

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL BUDGET

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September 26, 2019

Start: 10:17 a.m.

Recess: 11:33 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.
14th Fl.

B E F O R E: VANESSA L. GIBSON
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Mark Gjonaj
Barry S. Grodenchik
Steven Matteo
Helen K. Rosenthal

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

Andrew Haollweck, Deputy Commissioner for Deputy
Commissioner for Communications and policy NYC
Department of Design & Construction, DDC

Eric Boorstyn, Associate Commissioner of
Architecture and Engineering and Technical
Services, NYC Department of Design &
Construction, DDC

2 [sound check] [pause] [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Good morning

4 everyone. Welcome to the City Council. It's glad-I'm
5 glad to have you all here no this beautiful Thursday
6 morning. I am Council Member Vanessa Gibson of
7 District 16 in the Bronx, and I'm proud to serve as
8 the Chair of the Subcommittee on the Capital Budget
9 here in the New York City Council, and I'm thankful
10 to be here this morning to discuss the Department of
11 Design and Construction's Front-End Planning Unit.
12 As many of you know, DDC plays an essential role in
13 our city's capital construction process. As the
14 city's primary capital construction project manager,
15 DDC is responsible for the overall design, the
16 construction and the overall coordination of capital
17 projects citywide, and is currently managing over
18 3,883 agency projects to be exact. DDC provides
19 communities with new or renovated structures such as
20 firehouses, our libraries, police precincts,
21 courthouses, senior centers, children's museums to be
22 exact, while working collaboratively with other city
23 agencies and many external partners. The Front-End
24 Planning Unit was first established by DDC in 2016 to
25 perform an early review of project proposals with

2 sponsoring agencies and to ensure that goals and
3 budgets and scopes and schedules were all aligned.
4 The idea was that the Front-End Planning Unit would
5 help agencies understand exactly what they were
6 asking for, and how much it would cost the before-
7 before pursuing projects with the end goal of being
8 able to complete projects on time and within budget.
9 This was a key change to the city's capital projects
10 process. In January of this year, DDC released its
11 Strategic Blueprint for Construction Excellence that
12 everyone has in which outlines its plan to transform
13 how city agencies manage capital construction
14 projects from start to finish in order to deliver
15 public buildings and infrastructure on time and on
16 budget. The Strategic Blueprint outlines several
17 significant changes one of which included the
18 expansion of the Front-End Planning Unit. As many of
19 our city's buildings and infrastructure reach their
20 maturity, it seems increasingly more important to
21 incorporate front-end planning to more of our city's
22 projects. At this morning's hearing we look forward
23 to learning more about the work of the Front-End
24 Planning Unit, what's working, what can be improved,
25 whether it's having the desired effects and goals and

2 whether there is sufficient head count and budget.

3 We hope to hear more from DDC about the work to
4 further expand the Front-End Planning Unit, and how
5 such improvements will streamline the construction
6 pipeline and the review process to effectively scope
7 and budget city capital projects. Before I conclude
8 my opening, I want to thank the staff who helped
9 prepare for this hearing this morning, and I'd like
10 to thank the Finance Division and our subcommittee
11 staff, our Deputy Director Nathan Toth, our Unit Head
12 Chima Obichere, our Financial Analyst, Monica Buja
13 (sp?), our Senior Counsel Rebecca Chasen as well as
14 our Assistant Counsel Stephanie Ruiz. Thank you to
15 this team for putting today's hearing together. I'd
16 also like to acknowledge the members of the committee
17 who are here, and we will be joined by other members
18 throughout the morning. We have with us our Minority
19 Leader Council Member Steve Matteo is here, and we
20 will hear this morning from Andrew Hollweck, DDC's
21 Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs, as well as
22 Eric Boorstyn, our Associate Commissioner for
23 Architecture and Engineering and Technical Services,
24 and I do want to express my gratitude over the past
25 year and a half that I've chaired this subcommittee.

2 We've worked very, very closely with our Commissioner
3 Ms. Grillo and her team as the strategic blueprint
4 was released, and one of the projects that obviously
5 is in my back yard that I speak so lovingly about is
6 the Bronx Children's Museum, and I am just so excited
7 that in 2020 the County of the Bronx will finally
8 have a children's museum, and DDC is going to make
9 that happen. We've had a lot of hurdles, a lot of
10 challenges, but we are going to see that project to
11 fruition and I'm very, very proud that DDC is leading
12 it and I want to thank you on behalf of the Bronx
13 because it's important to all of us for our children
14 to have their own children's museum. Right now we
15 have a mobile bus that travels around the Bronx, and
16 would you believe the bus is breaking down. So we
17 are replacing the bus, but we're not delaying the
18 opening of the Children's Museum. So, I want to
19 thank DDC as well as our Commission Lorraine Grillo
20 and thank you for being here, and now I will have our
21 Counsel swear you in and then you can began your
22 testimony. Thank you for joining us today.

23 LEGAL COUNSEL: Do you affirm that your
24 testimony will be truthful to the best of your
25 knowledge, information and belief?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: I do.

3 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: You may begin.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Thank you
6 and good morning Chair Gibson and Council Member
7 Matteo and members of the Subcommittee on Cap—the
8 Capital Budget. My name is Andrew Hollweck, Deputy
9 Commissioner for Communications and Policy at the New
10 York City Department of Design of Construction. As
11 you—as you’ve mentioned, I’ve joined at the table
12 this morning by Associate Commissioner of
13 Architecture and Engineering, Eric Boorstyn, and we
14 have several of our DDC colleagues in the audience
15 who will be here to helping us with any detailed
16 questions you may have. I’m pleased to discuss in
17 detail our Front-End Planning Unit in perhaps
18 excruciating detail, but we want to—we want to be
19 transparent and make this a dialogue with the Council
20 and more broadly the great progress DDC has made in
21 the recent past to streamline the capital
22 construction process under the leadership of
23 Commission Lorraine Grillo. Completing capital
24 projects in a dense aging, urban environment that is
25 both highly regulated and closely scrutinized is

2 challenging. A recently released blueprint for
3 construction excellence details the risks related to
4 a constrained design, bid, build, procurement model a
5 multi-tiered oversight structure dozens, literally
6 dozens of interagency relationships and successfully
7 managing hundreds of consultants and contractors
8 while working to complete work on a \$2 billion
9 portfolio. This, by the way, is not an excuse, but
10 rather the backdrop to guide our solutions. In 2016
11 based on the advocacy of elected officials in this
12 room and others on the council, front-end planning
13 was created to develop a comprehensive understanding
14 of the needs of each capital project no matter how
15 large or how small to facilitate successful delivery
16 in a safe, expeditious and cost-effective way. Our
17 FEP Units work closely with sponsor agencies on every
18 single project submission to clearly understand
19 project scopes and ensure enough funding is in place
20 upfront. This is limited last minute changes and
21 advance project initiation more quickly. This also
22 decreases future delays in design and construction
23 the sponsor agencies must approve and sign off on FEP-
24 FEP's findings before project initiation. Our FEP
25 process put projects on a better path for long-term

2 success. One of the key longstanding challenges has
3 been improving the initial level of details of
4 projects submitted to DDC for construction for some
5 time to sponsor agencies for whom DDC builds were
6 required simply to submit a project initiation form
7 with limited detail with a budget to DDC and the
8 project immediately became DDC's and the clock on the
9 project started to tick. Today, once we come to an
10 agreement with our sponsor agency on a project's
11 scope and there is enough funding provided, then and
12 only then will DDC officially accept it to the
13 uniform electronic capital project initiation
14 process another innovation that came after the
15 release of our blueprint in January. Since we have
16 established this thorough proposed review process,
17 we've been able to work closely with the Office of
18 Management and Budget to use FEP's final report as
19 the official request for the certificate to proceed
20 provided to OMB. This is reduced the time between
21 FEP's work with the sponsor agency and DDC's approval
22 of the project from 15 months to 9, a substantial
23 reduction in the initial procurement process and
24 allowing us to jump into—into design more quickly
25 adding a level of certainty I think that really I

2 think can reassure project owners and people who
3 invested in those projects. The intensive pre-
4 approval engagement has significantly enhanced
5 communication between DC and sponsor agencies prior
6 to project acceptance and has led to a number of PIs
7 being returned for further review. In Fiscal 2019,
8 DDC public buildings FEP reviewed 97 projects, 51 or
9 53% of which were returned for further consultation.
10 Generally PIs were returned for further review due to
11 constructability issues that might impact the true
12 scope and true cost of the project, the need for
13 additional funding to complete the proposed project,
14 and/or a need to further differentiate between
15 capital and expense items in the scope, an real buga
16 bearer of many capital projects, and one we're able
17 to differentiate at the front again with this
18 process. Returning the PI to the sponsor does not
19 mean rejection to be clear. It simply ensures that
20 scope and budget must be in alignment before both DDC
21 and the sponsor undertake costly public work. The
22 FEP staff work tirelessly with sponsor agencies and
23 collaboratively to ensure projects come to fruition
24 via a host of resources at DDC's disposal including
25 in-house cost estimating services, site visits and

1 follow-up meetings. To reiterate every projects goes
2 through FEP before it is officially accepted. The
3 time between FPI form submission and the start of
4 design can take approximately seven to nine months
5 through a series of phased involved in-involving
6 multiple units within DDC in addition to FEP because
7 we'll get a little detailed. Phase A can send this-
8 this is a-you can sort of follow this on-on the
9 chart. Phase A consists of an initial assessment,
10 scope, scope development and feedback to the sponsor
11 agency. Phase B details project schedule utilizes
12 our in-house cost estimation services, identifies all
13 required regulatory approvals of which we know there
14 are many, and professional services that will be
15 needed and require and requires an additional agency
16 review of FEP's findings. Together, Phases A and B
17 are known as the planning phase and encompass the
18 bulk of FEP's process. These phases typically take
19 several weeks. The final deliverable of the project
20 planning process is the FEP Report, which details the
21 proposed scope of work as it-it's a really elaborate
22 document, which I hope we can share with you, if not
23 at this juncture, we have-we can-it's-it's a robust
24 document, which details the proposed scope of work,
25

1 project background and zoning information, applicable
2 zoning laws, photos after the site visit, the
3 project's schedule and the project budget. The
4 sponsor agency receives the FEP report, which
5 includes DDC's findings and recommendations. If DDC
6 has recommended the project for initiation, the
7 sponsor may approve the FEP report and conclusions
8 via a signed PI form. Alternatively the sponsor may
9 express concerns or comments with either of these
10 documents and further discussion ensues. Once
11 approved a managing agency switch occurs and the
12 project is initiated by DDC, the clock has started.
13 If DDC has not recommended the project for
14 initiation, DDC provides the sponsor with the
15 decision accompanied by the FEP report and the offers
16 the sponsor a meeting to discuss our recommendations
17 and to collaborate further. The sponsor may then
18 take the recommended changes to resubmit the PI form
19 for review, and this is also a successful process in
20 many cases including in, you know, Queens Library
21 projects and—and I think you have a much better track
22 record thanks to this process. The expansion of FEP
23 is one of a larger set of structural changes
24 happening at DDC under Commissioner Grillo to improve
25

2 capital project delivery. In January we released our
3 Strategic Blueprint for Construction Excellence an
4 agency wide review of business practices and external
5 challenges to build infrastructure and public works
6 more efficiently and cost effectively. While many of
7 the recommendations are technical, the ultimate
8 objectives are no less important ensuring the
9 collective quality of life for all New Yorkers. The
10 blueprint contains detailed solutions to bureaucratic
11 inefficiencies identified by practitioners and
12 supported by stakeholders who—who work with and
13 depend on DDC, and demonstrates how we can, in fact,
14 untangle complicated bureau—the government processes
15 and change them for the better. We're essentially
16 reverse engineering this process and looking very
17 carefully at how all these processes can be
18 untangled. Although not the subject of today's
19 hearing let me briefly highlight the blueprint's
20 objectives. First, at the front we want to improve
21 the pipeline. In addition to our Front-End Planning
22 Units, DDC is also expanding several services to
23 further assist agencies with their scope development
24 including cost estimating services and DDC led CPSD
25 studies as well as a new and this is critical and I

2 hope we can discuss this further, Advanced Capital
3 Planning Unit that will assist agencies in their
4 planning assessments well in advance of the proposed
5 capital work. DDC is committed to managing projects
6 more effectively to remain a best in class provider
7 of construction services. Two new initiatives
8 underway since January are the implementation of a
9 multi-day project manager training, a certification
10 for all of our frontline project managers giving them
11 the sense of ownership over their projects, which is
12 a critical function in both the public and private
13 sector really ensuring that this is—that they own
14 these projects. We have also established an Office
15 of Cost Control, which is another new initiative
16 under the blueprint whose sole job is to collect data
17 on DDC projects in order to create firm, reliable
18 standard unit costs and design and construction
19 schedules, which I hope we can report on in the
20 future. We are getting more out of designers,
21 contractors and construction managers by making it
22 easier for all parties to be included in projects be
23 increased MWBE participation, a top priority of
24 Commissioner Grillo and Mayor de Blasio. We are
25 retooling vendor performance evaluations so that we

can improve performance without limiting the vendor pool, another interesting exercise. Finally, DDC is modernizing our internal systems and technologies so that we can track key data efficiently so that flags are raised quickly on problematic steps in the process, and there's a further level of accountability both internally and externally as we know whose desk a particular review or action is on. DDC provided a six-month update on our strategic blueprint in July, which you also have on your desks, and will soon begin working on a one-year update so everyone stays on their toes on this process. The realization of a full scale front-end planning expansion has provided absolutely essential oversight and process control in the development of viable capital projects. The week spent at the outside of a project saved the city vast amounts of time and money over the life of a project. We are proud of these achievements, and the implementation of the strategic blueprint. While much work remains, we look forward to continuing to enhance the speed of project delivery, decrease costs and safety risks and bring valuable projects and services to New Yorkers more quickly. Thank you again for the opportunity to

2 testify. My colleagues and I are happy to answer to
3 any questions. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you very much.
5 We appreciate not only your presence here today, but
6 giving us a greater understanding of what the FEP
7 looks like in terms of its internal mechanisms and
8 some of the dynamics of the unit, why it was created
9 in 2016 to begin with coupled with the progress
10 update. I'm not normally receiving progress updates
11 after just six months. So, I think that's very
12 aggressive. So we do appreciate that.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Chair
14 Gibson, I just want to say that that was truly was
15 the—at the initiation of Commissioner Grillo. This
16 as her idea, and I just want to say because, you
17 know, these things come from the top down, and we are
18 as an agency very much committed to—to following her
19 lead, and making sure this—this gets done.

20 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Absolutely. I'd like
21 to also acknowledge the presence of one of our
22 members of the committee Council Member Barry
23 Grodenchik. Thank you very much on behalf of Queens.
24 Just a couple of questions, and then I'll see if my
25 colleague has anything to add, but you gave us this

2 really nice chronicle of the timeframe, and so step
3 by step from Phase A to Phase B, typically what is
4 the average timeframe in terms of the entire review
5 process in the Front-End Planning Unit from beginning
6 to end?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Eric can
8 you?

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Yeah,
10 I'd be happy to answer that one. Um, the process has
11 grown as we've grown our staff and we've grown the-

12 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: --depth
14 of the service we provide. When we first began the
15 process it was a little bit more abbreviated than the
16 document you see in front of you. In Fiscal 17 the
17 average wait was about 30 days to go through
18 everything. Now, however, it's grown to something
19 like 77 days. That's the average that we're
20 reporting, which includes all the steps that you see
21 here. These are representative of our current
22 process. Again the enhanced FEP process. This is
23 derived from the blueprint, which are much more
24 thorough dive into scope, budget and schedules
25 supported by members--many members of our staff.

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, it does look
3 very detailed and thorough, and I imagine the idea
4 and the goal is to get number one as much information
5 as possible and that's why we have the preliminary
6 document that agencies have to fill out, which asks
7 for a significant amount of documents. We were
8 briefed on it this week. Once you produce the draft
9 FEP Report, it goes to the final stage and it's given
10 to the agency. I guess my—one of the concerns I have
11 is in that report I think one of the things where you
12 may have an area of difference it probably the cost,
13 cost of what it takes to actually fund many of these
14 projects. So, once that final FEP is delivered to—
15 sorry, once the final report is delivered from the
16 FEP Unit to the agency, once there is any concern or
17 any response, how does the FEP Unit work with that
18 particular agency if it's cost, if it's scope? I
19 mean it seems like it could take longer than normal
20 depending on what the report releases in its
21 findings, correct?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Correct. I
23 mean I'll sort of give like a highlight level answer
24 and let Eric sort of get to the specific. I think
25 it's really important to understand that as you

2 pointed out in your opening statement, our job is to
3 serve as the city's really construction manager from—
4 the design construction manager from beginning to
5 end. That responsibility includes helping our sponsor
6 agencies understand what they need and what they can
7 build and what they can afford, and for years we've
8 sort of accepted their submissions and sort of dealt
9 with it after the fact. What we're doing here at
10 this—at this juncture is a much more robust deep
11 diver with then helping them understand that they
12 actually have a scope and budget to do. So, we help
13 them define that, and that is—that's a really
14 important function that we're acknowledging with the
15 creation of funding planning. That's a good thing.
16 So, yes there are—there are discrepancies in what
17 they submit many times and what—and what we tell them
18 they actually need, and what the scope that they can
19 afford, but that's a good thing, right? We've now
20 thought thoroughly about these projects in a way we
21 haven't in the past, and that's our role.

22 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: If I
24 could—if I could add to that then.

25 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Sure.

2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: We very
3 often when we submit [coughs] when we submit the
4 reports back to the sponsor agencies we are telling
5 them they don't have enough funding in place for the
6 scope of work or have a scope of work what is
7 initially under-represented and guided required work
8 that needs to be done. Perhaps the scope is just
9 fine, but their assumption of what the cost would be
10 is under-represented so we're going back to them and
11 saying you need to put more money into this project.
12 It's never good news for an agency to hear that.
13 They have to remove money perhaps from other projects
14 to help fund the one that we're talking about.
15 Perhaps they choose not to pursue the project at all
16 because we're telling them it's going to cost so much
17 more. They're not prepared to spend the money, but
18 the good news is we're telling them that now before
19 anybody has committed to anything or spent any money
20 as Andrew has suggested in the old days, we would
21 have taken the project, initiated it, started our
22 clock, hired a consultant, start a design, start to
23 spend that money, and made all kinds of public
24 commitments, and then someone would say we don't
25 think we have enough money. We have to stop work.

2 We have to ask for more funds. After we have already
3 spent money, after we've already made commitments
4 that's a very difficult message to deliver and it's a
5 very difficult message to receive. We think the
6 value of front-end planning is doing all this work
7 upfront, and then helping the sponsor agencies make
8 more informed decisions. If in the end they choose
9 not to pursue a project because we've told them they
10 need to commit more funds, they'll spend that money
11 more wisely on other things. We also go back to them
12 and say if this is all the money you need to spend,
13 this is your highest priority. Perhaps there are
14 three, four, ten items they initially asked for.
15 We'll say you can only afford three, and these are
16 the ones that are most critical given the existing
17 conditions of your building. So, we think it's good
18 advice at the right time. Again, in the old days we
19 never did that. We never had to privy to do that.
20 We would jump in, start trying to meet expectations.
21 We'd have commitments made and then discover these
22 problems. Very often those jobs are the ones that
23 would stop dead in the water sometimes for years as
24 people try to decide what to do after we've already

2 spend some of their design funds. So, it's a little
3 late to hear that message. We like this much better.

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: I understand and
5 then you would have very angry elected officials.

6 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Which
7 we don't like you to--

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: We don't like you
9 to--[laughs]

10 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Well,
11 again right.

12 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: That
14 doesn't--

15 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: So, I think many of
16 my colleagues have experience as some of the
17 challenges that you talked about before the Front-End
18 Planning Unit was created, and I understand the goal
19 now is to really shift the dynamics and change that
20 process, and that's a good one. It does make sense.
21 I wonder for many projects where you do submit the
22 final report to our client agency and particularly if
23 the scope needs to be amended. I've had situations
24 where consultants were changed during that process,
25 which caused the price to go up. There were parts of

2 their design and their mechanism that were also
3 changed during that process, and then more
4 importantly on our end as the perspective of elected
5 officials the cost. So, how much time is invested in
6 the Front-End Planning Unit to allow these client
7 agencies to figure out the best course of action for
8 them and then for many of us if we're talking about
9 money where additional funds are necessary, that
10 doesn't always happen in one fiscal year.

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Sure.

12 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: And then you could
13 also be talking about a combination of both private
14 and public dollars, and so the timeframe is quite
15 different. So in instances like that and that
16 probably speaks to the percentage from Fiscal Year 19
17 where 53% of the projects were returned. I can
18 imagine some of that was incorporated, but how long
19 do you wait for these client agencies to figure out
20 their best course of action particularly when it's
21 some of those issues like scope as well as costs
22 where they need to go to outside external sources to
23 acquire additional funds.

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: So, we
25 don't have a lot of insight into that process in the

2 agencies themselves. We'd like to be more helpful if
3 we could, and hence we refer to our Proposed ACP
4 Advanced Capital Planning Project or program, but the
5 truth is we'll support the sponsor agencies as long
6 as it takes them to make those decisions. Sometimes
7 we find the scope is clear, the budget is pretty good
8 and there's a shortfall but de minimis one, and we
9 would expect and we can experience that those
10 projects are resubmitted to us relatively quickly if
11 we're off by 10%, 15% maybe. As we described in our
12 testimony the Front-End Planning Report goes to OMB
13 as its basis for the CP request. So, OMB checks to
14 make sure. If we say there's a certain amount of
15 money required for the project, they're not going to
16 give us the CP if that money isn't there. If it's a
17 small amount we expect that the agencies can quickly
18 relocate the funds. Again, from our outside position
19 we're not internal to that decision making process.
20 We could do it relatively quickly and we can issue
21 with those projects if we're close. If we're far
22 apart and sometimes we are, very often, many times
23 those projects don't come back to us at all. We
24 don't know exactly why, but we would assume the
25 shortfall is so great they have decided to spend the

2 money on a different project. So, you don't have a
3 formal closure process. There's no-maybe there
4 should be, after we've returned the Front-End
5 Planning Report to them, they can respond by saying
6 thank you. We've chosen not to continue with this
7 project. We keep metrics on how long it's been since
8 we've heard last, and if we didn't remember like 300,
9 400, 500 days, but they only access the need, but
10 they reprioritized the needs or spending that money
11 on something else. We don't know and so we can't
12 turn off that particular clock, but very often times
13 again we have some data on this, but we would rather
14 give you a more detailed report when we have better
15 collection of data, and can be more conclusive with
16 that. The range and response times can vary from a
17 couple of weeks, a couple of months to then, you
18 know, never. So then, it implies that the allocated
19 funding towards something else.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: But let
21 me-let me intervene a little bit. Most of the
22 projects that get through front-end planning proceed
23 quickly into design, many of which-which started in
24 2017. A number of them have actually completed
25 construction. So, what we're seeing is that the-the

2 Front-End Planning Unit has a demonstrated value. In
3 other words, the projects—the projects that have gone
4 through and which the sponsor agencies have chosen to
5 initiate are proceeding at a—at a more rapid rate,
6 which is a good thing. I think what you're talking
7 about is important, but may—may align better with
8 some of these other initiatives that we're talking
9 about like using CPSD studies, these early Capital
10 Planning Studies, which we're initiating with come of
11 the sponsor agencies. We're doing a lot of reviews
12 with the Brooklyn Public Library. We're going to
13 initiate it, but when we look at their assets before
14 they recommend the project, give them an analysis of
15 what their assets look like, and then they make a
16 decision about what they can afford and what—what is
17 an priority. So, this notion that you come to us
18 with something, you know, and then we—it's almost too
19 late at that point. We should—we—as a city we should
20 be thinking about very early asset analysis, and
21 looking at those things closely, and that's what DDC
22 is—is beginning to do in addition to its Funding
23 Planning Unit--

24 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: --which
3 does create that sort of catchment so we don't get
4 too far down the road.

5 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Uh-hm. Do you have
6 data that would look at some of the trends in terms
7 of some of the sponsor agencies that, you know, you
8 seem to have a good track record of accepting their
9 particular capital projects. So, I think I've been
10 here six years, and if I look at that total spectrum
11 of capital projects that DDC has managed, one of the
12 projects that, you know, we do really well are step
13 streets. The step streets are completed in less than
14 two years, more like a year and a half. It almost
15 seems like they're expedited, but we manage them
16 really well.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Uh-hm.

18 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: But then I also look
19 at, you know, just hearing from other colleagues
20 we've struggled over the years even before the Front-
21 End Planning Unit was created with our cultural
22 institutions as well as our libraries. So, we've had
23 about—I'll get to Parks. Where we've had, you know,
24 projects that are year and years and years and you
25 wonder what is the delay? And so I guess I asked

2 that question to look at data that you already have
3 where you're seeing agencies that just seem to do
4 this really well, and then the other agencies that,
5 you know, need a little bit more assistance. Are you
6 looking at trends based on the data you have?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: We are
8 looking and we'll be happy to provide that to you.

9 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: I don't
11 think we can do that at this hearing--

12 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: --but I
14 would make a, you know, raising an important point at
15 front-end planning is not the only tool in the
16 toolbox that we need, and I think you're talking
17 about the devote--why do projects take so long? Why
18 are they complicated? Well, I think a really
19 important, you know, particularly for public
20 buildings is sophisticated, complicated buildings.
21 The way the system is designed now the city has to
22 procure a designer. The designer designs the project
23 with staff, and then they procure a contractor to
24 look at the completed design, which they had no input
25 on and then they offer their lowest responsible bid,

2 which we're required by law to accept, and we take
3 the lowest bidder, and they're instructed to build
4 that building which had an estimated cost that they
5 had no input in. The city right now has, which is
6 not efficient and has led to enumerable problems
7 particularly for sophisticated unique projects like
8 cultural institutions, right, which are really
9 supposed to be gems for a community, and which by
10 definition are unique and special and what we're
11 proposing is legislation in Albany that's awaiting
12 the Governor's signature called Design-Build
13 Authorization, which I know you're familiar with,
14 which is one of a suite, which is just one of a new
15 approach to design and construction that virtually
16 the rest of the world uses to great effect including
17 the state of New York to allow us to—to permit the
18 designer and the constructor to talk to one another
19 before they've designed this project so we know what
20 the cost is going to be. They're allowed to
21 collaborate. They do—they do troubleshooting, and
22 what's more, this process allows us to request a
23 guaranteed maximum price. So, all these things are
24 submitted in a package, which we're able to evaluate.
25 So, when we—we proceed, we're much more certain of

2 price, timeline, and constructability and all we're
3 waiting on is the governor's signature for this, but
4 this is just one of a suite. There are other—in our
5 legislative agenda last year we asked for, you know,
6 not to get too, you know, into the weeds, but there's
7 a construction manager at risk, construction manager
8 on build, which are just variations on this concept
9 that these two critical components of the design and
10 construction process, the designer and the
11 constructor—constructor talk to one another, and
12 offer a price so we know what the heck is going on--

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Uh-hm.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: --and we
15 urge the Council to continue its strong support of
16 these initiatives so that we can get these tools this
17 year and next year as we go back to Albany.

18 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: I agree. I hope the
19 Governor signs the bill. We're waiting. I wanted to
20 ask the question about the—the revised project
21 initiation form, which makes, you know, things
22 obviously more comprehensive to get all of the
23 additional information. Have you received any
24 feedback yet from any of the sponsor agencies on how
25 the form could be improved. Since you launched it,

2 has there been any, you know, dialogue on the
3 contents of the form?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: I haven't
5 heard anything specifically about recommendations
6 from the sponsors in terms of the form.

7 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: You know,
9 the form takes what used to be sort of hand filled
10 out series of sheets of paper where they would
11 handwrite in information. We tried an excel
12 spreadsheet and we got the IQ support as you build a
13 portal. We've launched the portal live. The FEP L-
14 i-t-e Lite Portal, and we'd like to roll out the full
15 version once training is complete. We bring all the
16 sponsor agencies into our offices to give them
17 training on how the portal works so they can then
18 enter their information electronically. The full
19 blown module wants that's live would give everybody
20 greater insight to the full working process so that
21 anybody involved be it the FEP staff, be it the
22 sponsor agency or anyone else can actually get
23 insight into where we are in the process, and so
24 launching software like that, which we developed in-
25 house with the IT Department. There have been some

2 setbacks, and things that we've been hearing, which,
3 you know, are not substantive have trouble using the
4 tool, trouble making the incoming (sic) data in a way
5 that then you get to expect the results so we're
6 debugging that, but that's—that's just growing pains
7 I believe. I think the information is clear. We
8 tried to be as specific as we can so that the front-
9 end planning staff has the information. We don't
10 always get all the information that's required, and
11 that holds us up. So, sometimes a PI form will come
12 in, and in our initial review it says: Initial
13 assessment in the first box on this flowchart.

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Uh-hm.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: These are
16 our budget office. We'll look at it and simply say
17 there's missing information. We can't accept this
18 yet.

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Got it.

20 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: As an
21 administrative task I think that's annoying for
22 everybody including the sponsors, and so we're
23 looking for a little bit more familiarity I think the
24 technique before it becomes second nature.

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, and I
3 understand it takes time to transition to a process
4 that--

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Sure.

6 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: --agencies are not
7 necessarily used to, and you indicated that you do
8 provide the training and sufficient materials--

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: --to allow them a
11 chance to navigate the form.

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: We do
13 have people available to assist the sponsor agency.
14 As they do this, they can just give us a call. We
15 can have them come in. We can go to them. Our IT
16 people are very much available to help with that.

17 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, great and in
18 addition to the Project Initiation form, you also
19 introduced the Scope Verification Report.

20 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Uh-hm.

21 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: So, I wanted to ask
22 have you seen any impacts or any results from the
23 institution of this practice so far?

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Well we
25 have. The Scope Verification Report is the first time

2 we go back to the sponsor and say, you know, we've
3 looked at what you've told us. We've met on-site and
4 spoken with you. We've read the report or the scope
5 that you've recommended, and this is our version of
6 what we believe is required and you send that back to
7 them recommending certain things that they may have
8 omitted just from lack of knowledge need to be
9 included because it will have a cost impact.

10 Sometimes the response from the sponsors is: No, it's
11 not all we want. And we go around another revision
12 to that. More often than not, it's like they
13 understand that this is not a more complete version
14 of this scope and they can then sign off on that. The
15 Scope Verification Report is the first step. One
16 we're in agreement on scope, we're aligned with the
17 sponsor on scope that would lead to whatever it is
18 that what recommend needs to be done. We then can
19 get out our budget and schedules and consulting fees
20 and that type of work in the so-called Phase-B on
21 your flowchart, and then that goes to again a second
22 opportunity I guess that field the red box on your
23 sheet where the sponsors again get to sign off on our
24 recommendations before we proceed.

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: And in terms of when
3 the unit presents design options to the client agency
4 itself informing them of the costs associated with
5 each proposed design, are you finding that there is a
6 lot of pushback sometimes on the actual cost
7 estimates that you're providing where a sponsor
8 agency will say well, no, we believe that this is the
9 actual cost, and here is our data. So, was there
10 that back and forth at times with some of the
11 agencies?

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Yeah.

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Oh, okay, yes.

14 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Okay,
15 definitely. [laughter]

16 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: I can only imagine.
17 [laughs]

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: But-but
19 I want to add, you know, we alluded to our
20 construction procurement process, a competitive
21 sealed bid process where prices are proposed by
22 contractors on the open market very much subject to
23 market conditions to complication. How busy is the
24 general construction industry at large. When we go
25 back to our sponsor agencies and advise them that

2 maybe the project is underfunding, it's in that
3 context that we're advising them. We're not arguing
4 the past should be lower. We're not arguing that.
5 We don't want to bring the jobs in for the prices
6 that they have. They get their information, you
7 know, from a lot other sources as well. We're
8 reflecting more on our experience in the marketplace
9 and compared to the bid environment, and we base our
10 costs on recent bid results. So, if we have
11 comparable projects that are similar in scope or
12 similar in size, we can say well, we've just bid
13 three of these, and the prices are higher than any of
14 us like, but it is what it is. Until we have a
15 different procurement methodology in the old kit,
16 this is what we can expect the field project. I'm not
17 saying it's great news, but with we're saying it's
18 reality. I'd use this reality as far as we can
19 predict it this early in the process.

20 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON:

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Just—just
22 to—it's a great question. So there's things that
23 we're also trying to do to, you know, help solve that
24 problem. Also, as a result of the creation of the
25 blueprint would establish an Office of Cost Control.

2 It's a new office that did not—I mean there were
3 other, you know, stopgaps in the—throughout the
4 agency that did cost control, but we have now a
5 dedicated unit whose sole function is really to
6 analyze DDC's historical costs and schedule data to
7 make sure that we fully understand what unit costs
8 are for a certain type of building at standard
9 duration so that we really, really have a much more
10 solid grasp of, you know, very standard range of
11 costs and schedules. What's more, [laughs] the
12 standard schedules are not flying any more. We are
13 going to establish shorter construction durations,
14 shorter design durations because these things are
15 unacceptable as they are now. It is—it is a labor.
16 I'm not saying tomorrow we're going to roll our
17 shorter times and—and budgets, but the answer to your
18 question is yes they should be less, and we're
19 working on a—on a separate initiative, which is
20 included in the blueprint to—to-to accomplish just
21 that.

22 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: The Office of Cost
23 Control that you described is a brand new office
24 created, but it's not within front-end planning. It's

2 within another part of DDC, but it works closely with
3 FEP?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Right.

5 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: We're--
7 we're not a gigantic. I mean we're a big agency, but
8 yes. I mean the office is housed on the same floor
9 near where Eric sits, and they work together.

10 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, so I can
11 imagine this unit has to work very closely with the
12 FEP as it relates to just the cost control and
13 overall cost management and real estimates that are
14 as accurate as can be. How does that unit control
15 some of the variable costs that are not necessarily
16 fixed that are more so market determined? Does that
17 make sense?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Well--

21 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Things you can't
22 really control even though--

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK:

24 [interposing] I would--I--

25

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: --even though it's
3 climate control? [laughs]

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: --I thinks
5 for starters I mean with, you know, making this sound
6 really terrific, but they--the office has only
7 recently been established. I mean there's a full
8 unit, there's--there's staff, there's a director.
9 It's functioning, but I don't think we're at this
10 point where they're sort of making inputs into all of
11 FEP's decisions. I mean but some of the data that
12 they use is also the data that--that FEP uses, but I
13 think, you know, the outcomes that we're looking for
14 should be, you know, available, some of the outcomes
15 should be available by the time we report back in
16 January.

17 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Oh, okay, okay,
18 great in the Year Report we'll see it?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: In the
20 Year Report. Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, in the--the
22 six-month blueprint progress update that we have, it
23 was announced that we issued a sponsor initiated
24 change request policy that would really improve the
25 project initiation, and limit scope change. Can you

2 describe a little bit of the details of what this
3 means and—and what you entail as the goal of—of this?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Sort of to
5 back up. I mean the idea is that when a sponsor signs
6 off on the FEP Report, that's a—that's the project.
7 I think in the past, you know, historically again I
8 think Eric described fairly that, you know, there
9 would be a budget and a scope. We would accept it,
10 and then sort of to design our way to a project and
11 budget our way to a project after the things was—was
12 submitted. Now, with FEP, there's some—through this
13 very thorough analysis they're going to build a box
14 with X components to the box, and it's going to cost
15 X amount. On the rare occasion that there's—that
16 there's some wait or scope change, I think that what
17 we're trying to do is establish some certainty that
18 we understand that this is a change initiated by the
19 sponsor.

20 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Ultimately, how do
21 we establish the performance measurements of the
22 Front-End Planning Unit? So, how do we define
23 success? Is that by the number of projects that we
24 are accepting from the initial stage, or is it how
25 many other projects were kept within scope or design,

2 budget and timeline, and I ask that question because
3 many projects go through front-end planning, and we
4 want to understand obviously some of the best
5 practices, some of the things that are working, but
6 also identifying gaps in services with a number of
7 the new efforts that you have embarked on--

8 Uh-hm. DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK:

9 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: --but ultimately
10 with front-end planning since 2016 as we look to
11 receive, which you know you will--

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Uh-hm.

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: --more capital
14 projects. Many of us have a few years left to go.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: right.

16 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: So, we're just
17 pushing out capital projects--

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Amen.

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: --as much as we can
20 just overall with what the city is doing with
21 resiliency projects. I mean this is so much going on
22 across the city to provide more sustainability in a
23 growing city that has to recognize climate change.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: So, what would you
3 say are some of the measurements of success for the
4 Front-End Planning Unit.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Again,
6 that's—that's a great project, and we were—as we were
7 preparing for this hearing we looked at some of the
8 data from the initial—initial couple of years of
9 front-end planning, and most of the projects that
10 have proceeded from design, from FEP into DDC's
11 pipeline are either proceeding through design, some
12 of them into construction. So, just sort of based on
13 that high level review, we believe that the—that the
14 process is functioning. Do we—do we have an apples
15 to apples side-by-side with what we've done in the
16 past? No, but we—we will have metrics, but the—the
17 program is a little young to be able to really—this
18 is the life of a project. Even if you had started a
19 project through FEP in Fiscal Year 2016, even for a
20 standard construction project, that very first
21 tranche of projects would only now sort of becoming
22 to fruition. So, we will be measuring it. We don't
23 have like that hard data yet.

24 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: And I think I know
25 the answers to this but--

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: --within the process
4 within FEP if there is a change to the price, I'm
5 assuming that the sponsor agency has the sole
6 responsibility of identifying those external or
7 internal cost additions. So, at any point does DDC
8 say, well, the project is a half a million dollars,
9 you know, under budget. So, we'll do half and half.
10 You guys do 250, we'll do 250. Does that ever happen
11 or does the agency assume all of the costs?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: We have no
13 funding.

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. Just wanted to
15 make sure. I knew the answer.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: That's the
18 commercial (sic) Oh, but also, I would add Council
19 Member knows, this is where the elected officials
20 come in.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Right.

22 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Where we get called
23 by some of the sponsor agencies in terms of some of
24 the cost changes. I've been through that a few times
25 so I-I certainly understand how that process happens.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Right.

3 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: So, I wanted to ask
4 a question, and this is probably important for the
5 elected to understand as well with DDC. The
6 community and the external input, right? So, many of
7 the projects you're managing are infrastructure,
8 they're step streets, they're building facades. So
9 the New Yorkers that live in these communities have
10 to live through the construction, right? So, over
11 the course of—of my tenure here we've talked a lot
12 about the interagency coordination particularly with
13 utility companies as they get necessary building and
14 other permits, but I wanted to understand what that
15 looks like on the ground. Many of the projects go
16 through an extensive community input process like as
17 an example the Parks Department. When we—even before
18 we get to design we have extensive meetings on the
19 ground to talk about what a design looks like, and
20 recognizing that as much input we want from the local
21 residents, we can't get everything we want, and so
22 Parks as an example has now started to use a
23 standardized design process to give them a little bit
24 of a layer so that residents can understand well this
25 is where we can start without putting everything into

2 and actual design. So between that going through the
3 extensive community input process and where the final
4 product should adhere closely as possible to the
5 community's wishes. So, as I mentioned, Parks
6 Department, another example for us are the
7 participatory budgeting, capital projects that we
8 have. So, do you know how the Front-End Planning
9 Unit approaches these specific types of projects
10 particularly where there was less flexibility in the
11 design options. Is it often that you align the scope
12 with the actual budget?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: I'm--

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: And that's just
15 Parks for an example. I just presented that.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: I'm going
17 to--this may be an unsatisfactory answer, but I'm
18 going to answer in a different way.

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: As it
21 happens, you know, particularly for our--our public
22 plaza project that we build on behalf of DEP and DOT,
23 we're trying to establish a very rigorous
24 collaboration, which is underway. In fact, we're
25 meeting with SBS and DOT later this afternoon to

2 discuss this in more detail. How we ensure that the
3 BID who will ultimately or the-or the community
4 entity that will manage the plaza is a participant
5 alongside the community board with the design of that
6 project and particularly for infrastructure projects
7 DDC has long had very sort of comprehensive
8 communication with the community board with generally
9 via mail, but presentations of designs so there's a-
10 there's a really lengthy consultation after a project
11 leaves. So, you have a generic scope and a generic
12 budget that you've established through some basic
13 unit costs understanding some basic, you know, sort
14 of larger sort of big picture assessments of the
15 project, but when you-when you get down to the nitty
16 gritty, the actual design, I think DDC is, you know,
17 is kind of proud of its consultative process, which
18 we've done, which I just want to acknowledge Jeff
19 Margolis in the office who really, you know, you go
20 out, you talk to the community about what you want.
21 You bring the design and you bring a Power Point.
22 Months and years before that project is underway. So,
23 I think that's something we do pretty effectively,
24 but that-that does come after the FEP process.

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay and is it DDC's
3 responsibility to do the external communications with
4 the stakeholders or do you leave that to the sponsor
5 agency?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: That's
7 another excellent question--

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [laughs]

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: --and
10 something, you know, we're, you know, since I've
11 arrived at DDC and the Commissioner has arrived at
12 DDC we're definitely trying to calibrate. We are the
13 designer and the constructor of projects on behalf of
14 sponsors who really define through the mission of
15 their agency. So, we're trying to become a much more
16 collaborative partner with our sponsors to make sure
17 that the community understands that, you know, a
18 sewer project is part of a larger drainage plant. A
19 street improvement project is part of a larger vision
20 for the city's transportation network, and what we
21 are supposed to come out and do is really help them
22 think about for the nuts and bolts of the design, the
23 nuts and bolts of the process, and make sure that any
24 problems that arise during construction are taken
25 care of immediately.

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, so I can give
3 you one example of a project that turned out really
4 well. There were some hitches and delays. They were
5 brought up to Mentay (sp?) Plaza in the Bronx--

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: --by the HUB.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yep.

9 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: It's gorgeous.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yep.

11 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: It's absolutely
12 beautiful.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: It took us a while
15 to get there.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes,

17 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: But-and I don't know
18 if the sponsor agency-I'm assuming it's DOT.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. Yeah, that
21 was a really good process. I mean it-it-as I
22 mentioned there were some hitches, but--

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: That is
24 sort of the poster child for the type of process
25 we're trying to sort of reconstruct.

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, I understand.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: That,
4 again, that happened before there was an FEP process.

5 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Uh-hm.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: It
7 happened before we had this, we're having this really
8 intensive and--and to my mind under-reported
9 collaboration with BID organizations, DOT, SBS and
10 DDC to really make sure that--that we avoid that, and
11 I, you could go in chapter and verse, you know, who
12 didn't do what, who did what. The outcome is
13 magnificent--

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Uh-hm.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: --and it's
16 a great public amenity that just kind of hurt getting
17 there. We--we know that we can avoid that, but we just
18 have to communicate it with our sponsor agencies, and
19 I assure you that we're doing that, and I'm happy to
20 walk you through that process as well not here, but
21 yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: It's
24 important. It needs to change and we're working on
25 it.

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, and in keeping
3 in line with just the community and external inputs,
4 I mentioned utility companies. I think every member
5 of the Council generally I'm sure you as well, get
6 frustrated with Con Edison and just the air agency
7 coordination of utility companies because a lot of
8 time on the ground those are the individuals you see,
9 and we don't, you know, we don't want to yell at the
10 workers. It's not their fault. However, when
11 projects are started is it the Front-End Planning
12 Unit that coordinates that with the utility
13 companies, or do you leave that to the sponsor agency
14 and then during the duration of conception.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Right,
16 right.

17 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Right? How does
18 that work in terms of communication and then the
19 final part of this is as we end, we need to make sure
20 that these utility companies fix the work that they
21 have done and clean up after themselves so we know
22 that they were not even there. Beyond frustrating
23 and it's not, you know, utility companies generally I
24 mean I'm not calling out names, but there's been a
25 growing concern.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: That's
3 tremendous for us. (sic)

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [laughs] Oh that's
5 soon. That's the name of the fallout, but it's
6 frustrating just on the ground to see that and
7 experience it and live it. So, what does the Front-
8 End Planning Unit do as it relates to that external
9 coordination with utility companies?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Again, not
11 just Geoplan (sic) and Planning Sonder. They—they
12 have a very—fortunately for us they have a defined
13 task, right.

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: It's to
16 say yes or no to a project so a sponsor knows where
17 they have a scope and budget.

18 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Uh-hm.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Once that
20 happens, it goes to a design team.

21 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Uh-hm.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: For
23 infrastructure projects generally that happens in-
24 houses and there is a long-standing acknowledgement
25 that a relationship with the utilities needs to

2 change. The communication needs to improve. This
3 timing and sequencing of when they get in and move
4 their utilities so that we can proceed with our work,
5 happens seamlessly. It's easier said than done, but
6 I want you—I want to just make it clear that this a
7 top priority not just with DDC, Commissioner Grillo,
8 but the Mayor's Office is leading a task force about
9 utility coordination.

10 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Great.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Listen,
12 the proof is in the pudding, right, but everyone is
13 on notice, and we are thinking about the—the—I don't
14 want to say the most radical ways to deal with this,
15 but it needs to change. We recognize that. I think
16 we have, you know, I think our utilities are trying
17 to be honest brokers about this. We're trying to get
18 there. You know, one—one effort we're undertaking is
19 sort of a more thorough going joint bidding process
20 so that the utility relocation and our construction
21 can sort of happen under the same umbrella instead of
22 again the sequence thing where the utility comes in
23 and moves, and then we move in. The joint bidding
24 sort or blends that because, you know, it's either

2 the same contractor. It's under the same sort of
3 umbrella.

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: That's one
6 effort, but really the most important thing is
7 understanding our schedule and--and the utilities
8 responding to our schedules--

9 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: --more
11 efficiently.

12 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay at what point
13 or what part of the process if it's not front-end
14 planning, what unit handles the field offices that
15 are usually on the ground? Does every capital
16 project that DDC manages have an actual field office
17 or is it based on--

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Oh, yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Oh, that is the
20 case?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yeah, of
22 course.

23 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: okay.

24

25

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: There's a-
3 there's a-there's-every-every single DDC project has
4 a resident engineer--

5 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: An engineer. Okay.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: --who is
7 onsite managing that specific project.

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, okay.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: And it's-
10 it's fully staffed. There should be a community
11 construction liaison to interact with your offices.
12 There should be an engineer who's coordinating with
13 DDC and the utility to do that.

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, great. So, I-I
15 was saying to one of your staff those are the emails
16 I get weekly.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes. Well
18 thank goodness you're getting that.

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: And I told her I get
20 DDC projects. Yes, I do get them.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Okay.

22 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: I wanted to ask the
23 question about budget. I certainly have to mention
24 the budget just because we are in the business of
25 trying to obviously save money, operate more

2 effectively and efficiently on time and we obviously
3 can't talk about that without talking about the
4 budget and in every year since the inception of the
5 Front-End Planning Unit, DDC has not spent its entire
6 budget both PS as well as OTPS. So, I wanted to
7 understand if there was some idea or reasoning behind
8 that why DDC hasn't been able to spend all of the
9 budgeted funds for the unit, and do you anticipate
10 having the same issue in Fiscal 2020?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Specific
12 to FEP?

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Yes.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: I'll let
15 Eric answer that one.

16 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Well,
17 we're trying to catch up on the payroll on the PS
18 Budget. We've noted that they see we have a certain
19 number of lines accrued by OMB. Most of those lines
20 are being actively pursued. We have interviews going
21 on this very week. We have a few candidates
22 identified to onboard them through the hiring
23 process. So, we're always looking to grow those—those
24 heads. It's an ongoing process. We've had a number of
25 separations, which set us back at the same time. So

2 the net number is sometimes a bit lower than it might
3 be in in terms of the number of people who have come
4 on board. You know, I'm reminded of the people who
5 have left you had introduced this week preparing for
6 this hearing and interviewing potential re-staff
7 members, and I know you've been doing it, too. So,
8 we're very much trying to do--

9 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

10 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: --to do
11 that. The OTPS Budget for FEP includes things like a
12 budget for probes. So, if we need to go out there and
13 develop our scope and our budget projections to
14 advise our sponsor agencies what the probable costs
15 would be, if there are concealed conditions that
16 could be instrumental in impacting both budget and--and
17 schedule we have a small budget that we've been
18 trying to utilize to have a contractor out in the
19 field open up some masonry walls, take a test kit or
20 whatever it might be to expose what would otherwise
21 be an unknown and hidden field condition. Then so
22 that was the first year we ever had that, and again,
23 we're struggling to find the most efficient way to
24 utilize that funding like getting contractors
25 onboard, but those are useful tools for us. So,

2 we're looking to make better use of them as we get
3 more and more up to speed.

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay. So the
5 budgeted headcount increased by 12 positions this
6 year.

7 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: So, those are the
9 positions that you're looking to staff up and get to
10 full-full staff?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Well, the
12 answer is yes, but sort of just to refine that a
13 little bit to be clear, the Front-End Planning Unit's
14 headcount is I believe at 10 and we're seeking to get
15 to 15 headcount.

16 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: There's
18 additional headcount for the infrastructure FEP Unit,
19 whose reviewed durations are already considerably
20 shorter just due to the nature of the sponsor
21 agencies that they work with again and again and
22 again. So that really makes the process a little
23 shorter, and third, some of that head count we
24 believe will ultimately be dedicated to an Advanced
25 Capital Planning Unit, which is critical.

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Oh, okay, that's
3 good.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: And that's
5 again it's , you know, this isn't about the AC. The
6 ACP Unit, which doesn't exist right now, but this is
7 a lot of fun, right. We get it. We really get to
8 think about sort of our capital program before we,
9 you know, decided to do something. We have advanced
10 planning, which is so critical.

11 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, great. I want
12 to acknowledge we've also been joined by another
13 member of our committee from the Bronx, Council
14 Member Mark Gjonaj, and I just have to step out for
15 about ten minutes. So, I'm going to—I'm going ask my
16 colleague from Queen to continue with the hearing. I
17 know there are a number of questions. He's getting
18 ready. So, I turn this over to Council Member Barry
19 Grodenchik. Thank you.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Thank you.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
22 Chair Gibson and good morning.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Good
24 morning.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Do you have a
3 question, Councilman?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Thank you,
5 colleague for the—

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Don't take
7 more than nine minutes because, I, you know, I want
8 to start asking my questions before the Chair gets
9 back.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: It's a simple
11 point that I want to make and then—

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: --one that all of
14 us have experienced at one point or another in our
15 careers. When we put in for our funding and
16 something as small as a park, and we're given a
17 dollar amount for the capital project and the limited
18 dollar amount—dollars that we have are appropriated
19 to that project. It's something of high demand and
20 much need and long anticipated and awaited by the
21 community, to only find out that the dollar amount
22 that we were given that we fully funded is not
23 adequate enough that would require additional
24 funding. Then begins the cycle and the cycle is we
25 have to wait until the next budget to allocate that

2 money based on the information that we're given as
3 the Revised Capital Needs. So. when we allocate that
4 funding we find out that the price is going up again
5 and by the time the bids have come in, that we have
6 to allocate additional funding, and it's ground hog
7 day all over again, and projects go on for years as
8 we allocate our very limited funding available to
9 capital projects to find out that it takes--some of
10 our members have put in for capital projects when
11 they first walked into office and by the time they
12 got out eight years later the project, there's never
13 been a shovel in the ground. It's a disservice to
14 the community. It's a disservice to the elected, and
15 the whole process, and if we can come up with a way
16 to address this issue, and I think the--the most
17 famous of them all is the library project.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Which one of
19 them? There's numerous ones to save money.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Like the one in
21 Queens that our colleague has started over 10 years
22 ago.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: The street
24 leagues (sic) have taken. It's was the one that
25 opened this week. Rego Park was--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: It's like 10 years
3 correct?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: We're waiting
5 on Rego Park in Far Rockaway also.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So, I just seen a
7 picture. When we go out there and we do these
8 incredible announcements that are received with
9 applause and sometimes even tears, we look like we've
10 deceived the public.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: I have a
12 question.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So, what are we
14 going to do--.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: What do we
16 do?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: --to change this.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Council
19 Member, yeah, before you arrived, I, you know, I
20 spent a lot of time, you know, talking about how
21 we're trying to improve the process, but the other
22 piece of this I think you articulated perfectly is
23 that on the other side of this there's people who
24 have invested their time, emotions, their money, the
25 political capital. All the things that make the city

2 function, and they hand off this project with the
3 expectations that this thing is going to get done,
4 and it takes too long and it's—it—it doesn't do the
5 city any good because it—people lose faith in
6 government. They don't think that we have the
7 capacity to do these things. Our answer in part is
8 that we have created a unit so that that does not
9 happen. The Front-End Planning Unit is working with
10 the Queens Public Library and telling them this is
11 what you can do, this is the box you can build. It
12 can be a beautiful box. It can continue to be a
13 beautiful box. This is the money you have to do it
14 with or the money that you will need so that within
15 70 days or 80 days they know, and this is a new unit.
16 We have some anecdote with—with libraries that did
17 not go through that process with QPL, which have
18 subsequently gone through it, and they sub-
19 subsequently gone into design thanks to the creation
20 of the Front-End Planning Unit. Now, have we solved
21 every problem with front-end planning? No. What we
22 still have is this design bid/build process, which
23 drags this process out much longer than it should be.
24 I alluded before you arrived to the legislation in
25 Albany seeking authority to use Design-Build

2 construction methods so that the designer and the
3 contractor are procured at the exact same time
4 eliminating a year of procurement like that. So this
5 thing gets done. We're waiting for the Governor's
6 signature.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: You got a partner
8 here. I'm all in with you--

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: That's
10 good.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: --and let's get
12 this thing done--

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Good.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: --and I rely on
15 my colleagues in the city to help put the pressure on
16 Albany to finally deliver this. We need a Design-
17 Build.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: We thank
19 you for your support.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: That makes sense,
21 and it saves taxpayer dollars--

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Right.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: --and time.

24 Thank you.

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Thank you.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: We're also
3 for Design-Build. I've—we've seen it work on the
4 Kosciuszko Bridge--

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: --although I
7 will remind people that it took decades to get to the
8 point where we funded, you know, that. Things take
9 time because there are priorities so--

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes, but I
11 think you see under strong leadership when someone
12 says get something done.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Yes, yes.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: And that's
15 we are with this.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: And we have
17 seen differences in-in projects in my neighborhood
18 and other neighborhoods around the city. Tomorrow is
19 my 32n Anniversary of my start in government, and I
20 will say that over that time things have certainly
21 improved with-in terms of our relationships, which
22 the construction managers out in the field and my
23 office at least, I know we've had good relationships,
24 and we are able to get answers much more quickly than
25 there were no-it was-it was difficult back 30 years

2 ago. Today it's a lot easier. If I have to I can
3 even go out to the project and find somebody there.
4 Although I don't think it's ever come to that. You
5 mentioned Design-Build Commissioner and you—it gets
6 us like a year. It's like pole vaults. It's a year
7 ahead just—just like that.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Just in
9 the procurement side, but also on the delivery side
10 because you're delivering a project that you have
11 much more certainty about its schedule and its
12 constructability. Something that you don't have with
13 your project is design stop and then the construction
14 is procured and then the constructor has to examine
15 the design documents to see what is feasible and what
16 isn't feasible.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Do we use the
18 Design-Build in negotiating now? Is that--?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: No, I
20 mean--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Is that a yes
22 or a no?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Soon I
24 will be sharing a document about the—the dozens of

2 things that the School Construction Authority is able
3 to do that the--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
5 Yeah, I know. I was there.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: --
7 Department of Design and Construction cannot.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: We understand
9 that.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Right.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: And we--

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: And--and
13 the--and--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: --are
15 wondering.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yeah.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: --about that.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yep.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay, so they
20 don't have it yet and--

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: They've
22 got lots of other tools.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: They have a
24 lot other tools--

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: --and we work
3 very closely with Commissioner Grillo.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: On that end
6 we—we have great affection and respect for her. You
7 have in your—I was just reading through this. You
8 have in your brochure the 116th Precinct, but it's
9 not in my district, but well, that's true. I am very
10 interested in the project. I've been a big supporter.
11 It would be in Councilman Richard's district in
12 Rosedale, and I see the mock-up. I see the American
13 flag with the wind blowing east, which is unusual.
14 It's usually blowing the other direction in that
15 neighborhood but that's okay. [laughter]

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes, you
17 guessed that. (sic)

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: The—the
19 question I have for you with this, I know that the
20 116 has moved along rather quickly.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Not as
23 quickly as I'd like. I—I guess the Mayor announced
24 funding for that soon after I got to the Council like
25 3-1/2 years ago so it's--

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Right.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: So that will
4 give you some idea. There is a timeline and that's a
5 project that has moved quickly.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Right.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: First we had
8 to find a location. So there are a lot of steps that
9 go well beyond what even the DDC is able to
10 accomplish.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Right, but
12 we're-we're designing and constructing that under
13 existing rules, pre-frontend planning. We are
14 procuring construction for that project as we speak.
15 So there should be a shovel in the ground.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Yeah, I'm
17 looking for it. I've heard that through the
18 grapevine--

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: --and
21 Councilman Richards is just feeling really good about
22 that.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yeah,
24 when-when the Mayor tells you to do something, you
25 know, you make sure you do it.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Yes, I
3 usually follow what he wants.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Not always,
6 but usually.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yeah.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: My question
9 for you is to follow up on something that Councilman
10 Gjonaj just talked about. I can make a deal with a
11 handshake with the School Construction Authority
12 because we have, you know, projects that fall short
13 of funding there as well. It's not just DDC who
14 design projects, but I promised them that I'm going
15 to fund it in the next cycle and they go ahead and
16 start the process, which is not the case with
17 anything that the city does outside of SCA, and it
18 can be extremely frustrating. We do not and I'm
19 looking at Mr. Toth. We do not do capital budget
20 mods during the year with you. The Mayor's Office
21 can do that. We don't. Am I correct with that, Mr.
22 Toth that the Mayor's Office can do?

23 NATHAN TOTH: [off mic] Yes, we request
24 from the Mayor's Office normally and that's fine.
25 (sic)

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay, okay,
3 so, but the Mayor has a lot more funds at his or her
4 discretion to do that with. So, one of the ideas and
5 I have mentioned this before to some of the
6 commissioners and some of my colleagues and I have
7 discussed it, without putting you under too much
8 pressure, would it be advisable that there would be a
9 fund to kind of like—it would almost be like the
10 mortar to the bricks where you're \$100,000 short of
11 to half a million dollars short on an major project,
12 and at the discretion of the Commissioner and with
13 the approval of the Council, we would be able to move
14 those projects along without having to wait a full
15 budget cycle. Do you think that would be--? It
16 couldn't hurt right?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: I mean
18 that's sort of an anecdotal question. So, I couldn't
19 give you the—as specific answer to it. I will say
20 that the School Construction Authority the way and
21 I'm sure Council Finance staff can—can give a chapter
22 and verse about it, but they have a lot more
23 flexibility in how funds are, you know, sort of moved
24 and it's again because they're an authority because
25 of the relationship to their oversights, they're able

2 to do things more efficiently. Yes, it would be a
3 good idea.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay, yeah,
5 but you know, I mean because a lot of what--

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK:
7 [interposing] Listen, I can't--and before I, you know,
8 get into hot water--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Don't get
10 into the hot water.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: I'm
12 already in hot water, but, you know, this is--this is
13 a conversation that we need to have with the Office
14 of Management and Budget, which is the custodian of
15 a budget of tens and tens of billions of dollars,
16 and--and which they are--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
18 Well they are--

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: --they are
20 the fiduciaries for that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: With all due
22 respect, and I know people from the Mayor's Office
23 are here this morning, and their job is to make sure
24 we don't spend money even though we know, of course,
25 we have to spend money. They want us to spend as

2 little as possible because they're under tremendous
3 pressure. Whereas, we want to spend where, you know,
4 we want to build stuff and we want to—we want to
5 update stuff, which, some of which is incredibly
6 critical to the city's life like sewers and water
7 mains and they about the unsexist projects there are,
8 but without a sewer system the city would stop in
9 [snaps fingers] faster than that, you know.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: I mean
11 you're talking to infrastructure people. This stuff
12 is sexy to us.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay.

14 [laughter]

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: And—and
16 I'm—I-I—I'm not being facetious. This is—this is
17 the—this really important stuff.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: No, it is and
19 I know it's--

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: It's sexy.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: --you know to
22 me I mean, you know.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yeah.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: DEP if you're
25 listening the water main break on 73rd Avenue and

2 210th Street still hasn't been looked at, but it's-
3 it's parks, it's libraries that kind of stuff,
4 school, playgrounds, whatever you have, and it takes
5 some time, but I-I-I just think that fund or, you
6 know, the thought of it and I'll be talking more with
7 Danny Dromm about that and-and the Speaker, and
8 hopefully we can get some movement on that.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Again,
10 without our planning on sort of, you know, budget
11 issues, what-what we are proposing in our blueprint
12 is increased flexibility and there-there are multiple
13 ways to do that.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I think it is
15 important. I really think it is. I-I look from time
16 to time at Parks Department. They now, they've put
17 some of their bids online. So, it's fascinating to
18 see projects where, you know, they're a little bit
19 over. You know sometimes it's \$50 or \$100,000 and
20 sometimes- There is one project in the Bronx
21 somewhere. It was like 47% over. It was expected to
22 be \$10 million. It was closer to \$15 million and-and
23 that is really wrong. (sic) I imagine that happens
24 also on \$100 million or a billion dollar projects as
25 well.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Correct
3 and—and an initiative we're undertaking, not to—not
4 to, you know, beat dead horse here is that we are
5 trying to have a much better understanding of the
6 true costs and the true schedule with our office—
7 through or Office of Cost Control so that, you know,
8 I think a better example is a project that, you know
9 we estimate at, you know, \$5 million and it come in
10 substantially higher, which is not, you know a
11 marginal issue. You know we have—we have to
12 understand why that is and fix that so that we don't,
13 you know, we can sort of beat you to that question
14 before—before we get to it.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Yeah, it's—
16 it's--when I listen, it's frustrating, and I know the
17 economy is booming in New York City and it's, you
18 know everywhere we look there are cranes building and
19 it's sometimes hard. You know, I've had this
20 conversation with Terese Braddock and others at Parks
21 and—

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Uh-hm.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: --it's hard
24 to find contractors that or responsible contractors
25 and—and that's—we talked about what happens after the

2 contract is going, and I had a major issue in Bayside
3 Hills, which was resolved quickly where the
4 contractor went belly-up on that water main project,
5 and fortunately within a month we were able to
6 replace them but that's unusual, and so-so all kinds
7 of stuff happens, and I know it keeps you all busy. I
8 don't know of the Chair had other questions for the
9 panel. That's it, yeah. Alright. Let me see. Is
10 there anything else I've scribbled down here that I
11 haven't read yet. This, Front-End Plan, my last
12 question. Does that cover any—I mean your—your
13 projects go from under a million to billions. So it
14 covers everything?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay, so
16 every single project. That's good.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: All of it.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: It's good to
19 hear. Alright.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Again as
21 we were preparing for this hearing, you know, a point
22 we wanted to make is no project is-is missed and I
23 think Council--Council Members who are responsible
24 for funding maybe perhaps what we would call smaller
25 projects maybe smaller budget projects get the same

2 attention, the same full review that any other does.
3 We—we consider every project important.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: And I'm
5 looking forward to working with you on a new
6 Education and Business Center at the Queens County
7 Farm Museum. I'm sure you're familiar with that. I
8 don't know if you still take your children there,
9 Commissioner.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Yeah, I
11 do.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Finkelpearl
13 (sic) is the Commissioner and your OMB Director is
14 very familiar with it. So, I'm—I'm excited, but we
15 have \$9.5 million. This is not a commercial, by the
16 way. I just wanted to make that clear, but we do
17 have \$9.5 million in funding, and I think for the
18 first phase we need a million or two more now, and
19 I'm hopeful that we'll get that very soon, and then
20 if we could do both phases at once that would be
21 good.

22 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Council
23 Member we'd be very happy to work with you as early
24 as you like. We can help you develop that budget to
25 make sure that you get this project on the way.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I will
3 mention that to my Chief of Staff and to Mrs.
4 Jennifer Weprin who runs the farm. It's-it's an
5 amazing place and it gets over 400,000 visitors a
6 year. I think that's-I'm really back up? (sic) It's
7 one of the most visited cultural in the city and
8 130,000 school children a year. We just had the
9 Queens County Fair there. Over 16,000 visitors this
10 weekend so-and if you haven't gotten to May's Maids
11 you can-there's still time to sponsor that. It's
12 sponsored by a utility that I don't want to mention.
13 [laughter] Alright, I am going to-unless he Counsel
14 tells me otherwise, I'm going to release the panel.
15 It's okay? Well, Alexa Hunte, you smiled over there?
16 Okay. Alright, we're going to thank you and please
17 give our regards to Commissioner Grillo.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: We will.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: And, I thank
20 you for your work.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HOLLWECK: Thank you.

22 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER BOORSTYN: Thank
23 you.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: There are-
25 currently, nobody else wanting to testify? No?

2 [background comments] Alright, I'm going to close
3 this hearing on behalf of my colleague and Chair
4 Vanessa Gibson. I thank you all for being here
5 today, and this thing was closed let's say 11:30.
6 Have a wonderful day. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date September 30, 2019