

The City as a Home

We should create a citizens' task force to develop and carry out comprehensive and innovative approaches to the worsening blight of homelessness. Call it Home in New York.

The group, of about a dozen, would include business people, academics, community activists, artists, religious leaders — and, of course, the homeless.

The task force should operate independently of the city's political and administrative structures but with official blessing. Its life span would be brief: two to five years. It would be



financed through a special tax, approved in a referendum. New Yorkers, polled in 1992, indicated a willingness to pay such an extra, specific tax.

Home in New York would remind us that the police should not be used to deal with the poor: homelessness is neither illegal nor immoral. It would create a showcase for successful community action in the most socially diverse, economically powerful and culturally rich city in the world.

— GRACIELA CHICHILNISKY, professor
of economics at Columbia.