

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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B E F O R E: STEPHEN T. LEVIN  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ADRIENEE E. ADAMS  
DIANA AVALA  
VANESSA L. GIBSON  
MARK GJONAJ  
BARRY S. GRODENCHIK  
BRAD S. LANDER  
ANTONIO REYNOSO  
RAFAEL SALAMANCA, JR.  
RITCHIE J. TORRES  
MARK TREYGER

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

Steven Banks  
Commissioner of the New York City Department of  
Social Services, HRA

Maria Torres-Springer  
Commissioner of the New York City Department of  
Housing Preservation and Development, HPD

Molly Park  
Deputy Commissioner for Development at the  
Department of Housing Preservation and  
Development, HPD

Laura Mascuch  
Executive Director of the Supportive Housing  
Network of New York, Co-Chair of the New York  
City Coalition on the Continuum of Care

Kristin Miller  
Director of the Metro Team for Cooperation for  
Supportive Housing, CSH

Carol Corden  
Executive Director of New Destiny Housing

Josh Goldfein  
Staff Attorney from the Legal Aid Society

Gisselle Routhier  
Policy Director for the Coalition for the  
homeless

Sandra Gresl  
Senior Staff Attorney in the Mental Health Law  
Project at Mobilization for Justice

Jeff Nemetsky  
Executive Director for Brooklyn Community Housing  
And Services in Fort Greene

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

Brooke Taylor  
Licensed Social Worker at the Urban Justice  
Center's Mental Health Project

Amy Blumsack  
Director of Organizing and Policy at Neighbors  
Together

Nicole Bramstedt  
Director of Policy at Urban Pathways

Peter Malvan  
Co-chair of the Coalition on the Continuum of  
Care

Wendy O'Shields  
Member of the Urban Justice Safety Net Project

Toac Kamatsu  
Resident against HPD and HRA

1

2 [gavel]

2

3

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good afternoon

4

everybody. I'm Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of

5

the Council's, Council's Committee on General

6

Welfare. Today we are holding a hearing, an oversight

7

hearing on the progress made by the New York City

8

15/15 Initiative as well as a bill that I am

9

sponsoring, Intro Number 147 which will require the

10

Department of Social Services to produce an annual

11

report on supportive housing which is the subject of

12

today's hearing. I'm going to turn it over to our

13

Speaker, Corey Johnson to deliver opening remarks for

14

today's hearing and I want to thank him for his

15

ongoing passion and dedication to supportive housing

16

and to being about to ensure that our city serves the

17

most vulnerable populations with needed housing and

18

supportive services.

19

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you Chair Levin,

20

good afternoon everyone. I'm Corey Johnson, Speaker

21

of the New York City Council. First, I want to thank

22

my dear friend and colleague, Council Member Steve

23

Levin for his stead cast... steadfast dedication over

24

the course of his four years as Chair of this

25

Committee on General Welfare, I was proud to

1  
2 reappoint Steve as Chair of the Committee on General  
3 Welfare again this session. I want to thank the  
4 committee staff for their work on this hearing and  
5 lastly, I want to thank the advocacy and provider  
6 community for being here today, your efforts along  
7 with our partners in city government provide  
8 vulnerable New Yorkers with their most basic needs.  
9 Supportive housing which began in the 1970's in  
10 response to the homelessness crisis in New York City  
11 is considered the most successful existing model for  
12 ending chronic homelessness among vulnerable  
13 populations, it provides integrated permanent housing  
14 with services that help people overcome barriers to  
15 maintaining stable housing. Today more than 32,000  
16 units of supportive housing exists in New York City  
17 and because supportive housing is the gold standard  
18 I'd like to see a number... I'd like to see the number  
19 of units in the city grow more quickly. I'd also like  
20 to see that more people who are eligible for  
21 supportive housing are guaranteed such housing. It's  
22 important that the most vulnerable are prioritized  
23 for placement, we cannot let the neediest including  
24 populations such as New York City's street homeless  
25 slip through the cracks in a system that should be

1  
2 designed to help them. supportive housing isn't just  
3 the most effective way to end chronic homelessness  
4 among New York City's most vulnerable, it's cost  
5 effective, it saves tax payer dollars and it enhances  
6 neighborhoods. Under New York/New York III each unit  
7 of supportive housing saved the city and state an  
8 average of 10,100 dollars per year in public  
9 resources. Supportive housing is often mistaken for a  
10 homeless shelter which can sometimes bring about  
11 community resistance, but the fact of the matter is  
12 that supportive housing is permanent affordable  
13 housing. Typically, there are no complaints once a  
14 facility is built in a neighborhood, people often do  
15 not realize that a building is supportive housing and  
16 supportive housing looks just like any other  
17 apartment building would. The buildings are  
18 attractive and designed to match the neighborhood  
19 density, scale and appearance. I'm proud to say that  
20 I have a lot of supportive housing in my own  
21 district. The Times Square Hotel is a supportive  
22 housing project with 652 units that opened up in  
23 1991, this building is listed on the national  
24 register of historic places. The Christopher is also  
25 supportive housing, it's in Chelsea located on West

1  
2 24<sup>th</sup> Street right near the Whole Foods on the corner  
3 and it has 207 units of supportive housing, 40 of  
4 which are designated for youth aging out of the  
5 foster care system who would become homeless. A fun  
6 fact about that building, it was originally the  
7 McBurney YMCA which was the inspiration of the song,  
8 YMCA. Our budget response focuses on prioritizing  
9 permanent housing and supportive housing and we care  
10 about this greatly. As a city instead of placing  
11 people in temporary shelters it's our belief we  
12 should be placing them in permanent housing with  
13 support services that they need. The city has a plan  
14 to create 15,000 new units of supportive housing over  
15 the next 15 years and by the end of 2017 550 units of  
16 new supportive housing were supposed to be  
17 operational however only 150 of the planned 550 are  
18 currently operating and this pace is unacceptable and  
19 its definitely not adequate enough to help vulnerable  
20 New Yorkers that need it. At the rate we're going  
21 15,000 units in 15 years is not achievable, we need  
22 to do more to make sure these units aren't just  
23 funded but that they are fully operational. In  
24 addition, because the Mayor and Governor did not come  
25 to a joint agreement which historically had been the

1  
2 case with New York I, New York II... New York/New York  
3 I, New York/New York II and New York/New York III  
4 where the state board, the majority of the cost, the  
5 city is now competing with the state in its own  
6 supportive housing plan. With these separate plans  
7 finding possible supportive housing sites across all  
8 five boroughs may be more challenging. We need to  
9 find ways to work together to meet such challenges  
10 head on. I hope this hearing is the beginning of a  
11 conversation of how we can work together to ensure  
12 the roll out of NYC 15/15 supportive housing units is  
13 smooth, timely and successful. I also hope that we  
14 can work together to ensure that those who are in  
15 need particularly the most vulnerable get placed in  
16 supportive housing units. Again, I want to thank  
17 Chair Levin, the advocates and the providers once  
18 again for this work on this important topic and I  
19 just want to end with this, I know the commitment  
20 that both Commissioners have here today to our city  
21 and the work that they had done previously before  
22 they took the current jobs that they're in and I  
23 respect them greatly and we have a good working  
24 relationship. I think that, you know there's a lot of  
25 methodology around homelessness in New York City as



1  
2 we see playout every day in the press, I believe that  
3 there are different of course populations of homeless  
4 individuals which the city I think has done a good  
5 job talking about and tailoring programs to like the  
6 Link vouchers that effect different populations but I  
7 think for the vast majority of New Yorkers who may  
8 not ever think of a homeless shelter unless it might  
9 be sited in their neighborhood their day to day  
10 contact with homelessness in seeing the chronically  
11 street homeless living on the street, sleeping on the  
12 subway and that is what they think of as homelessness  
13 in New York City. As someone who has been, this July  
14 I'll be sober... July 13<sup>th</sup> I'll have nine years sober  
15 and as someone who understands how difficult it is to  
16 achieve sobriety and also understands that not all  
17 but a significant portion of the chronically street  
18 homeless are dealing and struggling with substance  
19 abuse, alcoholism, untreated mental health issues  
20 that the only way to really help these folks is to  
21 get a roof over their head and until you get a roof  
22 over their head there's no way to get them into a 12  
23 step program or get them connected to social services  
24 in a regular meaningful way or get them on medication  
25 in a way that keeps them on a regiment with the drugs

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1 10  
2 that they need and I think that everyday and walk  
3 through the streets of Chelsea heading home and there  
4 are homeless people everywhere living on the streets  
5 and its heartbreaking, it's horrific and many not all  
6 but many folks if they're chronically homeless have  
7 not had a great experience sometimes when they've  
8 gone to a city shelter and they decide not to go back  
9 so they decide to live on the streets of New York  
10 City. We need to speed up this plan. Now I don't say  
11 this in an adversarial way or to be offensive but I  
12 don't really care about a 15 year plan, I care about  
13 a three year plan or a four year plan or maybe a five  
14 year plan at most but when you have the level of  
15 homelessness that we've seen even with all the  
16 prevention programs that we've instituted; the  
17 vouchers, the amount of money the city's appropriated  
18 year in and year out for the Department of Social  
19 Services and HRA in building new shelters and the  
20 shelter repair squad and the Link vouchers and rental  
21 subsidy and all of the great programs that have been  
22 innovative and I think effective in stemming the tide  
23 so it's not as bad as it even would be if we didn't  
24 do those things, a 15 year plan is not acceptable. I,  
25 I, I don't want to hear about a 15-year plan when in

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1 11  
2 the first year we're only getting 150 units of 550  
3 units that should be operational. So, for me I am  
4 going to continue to bang the drum on when we're  
5 talking about city owned sites, when we're talking  
6 about new affordable housing projects, when we're  
7 talking about neighborhood rezoning's, when we're  
8 talking about individual sites that are being  
9 rezoned, what is the set aside, what's the  
10 relationship between congregant sites and cluster  
11 sites, how are we doing in those areas? In my own  
12 district in the last couple of years we've built two  
13 new supportive housing sites right near my district  
14 office, one on West 28<sup>th</sup> Street between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>  
15 Avenues and one on West 29<sup>th</sup> Street between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>  
16 Avenues for formally homeless single adults living  
17 with HIV and AIDS, 36 units in one building, 37 units  
18 in another building and, and that is what I want to  
19 see, I want to see us prioritizing this in a  
20 significant way, it doesn't all fall on HPD, it  
21 doesn't all fall on social services and HRA, NYCHA  
22 should be significantly increasing the number of  
23 homeless individuals and families that they take in  
24 but for the chronically street homeless we must,  
25 must, must do better and I... and I, I, I really don't

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1 12  
2 want to hear about a 15 year plan because 15 years  
3 could be three Mayors from now, three Council  
4 Speakers from now, none of us will be here, it's not  
5 a plan that we should be talking about, we should be  
6 figuring out what is... we're in budget season, what is  
7 the amount of money we need on the capital side, what  
8 is the bond cap that we need, what is the operational  
9 money that we need to get these things done. So, I  
10 don't want to keep speaking, I want to let it go back  
11 to Chair Levin but, you know I've come to a handful  
12 of committee hearings since I became Speaker, I care  
13 about this issue deeply and I'm going to continue to  
14 press and push on this issue so I look forward to  
15 hearing your testimony today and I have a series of  
16 questions that I have for you related to the existing  
17 plan and to understand how we're going to achieve  
18 numbers as quickly as possible. Thank you very much  
19 Chair Levin.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
21 Speaker and I can speak and attest to firsthand your  
22 dedication and say a good percentage of our  
23 conversations since you've become Speaker have been  
24 about ensuring that the city meets its commitments on  
25 supportive housing and, and I know that this is

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1 13  
2 something that you're willing to play a very active  
3 role in ensuring that the, the... that this  
4 administration does what it's supposed to be doing  
5 so... so, I'll, I'll go through my, my opening  
6 statement and acknowledge my colleagues and, and then  
7 turn it over to you all. As the Speaker said  
8 supportive housing is considered the most successful  
9 existing model for ending chronic homelessness among  
10 vulnerable populations. Just last year the General  
11 Welfare Committee held a hearing at the Schermerhorn  
12 which is in my district, if you look next door to the  
13 Schermerhorn by the way is a Hilton Hotel across the  
14 street, our luxury condominiums, those have all gone  
15 up I think actually since the Schermerhorn was built.  
16 It is a very successful supportive housing building  
17 that is a partnership breaking ground and the actors  
18 fund, it contains affordable housing for the  
19 community as well as a black box theatre and studio  
20 space for Brooklyn Ballet which has been a tenant  
21 there for probably about ten years now. It's a  
22 perfect example of how a supportive housing  
23 development creates jobs and adds value to a  
24 neighborhood. Given what we know about supportive  
25 housing through research and personal experience the

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1 14  
2 De Blasio Administration and as the announcement in  
3 2015 to create 15,000 units of supportive housing  
4 over 15 years was very welcome news, however as the  
5 Speaker said now that we are a few years in we are  
6 hearing about delays and challenges in implementing  
7 this initiative, 550 units were expected to come  
8 online in FY '18 but we're still not up and running  
9 when we checked in earlier this year. Now this  
10 administration just proposed and we at the council  
11 approved a 160-million-dollar budget mod to be able  
12 to pay for the current needs of our unstably housed  
13 residents, that is... that is a massive, massive  
14 number, of, of that 160 million over 110 million were  
15 for single adults that means that when we budget for  
16 the coming year we are under budgeting by roughly ten  
17 percent for the needs of the shelter system itself.  
18 We know that the antidote to that is to build better,  
19 more plentiful, long term, stable, permanent housing  
20 and supportive housing, a key component to that. We  
21 simply say simply we have to stop playing catch up on  
22 the city's homelessness crisis, we need to dedicate  
23 funding to address this long term and set aside... and  
24 set aside funding for supportive housing in new  
25 developments. We have heard also concerns that the

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1 15  
2 lack of studios and one bedrooms in New York City are  
3 a hinderance to creating scatter site units, we have  
4 heard that individuals being placed in... of  
5 individuals being placed in two-bedroom roommate  
6 situations which is not an ideal situation for two  
7 people who are trying to get back on their feet.  
8 Additionally, some advocates have argued that only  
9 the easiest to serve clients are accepted into  
10 supportive housing, a process known as quote, unquote  
11 "creaming". There are reports of applicants being  
12 denied supportive housing due to their age, quote  
13 "lack of insight into their mental illness, not being  
14 compliant with medication or recent substance abuse".  
15 HRA's response to this concern is to coordinate an  
16 assessment and placement system or CAPS which  
17 includes a vulnerability index to prioritize the  
18 highest need individuals and families approved for  
19 supportive housing. While such a system is admirable  
20 some have expressed concerns that the vulnerability  
21 index may not capture the street homeless and youth  
22 populations, harder to reach communities with unique  
23 needs that require sensitive approaches to care  
24 linkage. It is important that we are all clear on the  
25 process and implementation of the CAP system. In

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1 16  
2 order to ensure that we are serving those who need it  
3 most and not leaving any population behind I've  
4 introduced Intro Number 147, this bill would require  
5 the Department of Social Services to produce an  
6 annual report on the number of individuals referred  
7 to and accepted to rejected for and still awaiting  
8 placement for supportive housing disaggregated by the  
9 source of referral, time the individual's been  
10 homeless, the individual's current shelter placement,  
11 the amount of time the individual's been awaiting  
12 placement, the number of interviews the individual  
13 has attended and the reason an individual has been  
14 rejected for placement. This data will help us all  
15 figure out and get a clear picture if there are any  
16 hiccups in the system or groups who are being  
17 underserved. I'm a dedicated proponent of supportive  
18 housing and I want the roll out of new units to be  
19 successful so that all supportive units can be as  
20 much of a success as the Schermerhorn in my district  
21 and the developments that the speaker spoke of in his  
22 district. I hope that we can all work together to get  
23 the support that... to those that need it starting with  
24 ensuring that those with the highest needs are served  
25 and you know just a, a note from my end, I only have



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1 17  
2 three and a half years left in this council, so I  
3 feel... I feel a, a deep sense of urgency to get things  
4 moving and so when I hear about concerns from  
5 providers around some of the, the... not enough scatter  
6 site units coming on or providers reorienting there,  
7 their contracts because they can't find enough  
8 scatter site units or that I'm hearing about  
9 opportunities for congregant facilities that might  
10 not be taken advantage of, you know I am very  
11 concerned, I'm very concerned, this is not the type  
12 of, of... this is not... this is not the type of crisis  
13 that we should be overly stingy about frankly, we  
14 need to be putting the funding in where it's  
15 necessary and if it requires additional funding or a  
16 more up front funding to address the needs head on if  
17 we don't do that what we see every year is 160  
18 million dollar budget mods in April or in March  
19 because we're not moving out enough single adults out  
20 of the, the shelter system and the cost of shelter,  
21 of temporary shelter will just continue to go up, we  
22 have a right to shelter in this city, we have to have  
23 a right to shelter in the city, we should have a  
24 right to shelter in this city but if we're not  
25 providing and building aggressively permanent housing

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1 18  
2 options starting with supportive housing then we're  
3 going to be throwing away money on the backend  
4 instead of investing it in the frontend and that's a  
5 shame. So, that urgency, I know the Speaker feels it,  
6 I know you all feel it, we need to make sure that,  
7 that we are not in any way... we're not letting a day  
8 slip by without taking advantage of opportunities  
9 that are before us. So, with that I want to  
10 acknowledge my colleagues; Council Member Rafael  
11 Salamanca was here, Council Member Adrienne Adams,  
12 Council Member Diana Ayala, Council Member Mark  
13 Gjonaj, Council Member Brad Lander and I... we're  
14 expecting to be joined by others as well. And with  
15 that I will turn it over to the administration,  
16 before you testify can I ask you to raise your right  
17 hand please? Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
18 whole truth and nothing but the truth in your  
19 testimony before this committee and to respond  
20 honestly to Council Member's questions?

21 STEVEN BANKS: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

23 STEVEN BANKS: Good afternoon, I'm going  
24 to go first. Good afternoon, thank you Chair Levin  
25 and thank you Speaker Johnson and members of the

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1 19  
2 General Welfare Committee for giving us the  
3 opportunity to testify today about this subject of  
4 supportive housing in New York City. My name is  
5 Steven Banks and I'm the Commissioner of the New York  
6 City Department of Social Services which oversees the  
7 Human Resources Administration of the Department of  
8 Social Services and I'd like to thank Commissioner  
9 Torres-Springer as well as HPD's support and  
10 partnership as we continue to implement our reforms.  
11 I also want to thank both the Speaker and the Chair  
12 for your very kind words and for your partnership, we  
13 have implemented a number of reforms with your  
14 support in the HASA area and other areas and I look  
15 forward to giving some testimony today and then... and  
16 then providing information in, in terms of the  
17 questions that you may have so that we can address  
18 your concerns and move forward on something that I  
19 know you care greatly about and we do too. Let me  
20 begin my testimony as I've done previously for the  
21 committee by sort of contextualizing homelessness in  
22 New York City and highlighting the structural and  
23 economic factors that drive the challenge. There is  
24 no one size fits all approach to addressing  
25 homelessness which is why our approach is

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1 20  
2 multifaceted and includes four core components;  
3 prevention, bringing people in from the streets, re-  
4 housing and transforming the provision of shelter  
5 from a haphazard system to a borough-based system  
6 approach. Of course, one significant contributing  
7 factor to homelessness is an insufficient supply of  
8 viable housing options for low income New Yorkers.  
9 From 2005 to 2015 the median rent in New York City  
10 increased by 18.3 percent while household income  
11 increased by only 4.8 percent. The most recent  
12 housing and vacancy survey showed some sign of change  
13 estimating the household incomes among renters rose  
14 by 10.9 percent, in real terms while, while rents  
15 increased 6.2 percent in 2017 but we're still  
16 combatting this long-term trend. Furthermore between  
17 1994 and 2012 the city lost about 16 percent of the  
18 total rent regulated housing stock which encompassed  
19 approximately 150,000 units. These trends among other  
20 contributing factors created a situation where, by  
21 2015, the city had only half the housing it needs to  
22 serve about three million low-income New Yorkers. And  
23 while the city's overall vacancy rate of 3.36 percent  
24 poses a problem for people across incomes, renters  
25 who are only able to afford an apartment costing 800

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1 21  
2 dollars or less must search in a market with an even  
3 lower vacancy rate of 1.15 percent in 2017, down from  
4 1.8 percent in 2014 losing ground there. The  
5 devastating effects of economic inequality and past  
6 inaction from prior administrations in New York City,  
7 Albany and Washington led to the homeless crisis we  
8 face today. In the initiatives of both HRA and DHS  
9 are beginning to reverse the trend. The average  
10 monthly census for DHS shelters increased 115 percent  
11 from 1994 to 2014, rising from 23,868 men, women, and  
12 children in January 1994, to 31,009 in January of  
13 2002, and reaching 51,470 in January 2014. Without  
14 the initiatives that the Speaker acknowledged or  
15 mentioned that he's been... he supported we would have  
16 exceeded 70,000 instead of the 60,000 level that  
17 we're currently at today. In fact, a recent Furman  
18 study found that the year-over-year shelter census  
19 growth from calendar year 2015 to calendar year 2016  
20 was the lowest since 2011, the year the city and  
21 state ended the Advantage rental assistance program,  
22 leading to a 38 percent increase in homelessness. The  
23 DHS census for 2017 remained roughly flat compared to  
24 2016, this is the first time in more than a decade  
25 that the DHS census has remained flat. And among the

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1 22  
2 first four months of 2018 compared to the same period  
3 in the prior year, the number of families with  
4 children entering the DHS shelter system declined by  
5 15.1 percent and adult family entrants declined by  
6 10.8 percent. Since 2014 we've expanded and enhanced  
7 our services and assistance with support from the  
8 council including, but not limited to, the following  
9 initiatives; created and implemented rental  
10 assistance programs and restored Section 8 and New  
11 York City Housing Authority priorities, which through  
12 2017... December 2017 have helped over 81,124 children  
13 and adults move out of, or avert entry into shelter,  
14 established the Homelessness Prevention  
15 Administration within HRA and provided emergency  
16 rental assistance to 217,000 households through FY  
17 '17, aggressively expanded free legal assistance for  
18 New Yorkers facing eviction, harassment by  
19 unscrupulous landlords and other displacement  
20 pressures by increasing funding for legal services  
21 for tenants from six million in FY '13 to 77 million  
22 in FY '18, a 12-fold increase, providing legal  
23 assistance to over 180,000 New Yorkers. These  
24 services have begun to yield positive results, the  
25 Mayor recently announced that residential evictions

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1 23  
2 by marshals dropped by 27 percent from 2013 to 2017,  
3 helping more than 70,000 New Yorkers stay in their  
4 homes. Some New Yorkers face heightened barriers to  
5 securing and maintaining stable housing due to mental  
6 health issues, substance use disorders, HIV and other  
7 disabling medical conditions. Supportive Housing is  
8 targeted to reach this particularly vulnerable cross-  
9 section of New Yorkers. And within the  
10 Administration's comprehensive strategy to turn the  
11 tide on homelessness, Supportive Housing is one  
12 critical component in our efforts. Supportive Housing  
13 not only provides a secure living environment that  
14 helps to stabilize residents, but it also connects  
15 those who meet the eligibility requirements with  
16 support services to ensure that they have access to  
17 the tools necessary to maintain their personal  
18 highest level of self-sufficiency. Services in this  
19 housing model are customized to meet the individual  
20 needs of each resident and can include connection to  
21 mental health and substance use treatment,  
22 employment, and education. The robust, evidence-based  
23 framework, which builds on decades of experience and  
24 evaluation, is one tool in our toolbox to address  
25 homelessness in New York City. For example, our

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1 24  
2 latest data on New York/New York III housing  
3 retention rates shows us that 88 percent of clients  
4 remain stably house after one year and 78 percent  
5 after two. By providing a combination of stable  
6 housing and support services, we are helping  
7 vulnerable populations achieve their maximum  
8 functional capacity in a safe and supportive  
9 environment. The history of Supportive Housing in New  
10 York City highlights the importance of our current  
11 efforts. Supportive Housing has existed in New York  
12 City since the 1980s. Over the past few decades, we  
13 have gained a wealth of knowledge from implementing  
14 the Supportive Housing model and analyzing the  
15 outcomes. Beginning in 1990, the City and State  
16 shared in the development and implementation of  
17 Supportive Housing using an evidenced-based model to  
18 keep some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers stably  
19 housed. These agreements are known as New York/New  
20 York I, II, and III. The New York/New York III  
21 agreement was implemented to create 9,000 units of  
22 Supportive Housing in New York City between 2005 and  
23 2015. Currently, the city and state are still  
24 completing units committed to the New York/New York  
25 III plan and we'll continue to engage in the



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1 25  
2 eligibility determinations, placement, tracking,  
3 contract administration, oversight, and evaluation of  
4 these units. In the absence of fourth New York/New  
5 York agreement in 2015, the administration launched  
6 the largest municipal commitment to Supportive  
7 Housing ever, the Mayor's 15/15 plan. The Mayor's  
8 plan, which commits to developing 15,000 units over  
9 15 years, includes more units than the combined  
10 number of units from the three previous New York/New  
11 York agreements and reaches further than any other  
12 Supportive Housing effort in the country. We are  
13 confident that this sweeping and a comprehensive  
14 plan, along with the existing services provided  
15 through New York/New York agreements, will continue  
16 to improve the lives of New Yorkers in need who  
17 benefit from a combination of stable housing and  
18 supportive services. It's important to note that  
19 while NYC 15/15 has been ramping up, the City  
20 continues to make placements into supportive housing  
21 via vacancies and new units from the prior New  
22 York/New York agreements. Since 2014, the City has  
23 placed over 5,000 people from shelter into supportive  
24 housing units, including re-rentals into New York/New  
25 York I, II, and III units and new units in New

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1 26  
2 York/New York III that are still coming online. There  
3 are two types of Supportive Housing in the 15/15  
4 plan; single-site, also referred to as congregate,  
5 which are designated buildings where each individual  
6 and family has a private living quarters and may  
7 share kitchens or common recreational rooms or other  
8 facilities; scattered site, which are units in  
9 private apartment buildings spread across  
10 neighborhoods and communities throughout the city  
11 that are designated for targeted vulnerable  
12 populations. Both housing models include on-site  
13 services for the residents. Over 15 years, the  
14 expectation is that the City will create 7,500 newly  
15 built congregate units and obtain an additional 7,500  
16 scattered site units. These residential units are  
17 equipped with on-site case management and supportive  
18 services and adhere to safety and quality standards  
19 in accordance with local, state, and federal laws and  
20 regulations. Tenants in Supportive Housing sign a  
21 standard lease or occupancy agreement and receive  
22 rental assistance, along with voluntary, strength-  
23 based support services that are customized to meet  
24 each individual's specific needs. Our requests for  
25 proposals require services for an individual or the

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1 27

2 entire family; and in the case of family supportive  
3 housing, providers must offer programming that is  
4 developmentally appropriate for children and  
5 families. A case management team is responsible for  
6 developing a person-centered assessment and service  
7 plan, and connecting residents to comprehensive  
8 support services including: case management;  
9 educational, vocational, and other recovery-oriented  
10 services; medication management and counseling;  
11 assistance in gaining access to government benefits,  
12 such as food stamps; referrals to medical services,  
13 medical care and treatment by drug and alcohol use;  
14 recommendations for other needed services, such as  
15 legal support. In supportive housing, residents pay  
16 30 percent of their income towards rent and are not  
17 required to participate in services to maintain their  
18 tenancy, but many do. Professional staff members  
19 engage with tenants, providing motivational support  
20 that reduces isolation and increases their connection  
21 to much needed supports. This cost-effective approach  
22 to deliver stable and permanent housing to New  
23 Yorkers struggling with mental illness, homelessness,  
24 and substance use, as well as other vulnerable  
25 populations such as New Yorkers with HIV, is worth

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1 28

2 every penny of the investment. Research, research  
3 shows that Supportive Housing reduces the City's  
4 reliance on homeless shelters, hospitals, mental  
5 health institutions, and incarceration, setting up  
6 these individuals and families for success and the  
7 long-term savings for tax payers. And Supportive  
8 Housing creates positive outcomes for individuals and  
9 their families, the community and government.  
10 Progress so far in the right direction. Throughout  
11 the years, eligibility for Supportive Housing in New  
12 York City has expanded to encompass additional  
13 categories of vulnerable New Yorkers. The first and  
14 second New York/New York agreements provided services  
15 to homeless New Yorkers who were seriously mentally  
16 ill. The third New York/New York agreement  
17 significantly expanded eligibility to include  
18 homeless or at risk of homelessness individuals and  
19 families with a broader range of mental health or  
20 substance use disorders or HIV. It also included  
21 individuals aging out of foster care or transitioning  
22 from State psychiatric facilities. Building on this  
23 expansion, the Mayor's 15/15 plan further reforms  
24 eligibility to reach adults, single adults or heads  
25 of families, with serious mental illness or substance

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1 29  
2 use disorders, SMI or SUD and a history of chronic  
3 homelessness, or young adults, single, pregnant or  
4 head of family, at risk of homelessness. Supportive  
5 Housing task force update, following the historic  
6 announcement of NYC 15/15 in November of 2015, the  
7 Mayor assembled a 28-member Task Force comprised of a  
8 broad representation of subject matter experts from  
9 supportive housing providers and advocates, to social  
10 service practitioners. City agencies worked closely  
11 with the Task Force and also assembled focus groups  
12 with clients to ensure a broad range of feedback. The  
13 Task Force was convened in January of 2016 and their  
14 work culminated in a report issued in December 2016.  
15 This report includes 23 specific recommendations that  
16 outlined the ways in which the NYC 15/15 could expand  
17 and improve upon the previous New York/New York  
18 agreements. The 23 recommendations are grouped into  
19 the following categories: data and evaluation;  
20 referral process; services models; and streamlining  
21 development. In the year and a half since those  
22 recommendations came out, the City has made  
23 significant progress. In last year's testimony, we  
24 outlined for the Council the 23 Task Force  
25 recommendations and detailed some early successes. As

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1 30  
2 of today, we are well underway in the implementation  
3 of those recommendations; more than 75 percent of the  
4 recommendations are either completed or ongoing, the  
5 remaining recommendations are in the process of being  
6 implemented. Prior, prioritizing the most vulnerable  
7 individuals, we have had success in developing and  
8 implementing a process to identify and prioritize  
9 clients who are in the greatest need of Supportive  
10 Housing. Part of the Supportive Housing Task Force's  
11 recommendations included moving away from the rigid  
12 population categories of New York/New York III and  
13 expanding the eligibility to three broad populations;  
14 adults, families, and young adults. In last year's  
15 testimony, we noted that HRA had begun working with  
16 the Coordinated Assessment Placement System, CAPS,  
17 Steering Committee to develop the Coordinated Access  
18 Assessment Survey, a universal tool to assist case  
19 managers and housing specialists to understand the  
20 different types of Supportive Housing and rental  
21 subsidies for which their clients may be eligible.  
22 The survey is now accessible to all 12,000 Placement,  
23 Assessment, and Client Tracking users across NYC,  
24 improving the efficiency of referrals and placements  
25 of vulnerable individuals and clients. The CAPS

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1 31  
2 survey works in conjunction with the Standardized  
3 Vulnerability Assessment, which was implemented in  
4 January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018. Through the Standard  
5 Vulnerability Assessment or SVA, all approved  
6 Supportive Housing applications receive a  
7 vulnerability rating of high, medium, or low based on  
8 criteria that contribute to the probability an  
9 individual or family is vulnerable to becoming or  
10 remaining homeless. Some of these criteria include  
11 multi-system contacts, functional impairments, high  
12 utilization of Medicaid, and length of time homeless.  
13 The SVA is determined by live data feeds with DHS,  
14 the HRA HIV/AIDS Services Administration, or HASA,  
15 the Department of Corrections, and the Department of  
16 Health and Mental Hygiene as well as the information  
17 contained in the 2010e Supportive Housing  
18 applications that HRA administers. These live feeds  
19 provide real-time shelter stay, Medicaid  
20 expenditures, and other information to determine  
21 eligibility and vulnerability for homeless  
22 individuals. As of February 2018, almost 6,000 client  
23 surveys have been completed, and HRA continues to  
24 work with the aforementioned agencies, along with  
25 many additional City, State, advocacy and community-

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1 32  
2 based stakeholders to fully implement CAPS citywide.  
3 Making the application accessible, in previous  
4 testimony, we detailed the 2010e application process,  
5 administered by HRA, which allows referring agencies  
6 to electronically submit the application to HRA's  
7 Placement, Assessment, and Client Tracking Unit. In  
8 2016, we streamlined the application to include  
9 automatic uploads of copies of supportive documents  
10 required for housing, such as the client's social  
11 security card and income information. In 2017, we  
12 expanded access to the application process to a broad  
13 range of referral sources including the Department of  
14 Housing Preservation and Development, HRA's Office of  
15 Domestic Violence, and the Department of Youth and  
16 Community Development. Further, we made it easier to  
17 apply for Supportive Housing by allowing additional  
18 professionals, such as licensed clinical social  
19 workers and psychologists, to complete the required  
20 mental health evaluations for the 2010e application.  
21 We also now prepopulate sections of the 2010e with  
22 information collected as part of the Coordinated  
23 Assessment Survey. This reduces redundancy for  
24 individuals completing the application while ensuring  
25 consistency of information. We also made progress in



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1 33  
2 educating the public, stakeholders, and other  
3 agencies of the Supportive Housing model. In March of  
4 2018 we launched the first comprehensive city webpage  
5 on Supportive Housing. It explains the process to  
6 apply for Supportive Housing, to build Supportive  
7 Housing units, and to provide services for Supportive  
8 Housing. This platform is easy to navigate and allows  
9 users to access consolidated information from  
10 multiple city agencies and community-based  
11 organizations to learn about available services and  
12 how to access them. Drawing on the work of the  
13 Supportive Housing Task Force and even before the  
14 release of the Task Force's recommendations and  
15 report in December 2016, in August 2016, the City  
16 released its first RFP for scattered site housing and  
17 awarded 505 units. This RFP includes evidence-  
18 informed practices geared towards helping individuals  
19 on their personal path to recovery such as  
20 motivational interviewing, person centered planning  
21 and trauma informed care. After the release of the  
22 Task Force's recommendations and report, the City  
23 also released an open-ended RFP for scattered site  
24 housing in an open... and an RFP for congregate units.  
25 We are on track with the awards for NYC 15/15 for the

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1 34  
2 15-year program that has improved the prior New  
3 York/New York plans through the Supportive Housing  
4 Task Force's December 2016 reforms. Through the 15/15  
5 plan thus far, we have made 1,426 awards to  
6 providers, including 505 scattered and 921 congregate  
7 units, 460 of which are congregate units that have  
8 closed on financing and are included in the 3,059  
9 units in the HPD production line. Through HPD's  
10 overall supportive housing production pipeline,  
11 between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017, HPD  
12 has funded 2,599 supportive units in addition to the  
13 460 New York... New York... NYC 15/15 units through the  
14 preservation of existing supportive projects,  
15 remaining New York/New York III commitments, and  
16 other federal and state projects. The City has and  
17 continues to move people out of shelter and into  
18 supportive housing. From 2014 to date, the  
19 Administration has provided Supportive Housing to  
20 over 5,000 New Yorkers moving out of shelter through  
21 a combination of units that have come available  
22 through the prior New York/New York pipeline as well  
23 as units that have come online through the new NYC  
24 15/15 initiative. In 2017, the same year in which the  
25 first NYC 15/15 awards were made, we projected that

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1 35  
2 we would have 500 clients linked to units by the end  
3 of December 2017. And for the second year following  
4 the awards, even while development and construction  
5 were ramping up, we projected that we would link an  
6 additional 500 clients to Supportive Housing. Today,  
7 we are on pace with our target to reach the 1,000-  
8 client goal by the end of this calendar year: three..  
9 337 clients have already moved into units and 170  
10 clients are linked to units and are in the process of  
11 moving in including.. 30 will move in over the next  
12 several weeks and we expect at least 411 NYC 15/15  
13 congregate units to come online during 2018 for a  
14 total of at least 918 units so far for the 15-year  
15 initiative. In addition, HPD continues to develop  
16 supportive housing units that will come online in  
17 2018, including the remaining New York/New York III  
18 units. It's important to talk about the progress  
19 we've made against the backdrop of a unit shortage in  
20 the market. In our efforts to achieve the goals set  
21 out in the 15/15 plan, we face the challenge of  
22 operating in a market where the demand for units far  
23 exceeds the supply. Put simply, the abundance of  
24 renters in the market competing for the same units,  
25 coupled with a 1.15 percent vacancy rate for

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1 36

2 affordable apartments, influences the pace at which  
3 we are able to expand our scattered site program.  
4 This continuing work, coupled with our rental  
5 assistance programs and legal assistance services,  
6 all contribute to address the challenge of  
7 homelessness in our city and have made it possible to  
8 break the trajectory and hold the DHS census flat for  
9 the first time in a decade. In sum, within our multi-  
10 pronged plan to address the problem of homelessness  
11 that has built up over four decades, Supportive  
12 Housing is a critical component that benefits one  
13 cross-section of the population with a particular set  
14 of needs. Implementing the NYC 15/15 plan will  
15 provide permanent, stable housing and essential  
16 social services for some of the most vulnerable New  
17 Yorkers. Turning the tide on homelessness overall,  
18 however, goes far beyond developing and building  
19 Supportive Housing; it requires a multifaceted  
20 approach that focuses on prevention, bringing people  
21 in from the streets 24/7, rehousing people who become  
22 homeless, and transforming the approach to providing  
23 shelter that has been used over 40 years. The  
24 agencies before you today work in close partnership  
25 with each other and other City agencies, and

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1 37

2 community and faith-based organizations to help to  
3 mediate housing insecurity and homelessness for New  
4 Yorkers. The recent integration of HRA and DHS has  
5 facilitated coordination between housing units in  
6 each agency and has improved the efficiency with  
7 which we deliver our services to low-income New  
8 Yorkers. Proposed legislation, Intro 147, would  
9 require the Human Resources Administration to issue  
10 an annual report regarding supportive housing. We  
11 look forward to working with the sponsors to address  
12 the concerns that underlie the proposed legislation  
13 in terms of specific reporting. We have made progress  
14 over the past few years, but we know we have much  
15 more work to do to address this decades-old problem.  
16 We look forward to our continued partnership with the  
17 Council to provide the help that New Yorkers need to  
18 get back on their feet. Thank you again for this  
19 opportunity to testify and I welcome your questions  
20 after Commissioner Torres-Springer's testimony.

21           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Good afternoon  
22 Speaker Johnson, Chair Levin and members of the  
23 General Welfare Committee. My name is Maria Torres-  
24 Springer, I'm the Commissioner of the New York City  
25 Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

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1 38

2 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about  
3 supportive housing and the progress of the 15/15  
4 initiative. I'd like to thank Commissioner Steve  
5 Banks for his testimony and all of the important work  
6 that the Department of Social Services does to  
7 promote supportive housing. I'm also joined here  
8 today by our Deputy Commissioner for Development,  
9 Molly Park. Last night about 60,000 New Yorkers slept  
10 in one of the many homeless shelters throughout our  
11 city. This number is a grave reminder of the severity  
12 of the affordability crisis we face. The many  
13 individuals and families currently residing in our  
14 shelter system come from neighborhoods across each of  
15 the five boroughs; they live, work and attend school  
16 among us, they were our neighbors until they fell on  
17 hard times and now lack a stable place to call home.  
18 Many of the people currently residing in shelters  
19 have long histories of homelessness and some have  
20 other challenges including mental illness, addiction  
21 or are living with HIV/AIDS. Many of these New  
22 Yorkers have the fewest option for exiting the  
23 shelter system and obtaining stable housing. For this  
24 reason, creating supportive housing is the best tool  
25 at HPD's disposal to support these populations. The

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1 39  
2 production of supportive housing enables the city to  
3 move more individuals and families with special needs  
4 out of the shelter system and into permanent rent  
5 stabilized homes with access to individualized on  
6 site social services that help tenants maintain their  
7 housing for the long term. For HPD to sustain a high  
8 rate of supportive housing production it must be able  
9 to rely on consistent streams of services, rental  
10 assistance and capital funding. Towards the beginning  
11 of this mayoral administration, the city faced a  
12 twofold challenge regarding these resources, first  
13 the New York/New York III services funding agreement  
14 was winding down and second the supply of federal  
15 project-based Section 8 vouchers remained  
16 insufficient for all of HPD's needs. In response the  
17 Mayor announced in 2015, as Commissioner Banks  
18 mentioned, a major commitment of city resources to  
19 establish the NYC 15/15 initiative creating 15,000  
20 supportive housing apartments over 15 years in  
21 partnership with DSS. Approximately half of this  
22 commitment of 15,000 apartments will be met through  
23 services and rental assistance funding for scattered  
24 site supportive housing apartments administered by  
25 HRA. The other half will be created through the new

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1 40  
2 construction of congregate supportive housing  
3 buildings administered by HPD. The 7,500 congregate  
4 supportive housing apartments will require a total of  
5 2.6 billion in capital funds over the 15 years it  
6 needs to develop. The city will provide one billion  
7 in city capital towards this total amount all but 380  
8 million of which has already been budgeted through  
9 Housing New York. The remaining capital cost, about  
10 1.6 billion will be offset with low income tax  
11 credits and other private sources. There will be  
12 additional funds dedicated to ensuring that these  
13 buildings will have the crucial social, social  
14 services contracts they need to serve their tenants.  
15 Additionally, the city committed to create a new city  
16 funded rental assistance program to reduce pressure  
17 on our finite Section 8 pipeline which is currently  
18 facing additional threats at the federal level. This  
19 new program has freed up Section 8 to produce units  
20 for low income seniors and other homeless households  
21 who do not need a... supportive housing. NYC 15/15  
22 rental assistance will mimic the long-term structure  
23 and funding rates of project-based Section 8 paying  
24 the difference between the tenant's share of rent  
25 equal to 30 percent of their incomes and the rent



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1 41  
2 needed for proper building maintenance and  
3 operations. The 15/15 initiative is part of a long  
4 history of investment in supportive housing, HPD's  
5 supportive housing loan program is the primary  
6 capital financing tool for the city's supportive  
7 housing production. SHLP makes loans to primarily not  
8 for profit developers of permanent supportive  
9 housing, all projects include on site social  
10 services. Projects developed through SHLP are made up  
11 of 60 percent apartments for New Yorkers who are  
12 chronically homeless and disabled and the remaining  
13 40 percent of apartments are reserved for households  
14 earning up to 60 percent of the area median income  
15 who are also able to access the social services in  
16 place. In the program we combine a range of funding  
17 sources to bring together the capital, operating and  
18 service funds we need in order to create this vital  
19 housing source. This historic... this includes city  
20 capital, low income housing tax credits, project  
21 based rental assistance and historically a variety of  
22 city and state social service contracts, home and  
23 project-based Section 8. I am proud to say that since  
24 the beginning of Housing New York, since... so, since  
25 January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, we have financed the construction

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1 42  
2 or preservation of more than 3,000 supportive housing  
3 apartments. I certainly would like to thank the city  
4 council for holding two hearings last year jointly  
5 with the Committees on General Welfare and Housing  
6 and Buildings that underscored the importance of  
7 housing for those who are formerly homeless. In  
8 particular about five months ago on HPD's  
9 coordination with DHS, HRA to address the  
10 homelessness crisis and earlier in 2017 on supportive  
11 housing as the Chair mentioned in the Schermerhorn, a  
12 217-apartment supportive housing project in Cobble  
13 Hill. I'd like to thank Chair Levin whose district  
14 covers this project, for his leadership in making  
15 that happen and as he mentioned it is really a  
16 project that we... we're all very proud of and we think  
17 typifies all that supporting... supportive housing has  
18 to offer. We really believe however that this  
19 building is not an outlier, it is emblematic of the  
20 high-quality planning and design that is the standard  
21 for all of our supportive housing projects.  
22 Supportive housing projects are not quote, unquote  
23 "facilities" or quote, unquote "institutions", they  
24 are affordable apartment buildings that provide  
25 tenants with rent stabilized leases and all of the

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1 43  
2 same rights and responsibilities as every other... any  
3 other tenant in a rental apartment in New York City.  
4 They are built with sensitivity to the privacy  
5 supportive housing tenants deserve due to the various  
6 stigmas attached to people with supportive needs.  
7 Supportive housing projects provide amenities such as  
8 community space, computer rooms, all the while  
9 incorporating innovative design elements that make  
10 these buildings vibrant places to live. At typical  
11 supportive housing buildings includes a 60, 40 splits  
12 between supportive housing apartments and other  
13 affordable apartments available to any household that  
14 income qualifies. This ensures that the projects are  
15 integrated and serve a, a wide range of your  
16 constituents, certainly encourage visits to various  
17 supportive housing projects in your own district and  
18 in other districts so you can see all the many ways  
19 these buildings really do enrich their neighborhoods.  
20 When you visit one of supportive housing projects  
21 it's also of course an opportunity to hear the  
22 personal stories of tenants who previously lived in  
23 shelter often for many years but who are now  
24 reconnecting with family, addressing their health  
25 needs and finding employment. Supportive housing is

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1 44  
2 also a cost-effective solution for addressing the  
3 homelessness crisis. Peer reviewed research found  
4 that for every supportive apartment tax payers save  
5 more than 10,000 dollars per year as was mentioned by  
6 the Speaker earlier and public resources that would  
7 otherwise be spent on shelters, emergency rooms,  
8 jails and psychiatric facilities. In fact, research  
9 has even shown that contrary to popular belief  
10 supportive housing projects also increase property  
11 values in the areas surrounding them. In 2008 the  
12 Furman Center examined property values in  
13 neighborhoods surrounding more than 120 supportive  
14 housing projects and found that the value of the  
15 adjacent properties increased after the supportive  
16 housing was built. This is in part because supportive  
17 housing providers replace what can be eyesores at  
18 times; vacant lots, severely underutilized land with  
19 beautiful well-maintained buildings. And the public  
20 design commission just last week released a report on  
21 design in affordable housing, in four out of the  
22 seven case studies of good design were supportive  
23 housing. Of course, supportive housing is not the  
24 only tool we have for bringing people out of the  
25 shelter system, we are working to increase the number

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1 45  
2 of set aside apartments in HPD programs which can be  
3 used to house homeless families and individuals with  
4 fewer social service needs and those who might be  
5 better suited to supportive housing. As part of our  
6 efforts to expand housing production for the formerly  
7 homeless while also ensuring that these apartments  
8 continue to be distributed in every neighborhood in  
9 which HPD is doing business we recently retooled our  
10 most popular term sheets to require homeless set  
11 asides. Our ELLA program which is extremely low and  
12 low-income affordability program, our mix and match,  
13 our mixed income program now both include a ten  
14 percent homeless set aside. We've also included  
15 homeless set asides effective upon re-rental in all  
16 of preservation programs. While supportive housing is  
17 our best tool for serving homeless individuals with  
18 special needs these set asides are particularly  
19 useful for creating housing for homeless families,  
20 these new set asides along with the 30 percent set  
21 aside in the SARA program, Senior Affordable Rental  
22 Apartments and the 60 percent that I mentioned for  
23 supportive housing loan program they've enabled us to  
24 more than double the rate of our homeless housing  
25 production since the onset of Housing New York.

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1 46  
2 During the second half of 2014 we were producing  
3 homeless apartments at a rate of about 1,000 homes  
4 annually, in FY '17 we closed on more than 2,500  
5 homeless apartments, in total since the start of the  
6 administration we have created and preserved over  
7 7,200 apartments for formerly homeless households as  
8 part of the overall housing plan. HPD, the Department  
9 of Homeless Services and HRA communicate daily to  
10 coordinate our response in the homelessness crisis.  
11 One of the major avenues for which is through our  
12 efforts to refer homeless households out of shelter  
13 and into permanent housing. For supportive housing  
14 apartments HPD and HRA conduct periodic meetings so  
15 that HRA knows when specific HPD buildings will be  
16 completing construction and when apartments will  
17 become available. DHS also attends marketing and  
18 lease up kick off meetings with HPD and the project  
19 development team so that they are aware of  
20 construction and marketing timelines. When an  
21 apartment is available HRA refers three suitable  
22 shelter clients to the apartment and then the  
23 landlord makes the decision... makes their decision.  
24 Communication between our agencies occurs therefor at  
25 several points during the referral and placement

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1 47  
2 process. Our agencies will continue to seek ways to  
3 streamline the supportive and homeless housing  
4 referral process and ensure that the shelter... the  
5 shelter system's most vulnerable clients receive the  
6 housing they so desperately need. I must now turn to  
7 all of you to ask for your help, it is essential that  
8 we continue the progress we have made to create even  
9 more supportive housing and the city council is a  
10 critical partner in helping us build more of it. HPD  
11 is extremely grateful to the Council Members here  
12 today for helping us educate New Yorkers about the  
13 benefits of supportive housing and for welcoming a  
14 number of wonderful supportive housing developments  
15 throughout the neighborhoods you represent. In  
16 addition to Chair Levin and his support for the  
17 Schermerhorn which I mentioned earlier many other  
18 Council Members are already great partners to HPD in  
19 helping us bring new supportive housing developments  
20 to their respective neighborhoods. I want to thank  
21 Council Member Torres, he was here earlier for his  
22 ongoing support for supportive housing developments  
23 in his district. Just the other day Breaking Grounds  
24 Webster residence at 178<sup>th</sup> Street in the Bronx  
25 completed construction and will soon be home to 171

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1 48  
2 low income and formerly homeless tenants. Council  
3 Member Gibson has been a similar ally, in November  
4 the Doe Fund celebrated the opening of its Crotona  
5 Park residence in her district. This building  
6 provides housing to 36 individuals living with HIV  
7 and AIDS as well as 24 low income seniors that had  
8 been on the NYCHA wait list. I'd also like to thank  
9 Council Member Salamanca for his service and  
10 leadership as the Chair of the Land Use Committee,  
11 grateful for his assistance shepherding supportive  
12 housing projects through the Land Use Committee and  
13 look forward to our continued partnership over the  
14 next few years. And of course, I especially want to  
15 thank Speaker Johnson for his strong commitment to  
16 supportive housing and the benefits it brings to  
17 neighbors and our communities. These are just a few  
18 examples of our partnerships with the city council  
19 about the last few years to build more and better  
20 supportive housing projects. So many of you have  
21 welcomed these projects into your districts but we do  
22 need your continued help if we are to create more of  
23 this much needed resource. When proposing a, a new  
24 supportive housing project we unfortunately often  
25 hear unfounded assumptions about how the project will



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1 49  
2 impact the neighboring neighborhood or questions  
3 about how we chose a specific site and whether we are  
4 building supportive housing exclusively in low income  
5 communities, we need your help to address these  
6 neighborhood concerns and shatter the myths that  
7 supportive housing is bad for communities or  
8 concentrated in certain neighborhoods. Many of our  
9 largest and oldest supportive housing projects such  
10 as the Speaker also mentioned earlier, the Times  
11 Square Hotel and the Christopher both in his district  
12 have operated in high value neighborhoods for decades  
13 proving that supportive housing projects are  
14 successful components of the neighborhood's urban  
15 fabrics. The high concentration of supportive housing  
16 projects in... South of 96<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan is  
17 also an important tool of course for affirmatively  
18 furthering fair housing across the city. We are often  
19 forced unfortunately to reduce or eliminate homeless  
20 set asides to garner support for our projects which  
21 minimizes our ability to make end roads into ending  
22 homelessness in our city. So, as you engage in public  
23 and private discussions on this issue in your  
24 communities and with fellow elected officials we need  
25 your help in combatting the misperceptions associated

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2 with homeless and supportive housing. Communities  
3 across the city need to know that they cannot be...  
4 both be opposed to the siting of homeless shelters  
5 and also to the siting of permanent housing for  
6 formerly homeless and supportive populations that  
7 would ultimately reduce the need for shelters. One is  
8 a key solution to the other and opposing them both  
9 unfortunately gets us nowhere. Further homelessness  
10 disproportionately effects people of color, fear of  
11 homeless and supportive housing is too often rooted  
12 in racism and presents a barrier to it's creation in  
13 more neighborhoods throughout the city. We need your  
14 help in unmasking this opposition so that more  
15 homeless and supportive housing apartments can  
16 ultimately serve the city's communities of color.  
17 Finally, it is important to illustrate that the very  
18 extremely low income and very low-income  
19 constituencies we all so fervently seeking to support  
20 are the same families and individuals who cycle in  
21 and out of the shelter system and who will benefit  
22 the most from increased homeless and supportive  
23 housing production. Homeless individuals and families  
24 are our fellow New Yorkers who have fallen on hard  
25 times and who need our genuine support the most.

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2 Supportive housing is the formerly chronically  
3 homeless woman who struggled for years living with a  
4 serious mental illness but is now receiving the  
5 support she needs to maintain her housing and her  
6 health, it's the man who contracted HIV at the height  
7 of the AIDS epidemic but who after years living on  
8 the streets is now living a long and healthy life  
9 thanks to the stability his apartment has provided  
10 him, it's a formerly incarcerated person who cycled  
11 in and out of jail and shelter who has found a job  
12 through the assistance of his onsite case manager,  
13 it's the LGBTQ young person who became homeless when  
14 their family objected to their identity but who has  
15 now found an affirming community that loves them for  
16 who they are and it's a chronically homeless man who  
17 struggles with addiction but instead of becoming the  
18 next victim of the opioid crisis is now standing on  
19 firmer ground because of his housing and it's the  
20 single mother who was raised in foster care and her  
21 young child who have been in and out of shelter who  
22 have found safety and security in their home.

23 Supportive housing is in many, many ways the diverse  
24 face of our own city and as part of our identity as  
25 New Yorkers we must welcome supportive housing

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2 tenants into all of our communities, we are certainly  
3 all in this together, so I will be leaning on all of  
4 you to do what you can to ensure that we can continue  
5 to create new opportunities for homeless New Yorkers.  
6 We should build on the example set just last week  
7 when we collaboratively worked with the council's  
8 Land Use Committee to approve a WSFSSH project, a 100  
9 percent affordable project in Manhattan Valley  
10 providing up to 275 apartments for low income  
11 families and seniors. We look forward to the project  
12 being taken up by the full council this week. I  
13 extend my sincerest gratitude to all of you for your  
14 ongoing help defending city, state and especially  
15 federal resources that are used to create homeless  
16 and supportive housing and I look forward to building  
17 on that progress that we have made together with so  
18 many partners, many of whom are in this hearing room  
19 today towards making sure that all of the goals of  
20 the NYC 15/15 program come to fruition. Thank you  
21 very much for your time and attention.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
23 Commissioners. We've been joined by Council Members  
24 Treyger, Grodenchik, Torres, Reynoso and Gibson and  
25

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2 I'm going to turn it over to our Speaker for  
3 questions.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you Commissioners  
5 for your testimony. So, the target populations that  
6 were mentioned in both of your testimonies were  
7 single adults, young single adults, 18 to 24, adults  
8 with children, young adults, pregnant or with  
9 children and adult families, 7,500 for congregate,  
10 7,500 for scatter sites, the vast majority going to  
11 single adults, 5,155 for congregate, 5,118 for  
12 scatter sites, are chronically street homeless  
13 individuals included in those targets?

14 STEVEN BANKS: Yes.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Under the single adult  
16 population... [cross-talk]

17 STEVEN BANKS: Yes, yes, they... [cross-  
18 talk]

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And, and what number is  
20 that out of that 5,100 on congregates and 5,500  
21 scatter sites, what number is street homeless?

22 STEVEN BANKS: The street homeless  
23 referrals come to... now that HRA and DHS are joined  
24 together, the street housing referrals come to us  
25 from our providers and they are allocated, you know...

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2 how should I say it... because they're... the street  
3 homeless clients are in that highest need group  
4 they're most likely to have all the criteria that I  
5 mentioned as... [cross-talk]

6 SPEAKER JOHNSON: As part of CAPS...  
7 [cross-talk]

8 STEVEN BANKS: ...as being, being high...  
9 yeah, as part of CAPS they're going to be in that  
10 highest priority to get those, those units.

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But are we targeting a  
12 certain number... if the HOPE count said last year  
13 there were 3,892 street homeless individuals which I  
14 think we all think is probably... I mean I think that's  
15 probably a low count but let's use that as the  
16 number, 3,892 about 3,900 what's our target on people  
17 living on the street who are not going into shelter,  
18 who don't have income verification or a savings or  
19 credit, who cannot get into normal housing, what are  
20 we targeting as part of the single adult's population  
21 for street homeless?

22 STEVEN BANKS: So, let me make it a  
23 little bit more granular, so for example I think as  
24 you know and as a result of council legislation we'll  
25 be posting it shortly, we have a by name list and so

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2 we have a by name list of 2,000 people on the streets  
3 that the outreach teams are, are engaging with and  
4 over 1,500 are prospects so roughly in balance with  
5 that, that HOPE number those individuals can be  
6 connected to supportive housing in one of two ways,  
7 let me talk process first, one of two ways. One is  
8 the outreach providers can do the 2010e's directly  
9 from the street or from the safe havens and so by way  
10 of sort of proportionality if you will the 5,000  
11 number that we gave you was from shelter, the 2,000  
12 number that we gave you in terms of from 2014 through  
13 2017 people have got supportive housing, that 2,000  
14 number includes people from the street and people  
15 from psychiatric institutions. So, you can see sort  
16 of a... I think you can see the balance between...

17 [cross-talk]

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: 2,000 are... [cross-talk]

19 STEVEN BANKS: ...shelter... [cross-talk]

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: ...people from the street  
21 or from psychiatric... [cross-talk]

22 STEVEN BANKS: Correct... [cross-talk]

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: ...institutions?

24 STEVEN BANKS: Correct, within how we  
25 have treated New York/New York III placements and I

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2 think that's a reasonable guide of how we're going to  
3 end up treating the, the street... but I should also  
4 emphasize we created a task force of experts and I  
5 think one of the things we conveyed to those experts;  
6 we're flexible, we're open, if someone was to say  
7 that our targeting should be different on the  
8 vulnerability index in terms of street versus shelter  
9 we're certainly open to, to that but we believe that  
10 based upon what we've done in New York/New York III  
11 and the vulnerability index that we are getting the  
12 people in the greatest need who are coming in.

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, out of... so, a 15-  
14 year plan wanting to create 550 units of supportive  
15 housing a year, that's the goal?

16 STEVEN BANKS: In the first two years...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes... [cross-talk]

19 STEVEN BANKS: It was to get 500 units up  
20 in '17 and 500 units up in '18, most of... the, the  
21 bulk of the things that HPD is doing and I'm  
22 certainly turn it over to my colleague are to develop  
23 new sites and so over the course of 15 years you've  
24 got to have the balance of both the scattered site  
25 move outs and the congregate move outs and the



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2 scattered sites are helpful in the short run to try  
3 to bridge the gap before new units are actually  
4 created.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, in, in your  
6 testimony Commissioner Banks you said towards the  
7 end, you said today we're on pace with our target to  
8 reach 1,000 client goals by the end of the calendar  
9 year, 337 clients have already moved into units?

10 STEVEN BANKS: Yes.

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: 170 clients are linked  
12 to units and they're in the process of moving in?

13 STEVEN BANKS: Yes..

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And we expect 411 NYC  
15 15/15 units will come online during 2018 for a total  
16 of 918 for a 15-year initiative, so how far behind  
17 schedule are we?

18 STEVEN BANKS: This is actually on the  
19 schedule that was set. Let me.. let me go, go through  
20 the, the targets maybe that would be helpful. So, the  
21 goal was to ramp up 1,600 awards so there's awards,  
22 there's move outs and there's financing so there are  
23 targets for each of them, I think its fair to say.  
24 So, as to awards, the goal was to have 1,600 awards  
25 by the end of 2018 and there are currently 1,426

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2 awards made so the... they're, they're on track for the  
3 number of awards to be made. The goal was to finance  
4 500 new supportive homes every year and there have  
5 been... there have been 3,000 supportive units financed  
6 outside of the New York/ New York... New... NYC 15...

7 [cross-talk]

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But... [cross-talk]

9 STEVEN BANKS: ...and they're... let, let me  
10 just give you the rest of the... [cross-talk]

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay... [cross-talk]

12 STEVEN BANKS: ...number I'm... apologize,  
13 they're... HPD is on track to finance 660 new units and  
14 100 preserved units this year so in terms of the  
15 financing target... [cross-talk]

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But I don't want to...  
17 but let's, let's put financing aside for the a  
18 second... [cross-talk]

19 STEVEN BANKS: Let's do... [cross-talk]

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: ...how many people who  
21 are in need of supportive housing since the plan was  
22 announced have moved into new supportive housing  
23 units as of this moment today?

24 STEVEN BANKS: Three... 337, the goal was  
25 to get 500 by the end of '17 and to get 500 in '18

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2 and so the goal would be for 1,000 people by the end  
3 of '18 and with the units that are available to us or  
4 coming available to us that, that particular goal  
5 would be met. I understand from your comment  
6 initially you were raising questions about the goals  
7 I'm just trying to put out the facts for you... [cross-  
8 talk]

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: No, I understand. So, I  
10 want to say that I am very much YIMBY for supportive  
11 housing, yes in my backyard, build supportive housing  
12 in my district, build more supportive housing in my  
13 district, you know if you look at the people that are  
14 kind of shocked to hear this but I think two years  
15 ago Commissioner Banks came to a democratic  
16 conference and presented a, a chart of where DHS  
17 facilities were located throughout the city and which  
18 districts had a certain amount, I think I had the 5<sup>th</sup>  
19 highest number of DHS facilities, shelters in the  
20 city of New York and I think given the projects we  
21 mentioned today the two new city leaf projects on  
22 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Street, the Christopher which was a... was  
23 common ground now it's breaking ground project same  
24 with the Times Square Hotel and there are many others  
25 in my district. I, I want more supportive housing

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2 built, there's not community opposition in my  
3 neighborhood, I've also told the Commissioner I'm  
4 actually fine with figuring out shelter siting in my  
5 own district.

6 STEVEN BANKS: We appreciate that, you've  
7 been tremendously supportive.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, you know I, I  
9 really and this is not in any way to under appreciate  
10 the amount of work that's been done especially all  
11 the amount of prevention work that's been done which  
12 would have made this situation much worse than it is  
13 today with what I would consider a homelessness  
14 crisis in New York City but, you know the... all of its  
15 great but I really feel like we need to do more and  
16 given the huge need that exists, the need that I  
17 think even far out... exceeds probably 15,000 units of  
18 supportive housing. When we get to the end of 15  
19 years the need will probably be great and will still  
20 exist that... again I, I want to kind of understand...  
21 you know we can make 15-year plans but if all of us  
22 are gone in three years who's... not you Barry, god  
23 bless us all, if most of us are gone in three years...  
24 we're putting it all in fresh meadows Barry... I mean I  
25 really kind of... I need to understand what is like the

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2 three-year seven-month plan that's what I, I really  
3 need to understand given what the high needs are,  
4 given the amount of city owned sites there are, given  
5 the amount of bond cap and financing and projects  
6 that you are doing all over the city what is the real  
7 plan given the huge need to get it done in the next  
8 three years and seven months?

9           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: If I may, thank  
10 you Speaker, it's music to my ears to hear you say  
11 YIMBY on... [cross-talk]

12           SPEAKER JOHNSON: I really mean it..  
13 [cross-talk]

14           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...on supportive  
15 housing... [cross-talk]

16           SPEAKER JOHNSON: Find me a site and  
17 let's do supportive housing..

18           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: And so, let me  
19 just do a couple of things which I think will be  
20 helpful both in, in exactly where we are and where do  
21 we go moving forward, you know the.. our testimonies  
22 were long but if I could just summarize. What we've  
23 had to.. and with incredible teams with the different  
24 agencies, in the last years where we've been  
25 operationally winding down all programs while

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2 launching NYC 15/15 and in that time, we've had to  
3 consistently make the awards that are necessary to  
4 keep the pace, finance projects in order to keep the  
5 pace and as the Commissioner mentioned also move real  
6 human beings into these homes that they need. On  
7 those three simple metrics we are on track in terms  
8 of awards, we're exceeding targets in terms of  
9 financing and we're on track in terms of move outs.  
10 We agree with you of course that we have to always  
11 look for ways to do more given the need and so there  
12 are four critical elements to building supportive  
13 housing in this city in my opinion some of which are  
14 finite resources others are not. The four key  
15 ingredients in my opinion; land, capital, tax  
16 credits, and community support and so those... [cross-  
17 talk]

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Do we have a  
19 comprehensive plan on that?

20 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: We, we certainly...  
21 at... the entire NYC 15/15 program tries to address  
22 each of these so far, for instance, the... on the, the  
23 second point that I mentioned in terms of city  
24 capital we're dedicating a billion dollars in city  
25

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2 capital, 680 of which is allocated through the term  
3 of the Housing New York plan... [cross-talk]

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: A billion dollars in  
5 capital for supportive housing?

6 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: That's correct.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: How much has been  
8 spent?

9 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: I have that on  
10 me... just give me one second... 106 million has been... in  
11 city subsidy has been spent thus far. A... the second...  
12 the, the third piece that I mentioned it's critical  
13 just, just so there's an understanding that not all  
14 of these levers we control are housing credits and so  
15 that of course is a scarce resources and I spend a  
16 lot of my time advocating to, to make that pie  
17 larger, it is a, a federal resource and so continued  
18 collaboration on... with the city council on finding  
19 ways to expand that resource helps not just with  
20 supportive housing but for all of our affordable  
21 housing production... [cross-talk]

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: We saw... we saw in the  
23 HUD federal budget many of the programs that we care  
24 about an increase in funding.

25

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2 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: That's right  
3 although... [cross-talk]

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Section 8, there are a  
5 variety of programs that... [cross-talk]

6 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: That's correct...  
7 [cross-talk]

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: ...got increases.

9 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: That's correct  
10 and it's because of the incredible advocacy here and  
11 across the country, with a drop however in the  
12 corporate tax rate the value of the housing credit in  
13 general, we estimate that that's a loss of about 200  
14 million to the affordable housing system in New York  
15 City. The, the good news for the omnibus spending  
16 package... spending bill that got... that got passed is  
17 that there's an expansion of the housing credit that  
18 essentially brings back 20 million more but there's  
19 still room that... there, therefor needs to be made up.  
20 There are a lot... we have a number of proposals to  
21 expand that, it's, it's, it's... it, it requires the  
22 cooperation of a legislature... the legislature on the  
23 federal side and we certainly want to work with you  
24 all as, as collaboratively as possible to make the  
25 strong case for the need and then lastly and very



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2 briefly the last piece is community support and, and  
3 that, I, I hear you loud and clear about your support  
4 and it's something that we want to make sure we're  
5 doing our part to provide the information and  
6 education necessary in every neighborhood where  
7 supportive housing gets sited to dispel those myths.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, Commissioner I, I,  
9 I like you very much...

10 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Thank you.

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, I want to preface  
12 with that...

13 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: I'm afraid of  
14 what's going to come next.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And it's not entirely  
16 your fault what I'm about to say but you know that I  
17 sometimes banging my head against the wall with the  
18 bureaucracy at HPD, what I consider to be the slow  
19 pace, the inability to move nimbly, quickly and to  
20 get projects out the door that were promised years  
21 ago and you and I have had... we don't have to go  
22 through a project by project but you and I have had  
23 multiple conversations about projects that were  
24 supposed to be awarded and go out the door and where  
25 there had been no community opposition, where ULURPS

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2 had been complete, where the community was begging  
3 for projects to be done and we see one, two, three,  
4 four year delays, five year delays, six year delays  
5 form when a ULURP went through with unanimous  
6 community support and, you know some of the RFPs were  
7 not recently... I'm not... I don't want to talk  
8 specifically about those RFPs, that's not why I'm  
9 bringing this up but having that experience  
10 personally as a Council Member, not as Speaker, as  
11 Council Member from my own district it doesn't give  
12 me a whole lot of confidence when we hear these  
13 things, when I am constantly like pleading and  
14 cajoling and sometimes trying to embarrass just to  
15 get things done, when I hear about all this it sounds  
16 good but then I, given my own personal experience in  
17 my own district wonder how it can actually be  
18 executed and it makes me wonder if you need more  
19 staff, if you need additional resources in the  
20 department to actually execute these things where  
21 there is community support because, you know I want  
22 to see this get done and I understand that there is  
23 financing issues, bond cap issues, federal moving  
24 targets, state moving targets, some neighborhoods  
25 community opposition but I really... I don't feel like

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2 I have the confidence that given we've seen some lag  
3 from what we initially projected and we just talked  
4 through some of that, we've made it up a little bit  
5 and we think by the end of 2018 hopefully we'll back  
6 nearly on schedule, I don't feel like I have the  
7 confidence that this will actually get done and I  
8 feel like it is so crucial given the vulnerable  
9 populations that we're dealing with, I, I would love  
10 to, to have greater confidence in wanting to see  
11 these projects get done, get out the door, people  
12 moved in, I mean looking at the numbers that  
13 Commissioner Banks just referenced here and I know  
14 every individual is an individual and every  
15 individual has their own challenges, 337 clients  
16 moved in, 170 units are linked to clients that are in  
17 the process of moving in so, you know I would.. 170  
18 people are waiting to move in, do we have the staff  
19 needed to actually get these things done quickly?

20 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Uh-huh. So, I  
21 certainly want you Speaker to have confidence in all  
22 of the work that we do. I am... and we know that in,  
23 in... for... not just for supportive housing but for a  
24 number of our programs we strive every day to do  
25 better and to do that work faster. I'm proud of the

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2 work that the agency has done in producing record  
3 levels of affordable housing, last calendar year was  
4 the highest production in terms... since HPD existed  
5 but we don't rest on our laurels however on  
6 supportive housing if you look at the construction  
7 starts and there might be individual projects for,  
8 for which there have been issues and always happy to  
9 problem solve through those... [cross-talk]

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: You know what they are...

11 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...but the... but  
12 the, the number of units that get financed every year  
13 for supportive housing that number has always either  
14 been at or has exceeded the targets and so we're,  
15 we're proud of that pace and proud of the... of the  
16 partnership with other agencies to once it's built to  
17 be able to move... make sure that families move in,  
18 again doesn't mean our work is over and so I think  
19 the benefit of this hearing is additional feedback  
20 about how we can deepen that work.

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Is the administration  
22 having ongoing conversations with the state about its  
23 planning to roll out 20,000 units of supportive  
24 housing over the next 15 years?

25

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2           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: The... supportive  
3 housing has traditionally been and continues to this  
4 day be a great partnership example between the city  
5 and state and so for a lot of programs there's  
6 braided funding, some state funding, some city  
7 funding that has been the case in the last several...  
8 in the New York/New York agreements and we expect to  
9 continue moving forward so on the congregate side for  
10 which a lot of this is, is, is happening that  
11 partnership has been strong and we talk every day to  
12 our counterparts at the state.

13           SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, there are ongoing  
14 conversations about those 20,000 units that are  
15 projected?

16           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: About the... our  
17 supportive housing programs, yes.

18           SPEAKER JOHNSON: And they're expecting  
19 an award of 1,200 units this year, the state?

20           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: That's my  
21 understanding.

22           SPEAKER JOHNSON: And does the  
23 administration know if the RFPs are currently out for  
24 these units?

25

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2 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Okay, we'll get  
3 back to you Speaker on that question.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And again be... given  
5 that the number, the 20,000 number was a statewide  
6 number it would be helpful to understand out of the  
7 1,200 units how many are actually coming to the city  
8 of New York. So, I have a question... I have a question  
9 for Commissioner Banks, you of course spoke in depth  
10 about the coordinated assessment placement system,  
11 CAPS vulnerability index, individuals who are living  
12 on the street would be considered some of the most  
13 vulnerable people in the city I would imagine, is  
14 that right?

15 STEVEN BANKS: Yes, that's correct.

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, is it possible for  
17 a street homeless individual with no systems contact  
18 to be considered a high priority under the current  
19 vulnerability index?

20 STEVEN BANKS: Well let me... the answer is  
21 yes but let me give you a... an... some more granularity  
22 for the purpose of the record and for dialogue, so  
23 functional impairments, Medicaid expenditures, length  
24 of time homeless are part of the vulnerability index  
25 and the people that we engage on the street and

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2 you've... at the same time as being frustrated with the  
3 situation you've been very supportive of what we're  
4 trying to do, you know that it's taking us an average  
5 of five months to build at least enough trust to get  
6 people to begin to work with us so in terms of length  
7 of time homelessness we're going to reach the federal  
8 chronic standard relatively easily so we'll have  
9 that, functional impairment issues of what you and I  
10 have talked about in terms of just observing people  
11 and Medicaid expenditures frequently go with the, the  
12 life of... [cross-talk]

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But if they've had no  
14 systems contact...

15 STEVEN BANKS: They're going to have a  
16 system contact with our... let's, let's sort of break  
17 it down, they're going to have the system contact  
18 with our outreach staff and so they're going to have  
19 the length of time homeless, they're going to have  
20 the functional impairments, they're going to have  
21 multi... Medicaid expenditures and I want to just say  
22 it would be... I don't know of a person that I've  
23 encountered that has had no more than one system  
24 contact who's in that situation, they may not have  
25 criminal justice involvement, they might not have

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2 been an HRA client before, they might not have had  
3 those kinds of systems contacts but they're having  
4 contacts of some sort.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay..

6 STEVEN BANKS: But I think in terms of  
7 what I understand you really need to be focused here  
8 on which is our focus too, how do reach the most  
9 vulnerable and.. [cross-talk]

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes.. [cross-talk]

11 STEVEN BANKS: ..people on the streets are  
12 clearly among the most vulnerable.. [cross-talk]

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I mean it is  
14 heartbreaking to see chronically homeless individuals  
15 living on the streets with their belongings, many of  
16 whom not all, again I don't want to stereotype  
17 homeless populations throughout New York City, I  
18 think it's important not to do that.. [cross-talk]

19 STEVEN BANKS: Thank you.. [cross-talk]

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: ...but there are many  
21 people who again are not getting the medical  
22 attention and care that they need, have major  
23 physical ailments, some of whom have very severe  
24 psychiatric problems that an individual walking by  
25 them can tell immediately that they have major



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2 psychiatric problems that are not being treated and  
3 to see individuals like that who are living on the  
4 streets of New York City, who will not go to a  
5 shelter because they're not able to function in that  
6 type of situation all the time these are the people  
7 that we really, really want to help and that's... this  
8 is why I am pushing so hard on supportive housing.  
9 I've, I've talked to Brenda Rosen in the past who is  
10 a real hero of mine from Breaking Ground and the  
11 model that works and getting people off the streets,  
12 I think it's just... you know so I know you're doing  
13 this work but I, I want to just keep saying we need  
14 more, we need more, we need more...

15 STEVEN BANKS: So, you're, you're  
16 absolutely right and, and we feel the same urgency  
17 that you do. Again just for the record so it's, it's  
18 clear and I... and I know you know this, someone who  
19 breaking ground or anyone of our, our providers are  
20 working with if they can't get the person to come in  
21 off the street they can get into supportive housing  
22 from being in the street of course we want to bring  
23 people in and not have those people that we have  
24 brought in not have access to supportive housing but  
25 we certainly prioritize that and we're, we're... as I

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2 said we're blessed with great providers like Breaking  
3 Ground and, and the others that are out there every  
4 day trying to build trust and bring people back in..  
5 [cross-talk]

6 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, I... [cross-talk]

7 STEVEN BANKS: ...to, to... and your point  
8 about the importance of supportive housing as part of  
9 that tool is critical, adding more safe havens beds  
10 is helping us bring the 1,480 people off the street..  
11 we brought of the last year that remained off, safe  
12 havens are helping us... [cross-talk]

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: That's amazing... [cross-  
14 talk]

15 STEVEN BANKS: ...supportive housing is  
16 helping us, I mean that's an important metric to, to  
17 focus on which I think doesn't get focused on a lot.  
18 In the past a lot of focus was on just bringing  
19 people off, our homestead focus is on not only  
20 bringing them off but making sure they stay off so  
21 that 1,480 number is since the beginning of homestead  
22 brought off remained off... [cross-talk]

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: That's amazing... [cross-  
24 talk]

25

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2 STEVEN BANKS: ...not gone on and off but  
3 getting the supportive housing tools that we get from  
4 New York/New York III vacancies and New York/New York  
5 III new units are very critical to us. We've focused  
6 a lot on the 500 by the end of '17 and, and the 500  
7 at... by the end of '18 for a combined total of 1,000  
8 and, and our ability to, to get on, on track with  
9 that and, and as I said we've got... so, we've gotten  
10 to and we're... we have confidence we'll get to it, we  
11 should be by the end of the year but we've also been  
12 getting 1,300 move outs a year from the New York/New  
13 York III vacancies and the New York/New York III new  
14 units that come on and that's what helping us with  
15 those 1,480 people and others and the by name list is  
16 helping us as well to make sure we've got an, an  
17 understanding of who those people are that, that you  
18 and I may walk by and connect them to tools that are  
19 being funded now.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, I have... I have a  
21 final question, according to advocates current  
22 housing units are not appropriately sized for the  
23 population that we're dealing with, approximately 50  
24 percent of the population is single that we are trying  
25 to reach but only seven percent of units that are

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2 being created are studios and 35 percent of units  
3 we're creating are one bedrooms. So, the lack of  
4 supportive... the lack of studio apartments results in  
5 supportive housing providers having to rent out two-  
6 bedroom apartments to two single individuals which  
7 can lead to roommate conflicts, how many units... how  
8 many units are one bedroom or studio apartments and  
9 then how many single adults are sharing two-bedroom  
10 apartments and should we be increasing the number of  
11 studios and one bedrooms? So, I'm, I'm a little  
12 shocked only seven percent are studios because when  
13 you look at the Times Square Hotel which again is  
14 hugely successful, 600 units I think the vast, vast  
15 majority of those units are studio apartments.

16 MOLLY PARK: Molly Park, Deputy  
17 Commissioner for Development at HPD. So, citywide  
18 housing stock figures this is not supportive housing  
19 specific but 47 percent of the housing stock in the  
20 city of New York are studio and one bedroom  
21 apartments, that is less than the percentage of, of  
22 the population that is one and two person households  
23 so certainly it's something that when we are doing  
24 new construction, again separate and apart from  
25 supportive housing but just in general, when we are

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2 doing new construction we are certainly trying to  
3 make sure that we are building sufficient studio and  
4 one bedroom apartments, that is another conversation  
5 that is often a robust one as we're going through the  
6 community approval process that there is... there is  
7 certainly a strong interest in having family units so  
8 we try and balance the... those two competing  
9 interests.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But are those numbers  
11 correct, seven percent of units that are being  
12 created are studios?

13 MOLLY PARK: Created, no. I can... I can...  
14 [cross-talk]

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: That are online?

16 MOLLY PARK: The, the 47 percent of  
17 studios and one bedrooms is the housing stock in the  
18 city... [cross-talk]

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: No, I'm talking about...  
20 [cross-talk]

21 MOLLY PARK: ...of New York... [cross-talk]

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: ...supportive housing  
23 numbers.

24 MOLLY PARK: Oh, virtually all of our  
25 supportive housing in studios.

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2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, I don't know... well  
3 the information that I'm having here, and I'd love  
4 the staff to, to, to clarify this is that we don't  
5 have enough studios and one bedrooms and providers,  
6 and advocates are telling us that it's creating  
7 situations where two singles are being housed in a  
8 two-bedroom apartment and it creates conflict..  
9 [cross-talk]

10 STEVEN BANKS: As, as to that point that  
11 has... is some of the scatter site units that we can  
12 get you the exact data have been roommate situations,  
13 we use that type of housing as part of our successful  
14 veteran's initiative in which we moved substantial  
15 numbers of veterans out with supportive housing light  
16 and the federal government certified that we had  
17 ended chronic veterans homelessness as a result of  
18 that tool so we piloted some of that usage in the...  
19 some of the first scatter sites, we can get you the  
20 exact number out of the 337 move outs so far and out  
21 of the 180 that are linked how many involve that. I  
22 think it, it, it... I understand your question but... and  
23 I understand that some of the providers have made it  
24 work and some of the providers were, were not  
25 interested in pursuing it and we found the same thing

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2 when we did the veterans move out, that some  
3 providers saw it as something that would work, and  
4 some didn't. Another important perspective here is  
5 scattered site is for people that need a little... less  
6 service level than the people in the congregate,  
7 people in congregates need a higher level of service  
8 and scatter site isn't for everyone.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Well I want to thank  
10 you both for being here, I want to repeat YIMBY, yes  
11 in my backyard, I would be happy to work with you all  
12 and identifying land, programs, providers to build  
13 supportive housing my own district, I know it can be  
14 more difficult in my district because of the value of  
15 land and the cost of land if the city doesn't own it  
16 itself but at the same time we have a... I'm very proud  
17 that my district in Chelsea and Hell's Kitchen in the  
18 Village has always been welcoming of supportive  
19 housing and I want to continue that and I want to  
20 make sure that my district does it's fair share and  
21 continues to help achieve the numbers that are  
22 necessary so I look forward to working with you all  
23 and continuing that progress and work and I want to  
24 thank Chair Levin and the members of this committee  
25 for being so understanding of my taking probably too

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2 much time with questions today. So, thank you very  
3 much.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I want to thank the  
5 Speaker, you know my take away from, from his  
6 questions is Speaker says YIMBY on supportive housing  
7 which I think is, I think an important message to  
8 send out to the rest of the city. I'm going to turn  
9 it over to couple of my colleagues because there's a...  
10 they have to attend other meetings and then I'll... and  
11 then I'll come back and ask my, my list of questions  
12 starting off with Council Member Adams from Queens.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you so much...  
14 so much Mr. Chair, thank you panelists for being  
15 here, so good to see you, always enjoy our  
16 conversations. In speaking about fair share, I, I  
17 just really want to thank the Commissioner for  
18 including in her testimony inclusive language in, in,  
19 in helping us to all realize that this is a citywide  
20 problem and it's even more refreshing to hear the  
21 Speaker include YIMBY in his words as well. So,  
22 speaking of fair share I think that all of you know  
23 that I represent Southeast Queens where we do have  
24 the highest percentage of homeless shelter  
25 concentration and on a daily basis it seems like



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2 we're increasing even more in hotel sheltering as  
3 well within our districts of Southeast Queens so  
4 Council Member Ayala and I were, were having a side  
5 bar conversation on the locations of the supportive  
6 housing stock and can you just give us if you can a  
7 bit of a breakdown or a little analysis if you have  
8 it of where the location, the current locations of  
9 your supporting... supportive housing stock is right  
10 now and if you can... I'll be a little selfish if you  
11 can hone that down for me for Queens in an aspect, I  
12 know Commissioner Banks is smiling at that, but if  
13 you can do that I'd really appreciate it?

14           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Yeah, I'd, I'd be  
15 happy to do that Council Member. So, for the 18,000  
16 or so units within our total supportive housing  
17 portfolio 43 percent of those homes are in Manhattan  
18 that includes 30 percent South of 96<sup>th</sup> Street and  
19 then other boroughs have amounts ranging from one  
20 percent to 30 percent and mostly those breakdowns on  
21 a borough level mirror what we see in general with  
22 where affordable housing is created across the city  
23 so that's generally the borough breakdown. So, the...  
24 a, a good significant percentage in Manhattan in  
25 particular South of 96<sup>th</sup> Street.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Okay, thank you  
3 I'll also draw attention to your testimony, when you  
4 spoke about supporting housing units actually being  
5 beneficial to communities in, in raising property,  
6 property values in certain neighborhoods so can you  
7 just for my edification just let me know where those  
8 neighborhoods are?

9 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: So, what we found  
10 by doing this... the study of supportive housing  
11 projects really across the city and we'd be happy to  
12 follow up as to where exactly those are that property  
13 values did increase and the context there as I  
14 mentioned in my testimony is that for a lot of the  
15 programs a lot of the projects the land may have been  
16 underutilized in the past or vacant and so having a  
17 new well designed building is one that is... becomes a  
18 real asset for the community and as I mentioned  
19 before I'm not surprised at all by the, the, the  
20 findings of that study because we really don't view  
21 these and what, what's been experienced by  
22 communities in the past as well bears this out  
23 supportive housing projects are really not  
24 facilities, they're regular well designed buildings  
25 with tenants who are regular lease holders, who are

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2 on rent stabilized leases and so our partners, the  
3 providers and development teams have done a  
4 tremendous job of making sure that they are well  
5 designed and well maintained and that is really in  
6 many ways the gospel that we want to make sure  
7 spreads across the city but we'll, we'll follow up on  
8 specifics of the 2008 study that was done.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you very  
10 much Commissioner. Finally, in, in speaking about  
11 land I think a, a good question is that city owning  
12 right now more than 1,100 vacant lots that could be  
13 used, are you looking at any of those properties  
14 right now for supportive housing?

15 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Absolutely, so  
16 we... and of the, the lots that are underutilized we  
17 have released RFPs and designated teams at a faster  
18 clip really than we have ever done before about 450  
19 of the 1,000 lots are either have been designated or  
20 about to be designated and for many of... many of the  
21 projects after consulting with the community many of  
22 them are supportive housing and so we'd be happy to  
23 provide as well some follow up. So, we... it's not just  
24 what gets assembled by private partners but we're

25

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2 certainly using our own stock to make sure that we're  
3 advancing these programs.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you very  
5 much for your testimony, thank you Mr. Chair.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council  
7 Member Adams. Before I turn it over to Council Member  
8 Gjonaj I just... in, in my opening statement I didn't  
9 acknowledge committee staff that worked to put  
10 together this hearing so I'd like to do that at this  
11 moment; Aminta Kilowan, our Committee Counsel; Tanya  
12 Cyrus, Senior, Senior Policy Analyst; Crystal Pond,  
13 Senior Legislative Policy Analyst; Nameera Nuzhat,  
14 Legislative Financial Analyst; Dohini Sompura, our  
15 Financial Unit Head and Elizabeth Adams who is my, my  
16 offices Legislative Director and this is her first  
17 hearing so, I want to welcome Elizabeth and with that  
18 I will turn it over to Council Member Mark Gjonaj.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Chair thank you  
20 for the consideration, we have several... it's a busy  
21 day, we have several hearings going on  
22 simultaneously. My... most of my questions are follow  
23 up to my colleagues and first of all as you heard  
24 from the Speaker, this body is committed to assuring  
25 that we come... we help develop as many supportive

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2 housing units as possible, so we not only talk the  
3 talk, but we walk the walk and you'll have great  
4 partners moving forward. You mentioned earlier before  
5 I had stepped out for my other hearing, the four  
6 approaches you have and one of them is prevention and  
7 obviously the more we prevent destabilization of  
8 these families from being homeless and finding  
9 themselves out in the street and part of supportive  
10 housing programs throughout the city, what more can  
11 we do to keep our tenants and our families in their  
12 current homes that are facing evictions and market  
13 rate rents that are unaffordable?

14 STEVEN BANKS: Well I think the  
15 partnership between the administration and the  
16 council in enacting the universal access to counsel  
17 legislation is the most critical step that we all can  
18 take together, no other city has done this and we can  
19 already see the results, I mean speaking of metrics  
20 as the Speaker asked me about the 1,480 people that  
21 we brought off the streets that remain off the  
22 streets, in terms of looking at prevention 27 percent  
23 drop in evictions by marshals, as we've been ramping  
24 up the program and the, the local law, it's a five  
25 year implementation phase, we're in year one now and

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2 so this drop has come just based upon the piloting  
3 plus year one is, is upon us now so I think that that  
4 is a very important initiative that you have  
5 supported, it's... it... obviously put substantial  
6 dollars in it going from six million to 77 million  
7 and then it's going to ultimately be 155 million  
8 dollar program that is really aimed at keeping people  
9 in their homes. Secondly, the 25 percent increase in  
10 payment rent arears that we have been making  
11 available through HRA, those 217,000 households that  
12 have gotten rent arears that's part of... part of that  
13 strategy and I think, you know I don't want to steal  
14 any points from my colleague but the preservation  
15 initiatives of HPD are tremendously helpful in terms  
16 of preserving affordability for units as well. So, I  
17 think that our initiatives on the prevention side are  
18 very well developed and very much in place and it's  
19 been a good partnership with the council to do those  
20 things.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Thank you  
22 Commissioner. You're familiar with the... and we've  
23 spoken about this in the past, the SCRIE program and  
24 the DRIE program... [cross-talk]

25 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Yes, I am.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Where rent  
3 stabilized apartments their rents are capped... [cross-  
4 talk]

5 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Right... [cross-  
6 talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: ...once they... for  
8 qualifying families and that's families that are  
9 earning under 50,000 dollars don't face a rent  
10 increase which helps create more stability in that  
11 household as they fight rent increases that are  
12 unaffordable, would you be supportive of the same  
13 program which would be the TRIE, the Tenant Rent  
14 Increase Exemption program for families earning under  
15 50,000 dollars that they would be afforded the same  
16 protections, now these are our most vulnerable  
17 families, those that are financially unstable and  
18 can't afford their current rent let alone an increase  
19 in rent?

20 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Yeah, I'll start  
21 by saying sir that we support initiatives that of  
22 course provide stability to our renters which is why  
23 we've done so much in preservation, all of the  
24 programs that Commissioner Banks mentioned, it's why  
25 we are fighting for reforms and protections up in

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2 Albany to make sure that we protect the rent  
3 regulated stock. As it relates to the specific  
4 proposal on TRIE we would really have to look at the  
5 cost implications of such... that program to really  
6 answer the question of whether that is the best place  
7 to... to invest resources compared to all of the other  
8 strategies and programs that we have already run and  
9 are running and so always open to new proposals but  
10 that is of course one of the many things that we  
11 would have to look at.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So, thank you for  
13 that answer and I just want to follow up, this  
14 program year one would be zero percent increase, year  
15 two it would be based on the RGB percentage increase  
16 which recently has been very low from an investment  
17 point of view, dollar for dollar this would be the  
18 greatest return on our investment to assuring those  
19 families remained within their homes at... compared to  
20 the rest of the budget associated with supportive  
21 housing and homelessness, this would be pennies and  
22 it would stop the bleeding for the most part, the  
23 increase in the numbers of those that are finding  
24 themselves homeless and it's something that can be  
25 done today, that could be implemented this year



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2 assuring families remain in their homes, I'm so  
3 dissatisfied with the administration's unwillingness  
4 to embrace it, it is probably the most practical and  
5 common sense approach to this unaffordability  
6 question that we have and stabilizing of these decent  
7 families that are struggling, alright, I didn't want  
8 to make it a statement but I think I just did.

9           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Again, I'd like  
10 to say that we of course support anything that helps  
11 provide family stability and would love to see  
12 specifics of the proposals in order to be able to  
13 answer for all of us whether that is the best use of  
14 resources compared to all of the other strategies  
15 that we are using or could use and so that is an open  
16 invitation to continue to discuss it.

17           COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: I think the  
18 estimated number that was given to me on a ten-year  
19 plan if I'm correct was 300 million which compared to  
20 the rest of the programs and again going to the most  
21 vulnerable of our families and Chair I hope that we  
22 will have a hearing on this specific approach that  
23 could help so many other families. My last question  
24 is a follow up to my colleagues, when it comes to  
25 shelters and... although my colleague had an

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2 interesting number I'll use the fair share report  
3 from... that was done in 2017, it showed the borough of  
4 the Bronx having twice as many shelters as Queens per  
5 capita this is, 41 percent more than Brooklyn, 99  
6 percent more than Staten Island and 13 percent more  
7 than Manhattan now we all know that this is a burden  
8 that we all have to share equally and Bronx sites in  
9 the borough of the Bronx is... wants to do it's fair  
10 share and this shouldn't be born on one borough, we  
11 know the impacts and I don't think we need studies to  
12 understand that this impacts our safety and that's  
13 when it comes to systems, schools, institutions,  
14 health care, policing and more importantly as these  
15 units are being built and created for these families  
16 they're not units that could be offered to Bronx  
17 sites, they're taking off so we're offering them as  
18 supportive housing units or as shelter units and not  
19 giving them the given opportunities to Bronx  
20 residents to take advantage of the shortage in  
21 housing that we currently have.

22 STEVEN BANKS: So, let me address the  
23 shelter system issues first and then... and then turn  
24 over to housing. So, I, I know we've had very good  
25 productive conversations about this before, in terms

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2 of the change that we're making in the provision of  
3 shelter we're, we're going to change the approach and  
4 we're already beginning to do that in terms of the  
5 way shelter is provided but having each borough  
6 roughly be in balance in the number of people that  
7 become homeless in the borough, the number of people  
8 be sheltered in the borough are obviously taken into  
9 account, domestic violence survivors and, and others  
10 with special needs that may not be able to be housed  
11 close to their schools or, or jobs or health care,  
12 houses of worship, family and friends but the  
13 transformation of the shelter system will address  
14 what your concern is, it... at the completion of the  
15 plan we will be able to offer opportunities for  
16 people who lose their homes to be sheltered in the  
17 Bronx if they come from the Bronx or Staten Island,  
18 Queens, Manhattan, Brooklyn again taking into  
19 domestic violence issues of course but that will be a  
20 very different approach to providing shelter than has  
21 gone on for the last 40 years. We have already made  
22 progress on what we committed to do a year ago, we  
23 said we would shrink the footprint of the city's  
24 shelter system by 45 percent during the life of the  
25 plan, we've already shrunk it in the first-year 16

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2 percent, we've gotten out of 100, a net 100 sites of  
3 open new sites but the net decrease of 100 sites  
4 around the city many of those sites.. [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Do any.. [cross-  
6 talk]

7 STEVEN BANKS: ...are in the Bronx... [cross-  
8 talk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Is that referring  
10 to cluster sites.. [cross-talk]

11 STEVEN BANKS: Yes.. [cross-talk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: ...now?

13 STEVEN BANKS: It's 100 sites overall so  
14 some are not cluster site.. [cross-talk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So.. [cross-talk]

16 STEVEN BANKS: ...many of those sites are  
17 in the Bronx where we've gotten out of a total.. by  
18 the end of June we'd be out of 1,700 cluster  
19 apartments most of them are in the Bronx but at.. when  
20 the turn the tide plan is fully implemented each  
21 borough will have shelter capacity for people who  
22 have become homeless from that borough and I think  
23 it'll really change what you have been concerned  
24 about when you're in the legislature here.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Thank you..

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2           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: And just to  
3 clarify for supportive housing projects, 60 percent  
4 are supportive units typically and 40 percent are for  
5 low income families and those units go through our  
6 regular housing connector lottery system so for  
7 supportive housing projects there are a significant  
8 portion, 40 percent are available for, for lottery.  
9 Yet another reason why and then the report that you  
10 mentioned Council Member is about fair share but I...  
11 we, we work very hard to make sure that supportive  
12 housing projects are not seen as a burden that has  
13 to... they are community assets with a lot of benefits..  
14 [cross-talk]

15           COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: They certainly  
16 are... [cross-talk]

17           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...and that is...  
18 and, and... which is the continued I think education  
19 and partnership we would like to see with all of... all  
20 of those who are involved in making sure that we  
21 build as much as we can.

22           COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: I, I agree with  
23 you and I again thank you for that but 40 percent of...  
24 for a lottery system and we have many more applying  
25 than are readily available is a clear indication that

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2 is not enough for Bronx sites or those that call the  
3 borough of the Bronx their home and the last I'll  
4 just leave off with a... please I encourage you to take  
5 advantage of every opportunity to develop these  
6 supportive housing units that are much needed and  
7 lets begin with all of the vacant land that can be  
8 developed, that is city owned rather than going to  
9 the bidding and purchasing and acquiring of land from  
10 private ownership, take advantage of the assets that  
11 we currently have.

12           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: We totally agree  
13 with you, there are in fact two projects that are  
14 going through the public approval process right now  
15 and so look forward to the council's support as those  
16 go through the process, so we can get them built.

17           COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: But the total  
18 number of vacant city owned land is 11,000 is that  
19 what I understood?

20           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: No, that... it's...  
21 there are about 1,000 lots and half of them we've  
22 either already... we've designated and or are about to  
23 designate so we're... we utilize every opportunity that  
24 we have, it's a scarce resource, we know we need land

25

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2 and we're advancing those RFPs as quickly as  
3 possible.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So, why did it  
5 take so long for us to take advantage of these lots  
6 that have been available and the city's owned?

7 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: I would beg to  
8 differ about it taking... it, it taking so long, we  
9 have upped the pace for sure over the course of the...  
10 of the last few years but the ability to finance a  
11 project there... the, the, the availability of land I...  
12 as I mentioned isn't just the only ingredient, the  
13 financing needs to be able to come together, a lot of  
14 that is city resources, we've made historic  
15 commitment of city capital but a number of the  
16 resources are also federal and those are a scarce  
17 resource and so that's why in order to not just build  
18 on city owned land as quickly as possible but using  
19 private land as well at the pace that is needed to  
20 deal with the crisis we need to be able to have all  
21 levels of government really partners in this work.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Thank you so  
23 much, thank you Chair for the consideration.

24

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
3 Council Member Gjonaj, Council Member Grodenchik for  
4 questions.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you Mr.  
6 Chairman, good after... it's afternoon, right, it's not  
7 evening yet so... it's, it's still afternoon. Alright,  
8 thank you because I too like every other colleague  
9 that we have here has got to go to another meeting.  
10 Just quickly it's good to see you both Commissioners  
11 and I do want to state for the record that I do have  
12 about 450 units of supportive housing in my district  
13 at Creedmoor and that works pretty well, I don't know  
14 if you've seen Hazel House which was built by TSI  
15 with a lot of state money, it was like a 35 million  
16 dollar investment, its beautiful and for the most  
17 part the community has embraced that and Creedmoor  
18 actually predates everybody else who's been living  
19 there so it's been out in Eastern Queens for a long,  
20 long time. I do want to ask a question that I have  
21 not asked of Commissioner before although I've heard  
22 him talk about it and that's the advantage program  
23 and I know it was shut down before this current  
24 administration took office and I have heard testimony  
25 from you that thereabouts we're spending



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2 unfortunately about a million dollars a day or  
3 somewhere near that figure putting people up in  
4 homeless hotels, can I ask you a question, how much  
5 was the city spending on the advantage program before  
6 it was shut down, do we have those figures?

7 STEVEN BANKS: I mean homelessness went  
8 up about... it was about 37,000 people were in the  
9 shelter system in April 2011 when the program ended  
10 and that went up almost 15,000... 14, 15,000 people in  
11 that period of time, 2011 to 2014 so it was a 38  
12 percent increase in homelessness, we'll get you the  
13 records as you... as you know I'm actually the one to  
14 blame because I sued the city and lost the case...  
15 [cross-talk]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I'll blame  
17 you, it's okay, it's easy... [cross-talk]

18 STEVEN BANKS: I lost the case... [cross-  
19 talk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Assigning,  
21 assigning blame is easy...

22 STEVEN BANKS: Yeah, I lost the case four  
23 to three so if I'd been a better lawyer that day  
24 maybe the program wouldn't have ended, I, I recall  
25 the amounts of money off the top of my head but since

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2 I'm under oath I'm going to ask that we get back to  
3 you... [cross-talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay... [cross-  
5 talk]

6 STEVEN BANKS: ...the exact... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: ...I would  
8 appreciate that because it seems to me and I've heard  
9 you mention this a fair number of times that if we  
10 could replicate the program ourselves I know that you  
11 have been working as have I with assemblyman Hevesi  
12 who has had some success this year fortunately on  
13 home stability support program and there will be I  
14 think 15 million dollars or there is 15 million  
15 dollars in the state budget which will help some  
16 people obviously not enough but I commend him for his  
17 efforts but I would be curious about how much we were  
18 spending, the city and how much the state was  
19 spending so if I could get those figures from you I  
20 would greatly appreciate that because maybe we could  
21 replicate that, I don't see why we couldn't do that.

22 STEVEN BANKS: We'll, we'll certainly get  
23 you those figures but just again for the record and I  
24 know there... you... we, we have said these numbers  
25 before but maybe not with this level of granularity

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2 so we implemented a number of, of rental assistance  
3 programs beginning in 2014 and rehousing programs and  
4 we reopened priority for Section 8 and, and housing  
5 authority as part of those efforts and so between  
6 2000... some, some where really sort of two... summer of  
7 2014, spring, summer 2014 through December 2017  
8 81,124 people have either moved out of shelter or  
9 avoided going into shelter, most of them moving out  
10 of shelter as a result of the rental assistance  
11 programs that we put in place to replace advantage  
12 and the rehousing programs, that's 29,768 households...  
13 [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: How many was  
15 that, I'm sorry?

16 STEVEN BANKS: 29,768 households within  
17 those numbers 22,463 of those households moved out  
18 with the rental assistance programs that we created  
19 or avoided going into shelter and that's a total of  
20 56,277 people so you're absolutely right that the  
21 elimination or maybe I'm putting words in your mouth  
22 now but the elimination of advantage caused this  
23 exponential trajectory and then we've been putting in  
24 place a number of initiatives to break that  
25 trajectory and so I know as the Speaker noted earlier

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2 the prevention programs plus the rental assistance  
3 programs are what have enabled us to get the first  
4 year over year system remaining flat for... in ten  
5 years.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: So, I don't  
7 want to take too long because I, I know the, the  
8 Chair has been very indulgent of the entire committee  
9 today and I thank him for that. I would appreciate  
10 what the advantage program was spending not just the  
11 city but the state and, and then what we've done to  
12 fill in that gap, so I'd just, just be curious to see  
13 how that's been effective and I thank you for that. I  
14 think that is it for now, I always enjoy seeing you,  
15 I always enjoy... we haven't seen you as much but  
16 you're, you're newer, he's been here, he, he started  
17 the job he was about seven feet tall and he had a  
18 full head of hair... [cross-talk]

19 STEVEN BANKS: That was when I went to  
20 Legal Aid I was... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Yes... [cross-  
22 talk]

23 STEVEN BANKS: ...seven feet tall and had a  
24 full head of hair.

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Well thank  
3 you for your time and thank you for your efforts and  
4 thank you Mr. Chairman.

5 STEVEN BANKS: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Council  
7 Member Grodenchik. So, to answer your question, I  
8 looked it up, New York Times article from 2011 the  
9 advantage program was envisioned as a transitional  
10 step between homelessness and self-sufficiency, its  
11 projected cost for the next fiscal year was 140  
12 million dollars with the state and federal  
13 governments contributing 92 million of that so 140  
14 minus 92 is 48 million was the city contribution in  
15 20... FY '11... or FY... proposed for FY '12... [cross-talk]

16 STEVEN BANKS: F, FY '12 it was, was  
17 going to be.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, there you go.  
19 Okay, so because my colleagues asked a lot of  
20 questions I'm going to be jumping around so try to  
21 follow along... [cross-talk]

22 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: I'll jump with  
23 you...

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, my first request  
25 is if it's possible as a follow up to this hearing

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2 can you provide us with a chart that shows us for the  
3 current plan, the 15/15 plan the number of, of  
4 congregate units that have been funded and sited so  
5 identify... because I, I appreciate that there's a  
6 billion dollars in the... in the capital plan I want to  
7 know how much of that has actually been identified,  
8 you know and, and there's the money out the door but  
9 then how much is in the pipeline... [cross-talk]

10 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Yep... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...so how many units  
12 are, are, are actually built... [cross-talk]

13 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Yep... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...how many units are  
15 in the pipeline and, and for each of these how that  
16 tracks to the plan so the annual plan or, or the  
17 semiannual plan so, you know if you're saying how  
18 many we're hoping to get every six months or how  
19 many... how many we're hoping... [cross-talk]

20 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Understood...

21 [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...to get every, every  
23 year and I'd like to know the same for the... for the  
24 scatter site as well. So, just in, in, in a chart  
25 form so that we can kind of... I mean we have a bill so

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2 we're going to make you do this in a bill anyway but,  
3 but in the meantime, it would be helpful for all of  
4 us to kind of see it visually I think laid out kind  
5 of in that chart form if that would be... if that's  
6 okay with you guys. Okay.

7 STEVEN BANKS: Yep, one chart, one plan.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thanks. So... okay, my  
9 first question is around... is around the congregate  
10 sites, okay, so currently how many units are in the  
11 pipeline for congregate, I think you said this  
12 before?

13 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: It depends on  
14 what you mean by pipeline, so we have financed on the  
15 congregate side over... since, since the start of the  
16 administration 3,000...

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry, don't, don't  
18 want to go start of the administration, I want to  
19 just go start of the 15/15... [cross-talk]

20 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: 15... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...plan.

22 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: 15 plan we have...  
23 there are 1,766 units that are financed and still in  
24 construction... [cross-talk]

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay... [cross-talk]

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2 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: 460 of those have  
3 NYC 15/15 service funding.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, so then the  
5 remainder, the 1,300... [cross-talk]

6 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Have service  
7 funding from previous plans.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but were...  
9 [cross-talk]

10 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: But they are  
11 still... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...financed... [cross-  
13 talk]

14 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...but they're in  
15 the pipeline.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, okay, so then  
17 those are financed through New York/New York III?

18 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay... [cross-talk]

20 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: For the most  
21 part.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, so then... so  
23 then the number of congregate units financed through  
24 15/15 because I want to... I, I... just be... just for  
25 clarity... [cross-talk]



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2 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: It's 460...

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay because I want

4 to take what... we could always come back to New

5 York/New York III, I appreciate that this

6 administration had commitments under New York/New

7 York III, I appreciate that but in terms of, of the...

8 looking forward I'm... I really wanted to drill down on

9 what the 15/15 plans outcomes are so... [cross-talk]

10 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Understood...

11 [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...400 and... [cross-

13 talk]

14 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...60 units

15 financed to date.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay and none of

17 those units are online yet because of the... [cross-

18 talk]

19 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: That's right...

20 [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...lack of staff...

22 [cross-talk]

23 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...because it...

24 [cross-talk]

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...and construction...

3 [cross-talk]

4 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...it takes a few  
5 years although we hope that the, the first of those  
6 units will come online by the summer.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, what is the  
8 cost of construction per unit in capital construction  
9 from the source... from various sources whether... you  
10 know you, you got your city... your city capital, tax  
11 exempt, bonds, tax credits...

12 MOLLY PARK: It's about 450,000 dollars a  
13 unit.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 450 a unit?

15 MOLLY PARK: Yep.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay and that... and  
17 that's give or take based on land cost, right?

18 MOLLY PARK: Yeah, I mean there is... there  
19 is certainly variation related to land cost, related  
20 to construction type, certain heights of buildings  
21 are taller, if there is environmental contamination,  
22 if it's near a subway train, I could go on for much  
23 longer than you'd like me to but 450... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure... [cross-talk]

25 MOLLY PARK: ...is about an average.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 450, so then the  
3 range would be probably 50,000 above and 50,000 below  
4 depending on where it is and those various factors..

5 MOLLY PARK: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. If you found  
7 opportunities to, to do it... to, to do congregate less  
8 than that at a price point less than that per unit is  
9 that something you would jump at?

10 MOLLY PARK: Certainly.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Are there... so  
12 that's... so, we're talking about congregate in terms  
13 of ground up, are there... are there opportunities for,  
14 for acquisition of facilities that are not ground up  
15 but are existing facilities that may need some rehab  
16 or less rehab but are... but are not necessarily ground  
17 up that could... that could be at a price point less?

18 MOLLY PARK: Yes, absolutely, we look at  
19 those, I am aware of the project that you're talking  
20 about and it's something that we're very interested  
21 in and looking carefully at.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, I mean are  
23 there other... I mean sure, there's... you know I'm  
24 looking at one... or there's one that's come to my  
25 attention as well but are there others... is that

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2 something that's a... strategically it makes sense I  
3 think because that's an, an opportunity or a method  
4 to bring on... I mean from my perspective, right, you  
5 bring on units faster, you bring up a, a lot of units  
6 at once and you have a price point that may even be  
7 less than ground up. I'm assuming it's a limited  
8 opportunity, there aren't a lot of buildings like  
9 that maybe.

10 MOLLY PARK: Sure, it has been  
11 historically a big part of the supportive housing  
12 pipeline, the, the Times... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right... [cross-talk]

14 MOLLY PARK: ...Square Hotel, the Prince  
15 George, right, these were all rehabs of existing SRO  
16 buildings, when we find opportunities like that we're  
17 always happy to look at them.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, do they exist  
19 around the city or are they more concentrated in kind  
20 of higher density areas and...

21 MOLLY PARK: I'm going to need to take a  
22 look at that and get back to you and as you said  
23 right now they are fewer and further between than  
24 they were in the... when there was a larger stock of  
25 SRO housing to convert to supportive housing.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, with  
3 congregate... so, what's our... if, if you were to as  
4 Corey said, you know it's great to talk about 15 year  
5 plans and you know that's, that's a... that's a, a  
6 methodology here or that's a... that's one way to do  
7 it, what is... how many... how many congregate units are  
8 we hoping to get online occupied in five years or at  
9 the end of... or at the end of this administration,  
10 three and a half years?

11 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: So, the math for  
12 that we are, as part of the 15/15 plan financing 500  
13 to 600 units per year and so for each of those since  
14 a construction takes anywhere from two to three  
15 years, two if we're lucky so the move out then  
16 associated, associated with each of those should  
17 follow two or three years after that and what, what  
18 would... we'd be happy to provide as a follow up  
19 exactly kind of what that means over the course of  
20 the next five years.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, then by the end  
22 of this year, by the end of '18 and we, we should  
23 hope to have... we should hope to have 1,000 or, or  
24 close... or 1,500 units financed and congregate as part  
25 of the 15/15 plan, right?

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2 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: That's right...

3 MOLLY PARK: That's correct,  
4 approximately.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, now... [cross-  
6 talk]

7 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: It's about 500 to  
8 600 each year.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, so then we  
10 should expect that because we're at four... 400 some  
11 odd... [cross-talk]

12 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: That's right...  
13 [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...in the 15/15 plan  
15 which commenced in '16 or FY '17?

16 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Well really it  
17 started... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: As New York/New York...

19 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Yeah, most of...  
20 most... the bulk of that it's really calendar year '17  
21 where... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay... [cross-talk]

23 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...most of those  
24 have come online because as Commissioner Banks  
25 mentioned the process to not just engage the task

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2 force but release the RFPs on the service side and  
3 so... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

5 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...we're starting  
6 to see those projects come together and should now be  
7 at a clip of 500 per year.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, now Miss... so,  
9 the state has its own... has a separate plan, I just  
10 want to put this out there for... since 1990 there was...  
11 so for 25 years there was a, a New York/New York  
12 agreement which was a, a collaboration of the city  
13 and state based on in memory... memorandum of  
14 understanding that... there, there was essentially one  
15 supportive housing plan in New York City that, that  
16 combined resources, city and state resources in a... in  
17 a... in a... based on a, a... an agreed upon standard of  
18 operation that was... that was negotiated. In... at the  
19 end of New York/New York III the, the De Blasio  
20 administration... the Cuomo administration could not  
21 agree on, on a... on a New York/New York IV agreement  
22 or decided not to do a New York/New York IV agreement  
23 and therefore we have two separate plans that are  
24 not... are, are not held together with an MOU so there,  
25 there may be braided funding on specific projects but

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2 it is not a, a cohesive singular plan, we essentially  
3 have two plans that are operating at the same time,  
4 that's, that's my words, you don't have to agree or  
5 disagree on that but when we're talking about 7,500  
6 congregate units that are use... that might use some  
7 state funding is that... are... is the state counting  
8 those very same units as part of their state  
9 supportive housing plan?

10 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: It's possible  
11 that they are but that wouldn't be a departure from  
12 the decades long partnership, right... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure... [cross-talk]

14 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...between the city  
15 and state... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Oh yeah, yeah...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...because for all  
19 of these projects they have funding in them, we have  
20 funding in them and that will continue to be true  
21 even with NYC 15/15 despite what you described  
22 earlier because NYC 15/15 rental and service could be  
23 paired with state capital and state ESSHI could be  
24 paired with city capital in many... and that's... we, we  
25 work every day to make sure that the, the... that this



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2 doesn't get in the way however of service providers  
3 being able to pull together and advance projects.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right but I, I just  
5 mean to say that if we're, we're not going to have...  
6 if, if the city's envisioning 15,000 units and the  
7 state's envisioning 15,000 units in, in New York City  
8 that doesn't necessarily mean we're going to have  
9 30,000 units, new supportive housing units at the end  
10 of 15 years because some of them will be counted by  
11 both I'm assuming. There is a concern that I think  
12 I've heard from some providers that navigating the  
13 city and state programs takes some time and takes  
14 resources of, of their staff away from what they  
15 might otherwise be doing because it's... you know  
16 because it's not coordinated and it's not seamless  
17 despite... I mean we've also heard the feedback that on  
18 a staff level thing... you know there is a lot of  
19 coordination but, you know there's... it... we've heard  
20 that it... the extra work could be burdensome for, for...  
21 from providers, have you heard that?

22 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: I think with any  
23 new program then Molly, please chime in, with any new  
24 programs that are launching and they... and the ramp up  
25 there's always a learning curve to ensure that we are

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2 ironing out the kinks, it's something that we've  
3 spoken very openly with our partners, service  
4 providers about to the extent that... and, and they are  
5 not shy and so these are, a lot of what you're  
6 alluding to Councilman we, I'm sure has, has been  
7 feedback that got shared and we always look to iron  
8 out those kinks, make it as streamlined as possible,  
9 if there are specific issues that you think we should  
10 focus on we'd be more than happy to concentrate on  
11 them.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, I mean I'll,  
13 I'll, I'll go back out to the provider community and,  
14 and see if there's specific issues that they've been  
15 encountering. One of the issues that brought... came  
16 into our attention was different definitions of  
17 homelessness that the city and the state had  
18 different definitions of homelessness, can you... is  
19 that... is that accurate, do you see that because it's  
20 creating some confusion?

21 MOLLY PARK: It... there are slightly  
22 different definitions, yes, I think the 15/15 uses  
23 some fairly broad categories ESSHI is broken down  
24 into a more specific subpopulations. As the  
25 Commissioner alluded we are working through the kinks

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2 of rolling out new programs, but I think we are  
3 working very closely with our colleagues at the state  
4 to make sure that we are, are filling units quickly  
5 and, and hitting high need populations.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, you don't see  
7 that as a long-term impediment to, to making sure  
8 you're reaching all the vulnerable populations?

9 MOLLY PARK: No.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I might come back to  
11 congregate but with, with... moving to scatter site,  
12 one of the concerns that we've heard is that rental  
13 rates... I mean this is... so, taking a kind of step back  
14 big picture here, with scatter site units, we're  
15 chasing many of the same units that we're chasing  
16 with all the other programs that Commissioner Banks  
17 and I have been talking about for the last four  
18 years. So, all of the, the FEPS, the CITYFEPS, the  
19 SEPS, the Link vouchers, all... you know and  
20 Commissioner Banks in your second paragraph of your  
21 testimony or third paragraph of your testimony you  
22 talked very in depth about the vacancy rates in New  
23 York City and we're essentially chasing a limited  
24 resource with a lot of different programs and  
25 essentially, you know we have our programs competing

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2 against one another and competing against, you know  
3 a, a market of, of, of other individuals looking for  
4 housing in New York City. One of the concerns that  
5 has come up is that the rate... the rental rates for,  
6 for the supportive... scattered site supportive units  
7 are actually pegged at the 2015 fair market rent  
8 values or 2015 or '16... [cross-talk]

9 STEVEN BANKS: 2017.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It's '17 now, we had  
11 heard '16 I think...

12 STEVEN BANKS: Its, its, its FY '17 but I  
13 think... I, I, I... I'm going to anticipate where you're  
14 going here, I, I mean my testimony was pretty much  
15 very clear on what, what you just also said and kind  
16 of direct all of us to what I said at the end which  
17 is that we face a challenge in operating a market  
18 where the demand for units far exceeds the supply,  
19 put simply the abundance of renters in the market  
20 competing for the same units coupled with the 1.15  
21 percent vacancy rate for affordable apartments  
22 influences the pace at which we're able to expand the  
23 scattered site program.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, I am concerned  
25 and I anticipate that the scattered site program is

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2 going to have difficulty keeping up with its  
3 objectives, with its objective numbers year over year  
4 and so if we're 50 units behind every year then we'll  
5 be, you know over, over five years will be 250 units  
6 behind or if we're 100 units behind a year then over  
7 five years we'll be 500 units behind and or worse as  
8 the situation gets worse and so I'm, I'm, I'm  
9 concerned that... and I don't know what the answer to  
10 this is other than to build more congregate  
11 facilities and, and skew the whole program towards  
12 congregate instead of scatter site or as opposed to  
13 scatter site because I anticipate that the scatter  
14 site are going to continue to fall behind because  
15 it's because of the challenges of the market and  
16 unless we're... unless we're worry... you know unless,  
17 unless the value of the... of a scatter site rental  
18 subsidy is based on the following years fair market  
19 rent it makes it very difficult to compete.

20 STEVEN BANKS: Again I think... as the  
21 testimony says we've got twice as many people overall  
22 looking for low income units as exist and the vacancy  
23 rate for units affordable to our agency's clients has  
24 continued to come down having said that we do have  
25 providers finding units, we're working with them very

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2 diligently, providing the same kind of incentives  
3 that we provide for our other rental assistance  
4 programs, I think it's fair to say that it's  
5 important to have stood up a scattered site program  
6 pending... at least pending the bringing on of the  
7 congregate units and we're going to keep being very  
8 focused on how to find as many units as we can and I  
9 think that both of us are committed to continuing to  
10 look at the program and see how best to deliver the  
11 number of units that we all agree are needed here.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: How did you determine  
13 the number, the breakdown between scatter and, and  
14 congregate other than just 50/50 and see where it  
15 goes from there?

16 STEVEN BANKS: I mean it was really...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, you can offer me  
19 a round number, you know...

20 STEVEN BANKS: It was really a focus at  
21 that particular time several years ago about what was  
22 feasible... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

24 STEVEN BANKS: ...New York/New York III was  
25 not wound down yet, there were, you know a lot of

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2 commitments to, to move forward with and I, I think  
3 both of us are committed to continuing to look... to  
4 look at this but, you know this is... significant  
5 investment at the time and a significant projection  
6 at the time, it was an ambitious goal and we're  
7 committed to continuing to do the things we've been  
8 doing to focus on the awards, on the financing and on  
9 the move outs over the course of the rest of the...  
10 rest of this year and then look at the program  
11 overall and see what other improvements and  
12 enhancements we can make but... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Are you concerned  
14 about falling behind and kind of never being able to  
15 catch up to, to the target numbers that we've set out  
16 as a city on the... on the scatter sites?

17 STEVEN BANKS: Look, I mean I, I'm  
18 concerned about sheltering the people that come to us  
19 every night at... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah... [cross-talk]

21 STEVEN BANKS: ...80, 80, 80 families or  
22 108... so 108 families came to us for shelter last  
23 night and that's, that's what our focus is on every  
24 night and this is an important tool and both agencies

25

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2 and the Mayor are very committed to delivering on  
3 this plan one way or the other.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, I'm concerned,  
5 I'm concerned, I mean look, I mean the fact of the  
6 matter is we had a 116-million-dollar budget mod on  
7 single adults last... I mean you know which is the,  
8 the, the largest percentage of population seeking  
9 supportive housing, or qualifying for supportive  
10 housing and you know that is... I mean that is... that is  
11 a... that is a huge amount of, of, of money that is  
12 above what... I mean that's above what, what we  
13 anticipated in our budget last year which is a huge  
14 budget, I mean when we... when I... my first year... our  
15 first year negotiating we can go back and see what  
16 the DHS budget was actual spent FY '15 and we are  
17 hundreds of millions of dollars beyond that now,  
18 hundreds of millions of... I mean it's probably about a  
19 billion two and now we're at billion eight and, and  
20 we're seeing the, the... we're seeing a lot of... I mean  
21 when you look at the data, we've talked about this  
22 that it... the, the family shelter census has, has, has  
23 eat... has... and there's been so much resources put in  
24 to trying to address that issue which is where we  
25 were seeing it from '11 to '14, that was the big



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2 driver in that... in that 38 percent jump that you  
3 spoke about, family homelessness we... resources we put  
4 in now we're seeing the annual increase in single  
5 adult shelter census continuing to grow at a much  
6 higher pace and, and the, the, the key... I mean you  
7 know I don't want to get into the whole SEPS and... you  
8 know right now we have a proposed budget in SEPS of  
9 zero dollars for FY '19 and I get it, that's going  
10 be... we're going... we're going to address that in the...  
11 in the... in the negotiated budget but this is our  
12 great resource, I'm just concerned that if it's... if  
13 we're competing against other programs, competing  
14 against the market, all the things you talked about  
15 in your testimony we... and, and frankly, you know  
16 we're, we're... I don't know how... you know I'm not  
17 quite sure we're on track on, on congregate to be at  
18 500 units every year considering that... you know  
19 there's a two or three year lag so we're starting,  
20 you know we don't see units online till three years  
21 into the program, you know and our... and I mean we're  
22 hearing from providers that there's a concern that  
23 the RFP that goes out for the... for the scatter site  
24 people might not bid on it because it's so hard to  
25 find brokers and landlords that are willing to take

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2 it, I mean this is real, this is... you know, I mean I  
3 know, we all know that this is... this is real, this is  
4 a really, really difficult market to be doing this  
5 in. I'm wondering if we're... are we going to  
6 reconsider our breakdown and, and, and putting more  
7 money into these congregates, I mean frankly the  
8 project that we have been obliquely referring to, if  
9 you bring on 300 units in a year, that's, that's  
10 like... that's like the entire scatter... that's why we  
11 didn't scatter site last year, in one project...

12 [cross-talk]

13 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Uh-huh... [cross-  
14 talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...you know there's got  
16 to be other opportunities to do that.

17 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Let me certainly  
18 support everything Commissioner Banks just mentioned,  
19 I want to reiterate that we are very much in the ramp  
20 up phase for 15/15 and to the extent given the  
21 realities of the market place there are changes that  
22 need to happen across many dimensions of the program,  
23 we're of course always open to that. One... I, I do  
24 want to correct the record the, the... in terms of  
25 congregate both starts and completions we are on

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2 track or exceeding targets and so that is.. that is  
3 something that as long as we continue to have the  
4 general mix of resources, the four things that I  
5 mentioned earlier we should be able to maintain the  
6 pace. In terms of doing more, some of those key  
7 pillars we do not control, we don't control every  
8 piece of land in the city, we need your help with  
9 community support, we don't control tax credits and  
10 so we need to be able to with the resources that we  
11 have both prioritized supportive housing and also  
12 know that certainly with land and capital and tax  
13 credits those are the same resources that are needed  
14 to build and preserve affordable housing generally  
15 and so the.. those are certainly the, the major issues  
16 that.. with it that we have to keep in the back of our  
17 heads but believe in making sure that we're  
18 continually evaluating where we are with this plan so  
19 we don't fall behind and we keep up the pace that is  
20 needed to make good on the targets.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: This isn't so much a  
22 supportive housing question, it's an affordable  
23 housing question but you, you spoke about set asides,  
24 you know within affordable housing developments,  
25 would the administration be supportive of like a non-

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2 negotiable 15 percent homeless set aside in every  
3 development affordable component to a development,  
4 every affordable housing development, say you know  
5 what, let's not negotiate this, let's just make it  
6 across the board, 15 percent and let's just go from  
7 there?

8           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Well the.. just in  
9 terms of level setting for what our goals are as it  
10 relates to housing for the formerly homeless, there  
11 is the 15,000 that is the general set asides for  
12 formerly homeless households, there is the 5,000 of  
13 congregate that happens within the context of the  
14 plan and so that's 20,000 units through Housing New  
15 York for formerly homeless households. Our term  
16 sheets, it actually ranges, some of them are more  
17 than 15 percent, it's 10 percent for some of our term  
18 sheets and up to 60 percent for supportive housing  
19 and so it.. a, a.. [cross-talk]

20           CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Let's say for..  
21 [cross-talk]

22           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...a blunt... [cross-  
23 talk]

24           CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...for ELLA... [cross-  
25 talk]

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2 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...15 percent...

3 ELLA... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...or, or, or a minimum  
5 15 percent, I mean if somebody wants to go greater  
6 than 15 percent like that's great, that's cool but,  
7 but in saying no less than 15 percent.

8 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: And that Council  
9 Member is certainly something that we want to do as  
10 much as we can, we need the Council's support and in...  
11 [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay and I've...  
13 [cross-talk]

14 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...despite... [cross-  
15 talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...been... [cross-talk]

17 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...and I understand  
18 at the last hearing you've been a critical ally, it  
19 is not always the case however that there is support  
20 for those percentages and at the same time we have to  
21 make sure that we're providing housing for extremely  
22 low-income families and so that... those units are...  
23 don't cannibalize, that the ability to provide  
24 housing for extremely low-income families as well.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right and I think  
3 that there's ways to address that for instance we  
4 could say that the numbers can... you know that they  
5 can go up to 60 percent or that it doesn't, you know  
6 it... or that there continues to be the... you know that...  
7 it doesn't... it doesn't cut into the, the 30 percent  
8 AMIs that are part of the ELLA program or it's not  
9 part of the community preference units that are... make  
10 up 50 percent of an affordable housing development, I  
11 mean I think that's there's creative ways that we can  
12 work with that. I, I... the question... the reason I  
13 asked the question is that I'm happy to talk to you  
14 and I have been talking to my colleagues and I just  
15 want to make sure that when I talk to them and I say  
16 hey what do you think about a, a minimum of 15  
17 percent set aside on every affordable housing  
18 development or MIH development what have you, the  
19 administration supports that so I, I, I just... you  
20 know...

21 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: We, we support  
22 exploring any idea that allows us to build more  
23 permanent housing for formerly homeless households.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Is... do you  
25 think it might be a good idea to formerly combine

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2 the, the administration's housing plan with its  
3 homeless plan in a... in a... in a more comprehensive  
4 way, I mean I, I think when I did a... when I did a, a  
5 search, a PDF search of... I think I did this in the  
6 last hearing of the... of the Housing New York plan and  
7 just searched the word homeless I don't think it came  
8 up and so I think... I think it might make sense that  
9 to make sure that there are... that, that that type of  
10 communication is more formalized, is it... is it  
11 something that we might want to consider?

12           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: I, I, I want to  
13 make sure that it's clear that despite what may not  
14 have shown up in the... in the... in a search on a PDF  
15 that the plans work in tandem, there are... if you look  
16 at the turning the tide, I think it's pillar four, it  
17 may be pillar three, all of... each aspect of that or  
18 major component of the Housing New York plan and then  
19 also the numbers I think are... speak for themselves,  
20 we have financed more than 7,000 units since the  
21 start of the plan, that's eight percent of the total  
22 production of the 88,000 financed thus far for  
23 formerly homeless households and so we're exceeding  
24 the targets that we have and are looking for every  
25 way to do better but that does not... that's not just

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2 a, a question of policy it's certainly not a question  
3 of integrating of written documents, it's a question  
4 of making sure we have the resources at every level..  
5 [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure but, but...

7 [cross-talk]

8 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...to advance... to  
9 meet and exceed goals.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But eight percent  
11 that's laudable, I think that that should be 15  
12 percent, so it should be basically double, and I  
13 think that that would have a meaningful impact in  
14 driving down... I mean then... you know then I don't get  
15 a request for 160-million-dollar budget mod, you know  
16 three quarters of the way through a fiscal year  
17 because we are drastically overspending on our DHS  
18 budget, I mean I'm... I honestly like... I got to tell  
19 you like when I talk to Council Members around that  
20 budget mod, I mean people were like what on earth is  
21 going on here, how are... [cross-talk]

22 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: I think... [cross-  
23 talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...how are... how are we..  
25 how can we not... how are we... how are we unable to plan



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2 for nine months in advance like to the point where  
3 we're spending... over spending by ten percent.

4           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: I think the other  
5 point, the eight percent for formerly homeless  
6 households but we shouldn't lose track of the fact  
7 that the goal for extremely low income and very low  
8 income is 25 percent of the plan and we have thus far  
9 exceeded that so a full third of the 88,000 are for  
10 extremely low and very low income households and as  
11 we all know those are the households that do cycle...  
12 that can cycle in and out of the shelter system and  
13 so one of the main tenets of the housing plan is to  
14 make sure we're building and preserving units for  
15 extremely low and very low as the main prevention  
16 tool so you really... [cross-talk]

17           CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry, what's the  
18 percentage... [cross-talk]

19           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...have to look at...  
20 [cross-talk]

21           CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...I'm sorry, for the  
22 very low... [cross-talk]

23           MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...both... [cross-  
24 talk]

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...and extremely low  
3 that you said?

4 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: It is... it's one  
5 third of the production to date has been... [cross-  
6 talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: One third... [cross-  
8 talk]

9 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...for extremely  
10 low and very low.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, I'd like to bump  
12 up the number... all... both of those numbers up seven  
13 percent so, so 15 percent for formerly homeless, 40  
14 percent for low... very low and extremely low.

15 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: The, the... [cross-  
16 talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, then its... a  
18 rising tide list...

19 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Yeah, the other  
20 thing to note is in the last fiscal year actually  
21 close to 50 percent of the units have been extremely  
22 low or very low so we are... with the targets that we  
23 have we're exceeding them but we always have to be  
24 conscientious of the resources not just city that are  
25 needed in order to advance all aspects of the plan

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2 that we don't cannibalize... we don't rob Peter to pay  
3 Paul... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure... [cross-talk]

5 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: ...in the  
6 advancement of it... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But I'd much rather  
8 do a budget mod for 160 million dollars to go towards  
9 supportive housing or, or very low, extremely low  
10 income affordable housing for people in the  
11 community, I'd much, much rather do a budget mod for  
12 that or, or allocate that money in the beginning of  
13 the fiscal year than, than, than do this budget mod  
14 at the end for... just for shelter costs which is  
15 really just temporary and no offense but substandard  
16 housing for a, a lot... a lot of New Yorkers who are... I  
17 mean to live in shelter for, you know your entire  
18 childhood is a devastatingly traumatic experience,  
19 nobody should ever have to do that so...

20 MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER: Agree with that.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, onto the issue  
22 of, of creaming so... an advocate researcher  
23 practitioner sent over some testimony and this was  
24 his result of some FOIL documentation data that was  
25 done by legal services in New York City, some of the...

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2 some of the bullet points for the 15.5 percent of  
3 interviewees between 2013 and 2016 were rejected  
4 because they were deemed by assessors to need a  
5 higher lever of care, we're struggling with too much...  
6 with too intense of mental illness who are  
7 experiencing suicidal ideations or lacked insight  
8 into their mental illness, I'm going to read some of  
9 these because... and I... and I, I... you know and I  
10 appreciate that we're, we're reforming the system and  
11 looking at the CAP system but this is what was  
12 happening prior to that. Interviewee declined,  
13 applicant was acting bizarre during the interview  
14 process and responded to internal stimuli, laughing  
15 without reason, the applicant was also guarded with  
16 information in regard to her mental health and  
17 substance abuse history. Another one... interview we  
18 rejected, client did not display the ability to live  
19 independently, has poor insight into his mental  
20 health illness... mental illness and requires a higher  
21 level of care, client has a long history of substance  
22 abuse and has only recently become sober, has not  
23 sufficiently displayed an ability to remain sober.  
24 Another incidence, interviewee rejected, client has  
25 poor insight into mental illness, minimizes personal

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2 responsibility for any problems in his life, client  
3 has been sober for a short time but does not display  
4 the ability to remain sober or live independently,  
5 the client requires a higher level of care.  
6 Interviewee rejected, client was disoriented during  
7 the interview, he has no insight into his mental  
8 illness, he was limited in his ability to express any  
9 independent living skills, client's sobriety is  
10 unclear. Another incidence.. or interview we rejected,  
11 needs a higher level of care, client has no insight  
12 into his mental illness and substance abuse. This was  
13 from Craig Hughes who supplied this, this testimony.  
14 Those are just some examples. These are exactly the  
15 people that need.. that need supportive housing, if  
16 somebody has suicidal ideations or doesn't have a  
17 clear understanding of their mental illness or  
18 doesn't have appropriate insight into their mental  
19 illness that's not.. that doesn't.. that, that  
20 shouldn't be a reason obviously to reject them from  
21 the very help that they so desperately need. So, is  
22 this.. I mean I'm assuming that this is what the CAPS  
23 system was meant to intercede with, but can you speak  
24 a little bit about kind of how we're approaching  
25 this?

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2 STEVEN BANKS: Look, this is... these kind  
3 of client focus concerns are exactly why we convened  
4 the task force and spent a year of time focusing on  
5 it and it was important not to, to simply not  
6 implement the plan without convening a group of  
7 providers and advocacy organizations and have a very  
8 deep dive into how the programs had operated, how  
9 they could be improved, they are the gold standard  
10 but even gold standards can be improved and so the  
11 CAPS approach came out of that working group, focus  
12 groups with clients we did and very intensive work  
13 with providers to come up with the vulnerability  
14 index, let's also... it's important to remember the  
15 context here is that in order to even be considered  
16 to have SMI or, or SUD so, you know severe mental  
17 illness or substance use disorder that's the client  
18 population we're working with and then the  
19 vulnerability index as I, you know went through with  
20 the Speaker but just I think it bears repeating is  
21 the vulnerability factor to consider is street  
22 homelessness, multiple criminal justice episodes,  
23 domestic violence, age, chronic medical conditions  
24 like HIV/AIDS, high use of emergency and crisis  
25 services and of course then you have to have the

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2 chronic time of having spent someone being homeless  
3 so, the revamping of the system was intended to draw  
4 upon client experience and provider experience and  
5 advocacy experience to make it better and we believe  
6 we've done that and we're very much focused on  
7 sending clients to providers that are appropriately  
8 matched, we want to make sure that we're... have the  
9 right program for the right client again as another  
10 aspect of having the vulnerability initiative but  
11 it's also something that we are going to closely  
12 monitor because we've identified the people that are  
13 most vulnerable who most need this service and should  
14 problems develop in getting people connected to that  
15 service that's something that we will have to take  
16 action to address but the... but the change in the  
17 assessment process was meant to have a, a more  
18 targeted way of ensuring the most vulnerable people  
19 got this critical assistance.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: What's the feedback  
21 mechanism within the CAPS system to, to look at kind  
22 of quality control so if there's a... if there's say a  
23 mismatch between the referral and the response or you  
24 know how, how are... how are... what's the... how are we  
25 ensuring quality control in a new system like this?

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2 STEVEN BANKS: Well internally we're... we  
3 want to see if people are for example being rejected  
4 frequently that could indicate two things; not a good  
5 match or perhaps not an appropriate response by the  
6 provider. We, we... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

8 STEVEN BANKS: ...and then again, it's very  
9 new, talking about a couple hundred people who have...  
10 who are in for very short periods of time but it's  
11 something that internally we're going to be working  
12 with, we created this city coordinating, you know  
13 effort among the agencies to be... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

15 STEVEN BANKS: ...very focused... [cross-  
16 talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: How often is that  
18 meeting?

19 STEVEN BANKS: We have... I think the last  
20 task force meeting was in March of the... of the  
21 provider task force... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

23 STEVEN BANKS: ...and the city coordinating  
24 effort is part of that task force structure, so the

25



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2 task force has continued to meet, it didn't end with  
3 the report...

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Are you doing... you...  
5 I'm... maybe it might be interesting to do like a  
6 random... a randomly selected, an anonymized case study  
7 the way that they do it at, at ChildStat or at  
8 COMSTAT where you're, you're doing... you know it's  
9 kind of a randomized quality control mechanism?

10 STEVEN BANKS: We're certainly, you know  
11 going to consider any suggestion you have at this  
12 hearing, we also are going to consider any suggestion  
13 that any providers have for us in that we get  
14 feedback from clients, but we want to... this to work...  
15 [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Because it's a small  
17 enough sample size at the moment, I mean you could...  
18 you could... you could really be able to and with, with  
19 only a few hundred cases so far within the CAPS  
20 system you could kind of... it's not so overwhelming a  
21 number that you, you know you, you wouldn't be able  
22 to see clear, you know trends in the smaller sample  
23 size.

24 STEVEN BANKS: We'll certainly, certainly  
25 take a look at what's feasible... [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

3 STEVEN BANKS: ...you know 110 percent of  
4 our focus now is getting units ready and getting  
5 people into them but we're going to keep looking at  
6 best ways to evaluate how we're doing so far.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I mean maybe... I mean  
8 it wouldn't be a bad investment if you wanted to hire  
9 an outside entity to do some type of... I mean if  
10 that's... I mean I... you know I'm not saying that we  
11 want to throw money down the drain, but quality  
12 assurance is very important as we're rolling out a  
13 new system... [cross-talk]

14 STEVEN BANKS: Agreed... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...if you don't have  
16 the... if you don't have the staff resources right now  
17 because they're dedicated to, to bringing the units  
18 online, I mean if maybe there's a... maybe you can look  
19 at bringing in somebody from the outside?

20 STEVEN BANKS: I mean we have a lot of  
21 quality assurance analysis that we do in house and  
22 directing resources to this is certainly something we  
23 would consider.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I'm a little  
25 bit concerned about the documentation requirements, I

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2 know you spoke about this a little bit with the  
3 Speaker but in terms of as it relates to street  
4 homelessness, those that are street homeless, if  
5 somebody does not have... somebody's been street  
6 homeless and does not have documentation, doesn't...  
7 isn't able to show that they've been street homeless...  
8 you know how long they've been street homeless,  
9 doesn't have... is not enrolled in Medicaid, is not  
10 enrolled in any benefits you know is, is, you know  
11 very tenuously linked to any, any systems how, how  
12 do... how are we working to ensure that, that they have  
13 access to, to supportive housing?

14 STEVEN BANKS: Well they are linked to a  
15 system, they're linked to the homestead system, they  
16 have a case... they have some contacts regularly with  
17 some of the best staff in the city that are out 24/7  
18 building trust so I, I, I just want to make sure that  
19 nobody... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Because they don't  
21 have like a... you know do they need a birth  
22 certificate, do they... [cross-talk]

23 STEVEN BANKS: We have the ability and we  
24 created special lanes for people to get information  
25 from HRA, remember the part of the integration, the

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2 agencies is creating a lot more efficiencies in that  
3 regard. One of the issues during the 90-day review  
4 that was presented by the outreach teams.. [cross-  
5 talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

7 STEVEN BANKS: ...was exactly the kind of  
8 challenges that you're describing and we created ways  
9 in which outreach teams could, could gather documents  
10 but of course we're accepting the, you know the  
11 representation of the outreach teams on length of  
12 stay that's someone's homeless because they're in the  
13 best position to observe that and we have a great  
14 deal of trust and experience in working with them and  
15 so if you're... and I... and I want to acknowledge the  
16 concern you're raising and just put it out there if  
17 you're concerned that on a technicality that we might  
18 say well that persons not homeless long enough I  
19 think that the work with the providers is what  
20 ensures that that... it doesn't become a bar. We also  
21 have an automatic upload of documents for all of our  
22 systems that created... that avoided the problem in the  
23 past of having to, you know find multiple documents,  
24 I think we testified earlier about expanding the, the  
25 people who can do the evaluations so all of these are

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2 recommendations that came out of the task force from  
3 clients, from providers and from advocates about how  
4 to address documentation issues and how to address  
5 some of the multi-agency interaction challenges that  
6 people had in the past and that's why we created this  
7 CAPS system.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm going to jump  
9 around a little bit if that's okay and I'm, I'm going  
10 to be sensitive to your time, you've been here for  
11 three hours so, just, just a few more questions here.  
12 the open-ended RFPs are out for all of the supportive  
13 housing units except for the 90 units for youth, when  
14 will the RFPs for the 90 units for youth be  
15 available?

16 STEVEN BANKS: Very shortly, it is  
17 complete it's just going through our procurement  
18 process before it is actually released. I think we  
19 got 99 percent of the units are subject to open ended  
20 RFPs and those last 90 units will, will complete the  
21 open-ended RFP process.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I don't know if you  
23 did this before for the Speaker but of the 15,000  
24 units do you have a breakdown of how many are going  
25 to be set aside for individuals with mental illness,

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2 substance abuse disorder, youth aging out of foster  
3 care, veterans, those four district populations?

4 STEVEN BANKS: That's actually... that's  
5 actually the significant change that we made instead  
6 of having particularized categories... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

8 STEVEN BANKS: ...that we took, you know  
9 high, medium and, and so low in terms of different  
10 vulnerability factors but then within the seven,  
11 seven... 7,500 scattered sites and 7,500 congregates  
12 we've made some projections as to allocations...  
13 [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay... [cross-talk]

15 STEVEN BANKS: ...and I think the Speaker  
16 referred to single adults about shortly over 50, 50...  
17 5,000 that's the allocation within congregate and  
18 about 5,500 is the allocation... actually if I add them  
19 up, thank you... it's good to have a terrific colleague  
20 who's done all the math for me. Single adults with  
21 SMI slash SUD, 10,673; adults, families where the  
22 head of household has SMI or SUD, 1,004; families  
23 with children with the head of the household SMI or  
24 SUD, 2,087; young adults, 1,236.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So, I think  
3 that that is at the moment all of... all of the  
4 questions that I have. I think that there needs to  
5 be... I mean we've had... this is our third hearing on  
6 supportive housing since I've been Chair, I think we  
7 probably should be doing one every year or every 18  
8 months so that we are clear where things are. I think  
9 the legislation that we're introducing that we're  
10 hearing today could give us some ongoing clarity in  
11 terms of the information. My, my long-term concern  
12 remains that we are going to be falling behind on our  
13 goals particularly with the scatter site and, and  
14 that we're not going to be able to catch up and, and  
15 so that's a... that's a... I think a really very real  
16 concern, I've heard this from... you know I've heard  
17 frankly from providers that they're concerned with  
18 the next round of RFP goes out that people aren't  
19 going to bid on it because it's so difficult, so  
20 difficult to, to work finding brokers and landlords  
21 willing to take them and so if that means changing  
22 the rates or skewing the entire plan towards  
23 congregate and investing heavily but again that  
24 means... that means it's, it's not going to be  
25 painless, it means putting real dollars in the budget

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2 to more aggressively pursue opportunities and site  
3 acquisitions and it might in some instances mean that  
4 the cost of construction is going to be a little bit  
5 higher and... but again I'm not... I mean, you know we,  
6 we approve a budget mod because the money's already  
7 spent, we don't really have much of an option to not  
8 approve a budget mod but it is extremely frustrating  
9 on our end, extremely frustrating on our end when on  
10 the one hand, you know we're getting some mixed  
11 messages about, you know pursuing opportunities where  
12 they exist, you know for supportive housing that  
13 could be turn key and, and then on the other hand  
14 saying that... you know because it's too expensive but  
15 then on the other hand being told that, that we need  
16 to spend more... you know more money on, on temporary  
17 shelter which nobody wants to do and most of all the  
18 people that are living in temporary shelter do not  
19 want to live in temporary shelter and if it's because  
20 there's not enough supportive housing units out there  
21 for them we need to change that reality and we are  
22 the only ones that have the opportunity to do that  
23 because we are the city government and we determine  
24 what our priorities are and we have an 88 billion  
25 dollar budget annually to work with but it really



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2 depends on our priorities. So, I would... you know I  
3 would greatly encourage, you know a, a continued and  
4 more formalized relationship between the housing plan  
5 and the homeless plan, I mean I, I, I appreciate that  
6 there's coordination and I appreciate that, that  
7 these two agencies work together but it is  
8 disappointing that in the housing plan document that  
9 is the thing that goes on, on into posterity about  
10 the objectives of this administration when it comes  
11 to the housing plan the word homelessness isn't even  
12 mentioned and it's, it just... it's... and you know it  
13 was an omission I guess but... and I'm not saying... I  
14 don't know who wrote it, I don't think anyone at this  
15 table wrote it but, but it's, it... I... there's an  
16 opportunity, we, we have three years left, I have  
17 three years left, you all have three years left it's  
18 an opportunity to amend that and to... and to set out  
19 on a course where there's a greater level of  
20 coordination and, and everybody's stepping up and  
21 saying we're going to do everything we can, that  
22 NYCHAs stepping up and saying we're going to do  
23 everything we can, that HPDs stepping up and saying  
24 we're going to do... the councils stepping up and  
25 saying we're going to do everything we can, I'm

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2 talking to my colleagues and talking about, you know  
3 increasing the level of set aside and saying we're  
4 not going to negotiate this, why would... why are we  
5 negotiating this, I don't want to negotiate it,  
6 that's silly, it's... and it's, it's, it's  
7 counterproductive. So, I want to... like to leave you  
8 with that but... and I do appreciate all the work  
9 obviously that you're doing but I'm... you know I  
10 remain very concerned and so we're going to have to  
11 probably have another hearing in a years' time just  
12 to, to check in on this.

13 STEVEN BANKS: Just as you're closing the  
14 record I want to... obviously our testimony acknowledge  
15 both the progress and the challenges that we have but  
16 I also want to say that the RFP is open ended so  
17 there won't be another one coming out and I'm pleased  
18 to tell you that very shortly we're going to have  
19 another award... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

21 STEVEN BANKS: ...for scattered site, it's  
22 just about to complete procurement so I think that  
23 will be hopeful but again I want to emphasize that  
24 our testimony was about progress and challenges...  
25 [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

3 STEVEN BANKS: ...lastly on the legislation  
4 look forward to staff to staff discussions, some of  
5 the things that are... that are delineated in the  
6 legislation may no longer match with the way that  
7 we've changed the system in terms of CAPS and so  
8 forth so we want to have a robust conversation with  
9 you about how to get to something that actually  
10 matches with what we're... what the system looks like  
11 but I understand what the intent is and we want to  
12 try to be helpful with you.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, it sounds good.  
14 Great, thank you all.

15 STEVEN BANKS: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We're going to take a  
17 three-minute break and we'll have the first panel  
18 come up to testify; Laura Mascuch, Supportive Housing  
19 Net Work of New York; Kristen Miller from CSH and  
20 Carol Corden from New Destiny Housing.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay everybody,  
22 welcome back so, because we have about 20 people  
23 signed up to testify we're going to keep testimony to  
24 three minutes give or take, if you need, you know an  
25 extra ten, 15 seconds it's okay but just try to keep

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2 it roughly in that ballpark but we're looking forward  
3 to hearing, you know what the experiences on the  
4 ground and so I'm looking forward to hearing from,  
5 from this panel and, and, and the following panels as  
6 well so, whoever wants to begin.

7 LAURA MASCUCH: Am I on... there we go.  
8 Good afternoon. So, I'd like to thank Council Member  
9 Levin the General Welfare Committee for this hearing  
10 today and their ongoing recognition of the importance  
11 of supportive housing in the homeless continuum. My  
12 name is Laura Mascuch, I'm the Executive Director of  
13 the Supportive Housing Network of New York, I also  
14 serve as the Co-chair of the New York City Coalition  
15 on the Continuum of Care, the planning body that  
16 serves to allocate HUD funding to the city for  
17 homeless and supportive housing services. As you know  
18 supportive housing is the key element in addressing  
19 homelessness, providing permanent housing plus  
20 services to the most vulnerable, those individuals  
21 with long histories of homelessness who cope with one  
22 or more disabling conditions. If you are concerned  
23 about the growing shelter census, supportive housing  
24 will stem that tide. Providing a permanent housing  
25 option for a chronically homeless individual will

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2 open up a shelter bed that other people can cycle  
3 through many times. At the end of 2015, without  
4 prospects for a New York/New York IV Agreement, Mayor  
5 de Blasio announced the City's commitment to create  
6 15,000 units of supportive housing over the next  
7 fifteen years, Governor Cuomo then followed with his  
8 own initiative, the Empire State Supportive Housing  
9 initiative to create 20,000 units over 15. In order  
10 to generate recommendations, the Mayor convened a  
11 supportive housing task force that you've heard about  
12 today that was staffed by more than two dozen  
13 industry experts and generated 23 recommendations.  
14 The task force recommendations reflected significant  
15 improvements to the supportive housing model,  
16 adequate service rates, separate rental assistance  
17 funding, a two percent escalator serving the entire  
18 family not just head of household but the children,  
19 improved models for youth which were no longer time  
20 limited and adding unserved populations; runaway and  
21 homeless youth and young families. Other than the  
22 scarce city of affordability buildable land, the  
23 primary impediment to developing single site  
24 supportive housing is community opposition. We very  
25 much hope that the council can provide leadership on

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2 this issue by championing supportive housing as a  
3 body and providing information about supportive  
4 housing to their communities and creating  
5 collaborative solutions, solutions-oriented  
6 environments. The scatter site model is facing  
7 tougher odds, there is a dearth of appropriate  
8 affordable apartments, rapid gentrification, 14,000  
9 existing scattered site apartments that are seeing  
10 loss of long term leases and the competition of  
11 numerous other subsidy programs. For all of these  
12 reasons my assessment of the current market is it is  
13 unlikely to absorb another 500 units per year for the  
14 duration of the program. We appreciate the council's  
15 abiding interest in addressing homelessness in New  
16 York City and its longstanding support. We look to  
17 the Council's leadership to assist the non-profit  
18 community find and site supportive housing. Thank you  
19 for this opportunity to testify.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Laura. I  
21 just want to actually ask before I move on to the  
22 other testimony, so then what... if, if the... this is  
23 kind of getting at what the Commissioner and I... the  
24 Commissioners and I were... [cross-talk0

25 LAURA MASCUCH: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...just talking about  
3 so if the overall housing market is unable to absorb  
4 500 units annually and we continue to fall further  
5 and further behind our, our, our goals what do you  
6 think or what does SHNNY think is an appropriate  
7 response to that or what... is it... is it increasing the  
8 rates, the rental rates, is it, you know coupling it  
9 with other incentive programs... [cross-talk]

10 LAURA MASCUCH: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...is it looking at new  
12 incentives like they do for CITYFEPS and things like  
13 that around, you know kind of like this issue of  
14 paying up front or whatever bonuses, sign up bonuses  
15 or is it adjusting the, the balance between  
16 congregate and scatter?

17 LAURA MASCUCH: Uh-huh, so I think it's a  
18 combination of all of those things that you have  
19 mentioned, and I think the city is... you know is going  
20 to be open to considering a, a number of different  
21 avenues to pursue. I think the program is still early  
22 but if we could look at current rates and in...  
23 potential incentives that might let us be a little  
24 bit more competitive but we are operating in an  
25 incredibly tight market, we have a lot of concern

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2 about the existing supportive housing that's in the  
3 scattered site model and so ultimately maybe the  
4 decision will be made to, to change the proportion of  
5 congregate and scattered site but I think we want to  
6 give this a fair chance because, you know as we have  
7 said, it's been said previously it's housing that's  
8 immediately available which is terrific.. [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

10 LAURA MASCUCH: ...as opposed to waiting  
11 the two to three years for development.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh. Are you  
13 seeing.. are you concerned about this current.. this  
14 next RFP going out and not.. and, and, and providers  
15 not actually bidding on it because of the concern  
16 about not, not being able to get all those units  
17 online?

18 LAURA MASCUCH: Yeah, so I think there is  
19 some interest and it seems like some, some nonprofits  
20 are bidding on it, I'm not sure of the extent of the  
21 interest so we'll see, it's an open RFP which is good  
22 because then people can come in at various times and  
23 decide to apply so it's not like we have a close of  
24 the RFP and then and then all the awards are  
25 announced and we could say oh my gosh we only had a



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2 certain amount of units so I think that as groups get  
3 more familiar they'll be, you know weighing the  
4 decision as to whether to apply or not.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is there a concern  
6 that if the program is not necessarily funded as  
7 robustly as might be necessary that, that maybe some  
8 providers that are... that don't have as much of a  
9 track record might, might, might be more interested  
10 than the ones that are... you know that are... that have...  
11 that know how... that know how to provide, you know  
12 long term quality service?

13 LAURA MASCUCH: Uh-huh, sure potentially  
14 but I think through the city's RFP and vetting  
15 process that they would probably figure that out and  
16 take it into consideration because the providers in  
17 this community are fairly well known...

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh, uh-huh and  
19 there's a... and it's a... kind of finite... another words  
20 it's not... there aren't new... you know within homeless  
21 shelter provision, you know you do see kind of new  
22 faces that are... you're like who are... who's this  
23 group... [cross-talk]

24 LAURA MASCUCH: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Where do they come  
3 from, how'd they get a 300-million-dollar contract,  
4 so I don't... you know I'm... it... but, but within the  
5 supportive housing community it's, it's different?

6 LAURA MASCUCH: I, I feel... I feel like  
7 it's a more finite universe in the supportive housing  
8 community, it's not to say that other homeless  
9 service providers or substance abuse providers would  
10 not... may be interested in the scattered site model  
11 and apply but again I think the city would vet them  
12 for prior experience.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, thank you.

14 LAURA MASCUCH: Uh-huh.

15 KRISTIN MILLER: Okay, good afternoon.  
16 Thank you for letting me testify today. I am Kristin  
17 Miller, Director of the Metro Team for CSH,  
18 Cooperation for Supportive Housing. We are a New York  
19 based nonprofit that finances, provides expertise and  
20 advocates for supportive housing. As everyone in this  
21 room is aware developers scale considerable hurdles  
22 to build supportive housing for people facing  
23 homelessness in New York City, they must locate  
24 available and affordable properties, cobble together  
25 financing from the city, state and a myriad of other

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2 sources, woe the community and line up special  
3 services needed by residents. Given these  
4 considerable challenges it is imperative for each  
5 member of this council to become a champion of  
6 supportive housing in your districts and  
7 neighborhoods helping us to educate our fellow New  
8 Yorkers on the value that quality supportive housing  
9 provides to everyone who lives, works and visits this  
10 city. It is not easy being a proponent, there are a  
11 great number of myths surrounding affordable  
12 supportive housing and nimbyism is a strong current  
13 to swim against, but the evidence is on our side, it  
14 has been proven time and again that the only way to  
15 truly address the needs of homeless individuals and  
16 families is the strategic efforts to create more  
17 affordable supportive housing throughout the whole  
18 city. And given the labyrinth developers must  
19 navigate supportive housing creation does not always  
20 happen as quickly as we would like it to unfold,  
21 we've been hearing a lot today about it but I wanted  
22 to note on thing that we were hearing earlier that a  
23 15 year plan is not acceptable but I would argue  
24 that... strongly that we do need a long term initiative  
25 in order to put investors at ease with the risk of

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2 developing supportive housing, they are putting  
3 finances into these deals and they need to know that  
4 there's a long term commitment to make it happen.  
5 Mayor De Blasio has embarked... earmarked additional  
6 and substantial resources to create supportive  
7 housing because he understands the challenges and the  
8 solution, timing is becoming more of a consideration  
9 as new avenues for the development of supportive  
10 housing open up. As New York III has wound down we  
11 are seeing greater and greater interest in accessing  
12 the additional resources. For example, CSH is a  
13 funder, acquisition funder for supportive housing, we  
14 help developers and nonprofit providers get the money  
15 they need to purchase these properties. Between the  
16 years of 2012 and '15 as New York III was at it's  
17 height we closed an average of 13 loans, loans per  
18 year for an average of 17.7 million dollars then as  
19 the initiative was winding down in 2016 we had a  
20 dramatic decrease and only closed four loans for an  
21 average of 100 and... 11.8 million but since the New  
22 York IV initiative, New York City 15/15 was agreed  
23 upon we once again saw a great uptick and closed ten  
24 loans total of an average 21.6 million dollars in  
25 2017. So, we think that... well there's a delay as been

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2 talked about today in seeing units open the  
3 development process takes two to five years and so  
4 you have to look back and know that in 2018 and 2019  
5 the numbers of units that will be opening is going to  
6 surge given the amount of lending that we're doing  
7 now. The only other thing I wanted to add is that I'm  
8 a CAPS Co-chair of the Steering Committee, so I've  
9 been working actually for three years with a large  
10 number of stakeholders in New York City to develop  
11 the CAP system in New York and as part of a national  
12 team I can say that New York City has by far the most  
13 sophisticated system developing for determining who  
14 needs which housing and assessing vulnerability. So,  
15 I just want to kind of give New York kudos in this  
16 huge collaborative process that's been involved and  
17 the outcomes I think are, are... if I may, I'm a bit  
18 biased but far better than, than other places around  
19 the country. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Quick  
21 question on, on your testimony, a congregate project  
22 deal, what's the breakdown... so, this... the  
23 Commissioner said around... or the Deputy Commissioner  
24 said around 450,000 dollars per unit, what's the

25

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2 breakdown of the sources of that funding roughly, do  
3 you know off the top of your head?

4 KRISTIN MILLER: It varies greatly..  
5 [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.. [cross-talk]

7 KRISTIN MILLER: ...the Chelsea has been  
8 brought up a number of times, the Chelsea has 17  
9 different funding sources.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

11 KRISTIN MILLER: So, this is a  
12 complicated process, it's federal, it's state, it's  
13 city all different kinds of funding.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

15 KRISTIN MILLER: A major capital source  
16 is low income housing tax credits.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, which have  
18 been... which have been diminished in value over... since  
19 the, the tax plan.

20 KRISTIN MILLER: Uh-huh, that's right.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay and how much..  
22 do... just percentage wise is there a consistency in  
23 terms of how much the city directs subsidy accounts  
24 for?

25

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2 KRISTIN MILLER: No, I think... I think  
3 part of what's complicated about all of this work is  
4 that no deal looks the same, each deal is unique as,  
5 as Miss Parks was talking about that it really varies  
6 on location, on acquisition price, on population  
7 served, if it's families, if it's singles, etcetera,  
8 etcetera.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Thank you,  
10 thank you so much. Oh, and one other thing just... I  
11 think... sorry, speaking about the, the, the Speakers  
12 point about the, the... a three-year plan or a five-  
13 year plan, I think he recognizes that it's important  
14 to have consistency in a... in a 15-year plan but wants  
15 to know what the three year and five-year plan is so  
16 that we're not lose... [cross-talk]

17 KRISTIN MILLER: Sure... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...so that we're not  
19 punting to future administrations and we're kind of  
20 taking... as a measure of accountability for what we're  
21 doing, when we're doing and trying to see some, some,  
22 some... [cross-talk]

23 KRISTIN MILLER: Yes, understandable we  
24 need to... [cross-talk]

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...verifiable out...

3 [cross-talk]

4 KRISTIN MILLER: ...be tracking it as we go  
5 along but really, I think the... what makes this New  
6 York City initiative so strong is that long term  
7 commitment from an investors perspective.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Understood, yep.

9 CAROL CORDEN: Okay, thank you for the  
10 opportunity to testify today at this oversight  
11 hearing. My name is Carol Cordon Corden and I am the  
12 Executive Director of New Destiny Housing, a 23-year  
13 old not-for-profit committed to ending the cycle of  
14 domestic violence and homelessness by connecting  
15 families to safe, permanent housing and services. We  
16 currently operate service enriched affordable housing  
17 in the Bronx and Brooklyn for homeless domestic  
18 violence survivors. My testimony today is about who  
19 is not served by New York City 15/15 and comments  
20 from the perspective of an organization whose mission  
21 is to help victims of domestic violence achieve long  
22 term safety and stability. Our image of homelessness  
23 tends to be a homeless man on the street, but it  
24 could as easily be a young mother fleeing from  
25 domestic violence with her children one is simply



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2 more visible than the other. Victims of domestic  
3 violence are a significant subset of the families who  
4 make up almost 70 percent of residents using New York  
5 City shelters. The 2017 HUD Point and Count... Point in  
6 Time Count for New York City revealed that victims of  
7 domestic violence were the third largest homeless sub  
8 population after individuals with mental illness and  
9 substance abuse. There are also in the city's second  
10 largest shelter system and that shelter system is...  
11 has a state mandated length of stay of 180 days, most  
12 leave at... the system still suffering from the trauma  
13 of domestic violence and homelessness and facing  
14 other life challenges which make housing stability  
15 precarious. Homeless domestic violence survivors are  
16 another word strong candidate for supportive housing,  
17 yet few will be served by New York City 15/15 because  
18 they must meet two requirements to qualify. The first  
19 is chronic homelessness and the second is medical  
20 disability. Because of the New York State mandated  
21 180 maximum stay most survivors coming from the HRA  
22 specialized domestic violence shelter system will not  
23 meet the federal definition of chronic homelessness.  
24 In fact, according again to New York City's 2017 Hud  
25 Point in Time Count fewer than ten percent of all

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2 homeless families currently sheltered can meet that  
3 standard. The second eligibility requirement is  
4 medical disability as determined by an interview  
5 using the 2010 e-form administered by a medical  
6 professional or a, a clinical masters with social  
7 work, this label is a problem for families in general  
8 and for households headed by domestic violence  
9 victims in particular. Low income homeless families  
10 many headed by a single parent are vulnerable to  
11 charges of neglect and abuse and for domestic  
12 violence survivors the stakes are even higher. There  
13 are two ways to address this situation, one is by  
14 making the eligibility criteria more appropriate for  
15 homeless families and the other is by creating new  
16 models to serve homeless families. New York City  
17 15/15 has already created a priority for youth, a  
18 homeless sub population which is not chronically  
19 homeless by using a more flexible screening process  
20 similar accommodations could be made for vulnerable  
21 homeless families including those headed by domestic  
22 violence. A second approach is to develop and fund  
23 another model for homeless families, that model could  
24 be service enriched housing, a non-medical model with  
25 voluntary services provided on site and through

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2 referrals. This approach has been successful in  
3 helping families stay together, remain stable and  
4 violence free. Right now, New York City 15/15 will  
5 only address a small number of the users of homeless  
6 shelters, some might argue that it does address the  
7 most vulnerable and needy but how do we know this,  
8 what are the data that support this contention? For  
9 this reason, New York New Destiny supports Intro 147,  
10 we need to document who is and who is not being  
11 served by supportive housing. Who can say that a  
12 five-year-old living with a depressed mother fleeing  
13 domestic violence in a hotel close to JFK airport is  
14 not as vulnerable and in need of support services as  
15 a 67-year-old Vietnam veteran on the subway platform.  
16 This shouldn't be an either-or issue both need and  
17 can benefit from supportive housing. I thank the  
18 council on behalf of New Destiny for the opportunity  
19 to speak today.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
21 Miss Corden and I think that this is something that  
22 we collectively need to be taking a look at and we  
23 should not... just because the plan is, is underway we  
24 should... we shouldn't shy away from amending it or  
25 adjusting it and, and in... and in... as, as the needs

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2 become more apparent so I, I thank you very much...

3 [cross-talk]

4 CAROL CORDEN: And I, I, I... [cross-talk]

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...for this testimony

6 and your work... [cross-talk]

7 CAROL CORDEN: ...think they, they have

8 been adjusting the plan and so... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay... [cross-talk]

10 CAROL CORDEN: ...we would look for more  
11 flexibility and hope that more families can in fact  
12 be, be helped.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great, I'll continue  
14 to, to, to advocate for that and work with, with your  
15 colleagues here at this table to try to make that a  
16 reality. Great, thank you. Thank you so much to this  
17 panel. The next panel; Sandra Gresl from Mobilization  
18 for Justice; Josh Goldfein from Legal Aid Society and  
19 Gisselle Routhier from Coalition for the Homeless and  
20 Jamie Powlovich from Coalition for Homeless Youth.  
21 Powlovich, sorry Jamie. Is Jamie still here, alright.  
22 Jamie... We'll call Jeff Nemetsky from Brooklyn  
23 Community HHS and Services... HSS and Services. And  
24 whoever wants to begin.

25

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2                   GISSELLE ROUTHIER: Good afternoon, thank  
3 you for the opportunity to testify today. We've  
4 submitted joint testimony with Legal Aid and we will  
5 be discussing that more briefly in our verbal  
6 comments. I want to mention you're all aware that New  
7 York City remains in the midst of the homelessness  
8 crisis since the great depression. This was something  
9 important that Commissioner Banks brought up  
10 particular that the shelter census has been  
11 stabilized. There's an important distinction I think  
12 is, is really critical here that particularly for  
13 families the shelter census has stabilized albeit at  
14 record levels but for single adults the shelter  
15 census continues to go up week by week, month by  
16 month. In February of 2018 over 16,750 homeless  
17 single adults slept in shelters or safe havens every  
18 single night and just two months before that in  
19 December 2017 was the first time ever that we've even  
20 surpassed 16,000 so at this rate we're likely to go  
21 over 17,000 homeless single adults in the next few  
22 months so that's a real concern and something that's  
23 very critical for this particular topic. And the  
24 number of homeless single adults is ten percent  
25 higher than it was last year and 140 percent higher

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2 than it was a decade ago so we're facing a real  
3 crisis for single adults in New York City. So, for  
4 that reason we really want to stress the urgency that  
5 units be brought online as quickly as possible given  
6 the scale of the crisis particularly for single  
7 adults and the severity of needs and we want to thank  
8 Speaker Johnson for emphasizing that urgency  
9 particularly over the next few years to really  
10 address this crisis but we also want to mention as  
11 part of this overall topic the need to look at the  
12 processes for applying for and being accepted to  
13 supportive housing. So, as the need has increased,  
14 and units have become scarcer we've encountered many  
15 issues relating to application and eligibility and  
16 placement processes for supportive housing. In  
17 addition, DSS has implemented new policies in  
18 response to HUD coordinated entry mandate that posed  
19 serious concerns regarding the allocation of  
20 supportive housing units to those in need. For  
21 example, homeless applicants for supportive housing  
22 are now assigned a vulnerability score as was  
23 discussed based in part on the number of system  
24 contacts they have had posing in our view accuracy  
25 problems for extremely vulnerable homeless New

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2 Yorkers who are disengaged from government agencies  
3 so we, we thank that the Speaker and yourself for  
4 bringing up that issue and I want to also mention  
5 that it's not only one system contact that will... that  
6 will make you a high vulnerability you have to have  
7 three system contacts to make... to categorize somebody  
8 as a high vulnerability so that's a concern in terms  
9 of reaching folks who have not engaged with various  
10 systems. And in particular the lack of an official or  
11 impartial appeals process regarding eligibility and  
12 vulnerability determinations is a concern for us  
13 particularly as new policies are being rolled out  
14 this year and we're thinking about the implementation  
15 of CAPS etcetera to think about how, you know  
16 advocates or clients themselves can appeal a decision  
17 that they think is potentially not accurate and we  
18 really think that's important to think about moving  
19 forward sooner rather than later and I'll, I'll  
20 quickly finish up. And we've included more about the  
21 concerns we're seeing in our testimony, our written  
22 testimony and more details about that. Just with  
23 respect to Intro 147, we support the goals of this  
24 bill and we believe it would create an important  
25 mechanism for the public and advocates to understand

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2 the complicated and often opaque processes, processes  
3 of applying for and being accepted to supportive  
4 housing. Additionally, we think it could provide  
5 insights into more systemic problems that need  
6 attention by DSS and we would appreciate an  
7 opportunity to meet with the council staff to propose  
8 some language changes to make sure that that's most  
9 effective. Thank you.

10 JOSH GOLDFEIN: Thank you Mr. Chair, I'm  
11 Josh Goldfein from the Legal Aid Society just as a, a  
12 transition between us and our client, Coalition for  
13 the Homeless and I know that Coalition for Homeless  
14 Youth couldn't stay but I know that one of their  
15 major concerns is that much of the information that  
16 is in the homeless... runaway and homeless youth  
17 shelter system cannot be shared in CAPS in the way  
18 that the Commissioner testified automatically  
19 uploaded into the system because there are different  
20 confidentiality rules there and that's... so that's  
21 another... along with the people who I think you were  
22 alluded to who don't have necessarily contacts with  
23 the various agencies that will populate those forms  
24 that's another group who's information may not be  
25 apparent in the system because it can't be shared



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2 directly in the way that the Commissioner referred  
3 to. I just also want to highlight some issues on  
4 behalf of tenants, supportive housing tenants. You  
5 talked about in, in, in talking to Commissioner Banks  
6 in particular about the people coming in and, and,  
7 and you went through some of the reasons that people  
8 are rejected for supportive housing, on the flip side  
9 of that we see people who are... who have disabilities  
10 who are facing eviction as a result of their  
11 disabilities because they're not getting the services  
12 that they need and so they can end up in, in a  
13 eviction proceeding when the ADA or, or the rules for  
14 the program would suggest that the, the provider  
15 should be offering additional services to them and  
16 not using the housing court as a solution to that  
17 problem that they're having with the client. We also  
18 see people getting evicted because of the market,  
19 people who are already in place but now the... in a  
20 scatter site kind of placement but the landlord now  
21 believes that the market has risen since they rented  
22 those units to the supportive housing provider and  
23 they also believe that they have a way to get out of  
24 rent regulation because the units have been rented  
25 for a non profit for a time putting aside whether

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2 they're right about that we see lots of cases being  
3 brought in housing court naming only the provider as  
4 the... as the... as the respondent and not the tenant,  
5 the person who actually lives in the apartment and  
6 sometimes the supportive housing tenant has no idea  
7 even that they've been sued so for these reasons we  
8 would advocate along with HPD I think agrees that the  
9 tenant should always have a lease in their name and  
10 we also have suggested an additional bill that you  
11 might consider that would make it clear to the  
12 tenants what their rights are and, and not just that  
13 they have rights but information particular to their  
14 apartment. You heard for instance that the  
15 Christopher has I think 17 different funding sources  
16 it's very difficult for the advocates let alone the  
17 tenants to figure out which rules apply to which  
18 unit, what programs am I governed by, which New  
19 York/New York agreement am I in that kind of  
20 information should be in the hands of the tenant and  
21 their advocates that they can sort out what, what  
22 rights the tenant has and finally we'll just say that  
23 as... you know we... you also heard from the last panel  
24 that the market may make it impossible to meet the  
25 targets that have been announced at least in the

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2 first round we also have concern for the rent  
3 regulated tenants in the city of New York that a... the  
4 response... in, in the... in the effort to create enough  
5 scatter sites supportive housing units that we do not  
6 end up with a situation where landlords are  
7 incentivized to evict current rent regulated tenants  
8 and take those units, try to get those units out of  
9 rent regulation by making them available as  
10 supportive housing units so that's something that we  
11 also need to exercise some caution about and, and  
12 some vigilance. Thank you.

13 SANDRA GRESL: Thank you, Chair Levin and  
14 the committee... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: You have to... red  
16 light means... yeah.

17 SANDRA GRESL: Thank you. Thank you,  
18 Chair Levin and the Committee, for the opportunity to  
19 testify before you today. My name is Sandra Gresl and  
20 I'm a Senior Staff Attorney in the Mental Health Law  
21 Project at Mobilization for Justice. While every  
22 project at MFJ serves people with mental illness  
23 MFJ's mental health law projects specifically  
24 addresses the civil legal needs of people with mental  
25 illness across the five boroughs of New York City

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2 hence we witness daily the power of supportive  
3 housing to positively transform and stabilize the  
4 lives of our clients. My full statement on behalf of  
5 MFJ can be found in my written testimony but there  
6 are just a few points that I wanted to emphasize  
7 today. Firstly, MFJ supports Intro 147, MFJ shares  
8 the concerns raised by other advocacy organizations  
9 that those who have higher support needs have more  
10 often than not been screened out of housing versus  
11 being screened into housing for some of the reasons  
12 that Chairperson Levin referenced earlier; suicidal  
13 ideations, lack of insight into mental illness,  
14 recent substance use, etcetera. There is a real need  
15 for greater oversight of housing denials and a clear  
16 administrative procedure to appeal denial...  
17 application denial and housing placement denials.  
18 Intro 147 is one important step forward in that  
19 direction. In addition, MFJ believes that the city  
20 has a role to play in ensuring that tenants in  
21 supportive housing have the supports necessary to  
22 maintain their housing. MFJ regularly provides legal  
23 advice and representation in and out of housing court  
24 to tenants who face eviction from supportive housing  
25 for small amounts of rent arrears or lease violations

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2 that may be directly related to the very disability  
3 that makes them eligible for supportive housing in  
4 the first place. Because many of these programs are  
5 unlicensed by the New York State Office of Mental  
6 Health OMH does not monitor evictions from scattered  
7 site supportive housing units. Given this void city  
8 tracking is one way to put the city's commitment to  
9 housing first principles into practice. In  
10 Commissioner Bank's testimony earlier, he testified  
11 or referenced 78 percent of people placed in  
12 supportive housing maintain their housing after... or,  
13 or continue to be stably housed after two years, we  
14 are concerned about the remaining 22 percent; what  
15 happened to them, where have they gone and what  
16 supports, or measures could be put in place to  
17 prevent them from ending there. Lastly, supportive  
18 housing residence should be provided the information  
19 that they need to understand and assert their rights  
20 in supportive housing. As my colleague referenced  
21 many supportive housing programs operate through a  
22 patchwork of different funding streams that can be  
23 confusing for an advocate let alone a tenant to  
24 untangle. We often receive calls from residents who  
25 don't know who to contact for repairs, an adjustment

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2 of rent or other services. Both scattered site and  
3 congregate care supportive housing providers should  
4 be required to provide incoming tenants at minimum  
5 with written notice outlining the regulatory status  
6 of the apartment or applicable regulatory schemes,  
7 information about a tenant's right to habitable  
8 housing, how to request repairs, protections against  
9 harassment and discrimination including how to  
10 request a reasonable accommodation. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Jeff I'm  
12 going to get you a chair.

13 JEFF NEMETSKY: Oh, thank you. Great,  
14 thank you again. Good afternoon, my name is Jeff  
15 Nemetsky and I'm the Executive Director for Brooklyn  
16 Community Housing and Services, a not for profit  
17 supportive housing agency headquarter in Fort Greene.  
18 I'd like to thank the General Welfare Committee and  
19 Chairman Levin for organizing this important hearing  
20 today and the members of the committee for being such  
21 robust advocates for supportive housing both now and  
22 throughout recent years. My organization, BCHS, was  
23 founded in 1978 by a group of local clergies from  
24 downtown Brooklyn and has committed to ending  
25 homelessness in Brooklyn. We now serve nearly 1,000

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2 formerly homeless and at-risk residents a year  
3 through a range of short term transitional and  
4 permanent supportive housing and provide a continuum  
5 of services. The creation of 1,500 units of new  
6 supportive housing through NYC 15/15 will be the  
7 solution for so many of those who are currently  
8 homeless and have a special need of one kind or  
9 another. At BCHS each year more than 95 percent of  
10 the formerly homeless individuals who come to us  
11 successfully maintain their housing with our agency  
12 or move on to even greater independence in the  
13 community, so we know that this approach works. From  
14 our perspective despite its challenges the New York  
15 City 15/15 effort has been a real step forward in the  
16 field, it has been guided by a series of  
17 recommendations from a task force of supportive  
18 housing experts and incorporates a vulnerability  
19 index to target housing to those most in need.  
20 Options for populations not previously targeted by  
21 supportive housing programs in the past have, have  
22 been created as well. Prioritizing the most  
23 vulnerable people for permanent supportive housing as  
24 Mr. Chairman you have highlighted today, is not only  
25 humane and compassionate but will also result in

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2 substantial savings of public dollars. Let me give  
3 you two brief examples of why I think this targeting  
4 is so important and holds so much promise. At BCHS  
5 we've been running two demonstration programs for a  
6 very high need formerly homeless populations, the  
7 first is individuals with significant histories of  
8 incarceration who are returning to the community and  
9 the second is formerly homeless seniors. Over time we  
10 had found that these two groups had more involved  
11 circumstances than the general supportive housing  
12 population, we're experiencing worst outcomes and  
13 we're utilizing expensive institutional care more  
14 often. We raise private money to provide enhanced  
15 services to both these groups and have found the  
16 resulting positive change to be significant and  
17 quantifiable. In... for example, our program for  
18 seniors has reduced the total number of days BCHS's  
19 older residents spend in the hospital each year by 90  
20 percent. In our other demonstration program, we have  
21 had similar success, 90 percent of the individuals  
22 with significant histories of incarceration  
23 successfully maintained their housing with us each  
24 year or move on to greater independence and don't get  
25 rearrested. In addition, we believe that the funding



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2 model for NYC 15/15 is a more realistic one than  
3 we've seen in past supportive housing agreements and  
4 will help agencies like ours provide better and more  
5 targeted services to a greater number of high need  
6 populations like the one I described. Like most  
7 who've spoken here today we believe the main  
8 challenge facing NYC 15/15 is the same one that faces  
9 most New Yorkers, the high cost of real estate but we  
10 are hopeful that over time with the thoughtful  
11 participation of our government partners and the  
12 council those challenges will be able to be addressed  
13 as well. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Jeff. So,  
15 I... my... I have a question that is kind of for  
16 everybody Gisselle in the beginning of your testimony  
17 you spoke about this rapid increase in the number of  
18 single adults within the shelter system which is, you  
19 know very alarming, you know looking at the graph..  
20 the coalition graph that, you know we see an  
21 acceleration, you know and just since the time.. the  
22 number has, has essentially doubled since the time  
23 that I've been in the council so this is a question  
24 for everybody, what do you think the driver, the main  
25 drivers are of that and what are some of the policy

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2 ideas that you would propose to, to, to reverse that,  
3 you know with, with, with money not being an object,  
4 I, I think... you know I think that with the situation  
5 like what we're seeing we should not be nickel and  
6 diming our approach here?

7           GISSELLE ROUTHIER: Absolutely, so  
8 there's an array of drivers, I mean some of the, the  
9 drivers that we've been made aware of more recently  
10 and we've seen this not only through data but also  
11 through our face to face monitoring out in the  
12 shelters is there's has been a significant increase  
13 in the number of people being paroled directly from  
14 state facilities, state prisons paroled directly to  
15 shelter in the absence of really proper discharge  
16 planning and housing plan for people that have been  
17 incarcerated so that's a huge concern and also  
18 something that involves advocacy at the state level  
19 as well. There is... we also have a pretty significant  
20 portion of single adults that have very high medical  
21 needs and mental health needs that are not being  
22 properly addressed through the current access to  
23 health care that they have and are thus sort of  
24 leading to the... leading to being languishing..  
25 languishing in shelter for longer so we see that. For

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2 us we continue to push for the solutions that we know  
3 work but aren't being implemented on a scale that we  
4 need particularly for this population and so that's  
5 the urgency of bringing on units for supportive  
6 housing but also as we've been talking about and as  
7 you mentioned as well during the course of this  
8 hearing is a much greater percentage of the Housing  
9 New York units being directed to homeless individuals  
10 and families in shelters so both of those populations  
11 and those units really could be effective at  
12 addressing some individuals who don't need the full...  
13 you know full array of services provided by  
14 supportive housing but the supportive housing is  
15 going to be a big... a big piece of this.

16 JOSH GOLDFEIN: I would... I, I would just  
17 add to that that we see a population that is, is  
18 moving between three systems, the, the jails and  
19 prisons, the mental health system and the shelter  
20 system and the solution for that population is  
21 supportive housing. We also see that the city has as  
22 you've alluded to the ability to raise the targets  
23 for the housing that it controls whether it's HPD or  
24 the housing authority and could be using a more  
25 aggressive approach even than they already are but

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2 that... because the two plans are, are integrated we  
3 have the, the housing side of city hall that does not  
4 see this as its problem to solve and that could also  
5 address this not to let the governor off the hook but  
6 that's another hearing.

7 JEFF NEMETSKY: Well I would agree  
8 certainly with my colleagues and I think, you know  
9 obviously a lot of the things that we've heard here  
10 today the, the affordability crisis and the lack of  
11 affordable housing and the lack of integration  
12 between service systems at times certainly are big  
13 drivers of all of those things. I think we're all in  
14 agreement that the creation of more supportive  
15 housing, permanent supportive housing and supportive  
16 housing that is developed with services that are  
17 appropriate to the different needs of different  
18 populations some of which are going to be... need a  
19 light hand, some of which are going to need more  
20 intensive services but I think over time that's  
21 really the solution and I think really the effort is  
22 to address the challenges of getting those things off  
23 the ground and getting them off the ground swiftly  
24 which I think is, is what we would all hope for.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, I, I greatly  
3 appreciate this panel's insight, I... you know it's,  
4 it's a... it's a... it's... all of those... were those... all  
5 those conditions... I'm sorry, were all those  
6 conditions existing though prior to, you know 2008, I  
7 mean because we've... you know there was a... between  
8 2000 and 2008 when we were seeing, you know an  
9 affordability crisis, you know gentrification was  
10 happening in New York City during that time but, but  
11 you know just so rapidly increasing since 2008, I'm  
12 just... I... is there any... I mean those conditions that  
13 you spoke about just... all those, those didn't exist  
14 back then or... [cross-talk]

15 GISSELLE ROUTHIER: I think some, some  
16 important things have changed so we, we have actually  
17 seen an increase in the number and percentage of  
18 people being released directly from state prisons to...  
19 [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That's a... [cross-  
21 talk]

22 GISSELLE ROUTHIER: ...shelter so that is  
23 actually... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...major driver...  
25 [cross-talk]

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2 GISSELLE ROUTHIER: ...a, a driver that,  
3 that has increased over that time period. We've also  
4 seen changes with the provision of medical services  
5 in terms of Medicaid redesign and the access to  
6 health for single adults throughout New York City  
7 that could potentially be, be an issue with regards  
8 to access to proper services in order for people to  
9 avoid the cycles that we've been talking about so  
10 that's one thing to think about that has changed  
11 certainly in that time span. In addition to the  
12 overall conditions that we've seen, you know  
13 throughout the housing market over the many years  
14 that continue to sort of drive everybody in the  
15 shelter system, the source of, of, of how they are  
16 becoming homeless so the affordability crisis  
17 etcetera but... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: There are some...  
19 [cross-talk]

20 GISSELLE ROUTHIER: ...there are a few  
21 things that we're aware of that have changed but  
22 that's what we know.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay and those are  
24 state level issues, but we need to have some, some  
25 advocacy down here around... [cross-talk]

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2 GISSELLE ROUTHIER: Yeah and I mean the  
3 other thing that I think you, you know well is that  
4 with respect to koshering for shelters, I mean the  
5 state has pretty much capped their contribution to  
6 single adult shelter spending at a very minimal  
7 amount so at this point the city is picking up the  
8 tab for like 90 percent of single adult shelter  
9 system which is why you're, you're seeing the budget  
10 mod so late in the year and why this increase should  
11 be of particular concern to the city because they're  
12 spending the majority of the money to, to shelter  
13 these folks.. [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah. Well thank,  
15 thank you very much to this panel and you know we  
16 have a lot of work I think to do together moving  
17 forward so let's, let's continue to, to talk and do,  
18 do whatever we can to advance sensible policy  
19 solutions. Thank you. The next panel; Nicole  
20 Bramstedt from Urban Pathways; Brooke Taylor, Urban  
21 Justice Center and Rosa Jaffe from Urban Justice  
22 Center as well. We can call... sorry, we'll call more  
23 people to this panel; Amy Blumsack from Neighbors  
24 Together, Amy, Amy? Alright, we'll leave it at that.  
25 Whoever wants to begin.

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2 BROOKE TAYLOR: Okay, my name is Brooke  
3 Taylor and I'm a licensed Social Worker at the Urban  
4 Justice Center's Mental Health Project which is  
5 focused on the needs of people with mental illness  
6 for more than 20 years. We have over a decade of  
7 experience in supportive housing applications. We  
8 thank the city council for convening this hearing on  
9 NYC 15/15 and Intro 147 which we strongly support. We  
10 would like to provide a couple of short examples that  
11 illustrate our client's struggles in obtaining  
12 supportive housing. Julie as a client who lacks any  
13 support outside of social service agencies, she's a  
14 foster care survivor struggling since aging out of  
15 the system to secure stable and safe housing for  
16 herself. Now 26 years of age, it is clear that she  
17 has endured a lifetime of trauma including being  
18 raped last year while trying to locate a warm place  
19 to sleep indoors for the night. She has multiple  
20 serious mental health diagnosis which has often  
21 resulted in her hospitalization, incarceration or  
22 placement into the shelter system. She has  
23 encountered significant roadblocks in obtaining  
24 interviews for supportive housing and has given up  
25 all hope. Joseph another client who is now in his



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1 185  
2 50's has spent most of his adulthood cycling in and  
3 out of psychiatric hospitals, homeless shelters and  
4 jails; he's been diagnosed with multiple serious  
5 mental health disorders. Despite the clear need he  
6 has never been able to obtain supportive housing,  
7 when applying for supportive housing from a state  
8 psychiatric hospital he was rejected at interviews  
9 because of his psychiatric symptoms and his  
10 difficulty getting to appointments. Joseph was  
11 finally placed on a wait list for housing at one  
12 agency but unfortunately the wait list seemed  
13 indefinite and he is now living in terrible  
14 conditions in an adult home. Joseph like thousands of  
15 other individuals living with serious mental illness  
16 deserves a safe and supportive place to live to help  
17 him with his psychiatric challenges rather than  
18 excluded him because of them. the city has been  
19 piloting changes to the application process for NYC  
20 15/15 and these changes may be extended to other sets  
21 of supportive housing in the future. Gathering data..  
22 gathering data on these changes and the process used  
23 for New York/New York I, II, III is necessary to  
24 determine whether a significant number of people who  
25 should be eligible are not obtaining supportive

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1 186  
2 housing and practice. Historically some of our  
3 clients who have the most severe psychiatric  
4 conditions and who are most in need of supportive  
5 housing have not obtained it because they have not  
6 been able to successfully navigate the application  
7 process. These clients rarely receive interviews,  
8 fare poorly in interviews and often do not have the  
9 necessary contacts and all of the treatment services  
10 they need. There lack of connection to treatment is  
11 all the more reason why supportive housing is  
12 desperately needed, the challenges caused by our  
13 client's disabilities should not prevent them from  
14 obtaining supportive housing. We all know many New  
15 Yorkers with serious mental illness are not connected  
16 to the system and are not receiving regular services.  
17 These New Yorkers are much less likely to be  
18 successful in the supportive housing application  
19 process being piloted since January for NYC 15/15. We  
20 need greater transparency and we need to know what is  
21 happening in the supportive housing application  
22 process in the aggregate. This information needs to  
23 be more available to promote more fairness in the  
24 system and end discriminatory practices. New York  
25 City's management of the supportive housing

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1 187  
2 application process historically has not been as fair  
3 or transparent as it could be. Certain populations  
4 such as LGBT youth on the streets have had greater  
5 difficulty in the supportive housing application  
6 process. Rather than having to wait years for  
7 anecdotes from advocates this bill will provide the  
8 council with the actual data from the application  
9 process, this data will allow the council to monitor  
10 whether the changes being made are effective. The  
11 information provided by Intro 147 needs to be  
12 available to allow for advocacy for those who would  
13 otherwise fall through the cracks. We strongly  
14 support this bill and I thank the council on behalf  
15 of the Urban Justice Center.

16 AMY BLUMSACK: Good afternoon, my name is  
17 Amy Blumsack, I'm the Director of Organizing and  
18 Policy at Neighbors Together. Neighbors Together is a  
19 soup kitchen and community-based organization located  
20 in Central Brooklyn, we serve over 10,000 unique  
21 individuals a year by providing hot meals,  
22 individualized stabilizing services around access to  
23 housing, benefits, legal clinics, psychiatric  
24 services and so on and then we also engage our  
25 members in policy and organizing work. I want to

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1 188  
2 first thank, thank you and the committee for the  
3 opportunity to testify on Intro 147. Neighbors  
4 Together is in support of this bill. So, I want to  
5 just first say that housing is the highest need of  
6 the members who come to Neighbors Together, we took a  
7 survey this year, in 2018 and over 40 percent of our  
8 members who come through our door report being  
9 homeless or unstably housed and in the past four  
10 fiscal years 50 percent of the people coming through  
11 our empowerment program came seeking housing  
12 services, 50 percent of whom were specifically  
13 seeking supportive housing services. The need for  
14 this bill exists, I just want to testify a little bit  
15 about some of the experiences of our supportive  
16 housing specialist. So, what, what we're finding  
17 which was mentioned in some of the previous testimony  
18 is that often times applicants are turned away for  
19 exhibiting symptoms of their mental health diagnosis  
20 which is like contradictory to the very purpose of  
21 supportive housing in and of itself, yeah and  
22 additionally at Neighbors Together we have dedicated  
23 staff who work with our members who come through the  
24 door from collecting documentation to submitting the  
25 2010e application and then there's a whole process

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1 189  
2 where our supportive housing specialist work with our  
3 members to do advocacy in terms of getting interviews  
4 and then help during interviews if needed and then  
5 support after the interview process until the time  
6 that that member is actually placed with their own  
7 key to their supportive housing unit and it's still  
8 very difficult and we have a concern that given this  
9 kind of like rejection of members or applicants to  
10 supportive housing who are showing symptoms of mental  
11 health diagnosis that for people who are only getting  
12 help submitting their application and receiving their  
13 eligibility determination that they're all going to  
14 fall through the cracks, it's a very complicated  
15 process and a lot of agencies who do the application  
16 submission don't actually do the advocacy necessary  
17 to see people placed in a unit in the end so that's a  
18 major concern that we wanted to highlight. And we  
19 want to just say that supportive housing as we all  
20 know is a vital resource, so many low income New  
21 Yorkers cycle through homelessness, through the  
22 shelter system, street homelessness, they live in  
23 three quarter houses, they are people who have been  
24 incarcerated, who struggle with mental health and  
25 sometimes need treatment for substance use disorder

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1 190  
2 or mental diagnosis and is a vicious cycle and  
3 supportive housing helps put an end to that cycle.  
4 So, we just want to say that we definitely support  
5 Intro 147 and that now is the time for this bill as  
6 these new units through NYC 15/15 start coming up. We  
7 think its more important than ever that there's  
8 greater transparency about who is getting access to  
9 these units and who isn't and why. Thank you.

10 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: Good afternoon, my  
11 name's Nicole Bramstedt and I'm the Director of  
12 Policy at Urban Pathways. Thank you to the General  
13 Welfare Committee for holding this hearing, for  
14 staying around and for the opportunity to testify  
15 particularly on the 15/15 initiative. We're going to  
16 talk about operating supportive housing including the  
17 15/15 initiative. And the first part of my testimony  
18 will... and it elaborates in the text on the issues we  
19 encounter with operating supportive housing including  
20 the 15/15 initiative and as you alluded to in the  
21 questions earlier in the hearing, a consistent  
22 challenge we face is in operating supportive housing  
23 is inadequate city investment that really complicates  
24 our ability to best run our residences as, as they're  
25 intended. We have... for... in the FY '19 budget there's

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1 191  
2 really two areas of human services; nonprofit  
3 operations, we asked the council to look at and I, I  
4 imagine that you've looked at this and addressed this  
5 in the Contracts Committee hearing but it's... the  
6 inadequate indirect in fringe rates as well the  
7 escalating occupancy and insurance costs. The other  
8 issue of inadequate city investment that I'm... that I  
9 elaborated on in my testimony is something that's  
10 been repeatedly referred to today is the inadequate  
11 operating rate for the 15/15 scattered site units.  
12 For the 15/15 scattered site units according to the  
13 RFP operating funding will not exceed fair market  
14 rent at the time of contract signing with an  
15 anticipated two percent annual escalator but FMR may  
16 increase by more than two percent each year as it has  
17 done from Fiscal Year '17 to '18, it increased 12  
18 percent as the result, you know we're left with  
19 making up the deficit or we have to, you know find  
20 apartments... find cheap apartments which are actually  
21 in... you know often in locations that are far from the  
22 transit and therefor far from support systems or we  
23 double up as, as, as the Speaker referenced and  
24 there's issues obviously with doubling up in terms of  
25 roommate conflict and compromised wellbeing. The

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1 192  
2 other thing I wanted to address in my testimony is  
3 while its really a cost effective housing option for  
4 them those released from the state correctional  
5 facilities may not be eligible for supportive housing  
6 and this is due to the federal housing and urban  
7 development definition of chronic homelessness  
8 particularly according to that definition those  
9 released from 90 plus day stays at prison or jails  
10 aren't chronically homeless and thus they don't  
11 qualify for programs that, you know are funded with  
12 HUD dollars or that base their eligibility on this.  
13 So, I make five recommendations in my testimony. One  
14 is with regards to the FMR for the operating funding  
15 is to adjust the operating funding for scattered site  
16 units to the current fiscal year FMR so that way we  
17 don't have to deal with that deficit every year and  
18 result in compromised outcomes for our tenants. Also  
19 recommend in terms of continuing the task force, it's  
20 a working group meeting regularly with members so  
21 that we... they can address implementation issues. The  
22 other issue in terms of the criminal justice to  
23 ensure that they're eligible for NYC 15/15,  
24 corporation supportive housing report in 2016 justice  
25 served for our treatment for formerly incarcerated



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1 193  
2 recommends that at least 15 percent of new city  
3 supportive housing for each special needs group;  
4 single adults, families, and young adults be  
5 dedicated to those with criminal justice histories.  
6 Of course, we would maybe need to adjust that  
7 percentage based on these new numbers we're getting  
8 in terms of individuals who are increasingly  
9 constituting a feeder into the homeless services  
10 system and they also have a good recommendation about  
11 connect... conducting an annual analysis of denials to  
12 supportive housing based on criminal justice history.  
13 Particularly we're seeing that's' a feeder, we know  
14 that supportive housing works for them based on Fuse  
15 and based on the justice involved supportive housing  
16 pilot which we are happy to be a provider of and we  
17 thank the committee for this opportunity to testify  
18 and for holding this hearing and we are in agreement  
19 in terms of the... having more hearings in year or even  
20 quarterly.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just as a, a follow  
22 up to your testimony Miss Bramstedt with, with regard  
23 to getting around the prohibition... or the, the, the  
24 90 day... [cross-talk]

25 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: Yes... [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...you know not, not  
3 counting as, as chronically homeless, is... some... is it  
4 possible that some of the... some of the units can be  
5 entirely city tax levy funded and therefor not have  
6 to rely on HUD definition or is that something that...  
7 is it... can it... because every unit is, is... [cross-  
8 talk]

9 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: Based on what I've  
10 seen... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: ...created and funded...  
12 [cross-talk]

13 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: ...that 15/15 bases  
14 eligibility on the federal definition of chronic  
15 homelessness... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

17 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: ...and I think there  
18 would have to be a conversation with the city about  
19 whether that's still accurate but that's based on  
20 what I've seen, and I've heard... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

22 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: ...you know the Fortune  
23 Society has done a lot of work of this as is  
24 corporation for supportive housing and really  
25 estimating that, you know maybe only ten percent of

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1 195

2 frequent users of criminal justice in homeless  
3 services are going to eligible for supportive  
4 housing.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh. I'm wondering  
6 if there's A, advocacy that we could do on a national  
7 level or federal level and you know there's  
8 sometimes... some, some criminal justice issues are  
9 become... are becoming bipartisan issues and it's  
10 possible that maybe there's a way to, to, to try to  
11 get some bipartisan support on a federal level...

12 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: I think definitely  
13 doing advocacy on the federal level as well as the  
14 state level in terms of trying to push back on this...  
15 [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

17 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: ...and then also maybe  
18 looking at alternate modes of funding... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right... [cross-talk]

20 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: ...you know like in the  
21 city of Los Angeles they don't... they have a ballot  
22 initiative and they raise the money that way and  
23 therefore they're not obliged to follow the... you know  
24 the federal definitions.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, right or...

3 [cross-talk]

4 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: And so there's... we can  
5 be creative in our funding... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure... [cross-talk]

7 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: ...in terms of... [cross-  
8 talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: With entirely CTL we  
10 can be entirely creative in how we... [cross-talk]

11 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: So, I think that's an  
12 option too because as you know with particularly the  
13 current administration federally the federal advocacy  
14 may not be a very, you know good... best use of the  
15 time.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh, okay. Okay,  
17 I'm certainly going to take these recommendations  
18 make sure that the administration is seeing them and,  
19 and that Commissioner Banks is, is, you know taking  
20 them under full consideration, really appreciate it  
21 and I appreciate all of the testimony here, thank you  
22 for all the work that you all do day in and day out  
23 which is, you know the... not just the, the... not just  
24 the, the, the work of policy and ideas but in the  
25 work of, of implementation and the people and, and so

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1 197  
2 that's... it's... I mean its so essential and important  
3 so thank you. Okay, I think we have one more panel;  
4 Wendy O'Shields, Urban Justice Center; Peter Malvan,  
5 with Safety Net Consumer, Peter Malvan, okay; Paul  
6 Freitag, WSFSSH and Toac, Toac Kamatsu [sp?]. Final  
7 panel, okay. Whoever wants to begin.

8 PAUL FREILAG: Good afternoon, my name is  
9 Paul Freitag and I'm the Executive Director of the  
10 West Side Federation for Senior in Supportive Housing  
11 known as WSFSSH. I also served on the Mayor's task  
12 force of supportive housing convened in 2016 which  
13 recommended many of the elements incorporated into  
14 NYC 15/15. For over 40 years WSFSSH has provided  
15 housing in combination with social services to older  
16 New Yorkers. Our early work was one of the models  
17 used in the formulation of the components what is  
18 now... of what is now referred to as supportive  
19 housing. Currently WSFSSH owns and manages over 2,000  
20 units of supportive housing in... of senior housing in  
21 26 buildings on the West side of Manhattan, in Harlem  
22 and in the Bronx. I would like to say that during our  
23 40-year history we have seen a reduction in the need  
24 for supportive housing but unfortunately that is not  
25 the case, thousands of New Yorkers are languishing on

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1 198  
2 waiting lists or on the street until more units of  
3 supportive housing can become available. We are  
4 extremely grateful to New York... NYC 15/15 and we look  
5 forward to working with the council and our agency  
6 partners to execute on the plan. NYC 15/15 comes at a  
7 specific moment in our city and states political  
8 history, prior to the announcement of the initiative  
9 in 2015 the city and state had jointly developed  
10 supportive housing under the apply named New York/New  
11 York Agreements. Under New York/New York I, II, and  
12 III programs WSFSSH developed almost 300 units of  
13 supportive housing. WSFSSH is currently stated into  
14 use NYC 15/15 in our WSFSSH at West 108<sup>th</sup> Street  
15 project will provide social service subsidy and  
16 rental assistance for 60 units of senior supportive  
17 housing. We are truly grateful to the council and the  
18 administration for allocating sufficient funding to  
19 provide the range and breadth of services that are  
20 needed to help chronically homeless and vulnerable  
21 people stabilize their lives. A 2008 citywide study  
22 conducted by the Furman Center found that single site  
23 residences led to a higher than average property  
24 values. Additionally, congregate residences provide  
25 community benefits including community, community

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1 199  
2 space that is available to local organizations,  
3 support for local businesses and partnerships with  
4 health, safety and arts organizations. Single site  
5 residences also create jobs for local residents  
6 during both... during... both during and after  
7 construction. Our WSFSSH at West 108 project provides  
8 an example of community enhancing benefits of  
9 supportive housing. In addition to the housing units  
10 this project will be providing a 5,000 square foot  
11 community clinic that will provide affordable health  
12 care to neighborhood residents. It will also provide  
13 storage space for ambulances for a non-profit  
14 ambulance core. Additionally, the project will  
15 include, include improvements to an adjacent  
16 playground and will provide much needed community  
17 meeting space. While land is expensive and creates a  
18 challenge for developing new supportive housing  
19 residences the benefits that these residences bring  
20 to the neighborhoods are many. As the council's aware  
21 supportive housing is, is not only the most... one of  
22 the most effective interventions for addressing  
23 chronic homelessness it is cost effective as well.  
24 According to the 2017 report from the New York State  
25 Department of Health targeting people with high

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1 200  
2 Medicaid utilization for supportive housing reduces  
3 substance use rehab admissions by 44 percent, reduces  
4 inpatient psychiatric admissions by 27 percent and  
5 reduces inpatient days overall by 40 percent. Based  
6 on WSFSSH's 40-year history of developing and  
7 operating supportive housing for seniors I can say  
8 from a firsthand experience that supportive housing  
9 provides a stable home and community for residents  
10 for whom life on the streets could be the likely  
11 alternative. We appreciate the council's abiding  
12 interest in addressing homelessness in New York City  
13 and its long-standing support of supportive housing.  
14 WSFSSH looks forward to working with you to continue  
15 to address the homelessness crisis and the critical  
16 shortage of affordable housing in New York City.  
17 Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

19 PETER MALVAN: Okay. Okay, thank you for  
20 allowing me to testify and I want you to read my  
21 submission later but for right now I'd like to give  
22 you a little history. In 1995 I was with the Mayor's  
23 Advisory Council, from 1991 to 2010 I worked in  
24 congregate supportive housing, I've also worked in  
25 outreach to homeless people on the street and the



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1 201  
2 issue I want to present is oversight of housing,  
3 supportive housing. I've... currently I'm the Co-chair  
4 of the COCC's Consumer Committee and therefor I'm the  
5 go to person when a person has issues with their  
6 supportive housing. I've noticed that... let me say,  
7 the people that I've worked with the kind of don't  
8 let go of me and I don't let go of them so over the  
9 years people have let me know everything happening  
10 and I've advocated for people who feel they were  
11 warehoused and actually since I don't have a license  
12 to be at risk I've actually been able to manipulate,  
13 threaten, coerce agencies to deal with the fact that  
14 people who have done programs, we have MRT programs,  
15 we have all kinds of programs that people go through  
16 when they have metal illnesses and it's... when they're  
17 introduced to the programs it... the goal is for them  
18 to be able to move on to less supportive housing and  
19 what's happened is in 1995 the plan was to put people  
20 in high level supportive housing let them build their  
21 skills so that they could move to less supportive  
22 housing and eventually to independent housing. The  
23 stock has not kept up with that with supportive  
24 housing being, being able to deal with that goal and  
25 what's happened is people have ended up in congregate

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1 202  
2 housing for much longer than the congregate,  
3 congregate housing was licensed to operate and what  
4 happens is people actually lose their motivation, get  
5 sick, go to the hospital, come out of the hospital to  
6 the same place and basically, they're raising a lot  
7 of hell. I've found there were people forensic  
8 histories, agency actually treat them as if they were  
9 some subset of society that doesn't deserve and..  
10 which they're doing a favor, the money comes from the  
11 federal government, the state and the city and the  
12 money is actually allocated because the idea is that  
13 people deserve a place to live, that human beings are  
14 human beings and as much as I am supportive of  
15 supportive housing I'd also like to request that  
16 funding be set aside which you've actually mentioned  
17 for extremely low income housing, that stock needs to  
18 be expanded so that people can move from high level  
19 to a lower level supportive housing and then to  
20 independent housing because it's human nature to want  
21 to do the best you can for yourself and this is just  
22 coming from the consumer side, I, I understand the  
23 business side is extremely complex and I understand  
24 that the idea of scattered site housing seems to be a  
25 little more difficult to attain but I think the idea

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2 of expanding congregate housing since its permanent  
3 housing is for human spirit ridiculous and that's all  
4 I have to say.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
6 Mr. Malvan.

7 WENDY O'SHIELDS: My name is Wendy  
8 O'Shields and I'm testifying as a housing and  
9 homeless rights advocate and a member of the Safe...  
10 the Urban Justice Safety Net activist. I bring your  
11 attention to the fact that the Department of Homeless  
12 Services emphasis to house Department of Homeless  
13 Services single adults in independent placement is  
14 almost nil. I'm going to skip this section in the  
15 middle and go down to the line that starts with  
16 additionally. The city of New York Department of  
17 Homeless Service single adult shelter residents need  
18 the following for a thorough assessment for residence  
19 housing, supportive or independent. Number 11, a New  
20 York State housing plan to be completed without  
21 hostility from DHS staff, see the attached New York  
22 State housing plan. Number 12, DHS single adult  
23 shelter residents have family, minor children, adult  
24 disabled children or elderly parents, these family  
25 members will be discovered on the New York State

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1 204  
2 housing plan. There's a clearly defined section for  
3 family reunification. Number 13, the city of New York  
4 Department of Homeless Services shelters operates  
5 shelters, many of their nonprofit vendors operate  
6 shelters and supportive housing in the form of SROs  
7 and scattered site apartments. The majority housing  
8 options... the majority of housing options offered a  
9 DHS single adult shelter resident is supportive  
10 housing, DHS single adult shelter residents are  
11 nearly 90 percent of the time pipelined from DHS  
12 shelters to the nonprofit supportive housing vendor  
13 without an assessment for independent permanent  
14 housing. Number 14, HUD, New York continuum of care  
15 nonprofit shelter vendors typically house most DHS  
16 single adults from the DHS shelters and DHS nonprofit  
17 vendors, vendor shelters to nonprofit supportive  
18 housing. Often times the nonprofit vendors own both  
19 shelters and supportive housing, see the 2017 New  
20 York CCoC NOFA awards results, it's in the packet.  
21 Number 15, HUD, New York Continuum of Care has three  
22 categories for housing homeless; permanent housing,  
23 transitional housing, supportive services only. The  
24 city of New York Department of Homeless Services and  
25 their DHS nonprofit vendor shelters are not screening

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1 205

2 DHS single adult shelter residents for independent  
3 housing as outlined by HUD shelter supportive and  
4 independent permanent housing funding. I thank you  
5 for considering my suggestions in ensuring that the  
6 DHS single adult shelter residents are assessed for  
7 the supportive housing if this need is demonstrated  
8 or independent permanent housing.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
10 Miss O'Shields.

11 TOAC KAMATSU: You and I have talked  
12 repeatedly at various meetings, I brought it to your  
13 attention that when Steven comes... Steven Banks comes  
14 into your room he lies to your face. I specifically  
15 asked you what recourse you could take against him  
16 for essentially committing perjury, he did that yet  
17 again today while people like me had to waste our day  
18 in this room. So, I guess can you... at what point can  
19 you answer that question, how can you hold him  
20 accountable for lying to your face while he's making  
21 those statements under oath. Also the Commissioner of  
22 HPD was in this room today, she was talking about  
23 supportive housing, permanent housing but the problem  
24 is HUD's definition, the federal agency, their  
25 definition of permanent housing is that the tenant

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1 206  
2 needs a valid lease agreement in order to be in  
3 permanent housing so if I and other people in my  
4 building don't have a valid lease agreement why is  
5 HRA continuing to fraudulently claim that we're in  
6 permanent housing when I've previously told you that  
7 the landlord, Urban Pathways committed a bait and  
8 switch against the people living in that building  
9 meaning we signed a valid lease agreement on February  
10 16<sup>th</sup> of 2016 in HRA's offices at 33 Beaver Street  
11 subsequent to that Urban Pathways gave us something  
12 all... entirely different. So, I raise the example of  
13 shopping for a car if you're shopping for a four-door  
14 car and the dealer gives you a two-door car, that's  
15 different, it's in... totally invalid. So, prior to  
16 walking into this room today I also noticed that my  
17 building still isn't validly registered with HPD, I  
18 talked to the Commissioner of HPD on March 28<sup>th</sup> at  
19 the Mayor's Town Hall she stated that she would look  
20 into it... look into that matter before she left this  
21 room today I tried to ask her about... to get an  
22 update, she refused to acknowledge my question. So,  
23 in terms of accountability transparency if taxpayers  
24 are footing the bill for the people residing in that  
25 building and people like me walk up to the

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1 207  
2 Commissioners and we don't get a straightforward  
3 answer, if you're a lawmaker can you hold them  
4 accountable and how and I guess when. Also, a  
5 representative from Urban Pathways was here. I  
6 actually testified against this proposed 10.6-  
7 million-dollar contract that HRA is mindlessly  
8 thinking about giving to them after I was assaulted  
9 due to HRA's... I should say Urban Pathways and the  
10 HRA's fraud and negligence. As I told you before I  
11 got 15 punches to my left temple on July 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2016  
12 that caused me a concussion. So, if you have a  
13 business that's not complying with applicable laws  
14 such that Navy veterans sitting in a chair in front  
15 of you are telling you that yeah I did actually get  
16 15 freaking punches to my left temple that caused me  
17 a concussion I was diagnosed with on July 30, 2016  
18 and that concussion prevented me from being  
19 considered fairly for a job that would have paid me  
20 450 dollars a day, at what point are you going to  
21 intervene but yeah, I mean bottom line is instead of  
22 wasting your time can you please arrange a meeting  
23 between you, me, Steven Banks and the Commissioner of  
24 HPD so that we can hash out our differences where I  
25 guess through you I could submit questions, you could

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2 ask them and then when they lie to your face I could  
3 just civilly express to you that here's a question  
4 that they answered that doesn't hold water.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I, I don't know if I  
6 can arrange a meeting but certainly there are  
7 specific questions that, that... I have your testimony  
8 here, are the questions in the testimony?

9 TOAC KAMATSU: You could use it to  
10 formulate your questions.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, I'll have to go  
12 through the testimony but I... obviously there's... I'll  
13 have to go through it, I don't... I don't know  
14 regarding Commissioner Banks's testimony what you're  
15 referring to in terms of... [cross-talk]

16 TOAC KAMATSU: If you give me 24 hours I  
17 can give you probably points that he lied about while  
18 he was in this room.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I, I think you have...  
20 you have a... an email address for me so if you want to  
21 send along an email I'll, I'll take a look at it...  
22 [cross-talk]

23 TOAC KAMATSU: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah. So, I want to...  
25 I want to thank the panel, I want to thank, thank you



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2 for the insight and for the dedication that you all  
3 have for, for advocating for individuals that have  
4 both gone through the, the shelter system, those that  
5 are living in supportive housing, its incredibly  
6 helpful to have the insight that you provided as part  
7 of this panel and I look forward to working with you  
8 all as we move forward to ensure that the system  
9 continues to serve as many New Yorkers as possible  
10 and as effectively as possible so I want to thank you  
11 very much for that time.

12 WENDY O'SHIELDS: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And, and with that is  
14 there any other individuals that would like to  
15 testify today? Seeing none at 5:34 p.m. this hearing  
16 of the General Welfare Committee is adjourned.

17 [gavel]

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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

May 19, 2018