

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS
JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEE ON LAND
USE AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL
BUDGET

----- X

February 23, 2021
Start: 10:16 a.m.
Recess: 4:45 p.m.

HELD AT: Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 3)

B E F O R E: Fernando Cabrera
CHAIRPERSON

Rafael Salamanca
CHAIRPERSON

Helen Rosenthal
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Dharma Diaz
- Ben Kallos
- Steven Levin
- Alan Maisel
- Bill Perkins
- Keith Powers
- Ydanis Rodriguez
- Kalman Yeger
- Adrienne Adams
- Diana Ayala
- Inez Barron

Joseph Borelli
Chaim Deutsch
Ruben Diaz, Sr.
Vanessa Gibson
Barry Grodenchik
Peter Koo
I. Daneek Miller
Francisco Moya
Kevin Riley
Antonio Reynoso
Carlina Rivera
Mark Treyger
Steven Matteo

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Marisa Lago, Chairperson
Department of City Planning

Anita Laremont, Executive Director
Department of City Planning

Dan Zarrilli, Chief Climate Policy
Advisor
Mayor's Office of Climate Policy and
Programs

Tara Boirard, Deputy Director for Housing
and Economic Development
Office of Management and Budget

Jon Kaufman, Chief Operating Officer
Department of City Planning

Paul Tymus, Associate Director for
Capital Budget
Office of Management and Budget

Howard Slatkin, Deputy Executive for
Strategic Planning
Department of City Planning

Susan Amron, General Counsel
Department of City Planning

Barika Williams, Executive Director
ANHD

Gale Brewer, President
Manhattan Borough

Maulin Mehta
RPA

Spencer Williams
Municipal Arts Society

Adam Friedman, Director
Pratt Center for Community Development

Paul Epstein, Co-chair
Inwood Legal Action

Fitzroy Christian
Community Action for Safe Apartments

Bruno Daniel Garcia, Organizer
Communities Resist

Kevin Worthington, Staff Attorney
Communities Resist

Meredith McNair, Community Planner
Cypress Hills Local Development
Corporation

Lena Dalke
Integrated Schools Project
New York Apple Seed

Paulette Soltani
Local New York

Tierra Labrada, Senior Policy Analyst
Supportive Housing Network of New York

Carlos Castell Croke, Associate for New
York City Programs
New York League of Conservation Voters

Cortney Worrall, President and CEO
Waterfront Alliance

Caroline Sousloff, Legal Follow in
Environmental Justice Programs
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Laura Wolf Powers, Professor of Urban
Policy and Planning Department
Hunter College

Eve Barron, Chair of City Planning
Pratt Institute

Eva Hanhardt
Collective for Community Culture and
Environment

Benjamin Prosky, Executive Director
Center for Architecture

George Janes, Urban Planner

Jessica Katz, Executive Director
Citizens Housing and Pleading Council

Andrea Goldwyn
New York Landmark Conservancy

Simeon Bankoff, Executive Director
Historic Districts Council

Lynnells Worth, New York City Resident

Sean Khorsandi
Landmark West

Russell Squire, Chairperson
Community Board Eight Manhattan

Carter Booth, Chairperson
Community Board Two

Eugene Kelty, Chairperson
Community Board Seven

Joseph Maziliano, District Manager
Community Board 11

Michael Budabin, Chairperson
Queens Community Board 11

Alicia Boyd
Movement to Protect the People

Henry Euler, Vice President
Auburndale Improvement Association

Paul Graziano, New York City Resident

Julia Bryant, New York City Resident

Kevin Forestall, President
Queens Civic Congress

Kirsten Theodos, New York City Resident

Linette Townsley, Board Member
Community Board 12

Lo van der Valk, President
Carnegie Hill Neighbors

Michael Hollingsworth
Crown Heights Tenant Union

Olympia Kazi
Community Board Three

Phil Konigsberg
Community Board Seven

Richard Hellenbrecht, Land Use
Chairperson
Queens Community Board

Rachel Levy, New York City Resident

William Thomas, Representative
Open New York

Leticia Remauro, Former Vice President
Battery Our City Authority

Philip Simpson, New York City Resident

Bryan Block, Chairperson
Community Board 13

1 COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS JOINTLY WITH
2 COMMITTEE ON LAND USE AND SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL
3 BUDGET 9

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: PC recording is on.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Cloud recording started.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Backup is rolling.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Sergeant Polite, can you
8 give us the opening, please?

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Good morning
10 and welcome to the remote hearing on the Committee on
11 Governmental Operations jointly with the Committee on
12 Land Use and Subcommittee on Capital Budgets. Will
13 Council members and staff please turn on their videos
14 at this time? Once again, will Council members and
15 staff please turn on their video at this time? Thank
16 you. To minimize disruptions, please place all cell
17 phones and electronics to vibrate. You may send your
18 [testimony at testimony@Council.NYC.gov](mailto:testimony@Council.NYC.gov). Once again,
19 that is testimony@Council.NYC.gov. Chairs, we are
20 ready to begin.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
22 I will be gaveling in today's meeting.

23 [gavel]

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Good morning. I am
25 Council member Fernando Cabrera, Chair of the
26 Committee on Governmental Operations. I want to
27 start off by thanking Speaker Cory Johnson for his

1 leadership for proposing a redesign of the city's
2 planning process is bold in future thinking. I also
3 want to thank cochairs Council member Rafael
4 Salamanca Junior of the Land Use Committee and
5 Council member Helen Rosenthal of the Subcommittee on
6 Capital Budgets. Your commitment to these complex
7 issues is a marvel and I am looking forward to
8 holding this discussion with you both. Additionally,
9 I want to thank that Council members who have joined
10 us this morning. There's quite a few, so let me go
11 down. I mentioned we had Chair Rosenthal, Chair
12 Salamanca. Council member Lander, Council member
13 Adams, Council member Perkins, Council member Matteo,
14 Council member Kallos, Council member Koo, Council
15 member Riley, Council member Powers, Council member
16 Deutsch, Council member Diaz, Council member Ayala,
17 Council member Gennaro, Council member Rivera, and
18 Council member Maisel. Today, the Committee will be
19 considering Introduction number 2186, sponsored by
20 Speaker Johnson in relation to a comprehensive long-
21 term plan. Our comprehensive long-term planning has
22 largely become the norm in other localities. New
23 York State has failed to make a citywide planning a
24 priority to stay focused, you know, [inaudible
25

1 00:02:40] currently, the Charter requires many
2 different reports and processes related to city
3 planning they are requiring holistic review of the
4 city's existing conditions to identify challenges,
5 opportunities, and goals and makes policy
6 recommendations to address and achieve them. The
7 charter itself does not make clear how these reports
8 and processes fit together in the silos of the areas
9 of land use, capital budgets, and city policies that
10 the city has continued to operate and has to simplify
11 this. We have the One NYC report that the Mayor and
12 is very proud to share, but it does not speak to land
13 use or budget decisions and does not include the
14 state of repair of the city's infrastructure,
15 assisting school capacity, housing units, and
16 vacancies of providing economic data. Beyond this,
17 we haven't seen broad coordination for or across city
18 agencies to inform the city's broad policy goal or
19 neighborhood needs. One NYC is not required to
20 integrate with other strategic policy statement,
21 whether the 10 year capital strategy, social
22 indicators report, or the citywide statement of
23 needs. And the inverse is also true. Capital
24 investment planning has little to no relationship
25

with the city's policy goals or land use planning.

There is a fundamental disconnect here that cannot be overstated. How can we, as a city, plan for our futures when we only have only fragmented-- only fragments of the full picture of the city's current needs and access? To increase coordination across city industries is critically important as the city faces significant budget constraints as a result of covid 19 crises. We cannot afford inefficiencies and redundancy across city agencies that undermine our ability to achieve citywide goals. We have a lot of work to do and I look forward to today's conversation with the administration as a starting point. I want to thank the staff, dream team staff, for making this hearing possible. Committee staff CJ Murray, Emily Fort John, Elizabeth Cronk, Sebastian Bocce, as well as Louis Fulton Brown and Annie Levers in the Office of Strategic Initiatives and the central staff operating this remote hearing behind the scenes. My legislative director, Clair Michael Vane. I will now turn it over to Speaker Johnson, sponsor of Introduction 2186, to give a statement.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Good morning. Thank you, Chair Cabrera. I want to thank you all for

1 being here today and to Chairs Cabrera, Salamanca,
2 and Rosenthal for holding this hearing. When the
3 Council started conversation about comprehensive
4 planning-- excuse me. My computer is going a little
5 crazy. When the Council started conversations about
6 comprehensive planning more than two years ago, the
7 city already faced serious challenges. Economic,
8 racial, and gender inequality, housing and food
9 insecurity, aging infrastructure, and, as we've seen
10 again and again throughout the five borough, the
11 impacts of climate change. We have worked hard as a
12 Counsel to advance equity and justice and to undo the
13 city's harmful and exclusionary policies, but we, as
14 a city, have not acknowledged, let alone reformed,
15 the ways in which our cities fundamental failure to
16 plan has upheld the status quo. For decades, the
17 city has relied on a piecemeal and ad hoc approach,
18 muddling through its planning exercises one
19 neighborhood, topic, and project at a time. That
20 planning has largely neglected people of color,
21 immigrants, people with disabilities, and low income
22 New Yorkers. It is also led to serious
23 inefficiencies. Our budget documents often simply
24 don't relate to our cities policy and land use
25

1 priorities and, as we enter a period of fiscal
2 stress, we have no rational system for prioritizing
3 our communities most urgent budget needs to reduce
4 disparities and combat climate change. So why is the
5 Council taking on these complicated issues now?
6 Because we simply cannot afford to wait. The
7 devastating and disparate impact of Covid 19 wasn't
8 unpredictable. It's just the most recent example of
9 what happens when we fail to plan ahead. When we
10 don't address the underlying systems and historic
11 disinvestment's that perpetuate inequality.
12 Disparities across race, culture, nationality gender,
13 and immigration status have all gotten worse and that
14 is no coincidence. It is a result of our cities
15 policy, budget, and land use decisions. Over the
16 next several decades, climate change will force us to
17 make difficult and critical decisions about our
18 infrastructure. The city is engaging in some good
19 planning work. We are updating our waterfront zoning
20 policies and Council legislation has led to the
21 production of a first-ever environmental Justice for
22 all report. But, too often, good policies and
23 reports get siphoned off or ignored completely by
24 future administrations. We can't win the battle
25

1
2 against climate change or racial injustice fighting
3 on one front. These are land-use issues. They are
4 budget issues, and they are policy issues. If we
5 can't coordinate these decisions, we put the
6 viability of our entire city at risk, not to mention
7 the vulnerable frontline communities that are already
8 bearing the burden of Covid 19. We must learn from
9 our past mistakes. If this crisis and beyond-- of
10 this crisis and beyond to plan for a better and more
11 just future. Before I go on, I think you can see
12 some slides that are being shown. I want to spend a
13 minute clearing up some facts about what this
14 proposal does and does not do in response to some
15 misinformation spreading about the bill.
16 Introduction 2186 does not make nor require any
17 amendments or changes to the city's zoning resolution
18 whatsoever. It does not require or trigger
19 requirements for any kind of rezonings, let alone up
20 zonings ever. It does not propose or support the
21 elimination of single-family zoning in New York City,
22 nor does it propose any rezoning actions whatsoever
23 and it does not amend or eliminate community board
24 role in future rezoning processes, all of which would
25 remain subject to the ULURP process. Now, I want to

1 be clear about what it does do. It requires the city
2 to provide community boards and the public with new
3 resources, new data, and new analyses to support
4 proactive community-based planning. It encourages
5 the city to direct new growth or development away
6 from low-lying, vulnerable areas to sea level rise
7 and other displacement risks like rising rent or real
8 estate speculation. It identifies and prioritizes
9 communities urgent budget needs, regardless of
10 whether or not those neighborhoods will be a reason
11 owned and it encourages fine-grained rezoning tools
12 to be equitably distributed citywide and gives all
13 neighborhoods the opportunity to proactively plan for
14 their future. I know this is a complicated bill. It
15 is 25 pages of unwinding decades of disconnected
16 planning mandates and building up a new system, but I
17 want to take a few minutes to walk there some of the
18 details about why it is so important and how this new
19 model works. You will see on this next slide
20 comprehensive planning can uniquely center racial,
21 economic, and environmental justice within a full
22 range of land use, budgeting, and policy tools. It
23 is a strategy that cities all across the globe used
24 the correct historical inequities, apply lessons
25

1 learned, and create new and innovative tools to
2 tackle the issues of tomorrow. And that is why I am
3 sponsoring Introduction 2186. The claim that this
4 proposal will remove, not enhance it, but from
5 neighborhoods where community boards and elected
6 officials is a come complete and total
7 misrepresentation. It is designed to do the exact
8 opposite. It requires the city to engage in
9 proactive land use. Infrastructure planning in every
10 single neighborhood regardless of whether that
11 neighborhood is being rezoned. It actually enhances
12 elected officials and community board influence over
13 future rezoning decisions by giving them a defined
14 role in a proactive neighborhood planning process.
15 Right now, we are stuck reacting to the rezoning
16 proposals from the Mayor or private developers and by
17 the time they come to the community board or the city
18 Council for review, the project is already fully
19 baked. This proposal flips the script to give
20 communities an opportunity to inform the city and
21 developer's plans at the front end of the process.
22 Before ULRUP is even considered. With the process
23 laid out in this belt, the city would finally develop
24 the shared long-term vision in partnership with
25

1 communities to prioritize citywide needs while
2 simultaneously addressing neighborhood specific ones.
3 The bill streamlines and meaningfully connects the
4 dozens of reports, plans, and documents that you see
5 right now on the left side of the screen. These
6 documents are already required by the city charter
7 and are often produced without any opportunities for
8 public input whatsoever. The charter fails to make
9 clear whether or how these documents relate to one
10 another. On the right, you will see a depiction of
11 the new cycle proposed by Introduction to 186. The
12 bill connects all of these disjointed documents and
13 reports required to create a citywide strategic
14 framework and vision for the city while strengthening
15 and creating new resources for communities to use as
16 they proactively plan. Comprehensive planning will
17 create a proactive process centering community voice
18 in a conversation about how to tackle citywide
19 challenges. The bill tasks the Office of Long-term
20 Planning and Sustainability with the responsibility
21 for coordinating this plan across city agencies as
22 they do currently for their Plan NYC and One NYC
23 reports. The city's first task would be the
24 production of a new Conditions of the City Report.
25

1 This report would take all of the data that currently
2 sits across dozens of reports and plans in the open
3 data portal in one easy to use place. It would also
4 include new analyses to help us assess the state of
5 our current infrastructure access to opportunity and
6 displacement risk, identifying disparities across our
7 neighborhoods. The city would then work in
8 partnership with communities and key stakeholders to
9 determine the city's long-term needs for housing,
10 jobs, open space, schools, and other critical
11 infrastructure. These would be measurable
12 infrastructure targets. Then, New Yorkers would help
13 decide where and how the city would help distribute
14 that critical infrastructure in their neighborhoods
15 over the next 10 years. The framework would
16 prioritize any new projected growth with areas of
17 high access to opportunity and low risk for
18 displacement. This would help us ensure that we are
19 investing in new infrastructure in communities that
20 need it most while we mitigate the harmful impact of
21 displacement and gentrification in our neighborhoods.
22 Community boards and borough presidents would adopt a
23 preferred land-use scenario for each of their
24 community districts. Those would then get sent to
25

1 the Council which would be responsible for
2 reconciling recommendations from various stakeholders
3 and adopting a final preferred land use map for
4 inclusion in the long-term final plan. Then, those
5 would set the vision for our neighborhoods and we
6 would measure future budgets and rezoning
7 applications against to those plans that have been
8 proactively planned by the local community. I won't
9 pretend this will be easy. Peeling away the
10 structural inequalities plaguing our city and
11 confronting the challenges that lay ahead will be an
12 enormous challenge. That is why this bill creates
13 the roadmap we need to move forward, when that
14 finally creates an integrated, citywide process with
15 robust opportunity for public input. The production
16 of the plan would take place over the course of four
17 years with transparent opportunities for public input
18 every step of the way. The bill creates these
19 important milestones which will increase
20 transparency, but gives the city flexibility to grow
21 and adapt that robust community-based planning
22 process over time. The bill does not propose, does
23 not propose, does not require and does not trigger
24 specific policies, zoning actions, or budget
25

1 commitments. Instead, it requires the city to center
2 equity and justice and proactive and ongoing
3 conversations about how to plan for future. This
4 bill creates new opportunities for the public to
5 directly shape the city's agenda before ULURP or
6 annual budgets are even considered. When the first
7 cycle is done, the cycle starts over again and each
8 plan will build on the successes and failures of the
9 last. Compliance with the long-term plan would be
10 encouraged and considered, but not required. All
11 rezoning actions, in furtherance of the plan or not,
12 would still be subject to ULURP. Future ULURP
13 applications would be required to include a statement
14 of alignment describing how the rezoning does or does
15 not align with the long-term plan. Community boards
16 would entirely retain their role in the ULURP process
17 with new data and resources assessing neighborhood
18 needs to help inform decision-making processes.
19 Inconsistent actions would get sent to the Council,
20 as usual. Consistent actions would be given an
21 easier path through the ULURP process. Instead of
22 mandatory Council review, consistent actions would be
23 subject to Council call up. A requirement for the
24 city to produce a generic environmental impact
25

1 statement, a GIS, would ensure the city assesses the
2 broad impact of the plan, but it would also
3 incentivize the city and developers to implement the
4 plans policies. Today, the administration will say
5 that the GEIS will cost the city nearly half a
6 billion every decade that cost estimate is both
7 inaccurate and absurd. It indicates that this
8 administration is not engaging in this conversation
9 with a seriously. There is nothing about this bill
10 that will amount to that price tag. In fact, the
11 GEIS has the potential to reduce city costs when it
12 comes time to implement the policy's plans. The
13 plans policies. And it can even reduce developers'
14 costs when projects are consistent with the plan.
15 The proposal will also make significant reforms to
16 our long-term infrastructure planning to ensure we
17 are spending our limited resources wisely. Unlike
18 Plan NYC and One NYC reports, the final long-term
19 plan will be required to include detailed budget
20 needs for meetings citywide and neighborhood specific
21 goals. The 10 year capital strategy will be reformed
22 to reflect the whole scope of our infrastructure
23 repair needs and a wish list of new infrastructure we
24 must build to achieve our citywide goals. Annual
25

1 budget documents would then prioritize those needs
2 based on more robust assessments of our
3 infrastructure. These plans are-- these reforms are
4 long overdue and would create transparency we need to
5 hold government accountable. Comprehensive planning
6 holds an enormous amount of opportunity for our city
7 as a whole and our individual neighborhoods. Through
8 this process, through this new process, we can
9 provide communities with new resources, data, and
10 analysis to support proactive planning. We can make
11 sure that community's long-standing budget needs are
12 addressed, regardless of whether or not the
13 neighborhood will be rezoned. We can address the
14 failures and unintended consequences of our zoning
15 decisions, just like most other cities do in the
16 world and we can force more coordination across city
17 agencies to better achieve our citywide and
18 neighborhood goals. Before I turn it over to my
19 colleagues, I want to thank the Thriving Communities
20 Coalition. They have been working on these issues
21 for years and continually have been advocating for
22 change. We would not be here today without them and
23 I am just glad to be part of a movement that they
24 started. Before I turn it back to Chair Cabrera, I
25

1 want to thank again Chairs Salamanca and Rosenthal
2 for cochairing this hearing and I want to thank
3 Council members Lander and Reynoso who have led on
4 this effort for a long time. Now I pass it back to
5 Chair Cabrera.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
8 Mr. Speaker. And I want to recognize we have also
9 been joined by Council members Yeager and Borelli
10 and, with that, let me turn it over to the Chair of
11 the Land Use Committee Counsel member Rafael
12 Salamanca.

13 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Chair
14 Cabrera. Thank you, Speaker Johnson and Chair
15 Rosenthal. Committee staff, representatives from the
16 administration and members of the general public. I
17 am Council member Rafael Salamanca. I am the Chair
18 of the Committee on Land Use from the 17th Council
19 district in the South Bronx. I'm going to make this
20 quick as we have lots to discuss as part of this
21 important hearing. It is no secret that New York
22 City planning framework is outdated and in need of
23 significant overhaul. Despite the exponential
24 growth, our city has seen over the half a century,
25 many of our communities still have the antiquated

1 zoning and planning guidelines from the first and
2 last time the city set out to truly map out the city
3 in 1961. At a time when local and national
4 conversations are providing governments with a
5 mandate to reform our laws, it is our duty to closely
6 look at the policies that have led to marginalization
7 of minority communities via exclusionary zonings or
8 the reminiscence of the Robert Moses Sarah that
9 contributed to the systemic racism of the city.
10 Using the platform of the Committee on Land Use, I
11 look forward to partnering with my cochairs in the
12 Speaker on this important conversation. Thank you,
13 Chair Cabrera.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
16 cochair. At this moment, let me turn it over to the
17 Council member and another cochair, Council member is
18 Helen Rosenthal, Chair of the subcommittee on capital
19 budgets to give a statement. Did we lose Council
20 member Rosenthal? I don't see her.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: With apologies. I
22 just had a little technical difficulties there.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much.

25 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you, Helen.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Chair
5 Cabrera. Thank you, Speaker Johnson and Chair
6 Salamanca for holding this hearing today. Today we
7 are hearing Speaker Johnson's Introduction to 186.
8 The bill tackles a lot of really important issues,
9 including the city's long-term infrastructure
10 planning. The bill requires the city to better
11 integrate its land use and policy planning with its
12 capital budget to better achieve citywide and
13 neighborhood goals. The city's budget decisions are,
14 unfortunately, suffering from insufficient
15 assessments of capital needs and, as a result, the
16 city's spending often fails to sufficiently maintain
17 existing infrastructure and enhance infrastructure to
18 reduce neighborhood disparities, improve the climate
19 resiliency of the infrastructure we fund, or fund the
20 infrastructure needed to accommodate projected
21 growth. Comprehensive planning offers the city an
22 important opportunity to better align and coordinate
23 our shared priorities and goals with our city's
24 budget, which I have always said our moral documents,
25 so, as we enter into an area of fiscal stress and
budget constraints, we must ensure our infrastructure
spending prioritizes urgent repairs and then needs of

1 our most vulnerable New Yorkers to better position us
2 to recover from this crisis in a just and equitable
3 way. I look forward to having this important
4 conversation today and hearing testimony from all
5 stakeholders. And before I conclude, I just want to
6 thank the staff who helped me prepare for this
7 hearing. The finance division committee staff,
8 Nathan tote, deputy director Chima Obitiri, unit head
9 Monica Fujack, financial analyst Rebecca Chiasson,
10 the senior counsel Noah brick, assistant counsel,
11 and, of course, my staff, Madari Shucla, Sarah Kreen,
12 and Cindy Cardinal. With that, I pass it back to
13 Chair Cabrera.
14

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
16 Chair Rosenthal. And let me just recognize we have
17 also been joined by Council member Grodenchik and
18 Council member Miller. And, with that, I will turn
19 it over to our moderator, committee counsel CJ Murray
20 to go over some of the procedural items.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair
22 Cabrera. I am CJ Murray, Counsel to the Committee on
23 Governmental Operations. Before we begin testimony,
24 I want to remind everyone that you will be on mute
25 until you are called on to testify, at which point

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON LAND USE AND SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL
BUDGET

28

1 you will be on muted by the host. I will be calling
2 on panelists to testify. Please listen for your name
3 to be called. The first panel last to give testimony
4 today will be representatives from the
5 administration. From the Department of City
6 Planning, testimony will be provided by the Director
7 of City Planning and Chair of the City Planning
8 Commission, Marisa Lago, as well as Executive
9 Director Anita Laremont. From the Office of
10 Management and Budget, testimony will be provided by
11 deputy director for housing and economic development,
12 Tara Boirard and associate director for capital
13 budget, Paul Tymus. In addition, the following
14 representatives from the administration will be
15 available to answer questions. From DCP, chief
16 operating officer, Jon Kauffman, deputy executive
17 director for strategic planning, Howard Slatkin, and
18 General Counsel, Susan Amron. And from the Mayor's
19 Office of Climate Policy and Programs, chief climate
20 policy advisor and One NYC director, Dan Zarrilli.
21 Panelists, I will call on you when it is your turn to
22 speak. During the hearing, if a Council member would
23 like to ask a question of a specific panelist, please
24 use the zoom raise hand function and I will call on
25

1 you in order. We will be limiting Council member
2 questions to five minutes, which includes the time it
3 takes the panelists to answer your question. As a
4 reminder to members of the public, please do not use
5 the zoom raise hand function. You will have an
6 opportunity to testify later in the hearing. All
7 hearing participants should submit written testimony
8 to testimony@council.nyc.gov. Before we begin
9 testimony, I will administer the oath to all members
10 of the administration who will be offering testimony
11 or will be available for questions. Please raise
12 your right hands. I will call on each of you
13 individually for a response. Do you affirm to tell
14 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
15 before this committee and to respond honestly to
16 Council member questions? Chair Lago?

18 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Yes.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Executive Director
20 Laremont?

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LAREMONT: Yes.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chief operating
23 officer Kauffman?

24 JON KAUFFMAN: Yes.

1 COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON LAND USE AND SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL
BUDGET 30

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Deputy
3 Executive Director Slatkin?

4 HOWARD SLATKIN: Yes.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: General Counsel
6 Amron?

7 SUSAN AMRON: Yes.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy director
9 Boirard?

10 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BOIRARD: Yes.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Associate director
12 Tymus?

13 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR TYMUS: Yes.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Director Zarrilli?

15 DIRECTOR ZARRILLI: Yes.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Chair
17 Lago, you may begin your testimony.

18 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Good morning, Chairs
19 Cabrera, Rosenthal, and Salamanca and members of the
20 committees. In the interest of efficiency, I will be
21 the only administration official who will be
22 testifying, but all the people who have been sworn
23 and will be available for questioning. Thank you for
24 the opportunity to testify at this hearing
25

1
2 Intro 2186, requiring a comprehensive
3 long-term plan. I am pleased to have the opportunity
4 to testify this morning on the subject of sound land-
5 use planning, a subject that we agree is of great
6 importance for the city's future. It is critical to
7 have a healthy discussion about how our planning
8 processes, including the uniform land use review
9 procedure can be made more effective in meeting the
10 needs of the city and how to do so more equitably.
11 We agree strongly with the importance of providing
12 sound data and analysis to guide decisions. City
13 planning's initiatives under Where We Live NYC, the
14 city's plan to advance for housing, includes
15 increasing the already considerable data and analysis
16 that we make available to the public about community
17 conditions and changes in housing and neighborhoods
18 across our city. We also agree that the main purpose
19 of planning is to support action to promote equitable
20 growth. Our neighborhood initiatives and SoHo NoHo
21 and Gowanus address the urgency highlighted in Where
22 We Live of creating more mixed income housing in high
23 opportunity neighborhoods, and absolutely vital need
24 before and especially since Covid 19 struck. While
25 it is encouraging to hear discussion of the

1 importance of meeting the city's needs for equitable
2 growth, we oppose this bill because of concerns about
3 its feasibility, its costs, and adults amid impact.
4 We do not believe that it is feasible to achieve all
5 of the bills goals through a single one-size-fits-all
6 process not without glossing over key priorities and
7 shortchanging community impact. To attempt to do so
8 would cost an incredible amount of money. We
9 estimate that the environmental review alone would
10 cost on the order of half a billion dollars with
11 significant increases in staffing needed on top of
12 that and we are concerned that the ultimate impact of
13 that time and money would be counter to our shared
14 goals. That it would make it more difficult, not
15 easy year, to build affordable housing or to the site
16 essential city facilities if these priority projects
17 were subject to this additional layer of bureaucracy.
18 The practical effect of the bill would be to
19 reinforce the political incentives to an action that
20 exist today and that drive exclusionary and an
21 equitable outcomes. I will start with the
22 feasibility. The bill provides just nine and a half
23 months for the central planning office to create 177
24 distinct land-use plans. Three options for each of
25

1 the city's 59 community districts. Each would
2 contain a level of detail comparable to that of an
3 individual neighborhood rezoning which is typically
4 created over years and involved scores of community
5 meetings. These three scenarios would be presented
6 to community boards which would then have to pick one
7 as the recommended option to the Council. It would
8 be impossible for this type of top-down planning to
9 achieve quality your equity or be responsive to
10 community input. The bill also underestimates the
11 importance of focused, topic specific planning
12 efforts such as those for the waterfront, greenhouse
13 gas emissions reduction, environmental Justice, food
14 policy, or resiliency. By trying to roll planning
15 for all issues into a single concurrent process and
16 document, the bill would muffle the voices and
17 priorities of important constituencies who help shape
18 planning for each of these issues and dilute the
19 ability to address each issue thoughtfully and
20 equitably. Recent, more focused planning efforts
21 have allowed us to address significant issues, as we
22 have with the zoning for coastal resiliency proposal,
23 a citywide proposal that is currently in ULURP
24 following years of community engagement. The
25

cornerstone of citywide strategic planning efforts
today is the quadrennial long-term plan required by
local law 84 of 2013, most recently known as One NYC
2050. This citywide long-term planning effort
identifies key challenges facing the city and
strategic priorities to meet those challenges. One
NYC acts as a framework to mobilize city government
to advance critical and timely priorities. Since
2007, when this planning process began in partnership
with the Council, it's been the basis for adopting
ambitious greenhouse gas emissions reduction
strategies, promoting transit oriented growth,
preparing for the risks of climate change, embedding
environmental Justice into the city's decision-
making, and setting the first ever poverty reduction
targets. Annual reports measure progress towards
goals and serve as a public accountability tool. We
believe that One NYC serves as a better model for
strengthening our planning efforts rather than this
bill. Turning to our second point of objection, we
are concerned about the extraordinary cost of the
bill. The most expensive component by far is the
requirement for a GEIS to accompany the 177 land use
scenarios. We estimate that the GEIS would cost on

1 the order of half a billion dollars of tax levy
2 funding. This 500 million figure is far from
3 hyperbolic, rather, it reflects the unprecedented
4 scope and scale that this GIS would require, covering
5 every inch of the city's 303 square miles and
6 analyzing not just land-use, but also transportation,
7 infrastructure, public facilities, and more and
8 analyzing the countless combinations of land use
9 scenarios that could be adopted across 59 community
10 districts. It would be the largest EIS on record by
11 a long margin. What's more, the benefits of the GEIS
12 would be limited, not meaningfully reducing the
13 burden of review required under state environmental
14 regulations for subsequent land-use actions. The
15 enormous GEIS would also open up countless
16 opportunities for litigation, which would delay not
17 only the plan, but also the implementation of all
18 actual projects that it might invasion. In addition
19 to the cost of the GEIS, the proposed planning
20 process would be extremely expensive. At a time when
21 the city is still under a financial crunch and a
22 hiring freeze. These costs would include staffing
23 new offices and a second 13 member commission for
24 planning. Our final objection is about the impact of
25

1 the bill. While we recognize that the intention is
2 to promote equitable growth and proactive planning,
3 and practice, the results would be the opposite. The
4 bill would create, rather than remove, bureaucratic
5 obstacles to projects that address pressing needs.
6 It would increase, rather than decrease, the ability
7 of affluent communities to reject projects that have
8 broader benefits for the city. We do not believe
9 that the bill would make it easier to accomplish
10 important land-use actions. For a start, the plan
11 would be nonbinding. The bill suggests that Council
12 members would often decline to call up actions
13 determined by the city planning commission to be
14 aligned with the plan. This is just implausible.
15 ULURP actions provide a useful forum to air and
16 negotiate key project details, including maximum
17 permitted densities and building heights, as well as
18 aspects of the project that are not directly part of
19 the land use approvals. Council members today call
20 up essentially every optional item and can be
21 expected to continue to do so. This means that the
22 bill would effectively add an additional veto point
23 to getting a project completed. The process of
24 creating a plan itself would reinforce, rather than
25

1 dismantle, inequities in the land-use process. The
2 bill would give the Council final authority to set
3 district level targets for housing, jobs, public
4 facilities, and more. For instance, when it votes on
5 the plan, the Council would have the ability to
6 change the community district level targets to, for
7 example, include more school seats, have less
8 affordable housing, or eliminate a proposed
9 sanitation garage. This flies in the face of data-
10 driven planning processes and further empowers
11 already powerful communities that are well resourced
12 to resist new housing or facilities that are needed
13 to create an equitable city. A planning process that
14 takes four years, which is an optimistic estimate,
15 would divert the attention and capacity of numerous
16 city agencies away from their important public
17 services. There would also be significant pressure
18 not to advance any large proposal until the plan has
19 been adopted. There would never be a good time for
20 New York City to take a hiatus of four years or more
21 from important land-use actions, but the need to
22 recover from the Covid 19 pandemic and economic shock
23 makes this a uniquely inopportune time to do so. By
24 putting too much emphasis on a single all-
25

1 encompassing process, this bill would limit our
2 ability to respond nimbly to a changing landscape.
3 When events such as 9/11, super storm Sandy, or the
4 pandemic occur, we need to be able to learn, adapt,
5 and take appropriate action promptly, not wait until
6 the next major comprehensive plan revision. Imagine
7 if we had set quantitative community district level
8 targets for retail space in 2018. It would be of
9 little use today. We appreciate the intention of the
10 bell, but we do not think it is the right approach
11 for New York City. Our sheer scale makes it hard to
12 compare this bill with other cities comprehensive
13 planning efforts. Minneapolis and Seattle are often
14 cited as models. Minneapolis has few were residents
15 than Staten Island, but their comprehensive plan
16 still took three years to create. Even Seattle has
17 only half the population of the Bronx in both cities
18 are much less complex than ours, being comprised
19 largely of suburban scale neighborhoods. And,
20 importantly, the legal structure in which these other
21 cities operate also differs meaningfully. Both of
22 these cities are mandated to meet growth targets that
23 have been established by state or regional
24 authorities. Authorities that are empowered to
25

1
2 override their city Council land-use authority if
3 these growth targets are met. In New York City,
4 there is no similar state authority, nor does the
5 Council propose one. The bill would contain not none
6 of the checks and limitations on the legislature's
7 authority that exists in other cities to ensure that
8 a citywide planning process addresses exclusionary
9 practices. This bill would add a new huge and costly
10 process, but without altering the fundamental
11 dynamics of land-use decisions. We continue to share
12 an interest in working with the Council to identify
13 ways to improve the planning process, but the process
14 must be one that helps us address the key challenges
15 before us and not diapered us from them. The roles
16 and authorities for planning and land-use decision-
17 making set forth in the charter are an important
18 foundation for our city's growth and development.
19 Considering changes to them is a worthy topic, but it
20 is a weighty matter that requires significant
21 deliberation. We look forward to further discussions
22 with the Council and a range of stakeholders about
23 how these processes can be improved. Thank you and
24 all of the city officials on this call now welcome
25 your questions.

1
2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you very much,
3 Chair Lago. I appreciate your testimony. I have a
4 few questions that I want to begin with. I have to
5 say, I pretty disappointed. This was supposed to be
6 the administration that ended the tale of two cities,
7 that took on inequality, that used the power of
8 government to make the lives of all New Yorkers
9 better than it does that seem like you all want to do
10 the hard work that we think is necessary. I would
11 hope that the administration is looking at legacy
12 items for big projects where, you know, you can lay
13 the groundwork for game changing policies and ICE
14 comprehensive planning as one of the big
15 opportunities we have to really turn things around.
16 I know the administration has been opposed to this
17 idea for a long time. There wasn't much willingness
18 to try and get to a good place during the Charter
19 Revision Commission, but what really strikes me is
20 that, after what the city has gone through in the
21 past year, the administration still kind of seems to
22 be in the same place. If the pandemic that
23 unquestionably has devastated communities of color
24 while leaving many wealthier, white neighborhoods
25 barely touched, then what does make you pause and

1 think that maybe we are doing something wrong here?

2 So, my question is did Covid 19 change anything for

3 the administration? Did you take any time to rethink

4 your approach to planning and not just land-use?

5 That is my first question.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you for the
8 question, Speaker. Covid has changed practically
9 everything and what it reinforces is the need to be
10 able to respond nimbly to external shocks that change
11 the city we are in and that change the needs of the
12 city. This administration has a history of
13 addressing, through citywide strategic plans, the
14 existential issues of the day. We can go back to
15 2015 when the Council adopted both mandatory
16 inclusionary housing, but also zoning for quality and
17 accessibility. And affordability. I will note that
18 the city, just yesterday food policy plan that
19 addresses one of the challenges that came to the
20 floor during the pandemic and I will know that is
21 currently pending before the City Planning Commission
22 is zoning for coastal resiliency that addresses the
23 coastal flooding issues that you your opening remarks
24 pointed out. And I hope that this proposal which was
25 generated after years of engagement with coastal

1 communities across the city, will be looked upon
2 favorably as a legacy item by the Council, as well.
3 I will also note that, with respect to issues that
4 came to the floor or were heightened by the pandemic,
5 the city is now, but for a lawsuit, would be in the
6 ULURP process for the Gowanus rezoning, a rezoning of
7 an opportunity neighborhood and we are well underway
8 on our work to rezone SoHo and NoHo, one of the
9 city's most affluent neighborhoods. I will note also
10 that building on the impetus of the Council, we are
11 working to, on a citywide proposal that would allow
12 our successful Open Restaurants program to exist
13 beyond the existence of emergency orders. These are
14 just a few of the ways in which we are responding but
15 in real time.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Do you think any of the
18 land-use decisions that have been made contributed to
19 the Covid disparities that we have seen?

20 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I believe that the land-
21 use decisions that we have made have produced
22 significant permanently affordable housing. We still
23 have a housing crisis, but I will note that, since
24 the ULURP process restarted this past fall, we have
25 seen 46 proposals enter public review and around half

1 of them or for housing. It is actually housing
2 proposals that make up the largest number of
3 applications coming into ULURP. These 46 proposals
4 will create 5100 homes, 2400 of them affordable, and
5 at least 740 of them permanently affordable pursuant
6 to MIH and we have to be able to facilitate
7 affordable housing proposals, job generating
8 proposals, rather than waiting for four years. The
9 need is now.
10

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Chair Lago, I appreciate
12 that, but the question was do you think that any of
13 the cities land use decisions have contributed to the
14 Covid disparities that we have seen and, if not, has
15 that question been studied at all?

16 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: We are, of course, like
17 all of city government, looking at the racial
18 disparities that have been made even more evident by
19 Covid. We will always look to advance ever more
20 equitable planning approaches, but we stand by the
21 approvals. We stand by the 300-- I'm sorry.
22 180,000 affordable homes that have been created or
23 preserved under Housing New York. These 180,000
24 affordable homes house more than 400,000 New Yorkers
25 and that is about as many homes as exist in all of

1
2 Minneapolis. And so, we are very proud of the steps
3 that we have taken and we will continue to redouble
4 our efforts going forward.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: At a hearing on Public
6 Advocate and Council member-- Public Advocate
7 Jumaane Williams and Council member Salamanca's bill
8 on racial impact studies, the administration made
9 clear the position that the cities rezoning decisions
10 have no impact, no impact on racial demographics of
11 rezoned neighborhoods. Given that position that was
12 stated not that long ago, I think it was last month,
13 it is hard to take the analysis completely seriously
14 and also the answer that you just gave to the
15 question. So, does the administration still maintain
16 that position?

17 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: We'll, ask City
18 Planning's Executive Director who testified at that
19 hearing, Anita Laremont, to handle this question.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Hi, Anita. You're
21 muted.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LAREMONT: Hi,
23 Speaker. Thank you for this opportunity to respond
24 to this question. What we said at the hearing was
25 not that our actions had no impact, but rather that

1 there are a host of factors that have an impact on
2 racial demographics in neighborhoods and that we
3 don't have very clear data to demonstrate what the
4 impacts of rezonings are on racial demographics. We
5 are working to try to give more data on that subject,
6 but that what we were not seeing in the analyses that
7 we have done thus far, is that the actions that we
8 have taken have resulted in racial change in
9 neighborhoods. We cited the work that we had done
10 in the Green Point rezoning and we made the
11 point that our analysis showed that the Hispanic
12 population had, in fact, increased in the
13 neighborhood. We are aware that the cuff analysis,
14 which actually looked at a time span much broader
15 than the time span that started once the rezoning was
16 done showed that there was a Hispanic decrease in the
17 neighborhood, but we believe that what that showed is
18 that that action occurred prior to the rezoning and
19 we really could not substantiate that. We do believe
20 that it is highly appropriate for us to look back in
21 our rezonings and tried to make an assessment about
22 what the impact of our zoning changes are and, like
23 we did there, we plan to do for our other
24 neighborhood rezoning areas.
25

1
2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Does the administration
3 have anyone here today that can talk about health
4 disparities and how those issues relate to planning?

5 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: We don't have anyone
6 here from the Department of Health and Mental
7 Hygiene.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay.

9 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: But I can assure you,
10 Speaker, that, as part of our neighborhood rezonings,
11 DOHMH is an invaluable partner. We particularly
12 enjoy working or benefit from working with DOHMH
13 since public health and land use regulations have a
14 common background in that they both arose from a
15 recognition of the need to provide light and air for
16 sound land use planning and for public health and we
17 will, going forward, continue to partner with DOHMH
18 in all these rezonings.

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: You know, ANHD, an
20 organization that is part of the Thriving Communities
21 Coalition found that New York City has lost
22 thousands of hospital beds since 1998 as a result of
23 hospital closures and the city's land use decisions.
24 Two thirds of those closure occurred in low income
25 communities of color that are now bearing the brunt

1 of Covid 19 and many of those hospitals were replaced
2 by luxury housing. Have you looked at how the city's
3 hospital closures and land use decisions contributed
4 to black and Latin X New Yorkers dying at twice the
5 rate of white New Yorkers?
6

7 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: We have worked, as I
8 said, very closely with DOHMH and, I'll note, even in
9 the height of the pandemic, they reached out to us
10 knowing of our data driven, factual, an analytic
11 capabilities and, as I said, I think that life has
12 changed as a result, not just of the pandemic, but
13 the increased attention to the racial inequities and
14 so, if anything, our partnership with them needs to
15 be stronger going forward.

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, Chair Lago, what is
17 your solution to disparities and inequalities? I
18 understand the administration doesn't support this
19 idea. You all made that clear in your testimony. It
20 sounds like you prefer the status quo which many New
21 Yorkers and communities did not feel like working for
22 them, but I did help that we could have a serious
23 conversation about these disparities and inequities
24 today, which was the impetus for this bill and, you
25 know, it seems strange that the administration can

1 sit here and tell the Council and the Thriving
2 Communities Coalition that we are wrong about the
3 experiences that Council members hear about, that the
4 Thriving Communities Coalition, which represents
5 vulnerable New Yorkers and communities of color with
6 what their own experience has been with the city's
7 land use process, and that we should appreciate how
8 we have it now because comprehensive planning would
9 make it worse. That is what it seems like it is
10 being said today and I think that seems a little out
11 of touch with what Council members here and with what
12 this coalition of groups that to work on the ground
13 in low income communities of color, with their
14 experience has been.

16 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you, Speaker. We
17 could not agree more that there is a need for a value
18 in having a discussion with Council members, but also
19 with a wide array of stakeholders. We do not believe
20 that this one specific proposal is the way forward.
21 We recognize that during the recent Council Charter
22 Revision Commission, we heard extensive testimony
23 about the need for comprehensive planning, but that
24 testimony indicated that there were very wide
25 variations in what people meant by comprehensive

1 planning, whether it would be a top-down or bottom-up
2 to the extent of it. And we think that that is a
3 useful conversation to consider and coupling it with
4 a consideration as to whether the Charter would need
5 to be revised to change the requirements that are in
6 there with respect to the allocation of
7 responsibilities. That is a discussion that we would
8 welcome, but we are presented here with a bill that
9 we believe has these three main flaws of feasibility,
10 cost, and impact and that is why we are opposing this
11 Introduction.

12
13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Before I get into some
14 more technical questions, and I am going to try to
15 keep this quick because I know a lot of Council
16 members that-- and the public is here to testify. I
17 also want to note that the goals here aren't just
18 about equity and resiliency. The goals are
19 incredibly important, but her failure to properly
20 plan threatens much more than that. New York City is
21 going to struggle to bounce back and I think a lot of
22 people and businesses are going to want to stay in
23 New York, but will have to work harder to show folks
24 that it is worth it. That we can handle climate
25 change. That we can get our housing crisis under

1 control and that our apartments are overcrowded and
2 that our public transit is running. Before we get to
3 whether I think your cost estimates are anywhere near
4 accurate or based on a correct reading of the belt,
5 want to ask whether any one of the administration has
6 done any kind of cost benefit analysis here?
7

8 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I can certainly address,
9 Speaker, your questions about the GEIS cost estimate.
10 While we did--

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Well, let me ask you
12 that. How did you calculate the price tag you came
13 up with for the GEIS? To get to that number, didn't
14 you take the highest price tag you could possibly
15 find? Did you even look at the cost of GIS's for
16 real-life comprehensive plans?

17 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you for the
18 question, Speaker. I can tell you how we came up
19 with the estimate that we think is feasible. We
20 looked at a recent neighborhood rezonings which
21 didn't comprise an entire community District, but
22 came close to it. The cost of that was two and a
23 half million dollars. We multiplied that by the 59
24 community districts that exist across the city and
25 the requirement that three different scenarios be

1 provided. That is 177 different scenarios. In
2 addition to the land use scenarios, there is also the
3 requirement to look at the transportation
4 infrastructure. Everything from the BQE to the
5 Bruckner. And if one just does the map, two and a
6 half million dollars by 59 community districts by
7 three scenarios, one gets over 400 million dollars.
8

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But--

10 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: In addition--

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Chair Lago, do you
12 understand the argument that they should actually
13 reduce some of your costs? I mean, do you really
14 think the way we spread out all of these studies and
15 plans that you talked about and that I talked about
16 is really the most effective use of taxpayer dollars?
17 I mean, are you telling me that the patchwork system
18 where more than half a dozen offices and agencies,
19 OLTPS, DCP, MOS, MOB, HPD, DDC, SCA, EDC, DOT, etc.,
20 Pursuing their own strategies is really more cost-
21 effective than streamlining? You don't see any
22 duplication that exists right now? Was that
23 considered in the estimate that you all put forward
24 today? The duplication and that is kind of way that
25

1 many agencies are doing their own thing without
2 coordination?
3

4 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I have a number of
5 responses, Speaker. One is that the-- there's
6 always the opportunity to look to streamline city
7 processes, but I can assure you that both in our land
8 use planning and in our capital planning, we work
9 with the agencies that you identified. If I might,
10 Speaker, the other points that we look to in coming
11 up with our estimate was the fact that the office
12 that is identified for. Being out this plan would
13 have to staff up markedly to be able to undertake
14 this work. We also looked at a recent GEIS which was
15 conducted for Hudson Yard and the extension of the
16 number seven line. That GEIS alone cost 25 million
17 dollars for an area that comprises just a part of a
18 community District. In your question, speaker, was
19 also embedded, I believe, implicitly, the fact that,
20 under New York State law, cities that undertake a
21 comprehensive plan with a GEIS can then be exempt
22 projects under that plan can subsequently be exempted
23 from state and environmental review requirements.
24 That provision of state law explicitly does not apply
25 to New York City. I would also note that just the

1 difference in the scales of the comprehensive plans
2 and GEIS's that have been prepared by other cities in
3 New York State. If we look at the 12 cities in New
4 York State that have over 50,000 people, if we
5 combine them, you still end up with the city that has
6 a population smaller than the Bronx.
7

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Chair Lago, I just want
9 to go back to the point you just made in your answer
10 regarding Hudson Yards. I mean, it's hard for me to
11 believe. Do you really believe that the cost of
12 completing a GEIS for a neighborhood plan citywide is
13 even remotely comparable to the GEIS completed for
14 Hudson yards which was one of the city's most massive
15 and expensive development initiatives in recent
16 history? Many of these neighborhood plans would not
17 even contemplate any new growth that all, let alone
18 18,000,000 ft.². That is what Hudson yards was.
19 18,000,000 ft.² of new commercial and residential
20 development and a brand-new subway. So, I am left
21 wondering why we would even use that as a starting
22 point unless we are talking about building a Hudson
23 yards like complex and a new subway in every single
24 neighborhood. It seems like apples and oranges to
25 even give that example.

CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Actually, Speaker, I think that the two are merely comparable because the scale and complexity of analyzing three different scenarios, 177 different scenarios across 303 miles, and that also looking at transportation, infrastructure, and more, means that this GEIS is going to be at a level that is almost inconceivable. We need to look at different scenarios across the entire city. A city that, in population, would be the nation's 12th largest state. And so, I don't think that Hudson Yard is a good [inaudible 01:04:29] because the GEIS this bill calls for is, in order of magnitude, more massive.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. I'm going to try to finish up here quickly because I know there is a lot of members that have questions and, of course, the public. I want to get back to the equity issue. That was one of the main reasons why we were motivated to introduce this bill. The report we released in December spends a lot of time showing how our neighborhood by neighborhood piecemeal approach to zoning isn't just a land-use issue. It has real world impacts on communities of color. It exacerbates inequality. Right now, some

1 neighborhoods are covered by customized contextual
2 and special districts, but others, mainly lower
3 income communities of color are stuck with zoning
4 policies from the early 1960s and only a handful of
5 neighborhoods have MIH. Most neighborhoods have no
6 affordability requirements at all, so I have a few
7 questions for city planning on this. One of our
8 conclusions we make in our report is that the city is
9 overall zoning landscape is uneven, unequal, and
10 unfair. Do you agree with that assessment?

12 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I agree with the need to
13 look at opportunities to provide housing and, in
14 particular, affordable housing across all
15 neighborhoods. We know that because of the tradition
16 of Council member deference that in neighborhoods,
17 even neighborhoods with good subway access where the
18 community and the Council member did not welcome what
19 we would believe it appropriate up zoning, that there
20 then is not a realistic possibility of addressing the
21 needs and the affordable housing needs. We wanted so
22 well, having Council members like Council member
23 Lander and Levin and like Council member Chin who
24 have reached out and worked with us to be able to
25 craft an equitable rezoning proposal in a high

1 opportunity neighborhood and we would welcome that
2 partnership from so many more members of the Council.

3
4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I just want to make one
5 point on a previous point that you made which was you
6 spoke to the size of New York City. Cities across
7 the globe complete comprehensive plans. London's
8 framework looks a lot like the one that we have
9 designed in this bill and they are larger than New
10 York City, but my next question is do you think it is
11 acceptable that some neighborhoods have 60 year old
12 zoning and others have 21st-century zoning?

13 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I think in some
14 instances the 1961 zonings continue to be appropriate
15 because not all neighborhoods of New York City change
16 at the same rate. I think it is appropriate when
17 circumstances have changed. When we see a subway
18 line with capacity in a neighborhood that continues
19 to be largely single and two-family zonings, that
20 then calls for a look, but I do think that there are
21 areas of the city that were zoned in 1961 and that
22 have remained relatively unchanged.

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. How can New
24 York's land-use policy possibly be brought up to date
25 without a more comprehensive approach? Do you

1
2 believe that our current system of land use and
3 zoning policies are equitable? Do you think our
4 approach to neighborhood rezonings currently help us
5 achieve citywide goals?

6 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I would say yes,
7 Speaker.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [inaudible 01:08:08]

9 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I would say yes,
10 Speaker. The neighborhood rezonings that have been
11 adopted have been adopted with the support of the
12 local Council member and that, in and of itself, is
13 an indication of the ground up community support. I
14 very much and please, as I keep coming back to, the
15 fact that but for a lawsuit, stopping the
16 commencement of ULURP, we would be in the midst of
17 ULURP to rezone Gowanus, a high opportunity
18 neighborhood with good subway access.

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. I'm going to stop
20 my questions for now. I'm going to come back after
21 members have a chance to ask some of their questions.
22 I want to thank you for answering them. I'm going to
23 have some more for you later on in this hearing and I
24 want to turn it back to Chair Cabrera. Thank you all

1 for being patient with me. I appreciate it. Chair
2 Cabrera.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you, Speaker.
5 Thank you for your insightful questions. I want to
6 recognize that we've been joined by Council members
7 Gibson, Dharma Diaz, Levin, and Reynoso. Chair, I
8 want to-- I just have a few questions and I'll come
9 back and-- because like I said, I do want to get to
10 my colleagues. I know they have questions, as well.
11 But can you share with us how does the
12 administration's One NYC plan inform the city's
13 future infrastructure repairs for post land use
14 action or other term city planning?

15 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you for the
16 question. It's appropriate that we're having this
17 hearing today because just yesterday, the city
18 released its food policy plan, something that is
19 incredibly timely given the food insecurity that
20 we've seen as a result of Covid and that existed
21 before. But that flowed from the strategic One NYC.
22 I have mentioned before zoning for coastal
23 resiliency. This is a citywide plan that was
24 referred out to all community boards and that
25 followed on years of very neighborhood based

1 outreach. That is just one example and, with that, I
2 will toss it over to Dan Zarrilli.
3

4 DAN ZARRILLI: Thanks for that. Sorry.
5 It just takes a second to get off mute here. Thank
6 you for that, Chair Lago. I think it is helpful to
7 put a little context here would One NYC to help
8 answer this question and understand the answer. You
9 know, as we go through the quadrennial One NYC
10 process that we have partnered with the Council on
11 since 2007, very successfully, we take stock of the
12 challenges that face New York City and that process,
13 since 2007, has evolved very extensively to really
14 look at all of the challenges strategically that face
15 us over the next several decades and that is things
16 like rising on affordability, economic insecurity,
17 the stubborn health and wealth inequities here in New
18 York City. Of course, our climate emergency. The
19 needs to update our infrastructure and even the
20 threat to our democracy. It is really a broad-based
21 program, but then we put forward strategic priorities
22 and goals backed up with action plans and indicators
23 to measure progress and all of those items, all of
24 the different initiatives and goals that we lay out
25 then find much more in depth planning processes and

1
2 efforts and actions across the agencies to deliver on
3 those goals and I think Chair Lago mentioned a few of
4 them that are very important, whether it is rezoning
5 for coastal resiliency and all of the extensive work
6 really since hurricane Sandy to think about our risks
7 and our coastal neighborhoods, things like the
8 environmental Justice work that is happening. The
9 environmental Justice for all that the Speaker
10 mentioned in his opening remarks. Very extensive
11 public engagement that is underway now to inform
12 different ways of embedding environmental justice
13 into the city's decision-making which certainly
14 deserves its own extensive process and collaboration
15 with the Council and neighborhoods all across the
16 city to inform that work. And things like
17 yesterday's food policy plan. And so, I think there
18 are extensive ways to the strategic plans and
19 priorities that are laid out One NYC then find homes,
20 whether it is through our infrastructure agencies and
21 DOT, and we've even seen that play out during the
22 pandemic as we have been prioritizing things like
23 Open Streets and Open Restaurants and, you know, new
24 ways to utilize our street space. And a lot of those
25 goals and priorities and items first came out through

collaboration with DOT through the One NYC process.

And so, we can point out lots of different ways where that strategic priority process, which takes stock of all of the challenges and is data-driven, then is delivered upon through all of the different other actions and initiatives and policies that the city has. So, I hope that answers the question, but I think it's helpful just for a little for how we approach this and then how that is delivered across the administration and in partnership with New Yorkers and with the Council, as well.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Have you looked at ways to enhance coordination between city agencies? I am assuming that you obviously see the benefits of having a cohesive way to have an interagency cooperation and, but have you looked at ways to do so and how do you compare that with the Speakers bill?

CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you for the question, Council member. Because City Planting's net is so broad, because land use planning and balls transportation, it involves parks, it involves our sewer and water infrastructure, we work on a daily basis with our sister agencies. I should also note that it involves the Department of Health. It

1 involves small business services. We work with the
2 Economic Development Corporation, with HPD. The
3 alphabet soup of city agencies that the Speaker
4 mentioned, they are our partners day in and day out.
5 I would also want to highlight something that was
6 started by this administration which is a
7 reinvigoration of the capital planning function at
8 the Department of City Planning. DCP hosts regular
9 meetings with the agencies with the major capital
10 agencies that are responsible for the lion's share of
11 the city capital budget and OMB is obviously part of
12 these discussions and we use these routine meetings
13 to hone in on areas where there are opportunities for
14 efficiencies to identify gaps, to identify overlaps,
15 exactly the type of efficiencies that you mentioned.

17 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And how do you
18 compare this with the Speakers plan where it seems to
19 be streamlined?

20 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I would have to, with
21 respect, take issue, Council member, with the notion
22 that requiring 177 distinct plans simultaneously a
23 GEIS is streamlining. I think that the ultimate
24 impact will be to place another hurdle in the way of
25 accomplishing needed affordable housing proposals.

1 And I will note that the vast majority of projects
2 that go through ULURP are noncontroversial. They
3 receive the support of the Council. I fear that the
4 message will be that there is a chill on development.
5 That it is that much harder to get things done in the
6 city and that would be so unfortunate at the time
7 where the pandemic has made crystal clear the need to
8 provide more housing and, in particular, affordable
9 housing. The need to kickstart the economic
10 recovery.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: You know, I am a
13 former community board member and, to be honest with
14 you, one of my greatest frustrations is that, you
15 know, every year we have assessed that means of the
16 communities. We will prioritize [inaudible 01:17:34]
17 to the city, but many Council members, they are
18 community board members and they get the overall
19 feeling that unless it is priority number one, most
20 of the things that are listed will never come to
21 pass. So, can you talk about what is your process of
22 integrating the needs and priorities identified by
23 communities, including the community boards and the
24 strategic planning efforts. And how do we get to
25

1 have a larger say and actually see it in a very
2 tangible way?

3
4 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you so much for
5 that question, Council member, because it allows me
6 to highlight the way in which the community districts
7 statement of needs has evolved since you were a
8 community board member. We have taken a process that
9 was paper-based and incredibly difficult for both
10 community board members, but especially district
11 managers to the way to their way through. One, we
12 brought it into the modern era by bringing it online
13 and then secondly we simplified the categories of
14 needs into buckets that made sense. We worked
15 extensively with the community boards and district
16 managers on training them in the new system. I would
17 say the first year that we rolled it out, it was
18 already an improvement, but now that we have been at
19 it for, I believe, for years, we are getting such
20 richer data. We are getting requests that are just a
21 cut and paste from last year's, but reflect the
22 changing needs. At the other end of the spectrum, we
23 take this information and we share it with the city's
24 capital agencies, so it is not just the community
25 boards city planning that see it. The community

1 board, city planning, and OMB that see it, but the
2 actual agencies themselves. And I do think that will
3 process that historically I think your critique was
4 accurate it is actually evolving into a useful
5 planning tool that is so heavily community informed
6 and I would ask Dan if you have anything that you
7 would want to add.
8

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And, Dan, you are
10 on muting yourself, if you could address whether
11 feedback is to look back to the community boards to
12 be able to say this is the amount of your input that
13 we took into consideration and actually became part
14 of the plan and it was executed?

15 DAN ZARRILLI: Yeah.

16 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I'll note-- I got--
17 Okay. GO.

18 DAN ZARRILLI: Thank you for that
19 question. I think it is-- You know, we all think it
20 is incredibly important to find ways to make sure
21 that we are hearing from New Yorkers in the
22 development of all these plans and efforts then, for
23 the One NYC process, in particular, we literally went
24 out to every single community, you know, either
25 digitally or in person and heard from every single

1 ZIP Code in New York City. We went out in 11
2 different languages as part of an extensive survey
3 process that we did across New York City, as well as
4 in person events to make sure that we were hearing
5 from New Yorkers. And we published some of the
6 results of what we have heard in the plan itself and
7 how that was being incorporated. And maybe just to
8 use a great example of how these connect process
9 laying out strategic priorities, now we are also
10 undertaking a very extensive public engagement
11 process as part of the environmental Justice plan and
12 we are doing a similar effort to go out to
13 environmental Justice communities, in particular,
14 that have been defined by law with the City Council
15 and are hearing from New Yorkers to shape the
16 environmental Justice plan that we now have an are in
17 the process of developing for New York City. And I
18 think it is really helpful to think about how all of
19 these efforts require a substantial amount of public
20 engagement and, by having a strategic priority
21 process that that is, you know, delivered upon in
22 different strategies and planning processes, you
23 know, across the administration, we are hearing very
24 robust things from communities that are really
25

1 thinking about new ways to incorporate that as we
2 move forward. And I think the EJ plan is a great
3 example for that. I think the waterfront plan is a
4 great example of that. There are so many different
5 areas where having that topic specific feedback
6 almost would it be possible if you tried to put it
7 into one big planning process, but we are able to
8 hear much more robust feedback that we can
9 incorporate by doing it in a way that we do it now.
10

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Now, I want to make
12 sure that we're not just talking about community
13 engagement before the One NYC plan is drafted but
14 afterwards-- can you give us some examples of where
15 community boards needs were funded and otherwise
16 addressed?

17 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Gladly. We would look
18 to the rezoning that we did in East New York with
19 support of then Council member Espinal and that is
20 the first of the comprehensive of the neighborhood
21 rezonings that this administration undertook and
22 because it occurred a number of years ago, we are
23 already seeing the investments. We're seeing the
24 affordable housing that is being built, the school
25 that's under construction. Something as

1 straightforward as the creation and upgrading of the
2 median along Atlantic Avenue that takes what had been
3 a very unsafe and daunting roadway and makes it much
4 more community centric. We see where the taking of
5 our-- or the repurposing of an old courthouse into a
6 youth community center run by NYPD with fabulous new
7 offices for the community board in the building and
8 so, there are examples, Council member Cabrera,
9 closer to home for you with the Jerome Avenue
10 rezoning. That goes to you and Council member Gibson
11 supported. Even though that rezoning is relatively
12 recent, we are seeing the progress that the Parks
13 Department has made on Corporal Fischer Park. Zoning
14 is-- or rezoning takes years to effectuate, but we
15 are already seeing the seeds that have been planted
16 beginning to sprout.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
19 I have a couple more questions, but I want to get to
20 my Chairs. But since we just talked on community
21 boards, I'll note they just [inaudible 01:24:56] cut
22 this year. There's another projected cut that is
23 coming. If they're going to be able to do the work
24 that they need to do? We can't keep slashing their
25 budget. We'll address that next month on the

1 preliminary budget hearing, but we do what make sure
2 that they have the tools in order to do their jobs.
3 And so, want to pass it now. I have more questions,
4 but I will come back later to Chair-- my cochairs
5 Salamanca.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Chair
8 Cabrera. I want to stay in line with the
9 conversations and questions that you have regarding
10 community boards. It is good to see you, Chair Lago.
11 As you know, I am a former district manager for Bronx
12 community board to and I can understand the
13 frustrations that I had as a district manager when I
14 submitted my community statement needs regarding the
15 capital and expense and I always felt that OMB
16 basically ignored our recommendations. Their
17 response to the capital and expense needs were, oh,
18 ask your local elected official, you know, to fund
19 these expense or capital needs or, you know, submit
20 this request at a later time because there is no
21 funding. So, my question here is, you know, first,
22 is OMB in this hearing?

23 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Yes. We are joined by
24 Tara Boirard, but if I might, Council member, the
25 process has evolved in what I believe is such a

1 productive way since your time as a district manager.
2
3 OMB works with the agencies to require them to
4 provide a public response for every request that's
5 submitted and it has become not a cursory exercise,
6 but actually a real explanation and, within
7 identification of real people in the agencies with
8 whom the community board, the district manager can
9 follow up on. And I will now toss it over to Tara
10 for further explanation.

11 TARA BOIRARD: Sure. Thank you, Chair
12 Lago. We appreciate the question and there are
13 multiple points of intervention where we hear from
14 community boards in the budget process. There is a
15 whole team at OMB that keeps us informed of community
16 board priorities and we hear specifically from the
17 agencies what are those priorities as we are putting
18 together the capital plan. Obviously, we listened
19 during the Council hearings, not only that OMB
20 hearing, but each one of the agency hearings and the
21 public testimony. And we hear from DCP and that
22 capital planning for him that outlines all of the
23 community board means associated with not only
24 rezonings, but capital projects in general.
25 Ultimately, we have to take all of that information

1 and way it is and various needs. They could be legal
2 mandates or other needs that are not necessarily
3 coming from the community were present during the
4 budget process. And, of course, the ultimate is what
5 we can actually afford in the capital process. But
6 we are interested in hearing how we can improve the
7 process.
8

9 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: What percentage of
10 recommendations that community boards give for
11 capital needs are actually fulfilled?

12 TARA BOIRARD: Yeah, I would have to
13 get back to you on that. We are required to provide
14 a response, so I think that we will have to do an
15 exercise to--

16 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I have to agree.

17 TARA BOIRARD: to actually run the
18 numbers.

19 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: I have to agree
20 that you guys do give a response, but 95 percent of
21 the time your response ask your local Council member
22 to fund these programs. So, I just want to say that,
23 while I understand that you have revamped and we have
24 improved on how to extract that information from
25 community boards, but the actual administration in

1 fulfilling those that the community boards are
2 requesting, it's not happening. And I know that for
3 fact, as the former district manager. Chair Lago, my
4 other question is community boards-- I believe that
5 every community board should have an urban planner,
6 an independent urban planner. Not an urban planner
7 that comes from city planning. Is that something
8 that city planning will support and ensuring that
9 community boards did not get cut anymore, but we can
10 add funding so that they can hire an independent
11 urban planner that is independent from the
12 administration that can give our community boards
13 actual recommendations of how the administration's
14 recommendations to build in their communities will
15 actually affect their community? Because, in my
16 opinion, city planning comes in and you are only
17 giving a one-sided opinion and I believe that there
18 should be an independent planner that can give
19 community boards what the outcome will be of what the
20 city is recommending to develop in their communities.

22 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you for that
23 question, Council member. I will note that the issue
24 of the budget for community boards is a matter for a
25 budget discussion among the administration, OMB, and

1 the Council. I will note a couple of things. One is
2 that a well-informed community board, a community
3 board that has a strong district manager, as you were
4 when you were in that role, a community board that
5 has a strong Chair and land use chair is a benefit to
6 the city. We enjoy working with community boards
7 that delve into the fact and that are interested in
8 data-driven, fact based planning. I will also note
9 that we do have a plan are assigned to each community
10 board and they represent the often conflicting views
11 of voices within the community. As you would know,
12 not just as a district manager, but even more so as a
13 Council member, very frequently, there are different
14 views with respect to land use issues. I'll use, as
15 an example, the proposal that we have working with
16 Council member Lander and Levin for a Gowanus
17 rezoning. In a [inaudible 01:31:18] group has to
18 stop the ULURP process from even commencing and, as
19 the city is challenging that lawsuit, we are joined
20 by the community board, a community board that would
21 still want, through the ULURP process, to see the
22 proposal be refined, but a community board that has
23 worked with us over close to five years and coming up
24 with a proposal that reflects the needs of many
25

1 different constituencies within the Gowanus
2 neighborhood.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Chair
5 Lago. I just, you know, want to reiterate that if
6 this administration is serious about community
7 impact, it starts with community boards. Slashing
8 community board budget like they are doing now, what
9 you are doing in my opinion is silencing community
10 boards and not giving them the resources that they
11 need so that they can gather community information
12 and give it back to the administration. I am going
13 to move on with my questions here. This proposal, in
14 terms of this comprehensive plan here in terms of the
15 recommendations that we have here, something that
16 strikes to me, communities such as mine, for example,
17 and in the five years that I've been in the Council,
18 I have approved about 7000 units of 100 percent
19 affordable housing. There are two projects, big
20 projects that God approved when I first got elected.
21 You have La Central, which is under construction now.
22 Over 900 units of 100 percent affordable housing.
23 You also have La Peninsula, 700 units of 100 percent
24 affordable housing. And I am really excited about
25 those two projects. It is really revitalizing these

1 two communities. But something that I just cannot
2 understand is the administration wants to build and
3 continue to build affordable housing in these
4 communities, but when I bring up the conversations
5 of, well, you are bringing in more families to my
6 communities, where are the supportive services that
7 are supposed to come with that? For example, school
8 seats, healthcare, public safety, more parks,
9 improving transportation. It seems as if I am
10 pulling teeth on the administration when I am asking
11 for that, but, yet, the administration wants to
12 continue to build in my community. So, what is the
13 City Planning's plan as to who you are building more
14 housing and communities, but is there any plan to
15 attach supportive services as you are increasing
16 density and increasing the population in these
17 communities?
18

19 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you for the
20 question, Council member. Of course. As part of the
21 review of any proposal that would increase density,
22 we look at the impact that it will have. I will use
23 the first example that you cited of school seats. We
24 work hand in glove with the School Construction
25 Authority to do an analysis of the school we need

1 from not just on comprehensive neighborhood
2 rezonings, but on large individuals. Or large
3 individual projects. It is something that we just
4 keep in mind as part of our annual statement of needs
5 process. We have feedback mechanisms--

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: And that is the
8 thing. You are keeping it in mind, but what about
9 actually building the school in a community when you
10 are increasing density?

11 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Again, we work with the
12 SCA to identify when the school seats need triggers
13 the need for an additional school.

14 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: What about public
15 safety? You know, the fire department, the police
16 department, EMS?

17 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I can't speak for those
18 agencies other than that they are routinely assessing
19 the needs of the city. Of a changing city.

20 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: But, Chair Lago,
21 you are the Chair of the City Planning Commission.
22 You are supposed to plan for these things, so if you
23 are planning on adding more density and increasing
24 the population in a community, shouldn't you also be
25 working with these agencies and planning on how to

1
2 increase staffing to provide more support services to
3 these communities?

4 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: These are agencies that
5 continually keep in mind the changing needs of the
6 community, Council member.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: So, is city
8 planning talking to the NYPD, the fire department,
9 and EMS as you are building more affordable housing
10 units and communities and increasing density? Are
11 those conversations happening?

12 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: We are routinely working
13 with the alphabet soup of agencies. And, again, we
14 use our statement of needs as the absolute-- as a
15 wealth of information and it is not just with the
16 capital agencies. We give the [inaudible 01:36:24].
17 We share them with operational agencies like the ones
18 that you mentioned. Police Department, fire, EMS.

19 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: [inaudible
20 01:36:34] Chairman and then I am going to pass it
21 along. Chair Lago, I believe in responsible
22 development and I think that a responsible developer
23 comes to a community prior to certifying. If there
24 planning on building or developing in their
25 community. But not all developers do that. Many

1 developers, what they do is they go and certify,
2 start the process, and immediately community boards
3 are on-- there's a time. There's a timestamp and
4 they have a certain time to review the application
5 and move on. And what systems are you implementing
6 to ensure that developers are going to community
7 boards or to communities and presenting their
8 planning and getting community input prior to being
9 certified?
10

11 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you, Council
12 member. I do have to start by thanking you. You
13 already Council member that understands the value of
14 taking long underutilized land and putting it to
15 having private landowners and put it to productive
16 use that provides the housing and the two signature
17 projects that you mentioned are ones that we are
18 quite proud of. We absolutely advise any landowner
19 who comes to us with a proposal to speak with the
20 community, to speak with that Council member early
21 on. As you said, those that do, do we see that their
22 land use applications generally fare well through the
23 ULURP process and I will note that the vast majority
24 of ULURP applications, including for affordable
25 housing, do not generate controversy. The ones that

1 do generate controversy are obviously the ones that
2 attract attention, but I would welcome a discussion
3 with you, Council member, and with other stakeholders
4 about how we can address those landowners who don't
5 follow up on our suggestion that it is valuable, as
6 part of the planning to reach out early to the
7 Council member and the community board.

9 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: But is it a
10 requirement or there is no requirement from city
11 planning for developers?

12 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: There is not a
13 requirement, although, Council member, if you have
14 participated in a City Planning Commission either
15 review session or the public hearing, you will note
16 that the Commissioner routinely asks about the--
17 whether there was prior outreach, the extent of it,
18 and when the answer is that the landowner hasn't done
19 it, a request by commissioners or advice but
20 commissioners that it would be tremendously helpful.
21 We share yours since the middle landowner that works
22 with the community board and the Council member, that
23 helps the landowner proposal move forward with less
24 controversy.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: In my last
3 question. I heard loud and clear your opposition to
4 this proposed [inaudible 01:39:42]. So, my question
5 to you is what, in your mind, could this legislation
6 to the detriment of equitable development,
7 particularly in affluent communities who have
8 inherited the, you know, not in my backyard in the
9 past?

10 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you for that
11 question, Council member. As I mentioned in response
12 to earlier questions, we see community districts in
13 areas with a single ULURP application. We know that
14 the Council-- the Speaker, I'm sorry-- commented
15 that under this bill many neighborhoods wouldn't
16 contemplate any growth at all. We think that all
17 neighborhoods need to contribute, including, perhaps,
18 most especially neighborhoods with good transit
19 access where the zoning is for extraordinarily low
20 growth. And so, I am concerned that, in communities
21 that have the opportunity to pull more weight, have
22 the transit access that would warrant a higher level
23 of housing development that would necessarily bring
24 affordable housing, that this proposal gives yet
25 another opportunity to stop the type of appropriate

1
2 up zoning that is needed to address the city's
3 affordability crisis. My other concern is that, you
4 know, we know that not all community districts have
5 the same historic resources to be able to oppose
6 development and my concern is that, again, under this
7 bill, it would be those community districts that are
8 able to hire counsel to oppose the plan and to oppose
9 every project under the plan that would prevent us
10 from having the type of equitable development that
11 you call for.

12 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay. Thank you,
13 Chair Lago. Thank you, Chair Cabrera for the
14 opportunity to test my questions.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
16 With that, we will turn it over to our cochair
17 Rosenthal.

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much,
19 Chair Cabrera. Chair Salamanca, I would actually
20 like to follow up on some your questions. Just
21 really quickly, I really appreciate the way you
22 framed them. So, I'm wondering-- And thank you so
23 much, of course, to the administration for being here
24 and taking these questions, but I would like to
25 follow up on the question of how do we know whether

1 or not the city is meeting the needs of the community
2 when there is additional population added? And Chair
3 Salamanca, I went through the exact same thing with
4 been up zoning in my district where, when you read
5 the Environmental Impact Statement, it states very
6 clearly that we need more school seats where we need
7 additional sewage capacity. But, you know, the EIS
8 is only recommendations, of course, right? The city
9 doesn't have to do any of that. I think the only
10 thing, if I recall correctly, that the city has to do
11 is meet the needs for daycare and, indeed-- and I
12 don't even know if it is that they have to do it.
13 They have to let-- I think it was DYCD and ACS know
14 that there would be an increased demand for daycare.
15 So, again, it is still all recommendations. There is
16 no like link even between the EIS and to the area
17 that I am going to be talking about which is the
18 capital budget strategy. There's no link to that, is
19 there? So, I am just wanting to nail down the
20 validity of how the system works.

22 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you, Council
23 member. I would like to start by clarifying the
24 purpose of an environmental impact statement. I
25 think that many incorrectly think that it is a

1 crystal ball that predicts the future. In fact,
2 under city law, what is required is to disclose the
3 impacts, disclose those impacts that could be
4 mitigated into have that information available to the
5 decision-makers as they make their decisions. It is
6 not a document that says this is going to happen or
7 you must do this. And, with that clarification, I am
8 actually going to pass that along to Jon Kaufman who
9 will talk about the work that are capital planning
10 team does with respect to capacity analyses.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I appreciate that.
13 And if, I mean-- I think what you just explain was
14 exactly my point. That, under the law, there is no
15 requirement that the EIS serve this purpose. I mean,
16 which always makes me wonder why we are spending
17 millions of dollars on EIS, but, sure. I'd love to
18 hear from the capital person. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Jon?

20 JON KAUFMAN: Hi. I'm sorry. I was
21 waiting to be on muted. My name, again, as Jon
22 Kaufman. Again, we do a lot of work on the capital
23 planning FRONT to do better planning overall, much of
24 which of this bill, you know, intends to make even
25 stronger. What we are talking about here is how we

1 think about all these different facilities that have,
2 you know, children who need more capacity, who need
3 more school seats to go to when they are going into
4 areas that already have density. Our plans here are,
5 as Marisa said, an ongoing dialogue with all the
6 capital agencies to make sure they understand where
7 the growth in the city is happening. Not just
8 currently, but as we look ahead with where the DOB
9 permits are going in. And so we talk about that with
10 them on a regular basis. Some groups like SCA want
11 more interaction than other groups like FDNY do--
12 less frequently. But the whole idea is that we are
13 always one step ahead of the game by looking into,
14 you know, where the people are moving into, as well
15 as the population shifts that have been in certain
16 neighborhoods., You know, as you all know, a lot of
17 our growth happens not from new housing, but from
18 [inaudible 01:46:36] configuration of households for
19 certain areas, you know, having more residents move
20 into them. And that all goes into these growth
21 forecasts that we regularly share with all the
22 different capital agencies such that they understand
23 sort of what is coming their way and they do their
24 detailed--
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Right. I mean,
3 with all due respect, for just one second-- and I am
4 looking at my other colleagues with their hands up,
5 so I really just want to not-- let's just try to be
6 short and sweet in our answers and our questions,
7 but, I mean, I know the formula. Yes, there is a
8 formula and city planning. Everyone knows that. I
9 don't know why you would have to sit down and discuss
10 it with SCA. It has never been revised. It's
11 something like for every building unit that goes up--
12 I'm forgetting now. This was seven years ago. .12
13 will end up in middle school. .18 ends up in
14 elementary endpoint 05 and is up in high school. I
15 mean, there is no-- it's a formula that may or may
16 not be accurate for that community. It is a citywide
17 formula love that has never changed. So, I mean,
18 again, I'm talking about not what is the law will
19 require us to do. I'm talking about how do we get--
20 which is what Chair Salamanca was talking about--
21 the best planning outcome for our community? Meeting
22 the law is a pretty low bar, you know?

23 JON KAUFMAN: Yeah. Well, actually, I
24 wasn't commenting on the law portion. I was
25 commenting on what we do separate from the EIS, which

1 is actually to talk about population changes in our
2 area regardless of what the ratios for CEQR specify.
3 So, this is a much more targeted like planning based
4 activity which is--

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I just--

6 JON KAUFMAN: where people moving in?

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: If that happened,
8 it never happened under my tenure. I have been
9 through two rezonings. So, okay.

10 JON KAUFMAN: Yeah. I mean, again, with
11 all due respect, I mean, this isn't a background of
12 just the normal planning process as we do with part
13 of the turbocharge that, you know, Chair Lago
14 referred to earlier about a bigger capital planning
15 division--

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay. So it's
17 not--

18 JON KAUFMAN: that actually thinks about--

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: anything you share
20 with Council members who represent the district?
21 It's just background planning that all of you all do?

22 JON KAUFMAN: I mean, the gross forecasts
23 are out there. We publish some of this on our
24 website for folks to understand where growth is
25

1 happening in the city and that SCA forecasts are also
2 published separate, again, from the EIS that is
3 actually, as part of their overall planning
4 exercises.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: And, Council member, if
7 I could clarify my earlier, is, if an EIS identifies
8 feasible mitigation for an impact, it has to be
9 implemented. And so, that is one reason why we value
10 having an environmental review because it identifies
11 and then determines whether mitigation is feasible.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah. I wish that
13 were true. It's not been my experience. And then,
14 sort of along those lines-- So, specifically, as
15 Chair of the Subcommittee on Capital Budget, I am
16 thinking about how the 10 year capital strategy, the
17 city's budget planning document is used by the
18 planners. So, again, sort of keeping in mind that I
19 worked at ON the for nearly a decade and have a very
20 clear idea of how seriously you're not seriously OMB
21 and the agencies consider community Board district
22 needs statements, with that in mind, sort of zooming
23 out a bit, I was wondering if you could tell me a bit
24 about the administration's view of the purpose of the
25 10 year capital strategy in its current form and

1 whether or not that strategy is referred to by
2 agencies or the administration as a planning tool
3 during the year.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you, Council
6 member. We have often benefited from your expertise
7 with OMB, but as I had mentioned--

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Oh, I don't know
9 about that. You guys know what you're doing.

10 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: OMB certainly knows what
11 it's doing which is why we are pleased to be working
12 with them, but I would note that, with the
13 reinvigoration of the capital planning function at
14 city planning, we have a much more robust engagement
15 both with the community districts through the
16 statement of means, but also by bringing a more plan
17 early approach to the 10 year capital strategy. I
18 will turn it over to Tara at this point, if she would
19 like to comment.

20 TARA BOIRARD: Thank you, Chair Lago.
21 Actually, I'm turning it over to Paul.

22 PAUL TYMUS: Thank you for the question,
23 Chair Rosenthal, and it's nice to see you.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Always good to see
25 you.

1
2 PAUL TYMUS: Always good to see you. So,
3 your question about using the 10 that year capital
4 strategy as a planning tool, it is both a planning
5 tool and a budget document, as you know. The first
6 thing, you know, when you put on your OMB hat, is you
7 look at, in terms of affordability. So, when we
8 present this program, you know, the one we just
9 released in January, it goes through fiscal year 31
10 and, you know, one of the responsibilities for us is
11 to be fiscally responsible and financially
12 responsible and that we keep that service as a
13 percentage of tax revenues is under 15 percent
14 annually.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah. It's around
16 12 now. It covers always between 11 and 12. That's
17 a-- yeah.

18 PAUL TYMUS: But when we look at the
19 overall size of the document right now, you know, you
20 look at the 10 year. It is 118.8 billion dollars and
21 what I would say use the overall size of the strategy
22 really corresponds to the city's average annual
23 commitment rate of 11.8 billion dollars over the last
24 three years. So, that is not including 2020 withing-
25 - you know, when the pandemic hit. So we think that

1 the overall size of the strategy in the envelope is
2 the right size. It's just, I guess the concern is
3 that the buckets of which everything is in. We have
4 been working with Council in the Subcommittee on
5 Capital Project on addressing frontloading. That is
6 always an issue in the strategy and, you know, we
7 have been very, very successful doing that, but we
8 look at it a little differently, too, at OMB.
9 Keeping the earlier years more robust than the outer
10 years, it gives the agencies more of an opportunity
11 to commit more projects. Over the last three years,
12 again, working with, you know, the Committee on
13 Capital-- Subcommittee on Capital Budget and your
14 predecessor, Council member Gipson, we started to
15 achieve historic heights in capital commitment rates.
16 And in 2019, we achieved about 12.6 billion dollars,
17 which was an all time high for the city. We equate
18 that to happen you know what a little bit of a more
19 robust plan early on and then, unfortunately, through
20 March of last year, through 2020, we were about 200
21 million dollars ahead of the previous year's pace.
22 So, we were thinking we were going to achieve well
23 over 13 billion dollars--

25 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yes. Yes.

1
2 PAUL TYMUS: But then Covid 19 hit and--

3 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

4 PAUL TYMUS: and all of these capital
5 restrictions went into place. With that, it resulted
6 in we only he could achieve about 8 billion dollars,
7 which was half of our commitment plan for 2020.
8 Well, now we are faced with a huge challenge. We now
9 have two roll about 7.9 billion dollars out of 2020
10 into the out years of the strategy. Well, that is
11 where having it a little bit lesser in the outer
12 years helps us because you can't roll everything into
13 the following fiscal year. It would have made it
14 ridiculous. It would've been, you know, a 25 or a 30
15 billion dollars, you know, commitment plan.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah. Paul, I--

17 PAUL TYMUS: So we use those years--

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah. I got you.

19 I got you. These are great and, again, I'm just
20 looking at my colleagues who look like they're going
21 to, you know, kill me in about three seconds. You
22 know, in doing that--

23 PAUL TYMUS: But I think my point would be
24 is that we need flexibility.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.
3 I am with you. Yep. I am with you on the
4 flexibility 100 percent. Let me ask you, though,
5 that in doing your work, how is that linked with Dan
6 Zarrilli's work on One NYC? So, as you are thinking
7 about pushing things into out years, where were your
8 priorities? And I'm seeing Council member Lander
9 say, are you going to ask about the affordable
10 housing that you pushed back into the next year? And
11 I promise, Council member Lander, I will ask and you
12 get test that question. But just if, Commissioner
13 Zarrilli could talk just a little bit about how were
14 the priorities of One NYC sort of linked to all the
15 budget-- you know, these necessary, because of
16 Covid, having to force it into the out years? Having
17 to force spending into the out years?

18 DAN ZARRILLI: Thank you, Chair
19 Rosenthal. And I certainly want to let OMB speak for
20 OMB on this. I can say that, in the development of
21 One NYC, really the three groups here and working
22 really closely with DCP and OMB, we help set the
23 priorities for the prior 10 year capital plan and the
24 goals that the Mayor has continued to lay out for
25 making sure that we are ensuring the growth of the

1 city and ensuring equity and resiliency and
2 sustainability. And that flowed through One NYC and
3 has continued to be in partnership with OMB on, you
4 know, priorities that come from the Mayor.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay. I'm just
7 wondering, does that, when you look through the
8 capital budget strategy, does that link to One NYC?

9 DAN ZARRILLI: And I don't know if my
10 colleagues as OMB would want to jump in on this, but
11 I think the alignment of priorities is clear from our
12 point of view and, you know, individual project
13 choices and things like that are always going to be,
14 you know, deliberated and weighed against each other.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Are you part of
16 that? Those discussions?

17 DAN ZARRILLI: On a regular basis, I
18 think our influence is really through City Hall and
19 with the first Deputy Mayor that the various the
20 collaboration that happens with OMB is with City Hall
21 directly.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay. Thank you
23 very much. We really appreciate you all. Back to
24 you, Chair Cabrera. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.

At this moment, we are going to move to our
colleagues. I want to thank them for being so
patient. We will have five minutes and I am holding
to a firm five minutes, and here's the good news,
because we're going to have a second round. So, that
way, you can end up with 10 minutes, if you choose
to. But, please, if we could hold to the five
minutes and then we will come back again. Okay. I
will hold my questions to the very, very and so there
won't be anything in between. With that, will turn
it over to our committee counsel, CJ Murray.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair. I
will now call on Council members in the order they
have used the zoom raise hand function. Council
members, if you would like to ask a question when you
have not yet raised your hand, please do so now. You
will have a total of five minutes to ask your
question and receive an answer from the panelist.
The sergeant-at-arms will keep a timer will let you
know when your time is up. Once I have called on
you, please wait until the sergeant has announced
that you may begin before asking your question.
First, we will hear from Council member Lander who

1 had his hand up first before having to leave and come
2 back and then we will hear from Council member
3 Reynoso followed by Council member Miller. Oh,
4 excuse me. Council member Powers followed by Council
5 member Reynoso. Council member Lander, please go
6 ahead.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you so much.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You time will begin.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you so much,
11 Chair. And I have been on the whole time. I just
12 had to switch devices. So, Chair, thank you to all
13 the Chairs in the Speaker. Thank you for convening
14 this hearing, Chair Lago. Thank you for being with
15 us. I think you know I have worked hard to be
16 leaning in partner in thinking about the future of my
17 own community and go on is, and working with HPD on
18 the Where We Live process and working with Director
19 Zarrilli on the One NYC process, but I will just be
20 honest. We are the frog in the proverbial pot. We
21 are watching the water boil. The temperatures are
22 rising and the seas are rising. Our affordable
23 housing crisis is growing. Our infrastructure is
24 aging and it is clear that our land use process has
25 become toxic and broken and unable to deliver

1 thoughtful conversation about the very future of our
2 city and here we are sitting in that pot and watching
3 it boil, hoping that somehow, magically, the same
4 ULURP process that we have had that has gotten us in
5 this predicament that has left us unable to fix it is
6 going to get us out, but it is not going to get us
7 out. Our real estate process debate is going to get
8 even more toxic. The temperatures are going to keep
9 rising along with the seas crisis is going to keep
10 going and we have got no unified strategy to invest
11 in our capital budget, as Chair Rosenthal said, were
12 to make a good series of plans. And, you know, the
13 Charter Revision Commission that, you know, some
14 folks on this panel took part in recognize it. It
15 said we have reached a level of public
16 disillusionment that the scattered approach the
17 charter takes to various planning requirements
18 exacerbates disillusionment and confusion. But all
19 that Charter Revision Commission did was a 30 day
20 email and it bans of a planning process. It does not
21 pay to get us out of that boiling pot. So, I really
22 deeply disappointed. It is fine to criticize this or
23 that element in order specific core proposal, but
24 this administration has utterly failed to put forward
25

1 any kind of thinking about our long-term future and
2 its planning that might get us out of that pot. It's
3 easy to let people put something on the table, as
4 Council member Reynoso and I did at the Planning
5 Commission, as the Speaker and Council are doing
6 today, and nitpick about it, make up numbers that
7 look good in a headline, but it is an abdication of
8 responsibility for the city's long-term future that
9 you are charged with stewarding. So, I guess I want
10 to ask two questions and I'm going to put them out
11 there because I'm going to lose my time, otherwise.
12 First, that in Gowanus, I think, as you know, it's
13 taken as the better part of a decade to try to build
14 a thoughtful community conversation and you have said
15 to me on a couple of occasions that, you know, where
16 would other Council members be from wider, wealthier
17 neighborhoods who would try to show up for a fair
18 housing approach? But you know they are not going
19 to-- you know, that's not going to happen out of our
20 short-term politics. There's no way communities are
21 going to like show up with their hands raise and say,
22 you know, we would like to do our fair share. Let's
23 engage in planning. There is no chance of it. So,
24 the only choices are a top down City Hall strategy
25

1 that points at neighborhoods and throws starts at a
2 map and targets communities with no rhyme or reason
3 for developers who show up demanding rezonings.
4 Short of a more thoughtful, comprehensive, fair share
5 in values minded community planning process, how on
6 earth could we have a fair process for thinking about
7 the future of our city? How do you think we would
8 come out of-- you know, get anything like that
9 conversation we are having in Gowanis and other
10 places without a process like this? And I guess the
11 part to of that question is just really honestly do
12 you believe that this administration has put forward
13 a thoughtful approach to getting us out of the pot we
14 are boiling and? I know there is supposedly a new
15 Charter Revision Commission with a focus on equity
16 that is why did I get started. But if you are just
17 going to sit here and criticize this set of
18 proposals, where is the proposal that is serious
19 about how toxic our land use and planning process has
20 become and how urgent more thoughtful planning is?

22 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you, Council
23 member. I have very much enjoyed the numerous
24 discussions that we have had about planning whether
25 for Gowanis specifically and while we disagree on

1 many things, I value your commitment to good
2 planning. I would note that this hearing is on the
3 proposal that is before us, a proposal that is top
4 down and--

5
6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I'm not going to
7 let you-- I'm sorry Chair. Do not start speaking to
8 this proposal again. I asked you at the time of the
9 Charter Revision Commission. You and I met before
10 the Charter Revision Commission to say will you
11 please offer proposals? So, please don't start again
12 nitpicking this one. All will just name what serious
13 proposal has this administration about forward to
14 address that broader set of comprehensive long-term
15 challenges that our city faces given how toxic our
16 land use process has become? Because all I have seen
17 is that 30 day email that we get now in advance of a
18 process.

19 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Council member, you know
20 that a successful rezoning requires the cooperation
21 of the Council. I have so frequently lauded you--

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time has expired.

23 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: and--

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: You can complete
25 your answer.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I don't get to ask
3 any more questions, but you can still go ahead and
4 continue, if necessary.

5 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Great. Thanks so much.
6 You know that I have frequently in public settings
7 like this indicated that the city would benefit from
8 having more Council members who recognize the value
9 of engaging with the community and with the Planning
10 Commission for sound land use. But, again, we have
11 before us a proposal that would make it even harder.
12 Would add another level of bureaucracy that would be
13 nonbinding and that would stall results in any
14 project with the slightest bit of controversy--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Madam Chair,
16 respectfully, I was, instead of nitpicking on this
17 proposal, speak to the ministration is doing to help
18 us get out of that pot. And I and my time here with
19 two things. One, you know, I do think it is worth
20 bringing forward the sometimes attributed to the
21 Dwight Eisenhower that comprehensive plans are
22 worthless, but comprehensive planning is everything
23 and we are not doing it. We are a frog boiling in a
24 pot. Climate change and lack of affordability and
25 aging infrastructure and toxic planning process and

1
2 to have you sit and tell us, you know what, jumping
3 out jumping out would have new problems. Everything
4 is fine. Let's just stay right like we are. That is
5 what we are going to do is boil and that pot and I
6 disappointed that we don't have a more proactive
7 approach. That's not to say that this proposal is
8 perfect, but the failure of this administration to
9 think long term and proactively is going to be one of
10 its real long-term failures. So, I appreciate you,
11 as well--

12 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Council member--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: But I [inaudible
14 02:05:56]

15 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Council member, I do
16 have to respond. The speaker himself noted that this
17 proposal would not require any rezonings and there
18 may be many communities who would anticipate having
19 no growth and this bill does nothing to change that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Oh. I mean, Madam,
21 Chair, we have--

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Council member,
23 we'll come back. I'm going to have you back. I am
24 going to have you back, guaranteed. We only have

25

1 four more. Council members will come back. And so,
2 guaranteed. Guaranteed. Next, thank you so much.

3
4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thanks, Chair.

5 Next, we will hear from Council member Adams who had
6 her hand up first and then Council member powers,
7 followed by Council member Reynoso. Council member
8 Adams, please begin.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you very
11 much. I think I am going to start by video so that
12 we can be seen here. There we go. Hello, Chair
13 Lago. It is good to see you again. I am enjoying
14 the conversation around this bill and it is
15 interesting to hear the perspective of city planning
16 on this legislation. I've heard a lot of concerns.
17 I am going to try to piggyback because I am planning
18 to come back for a second round, as well. On what my
19 colleague just asked, Council member Lander just
20 asked, we have a very significant piece of
21 legislation in front of us and in my community in
22 Southeast Queens, we been hearing a lot of narratives
23 around this particular piece of legislation which we
24 hope to clear up in this hearing today. We heard the
25 Speaker very forth fully say that this legislation

1 does not require amendments or changes to the city's
2 zoning resolution. That legislation does not require
3 or trigger requirements for any kind of rezonings or
4 up zonings. The legislation does not propose or
5 support the elimination of single-family zoning in
6 New York City or propose any specific reason zoning
7 actions whatsoever, which is something that my
8 community members seem to dispute. The Speaker also
9 contends that this legislation does not amend or
10 eliminate community Board role, which is something
11 near and dear to my heart as a former Chair of the
12 community Board. It does not eliminate community
13 Board role in future rezoning processes, which would
14 remain subject to ULURP. Do you disagree with any of
15 those statements that that Speaker has made a defense
16 of this legislation?
17

18 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you, Council
19 member. We benefit, as with Council member Salamanca
20 and other members of the Council who have had prior
21 roles with the community board. I think that many of
22 the statements that you have said explain why we have
23 concerns with this. The comprehensive plan that is
24 proposed would put before the community Board three
25 options for all multiple-choice. I want this one,

1 about one, or the other. Following that, though, the
2 Council member, each Council member, could determined
3 to revise the targets for their particular
4 neighborhood and, following that, it is correct that
5 there is nothing in the legislation that would-- the
6 underlined requirement for ULURP for land-use
7 approvals would remain which would mean that it would
8 go to the Council with the tradition of Council
9 member deference. At about the equitable allocation
10 of affordable housing and of community facilities and
11 so we see this proposal as creating a large
12 bureaucracy, and expense for GEIS, but without
13 changing the underlying allocation of
14 responsibilities between that Council, the Planning
15 Commission.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you for that.
18 And, again, the Speaker also disputes the cost. I am
19 just going to put one more thing out there just to
20 make sure that I hear this loud and clear. Do you
21 perceive the mandate in this legislation to reach any
22 type of quota of housing units which will necessitate
23 uploading that can potentially eliminate single-
24 family communities?

CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Since the ULURP process remains unchanged, the bill posits that Council members who have a proposal coming forward through ULURP that is aligned with the plan would choose to stand down and not call up the proposal. Our experience under the current system where there are land use actions that it is voluntary for the Council to-- it is optional for the Council to call it up. Our experience is that they are always called up. And so, because the plan would be at all level of the generality that doesn't get to the details that the ULURP process does, when you are engaged in ULURP, there is a discussion of what is the appropriate density? What is the appropriate height? How do we mask the buildings? That is the discussion before the Planning Commission. Council members frequently, in discussing an item that is before them for ULURP, go into matters that go well beyond land-use , but that are important to the community and so we anticipate that any project that will be called up also go through the full ULURP process and what this bill--

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time is expired.

4 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: will have
5 accomplished --

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Chair Lago, I am
7 just going to interrupt because I don't have any time
8 left, but that was a yes or no question, so I'm going
9 to ask it one more time. Will this legislation, in
10 your perception, potentially eliminate single-family
11 communities? Yes or no?

12 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Again, Council member,
13 I-- there are so many unknowns about this bill.
14 What I do know is that it will make it harder to
15 adopt the equity goals of providing more affordable
16 housing more equitably across the city.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Okay. I don't
18 think I got any answer to that, but I am going to
19 come back again for another round. Thank you very
20 much.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council
22 member. Next, we will hear from Council member
23 Powers followed by Council member Reynoso and then
24 Council member Miller. Council member Powers, you
25 may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you. Thanks
3 for the testimony and thanks to my colleagues for all
4 the questions. I just want to pick up from an
5 earlier conversation which is can you just tell a
6 soul and maybe lay out some of the adjustments or
7 changes to the existing land use process at the City
8 Planning Commission that the administration is
9 currently considering or would support? I recognize
10 that there are lots of ways to look at this proposal
11 and say, here is concerned a or concern B, but a lot
12 of New Yorkers, there is a frustration or attention
13 in this current process right now. This affects lots
14 of different ideas of how to do that. I would love
15 to hear your thoughts or ideas that perhaps would
16 help fix existing issues in the process and is
17 something you feel like you could support as a
18 change.

19 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you, Council
20 member. And it is good to speak with you because you
21 are a Council member who has been involved in so many
22 land use decisions and our discussions, I think, have
23 been helpful in making them better proposals. The
24 discussions that we have had have been, I believe, in
25 the wrong setting. In the context of a hearing on a

1 piece of legislation that would so fundamentally
2 restructure land use and that I believe poses a
3 question as to whether charter revision is done. The
4 prior process that we engaged in was during the
5 Council's Charter Revision process and they are we
6 had so much testimony that was conflicting. That
7 there were disagreements about whether planning
8 should be top down, whether planning should be
9 bottom-up. His you should be involved in it. I
10 would welcome him having a discussion which would
11 involve the Council members for sure, but I think a
12 broad array of stakeholders that would be, one,
13 substantive and, two, given the time to delve into
14 the issues.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: I would just know
17 that I think, for a lot of the folks and New Yorkers.
18 The point where they have most of the conversations
19 around it are during private application and their
20 communities around the land use and the trauma unit
21 and they feel like that is the wrong time to have a
22 conversation around how much housing you needed in
23 their community or you like at the clock on that
24 conversation unit in fact, I would argue a city
25 Council hearing and the city planning charter

1 revision commission are exactly the right places to
2 have a conversation about the land-use process as a
3 whole rather than doing it during individual
4 community applications or private applications in the
5 community. But I think--

7 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Council member, if I
8 might clarify, I was not suggesting that it is only a
9 through the ULURP process. I think that a phone
10 conversation outside of the confines of the charter
11 revision commission where we heard widely differing
12 testimony and then outside of one hearing on a high
13 the specific bill. I think that that would be
14 helpful and it is something that we would welcome
15 hard to the main menu.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay. I just
17 feel-- Yeah.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I apologize for jumping.
19 I just want to make one clarification of something
20 that was just said not by you, but I wanted to pass
21 without me jumping in. It was just said, I believe,
22 by city planning, I just want to be clear. Community
23 boards will not be forced to pick one of three
24 scenarios. That is not what the bill does.
25 Community boards and borough president can design and

1 use phrases you want on their own and those would be
2 that the Council which would reconcile those
3 recommendations and adopt final land-use scenario--
4 final land-use scenarios for inclusion in a long-term
5 plan. So, I just want to be clear that what was just
6 said is completely inaccurate to let the bill does.
7 I'm sorry, Keith, for interjecting. I just didn't
8 want to pass without me correcting what the facts
9 are.
10

11 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay. Thank you.
12 I guess, you know, just to pick up from where
13 everybody else was leaving off and then I want to get
14 to some other questions is just that I think rather
15 than having and sort of nitpicking-- and I'm not
16 even going to use the word nitpicking. We can all
17 pick out issues in this process that will cause a new
18 tension in the process, perhaps, for us all, but it
19 does not mean it is work throwing out the entirety of
20 the legislation or, you know, the conversation. We
21 want city planning to come to us, or the
22 administration with thoughts about how to look at
23 larger citywide planning and long-term growth with
24 public input because I think that is what is missing
25 right now on some of the long-term planning

1 conversations and I think we would like to see some
2 real sort of adjustments to this rather than just
3 saying we don't like it or we don't support it. I've
4 got a couple questions, though, and I'm going to ask
5 for a little bit more time because I lost about a
6 minute there. But one of the questions--

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Council member, you
9 didn't lose any minutes there. The sergeant was able
10 to keep it [inaudible 02:18:19]--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Right now.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay. Okay. So,
14 for communities that, right now, for a lot of the
15 communities that get rezoned, they end up with a lot
16 of investments as part of that process. They get--
17 you name some of them in East New York, for example,
18 that happened as a result of the East New York
19 rezoning. They get massive investment into their
20 community as part of that process, as part of that, I
21 would say, negotiation of the rezoning. What about
22 the other communities that don't get that? What
23 happens in terms of assessing the needs of
24 communities that are not going for a rezoning, where
25 they don't have the benefit of public process to

1
2 bring in new investment? I think that that is one of
3 the conversations than one of the pieces of
4 conversation that is really missing.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: is making
7 investments in communities when there is not a
8 process that brings those into them. So, how does
9 this city assess those needs, then? How does the
10 city make citywide assessments? And can you give us
11 any specific examples of that?

12 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Certainly. Thank you
13 for the question on that, Council member. We are
14 proud of the fact that, in connection with the
15 neighborhood wide reading zonings, that have markedly
16 increased the density and the house saying that we
17 have been able to bring the needed infrastructure
18 investments. But that is a very small part of the
19 city's overall capital planning process. The vast
20 majority of the capital budget is not going to those
21 neighborhoods. It is done citywide and I will turn
22 it over to chair who is the single person most expert
23 on how the city allocates its capital budget.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: We're waiting for
25 Tara.

4 TARA BOIRARD: Sorry. I didn't have
5 the opportunity to unmute. As Chair Lago said, what
6 actually gets done in the capital plans in the
7 neighborhood process is just a sliver that are
8 informed by DCP about how particular neighborhoods
9 are changing, you know, the demographics and where
10 growth and density would be happening and, from
11 there, we make decisions working with the agencies in
12 a collaborative process to fund their needs.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: I now, but that's--
14 I mean, that's basically like we have a capital
15 budget. That's kind of the answer. We know we have
16 a capital budget that can spend money all across the
17 board. I guess my real point here is that there is
18 the-- the neighborhood every zonings allow for an
19 opportunity for folks to make real investment into
20 those areas and get a lot of investment and attention
21 from the administration leaving, I think, other
22 neighborhoods out of that conversation, as well. I'm
23 going to end it with just one more question, Chair.
24 And I apologize taking more time. Which is--

25 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Real quick. Real
quick.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Sure. Can you
3 identify--

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: you can stick
5 around. Definitely stick around.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay. I will just
7 end here. Can you-- you've talked about some of the
8 high growth, high transit neighborhoods. Mine is
9 certainly part of that. Can you name other areas
10 that you think are opportunities with high transit
11 and high opportunities for housing that the
12 administration, besides what's in the conversation
13 right now. We know Gowanis, SoHo, NoHo. Can you
14 talk about other areas that you feel that have
15 potential and even have potential and real
16 opportunities alive right now in terms of expanding
17 housing in the city?

18 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I guess you mentioned,
19 but for a lawsuit, we would be in the midst of the
20 ULURP process for Gowanis. Exactly the type of high
21 opportunity and transit rich neighborhood. We are
22 actively working with Council member Chin on a
23 rezoning of SoHo and NoHo, one of the city's highest
24 opportunity neighborhood that is crisscrossed.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: I'm looking for
opportunities outside of those and I will and there.
Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Again, and I will note,
as I did in my answer to Council member Lander, that
we work with Council members with communities that
invite us to work with them. We know that, given the
resources we have, if we were to propose a rezoning
in a neighborhood where Council member says I don't
want that, the tradition enough Council member
deferent suggests that that would be a futile
exercise and not a good use of city taxpayer
resources. And, again, we thank you, Council member,
because you have been one of the Council members who
has recognized the extraordinary geography that you
represent and its ability to produce not just
housing, but since you covered the city's nations,
premier central business district, the ability to
provide the space for the jobs of today and tomorrow.
We appreciate that.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

Committee counsel?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,
5 we will hear from Council member Reynoso followed by
6 Council member Miller before moving on to the second
7 round which will begin with the Speaker. Council
8 member Reynoso, you may begin upon the sergeant's
9 announcement.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you,
12 committee counsel. Thank you, sergeant-at-arms.
13 Look, Council member Lander, Council member Adams,
14 Council member powers, will ask questions and none of
15 them were answered. I have never heard someone speak
16 so much and see so little that is kind of just speaks
17 to the mastery of the Department of City Planning
18 ability to just, you know, Dodge all these questions
19 and any responsibility for planning, right? They are
20 called the Department of City Planning and they are
21 just so-- you know, they object so much to the
22 planning it is unbelievable. And because I want to,
23 you know, move away from that act of that show of how
24 well they Dodge questions and don't answer that, I'm
25 just going to make a statement and then maybe I'll
ask a question and see how good they dodge that one.
My name is Antonio Reynoso and I am the

1 representative of communities in Williamsburg,
2 Bushwick, and Ridgewood, neighborhoods that know all
3 too well how devastating a lack of long-term planning
4 can be for local residents. We are having this
5 hearing today because our land-use process is
6 fundamentally broken. New York City is grappling
7 with major challenges related to resiliency,
8 transportation, housing, economic development, and
9 healthcare and we are failing to tackle these
10 problems head-on. Furthermore, the issues are deeply
11 rooted in systemic racism and time and again the city
12 is chosen to prioritize the needs of white, wealthy
13 communities over those of black and brown
14 neighborhood which is facilitated by the lack of any
15 sort of citywide vision. Our current process can in
16 no way be called planning. Rather, it is a piecemeal
17 sideload approach to encourage real estate
18 development with no real policy priorities or values
19 behind it the on the production of housing units.
20 The red-hot level of controversy that surrounds
21 nearly every land-use actions the city Council
22 undertakes makes it vividly clear that something
23 isn't working. Many of you may be surprised to learn
24 that we are already required to have a comprehensive
25

1 plan and the city has taken the position that a
2 rezoning resolution serves as that plan. I strongly
3 encourage everyone watching right now to Google New
4 York City's zoning resolution. Read through a few
5 pages and tell us if it looks like a plan to you.
6 And that is further proof that that plan is that
7 working, DCP and private developers come to this
8 Council to amended at 1/2 dozen ways every two weeks.
9 Applications for land-use changes are typically
10 initiated by private actors that are generally
11 disconnected from any broader planning process or
12 capital strategy. Additionally, our communities are
13 left without any venue to voice concerns related to
14 other planning related topic areas. Comprehensive
15 planning offers an opportunity for the city to
16 collect all the planning threads in one place,
17 provide a forum for communities to proactively
18 determine their future, and ensure agencies are
19 moving in a coordinated way. The process will be
20 guided by principles that analysis that are currently
21 lacking, such as addressing segregation and analyzing
22 displacement risks. It will align capital dollars
23 with planning initiatives and provide capital
24 investments where needs are identified, putting an
25

1 end to this extortionist practice of withholding
2 critical projects to force marginalized communities
3 into accepting various unwanted projects. As Council
4 member Lander and I have stated it is time to into
5 this [inaudible 02:26:53] doom loop. We can no
6 longer allow our city to be held hostage by the
7 interests of private capital or be frozen in amber by
8 these who feel that New York should no longer accept
9 newcomers. I am very much looking forward to the
10 discussion today and I am anxious to engage with
11 folks on how we can strengthen and improve the bill,
12 but it doesn't seem to be the objective of the City
13 Planning Commission today. You know, so want to ask
14 one question. DCP recently released data that showed
15 that for community districts out of the 59 have
16 accounted for 1/3 of the housing production and New
17 York City over the past 10 years. Was this a planned
18 outcome, Chair Lago?

20 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you, Council
21 member. This is an outcome based on the land-use
22 process we have in place that allows member deference
23 and allows communities that, regardless of the
24 comprehensive plan or not, do not want to see a

1 change from their current zoning to allow their
2 neighborhoods took, as you say, be frozen in amber.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: So,
5 Commissioner--

6 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: That is--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I'm sorry.

8 Chair. I have a limited amount of time. So, what do
9 you suggest we do differently? I guess that is the
10 number one question that Council members are asking
11 you. You seem unsatisfied with our ability to push
12 projects because of member difference, but have done
13 nothing to suggest an alternative.

14 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: suggest that this is the
15 remit of the Council. The system that we have now
16 allows communities, communities that are well
17 resourced, it is say, no. I may have a subway
18 station, but I don't want to change. I don't want to
19 see a ULURP application. I don't want to create the
20 housing that will welcome newcomers.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Right. But
22 what did you suggest we do differently, Chair? I get
23 what you're saying. Do you feel that you are
24 handcuffed from many ability--

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: to modify the
3 actions you take to develop housing or to zone. And,
4 because of it, you are just going to live in that
5 world and not suggest any changes, just abide by
6 those rules. It just doesn't make any sense to me
7 how you feel such an inability to actually plan and
8 then reject any proposals made by this Council to try
9 to fix that problem.

10 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: the I will note that we
11 will always look for opportunities to work with
12 Council members over the long haul as we did with
13 Council members Lander and Levin and then it was not-

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: But you're not
15 answering any questions. You just--

16 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: And secondly--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: But you're
18 just talking. You're not saying anything, Chair.
19 That is the big problem here. I asked a simple
20 question and you just can't say it. You're talking
21 about Lander. I asked you a simple question of why
22 have you not changed the process that seems to, you
23 know, only allow for locations where members are open
24 to develop met to have a real discussion about
25 zoning.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: That actually, Council
3 member, it is written into the charter that that the
4 ultimate code is with the city Council.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: But you
6 changed the charter then.

7 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Council member. And it
8 could easily be changed if there were not the
9 practice of Council member deference. I will also
10 note that--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: yeah. Because
12 member deference is a problem.

13 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I think that that is a
14 challenge, but I would mention proactively the Where
15 We Live process. The fact that we undertook a
16 comprehensive look to affirmatively further fair
17 housing and I do think that the commitments that were
18 made in the area on the fact that we now have an
19 administration and in Washington and that isn't
20 fighting against fair housing gives us a very good
21 opportunity. The other thing I might note is that I
22 think were the Council to adopt a citywide lens
23 rather than looking exclusively to Council member
24 deference, that that could be tremendously helpful in
25

1
2 achieving our shared goal of more equitable land-use,
3 of having communities--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Is that not
5 what we are trying to do with this legislation? That
6 is exactly what this legislation is trying to do. My
7 time is limited--

8 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Council member--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: and I am
10 waiting for the next round, but I will be excited to
11 hear you answer any questions that I may ask in the
12 future. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Council member, the
14 second round--

15 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Yes. But if I could ask
16 to be able to respond to that--

17 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: which is that the
19 proposal maintains the ability of a Council member to
20 call up any ULURP action, even if aligned with the
21 comprehensive plan and then it basically provides yet
22 another veto. Yet another impediment to the
23 construction of the affordable housing that we need.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

25 Committee counsel?

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,
3 we will hear from Council member Miller followed by
4 Council member Borelli before moving on to the second
5 round. Council member Miller, you may begin upon the
6 sergeant's announcement.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: good afternoon,
9 Chairs and good afternoon, Madam Chair. So, there is
10 been a lot of conversation about what this bill would
11 do when, in particular about how it would improve
12 what we have seen in the disparities that we have
13 seen by virtue of Covid 19 and its impact on, in
14 particular, communities of color, which I find a
15 little disturbing because of the lack of impact and
16 engagement through past land-use issues and policy
17 and moving on here. So, my first question, Madam
18 Chair, that is you testified in 2019, before the
19 Charter Commission, about your vision for equity and
20 predictability. How does this plan differ from that
21 and what, in fact, would you do to have more
22 inclusiveness to actual communities of color and also
23 communities that have particular nuances that rest
24 outside of the things that development and zoning
25 that we are talking about today, but real land-use

1 issues about how we-- you know, the southeast Queens
2 issues of land use of our streets and other issues
3 that don't get addressed here? How do we speak
4 specifically to that? Where is that voice and the
5 plan that you had enunciated and/or what you guys are
6 currently doing now planning? Where is it allowed
7 for the voices of communities that are less
8 interested in this type of development, but more in
9 preserving the continuity of the contextual fabrics
10 of the communities that they represent currently?
11 And then, finally, considering this is something that
12 has gone before the charter and referendum all in
13 charter, not made the referendum this past time, but
14 has in the past. Is this something that your agents
15 the feels is within the purview and authority of the
16 Council? I know it's a lot.

18 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you, Council
19 member, for both questions. And let me see-- You.
20 I will try to unpack them. We have the flexibility
21 in our approach to zoning that allows us to address
22 the existential issue of the day. I will note the
23 fact that just yesterday the city released its first
24 ever food policy plan and the need for such a plan
25 was only heightened by the pandemic and the food

1 insecurity that existed but that was height and there
2 and that, again, fell along racial lines. And so,
3 that's one example. The other thing that I will note
4 is that we are currently in the midst pending before
5 the Planning Commission at this point, with the
6 zoning for coastal resiliency. In preparing that
7 rezoning which is citywide which affects every
8 community District, but one. We went and met with
9 community groups, but we went beyond community
10 groups. We worked with environmental Justice groups,
11 as well, recognizing that the threat posed by coastal
12 flooding is even more existential in communities that
13 might not have the resources that more high
14 opportunity neighborhoods would have. We are
15 currently working on the city's waterfront plan and,
16 again, here are issues of environmental Justice,
17 issues of the multiple uses that we make of the water
18 from our represented by a broad array of
19 constituencies. The other thing that we are doing is
20 focusing on data. The department is always been a
21 factual and data-driven planning entity, but we are
22 getting data out to the community so that they can
23 have access to the same information on the web for
24 free.
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So-- I'm sorry.
3 With all due respect. Because clearly southeast
4 Queens is an area of that flood mitigation has been
5 an issue for the past 40 years, right, and that
6 happens to be data-driven, but it took forever to get
7 that addressed. Those are the specific nuances. But
8 then we also have, you know, our transportation
9 system is we live in a transportation desert. You
10 are forced to drive--

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: but also, at the
13 same time, we have an antiquated-- our streets are
14 antiquated. They have not been, you know-- our
15 buses run on trolley lines, but our streets are also
16 designed for, you know, single-family homes with two
17 car garage is and now we have basement dwellings, we
18 have doormies [sp?]. We are totally overpopulated
19 and two cars can't get down the street at the same
20 time. Council member Adams and myself introduced
21 legislation five years ago to address one-way streets
22 to mitigate this said we were told that I DO to you
23 that you don't have to do legislation. Just tell us
24 what you want them will do it. Well, five years
25 later, not a single Street has been reversed and how

1 does this translate into the agencies and how do we
2 make sure that this work is really getting to the
3 nuance work that really impacts folks outside of
4 Manhattan and that developing and gentrifying
5 communities that seem to be leading the conversation
6 here today. Just how does the everyday New Yorkers
7 in southeast Queens in the Bronx and Staten Island,
8 how does this impact us and where is our voice and
9 this?
10

11 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you for the
12 question. And, in particular, for mentioning the
13 flooding risk in southeast Queens. At the same time
14 that we are going through ULURP for the Zoning for
15 Coastal Resiliency, we are also looking at
16 neighborhoods that have particularly high flood risk
17 where mother nature is indicating that she is got a
18 special on them. And, as you may know, Council
19 member, we are at the same time, putting forward
20 proposals to sharply curtail development in the
21 floodplain and neighborhoods like old Howard Beach.
22 And so, thank you for putting a focus on the fact
23 that a proposal like Zoning for Coastal Resiliency is
24 not a one size fits all. It is very attuned to the
25 different characters of flood proud neighborhoods

1 like the financial district versus Howard Beach. The
2 same approach does that work for them, but we have
3 addressed the full range of them.
4

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
6 Thank you so much, Council member and committee
7 chairs. Council chair.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.
9 Next, we will hear from Council member Borelli
10 followed by Council member Grodenchik. Council
11 member Borelli, you may begin upon the sergeant's
12 announcement.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you. I
15 do believe in member difference because I think,
16 unlike the members of the Commission, I had my
17 colleagues have been elected by the people of the
18 city of New York to make decisions on their behalf.
19 That is why I just want to ask briefly about the
20 reforms to the Richmond special zoning district. I
21 think I made it clear, since the last go round of
22 this proposal, that I have absolutely no interest in
23 seeing these changes even happen and I am wondering
24 why, as an agency, knowing that this is not going to
25

1
2 happen, would you be still spending time and money on
3 staff hours doing this?

4 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: If I could ask Anita
5 Laremont to address this.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LAREMONT:

7 Apologies. It took a moment to unmute. The work
8 that we have done and Staten Island on the special
9 natural areas district was work that we actually
10 really did believe would be very helpful in
11 facilitating ability to do robust planning for the
12 borough of Staten Island because it would free us
13 from the very specific site planning work that we do
14 in the main and Staten Island. I will say that we
15 have been through a process of several years were, in
16 fact, your staff has been present and we believe, up
17 until we heard from you recently, that they are walls
18 the path to getting this done. We still think the
19 work is valuable, because we have done so much of it,
20 we believe that it is appropriate for us to at least
21 get through the environmental review process so that
22 if there is a more appropriate time, following
23 additional conversation with people in Staten Island
24 like you and other stakeholders that we can
25 reintroduce this work, that we will not have to start

1 over from square one for it, but we really very much
2 would welcome continuing the conversations on these
3 topics.
4

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Sure. Thank
6 you. While we are doing that work, there are other
7 projects in my district that have been languishing
8 and I hear from developers that, you know, these are
9 people that have come to the community board income
10 to me as their Council member and have made projects
11 that are amenable to my community that are just
12 waiting for motions from your office. And I will
13 point out one example. On Page Avenue, there was a
14 subdivision application. It took five years. The
15 applicant had to go through the process of drawing
16 their configurations and their layouts and surveys
17 and all that stuff. They were approved for the
18 subdivision. Now they are coming back to develop it
19 and suddenly city planning is telling them that
20 everything that they were just approved on part of
21 the subdivision is not acceptable for their
22 application. It's just seems to me that, as an
23 agency, we are doing everything we can when there is
24 city Council and community board acceptance of the
25

1
2 concept of a project, to stop people from actually
3 developing their property.

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LAREMONT: Council
5 member Borelli--

6 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: If I might, Council
7 member, it is what drove the proposal to revise the
8 special natural areas district is very much a desire
9 to take advantage of 40 years of advances in
10 environmental science to make it so much easier for
11 homeowners to install a pool, to expand a deck, to
12 relocate a driveway, to add an extra kitchen.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: But that
14 wasn't the purpose--

15 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: No. Apologies--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: an impermeable
17 surface they could use from their backyard and that
18 is why there was so much public outcry against the
19 initial city planning proposal was because people
20 wouldn't be able to put a deck or pavers or patio or
21 whatever on their property.

22 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: and, Council member, we
23 heard that and markedly revised that. Our desire is
24 to be able to get the planning commission out of the
25 business of having to do this detailed site plan

1 review for things like the kitchen addition that do
2 not have measurable environmental impacts and,
3 instead, focus on the larger sites of an acre or more
4 and that would free up resources for the kind of
5 long-term planning. With respect to the particular
6 project that you mentioned, Anita, could I toss it
7 over to you?
8

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LAREMONT: Yes. I
10 don't know the particulars of it and we will get back
11 to you is that it does take a long time to advance
12 these projects because the text under which they get
13 approved are the special natural area and South
14 Richmond text which are very detailed in terms of
15 what needs to be provided it's a very [inaudible
16 02:44:50] process. It takes a long time to get a
17 complete application. I will look into that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: I was just
19 looking have the answer now. But just to be
20 specific, the applicant went for a subdivision. They
21 were approved for two storied strip mall and they
22 subdivided the property--

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: resubmitted
25 the same exact plan that was just approved by city

1
2 planning in the city Council, etc., And now they
3 were told that the City Planning Commission would
4 like them to put a town center or change the
5 footprint. Now they are looking at residential
6 houses. Just kind of, you know, counterproductive to
7 make someone go through a five-year process when, at
8 the end of it, you're just going to say, well, that
9 was great, but now start from scratch and get your
10 surveys done again. I know you won't be able to have
11 a specific answer now and I'll leave it at that and I
12 thank you for your time. That's it.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
14 Committee counsel?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next we
16 will hear from Council member Grodenchik. Council
17 member, please begin upon the sergeant's
18 announcement.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
21 Chair Cabrera. Chair Lago, it is nice to see you.
22 We don't get to meet too often because, actually,
23 today was the first day that I had any kind of zoning
24 change approved after over five years and the Council
25 mostly because the plans that have come forth from

1 private individuals are so outrageous that I reject
2 them out of hand to save everybody's time. One
3 example was a single-family home where they wanted to
4 change the zoning from R2 to R6 to allow for the
5 construction of an eight story building. At least
6 that was on Hillside Avenue, but I am one of I think
7 only to Council members that doesn't have a subway,
8 Long Island Railroad, Staten Island Railroad, or
9 Metro-North stop in their district. So, our mass
10 transit is quite limited. I just want to ask you a
11 question. The disparities that some have talked
12 about today, these are not recent phenomenons. They
13 are things that have taken place and, in my opinion,
14 I started in government in the late 80s, over
15 decades. Would you agree with that, Chair?

17 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I would say that
18 the disparities go back even later than the late 80s,
19 Council member. Like you, I actually started my
20 first student at the Department of City Planning in
21 1983. I was a special assistant to the then Chair,
22 Herb Sterss [sp?].

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay. Know
24 him well.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Yeah. And I think that-
3 - we just can't help but smile when we mention Herb
4 Sterss' name. I would argue that the inequities and
5 disparities are evident throughout our society and go
6 back for beyond the early 80s. And so, I do think
7 that we need to look for systemic solutions that
8 extend so far beyond just zoning.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: And from your
10 purview, from your perch as City Planning Chair, a
11 very important job in our city, I know that I have
12 had discussions with just about every one of my
13 colleagues about the capital process and how things
14 unfold or don't unfold in the city and how it can--
15 and there have been improvements and I want to
16 complement, especially Commissioner Silver act Parks
17 and I know that Lorraine Grillo, who is the outgoing
18 Commissioner of DDC, have worked on this, but it
19 still takes seemingly forever. You can talk to Karen
20 Koslowitz about her Rego Park library that has been
21 decades and decades and still has a target date of
22 2024, how much of the city's inability to move
23 capital projects forward, how much does that hurt us
24 and made for inequities in our system?

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CHAIRPERSON LAGO: If I could toss the
issue of the capital budget over to you, Tara?

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Tara, did you
catch that toss?

CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I'm not a very good
pitcher. But I--

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: That's all
right.

CHAIRPERSON LAGO: suspect that has more to
do with the unmuting her.

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Tara. My time
is running.

TARA BOIRARD: I'm sorry. I was
waiting to--

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay.

TARA BOIRARD: the unmute function.
Okay. I can tell you that OMB has made great efforts
to try to streamline the process and brought in a new
unit to try to expedite the approvals, but from here
I will turn it over to Paul.

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Where is Paul?

PAUL TYMUS: To see you, Council member.
Good to see you.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Good to see
3 you.

4 PAUL TYMUS: We worked with you
5 extensively on the Borough President Shulman back in
6 the day.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Back in the
8 day. God rest his soul. Great lady.

9 PAUL TYMUS: we made significant strides
10 in streamlining the process. You know, obviously,
11 you know, there was great concern in delivering
12 capital commitments, you know, and we have introduced
13 different units which I think scoping was always the
14 biggest problem and I know that DDC has, you know,
15 introduced the unit is, you know, several years ago
16 where, you know, and I think they are doing a better
17 job than some of the budget agencies. As you know,
18 DDC is a managing agency, so they oversee, you know,
19 the construction of like libraries and cultural
20 institutions and things of that nature. So, the
21 budget agencies, you know, where we would put up a
22 project in the budget and it was more like
23 aspirational, I think, that the introduction of DDC,
24 along with some other scoping units' kind of within
25

1 Terrace unit, you know, they've expanded, you know,
2 and OMB role in that, as well.
3

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time is expired.

5 PAUL TYMUS: We have been working--
6 Again, I mentioned earlier with the Subcommittee on
7 the Capital Budget and improving in streamlining ways
8 to deliver projects. One of the biggest things we
9 have done recently and over the last several years,
10 actually, is the review of certificates to proceed
11 the CP times that was always concerning. And, you
12 know, we have gotten our CP approval days from a
13 record, if I can recall off the top of my head, of
14 over 65 days down into somewhere in the 30s. You
15 know, so just about a little over a month is the
16 average approval day now, you know, for a certificate
17 to proceed. This definitely advances the projects a
18 lot quicker and it streamlines the approval process.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: All right.

20 Thank you. I see my time is expired. I may come
21 back, Chair Cabrera, for a second round, but I do
22 want to state on the record that I am in favor of
23 member difference. I elected to carry out the wishes
24 of my constituents to the best of my ability, so I
25 appreciate that.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Holy agree. With
3 that, committee counsel, are we ready for the second
4 round starting with the speaker, correct?

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yeah. That is
6 right, Chair. We will now move on to the second
7 round of questioning. We will begin with the
8 Speaker, followed by the committee Chairs. If any
9 Council members would like to ask a second round of
10 questioning, please raise your hand using the zoom
11 raise hand function. Speaker Johnson, please begin.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. Let me just
13 turn my camera on. So, I do have a few more
14 questions. I will try to get through the quickly
15 before we move on. Chair, I had some questions
16 related to some of the-- right now, some of the
17 neighborhoods are covered by customized contextual
18 and special districts, as I mentioned earlier and,
19 you know, you talked about the GEIS earlier and I
20 think that is a particularly important part of this.
21 You were worried about the cost. A generic
22 environmental impact statement is, I think, really
23 key to incentivizing smart, cost-effective
24 development. Are you familiar with the state's
25

1 mandate to complete a GEIS for comprehensive plans
2 and other small cities?
3

4 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Yes. Very much so,
5 Council member. Speaker. I'm sorry. We are--

6 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And is given that most
7 of the cities in the state are completing a GEIS, I
8 understand we are larger, but what we do that here?

9 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I would note, Speaker,
10 that unlike the other cities in the state, the state
11 law does not allow New York City to do such a massive
12 GEIS to then avoid on a project by project basis
13 going through ULURP. I would note that, if we were
14 to look at the community District that has the
15 smallest population, that is Manhattan CD one, that
16 have a population as large as CD one, were smallest.
17 NCD one contains the US third-largest central
18 business district. There is a level of complexity in
19 preparing a GEIS citywide for New York that is
20 nowhere near what any other city would go through.
21 Then, then again, the state law doesn't provide the
22 subsequent pass on having to comply with SECRA, that
23 is with an S, the state review environmental process
24 for any other application as it makes its way through
25 ULURP.

1
2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Well, your own technical
3 manual on environmental review suggests completing a
4 GEIS for comprehensive plans. I can read you the
5 section if you like. Why is that in their if you are
6 opposed to doing a GEIS? And I will just quickly
7 read and you just mentioned it, the SEQRA technical
8 manual says that, quote, comprehensive planning
9 programs, new development programs, promulgation of
10 new regulations and revisions to such broadly
11 applicable elections may be candidates for a GEIS.
12 They have been done with the Governors Island
13 redevelopment, the solid waste management plan, and
14 Hudson yards.

15 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Before tossing it over
16 to both Anita Laremont and Susan Amron, I will note
17 that the scale of both governors Island and Hudson
18 Yard, neither encompasses an entire community
19 District, let alone all 59. But, with that, Anita, I
20 will turn it over to you first.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LAREMONT: Yes.
22 Yes. Speaker, I'd be happy to comment further on
23 this. Marisa is precisely right that really the
24 challenge here is the scale of the generic
25 environmental impact statement that we would need to

1 do here. You are correct in referencing the CEQR
2 technical manual in this regard, but the times when
3 this has been done have been really with respect to a
4 single individual project such as Hudson Yards.

5 Although it was a large area in terms of it was 89
6 blocks in the seven train, it still was one project.

7 It wasn't a citywide comprehensive plan with several
8 alternatives for each community District. It is that
9 part of it that makes this really challenging because
10 even if you did the generic impact statement, as you

11 would propose here, when the time came to implement
12 actual projects call but it would very likely not be
13 that the specific project that is done comports in

14 all material terms with what had been studied which
15 would mean that you would need to additional
16 analyses. Or it would mean that you would need to,

17 at least, argue over whether additional analyses are
18 necessary because this actually concerns us in that
19 it also gives people a new avenue to bring litigation

20 challenges with respect to whether or not the new
21 environmental impact statement needs to be done. And
22 then, of course, there is the cost of this which is

23 astronomical, as we talked about, but would not
24

1
2 actually offset the need to do the further analyses
3 when a particular project was done.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yeah. I think we
5 disagree with some of the underlying assumptions on
6 the costs and on some of the other things you have
7 said, but I appreciate your answering the question,
8 Anita. I want to go back to the Chair. Chair Lago,
9 you agreed that there needs to be a conversation
10 about how the city can more effectively plan
11 proactively to attack all citywide challenges, but
12 that the Charter Revision Commission wasn't the right
13 place to have that conversation and then you said now
14 today that the Council's legislative process is not
15 the right place to have the conversation. So, where
16 exactly do you expect to have this conversation, if
17 not through to the primary ways in the city to
18 discuss setting the city's policies? The city can do
19 this on their own without legislation or charter
20 revision, then why hasn't it been done already?

21 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you for the
22 question, Speaker. I will note that there was
23 extensive consideration of approaches to
24 comprehensive planning during the recent Charter
25 Revision Commission and the proposals were, at times,

1 in conflict with each other because of the varying
2 folks abuse about what constituted a comprehensive
3 planning and, in particular, whether it should be
4 bottom-up or top-down. And the result was that the
5 Council's Charter Revision Commission determined not
6 to advance the proposals. Now-- Oh. And I'm sorry.
7 I should note that one of the proposals that was
8 pending before the Charter Revision Commission for
9 significant similarities to the proposal that is
10 before us now. The last time that there was a very
11 significant revision to the land use by the Charter
12 Revision Commission, it was proceeded by years of
13 substantive analysis and outreach to a broad array of
14 stakeholders which allowed the Charter Revision
15 Commission to be able to coalesce upon the revisions
16 that were put in place and that defined the current
17 process that we have, including its allocation of
18 responsibilities among the various participants in
19 the land-use process.
20

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But my question was, if
22 you don't think that it was right in the Charter
23 Revision Commission, as you said, didn't take it up
24 and you don't think it is right for us to be moving
25 forward with legislation around a comprehensive plan

1
2 or comprehensive planning, where do you think this
3 conversation should take place?

4 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I think that there could
5 be a very healthy conversation with members of the
6 Council, with other stakeholders who will have widely
7 varying views, and with the city agencies that are
8 involved in planning, but not in the context of the
9 particular bill that we think has significant flaws.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I want to get into the
11 coordination piece a little bit more. To me, that is
12 one of the root problems here. There are just way
13 too many silos. Way too much that's already being
14 done without us really getting a lot out of it. I
15 know it is a challenge with our city that is this
16 large, but I don't think we can just accept the
17 status quo here. First, I want to note that it is
18 kind of indicative of this problem that we don't have
19 anyone from the Deputy Mayor's office here for
20 economic development and for planning. We have also
21 got one agency and to mayoral offices speaking to
22 three different perspectives and sets of issues. Can
23 someone tell me how the administration currently
24 coordinates across agencies when it comes to the
25

1
2 various planning related reports published by the
3 administration?

4 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Certainly. And I would
5 not take from the fact that no one from the Deputy
6 Mayors Office is signed up as a participant that
7 there has been noninvolvement. Far, far from it. We
8 have worked extensively with both Deputy Mayor Been
9 herself and her expert staff. We, at city planning,
10 work on a daily basis with the long litany of
11 agencies that you have mentioned in your early
12 questioning, Speaker. I will note something as-- I
13 will note the plan that was just released yesterday,
14 that we are particularly pleased to see out to their
15 food policy plan. One could step back and say, what
16 does food policy have to do with land use planning?
17 In fact, shortly after the appointment of the food
18 [inaudible 03:03:09], she reached out to city
19 planning no waiting of our analytical capabilities
20 and of our data mapping capabilities and asked if we
21 could succumb to her one of our planners, which we
22 gladly, gladly did. And we were able to be active
23 participants in, one, understanding the food supply
24 and the food distribution and network of the city,
25 something that, at the outbreak of the pandemic, we

1 didn't have nearly the insight into that we do now
2 and we were proud to continue to be part of the
3 development of the food policy plan. It is a
4 connection that I would guess many people wouldn't
5 immediately say, oh, food and city planning. And I
6 just use that as an example of the breadth of our
7 engagement with other agencies and, again, this isn't
8 an after-the-fact. This is an everyday occurrence.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. And I, of course,
11 appreciate the report that was released and, you
12 know, the Council had been pushing on those issues
13 for years asking and coordination and planning for a
14 long time. I released a report more than two years
15 ago which laid out some of the ways that we thought
16 we needed to move forward, so I am happy to see that
17 is coming out, but I think the question here is that,
18 when we are talking about land use, it feels like so
19 often things are disjointed and that agencies are not
20 speaking to one another in a coordinated way. You
21 heard earlier from Chair Salamanca on the issues
22 related to statement of district needs that community
23 boards put out asking for capital investment and
24 capital investment outside of the rezoning process.
25 Capital investment that looks that long term

1
2 planning. And I think that the experience that I
3 would say nearly every single Council member has is
4 that, you know, you only really have the ability to
5 try to secure large dollars for your district if
6 there is a rezoning going on. Otherwise, it is very,
7 very hard. And so, that is what you are hearing
8 today that people don't feel like there is
9 significant coordination that is going on in looking
10 at these issues.

11 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: , the attention clearly
12 is paid to the rezonings and the ability that, to
13 make investments in neighborhoods not historically
14 haven't received an equitable share of investment,
15 but the percentage of the capital budget that is
16 associated with the rezonings is a small part. I
17 would toss it over to Tara to help to mention the
18 fact that, while we are proud of the investments in
19 the capital investments in the rezoned neighborhoods,
20 that is not where the majority of our capital budget
21 goes.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Well, before we go over
23 to Tara-- I mean, Tara can answer this question, you
24 know-- Let me ask you first and then I will get into
25 something for Tara. How does the One NYC plan

1 informer relate to DCP's strategic objectives? Does
2 DCP work in coordination with the Mayor's Office of
3 long-term planning and sustainability to write those
4 objectives? And how do those objectives relate to
5 the city's budget?
6

7 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: to turn it over to Dan
8 and thank you for that question, Speaker. City
9 planning is actively involved in working with every
10 [inaudible 03:06:46] of the One NYC. Again, we view
11 that as a powerful citywide strategic planning tool.
12 So, Dan, if-- or, actually, Tara, I believe is now
13 on muted and so, if we can go to our and then to Dan?

14 TARA BOIRARD: Sure. Thank you,
15 Speaker. As you know and as you've said in your
16 question, it is a complex city, but as we are
17 evaluating new needs, we are looking at them through
18 multiple lenses. Some of the things that we are
19 looking at our issues such as equity, resiliency,
20 affordability and, ultimately, goes through and comes
21 to you for adoption. The neighborhood development
22 fund was a total of 1 billion dollars between EDC and
23 DEP and that is but a sliver of the entire capital--
24 the 10 year capital plan.
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: The other thing that I
3 might note before Dan speaks community Board budget
4 requests are not just public record. They are
5 available on the oh and be website and also on DCP
6 website through the community District poured all and
7 so this is part of our efforts to--

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Chair. Chair. I know.
9 And before I was elected to the Council, I was the
10 Chair of Manhattan community Board four and I can
11 tell you that many community boards, as you know, of
12 the 59 boards, spend a lot of time putting that
13 statement of [inaudible 03:08:11] every year and they
14 feel like it is, basically, ignored by the agencies
15 and the only ones that can come forward and fund the
16 asks are the local Council members. So I don't
17 believe that, you know, that people feel like when
18 they work on this charter mandated document, that
19 there is an that, instead, it's pro forma for many
20 people. And that is what I'm talking about seemingly
21 a lack of coordination or maybe a lack of putting
22 weight on a series document that is put forward for
23 59 community districts across the city.

24 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Dan, do you want to
25 follow up?

1
2 DAN ZARRILLI: Yeah. And maybe
3 [inaudible 03:08:57]. You know, I think the value
4 and [inaudible 03:09:03] that there are numerous
5 other things that, of course, getting [inaudible
6 03:09:07]--

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Dan, you're a little
8 muffled. It's hard to hear you.

9 DAN ZARRILLI: Sorry. Hopefully, this
10 works. But, as the One NYC process was create in
11 2019 and that plan was released, what we've been
12 doing is working with agencies on a number of
13 different areas to ensure strategic alignment and we
14 come in in different ways and different parts and
15 processes to make sure that, you know, it's clear
16 that the things that we need to do that are laid out
17 in One NYC to confront our climate crisis to address
18 the city's health and wealth inequities, strengthen
19 our democracy, like really to core visions are
20 finding ways to carry through and the food policy
21 sturdy is an example of that. The environmental
22 justice work, of course, is an example of that. The
23 waterfront plan. There's lots of different ways that
24 we work to ensure the strategic alignment with the
25 goals of One NYC and the priorities of the Mayor and

1 the advisory board for One NYC have helped us lay
2 out.
3

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But my question was does
5 the One NYC plan inform or relate to the Department
6 of City Planning strategic objectives?

7 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Absolutely, Council
8 member.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And then, does DCP work
10 in coordination with the Mayor's Office of Long Term
11 Planning and Sustainability to right those
12 objectives?

13 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Yes. Not only do our
14 strategic objectives in harmony with One NYC. We
15 work closely with the Mayor's Office on creating the
16 plan and informing it's strategic priorities.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And how do those
18 objectives relate to the city's budget?

19 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: We-- Jon, do you want
20 to turn and describe what we do with the city's
21 capital budget agencies through our capital planning
22 forum?

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Well, let me just give
24 an example. The compilation of the 10 year capital
25 strategy has two sections. A front section which

1 details policies and goals and a second section which
2 lists funding by agency. How do these two sections
3 connect to one another? Who drafts these sections
4 and how do the funding levels cited carry out the
5 goals? I mean, we, at the Council can't really
6 figure this out. It seems like it is a bit
7 disjointed then there is no rhyme or reason and that
8 these things don't align with each other. I mean, I
9 think that is one of the problems here. You have all
10 of these, in many instances, good public documents
11 and it doesn't feel like there is a real level of
12 coordination.
13

14 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I'll gladly toss this
15 over both to Jon and Tara.

16 JON KAUFMAN: Let me start a little bit and
17 then I will pass it to Tara and Paul can comment a
18 little bit more. Firstly, the One NYC process does
19 feed directly into the 10 year capital strategy, as
20 we have talked about. The boats in the priorities
21 that come through there are also manifested in the
22 narrative that you will see [inaudible 03:11:56] the
23 strategy of the 10 year budget. So these are, you
24 know, again, parts that are often talked about.
25 Things that you could interconnect. The second part

1 of it is how does the front and of the strategy
2 connect to some of the detailed budget pages in the
3 back is harder to see a linear line between because
4 there are so many budgetary decisions that are
5 involved in producing those allocations for the next
6 10 years. We do try to lay out clearly with all the
7 capital agencies that one of the principles of the
8 administration that should be carried through their
9 budgetary choices and then along the way they
10 continue to discuss those with OMB as you have to
11 whittle down to what can actually be afforded on a
12 given year. Let me pass it over to Tara how they get
13 that list narrowed down and, again, it is gaining
14 from this discussion about [inaudible 03:12:39] I
15 level with the agencies on a regular discussion
16 about--

18 TARA BOIRARD: Thank you. I'm turning
19 it over to Paul.

20 PAUL TYMUS: Very good. Thank you for
21 your question. As you can tell over the last several
22 releases of the strategy, we have actually
23 introduced, you know, more and more data. Thank you
24 to city planning for, you know, putting together a
25 lot of the guidelines that we use and, you know, we

1 show examples and that. The relationship to the back
2 of the book is that, you know, our priorities that
3 are mentioned in the front and our guiding principles
4 relates to the decisions that were made and, you
5 know, the agency section of the book is more
6 budgetary in nature. You know, we all are, you know,
7 for the strategy that is going to be released in
8 April, we are going to begin to make more of a
9 connection between the front of the book in the back
10 of the book, so I think you will be happy to see
11 that. You know, obviously, it is a big undertaking
12 and, you know, as we can do it more and more and we
13 will. We will advance it. But we're going to, you
14 know, site more examples in the agency narratives,
15 you know, to connect, you know, more to the guiding
16 principles in the front of the document.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. Here. I know
19 there are a lot of folks that are waiting to testify.
20 Chair Lago, do you see any value in integrating the
21 scattered disparate planning and reporting mandates
22 that we have now?

23 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: that, Speaker. I do
24 believe that we have a number of different reporting
25 requirements that have been created over the years

1 and that there is a very healthy exercise, I think,
2 and discussion to be had with the members of the
3 Council and stakeholders about which of the reporting
4 requirements make sense and which are reports that
5 are done because they are required to be, but don't
6 add value. The other reason that I think that that
7 is such a useful suggestion is that overridden during
8 this administration, we have so markedly enhanced the
9 information that we make available publicly, whether
10 through the population fact finder or the community
11 District poured all and that a stepping back and
12 taking stock that are produced in figuring out which
13 ones are adding value to the Council members and to
14 the communities and then coming up with a robust
15 reporting regime, but one that will be useful to the
16 Council, one where Council members will be waiting to
17 get at each year and, of course, that will be useful
18 to members of the public, as well.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And do you think we have
21 any work to do when it comes to improving how we
22 coordinate planning policy with the capital budget?

23 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I think that there can
24 always be improvements. I am an optimist. I have
25 been government because I am a believer and always

1 looking at what has been done and saying, what can we
2 do better? So, I would welcome working with you and
3 the Council on that.
4

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. I am going
6 to turn it back over to Chair Cabrera.

7 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
8 Mr. Speaker. I just have a couple of quick
9 questions, Chair. I wanted to know how does the city
10 planning decisions advance racial, social, and
11 economic equity in New York City?

12 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you. I think that
13 that is the challenge that we face. We are a nation
14 that has not confronted the issue of racial equity
15 and I think we always need to be looking for more
16 tools to address what has been done in the past and
17 not to perpetuate it going forward. Now partners in
18 Washington that share this and I do think that we
19 have a tool for doing it. A powerful tool which is
20 Where We Live. The Where We Live in New York City
21 document grew out of a requirement from HUD during
22 the Obama administration that all municipalities
23 looked at how they were affirmatively furthering the
24 fair housing. That requirement was stripped away by
25 the Trump administration. Nonetheless, the city

1 determined that it would proceed in this was an
2 initiative driven principally by HPD. But with city
3 planning as a partner and inactive participant and
4 contributor, absolutely every step of the way. We
5 are now at the point of implementation and the
6 implementing the Where We Live, which has assignments
7 not just for HPD, but for City Planning, as well,
8 that is one of the major things during the time
9 remaining in this administration. So, thank you for
10 highlighting that.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So, alongside with
13 that question, have you done an analysis? You are
14 all talking about the capital investments that you
15 have made that, outside of the rezoning, you have
16 made more capital investments outside of rezoning
17 then rezoning, if I understood right and, in light of
18 that, have you done an analysis of where that is
19 funding, this capital funding is going to? And, for
20 example, what percentage has come to the Bronx? What
21 percentages come to black and brown communities?
22 Have you done an in-house self-analysis of that?

23 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Tara, if I can ask you
24 since you're that keeper of the capital budget?

1
2 TARA BOIRARD: Thank you for the
3 question. We can probably get back to you on
4 different ways of cutting the data, including by
5 neighborhood, if that is what you are requesting.
6 And if you want to slice it in a different way, if
7 you share that information, that is something that we
8 can turn around.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes. Thank you for
10 that. And I would like to see it. You know,
11 sometimes we hear, oh, we are going to get you
12 information and then we never get it. I would
13 really-- this is some information that I would love
14 to get into our hands. So, do you have a sense
15 overall at least by borough of where this capital is
16 ending up back? Because that is something that you
17 actually do have control. Regardless of Washington's
18 staff, you have control. You have the power to
19 decide where is this money going to end up at? Do
20 you have anything in front of you, at least, by
21 borough?

22 TARA BOIRARD: Paul, do you have that
23 data in front of you or do we have to come back?

24 PAUL TYMUS: sorry, Council member. I
25 don't have that data available, you know, in front of

1 me right now, but we can get that to you. We can
2 follow up and get that to you.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yeah. If you can
5 get at before the hearing is over, someone can come
6 in and let us know you are in. We're going to be
7 here for at least a couple of hours. I see at least
8 three hours. We have a lot of people. So, I would
9 imagine it would be plenty of time because, honestly,
10 that will tell me at least it is one of the
11 indicators that there is an intentional plan year to
12 address inequity by boroughs. When I think about the
13 Bronx where I live and where I represent and there is
14 been so many inequities for so many years. I would
15 be very curious as to what those numbers would look
16 like and, if you could break it down by years of at
17 least for as long as this administration has been in.
18 I would appreciate it. My last question is building
19 resilience to for climate change demands a variety of
20 strategies, as you know. Policy change, incentives,
21 regulations, disinvestment, and the sort. Do you
22 agree that addressing these needs would require the
23 coordination of this strategy and the individual
24 efforts, individual agency effort and how does the
25 city intend to achieve that coordination under the

1 current planning framework and how would that be
2 superior to what is being proposed here today if it
3 is superior at all in part or inferior?
4

5 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you so much,
6 Council member. The Council is, you dissipate very
7 soon, going to be receiving zoning for coastal
8 resiliency. This is an attempt to take the lessons
9 that we have learned under the emergency zoning that
10 was put in place after superstorm Sandy. We have
11 lived with it for a while and we have learned a lot.
12 As I mentioned, we sent this out to every community
13 board in the city. We went to every community board
14 in the city and have gotten such useful feedback
15 about what the needs are, which very because our
16 coastline varies so widely across the city from a
17 working waterfront to recreational waterfront to a
18 hard edge along around many sections of the city,
19 including the financial district and I believe that
20 this is going to be a very important first step and
21 we are looking forward to the input from the Council
22 once this, again, citywide resiliency measure comes
23 before you in the coming months.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you. And let
25 me just close before I pass it on to Chair Salamanca

1 is the one of the indicators to me that we are very
2 serious about the community boards is to not slash
3 this 8000 plus dollars. The me just say that the
4 speaker-- and I want to give credit to the Speaker--
5 when I came in approached him about funding 42,500
6 dollars, we did that two years in a row. Last year
7 we couldn't. Then on top of that there was 3000
8 something dollars that were cut. Now you cut another
9 8000. We are looking at a huge percentage of funding
10 that is being cut out of the community boards when
11 they are doing more. And one of the indicators, one
12 of the signals that would show me that we are serious
13 about the community board is that we restore this
14 minute amount of money in the overall budget
15 spectrum, but it means so much to those community
16 boards. So, with that, I wanted to pass it on to one
17 of our cochairs, Chair Rafael Salamanca Junior.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Council
20 member. I'm having trouble with my video, so very
21 quickly, just my last question-- and I want to
22 reiterate this issue with community boards. The
23 question is to OMB. OMB, why have you asked
24 community boards to do a mod and you have proposed to
25 cut their budget for this fiscal year?

1
2 TARA BOIRARD: I have to-- We have to
3 come back to you with the particulars with community
4 boards. What I can tell you is, in the last two
5 budget cycles, all agencies have had to take budget
6 cuts, you know, against the expense budget largely
7 because of a function of where we were in the
8 financial plan and we were facing significant budget
9 constraints largely due to the pandemic. But I can
10 speak to the team that oversees community boards and
11 get the particulars of that situation.

12 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: I'm sorry. I
13 cannot accept that answer. That is something that
14 you need to find out right now. That is
15 unacceptable. You were aware of this hearing. This
16 hearing is about comprehensive plan. Community
17 boards play a big role here and, you know, we are
18 talking about budget cuts that affect the planning of
19 the city of New York as to what relates to
20 comprehensive planning. So, again, I'm going to ask
21 that you get that information and get back to us
22 before this hearing is done.

23 TARA BOIRARD: We can attempt to get
24 that information. I can tell you that the budget
25 director is going to be testifying in front of you

1 next week and we'll be prepared to speak to cuts to
2 the any cuts to the community boards, as well as any
3 other agencies, as well.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: You do understand
6 that community boards have the smallest budget out of
7 all city agencies in the city of New York and the
8 cuts that you make to a small budget like that has a
9 significant affect on their overall operations. With
10 that, thank you, Mr. Chair, for allowing me to ask my
11 questions.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you. And
13 thank you caring for community boards and joining the
14 chorus of concern that we have here. We are just
15 shared with you the level of nervousness this
16 community boards are feeling right now. So, as you
17 can tell, this will come up in the hearings. And
18 because, really, I mean, I just don't see how we
19 expect them to operate and especially when they go to
20 rezonings and [inaudible 03:26:34] with such a little
21 budget and in light of the fact that they haven't
22 received any salary increases in years. In years.
23 And we're going to lose good staff now because it's
24 either that or, you know, salaries. Just to maintain
25 the salaries or the rent and so forth. And so I

1 appreciate that, Chair. And with that, Chair
2 Rosenthal. I don't know if the Chair has any
3 questions. And if not, we'll go through the second
4 round with Council members. Okay. We can come back.
5 Committee counsel.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.

7 Next, we will hear from Council member Rivera
8 followed by Council member Reynoso. Council member
9 Rivera, you may begin upon the sergeant's
10 announcement.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Hi, there. Thank
13 you so much. I want to thank the committee. I want
14 to thank the Speaker for introducing this bill and
15 for clarifying the realities of community board input
16 in this proposal so since there is misrepresentation
17 of this by DCP and apparent confusion on this point
18 from many in our communities. I would also like to
19 thank the diverse affordable housing and community
20 groups that are in the Thriving Communities Coalition
21 for pushing this body to finally move on this
22 important legislation. It's really sad, based on the
23 hearing today, that the administration is more
24 interested in maintaining a tooth and nail lot by lot
25

1 zoning approach that seems to benefit developers and
2 further is an equity and that deeply concerns me. I
3 am a former community board member, as well. I spent
4 many years: community Board three. I worked on our
5 boards attempts to implement the closest thing we
6 have to comprehensive planning today, a 197 A plan.
7 Between those experiences, which was the conversation
8 that started almost 10 years ago, and from my time on
9 the Council, it is clear that our current land-use
10 process of one-off rezonings with no long-term vision
11 remains. T Mobley broken. We don't give our
12 community boards the funding they need, as you have
13 heard, and to effectively execute their land use
14 responsibilities and our neighborhoods continue to
15 price out far too many hard-working New Yorkers and
16 small businesses. I believe this legislation
17 combined with the right investments in our city could
18 be a vehicle to make the change we need, but we
19 obviously have a lot of work to do on this bill and I
20 will be listening to the feedback from today and
21 pushing to improve the legislation as it moves
22 through the process. My question. My question is
23 how does DCP work today to gather input from
24 communities to inform its decision making when it
25

1 comes to changes to the zoning code? And is any of
2 the collaborative work done outside of the individual
3 ULURPs for each rezoning and do you, as an agency,
4 the respect community board 197 A plans? So, it is
5 three questions and I am happy to repeat them as you
6 answer them. Thank you so much.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you, Council
9 member. First, I would want to address what I
10 believe it is a disagreement with respect to what the
11 bill provides. The legislation, as we read it,
12 proposes that a draft plan containing three scenarios
13 for each community board be presented and that the
14 community board identify the preferred plan among
15 them. This preferred plan goes to the Council which
16 then adopts a land use scenario for each community
17 District and the Council has the ability to make
18 modifications to the community boards preferred plan.
19 The community boards have the ability to amend the
20 scenarios that are presented in the draft plan, but
21 what we have found is that, frequently, it is those
22 community boards in neighborhoods that are
23 opportunity neighborhoods that have the resources to
24 be able to engage actively and generally on the
25 direction that it takes does not tend in the

1 direction of equity of saying we want more affordable
2 housing, we recognize the need of every community
3 District to accept facilities that might not be
4 locally desired, but are necessary from a citywide
5 perspective. To your next question-- and I will see
6 if I can remember all three-- of how it is that we
7 work with communities, we work with communities
8 extensively. It is the community boards and
9 community organizations that are lifeblood of
10 information for that Department and ultimately the
11 Planning Commission.
12

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: But, specifically--
14 I am so sorry, Commissioner. I just want to say,
15 specifically, to inform your decision-making, when it
16 comes to changes to the zoning code?

17 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Yeah. Sorry. That is
18 exactly where I headed. In particular, I think there
19 is such a good example in your neck of the woods or a
20 portion of your neck of the woods with the SoHo NoHo
21 initiative. This grew out of extensive conversations
22 with the community. A process that was sponsored by
23 the Council member, the borough president, and myself
24 and called Envision SoHo NoHo. There were so many
25 community meetings and what became evident is what we

1 see in neighborhoods throughout the city.

2 Frequently, there are different constituencies.

3 There are longtime residents. There are residents
4 who have moved to their more frequently. There is
5 the business--

6
7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time has expired.

8 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: and we now are at the
9 point of continuing, even after the conclusion in the
10 issuance of the Envision SoHo NoHo report to continue
11 public outreach meetings. We have had one in the
12 past few weeks. Because of the number of issues,
13 these outreach meetings focus on topic matters.
14 Housing, small business, the arts community. And so,
15 this is how we are informed. With respect to the
16 role of the community board in particular matters
17 that come before the commission, anyone who listens
18 and on our hearings, which is so much easier on the
19 Planning Commission hearings, which is so much easier
20 now that we are able to them virtually, we will see
21 that the commissioners, and their questionings, look
22 for answers for the applicant about the issues that
23 have been raised by the community board and by the
24 borough president. So, again, it's hard to overstate
25 the importance that we place on this other branch of

1 government that provides this information on our land
2 use applications.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: And I hear your
5 example. I would just say a couple things. One your
6 comments almost-- I feel like they are almost saying
7 that the bill provides too much community input.

8 That is how I kind of taking your comments. But, to

9 the SoHo NoHo envision plan for, I guess, the task

10 force which is the one example that you're bringing

11 up of where you go to for input outside of the

12 official ULURP process, many would say that the SoHo

13 NoHo proposal actually doesn't include to visioning

14 and that and that it strays far from what was

15 discussed or what was actually come to an agreement

16 within that committee and within all of those

17 meetings. So, I don't think it is the best example.

18 In the last thing I will say is, because I ran out of

19 time and I want to thank the Chairs for being so

20 gracious, is that, with the 197 Eight, I asked

21 whether you respect to those plans coming out of

22 community boards. I brought up on almost 10-year-old

23 conversation that were the community board sponsored

24 town halls and various discussions and brought in

25 numerous stakeholders and so I am just curious as to

1 why DCP hasn't been more collegial or collaborative
2 on that plan just generally. I would say that, if
3 you could just answer at least to why maybe you
4 haven't quite met community board three Manhattan at
5 least halfway on that plan when it seems to be very
6 popular within the community itself? And I will just
7 leave the comment on Envision SoHo NoHo literally
8 started to precipitate a rezoning process and I think
9 community should have a regular recurring opportunity
10 to comment. The ULURP process doesn't seem to be
11 enough right now, based on all of the feedback and
12 recommendations we get. So, we will leave that there
13 and if you could just, you know, come back to whether
14 you would consider 197 A plan from a community board,
15 I would really appreciate it. And thanks, again, for
16 your time.

18 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Thank you, Council
19 member and I do-- I think they are comments on SoHo
20 NoHo point out the fact that, understandably,
21 communities rarely speak with one voice and,
22 frequently, communities and community boards reflect
23 that particular community and don't get the broader
24 issues of equity and the need to address citywide
25 concerns. We know that, and SoHo NoHo, some of the

1 wealthiest districts in the city, are not producing
2 housing at affordable housing even though it is the
3 neighborhood that is so transit rich and so, part of
4 driving towards more equitable planning is looking
5 for these opportunities. The approach that we are
6 taking in SoHo NoHo is entirely consistent with Where
7 We Live and this focus on addressing historical and
8 existing inequities. Turning to the 197 A plan, you,
9 Council member, clearly understand the time and
10 energy that a 197 A planning process requires and I
11 have to note that it stands in such stark contrast to
12 the bill that is before us where the city's resources
13 would be consumed by devising 177 top down planning
14 scenarios.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
17 Committee counsel?

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,
19 we will hear from Council member Reynoso followed by
20 Council member Adams. Council member Reynoso, you
21 may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Chair, the I
24 wanted to like talk about a specific scenario here.
25 The Bushwick rezoning, a rezoning in which the City

1
2 Planning Commission sits with the community for
3 almost 5 years to go through a comprehensive plan of
4 exactly what a neighborhood rezoning could look like.
5 The community supports this project. The community
6 board, local organizations, and all of these elected
7 officials by into pushing this plan for five years
8 with the City Planning Commission on board. You join
9 almost every single meeting that has put-- Well, the
10 City Planning Commission joins every single meeting
11 that we have in Bushwick. The members are removed
12 from many voting decisions, so that means the Council
13 members have no voting rights in this community based
14 planning effort that we are trying to put together.
15 After six years, the community identified five
16 corridors in which they see an opportunity for up
17 zoning up to and R7A on Broadway, Myrtle,
18 Knickerbocker, and Wyckoff. We ended up identifying
19 8000 units and an opportunity to increase housing
20 units by 8000 units. The city has almost no land in
21 this area, right? So there is no thousand unit
22 affordable housing. There is no 500 units of
23 affordable housing that we could build on any of
24 these sites. So the opportunities on city-owned
25 sites are almost nonexistent, right? The community

1 also believes that, in manufacturing sites, if we
2 were to build affordable-- or build housing or
3 converted to residential, that MIH doesn't do enough
4 in these areas to maximize the opportunities given
5 that a manufacturing to residential or industrial to
6 residential rezoning is a huge windfall for any
7 developer. So, in an effort to extract more from a
8 potential developer, they ask that those sites that
9 are manufacturing be left to the Council member to
10 move forward with in an effort to allow for the
11 Council member to negotiate deeper levels or more
12 affordability in these projects. So, we do all this
13 work. We get to the 8000 units. We actually have an
14 up zoning and for corridors that are all transit rich
15 and you shut it down. You shut it down over the
16 manufacturing conversation and I just want to ask
17 more deeply where is the current scenario in the
18 zoning that we currently have in Bushwick and a
19 testament to equity by city planning? Doing nothing
20 is doing more harm to Bushwick then moving forward
21 with the plan that they support that does have an
22 increase in housing and density and there are more--
23 so, now, what we are going to end up getting is as of
24 right developments that have no affordable housing.
25

1 Zero affordable housing and no opportunities when it
2 comes to like capital dollars that need to go into
3 this community that are greatly needed. Can you just
4 explain to me how that scenario and your inability to
5 maybe get two or 3000 more units speaks to your
6 equity argument that you continue to make?
7

8 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Gladly, Council member.

9 I am glad that you mentioned the length of time that
10 was spent in looking at the Bushwick neighborhood
11 which encompassed almost the entirety of the
12 community district, one of the larger neighborhoods
13 that we had looked at. It had the fact that it was
14 five years. I would contrast that amount of time,
15 which is useful in getting to understand the neighbor
16 had. I would contrast it with the process under this
17 proposed bill. You mentioned the 8000 units of
18 housing. As you know, we believe that the
19 methodology that was used to estimate that was flawed
20 and that is an overestimate. We, ultimately,
21 disagreed as to what the appropriate up zoning was.
22 We looked at the proposed rezoning and, as you
23 mentioned, it is a neighborhood crisscrossed with
24 subway lines and believed that it was inappropriate
25 to undertake a rezoning that would yield so little

1 housing when the land use patterns in the
2 neighborhood with these five major corridors world
3 war it more robust up zoning that would produce so
4 much more housing. I think it unfortunate because I
5 do think when we all entered this with a desire to
6 see an effective up zoning, but that the proposal
7 that came back was not one that was in keeping with
8 the need citywide to produce affordable housing at
9 scale. I'm afraid that you are muted, Council
10 member.
11

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Yes. I was
13 asking them to unmute me. Chair, I asked a very
14 simple question. How did you, in your study, have
15 Bushwick as the fourth leading--

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time has expired.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: community--
18 thank you-- the fourth leading community of housing
19 development, right? The fourth most housing
20 development happening as of right is happening in
21 Bushwick. Number four. We are already beating out
22 all of these communities when it comes to housing
23 development, right? And it's happening almost at
24 strictly market rate housing. It is all market rate
25 housing. Almost no affordability. How is that

1 scenario and equitable-- like, speaking to your
2 equitable like mindset, right, that we allow this
3 community to completely be runover by market rate
4 housing and not move forward with a rezoning that
5 they supported? That they wanted to work with you
6 on. It is so one-sided and it is not justice and it
7 is not equitable. If City Planning doesn't get what
8 they want and maximize every single drop of housing,
9 then it is just relegate the community to the
10 destruction by gentrification.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I would have to
13 disagree, Council member. The number one request
14 that we get for reading zonings are for down zonings
15 or for very modest steps zonings Old, as with
16 Bushwick community proposal, with down zonings of
17 other portions of the neighborhood. In addition to
18 looking at neighborhood by neighborhood needs, we
19 need to look at citywide needs, as well. That is a
20 large part of where we live in the fact that we are a
21 city that prides ourselves: transit oriented
22 development and where there are corridors, where we
23 believe there is the ability to provide significant
24 amounts of additional housing with MIH, we do not
25

entertain modest steps zonings that, basically, are
not providing the housing that is so sorely needed.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
Council member.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you,
Chair.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,
we will hear from Council member Adams. Council
member, you may begin upon the sergeant's
announcement.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you very
much. I am just going to ask a couple more, if I
could just get some yes or no responses just is kind
of drill down on this a little bit more. As far as
your interpretation of this legislation is. Madam
Chair, did you find, in your interpretation of this
legislation, that there would be an installation of
some sort of plantings are who would take over the
decision-making process for communities?

CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I don't recall having
seen in the legislation that there is a planning
sorry.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Neither did I.

That would be a no. Thank you. Did you consider or find in this legislation any way, shape, or form, once again, that decision-making would be taken away from communities and community boards?

CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Oh, I very much see that within the legislation. If we look at the process, it is very heavily top down and, as I mentioned before, the community Board is presented with three options and, beyond that, when the recommended option goes to the Council, the Council member can fundamentally change-- the Council can. The Council can fundamentally change what was put forward in the recommendation from the community board.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: That is just factually not true.

COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please [inaudible 03:46:41].

SPEAKER JOHNSON: That is just literally not accurate, Chair, of what the legislation says.

CHAIRPERSON LAGO: We would be glad to follow up. Obviously, we have different readings of--

1
2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: First of all, it is not
3 top down. We are empowering local communities to
4 actually engage in planning instead of being reactive
5 to city planning certifying of private applications
6 and public applications. So, I don't know what-- I
7 mean, if we're going to have an honest conversation
8 here today, we should be honest about what the
9 legislation actually says and what you just said,
10 Madam Chair, is a complete and total
11 misrepresentation of what the legislative text says
12 and of what we have said consistently. So, I'm a
13 little flabbergasted that you would think-- this
14 doesn't change the ULURP process. It doesn't change
15 the ULURP clock. It doesn't change the ability for
16 community boards to weigh in. It does more planning.
17 It creates more opportunities for public input. The
18 current processes top down. The current process is
19 city planning certifies an application and then it
20 goes to the community board with no or very little
21 input precertification except maybe scoping sessions
22 that could happen for large-scale plans. This plan
23 would create an ongoing dialogue with communities,
24 community-based organizations, local stakeholders, to
25 constantly be talking about what do they want for

1
2 their community? Do they want more school seats? Do
3 they want more healthcare facilities? Do they want
4 more types of affordable housing? That is what this
5 plan calls for. We do not change the ULURP clock.
6 We do not change community Board's ability to weigh
7 in. We don't call for any particular type of zoning.
8 All it does is say more community input from the
9 bottom up. From grassroots, neighborhood groups who
10 can start to weigh in at the local level and
11 proactively plan with their community boards, with
12 their Council members and coordinate all of these
13 plans. So, I don't know if that was a willful
14 misrepresentation, but it is, literally, completely
15 and totally inaccurate to what the legislative text
16 says inside of this bill.

17 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: With respect, Speaker,
18 we disagree as to what is called for by the plan.

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: We can disagree on
20 opinions, but we can't disagree on facts.

21 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: And, again, we have a
22 disagreement--

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: The reading of the
24 bill--

25 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: of the interpretation--

1
2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: The bill does not call
3 for the ULURP process to be changed. The bill does
4 not call for community boards to be cut out. The
5 bill does not call for any particular type of zoning.
6 The bill calls for further community engagement and
7 input which, as you heard earlier, from multiple
8 Council members, people feel like is completely
9 broken right now and it calls for us to be able to
10 plan and a comprehensive way to hopefully garner
11 support from residents and communities who can have
12 some type of say on what that proactive planning
13 looks like. So, to say that this takes away control
14 from community boards, and accurate. Not factual.
15 Not what the bill says.

16 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Again, Speaker, we
17 disagree. We agree on the fact that it does not
18 change ULURP. It adds an additional process on top
19 of ULURP. We don't see the streamlining because we
20 believe that any proposal-- any specific project of
21 any size will be going through the entire ULURP
22 process and with, again, the requirement under state
23 law for a separate environmental analysis. So, we
24 believe that the impact, the upshot is going to be
25 yet another impediment to the production of

1 affordable housing at a time when we need to
2 prioritize it. At a time when we need to prioritize
3 the economic recovery from the pandemic.
4

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: That is a fine opinion
6 to have. You know, you can have that opinion in that
7 may actually be a worthy opinion. What I am saying
8 is that you your question to Council member Adams'--
9 your answer to Council member Adams's question was
10 not what you just said right there. What you said
11 right there could be a disagreement. We see a
12 different path to actually potentially generating
13 more affordable housing by getting buy-in from local
14 communities on an ongoing process instead of a
15 piecemeal reactive approach that we see right now.
16 But I just want to be 1000 percent clear about what
17 the legal language in the bill says. This does not
18 diminish community boards. It does not call for any
19 particular type of zoning. It does not change the
20 ULURP process. It doesn't do any of those things.
21 You all don't like the fact, it seems, that we are
22 creating more public opportunities for engagement
23 outside of the Department of City Planning and that
24 is a fine opinion I have. That is okay. I don't
25 disagree with that. I mean, I may disagree with

1 that, but you can have that opinion. I am just
2 trying to be factual on what this calls for. It
3 doesn't call for a top-down approach. Right now we
4 have a top-down approach. Right now, city planning,
5 in many instances without any consultation with
6 community boards and Council members, certify private
7 applications that end up being almost fully baked by
8 the time they get to the community board. The
9 community board has 60 days to weigh in on that
10 proposal. The community board issues an advisory
11 opinion. The borough president issues an advisory
12 opinion. In many instances, the City Planning
13 Commission ignores those two advisory opinions and
14 goes back to what the developer initially wanted in
15 the certification application and then the Council
16 member has to go back and do an amalgamation of what
17 the developer proposal was, what the community board
18 called for, what the borough president called for.
19 And I think that most Council members and most
20 community boards and most borough presidents
21 typically see, not across the board, but in most
22 instances, the City Planning Commission as a
23 rubberstamp for the application that the City
24
25

1 Planning Commission certified to go to the community
2 board. So, in many cases--

3
4 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Speaker, first and
5 foremost--

6 SPEAKER JOHNSON: we can--

7 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I have to take exception
8 with the notion of a rubberstamp.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: We think about as a top-
10 down approach. That that is the current process.
11 What we are trying to say is we want to empower local
12 communities to begin this process of asking what they
13 want for Long before the piecemeal, reactive pinball
14 game of land use applications happens community
15 District by community district. So, I apologize for
16 interrupting Council member Adams. I just wanted to
17 be fully clear about what the legislation says. We
18 can have a different opinion on if this is the best
19 way to generate affordable housing. That is fine.
20 There may be different opinions there, but it is
21 factual about what the bill actually calls for
22 process was.

23 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Speaker, one, I have to
24 take exception with the statement about the City
25 Planning Commission being a rubberstamp. Anyone who

1 watches our hearings sees the seriousness, the
2 deliberation that is put in. With respect to the
3 fact that this bill does not require any rezoning and
4 keeps the status quo of ULURP there, the fact that it
5 does not drive equitable change is a cause for
6 concern because we know that we do need more
7 equitable allocation of affordable housing and city
8 facilities. But, Speaker, again, with respect, we
9 cannot ignore the fact that the legislation allows
10 the Council at the time of adoption of the plan, to
11 make changes to the targets that have come forward
12 and that, as with the current ULURP process, which I
13 agree, remains absolutely unchanged under the bill,
14 the final resolution of any application under ULURP
15 is determined by the Council, not by the community
16 board.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Exactly. We don't
19 disagree on that. But I want to be-- I want to ask
20 you a question. When is the last time the City
21 Planning Commission voted down an application that
22 came to what?

23 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: We voted down an
24 application and Brooklyn-- I don't know if it was
25 2019 and the other thing that, as you know, the same

1 process occurs for the Council-- that applications
2 are withdrawn when it becomes evident that it is not
3 going to get a positive vote. But, we did, in one
4 instance, actually vote down an application.

5
6 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I think that is a very
7 rare occurrence which is why I said it feels like,
8 more often than not, whatever this certified
9 application is going into ULURP, the City Planning
10 Commission, you know, you may make some changes, you
11 may make, you know, from of the review session, and
12 from the public hearings, but it is very, very rare
13 and infrequent that the City Planning Commission
14 actually votes down an application.

15 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: We work to improve
16 applications. And, Speaker, you may be aware of the
17 fact that, as Chair, if an application is complete
18 and the department disagrees with that, I, at the
19 time of certification, express the department's
20 opposition to the application.

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I understand. I
22 apologize, Council member Adams. I just wanted to be
23 very clear on this. I know you are asking yes and no
24 questions and I want to be clear on your question
25 that this does not diminish the role of community

1 boards. It does not disempower community boards. It
2 doesn't override community boards. The community
3 boards would still have the same role in the ULURP
4 process and they would have more of a role to be able
5 to participate in long-term, comprehensive planning
6 on an ongoing basis instead of in a reactive
7 piecemeal way.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you, Mr.
10 Speaker. I appreciate that and I certainly
11 appreciate your response and depth to that question
12 and then, Madam Chair, I'm sure that you have noticed
13 today that there are a lot of us with community board
14 experience and we are very, very concerned about the
15 way that community boards have been handled in the
16 past. The lack of power for community boards. We
17 will continue to fight for budgets for community
18 boards, as well as I think that you heard that
19 virtually from every Council member that spoke today.
20 I'm going to ask one more question of you. Again, it
21 is a yes or no, I hope. And, again, I'm trying to
22 drill down to what is real in this legislation and
23 what is being misrepresented by the interpretation of
24 this legislation so that we can just get all this out
25 here. In your understanding of this legislation,

1 will this bill or does it have the potential-- will
2 it eliminate one-family zoning, single-family homes,
3 affect low density zones, the ultimate goal of
4 destroying single home communities?
5

6 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: We think that the intent
7 of the ballot and the reality is that it would
8 require considerations of changes to single-family
9 neighborhoods in areas where there is rich transit
10 access.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: But do you see
12 this--

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Not true.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: legislation as
15 devastating? Do you see this legislation as
16 devastating? But some of the language I have heard
17 also elsewhere fancied about. Do you see this
18 legislation as devastating to single-family
19 communities?

20 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: I don't think that the
21 legislation cannot at the same time say this is our
22 blow for equity for having high opportunity
23 neighborhoods absorb an equitable approach to meeting
24 the city's growth needs and, at the same time say,
25 but it will not make any changes anywhere. We know

1 that, ultimately, any zoning change will go through
2 ULURP and I will go to the Council which will make
3 the ultimate determination, but to engage in a
4 citywide planning effort at a time when we know the
5 housing and affordable housing needs that we have,
6 when we know the need for economic growth to recover
7 from the pandemic ends say, but we start with a
8 statement that we will not look at any single-family
9 residence. I just don't see having it both ways.
10

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: This is [inaudible
12 04:00:08].

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: But that is still
14 not answering my question. Mr. Speaker, I defer to
15 you.

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: This is shocking to me.
17 In one instance you are saying this plan does nothing
18 and in the other instance you are saying that you may
19 be eliminating single-family zoning. You can't say
20 both things because both things are untrue. I mean,
21 I am flabbergasted that this is a total red Herring
22 and a complete misdirection by the Department of City
23 Planning to come here today and say these things. I
24 and I am shocked that this is what your on the record
25 testimony is, to be truthful and for in front of the

1 Council. You know, Council member Adams' question
2 was does this-- is this going to eliminate it? The
3 answer is no and then, ultimately, you said it would
4 still be under the Council member to go through the
5 ULURP process. So, Council member Adams, are you
6 doing to eliminate single family zoning in your
7 district? I don't think you are.

9 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: Speaker?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Never.

11 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: If I could make sure
12 that [inaudible 04:01:10]--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: That would never
14 happen. As long as I am in this seat, that would
15 never happen, Mr. Speaker.

16 CHAIRPERSON LAGO: What I am pointing out
17 is that, ultimately, any rezoning is the purview of
18 the Council, but in speaking about creating a
19 citywide plan that needs to address the needs of a
20 growing city had a city that needs housing and, in
21 particular, affordable housing, it would strike me as
22 an unusual conversation that says that every single
23 family zoning district is off-limits. We could see--
24 But that doesn't get to the fundamental issue of
25 needing an equitable approach to address the areas of

1 the city that are rich in transit. There are areas
2 of the city-- and, again, we will never get away
3 from the fact that, under our current system it will
4 be the Council and, under the practice of Council
5 member deference, the Council member makes the
6 determination. The nuance in my comment is that, if
7 we are to address issues of equitable distribution of
8 city facilities and of affordable housing, one needs
9 to have the discussion about where our high
10 opportunity areas and where it would be appropriate
11 to look at this.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: I'll just conclude
14 with this, with all due respect, because I agree with
15 the Speaker. I think that the exchange has been very
16 duplicitous. We are ultimately coming back down to
17 Council member deference and what is real and what is
18 not real in this legislation. I think that we have
19 had a lot of misrepresentation with this legislation.
20 I think that a lot of people are confused and, quite
21 frankly, Madam Chair, and I don't think that you have
22 helped the confusion at all, but I'm really glad that
23 we are having this discussion today because there is
24 just-- there is just a lot of misguidance when it
25 comes to this legislation.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: make sure that our community and, in particular, the those of us who do reside in single home communities to realize that we are there to preserve where we live, not to tear it down and that is not what this legislation does. This legislation tends to empower, as a former Community Board Chair, and my interpretation, this legislation tends to empower the community boards that so many of us will continue to fight for to continue to empower our residents and empower our community boards when it comes to land use, land use discussions, and land use decisions. Thank you very much for your time, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much, Council member. Do we have any other Council members, committee counsel?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So, with that, Mr. Speaker, one last word before the administration moves forward or--

SPEAKER JOHNSON: No. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you all for being here today. Let's be accurate about what this bill actually does.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
3 Mr. Speaker, the administration. Thank you for
4 joining us. The dialogue will continue. This is a
5 very important issue regarding process, regarding our
6 communities, regarding equity. This is a very hard
7 and many of the issues that many of our communities
8 are facing at this moment. And so, with that, I turn
9 it back to the committee counsel.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.
11 We will now turn to public testimony. I would like
12 to remind everyone that, unlike our typical Council
13 hearings, we will be calling on individuals one by
14 one to testify. Due to the large number of witnesses
15 who have signed up to testify today, we will be
16 limiting each panelist speaking time to two minutes.
17 Council members who have questions for a particular
18 panelist should use the zoom raise hand function and
19 I will call on you after that panelist has completed
20 their testimony. For panelists, once your name is
21 called, a member of our staff will unmute you in the
22 sergeant-at-arms will set the timer and give you the
23 go-ahead to begin. Please wait for the sergeant to
24 announce that you may begin before delivering your
25 testimony. I would now like to welcome Barika

2 Williams to testify followed by borough president
3 Gale Brewer and then Maulin Mehta. Barika Williams,
4 you may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

6 BARIKA WILLIAMS: Okay. Am I unmuted?

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Yes. You are. We can
8 hear you.

9 BARIKA WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you. Hi.
10 Thank you, Speaker Johnson, Chair Rosenthal, Chair
11 Salamanca and Chair Cabrera and the entire Council.
12 My name is Barika Williams. I am the Executive
13 Director at ANHD. ANHD and our members have fought
14 for years to promote equitable access to thriving
15 neighborhoods for all New Yorkers. This is not just
16 a question of where folks have access to move into,
17 but justice crucially is where they have a right to
18 stay. Comprehensive planning is a crucial step
19 towards achieving this goal through more equitable
20 approach to planning centered around reducing
21 disparities in disinvestment in communities of color
22 and immigrant communities and in sharing a more
23 equitable distribution of development and the
24 investment cycle. If done properly, comprehensive
25 planning can further the principles we are so proud

1 to support with the Thriving Communities Coalition
2 which ANHD is a part of and have led and we are
3 leading this charge for equity and planning and land
4 use. It is important that we move away from of the
5 current paradigm where low income communities of
6 color are suffering the effects of decades of
7 disinvestment, not just recent, not just the 80s.
8 Their push to accept distractive rezonings in order
9 to have their existing needs addressed to address the
10 citywide needs. All six of the neighborhood
11 rezonings completed under this administration have
12 been a low and moderate income majority POC
13 neighborhoods. The budgeting process lacks
14 transparency and accountability which many of you all
15 know and experience and brought up and it fails to
16 address and identify neighborhood needs and
17 historical disparities. I understand and very much
18 realize that this can feel like a very complicated,
19 wonky, abstracted and sometimes misleading bill for
20 what is already complicated and abstract process, but
21 I want to stress how much ANHD cares about this bill
22 because of the impact we think it can have and create
23 tangible impacts on getting us towards equity and
24 planning and land-use.
25

1

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

BARIKA WILLIAMS: So, what-- One thing I want to be clear is that we do not think that this bill is perfect. ANHD, TCC, and our partners have a series of recommendations we want to see made, but what is important is that we want to name and work with you all as our Council members, as partners, as allies to strengthen this bill as opposed to being held hostage by unit administration that has not put forward any proposal to comprehensively address the inequities and planning in their eight years term. And so, we urge everyone that we don't allow another decade of planning injustice to plague and starve and ravage our BIPOC, immigrant, and marginalized communities. We want to work together with any partners who are willing to come to the table and say, let's figure out something better, which is different than saying that we are happy with the status quo and let that continue and, in this moment, reckoning with black lives matter with the system that we know what is unjust and inequitable. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we will hear from borough president, Gale Brewer

1 followed by Maulin Mehta and then Spencer Williams.

2 Borough president Brewer, you may begin upon the
3 sergeant's announcement.
4

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

6 GALE BREWER: Thank you very much. I am
7 Gale Brewer, Manhattan borough president. I want to
8 thank Chair Cabrera and all the Chairs. I've been
9 listening the whole time. Before I give just a few
10 remarks, I want to say I am intimately familiar with
11 the food 10 year plan and with the resiliency and I
12 want to just be clear. They are important. They
13 have to be part of the discussion. They need to be
14 thought of in a cohesive term, but they are not half
15 as controversial or as complicated as what we are
16 talking about today. So, I just don't want to throw
17 the men as we did well on the house, so, therefore,
18 this is not a good proposal. I disagree with that
19 completely. So, anyway, I believe that the approach
20 of this comprehensive long-term plan suggested by the
21 Speaker could achieve some planning goals in a
22 holistic way. We know that we have population growth
23 and we have infrastructure service improvements that
24 we need. I want to mention that when the 2019
25 Charter Revision came up, it was the Speaker and that

1 then Public Advocate and my bill that brought that
2 Charter Commission to the floor and it was very
3 frustrating. We could've had already a year and a
4 half of discussing planning and that was actually
5 shot down by the Mayor's staff members on that
6 commission and it is a shame. So, now we are 2021
7 and we have a plan that, one, will help agencies to
8 better coordinate amongst themselves and, too, look
9 at the racial and economic disparities that have long
10 persisted in our communities. That is the goal of
11 this plan and, as elected officials, those are your
12 goals. However, you mentioned SoHo NoHo a lot. Let
13 me be clear. That community would be glad to have
14 affordable housing, but, but, but the amount of
15 affordable housing that is being suggested under MIH
16 is still little. That is the challenge. When were
17 told in Manhattan you cannot have a subsidy. You
18 have to go with an MIH program, you are going to get
19 pushback and I want to say, city of New York, you at
20 least have to meet us halfway on things like that,
21 but we don't. If you are going to have affordable,
22 make it really affordable and make it something that
23 is more than 25 percent. So, as you heard earlier on
24 this plan, there are some really important key issues
25

1 that it addresses. I am just a little concerned that
2 it doesn't put communities at the center of the land-
3 use process and that is what we have done. We have
4 done 171 ULURPs since I took office in 2014 and the
5 borough president, which is more than any other
6 borough. And we see how important it is for the
7 community to have impact, to analyze and provide
8 constructive comments because they do. They are
9 experts. They can't be sidelined and I have to worry
10 a little bit that a comprehensive plan to do that
11 without the required city Council vote and the formal
12 growth targets that would be set out by the steering
13 committee. We know that the ULURP process is long
14 and the power that all the stakeholders used to
15 achieve a better deal for communities that could be
16 diminished. However, we know that there is much
17 possibility for improving the plan. It raises many
18 questions about how communities would be able to
19 participate, how their applications would go through
20 the public review process. We would need more in
21 greater detail on outreach plans. What would the
22 role of the stakeholders be for those who haven't
23 been involved in the past and ensuring participation
24 in the public process that could follow the plans
25

1 adoption. But just as you have heard from ANHD and
2 other, with more information that could be used to
3 determine whether an application is compliant with
4 the comprehensive plan, there are ways of tweaking it
5 to make it better. So I'm here to say we need some
6 targets that will talk about the growth that is
7 certainly going to be taking place in the city of New
8 York and, in theory, this proposal can provide New
9 Yorkers a better planning structure, but it should
10 not limit public input and so any changes that
11 improve the public input and can achieve both of
12 these goals are very, very appreciated. Thank you
13 very much for your consideration and SoHo NoHo needs
14 real affordable housing. Not 25 percent. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you, borough
17 president.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear
19 from Maulin Mehta followed by Spencer Williams and
20 then Adam Freidman. Maulin Mehta, you may begin upon
21 the sergeant's announcement.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

23 MAULIN MEHTA: Thank you and apologies.
24 I'm having some internet problems, so I'm keeping my
25 video off. RPA is a nonprofit research planning and

1 advocacy organization that has served the New York
2 metropolitan region for nearly a century. We have
3 been supporting comprehensive planning along with
4 other members of the Thriving Communities Coalition
5 and are happy to be here to support Intro 2186.
6 After 9/11, we helped organize the Listening To The
7 City effort which brought thousands of New Yorkers
8 together to think about the future of the World Trade
9 Center site. It was an opportunity to look past the
10 tragedy into think about what that area should
11 represent for all of us. Coming out of the pandemic
12 that has claimed too many lives and exacerbated
13 decades-old challenges, we think this effort will, at
14 the right time to center racial equity in our
15 planning process and work with all New Yorkers to
16 envision a better future for the entire city. This
17 bill provides a solid framework to better coordinate
18 planning and create more accountability. We will
19 include more commentary in our written submission,
20 but want to highlight a few points. One, the
21 conditions of the city report should be a critical
22 planning tool to inform the public and expand our
23 understanding of what investments are needed.
24 However, robust analysis and the development of new
25

1 industries should follow best practices, be
2 transparent, and be truly informative. As we have
3 seen through the CEQR process, complicated
4 information provided in an ad hoc way does not build
5 trust or understanding. RPA and MAS have been
6 working on a citywide index that could start a
7 dialogue and we are happy to discuss that work
8 further. Two, this proposal could help communities
9 proactively share their needs and vision, but
10 community boards don't have the resources they need
11 to meaningfully engage in such a complex and long-
12 term process. We did support the creation of the
13 civic engagement commission and, at the very least,
14 that entity should be well resourced to serve as a
15 hub for training, technical assistance, and the
16 sharing of best practices for community boards.
17 Three, the plan does create a foundation to better
18 align planning and the capital budgeting process.
19 However, real collaboration among city agencies is
20 needed to reduce costs and inefficiencies and
21 incentives to encourage better agency coordination
22 around capital and operating needs would serve--

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

4 MAULIN MEHTA: the purpose of the
5 legislation. Working to create a citywide vision
6 won't be easy, but this proposal improves upon the
7 status quo, will cut down duplicative efforts,
8 improve government accountability, and create a
9 framework to rebuild civic trust. Thank you again
10 for your leadership on this and we hope it moves
11 forward and look forward to working together to make
12 it successful.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,
14 we will hear from Spencer Williams followed by Adam
15 Freidman and then Paul Epstein. Spencer Williams,
16 you may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Sorry. Counsel, is that
18 the next panel or is that the current panel?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Speaker, the
20 current panel includes Spencer Williams and Adam
21 Friedman.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Oh, got it. Okay.
23 Because I have questions for this panel. Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sure.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

SPENCER WILLIAMS: Thank you, Council
members. The Municipal Arts Society has long

1 supported equitable and comprehensive community-based
2 planning as a tenant of sound land use policy. Given
3 the vast scope of crises that we face today, the time
4 is right for fundamental shift in how New York City
5 plans for its future. As a member of the Thriving
6 Communities Coalition, we share the view that
7 comprehensive planning can help our city more
8 effectively allocate resources, coordinate city
9 policy investment, and empower communities with the
10 knowledge and opportunity to help shape local land
11 use decisions. This bill brings forward key reforms
12 to budgeting, access to information, streamlining and
13 aligning key reporting requirements and enhancing
14 equity. To the extent that this bill can bring real
15 change substantive revisions to the city charter, MAS
16 believes it must be structured to further advance
17 meaningful, ongoing public engagement to better
18 balance power across land use process. With key
19 amendments, Intro 2186 can disrupt the current
20 structural imbalance in the city's planning process.
21 We have submitted more extensive comments in writing,
22 but want to briefly summarize our key recommendations
23 here. One, provide adequate resources to increase
24 capacity building and representation for communities.
25

1 We need to really equip planning staff within
2 community Board agency office that to sustain
3 resources through ongoing funding so that land use
4 planners and staff can facilitate community
5 engagement and the development of potential land use
6 scenarios. We need to create balanced growth
7 priorities citywide that incorporate a robust
8 community engagement process that can better identify
9 district level growth targets in areas of
10 opportunity. We need to ensure that this process
11 gets agency to community counsel, borough presidents,
12 and co-authorizing these goals through identifying
13 specific steps, implementing agencies, and
14 responsible actions that are needed to increase
15 access to opportunity while minimizing displacement
16 in each community. MAS is encouraged by the concept
17 of a comprehensive planning framework. We do not
18 think that New York is so unwieldy and vast that
19 comprehensive planning efforts are--

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

22 SPENCER WILLIAMS: However, the bill must
23 give communities more authority in the city's land
24 use process. Amendments can help us get the balance
25 right. MAS will continue to outline the specific

4 recommendations as the bill unfolds and we look
5 forward to working with the Council and the Thriving
6 Communities Coalition to bring forth amendments to
7 that nature.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The
9 next panelist will be Adam Friedman. Council
10 members, if you have any questions for the members of
11 this panel, please use the zoom raise hand function.
12 Adam Friedman, you may begin upon the sergeant's
13 announcement.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Friedman, I
16 believe you are on mute.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Adam, you have been
18 muted the whole time. We can't hear you.

19 ADAM FRIEDMAN: Sorry about that. I
20 thought you guys had that. Okay. So, I am Adam
21 Friedman, director of the Pratt Center for Community
22 Development and I thank you for the opportunity to
23 testify in support of the proposed legislation. The
24 city desperately needs a fair and inclusive process
25 for ensuring that it can meet the extraordinary
challenges of climate change, of racial and economic
inequality, and that sheer complexity of running a

1 city of 9 million people. Pratt Center has advocated
2 for equitable, comprehensive planning that encourages
3 and resources community-based plans and participation
4 for decades, so we really appreciate what a
5 significant milestone the proposed legislation in
6 this Council hearings are today. The city is facing
7 the exhilarating effects of climate change needs a
8 process that aims squarely at equity and resilience
9 if it is serious about achieving those goals. It's
10 process must make sure the city remains functional
11 and that all people, especially the historically and
12 currently underserved, have the basic essentials of
13 life, that are housing plans align with our
14 transportation and infrastructure, with school
15 construction and open space and that all public
16 policy objectives in advance racial justice. We
17 offer just two small examples of where to illustrate
18 the failure to think more comprehensively. This past
19 year, the Mayor healed the local production of
20 personal protective equipment, particularly the masks
21 and isolation gowns produced in the garment center as
22 having been essential to the city's response to Covid
23 19. This production capacity will be lost once the
24 market resumes and production space is converted and
25

1 is not allowed by recent zoning change. Recent
2 rezoning along Jerome Avenue, which displaced
3 clusters of small, largely immigrant owned auto
4 businesses. That was the fourth cluster of auto
5 businesses that was rezoned and, whether you like
6 cars or not, cities need functions like auto repair.
7 So, the question is who is thinking about the big,
8 long-term pictures of the city and how they all fit
9 together?
10

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

12 ADAM FRIEDMAN: Can I just make one last
13 point? That strengthening the capacity of
14 communities to engage in this process is essential
15 and we think that this legislation and the
16 accompanying services that will be provided around,
17 including resources for community planning, will go a
18 tremendous way to really building inclusive,
19 legitimate process. Thank you.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. Mr. Chair, I
21 have a question for Barika Williams from ANHD.
22 Barika, there has been, as you've heard today-- and
23 thank you for being patient and waiting to testify.
24 There has been a lot of misinformation and lies
25 spread about this bill. You've heard some of it that

1 it requires the city to be up zoned every 10 years,
2 which it doesn't, that it will eliminate single-
3 family zoning, which it doesn't. Can you speak to
4 what the impact of this bill would be on lower
5 density neighborhoods in New York City and one about
6 the neighborhoods facing severe displacement risks or
7 low access to opportunity?

9 BARIKA WILLIAMS: Yeah. So, thank you,
10 Speaker, and I would say, for you, for Council member
11 Adams and some others, I very much feel your
12 frustration, though I would say, from our experience,
13 our decades of experience, we are not surprised.
14 This is our continual experience with DCP that
15 includes DCP explicitly, not one time, but multiple
16 times having said to us very frankly, we don't do
17 race. So, the conversation around equity does not
18 seem like they are in a place and are equipped to do
19 it and I think we have to acknowledge and commend
20 that the Council stepped into that space and said,
21 we're going to move forward something. We're not
22 just going to stand still. I want to make clear that
23 we do not see that this bill in any way, shape, or
24 form is not-- it does not-- what we are talking
25 about is conflating density with planning equity.

1 This bill is as much about low density BIPOC
2 developments and communities that have also been
3 steamrolled and also been punished when it comes to
4 development and it is a red herring to tie this to
5 density and talk explicitly about single-family
6 zoning. To answer Council member Adams's question,
7 no, it does not mandate or eliminate single-family
8 zoning, right? This is what we are really trying to
9 do is talk about equity and equity in a broad
10 planning process that weaves together schools,
11 education, transportation, housing, industrial jobs,
12 commercial corridors, these various different pieces
13 and recognize that our current framework no
14 neighborhood should have the unilateral veto power to
15 say I don't like something and then we, as a city,
16 say we need it and therefore force other communities
17 to have it. What we really need to do is have a
18 broader conversation as a city and say, these are
19 things that we need and here is how we think we can
20 grow and do this. To Council member Reynoso's point,
21 where is development happening and was that the plan?
22 Because, if that is not the plan, then what does that
23 mean? How are things rolling out and how are we
24 moving forward?
25

1
2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Barika. And
3 I have one more question for you. I know that ANHD
4 has worked all across the city to advance and support
5 community-based development. How, in your view, can
6 a citywide comprehensive planning framework
7 complement good, local community based planning to
8 better achieve our citywide goals of affordable
9 housing, more school seats, better capital planning,
10 fair share, all of the things that communities
11 struggle with?

12 BARIKA WILLIAMS: Right. Because I think,
13 also, it is a misrepresentation to say that many of
14 these communities don't want any development, right?
15 What they want is development that is responsive and
16 responsible to food that community is and who those
17 residents and families are. We have communities that
18 don't have enough school seats but they are seeing
19 luxury housing pop up and they can't get school seats
20 or they can't get a new dance facility in their
21 neighborhood. That is what we are trying to create a
22 context to address. So, let the community-- and
23 these are one of the places, as Spencer Williams from
24 MAS mentioned where we need to see that there are
25 changes and we need to have recommendations that we

1 need to put the community in a more tangible and
2 clear seat to influence and direct the direction of
3 the comprehensive planning process as this bill is
4 laid out. So, that is part of the way how we want to
5 pursue and engage with you all, but that is different
6 than development kids handed to communities and
7 communities are forced to say yes or no, which is
8 where we are right now. It is just a decision of
9 take it or leave it and then we, as communities, are
10 dismissed, especially as black and brown and
11 immigrant communities are dismissed or talked down to
12 first say no to development and labeled as anti-
13 development when, in reality, what we really want to
14 do is have a say in have a voice and have a decision-
15 making authority and what is happening in our own
16 community and in our own neighborhoods.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Barika.

19 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you. Thank
21 you so much. Committee counsel?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. Our next
23 panel will include in order Paul Epstein, Fitzroy
24 Christian, Bruno Daniel Garcia, Kevin Worthington,

25

1 and Meredith McNair. Paul Epstein, you may begin
2 upon the sergeant's announcement.
3

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

5 PAUL EPSTEIN: Thank you. I am Paul
6 Epstein, cochair of Inwood Legal Action and a member
7 of the Thriving Communities Coalition. Recovery from
8 Covid 19 has kept me disconnected lately, so I
9 represented myself, not particular groups. As a
10 manager and to past mayor's office is, I really liked
11 that this bill would create order out of the current
12 planning and reporting chaos but, as an activist,
13 researcher, and author in community engagement, I
14 find the bills top down planning puts communities
15 last. So, this bill is a technocrat's dream, but a
16 community's nightmare, thus, I oppose the bill as
17 written. But I do think it can be fixed to be
18 community empowering not with tweaks, but with
19 fundamental changes. I will provide more details in
20 written testimony, but here is a sample that follows
21 four principles. First, no community can opt out of
22 its share of equity based policy goals, though,
23 requested targeted revision should be considered.
24 Second, each community should propose its own land
25 use scenario to meet its targets from the bottom up,

1 not by choosing, among other things told to it which,
2 if found reasonable, must be accepted. Only
3 unrealistic plans should be modified by LLTPS, the
4 steering committee, or the city Council. Third,
5 community engagement must go beyond public hearings
6 and deeper than community boards. Engagement at key
7 times, especially when developing scenarios, must be
8 deliberative with people with different interests
9 engaging each other and discussing trade-offs before
10 community boards decide. Engagement must also be
11 representative of the district population and,
12 fourth, communities must be provided independent,
13 professional assistance and planning and engagement
14 to help and develop realistic scenarios to meet
15 targets and to help with outreach and facilitation to
16 achieve representative, deliberative engagement.
17 Following these principles puts communities first
18 while still enabling equity-based goals to be
19 achieved. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Fitzroy
22 Christian, you may begin upon the sergeant's
23 announcement.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin
25 now.

1
2 FITZROY CHRISTIAN: Thank you. My name
3 is Fitzroy Christian. I am a member of the
4 leadership team at the Southwest Bronx based tenant
5 community organizing group known as CASA, Community
6 Action for Safe Apartments. I am also a member of
7 the city and statewide coalitions including Thriving
8 Communities Coalition and Racial Impact Studies
9 Coalition. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
10 in support of Intro 2186. So what is our vision of
11 comprehensive planning and why do we need it?
12 Comprehensive planning will ensure a more equitable
13 approach to formulating the redevelopment of and
14 reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods across the
15 city, driven by the needs of the communities in
16 including meaningful involvement of the residents of
17 those communities and we need this complete borough
18 base citywide methodology as opposed to the piecemeal
19 system currently in place which is driven by
20 developers and leads to the destruction of
21 communities and the displacement of those communities
22 residents. Comprehensive planning means discarding
23 the city's current and equitable process for system
24 that would center development around the community's
25 needs and not developer's greed. Comprehensive

1 planning would enshrine explicit principles of equity
2 in the citywide planning process that would reverse
3 the historic system which used destructive developer
4 driven rezonings that did nothing to correct or
5 improve the conditions of the people of color is
6 communities are primarily the ones chosen for
7 rezoning and developer enrichment, not for the
8 community requirements. The impact of comprehensive
9 planning would include a systemic scheme to create
10 and provide truly affordable housing developments and
11 a strategy to house the on how most and to prevent
12 homelessness. Break the cycle all that forces this
13 disadvantaged and underserved community residents to
14 accept destructive rezoning in exchange for long
15 overdue investments in their communities--

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

18 FITZROY CHRISTIAN: I am just about
19 finished. Thank you. From which they will
20 inexorably be driven. It creates a process that
21 includes meeting the needs of community jobs and
22 economic development and strengthening of the
23 cultural and social institutions the communities
24 being redeveloped. It ensures environmental equity
25 which provides baked into focus on green spaces,

1 connecting schools to the city and state parks, among
2 other enhanced benefits including climate resiliency.
3 Explicitly works to prevent displacement of residents
4 and small businesses. It is a system that would not
5 continue to exclude NYCHA residents and works to
6 ensure that public housing remains permanently public
7 and affordable. Privatization of public assets would
8 be eliminated from that process. It incorporates
9 robust public and community engagement in the
10 planning and implementation processes in all phases
11 of the redevelopment and it ensures that the
12 development has maximum impact on the surrounding
13 neighborhoods and will add to the growth process of
14 the city as a whole. And, finally, it ensures that
15 the redevelopment is designed and built for the
16 purpose of improving the lives of the current
17 residents and not for wealthier people in the city
18 developers hope to entice to get rid of developed
19 communities after the current residents have been
20 driven out. As has happened in Green Point in
21 Williamsburg and Central Harlem and Park Slope and
22 every community that has been rezoned over the past
23 10 or so decades. I would like to thank Speaker
24 Johnson for moving this bill forward. I look forward
25

1 to collaborating with the city Council to bring about
2 a brighter and more equitable New York City when
3 displacement and gentrification become historic
4 artifacts and not a way of life for people of color
5 in New York City. Thank you.

6
7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
8 is Bruno Daniel Garcia. You may begin upon the
9 sergeant's announcement.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin
11 now.

12 BRUNO DANIEL GARCIA: Hello, everyone.
13 My name is Bruno Daniel Garcia and I am an organizer
14 with Communities Resist, a community-based legal
15 service program in North Brooklyn and Queens founded
16 on the understanding that housing justice is racial
17 justice and that housing legal services must be in
18 support of community based tenant is organizing. We
19 are here as a member of Thriving Communities
20 Coalition to offer testimony on Intro 2186. The
21 recent history of what passes for planning in the
22 neighborhoods we serve are the piecemeal zoning text
23 amendment that have offered preservation for wealthy
24 homeowners, but displacement and gentrification in
25 low income communities of color. City enabled and

1 developer led, the results of the user rezonings were
2 exorbitant concentrations of capital for private
3 developers and the city while starkly neglecting who
4 are disproportionately displaced by the thousands as
5 they saw manufacturing jobs and rent-stabilized
6 housing robbed from them. For from an accident
7 unforeseeable, these harms all your, instead, the
8 direct consequence of explicit choices by
9 governmental and industry actors informed by racism
10 and discrimination, rather than [inaudible 04:35:40]
11 or just planning rationale. Our communities can no
12 longer planned for their future solely under the
13 context of private development, paternalistic
14 obfuscated city initiatives. Let's create a practice
15 with conversation around access to affordable
16 housing, public space, and environmental Justice take
17 place solely in response to the looming threat of a
18 private developer or in the mismanagement of public
19 engagement processes by unaligned, uncoordinated city
20 agencies. Conflicts of planning represent what the
21 neighborhoods of New York City require to undo those
22 injustices, but it must center racial justice and
23 commit to affirmatively furthering fair housing. Any
24 comprehensive planning legislation must come with
25

4 clear teeth and enforceability to ensure further
5 integration without displacement. The plan must
6 include the stated goal of eliminating segregation
7 and racial and disproportionate displacement. These
8 mandates must be coupled with a requirement to ensure
9 equitable access to a robust community planning and
10 public engagement, including resources for
11 communities of color to plan and assert their self-
12 determination along committed, sustained--

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

14 BRUNO DANIEL GARCIA: sustained outreach
15 so that participation is accessible, equitable, and
16 representational. Truly affordable fair housing is
17 possible without displacement, segregation, and
18 gentrification and it is possible only with the
19 citywide participation of communities of color.
20 Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Kevin
22 Worthington, you may begin upon the sergeant's
23 announcement.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: your time will begin
25 now.

26 KEVIN WORTHINGTON: Good afternoon.
27 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My

1 name is Kevin Worthington. I am a staff attorney at
2 Communities Resist, a community-based legal services
3 organization operating in North Brooklyn in Queens.
4 At Communities Resist, we provide legal services in
5 support of community based tenant organizing against
6 residential displacement, segregation, and
7 discrimination. Our work often takes place in the
8 context of post-rezoning appreciated real estate
9 market conditions where landlords resort to
10 harassment to satisfy their appetite for increased
11 rental income. Today we submit this testimony as a
12 member of the Thriving Communities Coalition. This
13 bill stands to commence the long overdue process of
14 planning for the city as a whole comprehensively.
15 Over the past 20 years, North Brooklyn has been
16 subjected to the opposite. A series of piecemeal
17 rezonings permanently transforming the makeup of
18 historically black and brown communities. After the
19 Williamsburg waterfront rezoning, vast amounts of
20 manufacturing land were turned into luxury apartments
21 and gave way to commercial stores becoming an
22 amusement park for transient crowds. While the city
23 and private developers felt the windfall of massive
24 amounts of cash flow, whether in rent rolls or
25

1
2 property tax revenues, communities who lived through
3 blackouts and planned shrinkage were being displaced
4 by the thousands. Sorry. The displacement of
5 families of color is not simply the collateral effect
6 of neoliberal policies, it results from the
7 convenient blind I the city turns on to its
8 obligation to take permanent steps to remedy racial
9 disparities in housing. Because of the deep wounds
10 left by institutionally gentrification. The city
11 must adopt a comprehensive and restorative approach
12 to planning. This means, among other things, that
13 New Yorkers need increased transparency and
14 accountability around how budgeting decisions respond
15 to a comprehensive plan and equity goals and how the
16 city's housing policies further fair housing as
17 required by the Fair Housing Act. Finally, our
18 communities cannot afford to engage in lengthy,
19 convoluted processes only to be disavowed and over
20 [inaudible 04:39:06] by politically assigned experts
21 who draw maps indirect development in neighborhoods
22 they never have set a foot in. Comprehensive
23 planning must be a process for the people and by the
24 people where accountability is not feigned, but
25 enforced. We look forward to continuing this

1 dialogue and will be providing additional feedback as
2 our client--

3
4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

5 KEVIN WORTHINGTON: of concern. Thank
6 you very much, again, for this opportunity.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The
8 last panelist on this panel will be Meredith McNair.
9 You may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin
11 now.

12 MEREDITH MCNAIR: Good afternoon. Thank
13 you for the opportunity to testify. My name is
14 Meredith McNair and I am a community planner at
15 Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation and I am
16 a member of the Thriving Communities Coalition. I am
17 here to express our support for the Speakers planning
18 proposal because that presents a thoughtful,
19 equitable, and proactive land use strategy that will
20 equip us to face the challenges of climate change and
21 racial and economic inequality. When East New York
22 was rezoned five years ago, residents got organized
23 and put a tremendous amount of effort into
24 negotiating with the city for infrastructure
25 investments and anti-displacement policies to help

1 the neighborhood withstand the added density, but it
2 shouldn't take a rezoning for neighborhoods to get
3 the investments they needed for decades. These
4 resources should be distributed to communities based
5 on their current needs, regardless of future growth
6 and accounting for past neglect. East New York has
7 witnessed firsthand how the city's current ad hoc
8 rezoning process leads to rampant speculation, rapid
9 increases in housing costs, and displacement. What
10 we need is a coordinated system that distributes
11 growth across all types of neighborhoods, not just
12 low income communities of color and that uses both
13 data analysis and deep community engagement to shape
14 priorities and also that promotes equity and access
15 to opportunity for all New Yorkers. In order to
16 work, the plan must be enforceable, measurable, and
17 tied to the capital budget. This would result in
18 better outcomes for community and greater clarity for
19 developers, as well. The Speakers proposal gives us
20 a great blueprint for a comprehensive planning
21 process that would finally give New York City a clear
22 vision for its future, one that is shaped by
23 residents and responsive to both citywide and
24 community needs. Let's make the most of this
25

1 opportunity and make sure it incorporates robust
2 public engagement all along the way and that it
3 highlights deeply affordable housing. Thank you very
4 much.
5

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Will
7 now move on to the next panel which will include, in
8 order, Lena Dalke, Paulette Soltani, Tierra Labrada,
9 Carlos Castillo Croke, and Courtney Worrell. Lena
10 Dalke, you may begin upon the sergeant's
11 announcement.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

13 LENA DALKE: Hi. My name is Lena Dalke.
14 And I am with the Integrated Schools Project at New
15 York Apple Seed. Apple Seed is a member of the
16 Thriving Communities Coalition and fully supports the
17 coalition's testimony submitted separately. Here, I
18 will address the role of comprehensive planning and
19 addressing racial and economic segregation in New
20 York City and request amendments required for the
21 bill to accomplish this purpose. Apple Seeds mission
22 is to advocate for integrated schools and
23 communities. Over the last decade, Apple Seed has
24 studied the problem of racial and economic
25 segregation in New York City and state and has

1 successfully advocated for policy reforms to address
2 the issue. Neighborhood segregation is a structural
3 problem that affects the entire city and was created
4 by centuries of racist governmental policies. It
5 cannot be solved with piecemeal space strategies.
6 Attached to our written testimony is 2019 op-ed New
7 York segregation was carefully planned. It's
8 integration must also be written by our Executive
9 Director, David Tipson, which explains the role of
10 comprehensive planning and addressing the legacy of
11 officially created segregation in New York City.
12 Similarly, in 2018, Council member Brad Lander
13 correctly noted in *Desegregating NYC, 12 steps*
14 *towards a more inclusive city*, that if fair housing
15 planning process is real, it must lead to
16 comprehensive citywide planning which desegregation
17 as-- with desegregation as one of its goals that
18 sets the city's agenda for growth and development
19 going forward. While we are glad to see that the
20 bill would require its conditions of the city report
21 to conduct an assessment of segregation, we do not
22 believe that the bill goes far enough to identify
23 integration as one of the paramount policy objective
24 and comprehensive plantings. Integration should be
25

1 specifically listed as one of the citywide policy
2 goals to be included in the preliminary citywide goal
3 statement, along with goals to reduce and eliminate
4 disparities across race, geography, socioeconomic
5 status, and access to opportunity and the
6 distribution of resources and development. Without
7 this and similar amendments, this legislation, if
8 enacted, will continue to allow policies to avoid
9 intentional policies-- sorry. Will continue to
10 allow policymakers to avoid intentional--
11

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

13 LENA DALKE: policies to integrate New
14 York City, as they have for the last century. The
15 city need look no further than its own abysmal 2020
16 Where We Look plan which we were shocked to see just
17 held up as a model by Chair Lago to see how easily
18 this could happen when the goal and integration is
19 obscured. Even in the report supposedly prepared in
20 furtherance of a hard rule to promote integration.
21 Thank you very much.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Paulette Soltani,
23 you may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

25

1
2 PAULETTE SOLTANI: Thank you. My name
3 is Paulette Soltani. I am the political director at
4 Vocal New York. On behalf of our organization, for
5 introducing this critical legislation and members of
6 the city Council who are here today. We are very
7 pleased to see the city Council take up Intro 2186
8 and consider comprehensive planning for New York
9 City. This is the direction that our city needs to
10 take. We are not surprised the administration is
11 against this bill. At every single turn, they have
12 been against housing for homeless New Yorkers,
13 investments and overdose prevention. The price tag
14 for justice for marginalized communities has always
15 been the justification. This administration's
16 divestment, broken policies, lack of planning has
17 resulted in examples like the horrific violence we
18 saw on the trains nearly 2 weeks ago where to
19 homeless New Yorkers lost their lives. We support
20 this direction. We have long called for
21 comprehensive planning through the campaigns to close
22 Rikers Island and defund the NYPD. We have called
23 for what we call a caring and compassionate new deal
24 for New York City, which is a comprehensive plan to
25 tackle the issues that underpin our criminal justice

1 system. Homelessness, extreme poverty, mental health
2 issues, drug use. We believe our city must
3 confront these intersecting issues through a massive
4 investment of resources and restructuring of our
5 government agencies. On any given night before Covid
6 19, over 79,000 people slept in New York City
7 shelters or on the streets. Our cities overdose
8 crisis claimed 1464 lives in 2019 and today, 5500
9 people are caged at Rikers Island. Vocal New York
10 runs a syringe exchange program in Brooklyn and
11 provides services to 1000 people who use drugs
12 actively. The majority of these individuals are
13 homeless, mostly living on the streets and in need of
14 supportive housing. Our participants of the syringe
15 exchange program are the ones we are centering in
16 this conversation and who need the city to center
17 them in decision-making. They are people who are
18 Street homeless, they face same period of experiences
19 that no person ever should from abusive policing,
20 developing abscesses from being forced to use and
21 unsterile and unsafe environments, or having their
22 limbs amputated due to sleeping outdoors in freezing
23 conditions. For over 20 years, we have long said
24 that housing is healthcare--
25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

PAULETTE SOLTANI: to contact city agencies for support within our participants are faced with the most desperate situations. We have had little success getting many of them into safe and permanent housing. There is a dire need for our city to plan and for comprehensive planning. We look forward to working with the city Council to strengthen this bill and to ensure that it centers care and compassion for all New Yorkers. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next step is Tierra Labrada. You may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

TIERRA LABRADA: Good afternoon, members of the Council and all of my colleagues here. My name is Tierra Labrada. I am a senior policy analyst at the Supportive Housing Network of New York. We our membership organization representing the developers and operators of supportive housing. As representatives of this sector, the network understands well the disjointed process of building affordable housing in the city and we fully support

1 creating a comprehensive plan which will allow
2 coordinated housing development. We do believe that
3 this is a crucial step towards a more equitable
4 approach to planning, one that is centered on
5 reducing disparities and disinvestment in communities
6 of color and ensuring a more equitable distribution
7 of development and investment citywide. Through its
8 various New York New York agreements and NYC 1515,
9 the city has already expressed its commitment to
10 addressing the needs of people experiencing
11 homelessness and we believe that the inclusion of
12 supportive housing in the comprehensive plan would
13 ensure that those exiting the homeless service system
14 and other institutions would have access to housing
15 in higher opportunity neighborhoods, wealthier and
16 whiter neighborhoods that have historically blocked
17 affordable and supportive housing development.
18 Thousands of our neighbors sleep in shelters or on
19 the street throughout the city every night, but are
20 never centered in conversations about their housing
21 needs. Instead, communities with more power and
22 social capital are able to make so need and land use
23 decisions not based on need, but on preference. We
24 look forward to working with the city to incorporate
25

1 a robust analysis of homeless data and supportive
2 housing needs throughout the city and include this
3 data in the Conditions of the City Report.

4 Additionally, we want to ensure that we did siting
5 and land-use conversations, supportive housing is
6 treated as exactly what it is, residential
7 development. We do believe that the city can and
8 must rectify its history of gentrification and

9 disinvestment in low income communities and
10 communities of color and not by rezoning trade-offs
11 which all but ensure that the concentration of
12 poverty, but by enforcing the notion that
13 neighborhoods across the city are required to

14 participate in the development and preservation of
15 affordable and supportive housing. As the city aims
16 to move towards a more transparent and needs-based
17 approach, we want to ensure that the voice of house
18 less New Yorkers are not lost or glossed over. As

19 such, we also believe the proposed legislation should
20 be amended to seek out meaningful participation from
21 people with lived experience of homelessness on the
22 proposed long-term planning steering committee. We
23 commend the Speaker and the Council for advancing
24 this bill and--
25

1

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

3

TIERRA LABRADA: as possible. Thank you
for this opportunity.

5

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
is Carlos Castell Croke. You may begin upon the
sergeant's announcement.

8

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin
now.

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

CARLOS CASTELL CROKE: Good afternoon. My
name is Carlos Castell Croke and I am the associate
for New York City programs at the New York League of
Conservation Voters. I want to thank Speaker
Johnson, along with Chair Salamanca, Cabrera, and
Rosenthal for the opportunity to testify today. We
all know that the next few decades are going to be
critical in the fight against climate change.
Drastically reducing emissions, pollution and waste
as soon as possible would reduce the severity of
climate -induced disasters that are growing in
frequency. There is no doubt that we must still
prepare for more severe weather and flooding now. We
must ensure that our infrastructure is not only built
with climate resiliency in mind, but also in ways
that place a high value on sustainability. This kind

1 of foresight requires comprehensive and consistent
2 planning to achieve. New York City has been
3 effectively setting goals to fight climate change in
4 Plan NYC under Mayor Bloomberg and One NYC under
5 Mayor de Blasio. Documents like this are valuable
6 tools for policymakers, advocates, and the public to
7 better understand how New York City is doing audits
8 climate goals and what policies the administration is
9 considering moving forward. However, One NYC is not
10 a formal city plan and does not necessarily look
11 holistically at what new challenges will arise in the
12 years to come and how city policies interact with
13 each other. Therefore, NYLCV supports the passage of
14 Intro 2186 which would require the Office of Long-
15 term Planning to regularly produce a comprehensive
16 long-term plan. This legislation will ensure that
17 the city is continuously setting goals to become more
18 sustainable and protect ourselves against climate
19 disasters and regularly evaluating these goals and
20 the programs we will implement to achieve them.
21 While Intro 2186 focuses on many aspects of the
22 city's infrastructure, we are especially glad to see
23 that it will establish citywide targets for open
24 space, resiliency infrastructure, and public
25

1 transportation. All three of these areas are crucial
2 for reducing emissions and protecting New Yorkers
3 from climate change. Furthermore, we know that New
4 Yorkers already have the lowest per capita carbon
5 emissions in the country because of an abundance of
6 walkable streets and public transportation networks.
7 And relatively energy-efficient multi-family housing.
8 Meeting our state climate goals requires making those
9 benefits of density available to everyone who wants
10 them. While much of this will mean more transit
11 oriented mixed-use development in the suburbs, and it
12 also means making New York a city that is--

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

15 CARLOS CASTELL CROKE: open and affordable
16 to anyone who wants to live here. Proactively
17 figuring out how to sustainably accommodate New
18 Yorkers is an important component of this bill. We
19 look forward to the passage of it and working with
20 the city in the future to fight climate change
21 together. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The
23 last panel last from this panel will be Cortney
24 Worrall you may begin upon the sergeant's
25 announcement.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin
now.

CORTNEY WORRALL: Thank you, Speaker, and
Council member Cabrera , for the opportunity to speak
today. My name is Cortney Worrall, President and CEO
of the Waterfront Alliance, and Alliance of 1100
organizations and convene are of the Rise to
Resilience Coalition. Climate change is a challenge
for New York City unlike any threat it has faced
before. For example, more than 1 million people are
at risk from flooding today, most of whom live in our
most distant invested neighborhoods. In principle
and in intent, Intro 2186 is consistent with the
Waterfront Alliance and the Rise to Resilience
Coalition platform for climate. This platform is
included in our written testimony. While we support
this legislation, we urge amendments. Substantial
changes are needed to meet the climate resilience
goals. Without changes, we believe waterfront and
resiliency planning will not stand on equal footing
next to the major needs this legislation seeks to
address. We recommend three changes. Put climate
resilience and equity at the center of decision-
making. We seek the inclusion of a climate

1 resilience roadmap based on data from the New York
2 City panel on climate change to guide decision-making
3 during an outside planning process. Our written
4 testimony provides a detailed description of the
5 climate resilience roadmap. Next, ensure sufficient
6 community engagement and empowerment. The city will
7 need to greatly increase capacity at the community
8 level for partnering nonprofits and institutions for
9 collaborative planning. This is especially critical
10 in waterfront districts that are dense and experience
11 flooding where extremely difficult decisions must be
12 made. These are often the most socially and
13 communities where generations of families have called
14 home. And, lastly, ensure interagency coordination.
15 Among other recommendations, we call for a process
16 that explicitly spells out how OLTPS will ensure
17 interagency coordination for resiliency and capital
18 planning processes. And, finally, we urge you to
19 support and pass Intro 2192. While this legislation
20 that we are talking about today is about how we plan
21 the city, Intro 2192 requires climate resiliency and
22 how the built environment is built. We will know you
23 feel there are things we must do outside of planning
24 processes that cannot wait.
25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

CORTNEY WORRALL: Thank you for working
with us and we really appreciate this opportunity
today.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Which
will include in order, Caroline Soussloff, Laura Wolf
Powers, Eve Barron, Eva Hanhardt, and Benjamin
Prosky. Caroline Soussloff, you may begin upon the
sergeant's announcement.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

CAROLINE SOUSSLOFF: Good morning. My
name is Caroline Sousloff and I am a legal fellow in
environmental justice program at New York Lawyers for
the Public Interest. Our EJ program has advocated
and litigated on the subject of the inequities of
distribution of environmental burdens in our city for
almost 3 decades. Thank you to Speaker Johnson, the
committee members here today, and the Council for
providing opportunity to testify on an issue with the
potential to truly transform our city's land use
processes in the future. I am pleased to be here
representing NYLPI and our EJ program to support the
City Council's effort in creating a comprehensive
long-term plan. NYLPI testified in support of

1 similar efforts during the city charter commission in
2 2018 and we are incredibly encouraged that, even
3 though that effort did not bear fruit, the Speaker
4 has taken it upon himself to ensure that many of the
5 same goals of equity are accomplished by introducing
6 this legislation. We, in particular, applaud the
7 commitment to reducing and eliminating disparities
8 across race, geography, and socioeconomic status and
9 access to opportunity and the distribution of
10 resources and development reflected in this plan. We
11 are also grateful that the plan includes target
12 setting for the development of resiliency
13 infrastructure. The procedures outlined in this bill
14 present an opportunity to protect our city and most
15 vulnerable populations against climate change and
16 mitigates the adverse impacts is causes. The
17 comprehensive planning process, combined with the
18 capital plan alignment, would go a long way towards
19 creating pathways for these critical projects to be
20 planned for and executed. We joined with the
21 proponents of this bill and wanting to enhance the
22 Democratic participation and city planning. We know
23 that so much of the inequities existing in our city
24 today are due to decisions having been made without
25

1
2 opportunity for input from the very communities who
3 end up bearing the brunt and negative consequences.
4 In addition, to further address the needs and
5 concerns of the city's environmental justice
6 communities, we urge the Council to amend the bill by
7 incorporating the following actions in the plan. And
8 I will be very concise because I'm cognizant of the
9 time. The first is to explicitly conduct fair share
10 analyses. The second is to will point EJ as
11 decision-makers as part of the--

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

13 CAROLINE SOUSSLOFF: long-term planning
14 steering committee. The third is to support
15 community [inaudible 04:57:39]. We work closely with
16 EJ communities and will help spread the word about
17 this bill for your time today.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
19 is Laura Wolf Powers. You may begin upon the
20 sergeant's announcement.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin
22 now.

23 LAURA WOLF POWERS: Hello and thank you
24 for this opportunity. I am Laura Wolf Powers. I am
25 a professor at Hunter College in the urban policy and

1
2 planning department. I am here my own behalf and not
3 my employers, but carrying on Hunter's tradition of
4 advocacy planning, I do want to speak to my friends
5 who are activists, planners, and organizers who have
6 been fighting displacement and fighting for essential
7 infrastructure and fighting against a system that
8 offloads the cost of development on to marginalize
9 communities. I see the comprehensive planning
10 proposal here that we are talking about today has
11 been a great start and so I appreciate the Speakers
12 leadership in stepping forward with this legislation.
13 The substitution of zoning for planning and the lack
14 of a values informed strategy for stewardship of land
15 and infrastructure exacerbate long-term structural
16 quality and environmental injustice every day. That
17 is the current existing condition. I am concerned
18 that some of my fellow activists have become
19 convinced about this proposal is not going to help
20 improve that condition so I want to address that.
21 Some people believe that the proposal would create a
22 system that is more top-down and less participatory
23 than we have now, and this is not the case. Under
24 the new system, the Office of Long-term Planning and
25 Sustainability would work with the Conditions of the

1 City report to develop a goal statement and,
2 ultimately, a citywide plan to members of the public
3 on a regular basis. There would be ample and robust
4 participation from borough presidents, from community
5 boards, from members of the public who have not
6 historically been plugged in to the opportunities for
7 participation, and the ultimate plan has a baked in
8 accountability structure because it would be required
9 by the city charter to reduce and eliminate
10 disparities in access to opportunity in the
11 distribution of resources and development across
12 race, geography, socioeconomic status. As advocates
13 for social justice and reparative planning, we often
14 use the terms community based and equity based
15 interchangeably. The underlying assumption is that,
16 at the micro level, advocates of inclusion and equity
17 will be able to prevail, but we have all seen cases
18 in which this does not happen. So, I think the
19 comprehensive framework in this proposal is an
20 opportunity to flip the script on that. I 100
21 percent agree with my friend--
22

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

24 LAURA WOLF POWERS: who urges the city
25 to establish a planning leadership that reflects the

1 diversity of the population at both citywide and
2 neighborhood levels, but I think that the first place
3 we need to establish that leadership is at the city
4 level and that is why I am going to fight in 2021 to
5 help elect a major will point a badass director of
6 long-term planning and sustainability and that
7 director, with a comprehensive planning system in
8 place will be able to start dismantling the
9 conditions that everyone is very dismayed at
10 currently. Thank you so much.

11
12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Eve
13 Barron, you may begin upon the sergeant's
14 announcement.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

16 EVE BARRON: Thank you. Hello, everyone.
17 My name is Eve Barron and I'm the chairperson of city
18 planning at Pratt Institute. Brooklyn borough
19 president's appointment to the Civic Engagement
20 Commission. Thank you for the shout out, RPA, but
21 I'm actually testifying as a private individual.
22 Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I realize
23 that the privilege that not everyone has. I support
24 comprehensive planning. I worked on the campaign for
25 community-based planning led by the community-based

1
2 planning task force. [Inaudible 05:01:13] this is a
3 coalition whose work between 2001 and 2009 was
4 coordinated by the municipal arts Society planning
5 center. This was a group of CBO's, community boards,
6 planners, EJ advocates, elected officials, and
7 academics. Groups and individuals actively involved
8 in neighborhood planning and decision-making, often
9 not on the same sides of specific issues, but
10 allowing to establish community-based planning as
11 official New York City policy. I am submitting the
12 campaign report along with my written testimony.
13 Intro 2186 is consistent with the campaign in several
14 important ways. Real leadership on issues of racial
15 and social justice, displacement of Covid 19
16 recovery, and climate action. Comprehensive planning
17 can reduce racial segregation, Inc. assessments of
18 fair housing into zoning, and can begin to upend the
19 connection between someone's life chances and the ZIP
20 Code of the place they grew up in. It provides the
21 missing link between plans and budget. It allows
22 plans to guide land use actions as opposed to having
23 zoning actions dictate plans. It provides
24 predictability about welcome and inappropriate
25 development and some assurance that local control

1 does not simply translate into more power for
2 communities that already have wealth and power.
3
4 However, New York City needs both community-based
5 planning and comprehensive planning. Community-based
6 plans are historically the most comprehensive and
7 most responsive to the local need, most creative, and
8 most acid based in their approach. Given communities
9 three planning scenarios from which to choose may not
10 be the most participatory approach. I urge Council
11 to reconsider the role of communities in the
12 legislation, provide them with resources to plan for
13 targets and benchmarks laid out in the legislation,
14 provide--

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

16 EVE BARRON: and ensure their work is
17 inclusive and based on justice and ensure their plans
18 are funded and implemented. Thank you for this
19 opportunity to submit my testimony.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Ava
21 Hanhardt, you may begin upon the sergeant's
22 announcement.

23 EVA HANHARDT: Okay. My name is Eva
24 Hanhardt.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

1
2 EVA HANHARDT: Now? Okay. My name is
3 Eva Hanhardt. I am testifying on behalf of the
4 Collective for Community Culture and Environment, and
5 all woman-owned consulting business and
6 interdisciplinary network. Many collective members
7 have been involved in advocacy for a citywide
8 comprehensive planning framework for more than 20
9 years, dating back to the campaign for community-
10 based planning that Eva described, which brought
11 together over 100 community-based organizations,
12 elected officials, academics, advocates around the
13 platform to row for community boards, create an
14 office of community planning, give teeth to
15 community-based glands, create a citywide
16 comprehensive planning framework. We are pleased
17 that, after years of advocacy, the idea of a
18 comprehensive planning framework has gained traction
19 and we hope involvement of the Mayor's Office will
20 facilitate interagency coordination. Yet, we have
21 concerns about the legislation as currently proposed
22 in the haste with which this bill is being reviewed.
23 That said, we believe that, to be truly effective and
24 further equity, the framework must, one, be
25 prescriptive about centering the goal of addressing

1 the city's racial and economic disparities. With
2 prior review and incorporation of the existing
3 community-based plans, including 197 As in the
4 framework. Include clear specifics about the goals
5 and format of the public input process. Reconsider
6 the steering committee, how its members are selected
7 and the amount of power they have. Working off a
8 list of three options created by the city is not
9 meaningful [inaudible 05:04:54]. And support to
10 communities. Providing less than six months
11 [inaudible 05:05:02] have teeth. The legislation
12 should specify that, before certifying any proposals,
13 the City Planning Commission must meet specific
14 findings that define what constitutes alignment with
15 the framework. Additionally, to critical things are
16 missing. Community board--

17
18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

19 EVA HANHARDT: assistance. We are
20 concerned that these might not move forward with the
21 framework. In conclusion, the Collective wants to
22 thank Speaker Johnson and then Council members
23 Reynoso and Lander for moving the need for a
24 comprehensive planning framework forward and looks
25 forward to working with you to make sure that we can

1 make this opportunity to do it the right way. We
2 will be submitting longer written testimony and, as
3 Eve said, the campaign's 2010 report for your
4 reference. Thank you very much.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The
7 last member of this panel will be Benjamin Prosky.
8 You may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

10 BENJAMIN PROSKY: Thank you, Speaker
11 Johnson. Thank you, Chairs Cabrera, Salamanca,
12 Rosenthal for holding this meeting. I'm Ben Prosky,
13 Executive Director of the Center for Architecture and
14 the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter
15 known as AIA New York. We represent New York City's
16 public and private sector architects. I would like
17 to read a statement on behalf of our Board of
18 Directors. Comprehensive planning is necessary in
19 addition to New York's land use policies. For too
20 long, public and private sector design and
21 construction have been an coordinated and addressing
22 the city's need around housing, open space, and
23 transportation. The only way to achieve this level
24 of citywide coordination is through the
25 implementation of a long-term comprehensive plan like

1 the one envisioned in Intro 2186. As the
2 professionals charged with implementing many of the
3 plan's provisions, architects are strongly supportive
4 of this effort. However, there are some important
5 changes that AIA New York believes should be
6 instituted to improve the bill. First, the amended
7 bill should accelerate the timeline for the final
8 adoption of the comprehensive plan. It is unclear
9 whether elected officials and city agencies will
10 continue to pursue necessary projects while the plan
11 is in development as they may opt to wait years until
12 the plan is in effect to ensure that these projects
13 are in accordance with that. And adoption date of
14 June 2025 may therefore significantly delay both
15 design and construction. The bill should also
16 consider more precise geographic boundaries than
17 community districts, which are based on demographic
18 realities from decades ago and can be far too large
19 to be effective for planning purposes. As such,
20 district level targets may not be able to fully
21 address the needs of a district, particularly the
22 needs of more marginalized communities. Lastly, the
23 power instilled in the director of the Office of Long
24

1 Term Planning is concerning. The bill will allow for
2 the director, and on elected official--

3
4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

5 BENJAMIN PROSKY: to hold over much of the
6 comprehensive planning process and, at times, make
7 unilateral decisions on design and construction.
8 Furthermore, we believe this person should be a
9 design professional. I would like to wrap up by
10 saying that it is an important first step in
11 instituting a much needed comprehensive plan for our
12 city. We help our recommendations are strongly
13 considered in an amended version of the bill. Thank
14 you, Speaker Johnson and the rest of the bill
15 sponsors for proposing this important legislation.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
17 now call on our next panel which will include, in
18 order, George M. Janes, Jessica Katz, Andrea Goldwyn,
19 Simeon Bankoff, and Andrew Berman. George M. Janes,
20 you may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

22 GEORGE JANES: My name is George Janes.
23 I am an urban planner. Let me start by saying that I
24 am supportive of comprehensive planning. There is a
25 lot in the proposal that is great, but there is one

1 part that, in my opinion, utterly failed. And that
2 is the role of the Mayor's Office of Long-term
3 Planning and Sustainability. They are responsible
4 for the community engagement and developing of the
5 three land use scenarios. Putting a Mayor's office
6 in this central role is a terrible idea. You can
7 either believe in community planning or you can
8 believe in the proposal laid out in this legislation.
9 You can't believe in both. Community planning needs
10 to be community led. The Mayor's Office cannot come
11 into 59 different communities to do meaningful
12 engagement. For example, in 2018, mayoral agencies
13 lead in engagement process in East Harlem regarding
14 resiliency the end result of the engagement process
15 was the East Harlem resiliency study which was never
16 published. What it was foiled, 90 percent of it was
17 redacted and much of what remained documented that
18 wasted community engagement profit. What happens
19 when the Mayor's office has different goals from the
20 community? If you pass this, you will be affected
21 Lee codifying a conflict of interest. The models we
22 should be using is the 2016 E. Harlem neighborhood
23 planning process. It was a fantastic effort that
24 showed what could happen when I community board
25

1
2 teamed up with the city Council, the borough
3 president, and community-based organizations or we
4 could look at the 2018 inclusive city report that
5 called for creating an office of community planning
6 driven by community priorities, have technical
7 expertise, and be independent, quote unquote. Or we
8 could be considering assigning responsibility for
9 developing local land use plans to community boards,
10 properly staffing them and let them develop their own
11 engagement process. Let me conclude by saying,
12 again, that we have to comprehensively plan.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

14 GEORGE JANES: And much of the existing
15 proposal is a great improvement, but if you believe
16 in community planning, you can't vote for this as is.
17 Let's fix that. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Jessica
19 Katz, you may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jessica, I believe
22 you are on mute.

23 JESSICA KATZ: Well, hello. Thank you
24 for the opportunity to testify today. My name is
25 Jessica Katz, Executive Director of the Citizens

1 Housing and Planning Council. CHPC fully supports
2 the goal of strengthening, planning, and land use
3 processes to increase equity across New York City
4 neighborhoods. We need solutions for a more
5 equitable future now more than ever. Our land-use
6 process drives to achieve the balance between
7 citywide needs and local perspectives, yet, these
8 goals often conflict in ways we must reckon with. In
9 my former role, I spent many hours before community
10 boards trying to gain support for controversial
11 supportive housing projects and I worry about how
12 this comprehensive planning process would help defend
13 the needs of New Yorkers experiencing homelessness.
14 If housing is a human right, then the hard truth is
15 we must examine the right of communities who wish to
16 maintain control of their neighborhoods at the
17 expense of New Yorkers who are least likely to be
18 heard should we spend more time analyzing and equity
19 in the city when there are glaring issues that we
20 know right now required action oriented solution?
21 Would a comprehensive land use plan from 10 years ago
22 have helped us navigate the Covid 19 pandemic? CHPC
23 hopes that the Council will seriously consider these
24 questions before diagnosing comprehensive planning in
25

1 this form as the best solution to New York's equity
2 issues. We are looking for new ways for New Yorkers
3 to say yes to the things we need, not create more
4 analysis of the problems we already know exist. The
5 committee's own presentation today went to great
6 lengths to argue that this legislation will not take
7 away any discretion from Council members or community
8 boards. I even heard someone say that many
9 neighborhood plans any new growth at all. So, then,
10 after millions of dollars in analysis and planning,
11 we will be back to square one. Back to the ground
12 game of begging local Council members to approve the
13 housing we say is a human right while thousands of
14 New Yorkers live in shelters or on the street. We
15 look forward to working with you to create a
16 decision-making framework that addresses these needs.
17 Thank you.

18
19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Andrea
20 Goldwyn, you may begin upon the sergeant's
21 announcement.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

23 ANDREA GOLDWYN: Thank you. Good
24 afternoon, Chair Cabrera and Council members. IM
25 Andrea Goldwyn speaking on behalf of the New York

1 Landmark Conservancy. The Conservancy is a 47-year-
2 old organization dedicated to preserving,
3 revitalizing, and reusing New York's historic
4 buildings and neighborhoods. We have long advocated
5 for comprehensive planning as a remedy to the unfair
6 piecemeal way that New York zones without planning.
7 We called for it in front of both of the recent
8 Charter Revision Commissions, but this legislation is
9 not the answer. We recognize the good intention,
10 but, based on the process, the substance, and
11 questions raised today, we ask you to rethink it.
12 The bill is moving ahead with limited outreach. We
13 thank the speaker's staff for making a presentation
14 to us and our colleagues. We been to many meetings,
15 but only to the groups that requested them. We have
16 heard from so many Council members today who
17 demonstrate the benefit of community board
18 experience. All community boards should hear this
19 plan before you make a decision. If the bill will
20 transform the way New York plans, we need more
21 details about how it will actually work. Why are
22 growth goals the priority? How does the plan guard
23 against new development, especially more luxury
24 condos that meet growth goals, but damaged
25

1 neighborhoods? If the best majority of development
2 is still as of right, what are the impacts? How will
3 the generic EIS and Council call up provisions reduce
4 already limited community impact? No one might like
5 this question, but how will this extensive planning
6 process be funded? Right now, community boards need
7 help to retain consultants and navigate these
8 complicated land-use proposals. If money is
9 available, can they access it now? Infrastructure
10 investments and sustainable neighborhoods should come
11 before growth. Every part of the city has major
12 needs right now, so start surveying and planning for
13 them now instead of waiting for years. We envision
14 comprehensive planning that helps everyone. It
15 should be guided by experts and powered by people.
16 It should bring opportunity and housing security to
17 every neighborhood, but this plan is to top down, it
18 limits community participation--

19
20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

21 ANDREA GOLDWYN: I'm almost done. And it
22 prioritizes the administration solution of building
23 its way out of systemic problems. We urge the
24 Council to reject to this proposal. New York needs

25

1 comprehensive planning, but not this plan. Thank
2 you.
3

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Simeon
5 Bankoff, you may begin upon the sergeant's
6 announcement.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

8 SIMEON BANKOFF: Okay. I'm Simeon
9 Bankoff, executive director to the Historic Districts
10 Council. HDC is a citywide advocate for New York's
11 historic neighborhoods and we represent a
12 constituency of over 500 neighborhood-based community
13 groups throughout the five boroughs. We are
14 preservationists by training and inclination. We
15 planned for the long-term. That is what preservation
16 is. We believe that long-term comprehensive planning
17 by a municipal body, by New York City, is a laudable
18 goal, however, we feel that these structural flaws in
19 this bill and its implementation make it into an
20 inadequate roadmap for New Yorkers best future. We
21 are submitting a broader statement which addresses
22 our concerns in more detail, but the proposal fails
23 in three major ways. This bill sidelines community
24 guidance. Many communities around New York City have
25 spent years or decades attempting to shape the future

4 of their neighborhoods to reflect their hopes and
5 desires. In almost all these cases, the results,
6 when they have been implemented, are the products of
7 compromised negotiation. No communities are actually
8 thrilled with the plans they currently have, however,
9 though the current imperfect system is-- however,
10 through the current imperfect system, part of the
11 protections and amenities in which residents desire
12 have been adopted and hopefully will come to pass.
13 This proposal, as written, sidelines neighborhood
14 community participation by creating even more
15 meetings which will result in advisory opinions at
16 best. The system of community participation does not
17 mandate any decision-making roles for the New Yorkers
18 it will affect and, instead, buries them in an
19 essentially meaningless time wasting exercise. If
20 the city wishes to do this, we already have 197 A
21 plans. We don't need another way to sideline
22 community planning. There is a lack of balance in
23 this plan. It proposes to streamline development
24 proposals which align with these priorities.
25 Meanwhile, existing zoning already exists and will
continue to allow as of right development to happen
throughout the city with a bare minimum of guidance.

1 This plan does not correct the basic imbalance of
2 power which developers wield over the shape of our
3 city. Instead, it gives them another power tool
4 drilled through the fabric of existing neighborhoods.
5 This plan, if adopted, would actually add to
6 developers' options--

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

9 SIMEON BANKOFF: when contemplating
10 speculative plans-- thank you very much. Finally,
11 by institutionalizing the long-term land-use powers
12 of the Mayor and the city Council, how does this
13 interact with the restrictive term limits of those
14 officials? This is conceptualizing 10 year periods,
15 but Grant's ultimate authority to officials with
16 eight-year lifespans. How will the function
17 actually-- how will this actually function? Thank
18 you very much.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
20 now move on to our next panel which will include, in
21 order, Lynnells Worth, Sean Khorsandi, Russel Squire,
22 Carter Booth, and Richard Hellenbrecht. Lynnells
23 Worth, you may begin upon the sergeant's
24 announcement.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

4 LYNNELLS WORTH: Am I unmuted?

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Yes. We can hear you
6 now.

7 LYNNELLS WORTH: Okay. Einstein said
8 that if we had an hour to solve the problem, better
9 to spend the first 55 minutes framing an
10 understanding that before searching for solutions.
11 In that spirit, I think this well-intentioned law,
12 despite its strong critique of crap planning, which I
13 agree with, rests on too many flawed background
14 assumptions. Here are a few. One, if concern for
15 displacement is an issue, why not use legislation to
16 solve it in the form of universal rent stabilization
17 and the good cause of action act? Similarly, why not
18 abandon MIH which is the primary driver of policy
19 driven displacement? Two, the law presumes that
20 housing NIMBYism is a huge problem that the city
21 needs to do a run via housing quotas, yet, the data
22 tells a different story. Over 85 percent of all
23 ULURP actions under de Blasio past the city Council
24 without modifications. 15 percent past with minor
25 modifications and 80 percent of new constructions as
of right. We are a big real estate town, not a NIMBY
town. Third, the law presumes infinite density as

1 possible and desirable and that there is something
2 inherently good about up zoning so-called wealthy
3 neighborhoods. Fourth, the law presumes to know
4 where increased density should go. It sent that
5 backwards? It fails to ask when is density to low?
6 When is density to high? Should we pile it up and
7 one place or spread it around like peanut butter on a
8 slice of bread? What role should the market and
9 transit expansion play in the allocation of density?
10 Should we give these decisions over to a nonelected
11 director? Fifth, the law presumes that an area
12 currently thought of as white must be racially
13 integrated through the construction of MIH towers,
14 but there is no evidence that MIH is an effective
15 tool of racial integration. There is also a
16 contradiction that needs analysis in the cities Where
17 We Live Now report. Low income people reported not
18 wanting to move--
19

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

21 LYNNELLS WORTH: Thank you. And ask
22 that their areas get the same high quality schools
23 and parks that the rich areas have. So, given the
24 way big real estate turns most policies into a
25 profitable deal for them, it may be better to

1 separate housing from planning for traditional
2 capital investments. For now, a better path might be
3 to focus on the capital budgeting process for
4 infrastructure like transit, schools, parks, and
5 hospitals. Thank you.

6
7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Sean
8 Khorsandi, you may begin upon the sergeant's
9 announcement.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

11 SEAN KHORSANDI: Thank you, Council
12 members. Sean Khorsandi with abbreviated comments
13 for Landmark West. Landmark West is a preservation
14 group serving the upper West side. Already America's
15 second densest neighborhood and we rank as number
16 three among the 12 Manhattan neighborhoods for
17 creation of housing in the past decade and, by
18 nature, as a preservationist, we are hardwired to
19 take the long view, much like planners are. We
20 believe that New York City is the greatest city in
21 the world and thus are very protective of it. So, we
22 read Planning Together with excitement, but also
23 caution and here are some of our concerns. Planning
24 together would compromise the city planning
25 department and swing the balance of power from the

1 existing model where in the City Planning Commission
2 is comprised of a Chair appointed by the Mayor and
3 six members. One per borough president and one by
4 the Public Advocate. Rather than share
5 representation, final decisions would all be funneled
6 through the Mayor's Office, although many diverse
7 parties from the community are involved along the
8 process. Those roles are purely advisory and
9 ultimately can be subject to political favors.
10 Planning together does not cite the metrics nor
11 rubrics for weighing those statistics for making
12 decisions, although affordable housing and equity are
13 indeed important goals, there are no considerations
14 of existing densities identified in the decision-
15 making process. Several areas earmarked as
16 opportunity zones are also some of the densest in the
17 country. By design, density already follows transit
18 lines and many of which have not been changed in
19 decades. If these areas are deemed opportunity
20 zones, it only further favors highly developed areas
21 and leaves less served areas increasingly less
22 served, not more. The city should seek to build out
23 infrastructure for a more even distribution of
24 opportunities. Most importantly, Planning Together
25

1 does not once mention landmarks, historic districts,
2 nor the value of place making. Key planning
3 considerations, but rather favors building placing
4 above all else, even at the peril of our own historic
5 asset. Planning Together seeks to engender trust
6 from a population that has been deemed disillusioned
7 with the process. In part--

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

10 SEAN KHORSANDI: by undoing decades of
11 community driven land-use actions such as contextual
12 zoning, special zoning districts, etc. We believe in
13 a truly collaborative comprehensive plan, but let's
14 actually do it together. Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Russel
16 Squire, you may begin upon the sergeant's
17 announcement.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

19 RUSSEL SQUIRE: Thank you. Community
20 Board eight Manhattan. I want to thank the many
21 Council members who have spoken forcefully in defense
22 of community boards and our role. CP eight will be
23 giving the Planning Together proposal a thorough and
24 comprehensive review in the coming weeks and I expect
25 that we will have a number of detailed comments and

1
2 recommendations in connection with that process. For
3 now, I have three points that I would like to make.
4 First, for Planning Together to be successful, it
5 must incorporate the input and ideas of the New
6 Yorkers whom it will affect. It is encouraging that
7 you are holding this hearing to hear from the public,
8 but this hearing will not be enough. It is
9 critically important that the Council provide
10 additional opportunities and time for New Yorkers to
11 weigh in and that it be open to making changes to the
12 proposal in response to their views. Second, CB
13 eight has called for a comprehensive city plan on
14 multiple occasions, most recently in connection with
15 the 2019 Charter Revision process. So, it is
16 encouraging that the Council is taking steps to
17 develop such a plan. In the absence of a citywide
18 plan, local communities and community boards lack
19 predictability and visibility into the city's
20 decision-making when it comes to certification and
21 other zoning decisions, but we emphasize that
22 developing a comprehensive city plan must use a
23 bottom up approach. Incorporating the knowledge and
24 views of communities will lead to better outcomes.
25 Finally, we are pleased that the Planning Together

1 proposal enhances the role of community boards in
2 some ways and it has been encouraging to hear Speaker
3 Johnson's remarks about the role of community boards.
4 But CB eight is, nevertheless, concerned about the
5 proposal to create a borough steering committee. Or
6 borough steering committees. The legislation says
7 that the borough steering committees shall provide
8 recommendations on the citywide steering committees
9 preferred land use planning scenario for each
10 community District. However, providing
11 recommendations on preferred land use planning
12 scenario for community districts is precisely the job
13 of community boards which are locally focused,
14 locally sourced in their membership, and locally
15 knowledgeable about their respective neighborhoods
16 and to the extent that a committee is needed to make
17 borough wide recommendations, Manhattan already has a
18 borough board for that. I strongly urge the city
19 Council to abandon plans for--

20
21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

22 RUSSEL SQUIRE: In conclusion, thank you
23 very much for allowing me to testify today and CB
24 eight looks forward to working with the Council to
25 provide our feedback on this proposal.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Carter
5 Booth, you may begin upon the sergeant's
6 announcement.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

8 CARTER BOOTH: Hi. My name is Carter
9 Booth. I am chair of Community Board Two which
10 covers Greenwich Village, the West Village, the
11 packing district, Little Italy, SoHo, NoHo, a portion
12 of Chinatown and Hudson Square. Our community Board
13 Council members are Speaker Johnson, Council member
14 Rivera, and Council member Chin. I want to echo much
15 of what Chair Squire from CB eight had just
16 mentioned. Since this bill was introduced in
17 December, there has been little outreach that we are
18 aware of to community stakeholders for a plan of
19 reports to include significant community engagement
20 as part of its process. We ask the speaker's office
21 to present on Intro 2186 after we became aware of
22 this hearing with the goal of being able to provide
23 constructive feedback before this legislation is
24 fully baked, but we were unable to have somebody, and
25 present at our land-use meeting. Our land-use
committee and members have many questions and we look
forward to having those answered. In hearing the

1 dialogue today, I want to point out that no one
2 reached out to CB two to discuss this bill or offer
3 to present the particulars in order to begin to
4 engage in the hardened real conversations that we
5 need to have regarding land use and comprehensive
6 planning. CB two, as some may know, is extensively
7 engaged in land use matters monthly and it is hard to
8 believe the conversation that we are very much
9 interested in participating in is not occurring. In
10 fact, it appears to us that this plan is being fast
11 tracked to be brought to a vote with insufficient
12 input at the community board level, especially in
13 light of the need to continue in Zoom only meetings.
14 This is in stark contrast to the lengthy educational
15 process undertaken by the 2019 Charter Revision
16 Commission. Adoption of the legislation and long-
17 term comprehensive plan, as it is now written, would
18 result in major changes to the public review process
19 that are not fully understood or appreciated at this
20 time. This legislation would add a completely new
21 layer of bureaucracy to a city that you are aware of
22 is already facing severe and unprecedented budget
23 constraints. Implementation would require resources
24 of both economic and staff that the community boards
25

do not currently have in order for us to be able to
participate in this complex and lengthy process. CB
two's unanimous position-- or the board's position
on this matter is that the city councils plan to vote
on Intro 2186 as early as next month be delayed until
there is--

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

CARTER BOOTH: extensive outreach to
the dialogue with community boards and related
stakeholders, those whose voices were mentioned
repeatedly as being an important part of the process
in the discussion earlier. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Richard
Hellenbrecht, you may begin upon the sergeant's
announcement.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: committee counsel?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Richard, you appear
unmuted on our end. I don't think we can hear you,
though. You may need to accept the unmute request.
Okay. In the meantime, we will move on to the next
panel. So, the next panel will include, in order,
Eugene Kelty, Joseph Marziliano, Alicia Boyd, Anthony

1 Rivers, and Henry Euler. Eugene Kelty, you may begin
2 upon the sergeant's announcement.
3

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

5 EUGENE KELTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

6 I appreciate it. I do understand what you are doing
7 with this virtual meeting. It's very difficult as
8 the Chair and I thank you and the Council for
9 allowing us to talk. As the Chair of Community Board
10 Seven, we sent a letter to the Speaker and we were
11 opposed to this procedure or plan. We have gone
12 through a lot of renovations and a lot of rezonings--
13 at least 11-- and we find that the process worked.
14 It's not perfect to the point that there still needs
15 tweaking and fixing, but you have to understand that
16 this board understands, and we been around for a long
17 time, that we work through the Council persons. We
18 work through our elected officials. Definitely work
19 through the borough president office and we do get
20 positive feedback from the city planning. I want to
21 thank the Commissioner for City Planning. I agree
22 with a lot of the statements that she made and we
23 need to draw on them for a lot of research and
24 support. I cannot tell you how many people have been
25 sent back are the city, city planning, not to mention

1 BSA when they find out that the application that came
2 before them is not what the community wanted. So, we
3 do have a problem with the way this process is being
4 done. As my Chairs from CB eight and two in
5 Manhattan, we think this is being fast tracked very
6 badly. I think that when we have something as
7 important as this, it should take a lot of time.
8 That is why we put a negative declaration out on this
9 that we are not happy with this plan. I have to tell
10 you, and I don't mean to be disrespectful. We look
11 for them. They are voted in by the people of our
12 district. They are their communities. They know
13 their communities. I have been a long time member of
14 community Board seven. I have been through many
15 Council members, many borough presidents. We work
16 with the community to fix the things. I dislike the
17 word equity. I like the word equal because it means
18 the same for everybody. I have to agree with Amanda
19 Goldwyn. My concern is a lot of the stuff in the
20 plan has problems because it doesn't deal with
21 funding. Who is in charge? And I don't want to
22 debate any more audit. We will be listening and we
23 will be responding to whatever you'd like and we will
24 always give feedback--
25

1

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

3

EUGENE KELTY: to the Council and our
elected officials. Thank you.

5

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Joseph
Marziliano, you may begin upon the sergeant's
announcement.

8

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

9

JOSEPH MARZILIANO: Thank you, Mr.
Speaker, members of the City Council and my
colleagues. My name is Joseph Marziliano. I am the
district manager of Community Board 11 in Queens. I
would like to ask if I could respectfully defer the
remainder of my time to my chairman who is on the
call and head of agency, Michael Budiban, if that is
possible.

17

CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes. That's

18

possible.

19

JOSEPH MARZILIANO: Okay. Thank you so
much.

21

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Budabin, you
may begin.

23

MICHAEL BUDIBAN: Thank you. My name is
Mike Budiban and I am the chair of Queen Community
Board 11. And thank you, Joe. To speak here. I am

25

1 here because our board considered this legislation
2 and voted to oppose it because of the effect we feel
3 it would likely have on communities such as Northeast
4 Queens. We were also disappointed in the fact that
5 this legislation was proposed without communication
6 to or input from community boards. The governmental
7 agency closest to the general public. In terms of
8 single-family housing, I acknowledge the bill does
9 not state single-family housing should be eliminated,
10 but it is a growth initiative and in the use of the
11 Minneapolis case study, combined with the negative
12 connotations regarding Mayor Bloomberg's down zoning
13 out or borough residential communities, reasonably
14 caused alarm in the minds of many community Board 11
15 constituents. I also believe the perceived need of
16 the speaker's fact sheet is a fundamental process
17 failure. The easiest way to ensure that constituents
18 don't misunderstand proposed legislation is to
19 explain it to them, but we received no notice from
20 the Speaker's office and no offer to meet with us for
21 input in advance of this bill's proposal. My office
22 sent two separate emails to Speaker Johnson's office
23 in advance of our vote on this matter, inviting his
24 office to come speak. These emails went unanswered
25

1 and this lack of advanced communication shows a
2 disrespect to community boards and constituents. I
3 would like to now briefly step out of my role as a
4 community board Chair and speak in my personal
5 capacity as a resident. Personally, I support
6 comprehensive planning initiatives as a general
7 matter and I believe that the lack of affordable
8 housing in the city is an absolute crisis. I also
9 recognize the historic racist policies and
10 environment of the United States in general and the
11 city, in particular, that have led to the terrible de
12 facto housing segregation that we all live under.
13 City residents of color deserve a strong voice in
14 zoning and land use matters. But while I'm sure that
15 the authors of this Pleading Together report had no
16 ill intent, the tone of certain aspects of it,
17 particularly in regards to the Bloomberg down zoning
18 in certain lower density New York City neighborhoods
19 almost guaranteed to put people in those communities,
20 communities like mine, on the defensive. I can tell
21 you that the people that I know in my area care
22 deeply about land use because they love the
23 combination of single-family living, yard space,
24 participation in the New York City community, and
25

1 access to all the wonders that the city has to offer,
2 not to insulate them from other New Yorkers. These
3 residents have stuck with New York City because they
4 love it. They want to be able to walk--

5
6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

7 MICHAEL BUDAPIN: to get a slice of pizza
8 or a haircut. I know that that is one of the reasons
9 that I live in Bayside. We need much, much better
10 communication from the government to its constituents
11 to allow bills like this to work and form a
12 partnership. It would have helped if those city
13 Council members had listened to stay and hear what
14 the community had to say about this. Many of them
15 have left. It's an example that we need more
16 communication. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Alicia
18 Boyd is up next. You may begin upon the sergeant's
19 announcement.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

21 ALICIA BOYD: Hi. My name is Alicia Boyd
22 and I represent the Movement to Protect the People.
23 We are a grassroots organization that is located in
24 Crown Heights Flatbush, a low to moderate income
25 communities of color that has been targeted for the

1 last six years for major up rezoning. And while this
2 bill talks about the need to protect communities like
3 mine, wanting to ensure that people of color can get
4 into white neighborhoods, and making sure that there
5 is more diversity as far as development outside of
6 just community color, I have looked at the law of
7 this bill. I didn't look at the 26 beautiful pages.
8 I looked at the law because we also file lawsuits
9 here in this community in order to protect ourselves
10 against DCP and against the city Council and against
11 our local elected officials who never are responsible
12 to communities of color. And the law says that there
13 is a City Planning Commission, there is the Office of
14 the Mayor who creates the three plans, that give the
15 three plans to the community board. The community
16 board chooses one plan. The borough president
17 chooses a plan. The committee chooses a plan and
18 then that plan gets submitted to the city Council
19 and, if the city Council does not approve the plan,
20 the Mayor's Office approves the plan. Now, to me,
21 that sounds like top down. It gets created by the
22 Mayor's office and it gets decided by the Mayor's
23 Office and in between is all the bullshit. Okay?
24 The bullshit that comes in the black communities all
25

1 the time about how they are going to do something for
2 us like create affordable housing that is not
3 affordable to us. The MIH has done absolutely
4 nothing in the city Council, as they talk about the
5 MIH--

6
7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

8 ALICIA BOYD: blame it on the Department of
9 City Planning. They have not changed the MIH. And
10 you have known that the MIH does nothing but create
11 displacement and gentrification in every black
12 community that is in New York City. So, if the city
13 Council really wanted to do something, and stop
14 blaming the Department of City Planning for the fact
15 that they are not doing their job and protecting
16 communities of color while they get real estate money
17 behind closed doors to do so. So, we definitely do
18 not support this plan that was never created with any
19 black community in New York City, but created by Cory
20 Johnson who just wants to sit there and get another
21 political position underneath his belt. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Than you. Henry
23 Euler, you may begin upon the sergeant's
24 announcement.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

1
2 HENRY EULER: My name is Henry Euler. I am
3 the first vice president of the Auburndale
4 Improvement Association. We have an organization of
5 close to 500 members. We are opposed to this plan.
6 We do believe in a comprehensive plan. We support
7 truly affordable housing. We are concerned about
8 resiliency and climate change and equality, but this
9 plan is a top down proposal. This plan had no input
10 from the public or the community boards at the
11 beginning of it and that is when it should have
12 started. At the beginning. Not in the middle, not
13 at the end. We also are very concerned about the
14 possible ops zoning situation. Were concerned about
15 the unelected director. We are concerned, as well,
16 about our single-family districts that they are
17 preserved. We work very hard to preserve those
18 particular areas. When the city charter revision
19 commission met recently, they had meetings all over
20 the city and they listened to the people and we gave
21 suggestions of what we wanted to see changed in the
22 charter and they listened to us, by and large. That
23 was planning together. When we did our rezonings
24 here in Auburndale and Western Bayside, there were
25 three of them that we were participating in in our

1 boundary lines and we were listened to. We work with
2 our elected officials. We worked with the community
3 board. We worked with city planning and we came up
4 with a plan that was agreeable to people in the area.
5 That was planning together. This bill is not
6 planning together and we oppose it and we submitted
7 our written statement about that, as well. And I am
8 representing, as well, Terry Pro--

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

11 HENRY EULER: president of my organization.

12 Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
14 now move on to the next panel which will include, in
15 order, Paul Graziano, Julia Bryant, Kevin Forrestall,
16 Kirsten Theodos, and Lynette Townsley. Paul
17 Graziano, you may begin upon the sergeant's
18 announcement.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

20 PAUL GRAZIANO: Good afternoon. Thank
21 you. Can you hear me?

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Yes. We can hear you.

23 PAUL GRAZIANO: Thank you. Thank you
24 for allowing me to testify today. I just want to
25 briefly say that I am an urban planner who has

1 rezoned tens of thousands of properties in the city
2 of New York over the last 15 years doing contextual
3 rezonings in communities throughout the city. I am
4 totally in favor of comprehensive planning. I am
5 opposed to this bill. I will be submitting my
6 written documentation and it will be published as of
7 tomorrow or Thursday in a major publication. If
8 anybody would like to sign up to our petition, it is
9 [change.org/stop NYC Intro 2186](http://change.org/stop-NYC-Intro-2186). In just a few
10 observations from today because I don't need to
11 repeat a lot of what has been said. I think the
12 behavior of some of the Council members today and,
13 most of whom have left, unfortunately, from this
14 meeting, has been pretty atrocious. This is not a
15 campaign situation. Many of the people been the most
16 outraged or, quote unquote, outraged are people who
17 are running for other positions. This bill should
18 not be submitted right before everybody is leaving
19 office. The unexplained or unintended consequences
20 of this bill will be severe. Again, my full position
21 will be sent as submitted testimony. But, again,
22 Speaker Johnson and others, you really should be much
23 more professional in the way that you are treating
24 both the people that you are speaking to and the
25

1 Department of City Planning who was extremely polite
2 to you. That is all I have to say today. Thank you.

3
4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,
5 we will hear from Julia Bryant. You may begin upon
6 the sergeant's announcement.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

8 JULIA BRYANT: My name is Julia Bryant.
9 I live in Prospect Heights Brooklyn. New York,
10 unlike other world-class cities, does not have
11 Internet infrastructure. That being said, it is
12 unfair to assume that communities will be able to
13 give their opinions on any public proposals including
14 comprehensive city planning or community land use
15 proposals. My suggestion is either we suspend public
16 virtual hearings or make dramatic improvements on our
17 broadband and Internet infrastructure. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: next up is Kevin
19 Forestall. You may begin upon the sergeant's
20 announcement.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

22 KEVIN FORESTALL: Thank you. I Kevin
23 Forrestall. I am president of the Queens Civic
24 Congress, which is an umbrella organizations of over
25 80 civic organizations in Queens. I think the

1 Speaker in the Chairs for this invitation. An
2 introduction of this legislation is a far-reaching,
3 complicated piece of legislation that could have
4 profound effects on the city. It is not a task to be
5 taken hastily and without significant amount of
6 deliberation and public review. It certainly is not
7 legislation which should be enacted by a lame-duck
8 legislature and Mayor. The voters overwhelmingly
9 rejected the calling for comprehensive planning in
10 2019. The will of the people should not be rejected
11 by the New York City Council. The task to develop
12 this type of comprehensive plan, as outlined in the
13 Intro will require significant amounts of new
14 resources and no dollars have been identified. This
15 Intro has been submitted in a time of severe fiscal
16 crisis and population fluctuations. It is the
17 responsibility to make long-term plans when the
18 fiscal stability of the city and the state have not
19 been addressed. If enacted, funds may well be
20 diverted from other essential services. I have
21 submitted or will submit written testimony outlining
22 14 points of which I don't have time to discuss
23 today. I call for the withdrawal of this
24 legislation. Thank you for your time.
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Kristin
3 Theodos, you may begin upon the sergeant's
4 announcement.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

6 KIRSTIN THEODOS: Good afternoon. My name
7 is--

8 [inaudible 05:47:30]

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: You can begin,
10 Kristin.

11 KIRSTIN THEODOS: Sorry. Can you hear me?

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes.

13 KIRSTIN THEODOS: Okay. Thank you. Good
14 afternoon. My name is Kirstin Theodos and in
15 opposition to Intro 2186. The city's land-use
16 process is indeed broken, but creating a 21st-century
17 Robert Moses is not the solution. Intro 2186 would
18 create a mayoral appointed director of long-term
19 planning to develop and implement a comprehensive
20 long-term plan prioritizing population growth. What
21 Robert Moses 2.0 would, quote, deem appropriate, ends
22 up in the final citywide goal statement for creating
23 targets to increase housing and commercial space
24 throughout the city. All this happens before a
25 single public hearing takes place, purposely blocking

1 the public from deliberation or review of how their
2 neighborhoods will be up zoned. After the final
3 goals statement is released, only one hearing per
4 borough is then required. A real comprehensive plan
5 would increase community and but, not diminish it. A
6 real plan would also not create a nonelected Robert
7 Moses figure with dictator like powers. A real
8 comprehensive plan creating housing targets would not
9 exclude the people who know the neighborhoods the
10 best, the residence. We even more alarming is the
11 grandstanding on racial injustice, a concept that was
12 blatantly ignored during the racist rezonings of East
13 New York, East Harlem, Inwood, Flushing, and Jerome
14 Avenue and how deliberately quiet this plan was
15 rolled out to the Public. The community boards
16 weren't even notified about this legislation, never
17 mind being excluded from drafting the ironically
18 named planning together plan that was unveiled in
19 December. In February, it was announced that that
20 Counsel would hold a hearing in just two weeks,
21 today, February 23. In the span of a couple months,
22 the Council has whipped up this bill proposing to
23 amend the city charter and, even after neglecting to
24 inform the public about the bill, it is still being
25

1 shot down by community boards all across the city.

2
3 There has been a mass exodus since Covid. It was
4 recently reported that there are over 16,000 vacant
5 apartments in Manhattan alone, so why is the city
6 determined to fast-track a bill with a specific goal
7 of increasing population and when we don't even know
8 what the population--

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

10 KIERSTEN THEODOS: For obvious reasons, I
11 ask city Council to vote no. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next up
13 is Linette Townsley. You may begin upon the
14 sergeant's announcement.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

16 LINETTE TOWNSLEY: Good afternoon. My
17 name is Linette Townsley and I'm from Queens and I
18 would just like to take this opportunity to say thank
19 you for having this. This is very informative. I
20 have been on here since 10 o'clock and I am a new
21 board member of community Board 12. I am concerned
22 and I agree with the community boards tow, eight,
23 seven and I also have the frustration of Ms. Alicia
24 Boyd. I grew up in Brownsville in Brooklyn where
25 there is a lot of people in the community and now I

1 live in Adams Lake Park in Queens where we are at
2 historical district and we have fought hard to keep
3 the character and the quality of life in our
4 community and we also, on the community board, we
5 also voted a resolution also to oppose this. And I
6 would hope-- we had meetings, too, you know, when it
7 came out and I am concerned that, you know, the
8 elected officials didn't come on to talk to us
9 because a lot of stuff that is going on now and
10 everything, we probably could have resolved some
11 things if it was truly by the community being
12 together. Earlier, I know they pointed out that it
13 didn't say things explicitly, but we feel that-- I
14 feel that, you know, the community board, they want
15 to upsell because they specifically say such
16 preliminary statements shall include proposed
17 strategies for meeting such goals and quantitative
18 and when asked-- you know, we know that means
19 numbers and when asked, then, are they going to take
20 away our homes or, you know, down-- take away
21 single-family homes, it's like, no. Just don't sell
22 your home. But what, 10 years from now, you know,
23 some of my neighbors, most of them are elderly--

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 LINETTE TOWNSLEY: and a developer builds,
3 then I have a single-family home, but they can build
4 an apartment building. So, that takes away the
5 character. I am glad that were having this
6 conversation, but I would truly hope that we can come
7 together as a community. Be transparent and have
8 these hard conversations so that we can work
9 together. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
11 now move on to our next panel which will include in
12 order, Lo van der Valk, Michael Hollingsworth,
13 Olympia Causey, Phil Konigsberg, and Rachel Levy.
14 Low vendor box, you may begin upon the sergeant's
15 announcement.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: Okay. He's coming right
18 now.

19 LO VAN DER VALK: Yes. Can you hear me?
20 Can you hear me? Okay.

21 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah. I unmuted you.

22 LO VAN DER VALK: My name is Lo van der
23 Valk. I am the president of Carnegie Hill Neighbors.
24 We are a local community organization seeking to
25 improve our neighborhood located in the northwest of

1 the Upper East Side. We applaud the objective of
2 this planning proposal. Its objective of
3 comprehensive planning that is equitable, fair, and
4 inclusive and that seeks to minimize displacement,
5 but we also see this proposed planning process is
6 very complex and we have some serious reservations
7 that we will be submitting in writing. Russell
8 Squire of community Board eight in Manhattan has
9 well-spoken earlier and we are located in the
10 community Board eight district and I would just like
11 to add that much of the development in the community
12 Board eight district in the last number years,
13 whether as of right or through ULURP has not been
14 well, because of the excessive heights and this is a
15 major concern. And also because of the devices used
16 by developers such as mechanical voids which further
17 increase height. Also, there has been a proposal for
18 the Lenexa Hill hospital expansion and also the New
19 York City blood center, both of them are ULURP
20 processes and also strongly, strongly opposed, at
21 least in their initial presentations. Finally, I
22 would like to mention that, even mayors can oppose
23 well-off neighborhoods. Mayor Bloomberg, in the view
24 of many, to his credit, and in the interest of social
25

1 justice, insisted that the Marine transfer station
2 which would transfer garbage from trucks to barges
3 and--

4
5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

6 LO VAN DER VALK: Yeah. Communities that
7 are well-off. Thank you so much.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Michael
9 Hollingsworth, you may begin upon the sergeant's
10 announcement.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

12 MICHAEL HOLLINGSWORTH: Good afternoon. My
13 name is Michael Hollingsworth. I'm a rent stabilized
14 tenant and member of the Crown Height Tenant Union,
15 an autonomous tenant led all volunteer tenant
16 Association. I live in a city Council District that
17 is been under siege for the past seven years. We
18 have seen a string of developer driven land deals
19 from the Bedford Union [inaudible 05:55:53] of 2017,
20 racist rezonings of Franklin Avenue in 2018, and a
21 forthcoming disaster that is 960 Franklin Avenue.
22 About this proposal for comprehensive citywide
23 planning, this whole proposal is still a top-down
24 plan. Giving community boards three scenarios and a
25 Showboat in which we get to pick one-- in which we

1
2 get to pick which one we hate the least is including
3 us in determining what gets built in our
4 neighborhoods. It is more of the same, simply
5 rebranded. Governments usually get one bite of the
6 apple. You all got yours with MIH which has been an
7 abject failure and it completely disqualifies this
8 Main area city Council that voted for it to get
9 another bite. New Yorkers number one concern is
10 housing affordability and stability and the city is
11 less affordable than eight years ago and more New
12 Yorkers are homeless that eight years ago. Late is
13 the hour in which this city Council chooses to appear
14 with the comprehensive citywide plan. As a lifelong
15 member of a red light district who lives with the
16 effects of your decisions every day, I strongly
17 believe that comprehensive city planning is needed,
18 but with this current city government's track record
19 as it relates to housing, rezoning, and land-use
20 decisions, you have shown that you are not up to the
21 task. This city Council should not settle
22 neighborhoods and future governments with their last
23 ditch effort to save a solidified history of failure.
24 Now is not the time for legacy building. Now is the
25 time for the city Council to stand down. Thank you.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Olympia
3 Kazi, you may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

5 OLYMPIA KAZI: Thank you. Can you hear
6 me?

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Yes. We can hear you.

8 OLYMPIA KAZI: Thank you. So my name
9 is Olympia Kazi and I'm a [inaudible 05:57:46] and I
10 also serve on land use on Community Board Three, but
11 today I testify on my personal capacity. So, in New
12 York City, we need comprehensive planning and I can't
13 stress enough how distressing it has been here year
14 after year to hear Department of City Planning
15 commissioners opposing comprehensive planning and
16 keep relying on zoning. When I saw the presentation
17 that the city Council people gave to my committee and
18 today the questions that I heard were what does
19 meaningful participation look like, how do we make
20 sure that sufficient funding and other resources are
21 ongoing for the communities, will this help
22 communities to really push through the community led
23 197 A plans, why will this be run from the Mayor's
24 office, why pass this bill now wall you are on your
25 way out? And the reality is that this plan doesn't,

1
2 you know, address a lot of these frustrations that
3 many of us have because the planning process has been
4 unfair. But, with all this said, I believe that this
5 proposal has strategic value and I don't like the
6 idea of throwing away the opportunity to start
7 building toward comprehensive planning, so I would
8 recommend, instead of typing these right away to the
9 actual planning process, past and improved version of
10 this deal as a steppingstone towards comprehensive
11 planning where we create these plans completely
12 [inaudible 05:59:11] from the planning process and we
13 evaluate them over the years and, if they do make
14 sense, then we include them in the decision-making
15 process because, sooner or later, we should stop
16 relying on zoning. We need comprehensive planning
17 and it needs to be equitable, so let's work on that.
18 Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Phil
20 Konigsberg, you may begin upon the sergeant's
21 announcement.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

23 PHIL KONIGSBERG: Hello, Council member
24 and Chair Cabrera. Good to see you again. My name
25 is Phil Konigsberg. I am a member of Queens

4 Community Board Seven for a long time, but I am
5 speaking here is an individual. I want to support
6 and endorse what my fellow community Board members
7 previously have spoken and, as I look at the squares
8 on the screen, Eugene Kelty, my Chair, Kevin
9 Forestall, Paul Graziano, and Henry Euler. I am
10 totally against this bill. The naming of that,
11 Planning Together, is a very poor description because
12 it is just not together. It is that Brett and, at
13 this point, I would like my remaining time to Richard
14 Hellenbrecht who, for technical reasons, couldn't
15 speak previously. So, if that is approved, I will
16 yield the rest of my time to Mr. Hellenbrecht. Mr.
17 Hellenbrecht.

18 RICHARD HELLENBRECHT: Can I be heard now?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. We can hear
20 you.

21 RICHARD HELLENBRECHT: Okay. Thank you.

22 I speak to you today from myself, Richard
23 Hellenbrecht, a lifelong resident of New York City
24 and a proud single-family homeowner in Bellerose town
25 in eastern Queens. I am known to be an active member
of the civic business and parks organizations in the
borough. I have thoughtfully considered the subject

1 intro as well as Planning Together, the study
2 document. As land-use chair of Queens Community
3 Board, I'm well aware of the crying need for
4 additional support for our local district officers,
5 particularly for more and better planning data, as
6 well as increased coordination among city agencies.
7 However, if I were a member of this city Council, I
8 would never consider voting for a massive complex and
9 potentially disruptive legislation such as
10 Introduction to 186 knowing that the bill's primary
11 sponsor will not be in office to lead the
12 implementation or to take the heat for any likely
13 problems. The city is facing numerous crises right
14 now. In addition to your awesome responsibilities to
15 govern the largest city in the world, the Council's
16 job right now is to fight the Covid pandemic, get 8
17 million+ people healthy, get businesses up and
18 running, open schools, and get kids in them, prepare
19 for climate change, find homes for the homeless, and
20 balance the worst budget crisis in decades. When all
21 of that work is done, you are welcome to turn the
22 city planning apparatus on its ear. Meanwhile, let's
23 stop wasting time fixing what ain't broke and let's
24

1 solve these very real and pressing problems. Thank
2 you.
3

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Rachel
5 Levy, you may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

7 RACHEL LEVY: Thank you. Thank you, Chair
8 Cabrera, Speaker Johnson, and Council members. I
9 Rachel Levy, Executive Director of Friends of the
10 Upper East Side Historic Districts. We are
11 preservation group founded in 1982 and a leading
12 voice for common sense planning in our neighborhood.
13 Holistic citywide planning processes that streamline
14 current redundancies provides a clear and equitable
15 vision for the future and empowers communities to
16 have a voice in the future of their neighborhoods is
17 a worthy and necessary goal that we support. But
18 this proposal falls short on the details. At its
19 core, Planning Together represents a top-down
20 planning process that would centralize land use
21 powers among the Mayor and city Council and
22 prioritize growth goals above all else. Communities
23 would have opportunities to be heard and an
24 engagement process, but this activity will be managed
25 by the Mayor's Office and local feedback is not the

1 primary input in the development of the land use
2 scenarios. It is unclear how growth targets will be
3 determined if and how they will consider historic
4 districts and landmarks, and what recourse
5 communities will have if they disagree with the plans
6 set out for their neighborhoods. Rather than
7 simplifying or streamlining the process, Planning
8 Together graphs a complex new bureaucratic process,
9 one that outlasts the term limits of any elected
10 official on to an already complex process. With
11 community engagement led by the same outside body
12 that is instituting the growth targets and no mention
13 of additional funding or professional support for
14 community boards, we are all but guaranteed more
15 engagement theater rather than any meaningful process
16 with New Yorkers to come together on shared values
17 and goals. More coordinated and equitable planning
18 is a worthy goal and something that communities
19 desperately need, but centralizing much of the
20 planning process to the Mayor's office and city
21 Council will further entrenched top-down planning
22 processes that would limit true community engagement
23 and further complicate planning in New York City.

24 Thank you.
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
3 now move on to our final panel which will include, in
4 order, William Thomas, Lakisha Romero, Phil Simpson,
5 and Brian Block. William Thomas, you may begin upon
6 the sergeant's announcement.

7 WILLIAM THOMAS: Hi. Can you hear me?

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.
9 Yes. We hear you.

10 WILLIAM THOMAS: Hi, everyone. My name
11 is will Thomas. I am here to testify on the
12 Council's proposed bill as a representative of Open
13 New York, an independent Pro housing organization.
14 We're judging this bill on how it will help us break
15 with the status quo in solving our historic housing
16 shortage, whether it will get us the housing we need
17 and where we need it. In this light, the bill has
18 many positives. First, we like the citywide goals
19 established at the start of the process creating a
20 common framework before ULURP begins should help
21 reduce the likelihood that residents feel taken
22 advantage of by developers or the city. We also
23 approve of the proposal to set districtwide targets.
24 We must have a common view of when a neighborhood is
25 truly seeing its fair share of construction without

1 being filtered through the lens of what is
2 politically realistic, which is inherently
3 inequitable. We also support the inclusion of
4 mandated periodic reviews of the zoning resolution.
5 By requiring the city to present every neighborhood
6 for proposals with land use changes before developers
7 submit applications, communities, elected officials,
8 and the city can evaluate them without the specter of
9 back room deal making. Finally, we also support the
10 general environmental impact statements on plan, as
11 doing the EIS project at the time is needlessly
12 costly and ignores the interconnected nature of urban
13 planning. All that said, there are significant
14 drawbacks, namely and how it allows the Council to
15 unilaterally undermine this plan. The bill permits
16 the Council to change the district level targets
17 before adoption with no oversight to ensure that they
18 remain consistent with the citywide goals or equity
19 mandates. Furthermore, the callout procedure is
20 vague and perpetuates ad hoc decision-making. One
21 could easily imagine a situation like today where the
22 Council calls up rezoning applications in higher
23 income neighborhoods, but also allows rezonings in
24 lower income ones to sail through. Significantly,
25

1 there are also no clear carrots or sticks to
2 encourage adherence to the plan. There needs to be
3 real incentives to stick to commitments. Finally,
4 this process is disconnected from the budget process
5 which opens the door for political wrangling where
6 low income neighborhoods could be told that they must
7 adopt land use changes in order to access needed
8 investment.

9
10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

11 WILLIAM THOMAS: we would recommend they
12 pair the bill with necessary minimums to ensure
13 accountability with objective methodologies for
14 homelessness, air pollution, educational disparities,
15 and racial segregation. As well as other things
16 which I will include in the written testimony. Thank
17 you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,
19 we will hear from Leticia Romero. You may begin upon
20 the sergeant's announcement.

21 LETICIA REMAURO: Well, good afternoon,
22 Speaker Johnson--

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

24 LETICIA REMAURO: Oh. Sorry. Good
25 afternoon. My name is Leticia Remauro and I'm a

1 former vice president for the Battery Park City
2 Authority and former chairman of Community Board One
3 Staten Island. Thanks for allowing me to speak on
4 this Intro 2186. The five boroughs are like five
5 children, not more better than the other, but each
6 different. Of the five boroughs, Staten Island is
7 most different. We are more suburban in character,
8 we have the smallest population which is severely
9 underserved by public transportation and we are often
10 left out when it comes to city service delivery.
11 One-size-fits-all planning never worked for us.
12 While Intro 2186 lays out a pathway towards
13 comprehensive planning for New York City, it doesn't
14 give real teeth to those who best know their
15 community. If you truly want to benefit all
16 neighborhoods, the comprehensive master-planned
17 reflecting goals that are unique to each borough
18 should be developed and adopted. Borough presidents
19 are empowered by the city charter to plan their
20 borough, therefore, they should lead a borough task
21 force that includes members of the borough board and
22 borough commissioners who will create a long-term,
23 comprehensive master-planned reflecting the unique
24 needs of their borough. Allowing each borough out a
25

1 plan and a way that celebrates its uniqueness will
2 provide New Yorkers the opportunity to choose where
3 and how they want to live. It will allow us to
4 successfully plan future service delivery budgets and
5 reduce the need for knee-jerk and reactionary
6 budgeting. Best of all, it will send a message to
7 residents and businesses that New York City wants
8 everyone to live and do business here. Imagine any
9 New York where borough presidents and community
10 boards have a real voice at the beginning of the
11 planning process, where ULURP variances and
12 individual rezonings are the exception, instead of
13 the norm, where the battle of residents to protect
14 the character of their neighborhood doesn't need to
15 be fought on a regular basis and where everyone gets
16 the services they need from the largest budget of any
17 city in the world. If you can imagine these things,
18 they can become a reality.

19
20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

21 LETICIA REMAURO: My years at the Battery
22 Park City Authority taught me the importance of
23 comprehensive planning, especially when initiating
24 new ideas such as sustainable development. My time
25 as Community Board One chair taught me that

1 comprehensive planning must begin with the people who
2 know their neighborhoods best. If Intro 2186 can be
3 revised to allow the comprehensive planning to begin
4 with borough based plans created by task forces lead
5 by each borough, beneficial character revision
6 president for their prospective boroughs, it has the
7 potential to be one of the most beneficial character
8 revisions of this century and to those who say it's
9 too costly, I ask how much money and how many people
10 has New York City lost to poor forecast planning.

11 The details of my idea are included in my written
12 testimony. Thank you for giving me the opportunity.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Phil
14 Simpson, you may begin upon the sergeant's
15 announcement.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time begins now.

17 PHILIP SIMPSON: Thank you. My name is
18 Philip Simpson. I am in resident of Inwood. I was
19 involved with the Inwood Rezoning for over the last
20 four years that other rezoning around the city. I
21 have seen the administration flatly reject any
22 consideration of race, refusing to see the racial
23 injustice and land use. I have also seen where that
24 prior Speaker referred to as engagement theater of
25

1 what happens during ULURP at the community level.

2
3 Process matters and if we want good outcomes, you
4 have to begin with a good process. I agree with many
5 of the speakers we have heard today that the current
6 process fails the people who live and work in our
7 city and that we need comprehensive planning, among
8 other reasons, so that neighborhoods are not required
9 to engage in destructive bargains in order to have
10 basic amenities that everybody agrees they should
11 have. You've heard from people that have been active
12 on the ground in land use decision-making, but this
13 bill falls far too short. I want to echo what I
14 heard borough president Brewer say this morning.
15 Planning has to begin at the community board and
16 neighborhood level. Borough wide hearings do not
17 empower people. The work begins at the community
18 board level. The work takes place at the committee
19 level within the community board. This process under
20 this bill would begin with the conditions of the city
21 report which, once issued, will drive the process.
22 The conditions of the city report needs to begin at
23 the community board and neighborhood level where
24 people who know the conditions of their neighborhoods
25 can provide actual knowledge about what is going on.

1
2 In the process needs to keep coming back to the
3 community boards and to the neighborhood before there
4 is a draft goal statement, before there is a draft
5 comprehensive long-term plan. We can't just have one
6 level of hearing at the community boards late in the
7 process and think that there is any sort of community
8 input at all. My recommendation, then, is to redraft
9 this legislation so that it be in the neighborhood,
10 it begins with the community board and to fund the
11 community boards so that they can actually have a
12 meaningful role. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Bryan Block, you
14 may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin
16 now.

17 BRYAN BLOCK: Thank you. Good afternoon,
18 Mr. Chairman and Council members. My name is Bryan
19 Block. I'm a resident of Cambridge Heights since
20 1967. I am also the chairperson of community board
21 13 and the president of the Cambridge Heights Civic
22 Association. I'm also joined here with my Chair of
23 land use, Mr. Richard Hellenbrecht, and my fellow
24 Chairs of the community boards in Queens and I have a
25 letter that we just want to read into the record.

1 Dear, Speaker Johnson, Queen community board 13,
2 located on the southeast Queens border with Nassau
3 County is one of the largest land mass, most diverse
4 districts in the city. Upon serious consideration of
5 the pros and cons of the Planning Together study and
6 related Council introduction 2186-2020, this board
7 voted unanimously, unanimously, to object to this
8 proposal for numerous critical reasons, many outlined
9 in this letter. Our analysis makes clear that this
10 scheme must be delayed until it can be vetted
11 thoroughly, yet more community buy-in and input from
12 upcoming city leadership. Most importantly, we
13 object any form of top-down planning that effectively
14 imposes limits on grassroots community based efforts.
15 Five quick points. Downplay Planning Together study.
16 Queens community board 13 expresses concern that the
17 Planning Together report makes the relevant
18 comparisons of the cities vastly different than New
19 York City and uses rezoning data. A limited
20 timeframe that skew results not reflecting the
21 diverse zoning actions that were implemented over a
22 broader period. This undue influence of the
23 methodology processes, and frameworks called in Intro
24 2186-2020. Number two, Limited comprehensive
25

1
2 planning. Comprehensive planning should be
3 implemented only by gathering dispersed city agency
4 data synthesized in a common portal with tools to
5 support communities and community boards, rather than
6 top-down control. Planning should start totally in a
7 strong bottom up process with the new strategic
8 planning offices as the last and least influential
9 stop. Where there is a consensus among communities,
10 QATPS task should be no meshed. These plans
11 coordinate service. Do not prioritize growth. Our
12 district has a minority majority district listing
13 only 18 percent white and the last census. It is low
14 density, residential area and transit desert with
15 overused and aging infrastructure. The growth
16 planning initiative would strain our infrastructure,
17 but all for little benefit to this district. We need
18 quality infrastructure and investment, not more
19 population. Thanks to a recent zoning actions by
20 city planning, with the help of outside technical
21 assistance, our district now reflects the needs of
22 our diverse communities. Rushed implementation must
23 be delayed. Introduction 2186 is being rushed in our
24 minimally vetted on. The bill vests extraordinary
25 authority in a single nonelected position while

1 introducing the best technical complexity. The city
2 faces numerous challenges, particularly in light of
3 the pandemic. There are severe budget constraints.
4 The declining population, reduce tax revenues,
5 extraordinary Covid expenses, and the aging
6 infrastructure. A rushed, flawed, and resource
7 intensive planning exercise will distract attention
8 from recovery. This is a lame-duck year for the
9 Mayor, the Speaker, and many Council members.
10 Passage of 2186 would leave a whole new city
11 government with a complex and untested planning
12 process to which they had no input, but full
13 accountability. Wait for the new Mayor in Council
14 and, finally, community board issues. Understaffed
15 community board district offices which have never
16 received the promised independent planning support
17 will be overtaxed. Volunteer board members would be
18 overwhelmed with new and difficult tasks. The
19 initiative may allow development meeting the broad,
20 long-term objectives of the plan, but which offers no
21 benefit to the community and without adequate
22 community input. Finally, the proposal offers no
23 real power to community groups or community boards to
24 shape change. Community boards would remain advisory
25

1 with their recommendations easily ignored. Give
2 boards a stronger local say on future plans. For
3 these reasons and more, Community Board 13 voted no
4 to 2086-2020. We urge our Council delegation and
5 others to defeat this legislation. Thank you, Mr.
6 Chair. Thank you for listening to us from CB 13.
7 Thank you very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you. I
10 believe we have a question by Council member
11 Grodenchik.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: It's not so
13 much a question, Mr. Chairman, but I've been here
14 pretty much all day and I want to thank you for your
15 utter professionalism, as always and I want to thank
16 the people, especially my constituents, but really
17 all the people from across the city that came out to
18 talk today to us about this most important issue and
19 I see my colleague, Daneek Miller, has raised his
20 hand, so I'm going to yield to him and, obviously, if
21 you haven't spoken to me locally, have spoken to a
22 number of you, but I'm just a phone call away to my
23 local folks. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
25 Council member Miller.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you, Mr.
3 Chair and thank you, Council member Grodenchik, for
4 your partnership and, quite frankly, for listening to
5 our collective constituencies that have been very
6 much concerned about this new process and what it
7 would look like and whether or not communities that
8 we know have been marginalized not just because they
9 are these historic communities of color that have
10 access to infrastructure and things that really
11 provide a quality of life, but for those that are on
12 the line-- I see many. I see Jean. I see Brian. I
13 see Richard and a few others from 12 and 13 and
14 Lynette. Thank you guys for really showing up, but
15 when 76 percent of the city are renters and the
16 communities that you and I represent are a lot
17 different and so we want to make sure that our voices
18 are in this space that is being discussed in this
19 process. And so, for those that were around for the
20 testimony this morning, know that I, that you have
21 lots of concerns about this process and whether or
22 not the needs and the values of the constituencies
23 that we serve are they are. So, what is most
24 important is that we look at, you know, when we talk
25 about this process opening up the ability for

1 communities to be engaged, I'm not so sure that that
2 is the case in the way that happens by, you know,
3 this type of public discourse and I'm so glad that
4 our folks from the community, constituents are on the
5 line and are willing to speak up and testify to those
6 values that we have and what we think is necessary in
7 this process. The Atman city planning had very
8 little answers for some of the questions that we have
9 had, but I would, once again, reiterate that this
10 is something that came before the Charter Commission
11 and was not successful during that time of the
12 Charter Commission and is being revisited in another
13 form today. And so, I am so glad that the same
14 constituency-- and the fact of the matter is it
15 never made it to the ballot in that case and the last
16 time it did, believe, was 89 and it was defeated,
17 then, as well. But that we are aware of something
18 that potentially will have impacts on our communities
19 and that we are willing to raise those voices and
20 just know that those who you have elected to be your
21 voice app the Council we speak often and there is a
22 consistent voice that comes from this coalition of
23 Southeast Queens legislators. So, thank you, Mr.
24 Chair. You have been gracious, the ultimate
25

1 professional. Somebody said that man some coffee,
2 please. All right. Thank you. Thank you all.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
5 Council member Miller. We always appreciate you.
6 Council member Adams? I think you've been here from
7 the beginning, as well.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: yes, sir. Thank
9 you, Mr. Chair. You have been amazing today. And,
10 for those of us that no that marathon hearings, it's
11 been quite a day as you all see that my jacket is off
12 now. So, yeah. It has been a great-- and I just
13 have to say, you know, aside, you know, from this
14 hearing which we heard so much passion, I just want
15 to say, first of all, I am just so proud of my
16 Southeast Queens constituents for being here today,
17 for speaking up. I think that you will know us.
18 Somebody said that you didn't hear from your elected
19 official. We wanted the narrative to go around, so
20 that was very intentional. It was not because we did
21 not want to come to you, we did not want to bring
22 this out. We wanted the narrative to play out
23 because we heard it and we wanted to get to a place
24 in a public forum in this hearing where all voices
25 could be heard together because there is one side of

1 a narrative that is very heavy. We wanted to make
2 sure that this legislation is scrutinized from a to
3 Z. You all are-- you are in the trenches and, like
4 I said, you know, community boards are everything to
5 me, so if we don't have the voice of the people
6 behind this legislation, as you all noticed who is
7 actually sponsoring this legislation, and I believe
8 there is only one person from Queens on this bill,
9 there is a reason for that, as well. You know, like
10 I said, we are talking about where I live in this
11 bill. We are talking about where I live. Single-
12 family homes. And that is why I asked the question
13 over and over and over again. I believe what I heard
14 from all sides, I believe it. This has to be
15 something that takes time to work through with our
16 community. We do not want a top-down process. This
17 is something that we have been speaking about as a
18 Counsel for way too long that we have been victims
19 of, particularly, you know, in Queens. We have been
20 victims of the top-down approach which has not
21 worked. Someone mentioned MIH. I was not on the
22 Council when MIH was passed, but I can let you know
23 that I was Chair of a community Board where our
24 voices were not heard. We opposed MIH and it
25

1 happened anyway. So, this is the type of thank that
2 we are here to dialogue with our communities because
3 a lot of us are totally, totally wrapped up and
4 committed to maintaining the voice of our
5 communities, maintaining the character of our
6 communities, maintaining the structure of our
7 communities and protecting our communities against
8 the coming concrete jungles. I will just put it that
9 way. So, with that said, I look forward to
10 continuing the dialogue and I think you, again, Chair
11 Cabrera. Another shout out to Southeast Queens. So
12 proud of you today for your testimony. We will
13 continue this dialogue with you. Look forward to
14 seeing you. Hey, Brian block. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
17 Council member, and thank you for staying during the
18 entire hearing. It is not easy to be here for almost
19 seven hours, but thank you for being a trooper. You
20 always stay for the [inaudible 06:25:54]. I want to
21 turn it over to the Committee Counsel for any last
22 words before I close it down.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.
24 At this time, if your name has not been called and
25 you wish to testify, please raise your hand using the

1 zoom raise hand function and, as a reminder, if you
2 wish to submit written testimony, you may do so
3 within the next 72 hours by emailing your testimony
4 to testimony@Council.NYC.gov. Seeing no hands
5 raised, I will turn it back to Chair Cabrera for
6 closing remarks.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
9 I want to thank my colleagues, especially those of
10 you who were here from the very beginning. I want to
11 thank every single one of you who testified today. I
12 know that we are passionate, regardless of where you
13 stand, because you care about New York and you care
14 about the future of New York. We are concerned about
15 the future of New York. We've got to get it right in
16 this is why I am so glad that we had this level of
17 dialogue and honest, transparent level dialogue. I
18 want to thank the community Board members and Chairs.
19 If anyone knows me, anybody been around in the
20 Council just for a little while, you know how
21 passionate I regarding community boards. You do a
22 tremendous amount of work. You care for the
23 community and you are making a difference. I think
24 that community boards need to be further empowered.
25 We are going to continue I'm asking all of the

1 community Board members here to call upon the
2 administration and test stop these cuts that are
3 taking place into your budget. It baffles me that
4 there are cuts taking place in one of the places
5 where-- actually, in the place where they get the
6 least funding. These crazy cuts that are taking
7 place. 8000 dollars for next year. You already had
8 a cut this year and, let alone the funding that we
9 are able to give through the Council the last two
10 previous years that initiative, unfortunately, due to
11 the pandemic, we were not able to provide that. But,
12 if you put all that together, you are talking about a
13 20 percent cut in your budget from just even a year
14 ago. We've got to do better. We must do better and
15 we will do better. And so, I want to encourage all
16 of the community Board members to come to the
17 Governmental Operations hearing when we do our
18 preliminary budget. To get these fundings restored
19 back to your operating budget. I want to thank the
20 staff. You did a fantastic job. It is not easy what
21 they do. There's a lot of preparation it takes for
22 this type a hearing. I salute you. I called them
23 the dream team. Council staff, thank you for all you
24 have done. And also to my cochairs. Their impact,

1 COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS JOINTLY WITH
2 COMMITTEE ON LAND USE AND SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL
3 BUDGET

318

4 there wisdom, into the Speaker, as well, for putting
5 forth this level of discussion. And so, with that,
6 today, we conclude today's hearing.

7 [gavel]

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

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 15, 2021