

COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

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March 11, 2025

Start: 2:15 p.m.

Recess: 4:10 p.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Rafael Salamanca, Jr., Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Selvena N. Brooks-Powers

Amanda Farías

Kamillah M. Hanks

Crystal Hudson

Francisco P. Moya

Kevin C. Riley

Carlina Rivera

Pierina Ana Sanchez

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Gale A. Brewer

A P P E A R A N C E S

Dan Garodnick, Director of New York City  
Department of City Planning

Edith Hsu-Chen, Executive Director of the New  
York City Department of City Planning

David Parish, Chief Operating Officer of the New  
York City Department of City Planning

Sarah Carroll, Chair of the New York City  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Lisa Kersavage, Executive Director of the New  
York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Akeem Bashiru, Director of Financial Management  
of the New York City Landmarks Preservation  
Commission

Yvette Chen, Program Manager in Neighborhood  
Development at the Center for New York City  
Neighborhoods

Christopher Leon Johnson, self

Michael Hiller, attorney

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Microphone check, microphone check. This is the Committee on Land Use done on March 11, 2025. This is done in the Committee Room, recording done by Janelle Yearwood.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: [GAVEL] All right. Good afternoon, and thank you for attending today's hearing on the Committee on Land Use regarding the Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Budget and the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget Management Report. I am Council Member Rafael Salamanca, Chair of the Committee on Land Use. I am pleased to be joined in this hearing by Chair of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchise, Council Member Kevin Riley, and Chair of the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Disposition, Council Member Hanks. We've also been joined by Council Member Moya, Rivera, Brooks-Powers, Abreu, Majority Leader Farías, Hanks, and Hudson.

At today's Preliminary Budget hearing, we will first hear from the Department of City Planning, DCP, then the Landmarks Preservation Commission, LPC, at 3 p.m., followed by the public around 4 p.m. We have also been joined today by our colleagues who I've introduced. Last year, the City Council approved modifications to three major Land Use initiatives,

known as the City of Yes. The third one, City of Yes for Housing Opportunities, is projected to add 82,000 more homes over the next 15 years. City of Yes is the most ambitious update to the City's zoning code since 1961, and we must be vigilant to make sure that there is adequate funding to realize the vision of the Council and the Administration. For DCP to properly execute this piece of legislation, the Agency requires three key things. First, proper staffing to assess and implement necessary zoning and planning changes. Second, full engagement with communities. And third, capital funding.

DCP has a final 2026 Preliminary Budget of 46.7 million, about 2.8 million less than the Fiscal Year '25 budget adoption. The Fiscal Year '26 budget includes 34.8 million for personal services to support 353 full-time positions, and 11.9 million for the other personal services expenditures, known as OTPS. When we review DCP's budget, I see a concerning disconnect between the central role that the Agency has to ensure the future of the city we all care deeply about and DCP's limited capacity to fulfill this role. While DCP's budget headcount was maintained in the Preliminary Plan, the Agency still

has a high vacancy rate of 13.3 percent. This vacancy rate needs to come down. One of the major issues we saw with the City of Yes is the need for DCP to meaningfully engage with communities before certification and give communities an opportunity to shape the proposal. Another major issue we saw is the need for much more effectively coordinated capital planning and with increased housing. The City cannot just build housing without the needed infrastructure. To make matters more complicated, we are also very concerned about the Agency's ability to maintain its current levels of federal funding, which comprises approximately one-third of DCP's budget. This all points to the fact that we need to increase the funding for the number of planners at DCP to offset potential loss in federal funding, two, to more proactively engage with our communities, and three, to better coordinate with the City's capital strategy and planning initiatives. The work that DCP does is critical to our City, and in my view, this Agency needs more funding to do a better job.

To briefly touch on LPC, LPC's Fiscal '26 Preliminary Budget totals 8.1 million, approximately 207,000 greater than its Fiscal '25 adopted budget.

Its Fiscal '26 budget includes 7.3 million for the personal services to support 77 full-time positions and approximately 863,000 for the other than personal services expenditures. This increase is welcome.

Today, we will look forward to learning more about the Preliminary Plans changes to both DCP and LPC's budget. Additionally, we look forward to learning more about the City of Yes implementation with actions DCP has taken to increase staffing and ensure all five boroughs have the appropriate staffing for rezonings and the Agency's engagement with communities across the City.

I would like to thank the Committee Staff who helped to prepare these hearings today. I would like to thank Adrian Drapeau (phonetic), the Senior Financial Analyst; Julia Haramis, the Finance Head Unit; Arthur Huh, William Vidal, and Debra Kessner (phonetic), the Land Use Counsels; Brian Paul and Perris Straughter, Land Use Deputy Director and the Director; and Kathleen Greer, the Legislative Analyst; and my Deputy Chief-of-Staff, Brian Hetey, and all of the staff working in my office and for my two Co-Chairs today.

Now I will pause and turn it over to our Subcommittee Chair Riley for his opening remarks on DCP.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Chair Salamanca, and welcome once again to DCP leadership and members of the public who are watching this hearing.

I would like to really focus on the need for investment in our neighborhood planning. It should not and cannot be just about headline numbers. Yes, we need more housing, and the City Council has worked with the Administration to create 82,000 new homes in the next 15 years, but Council had to negotiate very hard for the Administration to invest 5 billion dollars alongside of this new housing. From that 5-billion-dollar pool, 2 billion will go toward affordable housing, 2 billion will go toward infrastructure projects, and 1 billion will be set aside for public housing, vouchers, and tenant protections. Today, I would like to hear what the status of this capital commitment is.

In addition, new capital funds are needed. In March 2022, the Administration launched its Rebuild, Renew, and Reinvent Blueprint for the

City's Economic Recovery, which launched the New York City Strategy for Equity and Economic Development, also known as the SEED Fund. SEED was intended to invest City dollars into neighborhood-wide capital improvements with a new framework. However, we have only heard of three SEED investments in two years. This is not acceptable, and neighborhoods in my District are experiencing more and not less flooding, homeownership is becoming more and more unaffordable, and my constituents are not seeing improvements in public spaces. We cannot simply add density to our neighborhoods without addressing the needs of our communities. When SEED was first introduced by the Administration, it seemed to replace the previous Administration's tool for guiding investments into our communities, which was called the Neighborhood Development Fund. While the NDF remains funded in the City's Capital Plan, it appears most of the remaining money is on hold and otherwise inaccessible. We look forward to hearing more about the status and size of the SEED Fund, the status of NDF, and how either of these will be funded more to actually meet the needs of our communities, and which neighborhoods DCP and



the Administration are focusing on for capital improvements.

Other topics we would like to cover this afternoon include how DCP is supporting office conversion and climate change resiliency, proposing homes to the City Plan Commission, conducting timely land use reviews, and planning for fair housing and more manufacturing and industrial jobs.

I will now pass it back over to Chair Salamanca. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Chair Riley. I will now turn it over to the Director of the Department of City Planning, Chair Garodnick.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you very much, and good afternoon, Chair Salamanca, Subcommittee Chairs Hanks and Riley. Good to see you all, distinguished Members of the Land Use Committee. I am joined at the table here by the Executive Director of the Department of City Planning, Edith Hsu-Chen, as well as our Chief Operating Officer, David Parrish. We are very excited to be with you to discuss the Department of City Planning's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026.

Before we discuss the budget, though, I wanted to very briefly recap some of the historic accomplishments we were able to achieve during 2024 in partnership with the City Council. And, Chair Salamanca, I want to thank you for also highlighting, you know, the biggest of them all, of course, where else to begin but City of Yes, which was the most ambitious update to New York City zoning since 1961.

First, it was City of Yes for Economic Opportunity last year, which was approved by the City Council in June. This zoning amendment was urgently needed. Although our economy has changed dramatically in recent decades, our zoning code remained stuck in the past. Outdated regulations were holding back entrepreneurs and small businesses, stifling growing industries and prolonging storefront vacancies. For all of us tired of walking past empty storefronts, it is unacceptable that the City's own rules were preventing them from getting filled up. With City of Yes for Economic Opportunity, as you all know, we changed all of that, replacing archaic regulations with flexible rules designed for the 21st century that allow more entrepreneurs to start a business from home, make it easier for mom-and-pop shops to

grow, support life sciences and clean manufacturing, and create more vibrant commercial corridors. Already we're seeing shuttered storefronts reopen from Bay Ridge to Lower Manhattan thanks to this initiative, and we look forward to many more to come. After a robust public review process that entailed over 150 community board meetings, I will remind you all we have 59 community boards, I appreciate the time the Council took to consider and ultimately to approve this proposal with modifications. You all have helped ensure our city's future prosperity.

A few months later in December, you all approved City of Yes for Housing Opportunity with modifications, a momentous step to tackle our city's housing shortage. The final plan strikes a careful balance to address concerns about infrastructure and context while enabling 82,000 new homes across the city, making it the single most pro-housing zoning plan in New York City history. 82,000 homes of course is more than just a number. A stable, affordable home is life-changing, and New Yorkers will feel the difference. Working people struggling to pay rent will have more options and more leverage. Growing families will have more room. Homeownership will be

within reach once again. And crucially, in alignment with the Council's Fair Housing framework, City of Yes ensures that people will have more housing options in all neighborhoods because we can only solve our housing crisis if everyone pitches in. Thanks to the Council's efforts, the plan also allocates 5 billion dollars to upgrade infrastructure, to build affordable housing, to protect tenants, and to support homeownership, critical steps to ensure our neighborhoods thrive as they grow. And the City is meeting these commitments already. Just last month, DEP and DOT announced significant investments to increase sewer capacity and to prevent flooding in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Getting this ambitious plan across the finish line was only possible through a strong partnership and collaborative relationship with Speaker Adams, Land Use Committee Chairman Mr. Salamanca, thank you, our Zoning Subcommittee Chair Kevin Riley, Housing and Buildings Committee Chair Sanchez, and the entire Council. We are so appreciative to all of you. The process was never going to be easy. There were always going to be differences of opinion. But at the end of the day, after hundreds of community board meetings

and many hours of public testimony, we agreed that the status quo was not acceptable. We had to take bold action to give New Yorkers more housing options, and that is exactly what we did together so thank you. I am, again, just want to say I am deeply appreciative to your dedication to these transformative efforts.

The Department of City Planning's work did not end there, of course. In July, we implemented Green Fast Track to streamline environmental review for modest, climate-friendly housing projects. Just weeks ago, the first eligible project, a 100 percent affordable senior housing development in Brooklyn, was reviewed by the City Planning Commission. We are very excited to see that first project. We look forward to many more to come. Alongside these citywide initiatives, we continued to advance a number of neighborhood-based plans. In August, the Council adopted the Bronx Metro-North Station Area Plan, enabling 7,000 homes and 10,000 jobs near rail stations coming to the East Bronx. This plan was many years in the making, and we are deeply appreciative to the partnership of Chairs Salamanca and Riley, Majority Leader Farías and

Council Member Marmorato, and others in bringing it across the finish line.

With guidance and collaboration from Council Members Crystal Hudson and Chi Ossé, we launched public review for the Atlantic Avenue Mixed Use Plan in October. Developed through years of community-based work, this plan can bring thousands of homes and jobs to an area where restrictive zoning has stymied housing for far too long.

We also released a draft zoning framework for the Midtown South Mixed-Use Plan before launching public review in January of this year, just about six weeks ago. MSMX, as it is known, represents an incredible opportunity to bring more housing to the heart of Manhattan. My thanks go to Council Members Erik Bottcher and Keith Powers for their partnership.

Turning to Queens, we advanced planning processes for Jamaica and Long Island City in close coordination with Council Members Nantasha Williams and Julie Won, who have brought so much energy and attention to these initiatives. After conducting extensive community engagement and releasing draft zoning frameworks, we are poised to begin the public

review process for both of these plans this spring.  
So we have been very busy across the boroughs.

We also began work on the New York City Industrial Plan in September, which is the first citywide industrial development plan in New York City history. It emerges directly out of Local Law 172, passed unanimously by the City Council in 2023, and we appreciate the leadership of Majority Leader Amanda Farías in driving it forward.

Additionally, we began work on a last mile facility text amendment, which would establish a CPC special permit for new last mile facilities to mitigate their impact on surrounding communities. We appreciate the support and advocacy of Chair Salamanca and Council Member Avilés as we work toward releasing a draft version this spring.

So much was accomplished in 2024, and a lot more to come in the next year. We are committed to moving it forward in partnership with you, Members of the City Council, so thank you again for everything we have done together.

Now, for the financial overview, the Department of City Planning entered Fiscal Year '25 with an adopted budget of 49.5 million dollars and an

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2 authorized headcount of 353 full-time positions, of  
3 which 33.4 million dollars and 182 positions are  
4 funded with City tax levy dollars, that's 67 percent.  
5 The Department of City Planning remaining 16.1-  
6 million-dollar budget allocation and 171 positions  
7 are funded by state and federal grants, primarily  
8 through the HUD Community Development Block Grant  
9 Program. The 49.5-million-dollar Fiscal Year '25 25  
10 adopted budget allocated 34.2 million dollars to  
11 personal services, which include part-time staff,  
12 interns and members of the City Planning Commission.  
13 The remaining 15.3 million dollars went to other-  
14 than-personal services. I'm very glad to report that  
15 staff attrition declined significantly, 4 percent in  
16 Fiscal Year '25 as compared to 14 percent in the  
17 prior year.

18 Now, Fiscal Year '26 Preliminary Budget,  
19 in comparison to the Fiscal Year '25 adopted budget,  
20 it represents a net 2.8-million-dollar decrease. That  
21 is almost entirely due to the expiration of 6.4  
22 million dollars in temporary funding. Most of that  
23 funding was dedicated to environmental impact  
24 statements for projects that have since certified or  
25 will certify in the remaining months of Fiscal Year



2025. At the same time, there's about 3 million dollars in new funding for environmental studies and neighborhood plans, ensuring that the agency can continue its ambitious planning work into the new Fiscal Year. With personal services, as you noted, Mr. Chairman, there was no change in headcount. In total, the agency gained two new City tax levy funded positions and lost two grant funded positions. This even headcount came with a net increase of 600,000 dollars, mainly due to additional funding for collective bargaining. Overall, the Fiscal Year '26 Preliminary Budget reflects a strong foundation with a total budget of 46.7 million dollars and a steady full-time headcount of 353 positions.

The Department of City Planning remains committed to allocating its resources effectively to advance the Department's mission and meet the needs of New Yorkers, ensuring a more affordable, equitable, and resilient city for all of us. With that, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity to present an opening statement. I look forward to your questions.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Director Garodnick. I want to begin on some questions

regarding the federal funding. So DCP's budget is funded by the City's funds, with the second largest revenue source being the federal funding, largely from community development block grants. In Fiscal Year '26, DCP's budget included 14.6 million dollars of federal funding. This represents almost one-third of DCP's budget. Now, with the current presidential administration signaling that they want to reduce overall federal expenditures, how does the City plan on ensuring that DCP remains fully funded? And is DCP preparing any contingency plans for when, and if, this funding is jeopardized?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Well, needless to say, we're watching that issue very closely. A significant portion of our budget comes from federal and state block grants so we are hopeful that we do not see any disruption in those grants coming from the federal government. That said, you know, we will see what happens here. We will assess our needs. We will assess our work program. We will assess any changes that need to be made at such time that actual cuts come down the pike. At the moment, we are proceeding under the current framework as proposed in the Preliminary Budget.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. What does DCP use the community development block grants funding for, and do these funds support neighborhood rezonings?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yeah, in part. But I'm going to turn to David Parish, our Chief Operating Officer, to run through where specifically we most see the funding for community development block grants affecting our program. David, go ahead.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PARISH: Thanks. Community development block grants fund a wide array of programs, including the City's Demographic Analysis and Assessment Team, our Population Division, the mapping of city addresses at the Department of City Planning, and a number of our long-term and strategic planning groups so that's where the funding goes.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. Are there any federal funding applications DCP plans to submit in the near future? If so, please detail what they are. Additionally, are there any applications that have been submitted that DCP is waiting for a response?

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PARISH: Yes, Council Member. We've submitted a pro-housing grant with HPD. We were notified by HUD before the end of the last Administration that we had won some amount of funding and we're working with OMB and HPD to determine what the next steps in that grant process are.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. We just want to recognize that we've been joined also by Council Member Pierina Sanchez via Zoom.

All right. Let's talk about staffing and attrition. So, DCP plays a central role in advancing the Administration's housing growth and zoning goals, including the City of Yes agenda. Currently, the Department has 13.3 percent vacancy rate, about half of the rate it had in July of 2022. While the progress made since 2022 is welcome, DCP's borough offices are still struggling with staffing and the Department's overall vacancy rate is roughly the same as last year's. So, how is the high number of vacancies impacting the timelines for processing of applications at DCP, and how many of these applications are for housing projects to address the City's housing crisis?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you for the question. Well, first of all, it is important to note that our vacancy rate has gone significantly down the last couple of years. We've taken real steps to address that issue. The number that you cited of our nearly 14 percent officially reported vacancy rate is actually a little bit lower when you consider dormant grant-funded positions for which there are six and new hires that are already in the pipeline for which there are about eight. That brings us down to around 10 percent so we are still moving in the right direction. Also, you know, as I noted in my opening, our attrition is down significantly last year, 4 percent compared to 14 percent in the year before. So, we feel like things have significantly stabilized at the Department of City Planning. I don't think that there has been any question about the ambition of the Department as it relates to our work program. Certainly, we have sent plenty of that over to you, Mr. Chairman, and this Committee, and the full Council, and we feel poised to be able to continue to do that, although I don't think there's going to be any more City of Yes initiatives coming your way this year so don't worry.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Is the salary an issue with retaining staff?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Always. We want to make sure that we are competitive. We want to try to keep people. Obviously, we made some adjustments due to collective bargaining this year, which was helpful, and so we do our very best to not only pay people well but also to create an environment where people see this as a great opportunity. We want the Department of City Planning to be the pinnacle of one's opportunity in the planning world, and I think a lot of people do see that because of the incredible work that's coming out of our agency.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: My question more is in terms of the closing of projects. I know that when a developer wants to rezone or put in an application, they're waiting on DCP to close. Is there a backlog in terms of closing of projects at DCP because of a staffing issue?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: So we have moved faster over the last couple of years because of a number of changes that we have put in place. So, it always has taken, in my view, longer than it should to get private applications through the pipeline at

the Department of City Planning, and also even before they hit any official markers through the environmental review. So, we have made changes both internally at the Department to speed up the process for private applicants, whether that is moving them quickly to a preliminary application statement when they come in and meet with us so that we're all on a clock together or trying to resist the temptation to have multiple rounds of feedback. We are trying to tighten that all up. And you see that reflected through some very important metrics in the Management Report. I will also note that, and I noted this in my intro, one way that we're trying to speed up the pre-application process is to try to cut down environmental review times for those projects that do not have environmental impact, such as we have done in our Green Fast Track. All electric, smaller buildings, which we have seen over studying 10 years, do not have environmental impacts, now can pass through the environmental review, and that is savings of, you know, perhaps 100,000 or 200,000 dollars or more, and also a significant amount of time. So, we are taking real steps to try to speed this all up, but to the extent that there is an issue here, it is

not related to staffing, it is related to processes, and also related to, you know, some of the existing laws on environmental review, which make it very, very difficult for applicants to quickly get through the process.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: A few years back, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams and myself, we were the lead co-sponsors on what's called a racial impact study. During the ULURP process, is the environmental review and the racial impact study, is it done simultaneously or is it done separately?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: It's done simultaneously and is presented to the City Planning Commission at the same time upon certification.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Similar to other smaller projects where you're trying to cut time off on the environmental review, is that the same situation for the racial impact study?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: No.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay. All right. Thank you.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: It just doesn't take the same amount of time to do. The environmental review is one which requires multiple agencies, much



more complex. We're not looking to pare down the racial equity reports.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay. DCP currently has 353 budgeted positions, six fewer than it had in January of 2020. Are there any titles for which DCP would like to see additional headcount added to the budget?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Well, we're very happy that as part of our current budget that we have through new needs about 3 million dollars that will go for various positions, environmental review staff, will support our neighborhood plans, zoning for families, that we think will help us to accomplish the goals that we have set out. We think that's the most important part for us. Environmental review staff, finding ways to process applications more quickly through that very complicated part of the process is something that will allow us to continue to reduce backlog.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. We would like to see the potential of office to residential conversions unlock the city. Has DCP created a team focused on office of residential conversions? If so, how many people are on this team?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: So let me just start by saying that as a result of the City Council's own law back in 2021, which required us to study the question of office to residential conversions and make recommendations, that was a task force that came out of a bill passed by the City Council. I had the privilege of chairing that task force. It made recommendations as to what we could do to speed up the process for office to residential conversions. That was incorporated into City of Yes for Housing Opportunity and, as a result of the changes that you all adopted, we have now allowed for another 136 million square feet of commercial office space to be eligible to convert to residential. That's more office space than exists in the entire city of Philadelphia by way of illustration. We made it not any longer limited by geography to Manhattan and the immediate surrounding areas. We made it citywide, we changed the date of eligibility from 1961 or 1977 here in Lower Manhattan to 1991, and we allowed for the conversion to different types of housing. At this point, we at the Department of City Planning, you know, turn it over to private industry to explore the opportunities that we have now presented to them,

which is many more opportunities and through the tax abatement incentive, which was passed by Albany, 467M, an opportunity for many more buildings to have a look at converting from office to residential. The City also does have an Accelerator, which is designed to coordinate across various City agencies to make it easier for buildings or building owners or their representatives to explore what they need to do to actually convert a building from office to residential. That is not housed at the Department of City Planning. It is housed separately, but it's an effort to try to coordinate across, whether it's the Landmarks Commission, the Department of Buildings, the Fire Department, etc., all relevant agencies, and also to help advise potential applicants, potential converters, as to what exactly they need to do.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: So, is there a team specifically for this?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: At the Department of City Planning, no. There is a team that exists, but it is not at the Department of City Planning. The New York City Office Conversion Accelerator lives elsewhere in City Hall, but it exists.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: And do you know what's the headcount for their team?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Do I know the headcount? I do not offhand. I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: And who do they report to?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: They report to the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Interesting. Okay. All right. Thank you. I have one more question, then I'm going to hand it over to my Chair, Chair Riley. I want to talk about last miles and the text amendment. I'm extremely excited about this. So is Councilwoman Avilés and Council Member Gutiérrez and other Council Members who have IBZs. They are impacted by the amount of truck traffic coming in and out of their communities, and as a result, it has an environmental factor. I, myself, suffer from asthma. I have to walk around with my asthma pump because of the air quality in my District. And so, as you know, regulating last miles warehouses is a top priority for me. As part of a City of Yes for the Economic Opportunities, the Administration agreed to create a special permit process for the last mile e-commerce and package of

warehouses. Scoping notices signaling the beginning of the public review is committed to be posted by the end of this month, March 2025. Is DCP on track to fulfill this commitment?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes, we are.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: All right. And getting started with the environmental review is not enough. We need to start to have this project certified and start the unit by the end of the year. It is also very important that we be transparent with communities about these commitments. More generally, has DCP posted on the Online Commitment Tracker all the commitments it's made to the Council as part of all three City of Yes initiatives?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes, it has.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: It has, okay. And are you on track with the... you did answer that, you're on track in terms of fulfilling that commitment. The last time I checked, we didn't see the commitments made with the housing opportunities. Can you commit to uploading these by a certain date?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: It's done.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: It's done? Good, good. Can you also commit to updating the status of

all the commitments so that communities can see the progress that the Administration is making on its promises?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes. We do it every six months.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay. Thank you very much.

So, I will now hand it over to Chair Riley. And, Chair, we're going to give you six minutes for your questions, okay.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Chair Salamanca. The Preliminary Plan includes 1 million in City funding each Fiscal 2025 and 2026 for zoning and families. What will this funding be used for, and can you tell us more about the City of Yes Zoning for Families proposal and its goals? And do you expect to certify this application this year?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: So, this is a proposal that is still in development so we appreciate that there's funds allocated to allow us to proceed. It is designed to make it easier for families to access parks and schools, make it better for us to tie new buildings to transit improvements. But insofar as it is a proposal still in development,

I can't go much further than that other than to say that we're glad that there's funds allocated in the budget, and we are actively working on shaping the proposals that will be part of this.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I'm going to go to the SEED Fund for Neighborhood Investments. The NYC SEED Fund has replaced the prior Administration NDF Fund as a source of funding for some planning commitments for neighborhood rezoning. Is there sufficient funding set aside for SEED commitments for in-progress and future neighborhood rezonings?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: There is, yes.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: More generally, can you please tell us how this new tool is funded and how it intends to be functioned? How is this new fund different from the prior NDF, and it seems to be used in the same way by DCP with the Metro-North and the AAMUP neighborhood rezoning?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yeah, we call it AAMUP just to make our lives easier, but yes, we got with you, Mr. Chairman. In short, yeah, we have the author of AAMUP at the table, so we've got to get it right. In short, they serve the same purpose, which is when we're doing a rezoning plan, we must

accompany it with infrastructure investment because we're making real changes in neighborhoods in a very positive way, but also zoning is not the entire part of the conversation. As you correctly observed, when we did that as part of the Bronx Metro-North plan, that resulted in significant funding from everything from parks to schools to other infrastructure. The funding here is approved in the 10-year capital strategy and is part of the ongoing budget updates throughout the year. The process, the way that we identify these programs is, I think, really important and is very meaningful to me as a former Council Member. We try to figure out what those programs are, what those investments are that are most needed by the community, things that have been initiated or spotted by community boards, capital needs processes through Council Member priorities. They are dictated in part by the scale of the zoning change that we are making, and we are recognizing through this process that each neighborhood has unique needs, and we want to make sure that we have a thoughtful process with Council Members and community members to be able to come to good decisions. So yes, it is thematically



the same as prior processes, but just done in a different way, and that's how it is motivated.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Another commitment made by the Administration was to fund several new neighborhood studies for the City of Yes implementation. What progress has DCP made on the new planned studies for Coney Island, East Flatbush, Harlem River North, and White Plains Road? Does DCP have a target for the number of neighborhood studies it undertakes every year? And I'll ask the other two questions when you answer those.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes, we've gotten the ball rolling on the studies to which we have committed, having good positive conversations with, if not all, then most of the Council Members that we've worked with to make those commitments. We're really excited about these studies, and they are going to either start their own processes in this calendar year or early next, and we think that they're really good, thoughtful areas for us to be able to make land use changes.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Does DCP have a target number for the number of neighborhood studies they undertake each year?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: You know, we don't have a specific number, but we historically advance a handful of neighborhood plans during the course of a four-year term. The ones that we're dealing with right now, I'll just remind you, Mr. Chairman, we will have, if we are successful here, five neighborhood plans that will have come through the City Council since the start of this Council term and this Administration, starting with the Bronx Metro North Plan, AAMUP Up, Midtown South, MSMX, and both Jamaica and Long Island City. That's a fair measure of what we think can be accomplished. And of course, we also did southern Staten Island zoning relief to make it so that our rules focus on real environmental issues as opposed to just extra bureaucracy that was unnecessary for homeowners. So, I think that's a fair reflection of what can be accomplished. And of course, that was accomplished at a time of three citywide text amendments through City of Yes.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is the vacancies in the Department, which I'm kind of concerned about, is that going to affect any of these neighborhood studies going forward?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: No. No, it will not.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. ADUs are a large percentage of the projected increase in housing from the City of Yes Housing Opportunity Plan. However, the agency has not yet released guidelines for homeowners wishing to construct ADUs. When can we expect the full release of the City's ADU regulations? And what support will be provided for interested homeowners?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you for that question. We appreciate very much the Council's interest in giving homeowners the opportunity to add ADUs to their property. I will remind the Council that when you passed City of Yes for Housing, you also passed some accompanying legislation that gave a specific timeframe for those rules and regulations from the Department of Buildings and other agencies like DEP for flood maps and also for how to get this done. It was a six-month time horizon, so I expect you will see those this summer. The precise date, whatever, is six months so it's coming soon.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Chair, if I may just have one more question to ask?

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. The City currently has two active City Charter Revision Commissions exploring potential reforms to the development and planning process. Is DCP engaging with the Commission on ideas for reform? And are there any type of potential reform that DCP is focused on?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: We are keeping up to date. We are listening very carefully to the ideas that have been presented and certainly will serve as a resource to the Commission or Commissioners as needed, but we are not advocating for a particular change at this point.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: All right. And my last question is, on the same topic, some of the public discussion so far has focused on the Council's role in the ULURP as potentially detrimental to housing production. However, the Administration's recent Get Stuff Built report clearly identified the slow processing of applications at DCP, including long rounds of closed-door pre-application meetings between DCP staff and land-use applicants as a major challenge to speed in development. Has DCP been

working on reforming this process to move more quickly toward publicly available filed applications?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes, we have. It's an important priority for us. We have a team that is not only focused on our pipeline, but focusing on the processes to get applications in the door as quickly as we possibly can. We've made real strides on this front that we're very proud of, and I would like to think that if you ask practitioners out there, they are seeing a more user-friendly and accessible department over the past several years than before.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you for your leadership, Chair. I appreciate your question.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Chair Riley.

I just want to follow up, if possible, on the last mile special permit. First, I want to thank you for confirming that you'll be issuing the environmental scope shortly for the special permit. But can you commit to starting the ULURP by the end

of the year, because we need to see this through before the change of the Administration?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can commit to doing what we agreed to at the City of Yes for Economic Opportunity stage, which was scope it, have a scoping meeting, and then for us to explore options from there. So that is where we can go at this moment, and we certainly will meet those commitments.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. I am going to recognize Majority Whip Selvena Brooks-Powers for questions. She will have five minutes.

MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you, Chair. Can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Yes, and I can see you too.

MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Hello, everyone. Thank you for the testimony, DCP.

I have two quick questions. The first one is, how is DCP working to ensure that residents, particularly those in outer borough communities, are meaningfully engaged in the City of Yes process and other planning initiatives? And then I'll wait for you to respond, and I'll ask the next one.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you very much for that question. And I see your assistant in the background, and I like it.

Okay. So, the short answer is, we have developed an entire team at the Department of City Planning whose job is to assist us in reaching neighborhoods, communities, community members who previously had not been part of the process. We take very seriously our responsibility to community boards, that's defined in the Charter, but we also know that there are many people who need to understand our processes and need to understand what we're talking about, and in language that they can understand. I will note that I remember when I was in the shoes of a Council Member trying to digest some of the very, very technical land use proposals coming out of the City or even the Department of City Planning, and I found it very, very difficult in short periods of time to actually grapple with and engage with and understand those details. So, through this community engagement team, by way of illustration, when we were doing our engagement on city-wide text amendments, that meant, you know, an average of about three meetings per community board.

It meant that we were doing public town halls virtually. It meant that we were doing neighborhood engagement. We were doing Council Member-directed engagement with stakeholders. It meant that we were annotating our proposal in plain language. It meant that we were doing illustrated work to make it easier to understand one-page guides to be able to more easily understand the specific subparts of the proposal. All of this is an effort to try to make it easier for New Yorkers to understand our very complicated work, because it's very complicated, but it's also very important, so we want to demystify this and make sure that people have as much opportunity to engage and to be heard, and we're always looking to find ways to do better, and certainly welcome thoughts from you and your colleagues on how we can do that.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Yes, I see you waving.

MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: Sorry. I didn't realize they put that function to not allow ourselves to come off mute, but thank you for that response, and I definitely want to welcome DCP back into the District as this City of Yes is being



implemented so that people can still continue to be a part of the process.

My next question is, how does DCP plan to prioritize homeownership opportunities for working families, particularly in out-of-borough communities? As you know, through the many conversations we had around City of Yes, that was a huge focal point for me, and I just want to know what the game plan is now that it has been, not that City of Yes in particular has been planned, but just in general, understanding that this Council has been committed to trying to create opportunities for homeownership.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes. Thank you, Council Member. Appreciate the question. We share your goal in trying to create more opportunities here for homeownership. We think that there are a couple of component parts, even in City of Yes for Housing Opportunity which do just that. Certainly, the opportunity to create what we called, as you will remember, missing middle type apartment buildings, those that are either close to transit or above commercial strips are much... they're less expensive to build. They are also smaller. They are the sorts of buildings which I think that there will be many more

opportunities for homeownership. Similarly, through the process of accessory dwelling units that some of your Colleagues were asking me about how to activate a few minutes ago, we think that that will make it easier for first-time homebuyers because they can actually potentially find a revenue stream to make it easier for them to make that first purchase, but we also look forward to working with you and your Colleagues to find ways to make it easier for either first-time homeowner buyers or homebuyers more generally, but through zoning which, you know, I try to make it super compelling. We're talking about bulk and use and location. Through bulk, use, and location, we think that we've created the certain types of forms of buildings which will be well-suited for homeownership.

MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you and thank you for continuing to have an open door around these conversations. Much appreciated. Thank you, Chair.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Always. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Council Member. I would now like to recognize Council Member

Sanchez for her questions. Council Member, you have five minutes.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you, Chair. Okay, there I go. Just a quick follow-up.

Good afternoon, Chair Garodnick. As part of the City for All commitments, the Administration committed to an additional 5.9 million dollars in Fiscal Year '25 to support DCP's capacity for neighborhood planning efforts as was mentioned. Was that 5.9 million dollars reflected in the most recent budget modification and, if not, where is it reflected in FY26 given that you mentioned that staffing headcount remains unchanged?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you very much and good to see you. It was part of the neighborhood planning processes to allow us to get to the starting gate of the existing neighborhood plans, the ones that I mentioned previously in this hearing. The ones that remained were AAMUP, MSMX, Jamaica, Long Island City. That was designed to get us to the finish for the environmental review for those projects.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Okay. So, the 5.9 million is not going toward new work? It was going to those existing planning projects?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: That's correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Okay. Is there new funds for the new commitments?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes. There is. There's about nearly a million dollars for environmental review staff at the Department of City Planning, which is extremely helpful because we need to make sure that we have the ability to process land use applications. But I think the question that you're most interested in here is, are EIS funding going forward to allow us to achieve planning goals for things like, say, Fordham Road North or other types of initiatives, and we have seen an addition of 12.9 million dollars in EIS funding added to our budget between Fiscal Years '25 and '28. So this is recognized in the budget as an ongoing need for us. It's a very important one for the reasons you're pointing out. We can't initiate our own neighborhood planning studies without it, so I regard that as mission-critical funding for us.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: All right. Thank you so much, and Kingsbridge as well, environmental review for Kingsbridge, and thank you for your partnership, Chair. I continue to be very proud that

we could get to the finish line on City of Yes, so thank you, Chair, for your time.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you for all of your leadership. We appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Council Member. I would now like to recognize Majority Leader Farías.

MAJORITY LEADER FARÍAS: Hi, Chair Garodnick.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Hello there.

MAJORITY LEADER FARÍAS: How are you, and team.

I appreciate all the reiterations and the work we've been doing between Metro-North and the industrial strategic plans. Just kind of wanted to hear from you the update around those plans, what resources may be needed or expanded to continue on that work as the policy is going to be every eight years at all of our IBZs and manufacturing zones, which currently stand at 21. Hopefully we'll be expanding to 22 soon, and just getting any general updates on what we see if there are any new needs.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Well, thank you very much, and appreciate your initiative in launching

this process through Local Law 172. We are at work now. We're assessing conditions, engaging interested parties in the public, working to produce recommendations by the end of this calendar year, and that includes, of course, designating areas of the city which might be considered primary industrial as defined by your bill. We're in the very first phase of our plan development, which has focused on research and engagement to understand the issues that are facing industrial businesses and areas. We put out a survey, which went live in September, as you know. As of March 5th, so six days ago, the survey had 497 respondents, of which 139 were businesses, 358 were workers, residents, or stakeholders of industrial areas. SBS has contracted industrial service providers to supplement outreach to industrial businesses. We're going to keep the survey open for another couple of weeks, and certainly appreciate you and your Colleagues sharing the survey, and helping us to garner responses. After the survey is done, we'll release an update on our progress, and we plan to have a public information session in the spring.

MAJORITY LEADER FARÍAS: Okay, great.

Thank you so much. Thank you, Chair.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you. Council Member Chair Hanks, you have any questions? No? Chair Hudson, any questions?

COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Some of this has already been addressed, but I guess a more direct and pointed question would just be around AAMUP, of course, and the rezoning, and plans for real investments associated with that to be confirmed before the departure of Deputy Mayors, and just want to make sure that there's a continuation, and it would be great to hear just a little bit about that from you on the record. Thank you.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes. Well, certainly our commitment stands to you, to your community, to your Colleague, Council Member Ossé, that we will do our very best to get the plan right, to work with you right up to the finish line here, and to pair it with the necessary investments to make this a complete success for you and for the neighborhood. I will note that, you know, in our reporting structure with a new Deputy Mayor coming in, he is well-prepared to

continue without any gap in either access or advocacy for what we need to do to be able to make the necessary investments on Atlantic Avenue and in the surrounding area. We're really excited about this. We know that the zoning has to be paired with the infrastructure, the streetscape improvements, to be able to make it a complete plan, and so we look forward to working with you to be able to bring that fruition. We do not see any reason for concern on our side. We will have continuity, and we certainly...

COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: No reason for concern on my side.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: No concern on your side. No concern on the City Hall, Department of City Planning side. We're ready to do this with you, and we think we have both the resources, the human resources, and the capital resources to be able to deliver.

COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Great. Thank you so much.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you. We've been joined by Council Member Gale Brewer.



I just have one last question.

Neighborhood plans, new need. So, in the Preliminary Plan, 1 million dollars in City funding is added in the Fiscal Year '26, 2 million is added in Fiscal Year '27 and '28 to support neighborhood plans agreed to in the City of Yes legislation. What exactly will this funding be used for, and which neighborhoods will be supported by these zoning funds?

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yeah. This relates to our new needs for environmental consulting. As was pointed out by Council Member Sanchez, our environmental review is critical to our ability to advance neighborhood plans. That's what that relates to, and that's what that's all about.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay. I'm going to recognize Council Member Riley.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I have one more question, Commissioner. In 2023, in September, DCP released a building evaluation and subgrade data set, the most comprehensive data yet available on the elevation of New York City buildings. The data should help the City assess flood risks, improve on emergency management, and direct funding for local climate resilience efforts. What do flood risks mean

for available affordable housing that exists, for example, in basements? Does the City have a plan to make basement apartments safe during extreme but increasingly regular weather events? The only reason I asked this, last week I did a tour of my district in the corridor by Gun Hill Road that's close by the 5 train. And the train, being that they, I guess, renovated a few years ago, four or five years ago, elevated it, which is causing a lot of flooding into the basement apartments for some residents in my District so just wanted to learn a little bit more about this plan that was set by DCP.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yeah. So, first of all, I think it's really important for us to note that there are too many New Yorkers who live in unsafe conditions and are not recognized as legal dwelling units under City or State law. There are processes underway to find pathways to legalize safe basement apartments, but most importantly, and I think this goes to the core of why the action that you all took in City of Yes for Housing Opportunity was so important, was that without adequate housing supply in New York City, what you get is New Yorkers living in death traps, and that is not something that

we should accept as a city. That is something that we should be taking all necessary steps to avoid. And so whether it's somebody who can't find affordable housing that is not prone to regular flooding and they live in a basement that is not recognized by the City, or if it is somebody who just wants more flexibility in negotiating their lease renewal with their landlord, or if it's somebody who wants to get basic repairs to their apartment, if you have no options and if you have no leverage, you are out of luck as a New Yorker so we think those are directly related. The City is now working on the pilot program to find a way to legalize the basement apartments that can be legalized. I will also note that we did create some limitations in the accessory dwelling unit program for City of Yes to areas where we did not think that basement units were appropriate in flood-prone areas. That was an important part of the ways that we were trying to keep New Yorkers from gravitating to unsafe basement apartments. But most importantly, this initiative to add more housing is the way to get more affordable units and to do them in safe conditions and to not put New Yorkers in dangerous spots.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you,  
3 Commissioner. Thank you, Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. Council  
5 Member Brewer, do you have any questions?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: When you're doing  
7 the Manhattan South, are you going to take into  
8 consideration all of the manufacturing that goes on  
9 there for the textile and other kinds of industries  
10 that are manufacturing?

11 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: The short answer is  
12 yes, but I'm going to turn to Edith, who I think has  
13 something more to say on this one.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: Hello,  
15 Council Member. Thank you for your question. A  
16 portion of the garment district, the zoning garment  
17 district, does overlap with a portion of our MSMX  
18 neighborhood plan. Of the 42 blocks within our  
19 Midtown South plan, it's about 14 blocks, some  
20 partial and some whole. And our plan, the  
21 neighborhood plan, it recognizes the value and the  
22 importance of businesses, and it recognizes the  
23 legacy of the manufacturing that's been in this area,  
24 but it also, very importantly, allows housing and  
25 allows for conversions. Actually, going back to a

question that Chair Salamanca asked earlier, we're also further enabling conversions in areas where housing is not even allowed today. So, I mean, restrictive zoning can be, frankly, tempting to achieve specific outcomes, but we don't want to lock ourselves into a prescriptive approach that may actually end up prolonging elevated vacancies and, frankly, economic turbulence. The garment district, itself, has gone through a lot of change, as we know, and, you know, it's, frankly, been steadily on the decline, as we all know, for decades. And the 2018 zoning change, that analysis, the analysis that, I know, exactly, I salute you for that, the analysis that went with the 2018 zoning change, you know, showed that the zoning, the preservation requirements for manufacturing were really inhibiting, you know, use of space within that area. So, the 2018 zoning change removed those preservation requirements, but it did allow the continuation of businesses and manufacturing uses and, you know, commercial uses, and we're doing that still. I think that's very important as part of the MSMX Neighborhood Plan. We see a dynamic mix of uses. We see housing working very, in unison, in harmony with the businesses that

are there and businesses that may come there and grow there.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. I might disagree with some of what you're stating, but I appreciate it. Thank you very much. I'll let it go for now.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Council Member. Director, I would like to thank you and your team for today's hearing, and we will move on next to the Landmarks, Public Siting and Disposition part of the Preliminary Budget hearing. Thank you again.

DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. Well, good afternoon. We will now move on to our next part of today's Preliminary Budget hearing, where we will first hear from the Landmarks Preservation Commission, LPC.

A quick reminder that we will hear testimony at 4 p.m. from the public about the Preliminary Budgets for both DCP and LPC.

I would now like to turn it over to the Subcommittee Chair Hanks to share her opening remarks for LPC.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you, Chair Salamanca, and welcome once again to LPC leadership and the members of the public who are watching this hearing.

For six decades, LPC has sought to use the power of preservation to revitalize communities and drive investment to existing buildings and to tell the story of New York City. I'm so pleased that over the past few years, LPC has taken a more holistic view and incorporated more strongly equity in assessing which designation proposals to pursue. This means that telling the many stories of our cities, including the stories that are buried, sometimes quite literally in the ground, requiring LPC urban archaeologists to excavate them, and at other times, stories buried by historical underrepresentation, racism, or other factors. It is very positive to see LPC taking a broader view of what requires preservation and historical designation in the city, and today, the Committee that hopes to learn much more about the ongoing process around making equitable designations across the five boroughs. That, of course, includes my home borough, Staten Island, which is home to the city's oldest

building dating back to 1662, which LPC designated in 1967. I hope to better understand how LPC evaluates the economic and cultural impact of designations and how their outreach processes are engaging all city residents. I would also like to better understand how the agency manages federally funded restoration to work to make sure low-income homeowners who live in historic buildings, as well as not-for-profits, have the necessary supports to preserve our shared heritage. It is of particular interest. And more broadly, we want to hear more about LPC's efforts to increase the pace of landmark designations, processing work permit applications, enforcing complaints and possible violations, and supporting office conversions and climate change resiliency projects.

With that, I pass it over to Chair Salamanca for questions. Thank you very much, and thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Chair Hanks.

As a reminder, the public will testify starting around 4 p.m. If you are here to testify in person, please fill out a witness slip with the



Sergeant-at-Arms so that we can put it on the list. Additionally, if you would like to testify remotely, please note that you must sign up at [www.council.nyc.gov/testify](http://www.council.nyc.gov/testify). When you visit that website, click on the link for the Land Use Committee, and now I will hand it over to LPC.

CHAIR CARROLL: Thank you, Chair Salamanca and Chair Hanks. Good afternoon to you and the members of the Land Use Committee and the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Sitings and Dispositions. I am pleased to be here today to speak about the Landmarks Preservation Commission's Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget. I am joined today by Lisa Kersavage, our Executive Director, and by Akeem Bashiru, our Director of Financial Management.

The Commission's mission is to protect the significant architectural, historical, and cultural resources of the city. The preservation of historic resources revitalizes communities, supports economic development, and contributes to the vitality of New York City. It is my honor to lead the agency in its successful efforts to realize these important public policy and quality-of-life goals. To date, the Commission has designated and regulates more than

38,000 buildings and sites throughout the five boroughs. As Chair, one of my primary goals is to incorporate equity and diversity in all aspects of our agency's work, particularly to ensure diversity and inclusion in our designations, fairness, transparency, and efficiency in our regulations so that all property owners have equal access to resources, technical assistance, and expertise.

Since I last testified on our agency's budget, LPC has been focused on several key initiatives, designating buildings and districts that reflect the city's diversity and tell the story of all New Yorkers, transforming the permit process to make it more accessible, and developing programs to support small businesses and educate property owners about permitting processes and grant opportunities.

I will begin my testimony today by giving a brief overview of LPC's budget and how resources are allocated. LPC's preliminary budget for Fiscal Year 2026 is 8.14 million, which consists of 7.44 million in City funds and 698,287 dollars in federal community development block grant funds. LPC is fundamentally an agency of professionals. Almost 90 percent of the Preliminary Budget, 7.3 million, is

allocated to personal services, and 10 percent is allocated to other-than-personal services. Our budget supports the agency's five departments, including the Research Department, responsible for evaluating and advancing properties for designation, the Preservation Department, which reviews permit applications for work on designated properties, the Enforcement Department, which investigates complaints of potential violations and helps owners correct noncompliances, and the Archaeology and Environmental Review Departments, which assist city, state, and federal agencies in their environmental review process. The agency's total headcount in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget is 77 full-time staff. We also have six part-time staff. Of the CDBG funding, about 82 percent is allocated to personnel supporting critical community development related functions such as surveys, environmental review, archaeology, community outreach, and education, while about 18 percent, or approximately 114,790, is allocated for our historic preservation grant program for low-income homeowners and not-for-profit organizations.

I will now discuss the work of the Commission that these resources support. LPC's equity

framework guides our priorities for designations, and the agency has focused on places that represent New York City's diversity and in areas less represented by landmarks. In the first half of Fiscal Year 2025, LPC designated the Jacob Day Residence, a row house located at 50 West 13th Street in Manhattan. Jacob Day was a prominent 19th century Black business owner as well as an abolitionist who later became a leading advocate for voting rights and economic opportunities for the Black community. With this designation, LPC is furthering the goals of our equity framework to designate buildings and sites that address the city's difficult history with racism, as well as its inspiring role in movements for freedom and justice.

In addition, thus far in Fiscal Year 2025, LPC has held a public hearing for the proposed designation of the Paul Rudolph Designed Modulator Building apartment complex as an interior landmark, and just this morning, we held a public hearing for the proposed designation of the Marcel Breuer Designed Former Whitney Museum of American Art as both an individual landmark and an interior landmark.

I will now turn to our preservation and permitting operations. I believe it is imperative to

support property owners of designated landmark buildings. The key to success in preservation is effective regulation, which requires an efficient, transparent, and accessible process for applicants. Buildings are living, thriving contributors to the dynamism of New York City, and our job is not to prevent change, but to manage it so that we can ensure these significant buildings and sites are protected and allowed to remain a vital part of our city's continued growth. Our Preservation Department is the regulatory arm of the Commission and is the largest department within the agency. Our staff are professionally trained preservationists who work with property owners and business owners to help them obtain approval for work that meets their needs and is sensitive to the historic building in context. Each year, approximately 94 to 97 percent of permits are issued by staff pursuant to the Commission's rules. The remaining 3 to 6 percent of the applications are reviewed by the full Commission. LPC staff works closely with property owners, including meetings and other communications, to ensure they understand the criteria and review process and to help them put together a complete application and

presentation. In Fiscal Year '24, the Commission received 11,436 permit applications and took action on 11,120 applications, ranging from restoration and repairs to windows and storefronts to additions and to new buildings in historic districts. Through February of this Fiscal Year, we have received about 7,450 applications and are roughly on track to match the Fiscal Year '24 total.

In March 2024, LPC launched Portico, the Commission's online application portal that provides a user-friendly customer experience for people applying for permits to do work on their designated properties. Developed with New York City's small property owners in mind, Portico represents a transformation of the application process. Portico offers increased transparency and accessibility by making it easier for property owners to file an application on their own without needing to hire a professional, allowing multiple users to access the same application and offering detailed status updates from start to finish. Additionally, Portico simplifies the application process by asking users simple questions to direct them to the appropriate permit. Portico can also automatically determine

whether an application qualifies for one of LPC's expedited review services like Business Express, which helps small business owners get permits faster through a dedicated hotline, pre-application consultation, and focused review. Since the launch of Portico, 45 percent of applications are received and reviewed under expedited services versus 33 percent the prior year.

The number of applications reviewed as expedited Certificates of No Effect have doubled, and the number of permits through our Business Express program has increased five-fold. In the first four months of Fiscal Year '25, we greatly exceeded our targets by issuing 93 percent of Certificates of No Effect and 95 percent of permits for minor work in 10 business days or less. This high level of efficiency is a major achievement for the Preservation Department.

I will now share some further details about the outreach and education work LPC conducts. Outreach and education are also essential to our success. My goal is to make information accessible to everyone and, in a city as diverse as New York, we need to make sure we are effectively communicating

with property owners across the city, especially since a substantial number of owners directly file for permits with LPC. Since my tenure began, we have increased community outreach efforts and now place a special emphasis on reaching out to communities across all boroughs that have not traditionally been well represented by landmarks. We have also published new educational materials to improve access to important information. This is important for our regulatory work and generates support for designations. LPC has bolstered the use of our new e-filing portal, Portico, with extensive outreach increasingly focused on teaching the city's diverse community of property owners, from homeowners to seasoned professionals, how to use the tool.

Before I conclude, I want to return to the Historic Preservation Grant Program, a modest federally funded program targeted for low- and moderate-income homeowners and not-for-profit organizations to help restore or repair the façades of their landmark buildings. In Fiscal Year '24, the program awarded seven grants to homeowners and two grants to not-for-profit institutions for amounts ranging from 10,000 to 35,000 dollars. The homes are



in Addisleigh Park, Queens, Cambria Heights, Queens, Ridgewood, Queens, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and Greenpoint, Brooklyn. The institutions are the Frederick Douglass Memorial Park in Staten Island and the Greenpoint Reformed Church in Brooklyn. In Fiscal Year '25 thus far, LPC voted to award two homeowner grants and one non-profit grant.

In summary, we are excited for the future of preservation in New York City and thank the Administration and the Council for your continued support and the resources provided in this budget. We are a small agency and nearly the entirety of our budget is personnel-based. This is a hard-working, dedicated, and professional staff with an outsized impact on our city, responsible for the protection and preservation of its most significant buildings, districts, and sites. Our commitment is that we will continue to do so with the resources provided and strive to do so equitably, efficiently, and transparently. Thank you again for allowing me to testify, and I'm happy to answer any questions you have.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Chair,  
for your opening statement.

I want to start by asking regarding the federal funding for the restoration projects. I know that you spoke on it here, but I just want to get a little more into it. LPC administers a federally funded Historic Preservation Grant Program that provides financial assistance to low- to moderate-income landmark property owners to help fund restoration work on their designated properties. What was the total amount of this grant in Fiscal Year '24 and what is budgeted for Fiscal Years '25 and '26, and is the funding flat from previous years or has it changed?

CHAIR CARROLL: The fund has remained consistent. And I should back up saying, we are allotted about 689,000 in CDBG funds, and 82 percent of that funds personnel in critically important community development related functions such as survey work, environmental review work, and outreach work, and the other 18 percent is for the grant program and that comes to about 114,000 dollars, and that has been consistent throughout the recent years.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: We understand that there are around five staff who work on the program. How much is spent on personal services cost versus the OTPS cost?

CHAIR CARROLL: So, the staff who administer the grant program are actually City-funded staff and so the only staff that's funded by the CD money is a part-time grant coordinator.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay, so just a part-time coordinator.

CHAIR CARROLL: Yeah. And the other five staff who oversee the program are City-funded.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay. Perfect. Are you able to roll all unused grant funding from one year to the next?

CHAIR CARROLL: Yes, and this happens often. We award grants in one year, the money is earmarked, and the work may begin but it may not be completed in that year, and so that money is rolled over and we have a number of projects that have rolled over into this Fiscal Year.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: How many not-for-profits and homeowners were provided assistance in

each Fiscal Years '23 and '24, and has there been any for '24?

CHAIR CARROLL: Yeah. Let me start working up, so Fiscal Year 2023, we awarded four homeowner grants and one non-profit for a total of five, and the non-profit was the New Amsterdam Musical Association in Central Harlem, which is a really exciting opportunity to give them money for some façade restoration and some others of those grants, homeowner grants, were in Bed-Stuy in Greenpoint and in Mineta Street in the Bronx in your District.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: That's my District.

CHAIR CARROLL: Yes. And then in Fiscal Year '24, we awarded five homeowner grants and one non-profit grant for a total of six. The non-profit was the Greenpoint Reformed Church in Greenpoint, and we also awarded grants in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, and Addisleigh Park that year. And to date, this year, and we do these applications on a rolling basis, to date we've awarded two homeowner grants and one non-for-profit, and the non-for-profit is the Frederick Douglass Memorial Park Cemetery, which we're also really delighted to support.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Are churches or religious institutions eligible for the Historic Preservation Grant?

CHAIR CARROLL: The religious institutions are eligible to apply for the grant, and we have been able to award grants for areas that are not used for worship. So, for the Greenpoint Reformed Church, I believe it was we worked on the entryway. For the Bushwick Reformed Church, we gave them funding toward a steeple that was leaning to help them get that structurally engineered and restored. So, we've been able to do façade work or work related on their community building that does community-related functions, but we can't award grants for the central chapel or the place of worship.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: What about churches that have a dual use, where they have religious services and then they also have programming and they need roof work?

CHAIR CARROLL: Right. So, the roof work would be eligible because it is on the outside and it's restoration work, but we couldn't do work on inside the chapel.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Does the church need to be landmarked?

CHAIR CARROLL: In order to be eligible for our grant, you have to be either a New York City landmark or listed on the National Register.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: National Register. Okay. All right. This is good information. Thank you. I may have some churches in my District who may need some work. So, in essence, the exterior of the building will qualify for these grants, not the interior of the building.

CHAIR CARROLL: That's right.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay. All right. And then my last question is, recently I'm seeing, at least in the Bronx, that the Archdiocese is closing many of its private school buildings, and some of these buildings, in my opinion, would be landmark eligible, or in my opinion, they qualify to be designated as a landmark, but they have not, and so what we're seeing is that they... I don't know if they're selling their buildings to charter schools who are moving in or if they're leasing their property to charter schools and, in essence, when you get a charter school that comes in, the exterior of

the building, they want to change it, you know, with their aesthetics, and is LPC monitoring buildings? Do you have a list of buildings, especially buildings that are in the portfolio of the Archdiocese that qualify for landmarks that have not been landmarked?

CHAIR CARROLL: I mean, we do surveys every year. We survey thousands of buildings, and that survey inventory informs our planning and our priorities, so we are aware of many sites, religious or not, that may merit, and we think about when to prioritize certain items based on other factors, and so what I would say, though, with religious properties is that, you know, we work very hard. We recognize that many religious institutions have unique needs. Many of them have dwindling congregations and very complex buildings that are architecturally complex that are expensive to maintain, and the reality is that most of these are important to their communities or were historically, and so we, I think, have to look at religious properties with a real rigor and care to ensure that we are applying standards that allow us to protect the most significant buildings without causing harm to religious institutions or displacing them, so

it's, you know, we have very rigorous standards when we look at the architectural and historical significance. You know, we have recently in the last couple of years, we designated the Holyrood Episcopal Church in Washington Heights, which had very specific Latino history, and so that was a very exciting designation for us, but we do work very carefully to work with the religious institution as we move forward with the designation to ensure that it doesn't have a negative impact, and of course, we can't regulate use.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: No, no, I understand you cannot regulate the use, but we're just seeing, I don't want to call it a pattern, but it seems as if there's been an influx of school closures at least in the Borough of the Bronx, and there are concerns these buildings may qualify for designation, and they're not, and there is a concern, to say the least.

All right. With that, I'm going to hand it over to Chair Hanks. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you, Chair. I love your line of questioning when it comes to the schools. That's something that we should have a much



greater conversation about, so thank you so much once again.

I have lots of questions, so I'm just going to ask a few questions from each category, so Save America's Treasurer's Grant and federal funding. In the Preliminary Plan, 88,000 in federal funding is added to LPC in Fiscal 2025 from the Save America's Treasurer Grant. How will the Commission use this funding?

CHAIR CARROLL: So, this is a two-year project that is related to our Archaeology Department and archaeology repository, and so the grant will be used really for scanning and recording these artifacts, and we will be scanning over 20,000 documents and photographing over 8,000 artifacts, and as part of that, we are also planning multiple exhibits of these artifacts to make this archaeological repository more accessible to the public.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: So, you know what my next question is. Hopefully there's equity in boroughs across New York City, particularly Staten Island. So, would it be something that like the funding, like say the Staten Island Museum who also

collects artifacts and has that sort of initiative,  
can there be partnerships with the?

CHAIR CARROLL: So, the grant is  
administered by the National Park Service in  
partnership with NEA and NEH, and the agency applied  
for the grant specifically to make the artifacts  
within the archaeological repository accessible to  
the public. So, we have deliverables to return on  
that grant, and so I don't know that there's  
partnership, but we can certainly maybe provide  
guidance or work to help them find resources the way  
we do. Our staff has been incredibly successful  
finding grants and applying for grants, and we're  
happy to share the guidance on that.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: How would you say how  
many federal grants are you apply each year?

CHAIR CARROLL: I would say in recent  
years it's been one to two. Most of them are through  
actually the State, so as a certified local  
government, we can apply to the State for grants, and  
that those State grants are partially funded by  
federal funds.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay. So, that leads  
me to my next question. Are there any other grants

that LPC is currently applying for that is currently waiting a response?

CHAIR CARROLL: We don't have any pending applications.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay. Thank you. All right, so Vulnerable Buildings Action Plan was announced by Mayor Adams in April of 2023 to protect landmark buildings with structural risks and included early detection of risks and more robust engineering oversight, increased coordination and communication between LPC and DOB, and enhanced community tools. Is the Vulnerable Buildings Action Plan still active?

CHAIR CARROLL: It is still active, and we're very proud of it. It really focused sort of on three areas. One is early detection, and that involves a lot of communication and coordination with the Department of Buildings, who is sharing a considerable amount of data with us, and we are doing site visits together. It also included expanded oversight, engineering oversight, and so we have put that into place, and we have applications that involve excavation or other work that we think might have the potential to compromise the building or adjacent buildings. We do enhanced engineering with

an engineer that's retained by LPC and in coordination with the Department of Buildings engineering, and then of course on the outreach front, we have been, we work with community groups, but we also have been doing educational programs for engineers and architects.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: That's awesome. How many buildings were determined by DOB to be vulnerable that fall into that?

CHAIR CARROLL: Yeah. It's not actually the DOB determination. They have different kinds of violations than we do, but it is like one-tenth of a percent of the 38,000 buildings and sites. It is a very small number.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: I'll take that.

CHAIR CARROLL: Most landmark owners are very good stewards of their buildings and maintain them, but there is a very small percentage, about 30, that we have on our watch list that we are continuously working on, and we've increased our staff, also part of the Vulnerable Buildings Action Plan, to be able to monitor these sites, work with property owners, and initiate lawsuits if necessary.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Excellent. So when it comes to like landmark designations, what type of work continues to be underway to recognize and celebrate the places of African-American and Black cultural significance through designations and landmarks, and what efforts are the Administration taking around African burial grounds generally, and is there any update on your thinking around recognizing these locations?

CHAIR CARROLL: Yeah. You know, I'm proud at the Commission as we've, in recent years, really prioritized and had a real focus on representing the diversity of the city. The Commission, though, does have a long history of representing African-American history in our designations, and we've built on that, and as I mentioned in my testimony, we just recently designated 50 West 13th Street, which was a 19th century home of a prominent Black businessman and abolitionist, which tells that story in sort of pre-Civil War era, and as you know, we also recently designated the Frederick Douglass Memorial Park Cemetery and the Drake Park and Enslaved Peoples Burial Ground in the Bronx in Council Member Salamanca's District, and so we are committed to

continuing to tell the full story and represent these histories, and through our designations. And as we've talked a little bit about burials, we are able to designate them when they are known burial sites, when there's been testing and artifacts that can document boundaries. Boundaries are a very tricky thing with burials when they've been covered over by our urban infrastructure, but we absolutely support telling the story of these places, even when they're not extant, and even when we don't know what's beneath the ground, and so, you know, I applaud you for your work in trying to get markers, and we would be happy to support that in any way we can.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. Chair, may I ask one more question? Thank you.

I wanted to get more information, being that you have all of this work and this great work that you do in such a big city, you know, so let's talk about the, as of the Preliminary Budget Plan, there are 77 budgeted positions for each Fiscal 2025 and 2026. How many of these positions are currently filled, and how many are vacant, and how does that compare to, like, the historic levels?

CHAIR CARROLL: Right. So, we have a headcount of 77. We have 11 vacancies. We have one person on leave, which makes it look like 12, but it's really 11 vacancies. 10 are full-time, one is part-time. We have been working closely with OMB, and we have PARs approved for six of those 11, so we're very excited about that, and we're continuing to, so we are in the interview process and trying to fill those positions. Four of them are civil service titles so we have to wait for the civil service list to be established but, overall, our staff numbers are an increase over the years, over the last 10 years, it's a 24 percent increase in total staff.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much.  
Okay.

CHAIR CARROLL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you. Now, I would like to recognize Council Member Gale Brewer.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much, and thank you for taking all my calls. They are constant, and I appreciate it.

CHAIR CARROLL: Of course. I'm happy to.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: I know your number by heart, all your numbers.

My question, according to the material we have from the staff, that there's a 73.3 percent increase in complaints regarding enforcement, and a 22.6 percent decrease in investigations, and that's concerning. So, I didn't know if, according to the Preliminary Budget, there's a decline in enforcement activity, and I didn't know if that had to do with staff or if there's some other aspect.

CHAIR CARROLL: Yeah. These are tricky numbers. Actually, the number of complaints and the number of actions taken don't really correlate, right, because we can get maybe five complaints for one property, or we can get, you know, one complaint... it's not one complaint per property. You can get multiple complaints for one property, and so the number of investigations reflects really the number of properties investigated, which can be very different than the number of complaints, depending on how many complaints you get for a property. The other thing is is that, I think in the previous Fiscal Year, we had a backlog of complaints, and the Enforcement Department undertook a big initiative to



address that backlog, and they cleared out the backlog, which was about 500 complaints, so that also inflated the number of complaints that were investigated, so the numbers of complaints and investigations and actions don't really correlate to each other. They're different.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But you're saying, then, you are caught up staff-wise, and complained, and investigated. Every investigate...

CHAIR CARROLL: (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Complaint and investigation.

CHAIR CARROLL: Every complaint is investigated, and usually responded to within 30 days.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. And responded to means that somebody's going to do something about it...

CHAIR CARROLL: Either we've taken an action...

CHAIR CARROLL: If they're supposed to.

CHAIR CARROLL: Right, either we've taken an action and issued a warning letter of violation,

or we've investigated and found that it was not in violation.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Because I know, for instance, the CVS on 96 and Amsterdam was a mess, and you are, in fact, I see scaffolding, so I assume LPC got after them, and I appreciate that. I don't know if that's what happened, but I had written about that.

CHAIR CARROLL: If you reported it, I'm sure that we've gone after them.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I appreciate it. And then the budget reflects that landmark designations have declined because of the Commission's authority over interior landmarks, and I know this is more complicated. I guess it had to do with the decision of Save America's Clock versus New York City. So, I'm wondering, in terms of that decision, what you feel about it, should it have been expanded rather than reduced, your Commission's authority over interior landmarks? I want to get your opinion about that.

CHAIR CARROLL: Okay. So, I mean, we actually have recently designated quite a few interior landmarks. In general, interior landmarks

have to be publicly accessible, very special places by virtue of their volume, fixtures, and finishes...

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right.

CHAIR CARROLL: And so because of they have to be publicly accessible and very special, there are very few of them in the city, relatively few. There are about 125, I think now, 123, but we did recently designate a number of interior landmarks. We designated the Temple Court in the Beekman Hotel down here, and we designated the interior of the Red Room at 1 Wall Street, which we're very excited. Printemps is going in there, and they're opening later this month in the beautiful space, which will now be actually open to the public, which it hasn't been for decades, and we are currently considering the interior of the Modulightor Building in Midtown, and the interior of the former Whitney Museum Building.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. All right.

Now, of course, my challenging question. I understand that you received an application with respect to the West Park Presbyterian Church to repair the roof and the façade. Once completed, if it was to happen, it would allow for the removal of the sidewalk bridge

scaffolding that's been there over 20 years, and that may also eliminate certain public safety issues that the Department of Buildings has given the church, is actually the building. I understand that the Commission will only grant a permit for the repair work if it's signed by the owner of the property, and in this case, the Presbytery will not sign the application to have the roof fixed, even though Landmarks has signed off on all of the aspects, to your credit, of how the work will be done, and even though the church's tenant, meaning the cultural group that is in charge of (TIMER CHIME) has offered to perform all of the work itself at its own cost, so why hasn't the Commission issued a violation to the owner for not allowing the work to proceed, and wouldn't this repair be beneficial to the Landmark and to the City to get rid of the shed and fix the roof?

CHAIR CARROLL: Yeah, yeah. I mean we welcome applications to restore and repair and maintain buildings, and particularly religious buildings, which can be very complex, but as we've talked about before, the Commission's rules require an application to be signed by the property owner,

and you can imagine why we wouldn't want tenants doing work without a property owner's permission. I mean, imagine if they wanted to replace a historic feature instead of repair one, and the owner didn't sign off on it, so all of our rules do require an owner's signature, and this is no different than any other regulatory body. The Department of Buildings also requires an owner's signature, unless the lease explicitly states that the tenant has the authority to apply for permits, and so without that explicit statement, it puts the agency in the position of interpreting language in a lease, which regulatory bodies just cannot do and don't do, so, you know, the application was submitted. We did receive many materials, and we noted that those materials were accepted, but until all materials, including the application form, is signed, we can't do a final review and issue a permit, but, you know, I commend you for working with the center and raising funds and working together.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: This could go on for years...

CHAIR CARROLL: Yeah.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And your building  
3 will be deteriorating as a landmark.

4 CHAIR CARROLL: Yeah. I think...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: You have to come  
6 to some, I don't want to prelude this because I know  
7 that this is not what we're about today, but this  
8 has, I mean, every celebrity in the United States of  
9 America literally was there the other day in support...

10 CHAIR CARROLL: Yeah.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: So I hope we can  
12 come to some resolution.

13 CHAIR CARROLL: Yeah. And I think we are  
14 monitoring the condition. It, you know, has not  
15 changed substantially over the last several years,  
16 even since designation, we've been monitoring it, and  
17 we really don't issue failure to maintain violations  
18 unless the building is vacant and structurally  
19 unsound and compromised, which is not the case here,  
20 and we wouldn't want that to be the case. It's being  
21 used by the center, and that's a good thing.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All right. Thank  
23 you, Mr. Chair. This is an ongoing discussion.

24 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Council  
25 Member Gale Brewer.

I want to thank you for coming and testifying today's budget. Just know that you have partners here, and I think that we should actually increase your budget. Your budget is probably one of the smallest budgets out of all City agencies, and you're preserving the City of New York, you know, so thank you very much.

CHAIR CARROLL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. Up next, we're going to have our public testimony.

SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Okay. For the public testimony portion, I have a speaker card for Yvette Chen and Christopher Leon Johnson. Is that correct? Yes, you both are here. Great.

And after taking testimony from those signed up in person, we will then move to the online testimony portion. If there's anyone here in the room with us from the public who wishes to testify and has not yet submitted a speaker card, please do so, and then we'll take your testimony. Thank you.

YVETTE CHEN: Good afternoon. My name is Yvette Chen, and I'm...

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: I'm sorry. You should turn on your mic, the red button.

YVETTE CHEN: Thank you. Good afternoon.

My name is Yvette Chen. I'm a Program Manager in Neighborhood Development at the Center for New York City Neighborhoods. I would like to thank the Speaker, the Chair, and the Members of the Council for giving us the opportunity to address the Mayor's Preliminary Budget today. The Center for New York City Neighborhoods promotes and protects affordable homeownership in New York so that middle- and working-class families are able to live in strong, thriving communities.

Today, I want to discuss three key priorities for the budget that will expand homeownership and strengthen housing stability across New York City. The first priority is sustained funding for homeowner services, including foreclosure prevention and home repair. This funding preserves affordable homeownership in the city for historically disadvantaged communities as well as preserving the naturally-occurring senior housing stock and affordable rental supply in two- to four-family homes. The proposed 25.6 million dollars in funding for the Homeowner Help Desk funds legal services for homeowners in crisis. Furthermore, increasing the



investment in the Home First Down Payment Assistance Program will increase homeownership opportunities by expanding program eligibility to more moderate-income New Yorkers up to 120 percent area median income.

Our second priority is the expansion of affordable homeownership opportunities, including increased investment in Mitchell-Lama Developments and Down Payment Assistance. We ask for 2 billion dollars for housing capital investments to finance affordable housing development, including Mitchell-Lama Developments. We also asked the Council to support the creation of new homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers by doubling the funding of the citywide CLT initiative to 3 million dollars. Launched in 2020, this Council-funded initiative supports the formation, expansion, and stabilization of community land trusts in their mission to (TIMER CHIME) create, preserve, and steward permanently affordable housing.

The last priority is support for small property owners and homeowner landlords through accessory dwelling unit incentives and the creation of an office of small homes. We support the sustained funding for technical assistance and staff. To ensure

these efforts are successful, the budget should include funding for non-profit community-based organizations.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Sorry. Can you please wrap it up?

YVETTE CHEN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. Thank you.

I see that a lot of your asks are related to funding for housing and programming. Have you given this testimony to the Buildings Committee when they testified for their budget because I think that testimony is more appropriate there than it would be here, but we definitely would take your testimony.

YVETTE CHEN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. Thank you. All right, Chris.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Good afternoon, Chair Brewer, Chair Salamanca. My name is Christopher Leon Johnson. I am calling on the Land Use Chair. I know since Eric Adams is out the door and Andrew Cuomo's coming in, and I know you support Eric Adams, Rafael, you should be pushing for the Deliverista Hub to be outside City Hall. Eric is out, let's keep it

real. He's out the door. He might as well just do it for the deliveristas because he just completely gave Hell's Kitchen a bike lane and the 6th Avenue whole bike lane people didn't want. Since he knows that the people that should be supporting him is not supporting him anymore, and they're against the Deliverista Hub, he might as well give the deliveristas the Hub, what they need. But at the same time, the City Council should be pushing for more protections for deliveristas with Intro S992 in the State Senate, should introduce a resolution to make it a Class C felony for anybody to attack a deliverista, I mean S-9924A. At the same time, like I said, look, we gotta keep it real here. Eric is out. Eric is out the door. He might as well push certain things in like Deliverista Hubs, making sure that... pushing for more contracts with deliveristas on his way out.

And one more thing, since you talked about community land trust, I'm calling on the investigation to East New York CLT. The reason I'm calling for investigation to East New York CLT because there's a certain land use zoning thing that is called 248 Arlington, 248 Arlington, that's under

Council Member Sandy Nurse, and those people over there getting treated like crap. They're complaining to me about what's going on over there. East New York CLT need to be defunded or put on investigation of where that money is going to do their non-profit. Not only East New York CLT, Cypress Hills, the Cypress Hills organization that's ran by Haley Kim. Julie Won, you should know about this. Like I said, they're getting abused over there, the community land trust. I know there's a big (TIMER CHIME) thing over there, but they're getting treated like trash over there at 248 Arlington, and Sandy Nurse, the Council Member had done nothing about it. She's avoided him. She only listened to Albert Scott of East New York CLT, and they need to be put under investigation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. Thank you very much for that.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. I think we have someone online, correct?

SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: We have one person online that I'm aware of registered to

testify. That's Michael Hiller, and so we'll now hear from Michael Hiller.

MICHAEL HILLER: Good afternoon. My name is Michael Hiller, and I am, and for the approximately 30 years, have been an attorney representing preservation in environmental organizations, neighborhoods, and individuals throughout the city. I've had the honor of receiving both the Landmarks Lion and the Grassroots Preservation Awards from the Historic Districts Council, and I was one of three finalists as Attorney of the Year for the State of New York in 2021.

Over the last 15 years, my preservation work has increased exponentially by approximately 700 percent. The budget report you have in front of you provides an indication as to why. Regulatory enforcement and landmark designation have both declined substantially. And although not quantified in the report, the Commission's overarching dedication to designation and preservation of historic assets has been significantly compromised. When I first began practicing preservation law, there was very little for me to do, insofar as the Commission at the time maintained a robust commitment

to preservation. We were allies in our collaborative desire to preserve and protect existing landmark properties and to grant designations with respect to others. Over the years, however, the Commission's commitment to preservation has been replaced with a focus on managing disputes between preservationists on the one hand and developers on the other, and time and again the Commission has sided with the developers. As a consequence, demand for our services has increased and our relationship with the Commission, with which we were once substantially aligned, has become unfortunately adversarial. I'm able to point to just one publicly contested project proposed by developers in the past 15 years that the Commission outright rejected, and that was a proposal to reconfigure the Hopper Gibbons House, which is an underground railroad site. During preliminary hearings, the Commission actually indicated a willingness to grant the application. However, it was not until after the Commission received objections from members of the Congressional Black Caucus that the Commission changed its position and denied the application. Other than that one application to reconfigure an underground railroad site, I'm unaware

of a single publicly contested application on a significant development project that the Commission has rejected. (TIMER CHIME) My experience...

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Your time expired.

MICHAEL HILLER: Say again?

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time expired.

MICHAEL HILLER: I thought I got three minutes.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: That's three minutes, but if you can please wrap it up.

MICHAEL HILLER: I'm sorry. I thought I had three minutes. Okay. I just want to make reference to the one episode that Chair Carroll and Council Member Brewer just discussed, which involves the West Park Presbyterian Church. Council Member Brewer discussed the circumstances pretty clearly. What did not come out of that conversation is that the tenant of the building has raised 8 million dollars to make the repairs, has hired the professionals to draw plans, arranged for those plans to be approved by the Commission, and then hired contractors to do the work, and yet at the moment the Commission is not issuing a violation to the owner

who is refusing to allow the free repairs to proceed. Chair Carroll did explain why an owner must sign an application. What she did not explain is why the Commission is refusing to issue a violation to the owner who is refusing to repair an important landmark of the city. I would respectfully urge the Council to exercise its oversight functions and to undertake a meaningful investigation of the Commission and to reform it and the Landmarks Law as appropriate. The Landmarks Law is celebrating its 60th anniversary next month, and it seems to me that absent substantial review and oversight by the Council, the historic assets of the city will remain at risk. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you. Thank you very much.

All right. I would like to thank the public, my Counsel, and my Land Use Staff for attending today's hearing. This meeting is hereby adjourned. [GAVEL]



C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date March 29, 2025