

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS, STATE AND

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL  
OPERATIONS, STATE AND FEDERAL  
LEGISLATION

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March 1, 2024

Start: 1:22 p.m.

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HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE ROOM, 14TH  
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Lincoln Restler, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer  
David M. Carr  
Jennifer Gutiérrez  
Shahana Hanif  
Vickie Paladino  
Lynn C. Schulman  
Inna Vernikov

A P P E A R A N C E S

Daniel Steinberg, Director of the Mayor's Office  
of Operations

Lauren Quinones, First Deputy Director of the  
Mayor's Office of Operations

Michael Demarco, President, Local 1455, DC 37

Anne Callagy, Government Benefits Director in the  
Civil Practice of Legal Aid Society

1  
2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone  
3 check for the Committee on Governmental Operations  
4 and Federal Legislation. Today's date is March 1,  
5 2024. We're located in the 14th Floor Hearing Room,  
6 recording done by Rocco Mesiti.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon and  
8 welcome to the New York City Council hearing of the  
9 Committee on Governmental Operations, State and  
10 Federal Legislation.

11 At this time, can everybody please  
12 silence your cell phones.

13 If you wish to testify, please go up to  
14 the Sergeant-at-Arms' desk to fill out a testimony  
15 slip.

16 At this time and going forward, no one is  
17 to approach the dais. I repeat, no one is to approach  
18 the dais.

19 Thank you for your cooperation.

20 Chair, we are ready to begin.

21 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Good afternoon.  
22 Thank you all for being with us today. I am Council  
23 Member Lincoln Restler, and I am really excited to be  
24 the Chair of the Committee on Governmental  
25 Operations, and State and Federal Legislation.

I'd like to acknowledge and welcome my  
Colleagues who are with us today, my friend and  
neighbor, Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez, and  
former Chair of the Gov Ops Committee, a woman who  
needs no introduction, Council Member Gale Brewer.

I wanted to focus our first hearing on  
the Mayor's Preliminary Management Report, the PMMR,  
because the PMMR is really the Mayor's midterm report  
card for Fiscal Year 2024 and, quite frankly, he is  
not passing. The PMMR paints a picture of a  
mismanaged city, and my goal for the hearing today is  
to focus our collective attention on the areas where  
the Adams' Administration can and must do better.

I'd like to thank the team from the  
Mayor's Office of Operations for attending today's  
hearing and providing testimony. As a former Op  
staffer, I have a great deal of respect for the work  
that you do. We did also invite the Chief Efficiency  
Officer who is specifically tasked with working with  
agencies to assess the goals and metrics in the PMMR  
as well as representatives from the Municipal  
Services Assessment Office, which monitors and  
assesses the delivery of services that are measured  
in the PMMR. It is unfortunate that both of these

1 semi-mysterious offices have declined to attend  
2 today's hearing.

3  
4           As I mentioned, we're conducting  
5 oversight into the PMMR, a Charter-mandated document  
6 that evaluates the performance of municipal agencies  
7 for the first four months of the Fiscal Year. This  
8 report captures 2,000 indicators from every City  
9 agency from July through October of Calendar Year  
10 2023. I want to acknowledge all of the hard work by  
11 the Mayor's Office of Operations Performance  
12 Management Team who put together the PMMR as well as  
13 related reports. This work is absolutely critical for  
14 instilling transparency and accountability in City  
15 government, and I especially want to credit the  
16 Mayor's Office of Operation Director, Dan Steinberg,  
17 for his leadership in creating the Dynamic Mayor's  
18 Management Report. This new and compelling tool  
19 provides meaningful, real-time accountability of  
20 agency performance so we are not just waiting for the  
21 PMMR and the MMR to be released. For an  
22 Administration that has been appropriately criticized  
23 for reducing transparency, this is an important and  
24 notable step in the right direction.

1  
2           The Mayor loves to talk about getting  
3 stuff done, but the findings in the PMMR tell a very  
4 different story. Under the Charter, the Mayor's  
5 Office of Operations is charged with the  
6 accountability to catch issues in real time and  
7 understand when City services are going off the  
8 rails. Indeed, Ops plays a critical role in not only  
9 providing performance management and support for City  
10 agencies, but also providing project management  
11 expertise to make sure the priority initiatives of  
12 the Administration are effectively implemented and  
13 that problems are being flagged and fixed in real  
14 time.

15           NYPD response times to crimes in progress  
16 are up by almost two minutes year-over-year and are  
17 up almost six minutes since pre-COVID. The core  
18 function of the Police Department is to respond to  
19 and solve crimes in our communities. Instead, we have  
20 seen response times lag dangerously and massive  
21 increases in broken windows policing relating to  
22 minor issues. The NYPD is on pace this year to  
23 quadruple the number of minor summonses issued since  
24 the time the Mayor came into office, while at the  
25

1 same time spending approximately 1 billion on  
2 overtime.  
3

4           Despite reductions in crime, the Mayor is  
5 reversing the progress that has been made in recent  
6 years to end mass incarceration in New York City.  
7 Adult populations in our jails has increased by  
8 almost 1,000 folks since the Mayor took office,  
9 despite the humanitarian crisis on Rikers Island, and  
10 the number of kids, kids, in jail has doubled since  
11 the Mayor came into office and is up 31 percent year-  
12 over-year, according to the PMMR.

13           As has been widely reported, timely  
14 approvals of cash assistance and food stamps  
15 applications for New Yorkers struggling to put food  
16 on the table have plummeted despite litigation and  
17 extensive Council oversight over multiple years.

18           While most New Yorkers likely aren't  
19 aware of the PMMR, the indicators it includes have  
20 very real implications on their lives. A recent  
21 report revealed that New York City has experienced  
22 the largest increase in poverty in a decade, with  
23 nearly 2 million New Yorkers and one in four children  
24 now living in poverty. These New Yorkers especially  
25 need a City government that is delivering quality

1 services to meet their needs, and these kids deserve  
2 every possible service we can provide to set them on  
3 a pathway for success. The PMMR indicators tell a  
4 story of City agencies that are struggling due to  
5 seven painful rounds of the Mayor's budget cuts and  
6 extensive hiring freezes that have substantially  
7 shrunk our City government workforce. The PMMR shows  
8 clearly that City agencies cannot achieve their goals  
9 as the Mayor cuts their workforce and slashes their  
10 budgets. We will hear today from the leadership team  
11 at Ops about how your office is responding to these  
12 troubling trends and what your team is doing to get  
13 our City back on track.

14  
15 I'd also just like to thank Council  
16 Members Inna Vernikov and Council Member Shahana  
17 Hanif for joining us today as well.

18 I want to thank Jayasri Ganapathy and  
19 Erica Cohen from the Committee Staff for their  
20 support in putting this hearing together, and I just  
21 want to take a moment to thank my Chief-of-Staff,  
22 Molly Haley, who is like just freaking brilliant and  
23 really appreciate, and so thank you for all your help  
24 in putting this together and for everything we do and  
25



our exceptional Communications Director, Nieve  
Mooney.

I'd also like to thank Lynn Schulman, who  
is on with us, Council Member Schulman is on from  
Queens. She, unfortunately, has a cold. We hope she's  
feeling better.

I will now turn it over to Committee  
Counsel to swear in our first panel.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL GANAPATHY: Thank you,  
Chair Restler. I'm Jayasri Ganapathy. I'm Counsel to  
the Committee on Governmental Operations, State and  
Federal legislation, and I will be moderating this  
hearing.

During this hearing, I will be calling on  
panelists to testify, and I would like to remind  
anyone who is joining us to testify via Zoom that you  
will be on mute until your name is called to testify,  
at which time you will be unmuted by the host.

For those of you who are testifying in  
person, be sure to sign up with a Sergeant-at-Arms  
even if you have registered in advance and, when we  
do call public testimony, you're invited to come to  
the table and deliver your testimony once you have

1  
2 been cued. Please listen for your name to be called  
3 as we will periodically be calling them out.

4           At this time, we will have the first  
5 panel of testimony from the Mayor's Office of  
6 Operations, and then we will hear from members of the  
7 public during the testimony.

8           During the hearing, if Council Members  
9 would like to ask questions of the Administration or  
10 of a specific panelist, please let me know or, if you  
11 are online, please use the Zoom raise hand function,  
12 and I will call on you.

13           For all panelists, when you are called to  
14 testify, make sure to state your name and the  
15 organization you represent, if there is any.

16           I will now swear in the representatives  
17 of the Mayor's Office of Operations. Today we have  
18 Daniel Steinberg, who is Director of the Mayor's  
19 Office of Operations, and Lauren Quinones, First  
20 Deputy Director of the Mayor's Office of Operations.  
21 Panelists, can you please raise your right hands?

22           Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
23 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this  
24 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member  
25 questions.

1

2

DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Yes.

3

FIRST DEPUTY DIRECTOR QUINONES: Yes.

4

COMMITTEE COUNSEL GANAPATHY: Thank you.

5

You may begin.

6

DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Thank you. Before I

7

start my formal testimony, I just want to sincerely

8

thank the Chair for holding this hearing. It's been

9

over a couple of years since the Council had an MMR

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hearing, and we consider the MMR the quintessential

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oversight resource, and so the fact that you're using

12

it to criticize the Administration is something that

13

we consider a triumph of democracy and evidence that

14

we're meeting the highest standards of transparency

15

and accountability so we're very happy to be here and

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we're we're going to answer all of your questions and

17

we'll provide context and explanations as the report

18

does with the caveat that there might be some

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questions better directed toward agencies at budget

20

hearings, but we want to be as substantive as

21

possible today. Let me start my testimony.

22

Good afternoon, Chair Restler and Members

23

of the Committee on Government Operations. My name is

24

Dan Steinberg. I'm Director of the Mayor's Office of

25

Operations. I'm joined today by Lauren Quinones, the

1 First Deputy Director of the Mayor's Office of  
2 Operations, who oversees the preparation and  
3 publication of both the Preliminary Mayor's  
4 Management Report and the Mayor's Management Report.  
5 The MMR stands as a pioneering example of radical  
6 transparency and accountability since its origin, and  
7 my office has taken a number of crucial steps to  
8 modernize it in form and substance. In the wake of  
9 the fiscal crisis of the 1970s, the City pledged to  
10 more scientifically manage its operations by  
11 deploying data. Instead of management by crisis, the  
12 City would measure agency performance and proactively  
13 address issues that arise. It began as a pilot  
14 program by the Fire and Highways Departments and  
15 evolved in July 1976 to management by objectives,  
16 which for the first time, compelled city managers to  
17 articulate and quantify their performance goals as a  
18 baseline for evaluation. In 1977, the MMR and PMMR  
19 were codified in the City Charter and have been  
20 published biannually ever since. The PMMR offers an  
21 early evaluation of the City performance in the first  
22 four months of the Fiscal Year, fair to call it a  
23 report card, while the MMR, released in September,  
24 provides analysis of the full Fiscal Year. Each  
25

1  
2 report details agency goals and performance in clear  
3 terms, allowing stakeholders to closely monitor  
4 government performance. The MMR and PMMR track  
5 approximately 2,200 performance indicators across 46  
6 City agencies. Each agency provides explanations and  
7 context for their performance, documenting successes  
8 and accounting for shortfalls. No other City  
9 government comes close to this level of  
10 accountability to its constituents and to itself.  
11 This Administration has aggressively worked to usher  
12 the PMMR and the MMR into the 21st century through  
13 digital enhancements and new performance indicators.  
14 Last year, we launched and codified the Dynamic  
15 Mayors Management Report, the DMMR, we'll call it  
16 today, a digital interactive platform that allows  
17 users to compare indicators across agencies and time  
18 with user friendly data visualizations for each  
19 indicator. Furthermore, the DMMR provides monthly  
20 updates for nearly 1,200 performance indicators,  
21 allowing all stakeholders to monitor City performance  
22 more closely, more meaningfully, in more real time.  
23 The real magic of the DMMR obviously is that it makes  
24 it very easy to find what you're looking for, whether  
25 you're a layperson or an expert in government. You

1 don't need to be an expert or a statistician to find  
2 what you're looking for and to understand it, and  
3 that's really was our goal? It's greatly improved the  
4 usability of agency performance data, making it  
5 easier to explore historical trends, compare  
6 indicators through data viz, and download the data  
7 for their own research. In January 2023, Operations  
8 further increased access to the data by publishing  
9 expanded performance indicator data set on the Open  
10 Data Portal. This data set is updated monthly and  
11 synchronized with updates to the DMMR. Previously,  
12 the portal only contained static data sets for each  
13 individual publication, severely limiting  
14 longitudinal analysis. More recently, the Mayor's  
15 Office of Operations made several accessibility-  
16 related improvements to the DMMR, including improved  
17 keyboard accessibility, the ability to translate the  
18 site's content into eight languages other than  
19 English, and an accessibility statement page where  
20 the public can leave feedback. We will continue to  
21 improve the DMMR with new features such as data  
22 stories that will highlight important trends across  
23 agencies, showcasing how the public and other  
24 stakeholders can leverage the MMR to conduct their  
25

1  
2 own analysis. Following its launch, our office held  
3 two trainings for the City Council Staff and another  
4 training for stakeholder organizations on how to  
5 utilize the platform. We'd be happy to host  
6 additional trainings for Council Staff to help you  
7 better serve your constituents.

8           The Mayor's Office of Operations also  
9 works collaboratively with stakeholders inside and  
10 outside government. We institutionalized a process to  
11 consider, track, and implement new indicator  
12 recommendations from the City Council for the first  
13 time. So far, this Administration has added about 65  
14 indicators that were recommended by the City Council,  
15 such as the number of newly constructed schools by  
16 the SCA, the number of stop work orders by DOB, the  
17 number of litter baskets serviced by Sanitation, and  
18 the number of active and closed investigations by  
19 DOI, and the proportion of New Yorkers who have  
20 management over their diabetes as reported by the  
21 Health Department, and many others.

22           Under the current Administration,  
23 Operations has also proactively added customer  
24 centric indicators to better track how the City  
25 serves its residents. There are over 600 indicators

1  
2 in the MMR considered customer centric with nearly  
3 150 added over the past several cycles. Recent  
4 additions include the average time it takes for DOT  
5 to repair a pothole, the proportion of rate  
6 complaints addressed by the New York City Housing  
7 Authority, and so on.

8           The Mayor's Office of Operations  
9 continuously meets with our agency partners to  
10 reassess the applicability, transparency and accuracy  
11 of the indicators within their chapters. Our offices  
12 led agencies through a guided self-review process to  
13 realign MMR chapters with their missions and  
14 services, revising where needed, goals, services, and  
15 indicators, and updating performance targets, many of  
16 which hadn't been updated in a long time. The effort  
17 has yielded a net of seven new agency service areas,  
18 over 20 new agency goals, and over 200 new MMR  
19 indicators. The Mayor's Office of Operations also  
20 continues steps to improve the quality of the  
21 reports. This includes recently ensuring consistency  
22 in the formatting and clarity of indicator names, and  
23 I'm sorry if this sounds like we're deep in the  
24 weeds, but this is how the MMR becomes a democratic  
25 instrument through this sort of nitty gritty



1 incremental progress, clarity of indicator names and  
2 establishing a more regular and prompted revisiting  
3 and program targets. Ahead of the Fiscal 2024 MMR,  
4 we'll be ensuring indicator definitions have more  
5 depth and clarity in support of the public's  
6 understanding of what's being measured. One of the  
7 central aims of the MMR is to increase transparency  
8 into how local government functions that include  
9 showing inequities where they exist.  
10

11           Operations continues to expand the  
12 universe of indicators that can be disaggregated by  
13 relevant geography such as precincts, school  
14 districts and community boards and, in partnership  
15 with other units, we aim to expand the disaggregation  
16 of performance data geographically and  
17 demographically to better understand the inequities  
18 in services and outcomes that exist across  
19 constituencies in the city and the neighborhoods they  
20 live in. There are over 30 indicators currently  
21 labeled as equity indicators indicating that they are  
22 disaggregated and reported in the City's Annual  
23 Social Indicators and Equity Report which you can  
24 find online, Equity NYC. While the PMMR and MMR are  
25 each published annually, and this is the key point I

1 think for today, the Administration heavily relies  
2 upon performance data as a management tool year-round  
3 and continues to establish internal systems of  
4 results-based accountability. The Mayor is a strong  
5 proponent of active performance management, and the  
6 Mayor's Office of Operations has a series of monthly  
7 meetings with City Hall leadership focused on agency  
8 performance issues. In recognition of these systems  
9 and processes we have put in place, New York City was  
10 recently awarded a Platinum designation by What Works  
11 Cities, making us one of three cities in the world to  
12 achieve this high rank for data-driven management  
13 practices. However, our principal Charter-mandated  
14 deliverable is the MMR and PMMR. These reports  
15 require a lot of work and attention across all  
16 agencies involved. The staff that works on it is  
17 here, and it's a minor miracle that they pull off  
18 twice a year. You see how detailed and thorough the  
19 book is. The process to produce often stretches over  
20 several months after the close of a reporting period,  
21 and we oversee a detailed schedule with many steps  
22 that includes finalizing any changes, ensuring timely  
23 submission of data, drafting, editing narratives and,  
24  
25

1  
2 of course, facilitating internal reviews, approvals,  
3 and escalation.

4 I'll wrap up now, through the PMMR and  
5 MMR for nearly 50 years, Operations have strived to  
6 promote transparency and accountability regarding the  
7 performance of New York City agencies. We will  
8 steward this responsibility and appreciate the  
9 partnership with the Council to ensure these reports  
10 are the most comprehensive insight into the quality  
11 and level of service delivery. We thank you, again,  
12 for calling today's hearing and look forward to  
13 discussing how performance data can be deployed  
14 better and how it can be improved, what we're  
15 missing, and what we're measuring and what we could  
16 do better. Thank you very much.

17 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much,  
18 Director Steinberg, for your testimony and for your  
19 spirit of openness in working with me and my team. I  
20 think that the radical transparency that you  
21 reference that is in the MMR, I think you have  
22 modeled in your engagement with me and my Staff, and  
23 I just want to thank you for that and your, I think,  
24 genuine openness that you bring to this hearing to  
25

1  
2 try to figure out how we can do better as a City so  
3 thank you very much.

4 I'd like to just start with a couple  
5 overview questions around Ops. I might jump into some  
6 NYPD-related questions, and then I'll kick it over to  
7 Colleagues if they have any questions, and then I  
8 have many, many more questions that I'll ask and look  
9 forward to. It's a Friday. What else are we going to  
10 do?

11 I do also just want to acknowledge  
12 Brooklyn's newest Council Member, David Carr, for  
13 joining us. Thank you for being here as well, Council  
14 Member Carr.

15 The Charter places significant  
16 responsibility on Ops to ensure effective delivery of  
17 services, maintaining the MMR and PMMR, making  
18 recommendations on the City's operations more  
19 broadly. Could you just help us provide an overview  
20 of the structure of the office of Ops, the number of  
21 employees on each team and, in particular, could you  
22 describe the role of the Performance Management Team  
23 and the Project Management Team, and how many members  
24 are on each team, and how do those teams intersect?

1  
2                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Sure. The real kind  
3 of pillars of Operations, it does start with our  
4 Performance Management Team to some extent, which is  
5 the team that produces the MMR. They're in charge of  
6 data collection and reporting, indicator development,  
7 and analysis. They support projects when indicators  
8 are required to monitor the efficacy of an  
9 intervention, and they also produce at least mandated  
10 Local Law reports at different cadences, annually,  
11 biannually, monthly, so they have a lot of  
12 responsibility but, really, what's important to know  
13 about them is the way they're structured and how  
14 they've been professionalized. Each analyst owns a  
15 portfolio of agencies and corresponds frequently with  
16 their counterparts at agencies, and it's their job to  
17 really be data detectives, to understand the data  
18 we're looking at and why it's moving the way it is.  
19 They're put in the hot seat very often. They often  
20 brief Deputy Mayors directly, and the Deputy Mayors  
21 expect them to know the answers to questions around  
22 what's pushing the numbers in a given direction so  
23 we're very proud of that team and its growth.

24                   The Project Management Team, which you're  
25 an alumni of, I believe a Senior Policy Advisor, and

1 we're well-aware of your accomplishments at the  
2 office and proud of the work you did on IDNYC.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: That's under oath.

5 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I know. I know. I  
6 considered that, maybe not enough. The Project  
7 Management Team acts as an internal management  
8 consulting shop for City Hall and really is charged  
9 with driving the Mayor's overall agenda but also to  
10 drive efficiency in government. The PM Team supports,  
11 obviously they bring structure and process to  
12 anything that they're working on. Policy and program  
13 implementation, they launch new initiatives, often  
14 incubating programs at Ops, like IDNYC, before it's  
15 moved to the agency, but they also work on program  
16 design and launch, strategic planning, they've been  
17 instrumental in many of the plans that have come out  
18 of City Hall, and organizational improvement, and  
19 they often support emergency response in ad hoc ways.  
20 They're one of the more nimble and talented teams in  
21 the City Hall orbit, and they're used very flexibly.  
22 That's the two teams. A new branch that we created is  
23 Data Management and Analytics. This, to some extent,  
24 came out of the pandemic, where operations played a  
25 very central role in coordinating data across

1  
2 government so everything from the epidemiological  
3 data to the outreach data that was key toward  
4 reaching the public, and so what we did was we built  
5 a more formal, yet very small, Data Management  
6 Analytics Unit. They specialize in more sophisticated  
7 statistical techniques so, if there's something that  
8 needs more probing from the performance data or  
9 elsewhere, that's the team that will apply more  
10 sophisticated methods to the analysis, but they also  
11 have geospatial skills in terms of GIS mapping and  
12 that's one of the big contributions they make also to  
13 the City Hall orbit and, to some extent, mostly for  
14 internal purposes, they do product development and  
15 data engineering. When we need to build a database or  
16 we need an internal dashboard, they do a lot of the  
17 back-end work that's required in a lot of the  
18 automation. One of their public-facing products that  
19 recently was vastly expanded and is about to go  
20 through another expansion is the Capital Projects  
21 Dashboard. When you, Council Member, were at Ops, it  
22 had about 400 projects in it. Now it's got about  
23 10,000 projects in it, and that was accomplished  
24 through back-end magic in the sense that it's  
25 combining data from FISA and the financial management

1 system with project schedule data from over 20  
2 different agencies from their project management  
3 system so we're very proud of that work, and I don't  
4 think it'll ever get the credit it deserves, although  
5 it will be the subject of a lot of scrutiny, which is  
6 in the spirit of today's hearing and our mission.

7 Those are the core teams, but we do have other  
8 functions. I should have said we have about 60 people  
9 overall in the office. The Project Management Team is  
10 actually down to nine right now. I believe it was  
11 more robust when you were there. We're working on  
12 that. The Performance Management Team is a similar  
13 size. We get to 60 through all these other functions  
14 that I'll just quickly mention. We do rulemaking  
15 where we administer the City Administrative Procedure  
16 Act, CAPA, and facilitate key elements of rulemaking  
17 process, like plain language review. You may remember  
18 we have an inspection team called SCOUT that surveys  
19 city streets in search of commonly reported quality-  
20 of-life issues. They actually have a very important  
21 project right now focused on privately owned public  
22 spaces. We administer the citywide Central Insurance  
23 Program that provides non-profit vendors that have  
24 human service contracts with the required insurance  
25



1 coverages, another not glamorous but really crucial  
2 function, and we also administer the HUD Consolidated  
3 Plan, which is a really massive compliance document  
4 that's required to get federal money from the HUD  
5 program and from CDBGB grants, and we have some roles  
6 in customer service. You may remember we still run  
7 the Language Access Secret Shopper Program, and we  
8 run the Customer Service Awards, which actually we're  
9 very proud of, and other projects so that's a  
10 sweeping overview of how we're structured.

12 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: That's very helpful.  
13 If my notes are correct, my notes are that we were at  
14 about 110 people in Operations back in 2018 so down  
15 to 60 something today, that's a pretty steep drop. Do  
16 we have that broadly right?

17 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: That sounds very  
18 plausible. I would say that there have been some  
19 structural changes to how Operations is, so if your  
20 number includes NYC Opportunity, they no longer  
21 report to Operations, and Mayor's Office of Data  
22 Analytics is now in the CTO portfolio so those are  
23 two.

24 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: But that's a small  
25 number of staff in MODA, right?

1  
2 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: It's about 10  
3 probably.

4 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Okay.

5 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Yeah. Those are the  
6 two biggest. Of course, the other obvious one is 3-1-  
7 1 reported to Operations when you were there, and  
8 that was a pandemic-era kind of change but...

9 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: We're definitely  
10 eager to ask you some 3-1-1 questions anyway, since  
11 we know Ops has a long history with 3-1-1, and we're  
12 very concerned about that data. Just a couple other  
13 quick things. I want to ask about how is the DMMR,  
14 which, again, I want to give you all real credit for,  
15 how is that informing and helping Ops respond more  
16 quickly to concerning changes in performance?

17 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I think my vision for  
18 the office was really to take this remarkable data  
19 infrastructure that City government already had and  
20 developed over the course of decades and put it to  
21 work as part of a robust and continuous performance  
22 management regime, and that's not possible unless the  
23 data's updated more frequently and we're all working  
24 off the same data, and so the entire notion of  
25 dynamic means that the data's updated, readily

1 available to the Council, to us, the public and, to  
2 us, that's the highest and best use of technology in  
3 government, and performance management has to be a  
4 constant activity. It's not a communications  
5 exercise. When the MMR was a PDF that was put out  
6 twice a year, that's not performance management, and  
7 so we needed structures, processes, tools that feed  
8 into a culture of data-driven management and  
9 policymaking, and that's what the DMMR is a huge  
10 component of. I talked about what we did with the  
11 team, but that's how the DMMR kind of connects to our  
12 larger vision and what we're trying to create within  
13 City government.

14  
15 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I was pleased to  
16 hear you say that your Performance Management Team is  
17 regularly engaging Deputy Mayor offices and sharing  
18 feedback and input with them. Could you just walk us  
19 through when you all see a critical indicator moving  
20 in the wrong direction, whether that be in the PMMR  
21 or the DMMR, like what's the process for flagging  
22 issues for City Hall and agencies? Do you keep track  
23 of what action Ops has taken when an indicator is  
24 moving in the wrong direction and the corollary  
25 policy response?

1  
2                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: The relationship  
3 between the liaisons is the crux of the value that we  
4 add because that's where we collect information that  
5 the Deputy Mayors need to know in order to make  
6 decisions. We're not necessarily aspiring to come up  
7 with a solution to every single problem, obviously,  
8 and implement it ourselves. We see our sort of role  
9 as being the distillation function, to really  
10 escalate the right issues and give them the  
11 information they need to make sound decisions.  
12 Obviously, our Project Management Team does directly  
13 tackle a lot of issues, and we can talk about the  
14 work they're doing, but occasionally a flag can  
15 become a project. I always like to joke that every  
16 flag is a project. It's not necessarily true but, we  
17 are always on the lookout for opportunities to  
18 intervene directly. We tend to add the most value  
19 when it's interagency work and sometimes an issue  
20 that we escalate really is more appropriate for the  
21 Deputy Mayor to understand and manage directly with  
22 their agency, and it's ultimately their prerogative.  
23 I guess the answer is, it depends, but we are very  
24 rigorous in terms of how we, we've built essentially  
25 data instruments that flag issues for us in an

1 automated way, but that's no supplement for the  
2 critical faculties that we have.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Do you still use the  
5 kind of red, yellow, green?

6 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: All of it. This Mayor  
7 in particular loves color-coded dashboards and, to be  
8 honest, just the fact that he looks at data means  
9 that other people do in the sense that it creates a  
10 sort of environment of you could almost call it  
11 paranoia in that I don't think any manager wants to  
12 be responsible for data that the Mayor has seen and  
13 they haven't so it's very helpful in terms of the  
14 culture of performance management, but I just wanted  
15 to add that sometimes the data just doesn't speak for  
16 itself, right, so we have thresholds. Something could  
17 go up or down 10 percent and that'll percolate in the  
18 systems that we have, but sometimes the indicator  
19 that slips 5 percent has more significant  
20 ramifications for the public. Sometimes something  
21 that just slips a little bit has very severe  
22 implications or is happening because of a very severe  
23 root problem so that's where our staff and their sort  
24 of knowledge come into play and the relationships  
25 that they have and, frankly, sometimes they get

1 better, higher quality information directly from the  
2 agencies than leadership might, and we add a lot of  
3 value through maintaining those relationships.  
4

5 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: That is very  
6 helpful. I'm going to jump in to NYPD-related  
7 questions, but I think we have Colleagues who would  
8 like to ask questions, but not just this second so  
9 I'll keep going, happily. As I mentioned in my  
10 opening statement, one of the core functions of the  
11 Department, perhaps their most important function, is  
12 to respond to crime and help keep our community safe.  
13 The PMMR showed that NYPD from the time dispatch  
14 receives a call to the time officers arrived to all  
15 crimes in progress is on average now 13 minutes and  
16 48 seconds. That's up almost two minutes, 108 seconds  
17 from just last year, but that's up almost six minutes  
18 from FY19 so how has Operations responded to this  
19 extreme decline in NYPD response times?

20 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Thank you for the  
21 question. Obviously, it's been a real focus of the  
22 Administration's. The full context, and a lot of what  
23 I'll be doing today is providing the full context, is  
24 that both NYPD and FDNY response times have been  
25 steadily slipping over the past couple of years and,

1 if you look at the breakdown of what's driving it,  
2 the travel segment is making up the lion's share of  
3 the increase, and so there's really no doubt that  
4 worsening traffic conditions are a factor. To step  
5 back, emergency response times were never better than  
6 they were during the height of the pandemic. That's  
7 literally true in the City's history. There were no  
8 cars on the streets and people were generally  
9 avoiding hospitals and so, as society returned to  
10 normal kind of in-person activities where we're  
11 seeing a steady increase in response times but also  
12 in the number of vehicle trips into the City every  
13 day so, if you look across transportation systems.  
14 buses and trains ridership has come back between 60  
15 to 75 percent while car ownership is exponentially  
16 higher than before the pandemic and the number of  
17 cars that are traveling across bridges and tunnels  
18 every day has actually increased compared to pre-  
19 pandemic baseline so more people are driving. Fewer  
20 vehicles are entering the Manhattan core compared to  
21 pre-pandemic, and we're seeing slower vehicle speeds  
22 on major boulevards citywide, and this is part of a  
23 national phenomenon of shifting patterns of travel  
24 behavior and work in terms of the configuration and  
25

1  
2 the intensity of traffic. Chicago, Miami, Las Vegas  
3 have had similar issues. They're not necessarily  
4 doing as much as the city and state are doing but,  
5 for this reason, we've actually had DOT brief the  
6 emergency response agencies on these trends, and we  
7 found that there wasn't enough dialogue between the  
8 people who study traffic as a science and the people  
9 who have to navigate it in order to respond to  
10 emergencies. Obviously, demand is always an issue.  
11 The number of incidents had been increasing over the  
12 time period that you described, both in terms of  
13 crimes in progress and hospital visits. I think in  
14 terms of what we're doing about it, my office does  
15 closely work with the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety.  
16 We re-established the 9-1-1 Operating Committee. It  
17 meets monthly. The sort of purpose of the Committee  
18 was to establish a performance management kind of  
19 regime so that we're all looking at the same data  
20 monthly, quarterly, and using it to ask questions and  
21 chart progress. There's a number of areas that we're  
22 exploring, and it's a sprawling set of issues because  
23 it could be everything from hospital turnaround times  
24 when the ambulance drops somebody off to optimizing  
25 the DOA process, which is a very morbid construct and



1 the availability of units so it's a multidimensional  
2 problem. There are real forces at work, some beyond  
3 our control, but that doesn't obviously mean that we  
4 don't try to take action so that's the sort of high-  
5 level description of what's happening.

6  
7 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I think that's  
8 helpful, but I have a variety of questions from your  
9 response that are a little confounding to me. My  
10 recollection of the data across the board is we  
11 didn't see the same extreme uptick in FDNY or  
12 ambulance response times. It's significantly worse  
13 for the NYPD, and not just for all crimes in progress  
14 at 13 minutes and 48 seconds, even for critical  
15 crimes, the most serious crimes, things like shots  
16 fired, robbery, assault with a weapon, we're up  
17 almost two minutes year-over-year. It was always  
18 under five minutes as a response time, which is a  
19 great response. Now we're up at over 7 minutes and 18  
20 seconds, and year-over-year to see that kind of huge  
21 increase for the most violent crimes that are  
22 happening in New York City is deeply disturbing and,  
23 while I appreciate that we've got a variety of  
24 congestion issues, especially cars coming in and out  
25 of Manhattan and the central business district, most

1  
2 NYPD travel is relatively short distances within a  
3 precinct, and the congestion that we may be dealing  
4 with in Lower Manhattan doesn't impact the Northeast  
5 Bronx or Southeast Queens or Central Brooklyn and the  
6 ability for PD cars to travel within a precinct in a  
7 timely fashion. I am interested in digging in more to  
8 the data that you all have access to that I don't  
9 think is captured in the PMMR on the travel times,  
10 but I have to say my guess from looking at your data  
11 is that we're actually seeing, actually, before I go  
12 into my hypothesis of what's really causing the  
13 delay, I just want to ask, the response times on  
14 critical crimes was a, I know this gets confusing,  
15 but the response times are critical time crimes was a  
16 critical indicator so it was one of your critical  
17 indicators from what I understand, and critical  
18 crimes is just the most serious crimes, right? For  
19 the public, the Mayor's Office of Operations  
20 designates critical indicators as the most  
21 consequential, important indicators for us to follow  
22 and track as Administration and for the public at  
23 large. My understanding is that this was removed as a  
24 critical indicator. Could you help us explain why  
25 that is, and what the process was for making that

1 decision? Was Deputy Mayor Banks, the Office of  
2 Municipal Services Assessment, were they involved in  
3 making that decision? Is that an Ops decision? Thank  
4 you.  
5

6 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No problem. Just to  
7 step back, in terms of response times, one thing  
8 you'll notice is that response times to fires barely  
9 fluctuates over the past hundred years. The only real  
10 way that one fluctuates is if you were to open or  
11 close more fire companies and ladders. It's really  
12 the two that tend to move, and we need to pay very  
13 close attention to our response to medical  
14 emergencies and crimes in progress and critical  
15 crimes in progress. One thing that you'll note,  
16 although I don't want to claim credit, because data  
17 can be very noisy, but if you look at the months  
18 since the PMMR was published, the response times for  
19 critical crimes in progress have actually started to  
20 improve while response times to medical emergencies  
21 haven't so that's something that we're obviously  
22 trying to understand, but it's important to see that  
23 progress.

24 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Can you cite  
25 anything specifically?

1  
2                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: It's on the DMMR for  
3 sure. Yeah, if you look at the end-to-end response  
4 times, you can see the most recent months. I'll have  
5 to look more carefully. I don't remember making a  
6 policy decision around what's a critical indicator.  
7 There is some history around why there's so many  
8 different indicators about end-to-end response times.  
9 The agencies report dispatch and travel only metrics,  
10 which are in the report also that exclude the call-  
11 taking portion. That's for the purpose of seeing the  
12 different segments of what's involved in response  
13 times. It's a historical artifact though, because the  
14 complete end-to-end time wasn't always reported in  
15 the MMR before Fiscal 2014 actually, because the data  
16 was spread across multiple systems and hadn't been  
17 combined and so now we have these like truly holistic  
18 end-to-end times that are reported in the MMR that  
19 are the critical ones, but I don't know what you're  
20 talking about exactly so I have to... Do you?

21                   FIRST DEPUTY DIRECTOR QUINONES: We were  
22 just trying to look actually in the book. Sometimes  
23 there are just straight clerical or like print errors  
24 so we will check and get back to you. We don't have  
25

1  
2 any memory off the top of our head of us dropping a  
3 critical there.

4           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I would say that some  
5 are more important than others, and the end-to-end  
6 holistic kind of response times are the ones that we  
7 encourage the public to use to assess what's really  
8 happening.

9           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Okay, I do have  
10 additional NYPD questions and, frankly, I have my own  
11 analysis for why we're seeing these response times  
12 move in the wrong direction, but I know the Council  
13 Member Vernikov has a set of questions so I wanted to  
14 kick it over to her.

15           COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: I'll be short.  
16 Thank you very much. Chair, you mentioned 3-1-1, so  
17 I'd like to bring that up just for a bit. I'm sure it  
18 wouldn't be shocking to you to hear that people often  
19 complain about 3-1-1, and my constituents very often  
20 are very, should I say annoyed by having to call 3-1-  
21 1 and then not hear back from an agency or not get a  
22 response to their complaint, so I just wanted to know  
23 how your agency is dealing with helping this process  
24 because obviously we want constituents to be able to  
25

1 call, make a complaint and hear back and see their  
2 issues resolved. Thank you.  
3

4           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No, thank you for the  
5 question. There were some specific 3-1-1 data flags  
6 that I have a feeling the Council Member will also  
7 raise, but to start with your really important  
8 fundamental question about what do we know about 3-1-  
9 1 and the satisfaction of customers and what are we  
10 doing about it, I think one thing that people don't  
11 fully appreciate is that for most of 3-1-1's history,  
12 there was no feedback loop in terms of customer  
13 satisfaction. The City assessed whether it was doing  
14 a good job by how quickly it closed complaints, which  
15 is not a legitimate solution because sometimes  
16 complaints get closed for reasons that have nothing  
17 to do with the problem being addressed, and one of  
18 the big innovations that we have right now is a  
19 resident satisfaction survey. If you've made a 3-1-1  
20 complaint and you leave your information, you now get  
21 a survey sent to you automatically that asks you  
22 about, oh, I'm sorry, it gets sent to you after the  
23 complaint is closed out, and you have the opportunity  
24 to directly tell the City whether it was to your  
25 satisfaction or not. This is all new data that the

1 City is in the process of ingesting and it tends to  
2 make a public resource. The Office of Data Analytics  
3 is stewarding that project but, for our purposes,  
4 it's a breakthrough in terms of really knowing, what  
5 people think of each particular service and the  
6 quality of the City's response. The one other thing I  
7 wanted to mention is that one issue that we're  
8 focused on as an office is the quality of the  
9 resolution descriptions. 3-1-1 hasn't updated many of  
10 these resolution descriptions in 20 years. We think  
11 that much more clear information can be pushed out to  
12 the public, more specific information about what the  
13 City actually did or didn't do, and we think that  
14 will go a long way in terms of earning the public's  
15 trust that the City's being clear and candid about  
16 what action it's taken so there is a lot of activity  
17 in that space, and I think that we're better  
18 positioned than ever to acutely address whichever  
19 service requests are not to the satisfaction of New  
20 Yorkers.  
21

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Thank you. How  
23 do they get that survey if they just make a phone  
24 call? Because I know there are different ways they  
25 can reach out to 3-1-1.

1  
2 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: That's true. I can't  
3 remember if you get it, yeah, only online.

4 UNIDENTIFIED: (INAUDIBLE)

5 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: That's right. Right,  
6 you have to leave your email address for it to know  
7 where to send it.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Okay.

9 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Yeah.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: I think that  
11 might be difficult for some people if they're just  
12 calling. There may be language barriers or elderly  
13 people are calling.

14 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: That's a fair point.  
15 I know.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Maybe we can  
17 figure something out with that.

18 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No, definitely, and I  
19 do want to direct you to the Office of Data  
20 Analytics. We've been supporting their work on this,  
21 but they're situated within the CTO portfolio, which  
22 also is 3-1-1, so this has been the resident  
23 satisfaction kind of survey has been their project  
24 that we've worked with them on, but it's a really  
25 important progress.



COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much,  
Council Member. I will keep going and, if anyone  
else, I was thanking my colleague. I'm not thanking  
Dan for anything, just kidding. Okay, great, I would  
like to shift to what I think is driving the increase  
in response times, which is that we've seen a  
phenomenal increase in minor summons that are being  
issued by the NYPD. I'll just quote the Mayor who  
often talks about precision policing, and this is  
what precision policing is about, "the failures of  
the past is we stopped anyone, searched anyone based  
on their ethnicity and based on the demographics or  
the zip code where they may have lived. We're not  
doing that. We're not going to allow that to happen  
in our city. We're not going to break the law to  
enforce the law. We can have the balance that we are  
looking for by using precision policing," which I  
completely agree with the sentiment and think that  
the data tells truly a 180-degree different picture.  
That is the opposite of what has happened under Mayor  
Adams' tenure. NYPD has had nearly a 70 percent  
increase year-over-year in imposing minor summons for  
things like having an open container on the street.

1  
2 We're on track for almost a four-fold increase since  
3 the Mayor came into office in 2021 if the trends from  
4 the first four months of the year continue through  
5 the whole Fiscal Year. We've already, in fact, in the  
6 first four months of this year imposed more minor  
7 summons than we did in all of Fiscal Year 2021, the  
8 year before Mayor Adams came into office, and we've  
9 looked at data with partners that show overwhelmingly  
10 these are low-income black and brown folks,  
11 disproportionately, overwhelmingly low-income black  
12 and brown folks. Truly, we're talking about the  
13 opposite of precision policing. Could you explain,  
14 this takes up an enormous amount of staff time. Is  
15 that considered as a causal factor in why we are  
16 doing a worse job of responding to crimes in  
17 progress, especially serious crimes in progress, when  
18 NYPD officers are spending so much of their time on  
19 minor violations, quality-of-life issues like an open  
20 container law?

21                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I think it's a good  
22 and fair question to ask the Police Department. We  
23 see the same numbers that you're citing. They have  
24 not been the central focus of our reform efforts  
25 because the data we're looking at is suggesting that

1  
2 there's a number of other factors also, but we're  
3 glad that you're connecting dots in the data and  
4 encourage you to bring those questions to the  
5 appropriate parties.

6           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Have you consulted  
7 with, well, to me one of the things that that Ops  
8 often does is track whether an indicator is good or  
9 bad, and there's clearly been a policy decision made  
10 by this Administration to phenomenally increase the  
11 number of summonses that are issued, number of people  
12 that are getting arrested, increase incarceration,  
13 it's happening across the board in such clear trends  
14 and clear numbers a policy decision has been made.  
15 For this in particular on minor summons, is that a  
16 good thing? Does Ops have a perspective? Is that a  
17 good policy that this Administration is making or are  
18 you just calling balls and strikes?

19           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I don't think we can  
20 provide a sweeping analysis of it. I think, in some  
21 areas we've seen summonses correspond with  
22 improvements in street cleanliness, for instance,  
23 when it comes to the Sanitation Department's  
24 enforcement of properties and recycling streams but,  
25

1  
2 as a sweeping kind of statement, I'm not sure we're  
3 qualified to weigh in.

4           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Okay. Just to ask in  
5 a broader way on what I think is causing these  
6 serious and deeply concerning delays in response  
7 times to crimes in progress and to the most serious  
8 dangerous crimes. Beyond the travel times, are you  
9 looking at what other policy decisions may be driving  
10 the performance indicators? That very much feels to  
11 be the role and responsibility of Ops. Do you have  
12 anything to add beyond your suggestion that travel  
13 times may be a factor?

14           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I would say we're  
15 going to where the data points us, but you're making  
16 plenty of legitimate points about what competes for  
17 the time and resources of responders, and we're happy  
18 to bring them back to the Committee.

19           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Okay. Have these  
20 major shifts in the data been flagged for Deputy  
21 Mayor Banks and his team?

22           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Yes. Repeatedly, and  
23 they're well aware, and they have their own tools  
24 that we've built for them to monitor closely.

1  
2           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: We're looking, as  
3 you know well, Mayor Adams has imposed seven rounds  
4 of budget cuts since coming into office just over two  
5 years ago. We've taken 15 or 16 percent out of the  
6 operating budget that we fund at community colleges,  
7 significant cuts to 3K, library service and, yet,  
8 NYPD overtime is up 76 million dollars year-over-  
9 year, and we are on pace to spend about a billion  
10 dollars on NYPD overtime if the trends continue from  
11 the PMMR. Does Operations examine the link between  
12 spending, such as the bloated overtime NYPD budget,  
13 and performance metric changes? Are you able to make  
14 an argument that this is necessary or valuable  
15 spending or not?

16           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Generally speaking,  
17 it's part of our mission to consider the relationship  
18 between resources and performance so, to the extent  
19 that we're in dialogue with agencies around what's an  
20 appropriate target, those are really important  
21 inputs. I'm not sure if I can answer it as a policy  
22 question exactly unless you restate the question.

23           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: No, I think you've  
24 answered, you've responded. Look, I think that the, I  
25 just want to ask, could I actually get clarification?

1  
2 Who's in charge of this Office of Municipal Services  
3 Assessment?

4                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: That would be the  
5 Deputy Mayor for Public Safety.

6                   CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: But who's the  
7 Director of the Office? It reports in to Deputy Mayor  
8 Banks. Because it was reported in the press yesterday  
9 one thing, it's been reported to us differently. Do  
10 you know who's in charge of the office?

11                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I don't know off the  
12 top of my head unless you do, Lauren. Not off the top  
13 of my head.

14                   CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Okay, because it was  
15 written in the press yesterday. I'm just, somebody  
16 reads the Politico stories that Tim Pearson is  
17 actually in charge of the office. When it was  
18 reported to us by other officials in City government,  
19 we were told that there was a Deputy Inspector, Brian  
20 Bohanahan (phonetic), I may be butchering his name, I  
21 apologize to the Irish, that is in charge of the  
22 office. Brian Bohanan, Jr. None of this means  
23 anything to you?

24  
25

1  
2 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I'll follow up with  
3 you. The name certainly rings a bell, but I'll have  
4 to follow up.

5 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I do think it's  
6 notable that this office that's been created to  
7 "improve City agency performance" has a similar  
8 mission to the Office of Operations that we don't  
9 even know who the Director is. It just seems to me  
10 like Deputy Mayor Banks and his whole team are  
11 operating on a silo unto themselves and doing  
12 whatever the heck they want, and then there's  
13 everybody else in City government. You can't speak to  
14 what the Office of Municipal Service Assessment has  
15 been doing in response to the NYPD overtime, the  
16 extreme increase in response times, the huge increase  
17 in minor summons issuance.

18 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I know they've been  
19 deployed most heavily on asylum seeker work. They  
20 have been the boots on the ground in terms of  
21 understanding conditions at shelter sites but, beyond  
22 that, I think the questions need to be directed  
23 there.

24 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I've been asking for  
25 two years to meet with the Deputy Mayor's team about

1  
2 issues that are happening in our District, and we get  
3 radio silence. This is consistent with our experience  
4 to date, secret office, secret operation.

5 I do want to just ask about the CCRB, and  
6 then I'll pause if anyone else wants to jump in. You  
7 do? Why don't I just pause now then? Okay.

8 Perhaps it's not surprising that  
9 considering we've seen a huge increase in summonses  
10 and arrests by the NYPD over these past two years,  
11 major increase shown in the PMMR year-over-year,  
12 there's also been a major uptick in civilian  
13 complaints. I think we're up 60 percent in the PMMR  
14 year-over-year, on track to be almost double as many  
15 civilian complaints about police misconduct as when  
16 the Mayor came into office. Due to budget cuts, CCRB  
17 recently announced that they're stopping probes into  
18 a variety of different types of allegations. When  
19 officers accused of improperly removing someone to a  
20 hospital, inappropriately seizing property, and more  
21 refusing to provide their name and badge number,  
22 which I think is something that our friend, former  
23 Council Member Antonio Reynoso worked on. Have you  
24 discussed these trends with the CCRB and the NYPD.  
25 Have any policy prescriptions been identified in



1  
2 conjunction with the Mayor's Office of Operations to  
3 try to address this significant increase in police  
4 misconduct allegations?

5           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: We've briefed the  
6 Mayor directly on those numbers, and we've taken note  
7 of them also and escalated them. As you're stating,  
8 they're high by historical standards, and the CCRB  
9 takes a great deal of pride in their outreach which,  
10 to some extent, they feel like is working, but  
11 clearly there's a lot going on and the Mayor has been  
12 also very focused on expediting the review process  
13 because right now it takes far too long. It was, I  
14 think, a component of the State of the City speech  
15 and, from a performance perspective, that's something  
16 that we're very attuned to. We're also attuned to the  
17 mediation process from a performance perspective in  
18 the sense that officers appear to be more eager to  
19 enter mediation than civilians, and so these are  
20 issues that we brought to the Mayor's attention  
21 fairly recently and to the Mayor's Counsel who  
22 oversees the CCRB.

23           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Did they have any  
24 recommendations of things that could be done about  
25 this?

1  
2 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: The context of the  
3 meeting was more us briefing them on the phenomenon  
4 so I think better directed at the Mayor's Counsel.

5 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: We will follow up,  
6 but it's just we've seen this historic increase in  
7 complaints about NYPD misconduct, and the Mayor's  
8 response was to cut the CCRB budget and reduce the  
9 amount of staff so that they can respond to fewer  
10 complaints when they're already, as noted in your  
11 testimony and the PMMR, taking far too long to  
12 resolve complaints. It just doesn't make sense.

13 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: They did improve this  
14 cycle, but...

15 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: We appreciate the  
16 mild and modest improvement. That's better than the  
17 alternative, but it's still unacceptable, and I'm  
18 sure the CCRB is trying hard on outreach, but the  
19 reason that we get more complaints is because there's  
20 more misconduct and when we are issuing phenomenally  
21 more minor summonses, when we are arresting more New  
22 Yorkers, we get more complaints of people being  
23 mistreated, and I'm disappointed that we're cutting  
24 their budget and not providing the meaningful support  
25 to make sure that those allegations of misconduct are

1  
2 swiftly and appropriately investigated and people are  
3 held accountable for wrongdoing.

4 I will pause and pass it over to Council  
5 Member Gutiérrez.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you,  
7 Chair. Thank you both for your preparation today. I  
8 wanted to just expand a little bit on the 3-1-1  
9 conversation. Ass Chair of the Tech Committee, we  
10 constantly raise this with their director Joe, but  
11 also just in conversation with members. I'm curious  
12 about the critical indicator for customer  
13 satisfaction. You touched on it a little bit. It was  
14 actually raised at this week's hearing. Can you  
15 expand a little bit more on kind of what information  
16 is provided to you from 3-1-1, how it's presented to  
17 you, what are the data sets that they're providing?

18 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Sure. In the MMR  
19 specifically, we kind of report on every component of  
20 their operations as a call center so it's really the  
21 wait time.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, no, that  
23 I see. I'm curious about, is that what you mean?  
24 That's included in customer satisfaction?

1  
2           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No, that's a whole  
3 different effort that's separate from the MMR that we  
4 hope to capture in the MMR as it becomes a sort of  
5 more permanent function of government, and so the  
6 office of Data Analytics is in the process of  
7 building out this and, hopefully they testified about  
8 this...

9           COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: They did a  
10 great job. It's just that 3-1-1 kind of falls in this  
11 area of it's hard to get a very concise sense of,  
12 yes, customer satisfaction, as Council Member  
13 Vernikov just shared if people are texting or  
14 emailing, if they're emailing, that's the only way  
15 they're going to get prompted for a customer service.

16           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No, you're right.

17           COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Survey so that  
18 makes it harder. I think what also is a challenge is  
19 they create challenges for themselves, right, like  
20 they're telling people that the service complaints  
21 are closed when nothing is resolved, right? Clarity  
22 on, providing a picture to demonstrate that  
23 something's been closed, so they fall within a weird  
24 period so I'm just curious how you are all looking to  
25

1  
2 work with them to hear us out and incorporate some of  
3 these things that we're raising.

4           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No, we're in total  
5 lockstep with them, and we're even working together  
6 on the IT kind of solutions to making this data more  
7 available to everybody. I think in the long run we  
8 want to capture satisfaction scores in the MMR in  
9 some fashion. What's complicated obviously is that  
10 there's hundreds of service requests and each get a  
11 satisfaction score, and that's the beauty of the tool  
12 is that now the City has a relative sense of which  
13 service requests are being responded to to the  
14 satisfaction of New Yorkers. Really like the idea  
15 that the City would celebrate closing a complaint  
16 quickly, but not scrutinize whether it was a quality  
17 intervention is truly the way it's been working for  
18 over 20 years and so that's why I'm glad they  
19 testified about it because this is just a whole new  
20 capacity the City has to understand the quality of  
21 its work.

22           COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Right, and if  
23 you could just, I just want to double down on this on  
24 the record, the public housing, the NYCHA piece,  
25 right, the kind of landmark decision that allows

1  
2 NYCHA tenants to file 3-1-1 complaints, which really  
3 is not any more different than what they've been  
4 doing through calling their complaint number that  
5 they always have. We held a joint hearing on this  
6 last year, and we would really love to see an  
7 improvement on how they're reporting, NYCHA and 3-1-  
8 1, on how they're responding to these specific cases,  
9 because it was really troubling to hear from NYCHA  
10 residents that, they thought that the 3-1-1 would at  
11 the very least create accountability for their  
12 complaints to NYCHA, and that was not what was  
13 happening. They were just being prompted to, again,  
14 call the same number they've always called. I just  
15 feel like we can't throw a parade unless we figured  
16 that out.

17                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Oh, for sure. It's  
18 the first step and, just in terms of NYCHA, I'm sure  
19 we're going to get to NYCHA.

20                   COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Oh, there's  
21 pages here. I just want to warn you.

22                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I believe it.

23                   COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: There's  
24 multiple.

25

1  
2 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: But specifically on  
3 the issue that you raised, we added new indicators  
4 that I believe were at the behest to the Council on  
5 NYCHA that were specifically about NYCHA  
6 responsiveness to mold and rodent mitigation so those  
7 were received by us...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: (INAUDIBLE)

9 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: So thank you for the  
10 recommendations.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: No, and it is a  
12 whole other animal and I'm sure the Chair will get  
13 into that, but specifically I'm interested in the  
14 connection between NYCHA complaints and 3-1-1 and  
15 tenants being able to use 3-1-1 to hold NYCHA  
16 accountable and it's not happening.

17 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Understood.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: My last  
19 question, sorry, Chair, is just on, and I know that's  
20 a relatively new office and so maybe offices  
21 specifically aren't included in the Charter, but the  
22 Mayor's new Office of Child Care, I'm particularly  
23 interested because obviously I care about child care,  
24 so do so many of my Colleagues. We were looking  
25 forward to understanding a little bit more about the

1 office. As I know, in the fall, they lost their  
2 Executive Director. Now they're just an office. Is  
3 that potentially an office that would then you would  
4 include in the MMR at some point.  
5

6 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Traditionally the  
7 MMR, and I believe the Charter kind of defines it  
8 this way, are Mayoral agencies, and so there is a  
9 universe of smaller offices that don't have...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: There's just  
11 very little about child care. I know there's a little  
12 bit scattered, like ACS maybe, but...

13 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: You're right that  
14 child care appears in multiple chapters, which isn't  
15 great, right, because it's in DOE, it's in ACS, but  
16 we do have an introductory section that is  
17 specifically about this Administration's kind of  
18 contributions to the child care landscape, and so  
19 that's where we consolidated all here, but you're  
20 right, in terms of the permanent kind of tracking of  
21 that work, it's dispersed in the report.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Are there  
23 plans to have it live in one space?

24 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: This is almost  
25 existential problem with the MMR is that it's



1  
2 organized by agency, and really its function is to  
3 assess the performance by agency, and there always  
4 are cross-cutting issues that we separately want to  
5 analyze and understand and the collaboration chapters  
6 up top are usually where we try to tackle those  
7 issues, and there is a child care chapter that I  
8 definitely recommend reading.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: I'll do a quick  
10 search. Thank you.

11 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Yeah, sure.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you,  
13 Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much,  
15 Council Member Gutiérrez, and we are also joined by  
16 Council Member Paladino of Queens. Thank you for  
17 being here.

18 I just would like to follow up on some of  
19 the topics that Council Member Gutiérrez was asking  
20 about. I am very concerned about the increased  
21 response times from 3-1-1. It's just very frustrating  
22 when you call 3-1-1, and there's like a 77 second  
23 intro on parking policies for the next number of days  
24 and then finally you get to a real wait time, and my  
25 understanding is that we're down to 68 percent of

1 calls being answered in 30 seconds. That was 89  
2 percent just last year so that's a major reduction  
3 overall, but the wait time is 1.5 times as long  
4 during peak hours. It went from 25 seconds. Now, it's  
5 over a minute during peak hours. So it's three times  
6 as long during non-peak hours. It went from an eight  
7 second pickup now to over 30 seconds before 3-1-1  
8 operator is getting back to you, and it just feels  
9 like it's a deliberate strategy to, maybe, Joe does a  
10 great job, but it feels like it has the effect of  
11 discouraging New Yorkers from reaching out because if  
12 you're going to have to wait a very long time before  
13 you reach someone, you're just not going to call, and  
14 I encourage my constituents now to use the app  
15 because it's a lot fast, but the thing that surprises  
16 me is call volume is down because I think my  
17 constituents are listening to me. You know District  
18 33. We're a noisy bunch. Despite call volume being  
19 down, the response is way up. 3-1-1 used to be a part  
20 of Ops, these are issues that y'all are very familiar  
21 with. What's going on and how can we fix it?

22  
23 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No, we do pay very  
24 close attention to these issues. This is another  
25 indicator where if you were to look at more recent

1 data, it is improving so November, December, January  
2 that peak calls.  
3

4 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Are you calling me  
5 out for not being on top of all the DMMR stats? Is  
6 that what this is?

7 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No, I want my staff  
8 to know that...

9 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I feel like that's  
10 the...

11 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: A little bit. We do  
12 want the DMMR to be, you know, the MMR and PMMR are  
13 always going to add value because this is where we  
14 have narrative explaining what we're seeing, but the  
15 DMMR will always be more up-to-date, and I see my  
16 staff scurrying with laptops because they want you to  
17 know that those numbers are improving, and it's worth  
18 noting but the issue is, I don't want to...

19 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: This is a serious  
20 issue. I mean I'm making a joke, but I do appreciate  
21 your focus.

22 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: But I'm also not  
23 dismissing it because, while it's improving, like  
24 these are real performance issues that you're noting  
25 that we escalated, and there are explanations, and

1  
2 explanations are not excuses, but we do want to add  
3 context today. You're completely right that the calls  
4 were down. Generally, 3-1-1 are setting records in  
5 terms of total inquiries so the system, as the main  
6 customer service portal to the City, is functioning  
7 very effectively in that sense. They had almost 13  
8 million contacts across its call center during the  
9 reporting period, and they are providing more  
10 information, I should say, than just responding to  
11 service requests and fielding more Spanish language  
12 calls than ever. I think it was close to 200,000 in  
13 the reporting period and then an additional 30,000  
14 calls in languages other than English and Spanish.  
15 But to your question, you're right, that there were  
16 fewer calls and longer wait times. There was an  
17 increase in what 3-1-1 considers complex calls. They  
18 might have told you this in testimony. Complex calls  
19 are usually when a caller has more than one service  
20 request. That was definitely a driver, but that's the  
21 context that we have. I think as a call center, it's  
22 still very popular. They found that the 3-1-1  
23 customer service, there was a recent survey where the  
24 3-1-1 representative got a 94 suggesting that 9 out  
25 of 10 New Yorkers scored the experience highly in

1 terms of interacting with a customer service agent,  
2 and that's really their prime responsibility. The  
3 agencies are responsible for responding effectively  
4 to the complaint.  
5

6 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: That's a perfect  
7 segue to my next question, which is that they're not  
8 responding effectively. I saw a CBC report from 2017  
9 that said 35 of the 2,000 or so indicators capture  
10 public perception, maybe you all have increased it in  
11 the ensuing seven years, I hope you have, but when we  
12 looked at those indicators of how quickly City  
13 agencies are responding to letters and calls, it's  
14 not good. The Department of Sanitation emails and  
15 letter response times were down from just year-over-  
16 year 88 percent to 70 percent within 14 days on  
17 letters, down from 90 percent to 73 percent on  
18 emails. Noise complaints submitted to DEP took an  
19 average of 5.4 days to close, two days longer than  
20 pre-pandemic. Cultural Affairs is only responding to  
21 27 percent of emails in 14 days. CCRB is answering 25  
22 percent of letters in 14 days. CCHR is averaging wait  
23 of 10 minutes to speak with a customer service agent,  
24 up from 2 minutes. TLC, average time to close  
25 consumer complaints, is increased by four days. It's

1 over a month. HRA, average in person wait time,  
2 increased to 94 minutes. DHS, worst of all, waiting  
3 time to speak with a customer service agent increased  
4 from 77 minutes to 113 minutes. Who has time to wait  
5 two hours to speak to a DHS official when you're  
6 struggling with homelessness? But you then have other  
7 agencies that, in the spirit of your interchange with  
8 Council Member Gutiérrez, who are, I think, just  
9 willfully misrepresenting their responses, such as  
10 the NYPD and DOC. PD reports responding to 99 percent  
11 of 301 service requests on time, but I promise you I  
12 see how they close out the placard issues in my  
13 District in Downtown Brooklyn, like they're not doing  
14 anything so they could say they're closing them out,  
15 but it's disingenuous at best, or DOC reports  
16 responding to 100 percent of letters and 90 percent  
17 of emails on time. If that's true, I have a bridge to  
18 sell you because I just, but I digress. I'm broadly  
19 concerned that what we're seeing at 3-1-1 with the  
20 slower response times, we're also seeing across the  
21 board of City agencies. Ultimately, I think this is  
22 the result of seven rounds of budget cuts and  
23 multiple hiring freezes but, for a Mayor that claims  
24 that he wants to be the most accessible and the most  
25

1 responsive, this data tells a really different story  
2 and it's really troubling. What are we doing across  
3 the board on this? I remember the Chief Efficiency  
4 Officer had created like a customer service role. I  
5 don't know if that's a real thing. I don't know what  
6 the Chief Efficiency Officer does. What global  
7 approach is being taken? You're seeing these trends  
8 across lots of agencies in the PMMR. How can we do  
9 better to make sure we're engaging and responding to  
10 the complaints and concerns that New Yorkers raise?  
11

12           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I want to answer in a  
13 few ways. First of all, I think we're making the same  
14 point, but it's a very important point that a fast  
15 response does not always mean a quality response and,  
16 for too long, the City's assessed its own performance  
17 by how fast it responded, and that was a completely  
18 flawed framework and now we have the data available  
19 through the satisfaction surveys, and what you will  
20 see invariably are often the responses that get  
21 closed out the fastest are the least popular in terms  
22 of satisfaction, and so we need a new paradigm for  
23 assessing ourselves, and we finally have the data for  
24 that. I think you raised a lot of legitimate  
25 performance issues in that list. Some of them still

1 met their target. That's always an important  
2 qualification, so something can slip and not  
3 necessarily be off track, but some of those didn't  
4 meet their targets, and there are a lot of customer  
5 service indicators that have improved too. In terms  
6 of call times, wait times, and letters and emails  
7 responded to, which by the way, I've been told were  
8 obsolete indicators for a very long time until they  
9 started performing poorly, but I think that a lot of  
10 them, we explained pretty clearly in the report which  
11 ones are related to staffing and which ones are  
12 related to demand, or some combination. To the  
13 extent, demand for benefits in general right now is  
14 completely through the roof. It corresponds with the  
15 end of a lot of federal aid programs and economic  
16 trends, and so there has been some kind of objective,  
17 increases in demand for different types of services  
18 so I think I can't answer it in too brushstroke of  
19 sense because each situation is different and there  
20 are some legitimate highlights in terms of agencies  
21 really addressing customer service issues, but I  
22 think these are great questions for those agencies.

23  
24 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I appreciate that  
25 and, in some ways, this hearing the Friday before the



1 Monday of our Preliminary Budget hearing is a good  
2 segue and overview for that and that process over the  
3 next month, but I do think that this requires a more  
4 global response from City Hall about how they're  
5 engaging and encouraging agencies to respond to  
6 complaints and concerns that they hear from New  
7 Yorkers. If I responded to 25 percent of constituent  
8 incoming in two weeks, like we wouldn't be here and,  
9 if I closed out every complaint the way NYPD does  
10 without doing anything to help on those placard  
11 issues, I wouldn't be here. I just mean to say that I  
12 think there are some serious issues in this data, and  
13 I appreciate you advocating for their inclusion here  
14 but hope that we can work together to improve agency  
15 responsiveness to community concerns.  
16

17 With that, I mentioned this to Council  
18 Member Paladino, I had the privilege of hanging out  
19 in Murray Hill and knocking on some doors and  
20 visiting Bowne Park a few weeks ago. It was gorgeous.  
21 I really enjoyed it, and I will kick it to her for  
22 some questions.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Thank you very  
24 much. It's a pleasure to be here, and I do want to  
25 thank you very much for reaching out. As I said, it

1  
2 was terrific to have a Chairman, this is my first  
3 time on this Committee, so I'm new, I'm learning, and  
4 my Colleague here had offered to take me to coffee to  
5 explain exactly what goes on in Government Ops  
6 because I do want to be very much involved in it so  
7 I'm getting thrown into the deep end right now  
8 because I had Parks before you but, getting into it  
9 here, I'm listening to a lot about 3-1-1. I think to  
10 keep it simple, maybe it's been answered before I got  
11 here. 3-1-1 is divided into the boroughs, is that  
12 correct? We have five separate 3-1-1?

13 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: It is, but I'm  
14 reluctant to answer operational questions about them  
15 because we don't manage them.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: You don't  
17 manage.

18 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: We don't. They  
19 previously reported Ops years ago and, during the  
20 pandemic they were...

21 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Okay, someone  
22 calls for 3-1-1, and they need something done with a  
23 tree, does that get fielded directly to Parks and  
24 then Parks has its own 3-1-1, DEP has got their own  
25

1  
2 3-1-1, DDC has got their own 3-1-1, just give me the  
3 lay of the land.

4 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Yes, the 3-1-1  
5 principally functions as a call center that federates  
6 the requests to the agencies.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Okay.

8 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: They have to work  
9 very closely together to make sure that the backend  
10 technology is seamless.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: So NYPD as well,  
12 their 3-1-1 calls gets fielded out to NYPD and the  
13 same thing for the Fire Department.

14 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: That's right.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Okay, so my  
16 office is extremely busy and most of which we hear  
17 constantly is Vicky, we called 3-1-1 a hundred times  
18 or more. It's three years now into the job and, holy  
19 cow, we're into the hundreds and hundreds so I just  
20 want to know more or less the lay of the land with  
21 that. I'm very curious as to each Department and how  
22 many people do they have working now that I broke the  
23 pie up into slices, now we need to find out how many  
24 people are eating at that one slice of pie, that two  
25 slices of pie, because I want to know how many people

1 work the 3-1-1 for NYPD, I want to know how many do  
2 at DSNY, and so on and so forth so that helped me  
3 with that. Also, I'm hearing a lot about NYCHA here.  
4 I'm wondering, why can't the different NYCHA  
5 facilities have their own 3-1-1? They don't go into  
6 the big pot of soup, do they? So they can get the  
7 individualized attention that NYCHA housing needs.  
8 They should have, at their location, I'm talking  
9 about, like really bring it down to an extremely  
10 local level because these are gigantic problems in a  
11 gigantic city with 9 million people who need 9  
12 million different things every single day so I'm just  
13 wondering, and I will get my feet wet with my  
14 Chairman and I will learn the ropes, but I do want to  
15 know how does that work with NYCHA?  
16

17           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Great question. To  
18 your first question, just want to remind you, this is  
19 an obvious point that will be intuitive, but some  
20 agencies are far more complaint driven than others in  
21 terms of their operations.

22           COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Obviously, yes.

23           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: EDC, obviously, they  
24 get complaints about helicopter noise, Sanitation  
25 gets complaints about 500, they have literally

1  
2 hundreds of different service requests so obviously  
3 the sort of resources that are deployed are somewhat  
4 related to the demand. In terms of 3-1-1 NYCHA, I  
5 don't think I have the expertise to answer that  
6 question. There was some recent movement, I think  
7 historically NYCHA did have its own complaint system  
8 and that had been considered a problem in terms of  
9 its sort of detachment from 3-1-1, but we haven't  
10 been directly involved in that work. I'm happy to  
11 follow up.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: I always think  
13 when you bring it down to a smaller level, it's  
14 always easier to manage. There are serious problems,  
15 there are serious issues with NYCHA, and I just see  
16 it as just too big of a problem to handle it in such  
17 a vast manner. I always feel breaking it up, like I  
18 have a lot of issues with SCA. This is just something  
19 that I'll lead into. Tremendous problems with SCA,  
20 and I'm going to be putting forward, I actually have  
21 legislation in right now, I'm waiting, because I am  
22 not the only Council Member here who's got a bucket  
23 load of things about SCA. We're talking tens, even  
24 hundreds of millions of dollars that are stuck in a  
25 pipeline that they cannot get their money so that's

1  
2 for another visit. Take my time? We have got  
3 shortfalls. I'll give you an example. I I took over  
4 an incumbent. He was there for eight years. He term-  
5 limited out. His name was Paul Vallone. He had  
6 started a great many projects in my District with  
7 schools. They, of course, were not finished, and they  
8 have since come to me so when I was talking about a  
9 reading garden or Paul was talking about a reading  
10 garden, I fully funded a reading garden that I  
11 thought was astronomically priced but, then again, I  
12 think everything is astronomically priced, it was  
13 500,000 dollars, and I thought I fully funded that in  
14 my first budget year, doing it, only to find out the  
15 following year, I was 500,000 short so you're going  
16 to tell me SCA is going to tell me that a reading  
17 garden no bigger than the size of this room is  
18 costing a million dollars? Oh, no, it's not. Because  
19 I'll get contractors to do it for 50,000, and you'll  
20 get a beautiful reading garden. I could promise you  
21 that so I take everything. We got PS31 that has been  
22 fully funded and was started in 2017. When I took  
23 office in 2022, when I won in '21, took office in  
24 '22, I made sure that those contractors were fired.  
25 The same way, I made sure the contractors were fired

1  
2 that were hired by the Parks Department to finish  
3 Bowne Park. This is absolutely ridiculous. I want SCA  
4 held accountable, and I told SCA within my first year  
5 of working with them that I was going to figure them  
6 out and I want to know where is the money? It's plain  
7 and simple, and why are jobs incomplete. Why do they  
8 stop and go? Who are the contractors that they hire?  
9 Because I will do my own background check, being in  
10 the business myself, my family forever in the  
11 contracting business. I will figure it out, and I  
12 want to know the background of the contractors that  
13 are hired to do the jobs that can't get done. I just  
14 want to know, and now it's our taxpayer dollars. Big,  
15 big, big money that are paying for these sorts of  
16 things that should have been completed, given a  
17 starting date and all of that, and only to find out,  
18 now I'm in three years, and five or six of my  
19 projects are not getting started, they haven't even  
20 been given a start date yet. It's absolutely  
21 ridiculous. Okay? Thank you.

22 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No, no problem. It  
23 takes a lot of resources...

24 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: (INAUDIBLE)  
25 allow me to air myself out, but thank you.

1

DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No, of course.

3

COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Thank you, but  
SCA right there.

5

DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No, I hear you.

6

There's one resource I just want to make sure you're  
aware of because SCA status as a public authority  
means that it has special reporting requirements  
under the State so they have to submit a report that  
is on the project level in terms of budget and  
schedule.

11

12

COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Wait a minute.

13

SCA, the School Construction Authority for the City  
of New York, let me make sure I get this straight,  
has to report to the State? Are you kidding me?

15

16

DIRECTOR STEINBERG: The City doesn't have  
the authority to create its own public authorities in  
the sense that only the State can, public authorities  
are organizations that have certain advantages in  
terms of their ability to contract and everything  
else, and so in order for any local government to  
create an authority, the State has to pass  
legislation.

23

24

COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: No way. No,

25

don't even tell me this.



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DIRECTOR STEINBERG: But the SCA...

COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Seriously.

DIRECTOR STEINBERG: But the fact that the SCA is an authority is mostly to its benefit in the sense that it's it can operate more flexibly than a City agency.

COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: No, it's not at all.

DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Right, but I'm mostly telling you this because there's a very good report that they have to publish that on the project level that includes schedule and budget that, to be honest, the rest of the City's capital portfolio had to catch up to that quality of report.

COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: So wait, PS79 on 15th Drive and 149th Street in Whitestone.

DIRECTOR STEINBERG: It should have a line in the report, which is the beauty of it where you can...

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Project by project, and I'd be happy to talk.

COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: We are going to talk about this.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Let's talk about  
3 this.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Because this is,  
5 again, craziness.

6 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I have similar  
7 headaches with the SCA and...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: That's why I  
9 think this could be a very good bipartisan piece of  
10 legislation.

11 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I think that's  
12 right, and I'd be happy to make some introductions to  
13 some key folks over there who might be more senior.  
14 Let's talk. Let's talk. Thank you so much. We're all  
15 unhappy with the SCA together.

16 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Look at the chapter  
17 on the SCA and tell us what we're not measuring that  
18 we need to measure.

19 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: That's exactly  
20 right.

21 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: We did add one that  
22 the Council suggested in the most recent cycle, which  
23 is a very intuitive one. The number of schools  
24 completed was not actually reported as a unit metric,  
25 and so we're all ears.

1  
2           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I want to make sure  
3 to acknowledge Council Member Gennaro, who is on Zoom  
4 home sick. We hope you're feeling better, Jim. Thank  
5 you for being with us today, and we did acknowledge  
6 Lynn, who's still here with us. Lynn, we hope you're  
7 feeling okay too.

8           Okay. I did just want to say one thing on  
9 the previous item we were talking about because I got  
10 a text from a colleague that I think is exactly  
11 right. 3-1-1, often when you make complaints on the  
12 app, it gets directed to NYPD, and then the Police  
13 Department automatically says your complaint has been  
14 closed and or NYPD is not the appropriate  
15 jurisdiction, and that's why their data looks like  
16 they're responding in real time and solving  
17 everything and other agencies are not, and I just  
18 think there's some issues we need to work on with 3-  
19 1-1 and maybe with Council Member Gutiérrez on  
20 whether we're directing folks to the right agencies  
21 on some of these complaints, how they're getting  
22 automatically closed out. I appreciate your comments  
23 about the paradigm shift of measuring the  
24 effectiveness of the response, not just that we  
25 responded. It's not just a check box. It's are we

1  
2 actually solving the problem. Because that's  
3 certainly as my staff knows, and I think the same is  
4 true for Council Members Gutiérrez and Paladino,  
5 that's the expectation we have in our offices for how  
6 we're serving New Yorkers, for how we're serving our  
7 constituents.

8 I would like to shift gears to  
9 incarceration. Both adult and youth incarceration  
10 rates have been moving in deeply troubling  
11 directions. Since the Mayor took office, we've seen  
12 about a 30 percent increase in the adult population  
13 at Rikers, and we're up approximately 50 percent from  
14 the nadir during COVID where we were under 4,000  
15 incarcerated individuals in New York. We're now at  
16 over 6,200, despite Rikers being a widely  
17 acknowledged humanitarian disaster. We're also seeing  
18 record percentages of detainees who have a mental  
19 health designation, the Brad H. designation. In the  
20 PMMR, I think it was at 53 percent of detainees. The  
21 most recent data that we've seen puts it at 55  
22 percent, so we're continuing to see a rise in people  
23 with serious mental illness in our incarcerated  
24 population. Yet, at the same time we're seeing a  
25 significant decline in the number of health clinic

1 visits at Rikers so that juxtaposition is really  
2 disconcerting, but the thing that I really want to  
3 dig in on is the reduction in re-entry services, and  
4 this was a big fight that we had in last year's  
5 budget where the Mayor was insistent on cutting re-  
6 entry programming and services and kicking well-  
7 regarded non-profit organizations that have been  
8 providing services for years on Rikers Island out of  
9 DOC. The DMMR was great in this regard because it  
10 showed exactly the shift from June to July Fiscal  
11 Year '23 to '24 when the Mayor cut these programs,  
12 despite the Council's willingness to fund them, when  
13 the Mayor insisted on cutting these programs, we saw  
14 that in June of 2023, the last month of the previous  
15 Fiscal Year, 21 percent of detainees were accessing  
16 re-entry programming and services, but it dropped to  
17 11.8 percent, essentially half, in the following  
18 month, and we've seen that number continue to  
19 decline. The Administration had repeatedly assured us  
20 that you all could provide these services yourselves  
21 but, of course, by DOC staff, that was disingenuous.  
22 I guess the thing I really want to ask here is, for  
23 years, Operations tracked in the PMMR, in the MMR,  
24 how many detainees were accessing re-entry  
25

1  
2 programming and services and tracked it as a positive  
3 indicator for more detainees to be accessing more  
4 services. A deliberate policy decision was made to  
5 move in the opposite direction. Was Operations  
6 consulted on this? Do you have any opinion about  
7 this? Is there anything that you can ascertain is  
8 being done to try to reverse this trend? I think we  
9 all know this, but Rikers is a jail. People are held  
10 pre-trial. The vast majority of people who are there  
11 are coming back into our communities. When we fail to  
12 provide them with access to healthcare and access to  
13 re-entry programming and services, they're going to  
14 come back in even worse shape, and that undermines  
15 safety in our neighborhoods, and it's unfair to the  
16 individuals who are there. I know that's a lot, but  
17 this is a really big problem, and it would be helpful  
18 to understand if Operations is doing anything about  
19 it.

20                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: We have not been  
21 involved in setting policy in this area. We have  
22 briefed the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, the Budget  
23 Director on the very indicators that you just cited,  
24 but there's not too much more we can say beyond those  
25

1 are the numbers and those are good questions for  
2 those agencies.  
3

4 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: A week from right  
5 now, we will have DOC in front of us for our budget  
6 hearing on March 8th, and we will be grilling them on  
7 exactly this. I'm sure they won't answer the  
8 questions as they always do.

9 Next up. Of all of the data points that I  
10 found most disconcerting in Mayor Adams' tenure and  
11 in the PMMR, the rise in youth incarceration is at  
12 the top of my list. We've seen the number of kids,  
13 minors, who are in jail double during Mayor Adams  
14 tenure and, year-over-year, it's a 30 percent  
15 increase in the number of kids who are in jail. We've  
16 got to a point where kids are sleeping in classrooms,  
17 in our ACS juvenile detention facilities because  
18 these facilities have been packed to the brim. The  
19 PMMR seemingly celebrated that there was a 44 percent  
20 increase in youth felony arrests while the Adams'  
21 Administration has cut, and the Department of  
22 Probation has cut, vital programs that help support  
23 young adults. Arches, Next Steps have experienced  
24 multi-million-dollar cuts or been eliminated  
25 altogether. Could you just speak to is there a

1  
2 desired direction for the youth felony arrests  
3 indicator?

4 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No, I'm glad you've  
5 put it that way exactly because so many indicators in  
6 the report do have desired directions, and expressly  
7 crime and arrest numbers don't and we would never  
8 advocate for them to.

9 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: As we all know, the  
10 Law Department serves as the prosecutors in these  
11 cases so it's the Mayor's staff and representatives  
12 who are responsible for prosecuting these kids, and  
13 they are responsible for the 44 percent increase in  
14 pursuing 44 percent increase in youth felonies. Have  
15 you been involved in policy conversations with Law?  
16 Is there any insight into why they are pursuing so  
17 many additional felony designations, which I believe  
18 requires the kids to then be sent to the juvenile  
19 detention facilities.

20 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: We have briefed the  
21 Chief Counsel on that phenomenon. I do think it's  
22 important to add as context, Raise the Age, obviously  
23 just to the extent...

24 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Which Ops was  
25 actively involved with.



1  
2 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: That's right, and  
3 just the fact that that children under the age of 18  
4 are no longer sent to Rikers, but are sent to ACS  
5 detention is one of the drivers of the numbers, but  
6 that doesn't necessarily undermine the points you're  
7 making and the question...

8 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I'm sure it is. It  
9 just doesn't, what I don't understand is Raise the  
10 Age was implemented in, I'm not great, 2017, 2018.

11 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: It was in two stages.  
12 It was 17 years old was one and then 16...

13 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: (INAUDIBLE) or  
14 whatever it was.

15 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I think it was  
16 October 1, 2018 for 17 and then 2019 for 18, I think.

17 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Okay. I realize the  
18 pandemic had an impact in confusing some of these  
19 data trends, but the timeline for the major increases  
20 in kids in jail, the increases in the number of kids  
21 that are facing felonies coincides with Mayor Adams  
22 coming into office specifically and, just like we see  
23 with the minor summons, just like we see with the  
24 arrests, just like we see with the adult  
25 incarceration, we see this increase in youth

1 incarceration where it feels like more than a  
2 coincidence that we're seeing all of these trends  
3 shift in dramatic ways upon him taking office. There  
4 were policy decisions that were made to increase the  
5 reach of our criminal justice system and to sweep  
6 more predominantly black and brown young people up in  
7 it. I feel like I'm just going to get worked up if I  
8 keep asking questions on this.

10 I'm going to shift gears to staffing,  
11 which is another one of the things that I've been  
12 most fixated on over these two years, the decline in  
13 the City workforce. Many agency sections in the PMMR  
14 identified understaffing as a primary cause of their  
15 inability to achieve their goals. Agencies were  
16 acknowledging they don't have the bodies to do the  
17 work. Staffing is explicitly cited as a factor behind  
18 several performance declines, most notably the Health  
19 Department conducting 11 percent fewer restaurant  
20 inspections, and their ability to conduct  
21 tuberculosis control activities has been severely  
22 impacted by their lack of staffing. The Department of  
23 Buildings average response time for priority B  
24 complaints has increased by two days, almost 20  
25 percent increase by two days.

2 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Still on target.

3 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Still on target.

4 Much slower. Not a helpful thing when we're moving in  
5 the wrong direction, and I could literally pull out  
6 every line in the PMMRs I'm sure you all looked at  
7 where agency cited staffing as a primary factor in  
8 why they can't do their jobs. Has Operations  
9 recommended as a result of seeing that trend, which  
10 I'm sure you all did, that agencies be allowed to  
11 fill more vacancies and hire more staff to address  
12 specific concerns like tuberculosis spread,  
13 restaurant inspections, and the like, especially to  
14 address vacancies that are impacting critical health  
15 and safety issues?

16 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I do want to be clear  
17 that Operations is mostly the reason you know that  
18 information.

19 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I'm happy that we  
20 have it. I'm not criticizing you.

21 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: For sure, yeah.

22 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I'm asking what we  
23 do about it.

24 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Totally, and I'm not  
25 even saying it defensively. Part of the process of

1  
2 generating the report is insisting that agencies be  
3 candid about the roots of their performance issues,  
4 and so we're proud of the fact that staffing is  
5 explicitly mentioned many times, I have a tab here,  
6 an entire section. We are involved in some of the  
7 flexible work policy. Our Project Management Team has  
8 been heavily involved in that and in some of the  
9 recruitment efforts that that DCAS staged to really  
10 facilitate hiring. You'll see the DCAS numbers have  
11 actually improved in terms of numbers of civil  
12 service exams and the timeliness by which they  
13 complete them. There are some staffing success  
14 stories in the MMR. I would point to the HPD housing  
15 maintenance section in terms of their inspection  
16 units, set almost every record in terms of the number  
17 of inspections, the number of complaints closed out,  
18 and the number of issues remediated, and that's a  
19 really big deal because people had been avoiding  
20 inspectors coming to their homes for several years  
21 during the pandemic so I think that there are success  
22 stories that we could point to but that we're glad  
23 that you have this information and I think it's  
24 appropriate to raise this issue.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Are you tracking  
3 total headcount citywide? Is that something, I don't  
4 think it's a data point in the PMMR specifically or  
5 the MMR, but is it something that you're all focused  
6 on?

7 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Yes, but it's  
8 something that we have in our data systems for sure.  
9 It gets very complicated, to be honest, because  
10 there's a lot of temporary employees, there's H and  
11 H, and so it's actually very hard to get two people  
12 to agree on how many people work for the City of New  
13 York, but we do track that.

14 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Is the Performance  
15 Management Team engaging, or the Project Management  
16 Team, on strategies to hire more and to track and  
17 developing specific strategies where the lack of  
18 staff is impacting goals?

19 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Yeah, the Project  
20 Management Team has been assigned to that work over  
21 the past couple of years, and I'd have to check on  
22 the exact status of their involvement but that has  
23 been a major focus of their work.

24 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Okay, I will just  
25 cite some of the examples that are in the, that you

1  
2 have as well I'm sure, but that are concerning to me  
3 about some of the staffing impacts. At DOI, they're  
4 seeing a 16 percent increase in background check  
5 completion time and a 45 percent decrease in the  
6 backlogged investigations getting closed due to  
7 limited staffing. I mentioned some of the issues at  
8 the Health Department around their failure to control  
9 tuberculosis spread, to maintain the restaurant  
10 inspections. There's been a decline in pest control  
11 inspections by 23 percent. This is one of the things  
12 that the Mayor purports to care about more than  
13 anything else, and we're seeing a 23 percent year-  
14 over-year decline in pest inspections due to the lack  
15 of staffing in the Health Department. Individuals  
16 served by co-response teams, which is something that  
17 I care a ton about, the catch basins inspected by  
18 DEP, average time for DOT to process permit  
19 applications is up by 24 percent. I guess the  
20 question I want to ask on this, because these are all  
21 really concerning trends, is Ops involved,  
22 considering that you're tracking this information,  
23 focused on it, bringing accountability and  
24 transparency to it, that the Project Management Team  
25 is thinking about strategies to increase hiring, are

1  
2 you involved in the conversations around PEGs and  
3 budget cuts and like the impact that these are having  
4 on services, the hiring freeze decisions, the two to  
5 one replacement policy? When the Mayor is saying that  
6 there's going to be minimal disruption to City  
7 services due to the seven rounds of budget cuts, we  
8 just see a different story here, and you know this  
9 data better than I do. You understand these trends  
10 better than I do. What is Ops doing about it to help  
11 reverse this?

12                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: When it comes to this  
13 ocean of data, we really feel like it's our first and  
14 highest responsibility to make sure the Deputy Mayor,  
15 the respective Deputy Mayor, is aware of the problem  
16 and has the information they need to make informed  
17 decisions so it's a different answer to each one, but  
18 I can tell you that DM Williams-Isom is one of our  
19 best clients and was actually very aware of the  
20 issues that you mentioned and has been working  
21 closely with the Health Department to resolve them.  
22 She didn't ask for our involvement necessarily, but  
23 we're always game, capacity is always an issue  
24 obviously. I think our Project Management Team has a  
25 sterling reputation and figuring out how and where to

1 use them is really difficult and tricky, and I  
2 mentioned that I do think they add the most value in  
3 interagency work and so when a Deputy Mayor wants to  
4 work directly with one of their agencies to resolve  
5 something, that's certainly their prerogative.  
6

7 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: That's helpful and  
8 glad to hear that it's on Deputy Mayor Williams-  
9 Isom's radar and that she's focused on trying to  
10 address it, and we'll follow up with the Health  
11 Department during Preliminary Budget Hearings to  
12 understand how they are addressing it. We certainly  
13 appreciate that if she's involved, it should be  
14 helpful, and you feel that across the board you're  
15 getting the responsiveness that is needed from Deputy  
16 Mayors when identifying these kinds of troubling  
17 trends?

18 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: We've never had this  
19 strong an audience. I do think it comes from the top  
20 in terms of what's expected of people and what's  
21 required to manage a city as large and complex as  
22 this one. Each agency is the size of a local  
23 government, and I think there is a general confidence  
24 that data is really the only way that we can even  
25 aspire to get all the signals we need to make



1 informed decisions so I am very pleased with the  
2 audience we have and how seriously the data is taken.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: In connection to  
5 where we started the conversation this afternoon,  
6 yes, some offices have been shifted out of Ops, but  
7 you like every other agency in the City, has seen  
8 some belt tightening and reductions in staffing. If  
9 our Performance Management Team was expanded, if our  
10 Project Management Team was more than just nine  
11 people, would that help in better addressing some of  
12 these issues?

13 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I never turn down  
14 resources, and I think we'll never be able to tackle  
15 every problem with City government, but obviously the  
16 size of our Project Management Team has real  
17 implications for their capacity and they punch above  
18 their weight.

19 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I always think it's  
20 important to invest in the portions of City  
21 government that can have broad potential beneficial  
22 impact and, when you've got a strong Project  
23 Management Team that can help address crises and work  
24 through issues, it really does make a difference so I  
25 would certainly be supportive of that.

1  
2                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: If I could just say,  
3 because you know the organization so well, really  
4 what we're trying to establish are the sort of  
5 stronger connections between our teams and in the  
6 sense of they're serving as resources to one another,  
7 right? If the Project Management Team needs to  
8 measure something better in order to know whether  
9 they're successful, they have a team of experts that  
10 can help them develop indicators. If somebody needs  
11 to run a regression analysis to see what's the real  
12 cause of something. We have really high-powered data  
13 analysts that can do that, and so the long-term  
14 vision is for us to complement one another and, in a  
15 perfect world, we're generating work for our Project  
16 Management Team through the surveillance we're doing  
17 with Performance Management. That's the world we want  
18 to live in and, to some extent, we're getting there.

19                   CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: No, I think that  
20 makes a lot of sense. I think that in my experience,  
21 the units were siloed and the units would bring  
22 issues to Deputy Mayors and, if Deputy Mayors cared,  
23 then it would ping back to potentially other units  
24 within Ops to help, and having deeper integration  
25

1  
2 across the office seems like a smart and sensible  
3 thing to do from a management standpoint.

4           I'd like to shift gears to perhaps one of  
5 the least surprising but still incredibly one of the  
6 most disappointing indicators that was in the PMMR,  
7 and that relates to the processing of SNAP and cash  
8 assistance applications. Recognizing that we've seen  
9 an increase in SNAP and cash assistance applications,  
10 we still found that only 40 percent of SNAP  
11 applications and only 14 percent of cash assistance  
12 applications are being processed on time. This  
13 Administration has failed to address the issue for  
14 nearly two years despite litigation, despite multiple  
15 rounds of Council oversight hearings with agency  
16 leadership from DSS. This is just an enormously  
17 important issue. I started my opening statement by  
18 highlighting the nearly 2 million New Yorkers who are  
19 living in poverty, the one in four children who are  
20 in poverty in New York, and we're failing to get them  
21 the cash assistance and the food stamps that they are  
22 eligible for, that they deserve, that they need, to  
23 keep lights on, to keep themselves fed, because we  
24 don't have the staff in place to do it. It's just  
25 very, very disappointing. Has the Ops Project

1  
2 Management Team been working on this, and what have  
3 you been doing to try and help address this crisis?

4                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: They have been  
5 directly involved. We knew this was a crisis before  
6 it was making headlines or the subject of lawsuits.  
7 Our reports have been transparent about what's going  
8 on, that there is a combination of more applications,  
9 an avalanche of demand really, for the reasons I  
10 mentioned before. There was a backlog of  
11 recertifications. There was serious staff attrition  
12 in retirements following the pandemic, and actually  
13 those workers are not easily replaced because they  
14 require some federal involvement, and this  
15 unprecedented demand for benefits really did, to some  
16 extent, it was a perfect storm when you consider the  
17 staffing issues of the pandemic and the data bears  
18 that out. We're proud of the fact that the Legal Aid  
19 Society in their complaint cited the DMMR. If you  
20 look at their lawsuit, they're relying on the data  
21 that we generate, and that's the reason the data  
22 exists is for the public to hold the City  
23 accountable. The First Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor  
24 have been directly and very seriously involved in  
25 this issue, again, before it started generating

1  
2 headlines. The Chief Efficiency Officer is involved  
3 in this work. That office does specialize in sort of  
4 methods of process improvement, and this is one of  
5 those areas that was ripe for that skill set.  
6 Obviously, the numbers have been incrementally  
7 improving as DSS continues to aggressively hire,  
8 train, and redeploy staff. There are a number of  
9 process improvements that are in motion, but we're  
10 probably not the best party to speak to them, but  
11 it's using every lever possible, it's hiring, it's  
12 technology, it's legal and operational strategies  
13 that DSS could describe in more detail, but it's been  
14 a full-on approach, but clearly there's more work to  
15 do.

16 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I will tell you in  
17 my years of having worked with the team at HRA, I  
18 used to describe that agency as one of the most  
19 effective and nimble agencies in City government, and  
20 when Lisa Fitzpatrick, the former HRA Administrator,  
21 testified before the Council last year, she said,  
22 never in her 40 years at HRA had they had so few  
23 staff and, for what are primarily federally funded  
24 benefits, for us to be failing to have the staff in  
25 place to connect people to the resources that they

1  
2 deserve, it's just incredibly painful and  
3 disappointing. I get that it's not easy to fix these  
4 problems with a magic wand, but to see marginal  
5 improvement over years is a clear indication that  
6 this has not been prioritized and taken as seriously  
7 as it should be and, for an issue of such magnitude  
8 that is hurting people so much, I really hope that  
9 the Mayor on down starts to prioritize fixing this  
10 much more seriously than has been demonstrated to  
11 date.

12 I had a whole lot of questions I wanted  
13 to ask about housing for homeless individuals, but I  
14 recognize that it's already 3:11, and I have a lot of  
15 questions so I'll try to go quickly.

16 I'm only going to ask actually about  
17 NYCHA occupancy. We saw in the PMMR that occupancy is  
18 down in total NYCHA units to 96.5 percent, down from  
19 nearly 99 percent in FY21 when the Mayor came into  
20 office. NYCHA metrics though reported only 94.23  
21 percent occupancy at the same time. Just wondering if  
22 you could speak to the discrepancy there between the  
23 NYCHA metrics and the Ops metrics in the PMMR and,  
24 generally, I'm very concerned about the tenfold  
25 increase in vacant NYCHA apartments. I don't believe

1 that you're tracking the turnover time and the  
2 vacancy, forgive me if I missed it, but the number of  
3 vacant NYCHA units, I didn't believe was tracked in  
4 the PMMR explicitly as a hard number. I was just  
5 wondering, is that something that you're all thinking  
6 about considering how much attention and how  
7 problematic an issue this has been, is this data that  
8 you're interested in tracking moving forward?

10 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I think it's a great  
11 suggestion. I have to take a closer look, but I  
12 believe that you're right that we don't track the raw  
13 number of vacant apartments. It's a really important  
14 input. For us, you always want to know your  
15 denominator. If you're measuring how fast something's  
16 done, you want to know how many times we're doing it  
17 and need to do it so, yeah, we should take a look at  
18 that. There was something else. What was the other  
19 question? Oh, yeah, it's coming up, right? Oh, very  
20 good timing, Council Member. We have this cohort  
21 process. I mentioned it at a high level where we're  
22 subjecting each agency to this kind of very involved  
23 review where they have to realign what they're  
24 measuring with what they describe as their mission  
25 and their functions. NYCHA is actually about to go

1 through our cohort, and so it's a really good moment,  
2 and I know they have their own story they want to  
3 tell in the sense that they've created new systems  
4 for responding to tenant problems and they feel like  
5 they have a much more robust data infrastructure to  
6 generate performance data from so I think we're going  
7 to have a real opportunity to improve that chapter.  
8

9 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I hear you. The  
10 approximately 5,000 vacant apartments is one of the  
11 most troubling trends that we've seen over these two  
12 years. It was under 500 when the Mayor came into  
13 office and it's about 5,000 today, so that is a just  
14 huge increase. I recognize that there are some  
15 changes in lead paint remediation that have slowed  
16 things down, that have contributed to this, but  
17 ultimately this is a question of resources and  
18 management, and 5,000 apartments could house 15,000  
19 homeless people, right? If you gave 100 percent of  
20 those units over, or you could do half for folks that  
21 are special populations of folks, exiting DHS shelter  
22 and other, DV shelters and other places, and half for  
23 folks off the waiting list. It could be a huge  
24 housing resource, and it should be. I believe this  
25 Administration has reduced the percentage of formerly



1  
2 homeless people that are going into NYCHA housing as  
3 well, which is an area of real concern so I  
4 appreciate that you're focused on it with NYCHA  
5 management. There's been some reporting in the press  
6 since our last oversight hearings on this that NYCHA  
7 central management getting involved in trying to  
8 address this issue hasn't made much of a difference  
9 because we haven't seen the data improve. I think we  
10 need help on this, and to see such a valuable  
11 resource of deeply affordable housing sitting vacant  
12 when it should be helping people at a shelter, it  
13 needs real attention and swiftly.

14 I'd like to focus on a couple more topics  
15 briefly, not in great depth, but one that's near and  
16 dear to my heart are transportation indicators. We  
17 have seen the number of bike lanes installed go from,  
18 I think, it's 47.7 down from 62 in FY22. 25.9 of  
19 those miles are protected, 33 in FY22, so a decline  
20 there over these two years. Bus lane miles installed  
21 just 7.8 miles of bus lanes in the PMMR, down from  
22 12.9 in FY22, down from 20.5 in FY21. Bicycle  
23 fatalities are up 18 to 29 since last year, and up  
24 again over the first four months of the year, total  
25 fatalities are approximately flat, 263 to 260. I

1 think it's being widely reported, it's not a PMMR  
2 indicator, but that no new bike or bus lane proposals  
3 have been made by the Administration in many months,  
4 and Vision Zero has been a major priority articulated  
5 in the MMR for years. It works. It could save lives.  
6 We're seeing the beginnings, in my opinion, in the  
7 PMMR data of things moving in the wrong direction,  
8 and we know that the next set of data that you all  
9 release is going to be far worse. Are you helping to  
10 try to reverse this trend? Is there anything that can  
11 be done to start making protected bike lanes and bus  
12 lanes a priority again for the Adams' Administration?  
13

14 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Operations is very  
15 proud to still have Vision Zero in our portfolio, and  
16 it's one of the most important issues to have cross-  
17 agency collaboration on because DOT can be as  
18 brilliant and committed as it wants, but it can't  
19 achieve Vision Zero without enforcement and other  
20 levers that agencies bring to bear. On the data side,  
21 these are issues that we've escalated. I think the  
22 big caveat that we want to give is that, I think it  
23 was approximately 15 miles of protected bike lanes  
24 that reported in the PMMR was actually the highest  
25 total in the history of the PMMR in a quarter so they

1 did perform well in that respect. They did not  
2 perform well in respect to targets that were created  
3 that DOT would say was not with their involvement,  
4 and I think our agencies always resent when targets  
5 are set through a political process that they're not  
6 engaged in, and so I'm channeling DOT to some extent  
7 on that, but just objectively there were other...

9           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I just have to say,  
10 I think that the now Commissioner of the Department  
11 of Transportation was like the lead sponsor on the  
12 Streets Plan legislation that set those benchmarks,  
13 and so it's a little funny for him or for them to  
14 complain that they don't like the political goals  
15 that were set that he was responsible for setting,  
16 but I digress. I apologize for interrupting.

17           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No, it's okay. I was  
18 making a broader point too.

19           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I know you were.

20           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: We have several  
21 targets.

22           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: You gave me an  
23 opening on that one, and I took it. I apologize.

24           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I am going to take  
25 this opening that the First Deputy Commissioner of

1  
2 DOT, Margaret Forgery, when she started off as an  
3 analyst on our Performance Management Team and that's  
4 how she got to know DOT, and that's how we're going  
5 to create the next generation of city leaders.

6 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I love that.

7 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: We're very close with  
8 them.

9 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I feel like people  
10 always tell those stories about OMB analysts that go  
11 on to be CFOs at a...

12 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: That's because  
13 everyone thinks they'll get funding if they hire  
14 them, but I think you're right.

15 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: But the Ops stories  
16 are good ones. I didn't know that about Margaret. I  
17 like that.

18 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I know, and it really  
19 should be an inspiration, I think, to us, but the  
20 only other thing I wanted to say, what else is there,  
21 there is one other point. Oh, just that there were  
22 other legitimate highlights in the Vision Zero sense  
23 in this PMMR. I think stuff like the bike parking  
24 spaces, the pavement safety markings went up  
25 exponentially like hundreds of thousands of square

1 feet, and these matter, they all contribute to street  
2 safety. They're not as impactful necessarily as a  
3 street redesign on a major boulevard, but I think  
4 they think very holistically about the issue and  
5 address it from many different angles. We have a very  
6 strong data working group as part of Vision Zero  
7 where so much of the work in Vision Zero is driven by  
8 is driven by what's happening in the field and our  
9 research, and we're always happy to dig deeper into  
10 those issues.  
11

12 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I hear you. Look, I  
13 think DOT does a great job on their street redesign  
14 work and safety improvement work. I think the trouble  
15 is that, when they need City Hall approval, they  
16 can't get it anymore, and that's the fix that we need  
17 somebody, whether it's Operations or the Mayor to  
18 help intervene and to get these projects back on  
19 track so that we can start making Vision Zero a  
20 reality in New York City.

21 There was a whole hearing on class sizes  
22 yesterday so I don't want to dig into it too much,  
23 but I just have to say it was very notable in the  
24 PMMR to see every single grade from kindergarten  
25 through high school saw average class sizes increase

1  
2 year-over-year, and at a time when we're three years  
3 out from a significant new mandate from taking effect  
4 that will reduce class sizes, I'm just interested is  
5 Ops working with DOE and SCA on strategies to help  
6 facilitate compliance with this new requirement. Is  
7 this problematic trend being considered by current  
8 leadership, not only do we need to comply with much  
9 more ambitious goals, we need to figure out how to  
10 start moving things in the right direction?

11           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: The only mitigating  
12 data point I would offer is that the number of  
13 teachers did go up the cycle for the first time in a  
14 couple of years, which was a really troubling trend  
15 coming out of the pandemic that the City for years  
16 had been hiring more teachers and suddenly had fewer  
17 so that's a very important trend and a key toward  
18 getting to class sizes. Obviously, the number of  
19 students went up.

20           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Which is a good  
21 thing.

22           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Of course.

23           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: And for the first  
24 time in a while.

25

1  
2                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Exactly, and  
3 following the pandemic, it's exactly what we want to  
4 see but, yes, these are hot topics within City Hall,  
5 class sizes. We actually do have a meeting coming up  
6 on the topic, but we're not actively working on it  
7 right now as an office, but it's something that DOE  
8 feels like they have real command over. They feel  
9 very confident they're going to meet the State  
10 requirements, but we're not directly involved in that  
11 work.

12                   CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I would like to just  
13 shift gears to ask you about some of these new  
14 offices that the Mayor has created that we invited to  
15 come to testify today, who refused, who wanted to  
16 leave all the fun to the Operations. In particular,  
17 I'm interested in the Chief Efficiency Officer so Mel  
18 has left, Denise Clay is now the Chief Efficiency  
19 Officer. My recollection from the executive order  
20 that created the role was that they are charged with  
21 developing updated metrics to improve government  
22 transparency, performance, and accountability. If I  
23 hadn't told you in advance that was from the Chief  
24 Efficiency Officer Executive Order, and, if I were to  
25 ask you, is that to describe the Mayor's Office of

1  
2 Operations, I imagine you would've said yes. It  
3 sounds pretty darn duplicative to me. Could you help  
4 me understand how you all work together? What do they  
5 do that's different from what Ops does? Did we just  
6 create another office that got the same mandate as  
7 the Mayor's Office of Operations?

8 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: We weren't involved  
9 in the decision as to whether they'd be here today,  
10 and I don't want to represent the work of those  
11 offices fully. I do want to describe the work we've  
12 done together because we did fulfill that component  
13 of the EO in the sense that, I think it was 150  
14 customer service indicators that were added, was a  
15 very involved process that was partially driven by  
16 that office in coordination with us. They were the  
17 ones that essentially came up with a new paradigm of  
18 customer-centric measurements and a very legitimate  
19 critique that the MMR was missing.

20 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Was that Masha?

21 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Masha was involved,  
22 and it was a very productive engagement because they  
23 were right in the sense that so many of the customer  
24 service indicators in the MMR are from the  
25 perspective of government and allow us to break down



1  
2 components of our response, but don't necessarily  
3 represent the experience of the customer, the truly  
4 like how long did the thing take, not how long did it  
5 take us to get there, that sort of thing, and so many  
6 of the new customer service indicators represent that  
7 sort of customer-centric paradigm that they  
8 developed, and we worked closely with them. Beyond  
9 that I can't speak to their current portfolio. We do  
10 have somewhat of a division of labor in the sense  
11 that they really are strong on process improvements  
12 and on the methods of Lean Six Sigma, and so some of  
13 the issues that you described today are those types  
14 of issues but, in terms of the MMR, their involvement  
15 has been limited to those customer service indicators  
16 and to some extent they've been involved in the  
17 cohort review process. There's one more thing that,  
18 that we should say, no, I don't remember what it was.

19 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Could you speak to  
20 how does the work of their office, just their charge  
21 sounds like the same as Operations to me. I know this  
22 wasn't your decision to create the office so I'm not  
23 asking for the kind of analysis behind that, but I do  
24 want to understand, is this entirely duplicative? I  
25 appreciate that they were helpful with customer

1  
2 service-related indicators, that's great, that sounds  
3 like a positive thing, but how does their work  
4 complement yours? What are they doing?

5 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: You definitely should  
6 direct that question to them but, in practice, we do...

7 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: They wouldn't show  
8 up so you're all I got.

9 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: We do have a division  
10 of labor in the sense that that their core strengths  
11 really are process reform and taking existing  
12 processes and studying what types of either parallel  
13 processes or other kind of interventions, automation,  
14 technology they come at it with every lever but  
15 specifically on process improvements and that's been  
16 their focus and I think when you hear from them,  
17 you'll hear their portfolio is mostly focused on  
18 those sorts of issues. We're always very keen to  
19 share performance flags that we see with them in  
20 those areas. I think our Project Management Team has  
21 those skills, but we also have a number of other  
22 instruments and skills at our disposal.

23 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: One of the things I  
24 really enjoyed when I was preparing for this hearing,

1  
2 I think the last time there was a MMR PMMR official  
3 hearing was 2017.

4 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Yeah, I saw that  
5 transcript, yeah.

6 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Did you? I did too,  
7 and one of the people who came to testify at that  
8 hearing was my first Chief-of-Staff Mariana  
9 Alexander. She was then with the CBC. She then worked  
10 on the Performance Management Team at Ops, so maybe  
11 some of you know her.

12 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I have to say she was  
13 a key member of the team, she worked on the Dynamic,  
14 I would say the antecedent to the Dynamic Management  
15 Report, the very earliest stages of even conceiving  
16 it as like an interactive web tool. She did really  
17 invaluable work.

18 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: She included a  
19 series of recommendations in her CBC testimony from  
20 seven years ago, which I have not consulted with her  
21 if she still agrees with those recommendations, after  
22 having worked on the MMR and having dealt with me, or  
23 having had to put up with me I should say, but I  
24 thought they were very thoughtful recommendations and  
25 I just was interested in your general feedback. One

1 was to increase and emphasis on outcomes to better  
2 track the impact of services rather than inputs and  
3 outputs. Two was focusing on efficiency by developing  
4 cost measures in service areas, which was something  
5 former Comptroller Stringer also had recommended.  
6 Thirdly, connecting City spending on services with  
7 service outcomes, so investments are better informed  
8 by agency performance. Fourth, I think you actually  
9 did quite a bit of on the customer satisfaction side  
10 of kind of citizen satisfaction measures but, on the  
11 first three, interested in your perspective over  
12 seven years, do you think we've gotten better in  
13 those areas? Are there still opportunities for  
14 improvement in those areas and what could that look  
15 like?  
16

17                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I'm not exaggerating  
18 when I say we hired her because of her work at the at  
19 Budget Commission on the MMR, and we thought they  
20 were great recommendations and we want people to work  
21 on the MMR who had the experience of engaging it from  
22 the public. Lauren Quinones is one of those people  
23 who worked for the former Speaker of the City Council  
24 and also used the MMR as an instrument for policy  
25 scrutiny. What are we talking about?

1  
2           FIRST DEPUTY DIRECTOR QUINONES: I think  
3 the I think we have improved things over time. The  
4 thing that I want to mention is on, you asked a  
5 question about outcomes and like our indicators  
6 spread, we're currently in the process of actually  
7 tagging all of our indicators, 2,200 of them so it's  
8 taking a little bit, but thinking about is this  
9 indicator an input, an output, an outcome and trying  
10 to adjust accordingly? Not everything in the book is  
11 really a performance measure in its truest form. A  
12 lot of the indicators that we have are context to the  
13 performance and we think that that's just as  
14 important, but we are making a solid effort to really  
15 understand what we have and how it all breaks down  
16 and make some improvements where we need it.

17           DIRECTOR STEINBERG: I'll give you a  
18 candid answer about the hardest one to tackle that's  
19 the most important, which is the relationship to the  
20 budget and, in a perfect world, it would be easy to  
21 understand the level quality service of a very  
22 specific government function with its spending. The  
23 way OMB approaches the world is through units of  
24 appropriation, and those are very important for the  
25 budgeting process and for how they organize their

1 work. It doesn't correspond perfectly to the way that  
2 agencies might approach their own programs, or  
3 definitely not the way the public might interpret  
4 spending categories, and so that we see is like a  
5 much larger problem that we're very serious about  
6 tackling. OMB now has a Deputy Director of Management  
7 for the first time, I think it was a recognition that  
8 the M in the acronym wasn't always their strength,  
9 and his name is Teddy Gordon-Martin, and we've begun  
10 a dialogue with him about how to approach this as a  
11 much larger structural problem, but it's a very  
12 important point.

14 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Yeah. I do think in  
15 an ideal world there would be a much better  
16 connectivity and linkage there so we could make that  
17 analysis together in an informed way about what we're  
18 investing in and why. Certainly, there are a number  
19 of areas that we highlighted in our conversation in  
20 the hearing today, such as NYPD overtime, where it'd  
21 be really helpful for the agency to make a better  
22 case for why this is the best use of a billion  
23 dollars relative to other budget cuts that the City  
24 is experiencing. I appreciate that. I'm glad we had a  
25 chance to have a fun conversation about Mariana.

1  
2 I have just a couple close-out questions  
3 that are just clarifications on items that you  
4 mentioned earlier in your testimony. Do you have more  
5 detailed traffic data than, I think it was the  
6 crossing data that you referenced that you thought  
7 was contributing to the slowed down response times?

8 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Yeah, there's a lot  
9 of data. DOT has a very sophisticated system now  
10 called INRIX, very expensive, and they now have the  
11 ability to track vehicle speeds on most major  
12 corridors, and they're seeing widespread congestion.  
13 It really is in the major quarters and all five  
14 boroughs so there are ways now. The MMR actually does  
15 have one indicator on average speeds in Midtown which  
16 is specifically sourced from TLC cars which is a cool  
17 indicator, and it's slowing down a lot in Midtown so,  
18 yes, we could substantiate that claim and have done  
19 the research.

20 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Okay. I think we  
21 might be interested in figuring out how to make that  
22 more publicly accessible data so maybe that's  
23 something for us to figure out.

24 Last question I just wanted to ask is,  
25 the category of quality-of-life summons, are you able

1  
2 to provide a breakdown of which summons, which types  
3 of, I believe it's a combination of civil and  
4 criminal summons that are combined in that category,  
5 and if you'd like to provide this as a followup in  
6 writing that'd be fine but, if you could, just let us  
7 know exactly which summons are captured there. Does  
8 that include all the CJRA summons? We're just very  
9 interested in that data point in particular so, if  
10 you could break that down for us, we would be very  
11 appreciative.

12 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No problem.

13 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I just want to say  
14 that I sit up here and ask a lot of questions, but  
15 almost all of the smart ideas that I get come from  
16 Molly, and so I just want to thank her again for  
17 being such an amazing partner and I really appreciate  
18 it, Molly, so thank you.

19 Any further comments on your end?

20 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: No, just that we  
21 really do embrace this relationship and look forward  
22 to I hope democratizing the MMR going forward in the  
23 sense of making it a real object of public scrutiny  
24 and something that's shaped by the public as much as  
25 anything else.



1  
2                   CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I think that you  
3 really demonstrated that in how you approached this  
4 hearing and how you testified today so I just want to  
5 say thank you to you as well as to the First Deputy  
6 Director, Ms. Quinones, for being not just willing,  
7 but enthusiastic about testifying today and trying to  
8 provide meaningful answers to all the questions that  
9 were asked. It's not an easy feat to be responsible  
10 for 2,200 indicators but you did it, and I do just  
11 want to close this portion by recognizing your all's  
12 work on the DMMR. It's a really big deal, and it's a  
13 good thing for New York City that you all have  
14 created it and I want to thank you for that work.  
15 It's very meaningful.

16                   DIRECTOR STEINBERG: And Lauren, honestly,  
17 I just have to say led that process from beginning to  
18 end and so much more in terms of how we've built the  
19 capacity of that team, and so I did a lot of the  
20 talking today but, anything that I took credit for,  
21 was actually something that Lauren pretty much did

22                   CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you both. We  
23 really appreciate and thank you to the whole  
24 Performance Management Team from Ops. Thank you for  
25 your hard work.

1  
2 We've got another panel of great folks  
3 that are coming up, but thank you guys for being here  
4 We really appreciate it.

5 DIRECTOR STEINBERG: Thank you.

6 FIRST DEPUTY DIRECTOR QUINONES: Thank  
7 you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL GANAPATHY: Thank you,  
9 we'll give the Administration a couple minutes to  
10 gather their stuff and then we'll turn to public  
11 testimony.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL GANAPATHY: Thank you.  
13 We will now be turning to public testimony.

14 The public panelists will each have three  
15 minutes to speak. You can begin once the Sergeant has  
16 started the timer.

17 If the Council Member has a question for  
18 you, please make sure to turn on your mic by pushing  
19 the red button at the bottom.

20 I will now call our two public panelists,  
21 Michael DeMarco and Ann Callagy.

22 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you both so  
23 much for being here today and for your patience. We  
24 really appreciate it. Would either of you prefer to  
25 go first? Just press that button.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL GANAPATHY: As long as  
the red light is on.

ANNE CALLAGY: How about that?

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Perfect.

ANNE CALLAGY: Okay, very good. Good  
afternoon. My name is Ann Callagy. I'm from the Legal  
Aid Society. The Legal Aid Society really appreciates  
having the chance to testify here, and we will be  
submitting written testimony, which will be in  
greater detail than the few comments that I'll offer  
now. I am the Government Benefits Director in our  
Civil Practice and, part of our Government Benefits  
Practice, as you may know is aimed at serving the  
neediest New Yorkers in their obtaining and  
maintaining their SNAP and cash assistance benefits.  
I also very much appreciate your focus on the need  
for those benefits for those living in poverty. HRA  
is the agency we work with. They have legal mandates.  
Their legal mandates include processing applications  
within 30 days for cash assistance and SNAP. Their  
legal mandates include processing what are called  
recertifications for assistance for cash assistance  
and SNAP, also within 30 days. If you know this  
already, I'm sorry to say it, but when somebody is on

1 public assistance, they have to periodically  
2 recertify their eligibility. The other thing they're  
3 mandated to do, which we are focusing on because it's  
4 a problem though some of these problems don't appear  
5 in the management report, and that's a problem. HRA  
6 is mandated to issue emergency or expedited SNAP  
7 benefits for those who qualify when they're applying  
8 so that somebody without sufficient funds and no food  
9 are supposed to be able to get expedited SNAP in  
10 seven days rather than waiting the entire 30-day  
11 period. They're failing in their mandate to issue  
12 those benefits in a timely way. Courts have generally  
13 held that substantial compliance with the timeliness  
14 mandate is 95 percent so you see the percentages  
15 listed in the Management Report. They are so far  
16 below substantial compliance. I do hear that HRA  
17 doesn't think that is substantial compliance, and the  
18 Mayor's Management Office of Operations doesn't  
19 believe it's substantial compliance, but the question  
20 is what can be done about it and what is being done  
21 about it. One of the things is the process of  
22 applying and recertifying and seeking benefits  
23 involves three steps for anybody who's trying to do  
24 it. They have to fill out a form, submit documents,  
25

1  
2 and have an interview, and the processes that HRA  
3 uses really create barriers for...

4 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Please feel free to  
5 continue.

6 ANNE CALLAGY: Sorry. For the public who  
7 are trying to get these benefits. They have an Access  
8 HRA online portal. Not everybody can use it, and they  
9 are no longer really providing paper forms for people  
10 to fill out, and they don't provide truly sufficient  
11 services to do phone applications. To upload  
12 documents requires some technology. Though a person  
13 can go to a center and upload them there through the  
14 scanner, the problem we're finding is people have  
15 uploaded their documents and then their case gets  
16 closed or denied for the failure to submit documents  
17 so there is some disconnect in HRA's technology that  
18 needs to be addressed. Then the other big problem is  
19 the phone system so that if I need an interview and  
20 HRA has a backlog of applications or recertifications  
21 to deal with, they may be dealing with the backlog,  
22 but the numbers are telling us there are tens of  
23 thousands of denials for failure to have an  
24 interview. People cannot get through on the line.  
25 They're waiting for hours. There is one callback

1 feature that is easily missed. If you choose it and  
2 you miss your callback, you go back and call again,  
3 you just spend hours. People don't have minutes on  
4 their phones for one thing. It's very distressing.  
5 People are doing their best. It's not their fault  
6 that something failed. We have proposals in our  
7 testimony for improvements. My time may be done. One  
8 thing, we were talking about the need for  
9 transparency, and we appreciate the Committee's  
10 emphasis on that. We appreciate the Mayor's  
11 Management Ops people saying that's a thing. If HRA  
12 had to report monthly on the delays in applications  
13 and recertifications and offer a corrective action  
14 plan anytime it goes below substantial compliance,  
15 that essentially is what happens when we have no  
16 other recourse but to sue them. We end up with a  
17 corrective action plan so why don't we proactively  
18 have them do this and let's try to make it work  
19 before we get to that point where thousands of people  
20 are out of benefits so that's just one proposal that  
21 we have. The rest are in our testimony. One involved  
22 3-1-1, which I was interested to hear because 3-1-1  
23 just sends people who need HRA's help to HRA's  
24 OneNumber that they can't get through on so we were  
25

1 hoping 3-1-1 could be utilized to access the HRA  
2 system where needed. The rest of our recommendations  
3 are in writing, and we do appreciate again the chance  
4 to be here today and look forward to collaborating  
5 further to improve these issues.

6  
7 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much. I  
8 will have some questions, but we'll hear from Mr.  
9 DeMarco first.

10 MICHAEL DEMARCO: Thank you. Thanks for  
11 taking this hearing today, and thank you for letting  
12 me testify. Good afternoon, Chair Restler and fellow  
13 Members of the Committee. My name is Michael DeMarco  
14 and I am President of Local 1455, DC 37. Local 1455  
15 represents the New York City traffic employees who  
16 work in the Department of Transportation in the  
17 following titles: City parking equipment service  
18 workers, supervising city parking equipment service  
19 workers, and traffic device maintainers. Not only do  
20 my members ensure the safety of the public through  
21 maintaining traffic devices and street signage, they  
22 are also a revenue-generating title for the City. My  
23 members collect the revenue from the parking meters,  
24 now Muni Meters, and ensure the meters are  
25 functioning and working properly. This is a big

1 source of income for the City of New York.

2 Furthermore, my members who install and hang signs

3 ensure that streets are labeled properly, which

4 allows the traffic enforcement agents to properly

5 issue tickets for parking violations. Currently, my

6 membership is down by at least 60 members and, as a

7 result, this is impacting revenue collection by the

8 City since they are a revenue-generating title

9 category. I am sure the public is not complaining

10 that there are lesser people to repair parking

11 meters, but the City does suffer by not being able to

12 collect revenue. Furthermore, the public will

13 complain and file lawsuits that could cost millions

14 of taxpayer dollars if the life-protecting devices

15 aren't installed, like stop signs. If a citizen is

16 injured or killed by a missing sign, Vision Zero,

17 that's going to cost the City a lot of extra money.

18 We only get three days to hang a life-protecting

19 device like a stop sign so, with these vacancies, you

20 can see what I'm talking about with Vision Zero. In

21 conclusion, the City announced that they will begin

22 to backfill vacant positions at a rate of two for

23 one, meaning for every two positions that are vacant,

24 they will hire one person. Even though this is good

25



1 news that the City is hiring again, this will impact  
2 revenue collection in the long term since they are  
3 hiring less people to fill vacant positions. We urge  
4 the Administration to backfill all vacant positions  
5 in order for proper revenue collection to occur. The  
6 City is losing millions of dollars by not backfilling  
7 these positions. Thank you for holding this important  
8 hearing, and I will take questions if you have any.

10 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I have to say I am  
11 truly appreciative of you both coming to testify and  
12 sharing your expertise. I'm really interested in  
13 learning a little bit more. I would just like to  
14 begin and just help me on the pronunciation of your  
15 last name, Anne, is it Callagy?

16 ANNE CALLAGY: Callagy.

17 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Callagy. Thank you.  
18 I feel like you are the person in most demand for  
19 this hearing because the delays in processing of  
20 essential benefits is one of, if not the most  
21 problematic of all 2,200 indicators in this report,  
22 and New Yorkers are really struggling. I just want to  
23 first ask, could you share an update on the status of  
24 the litigation? Has that helped to resolve any of  
25 these issues?

1  
2 ANNE CALLAGY: Yes, there's a preliminary  
3 injunction in effect in the Forest case and, under  
4 that, there is a schedule for HRA to reduce its  
5 backlog over months so it began maybe in October or  
6 November and each month they were supposed to reduce  
7 it, and they are reducing the backlog of  
8 recertification delays and application delays. The  
9 concern we have is how is the backlog being reduced?  
10 So is it, and according to these statistics that were  
11 obtained under the City Council's Local Law, there  
12 was an extreme increase in denials for failure to  
13 have that interview that I was describing where you  
14 can't get through on the phone so the backlog may be  
15 decreasing, but we are concerned about how is it  
16 decreasing. They may be complying with the letter of  
17 the preliminary injunction without improving the  
18 quality of decisions that are being made and issuing  
19 benefits to eligible people. The other piece is that  
20 we have a contempt motion in the Reynolds versus  
21 Giuliani case, which was a longstanding court order  
22 on the issuance of expedited SNAP benefits, and there  
23 are ongoing negotiations in that case, and I'm not  
24 sure that I can give you more of an update than that.

1  
2           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: No that's fine, and  
3 that's helpful. I think firstly, we would love to get  
4 your input on what indicators should be tracked by  
5 the Mayor's Office of Operation in their Mayor's  
6 Management Report, their Preliminary Management  
7 Report, but most of all, in their Dynamic Mayor's  
8 Management Report which they testify to today, which  
9 provides more frequent updates to all of us to be  
10 able to access, and I think perhaps there's an  
11 opportunity for us to track more granular indicators  
12 that could give us a better understanding of how New  
13 Yorkers are accessing the benefits that they need so  
14 we will definitely follow up with you on those  
15 specific recommendations in writing that we can share  
16 with the Mayor's Office of Operations.

17           Secondly, I just want to highlight some  
18 of the operational challenges that you identified  
19 very clearly. One is on the technology fix. Are you  
20 under the impression from your conversations with HRA  
21 that they can handle this issue themselves or they're  
22 in the process of doing so? Is this something where  
23 Ops or potentially the CTO's office may be needed to  
24 develop the right technological solutions?

1  
2 ANNE CALLAGY: We have talked with HRA and  
3 I want to say when they say that they've been aware  
4 of the problem, they have because we've been working  
5 with them all through the pandemic so it's not that  
6 they don't know and we didn't know. It's just nothing  
7 that's really happening. One of the things that would  
8 help, like any technology, if there were real-time  
9 help for people who were using the Access HRA portal,  
10 and I'm not a technology person, but a chat feature,  
11 some way to reach HRA to say this didn't work for me,  
12 this is telling me I need to do something else, it's  
13 not clear to me what I'm supposed to check off, but  
14 there isn't any real-time help. That would be good.  
15 Many people are sophisticated, but many people are  
16 not and then, I don't know, there need to be  
17 improvements in the whole HRA info line OneNumber,  
18 and I think a lot of that is a staffing problem. If  
19 they had more staff people, the wait times would be  
20 reduced so when I'm listening to 3-1-1 calls that are  
21 appalling because you wait 10 minutes, people are  
22 waiting 2 hours.

23 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Oh, absolutely, and  
24 some of that data is in the PMMR. We did call it out  
25 today as the most disconcerting of the kind of failed

1 customer service data trends. I think one of the  
2 things that we can definitely follow up on also is  
3 that, during the hiring freeze, the Mayor's team  
4 celebrated that folks who were responsible for  
5 benefit enrollment were spared from the hiring  
6 freeze, which really just meant that if somebody who  
7 was actively in a job left it, that it could be  
8 replaced, not that they were going back and filling  
9 all the vacancies, but I don't know if the folks who  
10 were handling the call center, which is a really  
11 important component of helping to address these  
12 delays and processing times, were protected from the  
13 hiring freeze, and we should make sure that, and we  
14 have our Preliminary Budget hearing with HRA a week  
15 from Monday on March 8th, which I'll definitely be  
16 there and would love to follow up with you in advance  
17 of that hearing just to make sure we're putting  
18 Commissioner Park and Administrator French on the hot  
19 seat with the right specific questions on these  
20 issues, but I think we'll definitely push on the  
21 hiring front, on these fronts. I think I misspoke  
22 there, but we'll push on the hiring front in these  
23 areas. Technology-wise, appreciate the suggestions.  
24 We'll also ask questions of HRA on that to see how  
25

1  
2 that's progressing and what more can be done, but I  
3 really want to thank you for not just coming here  
4 today but for offering very specific solutions that  
5 would help. This issue is, it's both heartbreaking  
6 and it's a very clear example of terrible  
7 mismanagement, and so we have to get it fixed. It's  
8 been going on for too long, and I really hope that we  
9 can work together to get it addressed properly so  
10 thank you.

11           Mr. DeMarco, I'm so appreciative of your  
12 testimony and of the work of your local. You do  
13 essential work to keep people safe. I am very  
14 interested in just understanding a little bit more in  
15 how we can help work together to make a case to DOT  
16 and to DCAS for how we can get these lines filled so  
17 just to give me some context, you say you're down 60  
18 members. What's the denominator there, or what's the  
19 total number of members?

20           MICHAEL DEMARCO: At one point it was a  
21 lot higher, but the total number should be around  
22 mid-200s.

23           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Currently.  
24  
25

1  
2           MICHAEL DEMARCO: Between the three  
3 titles, and we're vacant about 60 members, at least  
4 just about 60 members. There is a list out there.

5           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: So mid 200s if fully  
6 staffed, but we're down by 60 people from that. Is  
7 that the right way to think about it?

8           MICHAEL DEMARCO: Yes.

9           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Okay.

10          MICHAEL DEMARCO: Yes.

11          CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Is there a problem?  
12 Hold on one second. Thank you very much.

13          MICHAEL DEMARCO: We're normally over 300  
14 members, and we're way down from that.

15          CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: So normally it's  
16 over 300, and now you were way down, at least 60 off  
17 from where we should be.

18          MICHAEL DEMARCO: Yes.

19          CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I appreciate that  
20 these are revenue-generating positions. The Mayor's  
21 Office has said until they're blue in the face as has  
22 the OMB Director that there's no hiring fees that's  
23 impacting revenue-generating positions, but that's  
24 not the case. Could you just help me understand if,  
25 the life and safety stuff aside as important as that

1 work is, just on the revenue side, if we're down 60  
2 people, how is that impacting us? It means that when  
3 a parking meter breaks, these are the guys that are  
4 going out to help fix it?  
5

6 MICHAEL DEMARCO: There's the two titles.  
7 One of them are the collection portion who collect  
8 the physical quarters from the parking meters.

9 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Got it.

10 MICHAEL DEMARCO: And then there's the  
11 traffic device maintainer position, which installs,  
12 maintain and repairs all those Muni Meters in the  
13 system.

14 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Got it.

15 MICHAEL DEMARCO: Being down the number of  
16 people and collections is...

17 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Can I just...

18 MICHAEL DEMARCO: Sure.

19 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Probe on that? For  
20 the Muni Meters in particular, because I imagine if,  
21 unless the device can't accommodate any more  
22 quarters, then OMB would say if it takes an extra  
23 couple days for somebody to pick it up, we're not  
24 losing any money but, if the Muni Meter is broken,  
25 and it takes longer to get it fixed and functional



1  
2 again, then that's money that the City's leaving on  
3 the table.

4           MICHAEL DEMARCO: Absolutely.

5           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Are you able to  
6 track or offer any insight into the timeframes  
7 worsening or lengthening to get Muni Meters fixed?

8           MICHAEL DEMARCO: Part of the problem is  
9 there are projects out there, retrofitting the Muni  
10 Meters. They're in the system a long time so there's  
11 over 15,000 of them in the system now, replacing over  
12 73,000 single space meters so they're all fully Muni  
13 Meters, but there's retrofitting the meters to come  
14 up to the standards that they should be today and  
15 there's also retiming projects, which is, for  
16 argument's sake, if you're putting a quarter in for  
17 20 minutes, now the retiming and that might not show  
18 in dollars and cents on the City's end but, if you're  
19 not doing the retiming with the people, instead of  
20 what they want to retime from 25 cents to 20 minutes  
21 to 25 cents for 10 minutes, that's revenue. There's  
22 not a lot of people, and it takes longer to do.

23           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Interesting.

24           MICHAEL DEMARCO: Besides the retrofit  
25 project, which if we were full-staffed in meter

1 maintenance, which is one of the divisions, from what  
2 I understand, the project, if we were fully staffed,  
3 would take two years when it begins. We're behind  
4 already. With the staffing levels we have now, four  
5 years, which (INAUDIBLE) total up and over time.  
6 There's a big difference in what we could do.  
7

8 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Wow.

9 MICHAEL DEMARCO: With the staffing, and  
10 that's just the meter end.

11 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I think that if we  
12 can think about any creative ways together to  
13 quantify the response times to get things fixed or to  
14 update policies on new rates that are being charged,  
15 we can then go back to OMB on pushing and to DCAS to  
16 push to say we have to move this faster, we've got to  
17 move this up the list and, one of the agencies that's  
18 under the purview of the Governmental Operations  
19 Committee is DCAS. We have a hearing with them on  
20 Tuesday so this is definitely something that we can  
21 dig in on further and really want to help across the  
22 board and really appreciate Susan being here as well.  
23 We are focused across the board on working with DCAS  
24 to improve the speed at which we are hiring more  
25 folks but, especially for titles like yours that

1  
2 generate revenue and save lives, we're really  
3 interested in figuring out how we can work together  
4 to provide better data to the agencies to make the  
5 case that they've got to move 1455 up the list and  
6 so, if there's any additional information that you  
7 can share with us, both on the revenue side, but also  
8 on, if it's taking, I've seen anecdotally in my  
9 District we've gotten complaints from DOT leadership  
10 when we go to them and say you're supposed to install  
11 this stop sign or you're supposed to install this  
12 street light or other safety devices that are  
13 supposed to be installed to make our neighborhood  
14 safer that were approved, and they're telling me  
15 about a delay that they can't get it done for a year  
16 or something like that. I don't know. Does your team  
17 do street lights as well?

18                   MICHAEL DEMARCO: We don't do street  
19 lights.

20                   CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: That's contracted  
21 out.

22                   MICHAEL DEMARCO: We do signage.

23                   CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Okay. The signage.

24 The safety devices, are you involved in moving around  
25 any of the red light cameras or no.

1  
2           MICHAEL DEMARCO: No, no cameras.

3           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: No speed cameras, no  
4 cameras, devices.

5           MICHAEL DEMARCO: Yeah, it's highway signs  
6 basically, all street signs in the five boroughs, we  
7 paint the lines in the streets with street markings,  
8 I could go on and on what we do. It's a very diverse  
9 title.

10           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I have to say,  
11 transportation may be the thing I'm most passionate  
12 about and the work that your members do to make our  
13 streets safer is saving lives, and I really value it  
14 so if there's any ways that my office and I can  
15 celebrate and recognize your members and the work  
16 that they're doing every day in our community, it  
17 really matters, and I was so happy to see DOT take  
18 some pictures of folks who I assume are your members  
19 installing crosswalks at a mid-block crossing on  
20 Atlantic Avenue in our District, and they like took a  
21 photo as if they were the Beatles from Abbey Road. I  
22 don't know if you saw any of this. It was so good.

23           MICHAEL DEMARCO: Hopefully it was ours,  
24 because some of the paint work is contracted out,  
25 which is another meeting, but, yeah.

1  
2           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I will tell you  
3 before I got appointed to this position, Henry and I  
4 had a conversation that we need to prioritize  
5 outsourcing together so that's another conversation  
6 for us to all have. We will definitely have it. It  
7 will definitely be a subject of a hearing of this  
8 Committee in the not distant future, but I really  
9 want to help on this. I really appreciate you coming  
10 to testify. Let's figure out how we can get some more  
11 granular data that we can really push the leadership  
12 of the appropriate agencies to try to make this  
13 happen because when your members are down, our  
14 streets are less safe, and that's not a good thing  
15 for anybody.

16           Thank you both. We really appreciate you  
17 taking the time to testify. This was really helpful.  
18 I know it's a long wait to get to testify so thank  
19 you for your patience.

20           MICHAEL DEMARCO: Just one other thing.

21           CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Please.

22           MICHAEL DEMARCO: I was talking about the  
23 retrofitting and the retiming. With these projects  
24 going on, if most of the employees, our members, are  
25 doing that project, it takes more time away from the

1  
2 repair side. That weighs into it too on getting the  
3 operable rate up so I just wanted to put that in  
4 there.

5 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Absolutely. Thank  
6 you so much. Thank you both. Have a great afternoon.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL GANAPATHY: Seeing no  
8 additional witnesses here in the Chambers..

9 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Susan, you don't  
10 want to testify? No? You're good. Okay. She's the  
11 only other person here.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL GANAPATHY: Or on the  
13 Zoom, if you'd like to offer any closing remarks  
14 before you close out.

15 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: I just want to thank  
16 you all for coming. This was a fun hearing. I really  
17 enjoyed it, and there's a lot of great information  
18 that we have today to dig into so this is hopefully  
19 going to be, it's a good precursor to all of the  
20 budget hearings for the month ahead. [GAVEL] Thanks  
21 so much.

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 23, 2024