



CITY OF NEW YORK  
**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**JESSICA CHAIT**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

January 24, 2024

Molly Park  
Commissioner,  
NYC Department of Social Services/Department of Homeless Services  
33 Beaver Street,  
New York, NY 10004

**Re: Project Renewal Temporary Shelter Relocation at 343 West 44<sup>th</sup> Street –  
Ramada Inn**

Dear Commissioner Park,

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, the NYC Department of Homeless Services presented the use of 343 West 44<sup>th</sup> Street, the Ramada Inn as a temporary relocation site for Project Renewal's adult women's shelter from its East 44<sup>th</sup> Street, Community Board 5 location, to Manhattan Community Board 4's (MCB4) Housing, Health, & Human Services Committee. Committee members reviewed and discussed the siting process and community concerns at the public meeting.

At its regularly scheduled Full Board meeting on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, MCB4 voted 37 in favor, 0 opposed, 4 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote to request that the NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) continue to engage with MCB4 on issues surrounding the temporary shelter for adult women at 343 West 44<sup>th</sup> Street and respond to the community's concerns and requests summarized below.

**Background**

As of December 2023, there are approximately 7,200 shelter and supportive housing beds situated within West Midtown, Clinton/Hell's Kitchen, and NoMad<sup>1</sup>. Within Manhattan

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<sup>1</sup> Of those 7,200 shelter and supportive housing beds, approximately 2,100 of them are funded by DHS or Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC), 800 are privately funded, 2,200 are for asylum seekers funded by DHS, OEM, and HHC, and 2,100 are supportive housing beds.

Community District 4, there are approximately 1,200 asylum seekers beds, 1,450 supportive housing beds, and 2,600 shelter beds.

Given the extraordinary number of shelters and supportive beds, MCB4 questions this DHS action to locate yet another social service facility with high need individuals in the district, especially with 29 homeless shelter sites in a 22-block radius. Despite this, 343 West 44<sup>th</sup> Street, the Ramada Inn, has opened as a temporary hotel shelter, with no information provided to MCB4 prior to opening.

## **Community Concerns & Requests**

- **Concentration of High Need Social Service Residents**

Concentrating a high need social service population in a 22-block radius is not a strategy for success, either for the clients or the community.

In MCD4, in Hell's Kitchen in a 22-block radius (West 35<sup>th</sup> Street to West 57<sup>th</sup> Street) there are currently 29 homeless shelter sites with 2,039 shelter beds with approximately 2,439 individuals, leased by either DHS or Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) in the West 30s, West 40s, and West 50s.

In addition, in that same 22-block radius there are 15 supportive housing developments with 983 units.

- **Public Safety Concerns for this location**

As of November 2023, out of 77 New York City Police precincts, Midtown South Precinct (MTS)<sup>2</sup> is in the top 3 precincts for narcotic arrests citywide.

The majority of those arrests have taken place in the 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor from West 34<sup>th</sup> to West 45<sup>th</sup> Streets. Heroin sales are centered to the south from West 34<sup>th</sup> to West 38<sup>th</sup>, while crack sales predominate from West 39<sup>th</sup> to West 45<sup>th</sup>. 343 West 44<sup>th</sup> Street sits in an active drug market, where crack sales dominate. The serious crime and lack of public safety in this corridor has necessitated a NYPD mobile command center on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and West 38<sup>th</sup> along with NYPD pole mounted flood lights along 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the West 30s and 40s.

Given this shelter location, MCB4 requests additional security both in and around the perimeter of the block to ensure the safety of sheltered individuals. MCB4 also requests DHS staff to attend the MTS Precinct Community Council meetings to keep themselves informed of community concerns and NYPD enforcement updates.

- **Community Advisory Board**

MCB4 understands DHS is committed to creating a Community Advisory Board to

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<sup>2</sup> Midtown South Precinct is bounded by 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the west, West 29<sup>th</sup> Street on the south, Lexington Avenue on the east from East 29<sup>th</sup> Street to East 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Madison Avenue on the east from East 34<sup>th</sup> Street to East 40<sup>th</sup> Street, Lexington Avenue on the east from East 40<sup>th</sup> to 45<sup>th</sup>, and East 45<sup>th</sup> Street on the north.

ensure that the site, irrespective of provider, is well integrated into the community, and that community concerns are addressed. Please work with MCB4 to ensure membership is broad and includes many community stakeholders.

- **Lack of and Future Planning for Shelter Siting**

After months of requests that DHS advise and consult with MCB4 in advance of siting shelters, DHS continues to locate shelters in Hell's Kitchen without any planning process or communication with the affected community. DHS has told the Board, month after month, "We hear you; we understand your concerns regarding the greatly increased number of shelter beds. We are taking those concerns very seriously." And the following month, another shelter is sited in MCD4, usually on a late Friday afternoon. These actions are then explained as part of the homeless or asylum seeker emergency. The Board notes, **even in emergencies and constantly changing situations,** some planning and certainly communication with other city agencies, namely MCB4 is highly important and expected. (See attached map for shelter sitings).

The ongoing lack of timely information, lack of timely response and lack of inclusion and transparency in the siting processes has seriously undermined our community's trust in DHS and Mayor Adams' administration. MCB4, even while managing solid working relationships with DHS staff, simply can no longer rely on information provided by the Agency to be truthful or accurate.

MCB4 is not in opposition to the planned and appropriate siting of shelters in Community District 4 but cannot support the clustering of a large number of facilities in a several-block radius. To address this lack of planning, MCB4 requests DHS, and other relevant city agencies as needed, engage in a process to identify shelter sites within MCD4 that it may be considering, so that DHS and other social services operators can benefit from local knowledge on surrounding context and conditions.

In addition to engaging in a proactive planning process, MCB4 requests that City Hall and its agencies review the Request For Proposal process for the siting of shelters and social services to include community input at the beginning of the siting process.

### **Manhattan Community Board, a City Agency**

MCB4, like the Department of Social Services, is a New York City agency, with Charter defined roles. To operate effectively, MCB4 should serve as both a conduit of public information to the public and generator of community issues and concerns to City agencies to notify them of neighborhood context, history and background to inform their decision making. With local information, New York City programs can better integrate and succeed in neighborhoods, and

that integration is especially critical for programs serving the homeless, whether service- or residential-based. It is critical for the City to notify the Community Board early on before social service providers and shelters move into the community so that it can be ready to answer any questions and to help manage the process.

MCB4 has appreciated DHS and the City's partnership in the past, but the key aspect of listening to the community has been removed from DHS's philosophy. Shelters and social services are not successful without the thoughtful input, support, and partnership between agencies and the community. That factor in the siting process must return to ensure the success of facilities and shelters. Without community input, the ensuing result has been a clustering of social services and homeless shelters on multiple blocks, creating unintended consequences and compromising public safety.

Furthermore, DHS must work with other City agencies to more evenly distribute social service facilities and shelters throughout the five boroughs to prevent concentration in any one neighborhood.

### **Conclusion**

**To ensure the success of social service facilities and shelters, they must be sited thoughtfully and carefully, with facilities distributed more evenly among neighborhoods and community districts.** MCB4 asks that City Hall and the Department of Homeless Services engage in a proactive planning process for siting social services facilities.

It is clear that responding to community notifications after decisions have already been made about locations and providers does little to address ongoing community concerns. *That lack of such discussion and input in advance has turned our hospitable community away from its welcoming approach for proposed new social service facilities.*

However, social service facilities, when planned in appropriate and thoughtful locations, with community input, are welcomed and encouraged. The most recent proposed social service facility in in MCD4 is Bayview Chelsea (550 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street), the newest reuse of a historic YMCA building into Supportive Housing for homeless individuals Supervised Housing for homeless mentally ill and a Community Center. After full public discussion, review and debate, the proposal was supported unanimously by the MCB4 [on February 1, 2023](#).

MCB4 asks DHS to respond to the community concerns and requests as raised by and in response to the temporary hotel shelter relocation at the Ramada Inn, 343 West 44<sup>th</sup> Street, **and ask DHS to communicate and consult with MCB4 in advance of any siting of any shelters**, as noted above.

The Board looks forward to rebuilding trust and cooperation with DHS.

Sincerely,



Jessica Chait  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 4



Joe Restuccia  
Chair  
Housing, Health, Human Services  
Committee



Maria Ortiz  
Chair  
Housing, Health, Human Services  
Committee

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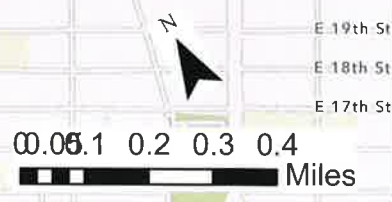
- ### Homeless Shelter/Social Service Facility
0. Long Acre Hotel, CUCS/Urban Pathways, 317 West 45th Street, 160 beds
  4. Jack Ryan, Bowery Residents Committee, 127/131 West 25th Street, 200 beds
  5. Puerto Rico Family Institute, 145 West 15th Street
  6. Trinity Presbyterian Church, Partnership for the Homeless, 422 West 57th Street, 10 beds
  7. Hartley House, 413 West 46th Street
  11. Dwelling Place, Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, 409 West 40th Street, 15 beds
  12. Sylvia's Place at Metropolitan Church, 446 West 36th Street
  13. Travel Inn Hotel, Acacia, 515 West 42nd Street, 81 beds
  16. Safe Haven, Urban Pathways, 301 West 48th Street, 10 beds
  17. Homes for the Homeless, 519 West 49th Street, 81 beds
  22. Damayan Migrant Workers Association, 406 West 40th Street
  26. Alexander Abraham Residence, Women in Need, 341 West 51st Street, 70 beds
  29. 43rd Street Veterans Program, Samaritan Daytop Village, 327 West 43rd Street, 48 beds
  30. NY State Parole Board, 314 West 40th Street
  31. New Alternatives, 410 West 40th Street
  32. DHS Family Shelter, Westhab, 440 West 41st Street, 120 beds
  33. Barbour House, Praxis House, 330 West 36th Street, 100 beds
  34. Housing Works Positive Health Project, 301 West 37th Street
  35. Salvation Army Rehabilitation Center, 535 West 48th Street
  40. 52nd Street Women's Shelter, Care for the Homeless, 427 West 52nd Street, 120 beds
  41. West Midtown Medical Group, 311 West 35th Street
  43. Project Find Coffee House, Holy Cross Church, 329 West 42nd Street
  47. Salvation Army Center, 315 West 47th Street
  49. Gay Men's Health Crisis and Housing Services United, 307 West 38th Street
  50. Red Cross, 520 West 49th Street
  52. Young Adult Institute, 120 West 16th Street
  - Covenant House, 460 West 41st Street, 120 beds

- ### Supportive Housing
1. Geffner House, Project Renewal, 351 West 42nd Street, 313 beds
  2. 500 West 42nd Street, CHDC, 500 West 42nd Street, 66 beds
  3. Christopher Residence, Common Ground, 202 West 24th Street, 62 beds
  8. 448 West 48th Street, Project Renewal, 448 West 48th Street, 41 beds
  9. St. Francis II, Franciscans, 151 West 22nd Street, 115 beds
  10. Stardom Hall, Lantern Group, 332 West 51st Street, 112 beds
  14. 105 West 17th Street, 105 West 17th Street, 18 beds
  15. 424 West 47th Street, Fountain House, 424 West 47th Street, 15 beds
  18. 300 West 46th Street, CHDC, 300 West 46th Street, 68 beds
  21. 353 West 30th Street, CHDC, 352 West 30th Street, 32 beds
  23. Postgraduate Center Community Residence, 516 West 50th Street, 20 beds
  25. St. Francis III, Franciscans, 148 8th Avenue, 79 beds
  27. 441 West 47th Street, Fountain House, 441 West 47th Street, 20 beds
  28. 347 West 37th Street, Fountain House, 30 beds
  36. Flemister House, American Baptist Churches, 527 West 22nd Street, 50 beds
  37. 454 West 35th Street, CHDC, 454 West 35th Street, 52 beds
  38. Frederic Fleming House, 443 West 22nd Street, 47 beds
  39. Volunteers of America, 226 West 26th Street, 52 beds
  42. Wanaque, Fountain House, 359 West 47th Street, 42 beds
  44. The Friedman, Common Ground, Actor's Fund, 475 West 57th Street, 98 beds
  45. Ivan Shapiro House, Urban Pathways, 459 West 46th Street, 47 beds
  46. The Flats/Old School, CHDC, 554 West 53rd Street, 52 beds

- ### Temporary Shelter for Asylum Seekers
19. Washington Jefferson Hotel, 318 West 51st Street, 160 beds
  20. Econo Lodge, 300 West 47th Street
  24. Watson Hotel, 440 West 57th Street, 600 beds
  48. Skyline Hotel, 725 10th Avenue, 230 beds
  51. Artel Hotel, 305 West 39th Street, 73 beds

## CB4 Shelters and Supportive Housing

- ### Facility Type
- Homeless Shelter/Social Service Facility
  - Supportive Housing
  - Temporary Shelters for Asylum Seekers
  - CB4 Boundary



W 13th St

E 14th St  
E 13th St