

COMMITTEE ON LAND USE JOINTLY WITH  
THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON LAND USE  
JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEE  
ON TECHNOLOGY

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March 23, 2022

Start: 9:50 a.m.

Recess: 2:41 p.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 2)

B E F O R E: Rafael Salamanca, Jr.,  
Chairperson of the Committee on  
Land Use

Farah N. Louis,  
Chairperson of Landmarks  
Subcommittee

Jennifer Gutiérrez Chairperson of  
the Committee on Technology

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joseph C. Borelli  
Erik D. Bottcher  
Selvena N. Brooks-Powers  
Kamillah Hanks  
Ari Kagan  
Shekar Krishnan  
Darlene Mealy  
Francisco P. Moya  
Kevin C. Riley  
Carlina Rivera  
Pierina Ana Sanchez  
Keith Powers  
Kristin Richardson Jordan  
Gale A. Brewer

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COUNCIL MEMBERS: (CONT.)

Shaun Abreu  
Robert F. Holden

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Sarah Carroll

Chair and Commissioner of the New York City  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Lisa Kersavage

Executive Director of the City of New York's  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Akeem Bashiru

Director of Budget for Workforce Development

Dan Garodnick

Chair of the New York City Department of City  
Planning

Edith Hsu-Chen

Executive Director of the New York City  
Department of City Planning

Susan Amron

General Counsel of the New York City Department  
of City Planning

David Parish

Acting COO of the New York City Department of  
City Planning

Matt Fraser

Commissioner of the Office of Technology and  
Innovation, DoITT

Joseph Antonelli

Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Technology  
and Innovation, DoITT

Michael McGrath

Chief Operating Officer of the Office of  
Technology and Innovation, DoITT

Tynia Richardson

General Counsel of the Office of Technology and  
Innovation, DoITT

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Noel Hidalgo  
BetaNYC

Elise Goldin  
New York Economy Project

Paula Segal  
TakeRoot Justice

Sabrina Lamb  
WorldofMoney

Dina Alfano  
Resident of Bushwick

Laura Paris  
Resident of Bushwick

Michael Caratzas  
Employee of Landmarks Preservation Commission

Memo Salazar  
Co-Chair of the Western Queens Community Land  
Trust

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SERGEANT SADOWSKY: PC recording is started.

SERGEANT BIONDO: And recording to the cloud  
underway. Good morning and welcome to today's Remote  
New York City Council Hearing for the Preliminary  
Budget Fiscal Year 2023 for the Committees on Land  
Use jointly with the Committee on Technology.

At this time, would all panelists please turn on  
their videos for verification purposes. To minimize  
disruptions, please place all electronic devices to  
vibrate or silent mode. If you'd like to submit  
testimony please send via email to either  
[landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov) or  
[testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). We thank you for your  
cooperation. Chair Salamanca, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, good morning  
everyone. Uhm and welcome to the Preliminary Budget  
Oversight hearing on Landmarks Preservation  
Commission, Department of City Planning and the  
Department of Information Technology and  
Telecommunications known as DoITT.

This hearing will begin with the Landmarks  
Preservation Commission and before moving on to the  
Department of City Planning and finally DOT, where  
the final portion will be held jointly with our

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Committee on Technology and under the leadership of  
Chair Gutiérrez, public testimony relating to the  
three agencies will be taken after testimony and  
Committee questions with all the agencies when all  
the agencies have concluded.

Members of the public wishing to testify may  
register to do so by visiting the City Council's  
website and selecting the March 23<sup>rd</sup> hearing option  
of 11:30 a.m.

At this time, I would like to welcome my  
colleagues joining us as members of the Land Use  
Committee, including Council Members Ayala, Kagan,  
Chair Louis, Moya, Richardson Jordan, Chair Riley and  
Sanchez. We've also been joined by Majority Whip  
Brooks-Powers.

At this time, I would like to welcome my  
colleagues. I will also especially would like to  
thank Council Members Riley and Louis for their  
leadership as Chairs of the Zoning and Landmark  
Subcommittee.

Before we begin, I would like to recognize the  
Committee Counsel to review the remote meeting  
procedure.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Salamanca. I am Arthur Huh Counsel to this Committee. During today's hearing Council Members who would like to ask questions should use the Zoom raise hand function. The raise hand button should appear at the bottom of your participant panel or the primary viewing window. Council Members will be announced or recognized in the order that they raise their hands.

Once your name has been called, you will receive an unmute request. Please note there may be a brief delay in that process. We ask that you please be patient should any technical difficulties arise today and Chair Salamanca will now continue with today's agenda.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you Counsel. As the city continues to struggle to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic in the first year of this new administration. The 2023 budget is especially consequential in setting the course of the near term future of New York. In many ways, investment in city planning is investment in our city itself in greater housing production and affordability. Resiliency from climate change and securing the infrastructure

in community resources that make economic growth and a healthy society possible.

As the Administrations recently released rebuild, renew, reinvent, economy recovery plans outlines.

The Department of City Planning could play a particularly important role in advancing equitable recovery in all of these ways. The Administration also stresses the need to streamline and speed the processing of land use and building applications at agencies like DCP and LPC to ensure that red tape is not holding up action.

Yet, today, we are presented with preliminary budgets that propose to reduce rather than increase resources for these agencies. Seemingly in contradiction with the administrations stated goals. As we consider the budget for City Planning, Landmarks and DoITT, we must seek to ensure that these agencies have the resources they need to help our city recover and grow.

We're going to begin with this hearing with testimony from the Landmarks Preservation Commissioner, which designates, regulates and protects the New York City's architectural, historical and cultural resources. LPC's Fiscal 2023



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Preliminary Budget totals \$6.8 million. These agencies Fiscal 2022 Preliminary Budget was \$59,000 less than the Fiscal Year of 2022 Adopted Budget of \$6.83 million.

We would like to thank LPC Chair Sarah Carroll for joining us today. But before we hear from the Chair and her colleagues, I will first turn it over to Chair Louis for her opening remarks as Chair of our Landmarks Subcommittee. Chair Louis.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you Chair Salamanca and thank you for joining us today Chair Carroll, Executive Director Lisa Kersavage and Budget Director Akeem Bashiru. I'm trying to see if there was any other members that joined us today from the Landmarks Committee. Seeing none at this time, I will move forward.

I will keep my remarks brief and reserve my time for questions however, in light of the Mayor's announcement of substantial cuts to city agencies, I do want to highlight two mission centric activities of the agency that I hope your testimonies will address today.

First, in recent years, LPC has committed to expanding its research to identify more landmarks in

1  
2 historic districts with significance to the Black  
3 experience in New York City.

4 Second, the Commission has also committed to  
5 making it easier for owners of landmark properties to  
6 work with the agency to obtain determinations of  
7 appropriateness for proposed renovations and  
8 alterations. I'm concerned about how the proposed  
9 cuts will affect these and other mission critical  
10 activities.

11 If we're seeking to protect New York City's  
12 architectural, historic and cultural resources, the  
13 proposed reduction to the preliminary budget flaws  
14 the process and it's counterintuitive to creating and  
15 improving the Black experience for New Yorkers. But  
16 I will save further comments for the question and  
17 answer period and yield to Chair Salamanca. Thank  
18 you.

19 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you Chair Louis. I  
20 will now ask the Counsel to swear in our panelists  
21 and we may begin.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, please raise your  
23 right hands and I will ask you individually to  
24 respond. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony  
25 you are about to give will be the truth, the whole

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truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony  
before this Committee and in answer to all Council  
Member questions? Chair Sarah Carroll?

SARAH CARROLL: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lisa Kersavage?

LISA KERSAVAGE: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Akeem Bashiru?

AKEEM BASHIRU: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you. Thank you  
Counsel. Uhm, I would like to welcome Chair Carroll  
and you may begin with your opening statement.

SARAH CARROLL: Good morning and thank you Chair  
Salamanca, Chair Louis and Chair Gutiérrez, if –  
she's here I think. Good morning to you and the  
member of the Land Use Committee Technology Committee  
and the Landmarks Subcommittee. I'm pleased to be  
here today to speak about the Landmarks Preservations  
Commissions Fiscal Year 2023 Preliminary Budget and  
I'm joined as you know today by Lisa Kersavage, our  
Executive Director and Akeem Bashiru, our Director of  
Financial Management.

The Commissions mission is to protect the  
significant architectural historical and cultural

resources of our city. To date, the Commission has designated and regulates more than 37,600 buildings and sites throughout the five boroughs.

Since I last testified on our agencies budget, the COVID-19 pandemic has deeply impacted New York City and the people who live, work and visit here. As the city recovers from the impact of the pandemic, LPC is striving to support the city's economic recovery efforts. New York City's landmarks and historic neighborhoods help make the city a global destination attracting residents, tourists and businesses and they play a vital role in the dynamism and economy of the city.

As Chair, one of my primary goals is to incorporate equity and diversity in all aspects of the agencies work. In January 2021, LPC launched an equity framework to ensure diversity and inclusion in designations with a particular focus on preserving historic places associated with underrepresented communities. Robust outreach and public dialogue with the city's diverse communities and fairness, transparency and efficiency in regulation, so that all property owners have equal access to resources, technical assistance and expertise.

1  
2       This framework has guided all of the agencies  
3 work, which I will describe throughout my testimony.  
4 LPC is one of the smallest city agencies but one with  
5 a large mandate that is important to so many New  
6 Yorkers. I remain proud to lead such a highly  
7 efficient team of professionals. Throughout the  
8 COVID-19 pandemic, LPC staff pivoted to accommodate  
9 new ways of working quickly transitioning from a  
10 paper-based permit process to a simplified E-filing  
11 application process.

12       And I'm also proud to say that LPC was the first  
13 agency to reach 100 percent vaccination status, a  
14 testament to our staff and their dedication to our  
15 work and respect for each other. I will begin my  
16 testimony today by giving a brief overview of LPC's  
17 budget and how resources are allocated.

18       LPC's preliminary budget for Fiscal Year 2023 is  
19 \$6.8 million, which consists of \$6.2 million in city  
20 funds and \$622,000 in Federal Community Development  
21 Block Grant funds. Of the overall preliminary  
22 budget, 90 percent is allocated to personnel services  
23 and ten percent is allocated to other than personnel  
24 services. Our budget supports the agencies five  
25 departments including the research department,

1 responsible for evaluating and advancing properties  
2 for designation, the preservation department that  
3 reviews permit applications for work on designated  
4 properties. The enforcement department that  
5 investigates complaints of potential violations and  
6 helps owners correct noncompliance's. And the  
7 archeology and environmental review departments that  
8 assist city, state and federal agencies in their  
9 environmental review process.  
10

11 The agency's total headcount in the preliminary  
12 Fiscal Year 2023 budget is 77 including 71 full time  
13 positions and six part-time positions.

14 Of the CDBG funding, about 80 percent is  
15 allocated to personnel supporting critical community  
16 development related functions such as surveys,  
17 environmental review, archeology, community outreach  
18 and education. While about 20 percent or  
19 approximately 115,000 is allocated for our historic  
20 preservation grant program for low-income homeowners  
21 and not-for-profit organizations.

22 I will now discuss the work of the Commission  
23 that these resources helped to support. As I noted,  
24 LPC's equity framework guided agencies priorities for  
25 designations and the agency focused on places that

1  
2 represent New York City's diversity and in less areas  
3 less represented by landmarks. The Commissioner  
4 completed ten designations in Fiscal Year 2021  
5 including two historic districts and eight individual  
6 landmarks for a total of 339 buildings and sites.

7 Among the designations last year, were the  
8 Harriet and Thomas Truesdell house at 227 Duffield  
9 Street, a rare surviving 19 Century abolitionist home  
10 in downtown Brooklyn. The East 25<sup>th</sup> Street historic  
11 district, the first district in East Flatbush, the  
12 Dorrance Brook Square historic district, which is New  
13 York City's first historic district named after an  
14 African American and has strong associations with  
15 notable figures in the Harlem Renaissance. The  
16 Holyrood Episcopal Church Iglesia Santa Cruz in  
17 Washington Heights which has important associations  
18 to the Latino community.

19 The educational building at 75<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which was  
20 the first national office of the NAACP, Kimlau War  
21 Memorial in Chinatown, the first landmark that  
22 specifically recognizes Chinese American history and  
23 culture and the Aakawayung Munahanung archeological  
24 site, the first New York City landmark specifically  
25

recognizing the many generations of indigenous  
people's who lived here.

In Fiscal Year 2022, as the city began to reopen  
after the pandemic and commercial buildings began to  
welcome back tenants, the Commission designated the  
elegant 200 Madison Avenue first floor lobby interior  
as an interior landmark. The Commission also  
calendared two historic districts in Cambria Heights  
Queens, an area where there are currently not any  
designated landmarks.

Also, to advance equity, LPC's research  
department has been preparing applications to the  
National Park Service to certify local historic  
districts and census tracts that are eligible for the  
New York State Historic Homeownership Rehabilitation  
Tax Credit, which allows homeowners to take advantage  
of this important financial incentive and I'm  
especially pleased to let you know Chair Salamanca  
that the Manida Street historic district in your  
district was just certified by the National Park  
Service.

I will now turn to our preservation and  
permitting operations, which are essential to



ensuring that designated landmarks remain in good repair.

The key to success in preservation is effective regulation which requires an efficient, transparent and accessible process for applicants. Buildings are living, thriving contributors to the dynamism of New York City. Our job is not to prevent change but to manage it, so that we can ensure that these significant buildings and sites are protected and allow to remain a vital part of our city's continued growth.

Our preservation department is the largest department within the commission and is the regulatory arm of our 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 percent of permits are issued by staff pursuant to the commission's rules and the remaining three to six percent of the applications are reviewed by the full commission. In Fiscal Year 2021, the Commission received 10,907 permit applications and took action

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on 10,075 applications, ranging from restoration and repairs to windows and storefronts to additions and new buildings. Through February of this fiscal year, we have received 7,764 applications and are on pace to surpass the Fiscal Year 2021 total.

As you can imagine, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a large drop in applications beginning in April 2020 which did not significantly rebound until March 2021. However, the number of applications has increased since this time and we currently receive approximately 85 percent of our pre-pandemic numbers.

The Fiscal 2023 Preliminary Budget includes funding for an e-filing project that will advance many of our efficiency goals and it was included in Mayor Adams blueprint for New York City's economic recovery to help advance the plans important goals, LPC will leverage technology to streamline its permitting process to make it easier for residents, businesses and cultural institutions to thrive in their historic buildings. LPC is working to file applications – is working with DoITT to develop and implement a public facing web portal that will allow owners of designated properties to file applications

for permits, upload supporting documentation, review the status of applications and receive final permits.

This project will also increase our agencies efficiency and provide transparency for applicants who will be able to better monitor the status of their applications. Our preservation department continues to develop and maintain resources to help applicants and owners put together complete applications and receive permits quickly.

In Fiscal Year 2021, LPC launched our Open Office Hours Initiative as part of our equity framework in which members of the public can virtually drop in for technical assistance and discuss pending applications with our preservation staff. This new service was so successful in making our services more accessible and improving efficiency, that we're planning to expand this service to businesses in the future.

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

1 the city. Since my tenure began, we have increased  
2 community outreach efforts and now place special  
3 emphasis on including communities across all boroughs  
4 that have not traditionally been well represented by  
5 LPC. We have also published new educational  
6 materials to improve access to important information  
7 and this is important for our regulatory work and  
8 also, in working to gain support for designations.

9  
10 In Fiscal Year 2021, we participated in or hosted  
11 15 outreach sessions and in Fiscal Year 2022 to date,  
12 we have participated in or hosted 13 outreach  
13 sessions with the public and community groups. Next  
14 week, we will host another outreach event for  
15 residents in one of our newly designated historic  
16 districts in Brooklyn, the East 25<sup>th</sup> Street historic  
17 district and we're very appreciative of your support  
18 throughout the designation process for the East 25<sup>th</sup>  
19 Street Historic District Chair Louis. And I'm so  
20 grateful that you and your team have helped to spread  
21 the word to residents about our upcoming event.

22 Before I conclude, I want to return to the  
23 Historic Preservation Grant Program. A modest,  
24 federally funded initiative targeted for low and  
25 moderate income homeowners and not-for-profit

1  
2 organizations to help restore or repair the facades  
3 of their landmark buildings. In Fiscal Year 2021,  
4 the program awarded five grants to three homeowners  
5 and two not-for-profit institutions in Brooklyn,  
6 Staten Island and the Bronx for amounts ranging from  
7 15,000 to 35,000. The homes are located in Bedford  
8 Stuyvesant Brooklyn, Mott Haven and Manida Street in  
9 the Bronx and the institutions are Casa Belvedere in  
10 Staten Island and the reformed church of South  
11 Bushwick in Brooklyn.

12 In Fiscal Year 2022 thus far, LPC voted to award  
13 three grants to two homeowners and one not-for-profit  
14 institution, all three in Brooklyn and for amounts  
15 ranging from \$20,000 to \$30,000. The homes are  
16 located in the Alison Agate Courts historic district  
17 in Brooklyn and the institution is the Brooklyn  
18 Sunday School Union in Brooklyn.

19 In summary, we are excited for the future of  
20 preservation in New York City and thank the  
21 Administration and the Council for your continued  
22 support and the resources provided in this budget.  
23 We are a small agency and nearly the entirety of our  
24 budget is personnel based. This is a hardworking,  
25 dedicated and professional staff with an outsized

1  
2 impact on our city responsible for the protection and  
3 preservation of its most significant buildings,  
4 districts and sites.

5 Our commitment is that we will continue to do so  
6 with the resources provided and strive to do so  
7 equitably, efficiently and transparently. Thank you  
8 again for allowing me to testify and I'm happy to  
9 answer any questions you may have.

10 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, thank you Chair  
11 Carroll for your testimony and I do want to thank you  
12 for the designation of Manida Street you know as a  
13 historic district and for really working with the  
14 homeowners there on making this a reality.

15 I have a few questions before I hand it over to  
16 Chair Louis. Uhm, in Fiscal Year - I just want to  
17 talk a little bit about headcounts and then I'm going  
18 to go onto the historic grant and some other  
19 questions but in terms of your headcount, in Fiscal  
20 Year 2023 Preliminary Budget, it includes a savings  
21 of \$161,700. In Fiscal Year 2022, 323,400 in Fiscal  
22 Year 2023 and in the outer years. So, my question  
23 is, are there any particular titles associated with  
24 the six eliminated vacancies as well as the four  
25 vacancies within your budget?

1  
2 SARAH CARROLL: So, the vacancies uhm, I want to  
3 start by first saying that the headcount reduction  
4 was based on vacancies and that no staff are going to  
5 be laid off as a result of this headcount reduction.  
6 The vacancies that we had last year are largely the  
7 landmarks preservationist title, which are the staff  
8 that work on designations and reviewing permit  
9 applications. Those were longstanding vacancies that  
10 we had had and we believe that we can accomplish our  
11 strategic goals as planned and we recognize that all  
12 agencies have been asked to do their part and support  
13 the budget.

14 Having said that, we will monitor it very  
15 carefully and should we find that we have additional  
16 needs, we will work closely with OMB and the  
17 Administration.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I'm sorry, I didn't  
19 hear. What are the titles that you have that have  
20 been eliminated or have vacancies?

21 SARAH CARROLL: Largely, the Landmarks  
22 Preservationists titles, which are the staff that  
23 work in our research department and our preservation  
24 department. Another title that was affected was our  
25 chauffeur, the agency driver and I think that -

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Wouldn't these preservationists having these vacancies delay the work that you do?

SARAH CARROLL: So, we uhm, you know we work very hard. Our staff is incredibly dedicated and we are very efficiency minded and always finding ways to be more efficient. So, we believe that we can continue to fulfill our mandate but as I said, we will be monitoring closely and be talking closely with the Administration and OMB on any needs.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I want to recognize that we've been joined by Majority Leader Powers, Council Member Bottcher and Council Member Mealy. Thank you for joining.

I want to just touch base on the historic grant program that you have there. Uhm, can you speak, has LPD awarded any historic grants to date for Fiscal Year 2022?

SARAH CARROLL: We have. We've awarded — we do it on a rolling basis and so, to date, we have awarded three grants. Two are to homeowners in the Allison Agate Court historic districts in Brooklyn and the third one is for a not-for-profit in the



Brooklyn Academy of Music historic district. It's  
the Brooklyn Sunday School Union.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: And this grant  
program, it's funded, is it federal dollars or is  
this city dollars?

SARAH CARROLL: These are federal dollars that  
come from the Community Development Block Grant.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: For homeowners, is  
there an income requirement to quality?

SARAH CARROLL: Right, in order to qualify  
because it is CDBG money, the applicants must meet  
the HUD income eligibility requirements which are you  
know fairly stringent, particularly for New York  
City.

So, for example, uhm, the requirements for a fam-  
the income requirement for a family of four is  
\$85,000 and you know, so that's fairly stringent for  
a family that owns a house in New York City. But we  
work closely with property owners to help identify  
their opportunities and whether they're eligible for  
the program and help them to put their application  
materials together.

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COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Has LPC, have you ever reached out to HUD and asked that they increase the income levels to qualify for these grant programs?

SARAH CARROLL: So, I think that uhm, I don't think we personally have ever reached out to HUD. I think it's a larger issue and we can certainly talk to our colleagues at OMB and see what the likelihood of that is.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I think this is something that I would like to work with Chair Louis on because you know, we have many -- well, I have a historic district in my -- the Longwood Historic District and these homes you know are going anywhere between \$800 to a little over \$1 million but these are homes predominantly from low-income homeowners that purchased these homes in the 80's and in the 90's when no one wanted to live there.

And now, these are working families. They had these townhouses and they want to do capital work on them and you know it's unfortunate that they have to abide by the rules that LPC has as to the work that they're allowed to do at the exterior of their homes. And it's extremely expensive for them and I would, I really would like to have a further conversation with

1  
2 you and maybe, I don't mind partnering with you and  
3 writing a letter to OMB and also to HUD asking them  
4 to uh, relook at the income requirements for this  
5 grant.

6 SARAH CARROLL: Yeah and I appreciate that  
7 support. We are always looking for opportunities to  
8 provide the grants and we do a lot of outreach to try  
9 to find eligible applicants and recognize that the  
10 HUD requirements because they're looking at income  
11 eligibility on a national level are not really  
12 reflective of the conditions in New York City. So, I  
13 appreciate your support on that.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: What about religious  
15 institutions? I know that when I was first elected,  
16 uhm, LPC wanted to landmark a religious institution  
17 in my district and we were able to get them off the  
18 list but you know one of the main concerns were that  
19 their parishioners are a low-income community,  
20 therefore, you know, the donations that they make to  
21 the church are not at the level if we're looking at a  
22 more wealthier community and there were many capital  
23 needs that they needed. And so, do low income  
24 religious institutions or institutions that are based  
25

1  
2 out of low-income communities. Can they qualify for  
3 these grants?

4 SARAH CARROLL: They can certainly apply for  
5 them. The Commission has — accepts applications from  
6 religious institutions because again, it's federal  
7 money. We can't provide grants for areas of worship  
8 but we had been able to provide grants for exterior  
9 repairs or repairs to portions of the building that  
10 are not used for worship.

11 So, for example, we last year, awarded a grant to  
12 the south — the reformed church of South Bushwick for  
13 a leaning steeple and we actually first we retained  
14 an engineer and paid for a structural assessment to  
15 address the leaning steeple and then we awarded the  
16 grant and worked with our partners at the New York  
17 Landmarks Conservancy to also awarded funding to make  
18 those repairs and we were delighted that we were able  
19 to do that on such an important landmark.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay, I want to talk a  
21 little bit about outreach. Does LPC have adequate  
22 resources to undertake sufficient outreach and public  
23 education.

24 SARAH CARROLL: As I said, outreach has been one  
25 of the key pillars of my priorities as Chair and so,

1 outreach I agree is incredibly important and we have  
2 a team dedicated to outreach and I think we have  
3 enough resources to it and I think now that we are  
4 able to use technology, we're able to expand the  
5 program even further just allows us to be in more  
6 places at once. The other part of the education are  
7 the tools that we've also been able to create  
8 leveraging technologies so we have incredible  
9 educational tools, interactive tools and story maps  
10 that take all of the information we have in  
11 designations and connect them together to make these  
12 stories much more accessible to the public.

14 So, I do believe we have the resources and we're  
15 taking advantage of all the new sort of 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
16 tools that are available to us.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: How many public  
18 educational meetings with Community Boards or other  
19 community organizations does LPC do annually?

20 SARAH CARROLL: So, last year, we did 15 outreach  
21 meetings and this year, I believe it was 11. I think  
22 that's what I actually -- we've done to date 13. So,  
23 last year we did 15 and today we did 13. We're about  
24 to meet owners in East Flatbush in the East 25<sup>th</sup>  
25 Street historic district next week, so that number

1  
2 will increase and we expect to increase it before the  
3 end of this Fiscal Year.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay, my final  
5 question and then I'm going to hand it over to Chair  
6 Louis. I want to talk a little bit about the  
7 designation process. And so, I received a call  
8 yesterday from some – the managers and owners of a  
9 co-op that received a call from LPC and in your  
10 interest of landmark, the exterior of their  
11 buildings. Now their concern with this is that their  
12 exterior of the buildings, there is capital projects  
13 that are in the works that are needed. And if LPC  
14 landmarks that the designation process moves forward,  
15 their cost to repair will increase, therefore that  
16 cost will be handed over to the co-op owners or in  
17 return the co-op owners will put that cost onto the  
18 tenants who are on – who are low income families or  
19 they're on fixed incomes.

20 So, explain to me, does LPC look into the incomes  
21 of tenants in buildings that you choose or you're  
22 interested in landmarking?

23 SARAH CARROLL: Well, I will say that when we are  
24 interested in designating an item, first we meet with  
25 the owners. We do an incredible amount of research

1 obviously into the history, architectural history,  
2 cultural history, development patterns of the  
3 building and how they relate to the neighborhood.  
4 You know income is not something that is one of the  
5 factors that we are required to evaluate but we are  
6 very mindful of it. We understand that people have  
7 concerns about designation and sometimes  
8 misunderstandings. We reach out to owners very early  
9 in the process before we begin designation and we  
10 talk to them. If they are in the middle of capital  
11 improvements and it's work that we don't think will  
12 detract or eliminate the significance of the  
13 property, we will work with them to allow them to  
14 achieve their work and to complete their work as we  
15 move through the process or before the process so  
16 we're very flexible on timing to allow people to do  
17 the work but I will also say that it depends on what  
18 the affect and the cost really depends on what the  
19 work is.  
20

21 In many cases restoration and repair work, the  
22 cost is really in the labor and the review that we do  
23 may or may not increase the cost. It really depends  
24 and I would say that sometimes when we ask for  
25 changes, it actually will save the building money in

1  
2 the long run because it ensures that the work will be  
3 durable and will not cause further harm to the  
4 building.

5       So, for example if somebody is repointing with a  
6 mortar that's too hard, it can then cause those bricks  
7 to fail. So, we may ask people to change the  
8 composition of the mortar. That won't change the  
9 cost of the work but it will actually aid in sort of  
10 the long term preservation and save the building  
11 money in the long run.

12       So, I think the question of cost really depends  
13 on what the work is and we work very closely with  
14 property owners as we talk through these issues to  
15 make sure that everyone is informed and you know we  
16 have a good working relationship.

17       COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay, alright, thank  
18 you Chair. I'm going to hand it over now to Chair  
19 Louis.

20       SARAH CARROLL: Thank you.

21       CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you so much Chair  
22 Salamanca and thank you so much Chair Carroll for  
23 joining us today and for all the updates you  
24 provided. I'll be, I'll be quick because I know  
25 we're low on time.



1  
2       LPC has seen a steady increase in the number of  
3 permit applications. The number of work permit  
4 applications received during the first four months of  
5 Fiscal Year '22 was about over 4,000 compared to the  
6 3,487 during the same period in Fiscal Year '21,  
7 which is a 17 percent increase.

8       I wanted to ask you what factors do you believe  
9 led to the increase in number of work permit  
10 applications during the first four months of Fiscal  
11 '22? And do you believe that you have the capacity,  
12 the man power in order to deal with the backlog?

13       SARAH CARROLL: Yeah, so I would say that you  
14 know the increase in applications as probably a sign  
15 of the economy recovering. And so, I think that's a  
16 great thing and we are currently as I stated in my  
17 testimony about 85 percent of where we were at the  
18 prepandemic. So, the number of applications that we  
19 received before the pandemic.

20       So, we're still slightly below that number but we  
21 see it continuing to increase and uhm, you know we  
22 don't have a backlog perse. Our applications are  
23 reviewed and approved on a rolling basis and simple  
24 ones, we have a number of expedited processes that  
25

1  
2 can handle a lot of the simpler applications and  
3 those move in and out of the office very quickly.

4 Applications that require a public hearing for  
5 new buildings in a historic district for example,  
6 those can take longer because there's more public  
7 input and a longer process for those. But we feel  
8 and the staff works equally hard on both types of  
9 applications and you know where staff is dedicated  
10 and we are always looking for efficiencies. We view  
11 our e-filing initiative to be an incredible  
12 efficiency measure that will allow for the staff to  
13 be able to — it will reduce the amount of time for  
14 intake, for data entry and will allow applicants,  
15 immediate contact with the staff and immediate  
16 ability to upload materials.

17 So, we think there will be a lot of efficiencies  
18 built into that initiative. So, we are, our  
19 expectation is that we will be able to continue to  
20 manage the workload as it increases and returns to  
21 prepandemic levels.

22 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. So, speaking of  
23 e-filing, Fiscal 2023 Preliminary Budget includes a  
24 little over 60,000 in Fiscal '22 and 92,000 in Fiscal  
25 '23 in the outyears for the e-filing project with

DoITT. Can you provide an update on that project as it relates to its objective in the timeline and any other additional information you could provide?

SARAH CARROLL: Yeah, so we've been working very closely with DoITT to develop and implement this web-based portal that will allow owners this sort of immediate interaction for filing their applications and managing them. And we've submitted a revised CP to DoITT and we're awaiting approval. We've been working through the CP with both DoITT and OMB and uhm, we are hoping for the approval to happen and then we will begin immediately and we expect that the building of the web portal can happen this Fiscal Year and then the expenses in the outyears really cover maintenance and training.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Alright and I wanted to talk a little bit about the initiative BLAST, the Mayor's recovery plan also includes the creation of the interagency Building and Land Use Streamlining Taskforce for those that know the name, to identify inefficiencies and streamline the application process as you've mentioned earlier.

So, I wanted to know is LPC included in this initiative? What does it look like? What

1  
2 information can you give to the Committee today  
3 regarding this?

4 SARAH CARROLL: Yeah, LPC is definitely included  
5 along with other land use agencies and we'll be  
6 convening in a taskforce to discuss efficiencies, so  
7 I don't have information yet on when it will begin or  
8 what exactly it will look like but we're excited to  
9 participate and excited that Landmarks Preservation  
10 Commission is included and can support economic  
11 recovery.

12 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Alright, we look forward to  
13 hearing more about that because you know mentioned it  
14 earlier in your testimony, so we look forward to  
15 that. Regarding enforcement because this is a big  
16 component, especially in Black or Brown communities  
17 it comes up often. The number of enforcement actions  
18 take in the total warning letters and LV's notice  
19 violations and stop work orders issued increased by  
20 18 from 32 for the first four months in Fiscal 2022  
21 when compared to the same period in Fiscal 2021.  
22 What factors do you believe led to the increase in  
23 number of total warning letters and notices of  
24 violations and stop work orders?

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1  
2 SARAH CARROLL: Sorry, I uhm, you know I think  
3 there's a couple of things. One is, our process is  
4 complaint driven and so, we investigate all  
5 complaints that come to us and I think that during  
6 the pandemic, we've received fewer complaints and now  
7 that people are out and about more, we are hearing  
8 from more people.

9 We also understood the severity of the pandemic  
10 and the financial tole that it took on New Yorkers  
11 including owners of designated properties and so,  
12 during the height of the pandemic, with fairness and  
13 equity in mind, we only acted on the more serious  
14 violations or work that was happening you know that  
15 was ongoing. And so, other complaints were all  
16 investigated and we tried to work with property  
17 owners outside of the enforcement process to address  
18 that.

19 You know that has now everybody's had a little  
20 bit of relief, we're coming out of it seems.  
21 Hopefully we're seeing a brighter future, so we have  
22 started to act on more of those investigations at  
23 this point and that would account for the increased  
24 number.  
25

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Are those complaints filed online or can people file those complaints?

SARAH CARROLL: Yes, we do have a violations search feature on our website, so people can follow, look up to see if there's a violation and what the status is.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Okay, I have two last questions because I know we have to go. And this one is particularly an outreach question. With the pandemic dwindling, what will outreach look like for LPC and what will on the ground outreach look like? What's the approach that the agency is thinking about?

SARAH CARROLL: Yeah, we uhm, you know we pivoted to the virtual outreach sessions and I think we were a little skeptical at first and worried that we wouldn't have as much face to face time, which is so critical for ensuring that everybody is – that we're communicating effectively and everybody understands. So, we are excited to do more on the ground research outreach. We will continue to do virtual sessions because in the end, they actually end up being very well attended because people don't have to take time off or get home, you know they go home and cook

dinner and then join a session and not sort of come out for the evening. So, they're also very popular and we will continue those but we're also excited to get out into neighborhoods and we look to local Council Members and community boards to partner with to host these events. So, we would be happy to continue to work with you to think about events we can partner to host together.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Oh, we would love to do that with you.

SARAH CARROLL: Great.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: And you've done a phenomenal with East Flatbush. My last question is regarding that's the designation process. A lot of folks are interested in designating particular areas. So, when LPC decides to do research and designate new landmarks. I'm talking about the next fiscal year coming up. Can you explain or describe what that process will look like? Will it remain the same? And do you primarily depend on proposals from the community and advocates and how do we include more Black and Brown organizations and advocates in this process?

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1  
2 SARAH CARROLL: So, I would say that you know our  
3 designations are really commission initiated and our  
4 research staff surveys thousands of properties every  
5 year and in fact during this last Fiscal Year, we  
6 surveyed over 10,000 properties. Buildings and sites  
7 which is more than we have ever done in a year.

8 And so, we also get requests from the public and  
9 a relatively small number compared to the amount of  
10 survey work that we're doing internally and we then,  
11 if the properties that are requested merit or may  
12 merit consideration, we include within our survey  
13 inventory. And then as we think about which items to  
14 advance, we think about our priorities and our goals  
15 for equity and representation, equitable  
16 representation in our designation. So, that is along  
17 with merit one of the significant guiding tools or  
18 guiding pillars that we use to determine when and how  
19 to move designations forward.

20 We also looked again to work very closely with  
21 the local Council Members on items in their district.  
22 You're so important in this designation process and  
23 have an important role in it, so we're happy to meet  
24 with anyone who wants to talk about designations in  
25 our area and I would say, you know the best -



1  
2 sometimes it's very hard when we do identify an area  
3 of significance and we come and the community has an  
4 ask for it and we come to the community and it takes  
5 a lot of work to get people to get comfortable with  
6 the idea and to understand the benefits as well as  
7 the responsibilities.

8       So, when we have particularly for historic  
9 districts, a neighborhood where the owners themselves  
10 seek designation, and the area, merits designation  
11 and it aligns with our priorities of representing the  
12 diversity of the city, it's sort of a win-win and  
13 that was the case with the East 25<sup>th</sup> Street historic  
14 district.

15       So, those are you know the best projects to work  
16 on and we look forward to having those kind of  
17 alignments in the future.

18       CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you so much Chair  
19 Carroll. Thank you Chair Salamanca. I'll yield back  
20 to you.

21       SARAH CARROLL: Thank you.

22       CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you Chair Louis. I  
23 would like to recognize that we've been joined by  
24 Council Member Gale Brewer. So, we will begin with  
25 questions from Council Members. Any Council Member

1  
2 who wishes to ask questions, please raise the hand  
3 button on your Zoom and because for the interest of  
4 time, we're going to give Council Members three  
5 minutes and we will start with Council Member Mealy.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Good morning Commissioner.  
8 Thank you Chairs. I'm asking, how do you choose the  
9 co-ops that you want to do an LPC on?

10 SARAH CARROLL: How do we choose?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: The co-op.

12 SARAH CARROLL: Well, when we look at any  
13 properties, uhm we look at by law they have to be 30  
14 years or older, older, older. They have to be  
15 significant architecturally, culturally, or  
16 historically and or historically. And so, we do  
17 research to determine whether they meet those  
18 threshold standards and then, as we have developed an  
19 inventory of sites that we've surveyed, we then do  
20 comparative analysis. We look at in particular  
21 integrity and whether they contain historic fabric  
22 that convey their significance, which is -

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I just remembered; he did  
24 ask that question Chair Salamanca but one thing I  
25 hear he's kind of requesting you to see how you can

1  
2 up the uhm, the salary or the price range of people  
3 want to get landmark on these developments. I was  
4 just wondering, with the requirements, the income  
5 requirement. I just want to make a statement in  
6 regards to that.

7 We have to be very careful because once we do  
8 that, the homeowners who have a set maintenance, that  
9 means their maintenance would have to go up and if  
10 their maintenance go up after they get this grant,  
11 that can take some people, may have to leave because  
12 they can't keep up with their maintenance because as  
13 soon as anyone do any capital improvements, their  
14 maintenance go up. So, have you considered that and  
15 do you have a plan for that going forward with any of  
16 these co-ops that you designate.

17 SARAH CARROLL: Yeah, thank you Council Member.  
18 I think it's a really important point and  
19 consideration. Unfortunately, it's not within the  
20 landmarks law to consider that but as human beings  
21 and as we think about the neighborhoods we're  
22 impacting, we absolutely do think about it. We don't  
23 study the income levels but we do work as I said  
24 closely with property owners and try to understand  
25 what their needs are.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay, I don't have that much time.

SARAH CARROLL: Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: But you will be talking to our Chair Salamanca said, he will be putting in a request for that. So, why that component is not in this. We cannot upgrade the bill and then throw people out, so that has to be a component in there and I hope you all start studying that.

SARAH CARROLL: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Before you just you know do something like this. That would be very sad for this city, that people that are staying in those landmark buildings and all of a sudden when you pick them up, then their salary can't keep up with the maintenance costs that elevated once they did put those capital projects and your grants in.

As soon as any capital project is done on a co-op, their maintenance go up. So, to say that that's not in your preview, something is wrong with that.

SARAH CARROLL: Yeah, so I just want to clarify-

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

SARAH CARROLL: Alright, okay.

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45

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I need to hear this.

Thank you.

SARAH CARROLL: Okay, well the grant program is for homeowners who may or may not have a tenant but they must be owner occupied. So, it's usually for smaller buildings not for co-ops. But I definitely hear you about the concerns that the cost of work in a designated building may have on buildings and we, you know we allow substitute materials and we try to always find ways to make it manageable for property owners. And so, I think it's a good point and thank you for bringing it up.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I just did it because our Chair Salamanca said, he will be asking for an increase. So, thank you. Thank you Chairs.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you Council Mealy. I will now recognize Council Member Bottcher.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Hello, Chair Carroll, how are you?

SARAH CARROLL: I'm good, how are you Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Good to see you. Likewise. Uhm, Chair, the Council District- I

1  
2 represent Council District Three. We have the most  
3 landmark properties of any district in the city,  
4 correct?

5 SARAH CARROLL: I believe that you are close to  
6 it. I know that you are one-third in the number of  
7 designations and uhm, I'm not quite sure, I think  
8 you're not first in the number of -

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Oh, my gosh, I thought  
10 I was first. Oh, I have to do something about that.

11 SARAH CARROLL: But you're very close.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Could you tell me in  
13 light of all the properties we have, what affect will  
14 these proposed cuts have for property owners in our  
15 landmarked areas? We as it stands despite the good  
16 work that you do, we do get calls from folks whose  
17 projects are taking a long time and historically, the  
18 LPC has said that you do a lot on very little staff  
19 and you could actually use more staff. We're seeing  
20 a proposed staff reduction. What affect will that  
21 have on the already over stretched agency on the  
22 property owners who have applications coming before  
23 you and on non-property owners who have to put up  
24 with construction and scaffolding. What's the on the  
25 ground affect of these cuts going to be?

1  
2 SARAH CARROLL: Yeah, so I would say again, you  
3 know we are — we're still not quite at the number of  
4 applications we were handling pre-pandemic. So, I  
5 again, feel that we can accommodate it but we will be  
6 monitoring it closely and working with OMB and the  
7 Administration if we find we do need needs — uh, have  
8 a need for additional staff. But I did also want to  
9 point out that sometimes the delay in applications is  
10 not a staffing issue, it's that we haven't received  
11 the materials needed to evaluate the application and  
12 there's sort of a communication. You know, the  
13 expeditor may not get the information to the  
14 architect, who doesn't get the information to the  
15 owner.

16 So, I would say that owners should feel free to  
17 reach out to our staff directly and not necessarily  
18 rely on their representatives because sometimes the  
19 messages don't get moved quickly enough.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: That's right and it is  
21 true that often times when we reach out, it turns out  
22 it's the applicant who owes something.

23 SARAH CARROLL: Right.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: That's what we need  
25 help with. But we had seen an agency that could use

more staff. You're now being asked to reduce your staff and all in the name of saving how much money is really going to be saved? How much again?

SARAH CARROLL: In the outyears, it's \$323,000.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: \$323,000 in a \$100 billion budget. Do you think that this is worth that? Saving that little money? The inconvenience it might cause?

SARAH CARROLL: I think that you know every agency has been asked to do their part and we have to try to do our part as well. And I again, you know, we are always concerned about efficiency and how well our staff is working and the efficiency of our permit process. So, you know we'll be watching it very closely.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Thanks. I understand the importance of a symbolic reduction to be fair but when it is going to have an affect on New Yorkers like this, I think it's a bad decision.

SARAH CARROLL: Yeah, yeah, we'll be watching to see what the affect is but thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Thank you.



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CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Sorry, Council Member  
Bottcher, are you? Are you?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: I could ask more  
question. My time is -

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: No, no, no, you're time  
is up. I'm sorry. Thank you Council Member  
Bottcher. I would like to recognize Council Member  
Brewer.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much. I'm  
in a noisy place but my question is, given that cut,  
what will it have an impact on? And let me be  
specific, we're all finding it very, very hard to get  
more preservation efforts in communities of color and  
sometimes that requires you know the persons who are  
requesting it do not have the money for any kind of  
an evaluation. We are always so appreciative when  
LPC does it number one.

And number two, you know there are so many more  
places that we, at least speaking for myself, would  
like to have preserved. So, do you have some sense  
of what that number might look like in terms of other  
places that you know if you had the funding, you  
could in fact suggest get preserved and by preserved,

1  
2 I'm including historic districts and landmarks and so  
3 on. Because there is a lot of as you know, you've  
4 been very great Sarah Carroll in responding but it's  
5 not always the way that we want you to respond.

6 SARAH CARROLL: Right.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: So, I think you had more  
8 funding, then more effort could be made to preserve  
9 and do historic districts in areas that are obviously  
10 in need. Thank you very much.

11 SARAH CARROLL: Okay, thank you and you know one,  
12 I do want to say that we survey as I said, thousands  
13 of properties a year and so, no community should feel  
14 like they need to spend money for an evaluation.  
15 There is no fee for our evaluation. Nobody needs to  
16 hire an outside uhm, researcher to do a nomination.  
17 We don't accept nominations. We do surveys and we  
18 identify priorities through our surveys and our  
19 surveys are informed by requests from the public and  
20 so, where we do find that there is merit in those  
21 requests aligned with our priorities, we are you  
22 know, we can easily allocate our resources and our  
23 staff and dedicate our staff to those research  
24 efforts.  
25

1  
2       So, we are committed to continuing to recognize  
3 historic districts that represent the diversity of  
4 the city, particularly communities in histories of  
5 people of color. And so, we are going to continue to  
6 prioritize those studies and those research efforts.  
7 And we look forward to working with all of you and  
8 the support that you, you know, you yourself have  
9 been incredibly supportive of our work. And so, it  
10 means a lot to us and we really appreciate that.  
11 That's so important for the process.

12       CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, so I want to  
13 thank you Chair Carroll for attending today's hearing  
14 and my office and Land Use and Council Member Farah  
15 Louis and I see Council Member Mealy, we're  
16 definitely going to be reaching out to see how we  
17 can figure out to increase that grant you know for  
18 homeowners that are part of the landmarks  
19 preservation.

20       SARAH CARROLL: Right, great. Thank you.

21       CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: So, with that, I'm going  
22 to take a one minute recess and we will begin with  
23 City Planning.

24       SARAH CARROLL: Thank you Council Members.  
25

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1  
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: As we are on recess, I would  
3 like to sound test our DCP members. So, we'll start  
4 with Mr. Garodnick.

5 DAN GARODNICK: Good morning.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning and welcome back.

7 DAN GARODNICK: Can you hear me?

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes, we can.

9 DAN GARODNICK: Thank you. Good to be here.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Uh, Executive Director Hsu-  
11 Chen? One second, we're going to unmute you. Accept  
12 the unmute request please.

13 EDITH HSU-CHEN: Good morning.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: There you go. Alright, we  
15 hear you loud and clear, thank you. General Counsel  
16 Amron?

17 SUSAN AMRON: Good morning.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, hear loud and  
19 clear thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, Sergeant at  
21 Arms, am I - can I proceed with the City Planning?

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: I believe so. I just got to  
23 sound check Mr. Parish and then you'll be able to go.

24 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you.

25 DAVID PARISH: Good morning.

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2

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, we got you.

3

Alright Chair, we're ready to continue.

4

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, Counsel, are we  
5 good?

6

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes sir.

7

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright awesome.

8

Alright, so now we will continue the Land Use

9

Preliminary Budget hearing and hear from the new

10

Director of City Planning and Chair of the City

11

Planning Commission former Council Member, now Chair

12

Dan Garodnick, Executive Director Edith Hsu-Chen and

13

the General Counsel Susan Amron and Acting COO David

14

Parish.

15

As I described in my opening remarks, DCP has a

16

tremendous influential role to play in both the

17

city's short term future, including our ongoing

18

recovery from COVID-19 and addressing long-term goals

19

such as climate resiliency, racial equity and fair

20

housing.

21

From our review of the Preliminary Budget, we

22

have concerns that proposed DCP budget may not

23

provide the resources necessary for the agency to

24

fully and effectively engage in these critical issues

25

but we have a brand new City Planning Chair here with

us today and we look forward to learning more about the new administrations vision for DCP.

The Council's Zoning Subcommittee is Chaired by Council Member Kevin Riley. I want to acknowledge the Chair's leadership on the City Planning issues and thank the Chair for joining us today. And right before the Counsel swears in the panelists, Chair Garodnick, I just want to say how proud I am and excited to see that you know a former colleague of ours is the Chair of DCP.

As a former Council Member, I know that you understand the frustrations that we as Council Members and communities have had with City Planning agency on really not getting information in a timely manner but I am confident that because you were a former colleague, you understand our frustration, you were in our shoes.

So, I'm just excited to know that you are in this role. And with that, I'm going to allow the Council to swear in the panelists.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, please raise your right hands and I will call on you each individually to answer. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your

COMMITTEE ON LAND USE JOINTLY WITH  
THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

55

testimony before this Committee and in answer to all  
Council Member questions? Chair Dan Garodnick?

DAN GARODNICK: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Edith Hsu-Chen?

EDITH HSU-CHEN: Yes, I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Susan Amron?

SUSAN AMRON: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: David Parish?

DAVID PARISH: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you Counsel and I  
will now hand it off to Chair Garodnick.

DAN GARODNICK: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman  
and thank you for the very kind words. I really  
appreciate it and it is good to be back here.

And Subcommittee Chairs Riley and Louis, thank  
you and of course to the distinguished members of the  
Land Use Committee. I thank you all for the  
opportunity to be here today to discuss the  
Department of City Plannings Preliminary Fiscal Year  
2023 Budget. As noted at the top, I'm joined by  
Edith Hsu-Chen who is the Executive Director, David  
Parish who's the Acting COO and Susan Amron who is  
the General Counsel.

1  
2 And I am very honored to have been appointed to  
3 lead the Department of City Planning and the City  
4 Planning Commission by Mayor Adams. Who is committed  
5 to ensuring that we expand access to opportunity for  
6 all New Yorkers.

7 It's also particularly meaningful to be  
8 testifying before the City Council, a body in which I  
9 served for 12 years and I believe my successor, the  
10 Majority Leader Keith Powers is here. There he is.  
11 I tip my hat to him and it is really great to see you  
12 all and Council Members, I certainly appreciate as  
13 Chair Salamanca noted upfront, the challenging tasks  
14 that you have before you and I am very much looking  
15 forward to collaborating with you.

16 You should know that some of my proudest Council  
17 accomplishments were in direct partnership with the  
18 City Planning Commission and the Department as we  
19 successfully work to modernize the greater Est  
20 Midtown area, the business district Grand Central  
21 Station. We did it to ensure that one of our city's  
22 largest job centers would continue to thrive well  
23 into the future while also providing flexibility for  
24 residential development.



1  
2 In my first Council term, I chaired one of the  
3 then three Land Use Subcommittee's that was called  
4 Planning, Dispositions and Concessions. And I had  
5 the occasion to work directly with the Commission  
6 Chair and staff. And even back then, I admired the  
7 professionalism of the agency and the city's  
8 commitment to continuously engage the public in our  
9 important land use decision making process.

10 With that said, nothing during my time in the  
11 Council compared to the challenging moment that we  
12 find ourselves in today. Among where we face an  
13 affordability crisis, housing crisis and a health  
14 crisis, all at the same time. In fact there has  
15 really been nothing quite like it in history. I have  
16 been working with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor Maria  
17 Torres-Springer and many others to help get New York  
18 City's economic recovery into high gear.

19 On March 10<sup>th</sup> we announce rebuild, renew, reinvent  
20 a blueprint for New York City's economic recovery. A  
21 five borough economic development plan that makes  
22 sure that our economy and the infrastructure that  
23 supports it is flexible, resilience, inclusive and  
24 innovative as we move into a post pandemic future.  
25

1  
2 To that end, I would like to thank the City  
3 Council on your efforts to make permanent the open  
4 restaurants plan. This is an example of taking a  
5 crisis and wisely adapting our policies to the city's  
6 advantage and I give you all a lot of credit for this  
7 accomplishment.

8 Of course, City Planning will work shoulder to  
9 shoulder with our peer agencies and the City Council  
10 to wrap up the details and to ensure its success. At  
11 City Planning, we are working to create housing to  
12 promote equitable growth, prepare for a changing  
13 environment and to rise to the challenge of meeting  
14 the needs of every community in the city. When it  
15 comes to public engagement and creating opportunity,  
16 we will include everyone. That includes communities  
17 across all five boroughs and it means offering a  
18 positive user experience for elected officials,  
19 community board members and private applicants in New  
20 York's public land use decision making process.

21 To your point Mr. Chairman, for those projects  
22 that align with city priorities, we will not only  
23 approve them but we will be there champions. Working  
24 directly with our sister agencies including the New  
25 York City Economic Development Corporation, the

Department of Housing, Preservation and Development,  
and the Office of Management and Budget. We will  
explore the future of work and its impacts on our  
central business districts and so many other job  
centers across our boroughs.

During the last two years driven by COVID-19, we  
have seen challenges to our central business  
districts as people spent time working from home. We  
also saw strength in smaller business districts  
located closer to where people live. We are building  
an economic plan that will touch every sector of our  
economy. It's a plan that will be nimble and will  
focus on a broader and more equitable geographic  
distribution of economic opportunity. We are laser  
focused on planning for inclusive and sustainable  
growth in the short and the long term.

This means working with communities to implement  
the city's newly released comprehensive waterfront  
plan for example and among some of the most pressing  
projects for the city include the Development of  
Offshore wind, advancing public access to the  
waterfront and coastal climate resiliency. This also  
means creating housing opportunities at highly  
accessible locations where residents can access the

1  
2 city's extraordinary opportunities for jobs,  
3 education, and amenities. We need to bring more jobs  
4 closer to where New Yorkers live. Supporting  
5 investment in the downtowns and job centers that  
6 exist and that are growing outside of the Manhattan  
7 Corp.

8 It also means maximizing the capacity and user  
9 accessibility of a safe and secure transit system.  
10 The city has already prioritized accessibility  
11 advance at key locations through strategic  
12 contributions for the MTA capital plan. In planning  
13 for Jerome Avenue's rezoning for example, we heard  
14 loud and clear that improved subway accessibility was  
15 sorely needed.

16 After collaborating with DOT, the MTA and Bronx  
17 stakeholders, earlier this year the 170<sup>th</sup> Street  
18 Jerome Avenue Station was renovated to make the  
19 station accessible to all riders. Three new  
20 elevators were installed at this station located in  
21 Council Member Stevens district and just one block  
22 south of Council Member Sanchez's district.

23 During my time at the City Council, I had the  
24 privilege of not only visiting all corners of the  
25 city but also working directly with communities

across all five boroughs. The diversity, energy and complexity of New York is what I love about it and every unique neighborhood will play a critical role in our success. That is why I'm so excited to have joined the Department of City Planning and to be taken the helm at a time of both incredible challenges but also tremendous opportunity to use the levels of government to achieve a new vision of a fairer, more prosperous and safer city.

City Planning stands at the crossroads of growth, change and opportunity and it will serve as a major driver in turning the goals of this administration into reality.

So, now, let me just turn to the budget. City Planning entered Fiscal Year 2022 with an Adopted Budget of \$44.9 million and an authorized headcount of 348 full-time staff positions. Of which, \$26.6 million and 162 positions are funded with city tax levy dollars. DCP's remaining \$18.3 million budget allocation and 186 positions are funded by state and federal grants, primarily through HUDs Community Development Block Grant program. The \$44.9 million Fiscal Year 2020 Adopted Budget allocated \$30.6 million, a little over two-thirds of City Plannings

Operating Budget to agencywide personal services including part-time staff and members of the City Planning Commission and the remaining \$14.3 million to non-personnel expenses.

In comparison to the Fiscal Year 2022 Adopted Budget, City Plannings Fiscal Year 2023 Preliminary Budget of \$45.3 million and 332 full time staff lines, represents \$354,000 increase to the overall operating budget and our 16 headcount decrease. This is a small budget increase even as we are down 16 staff including a PEG. So, let me explain how this comes to be.

Focusing on City Planning's OTPS, Other Than Personal Services, the Departments Fiscal Year '23 Preliminary Budget allocates \$15.6 million to pay for agency operating expenses other than staffing, such as community outreach, environmental consulting services and agency operations. And demonstrates a \$1.3 million temporary influx in OTPS as compared to City Plannings \$14.3 million adopted OTPS budget in the last Fiscal Year or I should say, the current fiscal year.

The net \$1.3 million increase in OTPS funding is primarily driven by a new need to conduct a citywide

1 building elevation survey. The study stems from the  
2 tragedies that the residents of below grade  
3 apartments during Hurricane Ida.  
4

5 The Mayor allocated \$3 million in OTPS for us to  
6 conduct this impactful study. The agency hired  
7 consultants to perform a citywide spatial analysis of  
8 building elevations throughout the city, including  
9 subgrade spaces. The analysis is geared toward the  
10 city's resiliency efforts and will provide  
11 comprehensive data on community flood risk, allowing  
12 the city to better target proactive planning  
13 strategies, infrastructure investments and outreach  
14 to residents and to property owners.

15 In addition to supplementing the city's knowledge  
16 of the geographic distribution of flood risk, the  
17 elevation measurements will allow the city to better  
18 model and estimate future flood damages. I want to  
19 thank the Chair of the Council's Resiliency and  
20 Waterfronts Committee Ari Kagan for his ongoing  
21 efforts on flood protection. We at the department  
22 are looking forward to working with you on resiliency  
23 and climate change issues.

24 The \$3 million citywide building elevation study  
25 you need is offset in the budget by the expiration of

\$1.7 million in temporary community development disaster recovery funding that had been budgeted for another resiliency related project led by HPD which was the Resilient Edgemere Community Plan within Council Member Brooks-Powers district.

DCP is supporting HPD in its implementation of the Resilient Edgemere Community Plan, by providing environmental consulting services through its on call environmental consulting contracts to analyze the environmental impacts of the proposed land use actions and to advance the environmental review work.

The Edgemere rezoning was certified into ULURP in December of 2021 and is currently making its way through public review. Between the \$3 million increase for the building elevation study and the \$1.7 million decrease in the Resilient Edgemere Community Plan, the agency has an increase of \$1.3 million in OTPS but at the same time, we have a net \$950,000 decrease in personal services and that corresponds to the agencies decrease in staffing levels.

The Departments Fiscal Year 2023 Preliminary Budget allocates \$29.7 million to personal services compared to \$30.6 million in the current adopted



1  
2 budget, in the Fiscal Year 2022 Adopted Budget and  
3 the \$29.7 figure represents a \$950,000 decline in  
4 funding for agency personnel attributed to a net loss  
5 of 16 positions.

6       Headcount and associated funding reductions  
7 include the elimination of nine tax levy funded  
8 vacancies and approximately \$500,000 to achieve  
9 agency savings in line with the Mayor's Program to  
10 Eliminate the Gap PEG. And the expiration of eight  
11 short-term staffing resources were untax levy  
12 positions and seven grant funded positions and  
13 \$600,000 funded in previous plans that are slated to  
14 exit the budget at the end of Fiscal Year 2022.

15       Seven of the eight positions consists of  
16 temporary resources received to support the 2020  
17 Census. The expansion of the agencies regional  
18 planning program and the development of an online  
19 tool that automates analysis required by certain  
20 chapters of the seeker technical manual.

21       The last position is a CDBG disaster recovery  
22 funded resiliency planner embedded in the Mayor's  
23 Office of Climate Resiliency whose funding coincides  
24 with the end of the CDBG disaster recovery grant.

25 These 17 positions and \$1.1 million in reductions are

offset by the addition of one \$75,000 temporary staff person that will be hired to manage and oversee the timely completion of the citywide building elevation study and \$39,000 in contractual increases negotiated through collective bargaining to arrive at the \$950,000, 16 position reduction to personal services.

So, to conclude, the increase of \$1.3 million for OTPS and the decrease of \$950,000 in PS result in an increase of \$354,000 but a decrease of 16 positions in the DCP budget. This establishes a Fiscal Year 2023 Preliminary Plan of 332 authorized positions and \$45.3 million of which, \$29.7 million is for agencywide personnel services and \$15.6 million is allocated to Other Than Personal Services. DCP will continue to distribute its resources in the most effective way possible to advance the Departments work – uh, our work program and to meet the needs of New Yorkers, all while striving for optimal financial and operational efficiency.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the welcome. I'm very happy to be here and I'd be delighted to answer any questions you or the Committee may have.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you Chair for your opening statement. So, I'm going to start with a few

1  
2 questions, big picture questions. Looking back at  
3 the de Blasio's Administration, what do you see DCP's  
4 top -- what were DCP's top accomplishments?

5 DAN GARODNICK: Yeah, thank you for that  
6 question. You know, I was not at DCP, so I had the  
7 benefit of looking at it from partially an outsiders  
8 perspective and I believe that the biggest  
9 accomplishments included adopting MIH to make  
10 affordable housing mandatory. It's most aggressive  
11 inclusionary housing program in the United States and  
12 ZQA, is something that I know that the Council was  
13 not only voted on but was deeply involved in removing  
14 obstacles that would help to allow for development to  
15 maximize affordable housing including senior housing  
16 and reducing parking requirements which were acting  
17 as an impediment for development. I also think in  
18 the end of the de Blasio administration of the SoHo  
19 and Gowanus rezonings were big accomplishments both  
20 neighborhoods with strong markets and great access to  
21 transit allowed for the city to advance its fair  
22 housing goals and ensure the neighborhoods, all  
23 neighborhoods are doing their part to provide  
24 affordable housing for New Yorkers. And you know of  
25 course I would be remiss not to mention the greater

1  
2 East Midtown rezoning which obviously was an  
3 important one. You know in my old district and you  
4 know we're you know partnered with City Planning you  
5 know and also we work very hard in the City Council  
6 to try to get that one right to promote economic  
7 development in the key area of New York City and tie  
8 density to transit improvement. So, I would site  
9 those as some of the big accomplishments under the  
10 last Mayor's Administration.

11 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: I see that Chair; you've  
12 been joined by your DCP General Counsel and who was  
13 there for some time. So, my question is when you  
14 came in, did they provide you with some of the  
15 lessons learned from the de Blasio Administration  
16 that can be improved now with this Adams  
17 Administration?

18 DAN GARODNICK: Definitely and you know I'm not  
19 only joined by the General Counsel but I also have  
20 our acting COO and the Executive Director and yes,  
21 they all have -- we've been having over the last month  
22 since I've been around some very detailed  
23 conversations about what has gone right and what has  
24 gone wrong.  
25

1  
2 Thinking about how we wanted to operate as an  
3 agency and certainly to your point at the start of  
4 the hearing Mr. Chairman, about responsiveness and  
5 engagement in community. You know we certainly want  
6 to do even more as it relates to community  
7 engagement, making an agency that is user friendly  
8 both on the side of private applicants who are coming  
9 to us for a variety of different applications that  
10 they see as important and also for communities and  
11 elected officials.

12 The agency is not always going to agree with  
13 everybody on everything but we certainly want to make  
14 sure that in an engagement with this highly  
15 professional and capable agency, that people are  
16 having a really good user experience.

17 Another lesson learned was that neighborhood  
18 plans you know they need more than just zoning. I  
19 think people look frequently to the zoning resolution  
20 to solve a lot of the problems that exist and the  
21 zoning resolution is not made for that. The Zoning  
22 Resolution is made to set a path for reasonable and  
23 responsible development in a way that the city has  
24 prioritized and so, we want to think about capital  
25 investments and neighborhood improvements in a more

1  
2 holistic way. It's one of the reasons why we are so  
3 excited about the Seed Fund which the Mayor announced  
4 as part of his blueprint, which I'd be happy to talk  
5 about in greater detail if you wish.

6 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, thank you for  
7 that. You mentioned MIH. Uhm, I was part of the  
8 Council, I had just came in as a new member when we  
9 voted on the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing and while  
10 I agree that it was a great step in bringing in more  
11 affordable housing, right, requiring these developers  
12 are going to build a market rate to set aside a  
13 certain percentage of units for affordable housing  
14 but there has been a concern within the Council that  
15 it does not do enough. Is City Planning looking into  
16 retweaking MIH?

17 DAN GARODNICK: So, we're open to this  
18 conversation and having it with the Council but what  
19 I will note is that you know this is today, the most  
20 aggressive program that exists in the country. That  
21 doesn't mean to say that it is not the moment to  
22 review, evaluate, take a hard look at it but we want  
23 to make sure that we hit the right balance here,  
24 right. Like most of us would love to see more  
25 affordability in more projects. What we need to do

1  
2 is we need to find the sweet spot between getting  
3 maximum affordable housing opportunities for our  
4 public policy goals while also ensuring that things  
5 get built. So, we are committed to taking a regular  
6 and ongoing look at that program and to do it with you  
7 Mr. Chairman, this Committee and the Council to make  
8 sure that we have that prescription right.

9 But we want to be very careful about it because  
10 we are you know counting on MIH. That is our tool to  
11 get private development of affordable housing for  
12 projects where the city is not the applicant. Those  
13 are the private applicants. So, we want to make sure  
14 that we're getting the most that we possibly can  
15 within a viable context.

16 So, the short answer is, we are eager to continue  
17 to look at this with you but we want to be very  
18 careful about it in the way that we prescribe as it  
19 was done as you know Mr. Chairman in the last go  
20 around, very carefully prescribe so as to try to hit  
21 the mark, where it was believed that not only would  
22 we get affordable housing but we also would get the  
23 units at the end of the day and not just stand on a  
24 broader principle but to actually make sure that  
25 something happened.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: ZQA, one of the components on ZQA was removing the parking requirements for some of these projects. One of the concerns that I'm hearing in my Community Boards where there's high density, there's a large number of affordable housing applications is that there's no parking in the area. We're building, we're building, we're building but we're not providing any parking. And so, it's becoming frustrating for my communities who are doing their fair share in housing but we're not looking into their parking requirements.

Is City Planning open to reviewing the parking requirements as part of uhm CQA?

DAN GARODNICK: The answer is yes and I will note that you know that you're making an important point about the need for parking and then of course we also hear from Council Members who say, let us not have you know a parking requirement because it inhibits the ability for more housing development.

So, we certainly are eager to take a look at this and to do it in a way that makes sense for all communities around the city but yes, it is obvious to us that there are concerns about the parking



requirements in both directions here and we're eager to work with you on that.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Uhm, I'm going to jump around on some questions. Redistricting is coming up and I know that my colleagues and I are monitoring this carefully as it affects us. Uhm, what role will City Planning play within the redistricting commission.

DAN GARODNICK: We intend to provide a supportive role as it relates to having a technical expertise on mapping and data. We have professionals in our agency who are experts in that and we have offered our resources to the Commission to help support their very important work.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, so are you going to assign specific staff to the redistricting commission to provide them with the support that they need?

DAN GARODNICK: Not full time but yes, we will have specific staff who are designated to act as support on these technical matters where our agency has expertise, yes.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright and the reason for that question is I want to jump into the

1 headcount and the resources. As of the Preliminary  
2 Budget, DCP reported that the headcount is 332  
3 positions, which is a decrease of 16 positions year  
4 over year. Additionally DCP to date has 63 vacancies  
5 or 90 percent of the Fiscal 2023 budgeted headcount.  
6 What's the impact that this hiring freeze has had on  
7 your agency?  
8

9 DAN GARODNICK: Yeah, thank you for that question  
10 and I appreciate your commitment to making sure that  
11 City Planning has what it needs and your recognition  
12 of the importance of the work that we are doing over  
13 here. I will note that uhm, you know we are doing  
14 our very best to work with the resources that we have  
15 and will. We have talented people we are working to  
16 reallocate as necessary to be able to perform at the  
17 highest capacity. The vacancy situation is – the  
18 numbers that you cited were accurate. It is not as  
19 dire as it sounds however and I will note why.

20 So, within that group of 63 vacancies, we have  
21 ten that are pending you know just onboarding right  
22 now. We have posted positions for 16 additional.  
23 Eight positions are expiring in Fiscal Year 2023.  
24 Five of them are dormant and unfunded, which leaves  
25 us 24 to be hired. So, uhm, you are right to observe

1  
2 that the present number of vacancies is what it is  
3 but when you take those other pieces into  
4 consideration, it's more like 24.

5 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Right, what's the average  
6 salary? What's the average salary range for these  
7 positions?

8 DAN GARODNICK: For the positions, which  
9 positions are you asking about? For all of them or  
10 for the one's where uhm -

11 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Let me go back. So, in  
12 terms of the DCP, the City Planning Planners, we were  
13 looking at salary ranges and the average salary that  
14 we noticed is in the range of \$65,000. Which I think  
15 it's difficult to retain talented staff in your  
16 agency at such a low salary. Do you as a new Chair  
17 plan on reviewing salaries and plan on working with  
18 the Mayor's office to increase salaries so that you  
19 can retain and attract talented staff?

20 DAN GARODNICK: The short answer is you know we  
21 obviously value our staff and we would love for  
22 everybody to be paid more. That is you know, that's  
23 obvious in any agency that would be the answer. But  
24 we are working within the boundaries that we have  
25 within the city budget and we are working through the

1  
2 tools that we have to build a pipeline of engagement  
3 of recruits through engagement with local  
4 universities, finding a way to create a dynamic and  
5 exciting environment to attract the best possible  
6 talent.

7 We have a retention plan which of course relies  
8 on regular career growth and equity in the work space  
9 and employee engagement. Salary is one very  
10 important component in that it helps us recruit when  
11 the economy is tight and it's also an indicator of  
12 value from the agency to our employees who have  
13 sustained strong performances. But we also are  
14 working to bring forth initiatives that will help  
15 build clearer career pathways and deepen engagement  
16 with the various social activities for people to  
17 reconnect with one another after a period of remote  
18 work.

19 You know, we know that salary considerations are  
20 part of every candidates decision but what we want to  
21 do is establish very good relationships with our  
22 people. Demonstrate that our work is impactful,  
23 provide opportunities for skill and career growth and  
24 you know we have an incredible dynamic agency, so I  
25 will say to anybody who's listening, paying attention

1  
2 right now, who wants to be a planner, it's a very  
3 exciting place to be and an exciting moment in time.  
4 So, we hope you will think about working with us as a  
5 career. It is a place where we're going to offer  
6 career growth and opportunities and we want to be the  
7 most dynamic and exciting planning agency not just in  
8 the region but also in the country.

9 So, we have big aspirations but Mr. Chairman, we  
10 appreciate your question and your concern about  
11 salaries. We obviously you know are concerned about  
12 that to but we want to offer all the other things  
13 that we know that we can offer, we call them off  
14 budget opportunities for growth and excitement within  
15 our agency.

16 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you. I have more  
17 questions but I'm going to hand it off to Chair Riley  
18 for some questions and then I see some Council  
19 Members have questions and then I'll come on for a  
20 second round. Chair Riley, the floor is yours.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Chair Salamanca and  
22 good morning to the Planning Committee and it's a  
23 pleasure to meet you Chair. I just have a few  
24 questions. In the past City Planning has sometimes  
25 faced criticism for the lack of affective outreach.

1  
2 Training and engagement within community boards and  
3 the broader public.

4 Moving forward, is the department looking to  
5 improve – looking forward, is the department looking  
6 to improve in how it informs the public and works  
7 with the diverse communities in our city?

8 DAN GARODNICK: The short answer is yes. Uhm,  
9 you know we are thinking about this question every  
10 single day. Uhm, we understand that frequently our  
11 agency speaks in a language that is difficult and not  
12 accessible to most New Yorkers. You know it's  
13 sometimes not accessible to me. And so, I uhm, you  
14 know I am sympathetic to the fact that we need to do  
15 a better job in laying out the history, the context,  
16 the relevance, the connection to community, speaking  
17 a language where people can understand the details.  
18 Obviously, you know once you start diving into map  
19 amendments and text amendments with you know even the  
20 acronyms that we're talking about here, ZQA's and  
21 MIH's. People's eyes glaze over pretty fast and we  
22 need to do a better job in telling a story about what  
23 we are trying to do. Why it's important but even  
24 beyond all of that, we need to be respectful of  
25 communities, community priorities and you know

1  
2 recognizing that you know City Planning is an agency  
3 which is you know, it has legal obligations under the  
4 charter. It has technical obligations in  
5 environmental and technical review. It is part of  
6 the ULURP process. It is not all of the ULURP  
7 process that we both, we're not going to be an agency  
8 that will be able to agree with everyone all the  
9 time. But what we can do is make sure that people  
10 are heard honestly, sincerely heard. That when  
11 applications are coming their way, certainly when  
12 they're public applications or something sponsored by  
13 the city, that there is high level of engagement from  
14 the city in the community about what it is, why it  
15 matters, why it is deserving of support and certainly  
16 when there is applications, even though that's not  
17 city planning, to do our best to guide applicants to  
18 engage better with neighborhoods and make sure that  
19 they understand what's happening and why it is  
20 relevant and important.

21 So, there's a very long answer to your very good  
22 question, which is yes, we definitely are interested  
23 in doing more and doing better on that front.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Oh, I agree, I think it's a  
25 place where we all could play our part which is

educating our community and just keeping them cognizant of new projects and how we want to you know fix our city. Does the proposed budget provide enough resources for DCP to effectively engage and respond to Community Boards and other organizations that request technical planning guidance.

DAN GARODNICK: We believe that it does and we understand that proposed budget takes us down a bit on personnel but we believe that we have what we need to be able accomplish these important goals and we look forward to working with you Mr. Chairman and members of this Committee and Council to make sure that we are doing the very best.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Chair. I'm going to move over to fair housing and equitable development data to.

The administration builds and renews, Renew and Reinvent Economic Recovery Plan includes ensuring all neighborhoods are meeting the needs for housing opportunities. Is DCP working with HPD on the citywide strategy for implementing the fair housing goal? And when can we expect more details?

DAN GARODNICK: Yes, and the short answer is yes, we are working with HPD on that and details are



1 coming in the coming months. I will note that on the  
2 EDDT that you noted, for the benefit of those who are  
3 less familiar with it. I mean, this is a really  
4 exciting tool that we are going to be releasing on  
5 April 1. Which is going to better equip New Yorkers  
6 with data that can facilitate some of these very  
7 challenging conversations that you noted about  
8 housing affordability, racial equity, displacement  
9 and the future of the city and our neighborhoods.  
10 This tool is going to allow the public to more easily  
11 see and explore data about housing and demographics,  
12 public health, while also allowing people to compare  
13 that data across neighborhoods and racial and ethnic  
14 groups as we plan for a fairer city. Well, it's not  
15 going to predict the affect of future changes on  
16 zoning or housing supply in a particular  
17 neighborhood, it will allow us to facilitate a  
18 discussion and create policies that increase  
19 affordable housing opportunities for New Yorkers to  
20 stay in their homes and their neighborhoods.  
21

22 We just had a public hearing on this tool on  
23 March 10. We were working in partnership with HPD.  
24 The racial impact study coalition and have been  
25

1  
2 hearing from New Yorkers and we're excited for it to  
3 go live on April 1.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Chair. As required  
5 by the Local Law 78 of 2021. In the coming months,  
6 the department will be fully launching a new  
7 equitable development tool and racial equity reports.  
8 How does DCP anticipate these new tools to inform the  
9 city's housing and planning policy?

10 DAN GARODNICK: Yeah, thank you for that. I mean  
11 I really do think it's going to allow the public to  
12 more easily see and explore data across neighborhoods  
13 and across racial and ethnic groups as we're planning  
14 for a fairer city. It's going to have you know a  
15 variety of results that you're going to be able to  
16 see on housing, demographics, health. You'll get all  
17 of the housing jobs in public health and more data in  
18 one place and you could actually compare them across  
19 neighborhoods and racial and ethnic groups.

20 So, we think it's going to be an important tool  
21 to allow for us to have some of these very difficult  
22 conversations about affordability and racial equity  
23 and displacement and to do it grounded in a tool that  
24 we have developed very carefully with our sister  
25 agency at HPD and also the racial impact study

coalition. So, coming soon, April 1 is the launch date.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Chair. Let's move over to climate change. The Resilient Neighborhoods Initiative was launched in 2013 to work directly with flood plain communities to reexam questions of land use, zoning and development. These studies were funded by use — excuse me, by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Disaster Recovery Block Grants.

For Fiscal 2023, the Federal Community Development Block Grant funding received by the Department decreased by \$2.6 million when compared to the Fiscal 2022 Adopted Budget. Largely due to the decrease of the \$1.7 million in Temporary Community Development Disaster Recovery Fund that have been budgeted for the environmental review work associated with the Resilient Edgemere Community Plan which is currently at the City Plan Commission stage at the URLUP.

Does the Administration have any desire to expand the Resilient Neighborhoods Initiative or similar place based planning initiative focused on resiliency to new neighborhoods?

1  
2       DAN GARODNICK: Thank you very much for that  
3 question. Really important question Mr. Chairman and  
4 as you know following Hurricane Sandy, this  
5 department embarked on a very ambitious resiliency  
6 portfolio that looked at specific neighborhoods and  
7 citywide coastal flooding issues.

8       We conducted ten neighborhood studies across all  
9 five boroughs and completed several topic area  
10 studies including examining the resiliency needs for  
11 retail and industrial uses. All this work fed into  
12 what became the Citywide Zoning Text Amendment,  
13 zoning for coastal flood resiliency which was adopted  
14 by the City Council in 2021 to make it easier for  
15 buildings to meet or exceed flood resistant  
16 construction standards.

17       So, these studies, these resilient neighborhood  
18 studies also led to the establishment of coastal,  
19 special coastal risk districts in select  
20 neighborhoods in the city most likely to be affected  
21 by title flooding and for which coastal protection is  
22 most challenging to limit future increases in  
23 residential density.

24       You know we are working very closely with the  
25 Mayor's Office on Climate Environmental Justice to

1  
2 your question for a climate adaptation road map,  
3 which will allow us to examine a range of climate  
4 hazards and adaptation measures citywide. And we  
5 expect that this work will identify neighborhoods for  
6 additional study and we're going to continue to work  
7 with them, the Mayor's Office of Climate  
8 Environmental Justice on those plans. So, I really  
9 appreciate your focusing on this is a very important  
10 one for us.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Chair. I'm just  
12 going to ask one more question because I see my  
13 colleagues who have questions. Regarding access to  
14 healthcare. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and  
15 the inequalities that is revealed, does DCPC enroll  
16 in land use and zoning for increasing access to  
17 primary and hospital healthcare for underserved  
18 communities?

19 DAN GARODNICK: The answer is yes. Uhm, you know  
20 particularly with the Department of Health, is  
21 looking for sites for clinics. Our agency could help  
22 to identify city sites or other sites that could be  
23 reused to accommodate these sorts of city facility  
24 needs. Also, in a neighborhood planning process, we  
25 might partner with DCAS or the Department of Health

1  
2 to improve public realm improvements, to make public  
3 realm improvements and allow for better access to  
4 these facilities themselves. Those are the areas in  
5 which I think that our agency would most likely be  
6 able to assist on the access to healthcare for  
7 underserved communities.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Chair. I'm going  
9 to yield the rest of my time to my colleagues. Chair  
10 Salamanca.

11 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you Chair Riley for  
12 your questions. I'm going to now open up questions  
13 from my colleagues. I'm going to start with Council  
14 Member Majority Leader Powers.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you. Nice to see  
17 you. I guess Chair Garodnick is the —

18 DAN GARODNICK: Hello, Mr. Majority Leader.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Yes, that's correct.  
20 Nice to see you. Thanks for the testimony and uh  
21 good to be on this side of asking Mr. Garodnick some  
22 questions but anyway more to the point, a couple  
23 items I had questions on.

24 One is, obviously we're talking a lot about you  
25 know my district and the district you know very well,

1 the kind of future year of commercial space and  
2 conversions and things like that. I just wanted to  
3 get an understanding of where and in terms of the  
4 budget to what might be needed for this. Where the  
5 agency is in terms of the involvement in that kind of  
6 a conversation like particularly around midtown and  
7 how to sort of move forward. And also how to sort of  
8 move forward and also uhm, how to you know what the  
9 on the question of conversions and you know if there  
10 is a need for any sort of budgetary items when you're  
11 doing that work and looking at that question.

12  
13 DAN GARODNICK: So, thank you and it's good to  
14 see you too on this side of things and thank you for  
15 all your incredible work.

16 So, the short answer is, we are exploring this  
17 question presently because as members of the Council  
18 and members of the public and our agency and others  
19 have identified, COVID has changed the way people are  
20 living and working and it has changed the way that we  
21 need to think about some of our commercial buildings.  
22 Not necessarily you know change entirely commercial  
23 districts but it does mean that we want to afford a  
24 certain level of flexibility for commercial buildings  
25 to evolve so that you know a building owner is not

1  
2 just boxed in to one use where another use might  
3 allow for more opportunity in a way that's consistent  
4 with city goals and priorities.

5 I will note that you know the city's zoning today  
6 allows flexibility for the conversion of buildings  
7 that were built before 1961 in districts where  
8 housing is permitted.

9 So, in the last decade about 8,000 units have  
10 been created through a residential conversion of  
11 office space including in Midtown and lower  
12 Manhattan. And the states multiple dwelling also has  
13 some flexible standards for light and air for  
14 buildings built before 1977. But we think that we  
15 actually through zoning could expand to a degree the  
16 categories of residential conversions that might be  
17 permitted here.

18 You know, more expansion might require state  
19 legislation to change the MDL but some of we believe  
20 that we can do through local zoning changes and you  
21 know to the point about you know your district, my  
22 former district, East Midtown, there were reports  
23 about a desire to change East Midtown. You know I  
24 will just note that we are looking to think about  
25 areas, places, rules, that limit conversion and that



1  
2 are boxing people in but it has never been a desire  
3 to change full scale commercial district. I mean,  
4 East Midtown is a you know obviously had a very  
5 difficult period of time over the last two years and  
6 continues. It also happens to be the area where you  
7 would want commercial office space because it is  
8 right next to one of the city's and reasons most  
9 important transit hubs.

10 So, we don't want to be so quick to do things  
11 that would you know change those rules you know  
12 completely. I will also note, there was nothing in  
13 the East Midtown rezoning which actually prevented  
14 the existing opportunities to do residential  
15 conversions. So, those opportunities existed before  
16 and also after the East Midtown rezoning.

17 Your question is a good one about budget. I  
18 don't know the answer to that one yet Council Member.  
19 Let me come back to you on it but I really appreciate  
20 that you flag it and let me come back to you on that  
21 one.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: And just permission, I'm  
23 just going to ask one follow-up question and I have a  
24 totally separate question. I'll give them to you  
25

both at the same time so that I don't have to keep interrupting and thank you to the Chairs.

But the second is, I just wanted to get a sense of timeline of when you think the agency might be saying to us at the City Council, to Mayor's, anyone else. Like, here is what we might need, desire or here is what the timeline looks like for us to have a plan or some ideas or thoughts for how we might accommodate some change beyond the ones that you noted, the 70 Law, 73, 61 changes?

And then second is, uhm, totally separate topic, something, you know last year both myself and the Mayor had talked about some regulations that kind of currently exist for small businesses notably in the night life industry in New York City when it comes to some of these remnants of the Cabaret Law that still exist in the zoning that prohibit that and could be punitive and certainly could be targeted towards certain establishments and that is what we call zoning for dancing here at the Council but you know certainly regulations that uh, still kind of layer on to existing places, notably places nearby Stuyvesant town.

1  
2       And we had done a letter last year, the Mayor  
3 agreed to with us that that should be repealed or  
4 changed. So, I wanted to get a status update on  
5 that. Your thoughts, where we might be on that and  
6 where we're headed?

7       DAN GARODNICK: Yes, thank you on both. The  
8 first one is, this a coming months sort of  
9 proposition as it relates to opportunities for uhm,  
10 conversions for commercial space. This is something  
11 which is front on our agenda and something that we  
12 are looking at presently and we look forward to  
13 working with you to try to get this to a good place.

14       On the point about dancing, I mean, this is the  
15 sort of thing that goes into the hopper of the sorts  
16 of things that we want to address about changing  
17 outdated zoning rules, which are having an effect.  
18 Which are inconsistent with what anybody really needs  
19 or wants. It is fanatically similar to conversions  
20 of office buildings which are no longer should be  
21 used primarily as office building or use  
22 restrictions, which in some cases you know are one  
23 thing on one side of the street and another thing on  
24 the other side of the street. We want to — we need  
25 as a city to be a little bit more flexible here.

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1  
2 Uhm, we continue to be in an emergency situation as  
3 it relates to you know coming out of COVID. You know  
4 the need for economic growth and recovery and we want  
5 to make sure that our rules allow for evolution  
6 particularly where they are out of date. So, this is  
7 also Council Member on our agenda and we will  
8 certainly want to come back to you with some details  
9 on this proposal too.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Great thank you. Thanks  
11 to the Chairs and nice to see you and good luck. I  
12 hope everybody's not too mean to you today but you  
13 never know.

14 DAN GARODNICK: Thank you Councilman, I  
15 appreciate it.

16 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you Majority  
17 Leader. Next, uhm, the next round of questions will  
18 go to Council Member Bottcher and then over to  
19 Majority Whip Powers and Council Member Brewer.  
20 Council Member Bottcher.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Hello Chair Garodnick.  
23 How are you?

24 DAN GARODNICK: Hi there Councilman, good to see  
25 you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCER: Likewise. Chair  
Garodnick, what is the estimated population growth  
for New York City over the next decade?

DAN GARODNICK: Councilman, we expected in 2030  
to grow to 9.1 million but we're updating those  
numbers as we get detailed results of the 2020 Census  
but the short answer is 9.1.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCER: So, like another  
600,000 residents or so? And how many units of  
housing do City Planners estimate will be needed to  
keep up with that population. Ideally, how many  
units of new housing would be generated for an  
additional 600,000 residents?

DAN GARODNICK: Well, I would need to come back  
to you with more details but one of the things that I  
will note is that we need housing production that not  
only keeps up with the population growth but also in  
other changes the way, in the way housing is  
presently being used.

So, we actually have an interactive feature on  
our website which shows like the average number of  
people per household dipped in the last decade. So,  
seemingly is a .02 you know dip. Small number you  
would think, but that small change means that we need

1  
2 more than 25,000 additional units just to house that  
3 same number of people.

4       So, you know, it's not a direct mathematic  
5 equation, population x, therefore housing wide. Some  
6 of it involves you know the changes in the way people  
7 are living and you know we, we do know that you know  
8 we have added about 20,000 units a year over the last  
9 decade but we need to do more. I mean, we have to do  
10 more and we need to sustain higher levels of  
11 production here in order to provide housing for  
12 everybody who needs it and you know, we need - this  
13 is a all hands on deck situation. We need the  
14 Council's support. We need everyone's support to be  
15 able to do this and to keep up. It's really - your  
16 question is an excellent one and regardless of what  
17 the precise dollar, the precise unit number is, the  
18 answer is, we need to do a lot and we need to take  
19 all the opportunities that we can find.

20       COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: So, will you be coming  
21 back to the Council with how many units you  
22 anticipate will be needed and also, some strategies  
23 for addressing the issue that - the density issue  
24 that the number of people occupying units that you  
25 identified.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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DAN GARODNICK: The answer is, we will be coming back to you constantly to address this issue and we hope that we will come back to a welcome audience because we need to do a lot more and we think about you know I've been around at City Planning for a month and I will say that you know we need to find the opportunities that we can take in communities and we want them to be welcomed when we need to create housing. It frequently is a complicated matter as you know Councilman and all the Council Members here and certainly I remember it in my days too, it's difficult for communities to say yes to most things but certainly housing is one of them.

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And so, we are going to need a lot of support from the Council to be able to help us accommodate whatever that precise dollar, dollar - I keep saying dollar amount. The precise unit number ends up being because we have to keep pace and we have to do a lot more as you are correctly pointing out here.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: What I'd like to do is have a conversation with you and my colleagues about what that number is. Try to, if at all possible come to some kind of collective understanding about what

1  
2 we are going to need to generate and then work  
3 together on some kind of larger plan to do it. Thank  
4 you very much.

5 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you Council Member  
6 Bottcher for your questions. Next up, we'll have  
7 Majority Whip Council Member Powers.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you Chair  
9 and good morning all. Uhm, just a few questions for  
10 the Department of City Planning. I do want to  
11 piggyback on a point that was raised by Council  
12 Member Chair Riley in terms of wanting to understand  
13 the citing's of healthcare facilities. I represent  
14 the 31<sup>st</sup> Council District, covering parts of  
15 Southeast Queens and the Rockaways and in far  
16 Rockaway in particular, we've seen significant uhm,  
17 growth and development and so, I want to understand  
18 DCP's I guess lens that they are looking through as  
19 they're shaping these communities because I've found  
20 that we have fallen short of ensuring that we have  
21 strong health infrastructure in a lot of these  
22 communities that are being developed.

23 I wanted to understand, has the agency committed  
24 any funding or otherwise created a plan to expand its  
25 staff capacity to analyze issues such as the need for



1 hospital. Such as the local strain on resources like  
2 traffic and parking, sewage and water systems. Uhm,  
3 because while it may be well intentioned, goals of  
4 the project that DCP tries to push forward have found  
5 like some of these elements have been missing in the  
6 conversation. In terms of looking at it from a more  
7 holistic perspective. I know there is like Edgemere  
8 Resiliency project underway and this is an attempt to  
9 try and make the community more resilient but then on  
10 another end of that project, it looks to have a R6  
11 for three different buildings to bring density right  
12 across the train tracks from Arber East which is a  
13 pretty big development underway. Not to mention  
14 downtown far Rockaway, construction happening and you  
15 could probably hear it in the background right now.  
16 And we have no trauma centers here in Rockaway at  
17 all. And so, I'm extremely concerned about that.

18 I also want to know how the agency is  
19 prioritizing equity in the budget for the next fiscal  
20 year. How the agency is allocating resources and  
21 balancing development projects to benefit  
22 marginalized communities.

23 And then the last question, I know my time is  
24 running short. Climate change will only increase the  
25

1  
2 frequency of severe weather events, like coastal  
3 flooding, impacting communities. What longer term  
4 plans does the agency have to account for those  
5 threats and how is the agency investing to fortify  
6 the city's infrastructure in high risk areas?

7 DAN GARODNICK: Alright, thank you Council  
8 Member. I wrote them down, so I'm going to get them  
9 all.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 DAN GARODNICK: Thank you for the questions. So,  
12 the first part of your question about healthcare and  
13 access to healthcare and facilities, you know we work  
14 with DCAS to uhm, to find areas and possible  
15 opportunities for agencies to locate. So, for  
16 example, you know if there are - there's a private  
17 actor you know looking for space, we would you know  
18 work with DCAS to try to help them find something.  
19 Do public realm improvements to improve access to  
20 facilities and even look to find sites that exist  
21 that might be reaccommodated for new uses like  
22 healthcare facilities. That is a role that our  
23 agency can play.

24 On the subject of uhm, equitable development in  
25 the budget and helping to - helping to invest in

1  
2 historically underserved neighborhoods. I will note  
3 that one of the things that we are most excited about  
4 at City Planning is the initiative in the budget  
5 referred to as Seed Funding.

6 Which is a different way of looking at capital  
7 funding than what has historically been done. As you  
8 know, historically agencies have done sort of siloed  
9 capital budgeting. You know the Parks Department  
10 goes to OMB. The DEP goes to the Budget office for  
11 the same end. Everybody does their sort of siloed  
12 needs.

13 What we are looking to do is to take a more  
14 holistic view on capital budgeting in a way that does  
15 it with an equity lens that looks for investments  
16 that are not just single agency investments but that  
17 are ones that will have a catalytic impact and really  
18 move the needle for neighborhoods that need them.  
19 Where there's opportunities for growth. Where  
20 there's opportunities to correct historic  
21 disinvestment and we have high hopes for this  
22 mechanism, which the mayor just announced on March 10  
23 as a way to drive outcomes in neighborhoods that need  
24 them and also that are consistent with city policies.

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1           So, that is something that I would point you to  
2  
3   look for and more to come on that as we develop this  
4   program. We also want to make it very clear that you  
5   don't need to have a rezoning for there to be  
6   investment in community right. There's need for  
7   investment in communities in all corners of the city,  
8   with or without a companion rezoning at the same  
9   time.

10          So, we are going to start this process up, look  
11   for catalytic opportunities and then also work with  
12   neighborhoods and figure out what their needs are and  
13   think with Community Boards and other groups about  
14   what they want to see. What they need to have in  
15   their neighborhoods that will help to guide this  
16   fund.

17          You last question about resiliency, you know  
18   obviously this has been a very important point for  
19   the Department of City Planning, particularly post  
20   Sandy, where we embarked on a very ambitious  
21   portfolio to look at both specific neighborhoods and  
22   also citywide coastal flooding issues and the end  
23   result was not only ten neighborhood studies but also  
24   a citywide zoning text amendment you know zoning for  
25

1  
2 coastal flood resiliency which was adopted by the  
3 City Council in 2021.

4       So, this is a really important initiative and we  
5 want to try to fund ways that align our zoning rules  
6 in a way that respect what we know to be a changing  
7 environment and also, you know changing those rules  
8 which are inhibiting the ability for sustainability  
9 at the same time. So, zoning for coastal flood  
10 resiliency but also zoning for carbon neutrality. We  
11 want to make it easier for people to get those solar  
12 panels up on their roofs. We want to make it easier  
13 for people to do battery storage. We want to define  
14 electric vehicles in the charging stations in the  
15 zoning resolution. Right now, all you see is gas  
16 stations.

17       So, we are thinking about this problem from the  
18 perspective of reducing the limitations for  
19 sustainability initiatives, while also zoning in a  
20 way that protects and ensures resiliency against  
21 flooding and the horrible impacts that we have seen.

22       So, I did my best to answer all of them. I, you  
23 know, I hope I got them all.

24       COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: I would like to  
25 say that it is refreshing to hear you as Chair say

1  
2 that you know, there's no need to necessarily rezone  
3 to get the investment. It's always a unique need and  
4 I think a lot of times there have been people who  
5 believe that in order to get the much needed  
6 investments you have to up zone and you know you have  
7 communities like Springfield Gardens in my district  
8 who are looking to downzone to keep the neighborhood  
9 to where it is and manageable in terms of like the  
10 infrastructure and capacity.

11 So, I'm happy to hear that and I just end with  
12 saying I would love to have a commitment from you  
13 that as we look at these zoning projects and  
14 opportunities, especially in Far Rockaway that we  
15 hold the line to make sure we are able to have much  
16 needed trauma care developed in the community as  
17 well. As well as making sure that the school is  
18 developed.

19 Because what I found even in the Arber East  
20 Project is that a school; we were told the school was  
21 sided but just like you're building all of these  
22 apartments and no one in them yet, you know that  
23 people will come. I feel that same approach needs to  
24 happen in terms of the school because we - I just  
25 read an email from a parent today who feels there's

1  
2 no real choices for her child and she moved to  
3 Rockaway. And that's not something we want parents  
4 to walk away with. And so, for me, with the  
5 development, we have to look more holistically making  
6 sure that we're looking at the infrastructure and  
7 what the community needs and would like and one of  
8 that in Rockaway in particular is to have a trauma  
9 facility there. We're looking for another hospital  
10 that has trauma care and as they are looking at doing  
11 a communitywide development like an engineer  
12 resiliency, I feel that has to be center in that  
13 conversation as well as a school.

14 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright thank you  
15 Majority Whip for your questions. My apologies, I  
16 have to move on.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Next up, we'll have  
19 Council Member Brewer followed by Council Member  
20 Sanchez.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much Chair  
23 Garodnick, it's very nice to see you. I'm at a Parks  
24 Department facility. You know how I am.

25 DAN GARODNICK: I love it.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Well, first question is,  
3 we all want housing but we want affordable housing,  
4 at least in Manhattan. And is there any discussion,  
5 I supported MIH when it first was instituted by de  
6 Blasio and I have to say it's not been a great number  
7 in terms of units and of course the model is market  
8 pays for the affordable but we don't end up with much  
9 affordable.

10 So, the question is, it's not an easy one because  
11 I know if we change the model, we might end up in a  
12 taking position. So, I want to know with you and  
13 Jessica Katz, is there something else we can think of  
14 to develop more affordable housing? Number one.

15 Number two, we have this endless discussion about  
16 lot mergers and air rights and mechanicals and  
17 obviously the issue is air rights, is there any way  
18 we can know if there's a transfer and same thing with  
19 lot mergers because we've had some bad experiences.  
20 I also want to mention that thanks to Council Member  
21 Powers, we were able in one Midtown building to add a  
22 space for artists. I'm not talking about a mural, an  
23 actual space for — I wanted it to be for the life of  
24 the building for a number of years and we do need to  
25 think more about the arts and artists and we don't do



1  
2 that. And I think that the commercial spaces should  
3 be a place that should be mandated but every new  
4 building that has – even if it's as of right, it  
5 needs to have an art space but certainly if there is  
6 a city input.

7 I'm also interested in uhm I'm very concerned  
8 about NYCHA and open space. I do think it should go  
9 through the ULURP process. I didn't know what your  
10 positions is on that. I'm not interested in  
11 destroying the open space in NYCHA but at the very  
12 least, it has to go through a process and I just want  
13 to mention that the Lincoln Square special district  
14 will come to you and I hope you support it and of  
15 course, we're all concerned about resiliency.

16 So, what my main questions are, this affordable  
17 housing crisis which is abating. Thank you very much  
18 and congratulations to Edith also.

19 DAN GARODNICK: Thank you Council Member. Good  
20 to see you. Uhm, let me uhm, your question is an  
21 excellent one about the balance of using MIH for  
22 affordability and we you know, we know that it may be  
23 the most aggressive mandatory program that exists in  
24 the country but also, it's you know, it is a subject  
25

1  
2 of regular conversation in the Council and City  
3 Planning as to whether or not it is sufficient.

4 And you know, one of the challenges as you know  
5 Council Member that we have here is that we need to  
6 hit the right balance on when we're relying - if  
7 we're going to rely in any way on the private sector  
8 to do anything. The mandates that we put in place  
9 need to be such that allow for the project to  
10 actually get built.

11 And so, we are eager to have this conversation  
12 with you and the Council as to whether or not we've  
13 got the right balance here but we also know that if  
14 relying on the private sector in these context to  
15 build our affordable housing then there is a going to  
16 be a number. I don't know what that number is. That  
17 will be the max on every individual project as to  
18 what is actually feasible. But to your point about  
19 how to get more and how to do more, yes, we are eager  
20 to circle up with Jessica Katz and with the Housing  
21 team, HPD and others to think about ways that we can  
22 expand the universe for us as an opportunity even  
23 beyond MIH and that is an important initiative for  
24 us.  
25

1           So, we look forward to working with you on that.

2           We'd like to come back to you on you know lot  
3           mergers, Lincoln Square, NYCHA and I will only note  
4           that on the subject of artists, I agree with your  
5           goal of trying to find space for artists and I think  
6           we should look to create flexibility in a way that  
7           allows for artist space.

8           You know, the one caution that I would offer as  
9           it relates to mandating the space is that one of the  
10          things that we are -- you know some of the Council  
11          Members who have come up before have raised the  
12          questions about creating more flexibility for in  
13          circumstances where things have not worked out as  
14          intended.

15          So, I only caution that I think you're right to  
16          try to find this space and I think we should look to  
17          allow for that use and for more uses and more  
18          flexibility in a way that allows New York City to  
19          continue to be vibrant, to be evolved and to take the  
20          energy that --

21           COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

22           DAN GARODNICK: The energy that exists, but I  
23           think we need to look at that one together but I  
24           share your goal for sure.  
25

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1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, and then the last  
3 one is — one question is Docs Doors, are you guys  
4 making a decision on my apporance of Docs Doors?

5 DAN GARODNICK: We are working with, as you know  
6 we're working with DOB and City Hall to come up with  
7 a recommendation on this one. This should be soon.  
8 As you know it's complicated. The zoning resolution  
9 didn't contemplate these sorts of things. So, we are  
10 working on the right set of factors here that will  
11 allow for better definition but we appreciate very  
12 much that you raise the issue because the right to  
13 raise the issue.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much.

15 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you Council Member  
16 Brewer. Now, we'll have Council Member Sanchez.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Hello. So, good to see  
19 you Chair Garodnick face to face. So, I have a slue  
20 of questions, so I'm just going to go right into it  
21 and see what we can get.

22 So, my question really is around the holistic  
23 planning approach and pushes that there were for the  
24 city to adopt comprehensive planning and things like  
25 that during the last administration right. We've

1  
2 heard so many criticisms that there is a piecemeal  
3 approach to development and capital spending as that  
4 as a result, we as a city have fundamentally failed  
5 to plan for our challenges.

6 Uhm, you know these include making sure that  
7 every single part of the city is contributing to what  
8 Council Member Brewer just mentioned, contributing to  
9 constructing new housing, right. Fair share of new  
10 facilities, making sure hat our transportation  
11 network is doing what it needs to do. All of these  
12 things right and so, I want to be clear that in  
13 asking my question, I am not at all saying that  
14 planning and development is not happening right in  
15 the City of New York. Of course it is. DCP, HPD,  
16 EDC, DOT, so many different agencies are involved in  
17 the process. But there is not a central place,  
18 right. Even Plan NYC and One NYC are not deep enough  
19 to really make sure that agencies at the agency level  
20 there is directives on the planning and development  
21 for the city as a whole.

22 And so, here are a couple of different questions  
23 right because in my view right, the DCP has been  
24 called the Department of Zoning you know and it's so  
25 true that your capacity is just eaten up by all, like

1  
2 reacting to all of these land use applications all  
3 the time right. And I want to recognize that having  
4 worked with, with you all so closely over the past  
5 few years at the staff.

6 And so, my question is about DCP's vision under  
7 the Adams Administration and one, how do you react to  
8 previous pushes for comprehensive planning or a  
9 comprehensive planning framework for the City of New  
10 York?

11 Two, there was in the previous administration  
12 commitments through the Neighborhood Development Fund  
13 to make sure that when we did do neighborhood  
14 rezonings, there were investments planned, so are  
15 those still onboard? I believe Jerome is behind on  
16 certain commitments and I would really love to have  
17 your commitment to you know make sure that those  
18 projects are fully funded and implemented but what's  
19 the future of the Neighborhood Development Fund?

20 Three, on community planning, you know bringing  
21 back to the greater East Midtown rezoning and how  
22 great that process was. You know we had a  
23 preplanning process right before the ULURP. I tried  
24 to for the rezoning but it was just such a great  
25 example of how you gather stakeholders before you

1  
2 have meaningful engagement and that feeds into in a  
3 very direct way future zoning plans.

4       So, what is your stance on community planning and  
5 finally, a follow-up on something you said earlier  
6 regarding the Mayor's blueprint. What is that? What  
7 is the Seed funding that you are referring to? So,  
8 I'll stop there and thank you. Good to see you.

9       DAN GARODNICK: Good to see you too. Uhm, thank  
10 you for those questions. So, for the benefit of  
11 those who don't know, Council Member Sanchez and I  
12 sat in a room together for and with Council Member  
13 Brewer, former Borough President Brewer and many  
14 other stakeholders to talk about, and Edith was  
15 there, City Planning was there and MTA was there.  
16 Everybody from the real estate board to the community  
17 board was in this room and we had a really thoughtful  
18 engagement over many, many months about what that  
19 plan should look like and it was I thought Council  
20 Member very productive and it brought us a really  
21 good result.

22       And you know that's the great model. It's not  
23 going to be able to be employed in every project,  
24 although in big projects, if you're talking about  
25

like something of this size and scale of one like that, that is a good model.

But as you pointed out, most things are not the East Midtown rezoning, they're mostly much smaller. Some of them are one up, some of them are this, some of them are that. But I agree with you that having a place for people to talk about their interests as opposed to their positions and to express their views in a place where it is uhm you know not where you feel like you can express your views and have an opportunity to be heard. To me that is mission critical in the way that we as an agency intend to engage with the public and with neighborhoods. The precise format will change from one thing to next but that is certainly a guiding principle for me is to how I want to be able to have that level of engagement.

So, I've answered your last question first. Now, on to comprehensive planning. You know, obviously in a city that's as large and dynamic as New York, so planning is sort of a -- it's a continuous process. We can't just set it and put it aside and forget it because as we're seeing in the moment that we're in right now and with questions from some of your



1  
2 colleagues, you know there is changes that need to  
3 happen to the zoning resolution right now because of  
4 outdated commercial office stock or the fact that  
5 only gas stations are defined in the zoning  
6 resolution as opposed to electric car charging  
7 stations or you know, dancing is out in some places,  
8 certain uses are in.

9       So, there is an effort underway for us to think  
10 about how do we both you know do thoughtful planning  
11 while also retaining a level of flexibility to evolve  
12 to changing moments and changing times.

13       You know a critical part of our work at City  
14 Planning is to produce you know thoughtful analysis  
15 and inform public discussions and decision making  
16 alike for example, the equitable development data  
17 tool which as you know is coming out in a couple of  
18 weeks. Which we're really excited about. A way to  
19 center equity and other key priorities in our  
20 decision making process and we are really committed  
21 to engaging with communities and the public in a  
22 variety of ways from using the EDDT tool to also an  
23 improved process of community district needs in the  
24 capital budget process, so that we have public  
25

1  
2 guidance on principles for a strong and good urban  
3 design.

4 Uhm, which brings us to the blueprint and the  
5 Seed Funding, which is, you know this is in formation  
6 right. So, the Mayor announced and the concept here  
7 is to do two categories of funding. First is shorter  
8 term a catalytic investment, capital investment in  
9 communities where the mayor believes or we believe  
10 there will be an impact beyond a single agencies  
11 capital budget needs.

12 So, if you take an example of a neighborhood  
13 which needs a variety of different things and if the  
14 city would just do it, it would have a much broader  
15 impact than if you you know left that alone or if you  
16 didn't do it in a coordinated sort of way across  
17 agencies. That's the sort of investment that the  
18 city wants to make.

19 But then we're going to have a broader process.  
20 We're going to go to different communities, talk  
21 about this more holistically, talk about what people  
22 need and want. Talk about how we can actually have a  
23 bigger impact through the capital budget process to  
24 address historic underinvestment in certain  
25 communities. Look at all this through an equity

1  
2 lens, find ways to promote economic growth with or  
3 without a rezoning. So, you know the point here is,  
4 NDF was part of the rezoning process. This is not  
5 part of the rezoning process. It could be part of  
6 the rezoning process; it does not need to be part of  
7 the rezoning process.

8 And so, what we are doing is we're trying to  
9 separate those points somewhat and to be able to say  
10 that we can have growth and we can create economic  
11 opportunity. We can improve public realm. We can  
12 deliver capital improvements in communities that  
13 cross over a variety of agencies separate and apart  
14 from what we are doing in the four square of the  
15 zoning resolution.

16 So, I think that's the answer to your NDF and  
17 your Seed question and it's something that we are  
18 really excited to work with you Council Member and  
19 certainly your colleagues on this Committee and more  
20 broadly to activate.

21 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay, thank you. Thank  
22 you Council Member Sanchez for your questions. We're  
23 going to wrap this up Chair but I just have to ask  
24 you these questions that I didn't get to ask and that  
25 has to do with neighborhood rezoning's. The

1  
2 Administration, the prior administration, they did  
3 quite a few neighborhood rezoning's and as part of  
4 the uhm, as part of the process, uh, there was a  
5 policy put in place that when neighborhood rezoning's  
6 were approved, the capital funding for infrastructure  
7 and community investment was attached to it.

8 Question number one, does this new  
9 administration, are they planning any new  
10 neighborhood rezoning's and if so, will that policy  
11 continue?

12 DAN GARODNICK: So, the answer to the first is,  
13 we surely will although there are none that I am here  
14 to announce today. And two, we believe that capital  
15 investment can and should be done separate and apart  
16 from rezoning's. As I was noting with Council Member  
17 Sanchez, it can partner with rezoning's. It would be  
18 appropriate for a rezoning but it does not need to be  
19 driven by a rezoning and we need to think about our  
20 capital budget more holistically across agencies and  
21 with an eye toward having a catalytic impact.

22 So, you make an investment but we've identified  
23 that this investment is something that's going to  
24 prompt growth in a meaningful way with our without  
25 changing to the zoning resolution. So, the short

1  
2 answer is, we are not yet at a point where we you  
3 know we're proposing any neighborhood rezoning's. As  
4 you know Mr. Chairman, there are a couple that have  
5 been suggested to us from Council Members. We  
6 certainly are open to those. We look forward to  
7 continuing that conversation with you and others.

8 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: In terms of the  
9 rezoning's, it's part of the process for a rezoning  
10 or ULURP application. Many times they have to go  
11 through an EIS Environmental Impact Study and the  
12 seeker is attached to it.

13 In the past, I've had hearings with your General  
14 Counsel Susan Amron regarding going back after a few  
15 years that a rezoning has been approved to see if  
16 what they anticipated, the anticipation of what  
17 communities or what impact that rezoning had on that  
18 immediate community. If they will go back you know  
19 two to five years to see if they were on queue or  
20 what changes their work and her response, which was a  
21 little frustrating was that City Planning is a  
22 forward thinking agency. Therefore, they don't go  
23 back and check. Is that policy going to change?

24 DAN GARODNICK: So, let me first say that and she  
25 is also on this call, so she can speak for herself

1 but I think I can handle this one. Uhm, Mr.

2 Chairman, we certainly understand what you are after  
3 and we actually agree with the notion that we should  
4 look back and think about impacts.  
5

6 So, for example, when it comes to housing  
7 production, both inside and outside of rezoning  
8 areas, monitoring how long it takes for projects to  
9 go from planning to occupancy. You know we are – we  
10 are looking at those elements and thinking about how  
11 successful they were in the context of rezoning's.

12 Environmental carries some challenges because  
13 it's hard to know exactly the causality. It's hard  
14 to know exactly what was the cause of the things that  
15 may or may not have happened but it's certainly  
16 something which as a result of the new Local Law 162  
17 that we are excited to take a look at more formally  
18 as to you know for covered projects going back 14  
19 years and looking at the impacts of housing, changes  
20 in population, housing prices, rents, incomes, units  
21 greater – We are eager to do that. Sort of a look  
22 back and we look forward to partnering with you to  
23 make sure that we are giving you and the Council what  
24 you need to be able to make thoughtful determinations  
25

1  
2 on whether we have succeeded in our joint projects  
3 that we are undertaking.

4 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: So, Mr. Chair, my  
5 question again, is City Planning going to change that  
6 policy and go back and review the rezoning's or  
7 that's not something that it's on the table?

8 DAN GARODNICK: Well, we do -- we review the  
9 rezoning's in that we look and see what the impacts  
10 have been. We do that but I think you're asking a  
11 more specific question that I want to make sure that  
12 I'm giving you the correct answer. When it comes to  
13 the EIS and the various things that are studied in  
14 EIS, if you go back in ten years and you look at what  
15 the actual impacts or what the changes in traffic may  
16 have been or what the air quality is, or what the  
17 school population is, it may or may not be connected  
18 to the thing that actually was done.

19 So, we just want to caution. We would be very  
20 happy to have a more complete conversation with you  
21 about how we might be able to do this in a way that's  
22 even more thoughtful. If you want us to go beyond  
23 what Local Law 162 does and you want us to do more,  
24 we're open to it but I do caution that there are some  
25 limits to what we can do in a way that actually gets

1  
2 us the answers. So, ones that I think you're looking  
3 for which is why I am answering it the way that I'm  
4 answering it.

5 So, we would be very happy to continue that  
6 conversation and think about ways to do that better  
7 but I think it's probably a longer conversation.

8 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright and then lastly,  
9 uhm, in the last Administration I had conversations  
10 with then the Deputy Mayor about certain  
11 neighborhoods in communities such as mine or in other  
12 community or council districts, where we have  
13 privately owned homes, two, three story homes blocks  
14 of them but they're zoned for an R7. And there has  
15 been instances where there may be a gap between each  
16 home. There's a little lot there and a developer  
17 will come and purchase that lot and build a six,  
18 seven story building and just killed the character of  
19 that neighborhood.

20 I asked back, a few years back I asked about  
21 maybe down zoning areas to keep the character of the  
22 neighborhood, especially communities such as mine who  
23 has lots of density but I have certain blocks that  
24 are two and three family homes that we want to keep  
25 them that way and I was told that the city - well,



1  
2 that administration at the time was not in the  
3 business of down zoning.

4 Uhm, is this administration, would they accept or  
5 review areas that we would like down zoned to keep  
6 the character of the neighborhood intact? Especially  
7 communities that have high density.

8 DAN GARODNICK: So, the short answer to your  
9 question is that we want to be in the business of  
10 thoughtful zoning. We want to be able to as so many  
11 of your colleagues have noted through this hearing,  
12 we have a housing crisis, we need to build more  
13 housing. We're not the builders. We need to allow  
14 for the opportunity for housing to be built in the  
15 city. And there are protections that can be afforded  
16 to certain areas either through Landmarks Commission  
17 or other rules, in neighborhood plans that have  
18 unzoning's associated. There's a lot of ways that  
19 these things can be accomplished.

20 The one thing I would flag for you is that if the  
21 city is going to be the applicant, if the city is  
22 going to put forth the plan or the goal or the  
23 outcome, you know it's too harsh to say the quote  
24 that you gave what the Deputy Mayor said in the last  
25 Administration, whoever that was. But we do have a

1  
2 high level of need to create housing. So, we need to  
3 spend the resources that we have in the agency on the  
4 things which we believe will further that policy  
5 goal. That does not mean to stay. That cannot  
6 include some protections in some neighborhoods in a  
7 thoughtful way but we do need to make decisions and  
8 you can certainly help us with this as we make  
9 resource allocations as to how to get it all done.

10 So, you know we want to be thoughtful. We've  
11 already seen plans coming from neighborhoods that  
12 include limited protections while also including  
13 unzoning's on wide avenues and things like that.  
14 Those are things that we certainly would be willing  
15 to have a conversation with you and others about.

16 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, Mr. Chair, thank  
17 you for your time today and we I guess we have lots  
18 of follow ups but I really want to thank you for your  
19 time and answering our questions.

20 DAN GARODNICK: Thank you and your staff as well.

21 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: With that, Sergeant at  
22 Arms, we'll take a one minute recess and we will  
23 continue on after that DoITT.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Alright, for our recess, I'm  
25 going to be sound checking members of DoITT, so I'm

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going to begin with Commissioner Fraser, once I send  
a unmute request if you could please accept it.  
Commissioner Fraser?

MATT FRASER: Yes sir.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Alright, I hear you loud and  
clear, thank you.

MATT FRASER: Alright.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Uhm, Committee Counsel Irene,  
we want to do a soundcheck.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Absolutely. Can you hear me?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes, I can. Thank you. Chair  
Gutiérrez, I'm going to unmute you for a sound check.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Hello, hello.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Hello, alright, you should be  
cohosted soon, you'll be able mute and unmute  
yourself as you choose. Next up, I'm going to sound  
check Deputy Commissioner Antonelli, who I'm not  
seeing on this call yet. Uhm, COO McGrath, I'm going  
to unmute you.

MICHAEL MCGRATH: Okay, good afternoon.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon, thank you.  
And General Counsel Richard. General Counsel Richard  
if you could please give me a sound check.

TYNIA RICHARD: Hello, can you hear me?

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes, I can. Thank you very  
much.

TYNIA RICHARD: Okay.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Is Deputy Commissioner with us  
or —

JOSEPH ANTONELLI: Yes, I'm here.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Oh, gotcha, okay thank you  
sir.

JOSEPH ANTONELLI: Yup, no problem.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, Sergeant at  
Arms, are we ready to begin?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: We are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you. Alright, so  
we'll begin now. At this time, we will take up the  
hearing for DoITT and I will turn it over to the  
Chair, Chair Gutiérrez who is the Chair of the  
Committee on Technology for the Council. Chair  
Gutiérrez.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you Chair  
Salamanca. Good afternoon. I'm going to just start  
with some remarks and then I'm going to pass it over  
to our Moderator Irene is that yes? Oh great, thank  
you.

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1 Uhm, good morning and welcome to the Fiscal 2023  
2 Preliminary Budget hearing for the Department of  
3 Technology and Telecommunications known as DoITT. My  
4 name is Jennifer Gutiérrez and I am the Chair of the  
5 Committee on Technology. Today's hearing is joint  
6 with the Committee on Land Use and I would like to  
7 thank my colleague Council Member Salamanca, Chair of  
8 the Committee on Land Use for Co-Chairing today's  
9 hearing with me.  
10

11 The Fiscal, the FY2023 Preliminary Budget for the  
12 Department of Information Technology and  
13 Telecommunications totals \$707 million, which  
14 includes nearly \$173 million in personal services  
15 funding to support 1,729 full-time positions. The  
16 budget also includes nearly \$534 million in other  
17 than personal services. Of which \$284 million is  
18 allocated to contractual services.

19 In the preliminary plan, DoITT's Fiscal 2022  
20 Budget of \$969 million is \$222 million more than its  
21 FY2022 Adopted Budget. A significant increase in  
22 funding between years is driven by the recognition of  
23 additional noncity funding in the current fiscal  
24 year. A large portion of which is related to COVID-  
25 19 response and recovery efforts.

1  
2       At today's hearing, we hope to examine many  
3 components of the Departments budget, including the  
4 department's savings program, miscellaneous revenue  
5 and capital projects. We would also like to hear  
6 about the departments vacancy reductions and the  
7 impact it may have on DoITT's overall operations and  
8 get status update on the Broadband Expansion project  
9 and the rollout of 5G. In addition, we would like  
10 for DOITT to give a status update on the next  
11 generation 911 system. And last, we would like to  
12 hear on how the city plans to recruit payments  
13 related to the franchise agreement to operate the  
14 LinkNYC kiosks.

15       We look forward to working with you to ensure the  
16 city investments in technology provide long term  
17 benefits to New York City residents. I would like  
18 to now welcome DOITT's Commissioner Matt Fraser and  
19 his team. After the testimony, Council Members will  
20 have the opportunity to follow-up with questions for  
21 the Commissioner.

22       And before I pass it off, I just want to thank  
23 the hardworking Committee staff and my staff for  
24 putting this hearing together. I want to shout out  
25 to our team, John, Irene, Charles, my staff Anna and

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1 Kristina and I just want to acknowledge my colleagues  
2 that are present today. We are joined by Council  
3 Members Holden, Council Member Riley, Council Member  
4 Erik Bottcher, of course our Land Use Chair  
5 Salamanca, uhm, Council Member Brewer, Council Member  
6 Sanchez, I think that's everybody. Yes, I think  
7 that's everybody.  
8

9 Uhm, okay, and then I'm just going to pass it  
10 over to Committee Counsel Irene Byhovsky to go over  
11 some procedural items.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Gutiérrez and  
13 good afternoon everyone. I'm Irene Byhovsky, I'm the  
14 Counsel to the Committee on Technology and I will be  
15 moderating this portion of the hearing today.

16 Before we begin, I would like to remind everyone  
17 that you will be on mute until you are called on to  
18 testify. During the hearing, I will be calling on  
19 panelists to testify. Please listen for your name to  
20 be called. I will be periodically announcing who the  
21 next panelist will be.

22 We'll first be hearing testimony from the  
23 Administration followed by testimonies from members  
24 of the public. During the hearing, if Council  
25 Members would like to ask questions of the

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Administration or a specific panelist, please use the Zoom raise hand function and I will call on you. We will be limiting Council Member questions to five minutes.

We will next call representatives of the Administration to testify. We will be hearing testimony from Matt Fraser, Commissioner of the Office of Technology and Innovation, also known as Department of Information Technology and Communication. Additionally, Deputy Commissioner Joseph Antonelli, Chief Operating Officer Mike McGrath and General Counsel Tynia Richardson also will be available to answer any questions.

At this time, I will administer the affirmation to each representative of the Administration. I will call on each of you individually for a response. So, please raise your right hands. Thank you. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member questions? Commissioner Fraser?

MATT FRASER: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner Antonelli?



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JOSEPH ANTONELLI: I do.

3

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chief Operating Officer

4

McGrath?

5

MICHAEL MCRATH: I do.

6

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: General Counsel Richard?

7

TYNIA RICHARD: I do.

8

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Commissioner

9

Fraser, you may begin your testimony.

10

MATT FRASER: Thank you very much. Good morning

11

Chair Salamanca ang Gutiérrez and the members of the

12

City Council's Committee's on Land Use and

13

Technology. My name is Matthew Fraser, I am the

14

City's Chief Technology Officer. Thank you for the

15

opportunity to testify today about the Office of Tech

16

and Innovations Fiscal '23 Preliminary Budget. With

17

me is Joseph Antonelli our Deputy Commissioner for

18

Management and Budget, also with me is Tynia Richard,

19

our General Counsel, and Michael McGrath, of the

20

Office of Tech and Innovations Chief Operating

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Officer.

22

I look forward to working with all of you in my

23

new role, and I'm pleased to take you through my

24

upcoming priorities as the Administration's

25

technology lead. As you know, when Mayor Adams

1  
2 appointed me as the City's Chief Technology Officer,  
3 he charged me with an important task: to consolidate  
4 all the different technology offices that were  
5 created under prior administrations and largely  
6 worked independently of one another.

7       The legacy offices now report up to me and they  
8 are as follows: the Department of Information  
9 Technology and Telecommunications, the Mayor's Office  
10 of the Chief Technology Officer, the Mayor's Office  
11 of Information Privacy, the Mayor's Office of Data  
12 Analytics, New York City Cyber Command, and the 311  
13 Customer Service Center. Technology underpins  
14 everything the city does, from policing to benefits  
15 screening and it's impossible to harness the full  
16 potential of our city's technology workforce if we do  
17 not eliminate the silos we've been working under for  
18 so long.

19       With the combined power of our collective  
20 abilities, we will be agile, efficient and laser-  
21 focused on revolutionizing technology and government  
22 with an aim at increasing the quality of service for  
23 all New Yorkers. We are much better equipped to get  
24 stuff done when we share expertise, collaborate and  
25 cooperate with one common purpose. And that's what

I've been focused on since January 1<sup>st</sup>. Streamlining every facet of the city's technology management into a single cohesive work stream under one Office of Technology and Innovation.

Cybersecurity is a critical function that requires collaboration across areas of expertise and levels of government. Now, more than ever, cybersecurity is a top priority of the Adams administration. Last month, the Mayor signed Executive Order 10, formalizing New York City's Cybercommands role under my direction, and putting in place a structure to require each city agency to designate a Cyber Command liaison who will work with the Office of Tech and Innovation to share information, monitor threats and adopt best practices around cybersecurity.

We are only as strong as our weakest link, so cybersecurity awareness across all city agencies is extremely important. Our collaborative work extends beyond our own agencies. I'm proud of the partnership that we formed with Governor Hochul and other cities across New York State to headquarter a Joint Security Operations Center in OTI's offices in

Downtown Brooklyn to bolster our abilities to combat cybersecurity threats and attacks statewide.

The JSOC centralizes cybersecurity expertise and streamlines threat intelligence and responses in the event of a cyberattack by housing New York City Cyber Command, federal and state law enforcement entities and representatives from local and county governments in the same space.

Broadband is another priority area that we will undoubtedly benefit from a collaborative environment. The pandemic has showed us that broadband is as essential utility and New Yorkers expect the city to act quickly to close the digital divide. Bringing together the city's franchise authority and aligning it with the mission to support universal broadband will allow us to explore options to fast-track digital equity goals. That's why we are in the process of negotiating a bulk purchase of broadband for residents in public housing. We will continue to move the ball forward on bringing in more internet service providers to give New Yorkers affordable and reliable service, but we also want to focus on short-term solutions that address this urgent need.

1  
2 One program that is connecting New Yorkers to  
3 broadband today is Link New York City, which has  
4 delivered over 10.5 million subscribers with free Wi-  
5 Fi across all five boroughs. After restructuring the  
6 program and getting approval on a new design last  
7 year, LinkNYC deployment is back on track. I'm proud  
8 to report that the installations have restarted in  
9 neighborhoods that had been previously neglected,  
10 plugging Council Members, Community Boards and  
11 Borough Presidents as we propose sites on a rolling  
12 basis.

13 Within the next few months, we plan to install  
14 the first Link 5G kiosk, which will provide all the  
15 services you've come to expect from LinkNYC, free  
16 calling, Wi-Fi, device charging, access to 9-1-1,  
17 with the added benefit of housing 5G infrastructure  
18 that will enhance mobile networks.

19 While we provide options for New Yorkers to  
20 access broadband, we also want our constituents to  
21 have a simple, seamless interaction with city  
22 agencies when they request services online. As you  
23 may be aware, Mayor Adams has championed the idea to  
24 create the My City app, a single portal for all city  
25 services and benefits. While I am in the beginning

1 stages of getting my arms around all the different  
2 systems and agencies that interact with the public, I  
3 want to assure the Committees that we are creating a  
4 simple, more seamless experience for New Yorkers and  
5 that's at the top of our mind. I will also look to  
6 keep the Committees apprised of our progress as to  
7 what evolves.  
8

9 Finally, I'd like to provide a brief summary of  
10 OTI's budget. OTI's Fiscal '23 Budget includes  
11 operating expenses of approximately \$707 million,  
12 allocating \$173 million in personnel services to  
13 support the 1,729 full-time positions and \$533  
14 million for Other than Personnel Services. Intra-  
15 city funds transferred from other agencies account  
16 for \$144 million, or about 20 percent of our total  
17 budget allocation. Telecommunications costs  
18 represent the largest portion of the Intra-city  
19 expense, projected at \$132 million for Fiscal Year  
20 2022.

21 For Fiscal Year 2022, the Preliminary Budget was  
22 increased by \$37 million, which is largely attributed  
23 to the Federal funding that OTI has received for  
24 COVID-related costs. For Fiscal Year 2023, the  
25 Preliminary Budget was decreased by \$10.9 million,

1  
2 which is largely attributed to savings such as  
3 vacancy reductions, and decommissioning of the NYCWIN  
4 network.

5 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.  
6 I will now take Council Member questions.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Commissioner. I  
8 will now turn over to Chair Salamanca for questions.  
9 Panelists, please stay unmuted if possible during  
10 this question and answer period. Thank you. Chair  
11 Salamanca.

12 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, thank you.  
13 Thank you all Commissioner for your opening remarks.  
14 Commissioner, I want to start with the City Bridge.  
15 The link, LinkNYC. City Bridge, the entity  
16 responsible for the maintenance and operation of  
17 LinkNYC Kiosks. Also, the city payments due related  
18 to franchise agreements to operate LinkNYC kiosks.

19 Last year Commissioner Jessica Tish assured the  
20 Committee that DoITT was taking necessary actions to  
21 collect the money. What actions has the city, first,  
22 how much do they owe City Bridge? How much do they  
23 currently owe the City of New York?

24 MATT FRASER: As it currently stands under the  
25 renegotiated terms of the deal, City Bridge, they

1  
2 aren't outstanding any payments at the moment and  
3 they are up to date with any money to be owed to the  
4 city but for specific details on the specific  
5 numbers, Joe Antonelli, our Deputy Commissioner for  
6 Management and Budget can provide more insights.

7 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: Sure, to date, so City Bridge  
8 owes the city approximately \$60 million under the  
9 agreement. City Bridge made their first down payment  
10 of \$25 million in the last Fiscal Year and they are  
11 required to pay us \$1.5 million a year as a part of  
12 that repayment and they are currently up to date as  
13 it was negotiated.

14 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, I am not getting  
15 it. So, they owe \$60 million, made a down payment of  
16 \$25 million, right?

17 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: And so, you renegotiated  
19 what? You renegotiated the difference there?

20 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: So, correct. So, they –

21 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Because 60 minus 25 is  
22 58, I'm sorry. 60 minus 25 is \$35 million.

23 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: Correct.

24 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: So, where's that \$35  
25 million?



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1  
2 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: So, the \$35 million, so this  
3 year they were required to make a \$1.5 million  
4 payment as a part of that \$35 million and it's  
5 negotiated over the lifetime of the agreement for  
6 them to repay the \$35 million.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: So, that's \$33.5 million  
8 that they owe us?

9 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: Correct.

10 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: And so, so how much  
11 revenue are we anticipating to collect from them  
12 yearly?

13 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: Approximately \$4.5 million is  
14 the minimum we anticipate receiving from them.

15 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: So, yearly, we're going  
16 to get \$4.5 million in revenue plus \$1.5 million from  
17 the \$35 million that they owe us from the \$60  
18 million.

19 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: Uh, the \$4.5 was inclusive of  
20 the \$1.5. So, \$3 million is the minimum revenue and  
21 then I was including the \$1.5 million repayment.

22 So, \$3 million is just the base revenue plus the  
23 repayment towards the \$60 million.

24 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay, and when — so that  
25 \$35 million that they owe us, that you're — what's

1  
2 the deadline? When do they have – when will we be  
3 paid in full?

4 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: Uh, I'd have to get you that  
5 date but it was over the course, over the lifetime of  
6 the agreement but I'll get you that date.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Uhm, okay, I'm going to  
8 move on to my next question but I would really like  
9 to see if you can get me that answer while we're  
10 still having this hearing. Uhm, that's important  
11 here. Uhm, there have been recent reports that DoITT  
12 is moving to revoke the LinkNYC franchise. What is  
13 the basis for the revocation and what is the status  
14 of those plans?

15 MATT FRASER: So, as it stands for the moment,  
16 anything relating to any of the contracts or  
17 associated with Link itself, I'll pass to our General  
18 Counsel Tynia Richard so you can provide insight.

19 TYNIA RICHARD: Chair?

20 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Yes.

21 TYNIA RICHARD: Did I understand you correctly to  
22 say we were looking to revoke?

23 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Uh, yeah, in my line of  
24 question here, there have been recent reports that  
25 DoITT is moving to revoke the LinkNYC franchise. If

1  
2 so, what is the basis for the revocation and what's  
3 the status of --

4 TYNIA RICHARD: That is not familiar to me at all  
5 Chair. I'm sorry to say it, I don't know.

6 MATT FRASER: And just let me emphasize that.  
7 There are no active conversations or no intent at the  
8 moment to pursue the revocation of that franchise.

9 So, and as Council pointed out, there's nothing  
10 from a contracts perspective that we're working on to  
11 that end.

12 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: No worries. Okay, uhm, I  
13 want to talk a little bit about the cable television  
14 franchise agreement if possible. The Cable  
15 Television franchise Agreement for the city expired  
16 several years ago and all the franchises have been  
17 operating on a hold over basis. Why hasn't DoITT  
18 submitted a new authorizing resolution for the  
19 Council to consider and when do you anticipate that  
20 DoITT will do so?

21 MATT FRASER: So, at this moment, as part of the  
22 administration finance likes, we are currently  
23 evaluating all of our outstanding franchises and  
24 we're looking at how we can move these things  
25 forward. It's the Administrations intent to get

1  
2 these things reestablished under current, under new  
3 terms and our timeline behind that is a little bit  
4 nebulous until we wrap our arms around the entire  
5 population and negotiate what the new terms would  
6 look like.

7 So, we would be happy to follow-up with Council  
8 as the work progresses within the next couple of  
9 months but as this stands right now, we don't have a  
10 firm timeline on that front as we are now wrapping  
11 our arms around it.

12 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay, alright, and then  
13 the Deputy Commissioner, were you able to get me an  
14 answer?

15 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: Yes, I do have that now. So,  
16 2030 is when the contract year, the final year of the  
17 contract, that's when it will be fully paid up and  
18 there's a repayment term that basically each year the  
19 amount City Bridge pays us increases. So, I had  
20 cited the \$1.5 million for the current year. The  
21 next year will be \$2.1 million then \$2.5, \$3, \$3.5,  
22 \$4.5, \$5, \$5.6 and \$7.5 and then that's how you get  
23 to the total amount. So, there is a large payment in  
24 the final year but it adds up to the full 60.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Was there a reason why they were delinquent in their payments to the city?

MATT FRASER: So, in terms of the historic lookbacks on what created that situation, again as the agency or as the new administration finds its — we are currently in the process of looking at that and the key here is that LinkNYC is just one example of a longstanding city contract. We want to make sure that we don't make that same misstep across the spectrum in other areas.

So, as we continue to impact that, unpack that, any lessons learned that we found, that we uncover, we will share accordingly but that work is currently being undertaken to assess that.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, and then my final line of questioning here. In 2020, this Council approved an authorizing resolution to grant DoITT the authority to grant new broadband internet franchises. Since the approval of that authorizing resolution, many new franchises have been granted. How many of those franchises are offering residential broadband internet services?

MATT FRASER: For the specifics — sorry.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: No, go ahead.

1  
2 MATT FRASER: Uh, so for the specifics around  
3 those services and those franchises, our Counsel  
4 Tynia Richard and our Chief Operating Officer Mike  
5 McGrath can give us more details on that front. But  
6 again, one of the things that I just want to layer on  
7 since this question was posed, in terms of what we're  
8 going to do around the New York City market and what  
9 we're going to do around broadband, in order to  
10 ensure that we have a market that's sustainable that  
11 has low cost options carry a diversity is one of the  
12 things that will bring that to the market, so we're  
13 committed to ensure that we continue to add that.

14 So, Tynia, Tynia, Mike, would you like to pick  
15 this up?

16 TYNIA RICHARD: Okay. Uhm, yes, I'd like to.  
17 The information services franchises, we went to the  
18 FCRC and obtained approval for ten new franchises in  
19 last year and we have completed five of those  
20 agreements and we have five more too to complete.  
21 The authorizing resolution remains open and so, there  
22 is still time for additional interested parties to  
23 apply for franchise.

24 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: When will New Yorkers  
25 have an opportunity to pick anyone other than

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1  
2 Optimum, Verizon, uh, I forget who the other one is.  
3 When are New Yorkers going to have an option other  
4 than those three?

5 MATT FRASER: So, the three that you're referring  
6 to now, those are the cable franchises. So, that's  
7 Altice, Charter Communication and Verizon. Uhm,  
8 beyond the cable franchises, we have -- on the info  
9 services franchises for broadband, there are options  
10 that extend beyond that.

11 A good example of that is within 18 NYCHA  
12 buildings right. We have of those five providers  
13 that we brought in, we've got a number of them that  
14 are present that are actively delivering services  
15 today and beyond those, you have other folks that  
16 other companies that are on the info-services  
17 franchise like Crown Castle and a number of others  
18 that offer those services at residential levels  
19 today.

20 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: But where are they  
21 offering services? I'm unaware of anyone offering  
22 services other than the three in my community.

23 MATT FRASER: And so, what we'd be happy to do is  
24 provide a franchise map to show you where broadband  
25

1  
2 services are available and do a deep dive and so we  
3 can take a look at that.

4 One of the key things that we want to focus on in  
5 addition to diversifying the market, is how do we fix  
6 the problems that exist today. Market diversity, new  
7 providers are things that take time. Every day we  
8 don't do something, there's another person that's in  
9 the community. Whether it's someone that's in school  
10 or someone that needs services to remain competitive  
11 in the workforce that doesn't have something that  
12 they need.

13 So, in addition to looking at he first find the  
14 market, we are currently looking at how do we plug  
15 that gap as quickly as possible. Which is some of  
16 the programs that we are launching now.

17 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Is it possible that Chair  
18 Gutiérrez and myself and other members of the  
19 Committee or the Council as a whole that you can send  
20 us the broadband map that you spoke about before  
21 business end. Before the end of the day today?

22 MATT FRASER: So, I will commit before the end of  
23 the day today but what I would say is before uh,  
24 hopefully before the end of the week we can produce  
25 it but what it will be is a broadband provider zone,



1  
2 so you can see what broadband providers are available  
3 within what zones in the city.

4 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Because I was extremely  
5 excited. This text amendment that we approved,  
6 actually I was the prime sponsor and you know I  
7 promised my constituents that we were going to get  
8 different options other than the three that's  
9 currently there.

10 So, I look forward to that. My final question  
11 is, I just don't understand this. I don't think that  
12 the last administration understood why this was  
13 occurring and hopefully this new administration will  
14 relook at this. Uhm, the Mayor's Office for Media  
15 and Entertainment, why are they under your  
16 jurisdiction?

17 MATT FRASER: So, jurisdiction is a very  
18 interesting term. The decisions of the last  
19 administration as this new administration finds its  
20 likes, again, this is one of the things that we're  
21 looking at and one of the things that we're looking  
22 at as a whole to see how this moves forward. I would  
23 defer any questions around the Mayor's Office of  
24 Media and Entertainment to the Commissioner of that  
25 entity.

1  
2 As for anything that falls within my explicit  
3 purview or under the Office of Tech Innovation, I'm  
4 happy to answer. But the City Hall as a whole –

5 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: But Commissioner, they  
6 fall under your budget.

7 MATT FRASER: They fall under – budget and  
8 authority are not necessarily the same thing, right?

9 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: But you have oversight  
10 over the DoITT budget correct? So, that oversight –  
11 I'm trying to understand why the Mayor's Office of  
12 Media Entertainment is under the DoITT budget and  
13 they are not their own entity and have their own  
14 budget, not under DoITT's budget.

15 MATT FRASER: Yup, so that placement and that  
16 association is a relic of time and whether that  
17 persists or moves forward is something that the  
18 Administration will determine as it moves forward.  
19 At this moment beyond telling you that we're looking  
20 into it, there are no other tangible answers that I  
21 can give you on that front until we get a chance to  
22 unpack that and any other auditees that exist.  
23 Again, the Adams Administration is committed to  
24 providing transparency and aligning things in the  
25 ways that make sense. As you can see from the

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1  
2 consolidation of all the entities that were once  
3 desperate into a single thing, it's evidence that we  
4 are moving in that direction and we're hopeful that  
5 as we move forward, other things that are out of line  
6 we can bring back into line.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay, alright. Thank  
8 you. I will now hand it over to Chair Gutiérrez.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you Chair  
10 Salamanca, I appreciate all of your questions and  
11 advocacy. Uhm, so I'm going to shift and once again  
12 just thank everyone for joining today's hearing and  
13 everyone that stuck around for Land Use to our first  
14 hearing. Congratulations Mr. Fraser on your  
15 appointment as New York City Chief Technology Officer  
16 and Commissioner of the Office of Technology and  
17 Innovation. As you mentioned in your opening  
18 statement early this year, Mayor Eric Adams signed  
19 the Executive Order to consolidate various technology  
20 services into a new office of technology and  
21 innovation led by the Chief Technology Officer.

22 At your appointment, you said, "streamlining  
23 technology systems will make city government more  
24 efficient and responsive to the means of both the  
25

1  
2 city and the eight million plus New Yorkers who call  
3 our city our home.

4 My first question is, how do you plan to  
5 implement this vision. How are the agencies talking  
6 to one another, right. So, that they are not in  
7 silos and how is this consolidation bringing about  
8 more efficiency in modern practices?

9 MATT FRASER: Thank you very much for the  
10 question. So, when we approach the Office of Tech  
11 and Innovation and this was the role. One of the  
12 things that we wanted to do was take a hard look at  
13 the city as a whole and all of the services that we  
14 provide and hold ourselves accountable for years  
15 where one, not where we were at one underperforming  
16 in areas where we were performed but we could do  
17 better, alright.

18 And in doing that, from a leadership perspective,  
19 everything starts from the top. And the Mayor has a  
20 commitment to the people of the city and the platform  
21 that he ran on was getting things done and that's the  
22 mantra that we all live by.

23 So in terms of alignment between agencies, once a  
24 week, the Deputy Mayor and the Chief's, the various  
25 Chief's. The Chief Technology Officer, Chief

1  
2 efficiency officer and Chief Housing Officer, we all  
3 made as senior leadership within the city and we  
4 drive the city's priorities, the Mayor's priorities  
5 forward.

6 The varying agencies fall under one of the eight  
7 people represented at this level and we work  
8 collaboratively towards the Mayor's vision. So, at  
9 the end of the day, the concept of an agency being a  
10 silo or being an entity that had the ability to defer  
11 and sort of determine destiny for services that  
12 impacted a resident, at the very, at the highest  
13 levels of leadership in the city, we are taking the  
14 approach of, this is one city, it's one mirror and  
15 this administration will act in that fashion.

16 So, to that end, the Deputy Mayor's and the  
17 Chief's are all aligned in executing that vision.  
18 So, the things that you're used to seeing in  
19 government in terms of the silos between agencies,  
20 communication chasms and gaps and the decisions that  
21 uhm, that had to be negotiated, are things that if  
22 we're all aligned then we will execute seamlessly.

23 But hopefully that answers the question and I'd  
24 be glad to provide any other information on the first  
25 part. To the second part in what we plan to do, is

1  
2 there are lots of services that we could rationalize  
3 and when you look at the average person's interaction  
4 between agencies in the city, what we acknowledge in  
5 the administration is that across the spectrum, the  
6 person that comes into the city to build a house or  
7 open a restaurant, they don't want to understand the  
8 differences or they don't need to know the  
9 differences between the Department of Buildings, the  
10 Fire Department or DEP where each one of those  
11 entities may be important in the certificate of  
12 occupancy issuance process. We as a city have to  
13 figure out a way where we streamline those services  
14 between those entities so those interactions happens  
15 in one place and it can cascade between them but a  
16 lot simpler.

17 So, that's a lot of the emphasis behind the my  
18 city portal. Streamlining access not just to city  
19 services but also city benefits.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. I do have  
21 some follow-up questions on the My City App, so I  
22 will just make a note of that. I do really  
23 appreciate that you emphasis accountability. I think  
24 that that is a practice that not just constituents to  
25 membership have but I think it's a relationship that

1  
2 New Yorkers to our agencies also should expect and I  
3 look forward to working with you and kind of building  
4 out what accountability looks like as the  
5 consolidation continues to rollout.

6 Uhm, do you see a space for I think so, what we  
7 saw throughout this pandemic was obviously the  
8 dependency on the internet and on apps and kind of  
9 understanding I think or revisioning what service  
10 looks like for New Yorkers. Uhm do you see a space  
11 for services and capacity to support this agency?  
12 Other agency services and to better serve New  
13 Yorkers?

14 MATT FRASER: Definitely, so one of the things  
15 that you touched on as we moved into this question  
16 was accountability and from a services line  
17 perspective and looking at how we can rationalize,  
18 it's a core component of how we operate.

19 So, I think there is at many times people  
20 confluent the use of technology, thinking that  
21 technology is an entity that serves itself. But  
22 technology in all facets is something that's meant to  
23 enable business outcomes. So, for us, when we talk  
24 about accountability, what that looks like isn't  
25 measured by whether a technology program gets

1  
2 executed or not. It's the time in which we take to  
3 do that and what it means to the people that are  
4 dependent on the service that we're updating.

5       So, when you look at things like office services  
6 that schools offer or we look at services that come  
7 out of other entities from a social services  
8 perspective or we look at development services.  
9 Those things have tangible impacts that leads to  
10 jobs, that leads to public safety, that leads to  
11 homelessness. And until we start to do a better  
12 alignment between what that tangible outcome is and  
13 the impact that the technology has to that, from a  
14 mission perspective, we will continue to miss the  
15 mark and that's what this office is driving and  
16 that's what the Mayor is driving. Getting stuff done  
17 but ensuring that as we get it done we push. We push  
18 the thing that helps the person that's doing the  
19 worst in the city for.

20       CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you and I hope you  
21 all also be open to incorporating getting stuff done  
22 collaboratively, because I think that that is also  
23 important.

24       MATT FRASER: I was just going to say that I love  
25 that. Collaboratively is the key. Uhm, the Mayor of



the City was appointed by the people of the city.

I'm appointed by the Mayor. Anyone that serves in this organization that's appointed by me, we have one fundamental responsibility and that's doing what's in the best interest of the people, which is our common mission. So, anything that we can do together to drive that forward, you got a willing and able partner.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Awesome, thank you. I have a couple more questions and then I'm going to hand it off to the moderator for some of the Council Members questions.

Uhm, can you highlight some of DoITT's budget priorities for the business portfolio?

MATT FRASER: So, as it stands the priorities that we have are focused around as we put it, uhm, earlier on, doing the thing that moves the needle forward for most people. So, we have a number of activities that are around stabilizing services that we already offer. But then also, repurposing and looking how we can leverage funds to cover the gap around things like the digital divide. But specific budget level details, our Deputy Commissioner for

1  
2 Management and Budget Joseph Antonelli can illuminate  
3 some of the key areas where we have spending.

4 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: Uhm, sure. So, obviously over  
5 the past couple of years, the response to the COVID-  
6 19 pandemic has been a very significant. We've  
7 received a good amount of federal funding for those  
8 efforts as it relates to 311 and other response to  
9 the pandemic. You know, on the capital side, we've  
10 certainly spent a large amount of money on an overall  
11 IT modernization plan and have several projects that  
12 are underway on that front. That's kind of the big  
13 picture of what our priorities have been and what's  
14 currently in the budget.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: So, uhm, can you  
16 highlight any of the capital priorities.

17 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: Sure, so on the capital  
18 budget, uhm, we do have just give me one second  
19 sorry.

20 MATT FRASER: While Joe looks that just high  
21 level, one of the things that we're really focused on  
22 from a technology perspective, from a capital one, is  
23 stabilizing infrastructure that exists. So, over the  
24 last decade or so, the city's massed a large  
25 technology ecosystem. A lot of the assets that

1 support that are outdated. As we've seen what  
2 happened you know in Atlanta, we saw what happened at  
3 the Colonial pipeline. We've seen what's happened in  
4 the international space and with the tensions  
5 escalating between Russian Ukraine every day.

6 From a cyber perspective, we have to get our  
7 resources and a lot of the underlying technologies  
8 aligned. So, we have a significant amount of our  
9 budget that focused on providing just the bare  
10 essentials right. All the legacy infrastructure  
11 that's aged out well beyond its useful life, getting  
12 those out. Replacing them, bringing in modern tech  
13 that aligns to what the go forward mission will be  
14 and in addition to that, from a cyber perspective  
15 shoring up and ensuring that we are taking proactive  
16 looks at how the city's not capable of protecting its  
17 most critical assets in the areas where we find gaps.  
18 Having professional services that are capable to help  
19 us supplement that.

20 And in addition to that, when we look at OTI's  
21 budget as a whole and we look at the city's tech  
22 spend as a whole, one of the things that I mentioned  
23 is in the old operating condition, these things were  
24 silos. OTI's budget and the agencies themselves, we  
25

1  
2 collectively have to look at how we use the overall  
3 city's tech spend towards furthering that base  
4 commission. I'm sorry Joe.

5 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: So, I mean some of the large  
6 chunks in the capital budget of projects, they really  
7 go along the theme of what the Chief Technology  
8 Officer was talking about in terms of really just  
9 upgrading a lot of legacy platforms and  
10 infrastructure. Outlined in the budget, we have one  
11 large project, foundational infrastructure which  
12 really is along that line.

13 Also, you know upgrades to our data sharing  
14 platform on the applications end. We also had in the  
15 budget for this fiscal year, the purchasing of  
16 Microsoft licenses was a significant amount of money.  
17 The 311 application, the actual application itself  
18 required a modernization of the platform, that was a  
19 large upgrade as well. Upgrading the city's -

20 MATT FRASER: So, just a second so, what Joe's  
21 talking about or what he's naming, naming the  
22 priorities and then I think for you tangibly drawing  
23 a line between when you say data sharing, what does  
24 that actually mean? It might be a little nebulous,  
25 so I just wanted to provide some quick insights.

1  
2 When we talk about data sharing, when someone  
3 interacts with the city and we talk about creating a  
4 process where those interactions are more seamless,  
5 we have to start with a common understanding of what  
6 a couple of key things are.

7       What is a person and what does that person look  
8 like between agencies? What is a building and what  
9 does that look between agencies? What is a business  
10 and what does that look like between agencies and  
11 part of the data sharing platform of what we're  
12 bringing in right now creates that normalized  
13 understanding.

14       So, when someone appears before a single agency,  
15 that interaction is contextualized between what this  
16 interaction looks like across other agencies. So, if  
17 you had to provide information before, we want to get  
18 to a space where you don't have to provide the same  
19 set of documents over and over and over when you are  
20 preparing before one city. Alright, it's sort of an  
21 odd thing to expect. Folks that already have limited  
22 access to technology in some cases to continuously  
23 provide the same levels of information, in some cases  
24 expecting to do that digitally when they may not have  
25 access to the things that they need.

1  
2       So, this is not, again as we look at the  
3 priorities here as Joe is pointing out, each one of  
4 these things are foundational steps and a step  
5 forward. 311 is a system that was commissioned  
6 almost two decades ago and the last major upgrade  
7 that it had and the tech staff underneath it was  
8 almost that long ago.

9       So, what we brought forward now and what's in the  
10 budget is establishing a new baseline which will  
11 hopefully operate for the next decade for 311. So,  
12 again, the budget right now is focused on  
13 establishing baseline services. While we work with  
14 the other agencies within the portfolio to push the  
15 business priorities forward led by the business  
16 owners of those priorities.

17       CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you and it was  
18 helpful, these are priorities and I appreciate that.  
19 And Commissioner, you may have already, I think you  
20 kind of answered this in a large picture but I just  
21 want to make sure that it's clear. Are there any new  
22 initiatives that you plan to implement through the  
23 operations for the department?

24       MATT FRASER: So, in terms of new initiatives,  
25 what we're looking at now is areas where we had

complimentary work going on but that work may have been done inefficiently because of the silos that may have existed.

So, some of things that we're looking at are things like broadband, right. When we look at broadband and its impact and its impact on the community, the ability to sort of asses what that means, it's really dependent on the lens that you look at. With the last two years of kids being sent home due to COVID and in some cases being sent home to a place where they have had limited access to internet. Then missing the mark and sending them out with mobile devices and hotspots that when it's the prewar buildings where they had limited signal penetration. It's one of those things that service the issue that broadband is as important as a utility and it's not something that surfaces because there weren't people committed to trying and figuring it out but some of the conditions, until you work through it, you don't see those things.

So, one of the things that this administration is committed to is bringing broadband to those people within the community that need it right. That have been underserved by traditional needs. What we're

also looking at is from a Cyber perspective.

Security, safety, it's like, I can't give you any statistic that tells you how safe you are but safety is more of a feeling and the moment that we have a compromise, that feeling of safety is fleeting very quickly.

So, we want to ensure that from a security perspective, all of the services that the city is dependent on or the resources in the city are dependent on are stable, they are available, and when they provide information to government, that information is protected like it is our own.

So, for us, there is a number of cyber priorities that we'll be focused on taking proactive looks at the city's most critical sets of infrastructure.

In addition to those two, which I consider are very basic right, we are going to look at consolidating city services and consolidating infrastructure where it makes sense. These individual silos where we in some cases bifurcate the city's fund or we make investments that bifurcate the city's tech workforce. We're trying to wrap our arms around that to make sure that the decisions that we make and every dollar that we spend goes towards a



1  
2 common cause, a common platform, a common set of  
3 tools, so that when we look at the outyears and we're  
4 looking at the existing budgetary conditions that  
5 we're projecting with an ongoing deficit until things  
6 normalize alright, that we can make sure that the  
7 spend that we have actually goes further towards the  
8 thing that helps the person.

9       Alright, agencies are entities that serve  
10 themselves. We are all focused on serving the people  
11 and at the highest levels of leadership from the  
12 deputy Mayor's to the Chief's, to the Mayor's, we're  
13 all focused on the same thing which is improving the  
14 quality of life for those that live and those that  
15 are commuting to the city.

16       CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. I have one  
17 more question and then I'll turn it to the Moderator.  
18 You did touch a little bit on the My City App. I  
19 think it's a concept that in the spirit of  
20 consolidating all of the city's technology agencies,  
21 I think most New Yorkers would appreciate kind of a  
22 one-stop shop in this nature. So, what can you tell  
23 us about the My City App? How is it being designed?  
24 Who are the players that are kind of designing this  
25 app and do you have a timeline?

1  
2 MATT FRASER: Yup, so the first phase of the  
3 administration has been focused on establishing  
4 baseline. So, selling out the organization, getting  
5 that settled and then taking a hard look at the  
6 services that we actually provide.

7 In terms of application development efforts and  
8 what's being done right now to build the app, we're  
9 currently in the requirements gathering phase. It's  
10 a process much like human development, crawl, walk,  
11 run, jump in this sort of effort, we're almost like  
12 babies. Dragging ourselves on the floor trying to  
13 get upright right, so that we can walk and run. So,  
14 as we do this, we're taking a look at each one of the  
15 city services and we're going to [INAUDIBLE 3:20:45]  
16 the work around specific lines of service.

17 So, the first line that we're looking at is  
18 things that fall in the human services benefit  
19 fulfillments base. Food benefits, childcare  
20 benefits, housing benefits, how things coordinated,  
21 what levels of information do you need to provide?  
22 Where do you go to get all of those things? How can  
23 we simplify? How can we simplify the eligibility  
24 confirmation part of this and that's the first place  
25 that we want to move forward.

1           So, before we can get into like innovative things  
2  
3       where we can look at stuff like development  
4  
5       businesses, we want to make sure from a human  
6  
7       perspective, we're enabling the people in the city  
8  
9       that need the resources the most with access to that  
10  
11       as quickly as possible.

12           So, that currently where we are. As we get  
13  
14       through the business requirements phase than we're  
15  
16       going to look at identifying the technology and the  
17  
18       partners that are best to help us build this out but  
19  
20       we want to be in a situation where it's like that old  
21  
22       saying, measure twice cut once. We can't afford to  
23  
24       merge in the market with something that consolidates  
25  
26       these services but it makes the experience worse.  
27  
28       Because what's worse than what they currently have is  
29  
30       breaking access to anything they can currently get to  
31  
32       mostly.

33           So, at this point as part of that assessment  
34  
35       phase, we're currently trying to get our arms around  
36  
37       what's going to be in that first wave in that benefit  
38  
39       fulfillment phase and then from there we're going to  
40  
41       branch out to other areas of the spectrum.

42           The development methodology for this is going to  
43  
44       agile, so we're going to look to deliver this in

1  
2 iterations and as we get it out, we're going to work  
3 with the public to collect feedback to make sure that  
4 we're hitting the mark in the right place. We  
5 started this around accountability. We as  
6 government, right or we as this administration  
7 understand that we are not in many cases, we are not  
8 the best when it comes to certain stuff and from a  
9 communications perspective, we want to make sure that  
10 we become the best at community engagement and  
11 employing that feed back in.

12 It's something that the Mayor started when he was  
13 in Borough Hall and it's something that he's going to  
14 continue as he moves in and he continues to operate  
15 the broader lens of the city. That's our commitment.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I appreciate that.  
17 Obviously, I mean organizing and I appreciate the  
18 community component and you know all the I think the  
19 earnest attempt for public engagement and I'd love to  
20 work with you all on that.

21 I am going to pass it off to our Moderator now  
22 and I do just want to mention that I want to do - I  
23 will ask some more follow-up questions on the  
24 broadband piece later on. Thank you.

25 MATT FRASER: Got it, thank you.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. I will now  
3 call on Council Members to ask their questions in  
4 order they have raised the Zoom raise hand function.  
5 Council Members, please keep your questions to five  
6 minutes. The Sergeant at Arms will keep the timer  
7 and will let you know when your time is up. First,  
8 we'll hear from Council Member Riley followed by  
9 Council Member Bottcher followed by Council Member  
10 Brewer.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Counsel. Thank  
13 you Chairs. Great to meet you Commissioner Fraser.  
14 Just a few quick questions. Is there a cellphone  
15 data plan required to access the free Wi-Fi provided  
16 by the new link 5G towers?

17 MATT FRASER: For the specifications around  
18 connectivity and the operations link, our Chief  
19 Operating Office Mike McGrath is best positioned to  
20 answer, Mike.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you.

22 MICHAEL MCGRATH: Thanks Commissioner. Thanks  
23 for the question Commissioner Riley. That answer is  
24 a simple one. The answer is no. Wi-Fi is enabled  
25

1  
2 through the device and connects to the tower outside  
3 to the kiosk today.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you. What will be  
5 the free Wi-Fi range of the link 5G towers and will  
6 the free Wi-Fi be accessible to people in apartments  
7 nearby?

8 MICHAEL MCGRATH: So, the actual distance, I'd  
9 have to look that up and get back to you. So, I  
10 don't have that answer off the top of my head. I  
11 will note that it is an expanded range because we are  
12 raising the Wi-Fi at this point of higher into the  
13 tower. So, it will provide a better range.

14 As far as accessing it, uhm, did you say indoors?  
15 Was that the specific question?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Yeah, like nearby  
17 apartments.

18 MICHAEL MCGRATH: Yeah, with the nearby  
19 apartments as a whole, I'd just say anything from a  
20 communications perspective, it depends on the  
21 structure of the building. Signal penetration  
22 through walls. So, it's highly subjective to the  
23 specific conditions of the building that they are  
24 actually in and distance from the tower. Any  
25

1  
2 assurances or guarantees of that cannot be guaranteed  
3 until we do an assessment of the surrounding area.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you. What progress  
5 has been made in the last year on the wireless  
6 internet services in homeless shelters that serve  
7 families with children?

8 MATT FRASER: Across the spectrum, we've made a  
9 launch commitment to get that done. I believe we are  
10 over 90 percent of the way complete. There are only  
11 two facilities that are outstanding but for the  
12 details surrounding that and a confirmation of that,  
13 our Chief Operating Officer McGrath can pick up where  
14 I just left it.

15 MICHAEL MCGRATH: Sure and that answer changed  
16 the score commissioner, those two are finished, so.

17 MATT FRASER: That's impressive.

18 MICHAEL MCGRATH: Now we sit at 100 percent.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: 100 percent.

20 MATT FRASER: Yeah, there are new openings that  
21 come down and as they open up, we are working closely  
22 with DSS on a schedule to get that aligned, so at  
23 this point, everything that was given to us has been  
24 completed.  
25

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you. Two more questions. During the pandemic, we saw an issue with broadband services with our school systems and even certain senior centers. Do DoITT have a plan or the administration has a plan to make sure that our DOE schools are fully up to date with technological advance in order to educate our youth today in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and will they be working with the senior centers to make sure that they are capable of having services to have our seniors capable of using technology as well?

MATT FRASER: Thank you for the question. Actually, great question. So, across the spectrum, one of the things that happened as the Office of Tech and Innovation was established, was creating a single authority and responsible and accountable party for tech across the city. Now that's true whether it's in DOE or any other agency.

So, the Mayor's commitment as well as my commitment to tech, especially when it comes to things like broadband and essential services for the generations that are coming through the education system now, it's a strong commitment to get them the best service that the city can provide.



1  
2       So, we're in the process of unpacking across the  
3 spectrum areas where we have spend – that are spent  
4 in areas that are complimentary. So, when we look at  
5 fiber and we look at broadband access in schools,  
6 we're going to take a hard look at that and come up  
7 with a consolidated strategy to provide faster,  
8 higher speed access at greater skill across the  
9 schools as a whole.

10       When it comes to senior living facility as part  
11 of [INAUDIBLE 3:27:57] is part of the work  
12 surrounding COVID. We actually went into senior  
13 living facilities and we deployed connectivity there  
14 as well and our plan is to take a look at the city  
15 run and managed facilities across the spectrum that  
16 fall into the public housing umbrella to see how from  
17 a baseline perspective, we can provide those  
18 capabilities at scale.

19       So that when you walk into some of these places,  
20 it's not like, it's like heat or hot water, when you  
21 walk in you don't have to ask for it, so we want to  
22 make sure that from a broadband perspective, we get  
23 to a point where broadband is available at that  
24 level.  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Chair and just  
3 one more question. Is there any plan with the  
4 administration, because I know that the Mayor did  
5 mention this in the beginning that he was very  
6 interested in crypto currency. Is there any plan  
7 with the Administration or educating communities of  
8 color or even communities across NYC on crypto  
9 currently, digital art or any new digital assets that  
10 are coming into age.

11 MATT FRASER: Yeah, so when it comes to digital  
12 assets and it comes to the crypto as a whole, block  
13 chain and all the technologies that are enabled by  
14 the foundational technologies, it's an emerging field  
15 across the global landscape. In New York City, it's  
16 our responsibility, not just as government but it's  
17 our civic responsibility to ensure that the kids and  
18 that the people that live within the city have access  
19 to the information to demystify what crypto is.

20 So, we're working very diligently to build  
21 programs, to build digital literacy around those sets  
22 of technologies and it's our intent to not only just  
23 build programs but build pathways where people if  
24 they are interested can get emersed in that level of  
25 tech.

1  
2 And it's also most like, when we talk about  
3 broadband and access to those services, its in order  
4 to play in this space, you need access to the right  
5 set of tools. When we talk about the digital divide,  
6 broadband is only one part. The device access  
7 another part. So, as we build dexterity around what  
8 crypto is, what block chain is, providing access, so  
9 if you want to get emersed you can.

10 So the short answer to the question is yes, we're  
11 focused and we will have in the coming months  
12 programs that are specifically targeted towards this  
13 but the Mayor is committed and I am committed to  
14 ensure that as this market emerges, New York City is  
15 at the cusp. We know what Big Coin started; New York  
16 City is already the financial hub for the world.  
17 From a crypto perspective, we want to cement New York  
18 City as a crypto hub for the world.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Commissioner. I  
20 would love to be a part of that initiative as I'm in  
21 the Council. Thank you Chairs. I yield the rest of  
22 my time. Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member for  
24 your questions. Next, we have Council Member  
25 Bottcher.

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2

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

3

4

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Hello Commissioner, how  
are you?

5

MATT FRASER: I'm doing well, how about yourself?

6

7

8

9

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: I'm good, thank you.

My question is about the 311 system and you know

recognizing that you've only been in your current

role for a few months. What are your plans to

10

improve 311 and what kind of initiative do you have

11

underway to address issues with it?

12

13

14

15

16

I have to tell you that in our office, we've

experienced more and more issues with cases being

immediately closed. People who file a 311 complaint

on the app and it'll say issue resolved or condition

not observed but it's clear that no one went there.

17

18

19

I'd like to know what kind of plans you have in

place to audit 311 or to spot check the responses or

what kind of quality controls being done?

20

21

22

23

24

25

MATT FRASER: So, thank you for the question.

So, I'd remind Council that the responsibility of OTI

and 311 is the operations of 311 system and the

operation itself, call taking, triaging, deployment.

The moment that it goes past deployment and it

actually lands in the agencies queue, that's where

1  
2 OTI's sort of responsibility and our insight ends  
3 until the agency actually responds to that, that  
4 action itself.

5 One of the things that we're doing to create  
6 broader transparency around agencies triage requests  
7 is building and this is one of the things that the  
8 Mayor spoke about publicly and one of the things that  
9 we're committed to doing is providing insights into  
10 the triaging handling of 311 cases. And not just  
11 that but agency performance dashboards right.

12 So, if you look on one side of the universe, you  
13 have tools like CompStat that provides insights into  
14 crime stats and efficacy around how the department,  
15 the police department is going to look around.  
16 Having a very similar public model around 311 related  
17 metrics around what agencies are expected to respond  
18 to timelines, numbers. Those are one of the things  
19 that we're currently exploring as part of this.

20 In terms of spot checks, we do spot checks around  
21 the 311 operation itself. We do have all the  
22 insurance teams that listen to goals, that ensure  
23 they are being triaged the right way. Spot checks on  
24 digital tickets that we're seeing to ensure that  
25 those are being handled the right and periodic checks

1 on the queues and the actual response. Their  
2 response messaging to ensure that those are  
3 consistent and they are aligned with the latest. So,  
4 within OTS purview, we're making active steps to make  
5 311 even better, especially through the introduction  
6 of the new system. But beyond that, when it comes to  
7 working with the agencies themselves, the short  
8 answer for that question is providing additional  
9 transparency through the production of statistics and  
10 dashboards that illustrate how to triage in that.  
11 And I'll take a step back to one of the answers that  
12 I gave previously around the city's commitment. So,  
13 when I say OTI's role right, we as leadership within  
14 the city, we operate under one mirror, it's one  
15 authority and we work collaboratively towards that  
16 goal. So, I will agree from the Mayor's commitment  
17 that between the Deputy Mayor's and the Chief's and  
18 the varying levels of the leadership in the city, we  
19 are all committed to making the city better.  
20

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCER: Understood and sorry,  
22 my times just running out.

23 MATT FRASER: Of course.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCER: I have a couple of  
25 follow-ups. So, I do understand that it's the

1  
2 responsibility of the agencies that receive that the  
3 call gets routed to, to respond but it would be –  
4 there really should be ultimate responsibility as  
5 someone at 311 to make sure that the various agencies  
6 are taking it from there and that the ball doesn't  
7 get dropped and that's great that you have the  
8 quality control. I would love to perhaps meet with  
9 you and your team with my district staff or we could  
10 show you some of the issues with 311 and we could  
11 work on it together some issues that could  
12 potentially be addressed.

13 Last question, has it been brought to your  
14 attention that 311 service requests regarding  
15 assistance for homeless individuals are still being  
16 routed to the NYPD?

17 MATT FRASER: So, as it comes to the service  
18 level routing for any specific requests and how it's  
19 triaged across the system, at testing right now that  
20 that is the case, we can have a follow-up  
21 conversation to look at the specific work to confirm  
22 that that's the case. At this moment, I cannot  
23 confirm that I know that to be a fact. But we will  
24 look into it and we will be glad to follow-up and  
25 unpack it.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Thank you very much.

MATT FRASER: No problem, thank you very much.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We will now hear questions from other Council Members. I saw Council Member Brewer had her hand, Council Member Brewer.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Brewer, I think we lost Council Member Brewer. We'll get back to you Council Member Brewer if you have any questions and now I'm going to turn back to Chair Gutiérrez for additional questions.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you Irene and thank you Council Members Riley and Bottcher for your questions and participation. Uhm, I want to shift to vacancies. The preliminary plan includes a program to eliminate the gap proposal that would reduce DoITT's budget to nearly \$10 million in FY22 and \$9 million in FY23, through the elimination of 127 vacant positions across the agency.

Uhm, my first two questions are how many vacant positions remain after the reductions of the vacant positions and what types of positions were eliminated?



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2 MATT FRASER: As it stands right now, when it  
3 comes to anything around headcount specifics, our  
4 Deputy Commissioner for Management and Budget Joe  
5 Antonelli can provide.

6 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: Sure, so as it stands right  
7 now, the agency still has 141 vacancies across all of  
8 the entities within the budget umbrella. In terms of  
9 the types of positions that were eliminated, I can  
10 give you the breakout of the different program areas  
11 that the headcount was taken from. So, 48 positions  
12 were taken from what we would consider like the  
13 traditional DoITT umbrella. 9 from the Public Safety  
14 Division, 17 from 311, 34 from Cyber Command, 7 from  
15 the legacy Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology  
16 Officer, 1 from Data Analytics Office, 8 from the  
17 Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment and 3 from  
18 the Civic Engagement Commission.

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. So, you are  
20 proposing to eliminate more than the 127 positions?

21 MATT FRASER: So, just one quick clarification.  
22 The cyber related jobs, those were realigned and we  
23 cut instead of cyber related jobs, we cut some  
24 additional funding.  
25

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CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I just want to recognize Council Member Brewer is back and I know she had a question, so Irene [INAUDIBLE 3:38:38].

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: So, Council Member Brewer.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. Thank you very much Madam Chair and I apologize. I'm at a place then my phone died. Thank you Commissioner Matt Fraser, I have a couple questions. Number one, I think there's still money and I could be wrong from the master plan, \$157 million, so I'm wondering what the status of that is.

Number two, as you know I'm the author of the open data bill and was Chair of Technology. I never do as well as the current Chair but I was there for eight years. And so, my question is, with open data, which I know comes under you I assume. So, what are your plans for that to keep it updated and to deal with some of the challenges that come up?

The third issue is I think places like uhm, some of the company that you mentioned, Crown in particular, I think they only deal with commercial and not residential so just in general, I understand about the kiosks although in Manhattan, they're going

1  
2 to get pushed back from the height of them. So, the  
3 Community Boards are not loving them, just so you  
4 know. So, you may get some push back.

5 So, then what exactly is your I would say  
6 broadband experience. I know some small companies  
7 are working at NYCHA. Uhm, you know some guys, we  
8 should just pay the big companies to go into some of  
9 these communities based on whatever comes out and I  
10 know Chair Salamanca asked about the uh, you know the  
11 cable companies because we also want to make sure  
12 they are going to fund the Manhattan Neighborhood  
13 Network and some of the other providers that do  
14 neighborhood programming.

15 So, it's mostly the master plan, just broadband  
16 in general because I think it's not just Link NYC but  
17 also we're doing, we've been talking about it for  
18 about 40 years. And then open data and how are you  
19 going to deal with the Manhattan Neighborhood  
20 Networks and the similar public access stations?  
21 Thank you.

22 MATT FRASER: There we go. Wait a minute. There  
23 we go alright sorry; I could not unmute. So, to  
24 answer the questions in line. First around the  
25 internet master plan and the funding associated with

1  
2 it, what we did as part of taking our first steps in  
3 the administration is we've taken a look at any area  
4 where we've had specific spend associated.

5 The internet master plan, we're currently  
6 assessing to determine what's the best go forward  
7 strategy. The plan was put together at a point where  
8 the city's franchise authority and the mission for  
9 universal broadband was destroyed. And we want to  
10 ensure that now that we've consolidated those  
11 authorities, all factors associating what makes the  
12 most sense and what's fiscally responsible for the  
13 city is the steps that we're taking.

14 Anytime you have a spend at this scale, it's our  
15 fiduciary responsibility as the current city  
16 administration to ensure that those funds go towards  
17 the things that moves the needle forward in the best  
18 areas. Especially when we're looking at deficits.  
19 So, the short answer to that question is we're  
20 currently in the process of assessing internet master  
21 plan and determining what the best go forward path of  
22 that is.

23 Timing in terms of when we will complete, it's a  
24 bit nebulous but we're actively working on it today.  
25 Our focus is around providing access to the resources

1  
2 as quickly as possible and as part of the internet  
3 master plan, a lot of the delivery was not expected  
4 within – the calendar year was expected beyond.

5 So, we want to ensure that as we look at what  
6 creates the best market diversity and ensures  
7 competitiveness within the market through that type  
8 of program, also while we work on building that, we  
9 do not create conditions that leave portions of the  
10 city –

11 And when referring to the Link NYC, the 5G  
12 buildouts in the future and what we plan to do on  
13 that side of the spectrum, working with Council,  
14 working with Public Design Commission and working  
15 with all parties involved to review what was proposed  
16 and come up with an acceptable path forward is what  
17 we're actively working on. For us and for the city,  
18 5G is not, it's an inevitability and from the  
19 consumption needs that are driven by modern devices,  
20 we have to push in that direction sooner rather than  
21 later.

22 So, anything that this administration can do to  
23 help provide comfort and move the ball forward, we're  
24 actively interested in. New York City is already the  
25 financial hub, we want it to be the tech hub and 5G

1 brings us the capability to provide broadband at  
2 scale without being burdened by traditional  
3 infrastructure demands.

4 So, we're actively pursuing that. Uhm, I believe  
5 beyond that, there was one other piece of open data.  
6 So, with open data itself. This administration has a  
7 strong commitment behind providing access to the  
8 city's data resources and as we look at building tech  
9 capabilities, tech capabilities across the spectrum,  
10 whether that's through our traditional education  
11 system, through Department of Ed and our higher  
12 learning through CUNY, data is the key and access to  
13 broad sets of data where you can do things like  
14 correlation and analysis, and provide upcoming and  
15 not just upcoming generations from the education  
16 system but also private companies insights that they  
17 need that they can help the city be its best self.

18 So, from an open data perspective, we're going to  
19 push forward very aggressively to add additional data  
20 sources and enrich and provide additional  
21 capabilities that supplement that.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I think it was the M and  
23 M's and all of the public access stations to.  
24 Because the franchises pay for the public access  
25

1 stations. So, and then you got the issue of less  
2 cable, more streaming, less money from cable, so how  
3 are we going to pay for public access?  
4

5 MATT FRASER: Yeah, so on that front, we're  
6 currently evaluating long term affects and not just  
7 of the shift from cable to digital but how we can  
8 diversify the franchise market. It's just like any  
9 sort of company operation. We have to take a look at  
10 how the city is collecting revenue and what those  
11 emerging markets look like and create mechanisms by  
12 which we can protect the city's streaming. So, we're  
13 actively working on that and as that evolves, we'll  
14 be glad to have the conversation and keep you at it.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, thank you Madam  
16 Chair. I could go on forever but I appreciate this  
17 opportunity. I have a thousand more questions but  
18 I'll wait. Thank you so much.

19 MATT FRASER: Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member  
21 Brewer. Chair Gutiérrez, do you have any additional  
22 questions to the administration?

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes and thank you Council  
24 Member Brewer for your compliment. You are my mentor  
25 in this area, so I appreciate it. I just wanted to

1  
2 go back. If I could ask the Deputy Commissioner just  
3 to run through the positions that he mentioned. You  
4 don't have to tell me the amount, just the names.  
5 The position titles again.

6 MATT FRASER: Oh, so it was, I gave you the  
7 different program areas. So, it was you know the  
8 traditional DoITT program, uhm Public Safety  
9 Division, 311, Cyber Command, the Legacy Mayor's  
10 Office of the Chief Technology Officer, Data  
11 Analytics Office, Mayor's Office of Media and  
12 Entertainment and the Civic Engagement Commission.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Can you elaborate under  
14 traditional, there was a headcount for general  
15 administration and operations and if that's not, can  
16 you explain why there is no headcount for that in  
17 this program area?

18 MATT FRASER: That is inclusive in there, yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: That is in traditional?

20 MATT FRASER: Yes, it would be included in  
21 traditional, yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, thank you.  
23 Commissioner, is the remaining headcount sufficient  
24 to one department overall operation?  
25



1  
2       MATT FRASER: So, that's a great question and the  
3 short answer to that is uhm, running the operation  
4 isn't - we have to do it right. So, with what we  
5 have, we've got to make it work.

6       Our responsibility is to do the best that we have  
7 without dropping the ball but what we've been able to  
8 do through the consolidation of the entities, is  
9 we've had some capability and some functions that  
10 were complimentary.

11       So, when you look at things like budget, HR.  
12 When you look at other things like uhm, external  
13 affairs or even from a development perspective or  
14 security perspective, legacy Cyber Command had a  
15 function that was focused on protecting the city's  
16 overall assets while within DoITT itself, there was  
17 an information security office that was focused on  
18 protecting the infrastructure that DoITT housed. By  
19 consolidating those two teams, we have greater  
20 economies at scale because you have resources that  
21 are capable and the same similar sets of tools and  
22 technology that can be purposed towards the city's  
23 overall mission.

24       So, changes like that is what we're looking to  
25 put in place. By taking the resources that we have,

1  
2 creating a broader set of skills and purposing them  
3 towards a broader set of missions. As it stands  
4 right now, we haven't seen any declamation in our  
5 services levels or our ability to deliver. And as we  
6 move forward, we'll look at how we leverage the  
7 city's overall workforce, tech workforce outside of  
8 just OTI but within the agencies themselves, towards  
9 the common mission of one city, one effort.

10 So, as it stands right now, I'd like to provide  
11 Council, the Council the uhm, you know with comfort  
12 in knowing that everything is moving ahead at the  
13 same or higher levels of quality that it was running  
14 before. But in addition to that, we're going to look  
15 to get greater efficiencies by pulling in the city's  
16 overall type workforce.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you Commissioner  
18 and I hear you loud and clear on the one city, one  
19 Mayor. When [INAUDIBLE 3:48:56] was our Brooklyn  
20 President, it was one Brooklyn and coming from that  
21 borough, I get it and I appreciate it. I know it's  
22 coming from a good place. Can you expand a little  
23 bit on what the attrition rate is?

24

25

1  
2 MATT FRASER: So, specifically around attrition,  
3 our Deputy Commissioner for Management and Budget can  
4 provide insights on that front.

5 JOSEPH ANTONELLI: I'd have to get back to you  
6 with the specific attrition rate. I don't have that  
7 with me at this time.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Uhm, Commissioner  
9 you – actually at the top of this section, you  
10 clarified a little bit of what the Deputy  
11 Commissioner mentioned in program area cuts. The  
12 preliminary plan proposes to reduce positions at  
13 Cyber Commands. Considering that Cyber Command work  
14 is critical to protecting New York City. Will this  
15 cut have a negative impact on operations and should  
16 Cyber Command have been exempted from budget cuts?

17 MATT FRASER: So, uhm, again, the whole process  
18 of – or the whole concept of one city means that when  
19 we take a cut, we prioritize across the spectrum of  
20 what makes the most sense. And also, the cuts don't  
21 reflect functionally what happened with the  
22 conversions between Cyber Command and DoITTs  
23 Information Security arm.

24 So, by doing that, the number of resources that  
25 are focused on the overall cyber effort as part of

1  
2 Cyber Command has increased as a whole and with the  
3 vacancies that we still have and plus with the joint  
4 mission of doing the join security operation center  
5 between us, the state and the federal government,  
6 also provides supplementary resources to that  
7 purpose.

8       So, while we cut vacancies, right, we did not cut  
9 any personnel that was actively working on any of  
10 these missions. So, our current headcount from a  
11 sitting headcount, still remains the same. From  
12 baseline to each one of these entities but the  
13 overall headcount at Cyber Command has increased  
14 because it's all under one OTI umbrella and we pull  
15 DoITT's information security arm.

16       My background comes from the enforcement.  
17 Right, the PD end of protecting and serving. And as  
18 I mentioned at the beginning of this, we are focused  
19 when it comes to our citizen data, our resident data,  
20 that we protect that, like we protect our own. And  
21 we want to ensure that for the services that they're  
22 dependent on, not just services rendered by the  
23 government. Over 80 percent of critical  
24 infrastructure is operated by entities in the private  
25 sector through the Joint Security Operations Center,

1  
2 we're looking to expand the same -- extend the same  
3 coverages that we have in the city to the private  
4 sector as well.

5 So, we're going to work collaboratively towards  
6 that and with the combined power of what was DoITT,  
7 what was Cyber Command, what comes from New York  
8 State and the other surrounding cities, we are going  
9 to be stronger than ever in this space.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. I want to  
11 switch gears to COVID response and recovery. The  
12 DoITT FY22 budget includes over \$170 million in  
13 federal funding for COVID-19 response and recovery.  
14 Can you share a breakdown about how this funding is  
15 used and as the city continues to recover, do you  
16 anticipate additional resources needed to maintain the  
17 COVID-19 related tax support moving forward?

18 MATT FRASER: So, from a COVID perspective, the  
19 funding that we get goes to a couple of majority  
20 buckets. So, when you look at the vaccine management  
21 portal, when you look at the call center supporting  
22 vaccine scheduling, right. When you look at the  
23 reporting and the resources that go to manage some of  
24 these services and the infrastructure that goes to  
25 it.

1  
2 Uhm, the vast majority of funding can be spread  
3 between those buckets. As we move forward, COVID,  
4 I'd like to say that we don't see a need for it but  
5 unfortunately as you know and as we've seen, uhm,  
6 when dealing with a pandemic at this scale, something  
7 that we haven't seen in modern history beyond what  
8 we're dealing with now, it's unknown what the long-  
9 term sustainability and by ability of these things  
10 are.

11 We are continuously evaluating to see where we  
12 deprecate spend and where we can repurpose to other  
13 mechanisms that already exists within the city's  
14 estate.

15 We're working very closely with our colleagues  
16 Dr. Fason(SP?) and the folks at Department of Health  
17 and also the folks at Health + Hospitals Corporation  
18 to track the trends around what's going on with  
19 COVID. Long-term impacts of what we will need, I  
20 will defer to the health, the health care  
21 professionals. Our role as a technology entity is to  
22 enable the services that they need to provide  
23 services to people.

24 So, to that end, as long as they need, we will  
25 stand ready to provide it.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. And do you think that there are lessons to be learned from how uhm, like the agency utilizing some of these tools and some of these app?

MATT FRASER: So, it's — in the you know, necessity is the mother of invention and a wise person, a smart person learns from their mistakes. A wise person learns from the mistakes of others.

As we emerge out of the other end of the pandemic, as the city reopens, all the work that we're doing now to do a look back on how we performed well. Where we could have performed better. Having playbooks, run books around what we should do. Understanding baseline capabilities and services and things that we should have had in place, right. Ensuring that we have those things in place going forward. It's very similar to what happened after Hurricane Sandy or superstorm, Superstorm Sandy.

After Superstorm Sandy, the city got hit from a national disaster perspective with a huge amount of property damage and out of that, the Office of Housing Recovery was created where we had entire models built up around how do you deal with federal funding and how do you help doing rebuilt? All those

1 lessons learned were incorporated into various  
2 agencies, so that if it ever had to be done again, we  
3 could stand that up very quickly.  
4

5 So, around standing up with things like COVID or  
6 pandemic level or other emergency level situations  
7 that require large call centers, large vaccine  
8 centers or large appointment centers. Using those  
9 lessons that we've learned, creating a playbook so  
10 that we can actually move very quickly is one of the  
11 things that we will actively work on with our  
12 partners at the Office of Emergency Management. But  
13 anything around continuity of operations or anything  
14 along the lines of how the city responds to crisis's,  
15 I would defer to my colleagues at OEM and  
16 Commissioner Iscol and they could definitely provide  
17 more insight.

18 One of the keys of being a good leader is knowing  
19 ears where you have depth and ears where you don't  
20 and I'd leave this one to the professionals and let  
21 the folks at OEM answer.

22 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I hear you. Uhm, do you  
23 think that agencies like OEM for example, do you  
24 think that they are going to maintain technology  
25 services? Do you think that they agree that there is



1  
2 a value in maintaining not just advocacy for funding  
3 but investments into these services?

4 MATT FRASER: So, agencies like OEM have a  
5 mission that they have to accomplish and that's a  
6 business mission. And identifying the trends behind  
7 what they need to keep up with what industry demands  
8 to support that business mission is something that  
9 we'll continue. But the way that we invest in the  
10 things that we invest in, right, will be led from a  
11 single voice and single office. And I think that  
12 that's the biggest part of the change.

13 In things that are commodity types of  
14 technologies are things that we can make poor  
15 decisions that give the city the greatest economy of  
16 scale when it comes to purchasing but strategic  
17 decision on what moves the business forward, it's  
18 something that we across the entire leadership  
19 spectrum of the city will decide, not in a silo but  
20 as I mentioned at the start of this, uhm, every week  
21 the Deputy Mayor's get together, the Chief's get  
22 together and we talk about what the priorities are  
23 and we drive those things as a team. And the team  
24 will continue to drive the Mayor's priorities and the  
25

1  
2 agencies priorities pursuant to what's best for the  
3 people of the city.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. I'm going to  
5 shift to 311 a little bit. I know you answered some  
6 of Council Member Bottcher's questions, so I was  
7 going to keep this limited to two under Local Law  
8 127. Uhm, the first one is, oh, sorry just a context  
9 on Local Law 127, it's the law that enables public  
10 housing tenants to call the city's 311 customer  
11 service center to submit request for repairs or  
12 complaints on top of their NYCHA conflict number  
13 hotline.

14 My first question is, is DoITT actively working  
15 with NYCHA in implementing this law? And the second  
16 one is, how would NYCHA access the data in real time?

17 MATT FRASER: So, we have a strong partnership  
18 between OTI and NYCHA and that partnership is  
19 evolving on many fronts. It's historically been a  
20 strong partnership but it's getting stronger every  
21 day. In terms of what we're working, relating to the  
22 customer service flow, relating to how do we deal  
23 with other conditions that we have joint sort of  
24 missions on, like universal broadband and things of  
25 that nature. We're working very closely with NYCHA

1 on all of these fronts. When it comes to how we  
2 would provide them with the access, one of the things  
3 that Commissioner Antonelli mentioned earlier, was  
4 around Data Bridge and building the city's next set  
5 of data management platforms, like that platform and  
6 what we're building there will be the conduit that  
7 pushes everything not just within OTI but across the  
8 entire city as a whole.  
9

10 And working and triaging between 311 and NYCHA's  
11 call center is something that we are actively working  
12 on and as it stands right now, I believe based on  
13 everything that we can see and everything that we can  
14 measure, that process is handled seamlessly today.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Alright, so what you're  
16 saying is there's obviously a collaboration between  
17 NYCHA and 311 and do you think that there is an  
18 opportunity for more efficiency between those,  
19 between both agencies and I bring this up; just  
20 obviously we're preventing a significant public  
21 housing population here in District 34. Often times  
22 tenants will feel that they have to resort to 311  
23 when their NYCHA complaints aren't being responded to  
24 in real time. And so, the real time is the emphasis  
25 is the place that I want to focus on. Would you

1  
2 endorse I would say the real time efficacy of both  
3 agencies in communication? Like, is that something I  
4 could go back to my constituents and say, they are  
5 running this efficiently.

6 MATT FRASER: Yeah, so that collaboration in real  
7 time is something that we are actively looking at and  
8 you can tell them that we are, we have full intents  
9 to participate in those ways. For the actual  
10 Council, for the actual connection between NYCHA and  
11 what exists between that and 311, we spent a lot of  
12 time historically looking at that but going forward,  
13 part of ensuring that we're providing the best  
14 possible service is measuring quality and spot  
15 checking some of the decisions that were made at best  
16 and it's the entire thing that we've mentioned so far  
17 throughout this conversation. Ensuring that the  
18 decisions that we made yesterday are still the best  
19 decisions today. So, you can provide that assurance.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank you  
21 Commissioner. Irene, are there any other questions  
22 before I shift into the next?

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I think we went through most  
24 of the questions that we had.  
25

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CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, great. Uhm,  
Commissioner, are you feeling okay? I still got a  
lot of questions.

MATT FRASER: Oh, no, no, we are good, we're  
good.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Good, good, okay. So,  
I'm going to shift over to broadband expansion and  
5G. The Capital Commitment Plan includes funding at  
\$157 million for the Broadband Initiative, which  
would expand wireless access to low income New  
Yorkers. I know just from our conversation; I know  
that this is a priority for you and this is a  
priority for me. This initiative would expand  
wireless access to low-income New Yorkers. Can you –  
and you may have touched on this but I just want you  
to emphasize this. Can you give us a status update  
on the Broadband Initiative? When can low-income New  
Yorkers specifically NYCHA tenants, you know depend  
on the broadband acceptability?

MATT FRASER: So, one of the things that we're  
looking at right now as a whole is, how do we lower  
the threshold and bar of entry for broadband  
services? And to do that, when we looked at the  
historic approach around how broadband is provided to

1 uh, broadband is provided to folks that live in  
2 public housing or that have that lower income  
3 threshold.  
4

5 It was a process that required the person to  
6 subscribe to a federal voucher. Once they got the  
7 voucher, they would have to go through a cable  
8 company, subscribe through the service. As part of  
9 that service, there would be a preliminary check and  
10 depending on the state of credit, there may have been  
11 an ask to a large scale deposit to get  
12 infrastructure.

13 What we as government are looking at and what  
14 this administration is looking at is how do we lower  
15 that bar? How do we lower that threshold and how do  
16 we provide services like to provide heat and hot  
17 water. You don't have to go through - jump through  
18 all those hoops, it's just available.

19 So, we're currently looking across the city's  
20 franchise authority and we're looking across the  
21 specific - across all the providers of services in  
22 this space to see how we can provide services at  
23 scale with very low threshold to entry for NYCHA  
24 residents. As it currently stands, we have a plan  
25 that extends over the next calendar year that's

1  
2 projected to provide broadband at scale across all by  
3 broadband and scale to a significant portion of  
4 NYCHA. But until we finalize that agreement or we  
5 finalize that plan, it's — we can't provide that  
6 confirmation at this moment but it is our intent to  
7 take the conversation around broadband access and  
8 public housing and public facilities and make that  
9 conversation a thing of the past in the near term.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Uhm, can you  
11 — I know the focus has been on NYCHA tenants. Can  
12 you talk about what the — how the city determined I  
13 guess which developments were — some had greater  
14 access first. Or how did you all determine the areas  
15 of the greatest need?

16 MATT FRASER: So, it's a collaborative approach  
17 with NYCHA itself where we take a look not just at  
18 the number of people that live within the development  
19 but we also look at the population of youth within  
20 the development because it's a good indicator of the  
21 broadband need driven by people that need it for  
22 school. But it's a holistic sort of assessment of a  
23 number of factors, including those two but I'd be  
24 happy to sit down with Council and show the specific  
25

1  
2 metrics that we use or that we use with NYCHA to sort  
3 of come up with a prioritization pipeline.

4 And as I mentioned in the last answer, it's a  
5 program that's currently in the emerging stage, so  
6 we're still working and no final determinations have  
7 been made but as it does, as we make those, we will  
8 keep Council aware.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Who are the  
10 vendors? Do you have a sense of who the vendors are?  
11 I know you said it's kind of in the emergent stages  
12 but do you have a sense of who the vendors are going  
13 to be for this project and how they were selected?

14 MATT FRASER: So, in its current, in its current  
15 state, it was cut across the city's franchise  
16 community. We haven't made any final determinations  
17 on who the vendors will be yet and because it's still  
18 a process that's ongoing in the assessment phase, I'm  
19 going to defer making any statements on that until we  
20 finalize.

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, uhm, I obviously  
22 will keep talking and I also want to work with you to  
23 understand uhm, you know just the assessment of which  
24 boroughs have the greatest need and a breakdown by  
25 borough. So, we can keep talking about that.



1                   Uhm, how is the initiative related to the  
2  
3 broadband master plan that the previous office of CTO  
4 issued in January 2020?

5           MATT FRASER: So, the previous plan focused on  
6 bringing additional infrastructure, creating  
7 broadband diversity within specific areas through the  
8 carriers and then also, that infrastructure that was  
9 build out, this new conduit that would lease out and  
10 as part of occupying that conduit, there was a  
11 requirement to provide the broadband at a much lower  
12 cost.

13           So, that sort of that effort was looking at  
14 creating broader market diversity and through that  
15 diversity, bringing the cost of the — the cost of  
16 broadband service down. What we're looking at right  
17 now and that's a plan that extended — it wasn't a  
18 plan that extends over one calendar year, it was over  
19 multiple years and based on the projections around  
20 that, it was only positioned to serve a part of the  
21 population.

22           What we're looking at right now, is something  
23 that can cover the universe of public housing and  
24 looking at something that can cover not just public  
25 housing but government run facilities and provide

1  
2 that in a timely manner that's significantly less  
3 time than what was initially proposed as part of  
4 using their master plan.

5 Now, what we're trying to do is address the  
6 problem that exists now. The problem that exists now  
7 is no access, is no unlimited access to broadband.  
8 The moment that we can provide that access and stop  
9 that gap, we can — it gives us more time where we can  
10 have a more methodical thoughtful approach on how we  
11 address longer term issues. But everyday that  
12 someone's left behind is another day that we're  
13 failing to meet our mark as what the public expects  
14 from government.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. I am going to  
16 shift into Next Generation 911 and just two years  
17 ago, New York City residents got to text to 911 and  
18 one of the purposes of Next Gen 911 is how to allow  
19 for more digital information to be sent.

20 Does the Next Gen 911 system have the capability  
21 of receiving and responding to photos and videos sent  
22 via text messages?

23 MATT FRASER: So, that is part of the feature,  
24 the feature capability of Next Gen 911 to respond or  
25 to accept more means of reporting an issue. So, both

1  
2 photo, video and other means, we're currently looking  
3 at but in addition to that, what Next Gen 911 also  
4 provides, it's a broader set of resiliency behind the  
5 underlining technologies and it gives us  
6 opportunities when the — instead of being tethered to  
7 physical facilities to perform those services, in the  
8 event that something happens, we have more agility  
9 behind how the city deploys and where we can send  
10 resources.

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Can you share what  
12 languages are also accommodated in through this  
13 system?

14 MATT FRASER: So, from a languages perspective,  
15 we can get you a full list of that. I'm not prepared  
16 at this moment to comment on that explicitly but it's  
17 important to note not just for 911 but also 311  
18 services, we also have a language line that we  
19 outsource and that helps bring in and fit the gap  
20 from a language gap.

21 But I want to make sure that we get you a  
22 comprehensive list and I don't speculate, so we will  
23 follow up shortly after this with that.

24 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you and I do  
25 appreciate the interpretation piece, I just — I think

with just simply in the text piece, it might be a little bit more challenging, so I'm just curious if it exists and yeah, I would love to know which —

MATT FRASER: So, I thought you meant across the entire population, not for just calls and texts. Currently for text, it's English and in Spanish.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: For text, okay. I just meant for text. Thank you and then do you know, uhm, is there plans to expand on the language access piece for text?

MATT FRASER: At this moment, I can't confirm that but we are actively looking at ways that we can enhance services overall. And certainly that's part of what we are accessing.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Absolutely. Uhm, I would just like to emphasis that I think a key feature of this was for domestic violence victims to be able to communicate and you know, we just want to make sure that we are being representative and like covering their need as well where you know we see specific populations being victimized more than others and we just want to make sure that we're covering language access.

1 I do see Council Member Holden has joined us.  
2  
3 Uhm, so I'd like to recognize him. Thank you former  
4 Chair. My next question is, does the system, does  
5 Next Gen 911 work with all cellphone providers?

6 MATT FRASER: So, currently Next Gen 911 isn't  
7 available yet. It's a process, it's a program that's  
8 currently evolving and we are currently in the  
9 process of pushing the technology in the back and  
10 forward. As it stands right now anything from a text  
11 to 911 or a voice call works across all carriers.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, okay. I have here  
13 that last year only former Sprint customers were able  
14 to access it.

15 MATT FRASER: So, text to 911, you can text from  
16 any carrier. As it stands right now, there's no  
17 limitation on texting 911 from other carriers.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

19 MATT FRASER: For standard text messages.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, you mentioned this,  
21 I don't - you touched on this before but is the  
22 timeline to complete the transition to Next Gen 911  
23 still by 2024?

24 MATT FRASER: Yeah, that is correct.  
25

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Uhm, so COVID did not  
impact the progress of this at all?

MATT FRASER: Yup.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Fantastic. Uhm, and  
then, when can we expect to receive the 2022 annual  
report on the implementation of Next Gen 911?

MATT FRASER: So, we're actively working on that  
now but you can expect it before the end of the year,  
within the month of – by December, you will have it.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And you would be able to  
share it with Council Finance?

MATT FRASER: Yes, we will.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Fantastic. Uhm, okay I  
want to shift to – before finishing, I just want to  
shift over to NYCWIN. Because you did mention the  
focus for the emphasis on efficiency for the agency  
in moving away from some of these legacy projects,  
outdated projects and I know that NYCWIN was an  
endeavor that's been in multiple administrations.

The department will generate savings of \$8  
million in FY22 and roughly \$10 million in FY2023 in  
the outyears the decommissioning work DoITT continues  
to do in placing end of life in legacy systems while  
implementing measures to secure the city's networks.

1  
2 Uhm, how many agencies have fully migrated out of  
3 the NYCWIN system and how many are in transition to  
4 migrate out?

5 MATT FRASER: So, all agencies have migrated off  
6 of NYCWIN. What we're currently in the process of is  
7 decommissioning the actual infrastructure to the  
8 network and services are offline but we're looking at  
9 pulling the actual physical assets that are employed  
10 out. We've got a significant portion of them out but  
11 there's still some remnant left behind and we're in  
12 the process of doing that right now.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Can you give us an update  
14 on decommissioning transition off of NYCWIN and can  
15 you talk about the related costs?

16 JEFF FRASER: The decommissioning, I'm sorry, can  
17 you --

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, can you give us an  
19 update on the decommissioning off of NYCWIN. So,  
20 like the decommissioning of the infrastructure and  
21 any of the costs.

22 JEFF FRASER: So, as it stands right now, we have  
23 a hand full of sites that are remaining that has  
24 physical infrastructure lot. And when I say handful,  
25 literally a handful, less than five. When the costs

1  
2 associated with them, it's dependent on an  
3 assessment, complexity, location, which is what we're  
4 currently unpacking.

5       Timeline to actually get that equipment down, we  
6 are hopeful that we can get that done within the  
7 calendar year but a lot of that will be subject to  
8 negotiation, building access and actually having  
9 contracts to remove the actual equipment itself.

10       The associated costs, like I said, until we get  
11 some of those details, it's hard to project what that  
12 actually is. From a service migration perspective,  
13 everyone is off of NYCWIN or the service that was  
14 provided by NYCWIN.

15       CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Uhm, can you  
16 commit to providing this Committee with an itemized  
17 breakdown of those costs when you have them and a  
18 schedule for completion date of the breakdown in  
19 transition office system.

20       MATT FRASER: We can't commit to that.

21       CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes, okay. And do you  
22 have a sense of the timeline to fully remove these  
23 [INAUDIBLE 4:15:27] to an appointment from rooftops?

24       MATT FRASER: Yeah, so the timeline is a bit  
25 nebulous considering the factors that I previously



mentioned but we're hopeful by years end. We're past that point but we will as we get details; we will provide the information to Council accordingly.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. I am going to pass it off to uhm, our Moderator – sorry, okay I’m going to pass it on to Irene. Thank you so much Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner for your time. I do look forward to – oh, I’m sorry. Council Member, I’m going to hand it off to Irene. I see the Council Member Council Member Holden has a question.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yeah, thank you Chair.  
Council Member Holden.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Yes, thank you Commissioner and thanks for your testimony, very complete. I just have a question about the City Bridge 5G Kiosk design. Are you okay with the design?

MATT FRASER: We are comfortable with where we planned it and again, this is an iterative process. We'll do what's necessary and what's in the best interest of the -- while protecting the city's overall landscape to get the technology deployed but as it stands right now, based on the needs of what 5G is and the communication needs of the actual spectrum

1  
2 and its placement, it's aligned with what we see from  
3 best in industry and best practices. So, we are  
4 comfortable from that perspective.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: But you're happy?  
6 Because I think it's a little bit -- it's very large  
7 and I understand that a lot of technology has to be  
8 put in but you know I looked at the one, I believe it  
9 was Philadelphia and that looked a little, I know  
10 they maybe don't have the technology that we have or  
11 the providers that have to go in there but it just  
12 seemed to me and you know I was Chair of Technology  
13 for three years prior and at the very end, I thought,  
14 maybe we can combine you know light fixtures,  
15 furniture because you know that the city scape has a  
16 lot of furniture and getting more things, more signs,  
17 more massive elements on it and I just thought if we  
18 could figure out a way that actually make it a more  
19 pleasing design, it looks a little bit overbearing to  
20 me.

21 You know, I'm a designer so it's kind of like,  
22 you know it just didn't sit well with me and I don't  
23 know if the Chair feels the same way. I don't know  
24 if you've seen it Chair but I just felt it was a bit  
25 massive for our city scape and I don't know if it

1  
2 will change from borough to borough but I'm a little  
3 concerned that's all. So, if you're okay with it, I  
4 don't know. It's a matter of taste.

5 MATT FRASER: No, no, thank you for the concern  
6 and you know to some degree, some things are a matter  
7 of taste. It's at the end of day when you do a  
8 comparison between New York and Philly, now I'm not  
9 knocking Philly at all. I just want to be very clear  
10 about this right but from a New York perspective,  
11 when there's a certain level of quality that's  
12 expected when you consume services within the city  
13 and we want to ensure that that level of quality is  
14 consistent.

15 So, when we move forward and we look at the  
16 street furniture, we want to ensure that the  
17 capability, not just for what we need today but the  
18 expansiveness of what we need tomorrow is culminated  
19 within that design.

20 So, we work collaboratively with the Public  
21 Design Commission. We work with the carriers and we  
22 sort of brought everyone together to say, what's the  
23 best approach that we could do on this front? And  
24 what we put forward is aligned with our existing -  
25 it's aligned with our existing street landscape, to

1  
2 the best possible. And like you said, with in  
3 between Philly and New York City, the things that  
4 we're getting out of this, I mean it's not  
5 necessarily apples and apples but to the best of our  
6 ability, we've been as accommodating as possible when  
7 it comes to the design and the services and we will  
8 continue to do so and iterate where necessary but as  
9 it stands right now, everything that we've done so  
10 far has been compliant with what PDC has mandated and  
11 what we could get every carrier to align to.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Great, thank you  
13 Commissioner. Thank you Chair.

14 MATT FRASER: Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Holden.  
16 Chair Gutiérrez, do you have any additional questions  
17 or remarks?

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: No additional questions  
19 Commissioner but I just wanted to let you know that  
20 you can expect a follow-up letter with some more  
21 additional questions and would really appreciate your  
22 response.

23 MATT FRASER: Yeah, no worries, no worries. As  
24 we started the conversation on the level of  
25 cooperation and collaboration that will come between

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1  
2 Council and the Administration will be stronger than  
3 ever. You have my commitment that this is a team  
4 effort and we will get – the only way that we can get  
5 to solving the challenges that we've historically  
6 missed a mark on is by in making sure that the voice  
7 of the people which Council represents and our  
8 ability to execute are aligned and we work hand and  
9 hand together. So, I look forward to the great work  
10 that we'll do with Council and I thank you all for  
11 the work that you do in advocating for the people  
12 within and the constituents within your respective  
13 districts.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so much.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you everyone. We have  
16 concluded administration testimony. We will now turn  
17 to public testimony. Once your name is called to  
18 testify, our staff will unmute you and the Sergeant  
19 at Arm will set the timer and announce that you may  
20 begin. We'll kindly ask each panelist to limit their  
21 testimonies to two minutes.

22 Council Members will have an opportunity to ask  
23 questions after each testimony. Our first panelist  
24 is Mr. Noel Hidalgo from BetaNYC followed by Elise  
25

Goldin from New York Economy Project followed by  
Paula Segal from TakeRoot Justice. Mr. Hidalgo.

NOEL HIDALGO: Hello.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

NOEL HIDALGO: Thank you. Dear Chairs, Chair  
Gutiérrez and fellow Council Members. For the last  
eight years, BetaNYC has called for a realignment of  
municipal technology services. And we are really,  
really glad to see Mayor Adams take the initiative to  
start this process. We have high hopes for the Chief  
Technology Officer Fraser and the whole Office of  
Technology and Innovation.

At the start of this month, we celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary of the city's open data law and for the  
first time since the passage of this groundbreaking  
law, the complete open data team sat together. No  
longer was there a division between DOITT resources  
and Mayor's Office resources. This is the type of  
de-siloing that we have exactly wished for and we  
hope that this type of unity becomes the norm. And  
we wish Technology Fraser and the DoITT/OTI team, a  
swift and effective unification.

Our following testimony is informed by the  
failures before and during the pandemic. As we have

1  
2 yet to see a complete detailed breakdown of the  
3 reorganization, our testimony will focus on core  
4 values and key questions to guide the budgeting  
5 process.

6 My testimony is going to divert a little bit and  
7 will be verbal and then I will submit some written  
8 testimony here. First of all, Chair Gutiérrez,  
9 thanks so much for asking questions about service  
10 design. What we didn't hear from the testimony from  
11 the administration was exactly what are those core  
12 principles? How exactly is this particular agency  
13 going to and this agency leadership is going to  
14 course correct from the failures that we see. We  
15 have to point back to our friends over at NYC of  
16 Opportunity who have been leading the charge. They  
17 have five core principles: Creating with the people  
18 who use and deliver those services; Prototyped and  
19 tested for usability; Accessibility for all; and  
20 Equitably distributing those tools and make sure that  
21 everything is evaluated for impact and effectiveness.

22 What we heard today was some really great words  
23 but we need to see this in action and the rest of my  
24 written testimony will be submitted outlining a clear  
25 list of questions that we think, BetaNYC thinks that

the Council should be asking for OTI. Specifically in this is understanding what is OTI's commitment to Community Boards.

As the Open Meetings Law is about to expire in less than four weeks, we need to understand exactly how OTI will be supporting community boards in their hybrid and virtual environments.

With that, I say thank you very much. You did a great job. I love being here. Thank you for making this pretty amazing.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Hidalgo for your testimony and I do not see right now any new questions from Council Members. And our next panelist is Mr. Goldin, Ms. Goldin, I apologize.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

ELISE GOLDIN: Hi, is this for me? Okay, hello, sorry, I just rejoined after being on since 9:30 but nice to see everybody. Good afternoon, my name is Elise Goldin, I am the Community Land Trust Organizer with the New Economy Project, which is an organization that works with community groups to build an economy that works for all rooted in racial and social justice, neighborhood equity, cooperation and ecological sustainability.



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1  
2       So, I'm here to urge the Land Use Committee to be  
3 supporting \$3 million for Fiscal Year '23 for funding  
4 for the citywide Community Land Trust Initiative as  
5 well as support legislation which removes land from  
6 the speculative market which we know is harming and  
7 displacing communities.

8       So, some of these you know laws that we want to  
9 pass this year include the Community Opportunity to  
10 Purchase Act, ensuring that public land remains  
11 permanently affordable and for the public good as  
12 well as abolishing the tax lien sale. So, Community  
13 Land Trust, just to remind people, our community  
14 governed nonprofits that own land and ensure that  
15 it's used to provide permanently affordable housing,  
16 as well as other public land uses.

17       So, the CLT model is really flexible and can  
18 support a range of community needs, from rental  
19 housing and co-ops to commercial spaces, cultural  
20 spaces, gardens and more. Anything that you know  
21 communities deem is necessary and CLT's are rooted in  
22 boarder movements for housing justice and economic  
23 democracy.

24

25

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1  
2       So, just wanted to again, urge the Committee to  
3 support our \$3 million ask for the citywide CLT  
4 initiative. Thank you.

5       COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Goldin for your  
6 testimony. Our next panelist is Paula Segal. Ms.  
7 Segal.

8       SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9       PAULA SEGAL: Thank you so much and I'm here with  
10 my colleague Elise Goldin to also talk to the Land  
11 Use Committee about the Community Land Trust  
12 Initiative. I realize that it's been a long day and  
13 it's been a long month of budget hearings, so we are  
14 submitting written testimony. I actually emailed  
15 mine to the Committee Council yesterday and I hope it  
16 will be distributed. And I'll just talk a little bit  
17 about the initiative.

18       The initiative was started in Fiscal Year 2020 by  
19 the last Council. It has been growing every year  
20 since. This year, we are 20 organizations strong  
21 including its organizations where Elise and I work.  
22 Elise described the New Economy Project a bit. I'll  
23 tell you a bit about TakeRoot Justice, where I am  
24 Senior Staff Attorney in our equitable neighborhoods  
25 practice. TakeRoot works with grassroots groups,

neighborhood organizations and community coalitions to help make sure that people of color, immigrants, and other low-income residents who have built our city are not pushed out in the name of progress.

TakeRoot and our 19 partners have been part of the citywide Community Land Initiative and are asking this Council to increase funding this year to keep up with demand. That every year the initiative has added new neighborhood based groups that are exploring community land trust that are doing deals that are taking over land on which buildings have been disinvested from by the city for decades. That are helping homeowners get their homes out of the lien sale and look for preservation pathways and are helping stabilize commercial spaces to make long-term small business opportunities available to low-income New Yorkers in perpetuity.

We are really excited that to be a technical assistance provider in the initiative, we do two things. We are counsel to several community land trusts including East Harlem El Barrio Community Land Trust, the Brooklyn Level Up Steering Committee in Brooklyn that is exploring the community land trust.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

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PAULA SEGAL: Oh, sorry. Can I finish one second?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Absolutely.

PAULA SEGAL: Thank you. So, and the other thing we do is kind of popular education and workshops for groups exploring whether a CLT is what would meet the need of the community that they are trying to meet and in both of those capacities each year, demand has just grown and grown. So, we're really excited to be asking for a reup of the initiative but also an increase to \$3 million to share across the 20 organizations. Thank you so much.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Segal for your testimony. Our next panelist is Sabrina Lamb followed by Dina Alfano followed by Laura Paris. Ms. Lamb.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

SABRINA LAMB: Chairwoman Gutierrez and Committee on Technology esteemed members, good afternoon. On behalf of over 6,000 WorldofMoney children and their families, I thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I am Sabrina Lamb, the Founder and Executive Director of the WorldofMoney, a 17-year New York City-based non-profit and leading provider of 120

1  
2 annual classrooms and online hours of diverse and  
3 immersive financial and entrepreneurial education for  
4 ages 7-18. Because money influences every aspect of  
5 our lives, we have leveraged the power of technology  
6 with a world of money online that work to teach more  
7 children with our culturally relevant lessons so that  
8 children accessing our platform will see children who  
9 look like them.

10  
11 Four of our financial lessons are translated into  
12 French, Spanish, Swahili and Portuguese. Maximillian  
13 Johnson, a 13-year-old Harlem resident, once shared,  
14 "World of Money has taught me how to build financial  
15 security for me and my family. Saving? Investing?  
16 Compound interest? Most adults don't know these  
17 things, and my learning about finance at such a young  
18 age and how money works puts me at a great  
19 advantage." Well, Maximillian is correct, because 38  
20 percent of teens report feeling unprepared to manage  
21 their personal finances and fear that they will not  
22 experience lifelong economic well-being.

23 And the lack or inadequate financial education  
24 may lead to poor health, lack of self-worth,  
25 predatory victimization and low college attainment.

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1  
2 So, there's no better time Council Members to include  
3 our curriculum in classrooms and after-school  
4 programs throughout New York City. We can harness  
5 the power of our technology and to deliver it to  
6 where children and youth like Maximillian, spend most  
7 of their time in the classroom and on their mobile  
8 devices.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 SABRINA LAMB: We welcome being partners with  
11 you. Thank you and remember the WorldofMoney moto,  
12 learn, earn, save, invest, donate. Thank you for  
13 your time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your  
15 testimony. Our next witness is Dina Alfano.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ms. Alfano?

18 DINA ALFANO: Hello.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: We hear you.

20 DINA ALFANO: Okay. Uhm, sorry about that.  
21 Really grateful to have this opportunity to speak  
22 today. Although I was hoping for someone, at least  
23 one person from LPC to be present. Anyway thank you  
24 very much Council Members. I am Dina Alfano, I've  
25 lived in Bushwick since 2014, returning to the

1 neighborhood of my family's roots and have been very  
2 passionate about landmarking for Bushwick. And I  
3 guess I'd like to express how frustrating its been  
4 for those of us who are passionate about landmarking,  
5 in that it seems our repeated attempts to call  
6 attention to Bushwick lead to dead ends. And  
7 honestly, it's not clear if that's just the reflects  
8 of response the city as whole has developed over the  
9 last number of decades when it comes to responding to  
10 Bushwick in general but it's disheartening just the  
11 same.  
12

13 Of course I understand there are established  
14 procedures to the landmarking process as well factors  
15 like budgets and staffing that affect prioritization  
16 and I well appreciate those realities. But there is  
17 another factor and one that's critical in my mind  
18 that I'd like to point out that merits real  
19 consideration particularly when it comes to Bushwick  
20 and that factor is context.

21 We're counting the details of Bushwick's troubled  
22 history belongs to the long time residents here who  
23 endured it firsthand and so, I wouldn't attempt to  
24 speak on that but that said, for anyone to just pause  
25 and consider the well-documented facts of Bushwick's

difficult history, I think we can all agree that it's pretty remarkable that any of these meritorious properties are still standing and are still savable.

And I wish that notion of context would have been taken into account in December of 2020 when the community rallied in front of cameras for two days in front of the Lindley house in a desperate attempt to save it from the bulldozer. And as I recall -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

DINA ALFANO: Uhm, sorry, I had a lot more to say but in summary, what I'm hoping is that LPC could host a landmarking 101 for Bushwick or otherwise engage our community and take the time to meet with us so that we know that we're seen, that we're heard and that there is a lot of support here for landmarking and time is running out for Bushwick. That ship sailed. We don't have that luxury any more. So, thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Ms. Alfano for your testimony. Our next witness is Laura Paris.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

LAURA PARIS: Hi everyone. My apologies for I'm walking to a quiet corner. Uhm, my apologies for



1  
2 jumping on and having to run to another corner of  
3 where I am.

4 I am a resident of Bushwick. I live on Mayor  
5 Row, one block from the destroyed Lindley house. I  
6 also work in Bushwick, I've lived in Bushwick since  
7 2004, worked in Bushwick since 1993. And uhm, we are  
8 outraged and despairing about the state of the  
9 landmark, what should be landmark buildings on  
10 Bushwick Avenue that are being destroyed one by one  
11 by developers and replaced with ugly modern buildings  
12 with no character. This is bad for the community  
13 because people are being displaced. It's bad for the  
14 esthetics of the community because the new buildings  
15 do not have any historical value.

16 And it is bad for residents who have to endure  
17 all of the construction, the dust, the noise. I echo  
18 what Dina is saying. We need to have the City  
19 Council more involved in promoting landmarking parts  
20 of Bushwick, the parts that remain and controlling  
21 the out of control development. Specifically, I  
22 think we should uhm, put some of the money that's  
23 going into Bushwick in current residents hands,  
24 encourage some basement conversions if what we want  
25 to see is more apartments in Bushwick. And I know

1  
2 that Cypress Hills is doing that and it's sort of a  
3 pilot project.

4 In addition, we know that without — I mean I live  
5 in Bushwick, I work for a not-for-profit, I had no  
6 idea there was a gas pipeline planned a few blocks  
7 from my house. The community was not consulted. And  
8 uhm, you know we know that the Community Board is on  
9 our side to control —

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 LAURA PARIS: This out of control, ugly  
12 development and yet, we've seen one remarkable and  
13 notable building after another go down.

14 So, uhm, what we're hoping for as Dina said is a  
15 101 on landmarking but also more Council involvement  
16 in protecting our buildings, protecting our  
17 neighborhood, protecting affordable housing and  
18 ideally, uhm, ideally also uhm, some more creative  
19 initiatives if we need more apartments. You know  
20 once again the basement conversion program, uhm and  
21 more awareness and community involvement in any kind  
22 of development, especially regarding this horrendous,  
23 ecologically, problematic and dangerous to the health  
24 of Bushwick residents gas pipeline that we, you know  
25 once again, knew nothing about.

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2 And I, with Dina and many other neighbors  
3 protested the bulldozing of Lindley House. We now  
4 have a huge building that is overshadowing all of the  
5 adjacent buildings including uhm, the next door  
6 neighbors who are friends of mine and you know, we  
7 just need help. We need the city's help to keep this  
8 from happening. Thank you very much.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your  
10 testimony and I see that Chair Gutiérrez has  
11 questions.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. I had a  
13 question but I do want to just thank Dina and Laura  
14 from my District for coming to testify. It's  
15 something that I stand with you all. I was at that  
16 corner of Lind back in 2020. I live in Bushwick so I  
17 will certainly be working with you all and also our  
18 Chair for Landmarks, Council Member Louis to dig a  
19 little bit deeper on everything that you're talking  
20 about.

21 I just didn't want you to think you were unheard  
22 and thank you for sticking around the whole duration  
23 of the hearing. Thank you all.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much for all  
25 testimonies and our next witness is Michael Caratzas.

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2       MICHAEL CARATZAS: Uh, yes, thank you. I'm a 19-  
3 year employee of the Landmarks Preservation  
4 Commission and am testifying as President of our  
5 Chapter, Chapter 41 of Local 375. Let me say first,  
6 I think it's a real disservice to our members, to the  
7 staff of the Commission who are asking you to come  
8 here and testify today that I'm testifying with  
9 absolutely nobody from the landmarks commission still  
10 here and Chair Salamanca is not here and no one from  
11 the Land Use Subcommittee is still here. So, this  
12 really feels like I have no opportunity to be heard  
13 here and I've been strung along all day and really  
14 have no chance to make my voice heard.

15       With that said, I wanted to respond to something  
16 about our Chair Sarah Carroll said earlier today.  
17 She talked about cutting our budget, cutting our  
18 staff and she said that it's fine to cut it 15  
19 percent, six people. We're already struggling with  
20 the staffing we have. We're a small agency, we're  
21 down from about 40 to 33 landmarks preservationists.  
22 These are the people who do the bread and butter work  
23 of the Commission.

24       At the same time that she is telling us that she  
25 can cut the people who are designating landmarks and

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2 reviewing applications, they are adding. They just  
3 added a new management position, an HR position that  
4 management was doing before. Basically saying all  
5 the cuts can fall on the staff. All the cuts can  
6 fall on the public and the management, they're not  
7 going to have to suffer any cuts at all. We're in  
8 the process very soon. We will be experiencing a  
9 summer surge of applications. We need many, many  
10 more staff, not less and what she said is completely  
11 unrealistic.

12 I would like to add quickly, there's a larger  
13 issue here, which is that our budget is too small to  
14 retain people, to pay them a competitive wage. Our  
15 wages have fallen from 20 percent -

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 MICHAEL CARATZAS: In the last 20 years, the  
18 switch from tier four to tier six has been a major  
19 loss in our benefits. The loss of teleworking, which  
20 the Mayor has come out against is another loss. All  
21 the while we've lost pay and benefits, rents have  
22 skyrocketed. We have people who are paying student  
23 loans. They can't afford to stay at the Commission  
24 and the place has basically become a revolving door  
25 where experienced people are leaving after two or

1  
2 three years of receiving you know training at the  
3 hands of the city and going on and making a better  
4 living for themselves. It's very inefficient. It's  
5 very unwise. It's pennywise and pound foolish and  
6 again, I really do not understand the structure of  
7 this. Why I had to wait all day to testify to people  
8 who have no interest in this issue whatsoever. It's  
9 very discouraging and it's a real disservice to our  
10 staff and to the people of our democracy. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your  
12 testimony and our next and final witness Memo  
13 Salazar.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Council Member Holden has  
15 his hand up for questions.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, thank you so much Chair.  
17 Council Member Holden.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you Chair and  
19 thanks to Committee Counsel for doing this hearing.  
20 Michael, you uhm, it's not falling on deaf ears.  
21 I've battled LPC before I got into the Council. New  
22 York City was never serious about preserving their  
23 buildings, their landmark buildings or exquisite  
24 buildings. It's historical. If anybody has ever  
25 been in Penn Station, you know what a loss that was

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2 but we did get a Landmarks Commission out of that but  
3 you're right, it's understaffed. They usually don't,  
4 they can't give us the attention we need as people  
5 who want to preserve but I will certainly bring your  
6 message back to the Council Michael and it is  
7 unfortunate that there's nobody from Landmarks on  
8 this call. I agree with you.

9 MICHAEL CARATZAS: Thank you. I appreciate that.  
10 I appreciate you doing that. I appreciate you  
11 sentiments. I am here for 33 staff at the Landmarks  
12 Preservation Commission and it's very disrespectful  
13 for nobody to be here from the Commission, from the  
14 Land Use Subcommittee to hear us. It's extremely  
15 disrespectful. So, please -

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: We do have a bill that's  
17 pending that will force these agencies to stay on  
18 this call and listen to the residents of New York  
19 City. Uhm, and that's one thing we will push and  
20 hopefully we'll get support in the Council because it  
21 is disrespectful, I agree. I was turned down for  
22 every you know in my district, I have no landmarks  
23 and I pushed for several at a church that was a  
24 carpenter gothic style church built in 1847 by a  
25 famous architect, built by the community, historical

1 value. We were turned down because there was siding  
2 on it that they said changed the structure of it.  
3 And when we took the siding off, they thought we were  
4 doctoring the photo in photoshop. But we did save  
5 it, it's housed in two trailers but we disassembled  
6 it and we're still waiting to put it up in my  
7 district. Hopefully we'll get funding for that but  
8 I've had frustrations for decades with the Landmarks  
9 Preservation Commission. So, I'm on your side and  
10 I'm on the advocate side, Bushwick certainly, there's  
11 a character of the neighborhood that has t be saved  
12 in Bushwick. There's some beautiful buildings there  
13 and we don't want to lose them, so anything I can do  
14 and Chair, anything I could do to help you as your  
15 neighbor in District 30, I will do and certainly  
16 thanks to the advocates for staying on this and thank  
17 you Michael.

18  
19 MICHAEL CARATZAS: Thank you. If I could just  
20 say one last thing. I've been waiting since 9:30  
21 this morning. I listened to our Chair speak and say  
22 whatever she had to say and everybody listened to her  
23 and nobody stuck around to listen to me. I represent  
24 as President of our Chapter 33 employees, very  
25 underpaid employees of the Landmarks Preservation



Commission. We're having a very tough time and heard our Chair say, we can continue to cut our staff while they're you know they're adding staff in management and my staff, the people I'm representing here today are the people who do the bread and butter work for the public and nobody stuck around to listen to us. It's extremely disrespectful. So, thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much for your testimony. We appreciate your testimony and our final witness is Memo Salazar.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

MEMO SALAZAR: Thank you. My name is Memo Salazar and I am the Co-Chair of the Western Queens Community Land Trust. This is — I'm here to speak to the Land Use Committee. Uhm, we've been trying to do something about rising costs of living and working in Queens. Specifically, we've been re-visioning the massive Vernon Boulevard building in Long Island City that our former governor Cuomo was going to give to Amazon as part of their HQ2 project.

We have spent the last two years going out into the community and talking to them, of going over all of their needs and wishes and pouring them all into a feasibility study in conjunction with an architecture

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2 firm that is about to release a community-led report  
3 on what can be done withing those 700 thousand square  
4 feet of space.

5 We are imagining all sorts of community uses from  
6 food service to artist studios, and more. All of  
7 this, as you know, takes a lot of time and money,  
8 which are two things that communities rarely have to  
9 spare and I personally have a full-time job as a TV  
10 Producer in children's education, which I should  
11 actually be there now. But uhm, I devote all of my  
12 free time to the CLT, because these issues are so  
13 vital to Queens.

14 Thanks to last year's City Council funding, we  
15 just able to hire our first coordinator part-time  
16 last month. She's a young, amazing Latinx woman with  
17 solid community organizing skills and she's got a  
18 personal interest in affordable housing, So, we're  
19 very lucky to have her but right now, we only can  
20 afford to have her part time. Her weekly calendar is  
21 already filled to the brim with meetings and events  
22 and we've barely gotten started.

23 Over the next couple of years, we need to meet  
24 with as many different elected officials that are in  
25 our area and city agencies as we find a way to work

1  
2 together to make this building project a reality. We  
3 need to do a lot more outreach in Western Queens to  
4 make sure that everyone including our most  
5 marginalized communities have a voice in this  
6 project. But again, this all takes time and money.  
7 The \$3 million dollar initiative request from City  
8 Council is vital to making this happen and allowing  
9 us to expand our outreach.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 MEMO SALAZAR: Without the adequate funding, we  
12 all struggle as volunteers with our day jobs, unable  
13 to bring these solutions to Queens for the people who  
14 need it the most. So, please support this  
15 initiative. Thank you very much.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and I want to thank  
17 every witness for their testimony and if we have  
18 missed anyone who has registered to testify today but  
19 has yet been called, please use your Zoom hand  
20 function now. I see none and I will turn over to  
21 Chair Gutiérrez for closing remarks and to adjourn  
22 the hearing.

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so much  
24 Moderator and I just, I don't want to take up anymore  
25 time. I just want to emphasize uhm, the amount of

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2 time the public has spent on this call. I really do  
3 appreciate whatever accommodations you had to make,  
4 childcare, work, whatever it was to sit here and  
5 listen to all of us, I like my colleague Council  
6 Member Holden, am happy to support the Council's  
7 mission in making sure that we are respecting your  
8 time by mandating some of these agencies and  
9 Commissioners to sit through it. This is the budget  
10 process to be here for hours on end, so I just want  
11 to highlight how much I do appreciate everyone who  
12 signed up and everyone who stuck around and all of  
13 your remarks.

14 I also just want to conclude by thanking the  
15 entire Committee Staff. Commissioner Fraser and you  
16 team for all of your answers. My team as well for  
17 helping with preparation and that is all I have.  
18 Thank you so much for your testimonies and the  
19 hearing is adjourned.

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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 May 15, 2022