Content

Final Report

Scope of Work .......................................................... 3
  Section 8 Conversion .............................................. 4
  Public Space ......................................................... 4
  Columbia Expansion Impacts .................................. 5
  Tax-Exempt Status ................................................ 6

Programs

Programs: .............................................................. 8

For Developers:
  Cornerstone Program ............................................ 9

For Homeowners:
  Article 8A Loan Program ...................................... 10

For Homeowners / Homebuilders:
  Preservation Participation Loan Program .................. 11

For Residents / Landlords:
  West Harlem Group Assistance, Inc. ...................... 12

For Tenants:
  Tenant’s Rights .................................................. 13
  HPD’s Housing Education Services .......................... 13
  City-Wide Task Force on Housing Court .................. 13
  Legal Assistance for Low-Income New York Residents 14
  New York City Rent Guidelines Board ....................... 14

Contact Information

Contacts ............................................................... 15

Appendix

HPD Preservation Finance Underwriting Criteria ............... Appendix A
Tenant’s Rights FAQ’s ............................................. Appendix B
Scope of Work
Final Report

Scope of Work

At our initial meeting on January 22, 2008, the Residents Association asked our group to help address four concerns:

1) Determine the details of the New York City Housing Authority’s plans to convert a certain number of units in the Manhattanville Houses from traditional public housing to the Section 8 program in order to increase federal subsidies to cover the Housing Authority’s $200 million deficit.

2) Find out if there are any plans to sell or otherwise take open space or parking spaces at the Manhattanville Houses for the same financial reasons.

3) Obtain tax-exempt status so that the Residents Association may better raise funds for community-based activities.

4) Assess certain impacts of the Columbia University expansion on the Manhattanville Houses and surrounding community.

Through contacts at the New York City Housing Authority, Columbia University and the Harlem Office of the Legal Aid Society we were able to obtain the following information:

Section 8 Conversion

On February 26, 2008, we met with Assistant Deputy General Manager Ilene Popkin and public affairs officer Lisa Diaz at the New York City Housing Authority. Ms. Diaz informed us that 575 of the 1,272 units at the Manhattanville Houses will be converted to the Section 8 program (45% of the units) in order to make up for the funding gap due to a lack of state and federal funding.

As of May 6, 2008, 27 units were being kept vacant for eventual conversion to Section 8.

As for the demographics of the Section 8 waiting list, Ms. Diaz explained to us that the public housing and Section 8 waiting lists are virtually identical. As of September 30, 2007 there were 125,564 families on the waiting list for conventional public housing and 160,676 families on the Section 8 waiting list (which was reopened in February 2007 and closed again in May 2007). 53,606 applicants were on both lists.

Public Space

Regarding the public space at the Manhattanville Houses, the New York City Housing Authority informed us that there are currently no plans to sell or convert any open space or parking spaces at the Manhattanville Houses. It will be at least a year before this would happen (if it happens) and the Housing Authority will hold meetings to discuss in advance any space that is to be taken or converted.
Final Report

Scope of Work (cont.)

Columbia Expansion

We forwarded the Residents Association’s four primary questions to Nilda Mesa, Assistant Vice President of Environmental Stewardship at Columbia, who met with our group, along with Ramesh Raman, Executive Director of Construction Field Compliance at Columbia, during class time in February. We received a reply from La-Verna Fountain, Associate Vice President for Public Affairs at Columbia’s Office of Communications and Public Affairs.

Ms. Fountain’s answers to the Residents Association’s questions are listed below in bold. Additionally, she emphasized in an email to our group that the University is more than willing to meet with the Residents Association as frequently as it would like in order to address any additional concerns, or if the answers below are insufficient. Mr. Raman made a similar offer to provide a tour of sites near the World Trade Center in order to see construction mitigation techniques that will be used by Columbia if anyone at the Manhattanville Houses is interested. We urge the Residents Association to feel free to contact Ms. Fountain, Ms. Mesa or Mr. Raman if any other issues arise concerning Columbia’s expansion in Manhattanville.

1) Will there be drilling of any kind occurring beneath the elevated train tracks on Broadway between 125th and 133rd Streets?

The plan does not call for drilling below these tracks. Utility relocation work will occur on Broadway.

2) Will the underground excavation of parking areas (seven stories underground) have any effects that may cause or lead to an increased possibility of flooding in the neighborhood?

The basement will have no effect on the flooding potential in the neighborhood.

3) Are there any fault lines that Columbia University will need to be aware of while performing construction?

The University’s construction will conform to the New York City Building Code. The Code takes into account seismic parameters for the design of buildings. One of the six faults that cross Manhattan is known as the 125th Street fault.
Final Report

Scope of Work (cont.)

Columbia Expansion (cont.)

4) There were concerns that past construction work on Broadway in the vicinity of 132nd and 133rd Streets was occurring early, ending late and taking place on weekends. While we are unclear if this was Columbia-related construction or not (it may have been Con Ed doing prep work for the Columbia expansion), the residents of Manhattanville Houses are concerned that such scheduling will take place during the various phases of Columbia’s expansion. Does Columbia University plan on doing any construction that will occur early/late/on weekends?

Construction work will typically occur between 7 am and 3 pm Monday through Friday. There will be instances of after hours and weekend work for utility work and other special cases. We will provide advance notice of such exceptions.

Obtaining Tax-Exempt Status

We spoke with Christina Runje, who is currently working as an extern attorney at the Legal Aid Society. Ms. Runje is currently filling in for Mr. Gonzalez, who is on vacation until May 12th, 2008. Ms. Runje outlined the steps that the Residents Association will need to take in order to begin the process of obtaining 501(c)(3) status:

- Call the Legal Aid Society (phone numbers and details listed below).
- They will ask several very basic questions about the organization and what kind of help it is seeking.
- A questionnaire will be mailed to the Residents Association that will ask more detailed questions about the group. It should be no longer than ten pages, but the Legal Aid Society also recommends sending copies of any and all relevant paper work (for example, information about funding, activities that would receive funding, members of the board, operating budgets, etc.)

The paperwork and questionnaire will be reviewed. If the Legal Aid Society approves of everything that was sent in, a member of the Residents Association will be called in for an interview.
Scope of Work (cont.)

Obtaining Tax-Exempt Status (cont.)

Unfortunately the Harlem Office of the Legal Aid Society is undergoing construction, so it can be a little confusing to track down certain people at certain offices, but the following is the most up-to-date contact information available.

If calling this week (May 7th – May 9th):
(212) 426-3032 – Ms. Runje

If calling next week (May 12th – May 16th):
(212) 426-3054 – Mr. Gonzalez

If calling any other time:
(212) 426-3000 - This is the general intake number. When someone answers, ask for the Community Development Project.

Ms. Runje said that it is perfectly acceptable for someone from our group to assist the Residents Association in filling out the paperwork or attending any meetings (if the Residents Association desires any assistance).

Attached we have provided a list of programs designed to promote affordable housing and additional social services in the Manhattanville and the greater Harlem community that may be of use to the Residents Association. We have also included a list of contact information for groups and individuals that we hope will be able to help the Residents Association after our studio has completed.

Please feel free to contact Chester Hartman if you feel that he can be of any additional help to the group, or Tyler Fairbairn if you would like his assistance in meeting with the Harlem Office of the Legal Aid Society. Their contact information is provided in the attached contact list.

Thank you very much for allowing us to work with you over the course of the past three and a half months. We hope that the information we have provided can be of help to the Residents Association.
Programs
Programs: For Developers

The Cornerstone Program

The Cornerstone Program is an initiative sponsored by New York City’s Department of Housing Preservation and Development ("HPD"). Its aim is to enable the construction of new, multi-family, mixed-income housing on City-owned land.

HPD anticipates that during the 2007 and 2008 Fiscal Years, over 3,500 new housing opportunities will be developed.

The Cornerstone Program draws funding from several sources, including:

- HPD’s Mixed Income Rental Program
- The New York City Housing Development Corporation’s New Housing Opportunities Program, Low Income Affordable Marketplace Program, and Cooperative Housing Program
- New York State’s Affordable Housing Corporation and Homes For Working Families Program
  - Provides grants to governmental, non-profit and charitable groups who build, acquire/rehabilitate or improve homes for low and moderate income families
  - Grants do not go directly to those seeking housing; municipalities/home builders receive grants, and are in turn responsible for ensuring that income affordability requirements are met
- The New York City Housing Partnership Development Corporation

Aims to create affordable housing and develop neighborhoods through public-private partnerships; have created or rehabilitated over 30,000 affordable units in NYC

Contact information
Phone: (212) 863-5998

Links
Cornerstone Program:  

New York State Affordable Housing Corporation:  
http://www.nyhomes.org/home/index.asp?page=50

Homes for Working Families:  
http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us/ocd/progs/hwf/ocdprghw.htm

Housing Partnership Development Corporation:  
http://www.housingpartnership.com/
Programs: For Homeowners

Article 8A Loan Program

The Article 8A Loan Program provides rehabilitation loans to improve building conditions in multiple dwellings. Loans are limited to up to $35,000 per dwelling unit with no maximum set for individual buildings.

Individuals, partnerships and corporations are eligible for these loans, however the borrower must own the property, or have a contract to purchase the property. Building owners must be unable to acquire private financing, and preference is given to buildings that have been maintained in accordance with the City’s Housing Maintenance Code.

Only buildings occupied by low-income tenants are eligible for this program. Please refer to Appendix A for complete program criteria.

Contact information
Phone: (212) 863-6412

Link
Preservation Participation Loan Program

The Preservation Participation Loan Program provides low-interest loans to private residential building owners for the rehabilitation of low- to moderate-income housing. Funding may also be used for acquisition in conjunction with rehabilitation.

Eligible buildings include vacant and occupied privately-owned residential and mixed-use buildings housing low- and moderate income residents. One- and two-family owner occupied buildings are also eligible, as are Single Room Occupancy buildings.

One- and two-family homes must apply through Neighborhood Housing Services. The application is accessible through the following website:


Contact information
Phone: (212) 863-6447

Link
Programs: For Residents / Landlords

West Harlem Group Assistance, Inc.

West Harlem Group Assistance is a community based development corporation that was established 30 years ago to help develop and revitalize Central and West Harlem communities. Their portfolio of affordable housing currently consists of 1,200 units (800 self-managed, 116 for homeless families, 167 for elderly).

West Harlem Group Assistance provides a range of affordable housing options, but they also work to ensure that Harlem residents have access to educational and job training services that will allow them develop a sustainable future.

WHGA assists other Harlem landlords and their low-income tenants through its Neighborhood Preservation Consultant Program. This program is designed to make affordable housing more accessible to Harlem residents who need it, and features services and counseling to prevent/offset the impacts of homelessness and displacement. Additionally, they offer:

- Eviction prevention/relocation services
- Section 8 assistance
- Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption program assistance
- AIDS services

West Harlem Group Assistance also has a Home Preservation Program to help low-income tenants address potentially hazardous building code violations.

The group also runs five different technology centers through its other companies. These centers provide access to computers, internet services and GED and ESL courses. They are located at:

Contact information
Phone: (212) 281-5552; (212) 862-1399

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harriet Tubman Family Living Center</th>
<th>Mannie L. Wilson Towers</th>
<th>Convent Avenue Family Living Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>138 West 143rd Street</td>
<td>565 Manhattan Avenue</td>
<td>22 Convent Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York, NY 10030-1615</td>
<td>New York, NY 10027</td>
<td>New York, NY 10027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (212) 281-1650</td>
<td>Phone: (212) 862-1399</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fax: (212) 862-3281

Link
www.whgainc.org
Tenants Rights Information

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) has compiled a list of frequently asked questions regarding the rights that a tenant has.

Please refer to Appendix B for the full text of this document.

HPD’s Housing Education Services

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development offers a variety of training programs through its Housing Education Services program. These programs are designed to help building owners, housing managers, superintendents and tenants understand the nuances of home ownership and preserve the character of their neighborhoods by maintaining their homes and buildings.

Link

City-wide Taskforce on Housing Court

The City-Wide Task Force on Housing Court is a non-profit coalition aimed at addressing the systematic challenges to justice in New York City Housing Court.

While the group does not provide legal services, they offer information about housing court procedures and work to provide people with the information necessary to obtain legal services to meet their particular housing court needs.

Link
http://www.cwtfhc.org/

Contact Information
Phone: (212) 962-4795
Legal Assistance for Low-Income New Yorkers

The following is a link to lawhelp.org/ny. This site provides information about organizations that offer free legal help to residents of the state of New York.

Income limits vary depending on the program and the legal issue to be addressed, however general yearly income limits set by the federal government state that a family of four must not be making more than $41,300 to receive free legal assistance.

The Housing section of the website specific links to issues such as:

- Eviction
- Housing discrimination
- Landlord/tenant disputes
- Tenant group representation
- Homeless families and individuals
- Rent control and stabilization

For public housing and Section 8 issues alone, there are 25 different resources to assist individuals or families meeting a wide range of criteria.

Link: http://www.lawhelp.org/NY/StateHome_icons.cfm/county/%20/city/New%20York/demoMode/=%201/Language/1/State/NY/TextOnly/N/zipcode/%20/LoggedIn/0

New York City Rent Guidelines Board

The New York City Rent Guidelines Board has on its website useful information for and about finding affordable housing.

Contact Information

Contacts

New York City Housing Authority

Lisa Diaz, Public Relations Officer  
Email: Lisa.diaz@nycha.nyc.gov

Ilene Popkin, Assistant Deputy General Manager  
Email: Ilene.Popkin@nycha.nyc.gov

Columbia University (for construction-related inquiries)

La-Verna J. Fountain, Associate Vice President for Public Affairs  
Phone: (212) 854-6595  
Fax: (212) 678-4817  
Email: ljfountain@columbia.edu

Nilda Mesa, Assistant VP, Environmental Stewardship  
Phone: (212) 854-6128  
Email: nmesa@columbia.edu

Ramesh Raman, Executive Director, Construction Field Compliance  
Phone: (212) 851-7261  
Email: rraman@columbia.edu

Legal Aid Society, Harlem Office

General Intake, Community Development Project  
Phone: (212) 426-3000

Columbia Studio Contacts

Tyler Fairbairn, (for assistance with legal aid)  
Email: wtf2103@columbia.edu

Chester Hartman, (for general questions)  
Phone: (202) 906-8025  
Email: chartman@prrac.org
Appendix B
Produced for

The Manhattanville
Residents Association

by

the Manhattanville Housing Studio Group

at

Columbia University
Urban Planning Studio
May 7, 2008