bit of a curve ball, so I don't mean to throw this
14 out there, but it's come up -- and since I have Dan
15 here, I thought I'd ask -- with RHY, it's been raised
16 to me that there's no link subsidy for RHY and that's
17 kind of a concern; is there... how are you guys
18 approaching that particular issue?

19 DANIEL TIETZ: We're working on it.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

21 DANIEL TIETZ: So we're having a very
22 active discussion with our friends at DYCD on
23 bringing subsidies to youth in their system.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So we'll be
25 following up on that and continue to talk about that;

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

104

3 I think through the budget process might be the
4 [background comment] most appropriate way that we can
5 engage that... [crosstalk]

6 DANIEL TIETZ: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I'll turn it
8 over to my colleague, Jumaane Williams.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you very
10 much. I don't have questions; just a comment.
11 Obviously this stuff is very hard; it's also
12 expensive, so I'm glad that we're putting the funding
13 behind it and making sure that money's not more
14 important than the people we're serving and I think
15 some of our contractors and developers have to have
16 the same mindset as well, and we have to use all the
17 tools that we have; I don't believe we're doing that
18 and I'm concerned about what the Governor is doing
19 with this revamped [sic] 421-a; I'm concerned about
20 sometimes what this body does in terms of rezonings
21 and the types of AMIs that are in those rezonings, so
22 we all need to do all that we can, and of course,
23 supportive housing is a critical, important piece of
24 that.

25 Lastly, I too want to say congratulations
to Ms. Katz for her promotion, and please, I think at

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

105

3 the time I have another hearing that HPD is primary
4 on; we'll have a new commissioner, so I just wanted
5 to reiterate what I mentioned at the Stated
6 yesterday, that we wish the commissioner being well
7 on her new job; it was a pleasure working with her; I
8 found her to be always forthcoming, willing to
9 compromise the best way we can in the best interests
10 of the City, even when we disagreed I found it to be
11 part of the job and very amenable, so I just wanted
12 to say that on the record on behalf of the Committee
13 and please pass that along to her. Thank you...

[crosstalk]

14 JESSICA KATZ: I will. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you all very
16 much for your testimony and for answering our
17 questions today; we look forward to continuing to
18 work with you in an ongoing fashion to make sure that
19 we are as aggressive as possible in developing
20 supportive housing for New Yorkers that need it.
21 Thank you.

22 So first panel -- Claire Sheedy from
23 Breaking Ground; Rebecca Sauer from Supportive
24 Housing Network of New York; Tony Hannigan, Center

25

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 106

2 for Urban Community Services; and Jennifer Garris
3 [sp?], from 160 Schermerhorn Street.

4 [background comments]

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Hello everyone.
6 My co-chair is not here; he's actually the lead
7 committee, so I'm going to follow his rules when we
8 normally do these hearings; mine is a little
9 different; I understand he doesn't normally put folks
10 on the clock and he doesn't swear people in, so you
11 can begin at the order of your preference.

12 CLAIRE SHEEDY: Thank you. Hi, my name
13 is Claire Sheedy; I will be reading the testimony of
14 Brenda Rosen, who's the CEO of Breaking Ground, who
15 couldn't be here today.

16 Brenda Rosen is the President and CEO of
17 Breaking Ground, New York City's largest supportive
18 housing developer and operator, serving low-income
19 and chronically homeless New Yorkers. We operate 19
20 buildings, over 3,500 units of permanent and
21 transitional housing in Manhattan, Brooklyn, the
22 Bronx, and Queens. We have another 1,000 in
23 development over the next five years. [background
24 comment]

25

We also provide street outreach in Brooklyn, Queens and about a third of Manhattan. Our Street to Home program connects the most entrenched long-term homeless individuals with housing and other critical support services. Over the last 25 years we've helped over 12,000 people escape or avoid homelessness, including veterans, seniors, artists, youth aging out of foster care, those living with addiction and chronic illnesses, and many more.

For the clinical homeless we create safe, secure housing, essential on-site support services to help address the psychosocial, mental and physical health problems that are obstacles to independent living.

For low-income folks who find themselves at the edge of homelessness, our affordable housing provides an all-important safety net; 99% of our residents remain stably housed; our eviction rate across our portfolio is less than 1%. Strengthening communities is core to Breaking Ground's mission.

We create neighborhood assets that promote social inclusion; our buildings preserve historic landmarks, transform neglected properties and introduce new resources and opportunities to

surrounding communities. Breaking Ground frequently partners with nationally-recognized architects to design and create beautiful buildings, like this one, that make tenants and neighbors in these communities feel proud. Whenever possible we include community uses in our buildings. Here at The Schermerhorn we have 217 units of supportive housing; the building is home to the Brooklyn Ballet; this gorgeous theater, operated by The Actors Fund, is used by the Brooklyn Ballet, as well as tenants who live here, and local arts groups seeking affordable rehearsal and performance space.

The Hegeman, one of two buildings Breaking Ground has in Brownsville, Brooklyn has 161 units of supportive housing; there we have an enclosed garden for building residents. In the adjacent lot we developed a community garden, offering programming to all neighborhood residents.

The safety of our residents and neighbors is of highest importance. Our buildings feature 24/7 security, outdoor cameras and exterior lights, all of which have proved to deter crime; we work closely with NYPD, FDNY; EMS. It is notable that studies done of supportive housing's impact on crime actually

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

109

3 show a positive reduction in crime, as I think was
4 mentioned earlier.

5 Breaking Ground works with our local
6 community boards, block associations and elected
7 officials; we regularly host and participate in
8 events and meetings formulized by these stakeholders;
9 we work hard to be seen as a community partner and
10 asset while also enhancing awareness of our work in
11 the communities we are.

12 Support from local organizations and
13 elected officials helps our reputation and
14 facilitates entry into neighborhoods that don't know
15 our work and may fear with supportive housing may
16 bring. Without the support of South Bronx Churches,
17 an affiliate of East Brooklyn Congregation, Breaking
18 Ground would not have secured sufficient support to
19 move forward with The Brook, our first building in
20 the South Bronx. Local groups like South Bronx
21 Churches help us market apartments as well as the
22 jobs that these projects bring to the communities we
23 build in. At The Hegeman, working with Brooklyn
24 Community Board 16, more than half of the staff live
25 in Brownsville or in the immediate nearby area.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 110

3 Supportive housing has proven to be both
4 a positive and stabilizing force in communities and
5 an effective solution to addressing chronic
6 homelessness. The City needs more of this type of
7 housing and the Mayor's 15/15 initiative is an
8 important component in addressing the City's homeless
9 crisis.

10 On behalf of Breaking Ground, thank you
11 for this opportunity to testify, your interest and
12 deep commitment to this critical issue is greatly
13 appreciated.

14 REBECCA SAUER: Okay. [background
15 comments] Yeah, I won't break it. Can you hear me?
16 Okay.

17 Thank you to Council Members Levin and
18 Williams and to Breaking Ground and The Actors Fund
19 for hosting us here. My name is Rebecca Sauer; I'm
20 the Director of Policy and Planning at the Supportive
21 Housing Network of New York. The Network is a
22 membership organization representing approximately
23 200 nonprofit developers and operators of supportive
24 housing statewide. Supportive housing is permanent
25 affordable housing with embedded social services for
vulnerable individuals and families, people who are

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

111

3 homeless and living with disabilities or other
4 barriers to maintaining stable housing.

5 New York City is the proud birthplace of
6 supportive housing; a model which has been replicated
7 across the country and the world. It is both humane
8 and cost-effective. It thrives on public-private
9 partnerships. As you will hear in other testimony
10 today, it provides people the platform to positively
11 transform their lives and achieve their potential --
12 it really works.

13 Supportive housing was created by
14 innovative New Yorkers in the late 70s and 80s as
15 single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels disappeared.
16 Decades later, what started as the conversion of a
17 few buildings has become a robust and agile community
18 serving individuals and families, youth aging out of
19 foster care, veterans, and seniors. Today there are
20 32,000 units in New York City; of those, 12,000 are
21 scattered-site and 20,000 are in purpose-built
22 supportive housing, which today is integrated with
23 affordable housing for low-income New Yorkers.

24 Everyone in this room is deeply aware of
25 the magnitude of the homelessness crisis we're
facing. Of course not all of the 60,000 plus people

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 112

3 in the homeless system need supportive housing; some
4 merely need access to housing they can afford.

5 However, there are thousands who would not be able to
6 maintain stable housing on their own and without
7 supportive housing the alternatives are costly --
8 homeless shelters, hospitals, psychiatric
9 institutions, jails, or prison.

10 As was mentioned in earlier testimony, a
11 2013 study done by DOHMH showed that public costs for
12 NY/NY III tenants were \$10,100 less than those for
13 unplaced individuals. Eighty-seven percent of
14 tenants in NY/NY III housing remained housed after
15 one year and of those who moved out, only 6% returned
16 to shelter and .5% to the street.

17 Despite the staggering need for
18 supportive housing and the evidence of its
19 effectiveness, many people are apprehensive about it
20 being built in their neighborhood; that's
21 understandable; most of these people have not had the
22 opportunity to visit a residence like The
23 Schermerhorn. Community residents also can be
24 comforted by research that shows that supportive
25 housing buildings have neutral or positive effect on

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

113

3 property values, such as the Fuhrman Center report,
4 which was also mentioned earlier.

5 These findings were the result of a
6 rigorous study done of 7,500 units of supportive
7 housing built over a 20-year period and the sales
8 prices of nearby properties. Studies done in
9 Columbus, Philadelphia, Fort Worth, Toronto, and in
10 six Connecticut communities show similar results.

11 The Network applauds the City's for its
12 bold leadership in introducing the NYC 15/15
13 initiative. Building on the past and transforming
14 all of these ideas into reality will require true
15 partnership across many sectors. One of the biggest
16 obstacles to developing new supportive housing is
17 finding adequate, attainable sites.

18 We invite all members of the Council to
19 partner with us and with your communities to help our
20 city meet this critical need and we know many members
21 of the Council and their staff have toured supportive
22 housing buildings and have been champions of it in
23 their community and we thank we. If any other
24 members of the Council or the public want a tour of
25 supportive housing or have a meeting, we are always
happy to facilitate that.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

114

3 Thanks for the opportunity to testify and
4 I look forward to future partnership.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.

6 I just want, as a short follow-up on that. So I
7 encourage anybody, [cough] excuse me, to do a Willow
8 search of the surrounding blocks around here in
9 downtown Brooklyn just to see what the property value
10 is around this supportive housing development.

11 [laughter] Pretty high.

12 [laughter, background comments]

13 TONY HANNIGAN: Good afternoon, my name
14 is Tony Hannigan; just want to start by -- I'm the
15 CEO and President of the Center for Urban Community
16 Services (CUCS), a nonprofit organization, and our
17 mission is to provide housing and help rebuild the
18 lives of homeless and low-income families and
19 individuals.

20 I've been CUCS for since 1981 and I am
21 one of the originators of supportive housing. CUCS
22 is widely recognized for having a particular
23 expertise in providing supportive services to people
24 who have a persistent major mental illness, such as
25 schizophrenia and serious depressive disorder, and I
would like to talk about supportive housing services

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

115

3 that are provided in supportive housing. In fact,
4 CUCS is the on-site service provider here at The
5 Schermerhorn. Before getting into that in any
6 detail, I want to put this into some context.

7 When I started working in homelessness in
8 1981, homelessness was beginning to become an
9 increasingly visible problem in the City. Much of
10 this had to do with the ongoing elimination of
11 privately owned SRO hotels, or welfare hotels, as
12 they were commonly called, where many people were
13 discharged en masse during deinstitutionalization
14 from in-patient psychiatric facilities where they had
15 lived. It also had to do with the community mental
16 health system not keeping pace with the rate of
17 discharges.

18 At its peak in 1955, there were 94,000
19 people living in New York State psychiatric
20 facilities; in 1984 that number was at 34,000; today
21 it is under 4,000. The people who are and had been
22 in State facilities represent only a fraction of
23 those who depend upon the public mental health
24 system, but the staggering decline in the number of
25 those on in-patient wards is telltale of the needs

3 for residential options for people who live with
4 serious psychiatric and other medical problems.

5 Supportive housing is a critical
6 component of New York's community mental health
7 system; supportive housing is where people have a
8 lease, can live permanently and receive needed mental
9 health and other services on-site. As the housing is
10 integrated with individuals who are not living with
11 mental illness is progressive, and being only a small
12 fraction of the cost of hospitalization, it is highly
13 cost-effective.

14 CUCS provides supportive services to
15 approximately 2,000 apartments; our on-site service
16 staff includes psychiatrists, licensed social
17 workers, nurse practitioners, job coaches, primary
18 care physicians, and paraprofessional case management
19 staff who assist tenants when necessary with various
20 activities of daily living, such as shopping for food
21 or doing laundry.

22 When individuals first move into
23 supportive housing, it is typically after years of
24 being homeless; they have minimal, if any, social
25 contacts, are cut off from family, have medical
issues in addition to mental illness, and if a woman,

3 likely suffering from trauma, having been victim of
4 domestic violence and other physical abuse. Most all
5 the individuals have not had any consistent medical
6 or mental health treatment services for years on end.

7 Our services include individual
8 counseling and supportive services that are tailored
9 to the needs of the individual. Unlike clinics and
10 hospital-based services where individuals are not
11 uncommonly lost to care, each tenant is assigned to a
12 team of social workers and case managers with a
13 caseload of 25 tenants. In addition, the tenant
14 would be able to see the same psychiatrist and
15 medical staff without the constant turnover often
16 experienced in other mental health settings.

17 Supportive housing provides the
18 opportunity to work with people over time, addressing
19 not just mental health and medical concerns, but also
20 quality of life issues, such as reuniting with
21 family, rejoining the community and for many, getting
22 a job. CUCS' career network, which specializes in
23 job and career opportunities for people with mental
24 illnesses, helped 180 people living in supportive
25 housing get jobs in 2016 with an average wage of
full-time employment of \$12.00 an hour.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

118

3 In conclusion, I would just like to
4 emphasize and try to debunk a little bit the myths
5 about people with mental illness and emphasize that
6 violent and aberrant behaviors are exceedingly rare
7 among supportive housing tenants, and this is the
8 fear that often communities have, and it just ain't
9 [sic] so. Instead, supportive housing providers are
10 addressing years of isolation, poverty, loss, and the
11 incalculable hardships of having been homeless.

12 Thank you, and thanks to the Council for
13 holding this; we really appreciate it.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, thank you
15 very much and thank you for the work that you've been
16 doing.

17 JENNIFER GARRIS: Good morning and
18 welcome everybody; I'm a tenant here at the
19 Schermerhorn. My name is Jennifer Rose Garris; I was
20 born in Coney Island and have lived in New York my
21 whole life.

22 I moved into The Schermerhorn in 2009,
23 the first year that it opened. Before that, my
24 husband of 35 years and I had lived in Fort Greene
25 for 17 years, but when he passed I didn't want to and
I didn't know how to go on. I struggled with

3 depression and drinking and eventually lost and left
4 my apartment. Sometimes I stayed with other people
5 in their apartments, but I would often sleep in the
6 hallways of apartment buildings or even outside. I
7 had always worked and provided for myself, but I
8 didn't want anyone to know that I was homeless; I was
9 too proud. I didn't even tell my family.

10 This could happen to anyone. I have a
11 master's in education, I taught special ed. for 24
12 years; this doesn't happen to just "those people,"
13 because you're poor; don't want to live inside;
14 things happen, it can happen to anyone.

15 I was homeless for a year before a
16 Breaking Ground outreach worker brought me to the Y
17 on Norwood Avenue while I waited for The Schermerhorn
18 to open. Once I moved in, we took trips to the
19 grocery stores to learn how to make our dollars go
20 further, we learned how to pay our rent on time and
21 to budget.

22 Since I've been here I've met tenants
23 that had been in the street 10, 20 years; they didn't
24 know how to go in the grocery store and buy food to
25 stretch for the month with the food stamps that
they're given. Breaking Ground caseworkers took us

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

120

3 to grocery stores, we go on trips, we... they teach you
4 how to live again. Excuse me. I work with my CUCS
5 caseworker on reaching goals, like quitting smoking.
6 I'm stable; my life is stable now.

7 How I live my life -- I volunteer at soup
8 kitchens or work in pantries, go to church;
9 participate in all sorts of activities in the
10 building. Living here is living with my family;
11 these people are my peeps; every Sunday I call people
12 from the 11th floor and work my way down to the 3rd,
13 just calling them to see how they feel; not everybody
14 has family; not everybody has friends. So many
15 people don't have the opportunity for somebody to
16 listen to them sometimes, and that's our job, we have
17 to give back; look what we've been given.

18 The main thing is to keep giving back and
19 getting to know other people; sometimes all people
20 need is someone to listen to them. I thank Breaking
21 Ground... I thank Breaking Ground for the impact it has
22 had on my life and so many others. Breaking Ground
23 is a god thanks [sic] and I thank you very much.
24 Thank you.

25 [applause]

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 121

2 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you all
3 for your testimony. Thank you in particular for
4 taking the courage to share your testimony; I think
5 it's important for people to understand. One of the
6 most poignant things was; it's not "those people" and
7 many folks have problems understanding that until
8 they are those people, so it's important that we
9 always put faces and real stories behind the human
10 beings who are being served here. So I just want to
11 say thank you so much; obviously your testimony was
12 very moving and touching and the type that we need to
13 keep these services going forward. So God bless you
14 and thank you for giving back; I wish everyone had
15 your spirit; I do want to know how you're doing on
16 your smoking.

17 [laughter]

18 JENNIFER GARRIS: Well I'm down from a
19 pack to three a day [inaudible]... [crosstalk]

20 [laughter]

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Oh that's
22 progress, that's progress, congrats.

23 JENNIFER GARRIS: Yeah, that's good
24 progress [sic].
25

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

122

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It's always a
4 challenge. I want to thank you as well... [crosstalk]

5 JENNIFER GARRIS: Thank you; you're
6 welcome.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: for your testimony,
8 for sharing your story... [crosstalk]

9 JENNIFER GARRIS: You're welcome.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: and for being an
11 inspiration to your neighbors and for looking out for
12 your neighbors; that's a wonderful thing to do, and
13 making sure that everybody has the benefit of
14 friendship [background comments] and I want to thank
15 you all very much for your testimony and for having
16 us here today; this is such a wonderful opportunity
17 for our committees, for the Council to be here at The
18 Schermerhorn and be part of this wonderful facility.
19 Thank you.

20 Next panel -- Joseph Rosenberg, Catholic
21 Charities, Catholic Community Relations Council; Jeff
22 Nemetsky, Brooklyn Community HSS [sic] and Services;
23 and Josh Goldfein and Giselle Routhier of Legal Aid
24 and Coalition for the Homeless. [background comment]
25 And Catherine Trapani from Homeless Services United.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

123

3 JOE ROSENBERG: Good afternoon Chair
4 Levin and Chair Williams; I'm Joe Rosenberg, the
5 Executive Director of the Catholic Community
6 Relations Council, representing the Archdiocese of
7 New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens on
8 local legislative and policy issues.

9 Housing advocates, governmental entities
10 and not-for-profits and faith-based organizations all
11 agree that supportive housing is a successful and
12 cost-effective model; it serves not only homeless
13 families and homeless singles, but also victims of
14 domestic violence, veterans, youth aging out of
15 foster care, and the elderly individuals receiving
16 nursing home care who can make the transition to
17 independent living. It is absolutely crucial that
18 existing programs serving its populations be
19 preserved and expanded and that new programs be
20 created to meet this pressing and growing need.
21 Sheltering the homeless and helping the needy have
22 always been among the primary missions of the
23 Catholic Church; consistent with that principle, the
24 Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn,
25 through Catholic Charities, parishes and affiliates,
have constructed and preserved thousands of

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 124

3 apartments for the poor and the homeless throughout
4 our city; this commitment continues to this day, with
5 the Catholic Church being the largest faith-based
6 provider of low-income senior citizen housing in New
7 York City and working with our governmental partners
8 to construct and preserve thousands of units of
9 affordable and supportive housing.

10 The supportive housing development
11 selected last January by Mayor de Blasio to announce
12 his plan to develop and preserve 15,000 supportive
13 housing units over the next 15 years is the Bishop
14 Joseph Sullivan residence. This Bedford-Stuyvesant
15 development is owned and operated by Catholic
16 Charities of the Diocese of Brooklyn; with [sic]
17 receipt of over \$21 million of state funding and the
18 assistance of financing from the feds and city
19 agencies this rehab project preserves 76 apartments
20 for the formerly homeless and created 22 units
21 designed specifically for formerly homeless veterans,
22 one of the most vulnerable groups of New Yorkers
23 amongst us.

24 And Morrisania Catholic Charities of the
25 Archdiocese of New York is developing 112 units of
low-income housing, with 35 units of supportive

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

125

3 housing at the St. Augustine Apartments. The special
4 need units target individuals with chronic mental
5 illness and will be supported through on-site
6 services provided by Beacon of Hope House, which
7 serves close to 300 individuals in its supportive
8 housing programs through New York City.

9 These developments are only two examples
10 of how creative and long-term commitment leads to the
11 construction and preservation of successful
12 supportive housing. There is much more to be done to
13 provide housing to our fellow New Yorkers who are
14 most at risk in falling through the cracks, ending up
15 on our streets and in our shelters.

16 Last year, for example, the State
17 Legislature and the Governor agreed upon a budget
18 that appropriated over \$2 billion for the development
19 and preservation of supportive and affordable housing
20 in New York State; that money, however, remains
21 unavailable, through the inability of the State
22 Legislature and the Governor to finalize and sign a
23 memorandum of understanding that would release the
24 funds to support the creation of 6,000 supportive
25 housing units over the next five years, as well as
finance the production and preservation of 94,000

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 126

3 affordable housing units. We urge that all parties
4 negotiate a final MOU as soon as possible so the
5 money can be used to provide housing for the most
6 vulnerable in our society, as the State Legislature
7 and the Governor clearly intended.

8 I also want to point out that the City
9 Council recently introduced a very significant bill,
10 Int. 214-A, the right to counsel for low-income
11 individuals facing eviction in Housing Court; over 42
12 members are on this bill; it is very important that
13 although certainly the Mayor is strongly in support
14 of expanding the program to finance families facing
15 eviction that a bill of this nature be passed
16 hopefully sooner rather than later.

17 In summary, there are many economic and
18 social challenges that must be surmounted to address
19 the homeless crisis in New York; the support and
20 expansion of this housing model is one clear humane,
21 cost-effective and proven means of confronting this
22 challenge; in short, it saves and rebuilds lives.
23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
25 Mr. Rosenberg.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

127

3 JEFF NEMETSKY: Thank you. Good
4 afternoon. [background comment] My name is Jeff
5 Nemetsky and I'm the Executive Director for Brooklyn
6 Community Housing and Services, a not-for-profit
7 supportive housing agency located nearby in Fort
8 Greene. I'd like to thank the General Welfare and
9 Housing Committees for organizing this important
10 hearing today and I would really like to thank the
11 members of these committees for being such robust
12 advocates for supportive housing in recent year; it
13 has been tremendously helpful to all us in the field.

14 My organization, BACH'S, was founded in
15 1978 by a group of local clergy from Downtown
16 Brooklyn, many from nearby parishes and churches, and
17 is committed to ending homelessness in Brooklyn. We
18 now serve nearly 1,000 formerly homeless and at-risk
19 residents a year, through a range of short-term,
20 transitional and permanent supportive housing and
21 provide a continuum of related services.

22 This past Saturday, a family from Fort
23 Greene reserved the community room at our Brooklyn
24 Gardens supporting housing building to celebrate
25 their daughter's Quinceanera. The proud family and
their friends danced to festive music and brought in

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 128

3 delicious home-cooked delicacies. A week before, the
4 community room was reserved by a family who had just
5 lost a beloved uncle and held a large repast and
6 memorial service in his honor. On Friday night,
7 Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year, this
8 community room is used by Fort Greene residents for
9 baby showers and birthday parties, family reunions
10 and graduation celebrations and even from time to
11 time a wedding. During the week this community room
12 plays host to regular AA meetings that are attended
13 by people from throughout the area, including
14 residents from nearby NYCHA public housing, teachers
15 and construction workers, as well as bankers, lawyers
16 and finance professionals who live in the beautiful
17 brownstones located on the other side of Myrtle
18 Avenue.

19 I highlight these few examples because I
20 think they illustrate that supportive housing is not
21 just sited at a location; it is an integral part of
22 the fabric of a community, both helping to strengthen
23 that community as well as being strengthened by it.

24 BCHS has a good neighbor policy that we
25 adhere to at all our locations; we have 24/7 security
and our buildings are well-lit, ensuring that the

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

129

3 blocks they are on remain safe, comfortable walkways
4 for pedestrians. We make sure that our buildings are
5 clean, calm and stable, that music is never too loud
6 in the evenings and that groups of people do not
7 congregate or loiter outside. We participate in
8 forums with other local businesses and civic groups
9 discussing neighborhood issues and supporting efforts
10 to help local business owners and other local
11 institutions. And like many supportive housing
12 buildings, our structures are also architecturally
13 sophisticated and enhance and beautify the
14 streetscape. Most importantly, our buildings are
15 staffed by highly qualified social service
16 professionals who are also available 24/7, enabling
17 residents to have a positive experience. Indeed,
18 even though the majority if BCHS' supportive housing
19 residents had been homeless for a long time before
20 they came to us, more than 95% either maintain their
21 housing with BCHS or move on to even greater
22 independence each year.

23 In 1991, our Brooklyn Gardens housing
24 facility opened its doors at a time when Fort Greene
25 was being hit hard by the crack epidemic, which had
fueled a great deal of crime and dislocation. Our

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

130

3 presence was seen by community members as an
4 important step in helping to improve public safety
5 and stabilize that area.

6 In 2012, we helped open the Navy Green
7 Supportive Housing building right outside the
8 Brooklyn Navy Yard and is part of the larger mixed-
9 use Navy Green development. Our presence once more
10 helped a neighborhood that had been dotted by
11 abandoned buildings, vacant lots and empty
12 storefronts to experience a new range of
13 opportunities and new vitality.

14 What we've seen in both instances is that
15 well designed, well maintained and well run
16 supportive housing not only helps formerly homeless
17 individuals achieve stability and independence, but
18 marks the blocks in neighborhoods where they are
19 present as attractive and desirable places to work
20 and live.

21 Thank you once more to the Committees for
22 both holding this hearing, and again, thank you for
23 your support for supportive housing.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.

25 GISELLE ROUTHIER: Thanks. My name is
Giselle Routhier; I'm the Policy Director at the

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

131

3 Coalition for the Homeless. I'm going to keep this
4 short and sweet; we submitted testimony; I'm just
5 going to summarize it here; we submitted joint
6 testimony with Legal Aid Society.

7 With respect to the need for supportive
8 housing in New York City, right now we can't move
9 quickly enough. As NY/NY III winds down, the number
10 of single adults specifically that have been placed
11 in supportive housing has reached the lowest rate as
12 a portion of the number of single adults in shelter
13 in a decade, so right now we're facing record
14 homelessness in New York City, so we have almost
15 15,000 single adults in shelter, and total, 62,840
16 individuals sleeping each night in shelter. So we
17 are pleased to hear about the progress that the City
18 is making at this hearing, specifically, moving
19 forward on the 550 scatter-site units that will be
20 opened before the end of this fiscal year or begin to
21 be opened before the end of this fiscal year, but we
22 are still facing challenges at the state level; it's
23 now the one-year anniversary of the commitment that
24 the Governor made to build 20,000 units of supportive
25 housing statewide, and we have nearly \$2 billion that
is still sitting idle, subject to a memorandum of

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

132

3 understanding. We like to say that it's true, that
4 last year's budget is law and this year's Fiscal Year
5 18 budget is a proposal, so we can still move forward
6 on that MOU and we've been pushing the Governor and
7 the legislative leaders to come together and release
8 that money as soon as possible so that we can move
9 forward on the State's commitment and really begin to
10 meet the vast need that exists out there. Thank you
11 very much.

12 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: I'm Joshua Goldfein
13 from The Legal Aid Society, just to add to, and as
14 Giselle said, we submitted joint testimony, but just
15 to add a few quick comments in response to Council
16 Member Torres' question about, how do we ensure that
17 the agreements that are made now continue on into
18 subsequent administrations. The answer, and
19 certainly it's good public policy and it saves the
20 City money and it's a better outcome for the
21 residents, but we also have the right to shelter in
22 New York City and without a robust program to
23 preserve affordable housing and ensure that people in
24 shelter can move somewhere, the shelter system can't
25 be managed, so the fact that we have a right to
shelter also serves as a significant driver for

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

133

3 ensuring that the City generates some kind of
4 permanent housing for people to go to.

5 I just also want to add that we at Legal
6 Aid agree with HPD, and are glad to hear them say,
7 that it's important that as we develop new scatter-
8 site affordable housing units as part of these new
9 programs that we preserve the rights of the tenants
10 who are going to get those units. We have seen, just
11 in the last year, hundreds of cases brought, just in
12 Brooklyn alone, against residents of supportive
13 housing, or brought in Housing Court against -- seek
14 the eviction of residents of supportive housing, and
15 I phrase it that way because in many of the cases the
16 cases were brought without naming the tenant, and HPD
17 is committed to making sure that as we develop these
18 units and give people leases to move into them that
19 the leases are in their names, that we secure their
20 rights and that we ensure that those will be stable,
21 long-term placements; that we don't end up with
22 situations where people can be evicted without even
23 knowing that something is happening. So we're going
24 to look forward helping roll out these new units in a
25 way that preserves everybody's rights; that it's in a
way that is a benefit to the whole community and also

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

134

3 make sure that we don't compromise the rent-stab
4 [sic] rights of the residents and other people who
5 live in those buildings already. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just one up on that
7 [sic]; what... I meant to ask this of the
8 Administration; what is the relationship between
9 supportive housing scatter-site units and rent-
10 stabilization? If a unit is previously rent
11 stabilized, how does that work within the supportive
12 housing contract and then what happens to that unit
13 in the long-term?

14 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: The short answer is,
15 that's a complicated and controversial legal question
16 right now that we are litigating at a number of
17 places; I would say a slightly longer answer is that
18 for many years there has been a mistaken assumption
19 on the part of a lot of people that the rent-stab
20 loss somehow doesn't apply any time that a not-for-
21 profit organization is involved in the relationship,
22 and that's actually not what the law says, and we've
23 been able to, I think, advance the correct position
24 through a number of cases and I think that people
25 will understand that rent-stab... we can't... these units
that are in buildings that are already rent-stab will

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

135

3 remain rent-stab and we shouldn't lose more units
4 from the affordable housing stock because we're
5 expanding a different kind of program to preserve
6 tenancies for vulnerable people, and the landlords
7 have tried in many cases to take advantage of what
8 they have advanced as a loophole that doesn't really
9 exist in the law, but the purpose of the rent
10 regulation is to preserve the rights of tenants to
11 stay in their housing; a program like this is not...
12 the purpose of the law doesn't contemplate that a
13 program to help more people would undercut that
14 bedrock principle of landlord-tenant law.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Has DHCR, do they
16 have a legal opinion on the matter; I mean they've
17 issued like a statement... [crosstalk]

18 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: Not that I'm aware of,
19 but...

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But ultimately
21 they're the agency that has jurisdiction over rent
22 stabilization and are they...

23 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: They have access to --
24 what has become important in a lot of these cases --
25 this is something that's played out also as we reduce
the number of cluster sites that DHS is using, and we

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 136

2 are asserting the rights of the tenants in those
3 buildings, including the former shelter residents who
4 are now in a unit that is no longer a shelter unit
5 but is a rent-regulated unit...

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure.

7 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: what should the rent be
8 for that unit, and so in those cases it becomes very
9 important to look at what rents have been registered
10 over the history of the use of the unit...

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uhm-hm.

12 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: and DHCR gets involved
13 in those cases in that way and... [crosstalk]

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But they're not
15 proactive, essentially; they're not proactively
16 enforcing the rent stabilization rights of tenants?

17 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: Certainly they could..
18 [crosstalk]

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: as an agency [sic].

20 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: they could certainly be
21 doing more, but...

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

23 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: they could be doing
24 more for tenants across the board there.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

137

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And I'm sorry, and
4 again I should've asked this of HPD when they were
5 here, but have they... do they have a legal written
6 memo on this matter?

7 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: Does HPD?

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

9 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: HPD is coming at it
10 from the point of view that going forward, as we roll
11 out these new scattered-site units, which we have to
12 do to meet these numbers, right; I mean it's just not
13 possible to build 15,000 units in the next 15 years;
14 a lot of them are going to have to be in existing
15 buildings and some number of... most of those are going
16 to be apartments that are otherwise in the market, so
17 there is this tension of competing with other
18 affordable uses of the building, and their concern is
19 that they want people to have a lease in their own
20 name to secure their rights and that's their position
21 of how this should work and we agree with them, and
22 it's going to take I think a lot of effort on the
23 part of all parts of the City and the communities
24 involved and the stakeholders to ensure that we
25 create a system that secures people's rights and
doesn't put them at risk.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

138

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Thank you.
4 Catherine.

5 CATHERINE TRAPANI: Thanks very much for
6 the opportunity to testify. My name is Catherine
7 Trapani and I'm the Executive Director of Homeless
8 Services United, which is a coalition of over 50
9 nonprofit agencies serving homeless and at-risk
10 adults and families in New York City. We provide
11 advocacy, information and training to member agencies
12 to expand their capacity to delivery high-quality
13 services. We advocate for the expansion of
14 affordable housing and prevention services and for
15 immediate access to safe, decent emergency and
16 transitional housing, outreach, and drop-in services
17 for homeless New Yorkers.

18 A lot of what I wanted to say this
19 morning has been covered by previous testimony, so I
20 just want to say that supportive housing has been an
21 infinitely effectively model to ending homelessness
22 for particularly chronically homeless single adults
23 with multiple and complex needs, and so what we're
24 really looking to to improve upon the model is
25 increased flexibility with serving families, victims
of domestic violence, youth, and not just those aging

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

139

3 out of foster care, but those using the RHY [sic]
4 system, and we heard a little bit about that today.
5 We also want to see reductions and burdens for
6 applicants; we think that... I've heard from our drop-
7 in centers that assist street homeless clients and
8 our street outreach teams and those that are working
9 with the most vulnerable people that the application
10 procedures are so onerous with all the documentation
11 that sometimes the sickest people are the hardest to
12 serve; they're sort of branded as noncompliant and
13 it's hardest to get them into the units even though
14 they may be the ones that need it the most, and
15 that's driven by the culture of scarcity that we've
16 talked about this morning, so it's not blaming and
17 sometimes it's even the HUD regulation that says that
18 you have to prove you've been homeless for this many
19 days and you can't have any gaps, but all of that
20 documentation I think really makes supportive housing
21 hard to access, which is a shame, 'cause as you can
22 see, it is fantastic and really transformative and
23 life-changing. So I'm really encouraged by the work
24 of the CAPS Committee that HSU was a part of to
25 reduce some of those application burdens and to
streamline and make it easier for applicants to get

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

140

through, so I'm looking forward to the implementation
of that, as well as the crafting of the vulnerability
index, which is crafted to ensure that the most
vulnerable clients are actually matched to the
available units. There is a problem and a perception
amount some providers that... for the supportive
housing providers that work with street homeless that
do outreach, people like Breaking Ground, people like
Urban Pathways, they get it; it's a low barrier model
where you meet people where they're at, you take them
into the housing and it works really well.

Unfortunately, there are some other providers where
my members have had the experience where even though
as HRA testified, everybody that is in a category
that's sort of branded as eligible for supportive
housing, within that there is always going to be
shades of grey, and so as the Committee questioned,
when they are referring three applicants and the
supportive housing provider is taking one of those
three, there isn't, to my knowledge, and I didn't
hear it in the answers today, a systematic tracking
of what happens to the other two, and so while we're
building in these protections, like the vulnerability
index and improved and streamlined applications

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

141

3 procedures, I would love to see a tracking of what
4 happens to those two so that we know that very
5 vulnerable people are being well-served, and again, I
6 understand that it's driven by the culture of
7 scarcity and there's simply not enough units to go
8 around, but I think it's still an important thing to
9 really track. And so HSU really supports reducing
10 application burdens -- just to summarize -- taking
11 into account not just mental illness and sort of
12 traditional things of the vulnerability index, but
13 medical frailty, this General Welfare Committee did a
14 hearing on medical services in shelter and we learned
15 that there is a great many people that are too well
16 for nursing homes, too sick for shelter, but without
17 a qualifying mental health disorder so far haven't
18 really been able to access supportive housing. So
19 there's groups that I think we need to fold in, so
20 really looking at vulnerability in a very broad sense
21 is important to us and making sure that the housing
22 models are flexible and appropriately funded so that
23 these new people that we haven't really been working
24 with before can be adequately served once they're in
25 the housing, so really making sure that this sector
is getting what it needs to rise to that challenge.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 142

3 Supportive housing is an incredibly important tool, a
4 piece of the puzzle in ending homelessness, and so we
5 just thank you for your commitment to the issue and
6 your colleagues on the Council and our members,
7 Breaking Ground for hosting us today, and all of my
8 colleagues here. Thanks very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
10 to this panel; we really appreciate the great work
11 that all of your organizations are doing and
12 continuing to hold government accountable on these
13 very important issues, and we look forward to working
14 with you. And I just want to encourage all of you
15 that as this move forward, I mean we obviously a
16 receptive City Administration and we have a receptive
17 State Administration; we want to make sure that this
18 is all happening in the most responsible way and so
19 you know I want to encourage all of you where there
20 are issues that arise, please let this committee know
21 in addition to letting HPD and City Hall and the
22 State know about these implementation issues as they
23 arise, so thank you. [background comments]

24 Next panel -- Nicole Bramstedt, Urban
25 Pathways; Moshe [sp?] Sugar [sp?], Urban Pathways;
Tabatha Renz, Manhattan Community Board 3; Chloe

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

143

2 Holzman, MFY Legal Services; Kristin Miller, CSH; and
3 then we'll have one more panel after that.

4 [background comments] And I want to thank everybody
5 for their patience. Okay, whoever wants to begin.

6 CHLOE HOLZMAN: I've been nominated.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: If you could speak
8 close to the mic so we get you on... on record.

9 CHLOE HOLZMAN: Can you all hear me? Hi,
10 my name is Chloe Holzman; I'm a staff attorney in the
11 Mental Health Law Project at MFY Legal Services. My
12 full statement on behalf of MFY can be found in the
13 written testimony, but there are a few points that
14 I'd like to highlight.

15 As has been discussed in-depth already
16 this morning, people with mental illness continue to
17 confront a severe lack of affordable housing in New
18 York City and expansion of supportive housing is
19 cost-effective, it reduces hospitalizations,
20 incarcerations, and unnecessary institutionalization.

21 As MFY has previously testified before
22 these committees, two other common alternatives to
23 supportive housing -- adult homes and three-quarter
24 houses -- are not conducive to recovery and my
25 written testimony includes a discussion of some of

3 the reasons why. But in contrast, expansion of
4 supportive housing would allow more New Yorkers to
5 afford safe, stable housing in the community while
6 ultimately saving taxpayer money.

7 My written testimony lays out several
8 suggested improvements to the supportive housing
9 program and among these, as has been echoed already
10 by many other people testifying today, is expanding
11 access to supportive housing by making the HRA 2010e
12 application process more accessible for people with
13 disabilities, including allowing mental health
14 treatment providers besides just psychiatrists to
15 submit mental health evaluations, as well as allowing
16 more flexibility regarding required documentation and
17 expired documentation in the HRA 2010e application.
18 We also believe in expanding the targeted priority
19 populations to include people with mental illness
20 facing imminent eviction as well as people with
21 criminal justice histories.

22 MFY supports the Mayor's Task Force on
23 Supportive Housing proposal to create a vulnerability
24 index to target housing to those most in need, but
25 again, in keeping with other testimony today, we
would want to see that index of vulnerability have a

3 very broad consideration of vulnerability that would
4 incorporate consideration of those in imminent need,
5 like people facing eviction and people exiting
6 hospitals and other institutions.

7 In addition, supportive housing providers
8 must have the resources to ensure that the housing
9 they maintain is stable and truly supportive.

10 Contract rates for supportive housing must be
11 sufficient to allow supportive housing providers to
12 access safe and habitable housing, train and retain
13 staff, and provide appropriate wraparound services
14 that are going to allow clients to succeed in their
15 inherent to long-term success and cost-effectiveness
16 of this kind of housing.

17 Finally, and echoing some of the comment
18 earlier by Joshua Goldfein of Legal Aid, we believe
19 that leases for scatter-site housing should be
20 required to be in the name of the resident. Despite
21 supportive housing guidelines that recommend that
22 leases be in the resident's name, in our experience
23 it is often the supportive housing provider who is
24 named on the lease and when that happened, as was
25 discussed earlier, the landlord may consider that the
rental unit is not covered by rent stabilization laws

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

146

3 that otherwise apply and in turn the landlord can
4 then refuse to renew a lease with the supportive
5 housing provider, which allows the unit to turn over
6 more quickly, rents to rise more quickly and denies
7 mental health consumers the same kind of protections
8 that other tenants would otherwise enjoy.

9 So again, more details about this are in
10 my written testimony, including about MFY's work
11 generally, but I want to thank you for holding this
12 hearing and for your commitment supporting these
13 expanding housing options for vulnerable New Yorkers.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

15 TABATHA RENZ: Good afternoon. I am
16 Tabatha Renz, Assistant District Manager of Manhattan
17 Community Board 3.

18 Community Board 3 Manhattan encompasses
19 the Lower East side and Chinatown and has roughly
20 152,000 people. Our district ranks second highest in
21 the city for a high diversity ratio between lower-
22 income and higher-income residents and we are the
23 third most gentrifying district.

24 Affordable housing has always been a
25 priority in CB3. Traditionally, this meant
affordable for low-income residents, although we are

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

147

3 now also concerned about loss of moderate- and
4 middle-income housing. Affordable housing has also
5 always included supportive housing as a priority for
6 CB3 and the Board has consistently advocated for it.
7 We made a quick list of supportive housing locations
8 in CB3 and came up with at least 14; included in
9 those is The Lee, which Ms. Katz spoke about earlier.
10 We additionally have over 15 shelters and a few safe
11 havens, also a priority for CB3.

12 Supportive housing works well in our
13 community. The Supportive Housing Task Force report
14 included a recommendation to improve community
15 engagement for new supportive housing projects and
16 that's something that we do very well in CB3. All
17 supportive housing projects in our district are
18 sponsored or partnered with organizations that are
19 well-known and established in the district. We work
20 with the organizations to provide many services,
21 including after school programs, senior services,
22 arts, and other programs. We all know who they are
23 and they are part of our community. The CB has an
24 ongoing dialogue with most of these organizations and
25 we often work with them on task forces and other

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

148

3 issues important to the district; some of them even
4 have members on our community board.

5 We think it is a very important factor
6 that sponsoring organizations are established in the
7 community; we know and we trust them; if there are
8 issues that require attention there is already an
9 ongoing dialogue. Some of these facilities provide
10 meeting space to the community board, which has been
11 mentioned in many testimonies about this really
12 valuable community space, and that eliminates
13 isolation of these facilities from the rest of the
14 community. On the rare occasion that there is an
15 unfortunate event, we can immediately meet with the
16 community and our elected officials, who are always
17 very supportive, and immediately give good
18 information and keep concerns focused. There is
19 always complete transparency. Organizations come to
20 the community board and discuss projects at public
21 meetings often from the earliest concept; the Board
22 and the public are included from the beginning for
23 any comments or feedback. In addition to providing
24 meeting space, some facilities offer services for the
25 community, such as medical and drug store services
and workforce development.

3 One point that hasn't been mentioned
4 often is the added benefit of stabilization of
5 diversity of income levels in the community. We are
6 grappling with rapid gentrification and losing
7 middle- and moderate-income housing due to harassment
8 and displacement while gaining market rate and luxury
9 housing. We need a stable mix of middle- to low-
10 income housing to ensure there will be services, such
11 as affordable grocery stores and other necessities
12 available to a diverse population.

13 Finally, to Council Member Torres' point;
14 substantiated by Ms. Katz, the last time a number of
15 community members organized against a supportive
16 housing project in CB3 was in the early 1990s. In
17 the last several years there have been a few comments
18 at CB meetings against projects, but the sponsor
19 partner [sic] organizations were long-time community-
20 based organizations and fears were not picked up by
21 the community. Now facilities have been open for a
22 few years and like most supportive housing, do not
23 have noticeable impact on the community that is
24 different from any other housing. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Just to
follow up on that, so I've represented this district

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 150

3 now for seven years and two weeks and in that time
4 I've gotten zero complaints about this building, so.

5 KRISTIN MILLER: Hi, good afternoon; I am
6 Kristin Miller, Director of the New York program at
7 Corporation for Supportive Housing. We are a
8 national organization whose mission is to advance
9 solutions that use housing as a platform to deliver
10 services, improve lives and build healthy
11 communities. With a 25-year track record here in New
12 York City, since 1991 we have made over \$138 million
13 in loans to supportive housing developers for the
14 creation of over 15,000 permanent supportive housing
15 and affordable housing units in New York City. We
16 provide important acquisition financing, so
17 particularly important to nonprofit organizations who
18 need money to purchase sites.

19 We are deeply committed to sustaining and
20 increasing access to permanent housing solutions in
21 New York and we want to thank both you Chairs for
22 holding this hearing today. We support Mayor de
23 Blasio's commitment to establishing the New York City
24 15/15 initiative and I'm grateful for the opportunity
25 today to highlight the importance of a multi-year
permanent supportive housing production initiative.

3 As we have heard today, New York City is
4 experiencing record homelessness; we are at a
5 critical moment to address this crisis and invest in
6 the most cost-effective strategy proven to solve
7 homelessness for those with greater needs, supportive
8 housing, which pairs permanent affordable housing
9 with supportive services and I can't stress the
10 "permanent" enough; this is "permanent" housing.
11 It's an evidence-based solution, combined with
12 permanent affordable housing with social services,
13 allows individuals and families to live stably in
14 their communities just like any other New Yorker.

15 We know that supportive housing stops
16 people from cycling between many crisis systems. For
17 example, CSH's Keeping Families Together (KFT)
18 Supportive Housing Program targeted homeless families
19 who were also involved in the child welfare system.
20 An evaluation of KFT demonstrated a 90% housing
21 stability rate, the closing of the majority of child
22 welfare cases and children attended 25 more days of
23 school per year.

24 And Council Member Torres also mentioned
25 housing is health care and we are part of a national
demonstration project where four communities across

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

152

3 the country are providing supportive housing for high
4 utilizers [sic] of Medicaid, and while we were doing
5 that evaluation, which will be out shortly, with this
6 and other New York State is going to be releasing
7 **[inaudible]** it's preliminary analysis **[inaudible]**
8 housing, so we have a growing body of evidence that
9 is really speaking just to the high utilizers of
10 Medicaid and other systems and how supportive housing
11 is cost-effective, so stay tuned for more on that.

12 Supportive housing results in reductions
13 in the shelter populations. In the first five years
14 of the NY/NY III agreement, chronic homelessness
15 among adults was reduced by 47%. Providing permanent
16 affordable supportive housing options for people
17 living in shelters will increase the positive exits
18 from shelter and **[inaudible]** stick, given **[inaudible]**
19 turnover or vacancy rates in supportive housing that
20 we've been hearing about today.

21 Many people here today have talked about
22 how it improves neighborhoods; it improves the block;
23 it improves individual lives and provides a valuable
24 resource in communities **[inaudible]** by community
25 members. A question was asked earlier about the
need; how do we know the need. In October of 2015

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

153

3 CSH released a statewide supportive housing needs
4 assessment and it lifted data from five State
5 agencies and using 2013 [sic] data showed that there
6 was a need in New York City of almost 24,000 units of
7 supportive housing, which is consistent, as we heard
8 that HRA had 23,000 applications, so that is aligned.

9 We support this defecting [sic]
10 intervention and put out money where our mouth is.
11 Last year alone, CSH invested \$33 million in new
12 supportive housing developments in New York, but the
13 permanent supportive housing production pipeline is
14 drying up. Supportive housing developers need a
15 multi-year funding commitment that includes capital,
16 operating and service funding that is required to
17 build new supportive housing. We are asking you for
18 your continued support in fully funding the Mayor's
19 15/15 initiative, promoting the siting of new
20 supportive housing buildings to give our most
21 vulnerable New Yorkers a place to call home. Thank
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.
24 I just have a quick follow-up on that. So when... so
25 you've been... your organization's been at it since
1991 in New York City..

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

154

3 KRISTIN MILLER: Yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 1991, much different
5 picture in terms of the amount of available land in
6 New York City, so... [crosstalk]

7 KRISTIN MILLER: Yeah, sure.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: as forces of
9 gentrification go to every corner of the City of New
10 York, how does an organization like yours work with
11 developers and supportive housing providers to
12 identify land and work on -- I mean it's so
13 expensive, how do you even identify and acquire land
14 to build supportive housing on?

15 KRISTIN MILLER: Yes, it's a fair
16 question. We are finding that acquisition prices are
17 skyrocketing, to your point, so we have internally
18 adjusted our loan pool and loan qualification term
19 sheets to try and meet the need for higher
20 acquisition costs. I will say that we often perform
21 as kind of a matchmaker, so a small perhaps nonprofit
22 who has not done this before or has limited assets,
23 we can help them joint venture in a variety of
24 different ways with an affordable housing developer
25 who would have a lot more resources available to
them...

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

155

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uhm-hm.

4 KRISTIN MILLER: to compete in this hot
5 real estate market and that can be a lot of different
6 flavors to what the joint ventureship looks like.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Are you working at
8 all with the JOE, the Joint Operating Entity of
9 affordable housing developers that have all pulled
10 resources together under HPD?

11 KRISTIN MILLER: Not directly, but around
12 them, right. So we have our foot in all of the
13 affordable housing work that is happening, and of
14 course work very closely with HPD.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great, thank you.

16 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: My testimony says good
17 morning, but good afternoon. [laughter] Thought it
18 was time for a good laugh.

19 My name is Nicole Bramstedt; I'm Policy
20 Director at Urban Pathways. Thank you to both
21 committees for having this hearing on supportive
22 housing and the opportunity to testify. You have my
23 full testimony that's been submitted; I will
24 summarize parts of it.

25 Since 1975, Urban Pathways has worked to
engage our most vulnerable, in particular,

3 chronically homeless individuals; also individuals
4 discharged from state hospitals, and provide them
5 with a way home. We have a continuum of program in
6 four of the five boroughs and that includes eight
7 supportive housing residences, as well as scattered-
8 site supportive housing units in Brooklyn, Manhattan
9 and the Bronx. Just to give you an idea, in Fiscal
10 Year 16 we assisted over 500 individuals via
11 supportive housing. In the first part of my
12 testimony I addressed the issues we faced since
13 opening our first supportive housing residence, Ivan
14 Shapiro House in Midtown Manhattan in 1997. One
15 issue I do want to speak on; it's been touched on; I
16 think it needs to be touched on again, is that
17 **[inaudible]** our community work and the extensive work
18 we do with the communities. So since we opened Ivan
19 Shapiro in 1997, we've worked really hard to engage
20 communities. Just to give you an idea, you know we
21 recognize our important role as a community member,
22 as being a good neighbor; our vision is that our
23 clients are self-sufficient, integrated members of
24 the communities; we need communities to help our
25 clients, and being engaged in community work and
predevelopment, development operations of supportive

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

157

3 housing. Typically during predevelopment the
4 community engagement we do is about a year and a
5 half, it's very extensive, outreach to local
6 electeds, including the City Council Member, the
7 borough president; we engage also with the community
8 board; we meet with them and present on the project,
9 and with this regard, this is the role **[inaudible]** in
10 deciding whether we need approval or we need
11 notification. Typically we go in; we don't go in
12 with specifics, we go in with an idea and some
13 general feasibility; that's to give them a sense of
14 shared ownership; we want them to be involved in
15 this. We also offer them the opportunity to have a
16 neighborhood advisory group so that community vendors
17 can have input in terms of the development and
18 operation of the residence. We also offer them
19 opportunities to tour our existing residences, so we
20 can, again, show them that we've done this before and
21 we're very competent and such. And then we continue
22 to engage with the community board during development
23 and operation development; we offer a district
24 manager a tour; we forward them job listings, as
25 supporting as I know Breaking Ground testified. You
know we ant people who are working in our buildings

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

158

3 to live them in the community, we want them to have a
4 connection, it's very important to us, and we forward
5 them the applications for low-income units in our
6 mixed-use buildings so we can have individuals who
7 are living in the community work there. And also,
8 during operation, again, we strive to be a good
9 neighbor, properly responding to community
10 complaints; we have our program directors monthly
11 attend community board meetings and we're involved in
12 the local precinct community council. Despite this
13 extensive engagement we still encounter resistance.
14 I document some resistance we encountered when we
15 opened our supportive housing residence in Astoria,
16 Queens in 2011-2012, which I elaborate on in my
17 written testimony. I'm really happy to report, and I
18 know this has been brought up before, that there was
19 **[inaudible]** Cove in Astoria, Queens; it'll be open
20 its fifth year now, and as it enters its fifth year
21 the concerns haven't materialized at all. Local
22 residents confirm its low profile, the former Council
23 Member reports no complaints during a site visit, the
24 Queensborough President Office, staff commented it
25 looked better than adjacent luxury apartments; the
waterfront development that they feared wouldn't

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

159

3 happen is happening, and we also want to thank the
4 current Council Member Constantinides for graciously
5 awarding us a discretionary funds grant this past
6 year. The residents there have a strong interest in
7 arts, and so we've put together an arts group, with a
8 real arts instructor and supplies, as opposed to a
9 staff member doing it, and this is really enabling
10 **[inaudible]** therapy to move forward. So it's these
11 kind of partnerships that are important to us with
12 the community.

13 As I elaborate in my testimony,
14 resistance has detrimental consequences during
15 predevelopment in particular and we have concerns
16 going forward with the Mayor's 15,000 units that
17 there might be a slowing in development of those
18 units because of community resistance, which has
19 happened in the past and the need right now -- you
20 know we really have to ensure the development of
21 these units are not delayed; we need to educate our
22 communities in supportive housing; we need to get out
23 in front of that potential community resistance. The
24 City should conduct a community to [sic] education
25 campaign generally, in terms of all New Yorkers, but
also in communities with the local councilmember, the

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

160

3 community board; campaign should clarify what
4 supportive housing is and isn't, specifically that
5 it's not a shelter, and it should include an
6 introduction to providers in residences; there needs
7 to be dialogue continuing. Also, we need to address
8 the role the community board plays in siting approval
9 versus notification and we need to synchronize the
10 City's policy with the State and the City could also
11 ensure coordination of proposed projects to prevent
12 multiple providers proposing sites at the same time
13 in the same neighborhood.

14 We really appreciate having, again, this
15 hearing and the support of the Council and the
16 support of the City in utilizing this very cost-
17 effective tool to addressing our homelessness crisis
18 and we look forward to working with you going
19 forward.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.

21 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: Sure.

22 MOSHE SUGAR: Good afternoon. My name is
23 Moshe Sugar. Thank you to both committees for having
24 this hearing on supportive housing.

25 I have lived in Urban Pathways Ivan
Shapiro House for close to four years now. Ivan

Shapiro House is a supportive housing residence in Midtown Manhattan. East resident has their own studio apartment with their own kitchen, bathroom and bedroom space. We also have an indoor and outdoor common space for groups, relaxing and events. Most importantly, we have 24-hour support; we have security always on-site. We also have case managers who make sure I take my medication, go to my program and keep my appointments. If I have a problem, there's always someone to talk with to nip it in the bud and take care of it before it overwhelms me.

Before Ivan Shapiro House, I was in and out of the hospital all my life. The last time I was there my doctor said let's try something different and would only discharge me to supportive housing; he would not let me out of the hospital otherwise. I did not want to go to supporting housing; I wanted to go home to my wife and kids, but he insisted that supportive housing was the only option. Now I'm very happy that the doctor suggested discharging me to supportive housing; it's been almost four years that I have been out of the hospital and not returned. If I would have not been in supportive housing, I would have been back in the hospital a long time ago.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

162

3 With the help and support of Ivan Shapiro
4 House I have changed for the better; before I entered
5 Ivan Shapiro I did not regularly visit my doctors and
6 when I did, I was not medication compliant, but now,
7 with the help and support I regularly keep my
8 appointments and take my medications as prescribed.
9 Also, before Ivan Shapiro House I relied on drugs and
10 alcohol to numb my pain, but now, with their help and
11 support I am, thank god, sober and clean.

12 I am also working on anger management and
13 how to reduce my anxiety and stress; this results in
14 me making better, more rational decisions and less
15 mistakes; I am also calmer. As a result, I am able
16 to be employed part-time, editing Hebrew books. I
17 also volunteer in the community, visiting individuals
18 in the hospital.

19 To those who oppose a supportive housing,
20 they should know that it is a building like any other
21 on the block; in fact, on the outside it actually
22 looks nicer. Sometimes when I am in front of Ivan
23 Shapiro House people stop me and ask me how to get an
24 apartment in the building.

25 I thank you for the opportunity to
testify on supportive housing; it has been valuable

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

163

3 for me and it can be valuable for others going
4 forward.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

6 MOSHE SUGAR: You're welcome too. [sic]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
8 Sugar; that was very moving testimony and we greatly
9 appreciate your willingness to be here to tell your
10 story and show us, as the previous resident did as
11 well on a previous panel, that supportive housing
12 works for people and people that are in need of
13 affordable housing, that it provides community,
14 provides support, provides the helping hand that all
15 of us need at some point. So I really greatly
16 appreciate your willingness to come down here and
17 testify. I want to thank this entire panel for your
18 testimony and I think Council Member Williams wants
19 to say something [sic].

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I just want to
21 reiterate that, particularly to Mr. Sugar for taking
22 the time and the courage to come share your story.
23 Again, as I said to the last resident, it's important
24 that folks see and hear the real people behind to
25 dismantle the preconceived notion they have of who's
taking part in this and it's just regular people who

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

164

3 need assistance; anyone could be there. So thank you
4 so much and hopefully you continue on your good path.
5 Thank you.

6 MOSHE SUGAR: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Final panel -- Jaron
8 Benjamin from Housing Works; is it... Rima Begum of
9 Housing Works -- and I apologize if I mispronounce
10 your name -- Chad Gholizadeh of Citizens' Community
11 for Children -- apologize if I mispronounce your name
12 -- Craig Hughes, Coalition for Homeless Youth; and
13 Madge Rosenberg from CB7. Blanket apology if I
14 mispronounce anybody...

15 JARON BENJAMIN: Thanks, Council Member
16 Levin and Council Member Williams. I have to say,
17 that's the first time that my name didn't get
18 mispronounced and other people, so I really, I really
19 appreciate that, so. I think there's a lot that's
20 been said that I won't waste time saying again, but
21 first of all, just thanks everybody for showing up.
22 My name is Jaron Benjamin; I'm Vice President of
23 Community Mobilization at Housing Works; we're here
24 in a community with people living with and affected
25 by HIV and AIDS and our mission is to end [inaudible]
crisis of homelessness and AIDS, and currently our

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

165

3 biggest project is working on implementing the New
4 York State blueprint for ending the AIDS epidemic by
5 the year 2020 and the reason why we're here today is
6 because expanding access to supportive housing is an
7 integral part of that plan.

8 Just based on the previous NY/NY
9 agreement, NY/NY III, we're expecting that up to 20%
10 of the new units created through a robust NY/NY IV
11 agreement could be targeted to homeless people living
12 with HIV and co-recurring behavioral health issues.
13 So that we're expecting could really make a dent in
14 our efforts to end AIDS in New York State by the year
15 2020.

16 Over the last decades Housing Works has
17 relentlessly worked to provide homeless and unstably
18 housed New Yorkers with stable housing and health
19 care and we have long proven that housing is health
20 care, and I'll talk a little bit more about some
21 research on that in a minute. But expanding
22 supportive housing would do more than just combat the
23 homelessness crisis; I think a lot of people have
24 done a great job talking about that, but it can also
25 greatly improve public health and we've seen it time
and time again when people have a place to take their

3 meds, a place to call home; then everything else
4 seems to settle down. I have not had the misfortune
5 of being homeless for an extended period of time, but
6 was homeless -- and I won't get too political -- but
7 was homeless during the government shutdown back in
8 1995 or 1996, when I was a high school, and I can
9 remember that during that time, during those months
10 that we were away from our home, which an arsonist
11 set fire to it, I don't remember taking any
12 medication for anything and I have asthma and other
13 chronic illnesses; I don't remember taking any daily
14 regimen of anything; I don't remember doing my
15 homework, and I can imagine, just that short period
16 of destabilization, what kind of impact it must have
17 on people that have much more than just homework,
18 football practice and other things like that to worry
19 about. And so we know that safe, stable housing go a
20 long way towards reducing the number of new HIV
21 infections from approximately, when the government
22 made the commitment, 3,000 infections per year to 750
23 new infections per year by the year 2020. And it's
24 worth noting that as of 2017 we're already ahead of
25 schedule, thanks in, I'm sure, no small part due to
the City's commitment in expansion of HIV and AIDS

3 services, administration benefits to people without
4 either **[inaudible]** infections or people with an AIDS
5 diagnosis. Now for people who are HIV positive, that
6 has gone a long way and we know that that's going to
7 continue to remove people from the shelter system.

8 But just to kind of get to some of the
9 things I alluded to earlier, we can't stress enough
10 that housing is health care and a comprehensive study
11 that was just recently published in the American
12 Journal of Public Health -- Housing Status, Medical
13 Care and Health Outcomes Among People Living with
14 HIV/AIDS: A Systematic Review -- reviewed 152 peer
15 review articles and the association between housing
16 status, medical care and health outcomes among people
17 living with HIV, and the findings reviewed provide
18 overwhelming evidence that lack of stable, secure,
19 adequate housing is a significant barrier and
20 consistent and appropriate HIV medical care, access
21 and **[inaudible]** medications sustain bowel
22 suppression, which for people not well-versed, means
23 that it's virtually impossible to pass the virus to
24 anyone else, and transmission risk [sic] reduction.
25 As the report also explains, housing compromises more
than just physical shelter; where we live is our

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

168

3 personal, social and economic lives come together;
4 people who lack stable, secure, adequate housing lack
5 protected space to maintain physical and
6 psychological wellbeing. This I know there's been a
7 lot of talk about cost investment, but if people can
8 just think back to the 30% rent cap bill that was
9 passed at the state level and how much we were able
10 to demonstrate cost savings in both medical care and
11 shelter costs; we know from the testimony of people
12 before and after me that this is definitely something
13 that's going to save money and greatly improve public
14 health. So a fourth NY/NY agreement would greatly
15 decrease homelessness, support efforts to end the
16 AIDS epidemic, save money for the city and state, and
17 while I'm specifically talking about HIV and AIDS, I
18 think it's the same with any other chronic illness,
19 and that can't be overstated. And we stand ready to
20 become the first jurisdiction in the world to end
21 this AIDS epidemic, but in order to do that we must
22 **[inaudible]** significant investments in housing
23 supports. Again, we applaud the City's bold actions
24 and continue to call on the Governor to complete a
25 NY/NY IV agreement through which the City and State

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

169

3 can invest in housing, optimize health care and work
4 towards an AIDS-free New York. Thank you.

5 RIMA BEGUM: Hello everyone, my name is
6 Rima Begum; I am also working at Housing Works; I'm
7 the Housing Coordinator, so I have more direct
8 experience in doing some of those applications, the
9 2010e application that HRA was talking about. And
10 before I start my testimony, I just want to say; the
11 only solution to homelessness is housing, period. No
12 matter how you slice it; what conditions come with
13 it; what life experiences, it's housing.

14 So I hope there are some HRA people here,
15 but the application itself is approved for a six-
16 month period, so one concern is that that's a very
17 short amount of time to have an application approved
18 for; it creates a little bit of strain on some of the
19 providers who are having to redo applications and
20 also psychiatric providers who have to redo
21 evaluations on a six-month basis. So expanding it to
22 a year would help tremendously, as evaluations are
23 typically done on a yearly basis; most clients do see
24 their providers on a monthly basis otherwise.

25 And then I know one population that we
don't particularly talk about that I like to

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

170

3 emphasize is a really vulnerable population that we
4 kind of often forget is sex offenders who kind of
5 have no form of getting housing and oftentimes, when
6 you were talking about the 1:3 ratio of who's getting
7 picked, oftentimes sex offenders are not the first on
8 the list to get picked and there's obviously other
9 reasons around that, other policies that kind of
10 contradict; whether there is a park or a school,
11 those things, but I would like to see in the New York
12 15/15 some policy around helping sex offenders.

13 CHAD GHOLIZADEH: Good afternoon. My
14 name is Chad Gholizadeh and I'm the Senior Policy and
15 Advocacy Associate for Economic and Housing Stability
16 at the Citizens' Committee for Children (CCC).

17 CCC is a 73-year-old independent multi-
18 issue child advocacy organization dedicated to
19 ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed,
20 educated, and safe. I'd like to thank Chairs Levin
21 and Williams and the City Council for holding today's
22 hearing on supportive housing and Breaking Ground and
23 the residents of The Schermerhorn for hosting us
24 today. And I'll just be summarizing my written
25 testimony.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

171

3 Supporting housing is a cost-effective
4 need to reduce homelessness; placement in supportive
5 housing reduces the use of costly emergency services
6 and provides stability of families; residents have a
7 lease, they receive necessary services and most
8 importantly, their rent is affordable. While
9 thousands of units of supportive housing have been
10 created, homelessness in New York City has reached
11 historic levels and the need for additional
12 supportive housing units is dire. We're grateful for
13 the Mayor and the City Council's longstanding support
14 for supportive housing and the development of
15 additional units of supportive housing to help New
16 Yorkers, and we're particularly pleased for the
17 commitment to create 15,000 affordable additional
18 supportive housing units over the next 15 years. We
19 hope this commitment is the start of a concerted
20 effort in cooperation with the State to ensure that
21 New York City and the State have supportive housing
22 units needed, and CCC respectfully submits the
23 following recommendation: that the State Legislature
24 and the Governor must finalize and sign the MOU to
25 release nearly \$2 billion in financing for funding

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

172

3 the creation of affordable and supportive housing as
4 soon as possible.

5 We appreciate the City Council's efforts
6 to date and urge you to continue to push your state
7 counterparts to expedite the release of these funds
8 and the start of housing development. We also wish
9 to ensure that the City's supportive housing
10 commitment includes sufficient units for families
11 with children and youth aging out of foster care.
12 The City's supportive housing recommendations include
13 a call to create a vulnerability index to target
14 housing applicants most in need of supportive
15 housing; families with children are now 70% of the
16 people living in DHS shelters.

17 In addition, youth aging out of foster
18 care are struggling to maintain housing in the city.
19 First, CCC urges the City to ensure that the rollout
20 of new units of supportive housing includes a
21 significant number of units for families and youth;
22 second, CCC calls on the City to ensure that any
23 vulnerability index takes into account the barriers
24 to housing that all members of the family face,
25 including the mental or developmental disabilities of
a family's children and whether a family is involved

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 173

3 in the child welfare system in order to accurately
4 assess their vulnerability. The coordinated
5 assessment and placement system would offer an
6 opportunity to identifying families who would benefit
7 from supportive housing and this will ensure that the
8 supply of affordable housing will be able to truly
9 serve the families most in need.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

12 CRAIG HUGHES: Hi. Thank you, Chairs
13 Levin and Williams and members of the Committee for
14 the opportunity to testify today. My name is Craig
15 Hughes and I'm the Policy Analyst at the Coalition
16 for Homeless Youth.

17 Coalition for Homeless Youth has
18 advocated for the needs of homeless youth for nearly
19 40 years; our coalition is comprised of 67 providers
20 of services to homeless youth across New York State,
21 including 29 members in New York City. We commend
22 the City Council for scheduling a truly necessary
23 oversight hearing on supportive housing. I'll also
24 add into that that in a former life I spent about
25 five years smotherly [sic] submitting supportive
housing applications with homeless young people from

the street into a placement and from a provider perspective can certainly testify to the absolute importance of this intervention; it is a lifesaver, hands down. Then with that there are complications and it can be difficult, without falling into Nimbyism, to dive into that consensus and talk about some of the difficulties that are in the supportive housing process to make sure the most vulnerable people are able to access housing. So I'm going to -- I submitted written testimony, but I am going to just highlight some particular parts of it.

First, probably important to start with some context and Councilman Levin, I want to truly thank you for bringing up the question of rental subsidies for homeless youth. According to the most reasonable and comprehensive study on the matter, there are more than 3,800 homeless youth in New York City on any given night; currently, homeless youth are one of the only homeless subpopulations in New York City that has been left with virtually no option for permanent housing to exit homelessness. Youth relying on DYCD's homeless youth programs have no access to local housing subsidies like LINC; these young people do not receive any priority access to

3 New York City Housing Authority units or priority
4 access to Section 8 subsidies. Youth eligible for
5 supportive housing also face significant barriers in
6 accessing the units.

7 As a result of the dearth of permanency
8 options, many vulnerable youth continue to cycle in
9 and out of homelessness. As an example of what I
10 would consider a kind of systematic deprioritization
11 in the City's Social Services Department of Homeless
12 Youth, we see today that HRA testified that of the
13 550 units coming online, they're only coming from
14 DHS; not the DYCD system, and that Dan Tietz
15 testified, when asked about whether LINC would be
16 provided to homeless youth that "we are working on
17 it." We're three years deep into an administration
18 where homeless youth have been provided no out of
19 shelter, no out and given that that's the case, three
20 years is three years too long and that needs to
21 happen.

22 City data shows that in FY16 less than 1%
23 of those discharged from DYCD crisis beds moved into
24 their own apartment, less than 1%. Only about 10% of
25 those discharged from tilt transitional beds, longer-
term transitional beds, moved into their own

3 apartment. For youth in crisis beds, nearly 30% of
4 those discharged went directly back into crisis beds.

5 Supportive housing, which is an
6 intervention available particularly for young people
7 aging out of foster care and for those with mental
8 health disabilities and other disabilities is
9 decisive; however, homeless youth have had a
10 particularly had time reaching that resource.

11 I'm going to bullet-point just a handful
12 of difficulties that come up, and to be clear, I do
13 this in a spirit of deep support of supportive
14 housing, but also an acknowledgement of how
15 marginalized homeless youth have been within the
16 homeless services systems, including access to
17 supportive housing.

18 First, there has to be an acknowledgement
19 that New York City has a chronically homeless youth
20 population and that many of these individuals would
21 greatly benefit from supportive housing. Often when
22 we speak of supportive housing for youth it solely
23 relates to many young people as they relate to the
24 foster care system, yet there's also a significant
25 population of homeless young people who have been
homeless for long periods of time, using DYCD

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

177

3 resources and many of them who don't. New York City
4 provides only a handful of beds specifically for
5 these young people and must provide more. As
6 importantly, young adults should not be limited to
7 age-specific units. Our providers have often found
8 that young people in supportive housing buildings
9 that are not in age-specific buildings do very well.

10 Secondly, and this gets to a more
11 controversial issue, but I am nothing appreciative
12 that it was approached, particularly by you, Council
13 Member Levin, nor was it completely answered by the
14 Administration, which is that creaming and cherry-
15 picking, or what gets called creaming of applicants
16 by providers is a pervasive issue that needs to be
17 addressed. Sometimes young people are denied in
18 supportive housing due to their age, although when
19 you get written responses as to why that occurs it
20 doesn't say that and sometimes you get verbal
21 statement of that. But creaming or cherry-picking
22 also occurs by screening out applicants through
23 quick, highly subjective and surface-level claims of
24 issues like lack of insight into mental illness, not
25 being compliant with medication or because an
applicant has a recent history of substance use or

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

178

3 because they are simply deemed too mentally ill. One
4 way of looking at this is that many of those most in
5 need may be the least likely to access the resource.
6 The question -- uh well, answer that here actually.
7 There is a need for oversight of denials and a
8 mechanism to ensure that eligible applicants aren't
9 being inappropriately screened out of permanent
10 housing via questionable assessments; there's also
11 need for some type of mechanism through which
12 applicants can challenge denials of supportive
13 housing. It's of note that supportive housing
14 denials are not subject to fair hearings or any other
15 administrative procedure for further review -- if you
16 are denied, you are denied. Advocating for a client
17 whose denial appears inappropriate -- and I can
18 testify to this personally -- is typically an
19 exercise in futility, including going up the City's
20 chain of command.

21 Homeless young adults relying exclusively
22 on DYCD resources appear to have a harder time
23 getting referrals for interviews than young people in
24 DHS beds; that is pretty clear today from what we've
25 seen DHS prioritize within the supportive housing
referral system.

3 Youth-specific units are often not
4 subsidized with permanent housing subsidies that have
5 the potential to become mobile and youth going into
6 their mid 20s often find themselves being pushed to
7 leave without a clear option in front of them. For
8 future youth-specific units, if they are age limited
9 -- and we would argue they should not be -- there
10 needs to be access to an ongoing rental subsidy upon
11 exit. The notion that was mentioned today of a
12 culture moving on, from landlord-speak, that could
13 also mean a culture of tenant harassment and I think
14 that's something we need to be very weary of.

15 Finally, supportive housing providers are
16 sometimes heavy-handed with tenants who suffer with
17 disabilities that impact their daily functionality.
18 For example, some supportive housing landlords are
19 quick to move for evictions over issues where a more
20 appropriate response is supportive and compassionate.
21 Other supportive housing providers move much slower
22 toward eviction and tend to focus on providing
23 supports and assistance rather than a threatening
24 warning letter or bringing someone to Housing Court.
25 We would hope that the City, in its efforts to
support the housing of vulnerable people, will

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

180

3 encourage best practices that emphasize the support
4 in supportive housing rather than sick [sic].

5 To conclude, the Coalition for Homeless
6 Youth is appreciative of the new supportive housing
7 units planned to come online and very appreciative of
8 this very needed hearing; we're in hopes that
9 challenges mentioned above that I just went through
10 will be taken into account in all forthcoming units
11 and also that there will be continuing oversight and
12 hearings as these units are developed. Thank you.

13 MADGE ROSENBERG: Hi, I'm Madge
14 Rosenberg, Co-Chair of Community Board 7's Health and
15 Human Services Committee and I'm going to speak about
16 something on a very micro level and that's -- in our
17 neighborhood we have several supportive housing
18 units, many, and over the years there has been
19 neighborhood opposition to some, especially since
20 it's compacted into a small part of the neighborhood.
21 But one particular building, which is Rustin House,
22 which took ten years to finally be converted under
23 NY/NY III, with a great deal of support from Gale
24 Brewer, who had been our councilperson, and
25 subsequently from our present Councilperson, Helen
Rosenthal, that's really turned into a success story

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 181

3 and one of the best parts of it is that it was a very
4 NIMBY situation early on. There was a large group,
5 including a lot a lawyers in the neighborhood, well
6 financed, who fought this; it took very long to be
7 built because of all the opposition and it also wound
8 up being a little smaller because of all the
9 opposition, but now that opposition, it's not there
10 anymore. Not only that, but the person who led that
11 opposition is supportive of this unit and the latest
12 unit, within a block of this, which is the Veterans'
13 House, and this particular gentleman is now really
14 involved with that and on the CAB. So that's been a
15 great success story and it was under NY/NY III and I
16 hope very much there will be NY/NY IV to bring more
17 of this, because the neighborhood is very, and the
18 Board, very encouraging of supportive housing and we
19 welcome it. Thank you.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you very
21 much for your testimony. I want to figure out why is
22 it concentrated in a certain part of the community?

23 MADGE ROSENBERG: Because there were a
24 lot of illegal hotels and buildings in bad condition;
25 the neighborhood's changed very, very much; it's been
gentrified the years I've lived here enormously, so

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 182

3 that there were parts that still had either rent-
4 controlled buildings or illegal hotels and the
5 landlord saw a way to make money by doing this, so
6 some of them have been turned into shelters, but the
7 community really doesn't want shelters so much as we
8 want supportive, permanent housing.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Well thank you
10 for all the work that you continue to do. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I want to thank this
12 panel as well for all the work that you do and for
13 bringing up really important issues that we're going
14 to continue to follow up on; I think that we've
15 identified, through your testimony; through the
16 public's testimony issues that need further
17 clarification and further follow-up and so we look
18 forward to working with you all as advocates and
19 providers to follow up on those.

20 I want to acknowledge and welcome my
21 colleagues, Council Member Robert Cornegy of Brooklyn
22 and Vanessa Gibson of the Bronx who are here as
23 members of the Housing and Buildings Committee and
24 the General Welfare Committee. And I want to thank
25 again all of you that came here to testify and for
the good and important work that you continue to do.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 183

3 I want to acknowledge, because this was an off-site
4 hearing it was a little bit harder to produce than
5 our regular City Hall hearings; I want to acknowledge
6 our Sergeants at Arms, John Biondo and Mohamed
7 Arshad; I want to acknowledge Tonya Cyrus and Andrea
8 Vazquez of the General Welfare Committee; Guillermo
9 Patino and Jose Conde of the Housing and Buildings
10 Committee; Carlos Coreno [sp?] and Jenny Berger of
11 The Speaker's staff. I want to acknowledge Breaking
12 Ground, CUCS, Matthew Brookshire from The Actors Fund
13 who's our like studio manager here, and let's see...
14 and the camera operators who are here from NYCTV who
15 are putting this broadcasting online and on the
16 television. Jumaane, you have anything?

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Sorry, and you
18 did ask me, but Sarah Gastelum was here also from the
19 Committee.

20 I did just want to make one point,
21 because I agree that permanent housing period is the
22 answer to homelessness; I just want to be careful
23 about some of the **[inaudible]** that comes with
24 rejecting shelters as well, but we definitely prefer
25 permanent housing, but there probably needs to be
some place for people to stay until those housing

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE, JOINTLY WITH THE
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

184

3 units come online and sometimes we see similar
4 Nimbyism that we see in the past when it comes to
5 shelters.

6 MADGE ROSENBERG: There is a shelter back
7 to back with this building.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Sure, no
9 problem. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Also acknowledging
11 Ashley -- and I don't know her last name -- from
12 Actors Fund and Julie Bero, my Legislative Director
13 as well. Okay. Well with that, thank you all; this
14 hearing is adjourned.

15 [gavel]

16 [background comments]
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date January 31, 2017