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**City Council Oversight: Sanitation and Recycling Practices at NYCHA Developments  
May 23, 2013**

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The Community Board 3 district is designated by DOH as an UAR area (urgent action required). CB 3 has an overall rodent problem, and we have a large number of NYCHA developments (14,500 NYCHA units). This is over 26% of the NYCHA units in Manhattan and 8% of NYCHA units citywide. Many NYCHA developments, like our parks with serious problems, have land where rodents can burrow and they are densely populated, and therefore generate a lot of garbage. It is therefore not surprising that we have a serious rodent problem on our NYCHA properties. Our residents don't complain in numbers corresponding to the problem, but we have been working very closely with DOH for the last three years, and DOH has inspected many NYCHA sites through the neighborhood rat indexing program, and has indexed the entire district annually for the last three years. CB 3 has been working very closely with DOHMH since the beginning of the indexing process, particularly after the first indexing results when we were ranked as having the second worst rat problem in Manhattan. We have been specifically working with Caroline Bragdon, who is a research scientist and the Manhattan Indexing and UAR Coordinator. We have also had the good fortune to have Dr. Bobby Corrigan, who is a worldwide acknowledged urban rat expert.

The biggest obstacle in reducing serious problems is holding city agencies accountable when DOH has issued referrals for city-owned properties. The process is for DOH to make referrals to the owner agency when there is a finding of rat infestation. NYCHA has been in the top three agencies receiving referrals from DOH. The City-owned properties are an area of focus for CB 3 because of the number of properties that have failed for rat infestation. There is not a process to hold agencies accountable as there is for private properties. This includes NYCHA. Dealing with rats is difficult—but it seems that NYCHA developments are not receiving the best rat abatement that is possible—and that is not acceptable.

Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES) has been working with NYCHA residents and some developments are beginning to be organized to better report rodent problems. The resident organizing along with the Community Board and elected officials working to coordinate city agencies on this issue has brought some attention and effort and NYCHA has been more responsive recently.

CB 3 has been working closely with DOH for the last several years and encouraging workshops and trainings for residents. DOH has also reported they have trainings for NYCHA staff. CB 3 has taken on the role of coordinating agencies to respond to rat problems, and in 2012 CB 3 hosted a meeting where agencies came together to coordinate response to rodent problems. For NYCHA properties, the impacted agencies are Parks, DOT, and Sanitation. At the time of the meeting, NYCHA reported that their focus was not rats as they were more concerned about bedbugs, and their resources were directed toward the bedbug problem. It appeared that the agency was short staffed and did not have resources to respond in the most effective manner to rat problems.

There needs to be a protocol for agencies to work together as rats obviously do not stay within agency areas of jurisdiction. For instance, we observed rat burrows in a broken curb/street bed. First there was

discussion back and forth between agencies as to which agency was responsible. It is DOT responsibility to fix, but it must be reported to DOT by NYCHA. When CB 3 tried to follow up, we were told that we had to have NYCHA list this as a higher priority, so we went back and forth between agencies to make sure this was reported and then to have the priority bumped up. This was reported by us after the March walkthrough—but we are still waiting for this to be fixed, even though it is a high priority.

We also observed serious problems evidenced by large rat boroughs in Parks property in Baruch and also in a Joint Operated Playground in Wald Housing under Parks jurisdiction. After this observation, both DOH and I reported these to the Parks Borough Commissioner, and these areas are now being baited and there is follow up. But, this depended on random observation by the CB and DOH. There seems to be no protocol to ensure this property is monitored.

NYCHA staff seems to believe the problem is often with residents not disposing of garbage properly. There definitely seems to be tension between staff and residents on this issue and it is not being addressed. DOH conducts staff trainings for pest control staff for all NYCHA properties every year. On March 13 CB 3 organized a rodent walk through with DOH and NYCHA, and elected officials and GOLES, who in turn organized residents who had the first-hand experience of rodent areas. This was at Baruch, but was not about just Baruch—we understood the problems there were representative of problems in NYCHA developments. However, Baruch is significant because it is the largest development in Manhattan with 3,200 units. The walkthrough was extremely productive. I am not the expert—the findings were all pointed out by DOH and I hope that you will have the opportunity to ask DOH to explain the specifics of these issues. I would particularly hope that you would ask DOH about the agency trainings of NYCHA staff and what they observed was followed and what was not.

1. We observed tracking powder along the exterior of buildings. This is toxic and should not have been accessible to the public. NYCHA acknowledged there were no bait stations. DOH always installs bait stations in severe infestations. NYCHA reported that they did not have resources, but the bait stations would soon be provided.
2. Doors and basement windows were open. This allows rats easy access to buildings. Residents reported some buildings in which they would never enter basements because of so many rats.
3. We opened an electric box—and a huge rat jumped out. This should have been monitored for rats and should have been sealed so that rats could not enter. Open boxes not only shelter rats, it allows rats to chew on the electrical wiring.
4. There were stagnant pools of water –hoses from a boiler room were draining water through open windows. Water attracts rats and the open windows bring them indoors so they can penetrate the entire building.
5. Baiting was not implemented properly. DOH has instructed staff in how to bait –but instructions are not followed. We observed bait that was sitting on top of rat burrows. It is poison and should not be visible. Also, to be effective, it should be inserted deep down in burrows.
6. Compactors have been installed in most of our NYCHA developments to help with the garbage problem which is causing much of the rat problem. However, if compactors are not kept clean they feed the rats. There have been many complaints of compactors not kept clean. I have observed this at Riis Houses because it is visible from the Girls Club building across the street. The Executive Director of the Girls Club tells me that until recently the horrible odor from the compactor could be smelled from blocks away.

We have had consistent failures at Riis, Wald, Gompers and Meltzer. The block association on the block near Meltzer complains constantly about the rats from Meltzer.

Inspection results can be found on the NYC.gov rat portal. We also receive District-wide reports from DOH and a yearly rat indexing map. I am attaching one list of failures for rat infestation from DOH. CB 3 has more referrals for rat infestation from NYCHA than other city agencies, which are usually Parks and HPD. So far in 2013, we have 30 NYCHA failures, and they are often the same ones over and over again. CB 3 is confident that with greater resources and attention, there can be much better control of this problem.

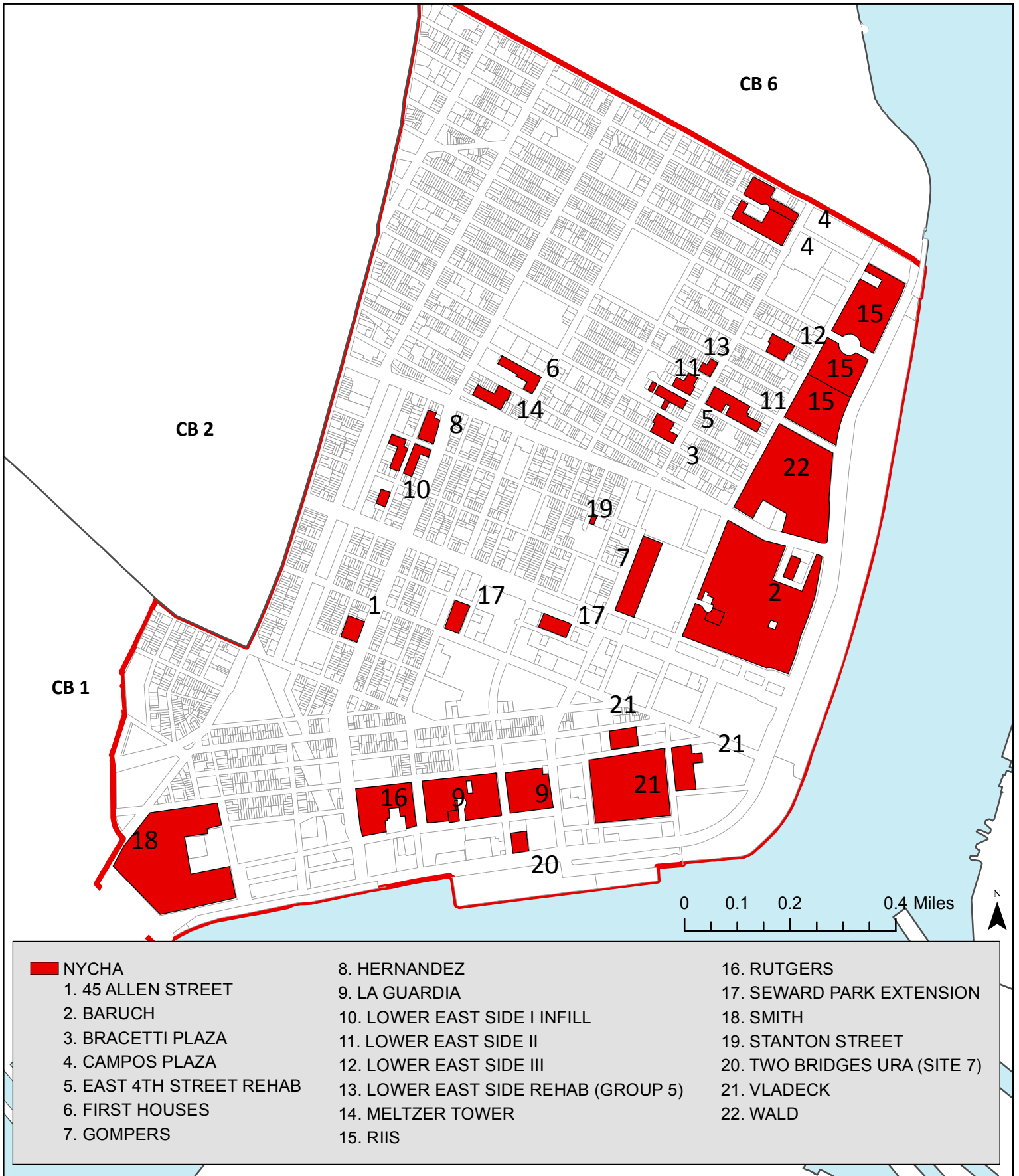
Figure 1: NYCHA Properties Failing 2013 DOHMH Rat Indexing in Community Board 3 Manhattan

Job ID	Inspection Date	Program Type	House No	Street	Boro	Block	Lot	CD	Agency Name	Failure Reason	Five Day Letter Print Date
PO573325	Jan 14, 2013	311	40	AVENUE D	Manhattan	356	1	0	NEW YORK CITY HOUSING	ARS Failure	Jan 16, 2013
PO580708	Jan 14, 2013	311	70	BARUCH DRIVE	Manhattan	323	1	0	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Jan 15, 2013
PO580745	Jan 14, 2013	311	80	COLUMBIA STREET	Manhattan	323	1	0	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Jan 15, 2013
PO598374	Jan 16, 2013	GEO	604	EAST 14 STREET	Manhattan	00396	0010	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Jan 31, 2013
PO598382	Jan 16, 2013	GEO	10	AVENUE D	Manhattan	00356	0001	103	NEW YORK CITY HOUSING	ARS Failure	Feb 01, 2013
PO600657	Jan 30, 2013	GEO	20	MADISON STREET	Manhattan	00111	0100	103	NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTH	ARS Failure	Feb 01, 2013
PO601403	Feb 01, 2013	GEO	721	EAST 5 STREET	Manhattan	00375	0045	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Feb 05, 2013
PO607291	Mar 01, 2013	311	54	AVENUE D	Manhattan	00356	0001	103	NEW YORK CITY HOUSING	ARS Failure	Mar 04, 2013
PO610644	Mar 06, 2013	311	189	ALLEN STREET	Manhattan	00417	0001	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Mar 12, 2013
PO612803	Mar 13, 2013	Indexing	134	AVENUE D	Manhattan	00362	0001	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Mar 20, 2013
PO612806	Mar 14, 2013	Indexing	288	DELANCEY STREET	Manhattan	00323	0001	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Mar 19, 2013
PO612856	Mar 14, 2013	Indexing	720	EAST 9 STREET	Manhattan	00378	0017	103	NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY	ARS Failure	Mar 20, 2013
PO612916	Mar 18, 2013	Indexing	639	EAST 6 STREET	Manhattan	00389	0041	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Mar 22, 2013
PO612920	Mar 18, 2013	Indexing	645	EAST 6 STREET	Manhattan	00389	0036	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Apr 29, 2013
PO612920	Apr 25, 2013	Indexing	645	EAST 6 STREET	Manhattan	00389	0036	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Apr 29, 2013
PO613146	Mar 27, 2013	Indexing	72	AVENUE C	Manhattan	00375	0001	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Apr 01, 2013
PO613147	Mar 27, 2013	Indexing	709	EAST 5 STREET	Manhattan	00375	0063	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Apr 08, 2013
PO613150	Mar 27, 2013	Indexing	721	EAST 5 STREET	Manhattan	00375	0045	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Apr 01, 2013
PO613283	Apr 23, 2013	Indexing	60	PITT STREET	Manhattan	00338	0001	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Apr 25, 2013
PO614708	Mar 19, 2013	Indexing	112	EAST 3 STREET	Manhattan	00430	0010	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Mar 22, 2013
PO614716	Mar 19, 2013	Indexing	117	EAST 2 STREET	Manhattan	00429	0021	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Mar 22, 2013

PO615358	Mar 18, 2013	Indexing	150	BROOME STREET	Manhattan	00347	0080	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Apr 05, 2013
PO617665	Apr 19, 2013	Indexing	196	ELDRIDGE STREET	Manhattan	00416	0001	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Apr 23, 2013
PO621245	Apr 23, 2013	Indexing	668	WATER STREET	Manhattan	00260	0075	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Apr 29, 2013
PO621247	Apr 23, 2013	Indexing	636	WATER STREET	Manhattan	00260	0001	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Apr 30, 2013
PO621299	Apr 17, 2013	Indexing	318	CHERRY STREET	Manhattan	00258	0001	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Apr 29, 2013
PO621988	Apr 16, 2013	Indexing	45	PIKE STREET	Manhattan	00255	0001	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Apr 22, 2013
PO622496	Mar 24, 2013	GEO	10	AVENUE D	Manhattan	00356	0001	103	NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTH	ARS Failure	Mar 27, 2013
PO623793	Apr 17, 2013	Indexing	20	MADISON STREET	Manhattan	00111	0100	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	Apr 25, 2013
PO641047	May 03, 2013	Indexing	288	DELANCEY STREET	Manhattan	00323	0001	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	May 06, 2013
PO641076	May 03, 2013	Indexing	10	AVENUE D	Manhattan	00356	0001	103	NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTH	ARS Failure	May 07, 2013
PO641090	May 06, 2013	Indexing	606	EAST 13 STREET	Manhattan	00395	0009	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	May 07, 2013
PO641093	May 03, 2013	Indexing	604	EAST 14 STREET	Manhattan	00396	0010	103	NYCHA	ARS Failure	May 08, 2013

Source: New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), 2013

# NYCHA Developments in Community Board 3 Manhattan



Source: 2013 NYC Department of City Planning; New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)