

STATEMENT AND PROPOSALS
OF THE
EAST HARLEM TRIANGLE COMMUNITY
ASSOCIATION
BEFORE
THE BOARD OF ESTIMATE
OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK

December 7, 1961

Mrs. Alice Kornegay
President

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With reference to the Communication from the Housing and Redevelopment Board of the City of New York, to the Board of Estimate, Item #204 Board of Estimate Calendar for December 7, 1961, to request permission to ask the Federal Housing Administration for funds to conduct a study pursuant to the East Harlem Industrial Urban Renewal Proposal and Findings of the Planning Commission of the City of New York of October 4, 1961, the East Harlem Triangle Community Association petitions the Board of Estimate as follows:

HISTORY

I. On May 1, 1961, the City Planning Commission announced its intentions to hold a public hearing on eighteen areas which it considered suitable for urban renewal. The City Planning Commission proposed to consider the area bounded by East 131st Street, the Harlem River Drive, East 125th Street, and Park Avenue (the so-called East Harlem Industrial Triangle) for redevelopment as an industrial park.

II. On June 6, 1961, a citizens organization was formed to consider the above proposal of the City Planning Commission and to conduct studies of the area and to submit recommendations at a hearing of the City Planning Commission to be held on June 20, 1961.

III. At the hearing on June 20, the citizens committee, composed of the Rev. Melvin E. Schoonover, chairman; Mrs. Annie Hopkins, Mrs. Alice Kornegay, the Rev. W. J. McPeak, and Mr. William Stanley, submitted its findings and recommendations, a copy of which is attached hereto and made a part hereof as Appendix I.

IV. The Rev. Melvin E. Schoonover and the Rev. W. J. McPeak met on September 13, 1961, with Mr. James Felt, chairman of the City Planning Commission, Mr. Richard Bernstein, executive assistant to Mr. Felt, and Mr. J. Clarence Davies, Jr., Chairman of the Housing and Redevelopment Board. Messrs. Schoonover and McPeak impressed upon the above persons the need for speedy decision regarding the designation of the East Harlem Triangle for study, owing to the demonstrable physical and social deterioration in the area since the announcement on May 1. The City Planning Commission and the representatives of the citizens committee present agreed to an amended form of the proposal as follows:

- (a) To consider the area from the viewpoint of its feasibility for industrial use.
- (b) To consider the inclusion of housing within the area.
- (c) A promise was made by the City Planning Commission that they would recommend to the Housing and Redevelopment Board that an Area Services Program be instituted im-

mediately after the area was designated for study and that the Board of Estimate be asked to give its approval to such a program even while approval of the study by the Federal Government was pending. Mr. Davies, on behalf of the Housing and Redevelopment Board, said, "We will do the best we can."

V. On October 4, 1961, the City Planning Commission made its formal designation of the area, which recommended that its character be predominantly industrial (see Planning Commission Proposal, page 10), that attention be given to the feasibility of developing housing within the area along its periphery, and that redevelopment be staged over an extended period to permit satisfactory relocation, and that an Area Services Program be established in the area at the earliest possible date.

VI. On November 20, 1961, the City Planning Commission reviewed its designation with a group of interested persons, including citizens of the Triangle area, and formally placed the matter in the hands of the Housing and Redevelopment Board for further appropriate action.

At this meeting, considerable concern and dissatisfaction was expressed by various interested parties that (1) the findings of the City Planning Commission gave no indication or real assurance that housing would be included in the area, (2) the findings gave no indication of awareness of the difficulties involved in relocation beyond a willingness to extend the period for redevelopment over a long period of time, (3) there was no indication that should housing be included in any redevelopment plan that residents of the area would be given any kind of priority in placement in said housing, and that indeed they would probably not be given such owing to the present standards for admission of the City Housing Authority, and (4) there was no indication of the date when, if ever, an Area Services Program might be instituted.

The following proposals were made to the City Planning Commission and the Housing and Redevelopment Board at that meeting.

- (1) That permission be requested of the Board of Estimate to begin an Area Services Program immediately and that the necessary funds be appropriated.
- (2) That the Housing and Redevelopment Board include in its Survey and Planning Application to the Federal Government proposals to contract with an organization, public or private, to make a study of the area specifically to determine the nature of the neighborhood with respect to "problem families," relocation difficulties, and all the myriad social problems which will affect relocation, and to determine how well social service needs of the area

are now being met.

Mr. Robert Seaver, on behalf of the Housing and Redevelopment Board, expressed--rather half-heartedly--a willingness to consider the above concerns and proposals. However, the meeting closed on a note of distrust and lack of confidence in HRB's sincerity. A request was made of Mr. Rabinow of the City Planning Commission, who was chairing the meeting, to prepare a summary of opinions expressed at the meeting which could be circulated among those present. (To the present date--December 7, 1961--the Planning Commission has failed to comply with this request.)

VII. On November 27, 1961, Mrs. Alice Kornegay, president of the East Harlem Triangle Community Association, and the Rev. Melvin E. Schoonover, a member of the Association's Executive Committee, met with Mr. Seaver, Mr. Ratensky, and Miss Kempton of the Housing and Redevelopment Board staff to discuss further the request mentioned in Paragraph VI above for a broadened study. At that time the HRB representatives agreed that there was no reason why they could not include social studies within the relocation study they would in any event be required to make. There was some resistance to doing this, however, on the grounds that HRB was empowered to implement physical recommendations only and did not necessarily have the responsibility to go beyond the traditional studies affecting relocation. Mrs. Kornegay and Mr. Schoonover were asked to submit a memorandum covering the kinds of things they felt should be included in social studies relating to and affecting problems of relocation so that HRB could render some kind of judgment as to the feasibility of conducting such studies.

VIII. On December 4, 1961, a letter was delivered to Miss Kempton in accordance with Paragraph VII above, a copy of which is attached hereto and made a part hereof as Appendix II.

IX. On December 4, 1961, the Rev. Mr. Schoonover met with Mr. Davies, who said that there would be no Area Services Program for the East Harlem Triangle area because the Housing and Redevelopment Board was already over-extended in its commitments to other areas. In addition, Mr. Davies insisted that the study would be a positive good for the community, whatever its form.

PRESENT POSITION OF THE EAST HARLEM TRIANGLE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

X. Because of the above history, the Association is still concerned with the problems of relocation and land use. The only recognition thus far made by the City of the former is the proposal of the Planning Commission to schedule redevelopment over a considerable period of time.

Insofar as land use is concerned, the City has not made a significant modification of its announced intention to industrialize

the East Harlem Triangle area because they have thus far declined to define the meaning of the phrase "develop housing within the area along its periphery."

XI. The Association wishes at this point to reaffirm its conviction of the need for comprehensive study to cover all problems related to relocation, as well as the proper use of the land. The Association is requesting that the study be far broader than has ever previously been undertaken by the City.

XII. To date the emphasis of the City in its urban renewal programs has centered in increasing the City's tax base through an increase in high and middle income housing and in increased industrialization. The net effect of this has been a program designed to help those citizens who are able to pay more. It is the Association's feeling that there has been a corresponding neglect by the City of those who are least able to pay and the most frequently dispossessed.

XIII. Symptomatic of the factors mentioned in paragraph XII above is the fact that the designation of the Planning Commission fails to describe the population of the area, except to cite the official census figures. Its ethnic and social composition is ignored. The emphasis has been placed exclusively on physical renewal, excluding from consideration the equally pressing need in any program of urban renewal for "human renewal." The City has a responsibility for the latter just as it does for the former.

XIV. In spite of the City's obligations under recently enunciated policies to provide every citizen affected by urban renewal with "decent, safe, and sanitary housing," it is the feeling of the Association that the City, no matter how good its intentions, cannot at present fulfill this promise. There is a severe housing shortage in the City, especially for low-income families; and this shortage is aggravated for many people because of the well-known practices of racial, religious, and social discrimination. There is a shortage of public housing accommodations, especially for single people and for large families. There is the additional problem regarding public housing of regulations which make large segments of the population "ineligible."

Even if the City could guarantee "decent, safe, and sanitary" housing to everyone displaced by an urban renewal project, the City's policy is unsatisfactory because it does not include any element of choice for the person affected. The displaced tenant has nothing to say, under current interpretation of the policy, regarding location of the new housing or whether he considers its conditions actually meet the City's formula.

XV. The whole underlying philosophy of the urban renewal program needs to be reviewed, taking into consideration the following factors: That there is no evidence that relocation of families in the

the urban renewal process has in fact settled them in better neighborhoods, this being particularly true for families ineligible for public housing. That the planning process has to date led to gains primarily for people who do not live on the site being renewed. That in effect the planning process asks citizens to plan their own uprooting and, in many cases, their own degradation.

The City still seems to find it hard to realize that its previous policies have caused a reaction of complete mistrust of any promises that it now gives concerning the welfare of its citizens. The City has a moral responsibility to make every effort to dispel this suspicion and really to help those communities which it arouses overcome their worst fears, as well as to help them to build a new community that will uplift their lives rather than merely scatter them.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EAST HARLEM TRIANGLE

XVI. With regard to the general condition of the area, including population statistics, employment statistics, housing accommodations, etc., see pages three through five of Appendix I, which contain a study of the area already done by its citizens.

XVII. With respect to factors which will aggravate the normal problems of relocation of families living in the East Harlem Triangle area, the following data is presented:

1. A private census of the area indicates that there are approximately 10,000 people living in it, not 6,100 as indicated by the 1960 Federal Census; and that 99% of the population has "minority" status.
2. The following figures reflect the extent to which the population is ineligible for public housing under present regulations:
 - a. Known narcotics addiction - 10% of the population.
 - b. Known past adult criminal records - 15%.
 - c. Known delinquency records and disciplinary school drop-outs - 12%.
 - d. Known families with out-of-wedlock children - 60%.
 - e. Known large families with 8 or more members - 5%.
 - f. Known mental health problems - 2%.
 - g. Known cases of overcrowded housing conditions - 75%.
 - h. Known incidence of alcoholism - 10%.
 - i. Known split families, without legal separation or divorce - 70%.
3. There is a substantial group of single or elderly people who would find it very difficult to find suitable housing.
4. There are a good many families who have already been moved one or more times from urban renewal sites.

Given the above data, it is the feeling of the Association that this area will have substantial relocation problems, problems which cannot adequately be dealt with using past methods and procedures.

SELF-HELP ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMUNITY

XVIII. A number of the residents of the community have been active for some time in attempting to improve their living conditions. Among these people are Mrs. Alice Kornegay, president of the East Harlem Triangle Community Association; Mrs. Virginia Watson, Secretary; Mrs. Celestine Leftwich, Treasurer; and Mrs. Annie Hopkins, chairman of the Housing Committee. The Association itself came into existence because of the actions of the City to initiate the urban renewal study.

The Association is making concerted attempts to upgrade its neighborhood, in spite of massive resistance on the part of the owners of the dwellings concerned, indifference and fear on the part of some of the families residing in the area, and indifference and often outright hostility to their efforts on the part of various City agencies. In addition, there is a long record of indifference on the part of political organizations, who are often willing to take the credit for improvements made but rarely willing to lift a finger prior to accomplishment of the goal.

As a direct result of the work of the Association, members of the community have been given a better understanding of their rights, particularly with relation to landlord-tenant problems. The Association has inspected most of the residential buildings in the neighborhood and noted all violations. These violations have been reported to the appropriate City departments. Inspections of some of the buildings have already been made by the Buildings Department as a direct result of the efforts of the Association, and within the past week two landlords have been heavily fined and given suspended sentences for building violations.

The Association has also formed a Welfare Committee to represent the interests of the citizens when improper treatment is rendered by the Department of Welfare, and a Schools Committee to look into the conditions at the public schools in the neighborhood and to consider the problems which the citizens have with the schools and the schools with the citizens. Block clubs have been organized to carry out informational, political, and clean-up campaigns in the neighborhood.

It is further anticipated that the Association will also have to give attention to problems involving the Police Department and the Courts. The citizens of the community are rapidly learning that apparently the only way to obtain action and protection is to band together and to exert political pressure. The callous way in which citizens are treated by the City in its administrative,

legislative, and judicial capacities and the extent to which they are victimized by landlords and political groups furnish ample evidence to support this position.

RECOMMENDATIONS

XIX. In view of the foregoing, the East Harlem Triangle Community Association places itself on record in support of the proposal of the City Planning Commission and of the present Communication of the Housing and Redevelopment Board if--and only if--the following proposals are adopted by the City of New York:

1. That an Area Services Program be instituted immediately, and that the Board of Estimate so instruct the Housing and Redevelopment Board as well as providing the necessary administrative and financial authority to implement the instruction.
2. That the Area Services Program be extended to include coordination of efforts toward unloading of overcrowded apartments on a planned basis, and that the work of this Program be integrally related to the operations of City, State, and Federal agencies dealing with problems of discrimination and intergroup relations.
3. That as families are moved, the City take every available means to prohibit re-rental of substandard apartments; and that vacated apartments and buildings be boarded up as they are emptied and demolished as soon as feasible.
4. That the City policy regarding relocation in "decent, safe, and sanitary" housing be amended to include the word "satisfactory"; and that no person relocated be forced to accept housing which he deems to be unsatisfactory.
5. That enabling legislation be enacted to permit the City to place certain buildings in the neighborhood in receivership as it is found necessary in order to maintain these buildings in reasonable repair during the process of relocation.
6. That the desire of many families to remain in the Triangle neighborhood be recognized by the City and steps taken to assure them of the opportunity to "decent, safe, sanitary, and satisfactory" housing in the East Harlem Triangle despite eligibility problems; and that this policy be set as a prerequisite to the establishment of an industrial park.
7. That a representative group of citizens be consulted by

the Housing and Redevelopment Board in drawing up the Survey and Planning application to the Federal Government for funds to make physical and relocation studies of the East Harlem Triangle.

8. That whatever else it includes, the relocation survey must be sufficiently broad to cover major social factors contributing to the "ineligibility" of much of the population. This study should include the problems of discrimination, and should consider the types of social services needed to make the East Harlem Triangle a "pilot project" in human renewal.
9. That a study of present policies of the New York City Housing Authority regarding standards of "eligibility" be conducted by some body empowered to make recommendations for change.
10. That a study of police problems prevalent in the Triangle area be instituted by whatever appropriate body.
11. That appropriate city agencies explore the establishment of special employment services designed to aid the poorly employed and the unemployable.
12. That every phase of urban renewal studies affecting the East Harlem Triangle involve citizen participation; and that aid be given to the creation of a broadly representative advisory committee from the neighborhood for this purpose.
13. That no decision be reached regarding land use in the East Harlem Triangle until all the relocation data has been collected and evaluated by all the proper City agencies.

The Association is aware that these recommendations represent a new approach to the problems of urban renewal, but feels that past experience indicates that previous approaches have been inadequate and unfortunate in their consequences for the City. The City, as a community of human beings, has a moral responsibility to act as a community and to care for its citizens and their problems. The City has access to the requisite technical services and disciplines which can draw up urban renewal programs which will accomplish the goal of curing blighted areas and increasing the City's revenue and at the same time bring to pass human renewal. It is time, we believe, that the City faced the complex nature of the problems which urban life entails and deals with them on a comprehensive basis.

A STATEMENT REGARDING THE SO-CALLED "EAST HARLEM
INDUSTRIAL TRIANGLE"

TO THE NEW YORK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION:

The undersigned is a citizens committee, called into existence at a public meeting on June 6, 1961, to consider the proposal of the New York City Planning Commission to study the so-called East Harlem Industrial Triangle area for conversion to all-industrial use. The committee represents tenants and small businessmen from this area, as well as church and civic organizations. A steering committee of five members was elected to conduct studies of the proposal and of the area, and to draw up a statement on behalf of the community for presentation at the public hearings of the Planning Commission.

After many meetings and careful consideration of the proposal, the steering committee has drawn up the following statement for submission to the Planning Commission. An outline of the statement was presented at a public meeting on June 19 and unanimously adopted by the citizens committee.

I. We commend the New York City Planning Commission for its intention to study our area. We are in complete agreement with the Commission that this area is in serious need of renewal. We believe that our neighborhood has too long been neglected, and we welcome the opportunity to discuss with appropriate and competent City officials rehabilitation of our area.

We object, however, to the "framework" in which the proposed study by the New York City Planning Commission is to be made. It is alleged in a newspaper release by the Commission that this area is "wholly unsuitable for housing" because of traffic problems. This seems to be a less than adequate justification for conversion of an area to industrial purposes. Yet, under the terms already set by the New York City Planning Commission, the study would be conducted with this objective already decided upon.

II. Further, we commend the New York City Planning Commission for its announced intention of involving local leadership in study and planning. This radical departure from previous practice reassures us that this community will not be destroyed so summarily as others have been in the past.

Nonetheless, the question needs to be raised whether the Planning Commission has indeed followed its own philosophy in dealing with the so-called "Industrial Triangle." As far as this committee can determine, the idea for industrialization of our neighborhood originated outside the area, and that it has only been within the past week that the Planning Commission has made serious efforts to determine the position of the leaders in the community affected.

A community obviously consists of people who live, work, and own property in a given area. To our knowledge, none of these were consulted by the Planning Commission until the final week prior to the public hearings.

If the study can be made only within the framework of a prior decision that it must result in a recommendation to industrialize the Triangle neighborhood, one must raise the question of whether effective community participation in the study has not already been stifled, if not completely eliminated.

III. Committee's study of the neighborhood.

In order to have a solid basis on which to make its recommendations, the Committee--aided by the staff of the Chambers Memorial Baptist Church--did a careful survey of the area, mapping it completely, and interviewing hundreds of tenants and small businessmen. The following are some of the more pertinent findings:

1. The area consists of 36 acres, almost evenly divided between industrial or commercial and residential use.

2. The area contains 16 city blocks, Of these, two consist almost in their entirety of park area and one contains a city-owned facility (the Transit Authority garage). Of the remaining 13 blocks, all contain one or more dwellings. The number of "apartments" per block varies from 31 to 351, and the percentage of total area occupied by residential buildings varies from 1/10 to 5/6.

3. In the area there are 90 industrial establishments, 123 retail businesses, 1 hospital, 1 public school, 10 churches, a police station, a fire station, one bank, and miscellaneous other public and private buildings.

4. There are more than 2250 apartments in the area, some housing more than one family. Many of the families are large; many are single person families.

5. Approximately 10% of the housing in this area is in very good condition. Slightly more than 1/3 is deemed rehabilitable.

6. A statistical study of family structure secured information from 162 families representing a total of 631 people. Of the 162 families:

- a. 10 (or 6.2%) have lived in the area 1 year or less.
- 37 (22.2%) 1-5 years.
- 28 (17.3%) 6-10 years.
- 63 (38.3%) 11-20 years.
- 26 (16%) more than 20 years.

54.3% of the people interviewed have lived in the Triangle area for more than 11 years.

b. 39 families (24.1%) indicated that they wanted to move; 123 (75.9%) did not want to move. Nearly everyone indicated, however, that he would like to have housing in better condition. Most people have no idea where they would go if their building were torn down, but a significant number indicated a desire to stay in the East Harlem area.

- c. Of the 111 wage earners interviewed:
 - 18 (16.2%) work in the East Harlem Triangle area.
 - 14 (12.6%) elsewhere in East Harlem.
 - 2 (1.8%) in Harlem.
 - 51 (45.9%) elsewhere in Manhattan.
 - 7 (6.3%) in the Bronx.
 - 6 (5.4%) in Brooklyn.
 - 1 (0.9%) in Queens.
 - 7 (6.3%) Long Island
 - 5 (4.5%) outside the greater New York area.
- A total of 76.5% work somewhere in Manhattan.

- d. 160 responses regarding rent currently paid revealed:

7 (4.4%) \$20 or less per mo.	5 (3.1%) \$61-70.
49 (30.6%) \$21-30.	6 (3.8%) \$71-80.
41 (25.6%) \$31-40.	7 (4.4%) \$81-90.
29 (18.1%) \$41-50.	3 (1.8%) \$91-100.
7 (4.4%) \$51-60.	6 (3.8%) over \$100.
- One person owned his own home.

e. A table comparing current rent with that people were willing to pay for improved housing showed the following distribution.

Current	Rent in \$/mo	Willing to pay
7	under 20	0
34	21-30	9
28	31-40	26
17	41-50	28
6	51-60	14
2	61-70	5
6	71-80	9
5	81-90	4
2	91-100	10
3	over 100	4

This indicated that tenants in the area are willing generally to pay higher rent for better housing.

f. 35 (21.6%) of the families interviewed said they would be interested in some form of cooperative housing.

IV. Comments on arguments cited for industrialization of the area.

1. "Isolation" of the area by traffic arteries.

Isolated neighborhoods traditionally have been considered ideal by many people for residences. There, indeed seems to be some contradiction in saying that an area is isolated, yet arguing on the other hand that it is cut up by heavy traffic. Traffic goes around the area more than through it. Heavy through traffic, however, does not per se necessarily make an area unsuited for housing nor suited for industrial purposes. Many other factors have to be considered.

There are many other neighborhoods in New York City facing similar traffic problems which apparently are not equally considered unsuited for housing, since a variety of types of housing have been constructed in such areas during recent years. The Morning-side Heights neighborhood is one illustration. Housing has even been built over highways in midtown Manhattan and is proposed for the George Washington Bridge approaches. Traffic problems, however severe, are not insoluble; and in any event, traffic flow must not be the final determiner of whether housing should remain in a particular neighborhood.

2. "Mixed" nature of the community.

It is assumed that it is undesirable to have a neighborhood in which housing and light industry exist side by side. There are two schools of thought even among city planners about the value of so-called "balanced" communities. It should be noted that people already residing in the Triangle area do not object to living in the same area with light industry.

3. Poor condition of existing dwellings.

Except for the exceptions cited in the statistical study above, much of the housing in the area is admittedly inferior. We must raise the question, however, whether a poor residence can be replaced only by a factory. There do seem to be other alternatives, such as replacing an old residential building with a new one. It should be noted that, particularly on 126th Street between Second and Third Avenues, voluntary renovation of some residential buildings is already taking place, with others scheduled for similar treatment.

4. Jobs for surrounding areas.

One argument frequently cited for redevelopment of the Triangle for industrial usage is that such a development would provide employment opportunities for surrounding areas. This is manifestly not the case at the present time. Interviews with cooperative businessmen showed only about 5% of their employees come from the Triangle area. The statistical study cited above showed only 16.2% of wage earners employed in any capacity in the Triangle neighborhood. Those who are so employed, and many of them are, women, work primarily for low-paying industries, such as some of the garment factories. Unless there were a multiplication of such "marginal" employment opportunities, there is no certainty that the employment picture now existing would be materially altered by total industrialization of the area.

5. Present industrial interests desire the conversion.

There may be individual business interests desiring the conversion of the Triangle to all-industrial use. This is not a position universally held, however. It is interesting to note that the largest business in the area plans to move away from it.

V. Further comments on industrialization.

1. Loss of park area.

The Harlem and East Harlem communities are already sadly deficient in park facilities. Industrialization of the Triangle would presumably mean the loss of the large park and playground space now there.

It has been argued by some officials that the parks are not so important as other factors, inasmuch as they are under-used at the present time. This is true -- if it is true -- only because of poor access. One dilapidated foot bridge at the extreme north end of the park is now in use; other access is gained only by crossing busy streets and highways. Two additional foot bridges have been approved by the New York City Planning Commission and tentatively approved by the Board of Estimate. Despite the inaccessibility of the parks, 1,500 school-age children attended a "fiesta" there Saturday, June 17.

2. Possible breeding ground for juvenile delinquency and crime.

There is considerable concern in the area that an industrial neighborhood would provide excellent cover for anti-social gangs, perverts, and criminals. Consideration needs to be given to the possible effect of an isolated industrial area in the midst of a heavily populated neighborhood on the surrounding area.

3. Air pollution of the surrounding areas.

Many complaints have been registered already in areas adjacent to the Triangle about pollution of the air by existing industrial concerns. Further industrialization would only aggravate this situation.

4. Effect on neighboring areas.

Various attempts at rehabilitating neighboring areas, especially in Harlem -- e.g. Lenox Terrace, Riverton Houses, Lincoln Houses, Delano Village, etc. The possible deterrent that industrialization of the Triangle might pose to such ventures should be carefully considered..

5. Perchability of highways.

Perhaps the strongest argument for industrialization is the ease of reaching the area -- good highway, subway, and train service from outside. These might also be cited as evidences that this area is equally suitable for housing.

VI. Comments on the need for housing in the area.

1. There is a larger population in the area than the City has estimated. The release of the City Planning Commission cited 1800 families; our study indicates more than 25% more families than this.

2. Relocation of these families would be an acute problem, and we are not at all persuaded that the City of New York is as yet able to cope with major relocation problems adequately and fairly. The question of where the people in the triangle area are to go is still unanswered. In the Triangle area the relocation problem is aggravated by such things as:

a. Many single person families who theoretically may be eligible for public housing but practically speaking find it impossible to find such accommodations.

b. Large families, even those eligible for public housing would end up on waiting lists because of the scarcity of such quarters.

c. Most of the families are in the low income bracket and therefore have fewer alternatives in the way of housing than more affluent families. Many of the families interviewed are convinced that they will be forced to move into other slum neighborhoods, accelerating the blight of those areas.

d. There is a high incidence of illegitimacy in the families in this area. Virtually all of these, by present administrative practice, are ineligible for public housing. It is our estimate that for this, and other reasons, at least 50% of the people in the Triangle area are not even theoretically eligible for public housing.

4. We believe that the City has too casually dismissed the riverfront as a suitable site for housing. Such a location is considered very desirable elsewhere; both very expensive private housing and low income public housing has been built in abundance along the East River in Manhattan. Despite the fact that the Triangle area will be zoned for light industry after the new zoning code becomes effective in December, we believe that--regardless of whatever is done to the rest of the land in the Triangle--the riverfront should be excluded from such zoning and housing constructed.

VII. Recommendations:

1. The committee recommends, therefore, that the Housing and Redevelopment Board seek Federal "assistance to make a careful and comprehensive study of the area," not for the purpose of transforming it into a modern industrial district, but rather to determine the best possible use of the land, considering first the welfare of the present residents of the area, the welfare of the entire area of East Harlem, and finally the welfare of Manhattan.

2. The Committee recommends that the study not be made in isolation, but that it be fitted into a study of the entire East Harlem community so that proper assessment can be made of the effect of redevelopment on surrounding areas. We believe that the best use of the Triangle site can be determined only after such a broad study has been made.

3. The Committee recommends that, no matter what the extent of the study, social planners be included as well as city planners so that serious attention will be paid to the effect of renewal on the total population and social organization of the community.

4. The Committee, on the basis of its own study, further recommends that the New York City Planning Commission take a careful look at the wisdom of preserving a "balanced community" combining light industry and housing, with renovation and upgrading of rehabilitable housing and construction of new housing along the riverfront.

5. The Committee also recommends that the present park area be preserved and improved, with adequate access provided.

Respectfully submitted,

THE COMMITTEE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF
THE EAST HARLEM TRIANGLE COMMUNITY

Steering Committee: The Rev. Melvin E. Schoonover, chairman; Mrs. Annie Hopkins, Mrs. Alice Kornegay, The Rev. W.J. McPeak, and Mr. William Stanley

CHAMBERS MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH
219 East 123rd Street
New York 35, New York

December 4, 1961

Miss Elizabeth Kempton
Housing and Redevelopment Board
2 Lafayette Street
New York, New York

Dear Miss Kempton:

In reflecting over our conversation with you and Messrs. Seaver and Ratensky last Monday, I have attempted to come up with a list of social problems which I think should be considered in the kind of social survey we discussed at our meeting. Since I am obviously a layman in this area, I do not pretend that the result is anything more than a calculated guess. We will need expert guidance even in formulating the list of areas to be explored.

Nonetheless, the following things occur to me: Delinquency, emotional disorders, venereal diseases, narcotics use, incidence of tuberculosis, family structure, marital status, illegitimacy, police records, employment histories and statistics. In addition, such information as ethnic composition of the population would be useful. Some indication of involvement with what kinds of agencies should be obtained; in interviewing welfare cases, the types of public assistance being secured should be noted. All these are pertinent to any adequate relocation study. I am well aware that it goes far beyond anything that HRB has attempted to do previously.

I am, of course, incompetent to suggest the means of securing such data. If any of us knew how, we would obviously not need your help.

The fundamental question is whether renewal does not involve more than buildings or even relocation procedures. Perhaps it is not your agency's responsibility to correct social problems. At present, however, it seems unlikely that anyone else will or can do such studies. We urge you to give serious consideration to this matter.

Enclosed are the copies of our presentation to the Planning Commission, which I promised you earlier.

Faithfully yours,

[s] Melvin E. Schoonover

A STATEMENT REGARDING THE SO-CALLED "EAST HARLEM
INDUSTRIAL TRIANGLE"

TO THE NEW YORK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION:

The undersigned is a citizens committee, called into existence at a public meeting on June 6, 1961, to consider the proposal of the New York City Planning Commission to study the so-called East Harlem Industrial Triangle area for conversion to all-industrial use. The committee represents tenants and small businessmen from this area, as well as church and civic organizations. A steering committee of five members was elected to conduct studies of the proposal and of the area, and to draw up a statement on behalf of the community for presentation at the public hearings of the Planning Commission.

After many meetings and careful consideration of the proposal, the steering committee has drawn up the following statement for submission to the Planning Commission. An outline of the statement was presented at a public meeting on June 19 and unanimously adopted by the citizens committee.

I

We commend the New York City Planning Commission for its intention to study our area. We are in complete agreement with the Commission that this area is in serious need of renewal. We believe that our neighborhood has too long been neglected, and we welcome the opportunity to discuss with appropriate and competent City officials rehabilitation of our area.

We object, however, to the "framework" in which the proposed study by the New York City Planning Commission is to be made. It is alleged in a newspaper release by the Commission that this area is "wholly unsuitable for housing" because of traffic problems. This seems to be a less than adequate justification for conversion of an area to industrial purposes. Yet, under the terms already set by the New York City Planning Commission, the study would be conducted with this objective already decided upon.

II

Further, we commend the New York City Planning Commission for its announced intention of involving local leadership in study and planning. This radical departure from previous practice reassures us that this community will not be destroyed so summarily as others have been in the past.

Nonetheless, the question needs to be raised whether the Planning Commission has indeed followed its own philosophy in dealing with the so-called "Industrial Triangle." As far as this committee can determine, the idea for industrialization of our neighborhood originated outside the area, and that it has only been within the past week that the Planning Commission has made serious efforts to determine the position of the leaders in the community affected.

A community obviously consists of people who live, work, and own property in a given area. To our knowledge, none of these were consulted by the Planning Commission until the final week prior to the public hearings.

If the study can be made only within the framework of a prior decision that it must result in a recommendation to industrialize the Triangle neighborhood, one must raise the question of whether effective community participation in the study has not already been stifled, if not completely eliminated.

III. Committee's study of the neighborhood

In order to have a solid basis on which to make its recommendations, the Committee--aided by the staff of the Chambers Memorial Baptist Church--did a careful survey of the area, mapping it completely, and interviewing hundreds of tenants and small businessmen. The following are some of the more pertinent findings:

- 1) The area consists of 36 acres, almost evenly divided between industrial or commercial and residential use.
 - 2) The area contains 16 city blocks. Of these, two consist almost in their entirety of park area and one contains a city-owned facility (the Transit Authority garage). Of the remaining 13 blocks, all contain one or more dwellings. The number of "apartments" per block varies from 31 to 351, and the percentage of total area occupied by residential buildings varies from 1/10 to 5/6.
 - 3) In the area there are 90 industrial establishments, 123 retail businesses, 1 hospital, 1 public school, 10 churches, a police station, a fire station, one bank, and miscellaneous other public and private buildings.
 - 4) There are more than 2250 apartments in the area, some housing more than one family. Many of the families are large; many are single person families.
 - 5) Approximately 10% of the housing in this area is in very good condition. Slightly more than 1/3 is deemed rehabilitable.
 - 6) A statistical study of family structure secured information from 162 families representing a total of 631 people. Of the 162 families
 - a) 10 (or 6.2%) have lived in the area 1 year or less

37	(22.2%)	1-5 years
28	(17.3%)	6-10 years
63	(38.3%)	11-20 years
26	(16%)	more than 20 years
- 54.3% of the people interviewed have lived in the Triangle area for more than 11 years.
- b) 39 families (24.1%) indicated that they wanted to move; 123 (75.9%) did not want to move. Nearly everyone indicated, however, that he would like to have housing in better condition. Most people have no idea where they would go if their building were torn down, but a significant number indicated a desire to stay in the East Harlem area.
 - c) Of the 111 wage earners interviewed

18	(16.2%)	work in the East Harlem Triangle area
14	(12.6%)	elsewhere in East Harlem

2 (1.8%) in Harlem
 51 (45.9%) elsewhere in Manhattan
 7 (6.3%) in the Bronx
 6 (5.4%) in Brooklyn
 1 (0.9%) in Queens
 7 (6.3%) on Long Island
 2 (1.8%) in Westchester
 2 (1.8%) in New Jersey
 1 (0.9%) is a seaman

76.5% work somewhere in Manhattan.

d) 160 responses regarding rent currently paid revealed
 7 (4.4%) pay \$20 or less per month
 49 (30.6%) \$21-30
 41 (25.6%) \$31-40
 29 (18.1%) \$41-50
 7 (4.4%) \$51-60
 5 (3.1%) \$61-70
 6 (3.8%) \$71-80
 7 (4.4%) \$81-90
 3 (1.8%) \$91-100
 6 (3.8%) over \$100 per month

One person owned his own home.

e) A table comparing current rent with that people were willing to pay for improved housing showed the following distribution:

<u>Current</u>	<u>Rent in \$/mo</u>	<u>Willing to pay</u>
7	under 20	0
34	21-30	9
28	31-40	26
17	41-50	28
6	51-60	14
2	61-70	5
6	71-80	9
5	81-90	4
2	91-100	10
3	over 100	4

This indicated that tenants in the area are willing generally to pay higher rent for better housing.

f) 35 (21.6%) of the families interviewed said they would be interested in some form of cooperative housing.

IV. Comments on arguments cited for industrialization of the area

1) "Isolation" of the area by traffic arteries.

Isolated neighborhoods traditionally have been considered ideal by many people for residences. There, indeed, seems to be some contradiction in saying that an area is isolated, yet arguing on the other hand that it is cut up by heavy traffic. Traffic goes around the area more than through it. Heavy through traffic, however, per se does not necessarily make an area unsuited for housing nor suited for industrial

purposes. Many other factors have to be considered.

There are many other neighborhoods in New York City facing similar traffic problems which apparently are not equally considered unsuited for housing, since a variety of types of housing have been constructed in such areas during recent years. The Morningside Heights neighborhood is one illustration. Housing has even been built over highways in midtown Manhattan and is proposed for the George Washington Bridge approaches. Traffic problems, however severe, are not insoluble; and in any event, traffic flow must not be the final determiner of whether housing should remain in a particular neighborhood.

2) "Mixed" nature of the community

It is assumed that it is undesirable to have a neighborhood in which housing and light industry exist side by side. There are two schools of thought even among city planners about the value of so-called "balanced" communities. It should be noted that people already residing in the Triangle area do not object to living in the same area with light industry.

3) Poor condition of existing dwellings.

Except for the exceptions cited in the statistical study above, much of the housing in the area is admittedly inferior. We must raise the question, however, whether a poor residence can be replaced only by a factory. There do seem to be other alternatives, such as replacing an old residential building with a new one. It should be noted that, particularly on 126th Street between Second and Third Avenues, voluntary renovation of some residential buildings is already taking place, with others scheduled for similar treatment.

4) Jobs for surrounding areas.

One argument frequently cited for redevelopment of the Triangle for industrial usage is that such a development would provide employment opportunities for surrounding areas. This is manifestly not the case at the present time. Interviews with cooperative businessmen showed only about 5% of their employees come from the triangle area. The statistical study cited above showed only 16.2% of wage earners employed in any capacity in the Triangle neighborhood. Those who are so employed, and many of them are women, work primarily for low-paying industries, such as some of the garment factories. Unless there were a multiplication of such "marginal" employment opportunities, there is no certainty that the employment picture now existing would be materially altered by total industrialization of the area.

5) Present industrial interests desire the conversion.

There may be individual business interests desiring the conversion of the Triangle to all-industrial use. This is not a position universally held, however. It is interesting to note that the largest business in the area plans to move away from it.

V. Further comments on industrialization

1) Loss of park area.

The Harlem and East Harlem communities are already sadly deficient

in park facilities. Industrialization of the Triangle would presumably mean the loss of the large park and playground space now there.

It has been argued by some officials that the parks are not so important as other factors, inasmuch as they are under-used at the present time. This is true--if it is true--only because of poor access. One dilapidated foot bridge at the extreme north end of the park is now in use; other access is gained only by crossing busy streets and highways. Two additional foot bridges have been approved by the New York City Planning Commission and tentatively approved by the Board of Estimate. Despite the inaccessibility of the parks, 1,500 school-age children attended a "fiesta" there Saturday, June 17.

2) Possible breeding ground for juvenile delinquency and crime.

There is considerable concern in the area that an industrial neighborhood would provide excellent cover for anti-social gangs, perverts, and criminals. Consideration needs to be given to the possible effect of an isolated industrial area in the midst of a heavily populated neighborhood on the surrounding area.

3) Air pollution of the surrounding areas.

Many complaints have been registered already in areas adjacent to the Triangle about pollution of the air by existing industrial concerns. Further industrialization would only aggravate this situation.

4) Effect on neighboring areas.

Various attempts at rehabilitating neighboring areas, especially in Harlem--e.g. Lenox Terrace, Riverton Houses, Lincoln Houses, Delano Village, etc. The possible deterrent that industrialization of the Triangle might pose to such ventures should be carefully considered.

5) Perhaps the strongest argument for industrialization is the ease of reaching the area--good highway, subway, and train service from outside. These might also be cited as evidences that this area is equally suitable for housing.

VI. Comments on the need for housing in the area

1) There is a larger population in the area than the City has estimated. The release of the City Planning Commission cited 1800 families; our study indicates more than 25% more families than this.

2) Relocation of these families would be an acute problem, and we are not at all persuaded that the City of New York is at yet able to cope with major relocation problems adequately and fairly. The question of where the people in the Triangle area are to go is still unanswered. In the Triangle area the relocation problem is aggravated by such things as:

a) Many single person families who theoretically may be eligible for public housing but practically speaking find it impossible to find such accommodations.

b) Large families. Even those eligible for public housing would end up on waiting lists because of the scarcity of such quarters.

c) Most of the families are in the low income bracket and therefore have fewer alternatives in the way of housing than more affluent families. Many of the families interviewed are convinced that they will be forced to move into other slum neighborhoods, accelerating the blight of those areas.

d) There is a high incidence of illegitimacy in families in this area. Virtually all of these, by present administrative practice, are ineligible for public housing. It is our estimate that for this, and other reasons, at least 50% of the people in the Triangle area are not even theoretically eligible for public housing.

4) We believe that the City has too casually dismissed the riverfront as a suitable site for housing. Such a location is considered very desirable elsewhere; both very expensive private housing and low income public housing has been built in abundance along the East River in Manhattan. Despite the fact that the Triangle area will be zoned for light industry after the new zoning code becomes effective in December, we believe that--regardless of whatever is done to the rest of the land in the Triangle--the riverfront should be excluded from such zoning and housing constructed.

VII. Recommendations

1) The committee recommends, therefore, that the Housing and Redevelopment Board seek Federal "assistance to make a careful and comprehensive study of the area," not for the purpose of transforming it into a modern industrial district, but rather to determine the best possible use of the land, considering first the welfare of the present residents of the area, the welfare of the entire area of East Harlem, and finally the welfare of Manhattan.

2) The Committee recommends that the study not be made in isolation but that it be fitted into a study of the entire East Harlem community so that proper assessment can be made of the effect of redevelopment on surrounding areas. We believe that the best use of the Triangle site can be determined only after such a broad study has been made.

3) The Committee recommends that, no matter what the extent of the study, social planners be included as well as city planners so that serious attention will be paid to the effect of renewal on the total population and social organization of the community.

4) The Committee, on the basis of its own study, further recommends that the New York City Planning Commission take a careful look at the wisdom of preserving a "balanced community," combining light industry and housing, with renovation and upgrading of rehabilitable housing and construction of new housing along the riverfront.

5) The committee also recommends that the present park area be preserved and improved, with adequate access provided.

Respectfully submitted,

THE COMMITTEE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF
THE EAST HARLEM TRIANGLE COMMUNITY

Steering Committee: The Rev. Melvin E. Schoonover, chairman; Mrs. Annie Hopkins, Mrs. Alice Kornegay, The Rev. W. J. McPeak, and Mr. William Stanley