



JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

**STATEMENT OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON
RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS
April 2 2025**

Good morning. I am Jumaane D. Williams, Public Advocate for the City of New York. I thank Chair Powers and the members of the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections for holding this hearing today and giving me the opportunity to testify.

Leah Goodridge, Esq. is a Brooklyn native who has spent her career fighting for tenants' rights and community empowerment. A Fulbright scholar with a focus on empowering community stakeholders in urban planning, Leah represented low-income New Yorkers facing eviction from their homes. Leah has won several eviction defense cases with published decisions and has argued before the New York State Court of Appeals. Both the New York City Bar Association and the New York County Lawyers Association honored Leah with awards to recognize her excellence in the legal profession. Appointed by Mayor Bill de Blasio in 2018, she served as a tenant representative on the Rent Guidelines Board for nearly four years—only resigning to join the Commission.

When I first appointed Leah Goodridge she said at the time, “How do I engage the public more in the city planning process?” As the Public Advocate’s nominee, she realized that city planning can be a very complex and opaque area, and she wanted to make it more accessible and understandable to New Yorkers.

Throughout her time on the Commission, Leah has worked to engage the public in the planning process. She created and launched the Efficient Cities program which offers workshops to the public at the Brooklyn Public Library on the basics of city planning. She published an op-ed in The New York Times, titled “New Yorkers Deserve More Public Restrooms,” to explain the urban planning history of public restrooms.

She has been a guest speaker at several universities including Columbia Journalism School and The New School, as well as community events to teach New Yorkers about the city planning process and how to get involved. The City Planning Commission should prioritize community impact, and center community involvement, in making decisions about the future of our city.



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Leah Goodridge has been an invaluable voice on the commission, empowering marginalized and disadvantaged communities as she has throughout her life and work.

The Commission helps to shape the city, now and for decades to come, and Leah's background, experience, and dedication, is perfectly suited both to this moment and to the long-term growth of the city as we pursue progress that is beneficial to all communities across New York. The COVID 19 pandemic has laid bare and exacerbated the inequities that have always existed in New York's housing market, and now more than ever we need the strongest advocates to protect New Yorkers. Stable housing is essential for our health, mental health and to keep us safe. I know that I can count on Leah Goodridge to ensure that these important factors are included in the planning process.