



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JESSICA CHAIT
Chair

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District Manager

May 16, 2024

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

**Re: 771 9th Avenue
Urban Pathways
Proposed Drop-In Center Location for Unhoused Persons**

Dear Commissioner Park,

At Manhattan Community Board 4's (MCB4) Housing, Health, and Human Services (HHHS) Committee meeting on April 4th, 2024, the committee received a presentation from Lisa Lombardi, Deputy Executive Director of Urban Pathways, regarding their new location for a drop-in center for unhoused persons (Drop-In Center) at 771 9th Avenue. Urban Pathways currently operates the Olivieri Drop-In Center at 257 West 30th Street. MCB4 appreciates the work of Urban Pathways in supporting unhoused individuals and hope to support its endeavors with community engagement and incorporation of our concerns and requests below.

Urban Pathways

Urban Pathways is a non-profit organization founded in 1975 in New York City. Operating in Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens, Urban Pathways addresses complex challenges of homelessness and housing insecurity through providing thousands of people annually through street outreach, care programs, and permanent supportive housing programs. Urban Pathways provides the following services:

- Outreach
- Drop-in centers and transitional housing
- Rapid rehousing
- Extended-stay and permanent supportive housing
- Case management and wellness education

- Employment assistance
- Advocacy

Urban Pathways operates in 7 outreach locations across New York City, and owns, manages, and leases 13 buildings, serving 735 people in supportive housing.

Background

Drop-In Centers

Drop-In Centers are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They are the first points of contacts for clients of Urban Pathways, offering services from providing hot meals, showers, and clothing, to more evaluative care including case management support, health assessments, and crisis intervention for unhoused adults. Unlike shelters, Drop-In Centers do not provide any beds; however, seating for overnight stays are available. Case managers, housing specialists, and other related staff are present at Drop-In Centers to connect unhoused persons with housing through regular engagement, care, and assistance.

771 9th Avenue Drop-In Center

771 9th Avenue, located on West 52nd Street and 9th Avenue, is a four-story building located in the Special Clinton District¹. Its completion as a Drop-In Center for Urban Pathways is planned in the next few months, as noted in the project timeline below.

The HHHS committee expressed MCB4's concern about the illegal drug use and presence of illegal cannabis storefronts in proximity to 771 9th Avenue, and Urban Pathways clarified their engagement with harm reduction models to their clients that would address this concern and noted their inability to enforce unlicensed and illegal drug activity in the area. Urban Pathways underscored their client-centered, solution-based approach to homelessness and housing insecurity through the management of care centers and group homes. The Drop-In Center is directly in front of the M11 bus stop, and MCB4 expresses concern regarding how loitering will be perceived. Clients waiting to get into the Drop-In Center should be queued differently than those waiting for the bus.

Project Development Timeline

Urban Pathways proposes the following timeline for the 771 9th Avenue Drop-In-Center:

- April/May 2024: Initial plan for completion, which has been delayed due to delays in receiving a temporary certificate of occupancy (TCO).
- Summer 2024: Newly proposed date for project development completion.

Proposed Use of Space

Urban Pathways proposes the following floor plan for the 771 9th Avenue Drop-In-Center :

- Basement: kitchen and laundry room
- First floor: client space
- Second floor: offices
- Third floor: client space
- Fourth floor: offices

The client spaces have a capacity for 70-75 clients, with case managers and housing specialists monitoring these spaces. Urban Pathways clarified that they are expecting to have one case manager for every 15-17 clients and 12-14 security guards. The supervisor, program director,

nurses, and related staff will also be present in these client spaces. The client spaces have built-in capacities for reprogramming.

MCB4 Requests

MCB4 requests the following from Urban Pathways regarding the 771 9th Avenue Drop-In Center location.

Community Transparency

- Urban Pathways to schedule a meeting with MCB4 approximately one and two weeks prior to opening the proposed 771 9th Avenue to discuss and address community expectations, demystify information that may be presented to the broader community, and inform the broader community of Drop-In Center plans.
- Urban Pathways to schedule a meeting with the HK 49-54 Block Alliance one and two weeks prior to opening the proposed 771 9th Avenue to discuss and address community expectations and how the Drop-In Center will be a partner within the neighborhood.
- When the 771 9th Avenue Drop-In Center is open and operating, Urban Pathways to establish a Community Advisory Board (CAB) to maintain consistent communication with the community.

Facility Management

- MCB4 calls for all Urban Pathways facilities in Manhattan Community District 4(MCD4), particularly the Ivan Schapiro House on 459 West 46th Street, to be more outward facing to better connect and integrate with the surrounding community. We recommend that the facilities have the following external features:
 - Front desks for all Urban Pathways facilities should be facing the street.
 - Building facades should be consistent with the surrounding neighborhood character.
 - Greenery around Urban Pathways facilities should be appropriately managed and maintained.
- MCB4 requests a high standard of maintenance and community integration with the new 771 9th Avenue development considering MCB4's concerns with illicit drug activities in the proximate area of the proposed location.

Conclusion

MCB4 appreciates the presentation and the offer made by Urban Pathways for a walking tour of the Drop-In Center facility prior to opening. Addressing community expectations and the aforementioned concerns is critical to the success of this center as a partner within MCD4. MCB4 looks forward to future meetings with Urban Pathways to support a successful operation of the 771 9th Avenue Drop-In Center.

Sincerely,



Jessica Chait
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Joe Restuccia
Chair
Housing, Health, Human Services
Committee



Maria Ortiz
Chair
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