

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

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March 23, 2026
Start: 10:35 a.m.
Recess: 1:29 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - 8th Floor - Hearing
Room 1

B E F O R E: Kevin C. Riley
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Shaun Abreu
Chris Banks
Selvena Brooks-Powers
Tiffany L. Cabán
David M. Carr
Elsie Encarnación
Simcha Felder
Linda Lee
Farah N. Louis
Christopher Marte
Chi A. Ossé
Yusef Salaam
Justin E. Sanchez
Shanel Thomas-Henry
Julie Won
Susan Zhuang

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

Sideya Sherman
New York City Department of City Planning

Edith Hsu-Chen
New York City Department of City Planning

David Parish
New York City Department of City Planning

Lisa Kersavage
Landmark Preservation Commission

Steven Thompson
Landmark Preservation Commission

Akeem Bashiru
Landmark Preservation Commission

Miquela Craytor
Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Dex Corporation

Logan Pahres
Open New York

Andrea Goldwyn
New Yorks Landmarks Conservancy

Sharon Freystaetter
Club A Kitchen

Emi
Self

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

Leticia Duller(SP?)

Bushwick City Farms

Marissa Matelica(SP?)

Bushwick City Farms

Sherry Ann Callahan(SP?)

Tyler Mann(SP?)

Brooklyn City Farms

Mary Poker(SP?)

Self

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning. This is a mic
3 check for the Committee on Land Use. Today's date
4 is March 23rd, 2026. We are located in Hearing Room
1, and this is being recorded by Mike Kane.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, ladies and
6 gentlemen. Welcome to the New York City Council
7 hearing for the Committee on Land Use. At this time,
8 I'd like to remind everyone to please silence all
devices and at no point may you approach the dais.

9 If you want to testify at today's hearing, please
10 see a Sergeant at the back of the room to fill out a
11 testimony slip. Chair, we are ready to begin.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [GAVEL] Good morning,
13 everyone, and welcome to the Committee on Land Use.
14 I'm Chair Riley, Chair of this Committee. I'd like
15 to welcome my colleagues in government. We're joined
16 today by Chair Marte, uh, Council Member Encarnación,
Council Member Thomas-Henry, and Council Member
Felder.

17 Welcome, Chair Sherman. Thank you for being here
18 today, and we are glad to have you leading the
19 Department of City Planning. Today is day 6, so we
20 really, really appreciate you being here today.
21

I am particularly pleased that the Director of City Planning is someone with a strong equity background. Investing in Black and Brown communities is a priority of myself and Chair Louis. Due to unforeseen events, Chair Louis will not be able to attend today.

Unfortunately, Chair Sherman, you seem to be joining DCP at a hard time because I was surprised and disappointed by the proposed budget for the agency. We are in the middle of a housing crisis and the Proposed Preliminary Budget for DCP in Fiscal 2026 is not being increased. And to make matters worse, the Administration is proposing to significantly decrease the agency's budget in Fiscal 2027.

For Fiscal Year 2026, the current budget is \$58.2 million, and then we'll go down to \$51.4 million in Fiscal Year 2027. The way we are going to solve our housing crisis is going to include much more planning and not less. So my questions today are focused on, first, the need for more staffing in DCP's borough offices to process more rezoning in a thoughtful way centered on our community's actual needs.

Second, the need to pursue holistic neighborhood planning. Third, how much housing has the City of Yes reform that we passed in 2024 created to date? And fourth, the ongoing effort to reform the environmental review process, which is an important tool for our communities.

I will also touch on some questions that I know Chair Louis wanted to ask today about the importance of urban design, Sunnyside Yards, and fair housing. As you can see, we have many issues we want to discuss today because land use and proactive planning for the Council under Speaker Menin's leadership is a high priority issue. And just want to state for the record, we've been joined by Council Member Salaam and Council Member Brooks-Powers online. Hmm.

Okay, I'm just gonna recognize, uh, the panel that is testifying on behalf of DCP. We have our Chair, uh, Chair Sherman. Uh, we have Edith Hsu-Chen, and we have David Parish. I'm just going to give, uh, the floor to you guys so you can make your opening statements.

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Good morning, Chair Riley, Subcommittee— Subcommittee Chairs. Uh, I know Chair Louis is not here today, and Chair Marte, um, and

distinguished members of the Land Use Committee. I am Sideya Sherman. I am Director of the Department of City Planning and Chair of the City Planning Commission. I'm joined here today by City Planning's Executive Director Edith Hsu-Chen and Chief Operating Officer David Parish. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Department's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year '26.

I'm honored to have recently been appointed Director of the Department of City Planning and Chair of the City Planning Commission, commissioned by Mayor Mamdani. And while this is my 6th day on the job, I'm grateful for the opportunity to join you today and discuss our work to plan for the future of our city.

First, I want to acknowledge the tremendous work that the City Council and City- and City Planning have accomplished together in recent years. In partnership with this body, the agency has implemented historic updates to the zoning code through City of Yes and advanced through neighborhood plans - advance thoughtful neighborhood plans across the boroughs that will deliver new jobs, housing, and investments to help communities thrive. But New York

1 City is no place for resting on our laurels. The
2 urgency of the housing crisis before us does not
3 permit it. The apartment vacancy— rental vacancy
4 stands— the apartment rental vacancy rate stands at
5 1.4%, the lowest rate since 1968. Half of all
6 tenants are rent burdened, paying over 30% of their
7 income on rent. But our housing shortage can't be
8 shun— sum— summed up in these stats alone because it
9 touches every aspect of New Yorkers' lives. It
10 drives the imbalance of power that leaves tenants
11 feeling at the mercy of their landlords. It fuels
12 the displacement and gentrification that reshapes the
13 neighborhoods and communities that we live in. It
14 drives the homelessness crisis that impacts so many
15 of our neighbors, including families and children.

16 Indeed, in some neighborhoods, as many as 1 in 5
17 public school students are living in shelter or
18 doubled up in an overcrowded apartment. And the
19 housing shortage is quite literally pushing people
20 out of the city, particularly Black and Brown New
21 Yorkers who have long been the backbone of so many
communities. So this is a time of incredible
challenges — but also tremendous opportunity.

We have tools in city government to chart a better path forward, to create a fairer, more affordable city for New Yorkers of all incomes and backgrounds. And I'm so proud to join Mayor Mamdani, Deputy Mayor Bozorg, and the DCP team in this work.

At DCP, this means unlocking significantly more housing across more neighborhoods so that opportunity is not just limited to a few places. It means working faster and smarter to reduce housing costs and timelines so we can get people into new housing faster. It means activating sites that lie underused and creating bold plans that support communities with more housing, jobs, and investments, all to make our city more affordable and equitable— and a more equitable place for New Yorkers to live in.

At a personal level, this work resonates with me deeply. I'm a lifelong New Yorker, and throughout my career, I've been working with communities to drive equitable change and stronger neighborhoods. Those experiences will absolutely shape how I approach this role and how I think about the responsibility we have to plan for a city that works for all New Yorkers. And of course, the DCP's work will continue across so many important factors, whether it's supporting—

1 driving industrial and commercial sectors, enhancing
2 waterfront resiliency, shaping citywide capital
3 investments, contributing to the census efforts,
4 analyzing the latest data trends, and engaging New
5 Yorkers to participate in shaping the future of their
6 city.

7 To my colleagues in the Council, we undertake
8 this work in close partnership with you, and I look
9 forward to a— to continuing a strong collaborative
relationship as we move forward.

10 Now I'll turn to an overview of the Preliminary
11 Budget. DCP entered Fiscal Year '26 with an Adopted
12 Budget of \$56.8 million and an authorized headcount
13 of 364 full-time positions. Of this, \$36.4 million
14 and 190 positions are funded with city, city tax levy
15 dollars. The rest of the \$20.4 million budget
16 allocation and the 174 positions are funded by state
and federal grants, primarily through HUD Community
Development Block Grant Program.

17 Our \$56.8 million FY26 Adopted Budget allocated
18 \$35.9 million, or 63%, to personnel services, which
19 include part-time staff, interns, and members of the
20 City Planning Commission. The remaining \$20.9
21 million went to other than personnel services.

Now, the FY27 Preliminary- Preliminary Budget. In comparison to the FY26 Adopted Budget, it represents a net \$5.3 million decrease. This is almost entirely due to the expiration of \$7 million in temporary funding, either grants or funding granted for environmental impact statements for projects that have since been approved by the Council. At the same time, there is a new \$1.7 million in funding to support work for the 2030 Census and to begin implementation of the City Map Charter Amendment.

Looking at personnel services, there was a net 6-position change in headcount. In total, the agency gained 12 new positions for Census, City Map, and Capital Planning work. At the same time, the agency lost 6 positions that were either temporary or grant-funded. This increased headcount came at a net increase of \$1.3 million for personnel services, which supports the increase- which supports the increased headcount.

Overall, the FY26 Preliminary Budget reflects a strong foundation with a total of \$51.4 million and an increased full-time headcount of 370 positions. We are committed to allocating our resources

effectively to advance the Department's mission and to help create a more affordable, equitable city for all New Yorkers. Thank you.

CHAIPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Commissioner. Um, just going to ask Council to swear you guys in before we start the question.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good morning. Could- could you please raise your right hand and state your name for the record?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sideya Sherman.

DAVID PARISH: David Parish.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Edith Hsu-Chen.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And do you swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony this morning and in response to Council member questions?

PANEL: Yes. Yes.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Counsel. Uh, thank you for your testimony, Commissioner. I just want to state for the record, we'll be joined by Minority Leader David Carr and also Council Member Justin Sanchez.

1
2 Alright, so my first line of question, I really
3 wanna focus on staffing and resources. Uh, it's a
4 concern for many Council Members who are leading
5 neighborhood rezoning projects like myself in the
6 Bronx. Um, so DCP and the borough offices, the DCP
7 borough offices are responsible for both neighborhood
8 planning and working with private applicants to shape
9 individual rezoning application. This work is very
10 essential to addressing our housing crisis and
11 support equitable development that uplifts all of New
12 Yorkers.

13 However, the borough offices are understaffed and
14 under-resourced for this important mission. Many
15 small cities around the country, cities smaller than
16 New York City, uh, Council Districts have more
17 planners on staff than DCP borough offices. For
18 example, in the Bronx, serving 1.4 million residents,
19 has only 16 budgeted staffers at this time. With
20 this staff— excuse me, with this small staff, it's
21 not clear, uh, if the office has the capacity to
22 undertake more than one neighborhood rezoning at a
23 given time. There's a clear consensus that New York
24 City must aggressively plan to increase our housing

1
2 supply, yet there is no proposed change to current
3 staffing levels.

4 So with that being said, Commissioner, does DCP
5 believe that the borough offices have sufficient
6 resources to meet this moment? And if yes, can you
let us know, uh, why you believe so?

7 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, I'll start and then I'll
8 turn over to our Chief Operating Officer. Um, so I
9 think as you heard from my testimony overall, um,
10 while we've had a net loss of \$5.3 million, a lot of
11 it was driven by temporary funding that has since
12 expired. Um, so the organization essentially is in
13 somewhat of a steady state with a net increase of 6
14 heads. Um, however, certainly I know that we need
resources to do the work that, um, we're charged to
do moving forward.

15 I feel confident that we will be able to carry
16 out the work. Obviously, I'm in my 6th day and
17 certainly still assessing the needs across the
18 organization. And as we go through this budget
19 process, we'll remain in conversation with OMB, um,
20 around what we see. But at, at, at our current
21 state, we, we- within our organization, between
central office and the borough offices, we certainly

1
2 see that we would be confident in carrying this work
3 out. Um, I'll turn over to our Chief Operating
4 Officer to talk a little bit more about staffing in
the borough offices.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Excuse me, could you just
6 move the microphones closer to you?

7 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

9 DAVID PARISH: Sure, thanks, Chair Riley. This
10 is a very important issue for us. I think, as you've
11 already seen, uh, we've also engaged staff at our
12 central office, particularly in community engagement,
13 capital planning, our policy divisions like housing,
14 zoning, etc., to support our borough office staff.
So, uh, we all hear you and understand the importance
of the borough staff and agree.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Do you have a breakdown by
16 each borough, how much staff is in each borough
office?

17 DAVID PARISH: Uh, I can get that back to you.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay.

19 DAVID PARISH: I believe we shared some data with
20 the Committee beforehand, but we can get that to you.
21

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Um, and, and I believe you. I, I, I would not say that even though you guys are short-staffed, you guys have been working tremendously with me in the Bronx. But this is important work that we have to do. I think, um, everyone's message has been affordability. We have to build more, we have to develop more. We know how important uh, your role is in this. So as we're asking these questions, I just want you to, um, be assured that we understand the important role and we want everyone else to understand the important role and provide you with the resources that you need. Okay.

So as of January 2026, DCP has a vacancy rate of 16.3%, over triple the average vacancy rate across all city agencies, which is alarming. With similar vacancy rates over the last 6 Fiscal Years, are there any specific roles or divisions that are driving these vacancies?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So I can share, obviously addressing vacancies will be a priority for me, and I know that there are a number of efforts already underway to do so. Um, I think our Chief Operating

Officer can share a little bit more about, um, what the, the pure vacancy rate is.

DAVID PARISH: Yeah, let, let me break that down a little further. We, we began, uh, Fiscal Year '26 with 364 positions. We've been gratified at uh, to receive 6 additional. So now we're at 370. Uh, and as of February, we had 300 active employees, 4 on leave, leaving us with 69 vacancies or about 19%. Within that though, within those 69, we have 1, 1 person pending payroll, 2 pending OMB approval, and out of the 46 remaining, 23 are posted and actively recruiting. Uh, 20 are, are unfunded from former grants, completed projects, leaving us with an adjusted vacancy rate of about 12%.

I just wanted to note we've taken, uh, extraordinary efforts to think about how to improve our hiring by working with DCAS to look at civil service specs, uh, to come up with a fellows program and think of new ways to onboard folks more quickly. That work continues.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: And do you have a breakdown of specific roles that you're looking for within those vacancies?

1
2 DAVID PARISH: So across the agency, if we look
3 at our borough offices, our central teams, our
4 technical teams, the vacancy rate is, is pretty
5 steady across all of those groups. Um, so we're,
6 we're hiring a little bit, uh, on every team. What
7 is DCP doing to reduce vacancies that could expedite
the neighborhood studies and rezonings?

8 DAVID PARISH: So, one thing we're gratified that
9 DCAS, uh, came out with the civil service list for
10 city planner at the end of last calendar year. We've
11 already completed our first round of civil service
12 hiring pools. Uh, that process, if utilized
13 consistently, will allow us to fill vacancies
quickly. Uh, and we look forward to doing more of
that this, this calendar year.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is there any barriers that
15 you see that are leading to the struggle of filling
these vacancies?

16 DAVID PARISH: Not at the moment.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Not the moment. Okay. The
18 median number of days for simple zoning action
19 projects to enter public review was 308 for the first
20 4 months of Fiscal Year 2026. This represents a
21 19.8% increase over the same period in Fiscal Year

2025. The median number of days for projects requiring environmental quality review increased by 162.9% from 278 days during the first 4 year— excuse me, 4 months of Fiscal Year 2025 to 731 in the first 4 months of Fiscal Year 2026.

We also hear from developers that DCP continues to lack the basic staffing necessary to quickly move applications forward. Is DCP considering increasing staff and/or other resources in order to speed up applications during this process?

DAVID PARISH: Thank you, Chair Riley. Again, I think, uh, we heard you very clearly. We have a mandate to both speed up applications to allow, uh, private actors to build more housing while focus on proactive neighborhood planning. And so this is really important for us.

Since the start of the Administration, uh, Mayor Mamdani has put forward the Speed Task Force, uh, that's targeted to, uh, push agencies to build homes faster to reduce red tape. Uh, for us, one of the signature issues that will help improve those numbers you just cited, uh, uh, connects to the governor's push for her Let Them Build agenda to streamline environmental review.

We believe that if this change happens, it will take our 2-year process and allow us to shrink down to a 6-month process, speeding up the overall flow of applications and reducing the staff time required for each individual application.

Uh, we think this is, uh, a huge innovation. We're working to implement that while at the same time trying to keep on top of these stats that you mentioned and push applications out.

On the specifics, I wanted to note for, um, zoning actions with EAS, we think, uh, improving the environmental review process, that really is the critical path for these projects and drives them to be several years long. It requires interagency coordination, detailed review, uh, and is really hard to expedite on our own. Uh, so that systematic change from the state would be very welcome.

On simple zoning actions, I'll note that while we are still below goal, we've improved each of the last 3 Fiscal Years from FY '23, we're at 57%. Last year, we closed at 64%. Uh, and while we have work to do to improve this year, I'll note that we are ahead in the number of applications processed. So we're trying to get things out of our system. Some of

those have been delayed for a long time, which leads to a lower on-time completion rate, but we're, we're working on this.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: And you touched on environmental, we're gonna touch on that a little bit later, but, uh, going into the new Administration, um, is the new Administration currently preparing a citywide housing agenda?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yes, there is work underway to prepare a citywide housing agenda. Um, there's also work underway as, as you know, uh, in align with the Council's legislation to complete- prepare an updated fair housing plan as well.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: If so, can you discuss DCP's role in this, uh, plan?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure. So as one of the many agencies that contributes to housing in the city, we're certainly, um, you know, working with City Hall to contribute ideas, um, as well as on the fair housing front. I don't know if, uh, Executive Director Hsu-Chen, if you want to jump in.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Thank you. Good morning, Chair Riley.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Edith, if, if you could just— thank you.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Good morning, Chair Riley and all City Council members. Uh, good to be here with you today. We took a historic step with City of Yes and the neighborhood plans to unlock housing across the city. We are committed to doing yet more bold actions. This includes more neighborhood plans, uh, text and zoning changes. Um, we are streamlining how we work, and we are working hard to activate city-owned sites.

Um, we greatly appreciate City Council's partnership in everything we do, and we look forward to talking with you about what, what more we can do together.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: That was my next question. So you guys are planning on engaging with stakeholders like City Council in developing this new housing plan?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Absolutely. We are— partnership with City Council is critical in everything we do, so you can, uh, rest assured that we will continue our, uh, collaboration and discussions with you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Are you guys considering any, uh, further text amendments for the City of Yes, uh, proposal?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Um, uh, there's still, uh, to be seen what text amendments we will pursue.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Sorry, Edith, I need you to talk right into the mic.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Oh, okay, excuse me, yes, okay.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Sorry, so sorry. Thank you.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, we're still assessing what specific text amendments we will pursue. Uh, certainly City of Yes was a huge undertaking, and we're seeing really, ah, great strides already in the past year and just a few months. Um, the signs are really good. We really need to unlock housing across the city. Housing— the housing shortage is a citywide problem. We need citywide solutions.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. And I, I, I must— I have to go back into staffing. Sorry.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Alright. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: So, uh, returning to the question on staffing and resources, being that we are gonna be coming up with bold plans, that means we're gonna need, you know, more hands on deck. Um, so

1 within that, uh, is DCP thinking about personal
2 necessary, uh, necessities for the implementation of
3 this new housing plan? Um, because it, it seems
4 pretty simple that if we're looking to increase
5 development opportunities around the city, we're
6 gonna need more planners.

7 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Well, we, we heard, um, from
8 David about different strategies. Um, and I love
9 what you said earlier, Chair Riley, that we need much
10 more planning, not less.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah.

12 EDITH HSU-CHEN: But we also need a lot more
13 smart planning. And we believe with City of Yes and
14 with the Charter reform, we have a lot of new tools
15 that are letting us advance more projects at speed
16 and at scale. We need every tool we can, we can, uh,
17 get to advance, uh, to alleviate the housing crisis.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Um, going to
19 neighborhood rezonings, uh, neighborhood rezonings
20 deliver thousands of homes. We all know that, right?
21 Um, paired with comprehensive planning for
infrastructure and services and are an essential tool
for the solving New York City's housing affordability
crisis. What role does DCP see for the neighborhood

rezoning in this coming term, and how many neighborhood rezonings are you planning to undertake this term?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Okay, well, I'll, I'll jump in. Um, so right now we're still determining, um, the amount and volume and of rezonings to pursue and neighborhood planning efforts to pursue. Um, but that will still continue to be, uh, certainly a priority, um, of our work. And obviously we are also focused on efforts um, in communities that have not contributed fairly to the city's affordable housing supply and housing supply overall in the past.

Um, I'll turn it over to Executive Director Hsu-Chen.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: I don't think I have anything to add. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. I mean, so you don't have a number?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: We don't have a specific number of—

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I think 5 between 10 should be a good amount. Um, just putting that on record. Okay. Um, I mean, we have to build as much as possible, so. Um, thank you.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Hmm. I can start with that.

DAVID PARISH: Um, ah, as we did, uh, previously, Uh, we look at everything from school capacity to, uh, transit to the public realm, open space. Those are tenets that we expect to continue, uh, in this Administration and also thinking about areas that were— that have experienced disinvestment and have, uh, significant resiliency needs. So we intend to continue that holistic planning.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Do you guys have, uh, indication of where the money's coming from? Um, I could give an example because I know, um, during the, de Blasio Administration, there was a dedicated \$1 billion fund for neighborhood rezonings. Um, so just wanted to know if you guys have any commitment, and if so, where would the money exactly be coming from?

DAVID PARISH: So the money will come from a variety of sources. Once we agree on projects with individual Council Members, the projects will be funded. Uh, sometimes these projects are funded through new needs. Sometimes these projects are funded through existing agency budgets. Uh, but we work holistically across the city and with members, uh, to make commitments and then fund those commitments when we— once we've made them.

I also want to note that we've refreshed the neighborhood commitments tracker, uh, which we, uh, is hosted by the Mayor's Office of Operations, and we, uh, ensure is, is kept up to date.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, and I just want to encourage the Administration if they could set aside a specific number, um, because we are asking for more density within communities. We all wanna play a, a

1 very important role with adding housing, but we have
2 to go back to our communities and we also have to
3 give back. Um, our communities are struggling when
4 it comes to school seats, they're struggling when it
5 comes to infrastructure, they're struggling when it
6 comes to transportation. So we just wanna ask the
7 Administration if they could set aside, uh, a
8 specific number for these neighborhood rezonings if
9 we're gonna make that commitment.

10 So I just wanted to go to the Sunnyside Yards
11 proposal. Uh, I know Chair Louis, if she was here,
12 she would wanna touch on -um, some of these
13 questions. So did DCP have any role developing or
14 evaluating that Sunnyside Yards proposal that Mayor
15 Mamdani raised with President Trump last month?

16 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, yes, we all know that Mayor
17 Mamdani traveled to Washington to speak to the
18 president about potential investment, federal
19 funding, to redevelop Sunnyside Yard to deliver over
20 12,000 new homes. This is a once-in-a-generation
21 opportunity. Um, but it's very early days. We have
not been in any discussions, uh, discussions about
land use actions that would be necessary to carry out

the plan. But we will be sure to talk to you all as, as plans, uh, further develop.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Because of the unit count, was that the reason why that was brought up to the president? Um, because it was 12,000 units and why it was asked for federal funding?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Um, there is a federal property interest at, at Sunnyside Yard.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: And, uh, 12,000, um, was a unit count that was put forward in a, a plan, uh, developed by the city, um, uh, what year, um, in the prior Administration, two prior Administrations, perhaps.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I've heard an estimate of \$14 billion investment, uh, in this project. Um, is that true? Uh, it would take about \$14 billion federal -dollars from the federal government?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: It's, er, er, to be determined.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: To be determined? Okay. Um, rather than investing all the money into a new community, uh, project, why would we not invest more in our current communities? And if the answer is that the plan is to do both, then I want to know what

the funding, uh, what funding this Administration's setting aside to invest in our communities would be.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, funding is important for all neighborhood plans. So whether if Sunnyside Yard is advancing, uh, alongside a neighborhood plan, there will be a very close examination into what capital investments are needed.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. I just wanna state for the record, we've been joined by Council Member Cabán. I'm just gonna ask, uh, a couple more questions, then I'm gonna turn over to the Committee to see if any members have questions.

Uh, turn over to the City of Yes Neighborhood rezoning commitments and my, uh, Project White Plains Road. Near the end of the prior term, DCP committed to undertake neighborhood planning in Coney Island Avenue area, south of Prospect Park, East Flatbush and Fordham Landing, Park Avenue and White Plains Road in the Bronx.

Is DCP currently moving forward with these planning areas?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, yes, we've been working hard to fulfill our commitments that we made to the City Council to initiate studies and public engagement in,

1 uh, the Bronx and in Brooklyn. Um, all of this has
2 been a very positive experience collaborating with
3 you. Um, as we begin the new year with our new
4 Commissioner, and, uh, and we, we're ready to talk
5 with you about next steps.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. So I wanna talk about
7 my project, uh, the White Plains Road Plan. So we
8 started off really strong. Uh, I feel like we really
9 started strong, but recently it feels like we're kind
10 of slowing back. Um, and just want to, uh,
11 understand why that's happening. When we first
12 announced an initiative, we need, we, understood and
13 we asked our community to help us deliver, um, as
14 much density as possible. My experience with White
15 Plains Road seems that the perfect example of the
16 Bronx Borough Office at DCP not having enough
17 planners.

18 Um, we're trying to have a very ambitious plan
19 over at White Plains Road, but recently, um, it seems
20 like we're kind of slowing back, even though you guys
21 have been tremendous, um, within the borough office.
Um, they're just taking on a lot of work at that
time. So if we're serious about building more
housing and investing in our neighborhoods, I don't

want us to slow down with projects like White Plains Road in my and Council Member Dinowitz's district.

So can you tell me why DCP and this Administration is not pushing, uh, this rezoning forward? And I would like a commitment from you today, if possible, that starting tomorrow, this rezoning will become a priority for DCP and the Administration.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Oh, sorry. Uh, well, we- sorry, we appreciate so much, uh, Chair Riley, that you recommended that we take a look at White Plains Road. Again, the best starting point for any effort is partnership with City Council. Um, we did launch the neighborhood planning process last year. Um, we've had ongoing engagement. In fact, we just had a, uh, a, a meeting, community meeting on March 10th.

So planning and efforts are continuing.

SIDEYA SHERMAN: And I would just add, Chair, um, I haven't- obviously I'm getting up to speed on the work on White Plains. I haven't had a chance to go to the community meetings, but certainly would make a commitment to come out to the district and really understand what the issues are.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

1
2 SIDEYA SHERMA: To make sure that, um, as those
3 conversations continue, that we have the support
4 needed for the team members in the Bronx to make sure
5 that those are robust sessions.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Commissioner.
7 We're looking forward to seeing you up there. I
8 think the community would love to have you up there.
9 Um, it will show a good sign of faith.

10 Um, I'm gonna take a pause on my questioning.
11 I'm going to turn it over to Council Members who have
12 questions. Um, we've also been joined by Council
13 Member Phil Wong. Uh, we're gonna start with Council
14 Member, uh, Encarnación, followed by Thomas-Henry,
15 and then Salaam.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ENCARNACIÓN: Good morning. Um, I
17 wanna thank the Chair for talking so much about the
18 neighborhood studies. Uh, some of my questions were
19 around that, so some of them were already answered,
20 but I did wanna ask around DCPs prioritizing and
21 analyzing neighborhoods with high immigration
population. Um, you know, given the hardships that
are faced by immigrant New Yorkers, can you talk a
little bit about how you identify those and if that's

a consideration of DCP when looking at neighborhoods to study?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Good question. Uh, when, when we do neighborhood planning, we are looking to, uh, improve the lives for all New Yorkers. All New Yorkers. It's a big city of area diversity. Um, you know, there are many communities across New York City that haven't had the attention that, that they deserve historically, and certainly we are, we are laser-focused on making sure that we are delivering the best planning across the board, and this includes many communities that have higher, uh, er, hmm, mhm, rate of immigrants. Um, so, yes, uh, this is something that we to keep in mind.

COUNCIL MEMBER ENCARNACIÓN: And do you collect individual-level data about immigration status when you collect— when you do these studies?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Oh, not, not, uh, when we deal with neighborhood studies per se, but as you all know, uh, Department of City Planning, we do have a population division. Um, we are very proud of the work that our population division, uh, takes on. It's one of the few planning agencies in the nation that has a specialized population and demographics

1 team, um, and they are very hard at work in making
2 sure that our census work is thorough, complete, and
3 every New Yorker is counted.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ENCARNACIÓN: And do you know if
5 they, um, collect individual-level data, and if it's,
6 uh, electronic or physical, and if it is indeed
7 protected by our, um, in accordance with our
8 sanctuary city policies?

9 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Oh, we- uh, everything we do is
10 in accordance with sanctuary city
11 policies. Um, and with respect to your question
12 about- we do not collect individual data as we, uh,
13 engage with the community.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ENCARNACIÓN: Sorry, I thought I
15 put it off. Um, and the private companies that you
16 contract with, they are also not sharing any data or
17 anything like that, right? You don't have to ask the
18 question, so I- it's okay if you repeat the answers
19 and they're all yes, then that's fine. I just have
20 to ask the question.

21 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Yeah, absolutely not. Our, our,
uh, er, the consultants we work with are not
collecting individual data on immigration status.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER ENCARNACIÓN: Okay. Now I know
2 DCP recently updated its bed-to-population ratio
3 calculation. Um, it also helps inform housing
4 shelter placements. Um, how do you plan to regularly
5 assess and update those numbers so that the shelters
6 are fairly distributed across the city?

7 DAVID PARISH: Uh, we've, we've gone through an
8 effort working with our partners and other city
9 agencies where, where in the past we would make
10 one-time requests of data. We've actually signed
11 MOUs with agencies to get that data on a more regular
12 basis so that we can ensure that it's updated
13 annually. So it's, it's really important, as you
14 know, to get that updated frequently as required.
15 But it, it takes in pooling data from, uh, DHS, from,
16 uh, Health and Hospitals, New York State, Department
17 of Corrections. And so what we've done is try to
18 build a, a smoother, more regular pipeline. So that
19 we can, uh, pull that data together quickly.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ENCARNACIÓN: So regularly is
21 quarterly possibly, or mid-year?

DAVID PARISH: We're gonna start annually, and
then if we can get more frequent, uh, more frequency
with the state, uh, we will, we'll try to do that.

COUNCIL MEMBER ENCARNACIÓN: Okay. Now I know that—

DAVID PARISH: I'm open to talking to you about that, Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER ENCARNACIÓN: Thank you. I know that DCP also recently dissolved the Urban Design Division before the inauguration of the current Mayoral Administration. Do you have plans to reverse the demand— the dismantling of the UDD?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, urban design remains a core value and function at the Department of City Planning. And what we did, uh, at the end of last year is that we actually enhanced and strengthened our ability to deliver good urban design at Department of City Planning. And we did this by shifting just 6 urban designers to other divisions. Many people do not know that we have over 25 urban designers and architects working at the Department of City Planning distributed throughout many divisions. Um, they have long been in borough offices and strategic planning offices. So at the end of last year, we, uh, we, we shifted 6 urban designers to work on mission-critical work directly in, in, in certain divisions.

COUNCIL MEMBER ENCARNACIÓN: So instead of having one division, they're just, uh-

EDITH HSU-CHEN: They're distributed throughout. And it, it's a model that we've had for many decades, very successful model. So we are expanding upon that model.

COUNCIL MEMBER ENCARNACIÓN: Okay. And, um, I know we're obviously facing a budget deficit, so many planners have discussed ending free parking in New York City as a way to raise revenue. Do you currently have plans to end free parking?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Um, that's with- that's outside the purview of the Department of City Planning.

COUNCIL MEMBER ENCARNACIÓN: Okay. And wait, just want to make sure any of these are really, really, really important. I do have- oh no, this is for LPC, but not for you guys. Okay, thank you.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Uh, next we're going to hear from Council Member Thomas-Henry, followed by Salaam, followed by Wong.

COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you, Chair. Um, my first question is around the neighborhood study done for Willets Point transformation. Um, so

1 the 23 acres of approximately 61-acre footprint, um,
2 has begun with the first 880 affordable units opening
3 this spring. Thank you. Have there been any other
4 studies of- about acquiring and potentially
5 developing the remaining acres that are out at that
6 site?

7 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, we'll, we'll have to get
8 back to you. Not to my knowledge, but we- I will get
9 back to you, Council Member.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: And I guess in the
11 process, in that neighborhood study, were there any
12 environmental studies done with, um, in terms of once
13 individuals do move into that site, because this is
14 the first housing that will be over there,
15 approximately 2,500 units, if the existing conditions
16 remain, which are largely auto body mechanic shops,
17 some construction plants, and others, what the
18 environmental impacts will be to those new residents.

19 EDITH HSU-CHEN: An extensive environmental
20 review was conducted with the Willets Point, uh, uh,
21 proposals, um, and, uh, er, all mitigations are
required to be carried out. Uh, but there was an
extensive review, environmental review. I will get
back to you if, if you have further questions.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. My next is
3 regarding the Sunnyside plan. Um, because this plan
4 seems to be heavily reliant on federal funds, um,
5 would we have to adhere solely to the federal DBE
6 program, which recently has been revamped to exclude
7 women and minorities as part of the criteria, or
8 could we use our MWBE program that we currently use
9 to ensure 30%, um, participation?

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure. I- yeah, that, that's a
11 good question. I think that it still be to be
12 determined what the restrictions may or may not be
13 with respect to federal funds. Obviously, the city
14 is still carrying out its MWBE program, um, and our
15 Chief Operating Officer can share more of our work.

16 DAVID PARISH: I, I was just going to add that it
17 would depend whether federal funds come from existing
18 grant channels through some other process, uh, etc.
19 So a lot to be determined in determining, uh, what
20 the federal need is and what funding would be used to
21 meet that need.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you, Chair.
That's all I have at the moment.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member. Council Member Salaam, followed by Council Member Wong.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for your testimony. Just a few questions, um, I'm gonna start with housing production. Land use actions projected to produce homes declined 61.-69.1% in the first 4 months of Fiscal Year '26. How does the Department plan to reverse this trend? And does the proposed budget additions, Census updates, City Map amendments, and so forth adequately support housing development goals?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, we can start with an update on just the- your first question regarding applications?

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Sure.

DAVID PARISH: Yeah, I, I just wanted to note, I believe that's MMR data, uh, and that data includes projects put forward by the Department. So large rezonings and our City of Yes proposal. So we would expect, uh, a decrease, uh, in the first quarter MMR.

SIDEYA SHERMAN: And then can you repeat the second part of your question, Council Member? I'm sorry. Yes, the second part is how does the

1 Department plan to reverse this trend? Well, second
2 part to that part, does the Proposed Budget
3 additions, Census updates, city, City Map amendments,
4 and so forth adequately support housing development
5 goals? The housing—

6 SIDEYA SHERMAN: I understand. So, so as noted,
7 um, within our, uh, Prelim budget, there is
8 additional funding to support Census work as well as
9 the map, um, uh, the map updates that are required by
10 DCP. Um, in totality, a number of the actions that
11 we're taking forward, uh, regarding— with respect to
12 the recently passed City Charter Amendments as well
13 as City of Yes, um, overall will help the city
14 increase its overall affordable housing supply and
15 housing supply.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Regarding professional
17 services reduction, why is the professional services
18 engineering and architectural services budget
19 declining for— from \$10.8 million Fiscal Year '26 to
20 \$3.8 million Fiscal Year '27, and what projects or
21 services will be reduced?

DAVID PARISH: Uh, thank you for that, Council
Member. Uh, I appreciate your, your eagle-eyed
attention to that. So those are, uh, project funds

1 that fund environmental impact statement consulting.
2 So as we work with Council Members on each rezoning,
3 uh, we size, uh, a pot of funding necessary to pay
4 for the environmental review for that project. As
5 you noted, we have a steady state budget of about
6 \$3.6 million for the next few Fiscal Years. But as
7 we work with the Council and the Administration to
8 greenlight neighborhood studies, uh, that, that
9 budget will be, uh, right-sized in later years as we
10 go. So I, I think it's, it's just, uh, the nature of
11 where we are in the cycle.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Thank you. And
13 regarding, um, borough office vacancies, borough
14 offices show vacancy rates ranging from 9.5% in
15 Manhattan to 25%— 9.5% in Manhattan to 25% in Staten
16 Island. Why is the disparity so significant, and how
17 will the budget address these gaps?

18 DAVID PARISH: Yeah, I think, uh, generally we're
19 talking about a handful of individuals in each
20 borough office in Staten Island, it's 3 individuals,
21 which is 25% of the office. There, I, I'd note in
the last Administration, we passed a, a Zoning Text
Amendment that reduces the number of private
applications coming to that team. Uh, you know, it

1 is— we, we hear the Council clearly that, uh, the
2 need to fill our positions is paramount. Um, but
3 the, the rate of vacancies across teams, I would say,
4 is generally pretty standard across, across all 5.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Thank you. And lastly,
6 regarding the zoning review timeline, the department—
7 department's target for simple zoning actions is 365
8 days to enter public review. Current performance
9 shows increasing delays. Should the Fiscal Year 2027
10 Budget include additional staffing for the zoning
11 division?

12 DAVID PARISH: So I think again with this, we are
13 thinking about how to deploy our resources more
14 strategically, uh, as part of the Mayor's speed
15 process. Uh, we do think that there could be
16 additional— there could be time savings that lead to
17 additional staff capacity, uh, with changes through
18 environmental review. And we have worked steadily
19 over the last 3 years to improve this timeline. I
20 just want to note with the, the decrease, uh, this
21 PMMR for the last 4 months, I believe, uh, we
processed, I believe, 25 projects this go-round,
where last year at the same time we had done 18. And

some of the 25 were older projects that had been in the queue for a long time.

So we're trying to clear our backlog right now, uh, which unfortunately has led to a number of projects being completed that are also behind schedule.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Thank you, thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member Wong, followed by Minority Leader Carr.

COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Thank you, Chair. Um, thank you, um, Director Hsu-Chen for coming and the members of the panel for coming. Uh, I have, uh, a few questions, uh, regarding, uh, outer borough zoning and regarding carbon neutrality on lithium-ion battery plants. Um, I represent Middle Village, Mass Beth, Glendale, Elmhurst, Rego Park, and Ridgewood. Neighborhoods that work with the city, plan responsibly, and fought hard for zoning that actually fits their communities. And now they're watching all of that get overridden.

City of Yes is not planning with communities, is forcing change into neighborhoods that never asked for it and cannot support it. We're talking about

1 areas in my district where infrastructure is already
2 strained. Sewer lines, traffic, schools, parking,
3 public safety. These are daily realities and not
4 hypotheticals. And instead of addressing those
5 issues, the city is adding more density, more
6 pressure, and more uncertainty. Nowhere is that
7 clearer than with the City of Yes for carbon
8 neutrality. And because in my district we now have a
9 lithium-ion battery facility being pushed as of right
10 directly across from a school near residential homes,
11 small businesses, and a daycare, no meaningful
12 community input. No, no local reviews, no real say,
13 and all that is a direct result of decisions made by
14 this agency. And from where I sit, this is not
15 thoughtful planning. This is a one-size-fits-all
16 policy being forced into neighborhoods that are
17 already at the limit. And I want answers on how we
18 got here.

16 The first— my first question is on forced zoning.
17 Why is DCP overriding locally planned zoning in
18 communities that are already downzoned? Can you
19 answer that, please?

20 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Sure. Happy to answer. Uh,
21 thank you, Council Member. Uh, City of Yes, uh, was

1 a historic achievement, um, that we did in
2 partnership with City Council. Um, we have a
3 citywide housing crisis and we need citywide
4 solutions. And the City of Yes approach was about
5 delivering a little more housing in every
6 neighborhood. So in the lower and mid, uh, density
7 areas, you're seeing, uh, the return, the
8 relegalization of missing middle housing. For
9 example, those 3, 4, and 5-story beloved buildings
on, on corridors, um, in the boroughs.

10 Um, we also allowed for, uh, accessory dwelling
11 units, which is giving homeowners more flexibility
12 and opportunities to provide opportunities for
13 families to stay together, or perhaps even some, uh,
rental income.

14 Um, there were many moves in the City of Yes. Um,
15 and again, we did a, uh, a lot of outreach, uh,
16 across the city in every single community district
17 and with all, uh, Council Members. Um, with respect
18 to City of Yes for carbon neutrality, yes, uh,
19 battery energy storage systems was included in, uh,
20 City of Yes for carbon neutrality, um, to- and with,
uh, expanding, expanding their, uh, uh, uh, uh,
21 allowance in, in, in other neighborhoods.

1 Um, battery energy, uh, storage systems have long
2 been allowed in, in New York City in commercial
3 manufacturing areas. Um, there are really important
4 tool to get our city to carbon neutrality. So do we—
5 did expand their allowance into residential
6 neighborhoods, but these, uh, systems require
7 extensive, extensive oversight by the FDNY and DOB,
8 not just in their application phase but also in their
9 installation. There's been no fire incidents in the
City of New York for the BESS.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Okay. Did the City
11 Planning analyze placing lithium-ion facilities next
12 to schools? Yes or no? Because this is, this is
13 happening right now. They're talking about
14 constructions across the street, PS 128, Middle
Village.

15 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, there, there was, uh, a, a
16 very close look at BESS across the city and in, in
17 various zoning districts. Um, again, these, uh, are,
18 are safe when they are installed correctly and
19 properly, and they are indeed in New York City with
the extensive oversight by the FDNY and DOB.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Do you believe a battery
21 storage site next to a school is appropriate?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Yes, given their track record, yes, I, I do believe they are appropriate. And in, in fact, schools can benefit from BESSs as, as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: How did you conclude there was no risk on these, these facilities?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, we can get back to you with more information. Um, but we certainly would not be citing any facility that is, uh, dangerous to a sensitive use such as schools. Um, we would not be facilitating that through zoning.

COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Okay. Yeah, thank you.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER WONG: Thank you Chair.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Council Member Wong. Minority Leader Carr. And I just want to say for the record, we've been joined by Council Member Zhuang.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you so much, Chair Riley. Um, I just want to associate myself with the comments on BESS's by my colleague Council Member Wong. Um, there is no other example where, you know, we literally permit something to be constructed in all zoning areas, like, unlike BESS's. So this is a sort of a, an exception, I think, to our approach to

1 zoning citywide, and I think it's an unfortunate one.
2 Um, and even if you want to dismiss the safety
3 concerns, which frankly, I don't think we should be
4 dismissing them. But even if you did, um, there's
5 something to the notion of planning, which I'm sure
6 is an idea that you're committed to, to being
7 committed to.

8 Um, and I feel that we absolutely need to think
9 about what's the best use for our sites. And to say
10 that a BESS could literally go up anywhere in the
11 city, um, based on the zoning type there, I, I think
12 that that's, that's a ridiculous proposition. But
13 we'll agree to disagree on that for now. I, I wanna
14 talk a little bit about ELURP and the changes that
15 are now upon us, uh, due to the recent Charter
16 Revision.

17 Um, and in particular, I'm, you know, I'm
18 concerned because the Commission and City Planning
19 now has significant more power and responsibility,
20 uh, over the course of rezonings than they did
21 previously. And I think there's gonna be a resulting
concern from the community and the stakeholders and
neighborhoods about transparency and whether or not

they're being heard as a part of this new ELURP process.

So I just wanted to ask, um, you know, if your part of this process is to determine whether there's adequate existing transportation and sewer infrastructure in determining the course of a ELURP project, can you explain how you're going to do this and what staff determinations may have to be made in order to reach that point?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Thank you for your question, Council Member. Uh, ELURP— thank you. Uh, thanks for your question. Uh, I think the battery is fading. Okay. Oh, here we go, Thank you. Alright. Thank you.

Um, with ELURP, New York City voters voted for a faster way to approve housing and resiliency projects. There are very clear eligibility criteria for the housing projects. In the low-density areas, we're talking about modestly up to 2 FAR or 45 feet in height. Um, in, uh, in, in higher-density areas, we're talking about an increase up to 30% of the allowed density. Um, what ELURP does, it reduces the, uh, extensive 7-month review process to 90 days. And this is a really, really important tool. This is

1
2 a really important thing to do as we're trying to
3 deliver more more housing in New York City. I'm so
4 happy Council Member Encarnación is back in the room
5 because it was my honor to stand with her on Powers
6 Avenue last month, um, when we launched, uh, with
7 HPD, um, an ELURP, uh, that will, uh, result in the
8 transformation of an underutilized city parking lot
9 into a mixed-use development with 84 new homes,
10 permanently affordable homes, as well as with some
11 community uses.

12 So we look forward to seeing, uh, more ELURP's
13 deliver more housing for New Yorkers.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: I understand that there
15 was, uh, the criteria that you were referencing in
16 determining whether something's even eligible for
17 ELURP, but my understanding is that there's also
18 going to be an assessment of infrastructure that goes
19 along with that, and that's up to City Planning to
20 make. So I was wondering if you can elaborate on how
21 that process is— that part of the process is going to
be approached.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: The eligibility criteria for
ELURP is really for the more, more modestly sized
housing proposals. And, uh, and of course also for

1
2 the resiliency projects. For larger neighborhood
3 initiatives, we would absolutely be looking across
4 the board at the infrastructure needs, the community
5 needs. So that will, that will, that remains a very
6 strong practice at Farm City Planning.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: So in terms of when an
8 ELURP is underway, right, what's going to be, um,
9 City Planning's approach to community consultation
10 and, and, and their part in this process?

11 EDITH HSU-CHEN: ELURP retains the review period
12 for community boards and borough president. So that,
13 you know, when, when a project is, is, is ready, um,
14 the application's ready to be referred out, it goes
15 to the community board and to the borough president
16 for their simultaneous review, 60-day review, and
17 then it comes, uh, to, to City Planning.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: I think, I think the issue
19 though with the process, right, is that in the past
20 that community boards, sometimes even borough
21 presidents, would opine on the details of a
particular project, and they would be— they would go
unheeded by the time the Commission did its vote.
Maybe there'd be some minor modifications, and then
it would come to the Council, and the community's

perspective was that we, the Council Members representing the area, would champion that local perspective. That's no longer gonna exist here, right?

So I'm asking what you're gonna do differently in terms of how you listen and process and digest what the local input is, whether it's the board's official opinion or what's said at the board by members of the community, because members of the community don't have the ability to come to City Planning to, to repeat their testimony. They're giving their testimony to the board.

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure. I, I would just add, and of course with the understanding that these are still modest projects that would go through ELURP, um, it will be important to the team at DCP as we're working to route these applications, that we are also engaging community members and making sure that that happens up into the certification process.

Obviously, as, uh, Edith noted, there's the community board and the the, um, the borough president process, and there's still the CPC process, right? Making sure that we're listening to the public testimony and taking that seriously. As Chair

1 of the CPC, I will assure that, um, we're taking
2 everyone's testimony to count. Thank you. Thank
3 you, Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much, Minority
5 Leader. Um, just to continue on ELURPs, um, how many
6 ELURPs have happened so far and how many are in the
7 pipeline?

8 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, to date— excuse me— to date,
9 there are, uh, there have been 3 ELURP applications,
10 um, launched into public review. Um, the first one I
11 referred to earlier in, in the Bronx on Powers Ave,
12 that's an HPD-led ELURP, and at City Planning, we
13 have 2 active ELURPs in the pipeline, one on Staten
14 Island that will facilitate the, uh, acquisition of
15 more land for the Sawmill Creek Park to help with
16 conservation and preservation, uh, in that area.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, um, can you discuss how
18 many ELURPs— um excuse me, how many units, uh, these
19 ELURPs usually produce?

20 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Um, I, I don't know if there,
21 uh, is, is an average per se because each ELURP will
be different. In the Bronx on Powers Ave, that was a
proposal that's going to lead to 84 permanently, uh,
income-restricted units.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. And the one in Staten Island?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: The one in Staten Island is to facilitate the expansion of a park. Um, so that is not a housing project.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: That is a resiliency project also allowed, uh, by, under ELURP.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Uh, going into community engagement, um, 'cause I think that's what, um, Minority Leader Carr was going into. Um, during the public review process during the City of Yes, uh, you guys had the opportunity to go through 59 community boards throughout New York City. Um, after visiting all 59 community boards multiple times, um, could you guys attest if there's any lessons learned about how community board trainings and engagements can be improved? And compared to last year, has DCP staffing for community engagement increased or decreased?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, engagement with the community— engagement with community is such an important thing what we do. It is a top priority. Working with our community boards across— thank you.

1
2 Okay, um, we meet regularly with the community boards
3 for training. There's a lot of technical information
4 in zoning. So we want to make sure that we're all,
5 um, uh, er, you know speaking the same language. Um,
6 we do extensive training with the community boards,
7 and we have a public engagement team at City
8 Planning, uh, which has been expanding our reach, um,
9 across all, uh, community stakeholders.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Has the team increased or
11 decreased since last year?

12 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Our team has actually increased.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Increased. Okay.

14 SIDEYA SHERMAN: And I would just add, um, Chair,
15 you know, I, very early in my career, I started a lot
16 of my work training community boards, um, helping
17 them to understand, uh, planning, helping to
18 demystify planning. And so I think as we continue
19 this work with a community focus, that will certainly
20 be a priority.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I just wanna emphasize the
importance of that. Just think if community boards
are engaged more with understanding the need that New
York City needs right now and the type of resources,
um, that are usually needed for big planning um,

1 within their communities, I think it would be much
2 helpful when we're going through these little
3 projects or within these projects with them.

4 Um, just wanted to speak, uh, go back to the
5 Sunnyside project, uh, for a little bit. Do you
6 believe New York City has a good track record
7 delivering affordable housing through the platforms
8 of train yards?

9 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Well, I, I mean, we have few
10 examples, um, but I, I think that there is-

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: What few examples do you
12 have, do you think you have a good track record?

13 SIDEYA SHERMAN: We have Atlantic Yards is, I, I
14 understand that that is one of the few examples. Um,
15 I do think, however, we have a clear commitment in
16 this Administration to addressing affordability. We
17 also have a sentiment across New York City where
18 people understand the importance of affordable
19 housing.

20 Um, and so, you know, I know that this is still
21 to be determined, but, um, you know, there's a
pursuit to make sure that whatever we move forward
with, um, and whatever we commit to is realized. Um,
so I know we have Hudson Yards and we have Atlantic

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Have the economics of housing, uh, changed so much that you believe that the Administration would do any better in delivering affordable housing at Sunnyside Yards in Queens?

I think it's still very early days for Sunnyside Yard, um, but I think we should be looking at all opportunities, especially, you know, big, you know, big swings, you know, can deliver a lot of housing for New New Yorkers.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, I mean, the cost of building, uh, insurance, uh, we just wanna know if the economics, uh, being changed in this current climate, if the Administration's gonna take any other different approach. I mean, 12,000 units is very ambitious, so—

EDITH HSU-CHEN: We're gonna take all approaches across the city. Sunnyside Yard is just one thing that we are pursuing. Um, but it is, you know, uh, rail yards do provide, um, opportunity for us to to think big, Atlantic Yards, Hudson Yards, even Grand Central, you know, Midtown.

Of course, that's primarily, uh, office space around Grand Central. But when, uh, New Yorker, New York City, when we, you know, think big, we can deliver big.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Um, wanna go back to my favorite topic, staffing. Um, can you discuss the average salary of a planner at DCP?

1
2 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, we will- I'll turn to our
3 COO. We're pulling that information for you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No problem.

5 DAVID PARISH: Yeah, I, um, I'm glad to let you
6 know that it has increased over the last few years,
7 uh, both with increased staff retention and the
8 citywide economic agreement across our team. It's
9 about \$97,000.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Um, just wanna
11 highlight for the record, um, with retention with
12 planners, uh, they're probably getting double, uh, in
13 the private sector. Um, even though we, we, we want
14 to, uh, do as much for public service, I just wanna
15 highlight that we're losing a lot of amazing planners
16 to the private sectors because the pay is so low for
17 them. Uh, so just wanna highlight that for the
18 record.

19 Um, can you speak to how DCPE utilizes outside
20 and private consultants in day-to-day operations at
21 City Planning, whether that being large neighborhood
rezonings or any other process, uh, within DCP?

 DAVID PARISH: Yeah, yeah, we try to keep it
minimal. Um, we primarily use consultants for
large-scale environmental impact statements for our

neighborhood plans, and generally that's because they're of such scale, and we try to do those reviews quickly with Council Members and communities so they don't get stale and we can get through that.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is there a set aside budget, um, for that?

DAVID PARISH: Currently it's \$3.6 million. Um, as we've talked about, it fluctuates based on the plans we agree with Council Members to, to deliver.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, uh, just wanna, uh, touch on, uh, city-owned sites. Under the Adams Administration, as an executive order, prioritizing housing production and accelerating the production of housing on city sites requires city agencies to identify public land suitable for new housing development to address the city's housing concerns.

How many sites has DCP identified to date, and where are they located?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, Chair, I, I, I know that, uh, on day one of this Administration, the Mayor put into effect the LIFT Task Force, which is focused on identifying city-owned sites, um, and we are contributing in, in part of that work. Um, the goal is, I think the, the LIFT work should be wrapped up

1
2 this summer, um, and we should be able to share more
3 information about the sites that have been
4 identified.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Um, thank you, Commissioner.

6 Um, do you have a process to identify those sites?

7 SIDEYA SHERMAMN: So I know that this is
8 happening across multiple city agencies, um, and I, I
9 don't know if, if there's more to share, at least on
10 the DCP end, but I think the city is identifying the,
11 the various sites that they own and operate.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. I just wanna state for
13 the record, we've been joined by, uh, Chair Lee and
14 Majority Leader Shaun Abreu. Okay. Alright. So,
15 uh, going back to urban, uh, design and urban design
16 is very critical. Uh, and we, uh, heard you speak
17 about it earlier with Council woman Encarnación, um,
18 for providing a healthy environment is also is
19 crucial to maintaining public support for growth and
20 development. How does DCP plan on having a
21 coordinated urban design policy without a central
urban design division?

Got I get new mics, y'all?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Okay. Um, yes, thank you for
your question. Uh, again, urban design remains a

1 core value and function at the Department of City
2 Planning. Uh, we still have a Chief Urban Designer,
3 uh, at, at the Department who has a general oversight
4 across, um, the urban design work across our agency.
5 Um, we, again, we have urban designers distributed
6 throughout the agency, many divisions, and in every
7 borough office, and, and, and also strategic planning
8 offices. Um, we are, uh, er, er, urban design is
9 critical. And, and as you, as you mentioned, Chair
10 Riley, and making sure that we have, you know, buy-in
and beautiful, great livable neighborhoods.

11 So this work that our urban designers are doing
12 across the agency, they'll be doing this work from
13 day one, from project inception across the agency.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. I'd now like to ask a
15 series of questions about the implementation of the
16 effectiveness of the City of Yes reforms, starting
17 with ADUs. ADUs are largely, uh, excuse me, ADUs are
18 a large percentage of the projected citywide increase
19 in housing production from the City of Yes for
20 housing opportunity, but the implementation has been
21 slow and we've seen some criticism from advocates
that the regulations are too complex and costly. How
many permits to date have been issued for ADUs?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Thank you for your question.

Um, we are very excited to say that we have over 150 ADU applications, uh, in the hopper right now. Um, we've been doing a lot of work in the past year to make sure that folks seeking and, uh, to build or provide an ADU have the tools.

Uh, just last week, the city launched a toolkit that has ready-to-go designs for ADUs and also guidance on financing these ADUs. Earlier last year, we promulgated rules, uh, to make sure ADUs are safe, and the ADU application portal was opened at DOB last fall. So we're really excited to see see a lot of activity, um, in the ADU applications.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Do you have a breakdown of the 150, um, boroughwide?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: We have, um, we have, uh, Queens and Staten Island leading the way. Um, I will give you, uh, the, uh, I can get you the specific numbers, uh, afterwards.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is DCP involved in making sure NYC has workable ADU regulations?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Absolutely. All these efforts are, are about making sure that we have not just workable but easy to use and, and great regulations

to help homeowners who want to provide an ADU provide one.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Thank you. And that's the website you just mentioned, right?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Yes, the website.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, good. Uh, with that being said, I do wanna commend the Administration on the new website you just released for homeowners to navigate the process for ADUs. It has been, uh, very useful for those who are interested in it.

Um, office conversions. Is DCP monitoring the progress on office conversion developments? And if so, are the zoning reforms from City of Yes and tax incentives proven to be effective in supporting increased conversions?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: We are so excited to see the boom in office conversions with City of Yes regulations and the state's 460M State program. Together, we're seeing this incredible surge in delivering housing by also— by repurposing vacant or low-performing office space.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Do you know how many office conversions have gone forward to date?

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2 EDITH HSU-CHEN: I don't know how many buildings
3 per se, but I know that the pipeline is, is- it
4 includes 12,000 new homes, uh, a quarter of which are
5 permanently income restricted.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Um, City of Yes also
7 included the Transit Oriented Development and Town
8 Centers proposal to allow 3 to f- 3 to 5 story
9 multifamily housing more broadly, As of Right, in
10 low-density areas.

11 Is DCP monitoring the implementation and uptake
12 by developers of these proposals, and how many TODs
13 and town center proposals have been filed across the
14 city to date?

15 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, we're working with DOB to
16 compile the, uh, filing permits, um, at, at the
17 locations, and we'll be able to share this with City
18 Council soon. Um, but we're really excited to see
19 that, um, the, uh, 3, 4, 5-story buildings that are
20 long, long, long have been loved in New York City
21 have been re-legalized, and, um, we're seeing more
housing, uh, developed, uh, across the city in, in
the, in these missing middle, uh, typologies.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, I'm gonna ask some
questions on environmental review reform, and then

I'm gonna turn it over to Chair Lee to ask her questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Hi, how are you? Thank you. Oh, sorry.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: One second. I'll be right with you Chair Lee.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: So the Governor is proposing to broadly exempt residential projects with up to 500 units from environmental review. Under the Governor's proposal, developers would not even have to study ground, air, and noise pollution. This raises fundamental environmental justice concerns. What is DCP's position regarding the Governor's proposal?

DAVID PARISH: I just wanted to note that the, the governor's proposal, as I understand it, and there are competing bills in Albany, focuses different, uh, housing limits in different density areas. So 500 would be in the most dense parts of the city, uh, it would be lower elsewhere. And the proposals that I've seen apply to only areas where homes are being proposed existing residential units. So, er, existing residential districts.

1
2 So today, as you can go and get a building permit
3 in an area zone for residential without doing those
4 environmental reviews, uh, this would be very similar
5 to that.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: So DCP is in favor of the
7 Governor's position?

8 DAVID PARISH: We, we do think that this is a
9 smart reform that will shorten our process and speed
10 the creation of housing across the city.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay.

12 SIDEYA SHERMAN: I would just add that, um, as
13 noted, right, much of this is still in the proposal
14 phase, and so, um, we're in conversations with the
15 state and we'll continue to work through the details.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. When DCP proposed
17 Green Fast Track, it limited the exemption to
18 projects— to residential projects up to 250 units,
19 which is half the size of what the Governor is
20 proposing. Why did DCP limit its exp— excuse me,
21 exemption to 250 units, and does the extensive data
analysis you perform establish that projects up to
500 units have no environmental impacts?

 DAVID PARISH: So, we, we were proud to do
research for Green Fast Track, but I, I think when

1 looking at the Green Fast Track, we were looking
2 within the universe of state SEQRA law. Uh, so the
3 things that we could not change despite, uh, the lack
4 of mitigations for number of housing units. So we,
5 we still, for example, had to go through certain
6 processes and there were limits that we, uh, could
7 not overcome.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Um, just to push, uh, a
9 little bit on that. So you were looking at the SEQRA
10 laws in order to come up with that, um, assumption.
11 But, um, I think the pushback that we wanna, uh, say
12 within that is that within that exemption of the 250
13 units, um, do you feel like that is suitable, uh, for
14 the Green Fast Track?

15 Um, because, uh, there are a lot of members that
16 have concerns about this. I, I think within this
17 process, within- we're trying our best to make sure
18 that we invest as much in our communities as
19 possible. We do understand that this is a process
20 that takes a long period of time, but this is how a
21 lot of those issues are going to be addressed. So
being that you guys did look at that law, um, do you
feel like that has been efficient to date?

1
2 EDITH HSU-CHEN: David mentioned that when we
3 proposed city, uh, excuse me, a Green Fast Track, we
4 were looking at it within the existing SEQRA, uh, uh,
5 regulations. Um, we have reviewed the Governor's
6 proposal and found that over the last 10 years, 99.6%
7 of the projects that would qualify for the Governor's
8 proposal had no impacts. So that's virtually all of
9 them. Had no impacts. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. The environmental
11 review process is critical to addressing
12 environmental justice needs and local infrastructure
13 needs, specifically funding for our local parks and
14 playgrounds, the creation of new open spaces, space
15 for schools, and creating more early childhood
16 facilities. By exempting the projects from
17 environmental review, projects would no longer have
18 to contribute towards the basic needs of our
19 communities.

20 If the Governor's reform is passed, what is DCP's
21 strategy to provide our communities with those needed
investments, um, such as schools, parks, rezonings,
libraries, and those facilities to make sure that our
communities can still thrive with density?

1
2 DAVID PARISH: So I think as Edith just noted,
3 the vast, vast majority of these projects do not have
4 impacts today. And I think, uh, the answer to your
5 question is is thinking holistically about capital
6 planning across our city, uh, which is something we
7 are strong advocates for in partnership with other
8 agencies.

9 Uh, we also look at this whenever we look closely
10 at a neighborhood or through a citywide text to look
11 at the provision of public services.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Alright. I'm gonna
13 turn it to Chair Lee. I'm just gonna ask if DCP
14 could share that analysis of the 99.7 uh, percentage.
15 Uh, Chair Lee.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Sorry, my ears are half
17 working these days. Um, thank you so much for being
18 here. Uh, just really quickly, um, who, uh, has been
19 identified at DCP for the, uh, Chief Savings Officer?

20 DAVID PARISH: Hi.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Oh, nice. Okay, great. Um,
I know that they were due last, uh, Friday, but are
you able to share any of the proposals for savings
within DCP's budget, and are you anticipating any

potential revenue loss, uh, resulting from
implementation of the savings plan?

DAVID PARISH: So thank you, Council Member. Uh,
we take— we took very seriously the, the guidelines
in this proposal to find savings that were both
sustainable but did not impact the provision of
services, so—

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Right.

DAVID PARISH: We do not expect, uh, services to
be diminished or revenue to decrease.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Perfect. Um, and especially
if revenue-generating positions are reduced, uh, such
as headcount for planning staff who facilitate
neighborhood studies and rezonings, is that still
also not going to impact?

DAVID PARISH: That's correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay. Um, the 2-for-1
hiring restrictions, is that, is that still in place,
or?

DAVID PARISH: Uh, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay. Um, and when do you
anticipate the timeline for—

1
2 DAVID PARISH: So it, it was, uh, as part of the
3 Chief Savings Officer program, the, the goal was to
4 release agencies from the 2-for-1, uh, hiring freeze.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay. Um, sorry, just going
6 to the OMB report because I know that it's in the
7 financial summary. The headcount is pretty much the
8 same. It's— there's like, it seems to be one
9 position difference between FY26 and FY27, but
10 there's quite a decrease in the overall budget. And
11 I'm just wondering, I know you mentioned in your
12 testimony that a lot of the decrease is due to, um,
13 the grants or funding, temporary funding going away,
14 but is there anything else that's in that, or is it
15 mostly that reason?

16 DAVID PARISH: It, it's— that's the vast
17 majority. Two big things that I'll cite, uh, so, uh,
18 environmental consulting dollars that were for prior
19 Administration projects that are no longer needed.
20 That's about, uh, almost \$3 million, and \$2.5
21 million, uh, is funding for the Jamaica rezoning that
came through a federal grant, and that with the
Council we were excited to complete.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Yes, definitely. Um, okay,
and then in the OTPS, what's the reason for— is it

1 the same issue of that decrease? Is that also
2 because of the funding going away, or is that a
3 different category of funding?

4 DAVID PARISH: That, that's the, the lion's share
5 of it, right? The, uh, okay, that's- yeah.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay. And then in terms of
7 the, uh, preliminary, uh, plan changes, I know that
8 in FY26, um, for new needs, it pretty much went up
9 from \$603,000 to \$1.3, and then other adjustments
10 also increased. And so I know in your testimony
11 you've outlined funding for the census to address
12 that. So is that most of the lion share of where the
13 new needs is going towards?

14 DAVID PARISH: Uh, yes, it's, uh, 716,007
15 headcount for the census.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: 760,000?

17 DAVID PARISH: \$716,000.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: \$16,000. Okay and then what
19 about the rest?

20 DAVID PARISH: So we received \$300,000 in
21 personnel dollars to activate, uh, dormant headcount
for City Map changes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Uh, dormant headcount for-
I'm sorry

1
2 DAVID PARISH: To- for, uh, City Map changes. So
3 we are, we are expected to take on, uh, address
4 assignments by January of next year and the City Map
5 over the next, uh, 2 following years from the borough
6 president. So we're working on establishing the plan
7 for that with this early investment.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay, perfect. Um, and then
9 just in terms of the neighborhood planning, um, I
10 know the neighborhood studies and subsequent,
11 subsequent rezoning and plans have a large economic
12 impact, um, by facilitating housing development and
13 driving activity for small businesses and increasing
14 the tax base. Um, have you done, um, have you
15 evaluated the economic benefit that a fully staffed
16 department would have on your ability to undertake a
17 greater number of these plans? Because I know that
18 it's going to increase.

19 DAVID PARISH: So, uh, you, you know, we think
20 these plans are tremendously impactful in different
21 neighborhoods that we work in, both in adding, uh,
both, uh, construction jobs and long-term jobs, and
then homes for people during this, this, uh,
significant housing crisis.

We have not done a full economic impact, but we've looked to see the outcomes of our work. Both in terms of jobs and housing and, you know, we look forward to speaking to all Council Members.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay. So you have done a full impact study on it?

DAVID PARISH: We, we have looked at the outcomes of past rezonings, correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay and can you share what some of those would be?

DAVID PARISH: Can you repeat the question?

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Can you share what some of those would be?

DAVID PARISH: Uh, I, I don't have that information with you. I'd have to get back to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Okay. Perfect. And then, um, what have been some of the impacts on city revenue from past rezonings, like East New York or Inwood?

DAVID PARISH: Uh, we at City Planning have not done an analysis of- I assume you're, you're talking about tax revenue. Uh, we have not done that type of analysis.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Alright, great. Thank you.
Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Uh, we'll hear
next from Council Member Felder, followed by Majority
Leader Abreu, then Council Member Cabán.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Thank you. Uh, I, I,
first I want to address the comment, uh, before I
start. Congratulations and good luck. Uh, you know
that the, uh, you're only gonna get complaints from
everyone, including us.

So, so at least today you're not getting any
complaints. Yeah, that's the nature. Um, your
colleague had mentioned something about the voters of
New York with the Charter Commission and the— hmm, so
I just wanna comment on that, is that I think, ah, I,
I, I'm not looking for an answer because the thing is
gonna go off and we won't have time to debate it.

But historically, we, er, hmm, you know, first of
all, the way the questions are asked, that's how the
answers are, are given. And that's, that, that's not
my creation. That's a general statement and that's
how the Charter questions go, uh, you know, for
since, you know, since I can remember, depending on

1
2 how the questions are asked, that's, that's whether
3 they get approved or not.

4 So I don't believe that they're referring to the
5 voters of New York approving the Charter, and we- I
6 have deep respect for the voters of New York, but I,
7 I'd be willing to bet that if somebody spent time,
8 uh, with vote- the voters explaining in detail what
9 they voted for, they would tell you that they had no
understanding of that, that that's what it meant,
period. So that's that.

10 Second, in terms of the comments that you made
11 about reaching out to the community through the
12 community board and the borough president, again,
13 deepest respect for some of the community boards. I,
14 I'm not speaking for my colleagues, I'm speaking for
15 my own district. I have community boards that are
16 very active and really do the job well, and clearly,
uh, I think your reference, uh, would have been
accurate.

17 And I have others that it- that the time you
18 spent with those community boards in those
19 neighborhoods, I don't know what they told you, but
20 they have no idea what they're talking about period.
21 Uh, you call- so- so I don't think that the that

1
2 you'd really get a good picture about what's going
3 on.

4 And, and, uh, what I, what I, what I would like
5 to know, uh, you know, here's the question. The,
6 it's, it's, you know, the all sorts of things go into
7 the, uh, the, uh, property, uh, building, uh, you
8 know, whatever else. The thing that, that I do not
9 hear is about the, the, you know, they talk about
10 parking, other things, about play area for the
11 children, that, that, that should be something that's
12 part of the requirement, just like, uh, you know, you
13 do anything else, unless, unless there, there's a,
14 uh, unless the, you know, that's not, uh, I don't
15 know what to tell you. To me, you know, I think it's
16 critical.

17 And I would just say is that under federal law- I
18 keep on looking at the clock because, uh, I, I, I,
19 you know, depending on, uh, you know, if I'm behaving
20 or not, they, they make it go quicker when I'm
21 talking or slower. Yeah. So, so no, I just want to
tell you that in the City of New York I, I dare say,
and this is nothing to do with this Administration,
because you just started, in the City of New York,
there are only 2 playgrounds in the entire city that

1 accommodate disabled and special needs children.
2 Every other playground accommodates them by having
3 one red or orange, I, I'm not sure, swing. That's
4 how they're accommodated. It's embarrassing and
5 outrageous. And I dare criticize it because, because
6 I have a grandchild with a disability. I had no idea
7 until, until he was born what that meant. And I, and
8 the one is in Queens, and one is in Felder's
9 District, believe it or not. I would just ask and
10 beg that, that be taken into consideration among your
many priorities.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member
Felder.

12 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Thank you, Council Member, and
13 absolutely you have our commitment to giving
14 attention to that. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Uh, next we're gonna hear
16 from Majority Leader Abreu, followed by Cabán and
Thomas-Henry.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Thank you, Chair Riley.
18 Last year, DCP announced it was pursuing an
19 initiative dubbed City of Yes for Families, with
20 potential citywide zoning reforms to support uses
21 like childcare facilities to help families stay in

1
2 New York City. Is DCP still working on this
3 initiative?

4 EDITH HSU-CHEN: I think so much of what we— of
5 our work is centered around making sure New York City
6 is a great place for families, that they can stay,
7 they can grow, and flourish here. Um, we are doing,
8 ah, so much work across the board to make sure that
9 this is the case. Um, we've seen in our neighborhood
10 plans, ah, the delivery of, of parks improvements, of
11 schools, of safer streets. These are really
12 important elements in making good neighborhoods.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Is the city pursuing this
14 initiative, Dub City of Yes for Families?

15 EDITH HSU-CHEN: We're pursuing many initiatives,
16 um, per— maybe not under a specific umbrella -

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: But this specific
18 initiative, this specific initiative that was dubbed
19 City of Yes for Families in the past Administration.
20 Is this Administration taking on that specific
21 initiative?

22 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, we are taking on many
23 initiatives under the umbrella of making, making sure
24 New York City is a great place for families.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Is there anything
2 currently in place with respect to potential citywide
3 zoning reforms for uses like child care facilities?

4 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Well, you- I think we've all
5 seen and heard that it, it is a top priority for this
6 Mayor, um, and we are seeing really exciting action
7 to make sure daycare is much more affordable for New
8 Yorkers.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: It doesn't sound like to
10 me that there is a current pursuit of this City of
11 Yes for Families as was envisioned by the prior
12 Administration. Is that fair to say? Um, because
13 you're not committing to whether or not you're,
14 you're following this specific initiative. It's okay
15 if you're not.

16 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Um, we are following many of the
17 initiatives that we were think- certainly that were
18 developing and developed under City of Yes for
19 Families. It'll probably come under perhaps
20 different branding or, um, come under, uh, uh, uh,
21 other initiatives, but we are 1,000% committed to
making sure that New York City is a great place to
grow families.

COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: I understand there's a commitment to the issue, uh, but it doesn't sound like there's something specific in work— in the works right now.

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Can I just—

COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Please, yeah.

SIDEYA SHERMAN: can I just add whether, um, it's being called City of Yes for Families, I think as the Executive Director shared, the, the components are, are in play, right? Making sure there are safer streets, making sure that we're taking into account school seats, all of the things that are needed to support thriving families, as well as making sure that we're facilitating access to the types of facilities that families need.

Um, I think it may not be called that same umbrella, but the components are moving.

COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: But the components are a priority and hopefully will be part of future plans.

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Alright, great. Uh, regarding City of Yes implementation, uh, the universal affordability preference from City of Yes created zoning incentives for affordable housing in

all high-density districts R-6 or higher. Is DCP monitoring the implementation and are developers using the UAP as expected?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Yes, we're, we're very, uh, very excited to see that UAP is being taken up. We have seen over 150 applications for UAP, so that's wonderful. Um, we are, uh, uh, collecting more and more data, working with DOB to be able to share out some more information about how UAP—

COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: That's great and 150 UAP applications across how many sites? Do you have that information?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: I don't have that, uh, specific number, but we can get back to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: If you can share that with this Committee, that would be great. And my last question is on development on houses of worship. City of U.S. implemented several zoning changes intended to make it easier for houses of worship to develop, develop affordable housing. Are we seeing an increase in development of faith-based organization sites as a result of the City of Yes reforms?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Let me get back to you with specifics on, on, on, on sites and applications.

COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Sounds good. If you could just get, get that information to the Chair, that would be great.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Yes, thank you. Thank you, Council Member.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Majority Leader. Council Member Cabán.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you very much. So I, I wanna start with, um, asking about neighborhood plans. Obviously, they play a significant role in securing housing potential and neighborhood investment. What's the process DCEP takes to make sure that the planning efforts are equitably distributed across the, the city?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: We're taking a hard look across the city for opportunities for neighborhood planning. I think a top priority.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Like mine, we've got a neighborhood plan.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Well, thank you. Actually, thank you very much, Council Member, for your, for

1
2 your community work on, on, on looking at, looking at
3 Astoria and the surroundings.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Well, thanks to our Land
5 Use Division, because they did that. They saved you
6 guys a lot of money by doing that in-house.

7 EDITH HSU-CHEN: So, well, it is, it is, you
8 know, certainly that's, uh, uh, working, work,
9 getting recommendations directly and work from
10 Council Member is, is hugely important to us. And,
11 and, and certainly very motivating.

12 Um, when we're looking at opportunities across
13 the city, we are certainly keeping our eye on areas
14 that have historically underdelivered. So that is
15 also one of our motivating factors.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Yeah. I, I mean, I, I
17 understand that that's a motivating factor, but then
18 there, there is the alternate issue of like, for
19 example, you have a district like mine or a district
20 like CM Won's where they're— we're doing our fair
21 share and it is, you know, housing development is
exploding, but it is not happening in a way that
really is grounded and rooted in community.

And so while we will, you know, there are plenty
of us who will be like, yeah, some of these other

1
2 districts need to do their fair share. Um, while we
3 are trying to do the, the right thing, we wanna make
4 sure that the Administration has a plan for, um,
5 investing in our neighborhoods so that these
6 rezonings, uh, are, are sort of, um, community
driven.

7 So, So I guess that leads into my next question
8 of, like, there's this issue where if there's an
9 appetite for upzoning, like there is in, in my
10 district, uh, but only if there's funding for
infrastructure, how are you considering that?

11 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yeah, so I think, Council
12 Member, to your point, um, we want to make sure we're
13 taking a holistic approach. And so while there's a
14 focus on communities that haven't delivered, um, to
15 the city's housing supply in the past, a community
16 such as yours. We also wanna make sure that we're
17 working in partnership with you for communities where
18 people may be experiencing displacement, development
19 pressures, um, and making sure that we're taking a
20 more holistic planning approach that also brings in
21 the capital needs and all of the other components
that come with a neighborhood plan.

Um, and some of the areas do also involve manufacturing. So I wanna ask about manufacturing districts in, in general that, like, there are rezonings in manufacturing districts that aren't prepared for residential. Uh, how does DCP plan for the infrastructure improvements needed in, in those areas?

COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Well, just, well, okay, so there's the added challenge of where we're looking to, to rezone, right? Um, in districts that have been heavily manufactured, but historically heavily manufactured. Like, for example, in Astoria, we

1 actually did- I think it was 2012, 2014- a
2 redistricting of what was mostly manufacturing into
3 residential, except there hasn't been any building.
4 But the surrounding area, also, there are things that
5 need to be done to make it livable as, as residential
6 zoning.

7 So whether it's there or in other places, when
8 you're looking you look at those particular types of
9 rezoning, um, where you're manufacturing districts
10 that they're not prepared for residential
11 necessarily, how do you plan for the infrastructure
12 improvements in those areas when you're moving from
13 manufacturing to residential?

14 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, thank you, Council Member.
15 Um, with any major neighborhood, uh, plan, including
16 rezoning from manufacturing to allow for, for
17 residential, we take a hard look at, at the potential
18 effects and, and, and the services and the
19 infrastructure so that we are prepared to- and, and
20 we're making sure that the area is, is ready for, for
21 residents. Um, with respect-

COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: What does that look like?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Like, in many cases, it's a-
it's an environmental review. The, the ULURPS that

1 we've seen for transitioning manufacturing areas to
2 deliver residential have had a very complete
3 environmental review where we're looking at Category
4 across the board.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Okay. And then what do
6 you do once those environmental reviews are done?
7 Like, what are some of the things that you are
8 investing in and actually doing in, in those
9 scenarios?

10 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Well, there may be mitigations
11 that are required in that environmental review, um,
12 and mitigations are required to be carried out. Um,
13 they are, uh, and with, and with respect to
14 industrial areas, not all industrial area is the
15 same, right?

16 So there are many areas that may be more more
17 ready and, and ripe for non-industrial uses. Um,
18 the, uh, City Council, uh, directed us, uh, at City
19 Planning to work with our city agencies to develop a
20 strategic plan, a policy plan for our industrial
21 areas. And we're very pleased to report that last,
uh, just this past December, we issued the city's
first strategic plan for industrial- for the
industrial sector, the industrial plan, a- as you all

1 know. And one of the strategies laid out in the
2 industrial plan is looking at areas and classifying
3 them whether they should remain core and primary for
4 manufacturing or industrial or secondary or even, you
5 know, ah, areas that may be ready and more, more
6 ready for, ah, non-industrial uses. So, um, er-

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Chair, can I ask one more
8 follow-up? So, and, and I also appreciate that there
9 is a need to maintain and preserve, um, some of our
10 manufacturing areas and, and shout out to Council
11 Member Gutiérrez, who I think has done just like a
12 lot of work on that front. But I, I just, in
13 addition to environmental review, so I understand
14 that districts are different.

15 I just would love to know what some of the other
16 concrete things that y'all are looking at or
17 investing in when making those changes. So there's
18 the environmental review. Are you doing street
19 safety? Th-that, like, what, what else is happening?

20 EDITH HSU-CHEN: May I add one thing before,
21 before the Commissioner?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Yeah. Um, I was remiss to
23 I would just say that when we're doing, um, you know,
24 ah, ah, holistic neighborhood planning that, that's

1 ushering in, you know, major new uses, you know,
2 moving, ah, manufacturing to housing, let's say, you
3 know, it's not just mitigations we're looking at. We
4 do extensive, ah, er, ah, hm, and collaborative
5 discussions with the community, with the
6 stakeholders, and with the electeds to see what the
7 needs are in these neighborhoods. So, um, there are
8 a number of commitments sometimes that come out of
9 neighborhood plans, and we see them carried out
10 through, uh, POA, which is tracked very closely by
the City of New York.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you. Thank you,
Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member
13 Cabán. Council Member Thomas-Henry.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you, um,
15 Chair. I do want to echo Councilman Felder's comment
16 about playgrounds. I had a real-life instance in my
17 district with Willets Point. I took a tour a couple
18 of months ago and asked that very question. It was
19 880 units and no outdoor space for kids. And I'm
20 happy to say when I went back around, they did
21 designate an area outdoors specifically to build a
playground.

1
2 So I think this is something very important when
3 we're thinking about building more units that are
4 supposed to be family-friendly, to make sure that
5 there is outdoor space for those, um, families.

6 Um, kind of piggybacking off, um, Council Member
7 Cabán's question, when we do this planning, how does
8 transportation come into play? And I would— you
9 probably don't have it now, but I would be interested
10 in knowing the transportation plan for Willets Point.
11 Currently, with the new bus redesign, there was a new
12 bus route that was placed there, but the only
13 accessible— the only train station is the number 7
14 line, which on a good day is terrible, and it's not
15 ADA accessible.

16 So curious to know how transportation comes in,
17 in general, with, um, these neighborhood plans, but
18 also if you guys could get back to me specifically
19 with Willets, what the transportation plan is.

20 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Sure. Transportation and access
21 is key when we are planning anything in New York.
22 Uh, we have a, uh, transportation division at the
23 Department of City Planning, and overall our agency,
24 we work very closely with the city's DOT and with
25 MTA. Um, you know, we are, uh, just generally, um, a

transit-oriented, uh, transit-oriented development city. We should be more so. We should be taking all opportunities to leverage this incredible asset. It's really unparalleled, um, maybe in the world. Uh, we have an incredible transit system. Um, it's not just subways, of course, it's bus and other modes of, of, of, uh, of moving around.

Um, with every neighborhood plan, we make sure that there is good transit or improved transit to— so that we are maximizing our, our— we're leveraging, um, transit and neighborhood planning to help each other.

COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: And who can I follow up with for the Willets Point planning exactly? Okay. Um, my last question is, last year, a former JFK Hilton Hotel in Queens was converted to over 300 units of affordable housing. As, um, hotels seem to become the preference to house individuals, is there a long-term plan to do more conversions like this into affordable, affordable permanent housing?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: We, we look to, uh, uh, the property owners and operators. Um, there's not a plan per se from, from our side, um, to see more of those conversions.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: As someone who
3 lives near airport, I would like it. And a lot of
4 those hotels have been converted. So if they're- if
5 that is something that, um, land use could look at,
6 that would be great.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member.
8 Um, just wanted to touch on the racial equity
9 reports. Um, so under the leadership of Public
10 Advocate Williams and then Committee Land Use Chair
11 Salamanca, this Council passed legislation requiring
12 developers to conduct racial equity reports for
13 large-scale developments. Um, Chair, Commissioner, I
14 know how important this is to you. Um, a lot of
15 times when we're doing these large rezonings, uh,
16 displacement is a word that tends to be put out
17 there. Um, even when I'm thinking about my
18 neighborhood planning, planning, I don't want anyone
19 to be displaced. Um, so as we're doing these large,
20 uh, plans, I just have a question. How does DCP
21 continue to work with developers to ensure projects
don't negatively affect minority communities?

19 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure. So thank you for your
20 question. Um, um, and yes, this is obviously very
21 important to me. I know that the racial equity

1 reports went in effect in 2022. Um, since then they
2 have been used as a tool to help reach deliberation
3 as, uh, applications go past certification. Um, I
4 know for for the CPC and the City Council, for
5 instance, they've been used to help reevaluate MIH
6 levels in certain projects. And so we certainly
7 wanna make sure that that's a tool that we continue
8 to use, uh, moving forward and strengthen.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Um, back to the housing
10 strategy, as you guys are developing this, it's no
11 secret housing projects face multi-year delays in
12 receiving financial subsidies, uh, through HPD. Does
13 DCP advocate for quicker, closing on city-led
14 development priorities, and if so, how do you do so?

15 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So obviously there's a need to
16 address the affordable housing crisis with the
17 urgency New Yorkers deserve. Um, I think on our end,
18 right, we shared in this, this hearing some of the
19 efforts that we have underway to at least help
20 environmental review move along more quickly in some
21 of the processes that we control.

Um, we're certainly, you know, regularly in
conversation with our colleagues at HPD too to do

1
2 whatever we can to support them as they work towards
3 closing on projects.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Because usually,
5 typically, after we close out, uh, of adherence, it's
6 taken years for developers even to get the shovel,
7 uh, in the floor. So I know where, where everyone's
8 thinking about units, units, units we have to
9 produce, but just, we also have to advocate for how
10 long it takes for developers to actually build. Um,
11 so just wanted to put that out there on the record,
12 Commissioner.

13 SIDEYA SHERMAN: And I know it's been mentioned
14 um, the Speed Task Force, right, that has been
15 launched.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah.

17 SIDEYA SHERMAN: There are multiple agencies
18 that, uh, role in the affordable housing pipeline.
19 Um, everyone's at the table to figure out how we can
20 do this more quickly.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Um, Fair Housing
Framework. So Local Law 167 of 2023, the Fair
Housing Framework is for the first time requiring a
citywide analysis of housing needs and housing

production targets for each community district to be released in October of 2026.

In what capacity has DCP worked alongside HPD on this plan so far? So I know the team at DCP has been hard at work, um, as well as our colleagues across the city to develop this such a comprehensive fair housing framework with, to your point, targets across districts. Um, and so I can certainly— perhaps you could lend more on the collaboration with HPD.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, it's— we, we work very closely with HPD on a number of things and certainly on, on this, uh, framework. Um, and, uh, this is of course a direct result of the City Council legislation, and we're really excited to use this framework to help guide our— to help us guide our work moving forward.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Does DCP have an adequate budget, uh, line for this framework?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yes and I would just add fair housing is not, uh, ancillary to the work, right? It's core business. And so, um, staff across the organization will be part of shaping this work.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Does DCP intend to use the community district targets as part of its evaluation of where to undertake neighborhood rezonings?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: I think that should inform the work that we do. Absolutely. Um, you know, part of the, the city's fair housing goals are to address the patterns of segregation, make sure, um, that we're working to connect people to high opportunity communities, addressing displacement. All of that should inform how we pursue neighborhood rezonings and planning efforts.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Um, to piggyback off of Chair Cabán, um, Chair Louis wanted me to ask this specifically. Um, within her district, uh, they are looking forward and moving forward with a neighborhood rezoning plan, but similar, uh, to my neighborhood rezoning, it's not receiving, uh, as much attention as possible from DCP. Can you commit to, um, moving forward with that attention and resources for the neighborhood plan in Council Member Cabán and Council Chair Louis and Council Member Joseph's district?

1
2 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So it, it is exciting to me that
3 there are a number of Council Members who are looking
4 to proactively plan for their community.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Means you have a lot of work
6 to do.

7 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yes. And so, um, as noted,
8 obviously, you know, just, just got here, certainly
9 assessing, um, where, where, where we will go, um,
10 but happy to get out to everyone's district and
11 really understand what the issues are so we can make
12 sure, um, to prioritize that in our early days.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Commissioner. I
14 just have two more questions. This is from, uh,
15 Council Member Brooks-Powers. Um, she wanted me to
16 ask these two questions on her behalf.

17 As a part of the City of Yes for Housing
18 Opportunity, DCP has begun approving accessory
19 dwelling units. By law, ADUs in the basements,
20 cellars, or backyards are not permitted if they are
21 located in coastal and land flood areas? How is DCP
coordinating with DEP to ensure that all new ADU
construction environmentally feasible— excuse me, is
environmentally feasible and safe for residents in
their neighborhoods?

1
2 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, we can share more about
3 the criteria.

4 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Uh, as I mentioned earlier
5 there, th-that we have been hard at work promulgating
6 very strict rules for safety of ADUs. Um, and, uh,
7 this is coming out of after the City of Yes
8 legislation legalized, uh, ADUs. We have to make
9 sure that all these are safe. Um, so we work, uh,
10 er, we have worked very closely with the agencies,
11 uh, moving forward. DOB and DEP are looking very
12 carefully, uh, DOB in particular at the applications
13 for each individual ADU.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: As DCP looks to support the
15 city's effort to expand affordable housing, how is
16 the agency considering transportation access or lack
17 thereof as a factor in new zoning amendments?

18 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Oh, transit is, is so key. We
19 are, um, a transit-oriented city. We should be even
20 more so. I think it's really, uh, er, incumbent upon
21 all of us to look for opportunities that leverage our
incredible transit across the city. It's not just
subway, it's also bus and bike, all modes of transit,
of, of transit.

Transit provides great places to locate homes, access to jobs, growth of institutions, uh, you name it. So, uh, access to transit is, um, a- transit provides access, and access to transit is a very important motivator in our neighborhood planning.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Well, thank you so much for your testimony today. Thank you for answering our questions. Uh, Commissioner, looking forward to working with you. Thank you so much to the DCP team, um, and we'll be in touch. You're excused from the panel.

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Thank you very much Council Members.

PANEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, we're gonna go to public testimony after we hear from, um, LPC. So we're going to hear, uh, from Landmarks Preservation Commission first, and then we're going to go into public testimony.

Okay, uh, before we go into, uh, the, um, testimony, I'm just going to allow Chair Marte to give his opening statement.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Thank you, Chair Riley, and thank you to the leadership of the Landmarks

The Preliminary Plan did include a slight miscellaneous revenue increase for LPC of \$150,000 in Fiscal 2026, reflecting an increase in landmarks permit fees collected due to larger projects submitting application for review. In addition to budget and resources, my questions focus on the following topic: LPC's process and plan for researching and designating new landmarks and historic districts, and LPC's oversight and stewardship of existing landmarks.

In particular, we have seen a concerning trend in the demolition of historic landmark, landmark sites due to neglect and poor maintenance. The members of this Committee and I are interested in hearing about LPC's effort to reduce instances of demolition and encourage proper care of landmarks to ensure we preserve these historically significant sites. Thank

you again for joining us today, and I will pass it to the Committee Counsel to administer the oath.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Perfect. Thank you, Chair.

Uh, could you please raise your right hand and state your name for the record?

LISA KRASAVAGE: Lisa Krasavage.

STEVEN THOMPSON: Steven Thompson.

AKEEM BASHIRU: Akeem Bashiru.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh, please keep your right hand raised. Do you swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony this morning and in your, uh, response to Council Member questions?

LISA KRASAVAGE: I do.

STEVEN THOMPSON: I do.

AKEEM BASHIRU: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: You may begin.

LISA KRASAVAGE: Okay, great. So thank you, Chair Riley and Chair Marte. Um, good afternoon to you and to members of the Committee on Land Use Subcommittee— er, excuse me, the Council Committee on Land Use and the Subcommittee on Landmark Sightings and Dispositions.

I'm Lisa Krasavage, Executive Director. I'm pleased to be here today here today to speak about the Landmarks Preservation Commission's Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget. I'm joined today by Akeem Bashiru, our Director of Financial Management, and Steven Thompson, Director of Community and Intergovernmental Affairs.

The Commission's mission is to protect the significant architectural, historical, and cultural resources of our city. We do that by designating buildings and sites as landmarks and subsequently regulating changes to them. The preservation of historic resources supports communities, fosters economic development, and contributes to the vitality of New York City.

To date, the commission has designated and regulates more than 38,500 buildings and sites throughout the 5 boroughs, and the agency issues about 12,000 work permits annually. Since we last testified on our agency's budget, LPC has continued advancements in our efforts to make city government work for New Yorkers by increasing the efficiency, transparency, transparency and accessibility of our permitting process, designating significant historic

resources across the city and prioritizing those buildings and districts that reflect the city's diversity and tell the story of all New Yorkers, and educating property owners about permitting processes and grant opportunities.

I will begin our testimony today giving a brief overview of LPC's budget and how resources are allocated. LPC's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2027 is \$8.15 million, which consists of \$7.45 million in city funds and, um, nearly \$700,000 in federal community development block grant funds.

LPC is fundamentally an agency of professionals. almost 90% of the Preliminary Budget of \$7.3 million is allocated to personnel services, and only 10%, about \$865,000, is allocated to Other Than Personnel Services. Our budget supports the agency's 5 departments, including the Research Department, responsible for evaluating and advancing properties for designation, the Preservation Department, which permit— which reviews permit applications for work on designated properties, the Enforcement Department, which investigates complaints of potential violations and helps owners correct non-compliances, and the Archaeology and Environmental Review Departments,

which assists city, state, and federal agencies in their environmental review processes.

The agency's total headcount in Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget is 78 full-time staff. We also have 5 part-time staff.

Of the CDBG funding, about 82% is allocated to personnel services supporting critical community development-related functions such as survey, environmental review, archaeology, community outreach, education, while 18%, or approximately \$115,000, is allocated for our historic preservation grant program for low-income homeowners and not-for-profit organizations.

I will now discuss the work of the commission, um, these resources support. Research and designations; LPC is committed to equitable representation and designations with a focus on communities in neighborhoods that have been less represented by landmark designation, and we work closely with agencies like the Department of City Planning to find opportunities for designation in areas of growth, um, and development citywide.

In Fiscal Year 2026 to date, LPC has designated 5 new individual landmarks and 2 historic districts for

a total of 433 buildings. The 2 new districts are in Flatbush, Brooklyn, Beverly Square West Historic District, and Ditmas Park West Historic District comprising a total of 427 buildings. These two districts of distinctive freestanding houses contain some of the finest residential, residential streetscapes in this part of Brooklyn.

The five individual landmarks are in Midtown South Manhattan and are related to the garment industry: Barbie Building, Fashion Tower, Furcraft Building, 29th Street Towers, and Left Court Clothing Center, all designated as individual landmarks in August. Designed by many of the city's leading architects at the time, the buildings are some of the garment district's most impressive examples of early 20th century commercial architecture, and together tell the story of Midtown Manhattan's transformation at the 20th century— at the turn of the 20th century into a global center of garment and furrier industries and a hub for the nation's growing labor movement, particularly for women.

The Commission's designation of these buildings was done in coordination with DCP's Midtown South mixed-use plan. With the rezoning and the

1 designation of these buildings, they can be
2 adaptively reused for housing, and any excess air
3 rights could be transferred to create additional
4 housing opportunities.

5 Earlier this month, LPC held public hearings for
6 the proposed designation of 3 sites in Brooklyn and
7 Manhattan as individual landmarks, um, Public School
8 15 Annex in Brooklyn, the Church of Main- uh, St.
9 Mary, uh, located in the Lower East Side, and the
10 Lithuanian Alliance Building in Midtown Manhattan.
11 In addition to their architectural significance,
12 these buildings are all related to New York City's
13 rich immigrant history, with all three serving
14 important functions to educate, uplift, and provide
15 social services to their respective communities.

16 Moving forward, we will continue to prioritize
17 designations that tell the full story of all New
18 Yorkers and represent the diversity of the city and
19 are located in areas less represented by landmarks.

20 Um, I will now turn to our preservation and
21 permitting operations. It is a top priority for LPC
to support property owners of designated landmark
buildings and to ensure an efficient, transparent,
and accessible process for applicants. Our job is

not to prevent change, but to manage it so that we can ensure these significant buildings and sites are protected and also remain vital.

LPC's Preservation Department is the regulatory arm of the commission and is the largest department within the agency. Our staff are professionally trained preservationists who work with property and business owners to help them obtain approval for work that meets their needs and is sensitive to the historic building and context. Each year, approximately 94 to 97% of permits are issued by staff pursuant to the Commission's rules. The remaining 3 to 6% of the applications are reviewed by the full Commission. LPC staff works closely with property owners to ensure they understand the criteria and review process and to help them put together a complete application and presentation.

In FY25, the Commission received, 11,748 permit applications and took action on 11,324 applications ranging from restoration, adaptive reuse, additions, and new buildings. As of March 1st, we have received about 7,600 applications and are roughly on track to match the FY25 total. The projects approved by the commission not only preserve historic buildings, but

also help create new housing, support New York City's iconic cultural institutions, and help drive economic growth across all 5 boroughs.

2 years ago, LPC launched the agency's online application portal, Portico, designed with, uh, New York City small property owners in mind. Portico has had a transformative effect on LPC's permit application process, making it easier and faster for applicants to obtain permits to perform work on their designated properties.

Since its launch, Portico has driven significant improvements in the efficiency of LPC's permitting process, with a 30% reduction in the average time it takes the agency to issue the 3 most common types of staff-level permits and a 36% increase in the number of applications received and reviewed through LPC's expedited services, including the agency's Business Express service.

A December 2025 report from the New York Comptroller's Office highlighted these gains, finding that Portico is to increase both the efficiency and transparency of LPC's permitting process. LPC works hard to make our application process easy to understand and accessible.

In recent years, we've increased community outreach efforts and now place special emphasis on meeting with communities across all 5 boroughs. In the last year, we have partnered with several Council Members and community boards to host events to share information on permits, grants, and financial incentives for property owners in historic districts

1 ranging from Sugar Hill and Hamilton Heights in Upper
2 Manhattan to Sunset Park and Bedford-Stuyvesant in
3 Brooklyn and St. George and Stapleton Heights on
4 Staten Island, and in the months ahead, we look
5 forward to holding events in Longwood in the Bronx
6 and Ridgewood, Queens.

7 These in-person engagements make regulation and
8 funding opportunities accessible through direct
9 conversations with LPC staff members. Um, we often
10 are accompanied by language interpreters. Um, and
11 LPC staff can answer questions in real time and
12 maintain contact with property owners as they prepare
13 permit applications. We also work to celebrate
14 landmark designations and provide educational tools
15 for New Yorkers to engage in the city's history.

16 In the last year, LPC released two enhanced
17 online mapping tools, the Discover New York City
18 Landmarks map and the Archaeology Report Finder, that
19 make it easier for users looking for information on a
20 given landmark site. These are accessible on LPC's
21 website along with other tools including story maps
featuring sites, an immersive heritage trail of
abolitionist and Underground Railroad sites in
Brooklyn.

Before I conclude, I wanna return to the Historic Preservation Grant Program, a modest federally funded program targeted for low and moderate income homeowners and not-for-profit organizations to help restore or repair the facades of their landmark buildings.

In FY25, the program awarded 3 \$35,000 grants, 2 to homeowners and and 1 to a nonprofit organization. Homeowner grants supported restoration work at the properties in Crown Heights North Historic District in Brooklyn and the Cambria Heights Historic District in Queens, including brownstone and stoop repairs, window replacement, and lead paint remediation. The nonprofit grant supported roof replacement at the office building at Frederick Douglass Memorial Park, an individual landmark on Staten Island.

In FY26 thus far, LPC has awarded 3 grants ranging from \$11 \$30,000 to \$35,000 to one homeowner and two nonprofit organizations. The homeowner grants support window replacement and restoration of brownstone stoop and trim at a property in Morris Heights— Morris High School Historic District in the Bronx. And the nonprofit grants include window replacement at a religious property in the Chelsea

1
2 Historic District in Manhattan and work at the Metro
3 Theater, an individual landmark on Broadway on the
4 Upper West Side.

5 In summary, we are excited for the future of
6 historic preservation in New York City and thank the
7 Administration and City Council for your continued
8 support and the— and for the resources provided in
9 this budget. We are a small agency and nearly the
10 entirety of our budget is personnel-based.

11 LPC has a hardworking, dedicated, and
12 professional staff with an outsized impact on our
13 city, responsible for the protection and preservation
14 of its most significant buildings, districts, and
15 sites. Our commitment is that we will continue to do
16 this important work with the resources provided and
17 strive to do so equitably, efficiently, and
18 transparently.

19 Thank you again for allowing me to testify. I'm
20 happy to answer any questions that you may have.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Lisa. Um, I just
have a couple of questions and one request, um, and
then I'll turn over to Chair Marte. Um, it is my
impression that in the past couple of years, uh, the

number of landmarks, uh, applications have decreased.

Could you please discuss the trend and why?

LISA KERSAVAGE: Um, and so could I just clarify your question? Are, are you talking about landmark designations or permit applications for work?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Designations.

LISA KERSAVAGE: Oh, designations, okay. Um, it is true that, um, you know, in the years during the pandemic and following the pandemic, the number of landmark designations, um, did decrease. Um, but as, you know, I just noted, um, our numbers already in FY26 are, are substantially higher.

Um, so, um, you know, I think it's important to understand that for our designations, um, the, the numbers are really a snapshot in time and don't necessarily reflect, um, you know, all of the surveys and studies that are, that are ongoing or the work with owner outreach. Um, so sometimes in a, in a fiscal year, you know, it'll look especially slow because we've been doing a lot of studies or a lot of outreach. Um, these, you know, all landmark designations take, uh, time. Um, and so, you know, it's important that we do things, uh, you know, correctly, and we do a lot of robust owner outreach.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Is the average age of landmark buildings going down as more older buildings have already been landmarked?

LISA KERSAVAGE: The average age of landmark buildings?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, newer buildings.

LISA KERSAVAGE: Oh, it's an— that's an interesting question. I don't think I have an answer for that, but it's something that we can, we can look into. Um, I'm sure our research department would love to—

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Check that out right.

LISA KERSAVAGE: Yeah, I think still probably the— probably it's, um, sort of late 19th century, early 20th century row houses that probably still make up most of the designated buildings.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. And last, just a request. I know that you're doing a lot of community engagements. I see you have one in the Bronx in Longwood. Um, I would love if you come to the Northeast Bronx to do some community engagement as possible.

So if you could do some outreach to our office to do so, I would really appreciate that.

LISA KERSAVAGE: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: And I'll turn over to Chair Marte for his lines of question.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Uh, thank you, Chair Riley. Um, I'm gonna skip to, to the designations just to follow what Chair Riley was questioning. Uh, in the Preliminary Mayor's Management Report indicates that during the first 4 months of Fiscal Year 2025, all 5 individual landmark designation came as a result of DCP's Midtown South mixed-use plan. Uh, why in 2025 was there only one designation outside of this rezoning plan? And why are so few landmarks being designated independently of rezoning plans?

LISA KERSAVAGE: Right. Well, actually, the, um, Midtown South, uh, buildings were designated in FY26, actually. Um, and we were very happy to work with City Planning on that. Um, you know, as I noted, when there's, um, a neighborhood rezoning plan, um, and there are preservation opportunities, we do try and work with DCP on that. Um, and so, you know, we had, um, been working with them throughout that process. Um, you know, the last year, the, um, buildings that were designated, um, it was admittedly

1 a, a, you know, a lower number, um, and that included
2 the Whitney Building, um, interior, um, the Jacob Day
3 Residence, um, which is a very important, um,
4 abolition site, um, and the Modulator Building, um,
5 interior. Um, so, so those were the 4 designations
6 of FY25.

7 So thus far in FY26, we've done the 5, uh,
8 Midtown South buildings and then 2 historic districts
9 in, um, Brooklyn and then we have 3 calendared
10 buildings.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Thank you. Um, one thing
12 you mentioned to the Chair was that you can't look at
13 these in a moment of time. You have to look at them
14 at a wider scope. Uh, you know, since 2020, an
15 average of 5.5 individual landmarks been designated
16 per year compared to 20.7 for the past previous 5
17 years. Can you explain the downturn in designations?

18 LISA KERSAVAGE: Yeah, you know, I do think that,
19 um, you know, 2020, um, the pandemic and then coming
20 out of the pandemic, um, you know, I think we were
21 really focused on making sure that our agency was
addressing critical needs related to our, you know,
permitting and helping the city with recovery.

1
2 Um, so I think it's not surprising that we were
3 designating fewer buildings at that time. Um, and,
4 you know, but our research staff was focused on
5 surveys. Um, you know, we've been doing, they've
6 been doing a lot of, um, uh, er, analysis. We're
7 working on a big technology project. So there was,
8 there's a lot of work that goes into the
9 identification of historic resources that builds the
10 foundation for future designations.

11 So our focus during that very difficult and dark
12 time in New York City was really on building that
13 foundation.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Okay. Alright, I'm gonna
15 go now to vacancies. LPC had vacancy rate of 15.4%
16 as of January 2026. What challenges is LPC facing to
17 backfill vacancies?

18 LISA KERSAVAGE: At the, at the moment, we, um,
19 have less, uh, than that. We're about 9%. Um, and
20 so we have 7 vacant positions, um, and we are working
21 with OMB, um, to fill those as appropriate, as we
can.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Um, can you tell us some
of those plans to ensure that these vacant pos-

vacancy positions are filled during the next Fiscal Year?

LISA KERSAVAGE: Yeah um, you know, I- we were able to fill quite a few, uh, positions at the end of December and early January. Um, so, and we're actually in the process of, um, hiring the Deputy Director of Research. That's an approved position. Um, and then the other positions, um, you know, we'll be working with OMB, um, to see how we can fill them.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Um, there are currently 2 Commissioner positions vacant, uh, with one being the Chair, which requires Mayoral appointment and City Council approval. How critical is it for these 2 Commissioner positions to be filled? Has the Administration given a timeline to LPC about filling these 2 positions?

LISA KERSAVAGE: Sure, um, that is correct. We have 2 vacant commission, um, positions, um, and I'd really have to refer that question on timing to the Administration.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Great. LPC had no changes to their budget in the Fiscal 2027 Preliminary Plan. What are- are there any additional resources or

operational changes that could help LPC to address its vacancy rate?

LISA KERSAVAGE: Um, I believe we have the resources in place that we need, um, you know, to address those vacancies and make sure that we are able to do our critical services.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Yeah. You know, in the past, LPC was targeted for vacancy reductions to find savings. Uh, what positions has historically been target for those vacancy reductions? And are there vacancies in those positions now?

LISA KERSAVAGE: Um, well, previous vacancy reductions have tended to be positions, um, like our landmarks preservationists where there's, um, you know, we have— it makes up 55% of our staff so that we have— we're able to continue to do our critical services.

Um, but, uh, you know, I can't speak to any, um, plans right now for vacancy reduction. And, and typically too, those, um, vacancies have been restored as well. So we've had all of those, um, positions restored to us.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Okay. Uh, we know that there has been a Chief Saving Officer in, in every

1 agency. Can you share any findings, uh, from the
2 Chief Saving Officer now that their proposal has been
3 submitted?

4 LISA KERSAVAGE: Sure, that, um, proposal was
5 submitted on, um, Friday, and since it's still under
6 review, um, with OMB and, um, City Hall, um, you
7 know, I think it's premature for us to share any, um,
8 you know, findings on that. But, um, you know, with
9 time, that will be shared.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Is there a timeline for
11 when the public will have more information on those
12 findings?

13 LISA KERSAVAGE: I don't have that information.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Okay, um, does LPC still
15 have the 2-for-1 hiring restriction in place, first
16 imposed by the previous Adams Administration?

17 LISA KERSAVAGE: Um, that has been changed, um,
18 recently, um, and so the, um, LPC will have the
19 ability to hire up to our revised, um, budgeted
20 headcount.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Okay, cool. Um, I'm gonna
move to— towards, uh, violations and complaints.

LISA KERSAVAGE: Okay.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Um, according to LPC's
2 data, since 2014, there are 2,383 violations that are
3 still active. That is 43% of all violations issued
4 over this time, some issues over 10 years ago. Can
5 you explain the status of these violations and why so
6 many remain active?

7 LISA KERSAVAGE: Sure. And, you know, I just
8 want to preface my- this by saying that our
9 enforcement department is really focused on
10 compliance. Um, and not necessarily taking, um, you
11 know, issuing penalties. So we really are trying to
12 work, you know, very closely with property owners on,
13 um, you know, addressing the, the violations.

14 So because of that, because our focus is, is on,
15 um, on compliance, you know, we have, uh, many steps
16 to- we take before we say issue a penalty. And that,
17 you know, is, is kind of staff intensive and, and
18 takes longer. Um, and I will also note, I, I, we did
19 look into that, uh, the 43%. Um, I think it, it's
20 actually lower than that, but I think, you know, um,
21 when you look at recent years, like in FY26, we have
90% of, of our violations are open because we're
still working with the property owners.

1
2 So when you go back in time, it reduces the
3 percentage, reduces dramatically. But, um, in more
4 recent years, we have more open violations because
5 we're still working with those property owners. Um,
6 but we, um, we spend a lot of time really working
7 with, with homeowners, property owners to find a
8 resolution.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Yeah. And then for the,
10 for the general public that doesn't know the process,
11 there's typically a warning letter that's sent before
12 issuing a violation. Is that correct?

13 LISA KERSAVAGE: That's correct. And actually,
14 um, we have found that 50% of the violations are
15 cleared after sending that warning letter.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Yeah, and I, I think one,
17 one of the issues I really wanna concentrate on is
18 that last year we saw 790 complaints, less than that
19 of which have re- have received a warning letter.
20 Can you explain the, the rise in complaints and why
21 the majority of them, uh, result in no enforcement or
at least not being issued a warning letter?

LISA KERSAVAGE: Sure. Um, you know, I, um, the
number of complaints has, has gone up. Um, and, you
know, it's another thing that during the pandemic,

1 the number of complaints dropped quite a bit. Um,
2 and they've been climbing upward. And I think that
3 probably says something about, um, just generally the
4 economy of the city and workers work being done on
5 buildings. Um, and so, um, we think that, you know,
6 it's related to just sort of generally people seeing
7 work done on landmark properties, and also that, um,
8 you know, potentially, uh, advocacy groups, you know,
9 sending them in.

10 Um, but we investigate every single complaint,
11 but not all of them have violations. These are
12 things that come in from the public Um, who might
13 think there's a, a violation, um, and there isn't
14 necessarily one that we see.

15 So that, you know, there's not a one-for-one
16 correlation between the complaints and the violations
17 by any means.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Okay. Um, I'm gonna move
19 to oversight over existing landmarks and demolition
20 by neglect. Uh, demolition by neglect is when
21 landlords allow landmark-designated properties to
fall into such a state of disrepair that demolition
is the reasonable outcome. LPC has also indicated
that they can take a compliance approach to

1 enforcement activities, preferring to provide
2 guidance and resources or send stop work orders and
3 warning letters to property managers rather than
4 issue fines and fees, as you, as you stated. How
5 many applications for demolition has been rejected by
6 LPC in the last year and also in the last 5 years?

7 LISA KERSAVAGE: Yeah, and I, I do wanna separate
8 out de- you know, applications for demolition, which
9 could be something like a rear yard garage that's not
10 contributing versus the actual demolition by neglect.
11 So in terms of the demolition by neglect, exactly
12 what you said is true. Um, it is buildings that are
13 not in sound, um, condition and, you know, at, at
14 risk of deterioration.

15 Um, and so the number of buildings that have been
16 demolished, um, that were considered demolished by
17 neglect is, is very small. Um, you know, it's- we
18 believe in the- since, uh, 2018, about 13 buildings,
19 um, were demolished, um, by an order of DOB because
20 they were in, um, a state that needed- that they were
21 a threat to public safety.

22 So, you know, out of our 38,500 buildings, it's
23 a, it's a tiny percentage but I recognize that, um,
24 it's, it's very upsetting to lose any of these

1 buildings. Um, we work very hard to not let
2 buildings get to that place. I think people might
3 think sometimes that it's a, you know, a developer or
4 somebody like that, that, or a bad actor, but it's
5 oftentimes property owners who are struggling. And
6 so that is why we spend a lot of time really trying
7 to help those property owners, trying to help them
8 get the building to a, a better state of repair. Um,
9 and again, we're really focusing on compliance
10 instead of, um, issuing violations.

11 That said though, if, um, you know, if we need
12 to, we do have the power to, um, you know, enter into
13 litigation and, and we do do that. There— we have 4,
14 um, cases right now. Um, so, you know, I think that
15 we have a good balance in this program of, um, you
16 know, trying to really get to the compliance, um,
17 without being punitive, but also, you know, trying to
18 save as many historic buildings as we can.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Yeah. You know, as many
20 of us know, many, uh, tenement buildings in historic
21 districts or that are landmark contain affordable
housing units. Do you know how many affordable
housing units were lost, um, as a part of the, the

number that you mentioned have been approved for demolition?

LISA KERSAVAGE: Um, I do not know that, um, but in these, not all of these buildings are residential, uh, for one thing. Um, we could try and look into that, but I think these are largely smaller row house buildings, but we could certainly try and look into that and understand it.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Thank you. Um, would LPC be supportive of legislation to strengthen enforcement around owner neglect and to restrict an owner's ability to demolish their landmark building?

LISA KERSAVAGE: Um, you know, I think that the, um, the system that we have and the legislation that we have is, is sufficient. Um, and I also wanna note that in 2023, we did launch a Vulnerable Building Action Plan, um, that has really made a difference. Um, and we've been focusing on earlier detection of at-risk buildings. Um, and we do that through having DOB share more information with us. Um, but also we've been really focusing on outreach to community groups, um, to elected officials so that if people see that a building may be deteriorating, that they let us know and we can start monitoring it.

Um, so I think these changes to— not necessarily to, you know, any laws, but to how we practice have really made a, a big difference.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Great. Um, those are my questions for right now. I'm gonna kick it back to the Chair.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Alright, just want to say for the record, we've been joined by Council Member Banks. Council Member Banks, uh, you can ask your question.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Thank you, Chair. Um, first of all, thanks again. Uh, the Landmark Commission, uh, Preservation Commission has identified, quote, a demolition by neglect, unquote, as a growing issue, uh, where landmark, uh, properties fall into despair due to a lack of maintenance. Uh, given that, um, given that, uh, the agency is operating with a vacancy rate of over 15% and a largely, uh, flat budget, uh, how is the, uh, FY27 Preliminary Budget strengthening enforcement, uh, capacity to address this issue?

LISA KERSAVAGE: Well, thank you for that question. You know, our enforcement department is, is fully staffed, so we don't actually have any

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2 vacancies in that department. Um, and, you know, I,
3 I, I don't think that we're necessarily seeing, uh,
4 you know, more demolition by neglect. I know that
5 it's, you know, every time it happens, it's very
6 upsetting. Um, but, you know, right now in, in FY
7 26, I haven't seen any. Um, we are undertaking some
8 litigation for some properties, but, um, you know, I
9 think that if we continue to, you know, keep our
10 department staffed and continue to work with our
11 Vulnerable Building Action Plan, um, I think that we
12 can, um, address this important issue.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Thank, thank you for that
12 information. Uh, also, uh, how is the Commission,
13 uh, using its current resources, uh, to intervene
14 earlier, whether through enforcement actions, um, or,
15 uh, facilitating, uh, responsible ownership
16 transitions, uh, to prevent the loss of historically
17 significant buildings?

18 LISA KERSAVAGE: Sure and I think that, uh, one
19 way is that we're getting information from Department
20 of Buildings. So we have, uh, you know, data sharing
21 on buildings that might have violations that are
landmarks that have violations with DOB. So we can
start to have better monitoring.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Okay.

LISA KERSAVAGE: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: And while there's been an increase, uh, in landmark designations recently, uh, how is the current budget supporting, uh, the continuation and the expansion of that work, particularly in communities that have historically been, uh, underrepresented, uh, in the landmark designations?

LISA KERSAVAGE: Sure and, um, you know, designating in places that have, um, been less represented by landmarks is really important to us. Um, you know, our research department, um, is, uh, you know, we don't have a high rate of vacancy there now. We're working on hiring a Deputy Director of, um, research. And, um, you know, I think that we've been undertaking a lot of studies that will enable us to, you know, pursue landmark designations moving forward.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Thank you for your response on that. And my last question that actually deals with NYCHA, I wanna know, are all NYCHA buildings, are they landmarked?

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2 LISA KERSAVAGE: Um, I believe that there's only
3 actually 2 NYCHA buildings or complexes that are, are
4 landmarked, but I, we can get back to you. There's a
5 number that are on the National Register of Historic
6 Places, um, and they're, you know, that enables them
to take advantage of federal tax credits.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: But have there been any
8 recent, uh, or, or have there been any recent, or,
9 ah, over the history, has there been any somewhat of
10 a landmarking applications for NYCHA buildings that
you know of?

11 LISA KERSAVAGE: Um, well, we, we don't have
12 applications for landmarks, but we do have requests
for—

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Well, requesting, yeah.

14 LISA KERSAVAGE: Yeah, and um, I believe that
15 there's been some over the years, and I could— we
16 could certainly pull that information together and
share that with you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Okay, we'd love to find
18 out the status of those, uh, applications, whether
19 accepted or rejected. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member.
21 Uh, just a few more questions. Um, has LPC reviewed

any proposals for ADUs since City of Yes zoning for housing opportunity came into effect in late 2024?

LISA KERSAVAGE: Um, we don't believe that we have had a, a, an application for an ADU proper. Um, we have, ah, you know, lots of multi-family, um, buildings and outbuildings that we regulate. Um, but we are excited by the opportunity with ADUs. We are planning to release, um, guidance and, um, maps that are very specific to landmarks issues to try and encourage people to build them. So we're excited to get in applications.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is there a different type of approach for ADUs and historic districts that you guys are creating a plan for?

LISA KERSAVAGE: Um, well, I would note that, um, there's 3 types of ADUs that are, um, allowed in historic districts. New buildings, um, are the, are the one type that are exempt in historic districts, but, um, we think there's a real growth opportunity with the ancillary structures, um, to be converted to ADUs, and also attic and basement ADUs are allowed.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: What kind of public engagement do you undertake when determining boundaries for new historic districts?

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2 LISA KERSAVAGE: So when we, um, identify a
3 historic district, we do quite a bit of outreach.
4 Um, so we typically will start with, um, a public
5 meeting where we invite everybody that's, um, in the
6 proposed historic district. Um, and sometimes we
7 have 1, 2, or 3 meetings, um, you know, depending on
8 the, you know, the amount of interest and questions.
9 Um, and then we very frequently do one-on-one
10 meetings with property owners as well to, um,
11 understand if they have concerns or if they have work
12 underway. Um, that kind of outreach is incredibly
13 important to LPC.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: How is your plan, uh,
15 affected when community members want a larger area
16 designated um, opposed to what you initially proposed
17 to them?

18 LISA KERSAVAGE: Well, it's very important that
19 we make merit-based decisions. So when our research
20 department draws boundaries for historic districts,
21 it's, it's really based on the merit of the, of the
buildings. And, you know, that's, that's kind of a
hard thing sometimes to explain, or for people who
would like to be in a historic district. So that's,
it's, you know, we, we, we work too hard to explain

our findings, but it can be, um, disappointing to people, I, I recognize.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, and we thank you for your work. Um, there being no more questions for this panel, this panel is excused. Thank you so much.

Uh, we're gonna transition into public testimony. Uh, first we're gonna begin with, uh, those who are here with us. I'm gonna call up and— excuse me if I butcher your name, you could correct me, um, when you come up. Um, Miquela Crayter. Uh, Logan Pahres, Andrea Goldwyn, and Sharon Freystaetter.

I mean, we have 3 seats, it's just 3, um, yeah.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Online or in person?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, so we're gonna, we're gonna get your form. So you know what, we'll just take 3 now and then we'll do another panel. So you could take away the chair and we'll do the next panel, okay? Um, Walter, can you just give her a form so she can fill out? Thank you. I'm sorry, Miss, what was your name? Sharon. Alright, I'll call you on the next panel, Sharon.

Okay, uh, members of the public are going to be given 3 minutes to testify. Please, after you hear,

um, the buzzer, if you could just wrap it up 15 seconds after that. Um, we're gonna do in-person testimony and then we're gonna transition to online testimony.

Uh, first we're gonna hear from Andrea.

ANDREA GOLDWYN: Okay, uh, good day Chair Riley, um, Council Members. Um, I'm Andrea Goldwyn speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy is a 53-year-old organization dedicated to preserving, revitalizing, and reusing New York's historic buildings and neighborhoods.

We want to ensure that New York's rich diversity of architecture continues to enhance the city, creating jobs, housing New Yorkers, encouraging sustainability, and welcoming visitors from around the world. We were founded to support the people who own and use buildings that fall under the purview of the Landmarks Commission. Our financial and preservation service programs have worked with many thousands of New Yorkers across the 5 boroughs who are living and working in these historic properties. And this gives us a particular interest in the budget and long-term plans for the Commission.

We're glad to see that the In an era of fiscal restraint, the personnel budget is set to remain level, and we look forward to the appointment of at least one position, the Chair.

Uh, the staff and Acting Chair continue to keep the agency and the Commission running smoothly, but keeping this position vacant is not viable for the long term. Uh, the Commission staff completes an extraordinary workload every year. They process and complete over 10,000 permit applications. The new application portal, Portico, has increased efficiency for the agency and transparency for teams working on building projects. We appreciate LPC's outreach efforts and have been glad to participate in meetings with constituents. Regarding designations, as noted over the past several years, the numbers have decreased, but there are still many buildings and neighborhoods that merit designation for architectural, cultural, and historic significance and designations remain popular with many residents.

On the issue of historic districts, uh, you might hear that they are preventing new housing or that there needs to be a moratorium on designations. Please note that across the city, historic districts

1 encompass about 5% of land and lots. Many are in the
2 densest neighborhoods, and designation helps limit
3 the demolition of existing affordable housing. There
4 are, of course, many, many reasons why housing is so
5 expensive in New York, but historic districts are a
6 small factor in that discussion.

7 Um, I have an attached map, which you have, uh,
8 which illustrates that point. Uh, historic districts
9 have proven to be a remarkable success for the city,
10 revitalizing neighborhoods, protecting homes,
11 fighting climate change, and celebrating New York's
12 whole story. Preservation is also a strong economic
13 engine, creating jobs and encouraging his- heritage
14 tourism.

15 And again, this is all accomplished in under 5%
16 of buildings and building lot area. We hope that
17 going forward, LPC will be able to increase
18 designations to accomplish all of these goals.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to present the
20 Conservancy's views.

21 LOGAN PAHRES: Thank you. Um, good morning or
good afternoon. My name is Logan Pahres. Um, and I
serve as the political director at Open Doors. New
York, a statewide grassroots advocacy organization,

organization that advocates for more homes, lower rents, and tenant protections. Thank you, Chair Riley and Members of the Committee, um, for allowing me to speak today.

In November, New Yorkers voted overwhelmingly to meaningfully address our housing crisis by making it easier and faster to build homes in every corner of our city. These changes expanded upon the historic progress made in the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity and the City Council's City for All, which collectively enabled over 80,000 new homes across the 5 boroughs.

While these changes mark a massive step towards addressing our historic housing crisis, it also means that we're asking for even more from the Department of City Planning. From small private applications to large neighborhood rezonings that will create tens of thousands more affordable homes, all of it requires staff and resources.

Cutting DCP's budget by 12% as proposed will save, just \$6.8 million, not much in the context of the large city budget. Um, the minor savings achieved will be eclipsed by the costs of working people continuing to leave our city, taking their

talents and tax dollars with them. New Yorkers were, were clear this past election. We need to continue to make strides to create more housing and lower the rent.

Mayor Mamdani and Speaker Menin agree that we must drastically increase the number of homes in our cities— in, in our city in order to make it affordable for working families. We've made great progress with City of Yes and City for All. Now we must empower DCP to deliver the housing New Yorkers need by funding the agency above and beyond last year's allocation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

MIQUELA CRAYTOR: Good afternoon. Thank you, Committee Chair Riley and members of the Land Use Committee, for the opportunity to testify today. Given time, I've abbreviated our written test, uh, submission, which provides more details and examples of the concerns I will share with you.

My name is Miquela Craytor. I am the Interim Executive Director, and I'm speaking on behalf of Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation, SBIDC for short.

For over 40 years, we have served as the industrial business and, um, businesses and workers of Sunset Park, Red Hook, and Gowanus. Across these neighborhoods, more than 2,000 industrial firms power the working waterfront, from food production garment manufacturing to film and TV, fabrication, wholesale, and logistics. And we have deep decades-long relationships with these companies and businesses, and we know the pulse of these sectors. We are the local intermediaries that connect them to government.

Each year, our organization supports over 250 companies and businesses through direct services and advocacy, and since 2017, we've helped place more than 2,000 New Yorkers in into quality family-sustaining jobs. And land use decisions made by the city directly impact and shape the stability of these companies and businesses and the communities that rely on these jobs.

SBIDC has served as a steward of what is re-formerly referred to as the city's in-place industrial parks since the late '70s, supporting safety and sanitation and later the evolving needs of what are now referred to as industrial business zones. While these challenges that businesses have,

have changed, the need for constant special ed guidance has not.

I'm here today because that continuity is at risk. The city is currently proposing to eliminate the only public program dedicated to supporting these small manufacturers and industrial companies, the IBSP program.

For SBIDC and our brothers and sisters in the industrial service areas, this represents um, a significant cut to our budgets. For the sector, it means a loss of critical specialized support that no generalist program is positioned to replace. This is being framed as streamlining. It is not. This is policymaking in the name of efficiency with very real and very foreseeable consequences. Industrial companies and businesses operate within highly specialized systems— land use, logistics, workforce, and regulation. A generalized approach cannot replace trust, expertise, and relationships that have been built over a decade, and that trust matters.

For example, when Work- Workspace 11, a Gowanus-based fabrication firm, faced displacement due to an eminent domain proceeding, SBIDC was the

1 first to inform them and the partner that helped them
2 navigate what came next.

3 We guided them through negotiations, financing,
4 and relocation, helping them stay in the neighborhood
5 that preserved over 30 jobs. This is what
6 specialized place-based support looks like, and it
7 can't be replicated by a program that does not know
8 the block, the business, or the history. We are
9 coming, coming to your Committee because you hold the
10 keys to land use decisions that impact businesses,
11 and these are your constituents.

12 We are supporting— we support making the city
13 more funding more efficient, and I see I'm out of
14 time, uh, more efficient but not at the expense of
15 the city's ability to provide targeted, trusted
16 support to essential businesses. There must be a
17 better way to achieve our shared goals.

18 We urge you to work with Administration to remove
19 the industrial services from the proposed RFP that
20 SBS has positioned, extend the IBSP contracts for
21 several years— 2 years— work with us to build a
modern sector-specific program. This is about
whether New York and its stewards who make or break
our small businesses continue to invest in the

1 systems that allow it to function and adapt. Thank
2 you for your time and consideration.

3 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you and I'll just ask
4 if you guys— if you have in the right to give us a
5 copy of testimony. Thank you so much. This panel is
6 excused.

7 Uh, the next panel we're going to hear from is
8 Emi and Sharon. We'll begin first with Sharon,
9 followed by Emi. Keep—

10 SHARON FREYSTAETTER: Okay. Hello, my name is
11 Sharon Freystaetter. I come on behalf to you today
12 from an organization that's grassroots called Club A
13 Kitchen. We operate in an unofficial city garden
14 called Bushwick City Farms. It is on 23 Lewis Street
15 or 354 Stockton Street.

16 Um, we have been using donations from the
17 community members to bring food to the neighborhoods
18 for the past 5 years, every Wednesday and Saturday,
19 rain or shine, without fail. We have never missed a
20 day. Um, so the community garden has recently been
21 rezoned from a commercial, uh, from a residential
space to a commercial space, which has increased
taxes on the landowner uh, it's a Class 4 commercial
space and has increased taxes on the landowner. So

1
2 he's no longer letting us use the space for for free
3 to have our garden where we have trees growing and
4 plants growing and the space that we have been
5 hosting a community distribution center for the past
6 5 years.

7 Um, and right now we are at risk of losing the
8 space, a space that we have been trying to work with
9 the New York City's, uh, government to turn into an
10 official Green Thumb space for the past few years
11 since 2017. Um, so I am here for your consideration
12 to allocate this space into an official Green Thumb
13 space to keep using it for the neighborhood as we
14 have been for ever since 2011.

15 So as a humanitarian, we have been allowing the
16 people who come every single week to use the space to
17 grow their own food, and they're there working on
18 plots, making food, growing herbs, growing produce,
19 as well as standing in our line to receive the food
20 that we have been bringing to them. And we have had
21 volunteers coming from all over the city with cars,
with whatever they can do to drive over food, to
reach out to the local grocery stores, to bring
resources to these people.

1
2 Um, and we adjust with the neighborhood and have
3 been adjusting. So when, uh, men's shelter opened up
4 across the street, we used our funds to buy
5 porta-potties or rent porta-potties, and we cleaned
6 them out weekly. We talked to these men, we gave
7 them food, we gave them resources and find anything
8 that to move them forward and to find jobs.

9 Um, when the egg prices went up and no one was
10 able to buy eggs anymore, we have chickens on the
11 farm that we have distributed dozens of eggs to the
12 people in the neighborhood. Just recently when SNAP
13 benefits were cut for the city, we were able to
14 gather all our volunteers and funds to buy more food
15 to support the increase of load of families waiting
16 in line to receive produce for the month of November.
17 Um, and as I have mentioned, this garden has been,
18 uh, a work in progress that we have been working on
19 since 2011.

20 So we have trees that have been growing there for
21 11 years. We have apple trees, plum trees, fig,
mulberry, trees that actively reduce the heat in New
York City and increase the air quality in New York
City.

1
2 I personally want to grow chestnut trees with New
3 York City's Restoration Project, but we cannot do
4 that without this being an official green thumb
5 space, and we really hope that you guys are willing
6 to help us out. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Sharon. Emi.

8 EMI: Hi, uh, I'm here today as a member of the
9 community who has been lucky enough to be touched by
10 the work of Bushwick City Farm. This cherished green
11 space located just down the road from Council Member
12 Ossé uh, in the heart of Brooklyn is at risk of
13 imminent destruction if the city does not act. Uh,
14 there are many supporters, uh, for the farm today
15 here in person, online, and in the Parks Committee.
16 Uh, Bushwick City Farm has been a vital community
17 resource for years, 15 years to be exact, put at risk
18 by rising taxes, rezoning, and the recent
19 reclassification of the space as a tax class 4
20 commercial property.
21

The garden is asking the city to acquire the
property and turn it into a proper green thumb garden
instead of pawning it off to the highest highest real
estate bidder. While I'm sure many will speak today
and submit written testimony on the specifics of the

bureaucratic situation, I want to talk money. In a time with skyrocketing rent and rampant gentrification, the city using its limited resources to acquire a community garden may seem low priority, uh, but make no mistake, this is not a cost to the city because I believe Bushwick City Farm and groups like Club A Kitchen, where it operates out of, has already served, say, ah, saved the city millions— yes, millions— of dollars in its 15 years of existence.

The farm transformed an abandoned lot that was essentially a neighborhood dump full of mattresses and needles into a flourishing community space. Um, it's fed thousands of families, rescued and grown and distributed thousands of pounds of food, cleaned up a quite frankly unholy amount of trash, and provided unique educational and cultural opportunities to countless community members, especially kids, like aquaponics, concerts, and lessons on food sovereignty. It served hundreds of migrants who were relocated to a s- shelter across the street that closed down last year.

The Bushwick City Farm is not just a community of gardeners. It is a community of people who, often

1 using only our lived experiences, Google, and each
2 other, have acted as farmers, teachers, caregivers,
3 food distributors, social workers, homeless outreach
4 specialists, uh, conflict mediators, legal experts,
5 city planners, harm reductionists for people with-
6 who struggle with addiction, uh, case managers,
7 translators, uh, sanitation workers, uh, and crisis
8 first responders. Bushwick City Farm has truly done
9 it all, day in, day out, for 15 years. Uh, I truly
10 believe the BCF community has saved thousands of
11 lives in addition to the millions of dollars that
12 this labor would have otherwise cost the city.

13 Allocating funds to preserve the farm is not an
14 expenditure. It is breaking even, and even more, it
15 is an investment. The labor of the BCF community has
16 sustained the neighborhood for over a decade. When
17 previous Administrations of the city failed hungry
18 families, BCF stepped in. When they failed migrants,
19 BCF stepped in. When they failed to provide a safe
20 space for children, BCF s-stepped in.

21 Now we need our elected officials to step in.
All of Brooklyn is forever in debt to Bushwick City
Farm and its founders. Pay it back, pay it forward.
Please invest in Bushwick City Farm. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much for your testimony. Um, Sharon, uh, Brian is gonna take your information so we can follow up and see how we could be helpful. Okay. Alright, thank you so much for your testimony. This panel is excused. Uh, we're gonna transition into online testimony. We just have 2, uh, people signed up online. If you are online and would like to testify, uh, please use the raise hand function, um, and we will promote you up.

Uh, we are going to begin the first panel, or the only panel we have, with Leticia Duller and Marissa Matelica(SP?). Uh, we will begin first with Leticia Duller, online testimony. You will be given 2 minutes to testify. After you hear the buzzer, please give 15 seconds to wrap it up. Uh, Leticia, you may begin.

LETICIA DULLER: Hi, um, I am speaking as a longtime volunteer at Bushwick City Farms. I've been involved since November of 2020. We started distributing food with Club Aid during the pandemic, and, um, yeah, it was a time where a lot of people needed resources, needed help, and we were able to kind of step up and feed the entire community. The garden has been active for 15 years, um, and has just

1 provided the neighborhood with countless resources,
2 countless everything. Um, when— Yeah. When, ah,
3 when an asylum seeker shelter opened up right across
4 from the farm and all of these guys were kind of
5 bussed in to New York, um, yeah, we kind of
6 immediately mobilized and were able to provide them
7 with food, with meals.

8 There was a long period during which the shelter
9 didn't have any running water, and it was hundreds of
10 men. Um, and we were able to get a shower bus to
11 come in. We were able to have the guys do their
12 laundry and use the bathroom at the farm, which is,
13 you know, this tiny community space. We were able to
14 who have French speakers and Arabic speakers
15 mobilized to, um, yeah, to provide translation
16 services and just help these guys with their
17 paperwork because, you know, they were not really
18 being offered these resources or the city was
19 overwhelmed. And so, that is just an example of how
20 Bushwick City Farms, you know, and, and similar
21 spaces like this really step up and kind of pick up
where the city is failing. And do so, you know,
without, without getting paid and without asking for
anything in return. But now we are at risk of, of

MARISSA MATELICA: Hi, thank you. Yeah, my name is Marissa Matelica. I am a longtime volunteer at Bushwick City Farms as well. Um, since 2012, I've been a volunteer there, and I just want to add a few things to the testimony that my colleagues have already provided.

1
2 Um, one is that the space, um, in District 36 is,
3 you know, it's at the crux of, um, it's right near
4 the, the Broadway, um, the Myrtle Broadway JMZ train.
5 And so, um, it's right near Bushwick and uh, Bed-Stuy
6 where they intersect. And in that area, there's a
dearth of green spaces.

7 So actually, there's nothing within, um, a half a
8 mile walking, um, from the location where Bushwick
9 City Farm is, um, exists currently. And so on a, on
10 a level of, you know, needing spaces for young people
11 to congregate outside safely, um, we need it for— we
12 need to maintain this space for those community
13 needs, as well as, you know, elders who need a third
14 space to gather and rest in the shade in the
15 summertime, in addition to the, the food that people
16 come to receive and, um, the other supports that they
17 receive.

18 So I just wanna urge, um, we have a path, uh,
19 forward that we would like to propose, and we have
20 been proposing, and we have actually had several
21 meetings with, uh, Council Member Ossé's office, as
well as, uh, Borough President Reynoso's office. Um,
and so, you know, there is, there, there is a
precedent for this kind of allocation of, um, of

1
2 privately held space to be allocated to Parks
3 Department and turned into Green Thumb. And that is
4 by, um, using the discretionary capital funding from
5 a combination of Parks Department and the Council
6 Members's office and the Borough President's office
7 to purchase the land from the title owner and then
8 turn it over to, uh, Green Thumb Space.

9 And so that's specifically what we are
10 requesting, and we look forward to working with you.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Merissa. I see
12 that we've been joined by one more person, so I'm
13 gonna ask Sherry- Sherry Ann Callahan to unmute, and
14 you may begin. Thank you, Merissa.

15 SHERRY Ann, if you can hear me, please unmute.
16 Okay, we lost Sherry Ann. Uh, we're gonna stand at
17 ease for 20 seconds to see if there's anyone else,
18 uh, that that wants to testify?

19 Okay, okay. Alright, there being no one else,
20 uh, signed to testify, this, uh, hearing is closed.
21 I would like to thank, uh, Council, uh, Sergeant at
Arms, uh, the Land Use Division, and my colleagues of
government for being here today, and especially our
Finance Division as well.

Uh, thank you to everyone that signed up to testify. Alright, hold on one second, y'all.

Um, Merissa? Marissa, if you can hear me, please unmute. I, I think she has her hand raised. There's two Marissas online, so I'm not sure if there's someone that's trying to testify under another—

TYLER MANN: Hey, uh, I have my hand up. My name is Tyler Mann.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Tyler? Okay, Tyler, go ahead.

TYLER MANN: Nice, thank you very much. Um, I am also, uh, calling to advocate for, um, Brooklyn City Farms. Uh, I'm a Brooklyn resident, I'm a native New Yorker, um, and this garden has existed for like 15 years. Brooklyn is, as people who are here know, a lot of this, you know, borough is a food desert. A lot of this borough is a green space desert. Like Marissa said, there's no green space. There's no safe places for kids. And even this garden, it used to be a dump. It used to be a danger to the community.

Um, it used to be dangerous and the neighborhood got together and turned it into somewhere where it

was safe for kids, and it turned up in a space where, you know, kids in the neighborhood grew up there.

Um, and thousands of people have depended on the space for free food and access to nature and a community hub and a safe third space. Um, and now this space that so many people depend on is at risk of being completely lost. Um and yeah, the city needs to help protect this space for the community. There's not enough spaces like this, um, for anybody. Um, and the garden has been advocating to permanentize this space since 2017.

Uh, so almost a decade now, um, they've been working with the city to try to permanentize it, um, and protect it from the neighborhood. Um, so I'm just calling to advocate for that process, um, and I'm really urging my local government to work with this garden, to work with Bushwick City Farms, um, and to protect the space. It's a really, really essential green third space. Um, we need more. Um, so thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, we have a phone number that ended with 4346. If you can hear me, the phone number ending with 4346. Please unmute by pressing star 6.

If you have a phone number ending with 4346, please unmute and press star 6 to begin your testimony.

MARY POKER: Hi, um, my name is Mary Poker. Yes, we can. I'm also a resident of Brooklyn advocating for Bushwick City Farms. Um, I live in Bed-Stuy, and this space means so much to me and my community as a place to be, um, a place where people can be fed, where they can, you know, meet other community members, um, like I stated, where they can, you know, be safe and enjoy what the neighborhood has to offer.

Um, and I just wanted to say that I think it should be allowed to remain as it has been for the last 15 years, and I think the city should have a part in maintaining it.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. Okay, that was— there's no one else online, uh, signed up to testify. With that being said, I'm going to close today's hearing. Thank you so much for everyone who participated. This hearing is thereby adjourned. Thank you. [GAVEL]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date August 3, 2026