

**Written Testimony for 3-3-2022 Hearing:
DHS/Project Renewal Proposal to Expand New Providence Women's Shelter
225 E 45th Street, Turtle Bay Manhattan**

I moved to East 44th Street between 2nd & 3rd Avenues on January 1, 1997, the same year the shelter opened. I did not even know there was shelter one block away from my residence until about 2008, when problems began that I could not explain.

Since that time, I have repeatedly been verbally harassed, with threat of physical violence by several women from the shelter who were loitering on the street. Their male friends also follow them into the neighborhood (as they were never residents here) and provoke negative interactions with residents.

As the pandemic changed our landscape and lawlessness became more acceptable by our city and state governments, these issues have increased and escalated. It has expanded to more threats, littering in our streets, and destruction in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, where shelter residents and their "boyfriends" do drugs openly, play very loud music on event-sized speakers, and harass and verbally threaten passersby. In addition, this short span of East 45th Street has been assaulted by a slew of graffiti and a sea garbage, that spill onto Second Ave and north to East 46th Street.

As a long-time advocate for helping those who are homeless, I fully acknowledge the need for more facilities that treat homeless drug addicted and mentally ill women and support the idea. And my heart breaks for them.

Here is why I oppose the current proposal to expand the New Providence Women's Shelter:

1. Location

Why Turtle Bay? The current shelter residents did not originate from this neighborhood and have no connection here. Instead they bring more of the negative elements of their addiction or illness in the form of like "friends" to the neighborhood. You are displacing these people away from their real friends and family who could be there to support them while in treatment.

The City of New York could provide much more effective care for these women by selling the land and purchasing a much less expensive space in another borough that would be more compatible to providing a real supportive community for them.

2. History of Mismanagement by Project Renewal (DHS complicit)

The Project Renewal team spoke of how much better this beautiful facility will help the NPWS residents. Why? Because it's prettier? Lack of cleanliness has nothing to do with the age of the facility.

Why did no one address the CURRENT issues occurring in the Shelter? The poison is within and spills outward into our neighborhood! This poor management and uncaring attitude endangers the many residents, visitors and workers of Midtown East and Turtle Bay. A new facility does not solve this problem and doubling (plus) the occupancy creates an even greater hazard to ALL.

To highlight the internal issues within the current shelter having nothing to do with the condition or age of the building:

Excerpts from Google Rating 2.2 – but actually less if the fake reviews are removed.

- **3 weeks ago** - I would rather sleep in grand central then sleep here another day. Terrible settings , **horrible staff , you literally have to do everything yourself. The case managers don't help you** , but gossip about clients . The R.A they hiring all have records most fresh out of jail . They are very inappropriate with clients trying to pay for sexual advantages. **So many overdoses I seen I never seen in my life !** This building needs to be shut down . & Sara should be fired
- 1 year ago - I didn't wanna really give no stars but I had to in order to comment I was there back in 2016 i wasn't there very long. I helped myself get my apartment I basically just slept, ate, and showered there that's it. I moved out February 2016 and I was so happy. The city really needs to look into and investigate that shelter based on these reviews and SHUT THAT PLACE DOWN. IF I HAD A CHOICE OF GRAND CENTRAL STATION AND NEW PROVIDENCE SHELTER ID PREFER TO SLEEP IN GRAND CENTRAL STATION
- 3 year ago - Ive been here for 10 days havent even been able to finish intake since Spuill literally gave me a 10am appointment which I've been waiting since 9:30 and she didnt not show up till 10:30 left got breakfast didnt return till 11 ish then told me i missed my appiontment and would have to wait yet again because shes busy. Staff refuses to allow me to speak to Sarah the director of the facility. **This place is the most dirty, unprofessional, corrupt facility to end up in.** We're homeless not hopeless stop treating us like criminals in a psych ward smh the **staff is disgustingly rude**
- 3 years ago - I was in New Providence Shelter in 2012 after my roommate and I were in a car accident. She was killed and I sustaining a traumatic brain injury, a back injury, and PTSD. I personally found the case workers to be NONCOMPLIANT WITH HUD STANDARDS, **passive aggressive, dismissive, and ineffectual.** I had a very short intake, after which I was completely ignored. The housing process was never initiated. **This is a stark contrast to Project Renewal mission of empowering individuals to “renew” ones life. I felt trapped in this shelter**
On a positive note I found Mr. Coach, and Mr. Brown to be kind, supportive and professional.
- 2 years ago Id rather be in the streets than being in here. **Awful people, horrible service....just inhuman.**
- 2 year ago - **I was regularly beaten** by the pathetic DHS pretend cops for being white, educated and strong while standing up for others.

Where there is smoke, there is fire. You cannot dismiss every one of these reviews and their span over time, escalating over the last 5-10 years.

3. Complete Lack of Consideration of Turtle Bay and Midtown East

Why is the focus only on the needs of the few with ZERO consideration for the needs of the many who live and work in this neighborhood? You are spending \$100 million to make a pretty building that “blends in” with the neighboring A&E Building and Wyndham hotels. That’s architectural – that is NOT substance. What you are peddling

does nothing to support or contribute to the welfare of this neighborhood. It's not - and should not be – about the skyline! It's not just about construction noise!

If my first two points of reason for my opposition of this project, 1. even being in Turtle Bay in the first place (much less be expanded here), and 2. That Project Renewal should NOT be running this shelter without an investigation into the current practices before granting them anything and must have greater accountability of the internal workings if they move forward, then I ask that you please consider that **there MUST be financial compensation to this neighborhood**. This takes the form of all of these:

1. Internal management (Project Renewal) that TAKES RESPONSIBILITY for the actions of the residents that they are bringing into the facility both purposefully and through the “Drop-in Clinic” outside of the facility and in and around the Turtle Bay neighborhood.
2. Providing security across all of 45th Street (bet. 2nd & 3rd) for protection of residents (safety) and preventing the physical destruction of that block.
3. Providing security and cleaning for Dag Hammarskjold Plaza (or significant donations for the entity to do so), so our residents are not harassed by poorly behaving shelter residents and friends, and to clean up the drug paraphernalia, graffiti, feces, used condoms, and litter that are frequently seen there.

The day I moved in, I was told by my 17th Precinct Police that Turtle Bay was the safest neighborhood in Manhattan. The ongoing mismanagement and uncaring attitude toward this neighborhood by Project Renewal through their management of NPWS no longer makes it so.

Lastly – I want to express my deep concern for the stealth manner in which this project was communicated to the public (it wasn't). I was lucky to find out about it from others. The information about public hearings was suppressed and you did not publicize the opportunity for public/resident feedback. This makes ALL involved look bad: City Council, CB6, DHS, and Project Renewal. CB6 also voted without taking feedback from its constituency, and none of the neighboring non-profits were contacted, despite the false testimony by Project Renewal.

I ask that this project be put on pause until the current shelter can be investigated and Project Renewal provide solutions to show they are capable of running the facility. And until the community can FULLY be allowed express their concerns. The entities giving unconditional consent blindly by agreeing without any conditions are doing so for their own, often political gain and NOT for the betterment of New York City overall, these women in need, or the local residents of our community.

I sincerely hope you will be open to my dissenting viewpoint, and not rush this proposal in its current form, as it has deep ramifications that have far reaching effects into the future.

Dianna Antlocer – 25+ year resident of Turtle Bay
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Homeless Services United Testimony before the New York City Council Sub-Committee on Landmarks, Public Sitings, and Dispositions March 3, 2022

Good morning members of the Chair Louis and members of the committee. My name is Catherine Trapani and I am the Executive Director of Homeless Services United. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Project Renewal's redevelopment of New Providence into supportive and affordable housing and a new purpose-built shelter, and the accompanying actions required to transfer ownership of the property to Project Renewal.

Homeless Services United is a coalition of mission driven non-profit agencies serving homeless and at-risk adults and families in New York City that promotes effective solutions to end the crisis of homelessness in New York City. Our member agencies operate hundreds of programs including shelters, drop-in centers, food pantries, eviction prevention, and outreach services.

Our strength is in the collective wisdom and expertise of our membership – organizations that ensure the City upholds its legal and moral obligation to provide shelter to everyone who needs it in New York City while also working tirelessly to ensure that as few New Yorkers as possible will ever need our help.

As Executive Director of Homeless Services United and, as someone who lived half a block away from a stabilization bed program for chronically homeless adults for several years and I know that well run and properly planned and maintained shelters make good neighbors. For this reason, I hope you to vote to recommend the city's disposition of the current shelter site to Project Renewal and thereby allow the New Providence project to move forward.

The current building is poorly designed and in need of upgrades – this project will rebuild the shelter from scratch with a design that supports safety, security and dignity for residents and neighbors. Ground floor services will make things accessible, wide hallways will create safety, easy flow throughout the space, and good sight lines. There will be outdoor space away from street level where residents can safely recreate and socialize

The difference that client-center design makes is transformative for both clients and neighbors. Having spaces that are welcoming and efficient make residents more comfortable, enhance access to and utilization of services and promotes better outcomes. Simple things like improving flow can make it easier for clients to engage with services and move forward with their permanency plans. Neighbors notice (or rather don't notice) these efficiencies because residents who feel comfortable in shelters and have safe places to socialize and the like treat the building much like anyone else treats their home making these facilities blend well into existing neighborhoods.

This project will not only deliver this improved experience for clients and neighbors already using or living near New Providence but, it will allow the rare chance to build new housing to meet the permanent housing needs of many homeless new Yorkers and others struggling to afford housing in Manhattan.

This project brings new permanent housing in a district with very few affordable units making it possible for those housed in shelters to move on to permanent homes. The stability this design will offer will be an asset to the community.

Project Renewal is an important partner and has the skills needed to provide holistic care to homeless people. They offer shelter, medical, job training and housing –all of the things necessary for people to recover from the crisis of homelessness and thrive in the community as productive neighbors.

I hope you will vote to approve this project. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOAN BOYLE
East 43rd Street
New York, NY 10017

JoanBoyle303@gmail.com

Written Testimony for March 3 2022 Hearing: DHS Project Renewal (New Providence)

My name is Joan Boyle and I am writing to OPPOSE the Proposed Project Renewal expansion very near to my co-op home of 30 years in Tudor City.

I am a longtime volunteer for the Undomiciled Project based at St Peter's Church and have been an overnight volunteer for the Holy Family homeless shelter held winters for many years. With that background, I was particularly concerned by a proposed expansion of a poorly managed shelter with a long history of a bad impact in my neighborhood.

Shockingly, the proposal involves selling city property, using city money to do so, to build a much larger operation, with little or no questioning whether the history of services by the recipient warrants such a unique give away.

I accompanied Zoom meetings through this process to now, to see little public awareness that such a major permanent expansion using tax dollars was going to occur. I saw no questions by the CB6 Committee and Council members about the historical and current operations, not even if there were any services provided during COVID for a population that sorely needs them. There was one question about the design of the proposed shelter including a dorm sleeping situation, which homeless advocates know is behind fear of safety in shelters; sadly not followed up on, in spite of the population proposed for service by the new project.

Snapshots of publicly reported incidences related to operations by Project Renewal New Providence:

- ABC7ny.com March 25, 2019 Reports on death of New Providence resident Anna DeJesus who was being transported following a health episode by EMTs when the only working elevator they were in was stuck for hours. Project Renewal is responsible for operations in the DHS owned facility.
- Gothamist October 3, 2011 "Cops Kill Homeless Woman Wielding Ornamental Knives on East 45th Street" reports on a resident at New Providence who had a fight with a girlfriend that spilled into 43rd Street and then back to 45th street where she refused to drop the knives she was waving and police killed her.

Reading these reports were not surprising to me personally as I have witnessed loud, angry and threatening behavior on 45th Street; in one of the instances I observed, staff from New Providence were outside the building trying to get control of one woman who was acting out... and were unable to do so.

Evidently this pattern continues, since at the Feb 4 2022 Build the Block Police Department meeting I attended, the Police reported on repeated efforts to deal with threatening behavior by one of the residents on the street nearby and their constant need to be in touch with shelter security at New Providence. Officer John Lamneck of the Precinct Build the Block program offered to speak regarding the continuing contacts with shelter security and reports of incidences. He describes shelter security staff as being responsive, but many of us attending were shocked to learn of the continuing and serious nature of the need to be in touch. His number is 929-281-7252. Copies of the minutes of the February 2022 Police meeting are not available.

I submit that a stealth approval process under cover of Zoom cannot be legitimate. I oppose proceeding with this project until in-person hearings attended by project neighbors and local organizations affected can attend and make their views known.

Written Testimony for March 3, 2022 Hearing: DHS Project Renewal (New Providence)

My name is Kim Baker and I live one block from the 45th street New Providence Women's shelter site.

I wear two hats with this testimony, one is as a member of the board of my co-op on 45th/46th street with 300 apartments and 500+ residents, the other is as a member of the board of directors of Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza.

The residents of my building have expressed growing concerns and fears about the rise of homelessness, erratic and threatening individuals on the streets from the increasing shelter populations over the last two years. Some are saying they are afraid for the first time to walk alone in the neighborhood. Our local drugstore on Second Avenue, for example now has virtually all products on the shelves behind locked plexiglass. As a property owner, and on behalf of the 500+ owners, residents and voters of our building, I have to ask the city what this shelter expansion will contribute to the neighborhood? Will the new building contribute to the tax base, the financial, cultural, or educational well-being of the neighborhood? What can I tell them?

With our reduced midtown east population due to lack of tourism, shuttered hotels and businesses, the closed YMCA, UN and the adjacent foreign-owned missions with no full-time residents, we see this proposed larger shelter as a further burden to the community and want to ask the city how the community benefits from this expansion?

We understand and appreciate how expansion benefits residents of the shelter, but remain concerned that the proposed increased of mental health patient population to 300 from the current 130 and a walk-in clinic will by definition increase a transient population coming from other neighborhoods seeking treatment. Can we know what type of treatment will be offered? Who is the target clientele for this clinic not currently being served by other medical facilities in the area? The clinic component of the proposed new building remains a vague promise to the neighborhood with no clarity as to why those outside the facility will benefit.

Since moving to the neighborhood, I have also worked in a volunteer capacity on the board of directors of the Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza. It is the largest open green space in midtown east. Our 1.5 acre Plaza shoulders international protests and festivals as well as daily use by the community for exercise and relaxation. The Plaza is also a favorite daytime location for residents of the current women's shelter to enjoy unsupervised time. We, as volunteers, have a front-row seat to the activities of the residents of the current women's shelter on a daily basis. Since the shelter itself does not allow alcohol and drug use, our Plaza is the preferred location to recreate.

Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza asks Project Renewal / New Providence to commit to being good neighbors and to contribute financially to our 501c3 organization so we can sufficiently fund the custodian(s) we will need to clean up after the increased population who will be enjoying this public space at no cost. With cup-in-hand, we have raised money from our neighbors to cover the cost of a part-time custodian to help to keep the plaza and garden free of needles, alcohol bottles, condoms, and human feces and cannot absorb more without financial support. It is a daily battle.

Many people think this is a park that is cared for by the Parks Department. Unfortunately, the Parks Department lacks the staff and funding to provide basic services such as daily sweeping and trash removal. With a patchwork of micro grants, small allocations from the city, dedicated volunteers as well as donations from good neighbors, we at Friends scratch together the barest of resources to manage a park that is the lynchpin of our neighborhood and to keep it a safe place to recreate. Without the dedication of Friends, the Plaza would become a derelict corridor. We are at the breaking point.

Since the New Providence Redevelopment Joint Venture plans to more than double the number of mental health patients in the community, we ask that the city and the New Providence allocate the funds we at Dag Plaza will need to maintain and care for the Plaza to compensate the community for the increased demand on our limited public outdoor space when those residents are not inside the shelter. Without this commitment of financial support to the Plaza, we cannot support the expansion of this facility.

We are happy to prepare financials to demonstrate our needs.

Kim Baker
Board of Directors, Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
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From: [Lisa Levine](#)
To: [Office of Council Member Powers](#)
Cc: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 225 E. 45th St
Date: Saturday, March 5, 2022 8:31:17 PM

Good evening Council Member Powers,
I have become aware of the plan for NYC, DHS, and current and future lessee, Project Renewal to tear down the current building on the city-owned property, called New Providence Women's Shelter at 225 E. 45th St. The rebuild would be an even larger building at the cost of \$100 million. This has far-reaching ramifications to the neighborhood around the quality of life issues of cleanliness and the safety of our streets. As you consider your vote on this issue, please consider those of us who enjoy living in the neighborhood. I urge you to vote no for the expansion of this facility.
Thank you!
Lisa Levine

Testimony to New York City Council Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions, March 3, 2022, 10:00 a.m. via Zoom, Submitted by Meryl Brodsky, District Leader, 73rd AD, Part A, representing Turtle Bay Association (TBA) Land Use Committee and on behalf of Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza

The following testimony is extracted from a TBA Land Use Committee Report, Monday, May 3, 2021 6:00 p.m. via Zoom, by Meryl Brodsky, Interim Land Use Chair

[It describes the increasing homeless problem in the area of the Turtle Bay Community, roughly 43rd -53rd Streets Midtown East Manhattan and the immediate environs. We have participated with the 17th Precinct in graffiti removal and mustered the support of DOT, Dep't of Sanitation and DHS in tracking the homeless problem. TBA strongly recommends the disposition of funds procured from the East 45th Street Project Renewal shelter expansion for the maintenance and security of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza and TBA environs.]

Hello Everyone:

To redress the damage to public and private property, a bunch of East Siders gathered at the 17th Precinct to fix graffiti splattered walls and amenities. Here we are in full force to make our district graffiti free. See Dolores Marsh, TBA President, far left and Meryl Brodsky, far right. Thanks to Michael Zullo, Cindi Buchwalter and many others.

Re: NYPD Precinct 17 - Graffiti Clean-Up April 10th Saturday morning & afternoon -





302 East 50th Street Before and After:

We are trying very hard to exert some pressure by calling or emailing 311 en masse. By filing multiple complaints both the NYC Dep't of Sanitation and Dep't of the Homeless (DHS) came to the aid of their community.

From: TBA Board Member: “FYI, one of the women in my building ... said that yesterday she also called one of the contacts at the Dep't of Sanitation who Michael has spoken to before (Mr. Gonzalez). He told her that pick up for 302 & 304 E 50th Street is scheduled for Monday, Wednesday and Friday, but since the trash was at the doorway and not the curb, it was not picked up. He told her they had to send a special truck to pick up the trash from the doorway. He also said he hoped his issuing of summonses would get the owner to act and put the garbage on the curb, and that additional summonses would be issued if it continues to happen. He also advised her going forward to call the Superintendent... at XXX-XXX-XXXX for a request to pick up trash in the doorway.”



Community Board 6 Joint Land Use and Waterfront Housing & Homeless Committee –

Many of us tuned in to the CB6 joint meeting and were a little surprised that a consensus of CB6 members exists for expansion of the women’s shelter on East 45th Street, the New Providence Project Renewal. It is currently slated to go through ULURP (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure) by September 2021; having been approved by CPC, it now pends in the City Council.

The Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza share the opinion that if we are to stay clean and green we need a commitment in dollars for increased surveillance and cleanliness. This requires funding for maintenance employees, trash removal and additional equipment.

Project Renewal will demolish the existing building and in its place will be a new 21-story multi-use facility including: adding 41 single-adult women’s shelter for women with mental health problems to a total 171 beds as well as 130 new units of supportive/affordable housing; 79 of the units will be supportive housing for formerly homeless tenants (who will pay 30% of their income) and 51 units will be made available for low-income New Yorkers at 60% area median income (AMI). Also, the ground floor will serve as a medical clinic to serve both the residents of the building and the larger community. There is currently a similar clinic on-site; however, to access it one has to go through the existing women’s shelter and as such it generally doesn’t serve more than those who live on-site (despite it being open to the public). (Adapted from TBA Newsletter, April 2021)

Redevelopment Proposed for Women's Shelter at 225 East 45th Street

The City's Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) have unveiled a plan to sell a DHS-owned building at 225 East 45th Street to Project Renewal, a nonprofit that provides housing, healthcare, and employment services to homeless New Yorkers. Project Renewal currently operates the site as a homeless shelter for women. Project Renewal seeks to buy the building from the City and redevelop it into a new multi-use facility including: a women's shelter, supportive/affordable housing, and a medical clinic to serve both the residents of the building and the larger community.

As DHS is proposing to sell a City-owned building, this sale is subject to the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP), a public review process that gives CB6 a chance to offer an advisory comment on the sale.

This project is not expected to officially enter the public review process until at least September 2021. That said, HPD, DHS, and Project Renewal will be presenting a preview of the project tonight to a joint meeting of the CB6 Housing & Homelessness and Land use and Waterfront Committees. This project will help fulfill some of our district's most pressing needs: notably the need for more affordable and supportive housing.

Comments: “To Kim Baker and all who attended CB6 Committee:

“It was interesting to note that security issues were not mentioned and that CB6 participants were so enthusiastic about the project. I agree the transfer of property ownership to make capital improvements is a windfall for Project Renewal. Also, we should address characteristics of homeless. Are they causing quality of life violations in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza? ...[S]ince we are tasked with keeping the park green and clean, it might help to continue documenting East 45th Street Inhabitant's violations, misdemeanors, etc. ULURP doesn't really kick start until September. The Friends should pass a Resolution stating our demands and try to cut a deal on safety measures.” - Meryl Brodsky, TBA Interim Chair, Land Use

We are past that point now. We have submitted testimony to the City Planning Commission within a window we created post-vote (February 2, 2022) at the CPC. We reserve the right to revisit our demands for security and maintenance of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza and environs procured from Project Renewal’s shelter expansion budget in the future.

New Providence Redevelopment – 225 East 45th Street Testimony

My name is Robert Stinson and I serve on the board of the Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza which is on 47 Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues. I also serve as a liaison with the 17th Precinct NYPD for the board. I live in the neighborhood at 301 East 52nd Street.

As a background to our response, we are already having a serious problem with the mentally ill homeless population in the Plaza and also in the neighborhood. As an example, a seriously mentally ill homeless man has been camping on 52nd street, on the sidewalk, and in the outdoor dining area of Mimi's restaurant at 52nd St. and 2nd Avenue. He has threatened Mimi's staff, run screaming up and down the street, and repeatedly been violently ill on the sidewalk. Nevertheless, we are told by the police and the EMS that they cannot do anything about this situation without the mentally ill man's approval in spite of numerous phone calls from the neighborhood. Basically, we have to wait for a crime to be committed before the police can act. We have repeatedly had this situation in the Plaza as well with other homeless people.

The new shelters at the Vanderbilt Y and elsewhere have exacerbated the problems with their clients left to roam the streets during the day, and causing unsafe and unsanitary situations to arise especially in the garden area and non-working fountains at the Plaza and throughout the neighborhood.

While we are very supportive of helping the homeless population providing a clinic and providing affordable housing, we have two concerns. First, what purpose does the clinic serve if so many of the mentally ill homeless already in the neighborhood are not willing to be admitted? The second is, if there is an increased mentally homeless population because of Project Renewal with those clients who are willing to be admitted are left to wander our streets during the day, what is Project Renewal willing to do to supplement our strained funding for maintaining the Plaza and neighborhood. We have hired people to clean the Plaza since the city is not keeping it clean, and volunteers are constantly cleaning excrement and needles from our garden area. While the police have tried to be responsive to disruptive behavior the situation has become overwhelming, and we need funds to clean the Plaza, and staff from Project Renewal though the DHS to assist us in monitoring the Plaza and the neighborhood.

Support for Project Renewal for the 225 East 45th Street project by our board cannot be given unless funding and staffing for sanitation and most of all safety are included as part of the Project Renewal package.

Thank you for your attention.

TESTIMONY

RE: City Council Landuse Committee/Landmark D. S. Subcommittee Hearing, 10 am, March 3, 2022, ULURP Application No.220131PSM and 220132HAM **New Providence Redevelopment**-225 East 45th Street by new York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development(HPD), the applicant.

RESOLUTION OF FRIENDS OF DAG HAMMARSKJOLD PLAZA (FDHP), a nonprofit 501c3 community organization incorporated in the State of New York on 11/30/1993. Office address 224 E. 47th St. NYC 10017 ~ fdhp@hammarskjoldplaza.org

Whereas the Dept. of Homeless Services (DHS) and Project Renewal, its largest nonprofit service provider, have put forth a joint ULURP application to Redevelop the New Providence Women’s Shelter located at 225 East 45th Street, three blocks from Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, the largest public park in east midtown Manhattan, by purchasing city-owned property and replacing the existing shelter facility with a 21-story building in order to expand the shelter operation from 130 beds to 171, add a drop-in clinic and 130 affordable housing units;

Whereas Community Board 6 unanimously recommended the application with no conditions, despite concerns expressed in preliminary meetings with neighborhood stakeholders;

Whereas Borough President Gale Brewer recommended that the project would “bring vitality to the neighborhood” despite an earlier study that she herself commissioned by the Independent Budget Office which concludes that property values DECLINE in proximity to homeless shelters;

Whereas the high incidence of mental illness and substance abuse among shelter occupants is NOT confined to the existing shelter and treatment facility but spills into our streets and parks, eroding quality of life, escalating risk and increasing the need for security and sanitation;

Whereas an expanded clinic catering to drop-ins in addition to the in-house facility to treat substance abuse, mental illness and special needs would draw an unstable, mixed sex, transient population to the neighborhood;

Whereas inadequate levels of Park (DPR), Sanitation (DSNY), and Security(NYPD) place an undue burden on the community while nonprofit service providers assume little or no responsibility beyond serving their “clients.”

Whereas City Council must determine that the area is in need of urban renewal for the proposed ULURP to receive Designation of an Urban Development Action Area (UDAA) and Project (UDAP), and evidence of urban decay is inconclusive given neighboring property values and taxes, among the highest in the city;

Whereas UDAP areas designated by City Council receive up to 20-year exemption from real estate taxes on the assessed value of the building, which would lower the tax base and vitality of the area;

Whereas east midtown is already impacted by a high concentration of temporary and permanent shelters which have eroded neighborhood safety, cleanliness and quality of life,

Whereas the City’s “Right to Shelter” has resulted in DHS receiving a disproportionate allocation of the annual budget (\$2.3 billion FY 2022), more than NYC parks, libraries and museums combined—resulting in the proliferation of shelters with little or no accountability for the impact on neighborhoods.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That should City Council move to support the joint application, CONDITIONS stipulate that DHS and Project Renewal be contractually bound to help financially support the security and cleanliness of the area’s parks and streets by making a direct contribution to community organizations who shoulder the burden and cost of upkeep;

That given the limitations of a Parks Department which stands to receive at best only one percent of the City's annual budget, Project Renewal fund Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officers in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza and/or provide a park-based presence of private security so that our neighbors on the block which include The Family School, Japan Society, Holy Family Church, local and global park visitors, feel safe.

That Hammarskjold Plaza serve as a pilot project for the nonprofit's rehabilitation and job training program to provide gardening and custodial care so that Project Renewal provides a path to income stability of the individuals served as well as neighborhood stability.

That the Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza seek long-term solutions with CB6, City Council and DHS to address the homeless and drug crisis while preserving the safety and vitality of our neighborhoods, parks and streets, all of which give Manhattan its special character and appeal.

The Board of Directors of Friends of Dag Hammarskjold 3/3/2022

Sherrill Kazan, President