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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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January 3, 2024

Ashwin Vasani
Commissioner
NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene
42-09 28th St., 7th Fl.
Long Island City, NY 11101

Molly Wasow Park
Commissioner
NYC Dept. of Homeless Services
33 Beaver St.
New York, NY 10004

Dear Commissioner Vasani and Commissioner Park:

At its Full Board meeting on December 19, 2023, Community Board #2, Manhattan (CB2, Man.) adopted the following resolution:

Resolution in support of city actions to reduce street homelessness in lower Manhattan and improve outcomes for unhoused New Yorkers

WHEREAS:

- 1) The New York City Department of Homeless Services contracts with nonprofit organizations through the Manhattan Outreach Consortium (MOC) to conduct outreach to street homeless New Yorkers in the borough; and
- 2) Goddard Riverside is a member organization of the MOC, with its Downtown Goddard program responsible for outreach to street homeless New Yorkers below 23rd Street; and
- 3) Downtown Goddard (DG) reports an increase in the number of street homeless New Yorkers within their case management program to 430, from roughly 300 two years ago, consistent with community members' experience of increased numbers of unhoused neighbors living on the street; and

- 4) DG provides access when possible to Safe Haven shelter beds and stabilization beds, both of which offer more privacy and autonomy for residents than the city's conventional congregate shelter model; and
- 5) The unhoused New Yorkers engaged by DG generally refuse entry into the congregate shelter system but do accept offers of Safe Haven and stabilization beds at much higher rates, moving them off the streets and into settings with support staff and pathways to permanent housing; and
- 6) The ability of DG to make these placements is limited not by the interest of unhoused New Yorkers but by the availability of these private shelter options; and
- 7) Safe Haven and stabilization beds have higher uptake and long-term stay rates, demonstrating success at reducing street homelessness when compared to alternatives; and
- 8) There were only roughly 2,500 Safe Havens and stabilization beds at year-end of 2022; and
- 9) There is only one Safe Haven or stabilization bed shelter in Community District 2, Paul's Place, with 24 beds; and
- 10) DG affirms that the street homeless New Yorkers they engage are local to the neighborhoods in which they are living on the street and are far more likely to accept nearby placements; and
- 11) The ability of DG to respond to 311 calls and manage its full caseload is limited by its staffing levels, currently at a ~50% vacancy rate within its 21 team member allotment; and
- 12) The Adams administration committed to addressing the intersection of homelessness, serious mental illness and substance use,¹ and CB2, together with other Community Boards in Manhattan, have also identified these concerns as a high priority; and
- 13) Nonetheless, DG reports that its inability to fill these challenging jobs is largely a function of the low starting salary rate (of less than \$37,000) demanded by its budget accord with the city.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT COMMUNITY BOARD 2, MANHATTAN

- 1) Commends Downtown Goddard, and the Manhattan Outreach Consortium, for their work to engage and support street homeless New Yorkers in service of assisting them in accessing safer housing and needed additional services; and

¹ <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/140-23/mayor-adams-ambitious-mental-health-agenda-focused-improving-family-child-mental#/0>.

- 2) Supports the creation of more Safe Haven and stabilization bed sites in downtown Manhattan, commensurate to the need of the unsheltered homeless population, in order to better serve these New Yorkers and the communities in which they live; and

Calls upon the Mayor to fulfill his commitment to address mental health, homelessness and substance use disorder by increasing budgeted salary levels for housing outreach specialists, so that service providers can hire complete staffs.

Vote: Unanimous, 36 Board Members in favor.

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



Susan Kent, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Susanna Aaron, Chair
Human Services Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan

SK/EM

cc: Hon. Eric Adams, Mayor
Hon. Dan Goldman, Congressman
Hon. Brian Kavanagh, NYS Senator
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NYS Senator
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Grace Lee NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Erik Bottcher, NYC Council Member
Hon. Christopher Marte, NYC Council Member
Hon. Carlina Rivera, NYC Council Member