

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Jointly with the

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
AND BUILDINGS

----- X

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Start: 9:50 a.m.

Recess: 4:40 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers, City Hall

B E F O R E: Justin L. Brannan, Chairperson
Pierina Ana Sanchez, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Shaun Abreu
- Alexa Avilés
- Diana I. Ayala
- Gale A. Brewer
- Selvena N. Brooks-Powers
- David M. Carr
- Eric Dinowitz
- Amanda Farias
- Oswald Feliz
- Kamillah Hanks
- Crystal Hudson
- Farah N. Louis
- Francisco P. Moya
- Chi A. Ossé
- Keith Powers

Lincoln Restler
Althea V. Stevens
Nantasha M. Williams
Julie Won
Public Advocate Jumaane Williams

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

James Oddo
Commissioner
NYC Department of Buildings

Laura Popa
Deputy Commissioner
Sustainability
NYC Department of Buildings

Guillermo Patino
Deputy Commissioner
Policy and Legal Affairs
NYC Department of Buildings

Gina Ugarte
Deputy Commissioner
Budget
NYC Department of Buildings

Yegal Shamash
Assistant Commissioner, Business
Chief Structural Engineer
NYC Department of Buildings

Adolfo Carrión
Commissioner
Department of Housing, Preservation,
and Development

Ahmed Tigani
First Deputy Commissioner
Department of Housing, Preservation,
and Development

Gardea Caphart
Deputy Commissioner
Finance and Administration
Department of Housing, Preservation,
and Development

Kimberly Durga
Deputy Commissioner
Development
Department of Housing, Preservation,
and Development

Ann Marie Santiago
Deputy Commissioner
Enforcement and Neighborhood Services
Department of Housing, Preservation,
and Development

Joelennys Negron
East New York Community Land Trust

Paula Segal
Senior Staff Attorney
Take Root Justice

Allison Nickerson
Executive Director
LiveOn New York

William Spisak
Senior Program Associate
New Economy Project

Brendan Cheney
Director of Policy and Operations
New York Housing Conference

Emily Goldstein
Director of Organizing and Advocacy
Association for Neighborhood and
Housing Development

Michael Hanlon
Member Local 3
International Brotherhood of
Electrical Workers

Albert Scott
East New York Community Land Trust

Caroline Chen
Senior Supervising Counsel
Environmental Justice Group
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Kevin Wolfe
Deputy Director of Advocacy
Center for New York City Neighborhoods

Ben Dorman
Deputy Director
Climate Jobs New York

Rolando Guzman
Deputy Director for Community
Preservation and Advocacy
St. Nicks Alliance

Onsé
Disabled New Yorker, Community Organizer
Photojournalist, Musician

Jackie Del Valle
Coordinator
Stabilizing NYC + Take Root Justice

Raul Rivera
Citizen, NYC

Bessie Kuravsky
Mother of Binyomin Kuravski
Citizen of New York City

Danielle Manley
Manager of Policy
Urban Green Council

Jim Dill
Executive Director
Housing and Services Inc.

Lyudmila [Zoom Name] or
Melanie Pomichet[sp?]
Relative of Binyomin Kuravski
Citizen of New York City

Natalie Akselrod
Citizen of New York City

Tierra Labrada
Supportive Housing Network of New York

Yakov Medinets
Citizen of New York City

Alexander Kuravski
Father of Binyomin Kuravski
Citizen of New York City

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE Jointly with the
2 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

7

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning and welcome to
4 today's New York City Council Executive Budget
5 hearing for the Committees on Finance joint with the
6 Committee on Housing and Buildings. If you would
7 like to submit testimony, you may at
8 testimony@Council.NYC.Gov. At this time please
9 silence all electronic devices. Please silence all
10 electronic devices. Just a reminder: No one may
11 approach the dais at any.during this hearing. Chairs
12 we are ready to begin.

13 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Sergeant. Okay,
14 good morning and welcome to day seven of FY 25
15 executive budget hearings. I'm Councilmember Justin
16 Brannan. I chair the committee on finance. Today's
17 hearing will begin with the Department of Buildings
18 followed later by the Department of Housing and
19 Preservation and Development, HPD. I'm pleased to be
20 joined by my good friend and colleague, Councilmember
21 Pierina Sanchez, Chair of the Committee on Housing
22 and Buildings. We've been joined this morning by
23 council members Louis, Avilés, and Hudson. Moya and
24 Cabán are joining us on Zoom.

25 Welcome to a familiar face, Commissioner James
Oddo. It's good to see you and your team. Thanks

1
2 for being here today. Laura Popa as well. Thank you
3 all for joining us to answer our questions.

4 Just to set the table for all our viewers at
5 home: On April 24, 2024, the Administration released
6 the Executive Financial Plan for FY 24 to 28, with a
7 proposed FY 25 budget of \$111.6 billion. DOB's
8 proposed FY 25 budget of \$210.1 million represents
9 less than 1% of the administration's proposed FY 25
10 budget. This is an increase of \$32.1 million or 18%
11 from the \$178.7 million originally budgeted in the FY
12 25 plan. This increase results from several actions,
13 mostly 36 baselined positions associated with
14 compliance and enforcement of Local Law 97, as well
15 as additional funds for the DOB NOW Project.

16 As of March 2024, DOB has 76 vacancies relative
17 to their FY 24 budgeted headcount. In the Council's
18 Preliminary Budget Response, we called on the Mayor
19 to add \$19 million to restore eliminated DOB
20 positions, especially for vacancies among DOB
21 inspectors, while also increasing penalties for
22 failing to provide inspectors building access, and
23 failing to maintain or remove sidewalk sheds.

24 The Administration did not put any money towards
25 additional inspectors. But most surprisingly, it did

1 not adopt our call for increased penalties, even
2 though the IBO estimates that such increases would
3 annually yield about \$30 million combined. It's one
4 thing for the Administration to favor their economic
5 projections over those of the Council, despite
6 consistent accuracy from our team, but it's something
7 else to deliberately turn down proposals that would
8 generate revenue for the city, while pushing bad
9 actors to change our behavior and promoting safer
10 buildings and sidewalks.
11

12 Significant work clearly remains in the process,
13 and the Council looks forward to shaping and
14 delivering a final budget that supports New York's
15 future.

16 My questions today will largely focus on DOB
17 vacancies, including their impact on building safety
18 and the DOB NOW Project. I now want to turn to my co
19 Chair, Councilmember Pierina Sanchez, for her opening
20 statements.

21 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much, Chair,
22 and good morning everyone. Thank you for attending
23 today's hearing on the fiscal 2025 Executive Budget
24 for the Department of Buildings, or DOB.
25

1
2 I'm Councilmember Pierina Sanchez, the Chair of
3 the Committee on Housing and Buildings. I would like
4 to acknowledge that we have been joined by
5 Councilmembers Avilés, Louis, Hudson, and Carr.

6 The Department of Buildings serves as the primary
7 regulator of the construction and real estate
8 industries in the city. DOB enforces the city's
9 construction codes, zoning resolutions, and the New
10 York State multiple dwelling law to protect workers
11 and the public, including across the nearly 1.1
12 million buildings, and over almost 44,000 active
13 construction sites through its review and approval of
14 building plans permit permitting, and licensing
15 functions and inspections.

16 As such DOB's staffing actions and budget is a
17 reflection of our city's commitment to safety within
18 our buildings. DOB's fiscal 2025 expense budget
19 totals \$210.8 million, as Chair said, which is \$8.5
20 million lower than the fiscal 2024 budget adoption.
21 DOB's fiscal 2025 revenue budget is \$345.3 million,
22 which is \$8.9 million greater than adoption.

23 The major action in DOB's Executive Plan is the
24 addition of 36 baseline positions associated with
25 compliance and enforcement for Local Law 97, the

1 city's landmark budget emissions reduction
2 legislation that passed in 2019. DOB's falling
3 headcount is partially reversed with the inclusion of
4 these positions, which are mainly energy auditors who
5 will review the first round of energy reports due
6 next year for some 50,000 buildings covered by the
7 law.
8

9 However, the positions that were given with one
10 hand were also taken away with another. The budget
11 removed 24 vacancies in order to align expected
12 headcount with reduced personnel services budget.
13 DOB's fiscal 2025 budget includes 1,642 full time
14 positions, which is 191 fewer than fiscal 24 at
15 budget adoption.

16 Remarkably, as I keep highlighting, a quarter of
17 DOB's positions have been removed since May of 2022.
18 Many of these positions have been in the inspectorial
19 and technical titles in the agency that seem far from
20 superfluous. And we see the impact. The average
21 wait time for a construction inspection has increased
22 by three days. The average wait time for plumbing
23 inspections has increased by 2.6 days. For
24 electrical inspections, it's increased by four days.
25 And in the first four months of fiscal 2024, DOB

1 issued 2,225 total stop work orders, which is
2 comprised of both full and partial stop work orders,
3 representing a 36% decrease from the same period in
4 fiscal year 2023.
5

6 These are significant impacts. Indeed, DOB plays
7 an essential role in enforcing the city's
8 construction codes and zoning resolutions and the
9 state multiple dwelling law. From construction
10 safety to propose City of Yes zoning changes, to
11 ensuring basements and buildings are habitable and
12 meeting higher energy standards, all of these fit
13 within DOB's portfolio. It is extremely concerning
14 to me that the Administration has reduced DOB's
15 headcount as much as it has. The Council's call in
16 the Preliminary Budget Response for \$19 million to
17 restore inspectorial and other key positions lost in
18 three successive rounds of vacancy reductions was
19 unfortunately not heeded. Too many recent building
20 collapses and construction fatalities have occurred,
21 including in my district. And there are stark
22 reminders that DOB is revenue-raising, and that is
23 because the law it is enforcing is life-or-death.

24 Construction-related incidents with injuries have
25 increased from 185 to 237, and construction-related

1 fatalities have been 2 in the first four months of
2 fiscal 2024.
3

4 As discussed during our last hearing with the
5 Department, nearly all collapsed buildings had a
6 number of DOB violations issued against them.
7 Nevertheless, in a city of over 1 million buildings
8 to inspect and attend to, these owners refused to
9 make necessary repairs. This is why the Council
10 called for stronger penalties in the Preliminary
11 Budget Response: \$20 million in revenue generating
12 penalty proposals that were not included in the
13 Executive Budget.

14 In addition to discussing headcount, inspections,
15 revenue, and sustainability, today the committee
16 hopes to hear more about DOB now, which received \$8.8
17 million more dollars in the Executive Plan over two
18 years, further extending the timeline and costs of
19 this longstanding IT project, as well as how we can
20 collaborate to safely get sidewalks shut down across
21 our city.

22 As a reminder after DOB we will hear from the
23 Department of Housing, Preservation, and Development,
24 and then from members of the public.
25

1
2 Finally, thank you once again to the Housing and
3 Buildings committee staff who work so hard to prepare
4 for today's hearing, Dan Croup, our Principal
5 Financial Analyst, Taylor Zaloni, and Austin Maloney
6 our Consels, Jose Conde, Andrew Bourne, Rhys Hirota,
7 Policy and Data Analyst, and of course my district
8 team, Sam Cardenas, Kadeem Robinson, and the entire
9 district staff.

10 With that I will now pass it back to Chair
11 Brannan.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you, Councilmember
13 Sanchez. Again, before we get started, I do always
14 want to thank the Finance Team that works really hard
15 behind the scenes this time of year to make these
16 hearings possible, especially today, Jack Story and
17 Dan Croup, my Committee Counsel Mike Toomey, and my
18 Senior Adviser John Yennan, who are doing hard work
19 every day.

20 As a reminder for folks in the chamber or
21 watching at home on Zoom, the Executive Budget joint
22 hearings will take public testimony on an agency's
23 Executive Budget the same day, meaning: After HPD
24 and DOB have completed their testimony today we will
25 take testimony from the public. If you wish to speak

1
2 on DOB or HPD Executive Budget, you've got to make
3 sure to fill out a witness slip with the Sergeant At
4 Arms. And with that, I'm going to turn it over to my
5 Committee Counsel Mike Toomey, to swear in the
6 witnesses.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good morning. Do you affirm
8 to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but
9 the truth before this committee, and to respond
10 honestly to Councilmember questions? Commissioner
11 Oddo?

12 COMMISSIONER ODDO: I do.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner Popa?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: I do.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner Patino?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PATINO: I do.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner Ugarte?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER UGARTE: I do.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Assistant Commissioner
20 Shamash?

21 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: I do.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, you may begin.

23 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Mr. Chairman, before I begin,
24 I just want to warn you if at any point during my
25 testimony, there's a kerfuffle behind me and we're

besieged with paparazzi, it's only because Assistant Commissioner Juan Arias is here. His personal security will get to it in due time.

CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Hey, Juan.

COMMISSIONER ODDO: Good morning, Chair Brannan, Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee on Finance and Housing and Buildings. I am Jimmy Oddo, Commissioner of New York City Department of Buildings, and I'm joined today at the dais by Laura Popa, Deputy Commissioner for Sustainability. Guillermo Patino, Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs and Policy, Gina Ugarte, Assistant Commissioner for Financial Management, and Yegal Shamash, Chief Structural Engineer, but I'm going to put a little asterisk next to that, and I'll come back to that a little later.

We're also joined by a couple of dozen of the senior staff at the agency.

We are pleased to be here to discuss the fiscal year 2025 Executive Budget, as well as to provide an update on the Department's performance and priority initiatives.

The fiscal year 2025 Executive Budget allocates approximately \$211 million in expense funds to the

1 Department. Of this funding approximately \$157
2 million is for personal service, which supports 1,642
3 budgeted positions, and nearly \$54 million is for
4 other-than-personal services, which primarily
5 supports contractual services, equipment and
6 supplies.
7

8 This funding is critical to supporting the
9 Department's mandates and priorities. The fiscal
10 year 25 Executive Budget allocates additional funding
11 to the Department to support critical initiatives,
12 including \$4.1 million to support the Department's
13 sustainability initiatives, including the ongoing
14 implementation of the climate mobilization act, \$1.7
15 million to support the Get Sheds Down Initiative to
16 redesign sidewalk sheds, and \$8.8 million to support
17 the ongoing implementation of DOB NOW.

18 While reduced staffing and overtime has had an
19 impact on the Department's service levels, we
20 continue to maintain strong service levels in all key
21 areas, including development and enforcement.

22 Regarding development, we are currently reviewing
23 new building applications within 10 days, major
24 alteration applications within seven days, and minor
25 alteration applications within six days. The wait

1
2 time between a construction inspection request and an
3 inspection, which occurs after the construction
4 project is completed by a contractor, also continues
5 to be short.

6 While there has been an uptick in the time it
7 takes for a development inspections to be completed
8 due to an increased demand for inspections and
9 budgetary constraints, such inspections are being
10 completed within five days of requests in most
11 instances, which includes inspections involving
12 general construction, electrical work, and plumbing
13 work.

14 We also continue to respond to complaints from
15 members of the public expeditiously. We are
16 responding to the most serious complaints, Priority A
17 complaints, which are those complaints that relate to
18 conditions that may present an immediate threat to
19 the public within hours. We are responding to
20 Priority B complaints, which capture violating
21 conditions that, if occurring, while serious, do not
22 present an immediate threat to the public within 12
23 days. We will continue to work to find efficiencies
24 to improve the services we offer to our customers and
25 members of the public and we will monitor our service

1
2 levels to determine whether additional resources are
3 needed to fulfill our mandate.

4 Last week was National Construction Safety Week,
5 which the Department used as an opportunity to remind
6 the construction industry that safety must always
7 come first on construction sites by holding safety-
8 focused events and connecting directly with workers
9 and contractors at construction sites in all five
10 boroughs.

11 Last week, the Department also released its
12 annual New York City Construction Safety Report,
13 which provides a comprehensive analysis of Building
14 Construction safety trends in 2023. This year's
15 report indicates that despite conducting more total
16 inspections than ever, department personnel have
17 issued fewer summonses and stop-work orders than in
18 past several years, a strong indicator of increased
19 compliance from construction industry professionals.
20 Additionally, building-construction-related
21 fatalities in the five boroughs are at the lowest
22 number in nearly a decade, with 7 deaths in 2023 as
23 compared to a high of 14, and 2019.

24 While fatalities are down, the report also shows
25 the total number of building construction related

1
2 worksite injuries continues to rise for a third
3 consecutive year, a concerning trend that the
4 Department is closely monitoring. The Department
5 will continue to conduct proactive, unannounced
6 inspections of larger construction sites to ensure
7 that safety regulations are being complied with.

8 This year, we are also implementing local laws
9 that reduce the number of construction jobs a
10 construction superintendent can be responsible for,
11 and that bolster site safety requirements at larger
12 construction sites, including requiring more site
13 safety supervision and the submission of site safety
14 plans to the Department.

15 The Department also continues to fulfill its
16 obligation to address greenhouse gas emissions coming
17 from buildings. The additional resources allocated
18 to the Department as part of fiscal year 25 Executive
19 Budget will support our implementation of the Climate
20 Mobilization Act, which requires all new buildings
21 and existing buildings undergoing certain major roof
22 renovations to install a solar photovoltaic system, a
23 green roof system, or a combination of the two, and
24 regulates greenhouse gas emissions at large buildings
25 starting this year.

1
2 The Department has released rules and guidance to
3 inform property owners about how to comply with the
4 law when they start reporting their progress to the
5 Department on May 1, 2025, for the first time, and
6 about how they will be held accountable if they do
7 not comply. We will continue to engage in rulemaking
8 and on-the-ground implementation this year.

9 As I mentioned during our preliminary budget
10 hearing in March, we are also taking significant
11 steps to improve quality of life for New Yorkers, and
12 to improve building safety. Last summer the Mayor
13 announced the Get Sheds Down plan, a multifaceted
14 approach to removing sidewalk sheds more quickly,
15 while reimagining the sidewalk sheds that are needed
16 to protect the public and in connection with
17 construction work. This builds upon the work of the
18 Department to address long standing sidewalk sheds,
19 including performing regular inspections and taking
20 legal action to hold building owners accountable for
21 maintaining their buildings.

22 The additional resources allocated to the
23 Department, as part of the Fiscal Year Executive
24 Budget, will support our efforts to redesign sidewalk
25 sheds. Since the mayor's plan was announced we have

1 released solicitations and selected firms to deliver
2 on two major initiatives, which includes redesigning
3 sidewalk sheds to make them less obtrusive and more
4 aesthetically pleasing, and to study Local Law 11,
5 which requires buildings greater than six stories in
6 height to have their facades inspected periodically
7 to determine whether any changes to the program are
8 needed.
9

10 We have also released guidance to the
11 construction industry regarding the use of netting in
12 lieu of sidewalk sheds, and rules regarding the
13 installation of art on sidewalk sheds. Key proposals
14 in the plan require legislative action, and we look
15 forward to working with the Housing and Buildings
16 Committee to pursue those changes in the near future.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify before
18 you. We welcome any questions you may have. Chair
19 Brannan. If I might just say a few additional
20 remarks above and beyond my written testimony.

21 Last week noted my completion of my first year
22 with the agency, and there's two observations that I
23 would like to share with you and the members of the
24 committees.
25

1
2 The folks at the dais, the folks in the first
3 three rows, and the folks that work with them are
4 true professionals. I've been in this business a
5 long time, working with a lot of really good public
6 servants. This is the epitome of public service. I
7 was watching last year's Executive Budget hearing and
8 Chair Sanchez made a comment that, unfortunately, her
9 district had suffered a numerous number of fires.
10 And to paraphrase she said that when the engineers
11 from the agency and the inspectors come and start
12 walking through the building, there's a-- there's a
13 level of comfort or confidence that comes with it. I
14 knew what she was saying. I was a brand-new
15 commissioner when the 10th Avenue crane collapsed,
16 and seeing the professionalism in action was
17 comforting. When the ground underneath us literally
18 shook several weeks ago, and I looked around and
19 said, "Okay, I know I have a role. What do we do?"
20 it was comfort Learning to have these men and women
21 around me.

22 I've not hidden the fact-- I've not run from the
23 fact-- I've embraced the fact-- the team has heard
24 me say: I'm in this position not because of my
25 knowledge of the Building Code, but because I've been

3 part of, and helped build great teams. And when I
4 got to the agency, we did not take a slash-and-burn
5 approach. We didn't go in and fire or change. We
6 took a systematic look at the agency, and we have
7 touched every critical vertical.

8 We have a new Deputy Commissioner from
9 Administration, Mark Ssanbria. He has gone from
10 unpaid intern to a Deputy Commissioner in this
11 agency. Guillermo Patino, who is probably most
12 familiar with the Council, has had his portfolio
13 expanded to be the DC for Policy and Legal Affairs.
14 We lost Joe Esposito. We took our time in naming a
15 replacement. It's not official-official, but the
16 Mayor has signed off. This is the asterisk I meant
17 earlier. Our Chief Structural Engineer, Yagal
18 Shamash, will be our DC for Enforcement.

19 Our budget shop is now run by the extremely
20 talented Assistant Commissioner, Gina Ugarte, who's
21 putting her style and her imprint on that shop.

22 Gus Sirakis, who is perhaps the most technically
23 sound member of the agency is now head of strategic
24 initiatives where he is the point on innovation.
25 That's allowed our first deputy commissioner Kaz
Vilenchik, who has worked in every borough office in

1
2 the city, to now have the borough offices fall under
3 his auspices, where he can have a more direct
4 linkage.

5 The first promotion we made is the woman sitting
6 behind me Cheryl Leone, who was a co-op worker, who
7 worked a week in high school, a week at the agency.
8 Her tenure is measured by decades, not days.

9 It's a long-winded way of saying that we have put
10 the best people in the right positions. And oh, by
11 the way, they look like New York.

12 And I'm a big believer in the book and the theme
13 of extreme ownership. That means the buck stops with
14 me. I'm accountable, but you push decision making
15 closer to the decision makers. And that is what
16 we've done.

17 Second observation. A little heady being in this
18 room after testifying before Chair Sanchez twice in
19 the in the Committee Room. This is sort of like
20 being at Center Court of Wimbledon for me.

21 I was in the super, super, super minority when I
22 was a member of this institution. I learned from my
23 mentor, Tom Ognibene, that relationships are
24 everything in this business, and I've tried to infuse
25 this agency with that mindset. Relationships with

1
2 sister agencies: We don't want to be the agency
3 known as the Agency of No, or the agency that is an
4 obstacle, we want to partner with our sister
5 agencies, figure out a way. My chief of staff, Jason
6 Razefsky, has played a major role in that.

7 Relationships with elected officials: I treasure
8 the relationship that we've built with Chair Sanchez.
9 She has my respect. She has my affinity. I have not
10 walked a mile in your shoes. I represented Staten
11 Island for 23 years, which means I walk I ran a
12 marathon with no shoes over hot coals in reverse.

13 And so we understand the pressures that you are
14 under and the responsibilities you have. And that's
15 why I think, you know, individuals on the dais and
16 across the Council we've worked closely with.

17 Today we're going to talk about resources, which
18 obviously is the right focus for a budget hearing,
19 how we spend them, can we spend them more
20 efficiently. I think we can do a better job with
21 what we have. But I also know where we want to take
22 this agency, we might need a little help getting
23 there. And I look forward to answering all your
24 questions.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you, Commissioner.
3 Certainly, you don't have to be a staffer to be a
4 good elected official. You don't have to be a former
5 elected official to be a Commissioner but I think it
6 helps, because you know-- you know what we go
7 through. You know all politics is local, and helping
8 our constituents is always going to be our top
9 priority.

10 Okay, let's jump right into it. I want to talk
11 about the vacancy reduction and inspector heads. So,
12 in the Council's Preliminary Budget Response, we
13 called for \$19 million to reverse the vacancy
14 reductions of the last three plans, particularly for
15 inspectors. We understand that OMB did not request
16 that OMB reverse that those headcount reductions.
17 Could you tell us what's the average salary? I think
18 you have about approximately 500 inspectors? What's
19 the average salary for those inspectors and what's
20 the average turnover?

21 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, just to get our numbers
22 correct: Agency-wide, were at a head budgeted
23 headcount of 1,642. We have an actual headcount as
24 of May of 1,584, 38 vacancies, a vacancy rate of
25 around 2%. Specific to our inspectors, we have a

1 budgeted headcount of 540. We are currently at 525,
2 which is 15 vacancies, a vacancy rate of 3%. I can
3 give you a further breakdown of units, where those
4 vacancies sit.
5

6 The-- To answer your question, specifically, the
7 recruiting rate-- I'll give you four numbers.

8 Assistant inspector is \$61,000, inspector is \$67,000,
9 supervising inspector is \$76,600, assistant chief
10 inspector is \$85,000.

11 If I can, Chair, the good news is that we have 15
12 vacancies on the inspectorial side. We have 15
13 candidates in the process to be hired that we hope to
14 bring on board. We are averaging-- We historically
15 have averaged around 18-19-20 inspectors per quarter,
16 bringing them on. The-- We had a very good January.
17 We have had a tough March in bringing inspectors on.
18 We-- Just to give you a sample, in fiscal year 24,
19 the third quarter, we had 13 new hires and 34
20 separations. So, we were minus 21. Of those 34, we
21 had 16 inspectors who left. Inspectors who leave our
22 agency, often go to sister agencies, often go to the
23 private sector. We can get into some of those
24 challenges if you want.
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Do you think-- Do you agree
3 with the Council that you should have more inspectors
4 and a higher headcount?

5 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Well, I'll answer that two
6 different ways: The first is, and I've said this
7 previously, you know, it's tough to go back to 280
8 Broadway, and ask folks to take a hill, if you come
9 and testify and say unequivocally, "we don't need
10 anything", no. So, I can't do that to the men and
11 women of the agency. What I can tell you, is that--
12 two things: One, if you look at our service levels
13 over the last year, two years, five years, ten year,
14 fifteen year period, despite the PEGs our service
15 levels continue to be strong. There are some
16 retrenchments, no doubt, but even with those
17 retrenchments, even on the development side, the
18 service levels continue to be strong. So we are
19 absolutely getting the job done.

20 The second thing I have to point out is even when
21 we were at, in recent memory, the highest number of
22 budgeted inspectors. I think it was 711 in 2022, the
23 actual headcount was around 580. So, the de Blasio
24 administration gave this agency lots of lines that
25 were never were never able to be filled.

1
2 So, what did we do in the two PEGs? Like other
3 agencies, we look to see where the pain would be the
4 least damaging, and we took down a bunch of those--
5 those lines. In the-- Just to give you quick
6 numbers. In the November plan, we took down 117
7 positions. Of those 47 were inspectors. In the
8 January plan, we took our 90 positions. Of those 28
9 were inspectors.

10 My point is, these were unfilled vacancies. So,
11 we continue to do the job with the staffing that we
12 have. The one thing I will say, and I alluded to it
13 in previous testimony before Chair Sanchez, is some
14 of our service levels were impacted because we had to
15 curtail overtime. Those vacancies that I referenced
16 earlier, what they allowed us to do was accrue
17 savings that we then used for overtime. Our overtime
18 budget was \$3 or \$4 million. We were at \$9 million
19 in overtime spending. Unsustainable. So, when the
20 PEGs first-- were first announced. And we turned the
21 valve part to the left to bring that number down.
22 And that's impacted some of our service levels,
23 certainly impacted some of the numbers on the
24 elevator side. What we've tried to do tactically is
25 turn the valve back to the right when needed. When

1
2 weather was troublesome as it was way too often on
3 the weekends, and we needed to do some safety sweeps,
4 we turned the valve back to the right. When the
5 numbers for a borough office, let's say the Manhattan
6 Borough office, the numbers are going in the wrong
7 direction, we turned the valve. And we've tried to
8 be really judicious. But think about that: We were
9 3-- we were at 3X of where we need it to be. And
10 that's been a little bit painful.

11 But again, even saying that the numbers are
12 historically strong.

13 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: I think during the prelim
14 hearing, you had mentioned there were no vacancies in
15 the inspectorial specialties for electrical boilers
16 and plumbing. Is that still the case today?

17 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah. Just bear with me. I
18 want to give you the exact numbers of that. Just
19 bear with me one second, sir.

20 Okay, so again, budgeted and total of our
21 inspectors is 540, actual 525. Let's break it down
22 by each unit. Boilers: 21 out of 21, 0% vacancy
23 rate. Construction side: 350 budgeted, 339, 11
24 vacancies, that's 3%. Of the 15 Incoming we intend
25 to help that number with some of those incoming

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE Jointly with the
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

32

2 inspectors. Cranes and derricks: 8 of 8, zero
3 vacancies. Electrical: 48 out of 48, zero
4 vacancies. Elevator: 33 budgeted, 30 actual, 3
5 vacancies. Investigations: 27 budgeted, 26 actual,
6 1 vacancy. And plumbing is 53 budgeted, 53 actual.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. I appreciate those
8 numbers. Some agencies bring their CFO and they
9 forgot to bring the numbers.

10 What is DOB's role in referring private property
11 owners to the DA's or the Law Department to seek
12 restitution for costs that the city incurs around
13 disasters?

14 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Say it again one more time.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: What's it what is your
16 agency's role in referring private property owners to
17 District Attorneys or to the law department to seek
18 restitution?

19 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah, uh, Chair, I don't
20 know. And I'm looking at the faces of our team.
21 Um...

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Does-- Does your agency
23 recoup any funds that you expend on attending to
24 private building collapses?

25 COMMISSIONER ODDO: No.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay, I want to talk about
3 DOB NOW. The Executive Plan includes a further \$5.5
4 million in FY 25, \$3.3 million in FY 26 for DOB.
5 There's also a roll of \$9.4 million from this fiscal
6 year to the next fiscal year. We understand the new
7 timeline for completion is December 2025. What was
8 the original budget and timeline for DOB NOW to be
9 completed? And I guess, where are we against that
10 original goal?

11 COMMISSIONER ODDO: I have to get back to you on
12 the original. It certainly wasn't 2025. But let me-
13 - Chair, let me just talk to you about DOB NOW.

14 Relatively speaking, it was a blink of an eye ago
15 that this agency was a paper-based agency. And so
16 many good things emanate from DOB NOW: convenience
17 for our customers, transparency for everyone, data
18 collection for the agency which hopefully can be
19 poured back into two safety efforts.

20 But DOB NOW is not static. It is evolving. I
21 kid the team, like it's this breathing, existing
22 system, because it has to adapt to every change that
23 comes its way. So, when the Council passes a Local
24 Law, DOB NOW has to be built out. When the
25 Administration has a new priority like BLAST or like

1 Sheds, DOB NOW has to be built out. When the agency
2 has its priorities, like the Adams Commission, and
3 the 15-year term changes, and the 26 long-term
4 changes, that has to be built out. When there are
5 simple rules-- quote/unquote-- "simple rule changes",
6 that has to be built out.
7

8 And as you know, Chair, the Council was
9 particularly prolific when it came to DOB during the
10 2018-2021 period. All of that has to be built out,
11 and everyone wants it built out simultaneously, and
12 that's a challenge.

13 So, the \$8.8 that has been given for this fiscal
14 year, speaks to priority number one on DOB NOW, and
15 that is finishing the original scope, which is to
16 retire BIS, which is a 30-year-old mainframe, and to
17 shift us off of the Accela platform.

18 And to make things more complicated, I've charged
19 the team with another task, and that is this:

20 Historically, the DOB commissioner and the folks
21 leading the DOB NOW effort, have been told: hit this
22 milestone, and then hit this milestone, and hit this
23 milestone, and then hit this milestone. Unlike most
24 technology, they weren't given a time to sort of beta
25 test this. It was all about advancing and building

1 out the system. Where the rubber meets the road, in
2 the borough offices, where your constituents go,
3 where the industry goes, that's where those glitches
4 manifest.

5
6 So, at the same time, we're charging forward with
7 the task at hand to build out the system. I've asked
8 our Deputy Commissioner to work with our Borough
9 Commissioners to look backwards and fix a bunch of
10 those -- quote/unquote -- "glitches", because that's
11 where lots of savings of time and efficiencies can be
12 found, including on things like the C of O.

13 And lastly, Chair, we continue to work with OTI
14 and OMB. We work with them very intimately on DOB
15 NOW, given all that is at stake to get it right.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: What do we-- What do we peg
17 the total cost to complete DOB NOW?

18 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah, we will get that to
19 you. But it's in the tens of millions.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: And are there-- Are there
21 going to be any recurring costs for the website?

22 COMMISSIONER ODDO: The-- Do you mean the work?
23 Implementing DOB NOW results in--

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Aside from basic
25 maintenance.

2 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Oh. Well, DOB NOW will
3 always have the need for product support, because the
4 Council will always pass bills, the Mayor will always
5 have priorities, and the agency will have priorities.
6 There will always be rules changed. So, we will
7 continue to build that out. But DOB NOW saves money
8 and creates economic activity, because it saves time
9 for the industry, and time is money as we know. And
10 we'll get you-- There are some really great numbers
11 about how frequent DOB NOW is used. And the
12 overwhelming majority of activity goes through DOB
13 NOW and not BIS. It's a-- In some ways, it's a
14 tiger by the tail. It is crucially important to this
15 agency in the city to get right. But again, while
16 you're always building the plane as you're expected
17 to fly it, and there's a priority to build the
18 engine, and a priority to build a wing, and a
19 priority to build the aviation system all
20 simultaneously. It's a-- It's proven to be a
21 challenge.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Do you credit DOB NOW with
23 the 10-7-6 number you gave earlier?

24 COMMISSIONER ODDO: With the...?
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: For the, you know, 10 days
3 for approvals?

4 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Oh, there's no doubt if you
5 look at the service levels before DOB NOW, and you
6 look at the service levels now, DOB NOW has resulted
7 in a vast improvement.

8 Listen, we are very candid. We go on the road,
9 the Deputy Commissioner and our team goes on the road
10 not only with real estate industry and the
11 professional design industry, but civic groups,
12 community groups. We go out we explain it, we get
13 feedback. And, oh, by the way, that feedback is also
14 an avenue where we then have to build out on the
15 platform. So, I know I'm repeating myself, and I
16 can't stress it enough: Everybody's priorities are
17 the priority, and trying to build that out all at
18 once is difficult. And it was-- Yeah, so we're
19 trying to-- we're trying to establish that priority,
20 work with our partners on it, and get it built,
21 because the sooner it's all built out, the better it
22 is.

23 And Chair, can I give you one example? And this
24 goes back to your question about inspectors and
25 efficiency: So, one of the things that DOB NOW has

1 allowed us to do, because of this access to new data:
2 We've partnered with a geographic information system
3 software called ESRI. And we have created-- we did a
4 pilot last summer of automated inspection routing for
5 three units. And what this does is, instead of a
6 supervisor doing pencil to paper a day or two before
7 and saying, "Okay, Inspector Jones, you're going to
8 go to this site, this site, this site, this site," we
9 take the data from DOB NOW, we take the software, and
10 we let it spit out for us automated routes that
11 allows our inspector to be more efficient. We've
12 done that in the construction enforcement, the
13 plumbing division, the quality-of-life unit, and the
14 numbers are pretty dramatic. It is-- As we, in the
15 fantasy sports, baseball sports genre like to say:
16 very small sample size, but the numbers are
17 encouraging. Construction enforcement: Like from 14
18 days down to around six days. Plumbing -- these are
19 workdays to inspection --: Six and a half down to
20 two and three quarters on the plumbing division side.
21 Quality of life: Almost half.

22 So, this is three units of pilot. We obviously
23 want to expand it. We can't expand it until the
24 Inspection Plus Capsule of DOB NOW is built out.
25

1
2 So, this is how things are interrelated. The
3 efficiencies that we want to find, in this agency,
4 many-- many are predicated on building DOB NOW. It's
5 not the sole focus of innovation. Maybe it's taken a
6 lot of oxygen out of that room, maybe too much. But
7 we've got to get that right because it provides us
8 various opportunities to take the resources we have
9 and be much more efficient with them.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: I've got a couple more, and
11 them I'm going to turn it over to the Chair Sanchez.

12 One of the things that's super frustrating for us
13 is-- for me-- is the, you know, the three knock rule,
14 basically where we can inspectors can come and knock
15 on the door three times, and if people don't want to
16 let you in, then it gets closed out.

17 The Council's Preliminary Budget Response called
18 on the Administration to smartly maximize its revenue
19 by changing penalties that create safety by
20 disincentivizing dangerous behavior. One of the
21 penalties based on an IBO analysis, we believe, could
22 have raised \$13 million through imposing a \$500
23 penalty when inspectors are unable to gain access to
24 a property. Property owners could then get the
25 penalty dropped by permitting access at a subsequent

1
2 inspection. Did DOB raise the Council proposal with
3 City Hall? Do you know what City Hall said?

4 COMMISSIONER ODDO: In all candor Chair, I did
5 not. But I will tell you--

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Do you like the idea?

7 COMMISSIONER ODDO: --not for the lack of
8 interest in it. As Chair Sanchez will tell you, and
9 as we testified to at both the hearing, the
10 preliminary hearing in March, and then the hearing on
11 Publican Building Integrity in April, we-- we in this
12 agency need bigger sticks. We need to go beyond the
13 ability to-- to issue violations. And I'm open, and
14 we as an agency have to be open to all ideas. So,
15 while I have not raised that with City Hall, it was
16 not for lack of interest. It was just our focus were
17 on other issues.

18 But Chair Sanchez knows, and I will tell you,
19 Chair, I will sit down and have conversations with
20 you all and vet any idea that allows us to increase
21 greater compliance, and I will use a line I used at
22 the preliminary hearing, and I steal it from
23 colleague, the DEP Commissioner, when he talks about
24 Local Law 97, where he says, "I don't want your
25 money, I want your carbon." We don't want their

1
2 money, we want their compliance. At the end of the
3 day, we are a compliance agency, and the way we
4 attempt to seek compliance is using the only tools
5 available and that is violations.

6 I can tell you we have increased our presence in
7 criminal court on the sidewalk shed side, and we want
8 to continue to do that. But we will sit down, Chair,
9 and have a conversation with you about that specific
10 idea.

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER ODDO: And Chair, can I say one
13 other thing? The other thing that we have at our
14 disposal, and I know Councilmember Holden is a big
15 fan of it, is access warrants. And this agency was
16 doing a lot of it in 2019, and then COVID came, and
17 in all candor, we haven't-- we haven't gotten back to
18 those numbers, in part because our friends at Law are
19 spread pretty thin, and also there was a weird thing
20 going on in the-- in the Supreme Court in Queens
21 County where they weren't interested in doing them,
22 although that's turned around. But we will try to
23 increase the number of access warrants we get, again,
24 to try to achieve compliance.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay, a couple of questions on sidewalk sheds, and then I'm going to hand it over to Chair Sanchez.

The Executive Plan reflects \$1.7 million in FY 25. city funds to make whole DOB's \$3.5 million two-year contract for new shed designs as part of its Get Sheds Done initiative that you mentioned. The contract vendor, Practice for Architecture and Urbanism, will refine 10 concepts to a final six, four for sidewalk sheds protecting pedestrians underneath, and two for non-sidewalk situations like general construction projects.

Can you share with us an update on where the vendor is with refining its concepts and getting them to your agency?

COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah, so two really-- as we said in the testimony, two really important RFPs that we've issued, and we brought on three great firms. Two, as you alluded to, PAU and Arup, two different firms to address the creation of six new designs. We hope to have them officially on board during the summer. They have deliverables of 12 months. We hope to encourage them or get them to be able to deliver on an even more timely basis. But again:

1
2 Four at street level, as you said, two at above
3 street level. I will tell you on the RFP for design,
4 if you look at some of the sheds up now, the ones
5 that were put up post the change to the 2022 code
6 that have the parapets that are screens: That slight
7 change in and of itself allows light into the-- to
8 the building, and it has less-- less of an obtrusive
9 feel. That was one slight change. We are really
10 excited about what these two well-respected firms
11 will-- will come back to us, and eventually,
12 obviously, to the Council.

13 And then the second RFP which we fought hard for
14 is a look at Local Law 11, The Facade Program. This
15 is Thornton Tomasetti, a well-known widely respected
16 entity. We hope to have them on board by July, again
17 12 months deliverables. They will look at a
18 regulatory review, look at our-- look at other
19 jurisdictions, maybe three jurisdictions comparable
20 to us. They will look at all of our data, 3500 or so
21 inspection reports and try to glean from that data.
22 They will study the materials buildings, maybe the
23 cycles we have for facade inspections should vary
24 depending on how-- building typology, building

1 material, building age, et cetera, and then they'll
2 have issued a report with specific recommendations.

3
4 Again, we look forward to coming to the Council
5 with those reports. And we look forward to
6 partnering with the Council on the various pieces of
7 legislation introduced by your colleagues.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: And then once the-- once
9 the vendor finishes its work, the next step is going
10 to be approving changes to the...?

11 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah. Good point. We
12 expect-- We expect to make them part of the code,
13 meeting this is the new minimum standard for sidewalk
14 sheds. If you still want to pay for the Urban
15 Umbrella, or if there is a new iteration of, like,
16 really high-end shed, this does not preclude that.
17 We've seen some folks at our pre-bid meeting (that's
18 really not the right terminology), but when we
19 invited all the folks before the bid, they had
20 questions. Clearly there were some folks with
21 proprietary concepts that did not want to participate
22 in this process. They will not be precluded. The
23 Urban Umbrella, as you remember, was a competition
24 during the Bloomberg Administration. They're really
25 beautiful. The problem is because they are

1
2 proprietary, you have to pay for them. And they're
3 expensive. This will be embedded into the code.
4 Everyone will have to abide by the new standards.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Last for me is: Could you
6 tell us thus far in FY 24, how much in penalties is
7 DOB charged for sidewalk sheds that should have come
8 down?

9 COMMISSIONER ODDO: [TO OTHERS:] Do we have that
10 number?

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: In terms of the
12 longstanding shed program, as the Commissioner said:
13 We're looking for compliance. So, we skip the
14 process of issuing violations to these building
15 owners. We had to wake them up. So, we took them--
16 We skipped the process of the violations and we went
17 right to court with these building owners that have
18 had sheds up for more than five years.

19 So, again, we're not looking for the penalty
20 amounts, but we were looking for compliance.

21 And in terms of compliance in the longstanding
22 shed program, which we started roughly mid 2020, we
23 have found 711 longstanding sheds, which we're
24 defining right now as over five years. Of that
25 number 258 and have been removed and 77 are actively

1
2 working. That is almost 50% of those longstanding
3 sheds have been removed due to our efforts.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Good thank you all very
5 much. Commissioner, thank you. I'm going to turn it
6 over now to my co-Chair, Chair Sanchez. We've also
7 been joined by Councilmembers Restler and Nurse.

8 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much, Chair,
9 and if it was okay with the quorum I would try to
10 give you a round of applause for the stamina of
11 hosting all of these hearings. Thank you.

12 Good morning DOB. It's good to see everybody,
13 everybody in the back, yay, friends in the back. So,
14 I just you know-- want to-- want to start off by-- by
15 thanking the agency for everything that you do on the
16 ground, it's always good to see the Buildings T
17 shirts, and the Polos on the ground and just know
18 that the inspectors are out there.

19 You're doing-- you're doing more with less,
20 right? Or, you're or you're doing a lot with less,
21 Commissioner, as you stated in some of your remarks
22 and your answers.

23 So, my first question is, just reflecting on some
24 of Councilmember Brannan's line of questioning and
25 appreciating the data that you shared regarding

1
2 inspectors, Commissioner, but the issues remain right
3 there you. As you mentioned, there is not a single
4 vacancy for boilers, electrical, or plumbing, and
5 there are no shortage of these issues citywide,
6 right? Similarly, there are now no vacancies for
7 crane investigations either, but the Executive Plan
8 had to add \$624,000 to pay for contracts to
9 investigate a crane collapse on the West Side and the
10 parking garage collapse just two blocks from City
11 Hall.

12 So, what would you say to folks that look at this
13 environment and wonder why DOB isn't requesting more
14 inspectors. I for one am a bit surprised that you've
15 mentioned that you did not put in an ask to OMB to,
16 you know, reverse some of these PEGs for inspectors.

17 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Well, I'm sorry, I'm not--
18 Maybe I misspoke. The response to Chair Brannan was
19 I did not ask for the IBO plan. I will-- I think the
20 less I say, and I think you will respect this, the
21 better. But as you know, I'm no wilting daisy, as
22 they say.

23 I think City Hall, my Deputy Mayor, know where I
24 stand on the agency and where-- what I think the
25 agency needs. I was, as you remember, Madam Chair,

1
2 quite candid in our preliminary, and our building
3 integrity, in supporting your legislation about
4 allowing us to go on offense. I asked the team for
5 sort of a back-of-the-envelope look at inspections
6 from January to April of this year, a percentage
7 breakdown, how many would we call complaint driven,
8 and how many are proactive? Proactive is around 26%
9 or 27%. Don't hold me to it, because again, it's a
10 little bit of a back-of-the-envelope, but I think
11 that's an accurate assessment.

12 I think you and I both agree that everyone would
13 be better-suited with us having the ability to go on
14 offense. I brought with me-- Madam Chair, I
15 referenced this at our last hearing. This is a
16 document that the agency put out in 2020 by Rick
17 Chandler under Mayor de Blasio. And in the back of
18 it, it talks about creation of a risk management
19 office and using intelligence and analytic tools to
20 go after bad actors.

21 So, you and I haven't created the wheel, but we
22 need to go on offense, and-- and we need to use
23 predictive analytics. We need to go after bad
24 actors, we need to target problematic buildings and
25

1
2 problematic players. We need to do re-inspections on
3 a more routine basis of open class ones.

4 And as I said to you all too candidly in two
5 hearings, that falls on me to get those-- perhaps us,
6 to get those resources.

7 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yes. Absolutely. Thank
8 you. Thank you, Commissioner and much appreciated,
9 and absolutely look forward to making progress on--
10 on that, making sure you can use the best data
11 available to you to be proactive. Thank you.

12 So, turning to sustainability: Councilmembers
13 have long called for the appropriate staffing to
14 implement the landmark climate change law, Local Law
15 97. In response to Executive Plan baselines, \$4
16 million and 36 positions for Local Law 97 enforcement
17 and compliance. A majority of these positions are
18 energy auditors who will review the energy reports
19 the building owners must file beginning next year.

20 How-- How are you going to be hiring for these
21 roles? What's the average salary and qualifications
22 for the energy auditor? Are you concerned about
23 difficulty with attracting candidates? And what is
24 the actual and budgeted headcount for staff working
25 on Local Law 97 at DOB NOW?

1
2 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Deputy Commissioner, Laura?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: Hi. Hello. How are
4 you Chair Sanchez? So, we're very excited about the
5 36 full-time positions in the Executive Budget. Yes,
6 the majority of those are auditors. I will say out
7 of the 36, we've posted for 30 positions already.
8 So, we're in it to win it.

9 We have a comprehensive recruitment plan that we
10 developed, where we're working with universities and
11 with professional groups. We have contacts at all of
12 these who are amplifying our postings. And so, this
13 is the first time we've implemented this recruitment
14 plan, and it just was implemented a few days ago.

15 So, we're hoping to get a lot of attention on the
16 positions, and we're hoping that we can hire as fast
17 as possible.

18 So, the-- as far as the auditors go, there's a
19 new position that we worked with for many years to
20 develop with-- as the civil service title of Energy
21 Conservation Specialist. And so, we've looked at it
22 as we need some people who are trained in
23 architecture and engineering, and people who are a
24 little bit, like, medium with potentially the Energy
25

1 Conservation Specialists, and we're even splitting it
2 down to an assistant auditor.
3

4 So, we're looking for three tiers of auditors,
5 which is new. And we'll see how it goes. But we're--
6 - we're very excited for it.

7 And as far as-- I mean, now that we have these
8 new budgeted positions, we obviously have a high
9 vacancy rate. We have five units. So, the Bureau of
10 Sustainability was created about a year-- almost two
11 years ago. Before that, it was the sustainability--
12 they had a sustainability team with two units. Now
13 we have five. So, the OB which has the auditors in
14 it, has 26 vacant positions because of the new-- the
15 new the new needs, and nine active positions
16 currently in it.

17 That said, Local Law 97 work isn't limited
18 anymore to OB. We have a Policy and Legal Team and
19 we have an Outreach and Assistance Team which also
20 does Local Law 97 work.

21 So, as far as that team goes, we have six people
22 in Policy and Legal, and we have nine vacancies,
23 again based on the news needs. And we have three
24 people in Outreach and Assistance, and we have two
25 vacancies based on the new needs. Those will be

1
2 project advocates who will be working with building
3 owners to help them to comply as the reports come in.
4 I hope that answers all your questions.

5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Most. Most of the
6 questions. So for the Energy Conservation
7 Specialists, and you mentioned assistants as well,
8 what is the salary level?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: I'm going to have to
10 ask Gina.

11 If I'm remembering correctly, it's in the 70s,
12 but I will have to get back to you with a with a with
13 the right number, since it's new.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: No problem. The new
15 positions are funded off of anticipated revenues from
16 report filings. Can you share the cost of what a
17 Local Law 97 Energy filing is to the agency? Does it
18 vary by building size?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: What it-- So, we are
20 working on the user costs. We'll be doing-- In our
21 third major rule package, we will include the fees
22 for the filing. And it's not based on the building.
23 It's going to be based on the compliance pathway.
24 So, a building who's just submitting a simple report
25 with clear compliance will have the lowest fee, and a

1 building who needs us to look at their good-faith
2 efforts (and that's going to be complicated) is going
3 to have the highest fee. There's different fee for
4 321 buildings, which is the affordable housing
5 buildings, whether or not you have a mediated
6 resolution. So they're like tiers that we're working
7 on. But that will be in the third rule package.

9 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. Thank you. That
10 makes sense. So, she mentioned three outreach
11 positions. In preparation for this hearing, we
12 convened with several advocacy organizations and
13 coalitions relating to Local Law 97, who expressed
14 concerns about harder-to-reach owners.

15 So, can you just share with us, what-- what is
16 the work of these three outreach workers? How does
17 that relate to folks at the mayor's office, you know,
18 under a Commissioner Aggarwala's shop? How is the--
19 How are folks working? How is the Department of
20 Buildings working with Accelerator?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: Sure. So, Accelerator
22 is the number one outreach tool that the city has for
23 building owners. 100%. When I came on, we created
24 this little unit just to supplement that, but
25 Accelerator is a big contract and, as you know,

1 overseen by MSEJ. E work with them very closely.

2 So, it's a combination of-- What the outreach team
3 does is we answer questions about Local Law 97, which
4 number in the thousands. And that's divided, not
5 just between them, but obviously it implicates a lot
6 of policy and legal issues, so then that shop gets
7 involved.
8

9 We do outreach education events, which again, all
10 of us participate in, not just that shop. So, we do,
11 Councilmember, in your-- Local Law 97 In Your
12 District events. There have been several of those.
13 We go out and we talk to, you know, different real
14 estate groups about 97 compliance. So, they
15 participate in that.

16 We do email blasts to members and letters,
17 depending on who we want to target. So, when we did
18 the 321 filing Guide, which is the Affordable
19 Housing, details on how to comply with the
20 prescriptive energy conservation measures, we wound
21 up doing an email blast to all the 321 buildings.
22 "Oh, did you know like, you know, it's time to
23 really, you know, think about Local Law 97." We've
24 done the same for the 320 buildings, which are the
25 34,000 regular buildings.

1
2 In addition, we've undertaken the task of calling
3 building owners personally. And we've started with
4 the building owners that we think are in the most
5 trouble. So, at this-- I mean, that's very time
6 intensive. And at this point, we're probably at
7 around 600 building owners who we've tried to get in
8 contact with. And every time that we call a building
9 owner, we refer them to the Accelerator. So, we'll
10 follow up with an email that even if we didn't reach
11 them on the phone, that refers them to the
12 Accelerator and assigns them a caseworker.

13 So, we're very busy, but we're supplementing or
14 working in partnership with Accelerator.

15 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: So when-- when you talk
16 about these emails and the end, the 600-- the calls
17 to 600 owners, and all of that outreach, those are--
18 that's being done by three individuals?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: The e-mails-- Yes.
20 The calls are being done by three individuals, yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I think you need a couple
22 more people. Okay. That's-- That's a great body of
23 work.

24 And so, turning to the Accelerator, do you have
25 data on the Accelerator's reach so far, and...?

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: I have one stat.

3 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: Because you asked me
5 last time, and the stat is that since 2021, they've
6 helped 18,156 building owners with sustainability
7 work, and of that it's 15,293 just on Local Law 97.

8 So, their mandate is bigger than Local Law 97,
9 but the vast majority of their work is Local Law 97.

10 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you and turning just
11 back to the 600 owners, what are some of their
12 characteristics, you said the folks that are most in
13 trouble?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: So, it reflects the
15 design of Local Law 97 itself. So, the law was
16 written for the first compliance period to capture
17 the worst 20% of polluters. Now, since that time,
18 based on 2022 data, nine more percent have moved into
19 compliance. So, we're only looking at 11%. Although
20 now we're looking at 2023 data, and we think that
21 number is going to get better. So--

22 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: So what is the number now?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: It's-- We have about
24 an 89% citywide compliance rate, and it was at 80%.
25 Now, this is just about 320 buildings. The 321

1 buildings, there are about 10,500 of those,
2 affordable housing buildings with 35% or more rent
3 regulated units and houses of worship. That's harder
4 to know, because they have to do PECM measures. So,
5 we can't know how many of those are compliant, right?
6 Because they're not submitting benchmarking data, we
7 don't know-- we won't be able to guess.

9 So, at any rate, it reflects the coverage of
10 buildings generally, which is the vast majority, or
11 more than around 55% or 60% are multifamily
12 buildings. That's how the law was drafted. So,
13 that's what we're looking at. It's a microcosm of
14 that.

15 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. So, another
16 question that advocates-- advocates raised was about
17 outreach, particularly in environmental justice
18 communities, lower income communities, among
19 cooperatives. So, can you talk a little bit about
20 that, and specifically: There was supposed to be an
21 RFP that went out from the Accelerator to expand
22 outreach to hard-to-reach owners. Has that happened?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: So, I can't speak to
24 that. That's MOCJ, who's, again, overseeing their
25 contract. But we have definitely focused on

1
2 affordable housing outreach. That has been a big
3 deal. And the first filing guide we did was on
4 Affordable Housing. And so we've been out there with
5 Accelerator. I believe it's this week that they have
6 an Affordable Housing-- a 321 event, actually, with
7 providers.

8 And so, it's been very important to us to get out
9 there. We are targeting them with, you know, our
10 email blasts, or letters, or whatnot, but it's really
11 the Accelerator who's the one going out and doing the
12 work. There is a new 321 Go program with HPD, which
13 they can they can speak to. They're partnering with
14 Accelerator on that. That's the other agency I
15 neglected to say: HPD is a big partner in this
16 because of the Affordable Housing aspect, and on the
17 outreach.

18 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I will ask them shortly.
19 Thank you. Okay, thank you. Thank you so much,
20 Deputy Commissioner.

21 So, turning to construction injuries and the
22 relationship to vacancies. The preliminary Mayor's
23 Management Report indicated construction-related
24 incidents with injury increase from 185 to 237, when
25 comparing the first four months of fiscal 23 to the

1
2 same period in fiscal 24. However, DOB has added
3 that fatalities and life-threatening injuries fell in
4 the same period. DOB's earlier analysis of the data
5 suggested that rising injuries resulted from numerous
6 fall-related incident incidents that did not result
7 in violations (we covered that a bit last hearing) or
8 stem from adverse practices by site safety personnel.

9 This would seem to suggest that mistakes were
10 made by the workers themselves. DOB has shared that
11 it has been investigating this trend to identify
12 correlations within specific workgroups, trades, and
13 individual personnel.

14 What has DOB's investigation revealed so far
15 regarding the city's growing trend of construction
16 injuries, and will DOB eventually release the
17 findings to the public?

18 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah. We have no definitive
19 findings at this point. But the moment we do we
20 certainly will share them with you. Again if you
21 look at the numbers, there-- it's really curious,
22 because the-- the spike in injuries, incidents and
23 injuries, if you if you look at the delta year-ove-
24 year, it's not to the number but it's-- it's very
25 similar to this sudden growth of incidents, injuries.

1 We go out to inspect. We see no violating
2 conditions. And again, it was-- for a long time it
3 was falling off of a three or four foot ladder. Now
4 it seems to be sort of trips and falls off of stairs.
5

6 So, we continue to look at it. And as soon as we
7 have reached a conclusion, we certainly will share
8 that with you.

9 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: You'll release it to the
10 public? Share it with the public?

11 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Sure. Madam Chair, can I--
12 So I don't forget. Can I clean up? Apparently, I
13 need to clean up something from the last hearing.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Sure.

15 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Because I saw some tweets
16 that seem to indicate that I said it was "up in the
17 air" if we would release to the public or to you the
18 report from LERA for the Ann Street parking garage.
19 I certainly didn't intend that. I don't know if it
20 came out that way. But my friend Gersh tweeted, and
21 said it seemed like it was iffy.

22 So, let me be perfectly clear. And I meant to be
23 perfectly clear then: We haven't changed our mind;
24 this is what we've always intended. You absolutely
25 will see the LERA report. The public will see the

1 LERA report as soon as we are allowed to share it.

2 The reason why we have not been able to share it to
3 date is because the investigation continues.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you for--

6 COMMISSIONER ODDO: But we will share with you as
7 quickly as we can the work that we do.

8 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yeah. That would be great.

9 Thank you, Commissioner. So, the Executive Plan
10 rolls city funds from fiscal 24 to 25 to reflect
11 delays for vendors to finish work on various
12 projects, including as the Chair began, for DOB NOW
13 \$9.4 million, sidewalk sheds at \$1.8 million,
14 sustainability \$1.6 million existing building code
15 \$1.4 million, waterfront \$810,000, facade \$800,000,
16 and records management for \$126,000. Most of this
17 contract work is now intended to be completed by
18 December 2024, with DOB NOW having a goal of
19 completion by 2025.

20 Can you elaborate on the general cause of the
21 delays across the seven contracts?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER UGARTE: So, the cause of the
23 DOB NOW delay is a result of spending approval delays
24 as well as procurement delays. The sidewalk shed
25 role is a result of the RFP process, and that's the

1
2 same for Local Law 11. And the waterfront contract
3 role, records management role, and the other roles
4 are a result of just contract delays.

5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Great, thank you. And when
6 you say spending approval delays, you mean that's
7 from OMB?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER UGARTE: OMB and OTI?

9 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: And OTI. Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Madam Chair, we have the
11 number that you asked for, the salary.

12 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yup.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER UGARTE: Yeah, we do. On
14 average, the salaries posted will be between \$73,000
15 to \$120,000.

16 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Madam Chair, we would like to
17 share with you, and any of the Councilmembers of the
18 postings. So, for you to get out on your platform,
19 because we want to have a far-and-wide reach.

20 I think Laura mentioned-- did you mention it --
21 I'm sorry, it was in my own head-- about CUNY?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: Yeah. CUNY is one of
23 our important partners in that. Yeah. So we-- we
24 will make those postings available. And-- And then
25 sort of related to that, if I can just get back to

1
2 the inspectors for a second, the-- what changes
3 obviously, is the budgeted and actual number, right?
4 That varies over the years. What is consistent is we
5 attrit inspectors. And it's a good thing writ large,
6 because a lot of them go into the industry. We train
7 them up. It's all the same ecosystem. Other
8 agencies benefit. It's a good thing for all of us,
9 but it's difficult to operate the candy store that
10 way.

11 One of the things that we would like to sit and
12 talk with you and the Council about is, once again,
13 looking at the charter provision that mandates
14 requirements for inspectors. We-- The Council and
15 DOB worked in the past to create the level ones,
16 which has helped. But we (and First Deputy
17 Commissioner Vilenchik testified to this last year)--
18 we are proud of the amount of training we put in to
19 our inspectors. It's one of the reasons why we lose
20 them, and the industry takes them. But we think we
21 can change the education and experience requirements,
22 widen the pool, broaden the pool, create a constant
23 pool of would-be inspectors, bring them into the DOB
24 family, train them up, and still have really
25 qualified folks in the field.

1
2 So, perhaps we can add that to the list of the
3 many things we're working on. But if we can broaden
4 those qualifications, we think we could have a more
5 consistent applicant pool for inspectors.

6 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: And who-- what would be the
7 mechanism to broaden those qualifications? Are those
8 conversations with OLR, the unions?

9 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Well, the mechanism to change
10 It would be a Local Law, but we would welcome anyone
11 to sit at the table so that we're all comfortable
12 with where we-- where we land in terms of education
13 and experience.

14 But again, the team does such a phenomenal job of
15 training and ongoing training, much like, you know, I
16 think Kaz used the example of the Fire Department
17 last year. When they are brought into the fold, we
18 train them up. Maybe there's an opportunity to
19 broaden the applicant pool.

20 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you,
21 Commissioner. Yep. I look forward to talking more
22 about that.

23 And one more followup in your line of discussion
24 around DOB NOW: How would you characterize what is
25

1 still going through bis versus, you know-- that still
2 is leftover to be transitioned to the DOB NOW portal?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PATINO: There's still
4 modules that are being transitioned. In terms of job
5 filings at this point, 90 percentage of filings are
6 going through DOB NOW versus 10% in BIS.

7 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PATINO: But there's things
9 like licenses that's left to be rolled out in DOB
10 NOW, certain inspectorial functions that have to be
11 rolled out into DOB NOW, and certain compliance
12 filings like parking structures, for example, that
13 need to be rolled into DOB NOW.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. So, it's 90%.
15 That's helpful. I'm looking at the MMRA and just
16 wondering about that delta. Thank you so much.

17 So, relating to facade penalties: In addition to
18 the failure-to-gain-access penalty, which you
19 discussed, the Council also proposed to generate
20 another \$15 million from changes to Local Law 11, the
21 Local Law 11 Fine schedule, which regulates facade
22 inspections and sidewalk sheds. This revenue
23 proposal could help advance the administration's
24 admirable determination to get sheds down. Can you
25

1 tell us if DOB raised Local Law 11 Fine changes with
2 City Hall? What was the response? What percentage
3 of Local Law 11 technical reports are filed in a
4 timely way with DOB at this time? And how much in
5 Local Law 11 in fines was charged and recouped in
6 fiscal 23, and so far in 2024?

8 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, let me answer the first
9 part. And I don't know if Yegal or Gina up here can
10 answer the latter parts about the specific dollar
11 amounts. The answer was no, I did not speak to the
12 folks about that. And not because I'm not interested
13 in it, but because we have this belief that we're
14 bringing on this world-renowned expert, who is going
15 to look at the regulatory scheme, both here and in at
16 least three comparable jurisdictions, and then make
17 recommendations, which may include what you're
18 suggesting. We certainly-- They will certainly be
19 aware of it. But we have the next year to tap into
20 their expertise and then kind of speak with one
21 voice. But any and all ideas that are raised by you,
22 Chair, or the Council, we will ensure that our
23 consultant factors that into the report that they
24 ultimately provide us. And we will eventually come
25 back, you know, again before you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, Commissioner.

3 And what about the percentage of reports filed in a
4 timely fashion, and how much was charged in fines and
5 recouped?

6 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: In terms of
7 compliance rate: For the last complete cycle, we
8 have a 97% compliance rate in Local Law 11. In terms
9 of collected, we have about-- in the last 12 months
10 we've collected about \$14 million, roughly, in
11 dollars. That is a collected number, not an imposed
12 number. And that includes fees and civil penalties.

13 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. And what is
14 that-- What's the, sort of, denominator there? How
15 much was charged in fines? In civil penalties?

16 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: The charged
17 amounts are difficult to calculate. But we can see
18 if we can try and get you that amount. The reason
19 why it's difficult to calculate is the civil penalty
20 continues to increase month by month until the
21 reports are submitted. So, the accrued values
22 continue to change every single month until the
23 reports are submitted.

24 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay. Well thank you.
25 Those are my questions for now. We will be turning

1
2 it over to colleagues for their questions. Thank
3 you, Commissioner, and team for your responses.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: We've also been joined by
5 Councilmember Hanks. Just quickly before we head to
6 the questions. Perfect world, Commissioner, what
7 would we do to end or curtail the weaponization of
8 311?

9 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Just since I was drinking the
10 water, we're going to have my spit take here in the
11 Council Chambers.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: I was hoping.

13 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Listen, it's a real issue.
14 We have seen it. I have a list somewhere where some
15 of your names are on it.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: I'm on it.

17 COMMISSIONER ODDO: You are on it, sir. Folks
18 where-- where calls were made-- erroneous calls were
19 made and accused of Airbnb. And as someone who knows
20 the system, and someone who's attuned to it-- having
21 although Jason Razesfky, our Chief of Staff is trying
22 his best Colombo act as sort of piecemeal it
23 together, these folks who voted for something or--
24 But it's punitive. It's gratuitous. It's a waste of
25 our resources.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: But you have to go because
3 it could be real.

4 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yes. Yes. We've talked to
5 different Councilmembers about potential legislation.
6 But the problem is, even if we require names for 311,
7 I-- you know, I'll say "Jimmy Oddo", Jimmy Oddo
8 called on David Michael Carr. He's got an Airbnb.

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: He does.

10 [LAUGHTER]

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: That's what I heard.

12 COMMISSIONER ODDO: And I have to tell you,
13 there's some names. It's not just Councilmembers,
14 it's not just city electeds. It's high on the food
15 chain across the state where these nuisance 311
16 complaints. Now they've-- they've died down
17 recently. But there was a spurt. And-- And for the
18 record, those complaints are inspected, those--
19 particularly those Airbnb are by the Mayor's Office
20 of Special Enforcement, which is outside of our
21 purview, although we have DOB inspectors detailed to
22 them. But the angry phone calls certainly came to
23 yours truly.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: But is there a way to sort
25 of, inherently-- I mean, how would you identify

1 nuisance complaints, if, you know, 5, 6, 7 calls are
2 made, and your guys go out there, and there's nothing
3 there. Like how many times are we going to...?

4
5 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Well, we have a triage unit
6 that is the intake. And we try-- short of a formal
7 policy to inject some common sense into the process
8 because of this--

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: "If it looks like a duck"
10 kind of thing.

11 COMMISSIONER ODDO: But it's still a challenge.
12 And again, this thing comes in spurts. And for now,
13 it's died down. The individual or individuals who
14 are engaging in it, and it's premeditated, it's
15 intentional, could be watching now. Who knows?
16 Next-- You know, I'm going to see a familiar
17 address, my own. Maybe my wife is running an Airbnb.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Nah. I look-- I think
19 one-- I think, you know, being a policymaker is
20 sometimes you have to admit you don't know. I don't
21 know what the answer is, because obviously, if-- if I
22 was doing something illegal in my house or dangerous,
23 I'd want someone to come check it-- you know, I'd
24 want my neighbor to be able to check it out. But
25 when it gets to a point where it's clearly someone

1 just trying to-- or it's a neighborly dispute, or
2 whatever it may be, it's just a waste of resources.
3 And it's sort of, you know-- you're calling 911 for
4 one thing, when you know, the fire department is busy
5 going there, when there's something-- It's the same--
6 You guys deal with the same thing. So...

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: Just to add to
9 what the Commissioner said: So, our triage officer
10 will-- We have to go, as you said, right? It's a
11 complaint. It's a public complaint and we're
12 required by law to go. However, what we do, and we
13 do this on a-- on a regular basis is we will
14 administratively close the-- the large bulk of the
15 complaints at a specific address, and group
16 everything together into one inspection, and try and
17 package that all together rather than sending out
18 numerous inspectors from numerous units at different
19 times.

20 So, our triage officers are keenly aware of this
21 and we-- It's a challenge but it's something that we
22 do on a daily basis to where we group all these
23 administratively close, the majority of them, but
24 still go and close out the-- the original complaint.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay, thank you. We have
3 questions now starting with Councilmember Cabán
4 followed by Hudson.

5 COUNCILMEMBER CABÁN: Thank you. I also-- I
6 think the administrator is not letting me start my
7 videos, so I will be camera-- camera off. I wanted
8 to ask a little bit in sort of my capacity as Chair
9 of the Queer caucus.

10 Queer New York Workers are disproportionately
11 affected by the affordability crisis, we're more
12 likely to experience employment discrimination that
13 act that impacts our ability to afford our expenses,
14 and more likely to experience family separations.
15 And so, you know, Councilmember Bottcher and I had
16 put out this this op ed, sort of outlining the needs
17 of queer New Yorkers, and affordable stable housing,
18 just like everybody else across our city. And, you
19 know, we need funding for the Homes Now, Homes For
20 Generations ask that we've been making to ensure that
21 queer New Yorkers are able to live safe, healthy,
22 joyous lives for generations to come.

23 And so, my questions for you or, you know, how
24 much funding does HPD currently have toward
25 preserving or constructing new limited equity coops?

1
2 How much is proposed for the next year? And then a
3 couple more that I want to add on there is that
4 there's been a lot of interest from community land
5 trusts and how they can be a part of Neighborhood
6 Pillars or Open Door Project. How can we integrate
7 CLTs into those programs so that we have more
8 opportunities for permanently affordable housing that
9 protects tenants from displacement and encourages
10 residents--

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Councilmember?

12 COUNCILMEMBER CABÁN: Yeah, yeah. Can you hear
13 me?

14 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Yeah. We're talking to DOB
15 now. So, you have to come back when we do HPD.

16 COUNCILMEMBER CABÁN: Oh, well, can I-- Oh okay.
17 So I wanted to ask, also about-- hang on one second.
18 It's letting me letting me start my-- my camera here.

19 Can you all hear and see me okay.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Yeah, go ahead.

21 COUNCILMEMBER CABÁN: Thank you. Okay, so I'll
22 come back with those for-- for HPD, for sure.

23 For DOB, can you talk a little bit about, sort
24 of, where you're seeing the most concentration of
25 some of the-- the violations and how your tracking

1 that, and sending out those, sort of your-- your
2 resources to those particular areas. Like has that--
3 are you seeing particular trends? And how has that
4 changed the way that you're operating those
5 departments?
6

7 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Councilmember, I'm going to
8 have Deputy Commissioner Shamash speak to that. But
9 before he does, one of the things that I've learned
10 in the first 12 months that I was here, and it's
11 really-- I credit my Chief of Staff for the comment.
12 And it was in wake of 1915 Billingsley in Chair
13 Sanchez's district, when that awful moment happened.
14 And I'll clean up the language, but it was, like,
15 "crappy owners tend to find crappy engineers, tend to
16 find crappy design professionals, and crappy
17 expeditors." And we need to figure out where those
18 universes meet. We have different data points from
19 other agencies or from other entities about worst
20 landlords. Or-- We know who are the design
21 professionals who kind of run outside the lines. We
22 need to figure out, using the available data we have,
23 to where those universes meet and focus some
24 resources on that. That speaks to the bad actors and
25 the risk mitigation effort that Chair Sanchez and I

1 spoke about in-- in two previous hearings and the
2 desire for us to go on offense, and be proactive.
3

4 And I will tell you, anecdotally, but I think
5 this is true, that those universes will be found most
6 often in communities of color or poorer communities.

7 So, everyone talks about bad actors. We want to
8 go after them. We want to take a group in this
9 agency to go on offense, to act proactively, seeking
10 them, those projects and those bad actors out. And
11 that's the resources I need to find that I've-- I've
12 shared with Chair Sanchez.

13 COUNCILMEMBER CABÁN: And can I ask about some of
14 the data around your collaboration and partnership
15 with the DA's offices? So, you know, how many cases
16 get referred to the DA's offices after being
17 investigated by you all? And then out of those
18 cases, what percentage of those if you know, are
19 resulting in the opening of-- of criminal court cases
20 for example. Like what is the appetite amongst DAs
21 to use the law to hold bad-- bad actors, bad
22 developers, bad landlords accountable? And are you
23 seeing different trends in different boroughs on-- on
24 that front in terms of prioritization by district
25 attorney's offices?

1
2 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, I will give you my
3 experience over the last year, and the-- The cases
4 aren't referred by us. It's the district--
5 individual district attorney's office who will
6 investigate a case and decide. And so, let's use the
7 examples of my 12 months. You have Ann Street, where
8 the Manhattan district attorney is involved, you have
9 Billingsley, where the Bronx DA's office is
10 evaluating. We had in the last three months in
11 Borough Park, that fatality, that awful situation
12 where there was no-- no plan submitted no work
13 permits, and we did a stop-work order, and they went
14 in anyway, and a 34-year-old guy died when the first
15 full collapsed on him, were the Brooklyn DA's office
16 is on it. Those individual DA's look at these cases,
17 and make the decision, and-- and are formulating the
18 decision in those instances as we speak, if they're
19 bringing cases or not.

20 COUNCILMEMBER CABÁN: Does HPD-- And sorry, I
21 can't see the clock. So, Chairs, please cut me off
22 if I'm out of time. But it is HBD feeding or
23 informing district attorneys of like, "Hey, this is
24 where you need to go look."
25

1
2 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, HPD is next. But I can
3 tell you from a DOB perspective--

4 COUNCILMEMBER CABÁN: I'm sorry. Housing and
5 Building. I apologize.

6 COMMISSIONER ODDO: That's okay. I've begun to
7 look like Adolfo as I've gotten older. Oh! We're
8 different.

9 The referral-- Again, it's the DA's office is--
10 Obviously they are aware of these high-profile cases,
11 or we make them aware of an incident, and then they
12 make an individual determination.

13 I'm sorry, what was the second part of the
14 question or...?

15 COUNCILMEMBER CABÁN: Oh, just-- Yeah, just if
16 there is, like, a clear process or a point of
17 collaboration where you are alerting them to places
18 that should be on their radar, because maybe it's not
19 as high profile, but just as dangerous a condition,
20 or it's something that you know is, you know, a
21 really persistent and prolific problem or something
22 like that.

23 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: Hi. It's Yegal
24 from Department Of Buildings, Chief Structural
25 Engineer. In terms of working with the DA's office

1
2 and our sister agency, The Department of
3 Investigation, we will work with them right at the
4 onset of the incident. Many times, all three of us
5 will be there at the incident. Certainly, that was
6 the case at Billingsley. Certainly that was the case
7 at Ann Street, the 10th Avenue crane collapse.

8 But there are incidents that happened that we
9 will refer over to the DA's office. For instance,
10 there were two fires up in the Bronx that had
11 fatalities, and we saw evidence of illegal conversion
12 or lack of egress. And we referred those recently to
13 the Bronx DA's office. And-- And so those are the
14 cases that they're looking into.

15 But we will certainly work with our sister
16 agencies in the DA's office to help them in their
17 investigation. That's one of the reasons why we
18 hired LERA, a very well-known forensic engineering
19 firm, for the Ann Street collapse, because we knew
20 that there was going to be a very intensive
21 investigation in that situation.

22 And we will continue working with them. But
23 these cases take years. I think there will be-- if
24 it hasn't come out already-- But out of out of
25 Brooklyn, there will be-- there was a case that was

1
2 tried by the DA's office on the fatality of a little
3 girl that happened back in 2019. And that case has
4 finally resolved itself, and the contractor was found
5 guilty. So, these cases take years. The
6 investigations take a long time. But we are staying
7 the course. We will find that bad actors with the
8 resources that we have, and we will work with the
9 partners at DOI and the DA's office to push forward
10 the investigations as-- as much as we can.

11 COUNCILMEMBER CABÁN: Well, thank you, and thank
12 you Chairs.

13 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you. Now we have
14 questions from Councilmember Hudson, followed by
15 Carr, and we've been joined by Councilmember
16 Dinowitz.

17 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Thank you so much Chairs.
18 Good morning, still. Just before I get into my-- my
19 question, I do want to say this is like the dream
20 team that you all have up here. I know I've had
21 incredibly positive and efficient responses and
22 experiences with DOB. And I know that the same goes
23 for many of my colleagues. So, thank you all, and
24 all of your teams for the work that that you all do.

25

1
2 Issuing violations and imposing financial
3 penalties is an important tool for incentivizing
4 building owners to follow the law and keep conditions
5 safe for New Yorkers. However, there are many cases
6 where buildings have open violations dating back
7 decades with no corrective action. What is the
8 Administration doing to ensure that violations are
9 actively corrected and not merely accepted at a cost
10 of doing business?

11 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah, thank you. First of
12 all, Councilmember, thank you for the kind comments.
13 Thank you for the collaboration. We appreciate it on
14 this side of the dais as well.

15 So, open violations. Let me explain it this way.
16 We-- We require something called a Certificate of
17 Correction. When you have received a violation,
18 you've addressed the underlying condition, perhaps
19 you've paid your OATH violation, then you have to
20 submit this affirmation to us affirming that you
21 have-- you have addressed the underlying condition.

22 All too often what has happened is that folks do
23 not complete the process. Sometimes they will go as
24 far as paying the violation, and thinking they're
25 done. And that leaves us, as a compliance agency,

1
2 with some books that are less than acceptable in that
3 is-- are these 10 open violations an indication that
4 the crack still exists? Or did they fix the crack
5 and not send us-- I'll call it a piece of paper, but
6 it's not a piece of paper.

7 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Right.

8 COMMISSIONER ODDO: And so we have begun to
9 attack that in a few different ways. Under Deputy
10 Commissioner Patino's shop, we're doing something
11 called GSC, Get Summonses Corrected, where we are
12 aggressively going out, and reaching out to building
13 owners who are the worst of the worst in terms of
14 those violate-- those open violations, and really
15 trying to discern between, again, an underlying
16 condition and an open COC.

17 So, we've begun this education process. One of
18 the things that we want to do, that the agency once
19 did, that has not-- we haven't been able to do in
20 recent years, is systematically, proactively go out
21 and look at all open class one violations, have a
22 team that just goes out and looks at it. And that's
23 where I need to take this agency. And that's where--
24 what we're trying to do.

1
2 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Thank you, and Chairs, I
3 do have two more questions, if-- Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER ODDO: And my apologies for being
5 long-winded.

6 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: That's okay. Who came up
7 with Get Summonses Corrected?

8 COMMISSIONER ODDO: I want "GSD", Get Summonses
9 Due, but I was overruled. And I go with the flow.

10 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Okay. Just curious.
11 It's-- It's fine to pursue amendments to Local Law
12 11, which is regulating facades and sidewalk sheds.
13 However, there is an existing law, which private
14 building owners are in violation of, and it sounds
15 like the city is apparently leaving money on the
16 table by not going after these owners. Why aren't
17 you pursuing the fines more aggressively?

18 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah. We are. In fact,
19 we've really upped our game in terms of taking folks
20 to criminal court. In the big picture, it's a small
21 universe of cases because they're so labor intensive.
22 But the word gets out and we-- we just had a big win
23 on-- [TO OTHERS:] What was the hospital? [TO
24 COUNCIL:] Well, we had one major hospital in the
25 city, where we took them to court. So, we are using

1
2 the tools available to us. This is why we've had
3 previous conversations with Chair Sanchez, and we're
4 all of the belief that we have to give us additional
5 tools, including the ability to extend our lien
6 ability. We need bigger sticks, because there are
7 owners out there who thumb their nose at violations.

8 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Right.

9 COMMISSIONER ODDO: And it leaves us in a
10 position where we've run out of means to try to
11 ensure their compliance.

12 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Understood. Okay. Thank
13 you. Thank you, Chairs.

14 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Questions from
15 Councilmember Carr, followed by Louis.

16 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: Thank you, Chair. And if
17 you or anyone here is looking for a place to stay for
18 under 30 days. Please see me. I might know a guy.
19 Commissioner, always great to see you. Thank you for
20 all the work you and your team and everyone at DOB is
21 doing. It's always much appreciated.

22 We've kind of got into this a little bit, this
23 notion of how we could do enforcement better, right?
24 As you know from your time as an elected official, so
25 much of what we send to you, and what you get sent to

1
2 you just from the public, is reactive, right? It's--
3 It's based on conditions that really should never
4 have reached that dangerous point. And so could you
5 talk a little bit more about the statistical analysis
6 that you're looking to maybe incorporate into the way
7 you do things? And how, given that there is a
8 desire, I think, for all of us to go on offense, as
9 you say, how you're going to do so when we're talking
10 about, you know, budgeted headcount reductions, and
11 maybe not filling spaces, that I think we would all
12 switch to be filled?

13 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah. So, I just want to
14 ready Deputy Commissioner Shamash for some response
15 on this too. But first, let me just say, publicly,
16 Councilmember: Job well done on St. John's Villa. I
17 haven't had a chance to Tweet.

18 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER ODDO: This is what we do. We pass
20 the baton on, and hope folks take it and run. Well
21 done. Well done.

22 Again, I don't know if you were here,
23 Councilmember, when I mentioned to the to the Chairs
24 that just a back-of-the-envelope look at the
25 inspections of the last four months, it's around 27%

1 that's proactive. We need to change that formula.

2 Not only for inspections writ large, but-- but tailor
3 it towards the universe that perhaps the
4 Councilmember Cabán was referencing and-- and others.
5

6 And we think that there's data available, because
7 of DOB NOW. We think there's data available from
8 other agencies, other outside entities. And we're
9 not just talking about inspectors. We're talking
10 about bringing on analysts-- like a whole unit of
11 analysts, engineers, and inspectors, a SWAT team of
12 sorts, to go on offense, to try to intercede in these
13 cases before they become a 1915 Billingsley.

14 This agency puts a ton of effort into
15 maintenance. Maintenance is how we avoid--
16 Maintenance compliance. Maintenance is how we avoid
17 these-- these incidents. So, whether it's in Yegal's
18 shop about the Fist Program, which is the facade, or
19 the Pips Program, which is the parking garages,
20 trying to get-- to get owners to live up to their
21 maintenance responsibilities is critical, so that it
22 doesn't-- it doesn't continue downstream. And we
23 have these-- these issues.

24 So, we need to find the resources to go on
25 offense to allow our team to take advantage of the

3 data. And as I just said previously, to-- on those
4 buildings where we know there are existing open class
5 ones, to go out, find them and determine if those
6 class ones are conditions-- conditions that maybe
7 have worsened, or because they haven't sent in their
8 COC. Yegal?

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: Just add to what
10 the commissioner mentioned. So, we talked about
11 analysts and inspectors. But it takes also
12 registered design professionals, architects, and
13 engineers, to review the plans, act as expert
14 witnesses for the Department, and then-- and then the
15 attorneys also to bring these cases forward.

16 So, as the Commissioner said, it's really a large
17 endeavor. It's going to take efforts from all
18 bureaus within the agency to put forth this effort.
19 And it's about connecting the dots. It's about
20 connecting the dots with our data. It's about
21 connecting the dots with social media, and seeing
22 what is happening out there.

23 And the biggest difficulty that we have right now
24 is owners hiding behind LLCs, right? So hiding
25 behind that veil with numerous LLCs for each of their

1 individual properties and connecting the dots between
2 all those entities.

3
4 So, that that's a very short-- We can talk about
5 this a lot more. But in terms of the work, it's a
6 group effort from all the bureaus within the agency:
7 Analytics, attorneys, registered design
8 professionals, and inspectorial staff.

9 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: Thank you. And Chair, if I
10 could just ask another followup. So, I'm-- I think
11 the agency's mission, you talked about the pursuit of
12 compliance, right? And the agency's mission is
13 safety, right? That's why you're seeking those--
14 those compliances.

15 And I guess I'm just confused, right?, where
16 you're-- you're trying to tighten the belt, but
17 you're adding 36 baselined positions to Local Law 97
18 enforcement, which has nothing to do with safety on
19 construction sites, safety for new builds, safety for
20 aging buildings.

21 I understand the agency has to follow the
22 locally-law-mandated provisions, but why are we
23 adding in one area and not seeking to add in other
24 areas, when that's the equally important?

1
2 And then my final question is, are currently
3 engaging in dialogue with the Administration about
4 the City of Yes. It remains to be seen whether
5 that's passed, or some version of it has passed. I
6 imagine that's going to mean more applications for
7 DOB, more plan examinations for DOB, more site
8 inspections, more complaints from constituents, more
9 complaints from constituents about things that are
10 legal, but they just may not like, right?

11 So given the uptick in workload, that means for
12 you, are there talks with OMB about being able to
13 staff up for if and when that happens?

14 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So-- Man, Councilmember, for
15 the last question after the bell, it was a doozy.

16 So, Local Law 97, Council passed Local Law. We
17 have to carry that Local Law out. It's a tremendous
18 amount of work. And we need to-- we need to staff up
19 and get those folks on board to do the work and be
20 ready to do the work that's coming down the pike.
21 So, that's Local Law 97.

22 The second part, we-- your point about not
23 asking for help on it. As I said earlier, the less I
24 say, the better. But you know, I'm proud to lead
25 this agency, I'm going to do right by this agency,

1 and use whatever skills mamma gave me or
2 relationships I have to do that. But the less I say,
3 frankly, here, the better.
4

5 And the last, the City of Yes: Yeah, there's a--
6 there's a likelihood that Mrs. Oddo is going to call
7 Councilmember Carr and say, "This barber shop is now
8 here." I mean, let's face it, there'll be lots of
9 questions. It will impact the agency across the
10 board. This Council, this Administration, the State
11 Senate, the State Assembly, the Governor, everyone is
12 on board that we need affordable housing. This is an
13 effort to deliver it. It's an administration
14 priority. That means it's our priority.

15 But yes, it will demand of this agency, both on
16 the inspectorial side, and the rest of the agency,
17 and I'm having those conversations, we are having
18 those conversations with our Deputy Mayor and with
19 City Hall. And while not complete, we are doing a
20 little bit more than a back-of-the-envelope
21 estimation of what that would entail for our agency,
22 so we could speak in an educated manner on what we
23 think those needs might be.

24 COMMISSIONER CARR: Thank you, Commissioner. And
25 just in closing, whatever we achieve, I feel it

1
2 wouldn't have happened if you hadn't gotten the City
3 to buy it. So, thank you so much for your efforts.
4 And thank you Chair.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. Questions from
6 Councilmember Louis followed by Restler.

7 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Thank you Chairs, and thank
8 you, Commissioner, for being here today. I must say
9 that we've met with a lot of commissioners and your
10 responses have been very succinct, and comprehensive,
11 and you have a great team, as Councilmember Hudson
12 mentioned earlier.

13 Just piggybacking off of Councilmember Carr's
14 questions on City of Yes. I wanted to ask a few
15 questions. So, I'll just ask all the questions and
16 you guys can all respond.

17 With staffing levels being a major topic of
18 discussion at the hearing, has the DOB analyzed the
19 increased workload and inspection requirements needed
20 to accommodate the permits for building out ADUs
21 being behind properties? And that's the City of Yes
22 proposals for housing opportunity.

23 A similar question on City of Yes for economic
24 opportunity: Has DOB assessed challenges with the
25 citywide deregulating of commercial use on upper

1 floors, and is the requisite enforcement budget
2 contained within the FY 25 budget?

3
4 And with these new zoning proposals increase--
5 Would the new zoning proposals increase the amount of
6 time DOB spends on reviewing permit applications, due
7 to the new workload that will come from these
8 changes? And is that reflected also in the FY 25
9 budget?

10 I'm going to ask a quick question on construction
11 impacts. Please provide us with a dollar amount DOB
12 spent on enforcement and inspectors in response to
13 construction complaints within new developments. And
14 what is that dollar amount for after hours and
15 weekend inspections. And that's for construction
16 complaints.

17 And the last one on construction is: How should
18 homeowners deal with trespassing construction workers
19 entering properties from neighboring lots?

20 And last, last, last question. I promise. This
21 is inspections. Can you provide statistics on how
22 many inspections have closed out an I2 or C2 status
23 when-- when there's no entry or refusal for entry at
24 a property, and how does the DOB NOW serve to improve
25 these issues related to access? Will DOB NOW

1 improved transparency from the agency on how and when
2 inspections are being conducted?
3

4 I know you mentioned some of that earlier
5 regarding DOB NOW, but I have a constituent watching
6 right now that's on my back about that. So, if you
7 guys could please share that. Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Okay, so to the first part,
9 as I mentioned to Councilmember Carr, we are in the
10 process internally of trying to assess what new needs
11 that would create, the City of Yes, the various
12 iterations of the City of Yes. We don't have those
13 numbers, but we're working on it. And the
14 conversations, again, with City Hall, our-- and our
15 friends at OMB, et cetera, are ongoing about that.
16 Not reflected, obviously, in Fiscal 25.

17 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER ODDO: In terms of the dollar
19 amounts, your questions about enforcement and
20 inspection in AHV. We will get that back to you. I
21 don't think we have them here. We will also get to
22 you the percentage of how often we're turned away.

23 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: And how should homeowners
24 respond to that? Like the trespassing of
25 construction workers.

1
2 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, we will get to you. But
3 the short answer to "how often we do not have access"
4 is just too-- too often. It's a reality of our
5 lives.

6 And the trespassing on-- [TO ASSISTANT
7 COMMISSIONER SHAMASH:] 311?

8 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: That's the problem. I
9 wanted to ask a question about that. But I don't
10 want to take up too much time. So, we could talk
11 about it afterwards. But 311 is a hot mess when it
12 comes to complaints on construction sites. So, we
13 could talk about that.

14 COMMISSIONER ODDO: We-- Yeah, Councilmember, we
15 certainly will do that. And in terms of DOB NOW and
16 the trans-- transparency question, if you could just
17 repeat it.

18 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Oh, sure. DOB NOW: How
19 will it serve to improve the issues related to
20 access? You mentioned it earlier in your testimony,
21 regarding DOB NOW?

22 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah. DOB NOW puts a whole
23 ton of information out there on online, information
24 that was a PDF on BIZ in previous-- previous life.
25 It's all out there. So, it's-- it's increased

1
2 transparency for the public, for people in the
3 industry, for elected officials.

4 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Alright, thank you so much.
5 Thank you, Chairs.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Councilmember Restler,
7 followed by Hanks.

8 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Great. Thank you,
9 Chairs Brannan and Sanchez. You both do a terrific
10 job. We're fortunate to have you in these roles.

11 And it's good to see you, Commissioner Oddo and
12 team. I feel like everywhere I go, I just hear about
13 Jimmy Oddo lovefests, that everybody's so happy with
14 the job you're doing the DOB, and how responsive you
15 are to all of the members of the City Council. And I
16 just want to echo the sentiments: That I really
17 appreciate, when we've had issues in our district,
18 you yourself personally, your senior leadership is
19 responsive, is on the ball, and is trying to help
20 solve the problems. And that's, frankly, how you've
21 always operated in public service over a long career.
22 And it's-- it's been a pleasure working with you in
23 this role as well. So, thank you very much.

24 My concern today is the same thing that I gave
25 you a hard time about in the preliminary budget

1 hearing, and I know that my colleagues have raised
2 some of these issues before. But I just want to come
3 back to headcount, because I'm deeply concerned about
4 the lack of people that work at the Department of
5 Buildings. As good as you are as good, as Kaz is,
6 and everyone else up there, you can't do the work if
7 you don't have people.
8

9 So, just remind me: As of today, could you tell
10 me the number of people that are working at DOB and
11 the budgeted headcount, both of those numbers?

12 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, we are at 1,642 as a
13 budgeted headcount and actual [TO OTHERS:] 1,622?
14 [TO COUNCIL:] I'm sorry, I said that earlier too.
15 1,622 is the budgeted headcount.

16 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER ODDO: The actual headcount is 1584,
18 for a vacancy rate of 2%. And on the inspectorial
19 side, Councilmember, we are budgeted at 540. We are
20 at 525, a 3% vacancy rate, 15 vacancies. The good
21 news on that front is that we have 15 folks in the
22 portal that-- that hopefully will be joining our
23 inspectorial ranks soon.

24 COMMISSIONER RESTLER: So, firstly, I appreciate
25 the direct answers. And I think it's a credit to you

1
2 and the DOB staff that your vacancy rate is as low as
3 it is. Earlier in the Administration DOB had among
4 the highest vacancy rates in the Administration.

5 Part of the reason we've seen such a decline in
6 the DOB vacancy rate though, as I understand it, is
7 that we've just seen so many positions eliminated.

8 If we go back to FY 22. We had a budgeted headcount

9 of 2,024 positions. 2,024 positions. Today our

10 budgeted headcount is 1622. That's a, you know, a

11 20% decline in the headcount that's available to DOB

12 to do its jobs. And, you know, when you look at

13 response times on certain types of complaints, we

14 have seen recently in the PMMR saw an uptick. So, I

15 think we-- Tell me, have we seen any improvement on

16 Priority B complaints, which I believe have increased

17 by about two days, year over year?

18 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, let me just say that it's

19 not on my resume that I'm the guy to hire-- to reduce

20 your vacancy rate because the vacancy rates were

21 reduced because the lines--

22 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Were eliminated.

23 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Right. So, I just want to be

24 clear that we're not bragging that we've reduced our

25

1 vacancy rates. I don't want to read a Tweet saying
2 "Jimmy Oddo reduced his vacancy rates. Hurrah."
3

4 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: I was trying to say
5 something nice, but acknowledging that the problem is
6 real.

7 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Here's-- We still-- The
8 numbers are what the numbers are. As I testified
9 earlier, there is some retrenchment on new bills.
10 There is some retrenchment on majority alts, on minor
11 roles, in terms of our service levels.

12 Historically speaking, though, over the year, the
13 two, the three, the four, the five, the six, the ten,
14 our service levels continue to be strong. The PEGs
15 that we absorbed, again, were lines that were
16 unfulfilled. So, we are seeing retrenchment, because
17 I had to go from \$9 million, which was unsustainable,
18 \$9 million in overtime, down to what is budgeted at
19 \$3 million. And how we were able to afford the \$9
20 million is all those vacancies were accruals.

21 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Right.

22 COMMISSIONER ODDO: We can't live that way. It
23 was wrong, and we-- it was wrong to have it that
24 high. So, we've been very judicious on our overtime
25 usage, to take it down, and that's led to some

1
2 increase. On the development side, there's been some
3 increase, but when you look at the increase, it's not
4 going in the direction I want. But if you look at
5 the overall length of a development project, the
6 additional time is-- is relatively small. The-- So,
7 while I understand your point--

8 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Yeah, I hear you on the
9 processing of the development times, and-- and I
10 trust that you're able manager and that you're trying
11 your best with the limited resources you have. But,
12 you know, my district is one of-- You know, I shed
13 18% of my population in redistricting last year
14 because of the amount of development we've had over
15 the last 15 years. CB1 and CB2 in Brooklyn are among
16 the three community districts in New York City that
17 have had the most housing starts in New York for 15
18 years. And we still have a ton of new development
19 that's happening our district, as there should be,
20 it's a transit rich area.

21 But if City of Yes comes forward with the
22 policies that were just adopted in the state budget,
23 we're going to see a ton of new development
24 happening, hopefully not just in District 33. But
25 across the five boroughs. And we need the Department

3 of Buildings out there in real time keeping our
4 community safe. Just this morning, I got a message
5 from a constituent where a beam failed on Greenpoint,
6 and McGuinness with a-- a beam from a scaffolding
7 fell on a lady walking with a baby carriage.

8 Fortunately, she's okay. Her shoulder is messed
9 up. The baby's okay. But we need DOB out there
10 keeping us safe with all of the development happening
11 in our communities. Losing 500 lines-- nearly, 400-
12 and-something lines, 20% of the total headcount that
13 was needed for this agency is not acceptable. And
14 you're not going to be able to-- to keep up with the
15 pace of development that we're anticipating in this
16 city without this headcount.

17 And you've managed to survive with less overtime,
18 it should have been replaced with more bodies to be
19 able to ensure that construction projects are
20 happening safely. I don't trust developers. I'm
21 counting on DOB to make sure that work is happening
22 safely.

23 And so, you know-- I've gone way over. I had a
24 bunch of other things I wanted to ask about. But if
25 there's a round two, then I'll bother Laura for--

1
2 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Councilmember, let me just
3 say that I appreciate the points you're making. I
4 respect the platform you have to make those-- those
5 points. And I'm not here to argue against more. I--
6 You know, I say that candidly and let the
7 repercussions fall where they may. It's unfair to
8 the men and women sitting behind us to do that.

9 But I don't want anyone in the Council or at home
10 leaving with the-- without the impression and the
11 understanding that historically speaking, we are
12 still doing an excellent job. We put out a report
13 last week on construction safety, and in it there's a
14 number: We were we did 370,000 field inspections
15 last year, more than at any other point.

16 So, while I respect what you're saying. I'm not--
17 - I'm not here to argue against you or against my
18 agency, but I want to be clear for everyone watching,
19 and everyone out there this agency is doing a-- an
20 effective job with the resources we have, and
21 excelling. 370,000 in-field inspections, despite all
22 of the valid numbers that you've just referenced.

23 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: And I just will close,
24 because I've talked too much.

1
2 I started by saying, I think you're doing a good
3 job, and I think your team is doing a good job. I
4 think you need more staff to do as excellent job as
5 the Department of Buildings should do for-- for our
6 communities. And I'll just leave it at that.

7 Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Point taken, sir.

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: We're joined by
10 Councilmember Feliz. We have questions now of
11 Councilmember Hanks followed by Avilés.

12 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: Hi. Good afternoon. It's
13 really good to see you. So, I'm not surprised that
14 my colleagues think you're doing a great job, because
15 you are. You're a Staten Islander... From the mid
16 island, but nobody's perfect.

17 So, my-- my line of questioning also revolves
18 around the City of Yes, and if it goes through as
19 written, and you and your enforcement team, the
20 Department of Building, have the resources to-- and
21 staff to conduct additional enforcement. I mean, I
22 think you've answered that with my colleague,
23 Councilmember Carr. But I think when it comes to the
24 City of Yes, one of the things that our constituents
25 have really been focusing on is understanding the

1
2 actual laws, and the revision of the laws, and
3 understanding how the Department of Buildings is
4 educating folks on these changes.

5 So, they're concerned with the enforcement
6 because they feel that the enforcement at this time
7 is not as great, but it's getting better under your
8 leadership, trust me.

9 But with this-- If the City of Yes goes through,
10 you're talking about an entirely different new stream
11 of revised laws that civic associations, community
12 boards, even the builders, property owners, and
13 business owners may not really understand if they're
14 breaking them, in particular. So, I just wanted to,
15 you know, put a bug in your ear. It's not too much
16 of a question, but to really think about how we're
17 going to make, you know, "Zoning Laws for Dummies,"
18 and how we can really educate the public and
19 constituencies so they feel comfortable enough to
20 understand these-- these kinds of changes, and how
21 they can have confidence that the Department of
22 Buildings will be able to do that enforcement. And
23 that's kind of like the budgetary question.

24 Thank you.

1
2 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Councilmember, it's a really
3 astute point. I once passed a Local Law in this body
4 taking the convoluted property tax process, and
5 mandating that the Department of Finance will have to
6 put out a pamphlet to describe it for our
7 constituents. The pamphlet was 13 pages.

8 So, your point is really well taken. And it has
9 to be-- education has to be a part. We will do our
10 part, but-- City Hall as well. And you hit on
11 something that I think we can do much better job at,
12 and that is storytelling as an agency, that is
13 communicating how this-- the services we provide, the
14 jobs that we do to New Yorkers, making them better
15 understand, making the industry understand,
16 requirements of small property owners, and just--
17 just the way we communicate. So your point about
18 education is well-taken.

19 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Thank you so much. And
20 we're here to help.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: We're joined by
22 Councilmember Powers. Now we have questions from
23 Councilmember Avilés.

24 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you. Thank you,
25 Chairs. Thank you. And I guess in the spirit of my

1
2 colleagues, we will continue the love fest of
3 appreciation for your Commissioner, and your team.

4 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Thank you.

5 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: That includes everyone
6 that works at this department. I hope the one thing
7 that you are hearing from my colleagues is, not only
8 a recognition of the importance of the work of
9 everyone at DOB, and how critical it is to services,
10 so like we want to make sure you hear that wholly.
11 But definitely an overarching concern that we are
12 passing policies, and updating zoning text
13 amendments, which will directly translate into
14 significantly increased workload without a
15 significant increase in those staffline items.

16 So, in particular, I know you're doing those
17 assessments. I was curious about-- We have this
18 City of Yes behemoth, the carbon neutrality one,
19 which has already passed, and then the ZEO, which is
20 in process and the housing behemoth on the table.

21 For the one that already passed, for carbon
22 neutrality, has the agency already had an assessment
23 around what it will additionally require in terms of
24 either staff or adjustments in the workload around
25 how it meets the mandates for that?

1
2 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, let me start with the
3 question, and then work back to your kind comments at
4 the end. So, we have trained up and have had a
5 series of trainings for our plan exam staff, to bring
6 them up to speed on the changes in the law on the
7 carbon neutrality. We have not seen any adverse
8 impacts so far, or any ripples from that to date. We
9 will obviously keep a close eye on that.

10 And, as your colleagues have asked, and as I've
11 stated, we are keenly aware of the potential for more
12 demand on the agency as a result of it. And we're
13 talking to our colleagues.

14 And let me just say thank you for the kind words
15 about the team. And thank you for the collaboration.
16 And, Councilmember, we have an answer based on
17 yesterday's conversation that we could do offline for
18 you a little bit more--

19 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah. Yeah. I promised I
20 would do that offline.

21 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Thank you.

22 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: So, in terms of-- you
23 mentioned, you would love to see all the open class 1
24 violations be proactively served. And at this point,
25

1
2 you're proactively at 27%. What would the agency
3 need to get to 50%?

4 COMMISSIONER ODDO: I don't know about the exact
5 numbers. But--

6 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: But just generally
7 speaking.

8 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Clearly we would want-- we
9 would need additional inspectors to put in the field
10 dedicated specifically to that purpose. What the
11 number would be? It varies on what we-- if we want
12 to pilot it, or, you know...

13 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: But it sounds like it's
14 not just inspectors, I think, to the point that
15 there's other-- it implicates other professions,
16 like--

17 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah. He sort of overall
18 going-on-offense sort of scheme, we would-- I need to
19 figure out how to get resources to bring on data
20 analysts, a few engineers. It's a-- it's a sort of a
21 holistic approach to it, and it's beyond just
22 inspectorial stuff.

23 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: And lastly, in terms of
24 the inspector salaries. We saw-- The supporting
25 schedule shows that the mean salary for construction

1 inspectors at DOB is \$73,000, and average salaries
2 for other inspectors titles are between \$65 and \$85.
3 I'm just curious about-- Do you believe that the
4 salary ranges pose a problem or challenge for
5 attracting or retaining new inspectors? And it
6 sounds like you're obviously doing a great job
7 developing inspectors with all the training, and
8 preparing them for a bigger check in the private
9 sector. But we want to retain our inspectors.
10

11 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah. Yeah. So, the numbers
12 that I mentioned earlier, Assistant Inspector
13 \$61,000, Inspector \$67, Supervising Inspector \$76
14 (this is the recruitment rate) \$76,000, Assistant
15 Chief Inspector \$85,000. And as I said earlier, it
16 has historically been a challenge to retain because
17 we do a great job of training them up. And when the
18 industry is healthy and robust, they come in, they
19 skim off the top and they take really talented
20 people.

21 Big picture, again, it's a good thing, because we
22 have talented people in this same ecosystem. But
23 it's a challenge for us. And that's why I-- we look
24 forward to sitting down with the Chair and the
25 Council to talk about maybe looking at the

1
2 qualifications again, to broaden that universe. So
3 we could have this constant, diverse pipeline of-- of
4 inspectors. And if we graduate them after three to
5 five years, it's a little less painful, knowing that
6 there's someone talented, coming in their wake.

7 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah. If you if you have
8 the magic wand on the tail end of retaining, what
9 would be some things you'd be able-- you would ask
10 for with a magic wand, to be able to retain some of
11 that top talent?

12 COMMISSIONER ODDO: I mean, salary is always
13 going to be an issue. You can't begrudge someone for
14 even changing from DOB to a sister agency for \$10,000
15 more. I mean, we've heard stories like that.

16 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Fair enough. Thank you so
17 much. Thank you Chairs.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay, final questions from
19 Councilmember Powers.

20 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: Thank you. Last but not
21 least, I hope. Nice to see you guys. And
22 Commissioner, thank you always for your partnership
23 and your responsiveness to all of my questions to you
24 throughout my district.

1
2 I know you touched upon this a bit in your
3 testimony. I'm sure there are questions on it. I'm
4 the annoying Councilmember who is probably going to
5 repeat a question or two. But one is scaffolding,
6 which is an issue that you guys have really made a
7 centerpiece in your portfolio, and something we had
8 partnered on together. And I was encouraged to see
9 the Mayor take that on early on. It is something I
10 think every New Yorker complains about, except for on
11 a rainy day.

12 Can you just give us two things: Just a general
13 status update on how you're-- We have a package of
14 legislation, as you know, that we want to work with
15 you guys on, but you're-- just sort of any updates on
16 numbers and stats related to progress being made
17 under the programs that you guys have put forth in
18 place, that we did a press conference in, I guess, an
19 outlet press conference, maybe last year now.

20 Second, is, I know you've recently announced a
21 RFP around Local Law 11 to look at-- look at supposed
22 timelines and how that's working. Can you just give
23 us, going into that RFP, a sense of what your goals
24 are, what you want to accomplish, and what the
25

1
2 timeline on that might be? And those are my two
3 questions.

4 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, just the-- I kind of
5 Tweet out the numbers occasionally with a "giff" or
6 "jiff"? GIF, or whatever it is of Larry David making
7 faces, because the vagaries of the overall numbers
8 are fascinating. We've crept back up to around
9 8,800, down off from where we were from the
10 announcement, but we were even down below that.

11 And so we're at around 8,800. Just in May, just
12 to give you a sample, like 219 privately owned sheds,
13 went up 52 for active construction, 125 for
14 maintenance, 42 for Local Law 11. I like to say like
15 all sheds are not the same. You like to see the
16 first number, active construction. We want to see
17 that. The local-- And the maintenance too is a good
18 thing, right? We talked about earlier. The 42 of
19 Local Law 11 is something that the second RFP speaks
20 to, and that is bringing in Thornton Tomasetti, who
21 will be on board in hopefully July, twelve months to
22 do the work, and come back to us with specific
23 recommendations.

24 Looking at our numbers, 3,500 of the FIST reports
25 go in and do a deep dive on the data, look at other

1 jurisdictions, maybe three or four comparable
2 jurisdictions to us, look at the material of the
3 building: Should all buildings be treated similarly
4 in terms of the length of the cycle?
5

6 Interestingly enough of the ones that came down--
7 So, 219 went up so far in May, 176 down. The number
8 I like of the 176 down, 65 are older than five years.
9 To me longstanding sheds are really where we have to
10 be at. If they're up, and there's no work being
11 done, or they're up and in bad condition, we have to--
12 - we have to improve markedly on that front.

13 And, again, we look forward to hearing your
14 bills, and working with you and the rest of the
15 package working with Chair Sanchez.

16 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: Just two followup
17 questions. One is: That 65 number of being taken
18 down, how does that compare to any year in the past
19 when it talks about, you know, proactive things we're
20 doing now, or you're doing in your administration to
21 help take them down.

22 And second is the program that would penalize
23 buildings that are having longstanding sheds up,
24 without as I understand the-- the program, if you're
25 not demonstrating work happening, new financial

1 penalties might occur. Is that in place? And is
2 that-- or no?
3

4 COMMISSIONER ODDO: You're talking about the IBO,
5 or the suggestion that the Chairs had?

6 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: As I understood it, there
7 was a program that you had announced at the press
8 conference I was at where there would be, for sheds
9 that had been up for a long time, you'd have to
10 continue to demonstrate there was some work being
11 done. Are my...?

12 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So there's a legislative
13 package that addresses that to some degree. There is
14 a concept that-- I think it was an IBO or some
15 outside group has proposed, that the Chair asked me
16 about earlier, and I-- my indication to the two
17 Chairs is that we are looking for sticks and we'll
18 sit down and discuss any proposal we have to date.

19 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: What-- so let me ask this:
20 What tools are you finding most succ-- what policies
21 or tools are you finding most successful right now to
22 encourage property owners?

23 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Well, taking them-- taking
24 them the criminal court has been very successful.
25 The problem is, it's labor intensive. And we--

1
2 Although we have like 33 docketed-- again, 33 cases,
3 the worst of the worst, right? Not every one of the
4 8,800 is the worst of the worst, but 33 cases is
5 important. It has to be part of the tools box. But
6 we need other tools to take on this-- this huge
7 universe where, again, some are up legitimately, new
8 construction, maintenance. We want them to happen.
9 It's the longstanding sheds that are up, no
10 underlying work that's been done. That's the
11 universe. And at the same time-- to answer your
12 first question-- At the same time, hopefully at the
13 end of this RFP in a year, have six possibility new
14 designs for at street level to above street level.

15 COUNCILMEMBER POWERS: Got it. Okay. I
16 appreciate it. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. With that, we're
18 going to close up this portion of the hearing.
19 Commissioner and your team, thank you very much. We
20 look forward to working with you.

21 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Thank you chair.

22 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. And I just
23 wanted to close by saying, let's hire more outreach
24 workers for Local Law 97. And, Commissioner, just
25 looking forward to trying to put down a down payment

1
2 in giving DOB the tools that you need to be a more
3 proactive agency. So, that looks like more
4 inspectors, that looks like a bigger budget in
5 certain areas, and I look forward to working with you
6 on that. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: We're going to take a 10-
8 minute break and then we'll hear from HPD.

9 [20.5 MINUTES SILENCE]

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon if everyone can
11 just please find their seat, we will be getting
12 shortly. Thank you

13 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay Good afternoon welcome
14 to the final Executive Budget hearing for the day,
15 focusing on HPD, the Department of Housing,
16 Preservation, and Development. I'm still
17 Councilmember Justin Brannan Chair of the Finance
18 Committee. I'm still joined by my colleague,
19 Councilmember Pierina Sanchez, Chair of the Committee
20 on Housing and Buildings.

21 Welcome, Commissioner Carrión and your team.
22 Thank you for joining us today to answer our
23 questions. I always like to set the table. April
24 24, 2024, the Administration released the Executive
25

1
2 Financial Plan for FY 24 to 28 with a proposed FY 25
3 budget of \$111.6 billion.

4 HPD's proposed FY 25 budget of \$1.84 billion
5 represents 1.6% of the administration's proposed FY
6 25 budget. This is an increase of \$55.1 million, or
7 3.1% from the \$1.79 billion originally budgeted in
8 the preliminary plan.

9 This increase results from several actions,
10 mostly contracts for emergency demolition work, and
11 increased funds for the COLA for human service
12 workers, partially offset by a \$7.5 million PEG to
13 HPD's asylum-seeker costs. As of March 2024 HPD has
14 252 vacancies relative to their FY 24 budgeted
15 headcount.

16 In the Council's Preliminary Budget Response we
17 called on the Mayor to increase HPD's capital
18 commitments for affordable housing and homeownership
19 by \$70-- Sorry, \$732 million annually across several
20 programs to align the city's capital budget with The
21 Mayor's moonshot pledge for 500,000 new homes over
22 the next decade.

23 We were disappointed to see the Administration
24 did not add any new money for affordable housing
25 capital, in line with the Council's call, despite the

1
2 Council identifying \$6.15 billion in resources that
3 can serve as both a financial shield against
4 unexpected costs, while making key investments to
5 move the city forward.

6 We can't recognize the city's in a housing crisis
7 and not invest our resources accordingly to resolve
8 it. Neither can we expect our economy to grow if the
9 New Yorkers that make the economy that make that
10 economy don't have the stability of an affordable
11 home to come back to when the day is done.

12 My questions today will largely focus on HPD's
13 capital response, and its role in The Mayor's
14 moonshot homeless pledge, along with the state budget
15 and the asylum-seeker costs.

16 I now want to turn to my Co-Chair for this
17 hearing, Councilmember Sanchez, to give her opening
18 statement.

19 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much, Chair
20 Brannan, and welcome back to today's hearing on the
21 Fiscal 2025 Executive Budget, where we're now turning
22 to HPD.

23 I would like to acknowledge that we are still
24 joined by Councilmember Restler and Avilés and
25 Councilmember Stevens.

1
2 New York is facing our worst affordability crisis
3 in decades. As the cost of rent of rents and housing
4 skyrocket, working middle class New Yorkers who have
5 been here for generations who have helped to build
6 the city are struggling to remain in their homes, as
7 demonstrated by a 1.4% vacancy rate. With the rate
8 of functional zero for our lowest cost apartments,
9 the lowest on record. The housing stock also appears
10 to be falling apart. More than 55 of every 100
11 apartments in New York City has a housing code
12 violation, and over 100,000 families in 10,000
13 buildings are living with multiple conditions that
14 are hazardous to health and safety.

15 There's much action we need to take in New York
16 City, especially in the face of a federal government
17 that continues decade after decade to subsidize
18 higher-income households at the expense of lower
19 income ones.

20 Households with incomes of over \$200,000--
21 According to the Center for Budget, Policy and
22 Priorities, households with incomes of over \$200,000
23 received an average housing benefit that is four
24 times greater than the average benefit received by
25 households with incomes below \$20,000. That has

1 implications for our state, and of course, our city.

2 It leaves many communities many advocates and many

3 New Yorkers asking when an affordable housing

4 development comes, "Affordable for who?"

5 And our state and city budgets still fall behind

6 in filling the gaps for the lowest income New

7 Yorkers. Moving forward, we need to preserve what we

8 have, build more using precious subsidy dollars for

9 those who need it the most, and protect tenants. To

10 that end, we're here to discuss HPDs budget. How

11 does it stack up against the challenges that we face?

12 And is it reflective of our values and goals?

13 HPDs Fiscal 2025 Executive Budget totals \$1.84

14 billion. When pass-through funding from the New York

15 City Housing Authority is removed, HPD's Fiscal 2025

16 budget is \$1.57 billion.

17 There are no new needs for HPD in fiscal 2025 or

18 beyond. And, in fact, next year's HPD budget is \$3.2

19 million smaller than in the preliminary plan due to

20 The Administration's \$7.5 million in asylum seeker

21 savings.

22 HPD's five-year capital plan, which is more than

23 a tenth of the city's entire capital plan, totals

24 \$10.58 billion, an increase of 3% from the

25

1 preliminary plan. However, no new mayoral funds are
2 added. Instead, funding is rolled into the plan from
3 the out years, Fiscal 2029 to 2033, and \$114 million
4 in additional HUD home funding from the federal
5 government is reflected.
6

7 Although it is typical for the capital budget to
8 be realigned to reflect the existing pipeline of
9 projects, a 23% decrease in HPDs capital plan from
10 fiscal 24 to 25 raises alarm bells. After all, we
11 know from the hearing in March that HPD has about 750
12 housing projects in its pipeline, still awaiting
13 processing and funding. Shouldn't the fiscal 2025
14 budget funding be increasing, as HPD invests deeper
15 resources into expanding the development pipeline?

16 Furthermore, rising construction costs means the
17 dollars can't go as far. Why is the City Council--
18 Excuse me. This is why the City Council called for
19 \$732 million annually in new capital commitments to
20 fund capital projects, and the associated staffing
21 needs to speed them up. This would support critical
22 programs like Neighborhood Pillars and Open Doors
23 that can advance affordable rental and homeownership
24 opportunities, while also keeping closer pace with
25

1
2 the city's desperate need for more senior,
3 supportive, and deeply affordable housing.

4 Neighborhood Pillars and Open Door together would
5 assist more mission-driven developers to preserve
6 permanently affordable rental housing, and create new
7 shared equity homeownership opportunities for working
8 families.

9 This five-year cumulative \$2.5 billion proposed
10 commitment would create and preserve over 12,000
11 permanently affordable homes.

12 In addition to reviewing the capital plan, today
13 the committee also wishes to understand where we are
14 now nearly two years from the administration's
15 release of its long-term housing blueprint. We hope
16 HPD is limiting any further delays or cuts to its own
17 plan for tackling the housing crisis. The housing
18 blueprint contains good programs to combat source of
19 income discrimination, prevent tenant harassment
20 through partners and preservation, and support
21 homeowners through the homeowner Help Desk.

22 I should note that Neighborhood Pillars was a
23 blueprint action that remains stuck in limbo two
24 years on.

1
2 The Committee further wishes to understand how
3 HPD will be impacted by the enactment of the fiscal
4 2025 state budget, which included a number of
5 measures related to promoting housing development in
6 New York, and added some tenant and homeowner
7 protections.

8 The state budget presents funding opportunities
9 that cannot be squandered including from Mitchell
10 Lama 2.0, and building on state land.

11 Through it all, we must remain laser focused on
12 building and preserving housing for New Yorkers at
13 the lower end of the income spectrum, our neighbors
14 who are getting priced out of the city every day,
15 weakening its social fabric and dynamic character.

16 Finally, we also hope to get a better
17 understanding of Code Enforcement performance, the
18 impact of reorganization of staff lines within the
19 division of tenant resources, and HPD's asylum secret
20 operations and budget, which has grown dramatically
21 to over \$600 million in fiscal 2025.

22 After HPD, we look forward to the opportunity to
23 hear from members of the public. Finally, thank you
24 once again to the amazing Housing and Buildings
25 Committee Staff who worked so hard to prepare today's

1
2 hearing. We appreciate all your work behind the
3 scenes. With that I will now pass it back to Chair
4 Brannon.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you, Chair Sanchez.
6 I'm now going to turn it over to-- Actually no. I
7 just want to remind folks, if you're here in the
8 chambers or on Zoom, make sure, if you want to give
9 testimony, public testimony after HPD is finished
10 testifying, make sure you fill out a witness slip
11 with the Sergeant In Arms. I am now going to turn it
12 over to committee counsel Mike Toomey to swear in the
13 witnesses and we'll begin.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good afternoon, could you
15 raise your right hands, please? Do you affirm to
16 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
17 truth before this committee and to respond honestly
18 to Councilmember questions? Commissioner Carrión?

19 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yes.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner Tigani?

21 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Yes.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner Caphart?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yes.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, you may begin.

1
2 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Thank you. Good
3 afternoon, Chair Brannon, Chair Sanchez, and members
4 of the New York City Council. I'm Adolfo Carrión,
5 Jr., Commissioner of the New York City Department of
6 Housing Preservation and Development, and I'm joined
7 by members of our agency's leadership team, as you
8 know, including some that are sitting behind us that
9 at some point during the hearing you may want to hear
10 from, and so I'm sure that they will be sworn in
11 appropriately at that time.

12 The work that we do here at the nation's largest
13 municipal housing agency, in partnership with this
14 City Council, is very personal to me. Like many
15 public servants in this chamber and throughout our
16 city government, I'm a direct beneficiary of the
17 critical investments government made that allowed my
18 family to flourish in this great city and beyond.

19 And so, I'd like to begin my brief testimony with
20 a personal reflection: My parents arrived in New
21 York City from Puerto Rico in the early 1950s. Like
22 so many others, they came looking for work in the
23 global city. As new arrivals, they had little to no
24 resources, very limited ability to speak English, and
25 little formal education. But in one generation, they

1
2 were able to rise to the middle class, from a
3 Williamsburg basement tenement apartment, to Jacob
4 Riis houses in the Lower East Side, to a HUD financed
5 rental to our first home in the North Bronx. It was
6 all possible because government invested in our
7 family with the understanding that it would pay huge
8 dividends for our society. This is why this work is
9 so personal to me. And I know, you've heard The
10 Mayor shared a similar story.

11 Investments in affordable housing work, and that
12 is exactly why we fought so hard this past year, to
13 get better tools to continue investing in the next
14 generation, and support those who worked hard to
15 build this great city. Growing up, I certainly
16 didn't understand the nuances of housing policy. I
17 wasn't aware of our housing code or zoning rules, and
18 I wasn't paying attention to budgetary decisions of
19 our local government, but I knew my parents were
20 relieved when we were chosen for a public housing
21 apartment. And I knew the excitement and joy of for
22 our entire family on the day we moved into our new
23 home in the north Bronx.

24 Mostly, I always knew what it meant to have a
25 home. My parents taught us that no one succeeds or

1 fails alone. When you know you and your kids have a
2 safe place to sleep at night in a neighborhood where
3 you know you'll be able to stay for years, and you
4 can then give back, you can be a leader, you can
5 advocate for others, you can raise kids to hold jobs
6 and start businesses you never would have dreamed of,
7 even for yourself.
8

9 As HPD Commissioner, I bring my parents' lessons
10 to work every single day. In New York City, every
11 child should have the opportunities given to my
12 family, and that means we must maintain and deepen
13 our commitment to creating and preserving affordable
14 housing. This is about the roof over a child's head,
15 the ability for an older adult to age in place
16 comfortably and safely, and with dignity and grace,
17 and the chance for a for a formerly homeless veteran
18 to access supportive services in a dignified place
19 they can call home.

20 We come before you today, not just talking about
21 numbers and data. We're quite literally talking
22 about our neighbors lives. It is a privilege to
23 testify before you all today, especially as a former
24 member of this of this body.
25

1
2 As HPDs Commissioner as a father and grandfather,
3 and more than anything as the former New York City
4 kid who had a shot to succeed in life because public
5 servants like us invested in affordable housing.

6 What does a real investment in housing look like?
7 The Mayor set a moonshot goal of half a million homes
8 created and preserved, because that is exactly what
9 will it will take to solve the housing shortage and
10 homelessness crisis. And we are moving full steam
11 ahead to make it a reality. Our mission is to create
12 and preserve affordable homes, especially for
13 vulnerable low-and-middle-income New Yorkers. We're
14 constantly finding ways to finance deeper
15 affordability and to partner with community
16 organizations who provide wraparound services to
17 better serve New Yorkers.

18 In the past two years, the city broke record
19 after record to create and preserve as many
20 affordable homes as possible, while getting people
21 into these new apartments as quickly as possible.

22 Our proposed Fiscal Year 2025 expense budget
23 totals, as you've heard, \$1.8 billion, of which \$275
24 million is a pass-through that goes to the New York
25 City Housing Authority.

1
2 Excluding this pass-through allocated for NYCHA,
3 our agency's operational budget is about \$1.6
4 billion. Approximately half of that \$790 million of
5 our expense budget comes from federal grants,
6 primarily for our rental support work, section 8
7 housing vouchers, and other rental assistance
8 programs. The agency also relies heavily on funding
9 from the Community Development Block Grant and home
10 Investment Partnership Program which support targeted
11 code enforcement, emergency repairs, tenant anti-
12 harassment, and downpayment assistance for first time
13 homebuyers.

14 The balance of our expense budget consists of
15 almost \$750 million in city funds, with a relatively
16 small amount of state and other categorical grants
17 that amount to just \$1.3 million. City funds are
18 used to fill gaps in programs and services that are
19 not eligible for federal reimbursement or require a
20 local matching contribution. So, this requires
21 innovative design and implementation of new programs
22 and services to maximize the city's resources.

23 Our capital commitment plan for Fiscal Year 25
24 totals \$2.2 billion of which almost \$430 million goes
25 to nature's permanent affordability Commitment

1 Together Program, leaving a balance of almost \$1.7
2 billion for the agency's project pipeline.

3
4 Almost 98% of our capital plan, as you know, is
5 funded by city sources, while the remaining 2% is
6 financed by the Federal Home Block Grant for
7 Affordable Housing.

8 It's not enough to just create housing. Where we
9 build and the types of homes we build matter. Every
10 New Yorkers should have access to safe, quality
11 housing they can afford in neighborhoods that best
12 fit their needs. And as you know, too many New
13 Yorkers face a wide range of obstacles to having true
14 choice and finding a home.

15 Our city is still very segregated, especially by
16 race, and we are committed to breaking down the
17 obstacles to fair housing. Through Where We Live
18 NYC, we set 81 specific commitments, and have made
19 significant progress towards those goals in the first
20 few years of this administration. These commitments
21 now permeate every aspect of our work, how we plan
22 how we build and preserve housing, how we think about
23 building quality and housing stability, how we're
24 starting work on the next iteration of Where We Live
25 NYC, which we expect to complete by mid-2025.

1
2 At its core, here's our prescription: Talk to
3 New Yorkers, pursue opportunities to build housing of
4 all types in every corner of this city, and ensure
5 that all New Yorkers have real housing choice, the
6 choice to stay in their current home, and their
7 current neighborhood or the choice to move to a new
8 home in a new neighborhood that better fits their
9 needs.

10 Our development division of more than eight teams
11 works on hundreds of projects. Everything from
12 converting hotels and commercial buildings into
13 affordable homes, to helping homeowners create safer
14 basements to rent out at affordable rates. And our
15 Office of Neighborhood Strategies is working with
16 communities throughout the city to plan for the
17 preservation and development of affordable housing in
18 a manner that fosters more equitable, diverse, and
19 livable neighborhoods.

20 Through our Housing Access and Stability Team, we
21 are connecting thousands of New Yorkers to homes
22 throughout the five boroughs. They not only run
23 Housing Connect, the city's affordable housing
24 lottery, but oversee our rental voucher programs and
25

1
2 homeless placements, altogether, which serve over
3 50,000 households a year.

4 Through our rental voucher program and homeless
5 placement programs, we can extend the reach of our
6 affordable housing to the lowest income New Yorkers.

7 You all know of the incredible work of our
8 Enforcement and Neighborhood Services Team. They
9 come before you quite a bit, with our inspectors and
10 emergency repair teams in almost-- every day in every
11 district, our attorneys are active in every housing
12 court of the five counties, our HPD In Your District
13 Initiative, covering any district that is interested,
14 and our alternative enforcement program tackling the
15 most distressed buildings.

16 You have heard from this team directly at these
17 hearings, more than any other HPD team, and we
18 continue to work with you productively to explore new
19 tools and new ways to improve our process, increase
20 transparency and communication, and work together
21 towards our shared goal of every New Yorker having a
22 safe place to rest their head.

23 Our division of asset and property management is
24 responsible for ensuring the longevity and
25 affordability of homes created and preserved by our

1
2 agency. And we're focused on proactively identifying
3 at-risk buildings and portfolios, and stabilizing
4 those that are struggling, and those that have been
5 mismanaged.

6 In the two months since our first budget hearing
7 for Fiscal Year 2025, our state legislature and
8 Governor passed a comprehensive housing package
9 arming us with new tools to better confront the
10 housing crisis. Specifically, Albany created a new
11 affordable housing tax incentive, while creating an
12 extension to allow in-progress buildings to complete,
13 ensure that there would be affordable housing when
14 office buildings convert to housing, remove the cap
15 on floor area ratio to allow for the construction of
16 more affordable homes, and open the door for us to
17 start a meaningful program for safer basement
18 apartments.

19 Together the new housing package and the City of
20 Yes for housing opportunity proposals will help
21 create the new housing and new affordable new housing
22 we need, and will jumpstart our progress toward
23 meeting the mayor's half-a-million-unit moonshot
24 goal, and the goals that were set out in the
25 Council's recently passed Fair Housing Framework.

1
2 We now need the City Council and our neighbors to
3 help create a City of Yes, and pass the zoning
4 changes to create a little more housing in every
5 neighborhood, from the highest density to lowest
6 density areas. Taken together, these small changes
7 will have a big impact on New Yorkers' housing needs
8 without overburdening any one areas infrastructure or
9 creating the dramatic change that New Yorkers often
10 fear.

11 Approving this citywide change to what is and
12 isn't allowed to be built here stands as a critical
13 step forward, creating a healthier housing market and
14 a fairer and more equitable city.

15 The City of Yes will help HPD bring new
16 affordable housing to communities more quickly and
17 effectively. For example, the Universal
18 Affordability Preference will allow 100% affordable
19 HPD projects to include more units, and establishes a
20 deeper affordability threshold than existing
21 voluntary inclusionary housing programs. Tweaks to
22 the mandatory inclusionary housing rules will allow
23 for a standalone option three, the deep affordability
24 option, when MIH is mapped, allowing projects in MIH
25 areas to offer deeper reform or affordability.

1 The Accessory Dwelling Unit Proposal will
2
3 complement HPDs Plus One ADU pilot program, enabling
4 homeowners to create space for family members, such
5 as grandparents or adult children, to live nearby or
6 to add new revenue streams to a rental unit, creating
7 greater financial stability.

8 Our best chance at success for creating a city
9 where everyone has access to safe, affordable housing
10 is by continuing to work hand in hand with you and
11 deepening our partnership.

12 We continue to work with OMB and City Hall as the
13 budget process develops to make sure that our needs
14 are supported and represented. We are encouraged by
15 your commitment to create safe and affordable homes
16 in the city we all love.

17 In closing, in New York City, everyone has a
18 story. These stories shape us, they connect us, and
19 often center around home and housing. As public
20 servants, those stories impact our work, our
21 advocacy, and our decisions. That's true if you're a
22 project manager on HPD's development team, a housing
23 inspector out in the field, or an elected official
24 here at City Hall. At HPD we hear these stories
25 whether they're told to us or witnessed by us. It is

1 a privilege to be the agency providing affordable
2 housing, and keeping New Yorkers safe in their homes.

3 Our stories, obviously, don't begin with us.

4 Mine is also the story of my mother Elisa, who was
5 the glue of our family. Originally from the Puerto
6 Rican countryside, from a small farming family, which
7 relied almost entirely on the food they grew. She
8 moved to New York City in 1952, and like many women
9 of her generation, she spent her life taking care of
10 us.
11

12 While my dad created a vibrant faith community.
13 It was my mom who made sure our application was
14 complete for NYCHA, and it was my mom who made sure
15 we learned how to save up to become homeowners.

16 Maybe most importantly, she made sure, no matter
17 what, our apartments were always a nurturing home.
18 My story, my history is one a family migration from a
19 US territory, a.k.a. a US colony, I will say on the
20 record. Friendships forged in our neighborhood, hard
21 work, struggle, and celebrating every little success.
22 It's the story of affordable housing and community
23 investment.

24 It's our job to do everything in our power so
25 that today in 2024, no young mom needs to choose

1 between homelessness and an unsafe basement
2 apartment. No mom should be kept up at night
3 wondering if they'll be chosen for affordable
4 housing. There should be simply enough for everyone.
5 No one should worry about being priced out of their
6 neighborhoods, the neighborhoods they love, and the
7 vibrant communities they have created.
8

9 I grew up the child of Puerto Rican migrants
10 determined to create stability and a new home for
11 their kids. Because of their determination and the
12 help of government housing programs, we went from a
13 basement apartment in Brooklyn, in a Brooklyn
14 tenement, to public housing in the Lower East Side,
15 to our own home in the north Bronx.

16 Because someone said we need to fund affordable
17 housing in New York City, the grandson of Puerto
18 Rican farmers sits before you today as Commissioner
19 of HPD.

20 It's been a decade since my father passed, and
21 five years since Mommy did. But I think about them
22 every single day not only because as a son, I miss
23 them terribly, but because as a public servant, I
24 never want to forget the lessons of my childhood. I
25 take my duties as Commissioner very seriously, and I

1
2 strive to be a responsible steward of our resources
3 as an agency in a way that will bring the same
4 housing opportunities to others that my family was
5 able to benefit from.

6 Home is the foundation on which we build the
7 future of our city. Thank you very much for allowing
8 me to provide this testimony and we're happy to
9 answer any questions you may have at this time.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you, Commissioner.
11 Thank you for sharing your story. We've also been
12 joined by Councilmembers Brewers and Brooks-Powers.

13 Okay, I want to jump right into it. The
14 Executive Budget did not include any new funding from
15 the Administration for housing. Although \$144
16 million in federal home funding was added. The
17 Council's Preliminary Budget Response called for an
18 additional \$732 million annually in capital funds.
19 Did HPD request additional capital funding from the
20 Administration as part of the budget request process?

21 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Mr. Chairman, thank you
22 for that question. Every year we go through an
23 exercise of making our case. Every agency does, the
24 70-plus agencies. Obviously, there are many
25 priorities for the city of New York to attend to. We

1
2 are very confident working with our partners at the
3 Office of Management and Budget that we are going to
4 deliver affordable housing at the rates that we have
5 been delivering consistently.

6 And let me just point out that just in calendar
7 year 23, as I stated in my testimony, we produced
8 record amounts of new construction in excess of
9 14,200 new units that we put into the market. We
10 housed more New Yorkers than ever before. We created
11 more housing for homeless families in our portfolio
12 than ever before, more supportive housing, in excess
13 of 1,670 units.

14 This is an iterative and dynamic process that we
15 engage in every year. And as you suggested, and you
16 can see from the budget exercise, there is movement
17 back and forth throughout the year to adjust to the
18 changing needs. We know that there is a 1.4% vacancy
19 rate, the lowest since the 1960s, when we started
20 recording this. We have a severe crisis in the lower
21 rungs of income in our city where it's virtually zero
22 opportunity to find an affordable home. And we're
23 very glad that we got the toolbox back that we needed
24 to incentivize significant investment in new
25 affordable housing from the state housing deal.

1
2 So, I think-- and maybe-- maybe Gardea can talk a
3 little bit about the-- you know, how we handle the
4 movement of those funds internally. But we're
5 committed to continuing the rate of production.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay, let's-- Go ahead.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Thank you-- No, I
8 just wanted to add, thank you, Commissioner, and Mr.
9 Chair.

10 So, just a reminder that across the 10-year
11 capital plan, we still have a \$20 billion capital
12 budget for the agency. And this is a dynamic
13 exercise we go through OMB every year. As we see
14 where our pipeline is, and where our projects are, we
15 also work with OMB to roll over funding from the
16 prior year. So, for funds that were not committed in
17 the private capital-- the prior year, we are able to
18 roll into the current year, which we did this fiscal
19 year. Typically, agencies are required to stretch
20 that uncommitted capital over the entire plan. But
21 given where we are this year, we were able to work
22 with OMB to ensure that that capital remains only in
23 the current fiscal year, which is why our current
24 fiscal year capital budget is where it is today.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: So, the Council called for
3 additional capital funding for programs which would
4 place affordable rentals and homeownership in reach
5 for thousands of New Yorkers, programs like
6 Neighborhood Pillars and Open Door. Neighborhood
7 Pillars was part of the Mayor's housing blueprint two
8 years ago, but the program remains closed. So, could
9 you talk to us about why it's taken so long for the
10 Administration to get neighborhood pillars up and
11 running?

12 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: So, we believe that
13 Neighborhood Pillars is a good program. It is a
14 priority for us. We have had to do some
15 reengineering of the program, and we are looking to
16 relaunch Neighborhood Pillars sometime toward the end
17 of this year, I believe? Yes, toward the end of this
18 year. But it remains a priority. Each program--
19 Part of our responsibility is to ensure that we get
20 the best return for the city taxpayers for these
21 programs. Some adjustments are being made, and it
22 will continue into the future.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: The-- I guess, speaking
24 about the Mayor's-- the moonshot goal to generate
25 half a million new homes in the next decade. For the

1
2 Council, I mean, it seems out of reach without
3 additional capital subsidy. Do you not agree with
4 that?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: I think it's important to
6 keep in mind that the city's housing agency that
7 preserves and develops housing, affordable housing is
8 only a thin slice of a very large housing market.
9 And so, we come with a set of tools to build
10 affordable housing. And you know the stack of
11 financing tools that include some of the tools that
12 we will we were able to restore and capture in the
13 legislative housing deal. That obviously includes a
14 new construction tax incentive that creates thousands
15 of units, and historically has created thousands of
16 affordable homes. That program needed to be
17 adjusted. We spent two years arguing about it.
18 We're very, very glad that we now have it with deeper
19 affordability, wage controls, permanent
20 affordability, enforcement tools to ensure that the
21 folks who do get that benefit, they'll have to be
22 called to task to make sure that they're delivering
23 that affordable housing.

24 We've-- We've got the potential for-- tremendous
25 potential for tens of thousands of units that will

1
2 come from office conversions. And obviously, we have
3 to work out the details here at the local level.

4 We've got, in addition to all those tools, I
5 think, a big and important challenge before us, which
6 is to look at a 60-year-old, 60-some-odd-year old
7 zoning code that no longer works for modern New York,
8 and for the needs that we have. If we incentivize
9 the private investments that that will create more
10 affordable housing, and we raise the ceiling on the
11 zoning and create, and execute on the City of Yes for
12 housing opportunity, I think we're going to unleash a
13 tremendous amount of housing in New York City's
14 future.

15 And it's around the corner. There is pent-up
16 demand to build housing in New York, market rate and
17 affordable. In fact, we saw a precipitous drop of
18 new construction permits in the last two cycles
19 because we didn't have a tax incentive. And now with
20 with this incentive, with the ability to convert
21 office buildings, hotels, which we're working on
22 that, and other tools, I think we're going to see an
23 explosion of development in New York City. And with
24 that development is going to come lots of economic
25 opportunity and jobs. And we can-- I'm sure we're

1
2 going to get to minority businesses and participation
3 in that largess.

4 But there's a real opportunity here in the next
5 decade to see a tremendous amount of housing. I know
6 that the Department of City Planning Commissioner and
7 the director of the agency is talking about an
8 estimate of about 100,000 units over 15 years. You
9 know, these are-- these are estimates. But it's a
10 significant addition to the housing supply in New
11 York City that is so needed.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: How many apartments and
13 homes does HPD anticipate financing in the next
14 decade? Do you have a goal?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: In the next decade?

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Yeah.

17 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: So, at the pace that we
18 currently operate. And you know, the Mayor's
19 Management Report is our, sort of, accountability
20 tool with you all. We set targets (we try to exceed
21 those targets like we did last year, where we hit
22 27,000 units financed in the calendar year) along
23 with our partners at NYCHA. So, you do the math,
24 right? At a pace of about, let's say, 20,000 units a
25 year, we're talking about hundreds of thousands of

1 units of housing in this market financed by our
2 agency.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: The state budget increased
5 the city's debt authority. However, we're still
6 hearing that debt capacity is restricting capital
7 plans. Did City Hall tell you that there was no
8 additional debt capacity to support housing in this
9 plan?

10 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: [TO OTHERS:] You want
11 to...?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: I can. Yeah. So,
13 as far as the conversation on debt capacity, we defer
14 to our partners at OMB to address the specifics
15 around that. But we continue to have conversations
16 addressing our specific budget and ensuring, that we
17 have what we need to--

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Right, but has OMB told
19 you, "Now that we've raise the debt limit, your--
20 everything is green light"?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: So, our
22 conversations as far as what's in our budget is not
23 tight in terms of our conversation to OMB, to the
24 specifics of the debt capacity. That's-- Those are
25 separate conversations. As far as what's in our

1 budget right now, we do have \$20 billion over our 10-
2 year plan, and we continue to have conversations with
3 OMB within any needs we have. But we defer to OMB as
4 far as any conversations around the debt capacity.
5

6 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: And Chairman, we advocated
7 for an increase in our debt capacity.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Yeah, I mean, we all-- OMB
9 told us that.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah. It benefits every
11 agency. It benefits HPD, as well as every other
12 agency that has to, you know, raise capital. So, we
13 look forward to being able to continue to make our
14 case inside the Administration, as we have done
15 decade after decade to deliver on our mission.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: And I agree with you on
17 the-- the income bands. I think we need to build
18 more housing at all income levels. The prior
19 administration had a target for affordable housing
20 production, not just overall production. How many of
21 the moonshot 500,000 units would HPD like to be
22 affordable?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: So if we-- if we have the
24 outcomes that we have historically had, 90% or better
25 of the affordable housing that-- that we finance will

1 go to low income households. And we can break that
2 down for you in terms of the historic performance.
3 But, you know, on the-- on the new construction side,
4 let me see if I can call up some numbers for you.
5 Ah, here it is.
6

7 So, let's take calendar year '23, as an example.
8 For the subsidized new construction, almost two
9 thirds, Chairman, of that new subsidized construction
10 was affordable to families of extremely low income,
11 and very low income, which is up to 50% of AMI,
12 starting at zero, because of all the support we give
13 to people who have little-to-no income.

14 Almost 90% of that subsidized new construction is
15 affordable to families of extremely low income, very
16 low income, and low income, which as you know, is the
17 federal threshold of 80% area median income.

18 And for our total production, the numbers are
19 still very, very strong: 40, extremely low income,
20 which is 30% and below. Almost-- More than two
21 thirds of our subsidized production, which includes
22 everything, is affordable to extremely low income,
23 very low income, the second highest percentage since
24 2014.
25

1
2 We're assuming that based on our objectives as an
3 administration, the priorities of the City Council,
4 if they remain as they are today and have for-- since
5 I was here in the late 1990s, that the lion's share
6 of the housing that we produce will be for low-income
7 families. Some of it will be for affordable
8 homeownership, some of it will be-- a very small
9 portion for moderate-to-middle-income families. But
10 the lion's share of the of the work we do is for
11 affordable housing for low income families.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: But there's no-- there's no
13 set target for that half a million?

14 COMMISSIONER CARRIO: You know, I-- Again, I
15 think that to remain committed to the way we've done
16 our work, and in line with the support that we get
17 from the federal government, the state government,
18 and of course, this body.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: I would just add,
20 sir, that as we continue, we are putting in place the
21 tools we need to figure out how much we can do. So,
22 for instance, when it comes to-- when it came to the
23 fact of using public land, that's where 24 and 24 of
24 the mayor's initiative comes from. From those sites
25 alone, we're looking at 12,000 units of affordable

1
2 housing. Then you take into account the new as-of-
3 right tax benefit, where historically we saw 80% of
4 new housing come through that. With the changes that
5 we were able to get at the state level for deeper
6 affordability permanent for affordability, we can see
7 that that will contribute greatly to where we're
8 trying to go.

9 And then from our MMR target, we continue to
10 assess, as Commissioner mentioned, work to exceed
11 where we can and how we can with more tools.

12 Sometimes that's making sure there's as-of-right tax
13 benefit tools like J-51 that can supplement the
14 preservation sides of our work. That's again--
15 Sometimes we're looking at the as-of-right tax
16 benefit side. So, with 45-X we're going to be able
17 to do more. So-- And then going two years back, we
18 were able to change our loan authority, so we could
19 be doing more with our money in a diversity of ways.

20 So, we have our MMR target. As we continue to
21 put more tools in place and see those pass through
22 either the state or local legislature, we will be
23 able to increase that number and have a larger slice
24 of the bigger market and affordable housing moonshot.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. I want to talk about
3 capital for-- to support RAD/PACT, city funding for
4 conversion of NYCHA developments to RAD/PACT totals
5 \$1.41 billion, and the 5-year Executive Capital
6 Commitment Plan. NYCHA has said that the PACT
7 conversions are targeted to be done by 2028, not
8 2026, which is actually when the funding runs out.
9 So, are there future plans to realign the budget to
10 be more in sync?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: So, we're very proud of
12 working with our partners at NYCHA, and I Chair the
13 New York City Housing Development Corporation that
14 does the PACT work. And so, we look forward to
15 continuing to support them. On-- On any adjustments
16 in terms of PACT, I would have to defer to NYCHA on
17 that.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay, one of the more
19 exciting programs included in the budget is the \$150
20 million to create a New York Housing for Future Home
21 Ownership Program. Sometimes people refer to it as
22 Mitchell-Lama 2.0. This is the state budget. This
23 is a new statewide limited equity cooperative program
24 that will provide affordable homeownership and rental
25 opportunities to low-and-middle income families, and

1
2 allow the program to develop housing on state locally
3 on sites, as well as sites owned by not-for-profit
4 corporations and CLTs, Community Land Trusts.

5 Do you have a sense of how much the \$150 million
6 that was allocated in state funding might flow to us
7 in New York City?

8 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We don't. We're looking
9 forward to getting some-- some details on this from
10 the State to continue this conversation. The one
11 thing I will say is that we all know, and anybody who
12 has a Mitchell-Lama development in their district,
13 that it's-- it's been a great tool. It's helped
14 people enter the middle class, to afford to live in
15 New York City. Some of them are healthier than
16 others. There's a lot of challenges for the future.
17 A lot of folks have been talking about, how do we--
18 how do we scale this up to continue to provide
19 families the opportunity to stay here, enter the
20 middle class, keep their kids here, have their kids
21 come back after college, age in place in a way that
22 they can still afford to be here and get the services
23 they need, et cetera, et cetera.

24 So, we look forward to hearing from the State on
25 details about how that's going to be distributed

1
2 around the state. We're going to make our case as a
3 city that we obviously need-- we represent the lion's
4 share of the New York state population, and the
5 economy, and the energy of the state. So, we're
6 ready to roll up our sleeves and work with the State
7 on that.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Do we know what share of
9 the \$650 million available for pro-housing
10 communities the city will receive?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We don't. We don't.
12 We're anticipating some clarity as well. I don't
13 know if the Deputy Commissioner or the...?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah. Yeah, I can
15 speak to that as well. So yes, there's \$650 million
16 in the budget for municipalities that certifies rural
17 housing communities. So, there's a process for that.
18 And there are two ways: Either by committing to
19 boosting our housing stock by a certain percentage,
20 or by passing a resolution declaring our pro-housing
21 intentions.

22 So, as far as that effort for New York City, our
23 colleagues at the Department of City Planning are
24 leading that effort. We have conversations, and they
25 will be looking into that, and sharing more details.

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANY: And the only thing
3 I'll add: If you break down the program itself, they
4 have examples of what consists of the larger program,
5 like the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, the Main
6 Street Program, the Restore NYC program, and you will
7 see that we've actually had success from the city in
8 being able to compete and win funds. So, an example
9 is to restore funds for the Gowanus, 950 units of
10 affordable housing that we're doing there. We've
11 been able to compete and win in Downtown
12 Revitalization Initiative funds. Again, by
13 demonstrating that we're pushing the envelope of
14 affordable housing, we continue to make our case
15 stronger. We've also applied for funds from the
16 federal government. They have a pro housing
17 initiative. We've applied for \$10 million in funds
18 in partnership with DCP to work on everything from,
19 you know, implementing, streamlining our zoning to
20 build more affordable housing, to helping support
21 faith-based institutions and mission-driven
22 organizations to support them in building affordable
23 housing. So we are competing for every dollar that's
24 out there.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. That's good to hear.
3 A couple last things from me, and then I'm going to
4 turn it over to Chair Sanchez.

5 The Council has always balanced the need for
6 affordable rentals with the need for more Affordable
7 homeownership opportunities. So, can you give us an
8 update on the status of the Office of Homeowner
9 Advocate, which the Council created last year?

10 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah. Very quickly, we're
11 proud to say that we've appointed a Homeowner
12 Advocate. We have an office. Jenny Veil is her
13 name. And thank you to Councilmember Brooks-Powers,
14 I think, for her leadership on that issue. And we're
15 glad to be able to partner.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: And what are some of the--
17 What are the first substantive actions that the
18 office will pursue?

19 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: [TO OTHERS:] You want to
20 talk a little bit about that?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: So, for the
22 alignment for the office, and making sure it's
23 connected to our homeownership work. So, this is the
24 Assistant Commissioner that's actually overseeing the
25 implementation of the expansion of the Homeowner Help

1
2 Desk. This is the Assistant Commissioner that will
3 oversee the expansion of our tenant and owner
4 resources. So, we aligned-- We took basically the
5 streams of work that would focus on supporting our
6 homeowners across the five boroughs and aligned it
7 with the Homeowner Advocate. So, there are programs
8 that we're doing, making sure that this person has
9 full insight and direction on that work. They work
10 closely with our homeownership team on the
11 development side, and those pieces of communication
12 and workflow are being pulled together over the last
13 two months.

14 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Can you tell us, how many
15 people has the homeownership helped us serve?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: So, as you as you
17 know, the Homeowner-- the Homeowner Helpdesk was a
18 pilot from 2021 to 2020. At that-- Sorry, I
19 apologize. It was a pilot going back to the Bed Stuy
20 Plan. That home-- I can come back and get you the
21 numbers as soon as I confirm them. But I think we
22 had thousands of individuals who benefited from the
23 program. It operated a phone number and in-person
24 offices with 12 CBOs across three boroughs. But

25

1 those numbers we can follow up, and make sure that
2 you have it.

3
4 Additionally, the expansion will now expand to
5 all five boroughs. It will be overseen by the Center
6 for New York City Neighborhoods. It will continue a
7 local network of CBOs to expand. Its baselined for
8 three years. It's baselined and budgeted at \$9.85
9 million. Additionally, we'll be moving resiliency
10 funds to help homeowners dealing with resiliency
11 issues in those homes.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: And the home fix repair
13 loans: How many have been granted year to date, FY
14 24?

15 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Let's see if we can dig
16 that up for you, Mr. Chairman.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. Additionally, I'd
18 like to know how much funding is there in the budget
19 for the Home Fix Repair Loans.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Well, while we search, the
21 Home Fix Executive Budget funding...

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: I can-- I can take
23 that, Commissioner. So, in terms of our Home Fix
24 program over the 10-year Capital Plan, we have our
25 \$64 million dedicated to Home Fix for our Capital

1 Plan. But speaking of homeownership in general, I
2 just want to also point out that we have several
3 programs on the expense side of our budget. We have--
4 - We dedicated over \$75 million across the financial
5 plan to support different homeownership programs.
6

7 And then on the capitalist side with the 10-year
8 Capital Plan, we have about \$1.2 billion spread
9 across the 10-year plan to support our various
10 homeownership programs.

11 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: And, sir, if I
12 can follow up on those numbers. So, the pilot was
13 from '21 to '22. The areas were Central Brooklyn,
14 Southeast Queens and North Bronx, with support, with
15 financial support from community-- from enterprise
16 community partners, and the Attorney General's
17 Office, we engaged more than 47,000 homeowners. We
18 assisted more than 2300 homeowners with direct
19 programs. We noted that 80% of the people we served
20 were homeowners of color, and more than half were
21 seniors.

22 A lot of that work actually went into building a
23 homeowner handbook and manual, which we released
24 citywide, and we use in addition to the phone line
25 and the in-person support from the CBOs.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: So through the office of
3 the homeowner advocate would the mission be then to
4 expand the homeownership helpdesk?

5 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Yes, sir. It
6 would not only expand both the people resource and
7 the ability to get in connection with expertise, but
8 also the areas of technical subjects would increase.
9 The estate planning, financial resources to banks, in
10 addition to our programs.

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. I'm going to hand it
12 over to Chair Sanchez. Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much Chair.
15 I'm going to-- I'm just absolutely going to give a
16 few minutes to our Public Advocate, and my
17 predecessor as Housing and Buildings Committee Chair,
18 Jumaane Williams, to give a few brief remarks.

19 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam
20 Chair. Thank you for doing above and beyond what we
21 did when I was there. So, Congratulation. Thank
22 you, Commissioner, for being here.

23 As mentioned, my name is Jumaane Williams, Public
24 Advocate for the City of New York. Thank you, Chair
25 Sanchez, Chair Brannon, and committee members for

1 holding this hearing, and allowing me the opportunity
2 to provide a statement.

3
4 New York City's housing crisis has progressively
5 worsened since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic,
6 exacerbating an already deeply unequal system.

7 Housing costs are increasing for everyone, including
8 owners. The cost of basic needs continues to rise
9 while unemployment in New York City is almost double
10 the national rate. The salaries that have remained
11 stagnant for decades, the skyrocketing rents with no
12 corresponding increase in the minimum wage means more
13 New Yorkers than ever will face evictions.

14 A recent study showed that wages to rents have
15 increased about three or four times faster than wages
16 have. Another study showed that one in four New
17 Yorkers are millionaires, some of the most
18 millionaires in the entire country.

19 HPD continues to have high vacancy rates. For
20 this fiscal year, it's extremely crucial that HPD is
21 fully staffed at levels prior to the pandemic, and
22 fully funded to properly fulfill obligations as an
23 agency.

24 Without this, there is concern that it'd be much
25 more difficult to complete any projects, conduct any

1 inspections, and enforce policies that hold landlords
2 accountable.
3

4 Although the Executive Plan includes a 27-person
5 headcount increase in HPD's Division of Tenant
6 Resources, it is not enough. HPD has 252 vacancies
7 since March of this year. In order to have an impact
8 in the Division of tenant resources, as well as code
9 enforcement, we need to make sure that the majority
10 of these vacancies are filled.

11 I also want to uplift the recommendation by ANHD,
12 the Association for Neighborhood Housing Development,
13 which is calling to add \$250 million in emergency
14 preservation funds to keep not-for-profit, affordable
15 housing providers and sound financial health.

16 These funds can go a long way to assist our
17 lowest income tenants, who may be in rent arrears.
18 It will also assist in not-for-profit housing
19 providers to make payments to vendors or set aside
20 reserves for capital work, particularly of funds that
21 are needed to comply with Local Law 97. I also know
22 that we have to build a lot of houses try to get out
23 of the situation we are in, including market rate
24 housing. But I know that market rate housing also is
25

1
2 as a need, clearly, we have a need for the low-income
3 bands as well.

4 I hope that at today's hearing, the
5 Administration will provide answers to these and
6 other questions and concerns. And I also would like
7 know if the Administration will push to fully staff
8 HPD.

9 I also just wanted to add, we had a some back-
10 and-forth when I was here last with the PD about
11 their overtime. And the reason for overtime is a
12 crisis that occurs. So, I'm just wondering, as well,
13 if the crisis of housing has had HPD increase the
14 overtime, and have been asked to pull back or not.
15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you so
17 much, Public Advocate, for joining us today and for
18 those introductory remarks.

19 Good afternoon! Hour four! Hour like a million
20 for Chair Brannon. Thank you. Thank you so much.

21 I have a lot of questions you might be shocked to
22 hear. So, if we could, you know, as I always say,
23 I'll talk fast. You talk fast. We all talk fast.
24 We get through it.

1
2 I want to acknowledge that we've been joined by
3 Councilmember Nurse, Councilmember Brooks-Powers, and
4 Councilmember Brewer. Anybody I didn't mention?
5 Okay, great.

6 So, starting off with the with the MMR on code
7 enforcement, our favorite topic. No offense to the
8 other divisions in HPD, but yes, we do invite the
9 code enforcement here quite a lot. But starting
10 there: First, I just want to say I have been, and
11 continue to be very heartened by the employment
12 numbers at-- in the inspectorial roles within the
13 agency. There-- there's just been a very marked
14 increase. And then we see that, turning around in
15 terms of increases in number of maintenance problems
16 that are made by the public, but also responded to by
17 the agency, a 22% increase in the number of
18 violations issued, which you all chalk-- have chalked
19 up in the MMR to just having more inspectors on hand
20 and being able to get out there more.

21 And so with-- with that, my first question is:
22 We have seen more complaints, more 311 complaints,
23 more violations issued. How are we doing on
24 compliance? What does it-- What can the agency say
25 about compliance with respect to these violations?

1
2 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: So, you know, let me from
3 a very high level just say that we're very proud of
4 the work of our Enforcement and Neighborhood Services
5 Office. As you suggested, the inspector headcount
6 between-- or since last January to just a month ago
7 about, has increased by 30%. Just last month alone,
8 we had a housing inspector job fair cohosted by the
9 Bronx Borough President, and we were able to offer on
10 the spot 25 Bronxites jobs is housing inspectors.

11 And I'll take the privilege of being the
12 Commissioner and having the microphone to say to the
13 other Borough Presidents (and we are working with
14 them, with Brooklyn and Manhattan and the others):
15 Take advantage of this opportunity to offer jobs to
16 your constituents. And to the members here, a lot of
17 the members have taken advantage of our HPD In Your
18 District, have cohosted job fairs, and people are
19 getting good solid jobs helping New Yorkers.

20 On the-- On the numbers, you know, I'll hand it
21 off to either-- Well, why don't we have the Deputy
22 Commissioner for Enforcement, who's a stranger here,
23 come up and talk a little bit. I know she's got to
24 be sworn in, sir, so we will wait for that.

1
2 Anne Marie Santiago, our Deputy Commissioner for
3 Enforcement and Neighborhood Services.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Afternoon. Do you affirm to
5 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing about
6 the truth before this committee, and to respond
7 honestly to Councilmember questions?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Yes, I do.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please state your name.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Anne Marie
11 Santiago.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Thank you. Thank
14 you, Councilmember, for your question about
15 compliance and DHPs enforcement.

16 So, we continue to see strong certification on
17 Class C violations, which as you know, are our most
18 serious violations. You know, we continue to
19 encourage owners to certify compliance with all
20 violations. We continue to, along with issuing
21 violations, more inspectors means we can reinspect
22 more violations. And so, we're making greater
23 efforts to do that, now that we'll be coming into the
24 summer months, the summer is usually our big time for
25 being able to do that. So, we'll see where we land.

1
2 As you know, we continue to get new tools, I feel
3 like every year, to encourage property owners to
4 comply, which has included over the past year an
5 increase in civil penalties across the board (that
6 that went into effect in December, right?), the
7 certification watchlist that will be implemented next
8 year as per the Council, you know our heat census
9 program is starting up again in July with a new
10 selection of buildings.

11 So, I think, you know, we really have the tools
12 to try and hold owners accountable. And we will
13 continue to-- to look at those compliance numbers as
14 we move forward. We put out a new ABCs Of Housing,
15 which I mention, because part of getting compliance
16 is making sure the property owners know what their
17 responsibilities are and how to comply. And so
18 that's a big tool as well.

19 We're out in the communities. We'd love to talk
20 to property owners as we come across them, the small
21 folks. We send out just about quarterly emails to
22 property owners with new compliance requirements. We
23 try to help our sister agencies do that as well,
24 Local Law 97, for example, just give them the
25 information they need to comply.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you so
3 much. And just a followup on certification rates for
4 Class C violations. I know in past hearings, we've
5 talked about the false certification rate. Can you
6 share the-- the most recent numbers of HPDs found
7 false certification rates?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Absolutely. We
9 actually have a report that's ready to go to the
10 Council about Class C violations. So, I will make
11 sure that you have that in your hands.

12 But we get a pretty-- a pretty decent
13 certification. The highest number of false
14 certifications that we see (and this will be laid out
15 in the report, and I'm happy really to discuss next
16 steps on this) is among pest violations, which are
17 very difficult to comply with, I think, in the period
18 of time that property owners have, and self-closing
19 door violations, which as you know, we're re-
20 inspecting, all self-closing door violations, I
21 think, which has led us to identify that.

22 And so we really are trying to do a lot, again,
23 to educate property owners around "what is
24 compliance?", because it's not just a door swinging
25 shut. It has to lock in place. It has to not have

1 too much space around the edges. There are a lot of
2 details and nuances to that violation type.
3

4 So, we are continuing our education campaign. We
5 are continuing to make sure that we're getting
6 compliance in those areas.

7 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. Thank you. But do
8 you have-- You said strong certification rates for
9 Class C. Do you have numbers with you today?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: I didn't bring the
11 report with me today. I apologize. But again, we
12 will make sure that you will have that report in your
13 hands.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. Thank you. We'll
15 be following up on that.

16 Um, one of-- one of the sort of really
17 interesting (interesting to be euphemistic) trends
18 that is shown in the in the latest MMR. We didn't
19 talk about it as much last time, but the increase in
20 emergency repair program violations and then work,
21 right? So, the most recent MMR shows an increase to
22 63,773 repair generating violations, which is an
23 increase of 245%.

24 On the one hand, great for tenants: HPD is doing
25 a lot of work. Tenants are seeing improved

1
2 conditions on a faster timeline, because the agency
3 is taking care of it. On the other hand, as we have
4 said before in this committee, we don't want
5 landlords using New York City as a piggy bank, and we
6 want to make sure that we're getting compliance
7 through them and not the agency's budget, right?,
8 with the limited funds.

9 So, can you-- can you share how many buildings
10 have received emergency pair repairs under ERP in
11 fiscal 2024, year to date?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Um, we can get
13 back to with that number Councilmember. You want
14 buildings with emergency repair generating
15 violations?

16 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yes. And the amount spent
17 by the agency to get the work done.

18 Do you have the percentage of ERP repairs that
19 were for self-closing door violations? As you know a
20 class-- a subset of class C, immediately hazardous
21 violations, and what other major categories of work
22 have been done by the agency?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Let me see. I do
24 have the total amount spent for emergency repair thus
25 far as of the end of March. This calendar year, we

1
2 spent about \$9.8 million on emergency repairs. Last
3 year, for the same time period it was about the same.
4 It was about \$10 million.

5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. And do you have
6 the categories of work, the most common categories?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: The most common
8 category: \$6 million was spent in general
9 construction, and that can include a lot of things.
10 So, if you-- if you want to break down from that we
11 can certainly look at that. About \$1.5 million is
12 heat related.

13 Last year, we spent about \$1 million on self-
14 closing doors, and I expect it will do about the same
15 if not more this year.

16 Lead at this time is about \$3.4 million. Again,
17 as of-- I'm sorry, that's as of the end of December,
18 not the end of March.

19 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Sorry. I'm just getting a
20 little confused with the timeframe. So, \$6 million
21 in general construction was for... what time period?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Was for July 1,
23 2023, to December 31, 2023. I'm sorry, I thought we
24 updated this to March. My mistake.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: That's okay. Okay. So we
3 can-- we can follow up just to get the most updated
4 numbers.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Absolutely. Is
6 there any particular category that you're looking
7 for?

8 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Just looking for trends on
9 what-- what the agency is spending money on for these
10 landlords.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Does HPD have targets for
13 how long it takes to close either emergency or
14 nonemergency problems, since we don't have targets
15 listed in the MMR?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Are you speaking
17 about inspection time? Or are you talking about
18 immediately hazardous violations?

19 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Violations. Yep.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Um, we don't have
21 a target. And it's mostly because it's very
22 difficult to do that on a high level. Some repairs
23 take a very short time to handle, and some repairs
24 do-- will take significant time to address. So,
25 there's no one set standard.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. Did HPD request
3 any additional funding or for code enforcement
4 programs through the new-needs process with OMB?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Gardea, do you want to
6 cover that?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah. So--

8 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: If so which programs?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: So, I'm also happy
10 to share specifically for our demolition program.
11 For the current fiscal year we got a new need to
12 approve for \$11 million to go toward our Emergency
13 Demolition Program. But, of course in the context of
14 our needs, we have a bunch of needs that we discuss
15 with OMB on an ongoing basis. But I want to call out
16 that one, because that one got approved for funding
17 this year, and we continue to have conversations
18 about our programs.

19 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay. Got it. Thank you.
20 Moving to litigation. In some preparation meetings
21 for this hearing today, we heard from advocates who
22 had some very interesting suggestions on just
23 understanding HPD's litigation, and comprehensive
24 litigation, in particular practices with respect to
25 comprehensive litigation. So, can you share how many

1 cases, comprehensive litigation cases HPD has filed
2 within the last several fiscal years?
3

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: I can share that.
5 I don't have 7 fiscal years' worth of data with me.
6 You said seven fiscal years?

7 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I didn't say "seven". I
8 said "several". But seven would be a great.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Oh, sorry. My
10 mistake. I apologize. Okay.

11 In Fiscal Year 22, we initiated about 3,000
12 cases. In fiscal year 23, 3,400 cases. And thus far
13 in fiscal year 24, this is as of the end of March,
14 about 3,100-- 3,200 cases. And those include all
15 types of litigation that we do.

16 So, just as a reminder, we bring comprehensive
17 litigation which is for all violations. At a
18 property, we bring a lot of heat and hot water
19 litigation. We bring 7-A litigation. We bring false
20 certification litigation. So, that includes all of
21 the cases we initiated. Also, we are a party, as you
22 know, to tenant-initiated actions, which have also
23 been increasing over the past three fiscal years.

24 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Those are HP actions?
25

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Those are HP
3 actions, yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: And so when you-- when you
5 share these numbers, hovering around 3,000 per year
6 that's inclusive of all of these categories?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Uh, non-inclusive
8 of the tenant actions. The tenant actions
9 themselves, as between July 1 of 23 and March 2024,
10 are about 6700 cases.

11 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. Do you know-- I
12 mean, I suppose this doesn't flow through your
13 budget, but do you have a sense of how many of those
14 tenant-initiated HP actions are supported through
15 legal service providers that are funded through the
16 city?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: I'm sorry,
18 Councilmember, I don't.

19 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. So, moving to--
20 as you know, I'm always interested in the fines and
21 judgments that are-- that result from these
22 litigation proceedings. Can you share revenues from,
23 say, Fiscal 21, to present of-- what the collections
24 have looked like for the agency?

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: So, we don't have
3 going back to '21 right now, but we can get that for
4 you. But in terms of just for our housing
5 litigation, fines, and judgments: for Fiscal Year 22,
6 the actual was a little over \$5 million collected,
7 '23 was about \$5.6 million, and for '24 so far, as of
8 May, early May, we're tracking about \$5.4 million.

9 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. '22 is 5 million?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah.

11 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay, and what do you
12 attribute the fluctuation to here? And I am
13 remembering that in previous years, in the past
14 administration, there were also significant
15 fluctuations between \$4and \$10 million. So, what do
16 you attribute the differences and collection to?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Councilmember, I
18 think some of it has to do with cases, like,
19 significant cases.

20 So, for example, the Ohebshalom case, which
21 everyone knows about, right? We've gotten judgments,
22 very significant judgments. Now, we have not yet
23 collected that, and that is another issue. But in
24 years where we have cases which result in
25 multimillion-dollar judgments, the number is going to

1
2 fluctuate, I think, beyond our, you know, ability to
3 predict.

4 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. Thank you. The
5 MMR also has no targets for how many units in
6 buildings, or how many buildings or properties
7 benefit from HPD's use of litigation to compel
8 landlords to make improvements. Would HPD consider
9 adding targets around litigation and comprehensive
10 cases?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: I think it's
12 something we can take back, Councilmember, and
13 consider. I think if it's going to fluctuate
14 depending on the courts, especially in these past few
15 years. As you know, they've been a little slow. So,
16 it's not always within our control about what happens
17 at the court. But it's something we can consider.

18 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: The only thing
19 I would add, Chair, is that for that same fiscal year
20 period, just-- you talked about the benefit. So,
21 through March 31, 48,621, violations were corrected
22 through litigation, which is a 10% increase.

23 So, in the way that we're managing the program
24 now, you're seeing us continue to move up, and Ann

1 Marie's team and her inspectors continue, and Housing
2 Litigation continue to move-- to move the ball.

3
4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: And, thank you,
5 Deputy Commissioner Tigani. Always our-- As you
6 know, our first goal is to get the conditions
7 corrected in our litigation. That is our first-- our
8 first priority.

9 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Absolutely. And do these--
10 these judgments become liens against a property when
11 they're not collected?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: The judgments are
13 filed with the court, and there are liens through the
14 court system. They are not collected by the
15 Department of Finance, in comparison to our emergency
16 repair, alternative enforcement fees, which go
17 through the Department of Finance.

18 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: To the city of New York at
19 the revenue?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Yeah. I believe
21 it...

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah. So, yeah,
23 the fines-- for the fines and judgments, we get
24 revenues in the city's budget.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. Thank you. What's
3 the vacancy rates at-- in the HPD Litigation
4 Division?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: 14 vacancies? So
6 yeah. So, just off the top, I just want to share
7 that this area is one of the areas, given the hiring
8 freeze right now, that is exempt, you know, from the
9 hiring. We are allowed to hire on a one-to-one
10 basis. So, as a vacancy opens up, we have-- we're
11 able to fill those up, the positions.

12 So, right now we have about 14 actual vacancies
13 that we're working actively to fill.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I'm sorry, 14 what?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Active 14 vacant
16 positions that we're working to fill right now.

17 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Out of how many positions
18 in total?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: It's about 49.
20 Sorry. So, that's roughly just under 29% that we're
21 looking to fill.

22 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay Commissioner, let's do
23 it. Okay. Thank you. Thank you for that.

24 Okay, so moving-- moving to affordable housing
25 production. We talked a little bit about Homes Now.

1
2 Well, what the campaign has called Homes Now, but the
3 Neighborhood Pillars and open-door term sheets.

4 So, I just want to-- want to dive in a little bit
5 there. So, as you know, in the City Council's Budget
6 Response, the Council highlighted these two term
7 sheets as term sheets that can be updated and can go
8 a long way into having mission-driven organizations,
9 enter or increase their footprint in Housing
10 Preservation and Development, and producing
11 cooperative models and preserving more housing in the
12 city of New York.

13 So, I was a bit disappointed to see that the
14 Executive Budget of failed to add additional funding
15 for these two term sheets, these two programs.

16 At the preliminary budget hearing, you noted that
17 there were no active projects under Neighborhood
18 Pillars to date, and that you are in conversations
19 about relaunching. How confident are we about an...
20 end of May, did you say? End of May or end of June?

21 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: The end of this year,
22 yeah.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: For Neighborhood Pillars?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yes.
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay. End of-- Is that the
3 announcement that you alluded to?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: [CHUCKLES] We were-- We
5 were at a housing summit a few days ago with the
6 Chair, folks. And she was-- Shall we say, we had
7 some friendly banter, and I suggested that I might
8 make a special announcement about Neighborhood
9 Pillars. There is no special announcement, other
10 than the fact that we are very committed to
11 relaunching, and are, as I said earlier in my
12 testimony, reengineering the-- taking a fresh look at
13 the program.

14 And let me at this time bring up our Deputy
15 Commissioner for Development, who, from my peripheral
16 vision looks like she already came up. She-- You
17 got the signal from the First Dep? She's in the
18 batter's box and will need to be sworn in.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the
20 truth, the whole truth, and nothing about the truth
21 before this committee and to respond honestly to
22 Councilmember questions?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURKA: I do.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please state your name.

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURKA: Kimberly Durka.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

3 [BRIEF SILENCE]

4 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Oh. Okay, all right.

5 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: She is here for any
6 questions--

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: They're preparing.

8 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah. Related to
9 development.

10 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: But no, good to have you,
11 Commissioner-- Deputy Commissioner Durga. Sorry.
12 The promotion. What-- What are some of the changes
13 that are being considered to the program? Can you
14 share?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: So, the program was
16 originally launched in 2018 in a very different
17 moment in time, in terms of the types of housing
18 issues that we are grappling with. That was before
19 really significant changes to rent stabilization
20 laws. And so, we were primarily concerned with loss
21 of rent stabilized units, and basically purchasing
22 affordability or stabilizing affordability within
23 buildings.

24 After the 2009 laws passed that definitely
25 shifted the need to focus on that, within the

1
2 Neighborhood Pillars program, and more generally
3 within some of our preservation work.

4 And so, we pause the program at that point in
5 time. And then COVID hit. And certainly we're not--
6 that was not our primary focus at that moment. The
7 market was also very unstable.

8 So, we've been thinking about really what the
9 issues are right now that the program could be
10 particularly useful in addressing. And one area of
11 concern is making sure that we have a tool that
12 allows a new qualified preservation buyer to purchase
13 a property in order to stabilize it. So, I think the
14 major area of focus on our part will be buildings
15 that are experiencing some type of financial or
16 physical distress.

17 We have other preservation programs that are
18 available more generally, that can support some
19 acquisition, but not really as a primary cost within
20 the project. So, that wider toolbox is still
21 available for other types of projects.

22 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: And then the
23 only thing I'll add is that recent changes to New
24 York City Acquisition Fund (and maybe they're not so
25 recent, because they were done in the last couple of

1 years), but they were within that time period that
2 Deputy Commissioner Durga spoke. It to shifted to a
3 focus on MWBEs and nonprofit partners. So, we found
4 other ways to support acquisition tools for mission-
5 driven organizations.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Okay, so
8 moving-- Thank you. Thank you for that, Deputy
9 Commissioners.

10 So, moving back to something we discovered at one
11 of the last budget hearings. Last year's exec
12 budgeted plan-- budget plan. Excuse me. Last year's
13 Executive Plan included a new need for the Unlocking
14 Doors pilot, which provided landlords with up to
15 \$25,000 for needed repairs in vacant rent stabilized
16 buildings to bring them online, at a cost of up to
17 \$10 million in total in exchange for the landlords'
18 agreement to rent the units to city voucher holders.

19 The pilot aimed to renovate 400 units and serve
20 400 households, and the committee previously heard
21 the program was off to a slow start with just one
22 applicant. Can you share an update on the progress
23 of this program?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Kim, do you want to talk a
25 little bit about that?

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: Sure. So, we've
3 received two applications to the program. One
4 applicant withdrew; they were not eligible. One is
5 proceeding. And the program remains active. We've
6 been actually doing some outreach as requested, in
7 different-- We did some Community Board conversations
8 around the program, just to make sure the word is
9 out, to make sure building owners know that they can
10 take advantage if there are vacant units and their
11 buildings that qualify, and where they are really
12 interested in bringing in somebody with a CityFHEPS
13 sponsor.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. And then
15 layering that with some of the reforms that passed in
16 Albany in the budget: Is it the case that now
17 landlords would be able to-- of rent-stabilized
18 properties would be able to take advantage of
19 increases that Albany is allowing, and layer on this
20 change? And the-- You know, the purpose of my
21 question is to ask whether you're hearing feedback
22 that \$25,000 is not enough, and whether conversations
23 have gotten more productive since there are more
24 resources from Albany now.

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: So, I don't think
3 that we have a large enough sample size right now to
4 know whether or not the demand, or limited demand so
5 far, is because of the amount of assistance. You
6 would think that even if a building owner had greater
7 need, they would want to take advantage of a program
8 that provided basically no-cost funding in order to
9 do renovations. You know, we're certainly very,
10 very-- we want to make sure that the building owners
11 have a full range of resources and tools to help them
12 do investments in their properties. And that's why
13 we've been very interested, not only moving Unlocking
14 Doors forward, but we were pleased that the State
15 Legislature passed J-51 last year, and hopefully
16 Council will be taking that up for authorization
17 soon.

18 And so, you know, I think it is part of a wide
19 range of tools. Hopefully, between the rent
20 stabilization laws, and the different resources the
21 city has available, there are resources for owners to
22 do improvements to their properties.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. It's just
24 really shocking at this time that, you know, we keep
25 hearing about concerns that the rent levels are

1
2 insufficient and costs are rising. But here we have
3 a program by the city that's essentially giving free
4 money and a voucher holder to occupy your unit, and
5 the agency is not receiving any interest. So, just--
6 just interesting there.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We're keeping an eye on
8 the industry to see how they respond to the new
9 tools.

10 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yeah. Yeah. We all will
11 be. Thank you, Commissioner.

12 So, going into-- into production, and
13 particularly with respect to housing starts, can you
14 share for Fiscal 23, and then actual and projected
15 for Fiscal 24, how many new construction versus
16 preservation starts do you anticipate?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: So, we've set a-- we've
18 set a goal for the new fiscal year of 20,000 units.
19 It's part of the Mayor's Management Report target.

20 As I said earlier, at the opening of the session:
21 Every year, we try to give a modestly conservative
22 estimate of what we think we can do with the
23 available resources and the market pressures that we
24 face. Last year, we set a target of 18,000 units and
25

1 exceeded that target significantly. And our goal
2 every year is to do the same, to exceed the target.

3 We, like everybody else, is worried about
4 interest rates, the cost of construction. Now that
5 we have more available tools, I think we're going to
6 see, clearly, an increase in developers taking
7 advantage of the opportunity to build more housing.
8 And of course, the conversion possibilities with--
9 with commercial conversions, the FAR cap being
10 lifted, is going to give us an opportunity to produce
11 more housing.
12

13 We don't know what the uptake will be just yet.
14 It's always hard to predict. I know that, you know,
15 folks try to pin us down on it: "Well, what do you
16 think the new tax incentive is going to do?" We can
17 confidently say, based on history, that it's going to
18 produce a lot more housing, a lot more affordable
19 housing, with all the benefits of the new rules
20 associated with this. We look forward to our,
21 obviously, our continued partnership with you.

22 But I don't know if the Deputy Commissioner wants
23 to add anything to that.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: Sure, just-- You
25 know, I think over time, the proportion of

1 preservation versus new construction has shifted.

2 The last couple years, there was a really, really
3 significant impact from the as-of-right programs that
4 expired.
5

6 And I think we do expect that with the new
7 programs that hopefully that trend of being able to
8 build significantly more new affordable housing will
9 continue.

10 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. I'm in
11 conversations with the New York Housing Conference,
12 and they put out a brief about this just a few days
13 ago, they highlight that construction costs have
14 increased by 26% since 2020. And yet there's a
15 shortfall, there's a decline in the amount of HPD
16 capital in this fiscal year, in Fiscal Year 25, that
17 they projected is going to result in 32% fewer
18 subsidized units through HPD's Affordable Housing
19 Development and Preservation Programs.

20 So, how do you-- how do you explain the drop that
21 we're seeing in this fiscal year, you know,
22 understanding that the larger picture is still
23 painting, you know, significant resources from HPD
24 into the capital program. But why is there such a
25

1
2 significant decline in Fiscal 25 in the capital
3 budget?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Let me just address that
5 at the top level, and then I'll ask the Deputy
6 Commissioner for Finance and Administration to
7 explain the budget side of this.

8 But with all due respect to a partner of ours,
9 the New York Housing Conference, they got it wrong.
10 There's-- There's no cut. And there's a historical
11 trend that you'll see that will continue.

12 And I mentioned earlier that we-- the budget
13 exercise in partnership with OMB is an iterative
14 process. It's dynamic. There's movement of funds
15 from future years to current year, from federal funds
16 that come in. And maybe you can address that Gardea?

17 COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah. Sure. Thank you,
18 Commissioner. Thank you, Madam Chair. So, in terms
19 of budget, it's typical to see in the current fiscal
20 year, to see a higher capital budget for a couple of
21 reasons. One of them being that as I mentioned
22 before, uncommitted capital from the prior year, we
23 can shift or roll to the current fiscal year, which
24 we did in this case. So, we were exempt from having
25 to stretch that capital over the out years.

1
2 There are times also that we will accelerate
3 capital from the out years into the current year for
4 particular projects. So, we also did some of that
5 this year to the tune of about \$540 million, close to
6 that amount.

7 And so that's why the current year budget is an
8 anomaly. It's an outlier. So, now, for our-- our
9 Capital Plan, you will see that it is level compared
10 to what has been historically. It is on par with our
11 historical commitments for our capital commitments
12 over the prior year. And if you look from '25 out,
13 it is still about the same, somewhere between \$1.5 to
14 \$1.7 billion. And we work as a commission-- I
15 mentioned, over the course of the year between
16 financial plans, we work with OMB to move funds as
17 needed to fill in the needs that we have.

18 So, that's why you're seeing-- that's why you're
19 seeing this year looking the way it does. But it
20 levels off, on par, where it has been historically.

21 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. Thank you. Thank
22 you for that clarification.

23 Okay, so, with respect to asset management,
24 turning to asset management, 12% of rental and 29% of
25 co-ops in the HPD Asset Management Portfolio, were at

1 high risk of physical deterioration, financial
2 stress, or at risk of noncompliance with federal
3 requirements. Can you just share a little bit more
4 about these-- these properties? I imagine that TIL
5 properties are in here, but what-- what does this
6 portfolio look like, and what are some of the
7 ownership models, and what are some of the major
8 problems that they're facing specifically?

9
10 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Uh, First Deputy
11 Commissioner?

12 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Sure. So, our
13 asset property and management team is broken up,
14 obviously, to a number of different divisions.
15 Primarily in this world, we have Asset Management
16 that oversees roughly 172,000 units under regulatory
17 contract, 140 approximately are rental, the balance
18 is HDFC co-ops. In the Mitchell-Lama world, which is
19 related but separate, we oversee a little over 90
20 different properties, a little over 40,000 units.

21 I think across the board, as the Commissioner and
22 Deputy Commissioner have said before, we have seen
23 the same trends that we've talked about in past
24 hearings. Physical distress that happens over time,
25 the difficulty in paying for those repairs based on

1
2 operating revenues have decreased, higher taxes,
3 higher interest rates, insurance rates. You know,
4 and it has fluctuated when labor and supplies have
5 impacted the costs.

6 The other thing that we've seen is regulatory
7 changes that have added new costs, everything from
8 gas piping to Local-Law-11 work. Obviously
9 sustainability, things that are important, that we
10 want our buildings to meet. But they have come with
11 costs that we try and manage with these properties.

12 So, our asset managers have direct engagement
13 with our property owners, their property management
14 staff. We do get annual audits to understand the
15 conditions in the building and use that to work with
16 them to make decisions about how we can come up with
17 short and long-term decisions.

18 The longer-term decisions is where the
19 partnership between our asset management team and our
20 development preservation finance team comes.

21 So, as you know, we have over-- we have nearly a
22 dozen different preservation finance tools. That is
23 a more detailed process that we go through. It
24 sometimes involves the Council with the discretionary
25

1 tools. When we have J-51 back as a tool, that will
2 be part of it.
3

4 We've been able to-- We're looking at the
5 changes in our loan authority to see what else we can
6 do to use our dollars to address these different
7 needs. There is-- And often we partner with
8 Councilmembers on Reso-A funds to help put dollars
9 into these projects.

10 But as we've said in previous hearings, we are
11 looking at ways that we can use our preservation
12 dollars to continue larger, major building repairs
13 that address both their future stability and short
14 term immediate physical problems. We're looking at
15 our project-based voucher dollars on some of these
16 projects to see how we can get more out of that,
17 preserve the impact on the tenant to put more money
18 into the building to see what repairs can be made.
19 We again are advocating for more tax benefit tools so
20 that these properties can succeed, and we're helping
21 them reposition and look at ways that they can bring
22 money into the project.

23 We're also-- Where there is assistance between
24 the tenants and the landlords, where they need help
25 with a local CBO, we are providing them that

1
2 information and working with other partners like the
3 public engagement unit, HRA, to make sure the tenants
4 are getting that help, so that operating reserves try
5 to get more healthy.

6 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Are their state and federal
7 tools, funding sources, that that you can-- that the
8 agency taps into to also assist these outside of HPD
9 capital and HPD preservation programs?

10 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I think the
11 Deputy Commissioner can speak more to it. But we are
12 regularly working with HCR in joint work, so either
13 through the financing tools that they have for both
14 one-to-four-family and multifamily buildings. But
15 additionally, we coordinate on things like the
16 Emergency Housing Voucher Program, which we use as a
17 tool to help people get vouchers, but also direct
18 them to buildings where there are vacancies,
19 especially through the years of COVID.

20 So, there's a number of different examples where
21 both HCR and HPD work closely on this.

22 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah. And I'll just
24 add in terms of our funding sources for our Division
25 of Asset and Property Management, we use federal

dollars, community development block grant funding.

We have home investment partners funding that we use for asset management. There is some Section 8 funding for Mitchell-Lamas in there as well, and some state funding for emergency housing services. So, we have a full range of different funding sources that support our Office of Assets and Property Management.

CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. And what's the rental-versus-owner breakdown of the asset management portfolio of 170-- 172,000 units you mentioned?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I think it is roughly 125,000 co-ops, and 142 rentals, but we can we can come back and make sure those numbers are exact.

CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. Thank you. Thank you so much. I'm going to round out my last batch of questions in connection to blueprint initiatives, and then we'll turn it over to colleagues. Thank you for patiently waiting and being here and engaging on this.

So, the budget reflects 27 additional staff lines as part of a reorganization of HPD's division of tenant resources, which administers programs like Section 8 vouchers, NYC 15/15 Supportive Housing.

1
2 However, no funding was added despite the presence of
3 additional positions, which is a bit confusing to the
4 layperson. So, first and foremost, can you help us
5 to understand how you added more budget lines, but
6 did not have additional funding? And what is the
7 goal with-- in particular with the reorganization?
8 And what are you trying to accomplish?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Let me-- Let me just,
10 from a high level, say that we're always looking at
11 how the agency is organized to be most effective.
12 Anytime an agency decides to create a new office, it
13 obviously demonstrates that there is a level of
14 priority that is quite serious, and that we think
15 there are smarter, better ways, more efficient ways
16 to deal with the issues related to that work, in
17 terms of housing stability, availability, access to
18 rental support, getting people into housing quicker,
19 as fast as we can.

20 And I think from the moment that we walked in the
21 door on January 1 of 2022, one of the refrains that
22 you have probably heard this administration talk
23 about is "housing people faster". And this body has
24 called attention to that issue, because you hear it
25

1 from your constituents: How do we how do we get into
2 those units more quickly?
3

4 And so the First Deputy Commissioner working with
5 a team internally crafted a new office that gives the
6 highest priority to that. And I wanted to say that
7 before, he goes into a little bit of explaining the
8 mechanics of that.

9 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, I'll talk
10 quickly about the pieces, and I'll let Deputy
11 Commissioner Caphart talk about the funding. But the
12 basic premise is, we want to create a better
13 streamline of accountability in the process of
14 putting people into homes. So, we looked at the
15 sections of our agency that was responsible for
16 everything from the marketing and lease-up process
17 into our affordable housing, up and through the
18 subsidy administration.

19 Now HPD is the fifth largest PHA in the country,
20 or housing choice voucher program in the country. We
21 have a tremendous amount of work that we do to make
22 sure people are processed to get the federal
23 vouchers. And, you know, the 47,000 vouchers overall
24 between federal and city vouchers like 15/15, there
25

1
2 is a direct connection to our marketing and lease-up
3 process.

4 We worked a lot with outside and internal
5 stakeholders, we brought in CBOs, we brought in
6 housing providers, we worked with our front-line
7 workers to figure out what is the best way to create
8 more communication and streamlining. That resulted
9 in the Office of Housing Access and Stability, where
10 we basically make sure, soup-to-nuts, we have all the
11 people working together talking to each other about
12 what we're doing to facilitate a streamlined approach
13 to getting people in homes. As 4 out of 27 lines, we
14 did not need additional funding. I'll let the
15 Commissioner talk about that.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah, and just to
17 clarify on the line: So, while the reorganization is
18 happening, aside from that, specifically to our
19 Division of Tenant and Owner Resources that
20 administers our Section 8 program, we've seen some
21 incremental growth in that area as well. And as part
22 of that growth, the headcount is just to, you know,
23 keep up with the additional staff we needed.

24 We already have the funding in our budget. We
25 already have sufficient Section 8 administrative

1
2 funding in the budget to cover the costs. What we've
3 done as a strategy has been to first fill existing
4 vacancies before we add headcount to the budget,
5 working with OMB.

6 And so, once we reach the point where we have
7 maxed out our authorized headcount for those-- for
8 that area, we work with OMB to schedule additional
9 headcount as needed in order to continue our hiring.
10 But we already had the funds in our budget to cover
11 that need. That's why there was no funding added at
12 this time.

13 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. Thank you. Thank
14 you so much. Commissioner, just a quick follow up in
15 connection to getting people in homes faster. I did
16 note that the median time from completed application
17 to voucher issuance, and the median time from voucher
18 issuance to lease-up have both gotten slower by two
19 days. So, how-- how does this reorganization connect
20 with that speed, and can we anticipate improvements
21 here?

22 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yes, you definitely can
23 anticipate improvement. It's the reason we created
24 the Office. And maybe, First Deputy, you can talk a
25

1 little bit about the mechanics of how we're going to
2 execute on that.
3

4 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Absolutely.

5 So, on the voucher side, we are actually moving
6 forward with moving the vouchering process from what
7 was largely a paper-based system that only got minor
8 improvements toward online efficiency during COVID.

9 We will now be going into a full-blown tenant and
10 owner portal system. We believe that will create a
11 lot of efficiency and speed in being able to cut down
12 the friction from exchanging paper and emails.

13 Continuing that communication there in the long-term
14 will help.

15 In the short term, again we manage a federally
16 executed program, which comes with federal
17 requirements specifically targeted to-- targeted to
18 eligibility. Many people have been tracking the
19 implementation of HOTMA, which are the modernization
20 rules passed in 2016. To make the Housing Choice
21 Voucher program more efficient. It was last year
22 where rules were finally executed, rules that would
23 make it easier for us to process people with vouchers
24 and move them into housing faster. It was the
25 beginning of this year where many of those rules

1
2 became live, and we have been slowly issuing changes
3 and training so that we can speed up with the full
4 implementation of HOTMA.

5 Additionally, we are working on set of new
6 streamlining principles and requirements and
7 regulations working directly with HUD, using feedback
8 that we're getting from people who are applying for
9 vouchers, feedback from people who manage vouchers as
10 owners, so that we can continue to streamline and
11 make less onerous the rules to being eligible for a
12 voucher. If we make those rules more streamlined;
13 we're able to use documentation we already have;
14 Agencies are working together and have been working
15 together since it began this administration to see
16 how much more of existing information we can use to
17 make people qualify and be eligible for the vouchers:
18 Those are things that we think, in the short term,
19 plus long-term technology upgrades, that make it
20 easier and faster for people to get their voucher
21 approved, so that they can get an apartment.

22 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you.
23 That is helpful context. Okay, so moving to another
24 blueprint initiative: Is the Anti-Harassment Unit

1 off the ground with the 20 or so staff that it should
2 have at this time?
3

4 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: So, we've made some
5 investments in the Anti-Harassment Unit. It is
6 obviously a priority for our office. And maybe you
7 can give some details, Deputy Commissioner, on our
8 efforts there.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Thank you,
10 Commissioner. Yes, we are actively filling
11 positions. So, we have two candidates that are just
12 awaiting final approval. We are actively
13 interviewing for the remaining positions. But we are
14 certainly moving ahead. We are also-- received
15 funding for a database. And that is also a work in
16 progress, to be able to enable us to report better on
17 the outcomes of that unit.

18 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. So what's the
19 vacancy rate for the unit?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: I don't have that
21 here. We'll have to get-- Sorry, we'll have to get
22 back to you on that, Councilmember. We don't have
23 that information.

24 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Are the contracts targeting
25 source of income discrimination active?

1
2 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Do you have that?

3 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Yup. The
4 contract for that is expected-- We're expected to
5 move forward this summer, but we have continued to
6 work with CCHR and other partners. We've recently
7 completed a pilot. So, where we can do targeted
8 work, we do-- we are continuing to work with our
9 partners on COI Discrimination. And then we will
10 fold that into the contract that we hope to launch
11 this summer.

12 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Last question
13 from me for now: Partners In Preservation, which is
14 designed to help tenants defend their rights and
15 prevent displacement has \$4 million allocated in
16 Fiscal 24. How has the program been going this year,
17 and what outcomes have been achieved?

18 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Um, just again, generally
19 speaking, we love this program. It empowers tenants,
20 tenant associations, renters. It is-- It is a pro-
21 renter approach to community engagement. We've seen
22 success, and maybe Deputy Commissioner, you can talk
23 a little bit about our partners, our pending
24 contracts. We have four new contractors that we're
25 going to be working with in specific areas of the

1 city, where we see the need to support tenants more
2 actively than in other areas. Because of the data
3 that we're-- we're seeing come in. So, you want to
4 talk a little bit about that?
5

6 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Sure. We are--
7 - We are aiming again, for a launch this summer. I
8 will say that the pilot had continued through 2021.
9 But in between those years, between then and now,
10 we've not waited for the launch to be able to do this
11 work.

12 So, in fact, there was a HUD-funded version of
13 this. We are not a funding partner, but we have been
14 a partner with CBOs in North Manhattan and the South
15 Bronx. That was a \$2.4 million project that
16 continues the PIP model.

17 So, in one way or another, we've continued to see
18 implementation of this between 2019 and now. And we
19 hope HUD actually sees this as a model that they want
20 to fund even more in the future, to supplement the
21 \$3.6 million annual funding that we've baselined here
22 at the city level.

23 But again, we-- the city program hopes to launch
24 this summer. And then we will obviously run that in
25 parallel to any HUD programs that we see.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you so
3 much. I'll now turn it back over to Chair Brannon to
4 ask-- to get questions from my colleagues.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you Chair Sanchez.
6 We've been joined by Councilmember Abreu, and we're
7 going to start questions from Brooks-Powers followed
8 by Avilés.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you Chairs
10 and High Commissioner. It's great to see you. I
11 wanted to spend a little time in terms of HPD's new
12 construction pipeline, wanting to understand as
13 measured an average time from proposal to closing.
14 How long is that pipeline using the same measure?
15 And how much time does it take for a project to be
16 assigned to a project manager? I'm curious in terms
17 of the trends in affordable housing, not so much
18 production, but in terms of being able to get into
19 closing.

20 I'd also like to know the status of the Arverne
21 East project, which we've discussed before, in terms
22 of the next phase, which is homeownership, and the
23 likelihood of it reaching the pipeline, recognizing
24 that that's the next phase for the project. So,
25

1
2 delaying that delays the remaining part of the
3 project.

4 Also wanting to understand if there's anything in
5 the budget that helps to support moving these
6 projects much more quickly in terms of staffing, if
7 that plays a factor to that. And then we also have
8 the Ocean Crest project in Rockaway that we worked
9 together last year on, that created 100% affordable
10 homeownership. Wanting to know the status of that
11 project as well.

12 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Okay. So, let me start
13 with the size of the pipe line, Councilmember, and
14 and let me-- let me just say thank you for your--

15 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Wait, Commissioner.
16 One more moment. Because I don't want to run out of
17 time, so I'm going to just ask my last question.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Pack them all in.

19 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Just answer them
20 all together.

21 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Oh my. I'll try.

22 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: But also-- Well,
23 two last questions.

24 We've had some cases also where landlords have
25 been harassed and bullied by the tenants, and vice

1
2 versa. What is the process for handling landlord-
3 tenant harassments through HPD?

4 And also in my district, there have been many
5 instances when emergency transfer was needed for
6 various reasons, unlivable conditions, infestation of
7 mice, asbestos, so on and so forth. What should be
8 the longest wait time for an emergency transfer? And
9 that's not the transfer itself, but actually moving
10 that family. I know your team was extremely helpful
11 recently. We had a family that is in awful
12 conditions with their children that is unsafe, and we
13 were able to quickly get the emergency transfer. But
14 they're still in the home, which is unsafe. And so
15 how can we move that along more quickly? And what
16 should the longest wait time be for that?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Okay.

18 [BELL RINGS]

19 Your time is up.

20 That's a bad joke here if I'm sitting before you.
21 I know that.

22 In terms of the size of the pipeline, we have a
23 pipeline that is 750 projects long. 300 of those
24 projects are new construction, and the other-- the

1 balance, 450, is preservation work that is in the
2 queue.
3

4 So, it's a very-- it's a very long pipeline,
5 obviously. We rely on a whole set of tools to try to
6 deliver on that pipeline, whether it's capital, the
7 availability of tax credits, the bond cap capacity
8 that we have much of which comes from the State of
9 New York. And so, based on the resources available,
10 we can sort of trickle these projects out at a rate
11 that we wish was much faster, but it's not because
12 we're we have the imposition of reality on us, right?

13 We'd like to see more faster. And we always are
14 happy to work with the City Council. I think right
15 now, on the preservation side, and I know you're
16 interested in the new construction side of it, but on
17 the preservation side, if we can get-- if we can get
18 J-51 through this body quickly, I know that there's--
19 I hear that there's a hearing that might be scheduled
20 soon. I don't know. I hear things, you know. I
21 think that would be tremendously helpful to advance
22 the 450 projects that we need to get through that
23 pipeline.

24 On the construction side--
25

1
2 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: But-- Just-- I'm
3 sorry. Just on that piece, when we approve these
4 projects that HPD oftentimes is really advocating for
5 us to approve, would HPD not already know that there
6 is the capacity in terms of funding and whatever
7 other metrics are used to know that these projects
8 can go forward?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Well, when we ask you to--
10 When we are at the phase of getting the project
11 approved, we know about the availability of
12 resources. And then there are a lot of impositions
13 on the timeline. But you know projects can be-- can
14 be delayed if there is a rezoning action, if they are
15 dependent on the availability of funds from another
16 level of government. It's again, you know, the
17 availability of tax credits, if it's a tax credit
18 deal. And that's why we're-- we're going outside of
19 the tax credit universe, and initiating a program
20 that's called Mixed Income Market Initiative, which
21 will allow for mixed income deals that are 70%,
22 affordable, 30% market rate. There is a cross
23 subsidy there. We don't need the tax credits. We've
24 invited the development communities to give us
25 proposals for this type of development around the

1 city, especially in low-affordability areas that
2 we've identified, where we need more opportunity for
3 affordable housing.
4

5 So, there's-- there's a lot of variables that go
6 into this. Obviously, during COVID and after, we had
7 some staffing challenges that we've addressed. We've
8 created a system where we can now get outside help to
9 get some of these projects through the pipeline.

10 So, that's-- those are kind of the strictures and
11 you know, that we have to live with. There's no way
12 around the availability of resources. We can-- We
13 look forward to continuing to partner with you to
14 find more resources to pressure the Federal
15 Government on the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Test.

16 So, I'm going to ask Deputy Commissioner Durga to
17 come up for a second. And I know that specific
18 projects-- I'd like to be able to discuss them after
19 this hearing, because it'll take a while. But
20 Arverne East is a priority for us. We've invested
21 already significantly in Arverne East. Ocean Crest
22 is a great project. It is 100% affordable. You
23 know, we want to work on homeownership with you.
24 Every time you see me, you're pushing homeownership.
25 We think that those homeless homeowner ownership

1 opportunities should continue to be advanced
2 everywhere across the city, keeping in mind that the
3 biggest need is in low-rent, low-income housing for
4 New Yorkers.
5

6 [TO OTHERS:] I don't know if there's anything
7 you want to add to what I've already shared.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah. And just
9 before Deputy Commissioner Dugra goes on, I want to
10 also talk about the-- in terms of staffing. You
11 mentioned staffing, we've been working really hard to
12 reduce that vacancy in our Office Of Development. A
13 couple of years ago, we were looking at vacancy rates
14 over 30%. We were able to cut that significantly.
15 Now we're just a little over 20%. We're still
16 working hard to do that. We were able to work with
17 our partners at OMB to ensure that that part of our
18 agency has an exemption from the hiring freeze, so
19 that we can hire people on a one-to-one basis as
20 staff leave. We're also happy with the bargaining
21 increases that went through that also helped with
22 some staff retention. So that's-- those are all the
23 different things that have been helping on the
24 staffing front.
25

1
2 And as the Commissioner mentioned, we also have a
3 special program by which we have engaged outside
4 counsel. So, one of the areas where our-- we asked
5 our attorneys while we're working to fill vacancies
6 in those areas, we also have an ability to contract
7 with the outside counsel to help with some of that
8 work, to push some of that work along. And also just
9 hiring temporary staff through a contract as needed.

10 So, those are all different tools that we have
11 put in place just to make sure we help move our-- our
12 pipeline.

13 And so now I'll turn it over to Deputy
14 Commissioner Durga to talk more about it.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: Good afternoon. So,
16 just I think one thing maybe to add to what the
17 commissioner was saying earlier about the pipeline:
18 I think for homeownership specifically, you know, we
19 don't have the benefit of being able to leverage some
20 of the other sources that we can for affordable
21 rental housing. So, for example, along with housing
22 tax credits, we also-- we're setting affordability in
23 a co-op, which is the most common structure that we
24 finance. We have to set maintenance the same for
25 every unit. And so you don't have the benefit of

1 cross-subsidization the way that you would in an
2 affordable rental housing project.

3
4 That means that the amount of subsidy that we're
5 putting in is higher than on average that we put in
6 for an affordable rental project. So, that does
7 create some challenges. You know, we're still
8 committing to advancing the pipeline.

9 I think one thing that has been really useful the
10 last couple years has been that the State has also
11 had for the first time, or that I'm aware of, a
12 reliable and robust source to subsidize affordable
13 homeownership as well. That's-- Oh, geez, I'm going
14 to forget the acronym now. But-- AHOP. What does
15 the H-O-P stand for? Affordable Homeownership
16 Opportunities Program, I think is what it is. That
17 has actually been really critical for us, because
18 it's been able to bring down the average subsidy
19 investment from the City. And so we're able to
20 actually advance some of those projects.

21 It's going to be a little bit of time still
22 before we get to the newer project, I think Ocean
23 Crest, which was approved last year. But we are
24 making progress.

1
2 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: And what's that
3 timeline look like?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: We're in the really
5 early stages. So, it's-- I think it'll be a couple
6 of years still. We're not-- We're not getting active
7 engagement with the development team at this point.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: So, I'll talk to
9 you offline about that, because that's not the read
10 that I get from the development team. So, I just
11 want to make sure we're on the same page with that.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: Great.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: And going back to
14 Arverne East, which is a larger project, and
15 understanding that the project is sequenced out: Do
16 I have a commitment from HPD to not bypass the
17 homeownership, to move on to other phases, because
18 the Borough President and myself have already
19 contributed I think over \$3 million in capital
20 dollars for this project specifically for
21 homeownership to show our commitment to it.

22 As you saw, Commissioner, the other day in the
23 district, that's all people are talking about. So,
24 while there is a need for affordable rental, the
25 Rockaway Community has done a significant amount to

1
2 create the environment where there is thousands of
3 affordable apartments coming off-- like coming off
4 the market right now, and that are still being built
5 and in the pipeline. Not so much so for the
6 affordable homeownership, which fosters community,
7 keeps people in the community longer, and that is
8 also something that members of my district is looking
9 to see, as well as some of my colleagues, because I
10 hear it from them in different parts of the city
11 quite honestly.

12 And so I'd like to have that commitment from HPD,
13 to make sure we're on the same page with that.

14 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: So, I think that we have a
15 project plan to execute on. We're working with the
16 development team, right? And whatever commitments
17 we've made, obviously we're going to keep.

18 And let me just say thank you to that area of the
19 city. There are other areas of the city that are not
20 doing their part to contribute to affordable housing
21 supply. And the Rockaways is stepping up, and we
22 appreciate that.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: So, is that, "Yes,
24 we're on the same page," in terms of the commitment,
25 which next phase is homeownership on L&M. Because I

1 will tell you I am hearing rumblings that HPD is
2 walking back that commitment. And I would really
3 hate to see that, considering that in good faith we
4 as Councilmembers negotiate these projects to have
5 specific outcomes. And I would really hate to see a
6 change on the project. And, again, being presented
7 as if things are still moving forward, as was
8 committed at the onset of the project.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We will continue to move
11 forward, you know, with you in partnership. And we
12 see a very successful project, a great outcome. I
13 can't-- I can't get into the particulars of the
14 number of units right now. I have to look at a piece
15 of paper so we can be on the same page. So--

16 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: I just want to know
17 that homeownership is still the next phase of L&M's
18 Arverne East project.

19 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah. I don't know if
20 it's exactly the next phase.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: That's the next
22 phase based on a developers, as recent as last week's
23 briefing with them. And that has been a part of, as
24 you mentioned, the plan that was committed to when
25 this was approved.

1
2 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yes. So, we'll look at--
3 we'll look at the tick-tock on this project and see--

4 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: But Commissioner,
5 can you tell me that that still remains the next
6 phase of this project?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We remain committed to the
8 to the outcome.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Commissioner, it's
10 a specific question.

11 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah. But without the
12 project details in front of me, you know, based on
13 what the developer told you that-- where it is. I'd
14 have to look at the details.

15 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Can anyone on your
16 team confirm?

17 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We can circle back to you.

18 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Can you let me know
19 before the hearing is out?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We'll--

21 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: I just wanted to do
22 this while you guys are under oath.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We will circle back to
24 you. I'm not sure we can do it before the hearing is
25 up.

1
2 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Someone at HPD
3 should be able to tell us what's next on this
4 project, right Chair?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We'll try.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay, Councilmember Avilés
8 followed by Restler.

9 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Great. Thank you so much
10 Chairs. And thank you to the HPD Team, and special
11 shout out for the recognition of the last remaining
12 colonies, Puerto Rico.

13 I wanted to-- I wanted to talk a little bit about
14 to get a sense in terms of the overall housing
15 production pipeline: How many not-for-profit
16 developers work on-- on these pipeline projects, in
17 terms of a percentage sense?

18 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah, I'm not certain that
19 right now I could answer that question. But we do
20 have lots of nonprofit partners working with us
21 around the city. Do you want to--

22 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Do you develop-- Do you
23 determine targets to make sure, I don't know, to
24 ensure that production is happening with these
25 partners of mine?

1
2 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: In fact, I
3 think we have a number of different ways that we
4 ensure that nonprofit and mission-based organizations
5 are part of it.

6 So, taking a step back, if you go to the website
7 now, especially since we do get a number of questions
8 about developers, who are developers that we can work
9 with? Maybe a faith-based organization, maybe an
10 owner looking to partner with someone who has
11 expertise, you can see on our website a number of
12 different pre-qualified lists, referral lists, one is
13 called the owner representative list, we have our
14 supportive housing RFQ list, we have our preservation
15 buyer preservation builder list, and all of these
16 lists will demonstrate that it's actually
17 significantly, if not almost all in a supportive
18 housing sense, nonprofit entities.

19 Separate and apart, our programs to help make
20 sure that mission-driven organizations are part of
21 the mix. We are very much leaning that direction.
22 So, I mentioned earlier the New York City acquisition
23 Fund, which we made the change to only support MWBEs
24 and nonprofits. And often we find that they are
25 working together on complicated deals. There's a

1 natural partnership there. In our RFPs, since--
2 since we've gone ahead and made the change required
3 that at least 25% of the ownership team include MWBE
4 or nonprofit. You know, 86% of our projects have
5 included-- have included that requirement and 100%,
6 obviously, since we've implemented that in, I believe
7 it's 2020, if not a little bit earlier.

8
9 So, we have targets on our public land, we have
10 tried to put in measures that increase their chances
11 in our RFPs, in our acquisition fund tools, and we
12 make it clear to those who want to do business with
13 us through these RFQ lists that these are folks that
14 we have worked with, have experience, and could be
15 excellent partners.

16 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you. So, we've
17 heard in particular, there have been concerns around
18 staffing levels and turnover in the asset and
19 property management teams. Obviously, since they're
20 focused on preservation, this is critically important
21 to us. Can you tell us a little bit about what is
22 happening here and how we can make sure we keep our
23 people, and we keep them preserving?

24 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: So yeah. I'll just say
25 initially, that it's one of the largest teams at HPD,

1 because of how important this work is. And we are
2 continuing to fill vacancies there. The Deputy
3 Commissioner for Finance and Administration could
4 speak a little bit about details there. But it is--
5 it is one of our largest and strongest teams, and
6 we're working it internally to bolster their work.
7

8 We're taking a fresh look at the entirety of
9 their portfolios, and how those portfolios are
10 managed on a daily basis, and the teams, and it's
11 constantly a work in progress because of the--
12 obviously the risk factors involved.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah. And just in
14 terms of the staffing for our asset-- property
15 management office, we are tracking just about 1%
16 vacancy. Right now, we have a total of about 176
17 staff on board. We recognize that as staff go now
18 with the-- so we were able to bring our vacancy rate
19 down significantly. But now with the new hiring
20 freeze, with the two-for-one requirement that we
21 have. So, we realize that will be a little slow when
22 we have people leave. But we'll continue to work
23 with the team, with OMB to be to see how quickly we
24 can move actions through to ensure that our rate
25 doesn't take up higher than where it is right now.

1
2 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Great. Well, as one of
3 your strongest, it is definitely a team that is very
4 important to the things that we hold dear.

5 In terms of preservation, you mentioned your--
6 your commitment and regard for the Neighborhood
7 Pillars Program. However, I am not sure I heard
8 clearly when exactly that was going to start. I
9 heard this year, but I don't know if you meant a
10 calendar year or our fiscal-- current fiscal year.
11 Could you tell me specifically when you expect to
12 launch-- relaunch this program?

13 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Sorry. We expect to do it
14 by the end of this year, the calendar year.

15 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Okay, so the end of the
16 calendar year, thank you. And so, you know-- I mean,
17 I can't underscore enough how important this is for
18 us, given on a daily basis, we receive so many
19 tenants that are fighting for repairs that-- and
20 landlords who are honestly just quite sitting on
21 these awful situations.

22 And so, everything we obviously commend HPDs
23 actions on the landlord who was put in jail, we
24 shouldn't be getting to that point. Nevertheless,
25

1 this program is truly important for us to provide a
2 mechanism to transfer the buildings out.
3

4 I just want to know if the program is, in fact,
5 relaunching this year, yet there are no new needs
6 noted in the budget. How do we expect this to work?
7 And are there particular targets that you are
8 expecting to be part of the program?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: So, just in general, you
10 know, as we rebuild and have rebuilt the preservation
11 finance team, the project management staff, the
12 attorneys that work on all of this, we will continue
13 to address the vacancies in preservation alongside
14 our outside resources to close the deals.
15 Neighborhood Pillars, obviously, earlier, I said, you
16 know, we're taking a fresh look at this prior to
17 relaunch, and I think we have a capable team that's
18 able to support neighborhood pillars in its relaunch.

19 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: And just to
20 add, again, the Neighborhood Pillars Program is
21 something that, obviously, we're committed to. But I
22 don't want to leave aside the fact that we do have
23 around a dozen different preservation finance
24 programs now. These are preservation finance
25 programs that some of the most trusted and

1
2 experienced CBOs, nonprofits, have been using for a
3 very long time to make sure that these properties
4 have the funding they need to make the repairs they
5 need. We have finance programs that are specifically
6 targeted to sustainability, HUD finance properties,
7 and everything in between.

8 So, right now, we do have a slew of tools that
9 our preservation finance team and our great
10 colleagues there who are working every day, to make
11 sure that buildings are getting funding, to make the
12 repairs that they need, either for something more
13 narrow and specific, like sustainability, or a major
14 capital overhaul and other compliance pieces.

15 Pillars will be another tool that we add. But we
16 do have tools now.

17 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: And I can't say enough
18 about J-51 getting through as quickly as possible.

19 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: We are all for tools, but
20 we need funded tools, and we need a variety of them.
21 So, I'd like to really understand. The Council has
22 called for at least \$500 million per year to be
23 dedicated to this program, and we saw a responsive
24 zero. And I know you're rethinking the program. But
25

1
2 again, without a fully funded team and program, the
3 tool is not a tool. But thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I just want to appreciate
5 the Commissioner taking a page out of my playbook and
6 lobbying us while we're at a thing. Chair?

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. Questions now from
8 Councilmember Restler followed by Hanks.

9 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Wonderful. Thank you
10 both. Thank you to the Chairs. You both do a great
11 job. Good to see you, Commissioner and team. I'm
12 not going to make any jokes about the First Deputy
13 Commissioner today.

14 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Thank you.

15 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: I've made them so many
16 times, I don't need to repeat them.

17 I wanted to, firstly, just echo sentiments from
18 Councilmember Avilés and Sanchez and others to
19 express my strong support for Neighborhood Pillars
20 and Open Door. These are vital HPD programs. I'm
21 thrilled that the Council is championing investments
22 in both of these initiatives. We need to get the
23 worst landlords out of New York City. Bringing
24 nonprofits in to take over those buildings is a great
25 solution.

1
2 And on the Open Door front I'm I want there to be
3 more pathways to homeownership. If you have other
4 suggestions for the best ways to do it that you think
5 are more cost effective, we're listening. But we do
6 want to see more homeownership expanded in New York
7 City.

8 Now that I've said that I'm going to try to cover
9 three topics, and I got two minutes and six seconds
10 to go, so get ready.

11 There was a disturbing piece in Crains this
12 morning that the New York Housing Conference found
13 that we would need to increase HPD's capital budget
14 by \$812 million to meet our housing-- affordable
15 housing production goal numbers from just this year
16 in the adopted budget. So to sustain our affordable
17 housing production, the city would need to find \$812
18 million beyond what the Mayor was willing to put in
19 Exec to meet our housing goals.

20 Do you agree with that, number one? And if not,
21 how much more money needs to go into our-- into the
22 adopted budget to maintain, just maintain the
23 affordable housing numbers that you hit most
24 recently?

1
2 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: So, as I said earlier,
3 there is maintenance of an average across the years
4 on the capital commitment. You'll see some increase
5 in future years. I think they were focusing on a--
6 sort of comparative to the prior-- or the fiscal year
7 we're in, where we moved resources in. We carried
8 over resources from a prior fiscal year to close on--
9 on development deals that were ready to close and
10 needed the resources.

11 And I said earlier, Councilmember, in my remarks
12 that it's an iterative process. It's a-- It's a
13 dynamic process. So, we go back and forth throughout
14 the year with OMB to look at resource reallocation,
15 placement, et cetera, to be able to reach our goals.
16 We're committed to exceeding the goals set in the
17 Mayor's Management Report. We're confident that we
18 will do that.

19 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: How much more money is
20 needed in the adopted budget to achieve that goal?

21 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: The resources that are
22 needed, as-- as we go through the process, will--
23 will be available to us. And so--

24 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: I just wish--
25

1
2 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Look, I-- what I
3 appreciate--

4 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: We are in a city where we
5 recognize the affordable housing crisis is the number
6 one challenge facing the people in New York. One in
7 three tenants pay majority of their income in rent
8 every month, where people are struggling like all
9 hell to get by, a 1.4% vacancy rate for moderate and
10 low income apartments. Why we have to push and pull
11 and prod to get resources from OMB, rather than just
12 invest it in the housing agency so that we know the
13 resources are there to invest in affordable housing.
14 That makes no sense to me.

15 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We now--

16 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: So we're going to do
17 everything we can on the Council side to push for
18 deeper investments in affordable housing. I just
19 wished the Mayor had a similar commitment.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: And let me just very
21 quickly--

22 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: I'm going to shift to
23 supportive housing, because I'm in trouble on time,
24 Commissioner, and I don't want Chair Sanchez and
25 Brannon to yell at me.

1
2 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: I just want to, quickly,
3 just respond to one thing, and I can say--

4 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: The Mayor's lack of
5 commitment, or was it something else?

6 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: The-- You said it earlier.
7 And the commitment, the fight that we went through,
8 the Mayor's commitment going up to Albany to fight
9 for the tools that we got to advance the City of Yes
10 for housing opportunity gives us a whole bunch of
11 tools to be able to deliver on supply in this town.
12 We're committed to that. And--

13 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: I've been one of the
14 Councilmembers that has been most supportive of City
15 of Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Thank you.

17 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: I'm pleased about the
18 things that we've seen in Albany this year. What I'm
19 concerned about is that budgets are moral documents.
20 They reflect our values. They reflect our
21 priorities. If the Mayor cared as much as he claims
22 about affordable housing, your all's budget would
23 look a lot different than it does.

24 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: I know you-- Look, I--
25

1
2 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: So, I just want to shift
3 gears to supportive housing, which is another area of
4 major concern. I know you're not fully responsible
5 on the supportive housing side. You are on the new
6 construction side. Other agencies are involved. But
7 yesterday's news reported that we, since 2016, have
8 only seen 3853 units of supportive housing actually
9 completed since over the previous eight years.

10 We have a goal of 15,000 units in 15 years, the
11 previous mayor announced. This mayor said we're
12 going to do it faster, we're going to do 15,000 units
13 in 13 years, but in eight years, we're just 25% of
14 the way there, 28% of the way there. So, I just want
15 to come back: Are we actually on pace to reach
16 15,000 units of supportive housing by 2028? And how
17 are we going to magically triple the amount of
18 supportive housing that's been generated to achieve
19 that goal?

20 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: So, we're very proud of
21 the accomplishments associated with supportive
22 housing. As you said, HPD is a partner in delivering
23 on the 15/15 commitment, half of which is congregate,
24 which we're responsible for.

1 We, at the pace that we're going now, will
2 deliver on the 2028 deadline.

3 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: So by 2028, there will be
4 7,500 new congregate units of supportive housing?

5 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: That-- For our share, yes.

6 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Yes. So--

7 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: The question is going to
8 be--

9 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: --on a scattered-site
10 side, which we've stopped all scattered-site
11 production.

12 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We're working-- And we
13 think-- And I know that this is part of the public
14 policy conversation. Everybody knows we're
15 discussing it with our sister agency.

16 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Right.

17 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: How can we do it better?
18 How can we move to more congregate housing? But
19 we're committed-- we're committed as an
20 administration to deliver on-- on supportive housing,
21 and we're doing it.

22 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: On the 7,500 congregate
23 units, which is important. But we all know that
24 supportive housing is the number one most effective
25

1
2 evidence-based, cost-effective solution for single
3 adult homelessness in particular, in New York City.
4 It is the most important investment we can make to
5 drive down our shelter census, which-- and the single
6 adult population has gone up by 1000 people a year
7 for over-- for about a decade.

8 So, I'm really concerned when you tell me that
9 only half-- HPD is responsible for just half, and
10 you're going to meet that goal, even though it's--
11 you've got a long way to go, you're going to meet
12 that goal. But we have no solutions for the other
13 half, where we've done just about 1092 out of the
14 7500 that are needed, and scattered site production
15 has come to a complete halt.

16 So, does that mean HPD is going to take on
17 responsibility for 10,000... 12,000 of these 15,000
18 units? And we're going to shift to congregate? Are
19 you going to be able to achieve those goals by 2028
20 as the Mayor had promised us?

21 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: The necessary adjustments
22 that need to be made are being looked at. To get--

23 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Don't they need to be in
24 this budget, to get it done?

1
2 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: To get to the most
3 effective outcome within the level of resources
4 available. And, you know, folks are talking about
5 cuts, and maybe Deputy Commissioner, you can address
6 that side of it, because we are going to get to our--
7 the number of units that are needed. And obviously,
8 there's more to be done.

9 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Okay. It's-- And I'm
10 done, because I went over time. But I just want to
11 close by saying this: The Mayor went out of his way
12 to say, "We're going to achieve this bold, ambitious,
13 but absolutely critical goal of 15,000 units of
14 supportive housing two years faster." We are years
15 behind in achieving our goal. You're telling us that
16 scattered site needs to be revisited, we're not going
17 to do the scattered site production. But we're not
18 having that conversation in the context of the city
19 budget that needs to be adopted 45 days from now. If
20 the funds are going to be allocated to actually allow
21 for HPD and the other sister agencies to achieve the
22 more ambitious goals that have been set, you're going
23 to need resources from us. And we need to be talking
24 about it. And I'm concerned that we're getting vague
25 answers that you're going to come back to us on, kind

1 of, the future of scattered site and how those gaps
2 are going to be filled.
3

4 This is too important. It's too important for us
5 to drive down our shelter census, to provide actual
6 housing, to people who are otherwise stuck in our
7 shelter system, or are living on the streets of New
8 York. And I don't hear solutions.

9 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I will just
10 say just, unrelated but connect-- related to this is
11 that, as an agency, the areas where we are working on
12 is making sure that we re-upped and retooled our
13 supportive housing RFQs. So, now we have a set,
14 updated list of supportive housing providers that we
15 can make sure are connected to the programs they need
16 HPD in order to build housing. We're looking at our
17 public land, and their demonstration of that, even
18 within the recent year where we talked about public
19 site supportive housing.

20 So, as an agency, we continue to look for other
21 ways to-- and in addition to the proejcts--

22 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: I'll do everything I can
23 to help. We've done two big new supportive housing
24 develops in our district, the largest supportive
25 housing development in Brooklyn history. We've got

1
2 another site that we're talking about for potential
3 supportive housing in District 33. Every
4 opportunity, we'll be there to help. I want to be
5 your partner. I'm concerned the Council isn't being
6 brought in as a partner to make the investments that
7 are needed, to meet these ambitious goals which
8 we're-- where we're clearly significantly behind.

9 Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We look forward to your
11 continued partnership. And you know, let me just say
12 thank you to the Council for the-- the mandate for
13 providing 15% of every new project to homeless New
14 Yorkers.

15 We remain not only committed to that, but in some
16 cases, in some of our development deals, we are able
17 to increase the share of needy New Yorkers who we can
18 house. So to you, the Council partners, the
19 development partners, who oftentimes will say, "Yes,
20 I'll take on more to help the city." And we will
21 continue-- we remain committed to supportive housing,
22 to delivering as much as needed and to working with
23 have you on getting that.

24 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: I'm pleased you're on
25 pace for your targets. It's not going to help us

1 meet our overall targets citywide. You're clearly
2 going to have to do a lot more. And so we've got to
3 have conversations about how we make that happen.
4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Councilmember Hanks,
6 followed by Louis.

7 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: Thank you Chairs.

8 [BELL RINGS]

9 There it is.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Time is up.

11 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: That was easy. So, thank
12 you so much for your testimony. I wanted to say that
13 my family also shares, you know, a similar story. I
14 know that I'm dating myself, but after the bridge was
15 built, my family, you know, was-- this is NYCHA, and
16 live there until they were able to purchase a home.

17 So, the story that you-- you tell is many of our
18 stories. And housing absolutely is personal. So, it
19 kind of leads me to my question on the Federal
20 Section 8 housing assistance payments: The Executive
21 Plan includes an additional \$43.5 million in federal
22 funding in fiscal 2024 to fund total expected Section
23 8 rental assistance payments. Following the years of
24 trying to levy fines against the landlord of a
25

1
2 Washington Heights building and making emergency
3 fixes, the city issued an arrest warrant against
4 Daniel Ohebshalom after allegedly failing to perform
5 hundreds of court-ordered repairs on some Manhattan
6 property he owns. It was about a total of 700 open
7 violations on several properties.

8 In my district, Park Hill, the neighborhood in
9 which my parents bought a home, across the street is
10 a HUD development, and it has over 200 violations,
11 some dating back to 2008, preceding my being a
12 Councilmember. And when I tell you that conditions
13 are so horrible, there are tenants that could
14 actually see below and above, the holes are so
15 gaping. Mold, open garage pits, vermin, apartments
16 where tenants, again, could see into the neighbors'
17 apartments.

18 And I think what-- what I need to understand
19 today is why is HPD not withholding their portion of
20 rental payments for the Park Hill apartments? And by
21 the way, I have hundreds of families that are
22 listening to this testimony today, in which it's
23 important that they understand that I'm advocating
24 for them.

1
2 But with hundreds of open violations, these
3 people are living in horrible conditions, but we keep
4 paying. We keep, you know, subsidizing these bad
5 actors. So, I-- what I really want to say is: HPD,
6 withhold payments of violations if these aren't
7 cleared up.

8 And what is the breaking point where you actually
9 will officiate an arrest? So, he was arrested with
10 700. We're dealing with 200. And if you don't have
11 plans to withhold funding from this landlord, what is
12 the corrective action plan in place that it will
13 ensure the improvements for these residents in this
14 development? Thank you for your patience.

15 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Thank you, Councilmember.
16 I'll start. And then I'll have the team talk a
17 little bit about some of the aspects of our work and
18 how we get there. But I wanted to just start by
19 saying that I'm very proud of the work of our
20 enforcement team in going after this guy, Daniel
21 Ohebshalom, who was clearly abusing the tenants in
22 his building.

23 We have other cases. The district attorney and
24 the Department of Investigation last-- about a week
25 and a half ago announced a new indictment. So, the

1
2 guy is in jail, being indicted. He's got lots of
3 properties around the city. He is emblematic of some
4 of the bad players in the marketplace that we-- we
5 constantly go after.

6 And so I wanted to say that, because the message
7 that was sent by that arrest, and hopefully if the
8 district attorney gets what he's asking for, and the
9 Department of Investigation does, this guy could be
10 sentenced to live in his building.

11 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: Well, amen to that.

12 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah. And so if-- if that
13 happens, we don't-- you know, we want to make sure
14 that he gets there before the repair starts, so he
15 could experience a little bit of what it is to live
16 in his property. But we do a lot of work. And I
17 have to take my hat off to Ann Marie and her team on
18 the enforcement side, the litigation side, that got
19 us that result. And then First Deputy Commissioner
20 Tigani will talk a little bit about the rental
21 support, and sort of how the money side of this
22 works.

23 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: So the question is--

24 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: And you said this is Park
25 Hill?

1
2 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: --is where is the tripping
3 point?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yep.

5 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: We would-- I applaud you
6 for arresting and giving this gentleman what he
7 deserves. But we don't want to wait until everyone
8 is looking at an example of someone who's a bad
9 actor.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: 100 percent. 100 percent.

11 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: We want action because, to
12 be honest with you, while we're waiting for new
13 housing, while we're waiting for, you know, folks who
14 are in-- in housing to become homeowners, we are
15 dealing with, in this country, in this state, in this
16 city, in my district, people who are living in
17 conditions that I can't even describe nor imagine.

18 So, I have to use my time, my position to really
19 explain and illuminate to all of you the importance
20 of not waiting for someone to take an example, but to
21 take action and to hold these landlords accountable.
22 And the action needs to happen now.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Councilmember, before I
24 pass it over to Deputy Commissioner Santiago, let me
25 say for-- for every one of these that make the news,

1
2 there are hundreds and hundreds of cases where we've
3 avoided all of that, and we've got-- because our
4 primary mission is to ensure the safety, and the
5 health and wellness of tenants around the city. And
6 we're able to force landlords in many, many, many
7 cases. Which is what--

8 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: But how long do the people
9 of Park Hill have to wait since 2008? How long do
10 they have to wait in squalor before you get them?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Let's talk about the
12 process.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Thank you
14 Councilmember. And I will tell you a little bit
15 about what we're doing in the big picture. But we're
16 certainly happy to meet with you and talk in more
17 detail. So, Park Hill is three buildings. I'm
18 sorry, six buildings, correct? It's a--

19 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: I actually have the
20 building numbers. It's 140, 160, and 260. It is not
21 Vanderbilt. It's Park Hill Avenue.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: So, three of those
23 buildings were selected for our alternative
24 enforcement program in January. So, they are getting
25 specialized enhanced enforcement. Again, this

1 hearing is a little too short for me to go into the
2 details of that means but we're very happy--

3
4 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: That's okay. I wish you
5 would tell them that, because we're on the phone with
6 them on a weekly basis.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: We're very happy
8 to meet with you and give you all the information.
9 The building should have been posted with flyers
10 indicating which ones are in the alternative
11 enforcement program. We would be happy to do another
12 tenant meeting with the tenants. If any of the
13 tenants are watching, as you said, we strongly
14 encourage them to call 311 to file their--

15 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: I'm not going to encourage
16 them to call 311. I'm going to encourage you all to
17 come with me and take care of this. They have--

18 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We're already committed--

19 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: --been down this road
20 before. They have heard it.

21 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Councilmember. Yeah,
22 we're committed to doing that.

23 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: And so I am going to
24 encourage you--

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: We-- And we--

1
2 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: --to take action that does
3 not involve a flyer. It involves action.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: We are-- We are
5 at that at that complex, once a week, every week,
6 spending a whole day there. Our alternative
7 enforcement team is there for three of the buildings.
8 We have reached out to the property owner. We've
9 reached out to HUD. And we are working closely with
10 them to see what other enforcement tools we can bring
11 to bear on that complex in particular. So, again,
12 we're very happy to meet with you and bring you--

13 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: I look forward to hearing
14 from you. Thank you so much.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: You're welcome.

16 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: One last
17 thing: For those people who have renter-- rental
18 assistance or voucher-- federal voucher programs,
19 there's actually a very clear line. There's a
20 housing quality standard. If they fail that
21 standard, it goes into an abatement program, where
22 the funding is held back. So we can go through those
23 units. We will work-- I'm sure we're already in
24 contact. Usually for an AP building we are. And we
25 can talk to you offline about what's in abatement,

1
2 what's not in the abatement, and what should be an
3 abatement.

4 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: I'll be sure to tell the
5 tenant on the third floor to yell up to the tenant on
6 the fourth floor what happened.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Councilmember Louis
8 followed by Nurse.

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Thanks Chairs. All right.
10 I have a couple of questions. Thank you for being
11 here, Commissioner. I'm glad your team is here.

12 My office is working on a severe case where a
13 senior homeowner in my district was assessed a
14 judgment of \$64,000 due to a squatter moving into the
15 second floor of their home. My office engaged HPD on
16 this issue back in January, and we have not received
17 a response from HPD or the HPD attorney working on
18 this case, and I still don't have a reply back from
19 my April 26 e-mail.

20 So, with that said, we know that many homes built
21 in the last 20 years have utilities and amenities
22 controlled by the tenant and not the building. So, I
23 wanted to know how does HPD determine who is liable
24 when utilities are turned off by-- are not turned off

1
2 by the homeowner but by the tenant, particularly a
3 squatter, and why they're responsible for that.

4 What is the dollar amount HPD has budgeted for
5 litigation for housing-related violations in FY 24,
6 and what is the amount being budgeted in the FY 25
7 budget?

8 I also have a question on 1111 Ocean Avenue. So,
9 if you want me to ask all the questions first, let me
10 know, because my time is limited.

11 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yes.

12 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Thanks. Do you want me to
13 do that?

14 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: No, no. I think, let's
15 let's tackle the first one, just simply--

16 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: And I have the notice of
17 judgment here if someone on your team wants to--

18 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Okay. So, what I'd like
19 to do-- What I'd like to do what I'd like to do
20 because each of these-- and I want to go back to
21 Councilmember Hanks, who unfortunately left. I want--
22 - I wanted to say--

23 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Are you talking about
24 Councilmember Hanks, or--

1
2 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Oh, no, no, no. I'm going
3 to address your issue--

4 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Okay. Just checking.

5 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: --that we we've made a
6 commitment there. But I think-- I think it's
7 important, Madam Chair, that, you know, we dedicate
8 the kind of time that we need to each of these
9 separately and not at these hearings, simply because
10 they require the time and attention--

11 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: But Commissioner, with all
12 due respect, there's folks on your team that don't
13 respond. So, that's why we're doing all of this.
14 And we shouldn't be doing this during the budget
15 hearing.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: You should-- Yeah,
17 definitely, we--

18 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: But we're forced to do
19 that, because we don't get responses. So, if you
20 could please reply back to this, and then we could
21 get to Councilmember Hanks's questions.

22 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: So I, you know,
23 unfortunately, with the amount of information I have
24 right now, before me: I try to take notes on some of
25

1 what you said, trying to understand the situation.

2 But we can definitely immediately follow up.

3
4 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Alright. So who on your
5 team could take this Notice Of Judgment, and I can go
6 to my next questions.

7 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah. You can have the--
8 one of the officers bring it up.

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Yeah. I'll have the
10 Sergeant give that.

11 Now regarding 1111 Ocean Avenue, we had HPD come
12 out-- Sergeant, if you could please give this...
13 We'll give it. We had HPD come out to 1111 Ocean
14 Avenue on numerous occasions. While progress is
15 sometimes made with increased pressure (thank you
16 from the agency) repeated 311 calls did not result in
17 HPD stepping in to make repairs.

18 So, I wanted to know how many active emergency
19 work orders are typically seen in a month in FY 24.
20 And what is the limitations on expanding emergency
21 repairs? How quickly is HPD contracting for these
22 work orders? And just piggybacking off of Chair
23 Sanchez's question, what is the criteria for
24 determining whether a particular class A violations
25 are eligible for emergency work orders? And is there

1 a budget constraint to that? Why are delinquent
2 violations not referred to more as emergency repairs?

3 And my last two questions is: Does HPD have the
4 statistics on their agreements with property owners
5 to convert their sites to HDFCs? And how many units
6 turned into home ownership rather than rentals?

7 That's two other members that mentioned the same
8 question. And Clipper Equity has not adhered to the
9 totality, to the terms of their contract that you
10 begged me for on Article 11. So, I want to know how
11 many Article 11 conversions took place in FY 24
12 citywide resulting in home ownership opportunities
13 for former renters? And those are all my questions.

14 Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Thank you, Councilmember.

16 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: No problem.

17 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: I'm not sure I was able to
18 take notes--

19 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: All right. So, the last
20 one is in regards to the Article 11. We could go
21 back to that, and then everything else. I know the
22 other stuff that we have to meet about.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah. We can-- We can
24 meet about 1111 Ocean Avenue. I mean, you talked
25

1
2 about-- you asked about emergency work orders in one
3 month. And I think we-- we could break it down for
4 you and provide information as needed.

5 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Yes. And--

6 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: and what was your question
7 about Article 11s?

8 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Article 11. How many
9 Article 11 conversions took place in FY 24 citywide,
10 resulting in homeownership?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah. I'm not certain we
12 have those statistics readily available. So, we
13 would have to circle back to you on that.

14 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANY: We'll have to
15 get that.

16 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: So, there's two cases here
17 that I'm expecting for someone on your team--

18 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah. We will-- We've
19 got the one you gave us and we'll follow up
20 immediately on the other as well.

21 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Thank you. Thank you,
22 Chairs.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Thank you, Councilmember.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Councilmember Nurse.

25 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: Good afternoon.

2 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Afternoon.

3 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: Thank you, Commissioner and
4 your team for meeting with the Bushwick stakeholders.
5 I really appreciate it. I was crafting my follow up
6 e-mail to you in this hearing. So, you can expect
7 that this afternoon.

8 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Okay, great.

9 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: Most of the members covered
10 a lot of topics. But I did want to touch upon the
11 basement conversion pilot. You know, my-- one of my
12 community boards, CB 5 was the pilot of the city.
13 There was about \$12 million allocated. Pretty
14 quickly after it started, it got cut. I think when I
15 first stepped into this role we were just begging for
16 like a measly \$250,000 to get got the final-- the
17 people who actually made it through to complete. And
18 we weren't able to get that so folks had to do
19 outside fundraising, unfortunately.

20 But the biggest issue was the state-- the state
21 law. So, now that the state is moving forward, even
22 though Community Board 5 is somehow, for some
23 actually ridiculous reason, not included in that.

24 Can you talk a little bit how HPD's role in that,
25 what you're thinking in terms of any rules around

1
2 developing that, and timelines that you can provide
3 to the council?

4 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Well, let me just say that
5 we're very glad that the state legislature acted on
6 this. You know, as you suggested, as you've
7 mentioned, we ran a local pilot. I think there were
8 a lot of lessons learned about how expensive this
9 kind of work is, and the barriers, the hurdles that
10 we need to deal with. That information that we've
11 gathered is going to help us.

12 This is a good first step for us to continue
13 expanding this work. There's a lot of low-- low-
14 lying areas in the city that need more attention, and
15 that were potentially not included, or obviously not
16 included in the areas that the legislation covers. I
17 believe we-- we need to engage in a process with the
18 City Council, and maybe somebody can help me on the
19 sort of clarification on that. And maybe Kim, you
20 can come up and talk a little bit about that process.

21 But we are-- we're glad we've got yet another
22 tool. And the legislative process is not perfect.
23 So, we've made an important step we need to advance
24 to make it citywide eventually. But Kim, do you want
25 to talk a little bit?

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: Yeah. I would just
3 note-- So, there are a few things. So, there's the
4 state legislation. You know all of New York City is
5 not included.

6 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: Yup.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: But hopefully we'll
8 learn some things from the process. It will require
9 authorization by Council in order for us to actually
10 implement a pilot. And HPD will be working with the
11 other agencies to actually be thinking about what
12 those code changes, what the provisions of the
13 amnesty program would-- would look like so I think
14 there's some process there to get--

15 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: Okay. Do you have like an
16 anticipated time this year that you think you'll
17 begin that process?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: I think-- You know,
19 this just happened a couple of weeks ago. I think we
20 need a little time to talk to their folks to figure
21 out what that would look like.

22 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: Okay.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: We can circle back.

24 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: One last question Chair,
25 since I'm at the end of the line.

1
2 So, there were issues around state law. That
3 were some of the barriers. But can you, for the
4 record, just relist some of the barriers that were
5 city barriers to successful completion of this
6 program? So now that the state piece might be out of
7 the way, what are the city pieces that we need to
8 also knock out of the way?

9 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: That's a good question.
10 You want to address it, Kim?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: Yeah. I mean, I
12 think there are two things that are-- that we are
13 very focused on at the city level, based on what we
14 learned from the pilot. One City of Yes, as part of
15 the zoning text amendment, will include hopefully
16 modifications that will make adding a certain type of
17 ADU possible, more feasible from a zoning
18 perspective. So, that's issue one. That was-- The
19 pilot that we implemented didn't get into zoning. We
20 specifically kind of put it aside and focused on
21 other issues. But we knew that a lot of folks were
22 impacted by the zoning requirements, parking, yard,
23 floor area, et cetera. Okay? That's issue one.

24 Two, we know we're still learning how to help
25 homeowners or overcome the challenges associated with

1 financing. We know that the costs, even with code
2 changes, are still pretty significant. And in order
3 to make sure that lower income homeowners can take
4 advantage, we launched an ADU pilot program. It's
5 partially funded by the City through our capital
6 budget and partially through state funding that our
7 partners applied for and received.
8

9 We just got another round of funding, so, it's
10 pretty limited scale, but we do think it will help us
11 continue to learn about how we can manage those
12 barriers. And I would just say that this program
13 that we launched, we announced late fall, we received
14 2,800 applications for the program, 2,600 in New York
15 City. We did have applicants in your district. I
16 think there were about four dozen--

17 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: Yeah. That expressed
18 interest.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: Yes.

20 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: Only a small amount got
21 through to the end.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: Yes. So, we're-- I
23 would just say that we are we know this is an issue
24 that people are interested in. We're continuing to
25 figure it out. And I-- One more thing, most of the

1 homeowners that applied to the ADU pilot, they were
2 overwhelmingly lower income, below 80% AMI. And they
3 were-- Even though the pilot was open to 165% AMI
4 from an income perspective, and they told us that the
5 primary reasons they were interested in ADU was to
6 house a family member or to improve their financial
7 security.

9 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: Yeah. Which speaks to the
10 urgent nature of the safety issue.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DURGA: Yeah.

12 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: Which is why it's even so
13 much more disappointing that CB 5 wasn't included.
14 Particularly also because we've had death due to
15 flooding with the new types of cloudburst rainstorms.

16 Is there any funding that you all are seeking in
17 this cycle to support that work that you're about to
18 embark on?

19 So, we do actually-- We are partners in
20 administering the AGU pilot, applied for the state
21 funds that are available. We did receive two
22 allocations of state funds for the pilot. In
23 addition, we are matching those state funds with city
24 resources.

1
2 So, we do have, between the two funding sources,
3 about \$395,000 per unit that will be available to
4 homeowners to add an ADU.

5 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: That's great. Thank you so
6 much. Thank you, Chairs.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you. Almost done. I
8 just wanted to ask-- I forgot to ask earlier: What
9 is HPDs involvement currently with the asylum seekers
10 crisis?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Okay. So, I'm glad you
12 asked. Just, you know, I don't want to do context
13 overkill, but it's now 190,000 arrivals. It was a
14 full-court press by multiple agencies. We were asked
15 to take on a chunk of that work related to running
16 HERRCs, hotels in New York City and hotels in other
17 parts of New York State. There are contracts
18 associated with that.

19 About-- More than 7,000 people are in our care.
20 And, you know, this has continued to morph. We are
21 very, very glad to have partnering with us and
22 supporting us now, given the amount of staff time and
23 strain that it put on our agency, the HRO. Is it--
24 Hurricane? [OTHERS SPEAK] Housing Recovery Office
25 taking on a good portion of this work. I know that

1 both Mr. Tigani and Mr. Caphart work every day on
2 this stuff. [TO OTHERS:] So, I don't know if you
3 want to talk a little bit about some of the
4 adjustments we're making?
5

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah. So I'll just
7 outline. And then we can answer any further
8 questions you have. So, as the Commissioner
9 mentioned, we have roughly about 7600 asylum seekers
10 in our care across seven different initiatives, that
11 we fund two different contracts that we have.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: 7,600?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah. The-- I
14 think the latest data we have is about 7,676 asylum
15 seekers across several initiatives that our budgets
16 support.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: And I-- The concern that
18 the Council has: The asylum-seeker emergency was
19 declared almost two years ago. It'll be July 2022.
20 And the concern is, you know, why does the city elect
21 to keep using emergency procurement rather than
22 traditional RFPs? We just don't think it's the best
23 value. You know, in an emergency situation, sure.
24 Two years in, I don't know that you could say it's
25 still an emergency. Have-- Has HPD made it clear to

1
2 the Administration that it would be great to leverage
3 our relationships with-- with more nonprofits rather
4 than working with companies like DocGo, or whatever
5 it may be?

6 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Chair, I
7 would-- I will just say that we-- So, in early April
8 the announcement was made about the shift, moving to
9 a competitive RFP. So, just again, to reiterate:
10 When the humanitarian crisis began, like emergency
11 contracts go, we were basically responding to an
12 evolving situation. As you point out, over time
13 we've learned. We know now more about the scale
14 shape of the program in between that time. I can say
15 from HPDs perspective, we have worked to try to
16 invite CBOs. We've worked to invite different
17 partners from workforce to mental health into the
18 different spaces we work in. Our prime contractors
19 have also been pushed to look at MWBE possibilities,
20 nonprofit possibilities. All of that, actually, is
21 setting us up well for the work that Housing Recovery
22 Operations, HRO is doing.

23 And the bigger picture the City is doing to put
24 together a competitive RFP. So, we've announced that
25 we're shifting into that space next. In the in-

1 between time, we're making sure that we are covering
2 any gap that will-- that may come about when you do
3 that kind of shift, because the first and paramount
4 responsibility is that there are people in our care.
5 So, we have to keep the services going throughout
6 that process as we shift into that place.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: This \$40 million DocGo
9 contract. That's new, though, isn't it?

10 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: No. So, that
11 was-- So, again we had pre approval for emergency
12 contract. This is us, now at the registration
13 process of that contract, and it does have an
14 expiration date that's coming up. Again, the future
15 RFP will be taking over that work. Part of that RFP
16 work is to take over that work.

17 So, this is not a new contract. This is the
18 registration. In between time we had been working to
19 get that registered and filed. Again, this was an
20 emergency, a crisis, with families, individuals
21 coming to New York City. But we had to deal with the
22 crisis first, and we worked on building the
23 parameters of the administrative pieces later. It's
24 the purpose of having the emergency contract in place
25 in the beginning.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: The executive budget had to
3 backfill \$200 million in city funds for asylum
4 seekers, because the State didn't put in the full
5 amount that the City expected. So, can you share why
6 the City made this expectation in its financial plan?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: So, I will speak to
8 that. So, in terms of that outside technical
9 adjustment-- earlier-- so as part of the Preliminary
10 Budget, in anticipation of the State Budget, the city
11 added to HPD's budget \$200 million in state funding
12 so that it could be directly accessed on our
13 contracts. However, the city reversed that. So, in
14 working with OMB to, again, take that state funding
15 out and replace that with tax levied funding.

16 So, as far as the details on the technical
17 adjustments that go with that, we don't have that
18 right now. But it's essentially just replacing tax
19 levied dollars that was swapped out before. That's
20 what that \$200 million is doing.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: So with regard to some of
22 the state impact, the state budget impacts that we
23 mentioned before: When do we think we'll have a--
24 When do we think we'll fully digest what all that
25 means for us, and as far as HPD is concerned.

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: So, that's still
3 ongoing in terms of the partners that are involved.
4 So in terms of the development side, just speaking
5 with HDR and other partners. But specifically, as it
6 relates to the asylum seeker funding, the city as a
7 whole, at the citywide level with the Office of
8 Management and Budget handles, in terms of
9 reimbursement requests to the State, against the
10 funding that was already made available in the state
11 budget for asylum-seeker services.

12 So, we provide reports in terms of our
13 expenditures and the OMB works of the State, in terms
14 of accessing the funds that were made available in
15 the state budget.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. All right. I'm
17 going to give it to Chair Sanchez for some closing
18 remarks, and then we'll close it out. Thank you so
19 much.

20 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you so
22 much, Chair. I, before closing, just wanted to ask
23 on behalf of Councilmember Brooks-Powers, whether
24 there is any update. Do you have responses for her
25 in connection to Arverne East and Ocean Crest.

1
2 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We will get back to her
3 Madam Chair, with all due respect.

4 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay. I tried, but I'm
5 also going to up on her behalf.

6 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah, you did try. You
7 did try.

8 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you for
9 today's testimony. See? You've got to keep up the
10 energy in hour six. Seven? 20 million?

11 No, thank you for all your responses today. I
12 think you know, just my-- my own reflection in
13 hearing your responses to my questions and
14 colleagues' questions. And just connecting it back
15 to the New York Housing Conference's analysis on the
16 capital budget, I think the broader point that many
17 of us are trying to make, is that it seems that HPD's
18 capital budget is still insufficient to meet the
19 demand, meet the desired production levels that we
20 have in the City of New York.

21 You might have thought that I was going to let it
22 go. But I don't let things go. So, the Mayor
23 promised \$4 billion in capital funding per year as a
24 candidate. We are still not there. We're close to
25 68% of that. We-- We've increased. Thank you for

1
2 listening to the Council as we continue to drive this
3 priority forward. But, you know, we're not going to
4 stop. We want HPD to do more and more and more, and
5 commit capital, and build more and do all of that.
6 So, that's-- that's my major takeaway. We want to
7 see more. We want to see the agency doing more. And
8 we want to make sure that the great ideas and the
9 blueprint are receiving the resources that they need
10 in order to be successful. So, thank you so much.
11 And Chair?

12 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Thank you, Chairs.

13 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you to Commissioner
14 and your team. Thank you very much. We look forward
15 to working with you.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Thank you so much.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: You have questions? Oh,
18 wait, Gale's got questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Just kidding. Sit down.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: I'll be very-- I was
21 meeting with the police department. I'm sorry. One
22 question is, where are we with the HDFC's? Another
23 one is, will you support the Mitchell-Lama program
24 that keeps Mitchell-Lamas in Mitchell-Lama. I know
25 Cadman has gone out. And then I know you got you

1 got-- you answered the DocGo question. And then just
2 finally-- maybe you did this, but what's the time to
3 get an apartment rented when you have a voucher? And
4 just the time it takes, maybe just generally, to get
5 affordable housing?
6

7 If you come as a developer, you have a building,
8 how long does it take to get through HPD? Those are
9 my questions. And I guess DocGo got asked earlier.

10 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Councilmember, thank you.
11 And we did discuss a number of the issues that you
12 raised.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. Let's skip them if
14 you did HDFC.

15 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: On the pipeline-- I think
16 we discussed HDFCs.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: And look, you know, we see
19 that as a great opportunity. We have-- We have 51
20 buildings that we've closed, and we have 7--

21 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: On the HDFCs, you closed
22 51 buildings?

23 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah. And we-- and we
24 have 75 that are in the queue.

25 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay.

1
2 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: We need the support of the
3 Council.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: And how many more in the
5 queue-- it doesn't mean that they've happened.
6 That's...?

7 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: They're in the works.
8 Yeah, they're in the works.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: And there are some that
10 are not in the works? Or everybody's in the works?

11 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: In our estimation,
12 everybody's in the works, because our goal is to
13 close them all, which will give us an excess of 1300
14 units additional.

15 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: All right. So 75 is the
16 issue. Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah. So, we look forward
18 to working with you on that.

19 And on the pipeline question very quickly. You
20 know, if you're a new developer, and you come to us
21 with a plan, it can-- it can range anywhere between
22 two and a half, three years to seven years to get
23 your project through. And these are estimates. And
24 it's simply because, as you know, availability of
25 resources, the complexity of a project, and 750

1 projects in the pipeline, 300 of which are new
2 construction.

3
4 So, it's just the queue. It's a-- It's a small
5 opening in that pipeline. So, you know, we've got
6 more tools, like I said before, to your colleagues,
7 more tools to work with now, and I think it's going
8 to unleash development in-- across the entire city.
9 And I cannot overemphasize the-- the importance of
10 the City Council helping us with taking a fresh look
11 at the zoning envelope in the city and supporting the
12 City of Yes for Housing Opportunity. That will also
13 unleash, in our estimation, at least 100,000 units in
14 15 years.

15 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Right.

16 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: And that's a-- that's an
17 estimate from Dan Garodnick, the Chair and Director
18 of City Planning. I'm not sure I could keep up with
19 the other...

20 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: There was Michell-Lama.
21 Try to keep it in Article 2 and not go to article 11,
22 despite Cadman House.

23 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I think the
24 answer is: Any state funding, federal funding for
25 that matter, that we can use that work with that

1 building to keep it in affordability long-term, we're
2 going to look at.

3
4 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Yeah.

5 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, we will
6 look at all the options including any state funding
7 that will come our way.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: I mean, that's one. But
9 I'm just talking about for the future, because there
10 are other coops. I'm trying to keep them in Article
11 2 and not Article 11.

12 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Absolutely.
13 As boards and property managers come to us, we work
14 with them and say, "If there's a funding source,
15 we'll look at that option." If that's there for
16 them, and they can use it, and stabilizes their
17 building and extends affordability past the current
18 affordability, and creates options for people for
19 homeownership, we're going to look at the program.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. We're going to try
21 to pass legislation that keeps them in Article 2,
22 just so you know. Okay, thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Commissioner, this time for
25 real: Thank you very much.

2 COMMISSIONER CARRIÓN: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: All right. We're going to
4 take a 10-minute break and then we're going to hear
5 from members of the public.

6 [15 MINUTES' SILENCE]

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good afternoon if everyone
8 can just please find the seat we will be beginning
9 shortly.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. We're now going to
11 open the hearing for public testimony. I remind
12 members of the public that this is a government
13 proceeding, and that decorum shall be observed at all
14 times. As such, unless you are testifying, members
15 of the public shall remain silent.

16 The witness table is reserved for people who wish
17 to testify. No video recording or photography is
18 allowed from the witness table. Further, members of
19 the public may not present audio or video recordings
20 as testimony, but they may submit transcripts of such
21 recordings to the Sergeant at Arms for inclusion in
22 the official record.

23 If you wish to speak on today's hearing, just
24 make sure that you filled out one of these appearance
25 tickets with the sergeant at arms and wait to be

1
2 recognized. Once you're recognized you'll have two
3 minutes to speak on today's hearing topic, which is
4 the DOB HPD FY 25 Executive Budgets. If you have
5 written testimony or additional written testimony you
6 wish to submit for the record, please provide that--
7 please provide a copy of that testimony to the
8 Sergeant At Arms. You also have 72 hours from the
9 completion of this hearing to submit testimony, and
10 you can do that via email at
11 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

12 I'm now going to call the first panel. Brendan
13 Cheney, William Spisak, Emily Goldstein, Allison
14 Nickerson, and Paula Siegel, and Joelennys Negron.

15 Want to go left from right. Just say your name
16 and then you can begin.

17 MR. NEGRON: Hello, my name is Joelennys Negron.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: You can begin your
19 testimony.

20 MR. NEGRON: Give me one second. Sorry.

21 MR. NEGRON: Hello, my name is Joelennys Negron,
22 but everyone calls me JJ for short to save time and
23 oxygen. And I'm a member of the East New York CLT.
24 I joined the East New York CLT because I was homeless
25 for a moment of time due to a house fire caused by

1 the negligence of a landlord not keeping the building
2 up to code.
3

4 The Red Cross put 15-year-old me and my family
5 into a shelter before we were moved into NYCHA, due
6 to the winning of the lottery. I was displaced. And
7 that's why I joined the CLT because East New York
8 COT's mission is to prevent displacement of longtime
9 black and brown residents, and protect and grow our
10 generational wealth.

11 We are building a movement in East New York and
12 Brownsville, because people know that we need to
13 control the land ourselves in order to thrive. In
14 June of 2023, we will launched a campaign alongside
15 the tenants of 248 Arlington Avenue to purchase their
16 20-unit rent-stabilized building, and just eight
17 months later in February of 2024, we made the
18 purchase.

19 Now 248 Arlington tenants have housing stability,
20 control over the management and renovations of the
21 building, and the opportunity to own their apartment,
22 and the opportunity that many of them may never have
23 in their lives before.

24 We are not stopping at 248 Arlington, we have
25 plans to acquire many more homes and buildings in

1 East New York and Brownsville in order to keep people
2 in our homes. But we need funding to grow.

3
4 We have been able to do all this work because so
5 many dedicated members such as I who truly care about
6 our communities. Councilmembers, if you want to do
7 something to stop displacement in our working class
8 black and brown communities, you should fund the CLT
9 initiative of at least \$3 million. East New York CLT
10 needs only \$300,000 of that initial funding to hire
11 more staff and grow small organization. Yet, with
12 our mission, East New York CLT needs \$4 million in
13 capital funding for the rehab of 248 Arlington so we
14 can upgrade all the building systems, replace the
15 roof and much more aspects that was neglected by the
16 previous landlord of 248. The CLTs in New York City
17 needs your help. East New York needs your help.
18 Brownsville needs your help. So, please
19 Councilmembers, help the CLTs so we can help the very
20 same people you vowed to help upon entering your
21 offices.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you.

23 MS. SEGAL: My name is Paula Segal. I'm here as
24 a senior staff attorney with Take Root Justice. I'm
25 also here for as myself and a Mitchell-Lama resident.

1
2 And I just want to thank Councilmember Brewer for
3 mentioning the puzzle of conversions. I live in a
4 building that has been puzzling through that problem.
5 And I'm excited to see a legislative fix.

6 I want to echo what JJ said about the need for
7 doubling the funding for the CLT initiative. The
8 work that the Community Land Trusts on the ground
9 have been able to get done on a shoestring over the
10 last four years has been unbelievable. I'm so proud
11 to work with the East New York Community Land Trust
12 on that transaction. And on related campaigns, it's
13 incredible to see them partner with seasoned
14 developers to see them replace terrible landlords,
15 and to see them really take leadership from both
16 tenants and residents who are impacted by how
17 buildings are managed in their neighborhoods.

18 I want to also, just pointing to my written
19 testimony-- I feel like we've been saying this like a
20 broken record. But I want to make sure that our
21 budget next year has funding in it for a robust and
22 equitable debt collection system. Councilmember
23 Brannon, we met with your staff today. It was a
24 meeting that-- I kind of want to cry like My heart
25 dropped out. We're making such incredible progress

1
2 towards a system that will be equitable, that will
3 protect tenants, that will protect equity for
4 homeowners, and that will really help neighborhoods.
5 We're not all the way there, but there are huge
6 strides being taken, I just want to make sure that
7 we're not just hand waving, and that the programs
8 that we're talking about are actually going to be
9 funded.

10 We will probably see an expansion of city In Rem
11 Foreclosures if the programs that we're talking about
12 happen. Both will need to see funding for outreach.
13 And that all-- that all needs to be reflected in the
14 budget, if it's going to happen.

15 And finally, just-- it's in my written testimony,
16 but I just want to highlight the need for capital
17 funding for New York City Public Housing, and the
18 need for us as a city to invest in public housing and
19 not rely on the private sector to bring those
20 buildings back into habitable conditions.

21 Thank you so much for all your work.

22 MS. NICKERSON: Good afternoon. I'm Alison
23 Nickerson. I'm the Executive Director of Lavon.
24 Thank you Chairs Brannon and Sanchez, Councilmember
25 Brewer, Dan. Thank you for being here. And the

1 whole staff. I know these are really long days. So,
2 thank you all for being here.

3
4 So, at LiveOn New York, we believe that all
5 people deserve equity and housing as they age and our
6 systems are actively excluding older people.

7 Seven years ago, we did a research study that
8 showed 200,000 people on waiting lists for affordable
9 senior housing, and waiting for an average of seven
10 to nine years. We have a forthcoming report that
11 shows those waiting lists have deteriorated and
12 gotten even worse, and people continue to wait and
13 wait and wait and wait.

14 I heard what the commissioner said. And we work
15 very closely with HPD. The budget for SARA, for
16 senior housing, was slashed by \$300 million. That's
17 on top of \$100 million budget cut over the next few
18 years for NYC Aging. That is not acceptable.

19 So, we have-- I will submit in the coming 72
20 hours a written testimony with specific
21 recommendations. But I really want to tell you two
22 things: The first is people who are older in the
23 city are poorer than you can imagine. People believe
24 that if they see someone in a hat and might have a
25 car, that they're okay. They are not. They are

1 living on just a few \$100 a month and they're
2 struggling to get housing.
3

4 Number two: I go all over this wonderful city
5 and everywhere I go, people come up to me and say, "I
6 don't need a huge apartment." Or in Staten Island
7 and Queens, "I don't need a home. I have nowhere to
8 go. There's nowhere for me to go." So, if we want
9 to allow families to move into housing, we have to
10 have a plan for older people and for where they can
11 go. Otherwise it's-- it's a constant struggle. So,
12 I look forward to working with the Council and thank
13 you for your leadership.

14 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you.

15 MR. SPISAK: Good afternoon. My name is Will
16 Spisak. I'm a Senior Program Associate at New
17 Economy Project. We're a citywide organization that
18 works to build a new economy that works for all New
19 Yorkers. And we are co-founders and coordinators of
20 the New York City Community Land Initiative, which is
21 the coalition that's been at the forefront of
22 expanding Community Land Trusts in New York City, as
23 organizations that help stem the tide of displacement
24 and build permanently and deeply-affordable housing
25 and equitable community space for New Yorkers.

1
2 We've seen tremendous growth in CLTs over the
3 last several years and the City Council has played a
4 critical role in that, channeling \$6 million since
5 Fiscal Year 20 to CLT organizing and technical
6 assistance to the citywide CLT initiative, and we're
7 here to urge the Council to redouble its commitment
8 to CLTs and permanently affordable housing, by
9 ensuring the City's Fiscal Year 25 budget includes
10 enhanced funding of \$3 million for the citywide
11 Community Land Trust initiative to meet the growing
12 demand for CLTs, and support three new Community Land
13 Trusts in the initiative, \$2.5 billion in capital
14 funding for permanently affordable housing as
15 outlined in the Homes Now Homes Regeneration
16 Platform, and \$3.2 billion for NYCHA repairs and
17 infrastructure.

18 Public Housing is social housing, and we want to
19 make sure we are standing in full solidarity with our
20 our friends in NYCHA.

21 As coordinators of the citywide CLT initiative,
22 you know, we can only speak Very briefly. I have
23 written testimony that has more details. But we've
24 seen tremendous growth from Mott Haven Port Morris
25 County Land Stewards in the Bronx, to ReAL Edgemere

1
2 CLT in Queens, acquiring land and growing their base
3 of members and-- and expanding the CLT model across
4 the city. We hope that the City Council continues to
5 be an ally and support in the Community Land Trust
6 movement by redoubling their commitment in the
7 budget. Thank you.

8 MR. CHENEY: Good afternoon. My name is Brendan
9 Cheney. I'm the Director of Policy and Operations at
10 the New York Housing Conference.

11 So, first, I just want to thank the City Council,
12 thank Chair Sanchez, Chair Brannon, for your ongoing
13 advocacy for housing, and your ongoing fight for
14 housing resources every year. It's really important,
15 and we really appreciate it.

16 So, as you know, we released a report recently
17 that found that the Executive Budget, the Capital
18 Budget for Housing is insufficient to maintain
19 housing production. I appreciate you guys talking
20 about this at the hearing and asking the Commissioner
21 about it. You guys have my written testimony. I'm
22 going to spend my time today just sort of trying to
23 correct how it was sort of represented at the
24 hearing, and maybe they misunderstood it.

1
2 So, I just want to be clear: Our analysis says
3 that the \$2.1 billion that's in HP's capital budget
4 next year is insufficient to maintain sort of
5 historical affordable housing production, right? We
6 did mention that there's a cut, but our focus is
7 really that \$2.1 billion is not enough. We came to
8 that conclusion by looking at how much housing they
9 normally produce every year, and what the average
10 subsidy cost is per unit for those programs. And
11 what we found was, if you look at the subsidy amount
12 and the number of units they do, you need more
13 funding than they have currently in the budget.

14 So, with the \$2.1 billion, we found that
15 affordable housing production will drop by 32% next
16 year unless they increase the capital budget. New
17 construction will be reduced by 52%, and that
18 includes supportive and senior housing. And
19 preservation projects that are funded through subsidy
20 will see a 15% decrease.

21 We're also concerned that this low level of
22 funding might mean that they won't fully utilize low-
23 income housing tax credits, leaving federal funding
24 on the table.

1
2 So, we-- we call for the City to increase HP's
3 capital budget by \$1 billion in fiscal year 2025.
4 This will both bring them up to historic production
5 and address-- start to address another issue that you
6 guys discussed, which is the pipeline.

7 So, just real quick, \$1 billion: \$812 million to
8 maintain current production, and then \$187 million
9 should be invested to help relieve the pipeline.

10 Thank you. And I'm happy to answer any of your
11 questions.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you.

13 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Good afternoon. My name is Emily
14 Goldstein. I'm the Director of Organizing and
15 Advocacy at the Association for Neighborhood and
16 Housing Development, or ANHD. Thank you so much for
17 the opportunity to testify at this hearing this
18 afternoon.

19 You have my full written testimony. So, I'm just
20 going to hit on a couple of highlights: First to
21 continue on the capital budget theme, this is
22 absolutely the time to invest more, not less. We
23 both-- You know, we desperately, desperately need
24 more affordable housing that's both new construction
25 and crucially, preservation, which often gets

1
2 overlooked and underappreciated, I think in some of
3 the production numbers.

4 We think that first and foremost, the proposed
5 cuts in the Executive Budget need to be restored so
6 that the mayor's original commitment actually gets
7 met. We also need additional funding.

8 In particular, I want to pull out two areas where
9 we think more money should be allocated: One, we
10 really need emergency preservation funds for existing
11 affordable housing, and this is buildings in current
12 HPD programs, current state programs that are facing
13 shortfalls due to pandemic-era challenges. There are
14 a lot of affordable housing buildings that are
15 dealing with massive arrears that did not get a RAP
16 or other sort of emergency federal funds at the
17 height of the pandemic, and are now still grappling
18 with the fallout. The city can't fully address this
19 issue. There's going to have to be funding from a
20 variety of government sources, but the city can and
21 should do its part.

22 Second, want to emphasize the importance of the
23 Neighborhood Pillars and Open Doors Programs. And we
24 support the Homes Now Homes Regeneration demand of
25 \$2.5 billion over the course of five years for those

3 preservation and homeownership programs, in
4 particular. Finally, I want to put in a plug for the
5 importance of improving agency staffing levels,
6 because without that none of the rest of this
7 actually hits the ground in our communities in the
8 way we need, whether it's on the construction side or
9 providing tenant services, doing inspections, making
10 sure that essentially our government is serving the
11 people who live in the housing here. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you all very much.

13 Okay, our next panel: Michael Hanlon, Albert
14 Scott, Rolando Guzman, Kevin Wolfe, Ben Dorman and
15 Caroline Chen.

16 Right. You can begin when you're ready.

17 MR. HANLON: Good afternoon. My name is Michael
18 Hanlon. I'm a member of Local 3 of the International
19 Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, one of nearly
20 27,000 members in the electrical industry in New York
21 City, Westchester, and the Tri-State area. I have
22 been a member of the Union for seven years. In my
23 time with Local 3, I have been proud to work with men
24 and women across the five boroughs on construction
25 progress projects that advance the city, economically
and structurally.

1
2 Now with the impacts of climate change becoming
3 clearer and more impactful, I want our city to
4 transition to a renewable energy economy and create
5 good jobs in the process. As a Local 3 member, we
6 receive top notch training on the fundamentals of our
7 work and training in the cutting-edge areas of our
8 field, on work such as solar energy technologies.

9 Most importantly, we are taught and uphold the
10 safety measures that ensure everyone returns home
11 safely at the end of the day. Solar installation
12 work is dangerous and workers complete difficult
13 tasks oftentimes high up on roofs. Without proper
14 training and safety precaution, serious injuries and
15 even deaths can happen. Neither I nor my union want
16 to see the growing solar industry become a dangerous
17 job where workers are put in a lose-lose situation.

18 On union jobs workers are protected with proper
19 equipment and safety measures. And they can speak up
20 when something is unsafe. Non-union workers don't
21 have that same protection or options.

22 Additionally, Local 3's state-of-the-art training
23 center and registered apprenticeship program enables
24 working people to build a career that ensures they
25

1
2 can live and raise a family right here in the
3 communities of New York City.

4 When I work with green technologies, such as
5 solar panels, I know I have the backing of my union,
6 my company, and all our members to get the job done
7 safely, efficiently, and professionally. And with
8 the union, I know that my job is not temporary. When
9 one job finishes we have the support of the Union in
10 finding a new one. That means we have a family
11 sustaining career in New York City supported by our
12 union wages and benefits.

13 By investing in the public solar power
14 legislation and other building decarbonization
15 efforts, we can uplift many more young people into a
16 lifelong career while tackling climate change. We
17 urge the Council to invest in funding these projects
18 so that more people like me can join the middle
19 class, while taking a huge step in the transition to
20 a renewable energy economy. Local 3 IBEW fully
21 supports the New York City public solar power
22 legislation, and my brothers and sisters in the Union
23 are eager to get to work.

24 This is an opportunity for all of us to get-- to
25 work together in a win-win that will help us

1 transition to fight climate change head on, create
2 good union jobs, and save the city money. It is a
3 no-brainer. Thank you for your time and
4 consideration.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you.

7 MR. SCOTT: Good afternoon. Good afternoon. My
8 name is Albert Scott. I'm with the East New York
9 Community Land Trust. And I'm just going to make it
10 simple and plain: In this upcoming budget, we need
11 to see \$3.5 billion dollars for Homes Now Homes For
12 Generation. As was mentioned earlier, this will help
13 contribute and promote community ownership, community
14 control, community wealth building.

15 We also need to see in this budget \$3 million for
16 the Community Land Trust initiative. Again, this
17 will increase and enhance community ownership,
18 community control, community wealth building.

19 And finally, we definitely would like to see \$4
20 million for the East New York Community Land Trust
21 for capital funding. Just on a small limited budget,
22 we were able to do great things in promoting
23 community ownership, community wealth building, and
24 community control in a community that were being
25 seeing saturation of just rentals, which is of course

1 the question of "affordable for whom?" When we hear
2 about housing affordability, from understanding "ing"
3 means plural, but we only see it in rental but not
4 enough ownership opportunities for the existing
5 residents of our community.
6

7 With these budget items added, I'm encouraging
8 and asking on behalf, on a dynamic awesome community
9 to please invest in our communities for ownership.

10 If you believe in community wealth building, if
11 you believe in community control, if you believe in
12 community ownership, these budget items will be
13 there. Thank you for your time.

14 MS. CHEN: Good afternoon. My name is Caroline
15 Chen, I'm the Senior Supervising Counsel in the
16 Environmental Justice Group of the New York Lawyers
17 for the Public Interest. Thank you for this
18 opportunity to testify. It is my first time. I am
19 here to talk about the implementation of Local Law 97
20 as currently envisioned in the budget. We appreciate
21 and applaud the inclusion of climate initiative
22 initiatives, and especially, specifically, the budget
23 allocating \$4 million toward 36 full time positions
24 of DOB.
25

1
2 And what we want to talk about today is making
3 sure that this-- these positions are implemented,
4 applied correctly. Commissioner Laura Popa testified
5 today that only two or three current DOB staffers are
6 calling 600-plus buildings in the city. And my
7 understanding is that Chair Sanchez remarked that
8 this was too little. And we completely agree.

9 At this critical stage and implementing Local Law
10 97, it is extremely important to do things right. We
11 don't want things to be ending up like the Housing
12 Maintenance Code that we've been hearing about for
13 the last little while, violations in Park Hill, for
14 example, things that we cannot fix, because they are
15 too difficult to fix.

16 We're at this critical time where Local Law 97
17 can be done right, and we urge you to make sure that
18 the new positions are DOB, if only 36 for now, to
19 apply more than two-- to ensure that more than two
20 are community outreach and assistance. We know that
21 MOCEJ is there to do some work, but we know there's
22 no transparency in the-- in how the accelerator is
23 working. We would love DOB to be able to take more
24 of those positions, apply to organizing, to compile
25 success stories, to motivate people out there,

1 buildings out there, to do things right from the get-
2 go, so that we're not worrying about the at the back
3 end about enforcing and collecting penalties, which
4 we know we're not doing anyway, in housing court or
5 HPD.
6

7 The other piece that we wanted-- You know,
8 something else that the DOB staffers should be
9 encouraged to do with this new additional funding is
10 to make sure that good faith efforts are being made,
11 and assist owners to make good faith efforts.

12 Because Local Law 97 does allow exemptions on penalty
13 collections, and can defer them if good-faith efforts
14 are being made. And if DOB can play a part in that
15 to make sure that we can achieve our climate goals,
16 the right way from the get-go, right now at this
17 critical stage of implementation, and I hope that we
18 really you know, can ensure a clean-- a clean future
19 for our future generations. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Good job on your first
22 time. Sorry.

23 MS. CHEN: I'm sorry?

24 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I said, great job on your
25 first time testifying.

1
2 MS. CHEN: Oh, thank you.

3 MR. WOLFE: And thank you Good afternoon. And
4 thank you to Chair Sanchez and Chair Brannon for
5 giving us the opportunity to testify. My name is
6 Kevin Wolfe. I am the Deputy Director of Advocacy at
7 the Center for New York City Neighborhoods. And the
8 center is one of the largest homeowners' service
9 organizations in New York City. And we provide
10 assistance to New Yorkers at all stages of their
11 homeownership journey, whether or not it's helping to
12 buy a home, helping to maintain a home, or helping to
13 save the home if it's in foreclosure.

14 The City Council has been one of the biggest
15 supporters for homeowners' services. And we've
16 really established something unique in the country by
17 supporting nonprofits across the city to provide
18 critical services to homeowners.

19 I did want to say that we are in support, and
20 would like to echo the statements made by those
21 supporting the Homes Now Coalition ask for \$2.5
22 billion in capital funding for Open Door as well as
23 for Neighborhood Pillars. We were supportive of
24 that. And also we're supportive of the Community
25

1 Land Trust initiative expanding to \$3 million. Those
2 are both very important items.
3

4 But we also did want to really focus on
5 homeownership preservation. That's one of the
6 critical issues affecting New York City, especially
7 as we see an increased focus on new production. We
8 want to make sure that none of our homeowners are
9 displaced.

10 So, we are asking for an increase in the City
11 Council's foreclosure prevention initiative. We are
12 the anchor partner. We would like to-- to see that
13 increased by a million dollars. And a part of that
14 will include supporting estate planning services that
15 speaker Adrienne Adams has championed.

16 In addition, we do want to point to support for--
17 increasing support for home repair through the City
18 Council's Home Fix program. That's been critical.
19 You did make a statement in the Budget Response that
20 I wanted to-- to respond to.

21 There was a question about how much-- what's the
22 average loan amount for Home Fix? It's about
23 \$48,000. There also was a question about how many
24 loans have been done. We do 100 loans per year. And
25

1 we're happy to-- to include that in our-- in our
2 written testimony.
3

4 The last thing that I did want to mention is
5 that, aside from increasing funding, the biggest
6 issue that we're having is contracts, and processing
7 contracts with the City. We've seen the Home Fix
8 program that you've supported-- we actually saw
9 \$700,000 clawed back. And that was money that we
10 could not provide for homeowners. And so, the
11 biggest thing that we can do, aside from increasing
12 funding for our nonprofit homeowners' services would
13 also be to speed up the-- the contracting process
14 with New York City. And I'll be happy to include the
15 rest of this in my written testimony. Thank you
16 again.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you.

18 MR. DORMAN: Thank you to the Chairs. Thank you
19 to the Council. My name is Ben Dorman. I'm the
20 Deputy Director of Climate Jobs New York, and we
21 direct the Carbon Free and Healthy Schools campaign
22 here in the city. Our union coalition is made up of
23 public sector unions such as UFT, DC 37, CSA. In
24 addition, we join with the private sector unions,
25 like Building and Construction Trades Council, like

1
2 my colleague at Local 3 IBEW, 32 BJ, and New York
3 State Nurses Association.

4 What our coalition and these union members know
5 is that if we continue to wait to act on climate
6 change, the cost of recovering from future extreme
7 weather events and other climate change effects will
8 only grow. So, our coalition supports building
9 decarbonization measures and energy efficiency
10 retrofits that can help turn our public buildings and
11 schools into tools in the fight against climate
12 change citywide.

13 Currently, buildings contribute nearly 80% of
14 total greenhouse gas pollution across New York City.
15 And we need to act now to utilize the ever-growing
16 and cutting-edge technologies that we have to
17 alleviate, not only that pollution, but also to
18 transition away from fossil fuel energy sources.

19 So, to do this, our campaign is asking for a \$600
20 million investment via the Capital Budget to help
21 transform those city-owned buildings and city
22 schools. And in the process of revamping our
23 buildings, we can create family sustaining jobs for
24 workers in this new renewable energy economy.

1
2 As part of that, and in addition, we do strongly
3 support Intro Number 353, which was introduced by
4 Councilmember Nurse as the New York City Public Solar
5 Power Bill with an end-goal of enabling or getting to
6 150 megawatts on city-owned buildings and schools by
7 2030.

8 So, with new avenues like the Inflation Reduction
9 Acts, Direct Pay Provision, and other sources from
10 the State Government, we believe that we can recoup
11 or cover up to 50% or more of the costs for investing
12 in those projects sheerly through federal and state
13 sources. Across our larger program, to revamp those
14 city-owned buildings and schools, we believe that a
15 \$600 million investment will be enough to get us on
16 the right path to, as I said, turn those what are
17 right now 80% fossil fuel emissions into tools in the
18 fight against climate change. And we hope that by
19 investing in our future, we can create those good
20 family-sustaining careers, and also create huge cost
21 savings for the city.

22 So, I'll leave it there and thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you.

24 Good afternoon, everybody. First of all, thank
25 you so much Chair Sanchez and Brannon, and

1 Councilmember Brewer for this hearing. My name is
2 Rolando Guzman, I'm the Deputy Director for Community
3 Preservation and Advocacy at St. Nicks Alliance. We
4 are a local community organization in North Brooklyn.
5 In my department, we are responsible for providing
6 anti-displacement assistance to residents who are
7 being pushed out of their community and their
8 apartments.
9

10 I'm here today in support of Stabilizing NYC and
11 the Community Housing Preservation Strategies
12 Initiative, and also the CLT. I think one thing that
13 I want to say is, thank you so much to the City
14 Council for the continued support to Stabilizing NYC.
15 When we started this coalition that was-- we were
16 spearheading the organizing in buildings owned by
17 predatory equity companies. That was back in the
18 days that not everybody talked about it.

19 And to this point we have 19 organizations
20 citywide, working organizing tenants, and fighting
21 against displacement. Some of the success including
22 organizing thousands of tenants, organizing hundreds
23 of tenant associations, Assistant tenants with
24 applications, for benefits such as IRAP, one-shot
25

1 deals and other benefits, so make sure that they are
2 able to stay, and also making banks accountable.
3

4 And I want to stress that-- that we were one of
5 the first organizations, along with NHD, trying to
6 figure out how to make the banks accountable to their
7 mortgages in buildings that had really bad
8 conditions. And one case that we all know from the
9 news is Signature Bank, for example, that was
10 notorious for giving bad loans to bad players in the
11 community.

12 I want to thank you, all and again stabilizing is
13 a great way to make sure that long-term, low-income
14 tenants stay in New York City. And we thank you so
15 much for your support. And we look forward. But
16 this year, we are asking for \$4 million. That will
17 allow us to have a more updated job retention from
18 community organizers and expand their services to
19 other areas as well. Thank you so much.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you all very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay, next panel Onsé, Raul
22 Rivera, Jackie Del Valle.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may begin when ready.
24
25

1
2 ONSÉ: Hi, my name is Onsé. It's my first time
3 at a City Council meeting. I have a little bit of
4 notes here. I'm a disabled New Yorker, a freelance
5 photojournalist, a musician and a community
6 organizer. Before the pandemic I managed a former
7 Pilates studio not too far from here. On Martin
8 Luther King Jr. day on 2021, I was at a peaceful
9 march commemorating the great civil rights leader MLK
10 when the police attacked us with brutal force. I was
11 beaten and knelt on by grown men, placed in an
12 illegal karate chokehold and hogtied. I was beaten
13 so brutally by the NYPD that I am now permanently
14 disabled.

15 Because of the police brutality, I can no longer
16 work and I have lost a lot. As a result, I'm
17 unhoused and I'm navigating the NYC DHS shelter
18 system.

19 I entered the DHS shelter system in January 2024,
20 and within 48 hours, I witnessed an unhoused New
21 Yorker being brutalized by a DHS shift supervisor,
22 and I was body-slammed and assaulted as well.

23 I have been on the ground documenting, as a
24 photojournalist, New York City Hotel shelters since
25 2021. Men repeatedly told me that the conditions of

1
2 confinement inside of the shelters were worse than
3 prison. Men struggled to get housing vouchers after
4 over a year of tenancy in the hotel shelters, and
5 then were evicted like they were less than human
6 after trying to comply with a malfunctioning system
7 to get housing vouchers.

8 I went into the shelter system because of what
9 the NYPD officers did to me. I'm an upstanding
10 member of my community with recognition from the
11 NAACP as a youth leader. I'm an award-winning
12 musician. I love to dance, and I used to love to
13 run, and I can't do any of those things anymore.

14 I would love to be able to work and to pay rent,
15 but I'm simply no longer physically able to do so.
16 So, because of my disability, I am now navigating--
17 excuse me-- the DHS shelter system.

18 I took this life change by the horns as an
19 opportunity to grow as a journalist, and I have been
20 constantly conducting interviews with women and
21 femmes who have been in the shelter system much
22 longer than I have. I have documented horrific
23 conditions inside the shelter, unconscionable
24 misconduct by DHS staff, including my own physical
25 assault.

1
2 I have interviewed women who have experienced
3 sexual assault in the shelter system and all kinds of
4 harm that could have and should have been avoided if
5 they had simply been housed. I have interviewed
6 women who had been in the shelter for not one, not
7 two, but up to eight years in the shelter system.
8 Most are waiting unnecessarily long for access to
9 housing vouchers which are becoming increasingly
10 inaccessible because of the addition of disqualifiers
11 like mandatory credit checks.

12 Many of the women I have interviewed are black
13 women and are discouraged, and some are even
14 contemplating leaving New York entirely because
15 they've lost faith. We need a housing-first approach
16 to homelessness, not the treatment-first approach
17 anymore.

18 I've written an open letter to the Acting
19 Commissioner of DHS, the Department of Homeless
20 Services, Molly Wasow Park, who recently went on CBS
21 News to defend the treatment-first approach, or the
22 ILP approach to homelessness. It does not work. It
23 is simply joining us in mountains of paperwork.

24 I'm organizing a class action lawsuit for the
25 disability discriminations and violations of the

2 Americans with Disabilities Act I've experienced as a
3 shelter tenant. And I'll include more in my written
4 testimony, which I'll deliver to you all.

5 But we are also living under the imposition of
6 reality. It's unacceptable for us to be waiting for
7 over a year for access to housing, which is a human
8 right, to languish in a shelter system that is
9 infested with bugs. We are served moldy food. We
10 are constantly abused.

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you.

12 ONSÉ: Yes. And I will deliver that open letter
13 to you as well, which is published on medium.com and
14 has over 50 signatures from across the country and
15 international signatures as well.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you for testifying.
17 Go ahead.

18 Hi. Is this on?

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: No.

20 There we go. Hi, good afternoon. Thank you to
21 the Housing and Buildings Committee for the
22 opportunity to speak, and the members who have given
23 all their time today, and thank you to Dan and of
24 course our wonderful Chairwoman.

1
2 My name is Jackie Del Valle. I'm the Coordinator
3 of Stabilizing NYC, Take Root Justice. As Rolando
4 Guzman from St. Nick's Alliance explained, we are a
5 coalition of grassroots organizations that combine
6 tenant organizing with legal representation to combat
7 tenant harassment and preserve affordable housing.

8 Our tenants associations form coalition's across
9 landlord portfolios, whose landlords have often made
10 speculative investments with the plan to push out
11 tenants and flip the units out of rent stabilization.

12 We've won rent strikes, prevented evictions,
13 corrected hazardous conditions, and empowered
14 hundreds of tenants to lead the rent law fights up in
15 Albany for the past 10 years. Yes, it's been 10
16 years that we've been a council-funded initiative.
17 To celebrate, we're going to have a breakfast
18 briefing next Thursday, May 23, from 9:30 to 11 at
19 One Center Street. Everyone here should have gotten
20 an invite. And I hope-- I know it's a busy day, but
21 I hope people can kind of stop in and here's some
22 stories. We're going to be talking, hearing from the
23 leaders of STAND, which is The Shalom Tenants
24 Alliance Neighborhood Defense. These are the tenants
25 of Landlord Daniel Ohebshalom, who's been in the

1 news. He was arrested. He's in Rikers for failing
2 to do repairs, tenant harassment, and falsifying
3 information. And although we've been working really
4 hard these 10 years, there's still a lot of
5 challenges ahead as-- as, actually you all up there
6 know really well. The recent data is showing rents
7 at all-time high, vacancy rates at all time low, and
8 courts are really overrun with eviction, and the rent
9 laws that passed up in Albany really favor landlords.
10 Our coalition right now is working on sending out
11 fact sheets and holding meetings on the new Good
12 Cause Law throughout our large network of tenants
13 associations.
14

15 Just the last thing that I want to say is I was
16 looking at my testimony for last year. And I'd
17 mentioned Signature Bank, which Rolando talked about,
18 which had recently at that time failed. And over the
19 past year, stabilizing groups along with NHD, UNHP,
20 and others have worked really hard so that the FDIC
21 and the current note holders are actually holding the
22 owners accountable to making repairs.

23 And with additional funding and organizing, it's
24 going to be a really big opportunity to make sure
25 that those buildings become stabilized. And when the

1
2 owners, they choose to walk away, that opportunity is
3 ripe for preservation purchasing.

4 So, we really encourage you to fund stabilizing,
5 fund Homes For Now, and fund the CLT initiative so
6 that we're able to kind of work together to meet this
7 current threat and crisis. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you very much.

9 MR. RIVERA: Good afternoon. My name is Raul
10 Rivera. I'm a TLC driver and TLC driver advocate.
11 I'm a native New Yorker. When we have a mayor of New
12 York going to 50 Hudson Yards in a \$5,000 suit and
13 cutting ribbons, that tells you who he's with. He's
14 not with the New Yorker. When you have the City of
15 Yes, to rezone this city, the city I was born in,
16 this rezoning is not for us. These are for the
17 developers.

18 And this city council is filled with Dominicans,
19 Puerto Ricans, Blacks, Asians. But you guys want to
20 convince us that it is the white man, the white man
21 sticking it to us. When it comes to congestion
22 pricing, what do you say? Nothing. When it comes to
23 Thrive NYC What do you say? Nothing. When Kathy
24 Hochul makes a racist remark, what do you say?
25 Nothing. I bet if Trump said something you would

1 have something to say. I know many drivers,
2 including myself, who have lived in their vehicles.
3 We have drivers now living in their vehicles. We
4 have other cities. Minneapolis is about to make more
5 money than the a New York driver. We got bills
6 drafted for the benefit of the driver, and Brooks-
7 Powers does not want to pass those bills.

8
9 It is shameful. It's our own people. It's not
10 the white man. It's the Puerto Rican. It's the
11 Dominican, the black, the Asian. They're the ones
12 doing it to us. Defund the cops. We need cops in
13 this city. It's chaos that's happening here. It's
14 chaos. We can't be safe in our own city. We can't
15 walk in our city. It's you guys. The Puerto Ricans,
16 the Dominicans. It's you guys? And I'm going to say
17 it like that. I'm Puerto Rican myself. You gaslight
18 us, like if it's the white man, white supremacy. No.
19 It's our own people sticking to us. Congestion
20 pricing.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you.

22 MR. RIVERA: Vaccine mandates.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. We have our next
24 panel now--

25 MR. RIVERA: You fire people.

1 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Sir, we're all set.

2 MR. RIVERA: You fire people.

3 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: We're good. Thank you.

4 MR. RIVERA: What do you expect when you fire
5 people? You're going to need workers.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you for your
7 testimony.

8 MR. RIVERA: Brannon-- [MICROPHONE TURNED OFF]

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. We have our next
10 panel on Zoom, starting with Bessie--

11 [BACKGROUND SHOUTING]

12 Okay, please remove him.

13 Okay, thank you. Have a good night.

14 [BACKGROUND SHOUTING]

15 Bessie Kuravsky?

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 [BACKGROUND SHOUTING]

18 MS. KURAVSKY: Hi, my name is Bessie Kuravsky.

19 On January 19, 2024, at 5:45 a.m. I opened my son's
20 bedroom door and in the loudest most fearful voice at
21 the top of my lungs. I shrieked, "Help. Fire." My
22 husband leapt out of bed, ran into our baby boy
23 Binyomin's room, into a room that was filled with
24 what we thought was smoke. He immediately took Baby
25

1
2 Boy Binyomin out of this crib and ran outside of the
3 apartment, holding my motionless son. I ran into my
4 bedroom to get my two newborn twin girls from their
5 bassinets. Binyomin was taken to Maimonides hospital
6 with my husband riding in the same ambulance, while I
7 rode to the hospital in a separate ambulance with our
8 one-month-old newborn twin girls.

9 When the doctors informed us that Binyomin passed
10 away, we were in shock and were in a profound state
11 of perpetual terror and paralyzing fear. How had
12 Binyomin, a boy who was 20 days away from celebrating
13 his one-year birthday, passed away from a
14 malfunctioning steam radiator in the comfort of his
15 own bedroom?

16 It has been almost four months and outside of
17 grief support. We are rightfully outraged by how the
18 landlord failed to provide the most basic, most
19 essential, most important right that every human
20 being deserves, which is physical safety.

21 We would like the budget to include funds for
22 annual steam radiator inspections. This should apply
23 to all residential buildings that use steam
24 radiators, but especially pre-war buildings that are
25 using aged steam radiators, and are often known to

1
2 have corroded floors that can cause the steam
3 radiators to malfunction.

4 Why are New York City rent-stabilized tenants
5 allowed to live in pre-war buildings that are unsafe?
6 Why are boilers inspected annually by the Department
7 of Buildings but not the steam radiators? Why are
8 there no mandatory safety inspections for steam
9 radiators?

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you so much. Your time
11 has expired.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you, Bessie. Thank
13 you for your testimony.

14 Now we have Danielle Manley.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 MS. MANLEY: Hi. Thank you. Good afternoon,
17 Chair Sanchez and Brannon.

18 Sorry, that was hard testimony to hear.

19 Good afternoon, Chair Sanchez and Brannon, and
20 members of the committee. Thank you for the
21 opportunity to comment today on the Mayor's Executive
22 Budget. My name is Danielle and I am the Manager of
23 Policy at Urban Green Council. We are a nonprofit
24 based here in New York City. And we are dedicated to
25

1
2 decarbonizing buildings for healthy and resilient
3 communities.

4 I'm here today not only on behalf of Urban Green
5 but also Natural Resources Defense Council, the New
6 York League of Conservation Voters, and Regional
7 Planning Association to stress our very strong
8 support for the \$4,000,000 and 36 staff positions
9 allocated at DOB to oversee the implementation of
10 Local Law 97.

11 I have detailed our support in our written
12 comments, but I'll underscore a few things. Since
13 2021, our organizations and a wide range of other
14 stakeholders have been advocating for the law to be
15 prioritized in the city's budget, because Local Law
16 97 is the centerpiece of New York's climate strategy
17 for buildings, and robust implementation. Robust
18 funding for its implementation is key to the city's
19 climate progress.

20 So, we're glad to see that this year's Executive
21 Budget demonstrates the commitment to Local Law 97
22 that we need right now. Since the law passed in
23 2019, DOB has worked very hard with very few staff,
24 and they successfully facilitated a large advisory
25 board process, issued two sets of major rulemaking on

1
2 technical details, and navigated many complex
3 implementation questions. Now that the first year of
4 compliance was underway, the bureau sustainability
5 staff still has a big charge, including that they
6 need to finish conducting analysis required by the
7 law to complete the rulemaking process, deliver
8 outreach and education to thousands of owners and
9 prepare for substantial review and enforcement
10 efforts on the compliance report that will start
11 rolling in in May of next year.

12 The mayor's new climate budgeting publication
13 found that private building emissions limits through
14 Local Law 97 are the most impactful climate
15 mitigation action that the city is taking. And the
16 Executive Budget supports the charge at hand, so we
17 strongly encourage the City Council--

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you so much your time
19 has expired.

20 MS. MANLEY: We strongly encourage the City
21 Council to pass a final budget with this full
22 allocation at DOB to see that work through. Thank
23 you for your time today.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you very much. Next
25 we have James Dill.

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

3 I'm Jim Dill, Executive Director of Housing and
4 Services Inc. We are a permanent supportive housing
5 serving 750 households in Manhattan and the Bronx.
6 We are members of the Supportive Housing Network of
7 New York and support all the netroots advocacy points
8 of this hearing.

9 First, we'd like to express our thanks to the
10 Council for both including provisions for a
11 reallocation of NYC 15/15 resources in the
12 Preliminary Budget Response, and for instituting the
13 COLA for the next few years for the human services
14 sector. The reallocation will vastly help the bold
15 and absolutely necessary 15/15 initiative to meet its
16 ambitious targets.

17 We are also so very grateful for the COLA that
18 will provide encouragement to our dedicated-but-
19 comically-underpaid essential workers.

20 We do express alarm at what we understand in the
21 propose 30%-plus-cut to HPD's special needs housing
22 funding in the Mayor's Executive Budget. While we
23 applaud the Mayor's ambitious goals for increasing
24 affordable housing, to propose cuts will only delay
25 and prohibit reduction of urgently needed housing.

1
2 HPD funding was the centerpiece of our last
3 development project brought online in 2022, with the
4 15/15 rent subsidy and services funding. We are
5 currently struggling with the development of a new
6 project facing significantly higher instruction and
7 interest costs. We understand there is up to a
8 three-year backlog and the HPD development pipeline
9 that could make our new project unviable. To meet
10 the housing crisis, it is imperative that HPD's
11 capital and staffing funding being significantly
12 increased and not cut.

13 We will submit written testimony, and thank you
14 so much for your time here, and very many thanks
15 again for the COLA and for the reallocation.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you Jim. Now we have
17 Lyudmila.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 LYUDMILA [ZOOM NAME]: --radiator inspections and
20 buildings. We have had the death of my little cousin
21 and Ms. Kuravsky's son was the third death of its
22 kind to occur due to a radiator malfunction. And it
23 is our lawmakers' responsibility-- Uh, hello?

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Hi. Yeah, you're on.
25

1
2 Okay, great. Hi. My name is Melanie
3 Pomichet[sp?], and I'm here to-- It's my first time
4 testifying. I'm here to support the plea by Ms.
5 Kuravsky to have regular radiator inspection--
6 inspections happen.

7 Actually, her little boy was my cousin, and he
8 was the third such deaths have happened recently.
9 And that is a preventable death. I think you all
10 need to appreciate that the tragedy of three little
11 babies basically dying from what-- what could have
12 been prevented through just a simple inspection.

13 So, I call on you, our lawmakers. You have a
14 responsibility to prevent these deaths. So,
15 inspections drive accountability. Steam radiation
16 inspections should be a priority, and I call on you
17 to make sure that that is prioritized in these next
18 budget discussions. Thank you

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you. Next we have
20 Natalie Akselrod.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

22 MS. AKSELROD: Hi, how are you? Hi, Councilman.
23 Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak. I'm
24 going to try to be as short as possible. Unlike a
25 lot of the members who I sympathize with, I'm not

1
2 going to ask for money. I'm here to talk about the
3 legislative change pertaining to mandatory radiator
4 inspections in all of New York City apartment
5 buildings that are over an X amount of years old.

6 There are a lot of very, very old buildings. We
7 have no idea how these how these radiators function,
8 we really have no precedent, and mandating these
9 kinds of inspections is crucial, because it will
10 prevent tragedies such as the one that has occurred.
11 You have all heard the mother and the testimony of
12 putting her son to bed, and finding that he had
13 passed away because of something that could have
14 easily been prevented.

15 Yes, it's an accident. But if an accident could
16 have been prevented, it is no longer an accident. It
17 is an act of negligence. And just to draw an
18 analogy: When 25 years ago, I was giving birth in
19 New York City, I was not able to leave the hospital
20 without the car seat being inspected. And that's
21 reasonable, because if the car seat was not
22 inspected, it was not up to par with standards, or if
23 I did not know how to use it, I could actually do a
24 lot more damage. Never mind putting the baby at
25 risk. There have been cases when babies had died as

1
2 a result of either malfunctioning car seats, or
3 parents accidentally killing them by buckling the men
4 incorrectly. Right? And it's reasonable that an
5 inspection had to take place.

6 Two years later, when I had my second baby in New
7 York City, I could not bring the same car seat and
8 say, "Oh, it's fine. It was inspected two years ago
9 and I still remember how to do it." They had to
10 inspect it again before letting me leave the
11 hospital. And they had to give me a mini tutorial
12 about strapping the baby in, and that makes sense.

13 So, it's insane that with something as large as
14 radiators, where again we have no idea how the
15 radiators will work in this building, they are over
16 100 years old, because--

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you so much. Your time
18 has expired.

19 MS. AKSELROD: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay, now we have Tierra
21 Labrada.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

23 MS. LABRADA: Can you hear me?

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Yes, go ahead.

25 MS. LABRADA: Hi, can you hear me?

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Yes, go ahead, Tierra.

3 MS. LABRADA: Okay, great. Thank you. I can't
4 hear you. Hi, Chairperson Brannon. Sorry,
5 Councilmember Brannon, members of the New York City
6 Council. My name is Tierra Labrada. I'm with the
7 Supportive Housing Network of New York. Thank you so
8 much for the opportunity to testify today.

9 First, we'd like to thank the Council for their
10 support for the human services workforce and
11 reinstating the annual COLA. And thank you also to
12 the Council for including the \$6.4 million to expand
13 the Justice-Involved Supportive Housing Initiative in
14 your Preliminary Budget Response. I also want to say
15 a huge thank you-- it's a day of thanks-- a huge
16 thank you to the Council for supporting the network's
17 NYC 15/15 reallocation proposal by signing on to the
18 Dear Colleague letter circulated by the Mental Health
19 Chair Linda Lee.

20 As you know, NYC 15/15 is the primary mechanism
21 for supportive housing development in the city, and
22 it's currently failing to meet its target. This
23 means that critical units are not being brought
24 online. Our proposal for NYC 15/15 also includes
25 expanding eligibility to include those exiting

1
2 institutional settings and survivors of domestic
3 violence. But with that being said, we are very
4 concerned about the Capital Budget, which decreases
5 in funding from \$2.6 to \$2.1 billion, which according
6 to our analysis, or analysis by the New York Housing
7 Conference can result in a 33% decrease in affordable
8 housing units that are financed by the city. This
9 will impact the most vulnerable populations, as you
10 know, including those exiting homelessness and low-
11 income seniors.

12 We're also concerned about the reductions in the
13 Mayor's Office of Contract Services. Nonprofits are
14 under significant financial strain due to the city's
15 failure to reimburse them for contractually mandated
16 services in a timely manner. Some providers are
17 still awaiting payment for services provided in 2018.
18 With millions of dollars in arrears. As proposed the
19 Executive Budget's significant reductions would
20 exacerbate this already untenable situation and we
21 urge you, the Council and the Administration, to
22 restore the funds to personnel and non-personnel
23 services to avert further harm.

24 The Network is also a member of CCIT, Correct
25 Crisis Intervention Today, a coalition advocating for

peer-led non police mental health crisis response.

The current pilot program B-HEARD omits peers. We ask that the Council adopt the best practices--

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

MS. LABRADA: --of CCIT NYC's model and focus on policing train peers on B-HEARD response teams, as well as fully restoring the prior B-HEARD PEGs.

With the recent tragic killing of Win Rosario, we must say that enough is enough, and fully invest in and build out a true peer-led mental health crisis response in our city.

Thank you so much for this opportunity.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you. Now we have Yakov Medinets.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

MR. MEDINETS: Hi. Thank you so much for taking the time. Thank you, Commissioners. Thank you for the Chairs. My name is Yakov Medinets, and I am testifying to echo the concerns raised by many about the issue of malfunctioning radiators that have recently killed small babies, and are a fundamental risk to anyone who lives in apartments that are old, with old radiator equipment. To the extent that they

1
2 may be young, they may be unable to get out of room
3 they-- there may be lots of reasons why people can
4 get hurt by these sorts of equipment. And the
5 common-sense approach to this problem should be basic
6 legislation that prevents owners from fixing these
7 radiators, from inspecting these radiators, from
8 making sure that these radiators are safe.

9 Some of these equipment can be more than 100
10 years old, and they're slowly falling apart. This
11 may be only the beginning of the kind of horror we
12 might see if we don't pass some sort of reasonable
13 regulations that require homeowners-- people who own
14 homes in New York City, who rent it out to tenants,
15 especially those that are controlled by the HPD. And
16 in general, there should be common sense approach.
17 We need the political courage to-- to realize that
18 the cost of this sort of-- this sort of regulation is
19 far outweighed by the value of the human life that
20 we'll be saving. The importance to our communities
21 to make us feel like-- that people who are renters
22 are still human beings, that they deserve protection.

23 We have all sorts of regulations for all sorts of
24 dangerous items in the house. And this is just a--

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you so much. Your time
3 has expired.

4 MR. MEDINETS: --huge example... Thank you so
5 much for your time.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you. Now we have
7 Alexander.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 Good afternoon, everyone. Can you hear me?
10 Sorry about that.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Yes. Go ahead.

13 MR. KURAVSKI: Great. My name is Alexander. I'm
14 the father of Binyomin Kuravski, the boy that
15 tragically passed away. Binyomin passed away 20 days
16 before his first year birthday. We already had a
17 birthday party for him planned. We had his outfit
18 planned. We had everything ready to go. I don't
19 need your sorry-- I don't need any sympathy. I need
20 change. I need laws to change. And I think I speak
21 for myself as well as on behalf of many, many others
22 who feel the same. Binyomin is the third baby that
23 has passed away inside of the comfort of his own
24 home, as a New York City tenant. He is the third
25 baby, again, that has passed away in the comfort of

3 his own bed in his own home, in what should have been
4 the safest place in the world, his own home.

5 If the right laws were in place, Baby Boy
6 Binyomin today would be 15 months old. If you have
7 children or grandchildren, chances are Binyomin would
8 still be even younger today than your children and
9 your grandchildren are now. Binyomin would still be
10 younger than them, and he passed away.

11 He's not here because the right laws were not in
12 place to protect them. If the right laws were in
13 place, the landlord would be required to have the
14 steam radiator inspected, a licensed professional
15 would inspect it and alert the landlord if it posed a
16 danger to anyone living inside of that unit.

17 But that didn't happen. We trusted that without
18 any kind of laws, the landlord out of the kindness of
19 his heart would just provide basic maintenance. He
20 clearly did not, and I'm sure that many other
21 landlords aren't doing it as well.

22 Our cars need to be inspected annually. Our
23 children need to undergo a medical checkup before
24 they go to daycare school, after school clubs,
25 extracurricular sports, you name it. We believe in
checking and inspecting things in order to have basic

1
2 safety measures. Why are the same safety measures
3 not being used when we are talking about a 100-year-
4 old piece of metal?

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you so much. Your time
6 has expired.

7 MR. KURAVSKY: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you very much for
9 your testimony.

10 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yeah, I just I just want to
11 thank the family of Binyomin Zachariah and all who
12 testified on his behalf. I know that you have been
13 working closely with Councilmember Farah Louis, who
14 represents your community. She-- She does have
15 legislation in the works, and I look forward to
16 reviewing that and working with you all to make sure
17 that the city-- the children in our city are safe.
18 I'm very sorry for your loss.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you, Chair Sanchez.
20 Okay, with that, we're going to close out today's
21 hearing and we'll see you tomorrow. Thank you.

22 [GAVEL]

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date 07/03/2024