

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

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March 21, 2024
Start: 12:00 p.m.
Recess: 3:19 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE ROOM, 16TH
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Rafael Salamanca, Jr., Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Shaun Abreu
Joseph Borelli
Selvena N. Brooks-Powers
Amanda Farías
Kamillah Hanks
Crystal Hudson
Kevin C. Riley
Carlina Rivera
Pierina Ana Sanchez

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Rita C. Joseph
Christopher Marte

A P P E A R A N C E S

Sarah Carroll, Chairperson of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Lisa Kersavage, Executive Director at the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Akeem Bashiru, Director of Fiscal Management at the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Daniel Garodnick, Chairperson and Director of the New York City Department of City Planning

David Parish, Chief Operating Officer of the New York City Department of City Planning

Edith Hsu-Chen, Executive Director of the New York City Department of City Planning

Sarita Subramanian, Senior Research and Strategy Officer at the New York City Independent Budget Office

Paula Segel, Senior Staff Attorney in the TakeRoot Justice Equitable Neighborhoods Unit

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

Kevin Wolfe, Center for New York City Neighborhoods

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning. This is a
3 microphone check for the Committee on Land Use.
4 Today's date is March 21, 2024. Located in the 16th
5 Floor Committee Room. Recording done by Pedro Lugo.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and
7 welcome to the New York City Council Preliminary
8 Budget Hearing on Land Use.

9 At this time, can everybody please
10 silence your cell phones?

11 If you wish to submit testimony, you may
12 do so at landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Again,
13 that is landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

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

17 Chair, we are ready to begin.

18 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: [GAVEL] All right,
19 good afternoon and thank you for attending today's
20 hearing on the Committee on Land Use regarding the
21 Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget and the Fiscal 2024
22 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report. I am Council
23 Member Salamanca, Chair of this Committee on Land
24 Use. I am pleased to be joined in this hearing by the
25 Chair of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchise,

2 Council Member Kevin Riley, and the Chair of the
3 Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and
4 Disposition, Council Member Hanks.

5 I would like to acknowledge members who
6 have joined us today. We've been joined by Council
7 Member Chair Riley, Majority Leader Farías, and
8 Council Member Chair Hanks.

9 At today's Preliminary Budget hearing, we
10 will hear from the Landmarks Preservation Commission
11 and then the Department of City Planning afterwards,
12 and finally the public after we hear from City
13 Planning. The Landmarks Preservation Commission, or
14 LPC, is responsible for protecting New York City's
15 architectural, historical, and cultural significant
16 buildings and sites by granting them landmark status
17 and regulating them after designation. There are over
18 37,000 designated buildings and sites in the city and
19 156 historic districts. LPC reviews applications for
20 work on designated properties, issues permits,
21 investigates complaints, and initiates actions to
22 ensure compliance with the Landmarks Law. LPC also
23 administers a federally funded historic Preservation
24 Grant Program that we look forward to discussing
25 today. At the outset, I want to thank LPC for their

1 efforts this year at breaking out of the traditional
2 preservation mold and into communities of color like
3 mine. The Commission proposed designation of the
4 Joseph Rodman Drake Park and Enslaved People's Burial
5 Ground will help raise public awareness about slavery
6 in colonial America, preserve and protect the sites,
7 and honor the legacy of enslaved people. This is
8 ambitious and important work, and I applaud the focus
9 here.
10

11 When evaluating LPC's budget, its Fiscal
12 2025 Preliminary total is 7.4 million, about 173,000
13 lower than at Fiscal 2024 budget adoption. The net
14 reduction results from increases in collective
15 bargaining adjustments for LPC staff, offset by two
16 rounds of Program to Eliminate the Gap or PEGs. The
17 PEGs in November and Preliminary Plans include both
18 PS and OTPS savings. LPC increased its baseline
19 revenue forecast for permit revenue by 250,000 in
20 November Plan to help meet its PEG target and avoid
21 headcount reduction. Generally, staffing at LPC has
22 been stronger than at other City agencies. There have
23 been no real needs so far in Fiscal 2024, although we
24 hope to hear from the agency about its budget needs
25 today.

2 I would to now turn it over to the
3 Subcommittee Chair Hanks to share her opening
4 remarks.

5 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR HANKS: Thank you,
6 Chair Salamanca, and welcome once again to the
7 Landmarks Preservation Committee leadership and
8 members of the public who are watching this hearing.
9 For six decades, LPC has sought to use the power of
10 preservation to revitalize communities, drive
11 investment into existing buildings, and tell the
12 story of New York. Importantly, over the past few
13 years, LPC has taken a more holistic view of the
14 importance of ensuring equity in its work. This means
15 that telling the many stories of New York, including
16 stories that are buried, sometimes quite literally in
17 the ground, requiring LPC urban archaeologists to
18 excavate them and other times stories build by
19 historical under-presentation, racism, or other
20 factors. It is positive to see LPC taking a broader
21 view of what requires preservation and historical
22 designation in the city and, today, the Committees
23 hope to learn much more about what the ongoing
24 progress around New York making equitable
25 designations across the five boroughs. That, of

2 course, includes my home borough, Staten Island,
3 which is home to New York's oldest standing building
4 dating from 1662. LPC designated the Billiou-
5 Stillwell-Perine House as a landmark in 1967, and it
6 was added to the National Register of Historic Places
7 in 1976. I hope to better understand how LPC
8 evaluates the economic and cultural impact of
9 designations and how their outreach processes are
10 engaging New Yorkers. As Chair Salamanca mentioned,
11 the federally funded program for restoration work is
12 of particular interest to make sure low-income
13 homeowners may live in historic buildings as well as
14 non-profits and they have the necessary supports to
15 preserve our shared heritage as New Yorkers. The
16 Committee is also to look forward to hearing more of
17 LPC's efforts at, one, processing work permit
18 applications, enforcing complaints and possible
19 violations, and supporting conversations and climate
20 change resiliency projects and much, much more. With
21 that, I will pass it back over to Chair Salamanca,
22 and I thank you very much for joining us today.

23 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Chair
24 Hanks.

2 Before we hear from LPC and Chair
3 Carroll, I would like to thank the Committee Staff
4 who helped prepare this hearing, Daniel Krupp,
5 Principal Financial Analyst; Jack Storey, Finance
6 Unit Head; Chima Obichere, Finance Deputy Director;
7 Arthur Huh, William Vidal, and Debra Zerner, Land Use
8 Counsels; Brian Paul and Perris Straughter, Land Use
9 Deputy Director and Director; and my Chief-of-Staff,
10 Shanna Knotts, and all of the Staff working in my
11 office for my two co-Chairs today.

12 After LPC, we will hear from the
13 Department of City Planning.

14 A reminder that the public will testify
15 after the City Planning hearing. If you are here to
16 testify in person, please fill out a witness slip at
17 the Sergeant-at-Arms so that we can put you in the
18 speaker's list.

19 Additionally, if you would like to
20 testify remotely, please note that you must sign up
21 at www.council.nyc.gov/testify.

22 I will now pass it over to our Committee
23 Counsel to swear in LPC leadership before turning it
24 over for their testimony.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Thank you, Chair.
3 Appearing today for the LPC are Chairperson Sarah
4 Carroll; Executive Director Lisa Kersavage; Akeem
5 Bashiru, Director of Fiscal Management. Panelists,
6 would you please raise your right hands?

7 Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth,
8 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your
9 testimony before this Committee and in answer to all
10 Council Member questions?

11 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: I do.

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER ORTIZ: I do.

13 DIRECTOR BASHIRU: Yes, I do.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Okay. All right.

16 Thank you, Chair Salamanca and Chair Hanks. Good
17 morning to you and the Members of the Land Use
18 Committee and the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Sitings
19 and Dispositions. I'm pleased to be here today to
20 speak about the Landmarks Preservation Commission's
21 Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary Budget. I am joined
22 today by Lisa Kersavage, our Executive Director, and
23 Akeem Bashiro, our Director of Financial Management.

24 The Commission's mission is to protect
25 the significant architectural, historical, and

2 cultural resources of our city. The preservation of
3 historic resources revitalizes communities, supports
4 economic development, and contributes to the vitality
5 of New York City. It is my honor to lead the agency
6 in its successful efforts to realize these important
7 public policy and quality-of-life goals. To date, the
8 Commission has designated and regulates almost 38,000
9 buildings and sites throughout the five boroughs. As
10 Chair, one of my primary goals is to incorporate
11 equity and diversity in all aspects of the agency's
12 work. to ensure diversity and inclusion in our
13 designations and fairness, transparency, and
14 efficiency in our regulations so that all property
15 owners have equal access to resources, technical
16 assistance, and expertise.

17 Since I last testified on our agency's
18 budget, LPC has been focused on several key
19 initiatives: Designating buildings and districts that
20 reflect the City's diversity and tell the story of
21 all New Yorkers, transforming the permit process to
22 make it more accessible, and developing programs to
23 support small businesses and educate property owners
24 about permit processes and grant opportunities.
25 Importantly, we are also working with other agencies

2 to advance Mayor Adams' Get Stuff Built Plan and have
3 identified steps to improve efficiency and
4 transparency in our permitting process.

5 I will begin my testimony today by giving
6 a brief overview of LPC's budget and how resources
7 are allocated. LPC's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal
8 Year 2025 is 7.4 million dollars, which consists of
9 6.6 million dollars in City funds and 668,874
10 dollars in federal community development block grant
11 funds. LPC is fundamentally an agency of
12 professionals. Almost 90 percent of the Preliminary
13 Budget is allocated to personal services, and 10
14 percent is allocated to other-than-personal services.
15 Our budget supports the agency's five departments
16 that include: the research department responsible for
17 evaluating and advancing properties for designation;
18 the Preservation Department, which reviews the permit
19 applications for work on designated properties; the
20 Enforcement Department, which investigates complaints
21 of potential violations and helps owners correct non-
22 compliances; and the Archaeology and Environmental
23 Review Departments, which assist city, state, and
24 federal agencies in their environmental review
25 process. The agency's total headcount in the Fiscal

2 Year 2025 Preliminary Budget is 74 full-time staff
3 and 6 part-time staff. Of the CDBG funding, about 82
4 percent is allocated to personnel supporting critical
5 community development related functions such as
6 surveys, environmental review, archaeology, community
7 outreach, and education while about 18 percent, or
8 approximately 122,900, is allocated for our historic
9 preservation grant program for low-income homeowners
10 and not-for-profit organizations.

11 I will now discuss the work of the
12 Commission that these resources support. For research
13 and designations, LPC's equity framework guides our
14 priorities, and the agency has focused on places that
15 represent New York City's diversity and in areas less
16 represented by landmarks. In the first half of Fiscal
17 Year 2024, LPC designated the Joseph Rodman Drake
18 Park and Enslaved People's Burial Ground in Hunts
19 Point, the Bronx, which raises public awareness about
20 the practice of slavery in colonial New York, honors
21 the legacy of the enslaved people who were central to
22 the area's history, and ensures the burial ground is
23 preserved and protected. Also, in the first half of
24 Fiscal Year '24, LPC designated the Barkin, Levin,
25 and Company Office Pavilion in Long Island City,

2 Queens, an area with few designated buildings, and
3 the New York Public Library Tremont Branch in
4 Tremont, the Bronx, which recognizes the library's
5 central role serving generations of immigrants
6 through innovative community programming and
7 multilingual education. We also anticipate the
8 Commission to vote soon on a proposed designation of
9 the Old Croton Aqueduct Walk as a scenic landmark in
10 University Heights and, this week, the Commission
11 voted to calendar the Frederick Douglass Memorial
12 Park in Staten Island, which is New York City's only
13 African American cemetery, and was established at a
14 time in which members of the African American
15 community were excluded from the city's burial
16 grounds.

17 I will now turn to our preservation and
18 permitting operations. I believe it is imperative to
19 support property owners of designated landmark
20 buildings. The key to success in preservation is
21 effective regulation, which requires an efficient,
22 transparent, and accessible process for applicants.
23 Buildings are living, thriving contributors to the
24 dynamism of New York City. Our job is not to prevent
25 change but to manage it so that we can ensure these

2 significant buildings and sites are protected and
3 allowed to remain a vital part of New York City's
4 continued growth. Our Preservation Department is the
5 regulatory arm of the Commission and it is the
6 largest department within the agency. Our staff are
7 professionally trained preservationists who work with
8 property and business owners to help them obtain
9 approval for the work that meets their needs and is
10 sensitive to the historic building and context each
11 year. Approximately 94 to 97 percent of permits are
12 issued by the staff pursuant to the Commission's
13 rules. The remaining 3 to 6 percent of the
14 applications are reviewed by the full Commission. LPC
15 staff works closely with property owners, including
16 meetings and other communications, to ensure they
17 understand the criteria and the review process and to
18 help them put together a complete application and
19 presentation. In Fiscal Year '23, the Commission
20 received 12,211 permit applications and took action
21 on 11,489 applications, ranging from restoration and
22 repairs to windows and storefronts to additions and
23 new buildings. Through February of this Fiscal Year,
24 we have received about 7,353 applications and are
25 roughly on track to match the Fiscal Year '23 total.

2 LPC has worked with OTI to advance a major technology
3 upgrade, an e-filing portal that we just launched
4 this month, streamlining our permit process and
5 improving customer experience. Applicants and
6 property owners are now able to upload supporting
7 documentation, view the status of applications at
8 every step in the process, and receive their final
9 permits directly through the portal. Our staff are
10 currently conducting training sessions on how to use
11 the new system for our diverse constituency, ranging
12 from homeowners to seasoned professionals.

13 Our Preservation Department continues to
14 develop and maintain resources to help applicants and
15 owners put together complete applications and process
16 permits quickly. In the summer of 2023, the
17 Commission voted to approve new rules to make the LPC
18 application and review process faster and easier for
19 business owners and homeowners seeking approval for
20 specific types of work, including building updates
21 that would improve the climate resiliency and
22 sustainability of landmark properties. These changes
23 allow LPC to support adoption of climate resiliency
24 and sustainability measures for landmark buildings
25 and better serve New Yorkers through a more efficient

2 process, empowering them to focus on the success of
3 their small businesses and maintaining their homes
4 and, in turn, increasing employment opportunities and
5 housing stability for the city's diverse workforce.

6 I want to take a moment to talk about our
7 at-risk building initiative. While the risk of
8 demolition or deconstruction of designated buildings
9 is very low, LPC and DOB have enacted our Vulnerable
10 Buildings Action Plan to strengthen enforcement tools
11 that preserve the City's most vulnerable historic
12 buildings intended to protect designated buildings
13 that are at-risk due to hidden pre-existing
14 conditions, owner neglect, and contractor negligence.
15 The plan has guided our agency in preserving numerous
16 at-risk buildings through a focus on earlier
17 detection of risks to designated buildings, more
18 robust engineering oversight, increased coordination
19 between the agencies and comprehensive community
20 outreach, employing new digital tools and stakeholder
21 outreach. Thus far, we have referred, or in the
22 process of referring, about 20 buildings to the
23 Department of Buildings for Enhanced Engineering. We
24 have reviewed dozens of buildings based on the new
25 data we are receiving from DOB.

2 I will now share some further details
3 about the outreach and education work LPC conducts.
4 Outreach and education are also essential to our
5 success. My goal is to make information accessible to
6 everyone and, in a city as diverse as New York, we
7 need to make sure that we are as effectively
8 communicating with property owners across the city,
9 especially since a substantial number of owners
10 directly file for permits with LPC. Since my tenure
11 began, we have increased community outreach efforts
12 and now place special emphasis on reaching out to
13 communities across all five boroughs that have not
14 traditionally been well represented by LPC. We have
15 also published new educational materials to improve
16 access to LPC. This is important for our regulatory
17 work and generates support for designations. With the
18 recent launch of our e-filing portal, Portico, we are
19 enacting a plan for robust community outreach to
20 ensure that property owners in historic districts
21 across all five boroughs know how to use the system.

22 Turning to our Community Development
23 Block Grant funding and, before I conclude, I want to
24 return to the Historic Preservation Grant Program, a
25 modest, federally funded program targeted for low-

2 and moderate-income homeowners and not-for-profit
3 organizations to help restore or repair the façades
4 of their landmark buildings. In Fiscal Year '23, the
5 program awarded five grants to homeowners and one
6 grant to a not-for-profit institution ranging from
7 25,000 to 35,000. The homes are in Addisleigh Park,
8 Queens; Greenpoint, Brooklyn; Manida Street in the
9 Bronx; and Central Harlem. The not-for-profit
10 institution is the New Amsterdam Music Association
11 located in Central Harlem. In Fiscal Year '24 thus
12 far, LPC voted to award five homeowner grants and one
13 not-for-profit grant for the Greenpoint Reformed
14 Church.

15 In summary, we are excited for the future
16 of preservation in New York City and thank the
17 Administration and the City Council for your
18 continued support and the resources provided in this
19 budget. We are a small agency and nearly the entirety
20 of our budget is personnel based. This is a hard-
21 working, dedicated, and professional staff with an
22 outsized impact on our city, responsible for the
23 protection and the preservation of its most
24 significant buildings, districts, and sites. Our
25 commitment is that we will continue to do so with the

2 resources provided and strive to do so equitably,
3 efficiently, and transparently. Thank you, again, for
4 allowing me to testify, and I'm happy to answer any
5 questions you have.

6 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Chair,
7 for your testimony. Before I begin with my
8 questioning, I just want to thank you and your staff
9 for working hand-in-hand with my office this last
10 year and a half. We landmarked Manida Street, which
11 was something extremely popular in the Hunts Point
12 community, and my constituents and the homeowners
13 were very thankful and grateful, and I want to thank
14 you also your team for helping and getting the Joseph
15 Rodman Drake Park and Enslaved People's Burial Ground
16 landmarked. Prior to being a Council Member, I was a
17 District Manager, and I remember back in 2010, I was
18 working with then State Senator Jeff Klein trying to
19 landmark it federally, but there was a struggle
20 there, but I'm happy that the City of New York got it
21 done so thank you for that.

22 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. So
24 going to our line of questioning. I just have a few
25 questions and then I'll pass it over to Chair Hanks.

2 In terms of staffing, at the end of
3 February, there were 73 active staff at LPC and just
4 one vacancy. LPC's current budget headcount of 74 is
5 three positions lower than it has been in recent
6 years. Do you feel that you have the appropriate
7 number of staff?

8 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: We do, and I will
9 note that one vacancy in February has now been filled
10 so we are fully staffed now. We did lose three
11 positions in an earlier PEG, but that actually did
12 not impact our staff at the time because they were
13 based on vacancies. They were vacancies that we had
14 not filled, and so it didn't impact the staff that
15 were working for us and it didn't impact our mission
16 or our ability to fulfill our mandate. We're fully
17 staffed now. We're excited about that and anticipate
18 being able to meet all of our strategic goals.

19 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Were those three
20 positions that were PEG'd, were they returned back or
21 are they still offline, I would say?

22 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: They're still
23 offline at this time. We continue to talk to OMB
24 about our needs, and we'll continue to have those
25 conversations.

2 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: What type of
3 positions were those?

4 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: There were two
5 Landmarks Preservationists titles and one Community
6 Coordinator.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Yeah. I would
8 think that having enough community coordinators is
9 important so I want to work with you on getting you
10 those three slots open again so that you can hire.

11 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: The LPC appears to
13 have regained the headcounts lost during the COVID-19
14 pandemic. What has contributed to staff recruitment
15 and retention?

16 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: I think that one
17 thing I can say is that we are a small staff and a
18 very committed and dedicated staff. I'm amazed every
19 day at how talented and how dedicated our staff is,
20 and I think that they truly believe in the mission,
21 everyone does, and I think there is something
22 rewarding in that, in doing something that you
23 believe in and that you feel you're making a
24 difference in the city, and so I think there's great
25 support. In addition to that, we work very hard to

2 provide a very inclusive and collegial work
3 environment, and we do that through trying to provide
4 opportunities for professional development training.
5 We provide space and opportunity for employee
6 resource groups where employee-led groups, staff can
7 gather together to discuss issues, and we also
8 provide opportunities to attend conferences when
9 possible so I think we do try to provide
10 opportunities for staff to engage with each other and
11 to professionally grow.

12 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. Thank
13 you. Just want to recognize that we've been joined by
14 Council Member Abreu and Council Member Joseph.

15 Going back to staffing, does staff at LPC
16 have flexible time schedules or hybrid schedules?

17 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Yes, all of the
18 staff have the opportunity to work in hybrid if they
19 follow the guidelines outlined by the City, and so
20 they must submit a form outlining their commitment
21 and their hours and the place of location when
22 they're not working in the office and so we do have
23 that ability to offer that to staff.

2 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: What percentage of
3 your staff are working in the office compared to
4 working from home?

5 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Everybody works in
6 the office a minimum of three days a week, and they
7 have the ability to work remotely two days a week,
8 and that is the majority of the staff. There's a
9 limited number of staff who need to be present
10 because they're public facing every day, and there
11 aren't multiple people in that department.

12 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: How many staff
13 oversee LPC's 215.9 million in contracts, and how do
14 you ensure a fair pricing for preservation
15 maintenance work?

16 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: The 215 in
17 maintenance contracts..

18 DIRECTOR BASHIRU: We don't really have
19 that kind of bandwidth for our budget.

20 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Sorry, they gave
21 me 215,000. So how many staff oversee the 215,000
22 dollars in contracts, and how do staff ensure fair
23 pricing for preservation maintenance work?

24 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: In our Budget and
25 Administration Departments, I think that's the

2 question, we have Akeem Bashiro, who is our Director
3 of Financial Management. We also have a Director of
4 Administration and a Director of Operations and
5 Facility Management and, under the Director of
6 Financial Management, we have the Procurement Officer
7 and the Timekeeper, and we strive hard to ensure fair
8 practices in all of our efforts in our procurement
9 process.

10 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. Going
11 to the federal grants, the federal funding for the
12 restoration project, so I know that LPC administers
13 federally funded historic preservation grant program
14 that provides financial assistance to low- to
15 moderate-income landmark property owners to help fund
16 restoration work on their designated properties. Now,
17 this is something that I've asked for the past couple
18 of years in terms of how that funding is used and who
19 has access to that funding. What's the total amount
20 of this grant in Fiscal 2025?

21 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: The total amount of
22 money that we have in CDBG money for '25 is 668,874,
23 and that, what that does is that...

24 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Sorry, can you
25 just repeat that number?

2 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Yeah, 668, 874.

3 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay.

4 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: And that funds five
5 employees who are really critical to our survey and
6 outreach work and our archaeology work, and also
7 122,900 dollars of that is allocated to the Historic
8 Preservation Grant Program and we, as you know, award
9 grants to the income-eligible property owners and
10 not-for-profits that range from 25,000 to 35,000
11 dollars each, and they fund repairs and restoration
12 work and maintenance for properties.

13 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Of that 668,874,
14 you have five employees that you're paying salaries
15 for, correct? You deduct the salary, what's the total
16 amount that's left over for the grant?

17 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: It's the 122,900,
18 and that is for the grant program, and we accept
19 applications on a rolling basis, but we do try to
20 award as many grants as possible when we have
21 applicants that meet the income eligibility
22 requirements that are set up by HUD.

23 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: In terms of the
24 funding that you receive every year, the Fiscal Year

2 2025, is funding flat from previous years in terms of
3 that grant money or has that grant money changed?

4 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: So...

5 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: The dollar amount?

6 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: The dollar amount
7 stays the same, and there are some properties where
8 we award grants, the money is earmarked in one
9 particular Fiscal Year but, because the work hasn't
10 been completed in that Fiscal Year, that may get
11 rolled over into the next Fiscal Year so that may
12 account for a change if you see a change in the
13 numbers.

14 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Funding that's not
15 used in one Fiscal Year, is it...

16 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: It's rolled over.

17 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Is it rolled over?

18 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: For the next Fiscal
19 Year, yeah, so once it's committed, it's earmarked,
20 it stays with that property and it will roll into the
21 next Fiscal Year.

22 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: What about unused
23 funding?

24 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Sorry, what about?

2 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Unused funding. I
3 don't...

4 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Yeah, we really
5 don't have unused funding. We are able to award all
6 of the money that we have available.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: The entire 122?

8 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Yeah, and we try to
9 divide it among as many property owners as we can.

10 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay. How many
11 not-for-profits and homeowners were awarded in Fiscal
12 '22 and '23?

13 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: So Fiscal '23, I
14 believe, was five property owners, five grants to
15 homeowners and one grant for a non-profit which was
16 the New Amsterdam Music Association in Central
17 Harlem.

18 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay, and what
19 about '24?

20 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: In '24, so far we've
21 awarded five homeowner grants and one not-for-profit
22 which is for the Greenpoint Reformed Church.

23 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: What is the income
24 requirement for both a homeowner compared to a not-
25 for-profit?

2 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: So there is no
3 income limit for a non-profit. The requirement is
4 that they own their property and that they are a
5 501(c)3. For homeowners, there are different
6 categories. There's extremely low income, low income,
7 and moderate income. Just to give you an example, for
8 a four-person household in the moderate-income
9 category, I think it's 70,000 is the maximum for low-
10 income in a four-person household, and it's 113,000
11 is the maximum amount for a four-person household in
12 a moderate-income situation, and then also for
13 moderate-income households, if there is an
14 opportunity to provide a matching grant, the income
15 cap is raised to 141,000, I believe, right? 141,000.

16 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Who sets the
17 income requirements?

18 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: The federal
19 government.

20 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: And what agency is
21 that?

22 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: That's HUD.

23 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: HUD. Now, HUD is
24 also responsible for our AMIs, area median income,
25 where we are negotiating and discussing housing. Do

2 they use the same formula for the area median income
3 or they're just using another formula?

4 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: That I couldn't
5 answer. We'd have to defer to OMB, I think, to
6 understand that.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: And the reason is
8 because I know that HUD, the frustration that we have
9 with AMI is that we feel that the average median
10 income in New York City, the way they calculate it,
11 they use the outside counties and they mix it all in,
12 including Westchester County, and so I think that, at
13 this moment, our AMI for the City of New York is
14 somewhere in the 90,000s, right, and I'm just curious
15 if HUD is using that number for affordable housing.
16 We would love to see them use that same number so
17 that homeowners, you have a bigger avenue of
18 homeowners that can have access to that grant money.
19 Has LPC ever lobbied or sent a letter or a request to
20 HUD asking that they review the income requirements
21 and increase them?

22 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: I think the
23 Landmarks Commission hasn't separately. We have
24 worked with OMB, and OMB obviously communicates with
25 HUD on these matters.

2 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: But I don't think
3 that's an OMB priority, so LPC has never really
4 requested an increase or that HUD review.

5 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: I think it's a
6 challenging thing and we do wish it was higher. We
7 wish we had more candidates also but, luckily, we are
8 able to target candidates who are eligible and we are
9 able to award the money and we are prioritizing the
10 low- and moderate-income, which is important to us,
11 but I think that the eligibility requirements really
12 affect kind of policy and funding on a federal,
13 national level, and I think it's challenging for the
14 Landmarks Commission to be able to affect change
15 there.

16 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: I think that it's,
17 and, after this line of questioning, I'm going to go
18 over to Chair Hanks but, Chair Hanks, I think that
19 this is a conversation when you have further hearings
20 on asking LPC to reach out to HUD and make a formal
21 request increasing the income eligibility. My
22 concerns here is that I have I have historic
23 districts as well. For example, the Lowell Historic
24 District. Townhouses, they're beautiful, but these
25 are working families, but because they're working

2 families does not mean that they have the funds
3 necessary to make repairs, and they cannot access the
4 avenue of grants that's being provided, and I think
5 that it's unfair to them that they cannot access that
6 funding.

7 All right, with that, I'm going to hand
8 it over to Chair Hanks for her Land questioning.

9 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR HANKS: Thank you so
10 much, Chair Salamanca, and that was part of also my
11 line of questioning but, firstly, I just want to
12 thank you for your testimony. Being from Staten
13 Island, it's very important that we have our historic
14 preservation. It's no secret that I like, that I'm a
15 builder, I love to build, and we have to find that
16 happy medium, and so I'm very happy that we're able
17 to ask these questions to you today.

18 I'm actually going to give you an
19 opportunity to explain what the federal role is and
20 what the LPC's role is in setting those limits so can
21 you explain to the public how the limits are set and,
22 just so everyone understands, this is the grant
23 process in which we grant homeowners funding to
24 complete some of the repairs on their historic
25 buildings. I'll have you explain a little bit about

2 who sets the limits and how that goes just for
3 clarity.

4 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Again, HUD sets that
5 limit and it is, I imagine, based on sort of a
6 national standard that they have applied. I really
7 can't speak any more to how they are set or how they
8 are determined because we have no role in that, but
9 we certainly do support increasing opportunities for
10 our designated building owners to take advantage of
11 any financial benefits that are available to them,
12 and so we do work really hard to try to bring
13 awareness about our grant program and we actually
14 have partnered with Chair Salamanca to do outreach in
15 your District to make that information available to
16 people and we can talk about our grant program and
17 opportunities there, but we also can make people
18 aware of other financial benefits or opportunities
19 through the non-profit, the New York Landmarks
20 Conservancy, which has a historic properties fund and
21 a sacred sites fund, which provides funding for
22 homeowners and houses of worship and also homeowners
23 in many of certain census tracts are eligible for a
24 state homeowners tax credit for restoration and
25 repair work, and so we work hard to make sure that

2 our property owners that are in those census tracts
3 are aware of that opportunity as well, so we agree
4 that it's important to help property owners with
5 maintaining their homes, which are designated
6 buildings and always looking for ways to increase
7 those opportunities.

8 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR HANKS: Thank you so
9 much. For the purpose of the Committee and for the
10 public, can you just give an example of what the
11 income limits are for a family of four?

12 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: So for a family of
13 four in the low-income category, the maximum
14 household income is 70,559 dollars and then for the
15 moderate-income category, a household of four, the
16 maximum income is 113,000 dollars but, again, again
17 if they are able to do a 20 percent matching grant,
18 the income cap becomes 141,000 dollars, and so we do
19 try to help our grant awardees leverage the grants
20 that we are able to award them to find other loans or
21 grants that they can use as a match.

22 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR HANKS: Thank you so
23 much. Is there a repository of information so like a
24 one-sheet fact sheet so the public is not going to a

2 myriad of places to find out what it means because
3 I'm really big on information and outreach.

4 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Yes, we have a fact
5 sheet on the financial incentives or benefits of
6 designation and we can certainly provide you with
7 that.

8 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR HANKS: I would love
9 that. Thank you so much.

10 In this same line of questioning for
11 federal funding for restoration projects, can you
12 tell us a little bit more of how not-for-profits
13 partner with homeowners in these restoration
14 projects?

15 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: I'm sorry.

16 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR HANKS: Can you tell us
17 more about how non-profits sometimes partner with
18 homeowners in these restoration projects? I apologize
19 if it wasn't clear.

20 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: As I was saying,
21 when we award grants, often we will partner and share
22 information about the New York Landmarks Conservancy,
23 which is a non-profit that also provides funding, and
24 so we will often try to make those connections and
25 work together to be able to provide more funding and,

2 in either case, whether it's a grant that we're
3 awarding or a low-interest loan that the non-profit
4 is awarding what comes with that is, of course, the
5 staff's expertise and also the staff's project
6 management so they file for all the necessary
7 permits. They are putting out the projects out to
8 bid. They are working with the contractors and
9 overseeing the work and managing the project from
10 beginning to end, and so that comes with the funding.

11 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR HANKS: Oh, thank you.

12 In Staten Island, we have a major development on a
13 site where there are about four or five historic
14 buildings so my question is there space or an
15 appetite for public/private partnerships with
16 development when it comes to restoration of...

17 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: I think we're always
18 open to opportunities. I'd be happy to talk to you
19 further about that.

20 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR HANKS: Thank you so
21 much. What are the key projects LPC has completed so
22 far under this grant?

23 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Some of the recent
24 grants that we approved, actually two were in Manida
25 Street in Chair Salamanca's District, and let me get

2 you some of the others. We have also awarded three
3 grants in Staten Island as well, one to a homeowner
4 in the St. Paul's Stapleton Heights Historic
5 District, one to a homeowner in the St. George
6 Historic District, and one not-profit, let me just
7 get to it, the non-profit was Casa Belvedere, so
8 three in Staten Island. Of course, the two that we
9 recently awarded on Manida Street and then, in
10 Council Member Abreu's District, we did also award a
11 homeowner grant for a home on 152nd Street and, of
12 course, our too recent not-for-profits were the New
13 Amsterdam Music Association, the Bushwick Reformed
14 Church, and the Greenpoint Reformed Church.

15 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR HANKS: Thank you so
16 much. I'd like to return a little bit with the
17 landmarking designations and equity so this is
18 central to the LPC's responsibilities and ensuring
19 that it's relevant to the City and, what I mean by
20 that is the equitable component, so what plans and/or
21 outreach do you have this year to continue to work on
22 recognizing designated sites related to
23 underrepresented groups such as LGBTQ people and
24 women, and what would that plan entail?

2 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: All of our work is
3 really Commission-led and Commission-initiated, but
4 we also do hear from different communities with
5 requests to evaluate or requests to designate, and so
6 those community dialogues are very important to
7 guiding our work as well, and our research department
8 surveys thousands of properties every year to
9 maintain our survey inventory and they do many
10 thematic studies and so they will do studies related
11 to LGBTQ history, they will do studies related to
12 African American history or Latino history. We just
13 recently designated the Bronx Opera House with
14 incredible cultural significance related to the
15 Latino, Latinx music scene. We do thematic studies,
16 and we also have been prioritizing large surveys in
17 areas that have been less well-represented, such as
18 we did a comprehensive survey of the Bronx, and we've
19 been working on a large survey in Queens as well, and
20 then, once we have identified areas that we find
21 merit and are our areas that we'd like to pursue, we
22 then begin outreach and, especially in areas where
23 there is less representation by landmarks, there's
24 less familiarity, so some of that outreach takes much
25 longer but we are committed to reaching out to those

2 neighborhoods and talking to them about the
3 importance of the history of the neighborhood or
4 district or building and what the benefits and
5 responsibilities are in order to raise awareness and
6 garner attention.

7 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR HANKS: Thank you so
8 much. What type of work is underway to continue the
9 work of recognizing African American and black
10 cultural significance, such as the African burial
11 grounds and through these designations and landmarks.

12 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Yeah, it's ongoing.
13 As I said, our staff is constantly, that's what they
14 do most of the time is do this survey work, and we've
15 designated important sites that represent African
16 American history over the last couple of years that
17 I'm very proud of and then, as we mentioned, we just
18 last week calendared for consideration the Frederick
19 Douglass Memorial Park which was incredibly exciting
20 moment, but also we've worked closely with the board
21 of trustees there and they're just incredible
22 stewards of the cemetery and the history so it's been
23 very exciting so that work is ongoing. Oh, and we are
24 also, this is breaking news, in addition to the
25 designation work that we do, we are also trying to

2 make these stories more accessible to the public, and
3 so we have created a number of tools that take these
4 sort of themes and highlight designations that tell
5 these stories, and so we have a really fabulous
6 digital tool that speaks to significant places of
7 African American history, and I totally recommend
8 going to our website and looking at it. It's just
9 it's a multimedia sort of history and layout of all
10 of the sites across the city related to that history.
11 We have another one called the New York City and Its
12 Path to Freedom, which highlights sites that are
13 important in terms of the story of abolition, and the
14 sort of breaking news is that we have been working
15 with Black Gotham Experience on a new immersive
16 experience to understand the story of abolition
17 through a trail of the landmarks in downtown
18 Brooklyn, and so I'm really excited about that being
19 launched in the coming weeks I think.

20 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR HANKS: That is
21 fantastic news. Thank you for breaking the news with
22 us.

23 My last question just before I pass it
24 back to Chair Salamanca really goes back to at-risk
25 buildings, and I only had one small question. Does

2 the LPC have at-risk buildings that are owned by the
3 City.

4 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: There are some
5 buildings that are we are monitoring that are owned
6 by the City, so we designate buildings owned by the
7 City and we designate buildings owned by private
8 property owners and, while the processes can be
9 slightly different, ultimately, we review the same
10 kinds of work, and we also monitor buildings that are
11 in need of maintenance and, yes, we work closely with
12 sister agencies who are responsible for buildings
13 that need to be sealed or maintained.

14 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR HANKS: Thank you so
15 much. I appreciate your answers today. I'll give it
16 back to Chair Salamanca. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Chair
18 Hanks. I want to recognize that we've been joined by
19 Council Members Rivera, Sanchez, Hudson, and Marte.

20 I will now hand it over to Council Member
21 Rivera for some questions.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Hello. Nice to see
23 you all. Sorry about the angle. I'm very happy that
24 you're here, and I want to for your testimony and all
25 your work, realizing how big your budget is.

2 Just a few questions. What mechanisms are
3 in place to protect landmarks during construction so
4 if there's maybe a building going up directly beside
5 a landmark building, and are those mechanisms or
6 programs fully funded and staffed?

7 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: They are fully
8 funded and staffed, and I can walk you through them.
9 As you know, last year, we launched a Vulnerable
10 Buildings Action Plan just for this purpose and,
11 while we did coordinate well with the Department of
12 Buildings on structural issues in the past, we did
13 really dig down to try to understand what underlying
14 causes that put buildings at risk were, and we met
15 with a roundtable of engineers, we met with community
16 and advocacy groups, we met with big cities across
17 the country, we're part of a network of other
18 preservation municipal agencies, and we looked at
19 issues that we had recently seen, and we really
20 identified sort of three major causes. One is
21 previously unknown hidden conditions behind walls
22 that were structural concerns, structural issues may
23 not have been evident. We also found that owner
24 neglect was another cause and contractor error or
25 work in violation was another cause, and so we

2 developed a plan to try to ensure that we are
3 protecting our oldest and most delicate buildings,
4 and that plan really was focused on addressing those
5 three causes with three sort of major pillars. One
6 was earlier detection, which is really important.
7 That was a key because when a building is neglected,
8 it can take a long time even to work through the
9 court system if you're initiating a lawsuit so early
10 detection was important, and we are coordinating much
11 more with the Department of Buildings on sharing data
12 to be able to flag buildings earlier before they're
13 in a state where they're at risk. We also increased
14 engineering oversight of proposed work and ongoing
15 work, working with our own consulting engineer and
16 the Department of Buildings Forensic Engineering
17 Unit, and the third pillar was working closely with
18 communities, providing them more tools and access to
19 our information and communicating with them on a
20 regular basis. They're our eyes and ears on the
21 ground, so they're very important to us, but in terms
22 of the...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: You have 20
24 buildings in the program, it says in your testimony?

2 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Oh, 20 buildings
3 that are getting this enhanced engineering. So back
4 to the second pillar, which is the enhanced
5 engineering and oversight. The way that now works is
6 that any work that is on a building or in a building
7 that may have the potential, and our staff has been
8 trained to identify this now, to have a structural
9 impact, we are requiring enhanced submissions from
10 the applicants and also enhanced review by our
11 consultant and/or by the Department of Buildings
12 Forensic Engineering Unit, and so right now there are
13 20 sites that we've referred to DOB for them to do
14 the enhanced engineering, and that also includes new
15 construction next to historic buildings. Then, of
16 course, in your District we recently had a proposal
17 adjacent to the Merchant's House where we did require
18 10 independent measures to ensure the structural
19 stability of the building as well as the stability of
20 the interior plaster.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Yeah. That was
22 important to us, and it remains a priority, the
23 Merchant's House. I was going to bring that up if you
24 did not. Please take care of it. For those who don't

2 know, it's landmarked inside and outside. It's a
3 lovely building on 4th Street.

4 You also mentioned you do these large
5 surveys of places that have been under-represented
6 and I think that's great. I know that there has been
7 a lot of discussion that maybe the outer boroughs
8 didn't receive as much attention from LPC and I see
9 here you have the Bronx and Queens and Brooklyn in
10 terms of some research and designation. How do you
11 prioritize proposals? Is it the size? Is it the
12 scope? Is it just, I don't know how popular it is,
13 how much history, and does the size and scope of
14 resources ever become a factor in how you prioritize
15 designations? I only ask because when you come back
16 to Manhattan, I'd really love for you to look at
17 Union Square South again, please, New York Eye and
18 Ear Infirmary and 50 West 13th Street, but I'll be
19 sure to follow up with you outside of that. How do
20 you prioritize these proposals, and does size, scope,
21 and how many resources go into those proposals ever
22 factor in how you prioritize? Thank you for the
23 questions, Mr. and Madam Chair.

24 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Thank you. As I
25 said, we have a vast inventory of sites that we have

2 surveyed, and we prioritize designations based on
3 merit first but also many other factors including
4 significance, architectural, cultural, and historical
5 significance, how it compares to other sites that are
6 designated with similar significance, where we have
7 gaps in designations that tell a specific story so we
8 look to see if it aligns with our priority of
9 ensuring equitable representation both to geographic
10 and cultural communities and across all five
11 boroughs, so there are many factors that we consider.
12 We work closely, of course, with the Council Members
13 in each District, and so I'm happy to continue to
14 talk to you about those sites.

15 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Council
16 Member Rivera.

17 I just want to recognize that we've been
18 joined by Council Member Borelli.

19 A few questions, Chair, regarding the
20 work permit applications. There were 3,873 work
21 permit applications during the first four months of
22 2024, down 8.5 percent from the same period in Fiscal
23 Year 2023. LPC hit its target by issuing expedited
24 certificates of no effect but narrowly missed its
25 target for certificates of no effect. What factors do

2 you believe led to the 8.5 percent decrease in the
3 number of work permit applications during the first
4 four months of Fiscal Year 2024?

5 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Yeah, we narrowly
6 missed those targets, and that is somewhat
7 consistent. We've seen that in the previous Fiscal
8 Years as well, and what I would say is that I think
9 one major reason for that is that there are outliers
10 that bring those percentages down, and really the
11 average number of certificates of no effect that are
12 approved and issued within 10 days is, the average
13 number of days of a certificate of no effect being
14 approved is six days, and the average number of days
15 for a permit for minor work to be issued is 6.3 days
16 so we do really strive hard to meet those targets,
17 but I think there are on occasion some outliers that
18 are just more complicated, and that has probably
19 caused the narrow miss of that target.

20 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: In light of the
21 revenue raising PEG from the November Plan, can you
22 share how much revenue LPC expects to generate from
23 permits issued to building owners in Fiscal Year '25
24 versus Fiscal Year '24?

2 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Right, so in Fiscal
3 Year '25, our revenue target is 6.9 million dollars,
4 and that is also our revenue target at this point,
5 6.9 million dollars at this point in Fiscal Year
6 2024. So far we have generated 5.5 million dollars,
7 which is 80 percent of our targets so we do expect to
8 meet our target of 6.9 million dollars.

9 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: How much are
10 typically the LPC permits?

11 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: So our fee structure
12 is set up to be relatively modest because we do
13 recognize that the property owners of the designated
14 buildings are a very small subset in the larger city
15 with only 38,000 buildings under our jurisdiction so
16 we are mindful of sort of the equity issues around
17 that so we do have a modest fee schedule, which is 95
18 dollars for the first 25,000 dollars of work, and
19 then 5 for every 1,000 dollars of work after that.
20 It's based on the DOB schedule and it's administered
21 through DOB, and we have found that we are nearly
22 self-sustaining and so that does seem to be the right
23 balance of equity for those property owners and
24 sufficiently maintaining our budget.

2 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: How does LPC
3 navigate interactions with owners who do not want
4 their buildings to be landmarked?

5 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: So this is a really
6 important part of our work, and we spend considerable
7 time doing outreach to property owners. Sometimes we
8 hear from property owners that they're very
9 supportive, and that's always the best outcome.
10 Sometimes people have concerns and questions, and
11 those are completely valid questions and concerns,
12 and so we work really hard to talk to them, to answer
13 all of those questions, address those concerns
14 because if a building is, and I should say, under the
15 Landmark's law, the Landmark's law does not require
16 owner consent in order to designate a property, but
17 it is really important to us to try to have some
18 support, particularly in larger historic districts,
19 and it's really important that owners are informed
20 and understand the process and what's happening,
21 because if the building in our district is
22 designated, we have a relationship in perpetuity so
23 it's really important to us that we start that
24 relationship out on the right foot and especially
25 that everybody is informed as we move through the

2 process so we spend a considerable amount of time and
3 effort on those outreach efforts.

4 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you. I'm
5 going to hand it over to Council Member Joseph for
6 questioning.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chairs.
8 Good morning. How are you?

9 In 2019, we found the African burial
10 ground on Church and Bedford Avenue. We're in the
11 middle of doing community engagement right now so we
12 wanted to know, whatever the community decide on how
13 to memorialize the space, do we apply for designation
14 before or after? That was one of the biggest
15 questions.

16 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: One thing that I
17 would say is that these are really important sites
18 and sometimes they're evident and sometimes they're
19 not. They're under paved streets or under new
20 buildings but they're very, very important, and so we
21 work very diligently with communities to help them
22 recognize those sites and, if there is evidence that
23 is something that the LPC can regulate designation,
24 maybe a good option but, if not, one thing I want to
25 point out is that our archaeologist is available to

2 oversee and assist any testing, excavation, or work
3 that might impact below-ground resources in the city,
4 and we have assisted communities and other elected
5 officials who've worked together to try to find other
6 ways to memorialize sites where designation may not
7 be an option at the time.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Yeah, because
9 there were two schools built on that site. There was
10 a public school and then there was a yeshiva, but a
11 couple of years ago they were demolished so we don't
12 know what the remains are. We were looking to do
13 probably a radar sonic. One that's not invasive and
14 disturbing what still remains under there.

15 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: And we're happy to
16 provide guidance on that.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: That would be very
18 helpful.

19 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: We can't go onto
20 somebody's property and do the work, but we can
21 certainly guide..

22 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: It's city-owned.

23 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Oh, it's city owned?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Yes. City-owned,
25 it's in my District.

2 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Okay.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Under my
4 stewardship. Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Okay. We can
6 certainly provide some guidance on that.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I would love that.
8 Thank you so much, Chairs.

9 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Thank you. Thank
10 you, Councilwoman Joseph.

11 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: I want to
12 recognize that we've also been joined by Minority
13 Leader Council Member Borelli.

14 I want to now hand it off to Council
15 Member Marte for questions.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Hey, thank you for
17 being here. Good to see you.

18 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Good to see you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: With 35,000
20 landmarked building, I feel like your staff is really
21 short-staffed when it comes to enforcement officer. I
22 think you're around three or four enforcement
23 officer. What would be the target goal for you guys
24 to feel comfortable that you can manage the amount of
25

2 landmarks throughout the city with this sufficient
3 amount of officers on my staff?

4 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: First, I would say
5 we actually did just increase our enforcement
6 department by two so we actually have six people who
7 are working in the enforcement division, and it is a
8 complaint-driven process so we evaluate every
9 complaint that comes in and, just to give you a sense
10 of sort of proportion, in terms of the applications
11 we get for work permits, we get about 13,000
12 applications a year for people applying for permits.
13 In terms of complaints, we get between sort of 200
14 and 400 complaints a year so the complaints,
15 hopefully that's a sign that people are actually
16 doing work legally and with permits, and the
17 complaints are a much smaller number so with the six
18 people on staff, we are able to investigate every
19 complaint and in a timely manner.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Great. I was
21 wondering, is there a tracker for, we talked about
22 eligible buildings and buildings that have been
23 landmarked and their status when it comes to
24 demolition. Do we have a tracker for buildings that
25 should be eligible for landmarks under your criteria

2 that are in the process of being demolished or are
3 threatened by potential demolition?

4 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: We don't have a
5 tracker for that but, as I said, we do consider many
6 factors. Threat would be one of those factors we'd
7 consider as we look at what sites to prioritize in
8 our inventory.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Great, and just to
10 piggyback off of Council Member Rivera's comment,
11 we're excited that you guys might look at Lower
12 Eastside again so happy and looking forward to that
13 conversation.

14 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Looking forward to
15 meeting you to talk about that.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Council
18 Member Marte.

19 Are there any other Members who have any
20 questions?

21 I'll hand it over to Council Member
22 Borelli.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you. This
24 is very awkward for me too, sitting in the front.

2 I just wanted to ask about procedures to
3 remove landmarking designation, is that possible and
4 has it ever happened?

5 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: As you know, when we
6 designate a building or a district, we go through our
7 process to designate it and then there is a post-
8 designation process, where the designation goes to
9 the City Planning Commission for an advisory review
10 to understand how it may relate to planning goals and
11 then ultimately it goes to the City Council so, at
12 the City Council, the City Council can uphold or
13 affirm the designation, they can rescind the
14 designation, or in the case of a historic district,
15 they can modify the boundaries to make them smaller
16 so the City Council certainly has a role shortly
17 after designation. After that, I think we have not
18 had any applications to...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: But there is an
20 application process for removing a designation?

21 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: There is no
22 application process for removing that but, as part of
23 the Landmarks Law, there is a hardship provision,
24 which is a safety valve when designation may cause an
25 undue hardship or burden to a property owner and so

2 that's a really important part of the Landmarks Law,
3 and it strengthens the Landmarks Law, and it does
4 require robust analysis, including an economic
5 analysis. They're very rare. We've had less than 20
6 in our 60 years of existence, and they really don't
7 happen that often, but we do take them very
8 seriously. Other than that, we might... In the case of
9 a fire or sort of a catastrophic event that results
10 in the demolition or collapse of a building, we have
11 in those cases de-designated the site, and a de-
12 designation process is the same as the designation
13 process. We initiate it and, ultimately, it would
14 come to the City Council.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: I guess I'm
16 asking this because we're faced with a situation in
17 the city where we don't seem to be able to build
18 housing. Some of these landmarkings, as you know
19 because you hear public testimony, you can get a
20 sense of reading between the lines when you speak to
21 people, that some of these landmarkings over the
22 years were done not just to preserve a particular
23 house but also to prevent development on a site. Is
24 it something that's in your wheelhouse or an idea to
25 ever just re-evaluate some of the sites that have

2 been landmarked to see if there's something worth
3 landmarking there still to keep the designation? I'll
4 give you an example. In Staten Island, in Prince's
5 Bay, there's a house and, granted, this is one of the
6 oldest houses in the City of New York, I think it's
7 called the Manee House, but it was purchased by a
8 developer legally, above the board, was going to
9 knock it down, put up some houses, or whatever he was
10 going to put up, and people said, we don't want
11 houses here. As the only historian, maybe I cared
12 about the house, not many other people cared about
13 the house. Now the house is dilapidated, and it's
14 just a pile of rubble.

15 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Yeah.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: What is the point
17 of maintaining a house like that, and I'm using this
18 as a hypothetical. I think it's an interesting
19 history, but there are other houses where the history
20 is not significant, where they're just piles of
21 dilapidated rubble, and we could be doing something
22 innovative with that property.

23 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Just with that
24 specific property, that was a situation where the
25 building was being neglected and we initiated a

2 lawsuit and prevailed and, unfortunately, it is still
3 in a sealed but neglected state, and we did approve
4 new housing on that site in front of the landmark
5 building, which included restoration of the landmark
6 building. That project didn't go forward, but we
7 certainly look for opportunities where we can
8 incorporate new housing in historic districts or on
9 landmark sites, and we understand that housing is...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: To be clear, it
11 didn't go forward because the developer bought the
12 property legally, was unaware that this was going to
13 be a landmark property, had some financial rubric
14 that indicated he could knock the building down,
15 build a certain number of townhouses or whatever, and
16 the landmarking was the catalyst of why this did not
17 happen.

18 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: No, it's a very
19 early designation. This owner bought the building
20 after it was designated so I think that...

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Okay, a different
22 owner than the guy...

23 CHAIRPERSON CARROLL: Maybe different
24 facts, or maybe they somehow weren't aware, but it's,
25 as you said, an important site and very early

2 designation, and we did approve housing and I think
3 we do recognize that there's a critical need for
4 housing in the city, and we think that there is a way
5 to find a balance between preserving really important
6 places and allowing for development to happen. We
7 support housing, additional housing, and especially
8 affordable housing in our historic districts. We are
9 in support of the City of Yes Housing for Opportunity
10 Plan, and we have worked very hard in historic
11 districts and on sites of individual landmarks to
12 allow for significant housing. For example, actually
13 on the Lower East Side recently for St. Augustine's
14 Church, we approved a tower on the back of their lot,
15 which will be a large residential tower. Similarly,
16 we partnered with a church in the Bronx as well, St.
17 James's Episcopal Church, to do an affordable housing
18 project on their property, which is also a large
19 building and, in our historic districts, we work
20 really hard to ensure that we're allowing for that
21 flexibility and growth in historic districts, and
22 we'll always be looking at our policies to find more
23 ways to allow for growth in historic districts. Thank
24 you.

2 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Council
3 Member Borelli.

4 With that, Madam Chair, I want to thank
5 you for your testimony (INAUDIBLE) questions, and I
6 want to thank your staff as well for being present
7 today.

8 We will take a five-minute recess and, up
9 next, we will have DCP, the Department of City
10 Planning, for testimony.

11 All right. Good afternoon. Thank you
12 again to LPC and welcome back to today's Preliminary
13 Budget hearing for the Committee on Land Use. We will
14 now continue with the Department of City Planning.

15 I want to recognize that we've been
16 joined by Councilwoman Selvena Brooks-Powers as well.

17 Now, we will continue with the Department
18 of City Planning.

19 I want to recognize we are joined by
20 Chair of Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, Chair
21 Kevin Riley, and Chair of the Subcommittee on
22 Landmarks, Public Siting and Dispositions, Council
23 Member Hanks.

24 The Department of City Planning, or DCP,
25 plans for New York City's overall growth and

2 development. Working with communities and elected
3 officials, it aims to shape and align planning needs
4 to improve our neighborhoods and make them more
5 equitable and resilient. Recent data suggests a
6 critical role for DCP at this moment in our city's
7 history. This week, the Citizens Budget Commission
8 released the results of its 2023 resident survey. The
9 survey showed that New Yorkers generally rate the
10 quality of life and the quality of core City services
11 much worse than they did in 2017. CBC points out that
12 long shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to
13 hover over the city, including with high office
14 vacancies, low housing affordability, and an increase
15 in low-paying jobs. While the Administration's verbal
16 commitment to housing and public safety are welcome,
17 there is a significant gap between how New Yorkers
18 rate the quality of life and city services now versus
19 how they did in 2017 or 2008. A great deal of
20 progress needs to be achieved to return to prior
21 levels of satisfaction. For DCP, this will require at
22 least three key components. First, proper staffing to
23 assess and implement necessary zoning and planning
24 changes, second, full engagement with communities
25 and, third, capital funding.

1 However, when we review DCP's budget,
2
3 there is a disconnect between its central role and
4 its limited capacity. DCP has a Fiscal 2025
5 Preliminary Budget of 44.1 million, about 4.6 million
6 lower than at Fiscal 2024 budget adoption. In Fiscal
7 2025, budget includes 32.9 million for personal
8 services to support 353 full-time positions and 11.1
9 million for other-than-personal services. DCP has
10 received two rounds of Programs to Eliminate the Gap,
11 or PEGs, so far in Fiscal 2024. The PEGs in the
12 November and Preliminary Plans include both PS and
13 OTPS savings, including an environmental review like
14 CEQR and other studies. While there were no headcount
15 reductions, DCP has struggled to fill its ranks. The
16 Department has a relatively high vacancy rate of 13.9
17 percent overall and vacancy rates of 30 percent and
18 25 percent respectfully in its Queens and Bronx
19 borough offices. These vacancies are much too high
20 and need to come down. The Committee seeks to learn
21 much more about what actions DCP has taken in the
22 budget to increase staffing and ensure all five
23 boroughs have the appropriate staffing for rezonings.
24 There are currently five active neighborhood
25 rezonings, but Council Members have heard that

2 capacity restrictions limits DCP's ability to expand
3 its scope to other communities. These rezonings are
4 necessary to create new opportunities and achieve the
5 Administration's own City of Yes agenda with its
6 moonshot goal of 500,000 new units of housing over a
7 decade.

8 I will pause here and turn it over to our
9 Subcommittee Chair, Chair Riley, to share his opening
10 remarks for the Department.

11 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Thank you,
12 Chair Salamanca, and welcome once again to DCP's
13 leadership and Director Garodnik. Thank you for being
14 here today.

15 I would like to pick up the importance of
16 DCP to the City of Yes agenda. Whether for aspiring
17 homeowners or entrepreneurs, DCP is seeking to modify
18 the City's Zoning Laws to drive change. We have heard
19 a lot from our constituents and our community boards
20 about the scale of the City of Yes proposal,
21 particularly Zoning for Economic Opportunity and
22 Zoning for Housing Opportunity, which are making
23 their way through the City's process now. The feeling
24 of a rushed presentation or misinformation threatens
25 to make moving forward more difficult. Certainly, the

2 high vacancy rates in the borough's office,
3 previously discussed, poses an obstacle to robust
4 engagement. I look forward to hearing more about
5 DCP's outreach and engagement functions and how they
6 are making sure that both neighborhood rezonings and
7 the City of Yes are receiving the support they
8 deserve.

9 In addition, new capital funds are
10 urgently needed. In March 2022, the Administration
11 launched its Rebuild, Renew, and Reinvent Blueprint
12 for the City's Economic Recovery, which launched the
13 NYC Strategy for Equity and Economic Development, or
14 SEED, fund. SEED was intended to invest City dollars
15 into neighborhood-wide capital improvements, forming
16 a new framework. However, we've only heard of three
17 SEED investments in two years. In some key respects,
18 SEED appeared posed to replace the previous
19 Administration's tool for guiding investments in
20 communities, which was called the Neighborhood
21 Development Fund. We look forward to hearing more
22 about the status and size of the SEED fund, next
23 steps for both it and the NDF and which neighborhoods
24 are expected to benefit from upcoming investments.

2 Other topics that the Committee hopes to
3 cover this afternoon include how DCP is supporting
4 office conversion and climate change resiliency,
5 proposing homes to City Planning Commission,
6 conducting timely land use reviews, planning for fair
7 housing and more manufacturing industrial jobs, and
8 so much more.

9 With that, I look forward to hearing from
10 Director Garodnik, and we'll pass it back over to
11 Chair Salamanca. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Chair
13 Riley.

14 Before we hear from DCP and the Director,
15 I would like to thank once again the Committee Staff
16 who helped prepare this hearing in the Finance and
17 Language Division as well as the hard-working staff
18 in my office and my co-Chair's office.

19 A reminder that the public will take
20 testify after DCP after we have finished hearing from
21 the Administration.

22 If you are here to testify in person,
23 please fill out a witness slip with the Sergeant-at-
24 Arms so that we can put you in the speaker's list.

2 Additionally, if you would like to
3 testify remotely, please note that you must sign up
4 at www.council.nyc.gov/testify.

5 Thank you to DCP in advance for keeping
6 your oral testimony to around 10 minutes, and I will
7 now pass it on to our Committee Counsel to swear in
8 DCP's leadership before they testify.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: The DCP panel will
10 include Chairperson and Director of the Department,
11 Dan Garodnick, Chief Operating Officer David Parish,
12 and Executive Director Edith Hsu-Chen. Panelists,
13 would you please raise your right hands?

14 Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth,
15 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your
16 testimony before this Committee and in answer to all
17 Council Member questions?

18 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: I do.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: Yes.

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PARISH: Yes.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Thank you.

22 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Good afternoon, Chair
23 Salamanca, Subcommittee Chairs Hanks and Riley, and
24 distinguished Members of the Land Use Committee. As
25 you heard, my name is Dan Garodnik, and I certainly

2 will keep my remarks to under ten minutes. I'm joined
3 by City Planning's Executive Director Edith Hsu Chen,
4 and our Chief Operating Officer, as you heard, David
5 Parrish. Thank you all very much for the opportunity
6 to discuss the Department of City Planning's
7 Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2025.

8 Before we discuss the budget, I want to
9 outline the work that City Planning has been doing
10 over the past year to help make our city a more
11 affordable, equitable, and prosperous place to live.
12 Key to our pursuit of these ambitious goals, and I
13 thank you for your reference to them in your
14 introductory remarks, is the City of Yes proposals,
15 three citywide initiatives to reduce our reliance on
16 fossil fuels, to support small businesses, and to
17 tackle our mounting housing crisis. The first of
18 these three proposals, as you all know, is City of
19 Yes for Carbon Neutrality which the Council adopted
20 in December, thank you. These changes have made it
21 much easier for New Yorkers to install solar panels,
22 to retrofit aging buildings, or charge their electric
23 vehicles, and we thank you very much for your
24 partnership and for your support. The second is City
25 of Yes for Economic Opportunity, which began its

2 public review in October and seeks to update decades
3 old zoning rules to bolster the City's industrial
4 sector, to revitalize commercial corridors, and boost
5 growing industries. Earlier this month, the City
6 Planning Commission approved the proposal by a vote
7 of 11 to 1 after an extended period of public
8 engagement, over 175 public meetings with Community
9 Boards in just a few months. Community boards raised
10 some specific concerns during this process, and I
11 want you to know that the Commission made
12 modifications to be responsive to those Community
13 Board concerns so I hope you will look at those and,
14 of course we'll have plenty of time to talk about
15 Economic Opportunity in the coming weeks as it will
16 be before the City Council.

17 Last but not least, City of Yes for
18 Housing Opportunity, a plan to tackle our growing
19 housing shortage by building a little more housing in
20 every neighborhood. I know we all recognize the
21 gravity of this crisis. We have seen how rental
22 apartment vacancy rates are at their lowest rate
23 since the 1960s at 1.41 percent and the imbalance of
24 power between landlords and tenants in this city.
25 There simply are not enough homes for New Yorkers to

2 live in and it is driving rents higher and higher.
3 City of Yes for Housing Opportunity helps alleviate
4 that crunch with a balanced approach that includes
5 allowing more affordable housing in dense, high-cost
6 neighborhoods, allowing modest apartment buildings
7 close to transit, and legalizing backyard cottages to
8 give homeowners extra income to allow them to stay
9 close to family. I applaud Speaker Adams for her
10 recent Daily News op-ed with the Mayor that calls for
11 government action at all levels, including here in
12 New York City with City of Yes for Housing
13 Opportunity. I appreciate Council Members Brannan,
14 Powers, and Bottcher for their vocal support of key
15 elements of this plan, and I want to note that City
16 of Yes for Housing Opportunity is driven by the same
17 fair housing goals that animated the City Council's
18 recently approved fair housing framework so we look
19 forward to continuing to work closely with all of you
20 as this plan advances to public review.

21 City of Yes isn't the only way we have
22 been advancing our housing and climate goals. In
23 December, we launched Green Fast Track, which is a
24 rulemaking process that will enable a streamlined
25 environmental review process for small- and medium-

2 sized housing projects that use all electric heating.
3 The changes would cut up to two years and lots of red
4 tape for these projects, getting homes built faster
5 and greener and, just yesterday, the City Planning
6 Commission voted to approve this initiative.

7 Alongside these citywide initiatives,
8 we've been working on neighborhood plans across the
9 boroughs tailored to meet specific community needs.
10 In the East Bronx, we have a plan to complement the
11 new Metro North stations that are coming in 2027,
12 with 7,500 new homes, 10,000 jobs. This plan entered
13 ULURP in January, and I want to thank you Chair
14 Salamanca, Chair Riley, Majority Leader Farías, and
15 Council Member Marmorato for your consistent
16 engagement throughout the process. We really
17 appreciate it and very much enjoy working with you on
18 this project.

19 We've also been active in Queens
20 launching a neighborhood planning process for Jamaica
21 in May and Long Island City in October. We're
22 coordinating closely with Council Members and Natasha
23 Williams and Julie Won to arrive at strategic long-
24 term visions for these neighborhoods that support
25 housing and economic opportunity and reflect resident

2 needs and, of course, Borough President Donovan
3 Richards, who is always our partner in all of the
4 matters in the Borough of Queens.

5 In October, we also kicked off the
6 Midtown South Mixed-Use Plan, which seeks to foster a
7 vibrant mixed-use neighborhood across 42 Manhattan
8 blocks, where housing is currently not permitted.
9 Earlier this month, we released the draft zoning plan
10 for Midtown South and we're working diligently toward
11 a formal land use proposal. Our thanks to Council
12 Members Eric Bottcher and Keith Powers as well as
13 Borough President Levine who have been close partners
14 on this project.

15 With guidance and collaboration from
16 Council Member Crystal Hudson, progress has continued
17 on the Atlantic Avenue Mixed-Use Plan to bring
18 housing and jobs to Central Brooklyn and we are
19 looking to begin ULURP later this year.

20 I also want to mention that we are
21 grateful that the City Council adopted South Richmond
22 Zoning Relief on Staten Island which eases burdens
23 for homeowners by simplifying zoning and planning
24 procedures, supports natural preservation, and
25 strengthens community oversight. Thank you, Minority

2 Leader Joe Borelli, for working with us on these
3 sensible reforms.

4 We're very active across the boroughs and
5 I know that I'm getting close to my time limit, but I
6 will turn now in a moment to the budget. I do want to
7 note that another area of focus has been creating new
8 tools that help New Yorkers to understand their city
9 and its demographics. In the past year, we released
10 the Population Fact Finder and Map Viewer tools to
11 visualize census data, the DCP Housing Database to
12 see where new housing is being built, the most
13 comprehensive data set ever of building elevations
14 and flood risk, and much more. As these examples
15 should demonstrate, we are committed to making the
16 data that we collect transparent and putting it at
17 the fingertips of New Yorkers.

18 Now for a financial overview, DCP entered
19 Fiscal Year 2024 with an adopted budget of 48.7
20 million, an authorized headcount of 353 full-time
21 staff positions, of which 32.8 million dollars and
22 182 positions are funded with City tax levy dollars.
23 DCP's remaining 15.8 million budget allocation and
24 171 positions are funded by state and federal grants,
25 primarily through HUD's Community Development Block

2 Grant Program. The 48.7 million of Fiscal Year 2024
3 adopted budget allocated 32.9 million dollars to
4 agency-wide personal services, which include part-
5 time staff, interns, and members of the City Planning
6 Commission, and the remaining 15.7 million to other-
7 than-personal services.

8 In comparison to the Fiscal Year '24
9 adopted budget, the Fiscal Year '25 Prelim of 44.1
10 million and 353 full-time staff lines represents a
11 net 4.6-million-dollar decrease, largely attributed
12 to the expiration of one-time project funds and the
13 City's Program to Eliminate the Gap that mandated a 5
14 percent reduction in agency spending in the last two
15 financial plans, including a reduction for our
16 environmental consulting budget. The vast majority of
17 the 4.6-million-dollar decrease relates to other-
18 than-personal services, OTPS, and came through EIS
19 savings from realigned priorities. The rest of the
20 decrease is due to OTPS efficiencies that we achieved
21 in such areas as travel, copier rentals, printing.
22 building maintenance, training, telecom
23 subscriptions, things like that. Looking ahead, EIS
24 needs will continue to be assessed to determine any
25 necessary budget adjustments.

2 With personal services, there was no
3 headcount change and a net decrease of 28,000
4 dollars. This was a result of cuts to personnel
5 funding and was offset by increased funding for
6 collective bargaining. Overall, these combined PS and
7 OTPS budget changes result in a decrease of 4.6
8 million dollars and a zero headcount change to DCP's
9 budget, establishing a Fiscal Year '25 Prelim Plan of
10 353 full-time authorized positions and 44.1 million
11 dollars.

12 The Department of City Planning will
13 continue to distribute its resources in the most
14 effective way possible to advance the Department's
15 work program and to meet the needs of New Yorkers all
16 while striving for bigger, better, and a brighter
17 future for our beloved city. Mr. Chairman, thank you
18 very much for the opportunity to say a few words at
19 the beginning and I'm all yours.

20 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Mr.
21 Chair, for your testimony.

22 I am going to break protocol very
23 quickly, and I'm just going to allow Council Member
24 Sanchez to ask a few questions.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you so
3 much, Chair. Really appreciate it. Hi, good to see
4 you all.

5 My first question is on City of Yes for
6 Housing Opportunity. When does the Department
7 anticipate certifying the application and beginning
8 public review?

9 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Let's see, today is
10 the 21st of March. I'd say it's coming soon. We are
11 finishing up our environmental review, and this is a
12 matter of weeks, not months so I would expect it
13 before the summer.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Great. Is the
15 environmental review process the only limiting factor
16 for the timeline.

17 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Once that is done, we
18 will be ready to refer it over to you and, of course,
19 to Community Boards.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Okay, and then a
21 sort of technical question, so we understand that the
22 text amendment does not go through the ULURP process,
23 but what is the process that it goes through and what
24 are the differences?

2 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: It's very similar. A
3 text amendment starts with a referral by the
4 Department of City Planning to Community Boards and
5 to Borough Presidents then it comes back to the City
6 Planning Commission for a public hearing, followed by
7 a public vote. If it approved by the City Planning
8 Commission, then it moves on to the City Council for
9 consideration, where the Council has, as you know,
10 the ability to approve, disapprove, or modify.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Okay, thank you.
12 The reason that I'm asking about the timeline is just
13 a concern for Community Boards. We know that they are
14 offline in the summer and just making sure that they
15 have ample time to review all of that substance, but
16 I, for one, am very excited to get our hands on the
17 meat, on the details behind a lot of these proposals,
18 a lot of which I personally agree with.

19 The second question is a broader one. We
20 know that there is a longstanding criticism that the
21 Department has faced about being more of a department
22 of zoning than a Department of City Planning and so
23 throwing you, maybe this is, anyway, won't
24 editorialize, but wondering how you would respond to
25 that criticism today and what changes has the

2 Administration and the Department made to move more
3 in the direction of a comprehensive planning
4 framework for the City of New York and second part to
5 that question, last one, Chair, thank you for the
6 time, is in the wake of hopefully being successful on
7 all of the City of Yes amendments, how will the City
8 be approaching large parcels of land opportunity
9 sites such as, and I will be selfish, Fordham Landing
10 in the Bronx, which is a proposed development of over
11 3,000 units. Thank you.

12 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Great. Thank you very
13 much for those questions and, Council Member Sanchez,
14 I did want to note that on the subject of Community
15 Boards and giving them ample time to be able to
16 really process a detailed text amendment like housing
17 and also as we did with economic opportunity, we
18 intend to give them extra time and also we were very
19 clear on the last go around for Economic Opportunity
20 that we were not going to bind ourselves at the City
21 Planning Commission or at the Department of City
22 Planning to the specific 50 or 60 Day limitations
23 that Community Boards officially have to give their
24 recommendations. We were accepting comments from
25 Community Boards right up to and including the day of

2 the vote from the City Planning Commission because we
3 want to hear their voices and we also know that these
4 are complicated proposals, and we know that it takes
5 time. I also will note, and then I'll get to your
6 actual questions, that we had on the last go around
7 on City of Yes for Economic Opportunity, some 175
8 meetings between the Department of City Planning and
9 Community Boards on that proposal. I'll remind
10 everybody there's 59 Community Boards so it comes out
11 to almost an average of three meetings per Board and
12 that's key to our role. We see that as central to the
13 function of the Department, and we want to continue
14 to do that. I just wanted to make that point. I
15 certainly agree.

16 As for the ways we're looking at things
17 more comprehensively, these proposals that we're
18 talking about right here, where we're looking at
19 things on a citywide scale and thinking about ways to
20 thoughtfully advance change for the environment, for
21 economic opportunity, and for housing are all of an
22 effort for us to do more thoughtful citywide planning
23 and also to think about the way that we're doing
24 infrastructure investments in connection with
25 planning in a way that makes sense, and I know Chair

2 Riley is going to ask me about it because he said it
3 in his opening statement so we're going to talk about
4 the way that we allocate funds and the way that we
5 intend to support neighborhood plans and the way that
6 we intend to do citywide efforts on this front but,
7 most importantly, we are trying not to do just site
8 by site by site, but rather to look at this on a
9 citywide basis.

10 The last thing on Fordham Landing North
11 and other, as you say, large opportunity sites, there
12 are sites in the city like that one and there are
13 others which in many places in this country would be
14 entire cities on their own and deserve that level of
15 attention and focus, and so we are already working
16 with your team to make sure that they and your
17 community have the tools to be able to shape that
18 proposal. It's a private application, as you note. It
19 has to have zoning approvals. It's going to be a
20 large-scale plan. That means there's lots of
21 opportunity for the community, the Council, Community
22 Board, Department of City Planning, City Planning
23 Commission to shape that in a way that that we want
24 to see it shaped so we really look forward to working

2 with you on that one. We know that's an important one
3 to you and to the Bronx and to the whole city.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you so
5 much, Chair. Thank you, Chair Salamanca.

6 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Council
7 Member Sanchez.

8 In terms of my questioning, I'm going to
9 start off with staffing and attrition. The Department
10 of City Planning plays a central role in advancing
11 the Administration's growth and zoning goals,
12 including the City of Yes agenda. Currently, the
13 Department has a 13.9 percent vacancy rate, about
14 half of the rate it had in July of 2022. Although
15 that progress is welcome, DCP's borough offices still
16 are struggling with staffing. The Bronx and Queens
17 boroughs offices have vacancy rates of 25 and 30
18 percent respectfully. I'm a Bronx kid, Mr. Chair,
19 question, what are we doing to increase staffing in
20 the Borough of the Bronx and Queens, respectfully?

21 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: First of all, let me
22 just note on the vacancy, because I appreciate that
23 we're making progress, we have a way to go, but there
24 are also a couple of additional details baked in
25 there that are worth the Council knowing about, that

2 right now there are 49 vacancies, the ones that
3 create that for 13.9 percent number that you noted
4 but, of those, 14 of them are right now pending OMB
5 approval, seven of them are grant-funded through
6 other sources and are not funded so if you take out
7 the ones that are in the process of approval at OMB
8 and the ones for which there's no separate grant
9 funding, we're actually at an 8 percent vacancy rate,
10 but I know your number is accurate though. It is 49
11 vacancies over the total number that we have, but I
12 did want to note that if you were to take out the
13 ones that are currently in the process and the ones
14 for which there is no federal or state funding
15 available, it's more like an 8 percent vacancy.

16 Put that aside, most importantly, we have
17 lost staff and we do have some vacancies in some of
18 our borough offices. What we do when that happens is
19 we make sure that our borough offices are staffed
20 sufficiently with central staff from the Agency's
21 main headquarters here in Manhattan. We shift
22 resources around to make sure that our work program
23 in the Bronx and Queens continues unabated. We have
24 some very big initiatives, as you know, Chairman, in
25 the Bronx that we care about very much. We want to

2 make sure that the Bronx Community Boards are well-
3 served by the agency. That's part of our Charter-
4 mandated function. We are committed to that. We don't
5 believe we've lost a step, but I know that you, Mr.
6 Chairman and your Colleagues, will tell us if we do,
7 but we are working very hard to fill those vacancies,
8 make sure that we are fully staffed up.

9 By the way, there are some ways in which
10 we have done that. We have already been out to meet
11 with the deans of all of the planning schools. We
12 have a fellowship program that we started last fall,
13 which is a two-year program designed to give people a
14 foot in the door with an eye toward hiring them at
15 the end, an internship program. We also are losing
16 people at a much lower rate. Our attrition is much,
17 much lower. We only lost two percent in quarter two
18 so we feel like we are in a much, much stronger
19 position than we have been previously, but I
20 certainly understand your point and we are very much
21 focused on filling vacancies that we have,
22 particularly in the borough offices where we know
23 that we have some vacancies.

24 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: I want to start by
25 saying that the Bronx Director for City Planning, we

2 have a great relationship, open dialogue, he's
3 accessible, he was the right choice for the position,
4 but I want to make sure he has the resources that he
5 needs as well, right, because we're going to hold him
6 accountable and, if he does not have the resources
7 necessary or staffing necessary, we cannot hold him
8 to that level of accountability, and we need to
9 ensure that he has staffing so that he can address
10 our zoning concerns.

11 Now, how do the high number of vacancies
12 impact timelines for the processing of applications
13 at DCP?

14 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: We are making changes
15 in our processes to find ways to move applications a
16 whole lot faster than we have historically. As I
17 noted in my introductory comments, we are advancing
18 new tools and procedures that will speed up some of
19 these applications to make it easier, particularly
20 smaller housing developments that are all electric
21 and don't have other sensitive concerns like the
22 length of time on construction or in flood areas. We
23 are trying to streamline a lot of these procedures so
24 that those projects can move faster. Our timelines on
25 neighborhood plans, our timelines on the City of Yes

2 for Housing and Economic Opportunity have remained
3 consistent throughout. We are we are working very
4 hard to provide a very positive user experience for
5 private applicants who are coming to engage with us
6 at the Department. We have changed the procedure by
7 which they engage. They come in, we get them to a
8 preliminary application statement as quickly as
9 possible, start the clock, measure the amount of time
10 that it is taking from start to finish for these
11 applications and not go through multiple back and
12 forths with agency personnel, borough offices or
13 otherwise. We're trying to make this a lot easier,
14 and we're trying to eliminate redundancies that are
15 unnecessary, that take up a lot of staff time, and
16 are frequently working to the great frustration of
17 people who are looking to do important things in the
18 city like create housing and economic opportunities
19 so we are we are creatively making changes here to
20 try to be better and more efficient at what we do,
21 all the while filling key vacancies to make sure that
22 we can do even more at the same time.

23 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: In terms of the
24 applications that are submitted, maybe you could give
25 us a percentage. How many applications are focused on

2 housing projects to address the housing crisis
3 opposed to just rezonings for anything other than
4 housing.

5 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: So housing projects
6 versus something else, like a change in a
7 manufacturing district or commercial, that sounds
8 like a Chief Operating Officer question to me so I'm
9 going to turn to David Parish and see if he has those
10 readily available.

11 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PARISH: I'm going
12 to say that Council Member, Chair, we're going to
13 have to get back to you with the details, but I will
14 say in my experience, the vast majority of rezonings
15 and the vast majority of all of our other actions are
16 really about some type of housing creation. A small
17 minority are for things like public facilities,
18 daycare approvals, things like that. The vast
19 majority relate to housing, but we'll get you that.

20 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Got it. I think
21 you answered my other line of questioning in terms of
22 what challenges is DCP still facing to backfill some
23 of these vacancies in your agency, but you did state
24 what you're doing to address it in terms of going to
25 schools and trying to recruit graduates. Now, are low

2 salaries or other uncompetitive features making it
3 harder to hire staff?

4 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: I think that we are
5 really moving in a positive direction here, judging
6 by our attrition rate, which is very low, and the
7 collective bargaining agreements that were reached
8 which brought up to 9 percent raises from longer
9 serving staff and changes to the work from home
10 dynamic that have been instituted. I do think people
11 who are considering working at a city agency, they've
12 got lots of great options, of course, in New York but
13 see this one is one that is taking big strides, very
14 mission-driven group of people, very talented. We do
15 extensive professional development at the Department
16 of City Planning. We have a Land Use Academy. We have
17 a speaker series. We've got employee resource groups.
18 We really do try to make this a very positive
19 experience for our team, and I think that is bearing
20 out so we feel really good about where we're headed,
21 and we certainly continue to make the case that a
22 professional experience at the Department of City
23 Planning is good, positive, and will be very
24 satisfying.

2 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay. We'll move
3 on to questions in terms of the City of Yes Zoning
4 for Economic Opportunity and Housing Opportunity. I
5 know that in terms of this amendment, City Planning
6 went to all 59 Community Boards. How many Community
7 Boards supported the plan versus how many Community
8 Boards voted it down?

9 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: We'll get you the
10 final number. It was something along the lines of 30
11 noes and 21 yeses, but I would have to I want to
12 impress upon you, Mr. Chairman and the Council, to
13 have a close look at what those responses were
14 because in both the yeses and the noes, for those
15 Community Boards that gave us a proposal-by-proposal
16 evaluation of what we had sent them, the vast
17 majority of these proposals got majority support from
18 Community Boards. When you all are in a position to
19 look at the 18 proposals that we're sending you in
20 our City of Yes for Economic Opportunity plan, it has
21 18 subparts, and we asked Community Boards, give it
22 to us every 18, tell us what you think, we want to
23 know what you think. You like 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, but
24 you don't like 2, 8, 12, 14, and 18, let us know
25 that, let us know what we can do. Even in their

2 initial recommendations when they gave us those
3 tallies, almost all of these proposals got more than
4 50 percent support. I will also note that we made
5 changes at the City Planning Commission to address
6 the concerns that were raised at the community board
7 level so when the time comes for the Council to
8 evaluate this proposal, I would strongly encourage
9 you to take a look at the changes that we made and
10 see whether you believe that we have addressed them
11 to your satisfaction. I think that we have gotten
12 this proposal to a really a good place and really
13 hope that Community Boards see that not only did we
14 give them more time than what is defined in the
15 process, but we also were very, very careful in
16 meeting them where they were for those 175-plus
17 meetings and also evaluating what they sent us and
18 making changes, and I will let you know, Chair, that
19 I did report back to Community Boards on the changes
20 that we made in response to the Community Board
21 process and have also forwarded that on to your
22 offices so that you have that as a point of
23 reference.

24 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: In terms of the 18
25 proposals for this Economic Opportunity and Housing

2 Opportunity, I was a former District Manager before I
3 became a Council Member and I went through the
4 process of MIH and ZQA within the previous
5 Administration, this was about 2016, I believe, and
6 the confusion was it was just too much information
7 for Community Boards and the individuals who were
8 presenting to the Community Boards too were a little
9 confused as to what they were actually presenting,
10 and so all 12 Community Boards in the Bronx voted it
11 down and so did the Borough President at the time,
12 then I came here as a Council Member and I voted for
13 it because I understood, I sat down with the Land Use
14 Staff, and they gave me a detailed explanation of
15 what exactly MIH and ZQA actually does. Do you not
16 think that in terms of the Economic Opportunity and
17 Housing Opportunity, the 18 proposals, it was just
18 too much information that you provided or the
19 proposal was just too big that was presented to the
20 Community Boards?

21 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you for that
22 question. First, let me just make one distinction
23 because the 18 is only Economic Opportunity. Housing
24 Opportunity will come next. The 18 is just for
25 Economic Opportunity. And, yes, you're right to say

2 it's a big proposal and, yes, you're right to observe
3 that this is the process that we have so if the only
4 way to do something big in New York City in the
5 context of making citywide changes the way we're
6 proposing is to send a lot of information to
7 Community Boards, that's what we have to do, but we
8 also need to meet them where they are, like your
9 point is right. This is hard. This is complicated.
10 People's eyes glaze over on this stuff frequently if
11 you're not engaging them properly, if you're not
12 talking in a language which makes sense. I remember
13 this too, even as a Council Member, sitting on the
14 receiving end of the briefings on ZQA and MIH,
15 finding it to be very, very confusing stuff if you're
16 not steeped in it on a daily basis so we have worked
17 really hard and, again, this is not perfect because
18 it's very hard. You have a limited amount of time in
19 the context for the Community Board. We have staff
20 that is out there. They're trying to engage and they
21 are. We are training them internally to go and make
22 these presentations as accessible as they possibly
23 can be, and we are trying to serve our function as a
24 guide and support to Community Boards in this context
25 but, no, I don't think that we should shy away from

2 the big things on that account. I think that we
3 should embrace the big things but provide the
4 necessary support to the people who are there to
5 evaluate them like Community Boards, Borough
6 Presidents and, of course, you all in the Council,
7 and you can certainly count on that from us as you
8 now take up Economic Opportunity, the Land Use
9 Division, they've done a phenomenal job. They are
10 experts in in the subject matter. We're here to
11 support them, to support you in whatever you need. We
12 know that this has a lot of complexity to it but,
13 when you do something important, it's going to be
14 hard and complex, and so we are here for the duration
15 to see how we can support you in that.

16 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. In
17 terms of the Zoning for Economic Opportunity, the
18 proposal will create clear and more enforceable rules
19 about music venues and home occupations, but these
20 new rules will not benefit communities unless they
21 are actually enforced. The Department of Buildings is
22 notoriously understaffed, and the Administration has
23 removed nearly all of its inspector vacancies. What
24 is the Administration proposing to increase
25 enforcement for zoning and quality-of-life officials?

2 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: I will let the
3 Department of Buildings speak for themselves on their
4 enforcement capacity, but one of the things that is
5 important to us is we have been working very closely
6 with our partner agencies because we know that we're
7 not the enforcer of the zoning rules. That ends up
8 being the Department of Buildings. Of course, it has
9 implications for the Department of Environmental
10 Protection and everybody else. We've been working
11 very closely with those partner agencies, and one of
12 the things that is an important note here on Economic
13 Opportunity is that the Department of Buildings
14 frequently looks at the zoning resolution, zoning
15 text, and sees questions and ambiguities, which makes
16 it very hard for them to actually enforce so if they
17 have the personnel, sometimes our own zoning rules
18 are creating complexities for them or ambiguities for
19 them which are making it very hard for them to
20 enforce. Central to City of Yes for Economic
21 Opportunity is to eliminate a lot of those
22 ambiguities that exist in zoning today. Ambiguities
23 in zoning are not the friend of innovators and of
24 business, and they are not the friend of enforcement
25 so by clearing those up and clarifying use groups and

2 better defining where you can do what, when, and
3 where, we think that this will be easier for the
4 Department of Buildings. I can't speak to your point
5 about vacancies over there, but I can tell you that
6 we have worked very closely with them to try to make
7 this as clean and as easy an enforcement tool as they
8 need to have.

9 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Mr. Chair, you're
10 asking communities to approve, which the majority of
11 Community Boards voted down, to approve this plan,
12 yet the Administration is aware that the Department
13 of Buildings is understaffed, I know that's another
14 agency, but City Planning is asking us to approve a
15 plan dependent on another agency and that other
16 agency is understaffed. Why should communities
17 support it knowing that the enforcement component of
18 it, there will be no enforcement because there's no
19 staff to enforce?

20 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: I certainly
21 understand your question, and I understand the
22 concern. What I would say is communities should
23 support this proposal because it is creating real
24 opportunities for New Yorkers and that our zoning
25 resolution today is laughably outdated in the way

2 that it addresses innovation, the way people live and
3 work, light manufacturing, definitions of typewriter
4 repair shops instead of, and airline ticketing
5 offices instead of virtual reality and more modern
6 things like cell phone repair stores. The zoning is
7 prolonging storefront vacancies. It's creating walls
8 of lacks of activity in our commercial and
9 residential corridors. It's impossible in some cases
10 to locate a corner store where people want to. It's
11 difficult for film studios to have flexibility to be
12 able to create a building structure that works for
13 them and, of course, in response to the Speaker and
14 this Council's advocacy, we also are including new
15 tools for manufacturing zones and districts as part
16 of this proposal. I understand the point that you are
17 raising. My response in the zoning context is, we've
18 tried to clarify things to make it easier for the
19 enforcement agencies, but the reason why people
20 should support it, and I will note, again, that of
21 those 18 proposals, almost all of them were met with
22 majority support by the folks who gave us the layout
23 and that's the reason why I think people should
24 support it.

2 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. Zoning
3 for Housing Opportunity strives for a more inclusive
4 and affordable city, and the proposed Zoning Text
5 Amendment is hoped to unlock upwards of 100,000 of
6 the Administration's target of 500,000 new homes over
7 a decade. Is there an overall breakout of which tools
8 the City hopes to use to generate half a million
9 units of housing in a decade?

10 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you for that.
11 Obviously to get to that moonshot goal, it's going to
12 take everybody pitching in, not just us at the city,
13 but also state and federal. The biggest thing that
14 we're doing, of course, is the City of Yes for
15 Housing Opportunity, which is, in sum, the most pro
16 housing set of changes in the history of New York
17 City zoning. Other moves at the city level to hit
18 that goal include our Get Stuff Built reforms, like
19 cutting red tape to unlock more housing. We have an
20 affordable housing pipeline to build tens of
21 thousands of units over the next decade and, of
22 course, as I noted in my opening, we have five
23 neighborhood rezonings in the works that can add
24 thousands of units each and, of course, it's
25 critically important that the state act to create a

2 successor tax incentive program for new development.
3 Federal factors around financing, interest rate, also
4 really important here so this is a sort of everybody
5 needs to be pulling the boat in the same direction
6 for us to be able to get there, and I will also note
7 that your question was about 10 years but, when we
8 make these zoning changes, we're looking backward to
9 rules that were established in 1961 so the things
10 that we do today will guide us over a long period of
11 time to the 2080s and beyond, and so we believe that
12 it will continue to enable housing over the long
13 term.

14 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right.

15 I'm going to hand it over to Chair Riley
16 for questioning.

17 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Thank you,
18 Chair Salamanca. How you doing, Director Garodnik?

19 I'm just going to start my line of
20 questioning first with the PEG restorations. For
21 Fiscal Year 2025, the PEG institutes a 1.5 million on
22 the environmental impact studies, which will reduce
23 DCP's capacity to conduct neighborhood rezonings and
24 achieve additional planning goals. However, DCP has
25 indicated that this cut will be restored in the

2 Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget. With that being
3 stated, can you please confirm that the PEG will be
4 reversed in the Executive Budget, and will the whole
5 PEG be reversed across all years of the financial
6 plan?

7 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thanks, Chair Riley.
8 We're working very closely with OMB with our actual
9 projections of need so that, whether the whole PEG is
10 restored or less is restored, we're working with them
11 to get the funding we need to advance our citywide
12 initiatives and our five neighborhood plans so we
13 feel very confident about that and have had great
14 support from the Administration.

15 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: If this funding
16 is restored, will DCP take on additional neighborhood
17 plans?

18 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes, the answer is
19 yes. We intend to take on more neighborhood plans.
20 It's central to our mission to do neighborhood plans.
21 There are five live right now, and there will be more
22 to come and, yes, that's critical for us and for our
23 mission.

24 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Thank you.
25 Going into the SEED program. I'd like to focus on the

2 capital funding requirement to make rezonings a
3 success. In March 2022, the Administration launched
4 its Rebuild, Renew, and Reinvent Blueprint for the
5 City's Economic Recovery. In it, it included the
6 launch of the New York City Strategy for Equity and
7 Economic Development, the SEED fund. What is DCP's
8 role in the SEED fund and what is the total size of
9 the SEED fund in the budget?

10 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Okay, so let me tell
11 you a little bit about how we view SEED and how we
12 view capital funding in connection with neighborhood
13 plans because I think that is really the core of this
14 issue. So SEED is the initiative, Strategy for Equity
15 and Economic Development, that's going to be used to
16 support capital investments related to neighborhood
17 plans so when we do a neighborhood plan, it is our
18 intention to make associated capital investments as
19 part of that neighborhood plan. To do that, we will
20 look at the scale of the change that's being
21 proposed, historic disinvestment, resiliency, both
22 climate for economic growth for each neighborhood.
23 This is a different approach than what had been done
24 previously, and we think that it is the right route
25 for us to take a look at the needs in an individual

2 neighborhood where we have focused a neighborhood
3 plan, look at Community Board statements of needs,
4 look at agencies' priorities and what is actionable,
5 listen to Council Members about what they want to see
6 done in their own turf, and talk about what is the
7 biggest needs that are created by our own
8 neighborhood plan and opportunities and, once we
9 throw that in the mix, that will define the projects
10 that are funded so it's really a process which is
11 defining the projects, and the projects will be
12 funded as part of that initiative.

13 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: During that
14 process, usually the typical, I know in my Community
15 Board usually about schools, parks, libraries, roads,
16 traffic, what about sewage? Being that proposed, a
17 lot of this is increasing density within these
18 communities, and we're seeing a lot of our stormwater
19 issues when it's raining. Is sewage, I guess,
20 investment looked at during the SEED process.

21 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes, we have to be
22 all-inclusive here when we're thinking about a
23 neighborhood plan and, some neighborhoods, that's
24 more of an issue than others, and we see that and so
25 our goal here is to be thoughtful about the needs

2 that are presented and make commensurate capital
3 investments and, Bronx Metro North, that's underway,
4 and that will be the first real example of this so
5 I've got three local Council Members right here on
6 the dais and we'll look forward to working with you
7 to deliver that.

8 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Thank you. A
9 recent analysis by the IBO shows that the prior
10 Administration's capital commitments were funded by a
11 mix of funds from the NDF and overall capital budget.
12 However, the NDF is almost entirely accounted for by
13 prior commitments. If the NDF remains depleted or is
14 being phased out, how does DCP intend to budget for
15 neighborhood capital investments alongside
16 neighborhood rezoning?

17 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Right, the way we do
18 it is the way that I just described, and one of the
19 things I will note though is on that IBO report of
20 the capital projects funding, you're correct to say
21 NDF, that's a thing of the past, that was an old
22 administration approach to doing this work. We intend
23 to also deliver significant capital investments as
24 part of our neighborhood plan, but we'll do it
25 through a process that is built up through thoughtful

2 community-based priorities, Council Members and
3 factors that include the size of the change and
4 historic disinvestment, but the outcome will be
5 equally, if not more significant.

6 As for the IBO's conclusion about 70
7 percent, I did want to note that some of the programs
8 that had been committed to through points of
9 agreement and past neighborhood plans, they were
10 funded through a variety of different sources, not
11 only through the historic NDF, but also through
12 agency general capital budgets and that's not so
13 easily visible to the IBO or others so when the IBO
14 found that 70 percent of planned commitments had been
15 spent or budgeted to date, they were only looking at
16 NDF projects and other large, very specific projects
17 that they could identify in the budget. The
18 Department of City Planning made efforts with the IBO
19 for the other 30 percent of projects to show them
20 where they were funded, but they did not adopt that
21 in their report because they could not precisely
22 match our data and identify the projects in the city
23 system. We understand that. We would have preferred
24 if they had just put an asterisk and noted that they
25 could not specifically identify the other 30 percent

2 because, in fact, 100 percent of those projects are
3 funded or completed or underway so that's a
4 significant difference in conclusion and it's an
5 important one because we want to make sure that you,
6 Mr. Chairman, and your Colleagues understand that
7 when commitments are made, they need to be kept, and
8 it is central to our work to do neighborhood planning
9 to do capital planning alongside and meet those
10 commitments.

11 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: This current
12 Preliminary Fiscal from 2024 to 2028 Capital
13 Commitment Plan has 216 million for NDF. Is any of
14 that money still available?

15 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yeah, that is money
16 that has been planned to be spent for Fiscal Year
17 2024-2025 as part of those past commitments.

18 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: So that's still
19 available.

20 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: It's still there, and
21 that's part of the 100 percent funded that I was
22 referring to a moment ago.

23 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Thank you. What
24 is the next SEED investment under consideration?

2 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Bronx Metro North.
3 That's it. That's actually the first, it really is.
4 We've piloted the SEED program to test the way that
5 we're evaluating projects and we have executed some
6 pilots in East New York, some streetscape
7 improvements on Steinway Street and St. Andrew's
8 Playground in Bed-Stuy and the Davidson Community
9 Center in the Bronx. We've piloted it, but Bronx
10 Metro North is the first neighborhood plan where this
11 will be applicable, and we're really excited because
12 we know that this is an important piece of the
13 puzzle, and we're looking forward to working with you
14 and your Colleagues to get a great result here.

15 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Thank you. Just
16 going to get some questions around the City of Yes so
17 can you share how the City of Yes will extend home
18 ownership opportunities for the working-class New
19 Yorker struggling for higher housing costs?

20 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Zoning is neutral on
21 rental versus home ownership but, by creating
22 opportunities and particularly in the sorts of
23 typologies that are so limited today from existing
24 zoning, we believe we're opening the door
25 significantly to homeownership opportunities along

2 with everything else. By creating a little more
3 housing in every neighborhood, we break down what
4 were otherwise these artificial barriers which have
5 limited housing from being created in all but a small
6 handful of areas of the city. We need to do that. The
7 impacts of not doing that are real. It is not only
8 limited homeownership opportunities for people, but
9 it has pushed rents way up. Our vacancy rate at 1.41
10 percent. Thank you to the Council, recognizing that
11 declaring housing emergency yesterday. We are in it.
12 We've got problems at all levels. Homeownership is
13 certainly limited by the absence of supply and the
14 absence of opportunity so the big picture answer
15 there is let's create more opportunities and with it
16 will come more home ownership opportunities.

17 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Do you believe
18 500 new units can happen without active and major
19 office conversions to residential?

20 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Part of the proposal
21 for our City of Yes for Housing Opportunity, as you
22 know, Mr. Chairman, is to enable more liberal rules
23 for office-to-residential conversion. We think that
24 will yield some 20,000 units of housing by changing
25 the date of eligibility from 1961 to 1990, expanding

2 the geographic eligibility from what is functionally
3 Midtown and Downtown Manhattan plus Long Island City
4 and Downtown Brooklyn to citywide, we will allow for
5 another 136 million square feet of commercial office
6 space to be eligible for conversion. That's more
7 office space than exists in the entire city of
8 Philadelphia. We don't expect all of it to convert
9 because it's complicated, it's expensive, but we do
10 think that some of it will take advantage of it. We
11 have made that estimate on housing. It's a piece of
12 the puzzle. It is not the piece of the puzzle, it is
13 a piece of the puzzle, but it's important because we
14 have a lot of commercial office buildings that today
15 are struggling. We need to help them and we also need
16 to create housing in the process.

17 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: What data and
18 metrics will the Department use to track the progress
19 of the City of Yes initiatives?

20 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: First, we got to get
21 the thing passed so I don't want to get ahead of
22 myself, Mr. Chairman, so thank you. If we fast
23 forward to next year, the Council has approved this
24 proposal in full without a single edit, then we will,
25 thank you, it was a laugh line, thank you. We will

2 measure, of course, and we always do measure where we
3 see housing starts, permanent housing, that's just
4 something that is part of our routine oversight of
5 what's happening in the city. We do it, HPD does it,
6 and we, of course, will look forward to reporting
7 back to you on the success of all that.

8 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Thank you.
9 Chair, I have a second round of questions, but I
10 would like to see if the Colleagues have any
11 questions.

12 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. Thank
13 you, Mr. Chair.

14 I will now hand it over to Majority
15 Leader Farías for questions.

16 MAJORITY LEADER FARÍAS: Thank you so
17 much. Chairs. Hi, folks. I will compliment you in
18 that as soon as this started, your Twitter account
19 already had a great photo of all three of you on here
20 so kudos to your comms team for being on top of
21 transparency to the people of New York.

22 I'd like to jump into some questions
23 around industrial development strategic plans. As we
24 worked really diligently on Local Law 172 of 2023
25 sponsored by myself in the Council requiring the

2 Department of City Planning and Small Business
3 Services along with the Economic Development
4 Corporation to develop an industrial development
5 strategic plan for industrial business zones
6 throughout the city so does DCP have the adequate
7 staffing and resources to undertake the citywide
8 industrial development strategic plan as required by
9 Local Law 172.

10 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: We certainly do, and
11 we're looking forward to working with you on all
12 that. We know what our deadlines are, and we've
13 already begun thinking about how best to deliver this
14 to you.

15 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: Amazing, and what
16 so far is the progress of implementing the law?

17 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: It's early. At this
18 stage, as you know, deadlines don't even start until
19 middle late of 2025.

20 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: Yes.

21 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: But we have started
22 thinking about how we are going to do engagement, how
23 we're going to do the measurement of the questions
24 that were asked in the law, how we're going to best
25 identify opportunities. The first thing and most

2 important I would say for the purposes of today is
3 that we have forwarded to the City Council a piece of
4 the puzzle in the economic opportunity text in that
5 we're sending you three new manufacturing districts,
6 which could be mapped so and very much thanks to you
7 and your Colleagues and the Speaker for asking us to
8 do that, and we anticipate making recommendations
9 about where those sorts of tools should be used, and
10 we look forward to developing all of this in
11 partnership with you.

12 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: That's amazing.
13 Thank you so much. The speaker and I will take all
14 credit.

15 Do you have any scope or any idea of how
16 many jobs could the industrial action plan generate,
17 maybe any anticipated

18 And should we expect any (INAUDIBLE)
19 workforce?

20 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: I'm sorry. Not yet.

21 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: Should we expect
22 any new needs related to the industrial development
23 strategic plans in the Executive Budget? The best
24 answer is no for me.

2 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yeah. I'm going to
3 turn it over to David on this one.

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PARISH: We have
5 not heard back on budget needs for the Executive
6 Budget. We did submit a proposal to OMB.

7 MAJORITY LEADER FARIAS: Okay, great. Does
8 the proposal include any new needs specifically to
9 these strategic plans?

10 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes, it does.

11 MAJORITY LEADER FARIAS: Okay, thank you.
12 I have a couple questions on freight and last mile
13 warehouses. As we know, the growth of e-commerce has
14 brought a new model of enormous last mile
15 distribution facilities to our industrial areas,
16 particularly Red Hook and Hunts Point. Communities
17 are raising important concerns about the impacts of
18 truck traffic and the over-concentration of
19 facilities in certain neighborhoods. Has DCP studied
20 the growth of these facilities and is the agency
21 planning to address them?

22 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: This is a really
23 important issue, and we are looking at this very
24 closely because we have seen concentrations of last
25 mile facilities in specific corners of the city and

2 it has an impact that is concerning so, yes, we are
3 looking at it. There are other agencies that are also
4 looking at this question, of course, DOT primarily,
5 and so we're looking forward to working with them to
6 continue that conversation because we see this as a
7 real issue.

8 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: Are you folks
9 working cohesively? Is there a different format of
10 how you're aggregating data or doing analysis?

11 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: The Department of
12 Transportation is thinking about the ways to advance
13 more sustainable and truly last mile operations for
14 goods delivery here. Because we're talking about
15 movement of trucks, they would be the primary agency
16 to do that, but I will note that we have been working
17 with DOT in the Red Hook study to analyze truck and
18 traffic patterns in that area, and we're also
19 considering some possible solutions that could
20 potentially mitigate some of the impacts here. I also
21 will note, not to be a broken record and bring it
22 back to City of Yes for Economic Opportunity, but
23 also in this proposal is an opportunity to do micro-
24 distribution, which would allow for some of this to
25 be done actually in the neighborhoods where packages

2 are being delivered so have small discrete places to
3 move in and out so that there's not so much of a
4 demand on a last mile facility and to do it in a way
5 where you don't have either extra truck trips that
6 are not necessary or loading and unloading of boxes
7 on sidewalks, which is what too frequently is
8 happening right now, so this is not the cure all to
9 this problem, but this is a piece which I hope meets
10 with your support.

11 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: Thank you. I'd
12 like to make a last plug just as often as you folks
13 can both your agency and DOT to work with the EDC. We
14 just passed the bill in the Committee on Economic
15 Development on shore power. One of the main problems
16 that we're seeing in Red Hook is the traffic
17 mitigation.

18 Chair, I have a couple of questions left
19 if I may.

20 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Yes.

21 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: Thank you. Just
22 quickly on the environmental impacts from these
23 facilities having on pollution, traffic congestion,
24 and others at the neighborhood level, have we looked
25 at that? Do we know what those are other than public

2 testimony we've received or even the availability of
3 industrial land for job-intensive industrial
4 manufacturing uses?

5 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: This is going to be
6 part of the question of what is available, what is
7 being used where. We view as central to the law that
8 you passed and that we are now beginning to engage
9 on, there really has not been this level of hard look
10 at manufacturing uses as you know, and we totally
11 support it and we think that it is the responsible
12 thing for us to be doing at this moment and also
13 perhaps will help us answer some of the questions
14 that you're asking me right now, which I think are
15 excellent questions. We need to get into it.

16 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: Okay, great. And
17 then I just have a last question. I'm excited that we
18 made manufacturing in New York City sexy. We're
19 trying our hardest here. Since 1961, we brought it
20 back.

21 Just really quickly to lean in a bit on
22 the Metro North Rezoning and the community concerns
23 that we've seen come up through our many, many
24 community engagement processes that both the Council
25 have put together and DCP. Firstly, thank you so much

2 for working so diligently with us on all of that. I'd
3 like to know if there's a specific point budget or if
4 we've figured out how we're going to specifically
5 fund or set aside funding for Metro North
6 infrastructure improvements, safety improvements,
7 even items like the community center, park space, or
8 the police center that has come up within these
9 rezonings?

10 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: The short answer is
11 we are we are amassing all of the opportunities right
12 now. We are consulting with sister agencies. We're
13 looking at community district needs that have been
14 stated by Community Boards. We're looking to the
15 priorities that you and your Colleagues have set out,
16 and we will come back to you all to talk about what
17 we view as the primary opportunities here, and that
18 is all going to be put in through the process that I
19 described to Chair Riley of look at the size of the
20 change, look at historic disinvestment, find projects
21 that are actionable, find things that directly
22 address the needs that are identified as part of the
23 neighborhood plan, but that's coming soon and we look
24 forward to having that conversation with you.

2 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: Okay, great.
3 Really look forward to seeing where in the budget or
4 if there's a specific budget on some of these things,
5 specifically in the Parkchester component.

6 I just want to make a last and final
7 comment. With ZHO oncoming, we really just want to
8 stress, we worked really hard on net neutrality,
9 worked really hard on economic opportunity. I really
10 want to impress on the Administration and DCP to make
11 sure that the community is engaged fully in ZHO. It's
12 smaller amounts of proposals but really big
13 proposals, and we want the community engaged as often
14 and frequently as possible so please continue doing
15 that with us. Thank you for the additional time,
16 Chairs.

17 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you, and we
18 agree that's critically important here and we will.

19 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you,
20 Majority Leader.

21 For questions, I will hand it over to
22 Council Member Joseph.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chairs.
24 I'm just going to read the brief statement. I'm
25 Council Member Rita Joseph, representing the 40th

2 District. Coney Island Avenue runs through a portion
3 of my District but stretches from Prospect Park to
4 Brighton Beach. Over the years, we've had numerous
5 tragedies along the street with pedestrians, cyclists
6 killed by motor vehicles. The zoning along the avenue
7 has not been updated for decades, as you mentioned,
8 since 1961, and fosters a landscape of self-storage,
9 gas stations, fast food. We've seen individual
10 rezoning application, but we need more comprehensive
11 and community-led approach that facilitates
12 affordable housing, street improvements,
13 infrastructure investments, and economic development.
14 I urge the Department of City Planning to work with
15 partner City agencies to focus on a plan for Coney
16 Island Avenue. The Department has taken on this task
17 in other areas of the City, and I call on them to do
18 the same here. I look forward to working with the
19 Administration and making this a reality with the
20 community which deserve these improvements and
21 investments. However, DCP recently indicated to us
22 that for the time being all further neighborhood
23 planning efforts are on hold due to budget
24 constraints. Neighborhood planning is one of our best
25 tools to simultaneously deliver on both the City

2 housing goals and local investments to uplift
3 communities. With delays on neighborhood planning for
4 Coney Island Avenue, I'm concerned we may be missing
5 an opportunity and will be left with scattered
6 private development application without coordinated
7 City investments.

8 When the Council approved my first
9 project, 534 Coney Island Avenue application, I
10 called for DCP to consider a neighborhood rezoning
11 plan instead of further private application. Has
12 there been any progress with this ask?

13 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: First of all, thank
14 you for your clarity and for your advocacy for us to
15 do a neighborhood-wide plan on Coney Island Avenue.
16 We hear you loud and clear, and we agree that this is
17 a really important area and deserves our attention. I
18 don't know what precisely was relayed to you, but
19 what should be conveyed to you is that we believe
20 that for the purposes of completing a neighborhood
21 plan in this Mayoral term and this Council term, we
22 think that we are at our max so we've got five that
23 are underway. They're all coming to you all we hope
24 in due course. That does not mean, however, that we
25 cannot advance a neighborhood plan to continue beyond

2 that goalpost and, in fact, we are right now in the
3 process of evaluating that very question of what's
4 next. These things don't all happen at once. They
5 come one at a time so as to manage our own workflow,
6 environmental, technical review, borough office staff
7 time, etc. We're very interested in this one, as you
8 know, Council Member, and you should not have taken
9 whatever was said, I don't know what was actually
10 said, as a no. It's not a no. It is a we want to
11 We're trying to figure out where this one fits in our
12 plan, but we're very interested in it and we really
13 appreciate that you are advocating for us to do it.
14 It's really important so thank you for that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. How
16 does DCP intend to accomplish our city housing
17 production goals without adding additional
18 neighborhoods? That plan cannot happen, especially,
19 for example, this corridor on Coney Island Avenue.
20 Ever since I was a kid, this is my neighborhood, I
21 grew up there, that's Kensington, I grew up in Ditmas
22 Park right down the street. It's always been that
23 way. Storage, restaurants, auto shops, but nothing
24 else.

2 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: The short answer is
3 we can't. We can't.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Okay.

5 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: We can't. We have to
6 do more neighborhood plans. We've got five that are
7 live and underway. More will come. We are right now
8 looking at the questions, including Coney Island
9 Avenue, as to what's next, but we love partnering
10 with Council Members to advance thoughtful change in
11 their neighborhoods and we love it when we have great
12 partners so, again, this would be a very exciting one
13 for us so we look forward to coming back to you soon.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. Is
15 there a timeline I could count on.

16 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: I appreciate that.
17 Over the coming months, we're going to be figuring
18 out what's next. We have not launched a new
19 neighborhood plan. We have several which are going to
20 be voted on on a timeline that pushes us toward the
21 end of 2025 that haven't yet even been certified. As
22 you know, they take some time to develop and to and
23 to mature here a little bit to a point where they can
24 be certified, but we hope to be able to give you real
25 direction on that in the coming months.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And you're going
3 to have all the resources you need to get this done?

4 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: You heard that.
6 Thank you so much, Chairs.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Council
8 Member Joseph.

9 Now we'll get questions from Council
10 Member Rivera.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Hi, thank you for
12 your testimony.

13 Just to follow up on Council Member
14 Joseph's question, how do you prioritize the
15 rezoning? I see here you have a few projects that are
16 very exciting and in Queens and in the Bronx that
17 you've mentioned a couple times, but is it that
18 Council Members reach out to you, is it that you look
19 at certain parts of the city, like how does that
20 work?

21 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: It's a great
22 question, and the answer is it's a mix. It's
23 obviously very influential to us when a Council
24 Member like Council Member Joseph in a public forum
25 says, hey, I want to be your partner and I want you

2 to work with me to do something that's very hard,
3 okay, so to me, that's a very big deal and, of
4 course, that's the level of partnership that we have
5 enjoyed with all of the neighborhood plans that are
6 presently ongoing, and we appreciate that, but it's
7 not only that. There are some neighborhoods that have
8 long been recognized as needing rejuvenation or that
9 they are struggling in a variety of different ways,
10 opportunity for housing. The Bronx Metro North plan,
11 which, yes, I have mentioned a number of times and
12 not just because I've got three local Council Members
13 here on the panel, two of them are Chairs of this
14 hearing, not just for that reason, but it's also our
15 first, but that one has been around for quite some
16 time as a concept and the MTA and the fact that
17 they're adding new Metro North stations in the East
18 Bronx, that obviously becomes a very significant
19 precipitating factor for that conversation so there's
20 no one thing, but we certainly do, and I certainly do
21 as a former Member of the Council, recognize the
22 importance of having a serious partnership with a
23 Member who can work with us who can do all the hard
24 things necessary to accomplish this difficult task.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Yeah, because you
3 ushered in the East Midtown rezoning, which I know is
4 more commercial-based which was a big deal and
5 there's Midtown South on here, which are 42 Manhattan
6 blocks, so just making sure there's equity in what
7 you're looking at. I like Midtown and I certainly
8 have some ideas for my district, but I want to ensure
9 that my Colleagues receive the same sort of
10 attention. The other thing that also affects my
11 district disproportionately, I can't help but mention
12 it, are resiliency measures and what you're doing
13 around that work. I know you released the building
14 elevation and subgrade data sets just late last year.
15 That's the most comprehensive data yet available on
16 building elevations of New York City buildings. The
17 data should help the City assess flood risk and
18 improve emergency management and, of course, direct
19 funding for local climate resilience efforts, which
20 is very exciting. How has the building elevation data
21 set been used so far? Are any building code or zoning
22 changes expected from the data and, if so, where?

23 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yeah, I think that's
24 an excellent question, and it was recently released,
25 and the people who would be making those changes are

2 not our agency, but I will say that being able to
3 identify in the context of Department of Buildings or
4 Emergency Management to be able to communicate the
5 areas where there's likely to be flooding in the
6 future is a really important tool. I know that they
7 are all looking at this actively right now and
8 thinking about how best to put it to work for New
9 Yorkers because, this came, as you know, from a
10 terrible tragedy with Hurricane Ida and the City
11 didn't really have this information. We will further
12 evaluate what we have released to better understand
13 the overall risks and inform the changes that you're
14 mentioning, but I do know that our sister agencies
15 are looking at this right now and thinking about how
16 best to put it to use.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Yeah, I figure
18 you're considering climate change and vulnerability
19 with respect to some of the long-term development
20 plans and patterns. Certainly, I know in some parts
21 of my District, not all, but it's important, but I'm
22 very much looking forward to working with you all on
23 increasing housing production and supply and ensuring
24 that the rezonings that have transpired in the past
25 and the work that we've done in places like SoHo and

2 NoHo that we continue to follow up and implement that
3 successfully because now we're seeing that in other
4 transit-rich areas, which I think is a phrase that we
5 all like to use very much and I think it's very
6 smart, but we want to ensure that's implemented as
7 successfully as possible so it could be a model, but
8 we could also do a lot better.

9 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Fair enough. Thank
10 you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you so much
12 for the time, Mr. Chairs.

13 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Council
14 Member Rivera.

15 Mr. Chair, I want to ask you a few
16 questions about prior rezonings, rezonings that
17 occurred prior to this Administration. Now, Local Law
18 175 of 2006 requires DCP to publish a list of capital
19 and programmatic commitments associated with
20 neighborhood scale rezonings in an annual progress
21 report detailing the status of each initiative.
22 However, DCP's website for this requirement dictates
23 that the last update was done in June of 2022. Why
24 did DCP not provide any updates in 2023?

2 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes, thank you for
3 that. There was a gap in COVID. We're fixing that,
4 but understand that is something that is not okay and
5 needs to be addressed so I appreciate you raising
6 that and we will fix it.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. I take
8 it that you there will be a tracker for 2024.

9 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes, the Mayor's
10 Office of Operations, which updates that tracker, is
11 in the process of addressing this and, yes, it will
12 be fixed and fixed on an ongoing basis.

13 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. In
14 addition to tracking points of agreement, the
15 commitments, does DCP monitor the success of the
16 prior neighborhood rezoning in meeting their
17 affordable housing and housing production goals?

18 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Go ahead, David.

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PARISH: So yes,
20 we take a look at that. Sorry for the back and forth.
21 We take a look at that and also, as it relates to the
22 points of agreement, I wanted to point out that we,
23 particularly for NDF funded projects, we routinely
24 track them with deep collaboration with OMB so that
25 we are aware of all the dollars being spent, where

2 they're being allocated, what years they go to, and
3 status updates, which we collect twice a year, and
4 then we work regularly with OMB on the budget data
5 so, while we do these look backs to understand what's
6 actually being done pursuant to our commitments, we
7 want to make sure that our commitments are held up.

8 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Are you tracking
9 how those rezonings, the impact it's had on that
10 community in terms of displacement and
11 gentrification?

12 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: One of the tools that
13 we have that is an ongoing basis and that we look at
14 regularly at the City Planning Commission is a
15 displacement risk index that was activated through a
16 local law, and it's something that we scrutinize very
17 closely at the Commission. Racial equity report,
18 displacement risk, and it is something that
19 Commissioners look at closely any time anything is
20 happening in a neighborhood. I will, not to again
21 make another plug, but one of the biggest factors for
22 displacement risk is absence of supply here and,
23 Chair Salamanca, this is an important stat, which you
24 may know already, but in 2022 of the 59 Community

2 Boards in New York City, nine of them produced as
3 much housing as the other 50 combined.

4 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Yep.

5 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: One of them is yours
6 and so, when we're talking about displacement risk,
7 gentrification, that is a direct feature of building
8 walls around entire parts of the city where we can't
9 functionally build any housing so I just wanted to
10 note that because displacement risk, it's a real
11 thing obviously and it's something that we need to
12 deal with and, by creating more supply, we have a
13 chance to actually deal with it significantly.

14 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. Now,
15 current rezonings, I know we spoke about the Bronx
16 Metro North. I want to talk just briefly on the
17 Atlantic Avenue, what is the status of on the
18 Atlantic Avenue rezoning, and when is DCP planning to
19 certify on this neighborhood rezoning.

20 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: We're pre-
21 certification. We're working very closely with
22 Council Member Hudson. We still have a number of
23 months left for pre-certification in our early work.
24 I would say in the fall we will be live on that one.

2 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Has the
3 Administration set aside capital dollars for this
4 critical project?

5 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: The way we're going
6 to do this is to identify the projects and, as part
7 of identifying those projects, in coordination with
8 OMB, they will be assigned a specific project
9 identifier, which will be funded at that time so we
10 are committed. We can't do a neighborhood plan
11 without significant capital dollars, but what we are
12 doing is we're identifying the projects and then we
13 are working with OMB to directly ascribe the dollars.

14 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. A few
15 years back when the City Council voted to, I think it
16 was the end of 2019, beginning of 2020, voted for the
17 closing of Rikers Island and building the borough-
18 based jails, there were commitments that were made
19 throughout the four communities in which we're going
20 to receive a new jail or an upgraded jail. I know in
21 the Bronx Council Member Ayala negotiated certain
22 capital needs that the Administration committed to
23 and also some program funding for that. Do you know
24 the status of the commitments that were made to

2 Council Member Ayala, or at least to the South Bronx,
3 and where are we with those commitments?

4 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Let me come back to
5 you on that. I do not know specifically, but I will
6 find out for you.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay. I'm going to
8 hand it off to Chair Riley for his second round of
9 questions.

10 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Thank you,
11 Chair Salamanca.

12 Director Garodnik, just for the record,
13 can you give me the size of the SEED fund?

14 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: I think it's a
15 misnomer to call it a fund. It is a process. SEED is
16 a strategy. It is the way that we are going to
17 identify the projects that will be funded so, in the
18 past Administration and over the past number of
19 years, there was a dollar amount, specific dollar
20 amount set aside for the purpose of neighborhood
21 plans, and that dollar amount was drawn down and has
22 now been drawn down functionally to zero so what we
23 are trying to do in...

24 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: So it's zero
25 now.

2 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yeah, it's zero.

3 There's nothing in there. There might be a small
4 amount left over from one of the prior neighborhood
5 plans. We are trying to do this in a different way.
6 We're trying to do this in a neighborhood-focused
7 manner that addresses some of the flaws that we saw
8 with that pot of funds' structure because every
9 neighborhood's needs are unique. As our planners work
10 with each community, we're going to consider each
11 area on its own merits and identify and prioritize
12 the capital needs that support the scale of the
13 change and also address historic disinvestment so
14 that means by doing that in a neighborhood-focused
15 approach, it means there's not a set pot so we don't
16 intentionally put one neighborhood up against
17 another. We got five neighborhood plans right now.
18 You have just a pot. We don't want neighborhoods
19 fighting with each other over that. What we want to
20 do is we want to thoughtfully identify what
21 neighborhoods need and deliver it so that's the way
22 we are approaching so to call it a fund is really,
23 it's really not right. It is a process, one that we
24 think will more thoughtfully balance needs across
25 neighborhoods and also allow us to get to the real

2 heart of what neighborhood capital needs are and to
3 deliver it.

4 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Okay. My two
5 lines of questions are going to be regarding Get
6 Stuff Built and office conversions for the remainder.

7 So last year, the Fiscal 2024 Preliminary
8 Budget included a new need for Get Stuff Built. We
9 all know the Mayor loves Get Stuff Built. Eight
10 temporary positions were added for approximately
11 796,000 and funded for Fiscal Year 2024 and 720,000
12 for Fiscal Year 2025. These staff were intended to
13 advance Get Stuff Built initiatives and develop
14 digital tools and service related to the City's
15 environmental quality review, data dissemination, and
16 reducing the complexity of analysis. With that being
17 stated, can you provide an update on the status of
18 last year's new need for Get Stuff Built? Are all
19 eight positions filled and what progress has it made
20 so far?

21 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PARISH: Yeah, so
22 seven of the eight positions are currently filled and
23 the Green Fast Track that Chair Garodnick spoke
24 about, the research that was required, the
25 rulemaking, we built an online tool to guide people

2 through that Green Fast Track, which is frankly
3 really cool, and we can share it in the next couple
4 of weeks with you. That is all bearing fruit because
5 of this investment the City made. We're also making
6 other changes to our land use process to speed things
7 up, but that process takes quite a long time, and so
8 it will take time for those changes to shorten the
9 overall application process.

10 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Thank you. One
11 of the proposals was to report to reduce the long
12 rounds of closed-door pre-application meetings
13 between DCP staff and land use applicants, and
14 instead move more quickly towards publicly available
15 filed application. Is that still happening?

16 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: That has happened,
17 and I'm going to turn to David to say how it has
18 happened but, yes, we're happy to share with you that
19 is already underway.

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PARISH: Yeah,
21 thanks to Edith's leadership with the borough
22 offices, we are now limiting those private meetings
23 at the very beginning of the process, and one other
24 change we've made is to limit applicants to one draft
25 application so that applications get filed sooner

2 and, of course, when an application gets filed, that
3 gets shared with Community Boards, the City Council,
4 and others, which gives all those folks a longer
5 runway in seeing the information that applicants are
6 proposing.

7 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Is there a
8 specific budget line in DCP's budget for Get Stuff
9 Built?

10 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PARISH: It's
11 across a couple of different divisions. Our IT, our
12 Planning Support, and there's not a specific budget
13 line. Most of our headcount is pretty generalized.

14 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: In August 2023,
15 the City launched an Office Conversion Accelerator to
16 expedite complex office to housing conversions
17 projects, and you spoke about this before, Director
18 Garodnik, and potential 136 million square feet, and
19 we do understand this is going to be very challenging
20 to obtain and complete. Can you provide an update on
21 the work DCP is doing with office conversions right
22 now?

23 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Yes. The Office
24 Accelerator is up and underway. It's receiving
25 interest from building owners that are looking..

2 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: And also if you
3 could go into the next milestone, sorry to cut you
4 off.

5 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: The next milestone?

6 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Yeah.

7 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: People are
8 approaching the City in the context of this
9 accelerator and asking how the City can move them
10 faster through the process, and there's been
11 interest. I think some 50 buildings have showed up to
12 say, or the buildings themselves have not come by,
13 but their owners, let's say, or representatives have
14 come by to express an interest in looking at an
15 office-to-residential conversion, and that's great.
16 That's an important tool, and it's working, but most
17 fundamentally, there's a limitation to how far that
18 can go so the next milestone for us is for us, at the
19 Department of City Planning, to refer out City of Yes
20 for Housing Opportunity to Community Boards, Borough
21 Presidents, and ultimately to the Council because it
22 is in that very text where we will propose to change
23 the rules to enable this to happen more freely, so
24 the next milestone will be in the coming months. We
25 will send that proposal out to Community Boards, and

2 it will land on your desk, Mr. Chairman, sometime
3 later this year.

4 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: I can't wait.

5 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: I bet.

6 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: My last
7 question. What budget and policy changes do the City
8 and DCP need in order to help convert these offices
9 into housing?

10 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: So the biggest policy
11 changes relate to the date of eligibility for the
12 buildings. Today, as a practical matter, if your
13 building is not in Midtown Manhattan and built before
14 1961, you're not eligible to take advantage of the
15 rules that would enable a conversion. There are
16 exceptions to this, of course, 1977 in Lower
17 Manhattan, the geography is a little broader than
18 what I just said. It also includes Long Island City
19 and Downtown Brooklyn but, functionally, Manhattan
20 Central, pre-1961, you're eligible, everywhere else,
21 not possible. The first thing we want to do is we
22 want to change that date of eligibility from 1961,
23 1977 Lower Manhattan to 1990. We also want to broaden
24 the geographic eligibility so that it's not just the
25 areas that I described but also make it citywide so

2 if you are in an area which today allows for
3 residential, we would enable you to do a conversion
4 to residential. We also want to allow for different
5 types of housing in the context of an office-to-
6 residential conversion, and these are the big policy
7 moves that we'd like to see. In addition, and this
8 one needs Albany, we would like Albany to deliver to
9 us a tax incentive so we can create affordable
10 housing in the context of an office-to-residential
11 conversion. That is a really important tool, and we
12 hope that they give us that opportunity as part of
13 this legislative session.

14 SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR RILEY: Thank you,
15 Chair.

16 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, Chair
18 Riley.

19 Just two more questions and we're done
20 here, Mr. Chair.

21 The Administration's initiatives on ZEO
22 and ZHO are raising a lot of concerns and confusion
23 among communities. In response, DCP has held
24 briefings with all the Community Boards, but this
25 engagement is just a start. There needs to be a

2 deeper and ongoing engagement with communities. Since
3 the pandemic, has DCP's staffing for community
4 engagement increased or decreased?

5 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: It's actually
6 increased in that we have established an entire unit
7 designed to community engagement. That's a new
8 initiative from this Department of City Planning,
9 recognizing the need for us to speak the same
10 language as New Yorkers as it relates to these
11 complicated proposals. It's one of the reasons we
12 were able to do 175-plus meetings with Community
13 Boards, and it's one of the reasons we are able to
14 train our own staff and planners that are going out
15 to engage with the public to use more common language
16 and to try to demystify some of these concepts, which
17 are inherently very hard, so the short answer to your
18 question is, yes, we have an entire team of people
19 whose job it is to do better community engagement. To
20 your point, this is mission critical. We need to make
21 sure that people understand what we're after for its
22 own sake but, also, we know that that's important to
23 the Council Members at the end of the day who are
24 going to be voting on this proposal.

25 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Sounds good.

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: May I add to
3 that?

4 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Yes.

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: Thank you.
6 We view it absolutely our responsibility to make sure
7 the content of our proposals are accessible and
8 comprehensible and, in addition to the new unit that
9 the Chair spoke of, our Community Planning Engagement
10 Team, we're also using many more new tools of
11 engagement so we have more public info sessions, we
12 have open houses, we are out in libraries, we have
13 active workshops so we are very active in developing
14 new ways to making sure that folks understand what
15 we're talking about. It's really important to us.
16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you.

18 Mr. Chair, I want to thank you and your
19 team for today's budget hearing. I will be following
20 up with your agency on the vacancies in the Bronx. I
21 want to make sure that my Bronx Director gets the
22 help that he needs, and please let your City Planning
23 staffers know that we appreciate them. I know at
24 times they may feel unappreciated, but we appreciate
25 them. Thank you.

2 DIRECTOR GARODNICK: Thank you for that,
3 Mr. Chairman. It's good to see you all. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: All right. We're
5 going to take a two-minute recess and we are going to
6 start with public comments.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Mr. Chair, with
8 your permission, we will now move to the public
9 testimony portion.

10 We will begin with speakers who are
11 present in the room with us today and so I will
12 invite to the panel table, Sarah Internicola, Sarita
13 Subramanian, and Paula Segal, and you may all three
14 approach the table and get settled and sorry if I
15 mispronounced anyone's name.

16 After the in-person testimony, we will
17 take testimony from two remote Zoom participants,
18 Kevin Wolfe and Emily Goldstein. Thank you both very
19 much. Thank you all for your patience. We will go to
20 you after the in-person testimony.

21 SARITA SUBRAMANIAN: Good afternoon, Chair
22 Salamanca. My name is Sarita Subramanian, and I'm
23 Senior Research and Strategy Officer at the New York
24 City Independent Budget Office. Thank you for the
25 opportunity to testify at this hearing to discuss

2 IBO's recent report on capital pledges for recent
3 neighborhood rezonings written by Zach Herman and
4 Sarah Internicola, who joins me here today. We thank
5 Council Member Natasha Williams for requesting this
6 research. The bulk of my testimony, my written
7 testimony, focuses on the capital dollars pledged as
8 a result of a recent neighborhood rezonings and
9 progress on those pledges, but I wanted to first
10 discuss some of the questions around our analysis as
11 brought to your attention by Director Garodnik, and
12 so I thought it would be helpful to explain the
13 process of how we identified capital projects and to
14 clarify that we did look at both projects that were
15 funded by the NDF as well as projects that are funded
16 within City agency budgets, so our analysis really
17 started with point of agreements and so we looked
18 specifically at capital projects and used text
19 searches to identify the specific areas specific
20 projects within the City's Capital Commitment Plan so
21 we looked project-by-project using data from the
22 Adopted Capital Commitment Plan and so for the NDF-
23 specific projects, they also followed standard naming
24 protocols that allowed us to look comprehensively at
25 both pots of money, both within City budgets and the

2 NDF funds, and the other aspect of my testimony that
3 I wanted to highlight was that there are three types
4 of pledges in points of agreements. First are the
5 capital pledges, which is what we looked at. Others
6 are expense pledges in the expense budget, but there
7 are also policy pledges, and those actually accounted
8 for the majority of, if you look by number of pledges
9 in points of agreements, and those do not have
10 dollars stipulated in the POAs, which makes them
11 particularly challenging to track from a transparency
12 perspective in order for us to determine whether or
13 not those pledges were actually committed to. I did
14 also want to clarify, we include in the testimony and
15 also in our larger report, a table by neighborhood so
16 while it is true that we note that all eight rezoned
17 areas have at least 70 percent of their pledged
18 dollars spent or budgeted to date, there is quite a
19 bit of variation by neighborhood so we do recognize
20 that the amount that was budgeted is over what was
21 initially pledged, but we do also note some that were
22 under that amount. To Director Garodnick's comment
23 about the difference between those that are under 100
24 percent and those that are at 100 percent, I think
25 that relates to the fact that we compared to the

2 points of agreements, the initial agreement so it is
3 possible that projects could come under budget just
4 as much as projects can cost more than what was
5 initially agreed upon so that's something that we are
6 very much interested in gaining a better
7 understanding of. Obviously, from the data that we
8 have available to us, we're not able to identify the
9 reasons why projects would come under and we're very
10 much interested in understanding that difference
11 between what is under versus at a hundred percent.

12 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you. This
13 was helpful.

14 PAULA SEGAL: Good afternoon, Chairperson
15 and the rest of the Committee in absentia. My name is
16 Paula Segel. I am here today as Senior Staff Attorney
17 in the TakeRoot Justice Equitable Neighborhoods Unit,
18 and I'm here to present our budget testimony, which
19 focuses on some expenditures that we want to make
20 sure are in the budget, particularly the continued
21 support of this Council for Community Land Trusts,
22 which really we've taken five years and it feels like
23 we've done 25-years' worth of work and working with
24 new groups that are not in the initiative yet, and we
25 really need to expand the initiative to make sure

2 that there's space for them to have funded positions
3 that we're not relying on all volunteers to plan for
4 the future of our city. I think it was Council Member
5 Sanchez earlier today who said that we have a
6 department of zoning instead of a Department of City
7 Planning and, as much as the agency is moving away
8 from that, what we have in the Community Land Trust
9 Initiative is a grassroots planning infrastructure
10 that is both planning for specific sites and planning
11 for neighborhoods and planning for policies that will
12 improve neighborhoods across the board. I saw you
13 flip to the last page. We just put out a report this
14 week where we used actually census data to have a
15 data-driven analysis that shows that the City's lien
16 sale, which was a Rudy Giuliani policy,
17 disproportionately or proportionately impacts
18 tenants. 85 percent of the units in buildings going
19 through the lien sale are actually renters and not
20 people who live in homes where they have their name
21 on the deed. That's not surprising in a city of
22 renters, but we need planning and policies that
23 protect those tenants and we want to see that put in
24 place this year. That's going to take supporting the
25 Department of Finance and making sure that their

2 staff to really put a new system in place. Happy to
3 answer any questions.

4 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: I have a question.
5 Yeah.

6 PAULA SEGAL: Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: So I see you in
8 your Community Land Trust, so I think almost every
9 organization that's on it, that covers the Bronx,
10 they're either in my District or, if they're not,
11 they are, yeah...

12 PAULA SEGAL: They're right next to it.

13 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: No, they may have
14 property that they're managing in my district, right?
15 Like Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition.
16 I know that they've done some work in my District.
17 How much funding do they get now in this Fiscal Year
18 that we're in now?

19 PAULA SEGAL: The way the initiative works
20 is groups that, this is a little confusing, but
21 there's 1.5 million dollars in the initiative now and
22 we really try to stretch it so like one unit of
23 funding is a little bit under 100,000. New groups get
24 half a unit so each of those groups right now should
25 be getting about 98,000 through HPD. That won't

2 necessarily change if we get the increase, but
3 hopefully it will by a little bit. We really need to
4 bring some new groups on board who have been doing
5 the same work but not getting paid. Those groups are
6 not in your District. Your District has a great
7 concentration of funded Community Land Trust
8 Initiative groups, which is wonderful, but we have
9 groups that have been working for nearly as long in
10 Ravenswood houses, actually there's a group of NYCHA
11 residents that have formed a Community Land Trust,
12 have been doing the organizing work through COVID,
13 focusing on a site that Department of Sanitation
14 plans to abandon when a Sanitation garage moves
15 probably in the next year or two and hoping to have
16 that site be dedicated to a community. There's a
17 group in Flatbush that has been organizing actually
18 homeowners and small homes and kind of tax class one
19 rental properties and trying to put together an
20 assemblage that will create a preservation strategy
21 for those homes There's another group in South
22 Brooklyn that's working with folks in terms of estate
23 planning and getting homes to go into the CLT, and
24 they're all just volunteer or they're getting small
25 grant funding, but none of them are in the Initiative

2 so we would love to have the groups that are already
3 funded get a little more money, and we would love to
4 grow the number of groups.

5 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: That's good. Thank
6 you. Thank you for your statement.

7 PAULA SEGAL: Thank you so much.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Okay, now we will
9 turn to our remote testimony. First, we will hear
10 from Emily Goldstein who will be followed by Kevin
11 Wolfe.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Emily, you may begin.

13 EMILY GOLDSTEIN: Sorry, I have to find
14 the unmute. Apologies.

15 Thank you very much for the opportunity
16 to testify today. My name is Emily Goldstein. I'm the
17 Director of Organizing and Advocacy at the
18 Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development,
19 or ANHD. Appreciate Chair Salamanca and the Committee
20 for holding these hearings.

21 I want to specifically talk about a
22 couple of things, and we'll submit longer testimony
23 online. First, it became clear even in the course of
24 your questions to the previous panel and to the
25 Commissioner that there's a lot to grapple with with

2 the City of Yes text amendments that are coming
3 through both on the economic development side and on
4 the housing side. We're also looking ahead to the
5 implementation of the new Fair Housing Framework Law,
6 which we're very excited about, and the new planning
7 that's going to take place around industrial zones,
8 and so it's really more important than ever for New
9 Yorkers to be able to understand and engage in an
10 empowered and thoughtful way with the land use and
11 planning processes that are happening in their
12 communities, and we know, unfortunately, that in a
13 lot of situations that it's just not the experience
14 that people have with the land use and rezoning
15 process, and so we are proposing and asking for your
16 support for a new initiative to do land use capacity
17 building that would provide resources including
18 trainings, both virtual and in-person, print and
19 online popular education materials, and technical
20 assistance to help community members, Council
21 Members, Community Boards really engage in the zoning
22 and planning processes that are happening in their
23 neighborhoods. This is an area that ANHD has a robust
24 history with. We've done a lot of this type of work,
25 and we're getting requests for support that are

2 beyond our capacity to fulfill, and so we are hoping
3 to be able to work with and partner with you all to...

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

5 EMILY GOLDSTEIN: Increase capacity to
6 really give all of those who are meant to be engaged
7 and involved in the land use process the opportunity
8 to do that effectively.

9 I also want to make a quick plug, we did
10 this with the Small Business Committee as well, but
11 there's obviously crossover in interest for better
12 and sustained funding for industrial business service
13 providers. This is particularly relevant in this
14 context because we are going to be rolling out the
15 industrial strategic planning that was passed by law
16 last year, and this is funding for non-profits that
17 work every day with the 40,000 industrial firms in
18 the city's industrial business zones and who are
19 really going to be important and crucial on the
20 ground to help make this new planning process work
21 and be as effective as possible. Thank you very much
22 for your time. I'm happy to answer any questions and,
23 again, submitted longer testimony online.

24 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you for your
25 testimony.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Kevin Wolfe.

3 KEVIN WOLFE: Great. Thank you, Chair

4 Salamanca, and thank you to the Committee on Land
5 Use. My name is Kevin Wolfe. I am with the Center for
6 New York City Neighborhoods. We are one of the
7 largest homeowner service organizations in New York
8 City. We were actually founded by the City Council in
9 part back in 2008, and the Council has provided
10 annually nearly 5 million dollars in support for
11 homeowner services, including foreclosure prevention,
12 as well as home repair. The center, part of our role
13 is to advocate for New Yorkers at all stages of the
14 homeownership journey from buying a home to
15 maintaining the home with home repair to foreclosure
16 prevention and to estate planning and, when we look
17 at the City of Yes proposal, the Center is strongly
18 supportive of bold steps to dramatically expand
19 affordable homeownership opportunities in particular,
20 particularly for low- to moderate-income families by
21 building more homes. We're recommending that the City
22 make a wide-scale investment in new development of
23 multifamily affordable homeownership at scale, and
24 this can include a mix of limited equity co-ops,
25 condos as well as community land trust, and we were

2 very happy to see Chair Pierina Sanchez and her 2-
3 billion-dollar initiative towards new construction as
4 well. Our proposal includes an ambitious plan to
5 create 120,000 new units of permanently affordable
6 homeownership that would house 400,000 New Yorkers
7 over a 25-year period, and the vision really is that
8 this homeownership would be at scale across New York
9 City. In fact, the homeownership would be placed in
10 geographic areas of the city that don't currently
11 have a large homeownership population, and it would..

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time is expired.

13 KEVIN WOLFE: Be really a model for what
14 cities could do across the country. We would use a
15 mixture, as I mentioned before, of limited equity co-
16 ops, condos as well as community land trust, and this
17 will ensure that these projects maintain
18 affordability for future generations, and we're
19 looking, in particular, to build on the commitment
20 that the Administration has made of nearly 900
21 million dollars for additional capital dollars for
22 the construction of new homeownership development,
23 and also we'd look to engage unions, insurance
24 companies to be active stakeholders that can put in
25 equity into new homeownership.

2 Finally, when it comes to new
3 development, New York City could also look to
4 investing in down payment assistance programs.
5 Obviously, there's been a restarting of HPD's down
6 payment assistance program but also post-purchase
7 counseling and estate planning. We were happy to see
8 the Speaker strongly support new estate planning
9 investment and look forward to working with the
10 Council Member on those items. We know that in order
11 to make sure that we have affordable homeownership
12 accessible to all New Yorkers, we have to increase
13 and build new homeownership, but we also have to
14 preserve the existing affordable homeownership that
15 we have so thank you for the opportunity to testify
16 today and happy to answer any questions.

17 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you for your
18 testimony.

19 All right. With that, that concludes this
20 preliminary hearing for Land Use. I want to thank all
21 the speakers. I want to thank the Public Land Use
22 Staff and the Finance Staff for putting this
23 together. I want to thank the Sergeant-at-Arms, and
24 we're hereby adjourned. [GAVEL]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date April 20, 2024