



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6**

1932 Arthur Avenue, Room 403-A, Bronx, NY 10457

Telephone: (718) 579-6990 Fax: (718) 579-6875 Email: bronxcb6@bronxcb6.org

Honorable Vanessa L. Gibson, Bronx Borough President

Honorable Oswald Feliz, New York City Council Member

MS. EVONNE CAPERS
Board Chairperson

MR. RAFAEL MOURE-PUNNETT
District Manager

January 23, 2022

Gary Jenkins
Commissioner, NYC Department of Homeless Services
33 Beaver Street, 17th Floor
New York, NY 10004

New York City has a pressing homeless services issue, with an ever-increasing number of people in homeless shelters and need to open new shelters. Bronx Community District 6 has served as one of the neighborhoods where the Department of Homeless Services has chosen to site shelters, with 23 permanent shelters, 2 shelters for migrants, and a 24th shelter in the process of being opened on Webster Avenue. This continued expansion of housing for homeless people in CD6 continues despite 8 Community Districts in NYC having no shelters. The current process of siting shelters is dysfunctional – DHS offers a citywide Request for Proposal, and then overwhelmingly accepts proposals for new shelters in low-income communities of color. This approach has led to a disproportionate burden on communities like Community District 6 to provide temporary housing. This flies in the face of the city’s supposed “Fair Share” rules. It creates the appearance that DHS is willing to sacrifice the well-being of shelter residents and community well-being to save money on shelter costs or avoid protest from affluent communities.

As you may be aware, children living in NYC homeless shelters face enormous challenges to their success through no fault of their own. Research shows that students in shelter are twice as likely to be chronically absent and three times as likely to drop out of high school as compared to their peers [NYTimes](#). By choosing to concentrate hundreds of children in shelters in certain neighborhoods, NYC DHS is concentrating high needs students in schools that do not have the capacity to provide extra resources so these children can succeed. NYC DHS, with no input from community, is choosing to create schools with growing populations of children in shelters and guaranteeing that all children in these neighborhoods will have less access to school-based resources to share as student need rises.

NYC DHS is undermining our communities’ efforts to increase our housing supply. From 2010 to 2020, Bronx Community District 6’s housing supply increased by 3,530 units, a 12% increase. Bronx CB6 is again doing more than its fair share of building new housing so that families can have

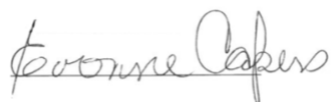
permanent homes. However, NYC DHS has chosen to remove more than 1,000 units of housing out of our local housing supply by using them for shelters. NYC DHS is choosing to create transient neighborhoods, where residents stay for a year or two and then move out of the shelter system. This prevents community organizing and building community power, as many of our residents do not live in our community for the long term. We understand that DHS looks to build shelters in communities where homeless individuals were previously residing, but this practice is creating a cycle of removing permanent housing from the neighborhood and warehousing shelters.

Community Board 6 members are also increasingly concerned about the continued concentration of shelters for asylum seekers. As asylum seekers continue to be bussed to NYC, DHS has been siting shelters at hotels for these families, with two such hotels in Community District 6. This leaves Community Board 6 members with the impression that not only are we hosting more than our fair share of permanent shelters, but we are also hosting more than our fair share of migrant shelters, turning local hotels into permanent shelters.

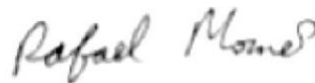
Lastly, Community Board 6 works to create and promote the existing social services in our District and acknowledges that there are very limited social services available in our District for tenants facing eviction. Without sufficient resources to support residents, the city has created a self-perpetuating cycle of eviction and shelter construction in our community.

Community Board 6 calls on DHS to immediately halt construction on the shelter on Webster Avenue. We call on DHS to immediately cease its current process of RFPs for shelters, and create a zip code-based RFP system, like many other city RFPs. Without dictating to providers which zip codes shelters can be placed in, DHS will continue to concentrate poverty and high-needs populations in neighborhoods that do not have the capacity to uplift shelter residents and will lead to further overuse of the limited social services in those communities.

Regards,



Evonne Capers
Chair
Bronx Community Board 6



Rafael Moure-Punnett
District Manager
Bronx Community Board 6