



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

**Testimony of Paula Z. Segal
to the New York City Council Committee on Land Use
Preliminary Budget Hearing for FY 2020
March 7, 2019**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Paula Segal; I am a senior staff attorney at the Community Development Project (CDP), a non-profit legal services organization that works with grassroots and community-based groups in New York City to dismantle racial, economic and social oppression. My practice, Equitable Neighborhoods, works with directly impacted communities to respond to City planning processes and private developers, helping to make sure that people of color, immigrants, and other low-income residents who have built our city are not pushed out in the name of “progress.”

As you will hear from our colleagues at the New Economy Project today, community land trusts (CLTs) are an opportunity for resident-led preservation of the affordability of New York City neighborhoods. CLTs have been used for housing, for cultural space, for commercial storefronts and for preserving places where people work. We are here to urge you to make sure that new citywide CLT Initiative be included in the FY20 budget. We are part of the initiative as a provider of transactional legal services to the grassroots organizations poised to create an expand CLTs across the boroughs. The needed legal support includes incorporation, governance, corporate and property tax filings, transactions and the design of governance strategies that reflect accountability to communities that have invested in the City by living in neighborhoods that were abandoned by both private and public capital for decades (a.k.a. drafting bylaws). Initiative funding will not only allow CDP to provide these services to CLTs that our existing

clients and partners are incubating,¹ it will also allow up to develop new relationships as legal service providers to other Initiative members and to support the development of best practices and training materials that we can share with other legal service providers.

For further information, contact:

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¹ Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition; Queens Neighborhoods United; the Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center (Bronx); CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities (Manhattan) and Nos Quedamos (Bronx).