

# Assessing Safe Haven Locations: A Case Study of New York City

## INTRODUCTION

On an average night in January 2015, 564,708 people were homeless in the United States and of those individuals, 83,170 or about 15% were considered chronically homeless (HUD, 2015).

### What is Chronic Homelessness?

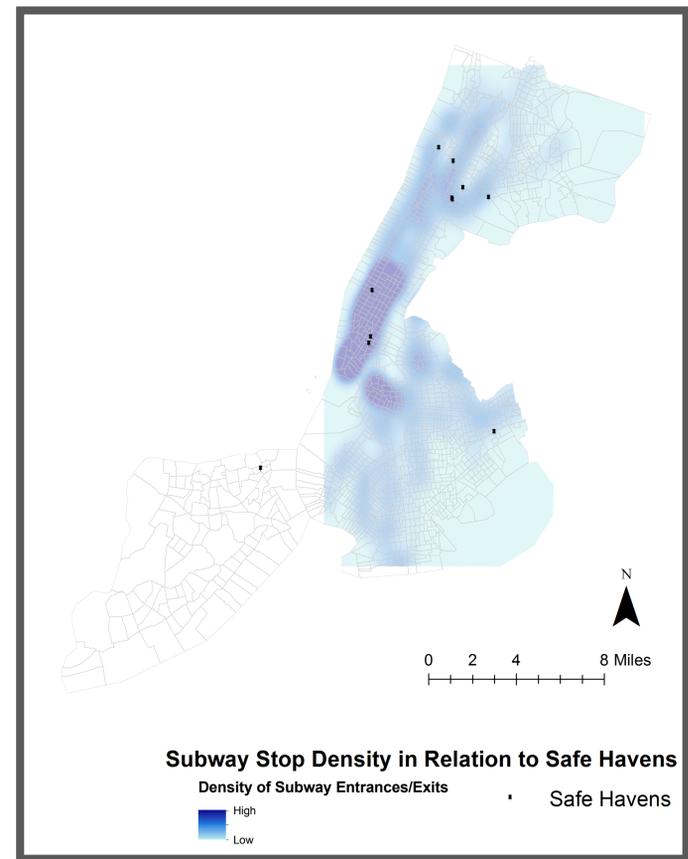
HUD defines a chronically homeless individual as someone who has been homeless for an extended period of time and is simultaneously dealing with a disability, mental health problems and/or substance abuse/dependency.

To combat chronic homelessness, a variety of interventions have been made by cities around the United States with the help of federal funding. One increasingly important strategy has been the creation of safe havens.

### What are Safe Havens?

Safe Havens are a type of temporary housing with limited rules and regulations made available to chronically homeless adults. Safe Havens offer supportive services, either directly or by referral, such as case management, mental health services and substance abuse services with the goal of assisting the client in finding permanent housing. As opposed to other housing programs, individuals are not required to be sober upon entry or during their stay. Individuals are typically referred to safe havens by homeless street outreach teams.

This project focuses specifically on the safe havens in New York City. There are currently eleven safe havens in NYC with around 550 beds total and Mayor Bill DeBlasio plans to add 500 more safe haven beds throughout the city. This GIS analysis begins to answer the question, "Where are safe havens located?" by assessing their accessibility to public transportation and related supportive services as well as the rent prices in the surrounding area. As more safe havens are being developed in New York City and throughout the United States, it is necessary to examine their location to determine both if they are meeting their mission of housing chronically homeless individuals as well as if there are any factors that are leading to locational biases.



## RESULTS

All of the safe havens in this analysis, with the exception of the Carpenter House Safe Haven in Staten Island, are within a ¼ mile of a subway entrance or exit. As shown in the Median Gross Rent by Census Tract map, all of the safe havens with the exception of the Traveler's Safe Haven in Manhattan, are located in census tracts in which the median gross rent is in the lower three categories indicated in the maps legend. In terms of accessibility to related supportive services, the graphs below illustrate that the overwhelming majority of the safe havens are located within a ½ mile of services. The greatest gap in accessible services seem to be at the Urban Pathways Safe Haven in Brooklyn and the Carpenter House Safe Haven in Staten Island.

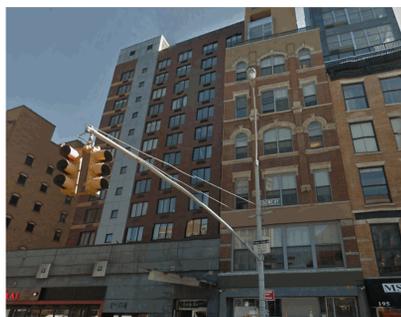
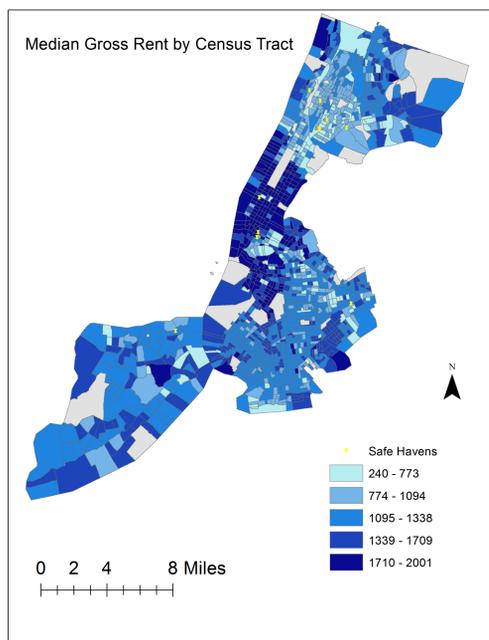


IMAGE 1: The Andrews Safe Haven (center right)  
197 Bowery New York, NY



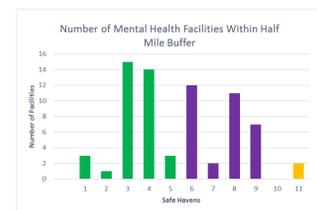
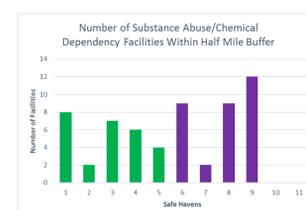
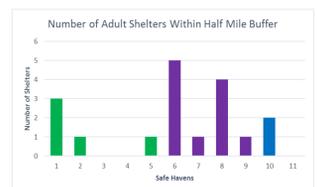
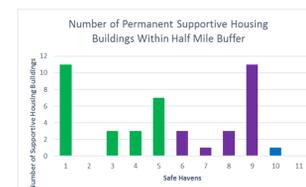
IMAGE 2: The Andrews Safe Haven  
Example Interior of one of the 80 Safe Haven Units



### LEGEND

#	Safe Haven Name
1	BronxWorks Pyramid Safe Haven
2	BronxWorks Safe Haven
3	Comunilife Safe Haven I
4	Comunilife Safe Haven II
5	VOA Safe Haven
6	BRC Safe Haven (Bowery)
7	BRC Safe Haven (182 <sup>nd</sup> Street)
8	The Andrews
9	Traveler's Safe Haven
10	Urban Pathways Safe Haven
11	Carpenter House Safe Haven

<span style="color: green;">■</span>	The Bronx	<span style="color: blue;">■</span>	Brooklyn
<span style="color: purple;">■</span>	Manhattan	<span style="color: orange;">■</span>	Staten Island



## DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS

As illustrated in this analysis, the majority of the safe havens studied are located within a ½ mile of related supportive services. While this means that supportive services are relatively close by, this analysis only looks at distance and does not take into account other barriers that may make these facilities difficult to access for individuals with disabilities. The scope of this analysis was also somewhat limited due to the information available. More specifically, it would have been beneficial to know the number of chronically homeless people by borough to gain a better understanding as to whether that has to do with the clustering of safe havens in certain areas.

Additionally, while this analysis took into account a few of the important characteristics for siting safe havens, there are many more factors that go into that decision making process. Further research needs to be done to assess factors such as NIMBYism, the racial composition of neighborhoods with safe havens and how buildings were financed and acquired.

## RESOURCES

5-year ACS Dataset : SE\_T104\_001, Social Explorer. 2014.  
 Tiger/Line Shapefiles -Census Tracts. 2016.  
 NYC Planning Open Data-City Facilities-Selected Facilities & Program Sites. 2016.  
 Subway Entrance and Exit Data. <http://web.mta.info/developers/developer-data-terms.html#data> . 2016.  
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 United States. Department of Housing and Urban Affairs "The Safe Haven Toolkit." (1997). <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/SafeHavens.pdf>  
 New York City. Department of Homeless Services. "Shelter Repair Scorecard." (2016). <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/Shelter-Repair-Scorecard-Archive/scorecard-summary-2016-sep-list.pdf>  
 PROJECTION: NAD\_1983\_StatePlane\_New\_York\_Long\_Island\_FIPS\_3104\_Feet