

2 CITY COUNCIL
3 CITY OF NEW YORK

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5 TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

6 Of the

7 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

8 Jointly with

9 COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

10 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL
11 PROTECTION

12 COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND
13 RECREATION

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15 May 28, 2014
16 Start: 10:35 a.m.
17 Recess: 1:28 p.m.

18 HELD AT: Council Chambers
19 City Hall

20 B E F O R E: Daniel Dromm, Julissa Ferreras,
21 Mark Levine, Donovan Richards
22 Chairpersons

23 COUNCIL MEMBERS:
24 Margaret S. Chin
25 Deborah L. Rose
Jumaane D. Williams
Andy L. King
Mark Levine
Alan N. Maisel

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

Council Members:

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James G. Van Bramer
Vanessa L. Gibson
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Stephen T. Levin
Mark S. Weprin
Vincent Ignizio
Vincent Gentile
Laurie Cumbo
Corey D. Johnson
I Daneek Miller
Helen K. Rosenthal
Inez D. Barron
Mark Treyger
Antonio Reynoso
Daniel Garodnick
Eric A. Ulrich
Costa G. Constantinides
Fernando Cabrera
Brad S. Lander
Andrew Cohen

Melissa Mark-Viverito
City Council Speaker

Carmen Farina
Department of Education Chancellor

Kathleen Grimm
Department of Education Deputy Chancellor

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

Ray Orlando
Department of Education Chief Financial
Officer

Sophia Pappas
Department of Education

Mitchell Silver
Department of Parks and Recreation
Commissioner

Liam Kavanagh
Department of Parks and Recreation First
Deputy Commissioner

Larry Scott-Blackmon
Department of Parks and Recreation Deputy
Commissioner for Community Outreach

Robert Garafola
Department of Parks and Recreation Deputy
Commissioner

William Castro
Manhattan Borough Commissioner

Michael Dockett
Department of Parks and Recreation
Assistant Commissioner

Emily Lloyd
Department of Environmental Protection
Commissioner

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

Steven Lawitts
Department of Environmental Protection Chief
Financial Officer

Joseph Murin
Department of Environmental Protection
Commissioner for Bureau of Water and Sewage

Joe Singleton

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Department of Environmental Protection
Deputy Commissioner

Jim Roberts
Department of Environmental Protection
Deputy Commissioner

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Good morning,
3 and welcome to the eighth day of the City
4 Council's hearing on the Mayor's Executive
5 Budget FY 2015. At this time we will hear from
6 our Speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito.

7 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you,
8 Madam Chair, and good morning to everyone that
9 is here. Good morning, Chancellor. Good
10 morning to everyone on this joint hearing of
11 the Finance and Education Committees. Today we
12 will hear from school's Chancellor Farina on
13 the Department of Education's expense budget
14 for fiscal year 2015. The DOE is a massive
15 agency with an expense budget of more than 20
16 billion dollars, which funds classroom
17 instruction, special education services,
18 bussing, pre-kindergarten, school food and many
19 other critical programs for more than one
20 million children. At the preliminary expense
21 budget hearing for the DOE, Chancellor Farina
22 spoke about her vision to support teachers,
23 principals and school staff, improve student
24 achievement by ensuring students receive all
25 the support they need to succeed, engage

2 families and support innovation to move our
3 school system forward. The Council's response
4 to the preliminary budget, we called on the DOE
5 to support schools, their staff, students and
6 families by increasing funding for school
7 budgets, restructuring school support to
8 achieve savings that could be used for direct
9 student services or equitably allocating
10 funding for schools sports to provide all
11 students with opportunities to participate, and
12 eliminating school lunch fees that are a burden
13 on many struggling families that do not qualify
14 for free lunch. I applaud the administration
15 for supporting the Council's call for increased
16 arts education, the 23 million expanded arts
17 instruction initiative. The Department's
18 addition of 13.3 million dollars to support
19 English language learners is also welcome.
20 These programs will provide more opportunities
21 for students to develop and achieve academic
22 and personal success. However, the
23 administration did not heed our request to
24 reserve the state's increasing and foundation
25 aid for school budgets. When the Governor's

2 budget was released, I went to Albany to fight
3 for the 2.7 billion the State owed New York
4 City and campaign for fiscal equity funds, as
5 did the DOE, as did some of my colleagues here
6 on the DAIS [sic], so we could increase funding
7 for schools. The state budget includes a 195
8 million dollars increase in foundation aid, but
9 this money won't go to our district schools.
10 The Administration plans to transfer most of
11 the school aid increased to DYCD for after
12 school programs. The remainder will go charter
13 schools. The Executive Budget Plan, no increase
14 for school budgets next year. I am also
15 disappointed that the Administration did not
16 find 24 million dollars in the city's 73.9
17 billion dollar budget to eliminate school lunch
18 fees. In order for a child to qualify for free
19 lunch, a family of three must earn less than
20 36,000 dollars annually. This means there are
21 many, many struggling families who must pay
22 \$1.75 for school lunch. while this may not seem
23 like a lot to many in this room, many--it's
24 just not affordable for many New Yorker living
25 just above that threshold. And as we heard

2 directly from several students who testified at
3 the preliminary budget hearing, many students
4 who do qualify for free lunch often do not take
5 advantage of it for fear of the stigma they
6 face. Universal free lunch would eliminate that
7 stigma and help ensure that all students have
8 access to a nutritious meal at school. As I
9 mentioned earlier, the Chancellor has said she
10 supports innovation to move schools forward.
11 Universal free lunch is not that. It's--at it's
12 best practice that has been replicated at
13 Boston, Chicago, Syracuse, Philadelphia,
14 Rochester and many other cities across the
15 country. These cities have all found success
16 providing universal free lunch through the
17 community eligibility option, which uses direct
18 certification for free meal eligibility, a
19 computer matching of files from the DOE and
20 human resources administration, indicating
21 participation in either Supplemental Nutrition
22 Assistance Program, SNAP, or Temporary
23 Assistance for Needy Families, TANF. The DOE
24 has already implemented CEO in District 75
25 schools, and I urge the DOE to expand it to the

2 rest of the system. If so many other cities
3 have been able to successfully implement the
4 program, I have no doubt that our great city
5 and this Administration can do the same. I want
6 to thank my colleagues and the finance staff
7 for their hard work on our preliminary budget
8 response, and for the hard work and long hours
9 I know they will put in over the next month as
10 we prepare to adopt the fiscal 2015 budget. I
11 would also like to thank chancellor Farina for
12 testifying today, and Chancellor I look forward
13 to continuing to discuss with you the DOE's
14 20.6 billion dollar budget and how it reflects
15 your priorities and I look forward to working
16 with you throughout the budget process in the
17 coming years so that we can provide New York
18 City school children with the high quality
19 education and services they deserve. Thank you
20 very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
22 Madam Speaker. My name is Julissa Ferreras and
23 I am the Chair of the Finance Committee. This
24 morning we are joined by the Committee on
25 Education chaired by my colleague Council

2 Member Daniel Dromm to hear from the Department
3 of Education. We've been joined by Council
4 Members Treyger, Rodriguez, Gibson, Miller,
5 Maisel, Rosenthal, Chin, Ignizio, Rose, Dromm
6 and Cornegy. We will kick off the hearing with
7 the Department of Education, then we will hear
8 from the Department of Parks and Recreation and
9 then the Department of Environmental
10 Protection. These hearings are a lot of work
11 and I want to thank the Finance staff for
12 putting these hearings together. I want to
13 thank acting Director Latonya Mckinney,
14 Division and Committee Counsel Tenisha [sp?]
15 Edwards, Deputy Director Regina Perada-Ryan
16 [sp?], Deputy Director Nathan Toth [sp?],
17 Senior Legislative Financial Analyst Christina
18 Perodi [sp?], who covers the Department of
19 Education, Unit Head Chima Obicheri [sp?] who
20 covers the Department of Parks and Recreation,
21 Senior Legislative Analyst Kate Sealy-Kirk
22 [sp?], who covers the Department of
23 Environmental Protection and the Finance super
24 stars, Nicole Anderson and Maria Pagon [sp?],
25 who pull everything together. Thank you for all

2 your hard work. Before we get started I want to
3 remind everyone that the public will be allowed
4 to testify on the last day of budget hearings
5 on June 6th, beginning at approximately 4:00
6 p.m. The public session will be held in this
7 room. For members of the public who wish to
8 testify but cannot make the hearing, you can
9 email your testimony to the Finance Division
10 and the staff will make it part of the official
11 record. The email address is
12 financetestimony@council@nyc.gov. Today's
13 executive budget hearing kicks off with the
14 Department of Education. The DOE's fiscal 2015
15 budget totals 20.6 billion dollars, which
16 reflects a 759 million dollar increase from the
17 adopted budget. The state aid portion of the
18 budget totals 9.33 billion dollars and reflects
19 an increase of 669 million dollars of which 300
20 million dollars would be provided for universal
21 pre-k, and 145 million dollars for after school
22 programs for middle school students. DOE's
23 budget also includes 260 million dollars in new
24 needs, in addition to funding for the after
25 school programs. New needs, 23 million dollars

2 for the expanded arts instruction, 13.3 million
3 dollars for English language learners, 9.5
4 million dollars for the new district schools,
5 4.2 million for the Close to Home program, and
6 1.3 million dollars for school nurses. I'm
7 happy that these new needs were funded in the
8 budget, particularly since we were--since they
9 were expressed in our council budget response.
10 However, I am not happy that other areas of
11 concerns that were expressed in our budget
12 response were not included in the executive
13 budget. As the speaker mentioned in our budget
14 response, we called for an elimination of
15 school lunch fees, funding for small schools
16 athletic leagues, restricting of school support
17 structures to achieve savings, funding for
18 instructional support for community based
19 organizations providing after school
20 programming, budget transparency in the DOE's
21 budget by restricting it's U of A's including
22 the creation of a separate U of A for UPK. It
23 is my hope that after this round of budget
24 hearings, the Administration will take the
25 concerns expressed by Council Members and the

2 public regarding DOE's proposed budget and work
3 with the council to ensure that fiscal 2015
4 adopted budget reflects all of our priorities
5 and values. I look forward to hearing from the
6 Department of Education to learn more about how
7 this executive budget affects its agencies
8 operations. Before we hear from the DOE
9 Chancellor Carmen Farina, I will turn the mic
10 over to my co-chair Council Member Dromm. We've
11 also, of course, have been joined by our Public
12 Advocate James. Council Member Dromm, you may
13 begin your statement.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Madam
15 Chair. Good morning everyone and thank you for
16 attending this hearing, and thank you
17 Chancellor Farina for coming with your staff to
18 testify today on the DOE's 20.6 billion
19 executive budget for fiscal 2015. I hope we
20 have a productive discussion today and gain
21 some insight into the details of the budget and
22 its implications for schools, teachers and
23 staff, and of course, the students. The DOE's
24 759 million dollars projected budget increase
25 compared to the fiscal 2014 adopted budget

2 stems primarily from the 669 million in
3 additional state funding. The enacted state
4 budget provides 300 million for full-day UPK
5 expansion, 20 million for charter schools and
6 359 million more in foundation aid. This influx
7 of state funds, a 7.7 percent increase from
8 last year is a victory for New York City, but
9 not necessarily for New York City public
10 schools. Of the additional 195 million in
11 foundation aid since the city's preliminary
12 budget, 145 million is allocated for after
13 school programming and the remaining funds are
14 budgeted to support charter schools. The DOE
15 does not intend to use any of the funds to
16 increase school budgets, despite the council
17 calling on the DOE to do so in our preliminary
18 budget response. Even with new funding for
19 English language learners, arts instruction and
20 several other initiatives, school budgets will
21 likely remain flat next year. At the
22 preliminary hearing, the DOE voiced their
23 support for increasing the number of guidance
24 counselors in schools. Is there funding for
25 this? How will schools improve or even maintain

2 service levels if school budgets remain flat
3 while staff salaries and other costs increase.
4 Why isn't the DOE using some of these funds to
5 increase the fair student funding level so
6 principals can have a larger flexible budget
7 for their school's needs? How much will class
8 sizes grow? While school budgets are
9 increasing, the executive budget includes a 247
10 million dollar or nearly 24 percent increase in
11 funding for charter schools compared to the
12 fiscal 2014 adopted budget. I understand that
13 the DOE must provide funding for charter
14 schools per state law, and I acknowledge that
15 many charter schools offer an alternative where
16 there are no or few other options for high
17 quality education. At the education committee's
18 recent hearing on charter schools, I heard
19 repeatedly that charter schools offer school
20 choice to families, but when neighborhood
21 schools are not adequately funded and have
22 large class sizes, no guidance counselors or
23 social workers and insufficient supplies and
24 technology, what choice to parents really have?
25 I would like to see the DOE to more to improve

2 district schools so families have a real choice
3 and several good options, and so those children
4 who do not enroll in a charter school have the
5 same opportunity for high quality education.
6 This starts with adequately funding school
7 budgets. I'd also like to talk about universal
8 pre-kindergarten. I'm a big believer in the
9 importance of early childhood education and I
10 am grateful the state has provided us with 300
11 million dollars in additional funding for full
12 day high quality UPK that will benefit tens of
13 thousands of children. I hope to get an update
14 today on the UPK expansion plan, including how
15 the DOE will spend this money, address pay
16 parity among public school and CBO teachers,
17 and create seats where there is the greatest
18 need, including in my own district. I am sure
19 that my colleagues and I will bring up many
20 other topics today and I look forward to the
21 discussion with the Department of Education.
22 Thank you very much.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you, Co-
24 Chair Dromm. You may begin, Chancellor.

2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Good morning,
3 Speaker Mark-Viverito, Public Advocate Letitia
4 James, Chairs Ferreras and Dromm and all
5 members of the City Council Finance and
6 Education Committees here today. Thank you for
7 this opportunity to discuss Mayor de Blasio's
8 proposal fiscal year 2015 executive budget as
9 it relates to the Department of Education and
10 our public schools. Seated with me are Kathleen
11 Grimm, Deputy Chancellor for Operations, and
12 Ray Orlando, our new Chief Financial Officer.
13 Ray comes to the DOE after serving 14 years at
14 New York City's Office of Management and Budget,
15 OBM, most recently as Deputy Director for
16 Budget Administration Capital and
17 Communications. He's going to be an integral
18 part of our team task to ensure that a
19 strategic fiscal initiatives are moving DOE in
20 a positive direction. I am delighted to have
21 someone of Ray's caliber on my Senior
22 Leadership team, and it doesn't hurt that he
23 also has a great sense of humor. This morning I
24 would like to provide an updated overview of
25 our fiscal condition and highlight some new

2 developments which have occurred since I last
3 appeared before the Education Committee in
4 March. The 2015 executive budget includes an
5 allocation of approximately 20.6 billion
6 dollars of operating funds and another 5.3
7 billion of education related pension and debt
8 service funds. This includes an increase of 300
9 million for high quality, full day universal
10 pre-k, an additional 145 million for expanded
11 after school programs and an increase of 424
12 million in pension and debt service costs. Our
13 funding is a combination of city, state and
14 federal dollars with city levy dollars making
15 up the largest share at 55 percent, state
16 dollars at 38 percent and federal dollars at
17 seven percent. The Mayor's budget makes an
18 unprecedented investments in education, which
19 reflects this administration's deeply held
20 value that children are our top priority. The
21 budget also reflects the core values that have
22 formed my 40 year career as an educator and the
23 four pillars that are guiding my work as
24 Chancellor. I shared the pillars with you in
25 March, and briefly they are to number one,

2 return dignity and respect to the teaching
3 profession, and I believe the about to be voted
4 on UFT contract does that, improve student
5 achievement by aligning all instruction to the
6 Common Core standards, and as we have initiated
7 a professional development department; I
8 believe we are on the road to doing that,
9 engage parents in every aspect of school life;
10 I have completed about ten town hall meetings
11 and continue to meet with parents in different
12 configurations and I think we are on the way to
13 accomplish that, and create new collaborative
14 innovative models within our city and schools.
15 This year's budget gives us the unique
16 opportunity to transform our values into
17 historic gains for our public schools students
18 by ensuring that they have access to early
19 education and high quality after school
20 programs, particularly for the middle school
21 grades. Early education and middle school,
22 particularly seventh grade are two important
23 stages in a child's academic growth and
24 development, and strengthening those programs
25 will help to ensure that our students graduate

1 ready to compete in the 21st century economy.
2 The universal full day pre-k initiative is
3 phenomenal and will be our foundation moving
4 forward. I have seen the impact of full day
5 pre-k on children's learning, and beginning in
6 September, it will be a reality for record
7 number of New York City families. To make this
8 program possible, the 2015 executive budget
9 includes and investment of 300 million to fund
10 53,000 high quality full day pre-k seats,
11 moving up to 73,000 seats the following year.
12 As you've heard me said before, critical growth
13 in language and speech occurs before
14 kindergarten. Children grow through significant
15 phases of development between the ages of three
16 and five. So getting them into language rich
17 environments as early as possible is critical
18 to the academic success. We will offer high
19 quality programs aligned with Common Core
20 standards that emphasize science. The first
21 phase demonstrates significant demand for pre-
22 k. We saw a 36 percent increase in enrollment
23 compared to public schools applications
24 submitted last year. Beginning in June,

2 families will be able apply for thousands of
3 additional full day pre-k seats in community
4 based early childhood centers. And I just came
5 from a meeting where our district family
6 advocates are actually going to be meeting with
7 parent coordinators to make sure the word is
8 out that parents know that CBO's are part of
9 their choices. After school programming is
10 another priority and I'm thrilled that next
11 year's budget includes unprecedented 145
12 million to fund 34,000 new middle school after
13 school seats for a total of approximately
14 100,000 children. Additionally, this funding
15 will support the expansion of summer programs
16 that serve approximately 33,000 students
17 beginning in 2015, up 48 percent from the
18 previous year. One of the summer programs that
19 has been most successful, Summer Quest, will be
20 expanded from the Bronx to Brooklyn and I
21 really anticipate that East New York will be
22 one of the recipients of a very special program
23 that runs from 9:00 to 6:00. After school
24 programs will offer enrichment activities such
25 as arts, leadership development and academic

1 support, including something that is sadly
2 missing today in schools, independent reading,
3 as well as physical activities geared towards
4 the promotion of healthy living. These after
5 school programs will serve as a safe haven for
6 many children who with otherwise go home alone
7 at the end of the school day. Middle schools
8 students will also be able to take advantage of
9 the extended learning time, which will
10 supplement their class work, as well as hone
11 non-academic skills essential to high school
12 and beyond. We work closely with our partner,
13 the Department of Youth and Community
14 Development in the design and development of
15 the after school expansion and will continue
16 work closely with DYCD to implement and
17 evaluate these programs and support our middle
18 schools. I want to express my gratitude to
19 Speaker Mark-Viverito and members of the council
20 for being our partners in this extraordinary
21 achievement. Overall, school budget funding
22 will remain stable. We will release the school
23 budgets next year, keeping in mind that many of
24 the things that are now paid for in the
25

2 contract and as part of this initiative will
3 also give principals more flexible money.
4 Principals have traditionally paid for the full
5 day pre-k out of their budget's professional
6 development and well as extended time which now
7 is included part of the budget. While the
8 increased funding from the State has allowed to
9 expand full day pre-k and other initiatives,
10 the State still falls short in fulfilling its
11 obligations in other areas. As you know, in
12 2007, the New York State Legislator and
13 Governor acted on the campaign for physical
14 equity court of appeals ruling. State's
15 obligation to ensure every student's
16 constitutional right to a sound basic education
17 should have ended the unfair distribution of
18 State aid to local school districts, and yet,
19 since 2009, the State has not met the court
20 ordered obligation to our city and other school
21 districts elsewhere in the state. In fiscal
22 2015 alone there was a shortfall of 2.5 billion
23 dollars of outstanding additional foundation
24 aid to New York City schools. We need this
25 additional school aid to reduce class size, to

2 provide academic intervention in the early
3 grades and to increase school budgets. We will
4 continue to fearlessly advocate for our
5 student's fair share. Due to projected
6 enrollment increases associated with both new
7 and existing charter schools, we will increase
8 funding to charter schools by 93 million, an
9 amount which will help offset the State
10 mandated increase of 250 in the tuition we're
11 required to pay the state enrolled students and
12 other facility costs. As you know, these
13 expenditures are driven by state law, which
14 sets the per capita tuition rate for New York
15 City students enrolled in charter schools. The
16 budget will also allow us to focus on art
17 education, which has sadly been placed on the
18 back burner in many schools, behind content
19 area such as math and English language arts.
20 The 2015 directs 23 million to increase arts
21 education. I want to thank Comptroller Stinger
22 and Chairs Dromm and Van Bramer for the work
23 they have done to highlight this issue and who
24 share our commitment to increasing arts
25 education in our schools. I am a proponent of

1 arts education. Not only because it enables
2 students to showcase their students, because it
3 teaches them how to think critically, master
4 the complexities of language and community,
5 skills that align beautifully with the Common
6 Core. Make no mistake, we are committing to
7 providing every child with an education that
8 includes chorus, drama, band, dance, the visual
9 arts. These are the kinds of experiences that
10 will help level the playing field and enhance
11 student's ongoing success. These areas also
12 return join to the school day. Nothing makes
13 me happier when visiting a school where I am
14 greeted at the front door in the lobby with a
15 chorus. Very telling, one of the chorus's that
16 greeted me in District 24, greeted me with the
17 song, "I am a Survivor." I will carry that as
18 my theme song. A major goal is to integrate the
19 arts with other content when and where
20 appropriate. Social studies and American
21 History are natural partners to the arts. Our
22 new teen Thursday's museum after school program
23 will expose seventh grader to arts education
24 that emphasizes American History. They'll learn
25

1 in small groups under the instruction of a
2 trained docent [sic], who started this program
3 about two weeks ago, and last week I attended
4 the--there's one in every borough, and I
5 attended the one in Queens, Museum of the
6 Moving Image, a place I had never been to, and
7 it was wonderful to see students who will be
8 going for a period of six weeks, the same
9 students from IS 10 there in a small group, 25
10 children with their principal and a teacher
11 enjoying the museum in a way that's not often
12 possible during the school days when there are
13 lots of crowds. And for someone whose lived as
14 long as I have, one of the outstanding
15 exhibitions there is the New York Fair from
16 1964. For many of the kids that have never even
17 heard of it. So there's a lot of way to do
18 history and experiencing the museum is a very
19 unique thing. We also want to ensure that all
20 students including those who do not enter
21 schools as native English speakers, have as
22 much of a chance to succeed in school as their
23 native English-speaking counterparts. Our
24 English language learners account for over 14
25

2 percent of our total school population, or more
3 than 150,000 students. As a former ELL, I'm
4 committed to building inclusive school
5 environments that honor the contributions of
6 our ELLs and ensure that they have access to
7 rigorous Common Core aligned instruction. The
8 addition of the 13 million in the 2015 budget
9 will allow us to expand central supports for
10 our ELLs in critical ways, including the number
11 of the bilingual general and special education
12 programs at all school levels, expanding
13 professional development opportunities to
14 support teachers and central staff in deepening
15 the understanding of second language
16 acquisition, literacy development and how to
17 design Common Core aligned lessons that meet
18 the diverse linguistic needs of ELLs. We're
19 expanding our dual language programs, K to 12
20 and this is as a request from principals,
21 something that really has not happened before.
22 While we support Speaker Mark-Viverito's and
23 Public Advocate James' goal to increase our
24 student's daily access to a healthy school
25 lunch, universal free lunch program changes the

2 way kids are counted for federal title one
3 funding. While this would not affect the total
4 amount that title one funds for received by the
5 city, the Department has concerns about how the
6 implementation of this program will affect the
7 distribution of funding among schools serving
8 many low income families. The Administration
9 will continue to work with the City Council on
10 this issue and is looking into other options as
11 we look forward. We are convinced that the
12 ground breaking initiatives made possible by
13 the 2015 budget will create greater
14 opportunities for our city's children to
15 thrive. However, we must not discount the
16 crucial role teachers play in improving our
17 school. I am thrilled that the preliminary
18 agreement the city has reached with the United
19 Federation of Teachers on May 1st did gratify,
20 will provide educators with the support they
21 need to enhance teaching and learning. As with
22 the Mayor's education budget, everything in the
23 contract is aligned with one of the four
24 pillars. This was done very consciously and
25 deliberately. We want teachers, administrators

2 and parents to understand this Administration
3 is totally committed to putting educators at
4 the forefront of our work. In order to continue
5 developing as professionals, teachers need time
6 to learn from and collaborate with one another.
7 This contract reconfigures professional
8 development time to ensure that teachers have a
9 block of time for professional learning every
10 week. On Mondays, teachers will have 80 minutes
11 of PD at the end of the school day to engage in
12 a variety of professional learning activities.
13 Partnering with parents is critical to ensuring
14 that students have the continuous support
15 necessary to succeed. This contract will build
16 additional time--this contract will build
17 additional time for teachers to communicate
18 with parents, including 40 minutes every
19 Tuesday to contact parents through emails,
20 phone calls, meetings or a class website or
21 newsletter. There will be two additional
22 parent/teacher conferences during the school
23 year, something I've long advocated, and I'm
24 encouraging schools to set up individual
25 parent/teacher conferences of minimum by

2 appointment for a minimum of 15 minutes over a
3 period of time so every parent will feel that
4 they will really understand what their child
5 has done and what that child needs. We will
6 also harness teacher's knowledge about how to
7 serve our students well by developing a new
8 career ladder that will create more
9 opportunities for effective teachers to grow.
10 Through a provision in the new contract, we
11 will introduce teacher ambassadors who can
12 change school assignments for a year to support
13 and engage in activities to share the
14 implementation and development of instructional
15 best practices. Model teachers will take
16 additional responsibilities to support the
17 instructional practice of other teachers in
18 their schools and in partner schools. We have
19 initiated a program called Learning Partners,
20 and I would say two of them that, you know, all
21 working beautifully, but two in particular. One
22 of the Learning Partner schools is housed at
23 the Kennedy campus in the Bronx, which has been
24 one of the schools that we have had difficulty
25 over the years, and this school has now begun

2 sharing practices across schools on the campus
3 and the teachers have actually found it
4 extremely worthwhile and all of them are
5 learning from each other. In addition, we have
6 a middle school in Brooklyn that is sharing
7 best practices with a wonderful middle school
8 in Staten Island and another one in Queens and
9 these three principals are actually sharing
10 best practices with each other across three
11 boroughs. In only a few short months we have
12 instituted several meaningful reforms that will
13 make real difference in our student's lives and
14 we have an aggressive agenda for going forward.
15 We will soon release a strategic plan to
16 support struggling schools. This will be a C
17 [sic] change for our students and represent a
18 new positive approach to public schools reform.
19 Over the summer we will finalize additional
20 initiatives that we plan on launching during
21 the next school year. I will continue to meet
22 regularly with Speaker Mark-Viverito and Chair
23 Dromm to discuss the Council's priorities and
24 additional ways to collaborate with the
25 Council. The more we empower our stakeholders

2 with information to our education policy, the
3 better the results for our kids. To that end on
4 Friday we'll be holding another training
5 session for elected officials, this time on
6 career and technical education. Programs that
7 need to better understood by parents and
8 students. I testify before you today, confident
9 that our school's children's futures have never
10 looked so bright. As I visit schools I am
11 constantly uplifted by the energy and
12 commitment of our teachers and principals. Our
13 new teacher's contract and our target
14 investments in our universal pre-k, after
15 school programs, arts education, programs for
16 English language learners are nothing short of
17 transformational and will put New York City on
18 track to becoming the premier education system
19 in the nation, if not the world. Thank you for
20 this opportunity to testify. I would be happy
21 to answer any questions you may have.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
23 Chancellor Farina. We will have questions from
24 the Speaker followed by our Public Advocate.

2 We've been joined by Council Members Garodnick,
3 King and Williams.

4 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you,
5 Madam Chair. So, Chancellor, thank you very
6 much for your testimony and there's going to be
7 a lot of questions I know that'll be asked by
8 my colleagues, and I do just want to focus
9 maybe on two in particular. One has to do
10 obviously with one of the areas that is a
11 priority for us and is in our budget response
12 and we just had a press conference earlier and
13 it is the issue of the universal free lunch,
14 and you do mention in your testimony the
15 concern regarding the universal free lunch. You
16 say, and I can just look at it right here, "The
17 implementation of the program would affect the
18 distribution of funding amongst schools serving
19 many low income families." Can you speak a
20 little bit more about what some of these
21 concerns are? I know that in looking--let me
22 just say, I mean, when we look at, and I really
23 commend you and I commend the Mayor for the
24 commitment to look at issues around social
25 equity injustice and access. Obviously,

2 universal pre-k speaks to that. The more
3 barriers we eliminate to a child begin able to
4 learn, the achievement gap we can lessen. It
5 creates better equity. After schools programs
6 I understand is a continuum, but clearly if
7 children, and you know this, you know, are not
8 being able to focus in school, that also will
9 impact their educational--the quality of the
10 education they receive. So that's why there's
11 been this clamor and push for the universal
12 free lunch. Understanding that we're doing it
13 on a local level in the school system with
14 district 75 schools, the community option, what
15 are the concerns? If you could just elaborate
16 that we can really get to the heart of the
17 concerns that DOE has around implementing it
18 system wide.

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think,
20 obviously, one of the major concerns we have is
21 how does this affect title one funding to
22 schools as a whole and we haven't--we're
23 exploring that. We want to see if it means that
24 in some schools the money that is generally
25 meant for lunch will be just taken out of

2 something else. So this is one of the things
3 that we're looking at. We also now are serving
4 about 75 percent of our students free lunch as
5 it is, and 22 percent of our schools are
6 universal free lunch. So we're looking at
7 what's being done in those schools, and then
8 how do we translate it to others, but our major
9 fear is how using this money will affect other
10 title one funding.

11 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Now, have
12 you seen that be an issue in other
13 municipalities that have been implementing the
14 community--

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
16 Well, we're looking at the municipalities, but
17 at the last time we were looking at this into
18 New York, there was a definitely a fear of
19 losing some of that money.

20 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: No,
21 understood, but I'm saying that there's a lot
22 of other examples of other places that have
23 implemented and does not--that's a concern to
24 us.

2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Yeah. Yeah. And
3 we are pursuing that, including having
4 additional meetings with members of the council
5 and that is--

6 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Yeah, well as the
7 Chancellor says, we are very interested in it
8 and we are pursuing it. We have contacted other
9 cities. We still have not been able to get from
10 them any information about the impact on
11 individual schools, because what would happen
12 here is that the amount of title one money
13 stays the same, the overall amount, which by
14 the way is shrinking, but this would have no
15 impact on the amount the district got. It would
16 have an impact because the school forms these
17 ugly hideous federal forms that parents have to
18 fill out, are used for each school to determine
19 title one status, and we know that some schools
20 would be winners and some schools would be
21 losers. Now, we have a process in place every
22 year, because that does happen at the margin
23 every year, not in the way it would happen if
24 we instituted the free lunch right away. We
25 have a policy of holding a school harmless for

2 one year to give them time to plan not to have
3 that title one money available to them. So with
4 this larger impact, we are looking at that. We
5 are looking at our own ind--our own food cost
6 in terms of staff, equipment and that sort of
7 thing. We would love to have free lunch. We
8 would love to get rid of the forms. We're
9 really disciples of this, but we are still
10 working out how we can manage to do that.

11 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: I mean, I--
12 I'm a little, to be honest, I'm--I'll just say
13 this, I'm a little shocked at this point to say
14 that maybe there hasn't been that level of
15 engagement with other municipalities to see how
16 it's impacted them, and I would think that
17 being in New York City with as much creativity
18 and innovation that we have that we could find
19 other ways other than the forms to figure out
20 how we capture the information so that title
21 one is not impacted, in terms of the number,
22 the amount received by schools. So, you know, I
23 think that those are things, and I know that
24 the public advocate when she speaks, will speak
25 a little bit about some of her interactions

2 but, you know, I would think that we could
3 really find a solution to this.

4 KATHLEEN GRIMM: We have been working
5 with Washington because we are working under
6 federal rules here in terms of the federal food
7 program and to date, we have not been
8 successful but we will not--we will persevere.

9 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: So consider--
10 I mean, understanding that our request
11 obviously is system wide, but has there even
12 been any thought considering that you're doing
13 it on a smaller scale? Was there any even
14 thought of maybe ramping it up even further to
15 maybe include a grade or cohort [sic] of
16 schools.

17 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Actually, we have
18 had conversations in terms of focusing on a
19 particular grade level, perhaps as the
20 beginning initiative plan. We had discussions
21 whether we should focus on middle school as an
22 initiative, and we're still going to continue
23 to focus and see if we can do that to see if
24 Washington, A, will help us, and also how an
25 experiment at the grade level where it seems to

2 be most productive given the fact that if
3 there's a stigma attached to it, it's more of a
4 middle school issue than it is an elementary
5 school issue. So yes, we are pursuing that and
6 we will continue to pursue that this is an open
7 door discussion and we will continue to look
8 into other ways to implement it.

9 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: And what, I
10 mean, obviously there's a commitment on this
11 side, you know, to engaging and partnership and
12 to the extent that any sort of advocacy is
13 necessary at the federal or state level, more
14 probably we're talking about federal level, to
15 figure out different way of capturing the
16 information so that we're not negatively
17 impacted in wanting to implement this system
18 wide. I think that definitely is something that
19 we can lend our voice to as well. So I
20 appreciate that. The other issue just quickly,
21 and then I think my colleagues probably could
22 more into deeper detail on that, is the issue
23 of the school aid, the amount that we're
24 getting from the state and the fact that none
25 of that money is really being brought back into

2 the school budgets, but being diverted, right,
3 for the after school programs and for the
4 charter schools. Could you talk a little bit
5 more about that? Was there, you know, was the
6 exercise, mathematical exercise done that if
7 that 95 million was allocated to school
8 budgets, what increase that would mean?

9 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I'm going
10 to let Ray answer that, but I want to make it
11 very clear that schools will have more
12 disposable money because of what we're paying
13 for now that they paid for in the past. For
14 example, as a principal, if you had an all day
15 pre-k, you paid for the all day pre-k out of
16 your existing school budget. That did not--
17 because the state only paid for half day, they
18 never paid for full day. So if you wanted full
19 day pre-k, you as a principal had to pay for
20 the coverage, teachers, and for all the other
21 things associated. So that money that those
22 schools had will still remain in their budget,
23 because now they don't have to pay for that.
24 The other things that principal paid for and
25 depending on the size of the school ranged

2 anywhere from my discussion with principals
3 from 25,000 to 50,000, could be as much as
4 100,000 for professional development. There was
5 no professional development time built into the
6 school day. So for principals who valued this,
7 this was money they had to pay out of their
8 flexible funds to be able to pay teachers per
9 session. By putting that money in the budget
10 through the contract, that allows principals
11 who have that money to move it over and use it
12 in other ways. And the third thing particularly
13 in middle schools is that most middle schools
14 figured out a way to fund extended day programs
15 out of their existing school budgets,
16 particularly if they had band and art and
17 chorus, and now that money they would have paid
18 for that can be moved over and be spent in
19 other ways. So I do think that there was in
20 certain schools there'll be more money, but
21 I'll let Ray answer the rest of it.

22 RAY ORLANDO: Good morning
23 everybody. Can you hear me? Okay, thanks. So
24 one thing I--

2 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: [interposing]
3 And actually, we hear you speak. In your other
4 capacity as often as you were here, I don't
5 think I ever heard you say a word, but okay.
6 Yes?

7 RAY ORLANDO: Yeah. So, yes, it's a
8 new territory for all of us, yes. So on the
9 question of the school aid, so as you've noted,
10 the school aid is going largely for the after
11 school, and I guess one thing I'd like to note
12 for--just so everybody has context, is you
13 know, looking at--we had a great victory in
14 Albany in getting additional state aid, and the
15 state aid, we got it for universal pre-k, which
16 is great. We're using 145, as you noted, for
17 expanded after school programming, and there's
18 additional funding for mandates. Special Ed
19 grows every year. As you know, charter schools
20 are having increasing grades and the tuition is
21 going up. So when you look at the pile, it gets
22 spent pretty quickly on these Mayoral and
23 Chancellor initiatives as well as state
24 mandates. Just as for context, if you look at
25 sort of total state aid over the whole sort of

2 last couple of years, gone back to 2009, this
3 is actually the first year that state aid
4 overall in total for education exceeds the 2009
5 funding level. So in 2010, 11, 12, 13, we
6 weren't at the 2009 level, which kind of goes
7 to the Chancellor's point about the CFE and the
8 lack of the two and a half billion dollars that
9 you noted in your testimony as well. And
10 unfortunately, what's happening to us is we're
11 funding Mayoral, Chancellor initiatives, state
12 mandates, and then we don't have enough left to
13 take the next step, and I think we're all
14 committed to working in the future to achieve,
15 you know, putting more money into the schools.
16 I think that's one of our top priorities, and I
17 think you'll see that going forward.

18 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you.
19 Chancellor, if I can get clarity on one thing
20 you indicated, right, because you indicated
21 that there are certain things that are going to
22 be paid centrally. So some money will be freed
23 up in school budgets. Now, is that impact, are
24 you projecting that to happen for every school,
25 but not every school's doing pre-k now. You

2 know, there's certain aspects of--obviously
3 every school hopefully is doing professional
4 development, so that would impact every school.
5 So do you see a benefit to every single school
6 in our system, that they'll have some money
7 freed up and additionally be able to--that they
8 can reinvest in school?

9 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think
10 professional development should be every single
11 school.

12 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Right.

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: It hasn't been
14 in the past, but it certainly should be. The
15 fact that we will be doing some of that
16 planning for them, I think, you know, and they
17 can take advantage of it to the degree they
18 want to. Yesterday we offered an all day
19 professional development for every middle
20 school principal in the city of New York, and
21 that's coming out of the DOE. So I think
22 there's going to be a lot more offerings like
23 that. So I do think everyone would benefit. I
24 think our ELL initiative is very much going to
25 be spread out city wide, and also keep in mind

2 that the ELL initiative is not only for newly
3 arrived students into this country, but are
4 also more and more parents around the city are
5 wanting dual language programs. So it's going
6 to be not only ELL students, but students who
7 are monolingual who want to be part of those
8 programs. To the degree, I want to, you know,
9 second something Ray said. You know, and again,
10 this is just an explanation. This is the fifth
11 month. Our hope going forward is that more
12 moneys will actually be going to schools in the
13 coming year and beyond, because that is always
14 where my head is as a former principal and
15 certainly as a teacher that the money should be
16 in the schools, but right now we have to catch
17 up on certain issues and I think we're focusing
18 very much on what do we need to put in place
19 that schools can benefit from us and then we
20 can give back to the schools. So the answer is
21 yes.

22 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Okay. And I'm
23 going to--I'll end there because I know my
24 colleagues have a lot of questions. Obviously,
25 you know, the CFE and outstanding amount is

2 something is incredibly--it's an imperative
3 that we resolve in some way, that money coming
4 into reduced class size and other things is
5 obviously critically important. And then
6 having to, you know, the idea of the school
7 aid, foundation aid really being allocated to
8 schools ideally is where we would like to be
9 and that's what we had indicated in our budget
10 response. But I am pleased, you know, to hear
11 about what other measures are being taken to
12 try to provide greater assistance to schools
13 and freeing up more money in the budget so that
14 money could be reinvested to quality
15 educational needs of each school. So I
16 appreciate your testimony. Thank you for being
17 here and I'll hand it back to you, Madam Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
19 Madam Speaker. We will now hear from Public
20 Advocate James.

21 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you.
22 Thank you to the Speaker and to the Chairs.
23 Before I begin my comments, I would be remiss
24 if I didn't mention the fact that we lost a
25 giant today, Maya Angelou was a world renowned

2 literary legend and influential figure in the
3 civil rights movement and an inspiration to
4 countless Americans including this one before
5 you, which is why I'm so happy as I segway into
6 the budget that we provided an increase to arts
7 and culture to our school's budget. It's really
8 critically important. I found my voice through
9 arts and culture and I'm one of the countless
10 number of children the tradition of Maya
11 Angelou will find their voice. Other than food
12 and shelter, a quality public education is the
13 most important tool we can bestow upon
14 children, but we are still struggling with
15 providing schools with books and staff or
16 school libraries to stay open, smaller
17 classroom size, physical education and free
18 lunch for all students just to name a few. I
19 want to thank the Mayor and the Chancellor and
20 the Deputy Chancellor for your UPK initiative
21 for providing 300 million dollars, your funds
22 for English language learners, technology and
23 of course, arts and culture. But I want to echo
24 my--echo the sentiments of the Speaker in
25 saying that I'm very, very disappointed that we

2 the state is still 2.5 billion dollars short of
3 meeting its campaign for fiscal equity, for our
4 public schools systems, yet we are faced with
5 an unfunded mandate that will divert from the
6 budget to provide charter schools the space,
7 leaving 94 percent of our children with less.
8 Again, we have a unfunded mandate. New York
9 City has yet to receive 2.5 billion dollars for
10 traditional public school children, and yet we
11 have a unfunded mandate leaving 94 percent of
12 our children with less. And it's--and that is
13 very unsettling and disappointing. And so with
14 that, the question really is, what is the
15 fiscal impact that the Department of Education
16 will face because of the funding for charter
17 schools?

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, obviously,
19 when you spend money in one category, you don't
20 have it to spend in the other, but on the other
21 hand, all children belong to us and to the
22 degree that these children are getting an
23 education and are learning to read and write
24 and do the things they need to do in schools,

2 that is part of my responsibility as chancellor
3 to ensure that we support them in that way.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I just hope
5 that we have fair funding in the State of--in
6 the City of New York for all children, and I
7 support your statement. What percentage of
8 DOE's budget will be spent with outside
9 consultants?

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I mean, at the
11 moment, we're doing almost everything that has
12 to do with teaching and learning in house. We
13 are--we now have a new mandate on social
14 studies frameworks, and rather than purchasing
15 anything from an out source, we're actually
16 developing it ourselves with our own staff and
17 our own teachers. We'll be doing that over the
18 summer, and in the past, a new curriculum costs
19 us on the average of 16 million dollars. So I
20 would say that, you know, not having to spend
21 that money on outside people is going to make a
22 big difference, and also we can then control
23 how this is distributed to schools. So it'll
24 get there in a timely manner. And we will also

2 control the professional development of the
3 curriculum.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I applaud the
5 fact that the executive budget includes 1.3
6 million dollars to place 25 nurses in schools
7 that do not currently have a nurse. As you
8 know, under the previous administration I
9 fought to make sure that we had dental clinics
10 in our schools, and I know that there is a
11 private initiative to provide vision for
12 children. What are we doing to restore dental
13 services and vision services for children in
14 the public school system?

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think to
16 a large degree, we are--our initiative on
17 community schools which wasn't mentioned today
18 is going to provide some of those services and
19 the community schools don't necessarily just
20 provide services to the kids in that building
21 but to that community and by expanding more of
22 those programs we'll be able to provide that.
23 Vision services in the past, some of them their
24 supports have been done in schools, and dental
25 services we have some, but we also have special

2 initiatives that we do in schools to encourage
3 parents to visit. So I do think those
4 initiatives will be in place, and having a
5 nurse in every school will also help us in that
6 direction.

7 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. In
8 regards to the rebidding of bus contracts, the
9 executive budget recognizes 62 million dollars
10 in savings. Will the bus contracts have EPP,
11 otherwise known as Employee Protection
12 Provisions within those contracts?

13 KATHLEEN GRIMM: The savings you
14 referenced--

15 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]
16 Yes.

17 KATHLEEN GRIMM: are from contracts
18 that are in play now, which do not have the
19 EPP. As you know, we have a massive RFP out on
20 the street waiting response, which will happen
21 on August 1st, and that issue is under
22 discussion right now.

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So EPP is
24 under discussion?

25 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Yes.

2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. In
3 regards to fringe benefits and health savings,
4 my understanding is that in the budget you
5 recognize 105.4 million dollars in healthcare
6 savings. How is that achieved?

7 RAY ORLANDO: Those are savings in
8 the fringe benefits of the city. They're in
9 each of the sort of categories. The--we do a
10 projection every year of fringe benefits. The
11 fringe benefits projection is a multi-billion
12 dollar figure and when you miss by a small
13 amount, it ends up with a savings or a cost,
14 and in this case we had a savings of
15 approximately 100 million dollars off of what
16 we were projecting. If only I had the crystal
17 ball and could get the number right each time,
18 it would be incredibly helpful in my business.

19 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: But isn't it
20 true that there's going to be a 64 million
21 dollar increase for health insurance compared
22 to last year? Health insurance is projected to
23 cost 1.8 billion dollars compared to--which is
24 a 64 million dollar increase compared to fiscal
25 year 2014.

2 RAY ORLANDO: And again, this is
3 the, again, a projection. So I'm trying--I
4 think what we're trying to do is we were too--
5 we're trying to get the number right. So this
6 year there was a savings, and so we right-sized
7 the budget to the current year number, and next
8 year we're looking at a slight increase and
9 we'll see if we get it right or not. I think as
10 you'll see we'll come back to you again after
11 adoption in November and January and we'll sort
12 of--we'll be in a better position to say it
13 went up, it went down, it went sideways.

14 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Something
15 tells me you'll be back in January.

16 RAY ORLANDO: No doubt.

17 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Tish, can I just
18 say one thing?

19 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yes.

20 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Because you know,
21 when you asked the question I had time to
22 think. One of things I wanted to say about the
23 contracts--

24 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]
25 Yes?

2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: is that when I
3 interviewed Ray, one of the questions I said to
4 him is how comfortable does he feel reviewing
5 all the contracts and figuring out which ones
6 we can do in house versus the ones that have to
7 go out, and since he's taken over and we've
8 been looking at all the contracts carefully, we
9 have actually stopped issuing some of them, and
10 one of the ones also for example by changing
11 the promotional policy this year. We did not
12 pay for an end of summer test, which was also
13 in the millions of dollars. So we're looking at
14 every single penny that we can save so
15 eventually going into next year we'll have that
16 pot of money to go to schools.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you,
18 Chancellor. My last question and/or point is
19 the following. We've had several meetings with
20 your office, particularly Mr. Shera [sp?] and
21 I'm very disappointed that we can't come to
22 some agreement on universal school lunch. My
23 office has interviewed school representatives
24 from Chicago, Detroit, Kentucky, Boston,
25 Syracuse, Poughkeepsie and Rochester who have

2 all successfully implemented universal school
3 lunch using the community eligibility option.
4 My office has also spoken with the United
5 States Department of Education, United States
6 Department of Agriculture, United States
7 Senator, Senator Jill Lebran [sic], everyone
8 has come to the same conclusion. You just
9 don't get it. We can implement universal free
10 lunch in the city of New York by using the
11 universal option program. In addition to that,
12 we've commissioned a study with the IBO,
13 Independent Budget Office. They too come to the
14 same conclusion, that in fact we will not
15 jeopardize any title one funds, any federal
16 funds, and that we can implement it throughout
17 the city of New York, and it would not
18 jeopardize any food to low income communities
19 compared to others. I just think that the
20 Department of Education has a fundamental
21 misunderstanding of the program. I would love
22 to sit down with you again for the fourth or
23 fifth time, perhaps with Mr. Rivera--

24 RAY ORLANDO: Mr. Orlando.

25

2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Mr. Orlando,
3 and perhaps we can come to some agreement since
4 you're new, with respect to how we can provide
5 free lunch to all children in the city of New
6 York, removing the stigma of poverty.

7 Chancellor, you said you are survivor. Are you
8 the Gloria Gaynor "I'm a Survivor" or the
9 Beyonce "I'm a Survivor."

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I don't think I
11 fit into either one of those categories.

12 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay.

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I--it'd have to
14 be someone like Ella Fitzgerald.

15 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay, very
16 good.

17 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I would say I
18 know that there's a meeting that our staff is
19 having with your staff, and I would certainly
20 encourage Ray to go along and we'll see--
21 continue the dialogue.

22 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I want the
23 children to survive and I want them to be a
24 success and we really need to implement
25 universal free lunch and I want bureaucrats to

2 be removed from the room and I want this to
3 happen in the city of New York, and I hope that
4 you would work with my office to make it
5 happen. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
7 Public Advocate. We have been joined by Council
8 Members Johnson, Levin, Reynoso and Gentile.
9 I'm going to ask some U of A questions, always
10 very exciting. The Department of Education's
11 2.6 billion dollar budget is organized into 26
12 units of appropriation. Nowhere in this
13 structure can I see either of the Mayor's most
14 notable initiatives, a 300 million dollar full
15 day universal pre-k expansion and a 145 million
16 dollar middle school after school program
17 expansion. Approximately 128 million of the
18 funding for after school program is a U of A
19 402, general education instruction and school
20 leadership. Yet, the money will not go to
21 schools. It will go to DYCD contracts with
22 service providers for after school programs.
23 Why is this funding for after school expansion
24 scheduled in U of A 402?

2 RAY ORLANDO: The after school
3 programming will be being provided by DYCD's
4 contracted providers, which is why the money's
5 there. It's just going to be an interest city
6 with DYCD, basically. And they're already
7 providing program services in the schools as
8 well and this is an expansion of that.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Right.

10 RAY ORLANDO: I hear you on the U of
11 A--

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing]
13 Yes.

14 RAY ORLANDO: It's loudly and
15 clearly.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: But, you know,
17 just for clarity, after school programs isn't
18 part of school funding and it would be--it is
19 in our best interest. You know, the Council,
20 as I've said before, votes on U of A's. When we
21 look at the budget, we're just looking at U of
22 A's, we're not looking at details. These
23 hearings allow for that opportunity.

24 RAY ORLANDO: Yes.

25

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: But anyone
3 from the public should be able to open up the
4 city's budget and understand what that is, and
5 we have two very large initiatives. I'd like
6 for us to work together with OMB. I believe
7 that both of these initiatives deserve their
8 own U of A.

9 RAY ORLANDO: We are happy to work
10 with you at OMB and anyone else on these,
11 absolutely. As you know, you know, the Mayor is
12 a big supporter of budget transparency as you
13 are, and we look forward to talking about that
14 and getting you the information you and the
15 public need.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Perfect. So
17 and I just want to reiterate that's for both
18 UPK 'cause of its size and after school.

19 RAY ORLANDO: Got it.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay. When we
21 talk about the middle school expansion, when I
22 spoke to commissioner over at DYCD, I asked
23 about why a percentage of the after school
24 dollars was remaining at the DOE budget, and he
25 clarified that it was because of district 75. I

2 want to make sure that that is the case, and if
3 that is the case, how many school and students
4 do you anticipate this funding will serve and
5 the cost of providing after school programs for
6 district 75 schools? Is there a difference in
7 cost of actual programming and will there be an
8 increase or an evadable budget line for
9 transportation, because clearly district 75
10 students also have a transportation component,
11 and many of them have to travel within the
12 borough and great distance. So now we're adding
13 hours and will those buses be there to pick up
14 those young people after school?

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: The answer is
16 yes, and we're working on that, and again, one
17 of the issues is that we want to ensure that
18 whatever services are offered to regular
19 education students are offered across the board
20 and because of the busing issue and many of
21 them, you know, handicaps, they're included in
22 all the after school programs and their
23 schools, but they need different kinds of buses
24 and transportation to get home.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Yeah, so I
3 wanted to know the cost. Did we see this at a
4 different cost? And also again, there's
5 already challenges with getting those schools
6 and the students home from after school, from
7 2:45 to 3:00. Now we may be dismissing students
8 at a much later hour, so are we going to also
9 be observant to ensure that young people get
10 back to their homes?

11 KATHLEEN GRIMM: We, of the 145
12 million, seven million is for district 75
13 spots, 3,690. There's an additional five
14 million slots at not public school locations,
15 and there is money in the budget for busing of
16 special ed. children who require that busing
17 will be on time so that we can make sure that
18 we get everyone home timely.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you. I
20 want to talk about budget risk and relation to
21 universal pre-k. According to the state budget
22 legislation, the state will allocate UPK
23 funding as a formula aid on a per pupil basis,
24 its 7,000 dollars per student, being taught by
25 a teacher without certification in early

2 childhood education, and 10,000 dollars per
3 student being taught by a teacher with
4 certification. The DOB and OMB--DOE and OMB are
5 still waiting for information from the state
6 regarding how UPK spending will be reimbursed
7 as highlighted in the City Council's
8 preliminary budget response. It is still
9 unclear if the state funding will cover all the
10 costs associated with UPK expansion such as
11 Administrative costs and DOE spending on
12 quality improvements. Based on the State's per
13 student reimbursement formula and your
14 enrollment projections for next year, how much
15 of the state's full day UPK revenue stream do
16 you expect to claim?

17 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Hi.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Hi. If you
19 could just state your name for the record.

20 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Sophia Pappas is
21 our Specialist on all things UPK.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay. So you
23 should have all answers, Sophia.

24 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Sure. So while we're
25 still awaiting some guidance from the state in

2 looking at the bill and our plans for next
3 year, we think that we will have sufficient
4 resources to cover our costs. Certain things
5 are not verified yet, such as the certification
6 of all the teachers in our system, but based on
7 preliminary estimates and what we'll need to
8 provide oversight and support, we think that we
9 would have sufficient resources.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Can you
11 provide to this committee the breakdown of
12 certified teachers and non-certified teachers
13 once you get to that level so that we have a
14 better understanding?

15 [cross-talk]

16 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Sure, of course. One
17 of the things that we did was invest in a
18 workforce registry called Aspire. That's
19 already established, but that we are making
20 sure that our teachers in our community-based
21 centers can use to input information that will
22 be verified with the state certification
23 database.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Now, the award
25 to the actual UPK location, would that vary

2 based on certification? So will some schools,
3 if they're not certified get 7,000 as opposed
4 to other--or other organizations that may have
5 all certified and everyone gets 10,000 match?
6 Or will the city--or will this potentially
7 create a deficit for us and we're going to
8 handle that or will it be passed on to the non-
9 profit or the partner organizations that we
10 partner with?

11 SOPHIA PAPPAS: So we anticipate
12 that we should be okay with that. I mean, when
13 we look at cost going directly to programs
14 versus what we do centrally, that's one thing,
15 and then what's reimbursed from the state per
16 child is another. Some costs go directly to the
17 programs, but we also use some of what we get
18 per child for things like coaching to go to
19 sites or our summer institute that we'll be
20 having. So it's important to look at how the
21 full picture shakes out, and once we have all
22 those details we'll provide them.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Yes, if you
24 can provide that for us, I would really
25 appreciate. I wish you could get it before June

2 30th, that'd be awesome. How do you expect to
3 achieve pay parity among DOE early childhood
4 education teachers or DOE contracted and
5 CBECC's and the ACS contract at the CBECC's?

6 SOPHIA PAPPAS: This issue of making
7 sure we have resources to attract and retain
8 the best talent has been at the forefront of
9 our planning from the beginning and so we're
10 really pleased as a key part of this plan to be
11 able to offer in the community-based centers
12 salaries for depending on--higher salaries
13 depending on where the teacher is in their
14 certification. So what we've said is that there
15 is an opportunity in community-based centers
16 for teachers who have a bachelor's and an
17 initial certification to make 44,000 and then
18 for teachers who have a bachelor's and a
19 professional certification, meaning they also
20 have a master's degree to make 50,000. And so
21 in the context of the rate per child going to
22 this site, that's factored in, and so on the
23 DOE contract it said when we're negotiating
24 rates with sites, this was part of the
25 conversation. It--we are encouraging it and we

2 really want as many programs to participate as
3 possible. It is an opt-in, but we are doing
4 everything we can to encourage that and we're
5 very clear that if programs get these
6 resources, that they have to be used for this
7 specific reason to go towards these salaries.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Have you--in
9 your research, have you seen it challenging for
10 programs in the outer borough or in low income
11 areas to find the certified teachers to provide
12 the services and how are you bridging that gap?

13 SOPHIA PAPPAS: We haven't done an
14 extensive analysis to draw correlations like
15 that, but what we are doing is a lot to make
16 sure that any program that may have challenges
17 getting certified teachers or teachers who are
18 close to certification has support for doing
19 that. So for example, we are--our DOE system
20 for helping principals find teachers, we have
21 extended for community-based providers to do
22 so. So, there's a new teacher finder tool where
23 basically an applicant can submit their resume
24 and indicate that they would like to be
25 considered by a community-based center, and

2 then the community-based directors can
3 essentially get a password to be able to access
4 those resumes. And we are see--continue to see
5 record numbers of early childhood certified
6 teachers applying through that system and we
7 will be having hiring events in the coming
8 months so that candidates can connect with
9 community-based providers, and that'll go for
10 various communities, but certainly if we are
11 seeing that there are struggling cases we will
12 make sure to do targeted outreach.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Right. I think
14 that that's something that we definitely have
15 to measure. It's a challenge in our--within the
16 DOE it's a challenge, right? So if we can
17 continue the conversation, I'm sure the chair
18 will also follow up. And speaking to the Chair
19 just now, one of the challenges that we face in
20 particular I have one of the most amongst, I'm
21 sure there's others, but most overpopulated
22 elementary schools, some say in the country
23 which is PS 19 or Roosevelt Avenue. And all of
24 our other schools are equally overpopulated.
25 The reality is that we don't have space within

2 the school to have UPK seats, and then we
3 don't--we equally don't have strong nonprofits
4 that are ready with their infrastructure to
5 receive these UPK seats. So what happens in the
6 districts like mine in our communities where we
7 hear this great program and where parents line
8 up at five in the morning to try to get the few
9 UPK seats that are existing? What are the
10 options? What are we telling those parents at
11 this present time where their neighbor may be
12 in the city or in downtown Brooklyn already has
13 their seat?

14 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Thank you for that.
15 So, first, I think, you know, we are definitely
16 committed to making sure that families in all
17 communities have really high quality convenient
18 options and some of that will happen over the
19 course of the next two years, but we know that
20 there are families with four year olds right
21 now who are starting in September and we want
22 to be responsive to that. So first I will say
23 that while there are certain communities that
24 have significant space challenges, we are
25 optimistic that between our district school,

2 community-based center applicants and soon will
3 have some charters offering pre-k, that we will
4 be able to provide a lot of options that
5 weren't there before, and it may not be exactly
6 around the corner, but we also want to
7 highlight for parents where there may be
8 options, for example, that are convenient for
9 where they work or where they may have a
10 relative or someone else who can pick up the
11 child. So we want to do everything we can to
12 provide close options for families this year
13 and where that there are challenges, really
14 connect with families through maybe many of you
15 and--

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing]
17 Right.

18 SOPHIA PAPPAS: through local
19 organizations to make it clear where there may
20 be additional options, and the other things is
21 that we are being very proactive about finding
22 additional spaces even for this September. So
23 we ran an additional spring solicitation for
24 the community-based centers. We had info
25 sessions that were very well attended centrally

2 here, but we also had--I think we had one in
3 Jackson Heights, which is an area where we have
4 some constraints and we're excited to see the
5 proposals that come out of that, and then we
6 continue to look in our district schools. We'll
7 be making additional decisions in the coming
8 weeks, and was thrilled to have the chancellor
9 reach out to principals. I think it was just
10 last week.

11 CHANCELLOR FARINA: One on one.

12 SOPHIA PAPPAS: To basically, you
13 know, if they had missed the initial deadline
14 to reach out to us, and to also take another
15 look in their buildings and maybe they didn't
16 think they had available space, but we can make
17 it work. So I totally acknowledge that there
18 are certain challenges, but I think between our
19 pro-active approach to finding available
20 locations across these different settings and
21 our outreach to families to help them find
22 convenient options, we'll be making a lot of
23 key strides even for this September.

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: And I have to say
25 that in all the years that I've been in

2 education, I have never seen an effort like
3 this one. We have gone across the board to tell
4 you that I am now doing spots in Spanish. I'm
5 meeting with Spanish press. Every meeting I go
6 to, I say, if you know anything. I mean, Danny
7 has actually said he's going to look for
8 spaces. Yesterday at the CEC, every member of
9 the CEC was going to go out there and scout and
10 this is in Corona where there's a tremendous
11 need. So I don't think we've ever actively
12 looked to really offer a program where we want
13 to succeed so badly, and we want everyone's
14 help in getting it done. So I think this is
15 going to really be an initiative that's going
16 to change the nature of what school looks like
17 and what it looks like particularly for parents
18 and young kids.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Well, clearly,
20 you know, this is something that we all want
21 you to succeed at, and we're doing this to get
22 it. So we went up to Albany and advocated and
23 it wasn't fun and it was cold, and we were all
24 there and you know, it was something that we
25 want to claim and we want you to succeed at

2 this. So every step of the way, when you think
3 you're doing enough with us, do a little bit
4 more. So right when you're like, "Oh, we've
5 engaged them ten times." You got to do it five
6 more times, because that's going to make the
7 difference in our neighborhoods, and it's going
8 to make a difference. And you know, I'm just
9 sitting here. I know that you said looking at
10 areas around your job as options. I have an
11 eight month old, getting in the car is a
12 production with him, so I can imagine for
13 families that have to travel with a four-year-
14 old on the train to get to the job, and yes, it
15 might be an option for some, but creative
16 thinking is welcomed. Any time that we can keep
17 our young little babies close to home I think
18 is really important. I have some more
19 questions, but I will have them in the second
20 round. I want to give our Co-Chair the
21 opportunity to ask his questions. Chair Dromm?

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: A little
23 technical question there. I generally swear
24 people in, and it's probably going to be that
25 policy. We didn't do that. So I'm going to ask

2 you to raise your right hand. And do you
3 solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole
4 truth and nothing but the truth and to answer
5 Council Member questions honestly?

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I do.

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very
8 much. Alright, now that--

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing]
10 I hope that didn't mean that everything before
11 that was--

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
13 Listen, it's on TV, how could we not?

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I just want to be
15 consistent so that I--people can say I've done
16 that with everybody who I've asked to give
17 testimony. Alright. So we--I just want to go to
18 the question about the 300 million for UPK. We
19 had originally asked for 340 million if I'm not
20 mistaken, going up to the State. Do we feel
21 confident that the 300 million's going to be
22 sufficient to cover what it is that we were
23 originally planning to do and if not, where do
24 we see the extra funding coming from?

25

2 SOPHIA PAPPAS: We feel confident in
3 it. You know, there were costs, certain costs
4 related to start up for the 340, and as we look
5 more closely at the programs coming before us
6 in terms of facility readiness, we were able to
7 shift those costs around.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So one of the
9 things that I've been thinking about, and maybe
10 I shouldn't think aloud in a hearing like this,
11 but I'm going to do a little bit of that right
12 now, is that there should be in my opinion some
13 type of a cost saving to the Administration for
14 Children Services, because now that we're
15 providing UPK seats, it would alleviate them of
16 some of the burden of providing their UPK Early
17 Learn seats, etcetera, so forth and so on. I
18 think that the figure for that is about 96
19 million dollars, and I'm wondering if in fact a
20 savings couldn't be had from that that would
21 help us with our UPK implementation and then
22 furthermore and follow up to what my co-chair
23 was talking about, the issue of pay parity and
24 the issue of pay parity not only as it relates
25 to the four-year-old teachers, but in some of

2 these day care centers and early childhood
3 centers where there are three year olds and two
4 year olds, etcetera, having a situation where
5 the teacher in a four year old is making 40 to
6 45,000, close to the director actually. I think
7 the director salaries are about 50, and then
8 teachers in the three year old or the two year
9 old rooms making a lot less than that. I don't
10 even know really what it is at this point. I
11 think we need to try to find some way to have
12 savings in order to be able to support those
13 other teachers in the building. And one way
14 that I was looking at that savings might be
15 from ACS. Have you thought about that at all?

16 SOPHIA PAPPAS: We--I'm not sure
17 about the savings part. That may be a question
18 for ACS, but in terms of how we're partnering
19 with them and what the additional resources are
20 going towards there is the having resources for
21 the higher salaries. There's also a lot of
22 additional professional development. We want to
23 make sure whether you're in an ACS--whether
24 you're in a UPK program within an ACS site or a
25

2 DOE, that you get comparable professional
3 development.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Sophia, I want
5 to--when I was in daycare prior to being in the
6 Department of Ed, I was a certified New York
7 State licensed teacher, and actually one of the
8 reasons why I switched over to DOE was the
9 salary concern. So I see it as potentially a
10 problem with the teachers, because you're going
11 to have different levels of pay basically for
12 doing the same thing in the same building. And
13 so that's one reason why I'm asking that
14 perhaps the Department can work with the
15 Administration for Children Services on this
16 issue, because I do see that there potentially
17 could be some savings in the money that they
18 are getting for essentially services that the
19 DOE will eventually take over.

20 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think that's
21 something we certainly will look into, but the
22 reality is up until now we haven't, but there's
23 always been disparity. You know, I remember
24 years ago, high school teachers made different
25 money than elementary school teachers. So

2 there's always been an element of that, but I
3 do think that this is something that everybody
4 wants to be part of one way or the other, but I
5 can get back to you on that one.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. So let me
7 go onto the issue then of guidance counselors.
8 In the preliminary hearings that we had, we did
9 say that it would be a priority for the DOE
10 moving forward to hire a guidance counselor. Is
11 there any provision in the exec budget now to
12 provide for those additional guidance
13 counselors?

14 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We've actually
15 asked schools to look at hiring more guidance
16 counselors. We've actually started. We have
17 now an additional 89 guidance counselors in
18 schools than we had just four months ago. So
19 that certainly would be something that would be
20 within the existing school's budget. Many
21 principals chose for a number of reasons not to
22 do that hiring. We are strictly--we're actually
23 actively encouraging them to go back and look
24 at hiring guidance counselors. And we have
25 over 4,000 presently in the system, but

2 certainly middle schools in particular and
3 depending on neighborhoods, we certainly
4 encourage them to do more. Keep in mind also
5 that many schools also are using social workers
6 as well as guidance counselors. I was in a
7 school the other day where they have two
8 guidance counselors, two social workers. So, a
9 lot of it is how schools use their individual
10 budgets.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is there--so it's
12 based on this, on the school budget itself
13 rather than the overall?

14 CHANCELLOR FARINA: That's correct.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Networks and
16 clusters. In your testimony today you spoke a
17 little bit about savings in school budgets from
18 various other means. It's something that I've
19 been thinking about and talking with you about
20 as well. Is there any potential savings in the
21 number, the head count for the networks and the
22 clusters? Basically, I see a lot of it as
23 being duplicative of work. You have a
24 superintendent. You have a network leader. You
25 have a cluster leader. Can you give me some

1 thoughts on that and is there any potential
2 savings moving forward regarding that?

3
4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We presently have
5 a strategic planning committee that's head by
6 Josh Wallack, and he is busy interviewing and
7 actually talking to the community at large
8 about what are the services that have been most
9 helpful in the last few years and what are the
10 services that may be redundant, and I expect
11 that a lot of our summer work is going to be
12 around how we look at all those answers and
13 rethink how we are opening in September and
14 beyond. We have always said from the very
15 beginning that we are committed to looking at
16 the system where one phone call is going to get
17 you the answer. And we're still thinking that
18 way, but in the system this large we have to go
19 very carefully and judiciously to ensure that
20 all services are provided on an ongoing basis.
21 So yes, stay tuned.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. The Chair,
23 my Co-Chair also asked about units of
24 appropriation. In the past it was clear to us
25 how the funding is allocated within units of

2 procreation. I believe that they're in 401 and
3 402, but we would like to have that separated
4 out a little bit more so that we can see the
5 exact amount of money that's being spent for
6 the clusters and the networks. Is that a
7 possibility moving forward as well?

8 RAY ORLANDO: As I said to Julissa
9 earlier, we would be happy to continue that
10 discussion with you and OMB and get you and the
11 public the information that you need.

12 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So the budget for
13 clusters and networks is about 100 million
14 dollars total for the schools?

15 RAY ORLANDO: Yeah, that sounds
16 about okay to me. I'm trying to find it in my
17 thing. I can't find it. I'm sorry. Yeah.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: That's a huge
19 savings if we were to either reconfigure how
20 that looks or how those people distribute it
21 within the system as well. About 100 million
22 dollars, okay.

23 RAY ORLANDO: Yeah, it's about 100
24 million dollars, yeah.

25

2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. Let me
3 go to the UFT contract. In the new contract,
4 the 37 minutes that is currently being used by
5 teachers for the small group work with the
6 students will now be able to be used for
7 meetings with parents, and the Chancellor
8 highlighted that in her testimony. My concern
9 is Academic Intervention Services, or AIS
10 services. How do you view that happening under
11 this new contract?

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Okay, well
13 several ways. Number one, we have reinstated
14 our intervention department at TWEED [sic]
15 which has not existed in the last I guess nine
16 years, since I was Deputy Chancellor. We expect
17 that department to be very actively working
18 with schools throughout the system. Secondly,
19 we have very clearly stated that, and if you
20 think about it Danny, 37 and a half minutes, by
21 the time you bring the kids down really
22 whittles down to 20 minutes. So we thought that
23 amount of time didn't necessarily help all the
24 kids, and not all the teachers were involved.
25 So we have clearly stated that as part of

1 family engagement, you know, 40 minutes. If
2 part of it is showing a parent how to work with
3 their child, perfectly acceptable. It makes
4 sense. If you're talking about professional
5 development, having teachers work with young,
6 with some children showing other teachers how
7 an intervention works, makes--again, I'm going
8 to go back to use the word common sense. We
9 need to use common sense in how we interpret
10 all these and how it serves the needs of kids.
11 We're also saying that a lot of the money that
12 principals may have spent on professional
13 development, they can now target more
14 specifically for students who need extra
15 support and pay the teachers procession for
16 those purposes. So I think there's lots of ways
17 to do this, but we're just trying to untie
18 principal's hands when things were told in
19 mandate service this is what you must do, we're
20 saying these are the choices you have in how
21 you do this.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So the, if the
24 teacher--if the principals were to go the route

25

2 of the procession, it's going to impact their
3 school budgets, though, correct?

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: But that's what
5 the procession money's all about. You can use
6 procession for a variety of reasons, and I
7 think using it in a targeted way to help the
8 kids who most need it. It certainly as a
9 principal, it was one of the things that I held
10 very dear. There are lots of ways also to do
11 scheduling different. We're actually doing a
12 lot of workshops for principals on how you can
13 use what we call more flexible scheduling, so
14 the teachers who may be intervention teachers
15 in the building can see kids before school
16 starts or after school starts. There's a lot of
17 things we can teach schools on how to work with
18 the neediest kids.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. I'm going
20 to turn it over to my colleagues to ask
21 questions as well, and then we'll come back.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you. We
23 will--a reminder to all my colleagues, we'll be
24 on a five minute clock, and if needed, we'll do
25 a three minute second round. We will now have

2 Council Member Rodriguez followed by Council
3 Member Gibson.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank
5 you, Chair. As we say, you know, when you took
6 this position that we are so proud that we have
7 a educator in charge of the DOE, but now you
8 know, like, we also know that you bring a new
9 leadership, but also you inherit, you know, a
10 lot of things that we're doing for so many
11 decades, things that we can--a system that made
12 some progress but also a system that was broke
13 in some pieces. Like, when I look at the
14 percentage of the students who are the ELL's,
15 citywide, we're saying that there's 14 percent
16 of student who are ELL citywide. In my district
17 that number goes to 60 percent. How and
18 therefore, it also increase the number of
19 student who needs some level of intervention,
20 intervention that we know that in a good school
21 that they have all the services and they have
22 all the resources, that we have all the
23 services in place. So what I--how are we
24 treating--how will we treating district--
25 district six that is not 14 percent, that is

2 you know a 60 percent or higher the number of
3 student who are ELL in population?

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think
5 there are many answers to this. Number one, is
6 first of all to acknowledge that there is a
7 situation that needs to be faced. I think for
8 many years we have marginalized ELL students
9 and special needs students. It was almost like
10 they didn't exist. The departments didn't
11 exist, support services for them didn't exist,
12 and I think just saying, look this is a
13 situation we have to deal with. To the degree
14 that we have also looked at our compliance
15 issues in these two areas, and said we are
16 going to be in compliance and we're going to
17 provide these services I think is also a whole
18 other approach. I think what is extremely
19 important to understand is that we now know
20 that there are certain strategies that work. I
21 went to a school the other day where all new
22 immigrants to this country and the principal
23 said he had to use special monies to buy the
24 materials because the materials that would help
25 these students were not part of the approved

1 list of materials. So we are looking carefully
2 at what are some of the materials that would
3 best serve ELL kids and we're letting all the
4 principals know through my principals notes
5 that these are things that are now able to be
6 purchased to help these students. The other
7 thing is that when we looked at parent, the 40
8 minutes, we're actually asking all principals
9 in the month of September and into mid-October
10 to make a priority of meeting with newly
11 immigrant families, that 40 minutes, and also
12 parents who children have IEPs. In the past,
13 many of the IEPs did not get looked at until
14 sometime mid-year. So we're keeping that in
15 mind. We're looking at training and we're also
16 looking at how do we make sure that the people
17 who are the heads of these schools understand
18 what the needs of those kids are and how to
19 best approach it.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: And then I
22 have a--one suggestion because of the timing,
23 is encouraging the DOE to continue expanding
24 the same program to our elementary school. We
25 know that any--the top school in the city or

2 any part of the nation, they are investing a
3 lot of resources. So when we talk about
4 inequality, also sometimes student of color and
5 female, and the girl are the one that we are
6 also leaving behind when it comes to STEM. So I
7 would like to encourage the DOE to continue
8 putting more attention. It's because of the
9 timing. And my question is, one, and I
10 appreciate what you're doing. Like, you know, I
11 know that in my district, like we are creating
12 new schools nine to 14, focus on HUB [sic] and
13 technology is a great model. My question is--
14 my next question is about one on the--the
15 percentage of student in New York City public
16 schools committed suicide, especially among
17 Latino. You know, last week at four years old
18 [sic] in one of the best school in my district
19 in Wale [sic] committed suicide. Last year,
20 another one committed suicide, young Latina
21 teenager, and Latina, they are leading the
22 percentage of being committed--attempting to
23 commit suicide and committed suicide. What are
24 we doing the DOE together with Department of
25 Health to be sure that the Latina--all student,

2 but especially in the Latina leading the
3 number, get the support they need, intervention
4 they need so that we don't continue having that
5 statistic. This year I haven't had a homicide.
6 In my hall, police present. However, we had the
7 first number of Latina girl 12 years old
8 committing suicide in a school that is almost
9 100 percent sending the student well [sic],
10 graduating from the high school and sending the
11 student to go to college. So what are we doing
12 to prevent?

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: This is a big
14 concern to me. I have to say that anytime we
15 lose a child in New York City through anything,
16 but particularly through their own hands.
17 Kathleen sends me the message and I get a
18 little hysterical, 'cause it's something that's
19 very sad for the family and for all of us. We
20 have now put out a special guidance to all
21 guidance counselor and to all principals
22 citywide. We actually did a whole write up in
23 Principal's Notes. We are very cognizant that
24 this is an issue. It's unfortunately a societal
25

2 issue and we're looking at it. We're also
3 making sure it's part of our teacher training.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: What about
5 with the BP [sic]. My last concern is that I
6 know that my time went over. In the last--Mayor
7 de Blasio committed that he will sit down with
8 the unions and the company and the negotiate a
9 good contract for the school drivers. What can
10 we say that the school drivers have some hope
11 that there's going to be a EEP in place in the
12 negotiation that should be taking place in
13 June?

14 KATHLEEN GRIMM: I can't answer that
15 fully, Council Member. I can only say that that
16 topic is under discussion with City Hall.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank
18 you.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, thank you.
20 Next up is Council Member Vanessa Gibson from
21 the Bronx.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you
23 very much, Mr. Chairman and Chairwoman
24 Ferreras. Good morning and thank you
25 Chancellor. Deputy Chancellor thank you for

2 being here, for your testimony. Chancellor, I
3 certainly thank you very much. You have been
4 refreshing for the Bronx, for school district
5 nine, for High Bridge. I know we complain a
6 lot, but we appreciate the attention that's
7 been given by you, and the numerous visits that
8 you have made to the Bronx. It's certainly a
9 great day for me as a member. Being that I
10 represent the Bronx and Upper Manhattan as
11 Council Member does, we have the highest rates
12 of asthma, and in my schools, in school
13 district nine, we have a lot of community-based
14 health centers, and I guess my question is how
15 are we working to address a lot of those health
16 disparities? What are we doing around
17 healthcare delivery and what are we doing to
18 recognize that beyond education, there's a huge
19 social health component that we must continue
20 to address in our school system?

21 CHANCELLOR FARINA: And I'm so glad
22 you're not whining about District Nine. It's
23 really been wonderful to visit some of the
24 schools there.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Yes, and
3 please keep coming back.

4 KATHLEEN GRIMM: As you know, in the
5 cab--excuse me. In the Capital plan we funded
6 additional school based mental health clinics,
7 which we're in the process of creating right
8 now. And we're working very closely with many
9 of the city hospitals who have really been
10 terrific in terms of actually coming in and
11 providing these services. Obviously that's not
12 in every school, but we are focused on also to
13 training mostly within the school buildings
14 themselves to help principals and teachers cope
15 with situations. The provision of health
16 services will also be addressed as we move
17 forward with our community school effort,
18 because we find when talking to principals one
19 of the biggest things they say is that I try to
20 get help very often, whether it's physical
21 health or mental health services for children,
22 they spend all day on the phone. So we're
23 working. It's a citywide effort, not just the
24 Department of Education effort on these
25

2 community schools to make sure children have
3 access.

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Another thing I
5 should say is that the Mayor put together a
6 taskforce called the Children's Cabinet under
7 Deputy Mayor Buery, and for the first time
8 there's a person from every single department
9 in New York City around the table discussing
10 how do we work together. And we also--and it
11 goes back to the issue of suicide and mental
12 health, all of it. So it's not that each of us
13 have to deal with this individually, because
14 some of the problems in the past have been
15 that we don't talk to each other and we don't
16 share resources. So one of the things hopefully
17 that will come out of this group will be that
18 in a couple of months we'll be able to say
19 these are the things we're all doing together,
20 these are the services. Why shouldn't I be
21 able to call up one of the other Commissioners?
22 And I'm, you know, working with two of them
23 closely right now, and say, "What are you doing
24 that you can help me do my job better?" So I
25 do think that kind of Children's Cabinet that

2 we're part of is going to be the answer to a
3 lot of these and it started unfortunately as a
4 result of some child abuse issues, but we need
5 to all be on the same page in how we deal with
6 all children's issues.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right. I
8 also share Council Member Rodriguez's
9 sentiments on the suicide prevention, in
10 addition focusing on bullying, which happens
11 every day across our school system. I wear a
12 button today of a young nine year old named
13 Justin who took his own life on May 1st in my
14 school district in the Bronx, and we recognize
15 that so many young people face every day
16 struggles in their communities and sometimes
17 they are private victims struggling in our
18 society. So I served as an Assembly Member, and
19 we always fought for SAPIS [sic] funding for
20 SAPIS workers, which I know we have, but what
21 are we doing to increase funding or is there
22 funding for more SAPIS workers? Bullying,
23 cyberbullying, suicide prevention, which is
24 key, and then the other thing I wanted to focus
25 on in the Bronx in District Nine, we had a high

2 distinction of students that were arrested and
3 suspended, and we've been working an incredible
4 amount of time with Chief Conroy and School
5 Safety. They've been very engaging and
6 responsive to drive those numbers down, but on
7 the back end of it, the policy conversation
8 that has to happen around some of the
9 regulations that almost create this prison-like
10 environment in our schools with metal
11 detectors, conflict mediation, and what are we
12 doing to prevent these cases from getting to
13 the local precinct? And the other thing I
14 wanted to mention while I have a little bit of
15 time is the 23 million for arts and education,
16 incredible, but what are we doing about
17 certified art teachers in our school system?
18 So, I thank you again.

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, first of
20 all, I think in terms of bullying, one of the
21 places to start is with more parent education,
22 and one of the recommendations we're making for
23 how principals should be using some of the time
24 with parents in September is to do more
25 workshops on how to find, how to think about

2 whether your child is being bullied, how do you
3 talk to your child about these issues.
4 Certainly would fit into all the other issues
5 you're talking. So how does a guidance
6 counselor do a workshop for parents and bring
7 some of those discussion up to levels. I think
8 the other thing that we're very conscious of is
9 that we--it's time to look at our discipline
10 code, and we are looking at it, and we have had
11 meetings throughout the city with Brian Conroy
12 and Ben Geraldini [sp?] and actually Donna
13 Lieberman. You name it, we've met with them.
14 And we will be coming out with draft proposal
15 that we certainly want the public to attend
16 hearings on and give us feedback on. So this is
17 an ongoing process and that will be coming up
18 shortly. As far as--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing]
20 Art teachers.

21 CHANCELLOR FARINA: arts, the arts
22 programs that we're putting on in arts
23 teachers, they will be cert--there will be more
24 certified arts teachers being hired. We also
25 will be looking at arts programs that people

2 can apply for that fit different needs. For
3 example, one of the approaches will be, how do
4 we get an elementary school and the middle
5 school to apply together so that we will have a
6 stream of a specific art form that goes from
7 it's possible, K to eight, because you know
8 it's--you're going to have a much better core--
9 band experience, any of those experiences, and
10 also encouraging more middle schools to put
11 theater arts and drama in their programs, which
12 I think add a whole dimension [sic]. We also
13 know the arts are a great way for kids to feel
14 good about themselves and bring parents to
15 school. So we really want to encourage that
16 aspect of the arts as well as other aspects.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you
18 very much, and as Chair for Public Safety I
19 certainly look forward to working with you and
20 Chief Conroy and the entire School Safety
21 Division. Thank you so much. Thank you, Madam
22 Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
24 Council Member Gibson. We will now have Council
25 Member Cornegy followed by Council Member

2 Rosenthal. We've been joined by Council Member
3 Deutsch.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Good
5 morning, Chancellor. Good morning, Deputy
6 Chancellor. So I sat here trying to determine
7 these two important points, how I was going to
8 get them out in five minutes, so I'm going to
9 do the best I can and talk very quickly. As
10 we're celebrating the landmark Brown versus
11 Education there's still some inequity that
12 manifests itself in my district and the
13 inequity between having districts in Brooklyn
14 that have an enormous [sic] amount of gifted
15 and talented programs, and having my district
16 that has zero, is there a commitment in this
17 budget to expand gifted and talented programs
18 to areas where they could certainly use them
19 and give a competitive advantage to those
20 students who are prepared to accept that
21 challenge?

22 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, first of
23 all, we have just reinstated a department to
24 work with gifted and talented principals and
25 teachers. I think we're looking at the whole

2 issue citywide. My major concern is to make
3 sure that every local school has a component of
4 good teaching that can really deal with a wide
5 variety of student ability. So this is
6 something that I think is very important, and
7 that I think in all parts of the city that's
8 going to be one of our emphasis.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you.

10 And at the preliminary budget hearing Chairman
11 Dromm asked some questions about the audible
12 alarms bill which I introduced in March. A
13 hearing on that bill has graciously been
14 scheduled by the Chair for June 12th, and I'm
15 looking forward to hearing detail testimony
16 from the Department of Education, parents and
17 concerned advocates at that time. My goal is
18 obviously to see the bill passed and that
19 critical safety implemented before the start of
20 the next school year and the influx of new
21 students into the universal pre-k system. With
22 that goal in mind, I just ask--I'd like to ask
23 a couple of questions related to the audible
24 alarms bill and the impact on the DOE budget
25 today. One of the questions I have is do

2 school's principals have a safety budget as
3 individual principals?

4 KATHLEEN GRIMM: No, anything like
5 that would be handled centrally. Schools
6 maintain their own safety budgets.

7 CHANCELLOR FARINA: However, every
8 principal is expected to develop a safety plan
9 and it's something that is actually signed off
10 by the SLT's in every school. So it has to be
11 reviewed and it has to fit the needs of that
12 particular school. I will tell you that one of
13 the major initiatives out of an unfortunate
14 situation is that we are now having a new re-
15 training. We have a new Director, Commissioner
16 at the Police Academy and he's re-training
17 school safety officers as are all the others,
18 and to look at schools differently in terms of
19 door exits and we're looking at video cameras
20 in schools. So there's a lot of things looking
21 at--are being put in place to ensure student
22 safety.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY:

24 Understanding protocol and that this is a
25 hearing around the budget, I'm going to reserve

2 some of my questions for the hearing that I've
3 graciously been given by the Chair, because I
4 think that it's more important to delve deeply
5 into the bill in its entirety at that time, but
6 I definitely wanted to know about whether or
7 not schools had any latitude themselves to
8 institute safety measures, and thank you for
9 clarifying that for me.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
11 Council Member Cornegy. Now we will have
12 Council Member Rosenthal, and we've been joined
13 by Council Member Cumbo.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you
15 Chair Ferreras and thank you Commissioner,
16 Deputy Commissioner and all the others. One
17 thing I want to just mention very quickly is
18 how much I appreciate the schools in my
19 district appreciate your moving away from the
20 public rating system. That's something that
21 really hindered some of our schools that I
22 think are proud C schools, and should not, you
23 know, the letter grade should not deter anyone
24 from coming to our schools. I think there are
25 schools that have been unfairly and unjustly

2 hindered by that. I want to ask some just very
3 technical questions. I'm wondering if you know
4 for UPK internally the demand and the capacity
5 for each council district. The reason I ask is
6 because in my council district, for example, we
7 don't have any--it's my understanding that
8 there's no public school capacity for
9 additional pre-k seats, and I haven't heard
10 about any movement with CBO's. So I'm just
11 wondering where you are with my district.

12 SOPHIA PAPPAS: So I'm not familiar
13 exactly where your district is--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL:
15 [interposing] Upper West Side of Manhattan.

16 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Okay. So, but more
17 broadly, we currently are doing a lot to make
18 allocation decisions and so we allocated our
19 first wave in the public schools it was about
20 4,200 back in April.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Right,
22 and we got nothing.

23 SOPHIA PAPPAS: Okay. So just to--and
24 then we are allocating several thousand more
25

2 starting this Friday because we're going to the
3 May panel meeting.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Great.

5 SOPHIA PAPPAS: We'll be allocating
6 more in June. So because we're basically in the
7 middle of all of those allocations, we don't
8 have--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL:

10 [interposing] So as soon as you have an
11 allocation. I'm on a time clock. As soon as
12 you have an allocation for my district, could
13 you send me a note?

14 SOPHIA PAPPAS: We'll work on getting
15 you that information.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Great, I
17 really appreciate that. I'm wondering--

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] I
19 think we'll send it out to all the city council
20 members.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I would
22 imagine everyone's interested. So the after
23 school RFP's--oh, do you have a sense of timing
24 of when we can expect that for all of our
25 districts?

2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Really quickly.

3 SOPHIA PAPPAS: We should get back--
4 yeah

5 [cross-talk]

6 SOPHIA PAPPAS: information needs to
7 be in the coming month.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'm
9 sorry? By the end of June?

10 SOPHIA PAPPAS: We'll get back to you
11 on that because there are multiple
12 solicitations, so we need to figure out.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Right, and
14 I understand that. I guess what I'm saying on
15 behalf of the Council is I'm not interested in
16 seeing this in September. I'm interested in
17 seeing where you are now as a baseline, like
18 today. And then I'm interested in seeing your
19 update, and then after that wave I'm interested
20 in seeing that update. I really don't want to--
21 I'm not interested in seeing the end of the day
22 because you guys are going to succeed. So the
23 end of the day--

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
25 Well, we'll share--

1

2

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL:

3

[interposing] is going to be--

4

CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]

5

We'll share what we have.

6

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you

7

very much. So if I could get Robert Cornegy's

8

minute and half, so I helped with our--no?

9

Okay. The responses to the DYCD responses to

10

the after school RFPs that they issue, will you

11

be reviewing those at all? Because I know you

12

basically moved that money over to them and I

13

raised a couple of concerns that I think DOE

14

would have about the programs. Are you going to

15

play a role in reviewing?

16

CHANCELLOR FARINA: Absolutely.

17

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So my

18

main concern and the concern again in the upper

19

west side is that the local after school

20

programs are going to lose out to citywide

21

programs that won't know our district, and we

22

have as, you know I always talk about pockets

23

of poverty, pockets of need where there are

24

specific providers that really know our kids,

25

1
2 and I'm sure that's true for everyone's
3 district.

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, first of
5 all, principals made decisions based on the
6 needs of their specific schools, and they
7 interviewed people. They did not accept
8 everyone who applied. They, I think, were
9 extremely careful. I had several principals who
10 called me specifically to see what we knew. So
11 I do think the decision was made school-based.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Oh, great.

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: To a large
14 degree. So and we encourage principals to do
15 that. We did not package a program and say you
16 must take this. It was really done that way,
17 and so I'm very, you know, convinced that this
18 is going to work, and I think as we move
19 forward we'll have lessons learned and one of
20 the things we're going to do in the fall is
21 have a fair going forward so that the people
22 who are particularly proud of what they've done
23 and the pieces they put together can share with
24 other people.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'm sorry.
3 I just had to watch that happen. I'm going to
4 ask my last question and if Ray could get back
5 to me with the answers. I'm interested--Public
6 Advocate James asked about outside consultants
7 in central office and we never really heard an
8 answer to that question. So if you could just
9 let us know the number and dollar amount for
10 yearend '14 and what your project number and
11 dollar amount is for '15, and then also your
12 headcount, your central office headcount for
13 yearend '14 and your projected number for '15,
14 and then on Medicaid reimbursement, if you
15 could separate out speech therapy and
16 transportation billing, what your yearend
17 number was for '14 and your projected number
18 for '15. Thank you.

19 RAY ORLANDO: You bet.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Council Member
21 Chin?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you,
23 Chair. Thank you Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor
24 and everyone. It's great to see you, and it's
25 such a breath of fresh air with an educator at

1
2 the helm. And I really love hearing from you
3 about, you know, the objective, the budget is
4 really to get more money back into the school,
5 and that is really critical. On the UPK issue,
6 some of the community providers are meeting
7 with us and letting us know that they are
8 really concerned about the reimbursement rate
9 to see whether it is feasible for them to
10 provide the program and also they're very
11 concerned about losing their teachers to
12 Department of Education, to the school because
13 of the salary. Even though you're saying that
14 it should be comparable, but a lot of parents,
15 especially immigrant parents want to do UPK in
16 the CBO because it's a longer extended day. So
17 how are you working with the CBO to make sure
18 that they are willing to take on this program?

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think to some
20 degree competition is healthy. It makes
21 everybody work a little harder, and I think in
22 this particular area we're willing to work with
23 CBO's. I think in the past, CBO's did not work
24 with the DOE, not because they didn't want to,
25 but we're providing the training for their

2 teachers, which is a cost factor. We're also
3 giving support which is a cost factor, and
4 we're giving them a curriculum that they can
5 follow, which, you know, is at no cost to them.
6 So I think, you know, we used to call money
7 real money and in kind services. I think
8 they're getting a lot of in kind service to
9 provide better services. So our ability to put
10 them front and center to offer services, I
11 think, is really good. And there are enough
12 children in New York City, I think, to give
13 everybody what they need.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I hope so. I
15 mean, we're willing to work with you and we are
16 also encouraging more CBO to apply and we send
17 RFP to them and encourage them to really
18 participate. So if you can keep us informed of
19 the progress and see how, you know, we could be
20 helpful, because we want to make sure the kids
21 get the education, and also because part of my
22 district, especially lower Manhattan is
23 overcrowded and I'm sure you heard from Speaker
24 Silber [sic] his overcrowding taskforce, and I
25 know that work with him to make sure that we do

2 have some pre-k opening. By going forward, I
3 mean, we are very concerned about class, you
4 know, class size getting bigger to accommodate
5 the pre-k and also not having the pre-k in
6 specific part of the community, because the
7 schools there are overcrowded. One of the other
8 question that I want to ask is that looking at
9 the opportunity of really expand the universal
10 pre-k, and in your testimony you're talking
11 about parent engagement. It is such a positive
12 first step to look at, you know, engaging the
13 parents, having more parent/teacher conference,
14 having more meetings with parent. I love what
15 you talked about, you know, meeting with
16 parents who have kids with IEP or the English
17 language learner. It's such a critical step to
18 engage parents and I think there's also an
19 opportunity to really look at parents who needs
20 English language learners themselves and adult
21 literacy to really give them the tools that
22 they can help their kids. And I know that the
23 Mayor has base lined some money for adult
24 literacy and also is moving the right
25 direction, but still not enough. So going

2 forward, how do you see the DOE really taking a
3 lead in terms of adult literacy without parents
4 and also the kids who are overage, but
5 definitely on the parent's side?

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think for the
7 parent's side, one of the things that we're
8 going to be putting out in the next Principal's
9 Notes is a program where free of charge,
10 principals and districts or even networks can
11 apply to have ESL training for parents free.
12 There's going to be a--there's a department
13 that we have which is not additional budgets;
14 it's in there where we going to be listing the
15 phone numbers people can call if they wanted to
16 have ESL training for their parents, and I
17 particularly want to do it for parents of
18 children pre-k to K, because they're the ones
19 who tend to come to school more often, and I
20 think if they can get this training while
21 they're in school, we can do the training right
22 in the schools, and I think this is going to be
23 very, very beneficial.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So that's not
25 coming out of the school's budget?

2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: No, this is an
3 already an existing department within the DOE
4 that might not be as fully--have been as fully
5 utilized as it could be. So I was very excited
6 to discover it myself, and we're going to be
7 putting it out there for schools to use.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Do you have a
9 total budget amount on that?

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I--it is a
11 department. I don't have a total budget, per
12 say, but I can get that for you.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, I think
14 that would be good to look at to really all the
15 money that is put into--

16 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] It
17 actually has its own superintendency.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Great.

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: So I will
20 definitely take care of it.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Alright, thank
22 you very much. Thank you, Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
24 Council Member Chin. We will now have Council
25

2 Member Miller followed by Council Member
3 Treyger.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you,
5 Madam Chair and Co-Chair, and it's so good to
6 see you again, Chancellor. And so I have gone
7 and I've returned. I'm sure my colleagues asked
8 so many great questions already, and Margaret
9 as usual, as I walked in she was talking about
10 the adult ed, and which was something that
11 obviously is important to us as well, and so
12 I'm glad to hear that there is that investment.
13 But I know it was asked, but I just for my
14 clarification, I want to talk a little bit
15 about or hear you talk about the Employee
16 Protection Provision and the savings on the
17 rebidding of the school bus contracts.

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Is that you?

19 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Thank you. Well, as
20 you know, right now we have a very, very large
21 RFB [sic] that is out, and those responses are
22 not due until August 1st. And the--I really
23 don't have any light to shed on the EPP at this
24 point. The EPP is not in those RFB's, but that
25 is under discussion with City Hall right now.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: That is
3 great to hear, and I'm not going to stay on
4 that any longer. I would just quote one of the
5 parents by saying that that job of caring for
6 disabled children should not be a low wage job,
7 and without the employee protection provision,
8 that'll happen. So in my last three minutes I'd
9 like to talk about something closer to home and
10 that is the co-locations of schools and IS 59
11 and that we in District 29 was a little
12 disappointed when we had to reschedule and were
13 unable to have our hearing on the school co-
14 location, which we did ourselves and myself and
15 Chairman Dromm and other Council Members from
16 Southeast Queens, and the community came out
17 and overwhelmingly with overwhelmingly
18 disapproved of the co-location of success at IS
19 59, and but I would--what I would like to say
20 is I know that I've had some conversation with
21 the Administration on both sides and there was
22 willingness from myself as well as others to
23 find another location or to deal with that
24 situation in another way, and was not given
25 that opportunity, and so I'm disheartened to

2 see that there was other options available that
3 was taken by other communities and we're still
4 left holding the bag of success at IS 59. So I
5 would hope that we are--there's still
6 opportunities for us to address that issue
7 moving forward.

8 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I would say that
9 Kathleen Grimm has done an unbelievable job of
10 visiting any location that asks for support
11 from the campus squad, which is what we call
12 it, to make sure that the space that is shared
13 is done in an equitable manner and in a way
14 that makes sense to everybody. So I'm--she'll
15 put it on her calendar. You can speak to her
16 afterwards and we'll make sure we visit.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I do, in my
18 1:23, I do want to say that while there is a
19 small amount of additional space with the
20 programs that the principal has put in place
21 and some of the activities that we take the
22 infrastructure to full capacity and does not
23 allow for that program, those programs to exist
24 and the real learning to take place in that
25 building when we stretch our capacity in that

2 way. So while on paper, you know, we may have
3 additional seats when we take those rooms back,
4 we lose science labs and other things, so.

5 CHANCELLOR FARINA: And again, we're
6 redoing the blueprints. We have a co-location
7 committee and some of this is, as mentioned
8 before, the past, and we're trying to move
9 forward to the future, but we will certainly
10 come and visit. And no loss of science labs,
11 guaranteed.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
13 Council Member Miller. We will have Council
14 Member Treyger followed by Council Member
15 Cumbo.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Welcome,
17 Chancellor. Thank you very much. Does the DOE
18 have a plan to expedite repairs to damaged fire
19 alarms and boilers in Sandy, in all Sandy
20 impacted schools, and what is the time table to
21 do so?

22 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Yes, we have 33
23 schools that currently still have temporary
24 boilers. Eight of those schools we have bids
25 out, so we'll be addressing those very shortly,

2 and bids for all 33 schools will be out by the
3 end of this calendar year.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And could I
5 have a listing of those school? I mean, 'cause
6 many of them are in my district, and I
7 represent--

8 KATHLEEN GRIMM: [interposing] Many
9 are, yes.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Coney
11 Island's as a matter of fact, I had the Mayor's
12 Senior Advisor on Sandy recovery, Bill
13 Goldstein visiting your PS 188, which is a
14 community learning school, and they were
15 mentioning how warm it is, and they can't
16 regulate the heat because of the temporary
17 boiler, and it is very uncomfortable there. So
18 I would really appreciate a listing of all the
19 schools and exact time frame because
20 Chancellor, as I read your book in class, I
21 remember the importance you mentioned of
22 environment, and those things, first of all,
23 they are very uncomfortable inside the schools,
24 and they have an impact on instruction. They're
25 also major community eyesores. And so that is--

1
2 I strongly urge the DOE to expedite this as
3 fast as possible.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Council
5 Member, I just want to let you know that
6 Tuesday, June 3rd we'll have a capital
7 conversation, so you can also bring that up at
8 one o'clock's hearing on Tuesday.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I certainly
10 will. Thank you. Thank you, Chair. Just to
11 get clarity once and for all, is the budget
12 freeze over to hire new teachers and new
13 guidance counselors? Especially in light of
14 the addition of thousands of children in the
15 UPK program.

16 CHANCELLOR FARINA: There are certain
17 categories where the freeze will be lifted
18 within the next two weeks, guidance counselors,
19 certainly one of them are teachers as well.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right, and I
21 heard your testimony before, Chancellor, about
22 how principals do have the authority to hire
23 guidance counselors, but we know historically
24 this term empowerment was, in my view, a mirage
25 because principals really align their budgets

2 to address progress reports and those report
3 cards, and so when they said that they were
4 given flexibility, in reality it was a mirage.
5 It was all about making sure that they were
6 aligning every dollar to meet the issues raised
7 in any--or needs of a progress report. And I
8 would like for you to comment on the future of
9 progress reports in our school system.

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, first of
11 all, there will be no letter grades. Secondly,
12 we are in the midst of redoing the quality
13 review, which I think is actually a better
14 format, and one of the major changes in the
15 quality review is we now have a category which
16 says including the arts, which was not there in
17 the past. So that means when a principal is
18 evaluated that will be one of the things he'll
19 be evaluated on. There are other things in the
20 quality review which we're certainly
21 instructing principals to be very careful
22 about. We'll also be reviewing schools on a
23 more regular basis. It won't be seven years
24 before you're reviewed. But I do think that the
25 message is clearly out there that schools will

1
2 be evaluated as a whole by how much support
3 they give kids, and certainly that's a
4 conversation. Two weeks ago we had an all-day
5 meeting at Brooklyn Tech and we had close to
6 1,000 principals show up. And that, I gather,
7 was not true in the past. So you have
8 principals coming to hear what this
9 Administration is advocating for, and of
10 course, we advocated for the arts. We advocated
11 for guidance counselors. We advocated for all
12 the things that we consider priorities, and a
13 lot of principals thanked us for putting that
14 front and center. So I do think the message is
15 getting out there and I look forward to having
16 a system that is definitely student friendly
17 and parent friendly.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you.
19 Thank you, Chancellor. Chancellor, do you
20 believe that superintendents have enough
21 resources to adequately support all the schools
22 within their jurisdiction?

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think that, you
24 know, it depends what the interpretation of
25 support is. I think we have been particularly

1 surprised, I would say, by how much people are
2 able to cover it considering, you know, what
3 they're doing. We have received a half a
4 million dollar grant from the Wallace
5 Foundation to spend this summer on working with
6 superintendents in New York City, and being
7 able to set an agenda for the future, what
8 their responsibilities might be and how they
9 might support schools, and we're looking
10 forward to as part of that training to be able
11 to ensure that for the first time every that
12 there will be a universal message to
13 superintendents about what's expected of them.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And if I
16 might just 30 extra seconds, very briefly.
17 There's a difference, Chancellor, as you know,
18 I was a teacher, between covering and learning
19 and teaching. So as--and I appreciate you
20 account about how much they have to cover, but
21 support, I think we know, is to make sure that
22 they're adequately there, visible, mentorship
23 modeling, you know, all those things. I do hear
24 feedback that they are stretched thin, and that
25 is something that I would hope that we can

1 bolster. The last thing I just want to say very
2 briefly. It was my understanding of the
3 previous state mandate with regards to the
4 teacher evaluations that was passed down from
5 Governor Cuomo by the previous Administration
6 that 60 percent teacher evaluations were based
7 on observations, 20 percent state exams, 20
8 percent local assessments. In the past, many
9 schools absolve, you know, they did not come up
10 with local assessments, so 40 percent became
11 the state assessment. Are there any plans to
12 change that? Will there be local assessments,
13 and how much flexibilities will local schools
14 have in shaping those local assessments?

16 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We're in constant
17 communication with Commissioner King. Deputy
18 Chancellor Phillip Wineberg [sp?] talks to him
19 at least once a week, and we have put a lot of
20 suggestions on the table. I think the new UFT
21 contract is giving us an opportunity to look at
22 what we consider the most important aspects of
23 teaching by going from 22 components of
24 teaching to eight so that principals can more
25 carefully focus their professional development,

2 and teachers can hone their craft. You can't do
3 22 things well the first year that you're a
4 principal--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER:

6 [interposing] Thank you.

7 CHANCELLOR FARINA: and a teacher.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you

9 Council Member Treyger. We will now have
10 Council Member Cumbo followed by Council Member
11 Deutsch.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

13 Again, always so good to see you and thank you
14 to our Co-Chairs. I wanted to start.

15 Specifically, I was at the Brooklyn Tech
16 meeting and was very excited to see you there
17 and the throngs of energy from all of the
18 principals there, and Brooklyn Tech is also my
19 Alma Mater and it's also in my district, and
20 I've had conversations with Council Member
21 Dromm about this as well, but have a lot of
22 concerns in regards to the diversity of our
23 specialized high schools, and so there has been
24 a lot of discussion in terms of changing the
25 test, eliminating the test, fortifying the test

2 with essays. Also an idea that I'm excited
3 about would be the opportunity for each of the
4 council districts, let's say hypothetically to
5 have the opportunity to have the best
6 performing on each of those tests to
7 participate in the ability to attend one of the
8 specialized high schools. So I wanted to talk
9 about the Administration's plan or approach to
10 very seriously diversifying so that students
11 such as myself would have the opportunity to
12 attend one of these incredible specialized high
13 schools.

14 CHANCELLOR FARINA: That is certainly
15 something we're exploring. We have actually
16 called a committee of all the principals, of
17 all the specialized schools in New York City to
18 discuss what might be some of the other ways we
19 could approach this. One of the things we're
20 actually doing is also putting in place more
21 after school support for middle school kids who
22 are in the range of being able to get into
23 these schools, Brooklyn Tech for example has
24 started a discovery program that the--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]
3 Correct.

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: the teachers,
5 yes, in the high school are actually working
6 with middle school kids to sort of get them
7 ready but also prepare them for that. We have a
8 dream program that also does that for kids in
9 other parts of the city. This is definitely on
10 our radar and we're meeting on a regular basis
11 and I hope to be able to have more information
12 the next time.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Is there
14 funding supporting this initiative so that this
15 level of after school programming, whether it
16 comes through UPK or other middle school
17 initiatives so that--because for me to get into
18 Brooklyn Tech, I had to do a dual Kaplan and
19 Princeton review, simultaneously. My parents
20 put money into both because it was so important
21 to them. Will there be resources that are
22 currently allocated in this budget in order to
23 have a substantial turnaround in terms of how
24 students are admitted?

2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: The answer is
3 yes, the money is in the budget, already has
4 existed in the budget for the last two or three
5 years, and there's also additional money that's
6 being put in there because we're doing one of
7 the things that when we did our research, we
8 found that one of the biggest needs was or
9 success rates is in schools that have algebra
10 programs. So we actually are having an algebra
11 institute this summer.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay.

13 CHANCELLOR FARINA: For schools that
14 may not have algebra certified teachers or
15 trained that we can actually--that can actually
16 come to summer programs to learn to do that.
17 So, the kids will have that advantage.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I appreciate
19 that and just want to add one of those things.
20 Those are great programs for those young people
21 who express the desire to want to do that, but
22 somehow it's reaching out so that those young
23 people that haven't gained the maturity to know
24 that this is something that they need to do,
25 somehow some sort of mandatory or mandation

2 [sic] of it needs to happen in that way, and
3 that might be a made up word. The second one
4 is in regards to sex education. So as Chair of
5 the Women's Issues Committee under Chancellor
6 Walcott, he was able to mandate a semester of
7 sex education on the middle school as well as
8 on the high school level, but the challenge has
9 been when speaking to affiliates that that
10 hasn't really been mandated, excuse me,
11 evaluated in terms of its effectiveness. Has
12 it been mandated? Are people actually--are
13 schools providing this curriculum on the middle
14 school because our young people are making very
15 serious decisions that are often very
16 detrimental to their educational career because
17 they don't have that value of sex education in
18 the schools.

19 KATHLEEN GRIMM: We couldn't--I
20 couldn't agree with you more. There is a
21 mandatory component of our--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]
23 Enforcement was the word I was looking for yes.
24 Go ahead.

1
2 KATHLEEN GRIMM: And we are looking
3 at how well that is being provided in the
4 schools. We have done several things to be able
5 to monitor that, and that is to enhance our
6 ability to sort of watch the programming that
7 all the schools have. In addition, we run a
8 special professional development to train
9 teachers for this, and we have a recommended
10 curriculum which includes this component which
11 we actually will give to the schools, to the
12 teachers or the other staff people who come and
13 take the professional development.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Is there
15 funding in the budget to support this mandation
16 [sic], my new word?

17 KATHLEEN GRIMM: I like that word.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Is there
19 funding in the budget to support this--

20 KATHLEEN GRIMM: [interposing] There
21 is money in the budget to monitor this
22 mandation.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.
24 Thank you. I'm going to see it in Webster's
25 next year.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
3 Council Member Cumbo. We will now have Council
4 Member Deutsch.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you,
6 Madam Chair. Good afternoon, Chancellor. I have
7 a school in my district, Sheep's Head High
8 School that's being phased out and this all
9 started from the previous administration and I
10 found out about it because I had meetings and I
11 met certain parents from the school, and I
12 happened to meet the principal. What is,
13 number one, is how many schools across the city
14 are being phased out and how are the Council
15 Members in those districts being briefed on
16 what schools are being phased out and why
17 they're being phased out, and also if we could
18 take a second or third or fourth look to see if
19 we can make those schools succeed?

20 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, first of
21 all, just to let you know, we're not closing
22 any schools this year at all, and we are very
23 carefully looking at schools that are
24 struggling. We'll be coming out with a plan
25 soon around that. The ones that are phased out

2 are generally already too far in the process to
3 resuscitate, but we're certainly encouraging
4 teachers and principals to think if there's
5 another way they want to start a small school.
6 One of the things we're going to be offering to
7 you is a whole thing on CTE schools, what they
8 look like, what they really are, what they're
9 really not. So for people who want to reinvent
10 themselves and work with some of those
11 programs, we certainly encourage them. We have
12 actually visited some of the phase out schools
13 and one of the things we're trying to do is
14 ensure that the kids have the best possible
15 education, especially in high school when they
16 have proms and senior trips and all, so they
17 don't lose those things when they're in phase
18 out schools, but in terms of stopping that
19 process from going forward in most cases
20 already too far into the process.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Well, I
22 would like to ask the Chancellor, I visited the
23 Sheep's Head High School already four times
24 since I got elected, and I cannot go back to
25 the children that it's too late in the game,

2 but I wanted to see if the chancellor can come
3 down and if we could speak to the principals
4 and the parents and the children as well, and
5 if we could get them back. Those children are
6 very special and I want to do everything in my
7 power and the Administration's power to see if
8 we could get them back on board. So I would
9 like to ask you--

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
11 Well, I'm happy to visit. I visited other
12 schools in the same situation, and the best
13 promise I can make you that this is not going
14 to happen under my watch. Not the Sheep's Head
15 bay [sic], but going forward.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay. So we're
17 going to start the second round, which is the
18 three minute round. I wanted to ask
19 specifically, earlier this morning I had a
20 meeting with some business leaders from our
21 city and actually was hosted over at NASDAQ,
22 and in the conversation which was obviously
23 about our city's finances what came up was our
24 STEM research and our STEM partnerships, and I
25 know that the Administration has for many years

1 we've been working with the urban advantage
2 program in our wonderful partner at the
3 American Museum of Natural History and the
4 incredible impact that that makes on young
5 people. So I have two questions. We know the
6 program works. It changes lives. Why hasn't the
7 Administration base lined it? The Council has
8 always put in the 2.5 million dollars
9 necessary. Also, the Administration has really
10 been forward thinking in partnering with CUNY
11 at 18.9 million dollars to do STEM research.
12 How can we ensure that our young people are
13 ready when they go into CUNY and other
14 organizations to be able to do the STEM, that
15 the STEM that we're preparing them for is the
16 accurate and up to par so that we're training
17 our young people for the jobs that are out
18 there, and not training them on a system that
19 may be antiquated? And as we all know,
20 technology moves at the rate of our iPhones,
21 right, every time you take a new one out. An
22 example of this where it seems to be working,
23 we had an executive at this meeting from Jet
24 Blue and he spoke of his partnership with
25

2 Aviation High School. Are there more
3 opportunities where we can see more industry
4 partnering at a very young age with our young
5 people to have the experience through
6 internships? So my urban advantage question,
7 our opportunities, and yes, we're partnering
8 with higher education on STEM. Are our
9 children going to be ready to step into those
10 new roles?

11 CHANCELLOR FARINA: That in two
12 minutes.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Well, no you
14 can take as--

15 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] Let
16 me start with one thing at a time. The STEM
17 program is actually alive and well. We now
18 have a Director of STEM. At Tweed [sic], Linda
19 Curtis Bay, and she's leading this initiative
20 and she is really well-known throughout the
21 city for her work in this effort. We are also
22 aligning ourselves and have asked the support
23 of Kathy Whyte [sp?] in Partnership for New
24 York City who actually put the CO's together.
25 And one of the things we're working to do is to

2 see and actually that's part of the meeting
3 that we're having this Sat--this Friday, to--

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing]
5 That's actually who I was meeting with this
6 morning.

7 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Oh, okay. And
8 one of the things that we ask is to make the
9 CTE, which many are STEM based, more meaningful
10 is to ask CEO's in related themed schools to
11 partner with our themed schools. So if your
12 school, for example, is media and advertising,
13 is there a CO who will kind of adopt that
14 school? And not just adopt for advice, but
15 also provide internships going forward in that
16 area, and Kathy and I have met several times on
17 this issue. I spoke to CO's, you know, at her
18 behest and explained what we're trying to do. I
19 think one of the situations we came up against
20 is that many people still think that career
21 technical and engineering schools are
22 vocational schools, and they're anything but
23 that. They are real serious math. P-Tech is a
24 serious math, science curriculum and it
25 requires kids who have high abilities be able

2 to get themselves into CUNY and other colleges.
3 So I think the first thing is to really get up
4 front and center and be able to present to
5 people including yourselves what do we mean by
6 CTE, and then translating it to parents. When I
7 go out and talk to parents many parents still
8 think CTE's are inferior schools and it's quite
9 the opposite. You know, we have urban assembly
10 all of a sudden opening a lot more CTE schools
11 and because there's a real need for kids to be
12 occupation ready, but occupation ready doesn't
13 mean that's not college ready as well. So I
14 think that's important. I think aviation is
15 probably a prime example of a relationship with
16 a company and a school. I was there recently
17 and I was blown away. I mean, those kids are
18 there 'til six o'clock at night. They go in on
19 weekends. It's a really very strong community
20 and I think he said 99.9 percent of the kids
21 have jobs when they leave that schools. That's
22 what we'd love all our CTE schools to be able
23 to do. I think in terms of Urban Advantage, I
24 was the Godmother of Urban Advantage with
25 Marissa McDonald ten years ago. I think that's

2 something we'll explore further, but certainly
3 it's a concern that to the degree possible that
4 schools also fund their relationships with the
5 Museum of Natural History to some degree, but
6 it's something on our agenda to keep
7 investigating.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Well, and this
9 is something that I'm going to bring up to Dean
10 Fuleihan, and as we begin our negotiations. I
11 think Urban Advantage as the Godmother, again
12 another example of it works. And then also
13 equally is MOUSE [sic] and that program and the
14 275 that we would love for it to be base lined,
15 and then we could think about enhancements from
16 the Council perspective, but this is a program
17 that makes sense. I'm now going to pass it over
18 to my co-chair Council Member--Chair Dromm.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Thank
20 you again Madam Chair. So I just have a few
21 questions to follow up. The first one is on
22 Medicaid and the executive budget includes 67
23 million in Medicaid revenue. This is a 70
24 million dollar reduction from the preliminary
25 budget projections, and so can you give us or

2 provide us with an updated break down of the
3 anticipated revenue by Medicaid claiming by
4 each category transportation, occupational
5 therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy,
6 contract schools and charter schools?

7 RAY ORLANDO: I can give you some of
8 that.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay.

10 RAY ORLANDO: So let me give you
11 what I can give you. Let's see. Okay. So OT,
12 about 29 million is the projection for fiscal
13 year--these are all projections for fiscal year
14 15, okay? Twenty-nine for OT, about 15 for PT,
15 about three for speech language, and I'm sure
16 you'll want to follow up on that, about four
17 for charters, and the balance for easy track.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So, on the speech
19 therapy--

20 RAY ORLANDO: Yep.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Where do we stand
22 with that with the UFT? I didn't see it in the
23 contract, and what's going on with that?

24 RAY ORLANDO: We are continuing to
25 work with them on the SLPs and we are hopeful

2 that this is the fiscal year, in fact, when we
3 manage to land the agreement and start
4 collecting the money for the over 100,000, you
5 know, speech language services that we provide
6 each year and those related services. We're
7 hopeful.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: SLPs are?

9 RAY ORLANDO: I'm sorry, speech
10 language--sorry, pathologists. Thank you.
11 That's--we need the--we need the license
12 number.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It's a part of ed
14 speak [sic] I wasn't even all that familiar
15 with.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So just for a
17 follow up, how much moneys would that total
18 that we're leaving on the--but the state--

19 RAY ORLANDO: It's tens of millions
20 of dollars.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I'm sorry?

22 RAY ORLANDO: It'd be probably tens
23 of millions of dollars. I don't have a--

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing]
25 Of course this committee's going to want the

2 specific number to that, so you can get back to
3 us.

4 RAY ORLANDO: I'd be happy to look
5 into whether we have an idea of x times y
6 equals z, absolutely.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, thank
8 you.

9 RAY ORLANDO: Happy to look into it,
10 yep.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, so middle
12 school quality initiative, I don't believe that
13 was addressed in the previous questions in
14 regard to urban advantage. How much funding is
15 included in the DOE's executive budget for
16 middle school quality initiative in fiscal
17 2015?

18 RAY ORLANDO: I'm looking.

19 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We're actually
20 expanding MSQI [sic]. I can't tell you exactly,
21 but it's been a pretty successful program and
22 we have a new director coming into manage it
23 who's a for--yeah.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So you're going
3 to expand that into the CBO after school
4 programming?

5 CHANCELLOR FARINA: No, we're going
6 to expand into more schools

7 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, and is the-
8 -are you looking at that as a model for the
9 after school programs?

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: To some degree,
11 if principals want to include that in their
12 after school. It's a school by school decision.
13 It is pretty much in the schools that it's in.
14 The ones I've observed pretty much integrated
15 into the school day, and I think because of the
16 way it's done it's probably better off there,
17 but we certainly wouldn't exclude it from after
18 school. The principals chose to do that.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Custodial
20 operations carried out by the DOE and the
21 contracted workers, it appears that the
22 contracted workers actually perform the same
23 work for the--for more pay than the DOE
24 custodians do, and what does the DOE consider
25

1
2 to be the prevailing wage for custodians, and
3 also, when does the contract expire?

4 KATHLEEN GRIMM: The contract expired
5 a long time ago. They were probably, or they
6 probably missed the last round when everything
7 closed down on contract negotiations. It's
8 okay.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So the issue of
10 pay parity is--remains an issue? Can you
11 address that?

12 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Let me say back to
13 you what I think you're asking me. With the
14 custodians, there's no issue of prevailing
15 wage. Recently an issue came up with the 32 BJ
16 employees. They are not our employees, and that
17 issue has not been resolved.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So that's
19 because--can you explain further why that has
20 not been resolved?

21 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Because--do you
22 know? No, but I'll get back to you.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Alright. So let's
24 follow up on that after this hearing.
25 Alternatives to suspension, it's a discussion

2 we've had outside of hearings. It's an issue of
3 major importance. Is there anything in the
4 budget that's going to help to address this
5 moving forward? Restorative discipline
6 programs, collaboration with UFT, etcetera, so
7 forth and so on, are there anything--is there
8 anything that you're looking at in regard to
9 that?

10 CHANCELLOR FARINA: We're actually
11 looking at everything in regard to that. And if
12 you give me about another two weeks I think
13 you'll have much fuller answers.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Is it going to be
15 something that's going to cost us there as
16 well? Is that?

17 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Not really. It's
18 a change of thinking.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. High
20 stakes testing, how much do we spend on those
21 tests? I think you mentioned it briefly before
22 in your testimony and you said there would be
23 some savings in testing.

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, the savings
25 came in creating our own testing for the end of

2 summer promotion policy. We always paid extra
3 for a test. We're creating those assessments in
4 house, so that's the money we saved. In terms
5 of the statewide testing, right now it's a
6 mandate. So do we have a price on that? We'll
7 get you the cost on that.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Class size,
9 huge issue especially in districts like the
10 Chair Ferreras said and in my district as well.
11 I'm concerned that the school budgets because
12 they're flat are not going to address the issue
13 of class size again and we're going to continue
14 to have similar class sizes to this year or
15 maybe worse. What is your anticipated class
16 size moving forward, how are you going to
17 address that issue?

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think it varies
19 so much from one part of the city to the other.
20 It has a lot to do with space. It has a lot to
21 do with other issues that are school specific.
22 So I know what the contract says is the
23 recommended class size, and I think that to the
24 extent possible, principals make decisions
25 based on where they think within a school the

2 greatest need is. I know I'm not answering your
3 question directly, but because I don't think
4 there was one answer that really fits all that.
5 And I think one of the things when we start
6 meeting with principals, which we'll be doing
7 shortly and thinking about how they use their
8 budgets that there's a lot of things they need
9 to think about a little differently because
10 it's not--you know, it's possible in some
11 places to get extra support in certain
12 classrooms. I know as a principal I made some
13 really interesting decisions that was good for
14 my school, but it isn't something I would
15 necessarily say would be good for all schools,
16 so.

17 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So probably in
18 the capital hearing we're going to talk a
19 little bit more about that as well, so I'll
20 have some follow up questions on that at that
21 time.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And just to
23 add, that conversation, you know, I'd like to
24 have a better understanding of the
25 relationships between the Department of

2 Building and our schools and certificate of
3 occupancies, because many of our schools have
4 overcrowding, and I know the principals are
5 trying to do their best in accommodating all
6 these students, but I got to believe that our
7 certificate of occupancies can be a challenge
8 in many of these cases. So we'll follow up on
9 the following capital hearing.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay, and then
11 Junior ROTC--

12 KATHLEEN GRIMM: [interposing] Could
13 I say--Chair, could I say one thing?

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes, go ahead.

15 KATHLEEN GRIMM: We'll be happy to
16 discuss to class size at the capital hearing,
17 but class size is much bigger and broader than
18 the capital plan. That's one very small aspect
19 of it. It has to do with programming. It has to
20 do with the 2.5 billion dollars that New York
21 State owes us. It has to do with a lot more
22 than capital. So--

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] I
24 agree with you, but I also believe that part of
25 the reason for the issues with class size have

2 to do with the construction of schools and
3 that's why I said I would defer it over there,
4 but if you want to talk more about that now,
5 that's fine too.

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I think, I mean,
7 the latest statistic I saw was, you know, an
8 average of 25 in most schools. That doesn't
9 mean that in some schools in Queens you don't
10 have 30, but--

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [interposing] And
12 actually, Chancellor, it's--for my whole
13 career--

14 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
15 Right.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: it was always 34
17 and in some cases, 38.

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: And I think those
19 are the other issues to look at because it's
20 also do they get enough money to do part time
21 teachers in classes that are oversized. So, you
22 know, definitely give me a chance to look into
23 that because that is in the past what happened,
24 but it also had to do with UFT contracts. So
25 we'll look into that.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. So the last
3 question that I have and then I think we have
4 one more person after that is in regard to the
5 Junior ROTC--oh, we have a few more after that,
6 okay. Not off the hook yet. How much federal
7 funding does the DOE receive for the Junior
8 ROTC program and how many students does this
9 serve?

10 KATHLEEN GRIMM: I don't know if I
11 have all the answers for you. We have 14 Junior
12 ROTC programs citywide with over 40
13 instructors. These are UFT members. I do not
14 have the amount of money that we are paying
15 them, but I can easily get that for you. We at
16 DOE cover half the salaries and the military
17 covers the over half. We'd actually have had
18 meetings with the military who are oppressed as
19 we are, so I don't anticipate any immediate
20 expansion in this program.

21 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I have
22 philosophical problems with the Junior ROTC,
23 and the fact that they're even in our schools.
24 I think that, you know, probably outside of the
25 realm of the budget per say, although I know

1
2 there's a budget impact on it, but I always
3 wonder why these programs are in many schools
4 where we have youth of color and immigrants and
5 we prepare them for a war machine basically,
6 and I find that to be problematic and that's
7 why I wanted to just touch upon this in this
8 hearing today.

9 KATHLEEN GRIMM: That's fine and I
10 would appreciate an opportunity to take you out
11 to see one or two of these programs and meet
12 some of these children.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I've actually
14 seen the one at Francis Lewis [sp?], and you
15 know, there's an awful big recruitment effort
16 then to join the ROTC program and then even
17 into the armed forces of the country.

18 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: And I have deep
20 concerns about the way in which they go about
21 their recruiting and it just--it contributes to
22 what I see as a war machine and I have ethical
23 problems with that about preparing our students
24 in that way to participate in that type of a
25 program.

2 KATHLEEN GRIMM: That's a different
3 topic and you should share with us your
4 concerns, because we have rules around
5 recruitment.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I know that they
7 don't do it on the campus, but by virtue of
8 them being there it's sending a message to
9 those kids about the armed forces and their
10 recruitment policies and then what it means for
11 them moving forward into college and then
12 thereafter. So, let me leave it at that,
13 because this is more of a budget discussion,
14 but I just needed to state that. Yes, the Chair
15 is going to cut me off here if I continue to go
16 on that. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
18 Chair Dromm. We now a five minute clock for two
19 members who have joined us. I know we were part
20 of the second round. Council Member Levin
21 followed by Council Member Barron, and part of
22 the three minute second round will be led by
23 Council Member Miller, Treyger and Cumbo and
24 then we will be done.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you,
3 Madam Chair. Hi, Chancellor, nice to see you.
4 Hi, Deputy Chancellor. So I'm going to ask
5 about two topics that I ask about frequently,
6 but in the context of the executive budget.
7 The first one is around the charter budget as
8 proposed in the executive budget. Now we see a-
9 -there's a 246 million dollar increase from the
10 previous year's budget. So that's a year over
11 year increase of, I don't know, 18 percent or
12 something like that. And that is a 98 million
13 dollar increase from our preliminary budget,
14 and so I brought this up at our preliminary
15 budget hearing. I bring it up at every
16 preliminary budget and executive budget hearing
17 that every year this happens over and over
18 again where there's a tremendous increase from
19 preliminary to executive and I know why that
20 happens, because the preliminary budget does
21 not take into account newly cited charter
22 schools, and I understand that the Department
23 of Education is mandated to fund every pupil
24 that is in a charter school and so that the
25 funding follows the child. I understand that,

2 but my concern is that it does not give us a
3 clear picture at the preliminary budget of what
4 our actual expense is going to be in the coming
5 fiscal year, and so what I would ask--I know
6 that it's happened this year and there's not
7 really much we could do about that, but in next
8 year's preliminary budget, if we could include
9 what an estimate of what--and we know how many
10 schools are cited. We do know that how many
11 schools got--we know how many schools have been
12 approved, charters been approved and how many
13 are likely to be cited. If we can get a more
14 accurate picture in the preliminary budget I
15 think that that's better for the public so that
16 we understand what the fiscal impact is going
17 to be, because as I said in the preliminary
18 budget hearing, a year over year increase of 20
19 percent in any budget line raises concerns and
20 this is kind of a, you know, obviously a hot
21 button issue, but that type of increase is
22 alarming and if we as a city understood what
23 that means in terms of a budgetary perspective,
24 I think that that's one way to look at it. At
25 least that's the way that I look at it because

2 as you said Chancellor before, every increase
3 in one budget line kind of comes out of another
4 one. So that would be my recommendation for
5 next year.

6 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I would say
7 that, you know, we get smarter every year about
8 how we do this and that's certainly something
9 we're going to put on the agenda and we now
10 have extra support in Ray Orlando, so that's
11 something he's going to be committed to, right
12 Ray? Absolutely.

13 RAY ORLANDO: Absolutely.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

15 RAY ORLANDO: What she said.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. Thank
17 you, and I'd like to work with you on that
18 moving forward. My other issue that I've
19 focused on a lot is breakfast in schools, and
20 this year we're bottom of the pack again. We
21 are rank last out of 63 major school districts
22 in the country in terms of the percentage of
23 children who qualify for free or reduced lunch
24 who are eating breakfast in the schools. So we
25 have a participation rate of 34.8 percent this

2 year according to the Food Research and Action
3 Center annual report. That's 63 out of 63
4 school districts. You know, Boise, Idaho has a
5 92.4 percent participation rate. Newark, New
6 Jersey, 91.2 and so on and so forth. We're down
7 there with the Elgin's school district in
8 Illinois, the Jeff Co [sic] public school
9 system in Colorado, Oakland in California,
10 Miami Dade in Florida. Again, we're 63rd out
11 of 63, so I've mentioned it before. I've
12 sponsored resolutions on this matter. If we
13 could work together, this is an area that could
14 really have an impact. Speaking to my aunt who
15 is a--she came out of retirement to be a school
16 nurse in Bound Brook, New Jersey and they just
17 started in that school district breakfast in
18 the classroom this year, and so more kids are
19 eating breakfast in schools, and she said that
20 from a school nurses' perspective it's had a
21 major impact, and so it's something I would
22 like to work with you on.

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I think
24 this is an issue that I really believe has not
25

2 been advertised enough. All schools provide
3 free breakfast.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

5 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I don't think
6 we've done a good enough job of advertising
7 that to parents. So I do think that one of the
8 things we're going to do starting, I guess in
9 June when we start meeting with principals is
10 really making a much bigger deal about it. They
11 can also grab and go breakfast. It doesn't have
12 to be that they have to eat in a specific
13 place, but I do think in working together we
14 can make this much more public, and asking
15 principals like within the first day of school
16 now that we're going to have all this extra
17 time with parents to send a letter home
18 reinforcing, because I know a lot of parents
19 that I spoke to didn't even know that that was
20 a possibility. And I think encouraging parents
21 to have breakfast in the cafeteria means they
22 have to get the kids to school on time.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Which would not
25 be a bad thing. So we already have 350 schools

2 that provide free lunch, you know, in the
3 classrooms, but I would love to see this more
4 as a community activity, and having it in the
5 cafeteria where kids can come early and sit
6 with other kids. So yes, and I think we can
7 work together to make this more public.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right, and
9 there's various models that have been
10 successful in other school districts, and so
11 you see--and this report details, you know,
12 there are certain school districts that have
13 had tremendous increases in participation of,
14 you know, 28 percent or 35 percent, or one
15 school district had 40 something percent
16 increase in a single year, and it's--they're
17 using a combination of models and seeing what
18 works the best. Obviously, New York is the
19 largest school district in the country, and
20 while that presents a particular logistical
21 challenge, it also presents a major opportunity
22 in terms of getting nutritious food to school
23 to children. So thank you very much,
24 Chancellor.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
3 Council Member Levin. We will now have Council
4 Member Barron followed by Council Member Miller
5 on our three minute clock.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you,
7 Madam Chair and to Chairman Dromm as well. I
8 want to thank the panel for coming and I know
9 you've been here for quite some time, but we
10 all know that education is certainly critical
11 and we appreciate the time that you're taking
12 to talk with us. I'm not going to ask questions
13 that may have possibly been asked before I
14 came. I'll just review the record, and should I
15 have other questions, I'd like to be able to
16 submit them for consideration. But you do have
17 in part of your testimony or in part of the
18 description of the funding is the Close to Home
19 program, and I wanted to know how many students
20 are a part of that Close to Home Program and
21 where in fact they are located.

22 KATHLEEN GRIMM: This is a special
23 program where in lieu of sending children up
24 state to be incarcerated, they are placed with
25 CBOs in residential facilities here in the city

2 and they go to some of our special schools, the
3 Passages. And if you need the locations and
4 the names of those schools we can provide them
5 to you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, I'd like
7 to have that. Approximately how many students
8 are serviced by this Close to Home program?

9 KATHLEEN GRIMM: That too I'll have
10 to provide you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

12 KATHLEEN GRIMM: I think we'll have
13 to provide to you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And then, a
15 part also of the concern of the Department of
16 Education is the services, the additional
17 services that are required by students who are
18 in homeless shelters. We have a oversaturation
19 of shelters in East New York and there's
20 another one that just opened about three weeks
21 ago located directly across the street from the
22 school, but I've been told the families do not
23 have to notify the school that they are in fact
24 a family that is temporary shelter, but we know
25 that that brings a real burden on the school to

2 be able to provide services in terms of even
3 just attendance because of requirements that
4 parents may have to go to certain appointments
5 and they're afraid they won't be back in time.
6 So they don't send their children to school for
7 that particular day. So what kind of support
8 services can we give to those schools where we
9 know there are families that are in temporary
10 shelters and then where we suspect based on
11 other factors that we see that there are
12 families in shelter and in additional need in
13 terms of academic support and other social
14 services.

15 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Well, we do several
16 things, and this is not to say the situation is
17 perfect. There's always more that can be done,
18 but in some shelters we actually have staff
19 that are there to assist children with their
20 homework. We, of course, transport any child
21 who is in a homeless shelter to its original
22 school. It doesn't have to change schools, even
23 though their home base may change. Do you want
24 to--

2 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I'm actually
3 meeting with Commissioner Taylor to see how we
4 might better coordinate. We know there's 151
5 shelters that now shelter children and one of
6 the issues that was brought up is that none of
7 them have books. So we're actually working with
8 other agencies to see we can make sure that
9 there are books in these particular shelters.
10 We also are looking to see how to the degree
11 possible we have uninterrupted education for
12 parents who wish to send their kids to the
13 schools they started off in. So I would say one
14 of the things that we're trying to do, which I
15 don't think has happened in the past, closer
16 coordination between the different
17 commissioners and the DOE to ensure that these
18 kids either don't feel any stigma, but to the
19 degree possible that their education continues
20 uninterrupted.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And then in
22 terms of the TCU's, perhaps that's a question
23 that would come later when we do the capital,
24 but certainly you can expect that there are
25 going to be lots of questions about that.

2 There's a school, a high school in my district
3 that has 12 portables, TCU's, and there's no
4 way that they could accommodate even one
5 additional classroom. They're all filled with
6 classroom students, all 12 of them, and there
7 is no space at all in the building because it
8 is not a traditional building. So we certainly
9 have a grave issue there in terms of the
10 removal and closing of those TCU's and where
11 those students would go. So please come
12 prepared. I'll tell you know, it's the East New
13 York Family Academy.

14 KATHLEEN GRIMM: Thank you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
17 Council Member. I just want to acknowledge that
18 the Chancellor has to leave at a hard 1:30, so
19 we're having follow up questions of three
20 minutes. If you can get your questions out so
21 that she can respond and we can get--and we
22 also have the Parks Department following this
23 hearing, so we don't want to leave them
24 waiting. We will now have Council Member Miller

25

2 followed by Council Member Treyger followed by
3 Council Member Cumbo on a three minute clock.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Good
5 afternoon again, Chancellor. I'm going to put
6 my questions out there and you can kind of
7 answer them, and one, you could probably--
8 you're probably have to get back on. And that
9 first one is about facility maintenance or
10 custodial budget. We've heard a lot in the past
11 about funds, custodians running out of funds,
12 teachers, parents and others having to bring
13 supplies in in order to maintain the buildings.
14 Have the custodial services budget for
15 custodial services been increased?

16 KATHLEEN GRIMM: There is actually a
17 small increase in the custodial budget. I think
18 it goes from 603 to 607, 604, 607, something
19 like that, but very often teachers in schools
20 will ask families to bring in various things
21 that the teacher and the children will be using
22 in the classroom. No one is ever asked to bring
23 in custodial equipment, and if you know of a
24 situation where that's true, I'd like to know
25 about it.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I've been
3 told that staff has brought in things like
4 toilet papers and things and other supplies.

5 KATHLEEN GRIMM: No.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Over the
7 years, so we would hate for that to be the case
8 and/or that it's impacted by some of the
9 contracts that have been farmed out. So
10 something that we want to take a look at, make
11 sure that they have adequate resources, because
12 we have to have clean schools. And then in
13 terms of the CTE's, I know--you guys were out
14 to campus magnet and we're being co-located for
15 the fifth time, and what I would like to say
16 about that, that CTE has never really been a
17 real conversation, alternative conversation and
18 we brought it to the attention to the past DOE.
19 We thought it was a magnificent idea for the
20 young men and women to be trained for 21st
21 century jobs, and so certainly something that
22 I'd like to have further conversation about and
23 in terms of the real investment, hard numbers
24 that's being made, because certainly is
25 something that our community would look forward

2 to having. And then finally, I would like to
3 know the hard numbers for the start up
4 implementation first year for Success Academy
5 at IS 59. Okay. Thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Chancellor,
7 in the interest of time, I'll just the one
8 question for now and then we could follow up
9 afterwards. And I could stress this not just
10 from a Council Member's point of view, but from
11 a former teacher's point of view. Teacher's
12 Choice, what is your--where do we stand with
13 Teacher's Choice? I cannot stress to you how
14 critical that has been and I'm sure I don't
15 have to convince you of how critical Teacher's
16 Choice has been, but where do we stand as far
17 as the budget and making sure that we provide
18 teachers with the resources to provide their
19 classrooms and their students?

20 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, I gather
21 the council funds this. I'll be honest with
22 you, it's been a number of years since I've
23 heard that teachers go back to need that, but
24 I'm happy to review it. As far as I know we
25 have asked principals to ensure that teachers

2 have what they need. There's a whole new way of
3 looking at things now. There's a lot more
4 technology in schools. There's a lot more
5 things that people now use Smart Boards.
6 There's a whole different way of teaching in
7 many places, but I'll look into that.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Yeah, and
9 just to--you know, with that new technology
10 there's certain pieces you have to buy to
11 supplement--

12 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing]
13 Right.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: that
15 technology. That comes out of teacher's
16 personal budgets, so I will say that--

17 CHANCELLOR FARINA: [interposing] I
18 remember that well.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: It is
20 crucial that we really support this for
21 educators and for classrooms.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
23 Council Member Treyger. Council Member Cumbo?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you,
25 and I will be brief. I'll just read my

2 questions out and of which in the time frame
3 you can answer would be great. I know Council
4 Member Gibson referred to this already, but I
5 really wanted to get more information about it.
6 Coming from an arts background, I wanted to
7 know in terms of the arts piece, my questions
8 go in series, how has the recruitment process
9 gone thus far? Where are we in securing the
10 teachers? Is there a track to get artists
11 certified in order to become teachers? Are we
12 reconfiguring how we determine space in schools
13 that there is a specifically designated
14 classroom for the arts so that way we make sure
15 that the arts are not something that is a--
16 something that can be done away with? And also
17 wanted to talk about had there been any
18 discussions around creating more of a
19 culturally relevant curriculum so that it more
20 expresses the view points, the histories and
21 the cultures of all of the children in the New
22 York City public schools system? That was just
23 my brief question.

24 CHANCELLOR FARINA: In two minutes.

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: In two
3 minutes.

4 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Well, very
5 quickly, once the contract is ratified we will
6 proceed on the recruitment for the specific
7 needs that we know we have. We are also looking
8 at not only certified art teachers but art
9 residencies and we have a lot of the art
10 residencies that are tied exactly to what
11 you're talking about, which is culturally. For
12 example, I was just at a school where in third
13 grade global studies, also in ninth grade and
14 high school, they have hired residencies that
15 are going to focus on the arts of China, Mexico
16 and Africa, because that is the population of
17 the kids in their school, and we're going to
18 encourage a lot more of that. I think in terms
19 of dedicated space, you know, it depends on the
20 art form. In the new blue print, an art room is
21 an art room is an art room, and it will be
22 counted as such, but a lot of the art--I was
23 just in a school in the Rock Aways where they
24 want a dance floor, and that's something we're
25 looking into. We're also looking to encourage

2 schools that are co-located, particularly high
3 schools, to share art, certified art teachers
4 so that one school may not have enough in their
5 program, but three schools together will do it.
6 So I think there's lots of ways to approach
7 this and certainly we have a commitment from
8 all our cultural institutions to also help us
9 in terms of developing curriculum in the arts
10 as well as exposing more of our kids to their
11 services.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And just
13 wanted to follow up, because Brooklyn and
14 specifically my district in the Bronx were the
15 two areas where that mandation was not
16 happening, and want to make sure that in
17 September that what was mandated is actually
18 implemented. Will we be ready in September to
19 have a fully rolled out arts and education
20 program in every school, particularly in
21 Brooklyn and the Bronx that were severely
22 lacking in the previous Administration?

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I can't promise
24 you every school. More schools than have it
25 now, absolutely. And if you could be very

2 specific about which parts of Brooklyn, because
3 the ones, the schools I have been to and
4 certainly the Bronx, I have seen arts
5 everywhere. So if you give me specifics, I'll
6 be happy to follow up.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay. Thank
8 you very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
10 Council Member Cumbo. Thank you Chancellor.

11 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And we may
13 have some follow up questions.

14 CHANCELLOR FARINA: By all means.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: If you can get
16 them to us in writing or response so that we
17 can make them part of the budget negotiations.

18 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Absolutely.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I'd appreciate
20 it.

21 CHANCELLOR FARINA: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you.

23 CHANCELLOR FARINA: I'm actually
24 leaving here smiling. Feels good.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Good, thank
3 you. We will take a five minute break before
4 we start our next portion with parks.

5 [break]

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: We will now
7 resume the City Council's hearing on the
8 Mayor's executive budget for FY 2015. The
9 Finance Committee has now been joined by the
10 Committee on Parks and Recreation, Chaired by
11 my colleague Council Member Mark Levine, to
12 hear from the Department of Parks and
13 Recreation. Before we hear from the Parks
14 Department I will turn the mic over to my Co-
15 chair for a statement.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you, Madam
17 Chair. Good afternoon everyone. I am Mark
18 Levine. I'm Chair of the City Council's Parks
19 and Recreation Committee. Want to welcome
20 everyone to this joint hearing of both the
21 Finance and Parks and Recreation Committees
22 regarding the Fiscal 2015 executive budget for
23 the Department of Parks and Recreation. I want
24 to take a minute and go off script and extend
25 the warmest of welcomes to our new

2 Commissioner, Commissioner Mitchell Silver.

3 Let's give a big round of applause for Mitchell
4 Silver.

5 [applause]

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: I can say I've
7 already enjoyed working with you your first
8 couple of weeks on the job and I tell you, I
9 think your background for this is ideal as
10 someone who has worked in parks in my district
11 over the years and someone who understands
12 urban planning from a professional perspective,
13 you're going to help make sure we always
14 integrate parks to the broader neighborhood.
15 That's what makes for great parts and great
16 neighborhoods, and I think you're going to be a
17 really good advocate for the system. So, thank
18 you. Today we're going to hear testimony from
19 the Department of Parks and Recreation about
20 their executive expense and capital budgets and
21 general agency operations. Before we begin, I
22 want to clearly state that I'm pleased that the
23 proposed budget does not include any programs
24 to eliminate the gaps, so-called PEGS [sic],
25 unlike in past years. This means that all of

2 the funding restorations made by this council
3 in the last budget adoption are now base lined,
4 including restorations for pools, playground
5 associates, tree stump removals, the JTP
6 program and seasonal workers, but despite these
7 restorations and despite an increase in the
8 total budget of about three percent in nominal
9 terms, funding for our parks system as a
10 portion of the total city budget remains far
11 below historic levels and far below other major
12 cities around the nation. As we discussed in
13 our previous hearing, this budget shortfall has
14 most seriously impacted parks in low and
15 moderate income neighborhoods of New York City,
16 areas which have not been able to compensate by
17 raising significant amount of private funds. To
18 begin to tackle the resulting parks inequity in
19 our city, the council has called for 27.5
20 million dollars in additional funding in our
21 response to the Administration's executive
22 budget. These funds would allow the Parks
23 Department to provide a much needed boost in
24 staffing for neighborhood parks, specifically
25 paying for gardeners, maintenance workers and

1 PEP [sic] officers. My fellow council
2 colleagues and I are disappointed that these
3 items were not included in the executive budget
4 and we are committed to continue advocating for
5 these increases. I would also like to see
6 increased funding for other essential programs
7 that we've discussed at recent hearings and
8 that park users around the five boroughs have
9 repeatedly asked to be funded at a higher level
10 this year. This includes expanding playground
11 associates, which offer educational, fitness
12 and artistic programming, but currently reach
13 only 130 out of the more than 1,000 playgrounds
14 in the city. Likewise, we need to act
15 decisively to protect the Green Thumb program,
16 which supports approximately 300 school gardens
17 and a similar number of community gardens. This
18 program is under threat from cuts by the
19 federal government and it's critical that the
20 city step in to make up the shortfall of these
21 vital community green spaces. We also should
22 increase funding to Partnership for Parks,
23 which supports local friends of groups
24 mobilizing volunteers and raising funds for
25

2 neighborhood parks. Empowering such groups in
3 low and moderate income neighborhoods will be
4 critical to closing the park equity gap. I also
5 hope the Administration will fund tree pruning
6 at a level that allows us to prune trees more
7 frequently. Currently, the Department only has
8 funds to prune trees once every ten years. Park
9 trees are pruned even less frequently, except
10 of course, for those in parks with well-funded
11 conservancies. With an additional two million
12 dollars, we can at least prune street trees at
13 the recommended frequency of once every seven
14 years. The Department's proposed capital budget
15 for fiscal years 2014 to 2018 totals 2.6
16 billion, an increase of 78.8 million or 3.1
17 million since the preliminary--excuse me, 3.1
18 percent since the preliminary plan. These
19 numbers sound impressive, but they are just
20 allocations. The actual amount spent on capital
21 projects will likely be far less since the
22 Parks Department has not had capacity in recent
23 years to complete much more than half of its
24 budget in capital projects in any given year.
25 New Yorkers know this because even the smallest

1 capital parks projects can take three or four
2 years to complete. In part, this is due to the
3 fact that the Department's capital division is
4 understaffed, considering the scale of the park
5 system's capital needs. That's why the council
6 has advocated for adding 55 new staff positions
7 to this critical team. Unfortunately, the
8 Administration's executive budget did not
9 include funding for these positions, but we
10 will continue pushing for this critical need in
11 the coming weeks. The committee looks forward
12 to hearing from Commissioner Silver on these
13 issues as well as on other fiscal 2015
14 executive budget actions and their impact on
15 the agency's ability to carry out its various
16 missions, including parks maintenance,
17 forestry, and recreational activities. And of
18 course, we look forward to discussing with you,
19 the members of the public and the leadership of
20 the Parks Department how we can work towards
21 the goal of creating a system that offers great
22 neighborhood green spaces to every New Yorker,
23 whether they live in a low, middle or upper
24 income area. Without further ado, we're going
25

2 to hear in a moment from our Parks
3 Commissioner. First I want to introduce my
4 colleagues who are here including Council
5 Member Brad Lander from Brooklyn, Council
6 Member Andy Cohen from the Bronx, Council
7 Member Chaim Deutsch from Brooklyn, Council
8 Member Alan Maisel from Brooklyn and Council
9 Member Fernando Cabrera from the Bronx.
10 Commissioner Silver, take it away.

11 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well, thank
12 you, Chair and good afternoon City Council
13 Finance Committee Chair Julissa Ferreras, City
14 Council Parks Committee Chair Mark Levine and
15 members of the council Finance and Parks
16 Committees. I am Mitchell Silver, the new Parks
17 Commissioner of New York City Department of
18 Parks and Recreation. It is a joy and a
19 pleasure to appear before you for the first
20 time today. I am joined here today by a number
21 of Parks Department Staff. With me on the
22 panel our First Deputy Commissioner Liam
23 Kavanagh and Deputy Commissioner for Community
24 Outreach Larry Scott Blackmon. Additionally,
25 I'm joined by key staff of our agency including

1 Deputy Commissioner Robert Garafola, Assistant
2 Commissioner Michael Dockett, Assistant
3 Commissioenr Alyssa Cobb Konon, Assistant
4 Commissioner Arthur Pincus, Assistant
5 Commissioner David Stark, Manhattan Borough
6 Commissioner William Castro, Brooklyn Borough
7 Commissioner Kevin Jeffry, Queens Borough
8 Commissioner Dorothy Lewandowski, Staten Island
9 Borough Commissioner Adena Long. We have
10 representing Capital, Jonna Carmona-Graf. We
11 have Bram Gunther of Forestry and Horticulture,
12 Charlette Hamamgian, Chief Management Services
13 and Nicholas Molinari, Chief of Planning and
14 Parks Land. I want to publicly thank the staff
15 of the agency for the work they've done to
16 date. Today marks my 16th day as Commissioner
17 of the agency and I'm learning a great deal. I
18 want you to know that while I may not be able
19 to address every issue personally today, I look
20 forward to meeting with you to better
21 understand your concerns. Additionally, I look
22 forward to working with you to make our
23 districts and New York City parks better for
24 all New Yorkers. I come to you by way of
25

1 Raleigh, North Carolina, where I served as
2 Chief Planner for the city. In Raleigh we built
3 a government that was efficient, innovative and
4 most importantly responsive to the citizens and
5 the city. We resolved issues before they
6 became major problems. We cut down bureaucracy.
7 Those items were important to me in Raleigh and
8 they are equally important to the Mayor Bill de
9 Blasio and me. We will work to provide similar
10 experiences for the people of this city during
11 my tenure at Parks. Mayor de Blasio and I are
12 completely aligned as it relates to our goals
13 for the agency. We will work to continue to
14 build a 21st century parks system using
15 innovation, transparency and technology to
16 improve efficiency. I have not waited. In my
17 first week I convened a Senior Management Team
18 to discuss my goals addressing the parks
19 capital process, that as a number of you had
20 already shared with me currently takes far too
21 long. I share your view that when you fund a
22 project, you want it built quickly and our
23 review of the capital process is underway. As
24 I've mentioned I believe in transparency and
25

1 understand that a number of you have asked for
2 the ability to know where publicly funded
3 capital projects stand. In an effort to improve
4 communication during the capital process, we're
5 going to create an online database where
6 individuals can track the progress of projects.
7 This database will be accessible to the public
8 so they can keep abreast of park developments
9 in their communities. While much of the
10 capital process involves our partners in
11 government, we will do our part to address this
12 issue with a fresh approach, increasing
13 communication through the capital journey.
14 Park equity is important to Mayor de Blasio and
15 is important to me as is to all of you. We
16 will work to address these concerns, ensuring
17 that there is an equitable distribution of
18 resources throughout our parks system. In
19 ensuring an equitable distribution of
20 resources, we will specifically examine the
21 allocation of parks maintenance, operations and
22 programming. Parks are vehicles for healthy
23 communities and I look to incorporate our many
24 growing partners in our plans. As you know, a
25

2 healthy community also involves active
3 recreation, and I want to make certain that
4 individuals are aware of and have access to our
5 recreational facilities where we provide
6 attractive indoor and outdoor programming that
7 is cutting edge and fun for our patrons.

8 Resiliency is also an important element of our
9 plans and our parks and facilities must be
10 built to withstand current and future changes
11 in our environment. I will share a few of our
12 resiliency highlights later in the testimony,
13 but as resiliency is important to the de Blasio
14 Administration, our agency will be on the
15 forefront of resiliency efforts and continue to
16 push forward. As you can tell I have a fairly
17 ambitious agenda and I'm looking at initially
18 addressing a number of these issues as soon as
19 possible, understanding that a number of these
20 items require continued dialogue, I am most
21 interested in meeting with you in upcoming
22 weeks in furthering these conversations. For
23 the purposes of today's hearing, I would now
24 like to take a moment and review elements of
25 the executive budget for fiscal year 2015. The

1
2 FY 2015 executive budget provides for operating
3 expenses of 392.3 million dollars. This
4 represents an increase of 12 million over FY
5 2014 adopted budget of 380 million 0.3. From
6 the preliminary FY 2015 budget, seven positions
7 were added at our parks the five shops, five
8 borough shops office. This will allow for the
9 expansion of our maintenance operations. I want
10 to take this opportunity to thank Mayor Bill de
11 Blasio and the City Council for ensuring that
12 much of the Parks Department funding remains
13 base lined. The guaranteeing of funding for our
14 pools makes certain that all of our swimming
15 facilities remain open for every New York City
16 resident without the threat of shortening the
17 season. The assurance of funding allows parks
18 to plan for full staffing of its facilities
19 rather than making contingency plans to operate
20 our facilities on a ad hoc basis. I also want
21 to thank the Mayor for ensuring that the fiscal
22 2015 executive budget preserves staffing to the
23 parks department ranks which has allowed us to
24 improve service and launch new initiatives.
25 Park and playground conditions as measured by

2 the Parks Inspection Program currently stand at
3 87 percent acceptable for overall condition and
4 91 percent acceptable for cleanliness,
5 exceeding the targets set in the Mayor's
6 management report. We continue to use
7 technology to maintain that standard as we
8 started issuing new mobile technology for the
9 field staff as part of our OPS 21 initiative to
10 modernize daily parks operations. During fiscal
11 year 14 we received additional allocations to
12 hire parks enforcement officers, which I
13 believe you now call PEP. The fiscal year 15
14 executive budget maintains its increase of PEP
15 officers staffing level. PEP officers are often
16 the public face of parks and special peace
17 officer status. Their visible presence acts as
18 both a deterrent to criminal activity and a
19 source of information, education and security
20 for park patrons. PEP officers and the
21 individuals of our urban park service
22 immediately address unsafe conditions,
23 encourage park stewardship, provide equal
24 access to all park goers and develop new ways
25 to improve their service to the public. Being

1 able to maintain the level of PEP officers that
2 we now have, Parks is making great strides in
3 increasing the safety of our parks. In terms of
4 capital, throughout the last decade there's
5 been over six billion in capital investments
6 made to parks citywide. The fiscal year 2015
7 capital budget moved parks forward by providing
8 537.8 million in capital investments.

9 Highlights of the FY 15 capital plan includes
10 12 million for the renovation of Columbus Park
11 which is adjacent to Brooklyn Borough Hall, 12
12 million for the expansion of Starlight Park in
13 the Bronx, and 82 million towards
14 rehabilitation of park owned bridges. A major
15 project underway in Washington Lighthouse link
16 [sic] in Manhattan where three million has been
17 allocated toward this project. The link will
18 allow the public greater access to Manhattan
19 waterfront greenway by providing a one mile
20 connection at Dikeman [sic] street and
21 continuing along the Hudson River. We're also
22 excited to tell you that we began the
23 renovation of the Lance Corporal Thomas P.
24 Noonan Playground on April 14th of this year.

1
2 When the renovation is complete, Noonan
3 Playground will have an upgraded facility
4 including a new spray shower and play
5 equipment. Parks is also taking steps to
6 perform construction at Noonan and stages so
7 they can remain open for the entire summer
8 season. I would like to this opportunity to
9 publicly thank Deputy Commissioner Therese
10 Braddick and the staff at the Capital Vision
11 for their work to date. First Deputy
12 Commissioner Kavanaugh reviewed many of our
13 agencies highlights at the preliminary budget
14 hearing in March, but I thought I would take a
15 few minutes to share a few items that have
16 transpired since that time. In terms of
17 resiliency, as we have mentioned previously we
18 have continued to work to repair our beaches in
19 the aftermath of super storm Sandy. Most
20 recently, the Sand Replenishment Project we
21 have worked to deliver in partnership with the
22 Army Corps of Engineers began with the 3.5
23 million cubic yards of sand being pumped onto
24 Rock Away Beach. In Brooklyn, another 600,000
25 cubic yards of sand were pumped onto Coney

1 Island. One of our largest recovery projects
2 has been the rebuilding of the boardwalk at
3 Rock Away. Parks has worked tirelessly with the
4 community to make the boardwalk a feature that
5 protects their homes as well as provide access
6 and recreational opportunities for all. Parks
7 is committed to spending 274 million towards a
8 new Rock Away boardwalk that is stronger, more
9 resilient and integrated to a multi-layer
10 system of coastal protection. The Parks
11 Department's commitment to resilience in the
12 aftermath of super storm Sandy is evident with
13 the rebuilding of the Midland Beach Promenade
14 Plaza. This includes a Splaza [sic], an
15 interactive water feature that is flush with
16 the pavement. The Midland Beach Promenade also
17 has new ornamental fountain with a mechanical
18 infrastructure that is more resilient to
19 storms. Additionally, there is a multitude of
20 family friendly amenities on the promenade.
21 This renovation has a budget of 5.8 million and
22 will open for all New Yorkers to enjoy this
23 summer. In terms of recreation, we are pleased
24 to be joined by several community stakeholders,
25

2 including Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez for
3 the unveiling of the improved High Bridge
4 Recreation Center on May 5th. This renovation
5 allows us to operate the facility uninterrupted
6 by the elements. Additionally, we are
7 fortunate to equip the center with new high
8 quality fitness equipment. We are more than
9 certain that our patrons will enjoy the
10 modifications, especially when the pool season
11 opens, begins in a month. We thank the Council
12 Member Rodriguez for his continued partnership.
13 The executive budget also provides to operate
14 the staff at the Ocean Breeze Park Track and
15 Field, our new indoor track facility that will
16 be opening in Staten Island. We want to thank
17 the team at the Department of Design and
18 Construction who have been working diligently
19 to deliver this world class facility. In terms
20 of the community, community engagement,
21 partnership and volunteerism are thriving at
22 parks. Throughout the month of May and
23 specifically on May 17th, we celebrate our
24 annual "It's My Park Day Event." Partnership
25 for Parks, our volunteer program that is

2 jointly operated by New York City Parks and the
3 City Parks Foundation, led our efforts. As you
4 may know, this bi-annual event allows for the
5 mobilization of parks volunteers throughout the
6 city via exciting volunteer opportunities. At
7 Kaiser Park there are more than 150 volunteers
8 who pitched in to weed, turn soil and remove
9 damaged tree branches. Kaiser Park was heavily
10 damaged by super storm Sandy and these
11 volunteers were extraordinary in their
12 dedication to help their local park recover. In
13 all, there were over 4,000 volunteers who
14 assisted parks during "It's My Park Day" events
15 thus far, and we look forward to another
16 exciting season. In closing, I am pleased and
17 honored to sit here before you today. These
18 past few weeks have been extremely pleasurable
19 and revealing. I will have conversations with
20 the Administration about agency needs as the
21 process develops. Thank you all for all you've
22 done to date to assist the agency and we rely
23 on our partnership and again, I look forward to
24 working with you. I thank you for your time,

1
2 and I look forward to your questions that you
3 may have.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
5 Commissioner Silver. I really am appreciative
6 that a lot of the issues that are going to be
7 brought up and were going to be discussed in
8 this committee, you've addressed in your
9 testimony, meaning that you and your--while
10 your team was listening to prelim and had you
11 prepared wisely. I want to talk about, and I
12 know that you mentioned it in your testimony,
13 but we've had a lot of discussions about park
14 equity from different perspectives, from PEP
15 officers to maintenance assignments to projects
16 being funded to even visioning for different
17 parks that we have in our district. Can you
18 tell this committee your thoughts and plans on
19 how to ensure equal services and access to
20 parks for all New Yorkers?

21 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well, first let
22 me say that over the summer within the first
23 three months we'll be meeting with staff to
24 dive deeper into the whole issue of the park
25 equity. So we're very excited about those

2 conversations that will happen this summer. But
3 there certainly have been a number of promising
4 plan to propose legislation in recent years and
5 all have been aimed at a clear problem in our
6 city, maintaining and improving smaller parks
7 in less wealthier neighborhoods. I support this
8 worthy goal and look forward to working with
9 the Mayor de Blasio to ensure that we supply
10 resources and maintenance fairly throughout all
11 the 29,000 acres of our city. So we're very
12 excited that we'll be rolling up our sleeves
13 and addressing this issue. We recognize how
14 important it is to all New Yorkers and is one
15 of the challenges that we're ready to step up
16 to and address.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And I am very
18 eager to be able to continue our conversations
19 and for you to speak to our colleagues, but
20 there is something to be said and hopefully in
21 next year's budget we can have more reflected
22 where the budget reflects the needs of our
23 parks and it would be great to see, and I know
24 that there's been some support and some work
25 the PEP officers and JTPs, but if you think

2 it's enough, we're here to tell you it's not
3 enough. And even when you get to what you
4 think is enough, think again. It's still not
5 enough. Our communities need presence. They
6 need change. Our parks need the dedication that
7 a lot of other parks have been getting. And you
8 know, we can sit here and we can debate whether
9 it's the existence of a conservancy or not,
10 whether it's the existence of millionaires
11 living around the park or not, but at the end
12 of the day a young person doesn't know what
13 their environment. They just want to be on a
14 safe slide. They just want to play baseball in
15 a field that's not going to flood, and I think
16 that's what we owe to the young people of New
17 York City. I want to talk about transparency in
18 particular on projects implementation and cost
19 over-runs and this is very specific to the
20 budget and although you alluded to it and you
21 discussed it in your opening statement, we have
22 issues with capital and we have issues with
23 getting our systems out, so I'm really excited
24 to hear that you're actually aggressively
25 looking at how to improve that. We're your

2 partner in this, so in any way that we can help
3 to figure out how we can bring more
4 transparency but also expedite the process,
5 because there's nothing more frustrating for us
6 to commit dollars on behalf of our community
7 and not have those projects turned over. What
8 is your agency's procedures for handling cost
9 over-runs which we have seen in some cases when
10 projects take five, six, seven years, the cost
11 changes and differ? Who makes the decision to
12 authorize over-run expenditures and how are
13 they approved?

14 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Let me take the
15 first part of the question and then see if the
16 First Deputy Commissioner can handle the second
17 part. In terms of the overall capital process,
18 we are going to take a fresh look at each step
19 of the process, from the point in time that OMB
20 authorizes the budget until it goes throughout
21 the RP [sic] procurement process and then a
22 construction phase. I don't have answers at
23 this time, but we want to take a look at all
24 those projects. The permitting process, when
25 they're--whether state or federal agencies

2 involved, other departments involved and take a
3 hard look at each step of the process along the
4 way, and then we'll do an evaluation about
5 where we can save time, where things can be
6 streamlined, where efficiencies can be found,
7 and that is our hope that we'll be able to move
8 the projects along a lot quicker. Of course, a
9 staff resources in terms of making sure we have
10 enough to move those capital projects in a
11 timely manner, but overall our goal is to take
12 a fresh look at the entire capital planning
13 process to examine to see where we can
14 streamline and save some efficiencies in terms
15 of time.

16 LIAM KAVANAGH: Good afternoon. I'm
17 Liam Kavanagh, First Deputy Commissioner of the
18 Parks Department. Cost over-runs usually fall
19 to three categories. There's an increase above
20 the estimated cost of the project. We
21 constantly update our construction estimating
22 tools to make sure that we're current with
23 labor costs, with material costs, with
24 transportation costs, but even with that we are
25 occasionally surprised by the bids that we

1 receive for some of our projects. Depending on
2 the gap between what the estimates was and what
3 the bids are, we may do several things. We may
4 rebid the project because we think that our
5 estimate was accurate and aligned with what the
6 project should cost or we attempt to find
7 additional monies to fund the project and move
8 it ahead. In some cases we have--in all cases,
9 rather, we have contingencies built into our
10 budget. In some cases we're able to cover the
11 increases with that contingency. In other,
12 however, we may have to go back to the entity
13 that fund it, whether it came out of the
14 Mayor's office, a Borough President or a
15 council and see if there are additional funds
16 available to bridge that gap. The other two
17 issues that drive change orders, which is what
18 the process is often referred to are
19 unanticipated environmental conditions, and
20 while we do do surveys in advance of any
21 project being defined, there are lots of
22 conditions that exist in New York City that you
23 would not expect to find, and occasionally they
24 come up in our projects and they can cause
25

2 delays and additional costs are not anticipated
3 in the original design or the original
4 estimate. Again, the process is the same if we
5 can cover them within the contingencies that
6 exist in the budget, we do so. If not, we may
7 have to seek additional funding in order for
8 the project to move forward. And the last case,
9 which does happen and is actually a happy
10 incident is when there is a movement to
11 increase the scope of a project. There may be--
12 you know, we may not be addressing the entire
13 site. Some additional money may become
14 available, but you have to integrate that new
15 scope into the design and that occasionally
16 causes delays in the project. But again, it
17 really comes down to we cover it within the
18 contingency of the project or we have to seek
19 additional funding in order for it to move
20 forward.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: What
22 percentage of your cost over-runs is due to the
23 delay in the actual project?

24 LIAM KAVANAGH: I--

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing]

And I say this with a perspective of members that sometimes we put money in, four years later it's like, oh, can you put in another half a million dollars.

LIAM KAVANAGH: I would hesitate to give you an answer off the top of my head. I haven't--I don't have the--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing]

Can you get it back for the--

LIAM KAVANAGH: [interposing] I would, but in general, you know, you do see an increase of about, you know, four or five percent in construction costs on average in a typical year. A few years ago it was--the rate was much higher, but it has seemed to have calmed down. Over a three or four year period, you might see an increase of 15 to 20 percent in the estimated cost, but I'll--we'll do a little bit more research and get you a much better number on that.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you. I want to have--I have two questions and then I'll open it up to my colleagues and we can

2 come back for a second round. So one of them is
3 public/private partnerships and how is Park's
4 benefitting if at all when we talk about
5 providing free Wi-Fi access to our parks? How
6 can our communities, when we talk about equity,
7 how can we have more communities from a lower
8 economic structure be able to take advantage of
9 free Wi-Fi when they may not have access to it?

10 LARRY SCOTT-BLACKMON: Good evening.
11 Good afternoon, Council Members. Larry Scott-
12 Blackmon, Deputy Commissioner for Community
13 Outreach for Parks. When the initial
14 discussions began regarding Wi-Fi in parks that
15 was equity and the availability of Wi-Fi was
16 something that we took great deal of time and
17 researching. Commissioner Robert Garafola and
18 his team led that effort. We are proud of where
19 we have Wi-Fi in parks, so everywhere from East
20 Harlem and Thomas Jefferson Park all the way
21 out to certain areas of Brooklyn and the Bronx.
22 It's an endeavor that we would love to expand
23 and we're interested in having additional
24 conversations to that effect.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Well,
3 definitely something that this council is
4 interested in seeing more of, especially in the
5 outer boroughs or the other boroughs, as we're
6 changing our language. And then my other
7 question was is there any synergies or
8 communication interagency-wise with DOT? Many-
9 -what we've seen is in some communities,
10 especially I think in Queens and in the other
11 boroughs is some bike lanes. In particular, in
12 my district, my bike lanes don't end up
13 anywhere. They kind of start nowhere and end up
14 at the end of another--just actually they pour
15 into the highway, right into the Grand Central
16 Parkway. So is there any communication between
17 the agencies to have better coordinated systems
18 with our park riders, with our bicycle riders
19 and our park system?

20 COMMISSIONER SILVER: I'm not
21 familiar with what has taken place to date, but
22 I can say that almost all the places where I've
23 worked, a collaboration with other departments
24 are key, and so Commissioner Trottenberg [sp?]
25 had already reached out to me. We'll be meeting

1 very soon to find out how we can collaborate.
2 I'm very familiar with working with multiple
3 departments, particularly in fact in my
4 previous position, Transportation Planning was
5 under my purview, and so to have planning as
6 well as transportation planning, there is,
7 you're correct, a lot of great synergy. I'll
8 let others see if there are some specifics
9 about key projects, but I look forward to not
10 only working with Commissioner Trottenberg but
11 other Commissioners where there's great synergy
12 for Parks, because Parks, they'll sit in
13 isolation. They're connected to neighborhoods,
14 to culture, to traditions, to memories, to
15 transportation networks, to economic
16 development, and so our goal is make sure is
17 that we look at the Park's system. It is, if
18 it's a piece of infrastructure that is
19 connected to other parts of our city, and so
20 I'm eager to have those conversations and
21 establish those relationships.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And I
24 appreciate that comment, and I would love to
25 help or be involved in any of those discussions

2 as we move forward. As you stated, you know,
3 for many of our young people, the park is our
4 backyard. We live in apartments. In my
5 neighborhood some families live just in a room,
6 and being able to go out and run to a
7 playground is how our young people can burn
8 energy and just be able to have a positive
9 experience is really what we're trying to get
10 at here in the Council. I'm going to now open,
11 pass it over to my Co-Chair for questioning,
12 Chair Levine.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you,
14 Madam Chair. First, Commissioner, I just wanted
15 to remark on the unfortunate incident that
16 occurred yesterday afternoon in my district
17 where a six year old boy who was riding a
18 scooter was hit by a Parks Department van. He's
19 recovering as I think some fractured bones. Do
20 you have any updates on that or any news on an
21 investigation related to that or someone on
22 your staff?

23 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Borough
24 Commissioner Castro may have an update for you.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay.

2 WILLIAM CASTRO: Yes, I went up to
3 the scene last night, met with the police and
4 then to the hospital and met with the parents
5 and also the young boy. And he does not have a
6 fractured leg, though, no broken bones. So
7 that's good news. So, the investigation is
8 underway by the police. So far, the employee
9 passed the Breathalyzer test. There was no
10 indication of that. And so we're working with
11 the police on that.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay, please let
13 us know if that investigation turns up anything
14 noteworthy. Thank you. Great. This past
15 weekend was a busy one for New York City Parks.
16 It was a holiday weekend, a three-day weekend
17 with great weather and I think it ended up
18 highlighting many of the challenges that we're
19 discussing here today. There was intense park
20 usage, which resulted in a great deal of refuse
21 left in parks. Because we have limited PEP
22 officers enforcement on cleanliness in minimal
23 and because we have, in my opinion,
24 insufficient maintenance staff, cleanup was
25 slow. For example in parks like Fort Washington

1 Park along the Hudson, Inwood Park, Cortona
2 Park in the Bronx, we've had reports that a day
3 and a half, even as late as this morning after
4 the weekend some of the parks did not get
5 cleaned up and to me that's a clear indication
6 of the shortfall in staffing in the agency.
7 Compare that to the situation in some of the
8 well-funded conservancy parks where they have
9 the ability to staff up on holiday weekends and
10 cleanup is done very quickly. In that context,
11 to me, there is an incredibly compelling case
12 to add additional maintenance workers to the
13 Department's payroll, something that we've
14 advocated for here in the council. So, one of
15 the priorities that this council identified in
16 its response to the Mayor's preliminary budget.
17 And I wonder if you could just comment on your
18 sense of the connect between staff capacity and
19 cleanliness and maintenance in general in the
20 parks system.

22 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well first, as
23 you can imagine we're always seeking
24 cooperation from our citizens to be as helpful
25 as possible, particularly on a weekend where

2 parks are going to draw large crowds. In terms
3 of the maintenance, I am aware as part of the
4 FY 14 budget that we receive funding for over
5 400 new positions. We're trying to assess the
6 impact those positions have had on the parks
7 system so we can determine some of the needs of
8 going forward and I'll be meeting with all the
9 borough commissioners just to take a review of
10 the entire operation, specifically on
11 maintenance. So that is something that we will
12 certainly take a look at, but I'm trying to
13 understand how the full 400 positions are being
14 absorbed and deployed and how we can take an
15 examination of our maintenance needs based upon
16 that commitment from the prior year, but also
17 OMB in parts have discussed additional funding
18 for seasonal park workers and playground
19 associate positions. So we do recognize this is
20 something we have to constantly monitor and
21 evaluate, but we do want to thank all those
22 staff that did some very hard work,
23 particularly started doing work right after the
24 holiday weekend to start to clean up a lot of
25 what was left behind in our city parks.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Well, we
3 certainly celebrate the bump up in staff that
4 was implemented last year, but I want to put
5 that in context. Even after the elevation, I
6 think headcount, full time headcount in the
7 department today is maybe 3,700, 3,800 full
8 time workers, and by comparison that's not much
9 more than half of figures that we saw for the
10 department in decades past, at a time when
11 system had fewer acreage and city had a lower
12 population. So I think we need to keep the
13 learn time perspective in context there. And a
14 similar related issue is the challenge of PEP
15 officers. The city after a slight rebound last
16 year that once again didn't bring us up to
17 historic levels has I believe about 160 PEP
18 officers. These are the police for the parks.
19 They don't carry firearms, but otherwise they
20 form--the perform every duty that a police
21 officer would, and not just telling people not
22 to litter. It's also they can intervene and
23 then preventing crimes in progress. They're
24 incredibly important to us as New Yorkers. This
25 is 161 officers for a system with 29,000 acres,

2 2,000 parks, a couple of thousand other smaller
3 properties. I think it's pretty easy to see
4 it's insufficient for such a vast sprawling
5 system, and here again there's a contrast to
6 what some of the privately funded parks are
7 able to do. Many of the parks have hired
8 additional PEP officers funded with private
9 contributions. So to try and level this playing
10 field, to try and get the broader system up to
11 the level of some of the better funded
12 privately funded parks, the council has
13 prioritized adding additional 150 to be
14 precise, PEP officers as part of our response
15 to the Mayor's preliminary budget. Neither this
16 request nor our request for staffing more
17 generally including gardeners and maintenance
18 workers. As I mentioned in my opening remarks,
19 we're included in the Mayor's executive budget,
20 and I wonder if you can comment specifically on
21 your sense of the system's need for PEP
22 officers, the extent to which we're meeting
23 that need adequately now. Actually, I don't
24 know the figure of the number of privately
25 funded PEP officers, but if someone on your

1
2 team had that number for comparison sake,
3 that'd be helpful as well.

4 COMMISSIONER SILVER: In terms of
5 numbers you are correct. There's roughly about
6 160 PEP officers. In terms of, I guess the
7 grant funded, that would be roughly about 84.
8 In terms of your question, these are questions
9 I'm asking as well. We're doing assessment of
10 all the resources citywide. I believe just as
11 400 positions were added last year, there were,
12 I believe, 80 positions of PEP officers also
13 added last year. So it was doubled and we're
14 trying to assess the impact of adding, of
15 double the PEP officer workforce. My
16 understandings are also looking at some mobile
17 units so that they can cover more territory. So
18 this is something that I'm going to evaluate to
19 see what impact that doubling of the PEP
20 officer workforce has done and we can measure
21 it to see going forward what we can do. So it's
22 still premature to determine. Clearly, 160 for
23 an entire city, when you measure that number
24 there were different park lands, some in
25 natural areas, some are active recreation

2 facilities. Each place maybe a little bit
3 different, so we're just going to see how we
4 can best use those 160 officers and their
5 determined needs going forward.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: I want to ask
7 you about the private money that's coming in
8 through concessions. This is money earned when
9 the city leases out space to private businesses
10 that generally return a portion of their
11 revenue to unfortunately not generally to the
12 parks department. They return it to the city's
13 general treasury. I believe this is now up to
14 close to 70 million projected in the coming
15 year. It's a significant amount. Maybe it's
16 about a fifth of the total budget relative to
17 what putting it in tax dollars. I wonder if you
18 have thoughts about whether and how some of
19 that money could be redirected into our parks
20 directly, as is done at least now in Central
21 Park, where there's a contractual agreement
22 which directs some of that revenue back to the
23 park itself and whether we can and should
24 direct more of that income directly to our
25 green spaces.

1
2 COMMISSIONER SILVER: I'm glad,
3 Council Member, you brought that up. I've
4 already asked for a full briefing on all of our
5 concessions and I believe the number's around
6 77 million. To understand what opportunity does
7 exist, I believe there may be some charter
8 mandated requirements about where those funds
9 go, but we certainly want to explore
10 possibilities. There are many examples across
11 the country. We want to make sure those can
12 work here, both in New York City and New York
13 State, but we are going to have a full briefing
14 on concessions and then we'll just take a fresh
15 look. So that meeting had not occurred yet, but
16 it's something that is definitely on my radar
17 screen as something we going to just talk more
18 in-depth with staff.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: But this is a
20 balancing act because no one wants one more
21 inch of public space used for private commerce
22 than is necessary. On the other hand, the
23 revenue is worth significant amounts of the
24 city and at times these concessions are
25 probably providing valuable services to park

1
2 users. So could you share your thoughts on how
3 to find the right balance here?

4 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Clearly there
5 are number of parks that--parks are public
6 spaces, and it's not uncommon whether it's a
7 zoo or other use within the park that provides
8 a public service such as a concession operated
9 in our parks. So it's something that I will be
10 taking a look at. I don't have a response
11 immediately. I do know there are some concerns
12 about concessions and the perception of
13 concessions within some of our parks, but this
14 too will be part of that conversation I want to
15 have with staff going forward about
16 concessions, the type of concessions that are
17 in our parks system.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: While we may
19 have mixed feelings about permitted commercial
20 activities in the parks, there is illegal
21 commercial activity in parks which I think
22 universally we would all denounce. One example
23 of that is the bike rental business in Central
24 Park, a booming business for which the parks
25 system is granted single concession to a

2 company called Bike and Roll, but anyone who
3 just walks by Columbus Circle recently has
4 probably experienced hawkers [sic] from a wide
5 variety of unlicensed unpermitted businesses,
6 and to the extent that they're doing business
7 that's money we're not receiving as a city, as
8 a park system, not to mention consumers being
9 put at risk. A report today in the New York
10 Post highlighted cases of stolen bikes being
11 rented back to a suspecting tourist and other
12 users. I wonder if this issue is on the radar
13 screen of the department and if you have any
14 plans to crack down on it?

15 COMMISSIONER SILVER: I believe I
16 heard it for the first time earlier today.
17 Thank you for bringing it to our attention.
18 It's something we'll certainly follow up and
19 work with law enforcement to find out exactly
20 how we can start to address that issue, but
21 thank you for raising that point.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you,
23 Commissioner. I want to acknowledge that we've
24 been joined now by Council Member Daneek Miller
25 and Council Member Darlene Mealy I believe is

2 with us, and Council Member Mark Treyger as
3 well. And I'm going to open up to my
4 colleagues. I'll pass it off to--

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing]
6 I just want to remind my colleagues that we're
7 on a five minute clock. This is in
8 consideration of all members so we all get a
9 chance to answer questions and then we will
10 have a follow-up three minute if needed, a
11 follow up three minute clock for the second
12 round.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Great. So we
14 have Council Member Lander with the first
15 question.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you
17 very much to both Chairs and for your strong
18 leadership on parks issues, and Commissioner,
19 welcome. We're thrilled to have you hear in
20 your first hearing. I'm a long time fan of your
21 work and your history and your Twitter feed,
22 and I think your commitment not only to
23 stewarding this wonderful treasure of our
24 parks, but to neighborhoods and to involving
25 communities and to planning and the work you've

2 done really bodes well for the future. As you
3 know you're joining an extraordinary team, and
4 we're proud to get to work with all the members
5 of the department and you're really hitting the
6 right notes in your opening testimony focusing
7 on these issues of capital and capital planning
8 and parks equity, and I know you're new, so
9 it's fair to have this coming up to speed
10 period, but I guess I'll just underline a
11 couple of things and ask a couple of questions.
12 First, on the capital process, it's great to
13 hear it's a priority of yours. Really
14 wonderful to hear that commitment to an online
15 database, something I've been asking for for a
16 couple of years now, so I'm glad to see it.
17 I'll have some questions in follow-up about
18 what we'll really be able to see on it. You
19 know, it is a wonderful agency. It's a broken
20 system that doesn't achieve either input or
21 efficiency, doesn't achieve good planning
22 centrally. Doesn't enable you to do what you
23 need to do. Doesn't enable us to know what we
24 need to know. So it's really--it's not just
25 tweaking. It's fundamentally broken, so much so

1 that last year some of us used our
2 discretionary funding to pay New Yorkers for
3 parks to commission a report to say please get
4 to work. So, I guess one, I want to make sure
5 you've seen that report, and two, do you
6 anticipate developing a plan or something that
7 you can share with the council in terms of
8 forward motion on improving the parks capital
9 process.
10

11 COMMISSIONER SILVER: The answer is
12 absolutely yes. Both the Mayor and I share that
13 the city needs a 21st century vision for a 21st
14 century park system that talks about equity,
15 innovation, healthy communities, economic
16 development. That--so there will be a vision
17 going forward of how we're going to take a
18 fresh look at our parks system. In terms of
19 technology, so the database you mentioned, in
20 terms of JAS [sic] technology. That's quite
21 simple to put together where it could be a map
22 interface which is easier experience for the
23 user to find out what's going on versus just
24 having a database. These are quite inexpensive
25 and can all be done in house, and so we'll be

2 taking a fresh look at innovation of how we can
3 bring that to bear to New York City, which is
4 the greatest city in the world. So that is the
5 vision, and in terms of streamlining the
6 capital process, in terms of our operations,
7 looking at the current technology to see how we
8 can enhance it with other technology. And so
9 we hear a lot about some of the positions, we
10 want to see how we could enhance some of the
11 technology to improve our efficiencies. So
12 we're going to take a fresh look, but we do
13 want to put forward, both the Mayor and I
14 agree, that we need a 21st century vision for a
15 21st century park system.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: That's great.

17 And have you seen yet, I'm sure you've got a
18 lot to look at, that New Yorkers for Parks
19 report on the capital process?

20 COMMISSIONER SILVER: I have--I have
21 heard and have seen some clear points, but
22 after this I'm sure my staff will get me a
23 copy.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Let's make
25 sure.

2 COMMISSIONER SILVER: I will read it
3 and I'm meeting with--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: [interposing]
5 And to be--

6 COMMISSIONER SILVER: [interposing]
7 Tupper [sic] Thomas very soon, so I'll--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: [interposing]
9 Very good. And to be clear, this is not only
10 for us. The lack of like a central capital
11 budget that enables the parks department to do
12 what it needs to do, this is a shared goal of
13 acting as stewards. My time is moving quickly.
14 It's good to hear you talk about this sort of
15 GS and information. I'm going to, I guess, lump
16 two parks equity issues into one question in my
17 remaining time. One is about information,
18 because I think one challenge in the parks
19 equity debate has been being able to see
20 clearly how much is being spent on the expense
21 and capital side down to the park district and
22 preferably park levels so we could actually
23 have a conversation about equity, which is
24 currently from my point of view impossible to
25 have. It's why the Chair and I have co-

2 sponsored legislation that would require you
3 guys to do it for yourselves and for us, and I
4 wonder what you've seen so far and what plans
5 you have, because it seems to me we've got to
6 have that baseline. And then second, your
7 history includes a lot of work to tap the kind
8 of deep wells of stewardship that people feel
9 about the park system in a lot of places, and I
10 think equity and funding and increased funding
11 is an essential issue, but I think--I don't
12 want to lose sight that part of what the
13 conservancies have been able to do is tap a
14 model of stewardship, and you can do that.
15 We've got this wonderful thing called the
16 Neighborhood Plaza Partnership on the DOT side
17 trying to take the model that worked at Bryant
18 Park and bring it to outer borough plazas that
19 don't have wealthy neighborhoods, and so I hope
20 in that is not only attention to equity and
21 funding, but also to new models. It's something
22 we should be able to do a lot better at and I
23 look forward to hearing your ideas about it.

24 COMMISSIONER SILVER: In terms of the
25 metrics, which is your question, that will take

2 some time to develop, but I understand you need
3 metrics to make comparisons to make decisions,
4 but at the same time there's a variety of park
5 assets from natural areas to active parks, and
6 so we'll have a conversation about as we
7 develop those metrics, how do we put it in a
8 format that is both understandable and usable,
9 and so that is something we're going to have a
10 conversation to see how we can bring that
11 forward. There is no question that people have
12 an affection for their parks. It means
13 different things to different people. As the
14 Council Member said, someone's front yard or
15 back yard. It's a place where people have a
16 spiritual connection, emotional connection, so
17 it is our goal to try to provide those spaces,
18 and it's public space, not just parks for all
19 New Yorkers in all neighborhoods. So that will
20 be part of the vision about how we deliver that
21 for all New Yorkers, but specifically for those
22 areas that may not over the years had the best
23 quality parks over time.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you
25 very much.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
3 Council Member Lander. We'll have Council
4 Member Deutsch followed by Council Member
5 Treyger.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you,
7 Madam Chair and thank you, Chair. I want to,
8 first of all, I want to congratulate you on
9 your new position, and any questions that I do
10 have is already being worked on with the Deputy
11 Commissioners in my districts, and I just want
12 to say thank you. Thank you for installing the
13 Mobi [sic] Mats in the beaches that are joining
14 my district. This is something myself and
15 Council Member Mark Treyger [sic] have been
16 asking for since we were elected. So, I really
17 want to say thank you for installing them, for
18 placing them in the beaches for our senior
19 citizens and people with disabilities. And I
20 am a strong supporter of our parks, anything
21 that I need to do as a Council Member to
22 support during this budget process to increase
23 maintenance workers I will do. I will be
24 working with our Chair Mark Levine. So once
25 again, I want to thank you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
3 Council Member Deutsch. Council Member Treyger
4 followed by Council Member Miller.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Welcome.
6 Welcome, Commissioner. Thank you very much for
7 being here, and First Deputy and others from
8 the Parks Department. I'd like to echo the
9 comments from Council Member Deutsch with
10 regard to the Mobi Mats. That has been a huge,
11 huge need for accessibility for all New Yorker
12 to access their beaches. I will say that one
13 location that was mentioned that would be
14 covered has not, it's Bright and Sixth [sic].
15 You know, that's something please I'd love for
16 your staff to follow up on, because that was
17 mentioned as one location that would be covered
18 and I would greatly appreciate that if we could
19 just follow up on that. And I also like to--I
20 see Brooklyn Commissioner Kevin Jeffreys. I
21 want to publicly thank him for his
22 responsiveness to my numerous office's
23 inquiries over time. I would like to just go
24 right into the discussion of do we know what is
25 the current number of PEP as we call them, the

2 parks, you know, enforcement police assigned to
3 the two and half mile Coney Island and Brighton
4 Beach and Boardwalk? Do we have any data on
5 that?

6 COMMISSIONER SILVER: We'll have to
7 get back to you on the specific locations. We
8 have the number by borough, but we'll have to
9 get back to you on specific location.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Well,
11 Commissioner, I'd appreciate a follow up on
12 that, because it is a public safety issue. So I
13 represent Coney Island and but I have also the
14 entire the beach and boardwalk that goes into
15 Brighton Beach, and there is a strain that is
16 placed on the local police department to be
17 responsible, especially now during the seasonal
18 months to cover two and half miles of beach and
19 boardwalk, the entire amusement area, and in
20 addition to that, the residential neighborhoods
21 of Coney Island into Brighton even up to
22 Bensonhurst, and even with the additional
23 summer detail that they get, they are all
24 assigned to cover the beach and amusement area.
25 It's not enough to protect the residential

2 areas. So I would urge the Parks Department. I
3 see that there is some figures here showing an
4 increase in PEP for the upcoming budget. I
5 would encourage and I would ask the Parks
6 Department to assign additional PEP, whatever
7 the number is now to increase it. So to
8 alleviate the burdens placed on the 60 police
9 precinct. Someone--yeah, please.

10 MICHAEL DOCKETT: I'm Mike Dockett,
11 Assistant Commissioner at Parks. I oversee the
12 Park Enforcement Patrol citywide. So we have
13 about 32 officers assigned to Brooklyn. They
14 work out of Prospect Park and Bushwick inlet,
15 and they patrol the boroughs from there.
16 Seasonally, we place staff at Coney Island, so
17 we have four PEP sergeants there that are
18 accompanied by people that we recruit. Those
19 are called our Park Security Service. So we
20 bring in about 38 officers to place at Coney
21 Island. They don't have arrest powers, but they
22 do control the Coney Island Pier to prevent
23 people from jumping off. They patrol the beach.
24 We station them on the sand where lifeguards
25 are not present. If there's a closed section,

2 they keep people out of the water during the
3 day, and then we patrol Coney Island sand from
4 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at night all summer long
5 while the beaches are open.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: So are you
7 saying that there are four seasonally?

8 MICHAEL DOCKETT: There are four PEP
9 Sergeants that oversee the 39 officers, 38
10 security officers that we place on the beach
11 during the summer. They're called city seasonal
12 aides.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: So 30,
14 you're saying there's 38 security personnel
15 from the Parks Department on the beach and
16 boardwalk?

17 MICHAEL DOCKETT: Correct. These
18 are not PEP officers, though. They don't have
19 arrest powers, but they are like security
20 officers.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: But how many
22 PEP do we actually have?

23 MICHAEL DOCKETT: We have four that
24 are assigned there seasonally.

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I would
3 directly ask for an increase, Commissioner,
4 because four to cover two and a half mile of
5 beach boardwalk and the amusement area is just
6 to me not enough, and there's a strain in the
7 local police department, and we've had a spike
8 in shootings recently. As a matter of fact,
9 when we had the Brooklyn half marathon that
10 ended in Coney Island on the boardwalk, at the
11 same time there was double shooting in the west
12 end of Coney Island when, you know, and again,
13 I would strongly urge the Parks Department to
14 consider adding additional PEP to cover, to
15 help alleviate the burdens on the police
16 department. I would like to also discuss and I
17 appreciate your comments about resiliency. I've
18 learned that the Parks Department makes up
19 about a third of the city's shoreline, and I
20 think when we discuss about resiliency, I think
21 the Parks Department will play an integral role
22 in making sure that we are resilient moving
23 forward in the face of climate change. You
24 know, having said that, I think that I've
25 mentioned this a number of times and I will

1 mention it, you know, to you for the first
2 time, Commissioner, that to me the beach and
3 boardwalk are recreational areas for tourists
4 and many residents, but it is a vital piece of
5 infrastructure for the local residents who call
6 Neighborhood home, and I would urge that the
7 Parks Department, and I've asked this before
8 and I haven't gotten data yet as far as the
9 maintenance of the boardwalk, maintenance of
10 our beaches because it is critical that we
11 properly maintain this vital piece of
12 infrastructure, and I'd like if there's any
13 data that you could share with us about the
14 maintenance of that boardwalk and how important
15 it is to our communities in Southern Brooklyn.

17 COMMISSIONER SILVER: We can follow
18 up with you about specifics about the
19 maintenance, unless Deputy Commissioner, you
20 know?

21 LIAM KAVANAGH: I think the issues
22 that you're raising, they're very important.
23 They are things that are important to us, but
24 as the Commissioner said, I think it would
25 better if we sit down with you and discuss it

1
2 in more detail. We'd be able to do it. [off
3 mic]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Alright,
5 thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
7 Council Member Treyger. We will now have
8 Council Member Miller followed by Council
9 Member Rosenthal.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you,
11 Madam Chair, Co-chairs and Commissioner. Thank
12 you and welcome to you and your staff for
13 coming out and answering questions for us
14 today. I have one from representing the
15 community with some of the most beautiful parks
16 in the city of New York in southern Queens. We
17 really appreciate the work that you do, and
18 obviously we're here to see if we can get some
19 more done. But my initial question speaks to
20 your staffing and the overview of that, those
21 titles that represent and service the parks as
22 well as who they are represented by, and then
23 speak to the WEPs and the JTP programs that
24 exist as well.

2 COMMISSIONER SILVER: In terms of
3 when you say the questions about?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Well, I want
5 to know how many--

6 COMMISSIONER SILVER: [interposing]
7 Oh, how many?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Well, yeah.
9 If you have the overall number of employees
10 that you have, what titles they are and if they
11 are represented to whom are they represented
12 by.

13 COMMISSIONER SILVER: We have--we
14 could follow up with that because I think we
15 have some of the information. There are roughly
16 a little over 2,000 JTP's. In terms of the
17 other titles and specifically which units they
18 have belong to, I don't think we have that
19 information right here, but we could certainly
20 get that to you, but I'm looking right here in
21 terms of the 2,000 JTP's. I don't have the
22 other unions for the other titles you had
23 mentioned.

24

25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay. Do you
3 know of the unions that represent any of the
4 titles there?

5 LIAM KAVANAGH: Council Member, the
6 job training participants are represented by
7 District Council 37. There are blue collar
8 representatives within District Council 37 that
9 work with us and with the job training
10 participants to make sure that they're
11 receiving all of the benefits that they are
12 entitled to as employees, but work experience
13 participants, however, are not paid employees
14 and are not represented by our unions. It's
15 approximately 350 of them assigned to the Parks
16 Department throughout the entire city.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: And you don't
18 know your overall headcount.

19 LIAM KAVANAGH: I'm sorry?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: The overall
21 headcount?

22 LIAM KAVANAGH: Oh, it's a little
23 over 2,000 on job training participants right
24 now. It fluctuates and it grows during the
25 summer.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Not just the
3 job training.

4 LIAM KAVANAGH: Oh, okay.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: The over--of
6 all the employees.

7 LIAM KAVANAGH: Yes, we do have that,
8 sure.

9 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Do you want
10 those numbers by titles or want us to--I could
11 read that now for the record or I could just
12 send this to you; admin managers 136, clerical
13 associates 79, committee associates 154,
14 committee coordinators 150, PAA's 71,
15 recreational directors 34, recreational
16 specialists 76, recreational supervisors 84.
17 In total we have here 2,521.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Which is--
19 okay, thank you. Which is pretty close to the
20 number of job training participants in there.
21 How many--I don't see your contracts, your
22 outstanding contracts out here as well. How
23 many outside--how many duties are performed by
24 outside contractors?

2 LARRY SCOTT-BLACKMON: Good
3 afternoon, Council Member. Larry Scott-
4 Blackmon, Deputy Commissioner of Parks. Our
5 maintenance work is not contracted out. The
6 only thing, the only item that we do contract
7 out is our tree pruning contracts. That's it.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay. Okay,
9 good. That's good to hear. And between that and
10 some of the administrative services, could you
11 speak to the NWBE opportunities?

12 COMMISSIONER SILVER: We're very
13 proud of our NWBE numbers. We have some of
14 those here that we could share with you. Most
15 recently several years ago we were actually
16 recognized as the--as one of the city agencies
17 with the highest NWBE performance numbers. So
18 we're very proud of our track record. As
19 reported in FY 12 and a matter of fact which is
20 in--we're still pulling this together for 14
21 because the data has not been released yet.
22 Preliminary quarter one and quarter two data
23 indicates that Parks awarded 1,162 contracts
24 which totaled roughly 97.65 million of which
25

2 28.66, which is 29 percent, close to 30 percent
3 went to NWBE prime contractors.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you so
5 much, Commissioner.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you.
7 Council Member Rosenthal followed by Council
8 Member Cohen.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Council
10 Member Miller asked my first question. So thank
11 you for taking care of that minute of my
12 testimony. I actually want to ask you a few
13 questions and welcome to New York City. It's
14 great to have you. It's great to meet you. I
15 have to say I've worked for a long time with
16 your borough commissioner in Manhattan,
17 Commissioner Castro and with Steve Simon.
18 They're just a pleasure. So you've inherited
19 some great employees. I'm sure you're learning
20 that. It's always a pleasure working with the
21 Parks Department, but I am going to ask you a
22 couple of questions. I'm Chair of the Contracts
23 Committee, and there was one contract in
24 particular that really has leapt out at us over
25 the years, and that's the contract for the--the

2 ongoing contract with the golf course at Ferry
3 Point Park. So I guess my first question is,
4 on average, just on average, citywide I guess
5 to your Deputy who does the numbers, how much
6 do you spend in capital on average per acre?

7 LIAM KAVANAGH: It varies greatly
8 depending on the--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Sure.

10 LIAM KAVANAGH: type of project
11 you're dealing with. In broad terms for what we
12 call site work, typical park construction work
13 in a park or playground it's about a million
14 dollars an acre is a good rule of thumb.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: A million
16 dollars an acre?

17 LIAM KAVANAGH: Yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Wow,
19 that's a lot.

20 LIAM KAVANAGH: Yes, that is.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Well, it
22 sounds like Ferry Point Park has hit your
23 average and gone beyond. The number I'm seeing
24 is around 1.2 million per acre. But let's--so
25 let me ask you, this is a project. So this is

2 more--I'm going to ask you these questions with
3 the hope that I could get back from you some
4 answers to these questions. I'm not expecting
5 you to have it today. I know you just walked in
6 a minute ago. But it would be instructive to
7 understand how a project that starts in the
8 year, I guess, 2000.

9 LIAM KAVANAGH: 1998.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: 1998 at
11 roughly 20 some million dollars, could now in
12 2014, the latest reports I'm hearing are 236
13 million dollars including the 30 acres
14 surrounding Ferry Point Park. So I'm interested
15 in knowing, understanding that story line so we
16 can do a good job not letting that happen
17 again. And I'm pleased to hear in your
18 testimony that you mentioned that you're
19 creating an online database to track the
20 progress of projects. I assume that that would
21 have allowed us had we had that in place since
22 1998. That would have allowed us to maybe stop
23 this project at 50 million dollars. Do you
24 think that might have been the case? Do you

25

2 have feelings about how much money this project
3 ended up costing, and where does it stand?

4 LIAM KAVANAGH: Well, the project is
5 almost complete. We're actually wrapping up
6 construction in the next month or so. It'll
7 open for play officially next spring. It's a
8 very complicated project. It's the initial plan
9 was--turned out to be completely unrealistic
10 from a financial perspective and did not
11 account for very significant environmental
12 conditions at the sight, and when the city made
13 the decision to assume responsibility for
14 constructing. All of those costs became much
15 more obvious and had to be dealt with in the
16 final budget for the project, but what you--and
17 I'm not saying it's the right choice or not,
18 but when you look at the cost for this project
19 in comparison to similar projects, converting
20 landfills into public golf courses. The costs
21 are very similar, and in fact they are somewhat
22 less in some of the examples that we've seen
23 across the country. So I'm not saying--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL:

25 [interposing] What's the final cost?

2 LIAM KAVANAGH: The total cost for
3 all projects associated with Ferry Point Park
4 is 236 million dollars. The golf course
5 itself, however, is about 180 million. There
6 was a 30 acre community park built as part of
7 the project and there is a waterfront esplanade
8 that has yet to be built. It has to be
9 redesigned because of the impacts of hurricane
10 Sandy, which is budgeted at about 10 million
11 dollars. And there was also some incidental
12 work in the surrounding areas. It's part of the
13 overall project, but the golf course itself was
14 about 180 million when you consider all of the
15 previous cost, design, environmental monitoring
16 and construction costs.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So I'm
18 going to ask one quick question, then I'm going
19 to ask to continue in a second round. So the
20 report that the City Council gets, the cost
21 over-run report, in the first quarter of fiscal
22 year '14, so that would be June--

23 LIAM KAVANAGH: [interposing] July 1st
24 to September, through September.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: It was 116
3 million. So from then to now it's gone up to
4 180. I'm hearing you say 10 is attributable to
5 Sandy. So there's 50 million in incidentals?
6 And I'm interested to know you call that 50
7 million incidentals?

8 LIAM KAVANAGH: I don't know that I
9 used the word incidentals, but as I said, this
10 is a very complicated project. I'd be happy to
11 go over it with you in detail. I don't have
12 notes about all the budgeting, but I think some
13 of what you may have seen in the first quarter
14 were payments that were made to date and didn't
15 reflect what will be the final cost of the
16 project, which is what I'm referring to.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I would
18 like to continue this, Chair, in the second
19 round. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
21 Council Member Rosenthal. We will now have
22 Council Member Cohen.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you
24 Chairs Ferreras and Levine. Welcome
25 Commissioner. I have a little bit of a head

2 start on you. I started in January as a new
3 Council Member, but I want you to know that
4 Commissioner Blackmon and Kavanagh had been
5 taking good care of me in my short tenure. So I
6 think we're in good hands. I don't want to
7 belabor the point about the capital projects,
8 but it's--the duration as well as the cost, the
9 cost is an issue. I was startled when I took
10 office and I discovered my predecessor had
11 funded a dog run that 250,000 dollars, you
12 know, going to--advocating for funds for a tot
13 lot that's 1.3 million dollars. The numbers
14 seem very large to me, and so I think that as
15 we're examining the whole capital process, it's
16 really--it's not just the duration that it
17 takes to execute the projects, but it is the
18 costs that they seem--you know, and I've been
19 to, I've seen schools, new schools built in my
20 district that seem to built that cost--that
21 seem more in line with that you'd expect, and I
22 think that Parks projects seem to be expensive.
23 So I think that's something that we should keep
24 an eye on. And I do want to say also regarding
25 the expense budget, I think that like I go to a

2 playground. The playgrounds look great, but a
3 lot of times the, you know, the associated
4 fields, they do need maintenance. If they're
5 not mowed as regularly now--it's particularly
6 noticeable now that everything is growing like
7 crazy. You can really see that maintenance,
8 that there are maintenance needs. You know, the
9 focal point is well-maintained, but as you get
10 further and further out from the center, you--
11 the maintenance really shows. My district, I
12 often tell people, is one third park land, and
13 so that when maintenance is deferred it really
14 shows and it has an impact community-wide, not
15 just on the park. So I would, you know, I think
16 all of us advocating for additional maintenance
17 funds, I mean we really see it out on the
18 ground and it's--you know, and like on the flip
19 side I was in Van Cortlandt Park over the
20 weekend. The parade grounds looked amazing. The
21 field's really finally, you know, after all
22 that work they really come in and they looked
23 gorgeous. So there are a lot of good things
24 going on in our parks and I don't want to make
25 light of that, but I do think that we--there is

2 just a shortage of maintenance funds. There's--
3 I do call parks and you know, you know, whether
4 calling my Van Cortlandt park administer or
5 anybody at--people want to help, but a lot of
6 times it is very--they just don't have the
7 resources and so there is an issue there. And
8 also, I just want to--you know, Mosholu Parkway
9 in my district also. It's mid--you know, I
10 can't say it's in a crisis, but it does not
11 look as well, as good as it could look, and
12 it's--I think it's partly maintenance. So, I'm
13 not sure there was a question in there, but--

14 COMMISSIONER SILVER: We're taking
15 notes.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
17 Council Member Cohen. We're going to now start
18 the Second round which goes to a three minute
19 clock. I just wanted to ask a few questions.
20 What about the 760,000 dollars noted in fiscal
21 '15 and 600,000 in fiscal '16 for the
22 waterfront inspection program. Wanted to have
23 more information on this, and if you have any
24 specifics on the implementation. Not sure if

1
2 that means that you oversee all waterfronts
3 across the city.

4 LIAM KAVANAGH: It's an EDC--

5 COMMISSIONER SILVER: It's an EDC
6 project, but I'll let Deputy, First Deputy
7 Commissioner--

8 LIAM KAVANAGH: As Commissioner
9 Silver mentioned, resiliency is going to be one
10 of our, you know, focuses going forward and as
11 was pointed out, much of our--much of the
12 waterfront is park land. Approximately 148
13 miles of the city's 520 some odd miles of
14 waterfront are park land. In looking at, you
15 know, what we owned and operate, it became very
16 apparent to us that we need to do better
17 planning, particularly on the built
18 infrastructure, the bulkheads, the piers and
19 things like that, and we did request this
20 funding to help us do that very specialized
21 inspection processes. At the same time, other
22 agencies like EDC and DOT have significant
23 holdings on the waterfront as well and EDC has
24 been sort of the lead agency for overseeing
25 this type of inspection work for the last few

2 years. So we will be working with both of those
3 agencies to make sure that all of our funds are
4 used as effectively to understand the true
5 state of our built infrastructure. At the same
6 time we're going to be looking at the unbuilt
7 part of the park waterfronts as well to take an
8 integrated planning approach in terms of
9 looking at those assets as part of our
10 resiliency planning as much as Council Member
11 Treyger pointed out, that you have to look at
12 them through that perspective as well as the
13 recreation values they provide.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Agreed, and I
15 think in much of what Council Member Treyger
16 said also effects the areas of park land like
17 you mentioned that are part of parks and
18 finding some way of communicating and doing
19 interagency work for example in Flushing
20 Meadows Corona Park there's a lot of water
21 connections but much of that water is
22 contaminated. It smells putrid. There's issues
23 and DEP's right behind you, so I'm planning to
24 focus in on them too. But to be able to have a
25 better, a more effective conversation working

2 with parks and their waterfronts and also our
3 water currently around our parks, because the
4 whole point is that you want to go out to the
5 promenade in East Elmhurst and go for a walk.
6 And you know, commissioner Lewandowski worked
7 very closely with the community to make sure
8 that it's open and its clean and we could
9 participate, but if the place smells because
10 there's sulfur scents coming, emanating from
11 the water, there's a problem. So you are
12 partner with that. We also have a marina and
13 we're talking about building a new community
14 called Willet's Point, and if we don't really
15 pay attention to this it's going to be a very
16 big issue for us to be able to get people to
17 actively participate and enjoy their life. I
18 live up in East Elmhurst which is quite a ways
19 away from the Marina, and there are mornings
20 when I wake up that you can smell. You can
21 drive from the Grand Central and go through the
22 park and you can smell the waters of Flushing
23 Meadows Park and the bay. So we really need to
24 work a little bit better with a multiagency
25 approach to address this issue. I have one

2 additional question. [off mic] We have so many
3 great questions for you. I'm going to pass it
4 over to my Co-chair while we find my--

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Commissioner,
6 you've heard a lot of talk today about the
7 capital process and you've made very
8 encouraging statements about your commitment to
9 improving it. We focused here in the council as
10 I mentioned on the bump up in staff needed for
11 the Division, 55 additional staff members. If
12 that doesn't come through, and again, it's not
13 currently in the Mayor's budget, are you
14 confident that the Department can execute on
15 the capital plan that is laid out for the
16 coming year?

17 COMMISSIONER SILVER: I am confident
18 but it's also part of that exercise of where I
19 want to see. There are, I believe, well over
20 maybe about 400 projects and clearly look at
21 the size and scale of those projects also
22 through their process to see where we can find
23 some efficiencies in moving the capital process
24 forward. So I look forward to that exercise.
25 Quite frankly, it's something I get very

2 excited about to see how we can look at each
3 stages of the process and have conversations
4 with staff to see how we can begin to move all
5 these projects forward. So I do know there's a
6 lot of Sandy work also involved, and I was told
7 that staff was trying to move things forward,
8 but we still have to deal with some work
9 related to super storm Sandy, but it's
10 something that I'm committed to taking a fresh
11 look at to see how we could move those projects
12 forward.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Well, I would
14 submit that it'll be a tremendous challenge to
15 meet your target without adequate capacity in
16 the division. You had mentioned earlier that
17 there was a bump up of about 400 positions in
18 last year's budget, but that they were still
19 coming on lines. The positions were still being
20 filled. Did I have that right? Are those
21 positions currently filled, all 400 of them?

22 COMMISSIONER SILVER: All those
23 positions are filled. The point I was making is
24 that we want to assess the full impact of those
25

1 positions coming online, but all those
2 positions have been filled.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: And how long
5 does it generally take to fill new positions?
6 Is it--

7 COMMISSIONER SILVER: I'm told it
8 could be roughly about at least two months to
9 fill those positions.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Alright. The
11 Mayor's Managing Report recently highlighted
12 trends in crime in the parks, and this report
13 only looked at the 30 major parks, excluding
14 central park. We don't have data on crime on a
15 park by park basis throughout the system, and
16 this is something that the council's concerned
17 about. In fact, my colleague Council Member
18 Lander and I introduced a piece of legislation
19 that would require the NYPD, not you all, but
20 the police department to report on crime on a
21 park by park basis, and in an age of GPS and
22 geocoding, there's no reason why we can't do
23 that. But we do know from the Mayor's
24 Management Report a little about the trends in
25 these 30 major parks, which do show a decline

2 in major felonies in the first four months of
3 year as compared to last year which is great
4 news. I believe a decline of about 30 percent,
5 but they also show an increase, what I think
6 could be accurately called a spike in property
7 crime, an increase of about 50, I believe about
8 56 percent on year over year comparison. Do
9 you have thoughts about what might be the cause
10 of such a steep rise in property crime in our
11 large parks?

12 COMMISSIONER SILVER: I do not, but
13 certainly as we approach this problem I'm told
14 there has been an increase, at least what we
15 called it down in North Carolina, apple
16 picking, which is when you try to take an Apple
17 device from someone, but certainly A--NYPD is
18 the agency that is really focused to address
19 crime in our parks and we want to work with
20 them from our perspective. We're going to start
21 to look at the site lines of our parks to see
22 whether the canopies at appropriate height
23 where people could actually see into the park.
24 Again, that may vary in some of the smaller
25 parks. The larger parks, that's more a bit of a

2 challenge. We certainly want to work with NYPD
3 to find out exactly what's going on and from
4 our perspective, is there any design solutions
5 that can come into play that can help address
6 this problem. Having visibility in the parks,
7 having the appropriate height of a canopy,
8 having those site lines where people feel a
9 sense of safety, something that we'll certainly
10 take a look at, but beyond that I do not know
11 why there has been an increase in crime.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Very interesting
13 to hear your thoughts on physical improvements
14 to the parks that could reduce crime, which we
15 love to hear more about. I'll note that if
16 overgrowth is a challenge, then more money for
17 tree pruning would help that, and to state the
18 obvious more PEP officers can only contribute
19 to a feeling of safety in the parks. I want to
20 ask you about life guards which of course the
21 park system employs for beaches and pools. What
22 is the total number of lifeguards?

23 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well, we had
24 over 1,400 lifeguards assigned to our pools and
25 beaches last summer.

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CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: And so we're starting our annual recruiting effort right now and looking, in December we had over 300 candidates that are currently in training, but as of last summer there were 1,400 assigned to both beaches and pools.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Well, I just want to understand this, so you're starting the recruitment for the 2014 summer season?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: No, that started in December, and right now there are over 300 candidates that are in training that'll be deployed.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: So, of the 1,400 positions that I saw were budgeted for, how many are currently in place in the pools and beaches?

LIAM KAVANAGH: There's a little over 500 that have been hired to date. They're all at the beaches. The hiring occurs in two phases. Obviously, Memorial Day weekend is the start of the beach season, beach lifeguards. Either the new recruits or the returnees report

2 for duty. They go through their training and
3 recertifications and are assigned for that
4 weekend. The pool lifeguards report later in
5 June and we anticipate having at least the same
6 number if not more lifeguards this summer than
7 we had last year.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right, but since
9 last weekend was probably one of the busiest
10 beach weekends of the season--

11 LIAM KAVANAGH: [interposing] Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: If you have 500
13 lifeguards in place, does that represent the
14 full allotment or were there some vacancies?

15 LIAM KAVANAGH: No, we will ramp up
16 to a little over 600 closer to the fourth of
17 July at the beaches alone.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: And the
19 shortfall of about 100 is a recruitment
20 challenge?

21 LIAM KAVANAGH: It's not so much of a
22 recruitment challenge. It's just that the new
23 lifeguards tend to be high school students.
24 They one, don't complete all their training
25 until June. They have to be certified to work

1
2 in the ocean environment which takes a little
3 bit of time and usually they don't want to
4 begin work until they finish their classes.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Understood.

6 Thank you. Finally I have a little more of a
7 technical question. You've got included in the
8 budget two million dollars. Actually, there was
9 two million in fiscal '14 and now it's 4.4
10 million in fiscal '15 for a line which is
11 described as technical adjustment to cover
12 personnel services costs. Could you explain
13 what that is and why it's needed?

14 LIAM KAVANAGH: There are a number of
15 job titles that have annuities and payments in
16 addition to their salaries that are simply due
17 to them as a result of collective bargaining.
18 And you know, occasionally our budgeting
19 doesn't match up with those payment
20 requirements. The technical adjustment is just
21 putting the money in our budget to meet our
22 contractual requirements.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Is this like an
24 actuarial analysis?

2 LIAM KAVANAGH: Well, not quite an
3 actuarial analysis, but there are supplemental
4 payments that are due by contract to certain
5 job titles, primarily trades workers who
6 receive annuities and other benefits as part of
7 their compensation.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Do you
9 consistently have to adjust up in which case
10 you might just want to generally budget more,
11 or was this an aberration the last two years?

12 LIAM KAVANAGH: It's somewhat of an
13 aberration. As Commissioner Silver mentioned,
14 we added staff. We added trades people in
15 addition to the regular maintenance people and
16 you know, the budget has to sort of catch up to
17 reflect the payments that are required due to
18 the increase in head count.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay. Thank
20 you. I'm going to pass it back to Chair
21 Ferreras.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you. And
23 I know that we've been joined by the DEP staff
24 and I believe the Commissioner may be here or
25 outside. So I just want to thank you for your

1 consideration. I know that we're running a
2 little bit--well, 45 minutes behind. The
3 question that I wanted to ask was about tree
4 pruning. What's the current budget for tree
5 pruning in this proposed budget? And that's
6 street pruning and stump removal, and what has
7 been the funding pattern for pruning and stump
8 removal over the last four years?

10 COMMISSIONER SILVER: For pruning,
11 roughly about 3.5 million. For stump removal
12 it's two million. Over time it looks like this
13 has been an increase. Well, in FY 09 stump
14 removal was 2.3. Today it's two. In terms of
15 pruning it was 1.7 in FY 09. It's now a 3.5.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Well, I'm sure
17 you've been abreast, but we've had some tragic
18 loss due to the maintenance of our trees in our
19 parks. So are you working actively with
20 updating training protocols for your staff to
21 identify dangerous situations in our parks?

22 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes, we did an
23 extensive retraining of all of the parks
24 supervisors who were responsible for inspecting
25 parks including trees, and we have integrated a

2 more comprehensive system of evaluating trees.
3 So that--if there's any concern on the part of
4 park supervisor or any other employee, they can
5 elevate that concern to a more experienced
6 forester who can make a professional judgement
7 on the condition of the tree.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So in some
9 cases of the other boroughs when we have strong
10 storms, heavy rains, heavy snow storm and a lot
11 of our electrical wiring and our wiring is
12 above ground and it becomes a problem with the
13 more, the older or larger canopy trees, what's
14 the process or how long does it take between a
15 constituent or someone filing a concern about a
16 tree outside of their property? I know the
17 ones on their property they have to prune, but
18 outside of the property, how long does it take
19 for them to get a response on the condition of
20 their tree and what is the cycle of pruning in
21 our communities? I think at some point we said
22 it was like every 10 years. Have we been able
23 to shrink that response or is that average in
24 the industry? Can you speak to pruning?

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LIAM KAVANAGH: Based on our current funding, we're projecting a 10 year pruning cycle. That is every mature tree on the streets of the city would be pruned every 10 years. The industry standard tends to be approximately seven years as a goal for a block pruning cycle in an urban environment. So we are slightly ahead of that. There have been years when we were way behind the 10 year--the seven year cycle, but thanks to the funding we received from the Council last year and the baseline that was in our budget from the Mayor's office. We're on a 10 year cycle right now, which means approximately 55,000 street trees will be pruned this fiscal year and next fiscal year based on the funding and the budget. In terms of the response to a citizen complaint it varies greatly depending on the nature of the service request. So for example, if a member of the public is reporting a dead tree or a tree that they believe that needs to be removed, we'll inspect that within two weeks, and if we do agree that it needs to be removed, we have a standard of removing it within 30 days, and we

2 track that very carefully and it's measured in
3 the Mayor's Management Report. If it's an
4 emergency condition, a broken limb in a tree
5 that's potential--that can fall or some other,
6 you know, obvious safety issue, we will address
7 that as quickly as possible. And just to give
8 you an example, the council passed legislation
9 a few years ago requiring trees that are
10 blocking traffic lights or stop signs get
11 inspected within four days, that if it's
12 blocking a traffic signal or a stop sign itself
13 we have to address the condition within five
14 days. If it's a less serious traffic sign
15 that's being obscured, we have 10 days to do
16 that. We track that very carefully as well. But
17 if it's routine pruning, we largely refer it to
18 the block pruning cycle in order to address
19 that kind of request.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So to get us
21 to the seven year industry, because we want to
22 be--we're about excellence here in New York
23 City, right Commissioner? And to get us to
24 industry pruning levels, what would those
25 budget dollars look like?

2 LIAM KAVANAGH: It would cost
3 approximately two million dollars to prune the
4 additional 20,000 trees it would take to get us
5 to the seven year cycle. That would be about--

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing]
7 So it would be taking us from 3.5 to 5.5, is
8 that correct?

9 LIAM KAVANAGH: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, thank
11 you very much. Now we will have a second round
12 of three minute--sorry, Council Member
13 Greenfield will be on the five minute clock and
14 then we'll start the second round where we have
15 two members.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank
17 you very much. Quick question for you. First of
18 all, congratulations and welcome. We're all
19 very excited and pleased that you're here. I
20 just want to follow up on the Chair's question
21 regarding stumps. How many outstanding stumps
22 do you currently have, and what--when will they
23 all be removed? And I ask because it's become
24 a very large public safety issue. In many of
25 our communities people walk down the street,

2 they trip over them, they fall over them. The
3 cars bang into them, etcetera. So do you have
4 a list of stumps in the city and how long will
5 it take for us to get rid of those stumps?

6 COMMISSIONER SILVER: We'll have to
7 get back to you on the number of stumps that
8 are out there, but on average, the Department
9 removes about 3,300 stumps, but we'll just have
10 to get back to you on the full inventory of--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD:

12 [interposing] I think especially post the many
13 storms that we've had, we're seeing an increase
14 in stumps, and I think that if we could look at
15 perhaps more resources to removing them, that
16 would be significant as well. I just also want
17 to add, you know, I know that this has been a
18 large topic of conversation but like my
19 colleagues, I feel very strongly about this. I
20 also want to add regarding our concerns about
21 the capital process. I think it's especially
22 pronounced and I know that you're someone who's
23 worried about inequities within the parks. I
24 think this actually creates more pronounce than
25 equity. For example, what happens is the parks

2 that have conservancies like Prospect Park
3 Alliance, they do the capital on their own,
4 they're able to do it for a fraction of the
5 cost. So ironically, they get more money from
6 the City and they can do it for literally one
7 quarter of the cost that the Parks Department
8 is actually able to do that. I just wanted to
9 make sure that you're aware of that when you're
10 doing your internal study to compare how it is
11 that someone like the Prospect Park Alliance
12 can literally build a building for one fifth of
13 the cost that we would have. The second thing,
14 I just also want to recommend is that for
15 minor changes in the parks, for example
16 creating a pathway or smaller changes, I think
17 you might want to look at the potential of
18 streamlining that process as well because right
19 now if we want to just create a path in the
20 park in the middle of a field, that requires a
21 design and a bid in the process, and you know,
22 could be a million dollars just to put out some
23 pavement just so that we can walk somewhere.
24 That doesn't really make sense when you look at
25 it. And I actually just want to reiterate and

2 you come with some very, very high marks and
3 recommendations, Commissioner. I just want to
4 tell you from my perspective, regardless of
5 what you do as commissioner, no matter how
6 wonderful you are, if you do not reform the
7 capital situation, in my opinion you will have
8 been a failure, because it is the biggest
9 scandal, and I say this publicly knowing that
10 there are folks in the room, the biggest
11 scandal in the City of New York, and it's not
12 your fault happily, you're just inheriting, is
13 the scandal in related to the extortion that
14 Council Members have to get funding for insane
15 amounts of money to pay for improvements in
16 their local parks. And the reason it's a
17 scandal is because as you well know, there is
18 inequities. So if you're in Manhattan or if
19 you're in downtown Brooklyn or next to Prospect
20 Park, you're getting millions of dollars.
21 Meanwhile, us local Council Members we spend
22 almost of our entire discretionary funds. My
23 number one discretionary expenditure is on
24 parks and five years later nothing's happening.
25 And honestly it's a scandal of great

2 proportions and I just want to encourage you. I
3 know it's a big portfolio and you're very
4 popular and you'll be out and about. This in my
5 opinion is the number one issue that needs to
6 be addressed by the Parks Department, and I
7 hope you take that equally seriously. And
8 then, finally, I just want to specifically
9 thank the Brooklyn Parks Department. Parks
10 Commissioner Jeffreys is very responsive on
11 many of our issues that we have and is always
12 there for us in a very professional manner, so
13 we're certainly grateful for his leadership as
14 well. And in terms of just the capital time,
15 because I am somewhat focused on this for my
16 remaining time. Can you tell us what you will
17 be doing in terms of big picture? Will you be
18 doing a top to bottom review? Will you have an
19 audit? Will you be comparing it to other
20 agencies? For example, we find that the parks
21 to playgrounds happen much quicker than the
22 regular parks, and part of that belief is that
23 because SCA is involved and they're able to do
24 it more quickly. So what steps will you be
25 taking as a Commissioner to come back to us and

1 say, "Hey, here's what I got. Here's the
2 recommendations. Here's how actually we're
3 going to improve the situation." And I'll just
4 add finally, the reason I'm so concerned is
5 because it's come to a point where some Council
6 Members honestly don't even bother giving money
7 to parks anymore because they know that by the
8 time the money comes through they'll likely be
9 retired or dead, and that's just not an
10 acceptable situation. Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Each process,
13 what we're going to do as I've stated starting
14 next month we're going to sit down and go
15 through the entire capital process from the
16 beginning until the permits are issued and it
17 opens. And so we're going to take a look at
18 each segment drill down, understand all the
19 different procedures. There are regulations.
20 There are requirements. There are permitting.
21 There are staffing issues. We're going to look
22 at each step of the process and ask some very
23 hard questions. I don't know what we're going
24 to uncover, but we're going to drill down very
25 deep and then we're going to come back and

2 recommend a way forward of where we believe
3 some efficiencies can be found. There may be
4 certain things such as regulations and
5 commissions and some outreach involved in those
6 process, but we want to be able to break down
7 each step of the process and have a
8 conversation because over time people have
9 requirements and the impact and implications
10 certain requirements is that it adds time onto
11 the process. So the approach is to sit down
12 with staff, ask the hard questions, go through
13 the entire process and find out where we can
14 start finding out those efficiencies as well as
15 specifications and cost estimates which is also
16 part of that process. So beyond that, I can't
17 get any more specific, but it's something--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD:
19 [interposing] Can you just tell us by when this
20 will be done, just so that we know that we have
21 a time frame here on the council?

22 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yeah. My hope
23 is that we're going to start the work in June,
24 and maybe by the end of the summer we'll be
25

2 able to have some recommendations about how we
3 can possibly streamline.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Looking
5 forward to that. Thank you and we wish you the
6 best of luck.

7 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Okay.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
9 Council Member Greenfield. We'll now have
10 Council Member Rosenthal followed by Council
11 Member Treyger, part of your three minute
12 second round.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you
14 very much. So I just want to ask two more
15 questions looking back, and then I'd really
16 like to focus on looking forward. How much of
17 the 260--236 million dollars was for cleaning
18 up the Brownfield component of Ferry Point
19 Park?

20 LIAM KAVANAGH: I'm sorry, I don't
21 have that information with me right now, but
22 we'll be able to provide that to you after the
23 hearing.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Is that
25 something that you--you track that?

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LIAM KAVANAGH: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I mean,
it's not--you just have it at your desk?

LIAM KAVANAGH: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay. And
do you get super fund? Do you get federal
money to reimburse on that?

LIAM KAVANAGH: No.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Do--have
you ever tried? Is that a option, opportunity,
or just not something that's successful?

LIAM KAVANAGH: I don't think a
project like this which was a municipal
landfill that is being converted to other uses
would qualify for federal funding. It certainly
was never deemed a super fund site, eligible
for management by EPA. But it is a, you know,
a situation that occurs all over the city.
There are these landfills that were developed
in some cases to create new parks in the 30s
and 40s and 50s and, you know, the chickens
have sort of come home to roost. There are
several of them around the city that cost

2 enormous amounts of money to convert them into
3 some beneficial public use.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Let me see
5 if I have this right. The 190--so looking
6 forward, the 190 acres will be luxury golf
7 course and then the 30 acres surrounding will
8 be open to the community for like a water park
9 or how is that going?

10 LIAM KAVANAGH: It will be a public
11 golf course, you know, open to anyone who
12 wishes to play there, as our--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL:
14 [interposing] What's the cost?

15 LIAM KAVANAGH: Excuse me?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: What's the
17 cost?

18 LIAM KAVANAGH: I don't remember what
19 the rates are off the top of my head. It is
20 higher than our other 12 golf courses, I do
21 know that. It reflects the cost of operating a
22 new facility.

23 LARRY SCOTT-BLACKMON: Council
24 Member, Larry Scott-Blackmon, Deputy
25 Commissioner.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

3 LARRY SCOTT-BLACKMON: How are you?

4 It's important to note that the landfill was
5 closed in the 60's. The community first
6 proposed this project in 1972/1973. When the
7 project started in 2000, this is a project that
8 the community is strongly in support of. The
9 community board, the district manager, the
10 Council Member, the current Council Member,
11 they all stood with the Parks Department at the
12 PACB hearing and all voiced their support for
13 the project and we understand the issues
14 related to the cost, and in fact we've gone so
15 far as to meet with the tenant association
16 leader of the Throgsneck [sic] Houses, which is
17 located right across the street, who again,
18 wanted the project and would love to be a part
19 of it. I personally met with her. Our Bronx
20 Commissioner has met with her. They've been
21 involved and they've been a part of this
22 process. So Council Member Vacca is strongly in
23 support of this project.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Oh, I'm
25 aware.

2 LARRY SCOTT-BLACKMON: And we've
3 toured the site with him, his staff and the
4 community several times. This is a public golf
5 course that will be open to the community, and
6 we look forward to its ultimate completion
7 sometime soon.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Are there
9 special considerations for the tenants living
10 across the street in terms of access to the
11 golf course, or will they too pay the 125
12 dollar admission fee?

13 LARRY SCOTT-BLACKMON: There were--
14 the tenants across the street will be involved.
15 Again, we've met with the tenant association
16 president. That's something that we would do.
17 The community park, which is right adjacent to
18 the golf course is beautiful, and it's
19 something that they clamored for and there are
20 additional plans for that area.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Could you
22 send me the specifics of the deal, the contract
23 or the concession, or the franchise whatever it
24 is with Trump, because my understanding is
25 he'll be running the golf course for the next

2 five years and getting all the proceeds from it
3 for the next five years, and then five years
4 from now we, the city, starts to see our money
5 coming back or no?

6 LIAM KAVANAGH: Yes, that is the
7 case.

8 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yeah, we can
9 send that to you.

10 LIAM KAVANAGH: It's a 20 year
11 license agreement. We'll be happy to share it
12 with you. The first five years of the payments
13 are deferred for maintenance that the
14 concessionaire Trump is performing on the golf
15 course to establish the turf, which is
16 something that we would normally have done
17 through the capital project, but because of the
18 timing of the concession agreement and their
19 expertise at managing golf courses. We
20 structured the deal in a way that makes that
21 payment to concession--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL:
23 [interposing] Well, we have other golf courses-
24 -

25 LIAM KAVANAGH: Excuse me?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: in the
3 city. We have other golf courses that we
4 maintain.

5 LIAM KAVANAGH: Yes, but they're all
6 operated by concessionaires.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And--
8 right, I'm finishing. Last question. So you're
9 going to send over the agreement, and shoot--I
10 may have to go to a third round. Go ahead.

11 LARRY SCOTT-BLACKMON: And just to--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

13 LARRY SCOTT-BLACKMON: Just to add to
14 add to that, the Trump organization contributed
15 a little over 10 million dollars towards the
16 capital cost of the course. Just for the
17 record.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Out of the 236
19 million. I don't think that was good.

20 LIAM KAVANAGH: No, that was in
21 addition.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: What I would
23 suggest is that you reach out to Council Member
24 Rosenthal and have a more informative meeting

25

2 with her on these details. Again, now we will
3 have our second round, Council Member Treyger.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you.
5 Commissioner Silver, at previous Parks
6 hearings, we had heard testimony that park land
7 sustained over 700 million dollars in capital
8 damage from super storm Sandy, to which I was
9 informed that little to none have been
10 reimbursed. We've been reimbursed to my
11 knowledge expense items, but to date are there
12 any figures that you have as far as
13 reimbursements for capital damage to park land?

14 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes, year to
15 date we received reimbursement approvals of
16 72.4 million in expense cost. We've already
17 received 33.5 million of that 72.4 million.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: So you've
19 received how many, 30?

20 COMMISSIONER SILVER: 33.5 in
21 reimbursement, but we're approved for up to
22 72.4 million.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And this is
24 for capital?

25

2 COMMISSIONER SILVER: These are for
3 in expense. These are expense costs.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: They're
5 reimbursements for capital damage as well?

6 COMMISSIONER SILVER: I'm told the
7 answer is yes.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: How much
9 have you received so far from capital
10 reimbursements?

11 [off mic]

12 COMMISSIONER SILVER: As--we haven't
13 received the reimbursements as of yet for
14 capital. That's expense.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay. So
16 over 700 million dollars in capital damage to
17 park lands, zero dollars reimbursed for capital
18 damage. Is that correct?

19 COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes, we'll
20 double check it and we'll follow up with you.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay. I
22 mean, that is a critical issue and we're
23 talking about equity and fairness. It is my
24 expectation that when we do hopefully we do
25 receive this money, and my committee separate

2 from this committee's will be following up on
3 this making sure that those monies go back to
4 the communities that sustained severe damage
5 from super storm Sandy, particularly like Coney
6 Island and parts of southern Brooklyn, other
7 parts of this city as well, Redhook and other
8 neighborhoods. I'd like to also just, you know,
9 point out that something that we learned from
10 the storm, there's Kaiser Park as you
11 mentioned--by the way, I applaud the Parks
12 Department. They did a great job on the It's My
13 Park Day. We had a lot of volunteers. It was
14 great, but there's a park house there, and one
15 thing that we learned from the park house is
16 that it did not flood during super storm Sandy,
17 and this is where I think coordination with the
18 Parks Department and OEM could be critical
19 because the evacuation center for Coney
20 Islanders and Sea Gate and people from Southern
21 Brooklyn actually is in Councilman Greenfield's
22 District, FDR High School, which is almost near
23 Borough Park, and they don't have the capacity
24 to accommodate all southern Brooklyn to go into
25 one school. If there are locations that we

1
2 could look at, maybe looking at turning the
3 park house or some area in that neighborhood
4 that did not flood into possibly a Parks and
5 Recreational Center, one of which--I don't know
6 of any in southern Brooklyn, a Parks and Rec
7 center. And so that could serve a multipurpose
8 in being a recreational facility affordable for
9 families in southern Brooklyn and serve as an
10 emergency center in the event, heaven forbid,
11 of another storm. And this is where I really
12 believe that coordination between your
13 department, OEM can play a crucial, and I'd
14 love to maybe hear any thoughts on that
15 proposal and idea. I don't know of any
16 recreational centers run by Parks in southern
17 Brooklyn. Am I correct on that?

18 LIAM KAVANAGH: Yes, you are
19 correct. We have the nature center and Marine
20 Park, but we don't have any formal recreation
21 centers in southern Brooklyn.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you,
23 and I look forward to following up on these
24 discussions. Thank you.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
3 Council Member Treyger, and Council Member
4 Rosenthal has a 15 second questions.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: It's
6 middle age muddle, you know. So, you'll get
7 there, Julissa. And just real quickly, so you
8 say it's going to be, the golf course is going
9 to be completed in two months, roughly August?

10 LIAM KAVANAGH: The construction
11 will be completed.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: The what?

13 LIAM KAVANAGH: The construction will
14 be completed within two months, but the course
15 will open for play next spring.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Why can't
17 it take advantage of the fall right now? Get--
18 start the revenues.

19 LIAM KAVANAGH: There's a grow-in
20 period that you have to let nature happen in
21 order for the course to be fully established
22 and--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL:
24 [interposing] And when does the concession
25 start, then? When they open the door or does

2 it, does the concession contract--I'm anxious
3 to get the five years completed so the city can
4 start getting some money in the door. When does
5 the contract--

6 LIAM KAVANAGH: [interposing] The
7 payments begin when the course opens for play.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
9 Council Member Rosenthal. And I'm sure she'll
10 have some more follow up questions, so don't go
11 anywhere. Thank you again. We're going to call
12 this part of the hearing to a close. Thank you
13 Commissioner. Congratulations, welcome aboard,
14 and I hope that we're able to get you any
15 additional questions, if you can get them back
16 to us so we can have them be part of the budget
17 negotiations, I would appreciate it. We're
18 going to take a two minute break, and we will
19 start with DEP.

20 [break]

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: We will now
22 resume the City Council's hearing on the
23 Mayor's executive budget, FY 2015. The Finance
24 Committee has now been joined by the Committee
25 on Environmental Protection chaired by my

1
2 colleague Council Member Donovan Richards to
3 hear from the Department of Environmental
4 Protection. I want to thank this moment to
5 thank the consideration of the Commissioner and
6 her staff. I know that we're running now
7 officially an hour late, so I thank you for
8 your patience. In the interest of time I will
9 forgo an opening statement and turn over the
10 mic to my Co-chair for a statement.

11 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay. Thank
12 you, Chairwoman Ferreras. Good afternoon. I am
13 Council Member Donovan Richards, Chair of the
14 Committee of Environmental Protection. This is
15 a hearing on the fiscal 2015 executive budget
16 for the Department of Environmental Protection
17 held jointly with the Committee of Finance.
18 Today, we will hear testimony from DEP about
19 its 1.2 billion dollar fiscal 2015 expense
20 budget, 9.2 billion dollar fiscal 2014 to 2018
21 capital commitment plan and general agency
22 operations. The Committee looks forward to
23 hearing about such important issues as an
24 update on the plan Delaware Aqueduct Bypass
25 Tunnel and preparations to minimize service

2 impacts, including restarting the Queens ground
3 water system, the status of building out new
4 sewers and replacements of old sewer lines and
5 the 1.2 billion dollar fiscal 2015 expense
6 budget, including 160 million dollars in
7 upstate property taxes. As a reminder, during
8 the executive budget hearing cycle all public
9 testimony is to be given at one hearing. This
10 year it will be held Friday, June 6th starting
11 at 4:00 p.m. to allow time for people to come
12 after traditional work hours. I would like to
13 introduce my colleagues in the Council who have
14 joined us from the committee, Council Member
15 Ulrich, Costa Constantinides, Miller, Council
16 Member Miller, Council Member Cohen, and
17 Council Member Rosenthal, and of course,
18 Council Member Ferreras. Thank you. We will
19 now--oh, I will let--do you do this or do I do
20 it?

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: You can do
22 it.

23 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay. I will
24 take pleasure in doing it. We will now hear
25 from the administration. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: Thank you, and
3 good afternoon, Chairpersons Ferreras and
4 Richards and members of the committee. I'm
5 Emily Lloyd, Commissioner of the New York City
6 Department of Environmental Protection, DEP,
7 and I'm joined today by Steven Lawitts on my
8 left, DEP's Chief Financial Officer, Joseph
9 Murin on my far left, DEP's Assistant
10 Commissioner for Budget, and on my right,
11 Deputy Commissioner Jim Roberts who is Deputy
12 Commissioner for the Bureau of Water and Sewer
13 Operations and we have other Deputy and
14 Assistant Commissions here as well so that when
15 in my state of relative newness when words fail
16 me, I can ask others to jump in. Thank you for
17 the opportunity to testify on the fiscal year
18 2015 executive budget. Before I review the
19 expense and capital budgets, I would like to
20 review with you briefly the water rate increase
21 adopted for fiscal year '15. Although we
22 understand that no increase is ever welcome,
23 the need to maintain and improve the delivery
24 of water and sewer service is critical. In the
25 absence of state and federal assistance for

2 drinking water and waste water infrastructure
3 water and sewer rates paid by our customers are
4 the only source of revenue to support this
5 service, which is essential for local public
6 health, quality of life and economic
7 development, and which is highly regulated by
8 state and federal governments. On April 23rd,
9 DEP proposed to the New York City Water Board a
10 3.35 percent increase in the water rate to take
11 effect on July 1. At its annual meeting on May
12 23rd, the Water Board adopted that rate
13 proposal. The adopted rate represents the
14 lowest increase in nine years and is less than
15 half the published projection of 7.8 percent
16 anticipated for fiscal year '15. We were able
17 to reduce the fiscal year rate increase by 57
18 percent compared to the projection last year
19 for the following reasons: Mayor de Blasio's
20 return of an additional 10 percent or 22
21 million dollars of the fiscal year '14 rental
22 payment to the water and sewer system. When
23 combined with the 14 million dollar that will
24 be returned as part of the rental return pilot
25 of the past three years that will bring it to a

2 total of 36 million dollars or 16.4 percent of
3 this fiscal year '14 rental payment. Strong
4 revenues; as of April 21, revenues were 166
5 million dollars or six percent ahead of
6 projections due in part to the substantial
7 completion of the automated meter reading
8 initiative. Negotiations with our regulators
9 have enabled us in some cases to better control
10 our capital budget. Debt service payments that
11 are 153 million dollars lower than projected
12 for fiscal year '14 due to continue low
13 interest rates, and finally our continued
14 commitment to efficiency and cost cutting while
15 improving the quality of services we provide to
16 New Yorkers. Under the adopted rate, a typical
17 single family homeowner will see an increase
18 from 992 dollars a year to 1,025 dollars a year
19 for water and sewer bills in fiscal year '15,
20 less than three dollar a month increase based
21 on an average consumption of 80,000 gallons of
22 water per year. A typical multi family unit in
23 a building with metered billing will see an
24 increase from 645 dollars per unit per year to
25 666, less than two dollars a month based on an

1 average consumption of 52,000 gallons of water
2 per year. Customers who use less than
3 approximately 100 gallons per year are billed
4 at a minimum charge of one dollar and 27 cents
5 per day, which has been frozen from fiscal year
6 '14 rate and will not increase at all in fiscal
7 year '15. Approximately 25 percent of single
8 family bills are issued at the minimum charge.
9 So a large percentage of our customers will
10 benefit from the freezing of this rate. DEP is
11 also implementing a number of additional
12 measures to improve service and make it easier
13 for rate payers to pay their bills, including
14 creation of a low income assistance program,
15 expansion of the leak forgiveness program,
16 freezing of the minimum charge, extension of
17 the deadline for customers to file an appeal
18 with the Water Board, halting the lien sale
19 process for customers with a pending appeal and
20 suspension of interest for customers with a
21 catch-up bill after automated meter reader
22 installation. The projected expense budget for
23 the current fiscal year, fiscal year '14, is
24 one billion--1.57 billion dollars. This
25

1 includes approximately 372 million dollars in
2 community development block grant funds for the
3 Build it Back program and 84 million dollars
4 and other Sandy related funds for which DEP
5 serves as the contracting entity for the city.
6

7 For fiscal year '15 we expect DEP's expense
8 budget to be 1.12 billion, a net increase of 60
9 million from the preliminary budget estimate.

10 Highlights of the net changes to the

11 preliminary budget include the following: an

12 increase of 13.3 million dollars to the Water

13 for the Future Water Conservation Program,

14 which is related to the Delaware Aqueduct

15 shutdown that is planned as part of the repair

16 of the Rondout-West Branch Tunnel; increases

17 totaling 11 million dollars for equipment

18 repairs at the wastewater treatment plants; in

19 maintenance contracts with the Croton

20 filtration plant and the Third Water Tunnel;

21 and for costs related to the capacity

22 management operations and maintenance or CMOM

23 program; an increase of 8.3 million dollars to

24 fund investigated studies related to the EPA

25 listed super fund sites that the Gowanus Canal

1 and at Newtown Creek; a 7.3 million dollar
2 increase related to items that now have to be
3 listed as expensive based on the Comptroller's
4 Directive 10, which governs capital
5 eligibility; projected increases of 4.6 million
6 dollars in property taxes for land owned in the
7 upstate water sheds; savings of 12.5 million
8 from re-estimates of the heat, light and power
9 and fuel budgets for the Agency; and finally,
10 savings from biosolids of three million dollars
11 as a result of new, lower price contracts. The
12 expense budget breaks down into the following
13 large categories: Personal services; the
14 fiscal year 2015 budget projects 455 million
15 dollars, 39 percent of the total in personal
16 services to pay the salaries of our nearly
17 6,000 funded positions. As with other agencies,
18 changes in employee benefits are not shown in
19 individual agencies. Taxes on upstate
20 watershed lands make up the next largest
21 category, accounting for 160 million dollars or
22 nearly 15 percent of the expense budget. The
23 ownership of watershed lands represents a
24 critical investment in maintaining the high
25

2 quality of New York City's drinking water by
3 protecting it as the source and ensuring that
4 it does not require more expensive treatment
5 such as filtration. I am pleased to report that
6 we have successfully negotiated agreements with
7 upstate jurisdictions to make our tax
8 obligations more stable and predictable and in
9 some cases to reduce them. Heat, light and
10 power, DEP's energy costs account for 101
11 million dollars or 10 percent of the fiscal
12 year '15 expense budget. DEP is the third
13 largest municipal consumer of electric power in
14 New York City after the Department of Education
15 and the Health and Hospitals Corporation, and
16 our consumption will grow as we bring new
17 treatment facilities online for both drinking
18 water and waste water. To control energy costs
19 and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, DEP is
20 investing in projects to reduce energy needs.
21 One of these is a co-generation plant at the
22 North River Wastewater Treatment Plant that I
23 will mention shortly. Chemicals such as
24 chlorine and fluoride that are used in the
25 treatment of drinking water and other chemicals

2 used during the wastewater treatment process
3 account for 53 million dollars, which is five
4 percent of our total budget. Finally,
5 management of 1,200 tons per day of sludge is
6 projected to cost about 37 million dollars in
7 fiscal year '15, or about four percent of our
8 projected fiscal year '15 expenses. DEP's
9 fiscal '15 capital budget is 7.6 billion
10 dollars for fiscal years '15 through '18 as
11 presented by Mayor de Blasio on May 8th, 2014.
12 Highlights of the four year plan are as
13 follows: The four year plan projects that 2.7
14 billion investment in wastewater treatment
15 projects, 2.2 billion of which is for the
16 reconstruction or replacement of components of
17 the wastewater treatment plants and pumping
18 stations. The remaining 525 million dollar
19 investment will be used to mitigate combined
20 sewer overflows with 360 million dollars for
21 green infrastructure such as green roofs and
22 bioswales and the reminder for gray
23 infrastructure such as improvements to aeration
24 systems at English Kills and regulator
25 modifications in Newtown Creek and Flushing

2 Bay. In addition, 175 million dollars is
3 budgeted for the construction of a new co-
4 generation plant the North River Wastewater
5 Treatment Plant. The new co-generation plant
6 will use renewable digester gas produced by the
7 wastewater treatment process to both power
8 equipment and heat the facility. It will help
9 us reduce our energy use and help the city meet
10 the ambitious greenhouse gas emission reduction
11 goal of PlaNYC. Over the next four years, the
12 Administration is proposing to invest an
13 additional two billion dollars in protecting
14 the quality of our reservoirs and the integrity
15 of our dams and maintaining and repairing the
16 water main system conveying potable water to
17 all New Yorkers. We have budgeted 253 million
18 dollars for the reconstruction of dams in our
19 three watersheds and 16 million dollars to
20 pressurize a two in one half mile segment of
21 the Catskill Aqueduct, which will increase the
22 volume of water available to the city and re-
23 establish DEP's ability to bypass Kensico
24 Reservoir when necessary to access the highest
25 quality water. For the continuation of our

2 current Filtration Avoidance Determination
3 Program, the fiscal year '15 through '18
4 capital plan includes 194 million dollars
5 covering all our capital needs for the current
6 Filtration Avoidance Plan or FAP, including 90
7 million dollars for land acquisition upstate.
8 Storm sewers either new or reconstructed
9 account for 521 million dollars of projected
10 spending of which 163 million dollars is for
11 high level storm sewers including Third Avenue
12 in Brooklyn, and 192 million dollars of the
13 total is for both the conventional sewers and
14 the lands necessary to create Bluebelt systems
15 which are being extended beyond Staten Island
16 to Springfield Lake in Queens, Van Cortlandt
17 Park and the New York Botanical Garden as well
18 as other locations. I'd like to mention a
19 couple of important capital projects planned
20 for each borough. In Queens, the executive
21 budget allocated a total of 1.2 billion dollars
22 for projects of all types. Sewers account for
23 272 million dollars. Work on two shaft sites
24 connected with the Brooklyn/Queens section of
25 City Water Tunnel Three is budgeted for 43

2 million dollars. We project 143 million
3 dollars to evaluate, assess and restore ground
4 water wells in southeast Queens for the purpose
5 of providing additional water during the
6 Rondout Bypass Construction and during any
7 drought or other instances in which the city's
8 surface water supplies are not adequate. In
9 Staten Island, the executive budget projects a
10 total of 492 million dollars of which 321
11 million is for sewers and 182 million for the
12 Bluebelt program. The Snug Harbor Bluebelt
13 Project is budgeted for 23.9 million dollars.
14 Repairs to the Oakwood Beach Wastewater
15 Treatment Plant and to the Hannah Street
16 pumping station are projected to cost 79.6
17 million dollars. I note that the executive
18 budget does not include the cost of repairing
19 damage to the Staten Island siphon project
20 caused by Sandy. The cost of the damage to
21 that project which will replace the two
22 existing underwater siphons that supply
23 drinking water to Staten Island are under
24 discussion. Some of the cost may be covered by
25 the contractor's insurance. We are expecting

1 that the federal government will cover any
2 uninsured costs. In the Bronx, the executive
3 budget projects 533 million dollars of capital
4 spending from fiscal year '15 through '18.
5 Approximately 143 million is budgeted for the
6 Hunts Point wastewater treatment plant
7 including 50 million dollars for new
8 centrifuges and 91 million dollars for new
9 digesters. Restoration of the Mosholu Driving
10 Range Club House and related work is budgeted
11 for 46 million dollars in fiscal year '15. To
12 reduce combined sewer overflows in Pugsley
13 Creek and on the Long Island Sound, DEP has
14 budgeted 72 million dollars in fiscal year 2015
15 for construction of the parallel sewer that
16 will divert flow away from the creek. In
17 Manhattan, the executive budget allocates 720
18 million dollars between fiscal year '15 and
19 '18. The largest single project is the 175
20 million dollar co-generation project at the
21 North River Wastewater Treatment Plant. As
22 mentioned above, the cogeneration project will
23 replace existing equipment for recycling
24 digester gas with a more efficient system that
25

2 will allow more of the plant's energy needs to
3 be generated by the plant itself, thereby
4 reducing energy costs and air emissions.

5 Another 270 million is for the several projects
6 at the Ward's Island Wastewater Treatment
7 Plant, reconstruction of final tanks,
8 reconstruction of the boiler complex and
9 installation of new de-watering centrifuges. In
10 addition to the funds budgeted for City Water
11 Tunnel Number Three mentioned previously, 160
12 million will fund the construction of water
13 mains connecting two of the City Water Tunnel
14 Three shafts with a local water distribution
15 system. In Brooklyn, the executive budget
16 includes 860 million dollars of planned
17 commitments, the 26 Ward Wastewater Treatment
18 plant, and associated sewer work to reduce
19 CSO's into Fresh Creek account for 282 million.
20 An additional 102 million is projected in
21 fiscal year '18 for Coney Island sewers. I want
22 to take this opportunity to remind the
23 committees that DEP remains concerned about
24 unfunded state and federal mandates that
25 threaten our ability to provide real value and

2 services for every dollar we receive from our
3 rate payers. As you know, we've expressed doubt
4 about the timing or need for certain federally
5 mandated projects that place enormous pressure
6 on the rates. For example, we do not believe
7 that building a concrete cover over Hill's View
8 Reservoir in Yonkers at the cost in excess of a
9 billion dollars is necessary to protect our
10 drinking water, but a blanket EPA rule that we
11 do not agree applies to our system says
12 otherwise. We are very involved in sponsoring
13 scientific research and in promoting sensible
14 solutions and we are certainly committed above
15 all to protecting public health. I do not want
16 to close without saying a word about our plans
17 to become more resilient. In October 2013 on
18 the first anniversary of hurricane Sandy, DEP
19 released the New York City Wastewater
20 Resiliency Plan, a comprehensive assessment of
21 the risk that climate change poses to our
22 wastewater collection and treatment system. The
23 study initiated in 2011 and expanded after
24 hurricane Sandy was based on an asset by asset
25 analysis of the risks from storm surge under

2 new flood maps at all 14 treatment plants and
3 58 pumping stations representing more than one
4 billion in infrastructure. If no action is
5 taken, we project that damage to the equipment
6 from repeated coastal flooding at projected
7 rising sea levels could exceed two billion
8 dollars over the next 50 years. We estimate
9 that if we invest 315 million dollars now to
10 protect valuable equipment and minimize
11 disruptions to critical services during future
12 storms, we will help protect this
13 infrastructure from the two billion dollar plus
14 in repeated flooding losses. We anticipate that
15 we will receive approximately 200 million
16 dollars in combined zero interest loans and
17 grants through the storm mitigation loan
18 program being administered by New York State to
19 support this effort. DEP will coordinate this
20 work with the broader coastal projection
21 initiative such as engineered barriers in
22 wetlands described in the 2013 report, "A
23 Stronger and More Resilient New York," and
24 continue to implement the drinking water and
25 drainage strategies identified in the report to

2 mitigate the impacts of future extreme weather
3 events and climate change. On behalf of the
4 almost 6,000 employees of DEP who make a
5 difference each and every day for our
6 environment, I want to thank the Chairs for
7 their support of our agency and express our
8 continued commitment to work with the Council
9 and your committees going forward. That
10 completes my prepared statement. Thank you so
11 much for the opportunity to present testimony
12 and for your patience in listening and I look
13 forward to answering your questions.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
15 Commissioner Lloyd. I'm going to ask two
16 capital questions very specific with budget
17 details and then something on my dear Flushing
18 Bay. And we'll then pass it over to my co-
19 chair. So I want to talk about the accuracy in
20 forecasting in the capital commitment plan. You
21 know, I understand that you've engaged in some
22 very positive steps forward. The DOP rolled out
23 some capital funding from fiscal 2014 to fiscal
24 2017 and 2018 and not all--you didn't front
25 load it into fiscal '15, and I know that's part

2 of the Administration's vision moving forward
3 with capital plans. This in line with
4 transparency measures that the council called
5 for, to move commitment forecast to the outer
6 years. How confident are you seeing within your
7 five year plan the accuracy represents timing
8 of capital dollars? However, DEP's fiscal 2015
9 allocation of three billion dollars and 316.3
10 million dollars of which was rolled to fiscal--
11 from fiscal 2014 still seem quite large. How
12 confident are you that you will be able to
13 commit most of the three million--of this three
14 billion dollars which is doable, the 1.4
15 billion that DEP was able to commit to in
16 fiscal '13? So that was a lot. How confident
17 are we that you're going to spend--obviously
18 your capital investments are huge. You're
19 probably one of our larger agencies with your
20 capital commitments. We weren't able to
21 successfully spend down in 2014. Now I know
22 that you're pushing things out. How confident
23 can we be in this council that you will spend
24 your 1.5 billion in 2015?

2 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: Well, I'm sure
3 you know we are as concerned about this as you
4 are, and we recognize three billion dollars as
5 a very large number. I think that our goal is
6 always to achieve as close to 100 percent
7 commitment as we can, but we know historically
8 we've committed about 75 percent of our capital
9 plan. In fiscal year 15 we very optimistic
10 because one-third of the capital plan consists
11 of just six big projects, and we feel confident
12 that those projects are in good shape to get
13 committed. I'll just mention a couple of them.
14 They may sound familiar to you. One, I've
15 already mentioned the Delaware Rondout Aqueduct
16 Tunnel. We're already starting work on that. We
17 feel that that is going to move ahead at the
18 rate that we have projected so far. Another is
19 the 26 Ward primary settling tank and solids
20 handling. Again, we're quite comfortable that
21 that project--well, I wouldn't--I don't ever
22 like to say comfortable. We're very optimistic.
23 We're quite confident that that project that we
24 know was going to--is going to entail and that
25 we would be able to get it committed and keep

2 moving it ahead. The parallel sewers that we've
3 been doing are actually less complicated
4 projects and we are able to get those out more
5 quickly than in some of the past projects. And
6 another big one is this wastewater cogeneration
7 project at North River, which we're giving a
8 lot of attention to. So for that, for those
9 projects we feel and speaking as someone who
10 was a DEP before and now and away and then
11 back, when we had those mega projects that we
12 were trying to get done at the fever sheet
13 [sic] of construction where we were actually
14 competing against ourselves to get contractors
15 and to get the work done, we had at times a
16 hard time keeping them moving forward at the
17 pace we wanted to. Sometimes we rebid a
18 contract trying to get a lower price for
19 example, but with these projects, we feel that
20 the size is such that we really have our brain
21 around them. They're not as complex as perhaps
22 the Croton filtration plant was, and that we
23 are really well on our way to having those in
24 hand and ready to be committed. The other
25 projects are numerous and smaller, and on those

2 I think it's really a question of our
3 marshalling our resources to make sure that we
4 are working with all of our sister agencies to
5 make sure that they don't get stuck along the
6 way to getting approved by OMB or signed off by
7 the Mayor's office, contracts all of which are
8 important things to do, but they have to be
9 followed every step of the way so that they
10 don't get slowed down. What we are planning to
11 do, we feel that we have a lot of capacity now
12 to focus on that, but we want to make sure that
13 we calibrate. We are going to be looking at the
14 capital plan every quarter and making sure that
15 we're on top of things, and we will know early
16 if there's any problem we think, if there's a
17 problem developing with a significant number of
18 projects. But at this point we feel optimistic
19 that we can move ahead with a significant
20 portion of them.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And I know
22 that you highlighted some, what was your
23 process in choosing one or, yeah, choosing one
24 project over another and what was your
25 priority? What was your measurables? Because

2 we all have to respond to the community and I
3 know that DEP isn't always a thing that people
4 see, but when it breaks down it's the first
5 that people feel.

6 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: Right. We over
7 the past, I take no credit for this because it
8 was not while I was there, but DEP over the
9 past few years did an asset evaluation process.
10 They looked at all of the parts of all the
11 equipment they have, whether it's at a
12 wastewater treatment plant or it's a regulator
13 in the water supply system, and they evaluated
14 the condition it was in, the risk that it would
15 fail within a certain amount of time, and the
16 amount of disruption that would come with that
17 failure, either to a treatment process or
18 service to customers. And based on the
19 likelihood of failure and the magnitude of the
20 negative effect of a failure, they ranked all
21 of the assets in descending order, from most
22 urgent to slightly less urgent, and so that's
23 been the basis for what goes to the top of the
24 list and we're happy to share that information,
25 but it's actually been done in a pretty

2 systematic way to try to both get at the things
3 that are most likely to fail and the ones that
4 are most likely to really cause a lot of
5 problems.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: If you can
7 share that with the committee we'd appreciate
8 it. Now I want--and thank you for addressing
9 the water rates. It was actually something that
10 I was going to ask, but you very clearly spoke
11 about it in the testimony, the only anxiety
12 that we have is with such a large capital
13 investment plan do you foresee any
14 opportunities to provide relief in perhaps
15 being able to waive the rate or, you know,
16 having something kind of going the other
17 direction to relieve or homeowners. I find it
18 a little bit challenging with the capital needs
19 that we have forecasted.

20 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: And we worry
21 about that as well. The rates have gone up
22 quite a lot over the past few years and I have
23 to say that I advocated for that and really set
24 it in motion because I felt the agency was
25 underfunded for both the capital work it had to

2 do and to operate, to clean out the catch
3 basins more frequently, to make sure that we
4 had the staff to respond to water main breaks
5 as quickly as we wanted to. I really felt the
6 agency was not as strong as it needed to be and
7 I think we made a case and were able to
8 convince people to let us increase rates. That
9 is tapering off now. A big piece of what has
10 driven the rate increases has been the debt,
11 and that has been driven by these very, very
12 large mandates coming from the two basic pieces
13 of federal legislation that drive all of the
14 wastewater and drinking water operations. And
15 as the borrowing [sic] from those huge projects
16 went up in the mid oughts [sic]. That's now
17 really continuing to grow out, because the old
18 debt that we're retiring from the early days of
19 the water board 30 years ago are maybe 500
20 million dollars a year, and what we were adding
21 back in the mid oughts [sic] might be--what was
22 the most a year? 3.7 billion dollars. So that
23 is still--that's still gaining on us and will
24 be for a while. The position we're in now is
25 that we have a bit of a break. I never--it

2 won't go away forever, but we have a bit of a
3 break in the mandates. We've caught up a little
4 bit, but now we have to play a lot of catch up
5 on other things like drainage problems in areas
6 that are under sewerred, and so we don't want to
7 say, "Oh, thank goodness we've finished Newtown
8 Creek. Good, we can, you know, not increase
9 the water rate and we just won't do those
10 sewers." Because they've been waiting to get
11 done. We now would like to pick up the pace on
12 some of those things, not that we stopped doing
13 them altogether, but we weren't able to do as
14 much as we would have liked to have done. So
15 now we feel that it's an opportunity to play
16 catch up. I think it would be great if we could
17 have a sit down and really talk through the
18 projects and the ones that we feel urgently we
19 want to keep funding our capital project, in
20 our capital program that keeps it as large as
21 it is and why we're so reluctant to drop them
22 or defer them for much longer. Because we also,
23 we do very much worry about the affordability
24 of the water rate. We've looked across the
25 country at things that other people do. Let me

2 just mention a couple things that I mentioned
3 very quickly that goes to your question, I
4 think. One is a program that we are going to
5 roll out similar to the HEAP [sic] program.
6 It's the homeowner water assistance program. We
7 are going to ask HRA to use the exact same
8 criteria for certifying homeowners to be
9 eligible for that program and then we will
10 through the city budget provide a way for
11 people to get a credit against their water bill
12 so that that will bring down their water bill
13 if they can register and show that they have a
14 real need, and we think that that will be a
15 significant number of people and many of them
16 will be single family homeowners and many of
17 them will be elderly, which are many of the
18 people that have trouble paying their water
19 bills. They're on a fixed income. They're not
20 using that much water but sometimes they'll
21 have a leak in the house, and, you know,
22 they're all--all the problems that go with
23 that. So we think--we're very eager to see how
24 that's going to help. We think that's going to
25 make a difference, and then the other is the

2 expansion of the leak forgiveness program.
3 About 25 percent of the inquiries we get
4 typically saying there's something wrong with
5 my water bill. Go to leaks in faucets in
6 toilets. Here to for we would not reimburse
7 people for those costs or forgive those costs
8 because we thought the homeowners should be
9 aware of that happening. You know, you hear the
10 toilet running. You can see the leak, but in
11 fact that doesn't happen. People, you know,
12 until they realize how much it's going to cost
13 them may not pay close attention to it. So now
14 we are putting in place an expanded program
15 that those leaks as well, if people will just
16 show us that they've had it fixed, we will then
17 forgive the cost. And so we think that's also
18 going to help out a lot, especially in some
19 older properties. So I'm probably going on too
20 much. That's too great a length.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: No, not at
22 all.

23 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: But we share
24 your concern and are trying to find ways to
25

2 make it, to give some support to the property
3 owners who are having a hard time.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I mean, you've
5 delivered fantastic news, and you know, we'd
6 probably be jumping in our chairs if it wasn't
7 so late. But the homeowner's assistance program
8 I think is going to be a huge relief and the
9 forgiveness program, because it is overwhelming
10 for people to find out that they have a leak by
11 their bill and not understanding, you know, we
12 have old homes and a whole host of other
13 issues. I would just urge you and seeing in
14 ways how we can work with some families that
15 may be on the brink of getting into the lien
16 because of their water rates, and perhaps, I
17 know that you're working with HRA, but seeing
18 how we can find some opportunities working with
19 the Department of Finance to see we're able to
20 help some of those families before they go into
21 a lien sale or get into further trouble and the
22 potential of them losing their homes because
23 they didn't pay a water bill.

24

25

2 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: And we share
3 that interest. We think we don't have the skill
4 set to make judgments about--

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing]
6 Right.

7 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: you know, who
8 should--

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: [interposing]
10 Who's what, right.

11 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: So that's why we
12 turn to HRA to say you're good at doing this,
13 help us out. And I think it might be them. It
14 might be somebody else like finance, because
15 they also have programs, but I--we agree that
16 that's the next round of things we should look
17 at.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Great, that's
19 totally making sense. I'm going to ask my last
20 question which is very important to my
21 constituents, and I think anybody flying out of
22 La Guardia airport or at City Field watching a
23 game or at the USTA or walking in the
24 promenade, and that is the putrid stench that
25 come from Flushing Bay. And I know that you

1 were at DEP so I'm sure you heard this already,
2 and the attempts and the cost of fixing the
3 situation. I had spoken with the former Borough
4 President Claire Schulman, former Borough
5 President Helen Marshall, and they've all tried
6 to take a stab at this issue, and now I'm
7 challenging you and everyone else that's
8 involved with helping. You know, there's some
9 stories that was created by the Port Authority
10 because of the famous finger and the expansion
11 of the runways; that the Army Corps of
12 Engineers has something to do with it. There
13 was an investment of creating something to help
14 mitigate the sewage, but the reality is we have
15 raw sewage spilling from all directions into
16 the bay and for homeowners they don't
17 understand, including myself, we don't
18 understand nor do we want to figure out how it
19 got there. We just want to know how it's going
20 to be fixed, because after a storm I wake in my
21 home, which is about maybe two miles away, and
22 I can smell that coming in through the sewer
23 system. I can smell the bay. Or just driving,
24 or going for a walk in the promenade at our--in
25

2 Flushing Meadows Corona Park and you can't walk
3 because of the stench. And it has to do with
4 low tide, high tide. I'm sure you can speak to
5 the complexities of it. How much is this going
6 to cost to fix this? Do we know how to fix
7 this? And I would hope that that's maybe one
8 of your priorities coming up the pipe.

9 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: It is probably
12 not only caused by CSO's but certainly
13 contributed to significantly, and the project
14 that is underway to try to address that is a
15 dredging project, to dredge sediment because
16 now there are mounds of sediment, and the
17 sediment may not all be CSO material, but the
18 CSO permeates it, and it traps the odors. And
19 so--and Flushing Bay does not flush because of,
20 you know--I'm always happy to have the
21 opportunity to blame the Port Authority for
22 something, but--my former employer, but I think
23 that in fact the dredging is going to be the
24 most immediate thing we can do. If that does
25 not solve the problem, we'll have to go on to

2 the next thing, but that is currently being
3 designed. It's at about 30 percent of the
4 design. We think it's going to cost about 50
5 million dollars to do the dredging, and the
6 schedule we have right now is that we are meant
7 to have. It's slightly more complicated than
8 one would like to think to do this properly,
9 but we'll have partial design of the dredging
10 operation by spring 2015. We think we'll have
11 design by that fall, and then we are meant to
12 have--I don't have the exact date, but we're
13 meant to get the notice to proceed out within a
14 fixed amount of time after that. Now, during
15 dredging there will be odors as well. So, you
16 know, it gets--stays as bad and maybe even gets
17 a little worse before it gets better, but we
18 think that is going to go a very long way to
19 solving this problem.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Which is
21 absolutely fine as long as I'm able to give
22 communication to the residents and so that we
23 can tell people ahead of time that there's a
24 light at the end, or there's, you know, fresh
25 air at the end of the tunnel. So I'd love to

2 work with you to make sure that we're giving
3 notice through this process, and this is
4 something that's very eagerly awaited by my
5 constituents, so I will--

6 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: [interposing]
7 And we will be happy to share all that
8 information with you so that you can share with
9 your constituents.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Excellent. I
11 am now going to give it over to my Co-chair,
12 Council Member Richards.

13 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Well, good
14 afternoon. I think we heard a lot of good news
15 today.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: So far. But
18 we're going to try to get into a little bit
19 more specifics. So the first question I will
20 raise is on the catch basins, and wanted to
21 know have you guys allocated more money into
22 catch basin cleaning? In particular especially
23 in the event of the last few storms that we've
24 had. I know Council Member Ulrich is here. I
25 know that he had some major flooding in Howard

2 Beach and I know that we in particular get
3 flooded a lot in particular areas in Rosedale
4 and Springfield as you know and Saint Albins
5 [sic] and other places, and wanted to know what
6 are you guys looking to do differently in this
7 budget in terms of catch basin cleaning?

8 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: So I am going to
9 ask Deputy Commissioner Jim Roberts to respond
10 to your question because he will be much more
11 complete than I'm able to be.

12 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay.

13 JIM ROBERTS: Chairman, thank you.
14 On the question of allocating additional
15 funding to catch basin cleaning, we really
16 don't have a direct line for catch basin
17 cleaning per say. It falls under the general
18 funds for all the maintenance work that we do.
19 What we have done or what we have seen over the
20 last several years really is that the number of
21 complaints relative to catch basin flooding
22 have really trended down, and we attribute that
23 to a number of things, not the least of which
24 is a more robust sort of programmatic sewer
25 cleaning and just really paying more focused

1 attention to the areas of, you know, concern.
2 As relates to the Lindenwood [sic] area in
3 Council Member Ulrich's district and also on
4 the Brooklyn side as well, that was a problem
5 not associated really with the, if you will,
6 the sewer infrastructure in the street as much
7 as it was a malfunction with one of the CSO
8 plants that is in Spring Creek there. So that
9 was an issue with the computer hardware there
10 at that. So the catch basin per say wouldn't
11 have anything to do with that.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay. So the
14 city was liable for that in other words?

15 JIM ROBERTS: I'm sorry?

16 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: The city was
17 liable for that issue?

18 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: I think what
19 we're supposed to say to answer that properly
20 is that we have--our indication was that there
21 was a malfunction. We will send--we're
22 completing that report. We will send it to the
23 Comptroller. They make a determination--

24 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: [interposing]
25 Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: of that.

3 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: So, catch--so
4 I understand in the general budget, you're
5 saying that catch basin clean, and I under--I'm
6 going to differ with you on the catch basin
7 issue, because a lot of resident, quite
8 frankly, who have catch basins are sick and
9 tired of calling 311. And we get a lot of that
10 in our communities, matter of fact. And I want
11 to thank you guys. I was just at a
12 constituent's home in Far Rock Away, in
13 particular, a few weeks ago and they were
14 calling to get their catch basin cleaned out,
15 and unfortunately it was not cleaned out in
16 time and it caused a major issue with their
17 line and their home was flooded. So, you know,
18 I'm going to differ with you because a lot of
19 our constituents, in particular in southern
20 Queens in particular I know for sure are tired
21 of calling 311. So I would hope that we're
22 really going to look at catch basin maintenance
23 more than we have in the past, and I think, you
24 know, right now that's unacceptable because we
25 understand that although 311 complaints may

2 have decreased, we know our constituents are
3 calling us any time there's a major rain and
4 complain about catch basin clean up.

5 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: I think that
6 the thing that has improved is that we have
7 allocated more resources. There's not a line in
8 the budget, but we--ten years ago the cycle on
9 which we actually went in and inspected catch
10 basins and cleaned them out if they needed it.
11 They don't always need it, sometimes they just
12 function perfectly or almost perfectly, was
13 almost laughable. Now, we do get around to all
14 of them to check them on a regular time basis
15 so frequently. We do think in some areas we're
16 having a lot fewer problems with the catch when
17 there's a lot of rain with the catch basin not
18 working because it's actually clogged in some
19 way. One problem that we are having, but I
20 think we have to continue to improve that and
21 continue to--I'm very eager if people are
22 capable of going online to have them go online
23 with complaints rather than call it in, because
24 then there's a record of it even if sometimes
25 the operator says we already have that one, and

2 they don't wait to get a number, and I do like
3 to have all the numbers of how many people
4 actually had a problem. But the other thing
5 that we're getting and I think it's--we're
6 thinking about how to do an effective outreach
7 that doesn't appear, doesn't seem to say that
8 we're trying to slough off our responsibility
9 because we're not, but one of the problems that
10 we do have with the kinds of storms we're
11 getting, these more intense storm cells, they
12 really scour the street and they wash any
13 debris from the trees, which there is nine
14 months out of the year usually, plus any other
15 trash that's in the street, and they wash it
16 down and it mats on top of the catch basin, and
17 then that impedes how much water can go into
18 the catch basins. So one of the things we
19 really, I really hope to do, I'm not sure
20 anyone agrees with me yet is to really do some
21 outreach around having people in neighborhoods
22 just, 'cause we can't go out every time it says
23 it's going to rain and check 180,000 catch
24 basins. We can go to the trouble areas, typical
25 trouble areas and check on them and try to make

2 sure there are no problems, but if we could
3 just get people routinely if they live near a
4 catch basin to have a look. It's not that hard
5 to just take the stuff off the top, and you
6 know, put it in a bag and put it in the
7 garbage. That can make a huge difference.

8 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay. I will--
9 we'll speak about that--

10 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: [interposing]
11 We'll talk about it more.

12 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: in terms as we
13 move on, but I'm hoping that, you know, we're
14 certainly going to make a bigger effort in
15 terms of catch basin maintenance. Second
16 question I had was on the clean heat program,
17 which was funded in I believe '14. Are you
18 guys moving forward with that particular
19 program?

20 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: Yes, I'm going
21 to--yes, we think we are. I'm going to ask
22 Deputy Commissioner Lawitts to answer.

23 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay.

24 STEVEN LAWITTS: Thank you. Yes,
25 Mr. Chair, we have a contract for approximately

2 1.4 million dollars with the Environmental
3 Defense Fund to provide outreach and advisory
4 services to building owners for conversion to
5 clean heat. That contract expires at the end of
6 this fiscal year, but we are consistent with
7 the Mayor's announcement last week that the
8 program is being extended. We are looking to
9 renew that contract as quickly as possible.

10 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay, great.
11 That's good news. The question I had was on
12 enforcement, and I know that I've brought this
13 issue up before in terms of really working with
14 building owners in particular in neighborhoods
15 like East Harlem and The Bronx to make sure
16 that they're really moving to convert from
17 number six to four or four to two. And are we
18 seeing progress with that, and are we going to
19 see more enforcement from DEP on that
20 particular issue? In those particular areas
21 especially where air quality, where we have
22 high asthma rates.

23 STEVEN LAWITTS: So in terms of the
24 resources devoted to air enforcement which also
25 includes noise enforcement, we have 44

1 inspectors, and we can provide you specific
2 numbers of notices of violations we found.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: One of the
5 things I raised at the preliminary budget
6 hearing was my concern with the low amount of
7 enforcement agents that we have. I mean, we
8 have eight million New Yorkers or over that,
9 and divide 44 into five boroughs, how are they
10 effectively being served with 44 enforcement
11 agents? And you know, Commissioner, I know you
12 said that we would look to do better. Are we
13 really going to look to do better?

14 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: Well, I think
15 that the numbers we've been looking at is how
16 many have been converting and we're seeing a
17 not--you know, we're seeing a steady trend
18 towards conversion, and I think we mentioned at
19 the last hearing that the--we have made an
20 agreement. I'm not exactly sure the legal way
21 to describe it, but with the environmental
22 control board that if, rather than having to
23 issue three notices of violation before they
24 will issue a cease and desist, they will do it
25 after one if it's not cured after that one

2 notice of violation. So that's shortening the
3 amount of time it takes to get people to come
4 into compliance significantly. So we think
5 we're seeing an acceleration in the pace of
6 people coming into compliance. The other thing
7 we looked at is the buildings that are in
8 noncompliance are fairly concentrated. So
9 that's actually an advantage to us in terms of
10 enforcement because it's much more efficient to
11 get around in a relatively small geographic
12 area. So at this point we have not added slots
13 for enforcement, but we're watching it very
14 closely and we'd be glad to share those numbers
15 with you in the terms of the number of
16 buildings that have come into compliance and
17 the numbers of buildings still to go and how
18 many violations we've done because I think
19 you'll be encouraged. You may not be satisfied,
20 but I think you'll be encouraged that we're
21 making progress.

22 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: So you're
23 saying the 44 enforcement agents do both air
24 and noise?
25

2 STEVEN LAWITTS: That's correct, and
3 I forgot to add earlier that we were also
4 funded, the Mayor funded us for about 1.2
5 million dollars in overtime for this group of
6 agents, so that provides the equivalent number
7 of post to about 10 additional agents. So
8 almost at 25 percent increase in output.

9 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: So, how many
10 noise complaints did we get last year in New
11 York City? Do you have those numbers?

12 STEVEN LAWITTS: Yeah, as I said
13 earlier, we'll provide you with the details of
14 the noise complaints and air complaints.

15 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: And I believe
16 noise com--what'd you say, noise complaints
17 were the number one 311 issue?

18 STEVEN LAWITTS: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: So do you
20 think 44 enforcement agents are a sufficient
21 amount of agents to deal with noise--to deal
22 with noise? If it's the number one complaint.

23 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: I do think that
24 we have, and I apologize I don't have the
25 numbers with me today, but we do have fairly

1
2 ambitious goals in terms of how quickly we
3 respond to noise complaints. As you know, many
4 of them have to be scheduled responses. It's--
5 you know, if it's a night club we have to go on
6 a Saturday night, we can't go on a Tuesday
7 afternoon, because it's going be quiet as a
8 mouse. And so the noise complaints frequently
9 can be and have to be scheduled at very odd
10 hours. So that makes it easier during the
11 business day if we have overtime for the
12 inspectors to go around and be doing
13 inspections of the building. So we thought--we
14 think we're making good progress, but you know,
15 we'll be willing to hear that we're not, that
16 you're not satisfied with that. If you don't
17 feel like you're starting to see numbers that
18 seem like we're making--gaining ground as
19 quickly as possible.

20 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: So, I don't
21 want to beat a dead horse, but 44, and I
22 understand overtime, but I cannot remember and
23 Daneek probably can when he speaks can raise
24 this too, I've never seen a DEP noise
25 enforcement agent in my community, and I worked

1 in the Council for almost 11 years. So, and my
2 constituents also, because this is a big issue
3 in particular especially as we approach summer
4 in southern queens because we got a lot of back
5 yards. We get the house parties. We've never
6 seen an enforcement agent from DEP. So I'm
7 wondering where are the concentration of these
8 agents at and whom are they particularly
9 serving when it comes to noise? So I don't
10 want to keep going back and forth. I think you
11 get my gist, but I think that we really, if
12 we're serious about addressing noise which is a
13 huge quality of life issue for homeowners, then
14 we should see an increase in agents. We must
15 see it, and then, you know, PD, police
16 department, is--you know, we're overwhelming
17 them because to me there's not a coordination
18 between the two as well. So maybe I think DEP
19 can do the strive to really address this issue
20 to aid PD at the very least, because they're
21 overtaxed in the summer too. So I'm, you know,
22 I'm not happy that I don't see it in this
23 particular budget, but I'm hoping that, you
24 know, by the time we pass budget you'll come
25

2 back to us with more enforcement agents. I know
3 we're going to get to other rounds of questions
4 and I don't want to take up all the time yet.
5 I'll come back later. I wanted to touch on the
6 143 million for Southern Queens, and just
7 wanted to hear a little bit more about what
8 your plans are in terms of the wells. Are they
9 pumping now? Are you guys looking to pump
10 them? This next, I think next fiscal year I
11 see 75 million dollars I believe in the budget
12 that's allocated towards that, or I could be
13 wrong with the number because your testimony
14 reflects something different than you sent us.
15 So I was just wondering what--can you just give
16 us a little bit more information on that?

17 JIM ROBERTS: So I can. So we are
18 currently in the process of reviewing what we
19 call site specific basis of design reports,
20 SOBDR's, which will formulate the basis for the
21 upcoming design projects that will go before
22 construction. You're probably two years or so
23 out from actual construction, but they are
24 making, I think, significant and productive
25 progress with the assessments that we've done.

2 I think the good news is we've to date we
3 haven't really seen any sort of odd balls or
4 curve balls. There's been nothing that's sort
5 of caught us off guard. So as we work through
6 that process we can obviously keep you up to
7 date, but it's basically the continuation of
8 these design reports, then the design process
9 and then they'll go out to construction.

10 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: I know there
11 was an article in News Day yesterday that
12 raised the issue of Nassau County's objection
13 to the Water for the Future Plan. Can you
14 touch on that, or are we moving ahead full
15 steam regardless of how Nassau feels?

16 JIM ROBERTS: Yeah, there's probably
17 not a lot to talk about specifically. We are
18 aware of the article. I think there are some,
19 you know, views in there that we might not
20 necessarily agree with and as the process moves
21 forward we'll sort of take on the questions and
22 the challenges from there, but I don't see
23 anything that's going to deter us from where
24 we're headed.

25

2 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: And we
3 anticipate we're going to spend all of this
4 money in Southern Queens. So we're not going to
5 see this money moved out.

6 JIM ROBERTS: This money is budgeted
7 for that purpose, and again, it's in support of
8 a big program initiative, you know, as the
9 Commissioner mentioned earlier. One thing is
10 dove tailed with the other.

11 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: I want to
12 applaud you for that, too, by the way. We are
13 very grateful and, you know, this is a long
14 time coming and we're really hoping that we're
15 going to see relief for many of these
16 homeowners and communities that are under water
17 every time it rains. My last question before we
18 go to my colleagues is on the automatic meter
19 readers, which I think you touched on a little
20 bit earlier. So can you just go through that
21 process again and how soon do we believe that
22 that process is going to be in place for
23 homeowners to be forgiven if they fix, you
24 know, their particular leaks so that they're
25 not overcharged, you know, tremendously. I'm

2 very concerned about the lien sales that are
3 happening, and one of my biggest concerns as
4 well is, you know, we had a lot of families who
5 went through super storm Sandy, and they may
6 not have been home to know if something was
7 leaking and might have ended up with a lien on
8 their property because of that, so I'm very
9 concerned about that and want to know how soon
10 are we going to really work to ensure that this
11 program gets up and running so that we're not
12 putting people out of their homes.

13 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: I'm going to
14 turn it over to Deputy Commissioner Joe
15 Singleton [sic].

16 JOE SINGLETON: Good afternoon,
17 Chairman and members. I'll address the most
18 pressing issue first that you raised which was
19 homes that might have been in the super storm
20 Sandy that have had damage. Anything that was
21 in those flood zones that had delinquencies
22 were pulled out of those lien sales. That was
23 done holistically, anything that was red,
24 anything that was yellow. So that was--

2 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: [interposing]
3 Sorry to cut you off. So during the storm--

4 JOE SINGLETON: [interposing] So, if
5 a home suffered storm damage and it was coded
6 for instance as a red or a yellow during
7 original assessment, those properties were
8 pulled out of the lien sales.

9 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: So if they had
10 a problem now, would they still be considered
11 in that specific--

12 JOE SINGLETON: [interposing] I'll
13 bring you through what else we do.

14 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay.

15 JOE SINGLETON: If I can. A home
16 that may have had its service terminated for
17 leaks or needed to have it, we brought that
18 termination back all the way to the date of
19 event. So even if that termination happened 10
20 months after the event, we treated that
21 property as terminated as the day of the storm.
22 So any leaks beyond that were essentially
23 abolished. Anybody that was in a yellow coded
24 property, we went through and flattened out all
25 those leaks and forgave those leaks. So we

2 think the majority of the properties that were
3 damaged in that storm we addressed most of any
4 financial impact, and we had pulled them out of
5 the lien sale. So that was the most pressing.
6 Going to the leak forgiveness issue, what we're
7 seeing, we do two things. You can sign up and
8 get an email alert, which if your consumption
9 goes up 300 percent for five days we email you.
10 And we've got over 200,000 properties that are
11 now receiving those emails. For folks that are
12 not computer enabled, we mail them a letter.
13 So we sort of got both ends covered and the
14 reason we were able to move out, to forgive
15 toilets, things of that nature, I can almost
16 tell you, you know, if you started leaking on
17 December 1st, and yes, I see that you fixed
18 that December 6th. When we had four data
19 points a year, that's not a discussion we could
20 have. With the data density that we now have,
21 we're very confident that we can make that
22 process a lot less painful for everybody, and
23 it'll help the homeowners. It'll also help the
24 customer service issues. So I think most of
25 that is well covered, and we wouldn't be able

2 to do that without that technology. Going
3 forward, there are some other initiatives that
4 the Mayor announced. There is going to be a
5 water credit that's going to come from Build it
6 Back. So folks that were on a minimum charge,
7 for instance, from the day of the event to now,
8 they may be out of their homes. Our bylaws
9 sort of require if you're hooked to the city's
10 system, even if you're not using water, you pay
11 a minimum charge. A, that's one of the reasons
12 we froze it. The Mayor is making money
13 available to those properties that are now in
14 the Build it Back database, about I think
15 20,000 accounts. When that triage is done
16 we'll be pushing a credit out to those accounts
17 sometime this summer. So I hope I've addressed
18 most of your concerns, but listen, there's
19 always outliers. There's things that happen
20 later. You know, we have an ombudsman, you
21 know. Kate [sic] knows all the direct contacts
22 with our ombudsman if you do not. I think you
23 may have met him, Patrick Genicalva [sp?], but
24 feel free to reach out at any time you think a
25

2 constituent's not getting the service they
3 need.

4 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Great. And you
5 guys have been good with that, when we got
6 those particular cases. One of the things I
7 would also hope, and maybe this is something we
8 can think out of the box, because maybe you
9 know, obviously if people are getting letters
10 they may look at it and say, "Oh, I owe." And
11 you know, may not want to open them or may not
12 look at their emails. So maybe looking at
13 automated calls as well may be something you
14 guys may want to do as well so that you're
15 covering three bases in case--

16 JOE SINGLETON: We'll certainly take
17 a look at that. We don't have all phone numbers
18 in our database, but where we do have a call,
19 that's something we'll take under advisement,
20 take a look to see what we could do.

21 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay, great.
22 Alrighty, I'm going--I'm going to hand it over
23 to Chairwoman Ferreras.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you.
25 Thank you, Chair Richards. We will now have

2 Council Member Levin followed by Council Member
3 Miller.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you
5 very much, Madam Chair, Mr. Chair. Thank you
6 Commissioner. Nice to see you. I just want to
7 first thank your staff who has been very
8 receptive whenever we have a constituent issue
9 and have been--you know, handled the--whether
10 it's a backup issue or problems that they're
11 having with the sewer system. It's always--it's
12 been consistently excellent working with your
13 staff as recently as last week. So I want to
14 thank you very much for that. And I wanted to
15 ask a couple of questions, more parochial
16 questions about my district. I represent, as
17 you know, Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment
18 Facility, and I wanted to ask about the
19 capital, the plans for the rest of the capital
20 build out at that facility in particular. The
21 community amenities that were all kind of put
22 into the last contract for that facility and if
23 that's going to be added into this current
24 capital plan or in a future capital plan. The
25 things that are non-essential.

1
2 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: So I think
3 you're referring to the completion of the
4 nature walk. There were three parts to it, and
5 so its parts two and three, and they are fully
6 funded. We are still having conversation with
7 the Parks Department about a contract to manage
8 that. I've spoken to them and we are on both
9 sides eager to get that resolved and done, and
10 I think we'll be able to do that shortly, and I
11 think that' the only thing that impedes it
12 getting all the approvals it needs so it can go
13 under construction.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. And also
15 there's the perimeter fence, I think, and not
16 sure where that's--

17 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: [interposing] I
18 believe--my understanding from a conversation
19 with the public design commission was that
20 there was not a problem with the design of the
21 substitute fence that it was really that they
22 didn't want to approve anything until the
23 nature walk maintenance contract got approved.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I see.
25

2 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: That was my
3 understanding. Now there will be a new PDC
4 Chair, a new PDC staff person, so--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]
6 Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: I think that--I
8 hope we don't have to start all over again on
9 that, but as you remember, the monitoring
10 committee supported the fence that we finally
11 arrived at that was expensive but not
12 catastrophically expensive.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

14 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: And we all liked
15 it. So I'm hoping we'll be able to get that
16 approved as well.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right. Great.
18 At PDC--

19 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: [interposing]
20 And there is money for that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And if I
22 could, you know, help or make sure that the
23 public design commission knows that there'll be
24 Council Members in support of. I think it's--I
25

2 forget the two different types of steel,
3 whether it's stainless steel, or--

4 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: [interposing]
5 Whatever it is. I forget as well. Yeah.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So I'd be
7 happy--

8 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: [interposing]
9 Alright, good. That may be very helpful.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And then I
11 just wanted to ask about also Greenpoint issue,
12 the area in northwest Greenpoint where the
13 sludge tank is that is scheduled to come down.
14 Wanted to kind of see how that is in terms of
15 the time frame and whether that's on track, and
16 also with that area along Commercial Street,
17 that is to be the site of 2,500 units of
18 housing or something like that in the next 10
19 years, and whether new, you know, capital
20 infrastructure is required there and if that's
21 reflected in the capital budget at this point.

22 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: Well, I very
23 much hope that one of my colleagues here can
24 answer that, because you have just hit an area
25 that I am not up to speed on yet.

2 STEVEN LAWITTS: Council Member, let
3 me take the first part of your question about
4 the sludge tank. We received one of the three
5 new sludge boats that were specifically built
6 to fit in Newtown and Wale [sp?] Creek.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, by
8 the way. That was not inexpensive, so.

9 STEVEN LAWITTS: Yes, and that was--
10 the delivery of those three sludge boats was
11 our largest stimulus funded project from 2009,
12 approximately 84 million dollars. And the
13 other two boats are on their way to being
14 completed and then on their way from Louisiana
15 to here. And so when we have that fleet fully
16 in service and we can fully take advantage of
17 the internal sludge loading dock in Newtown
18 Creek, then we can begin the demolition of the
19 existing sludge tank on the waterfront and make
20 that parcel available for development.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So all three
22 sludge boats have to be up in New York before
23 the tank comes down, or is that--

24 STEVEN LAWITTS: Well, I think we at
25 least want to have two out of the three and

2 like any new large piece of infrastructure know
3 that it's operating reliably before we demolish
4 our only other option for loading sludge from
5 Newtown Creek. And then I'm sorry, the second
6 part of your question was--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]
8 So along Commercial Street, north of the sludge
9 tank or northeast of the sludge tank, 'cause
10 Commercial Street comes down diagonally, I've
11 heard that from honestly the developer of the
12 parcel which is a 22 acre parcel, that there's
13 going to be, you know, need for additional
14 infrastructure, sewers and just wanted--I'm
15 assuming we've done an assessment of the
16 capacity at this point and what's going to be
17 needed in order to handle the type of
18 development that's been zoned since 2005, and
19 it looks like they're probably going to start
20 getting under way and what they build as of
21 right, which is like 2,500 units.

22 STEVEN LAWITTS: Right. And I'll
23 have to confirm this and we'll have to get back
24 to you, but I think that is not funded in the
25 first four years of the capital program, and

1 we'll have to confirm when it is in the out
2 years and get back to you.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, that'd
5 be great. Okay, thank you very much. I
6 appreciate it.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
8 Council Member Levin. We will now have Council
9 Member Miller.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you,
11 Madam Chair. Thank you Chair Richards for all
12 the work that you've done on this budget
13 hearing in particular, all the work that you've
14 done along with DEP and trying to relieve some
15 of the flood issues that we have in southeast
16 Queens and some of the issues that have been
17 addressed by my colleagues here today. To that
18 note I would like to speak about DEP's
19 commitment to southeast Queens, its flooding as
20 well as contamination over the next few years,
21 short and long term. I know we've had some
22 private discussions, but I want to get a
23 broader understanding about what is going to be
24 done in the district to which who has flooding
25 and contamination in the near future, and more

2 importantly, those big long term sustainable
3 projects?

4 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: Well, I think
5 that there are a couple of aspects of this. One
6 is that that area is under sewered in terms of
7 storm sewers and there is a very long term and
8 massive capital program underway that has money
9 in it allocated every year to build out the
10 storm sewers. When the area was built after
11 World War II, it was built quickly and storm
12 water wasn't as much of a problem and it wasn't
13 very densely built up. So there was a lot of
14 just pre-existing green infrastructure around
15 to soak up a lot of the storm water. So that
16 problem has really developed as being more
17 serious over the past 25 years as there's been
18 more development, more paving of areas, more,
19 you know, people put in patios, driveways. A
20 lot of the green has disappeared. So that's
21 part of the problem, and then of course,
22 another part of the problem is that there are
23 times when the water table rises. This is a--
24 we're in a green slice of climate change, which
25 in many ways is a fortunate thing, but it does

2 mean that the water table has recharged fairly
3 quickly into a point where you're now after
4 there's been a rainy period it is a problem for
5 people in some houses depending on where they
6 are. And the third problem that typically
7 happens is that the way that, and the period of
8 time when it was developed, many houses were
9 set a little below. The driveway goes below
10 street grade and it becomes basically a
11 drainage area for the street. If the street is
12 not paved perfectly to direct the water to a
13 catch basin or if there is not a good catch
14 basin there, because there's not a storm sewer
15 there yet, then there are real problems
16 associated with that as well. So there's the
17 big design, big sewers and have them run all
18 the way down through that area and that is
19 underway and Jim Roberts can speak to that. I
20 would also like him also to speak to some of
21 the other things that he and his staff have
22 been trying lately the past two or three years
23 which is to take areas that have very serious
24 spot problems with pooling and other kinds of
25 flooding and trying to where we do have

2 somewhere within a reasonable distance a storm
3 sewer built, instead of waiting until the new
4 one gets built. Run a sewer line from a catch
5 basin into that existing storm sewer to give a
6 little relief to that area, and I think he's
7 now tried a couple and I think they've been
8 quite successful. There are other things that
9 he's been trying, seepage basins. We were just
10 talking. We have not done a significant amount
11 of green infrastructure in that area because
12 we've been looking at it as primarily a tool in
13 areas that have combined sewer overflows which
14 is not the primary problem here. So I think
15 that's an area that you would like to see us
16 really look at and get into testing to see if
17 that can provide some relief as well, and I
18 think that we're very open to doing that. I
19 think that would be a very helpful thing to
20 explore in terms of the kind of problems people
21 are having. And then I think the last thing you
22 mentioned when we were--one of the times we
23 were discussing this informally is what can
24 people do to protect themselves, and we do
25 have--do we have it handy, the homeowner's

2 guide? We've just developed a homeowner's
3 guide to try to tell people who may not know
4 because they may not have had problems here to
5 for, before everything got so wet. Does that
6 mean I'm talking too long? That how things--
7 some of them somewhat expensive, many of them
8 quite small that they can do to provide
9 themselves with some protection if they are
10 building, if their home is below street level
11 or there's not very good--the design of that
12 street doesn't work very well, whether it's our
13 catch basin or it's the street design if they
14 have a driveway that goes down. The things
15 that, you know, this was fine 30 years ago, now
16 it's a problem. How can--we have to work
17 together. We can do what we can do, and then
18 homeowners need to have people who are, I hate
19 to say the word experts, but people who spend
20 all their time thinking about these things,
21 available to talk to these people about things
22 they can do to offer themselves a little
23 protection in addition to what the city can do.
24 And I think we--okay. So we will make a large
25 number of these homeowner's guides available to

2 your office, but that's the basic outline. Do
3 you want to talk a little bit about the seepage
4 basins and the high level sewers?

5 JIM ROBERTS: Right. And so as the
6 Commissioner was saying, in addition to what I
7 think has been historically the agency's
8 approach and for those on the committee that
9 are unfamiliar with sort of sewerage, if you
10 will. You generally want to go from the bottom
11 of the system to the top of the system because
12 you always need some place for the water to get
13 out, right, the outlet. While we continue to
14 aggressively build out that long term capital
15 program, we've begun looking at opportunities
16 to knock of an area that's been, you know,
17 problematic, whether it's an intersection that
18 floods. 183rd Street, I think there was one
19 when we were at the Borough President's office
20 that was adventurous [sic]. So and we've found
21 the ability to do a couple. I think we've done
22 about three. At this point we have about two
23 or three that we've identified and we continue
24 both with the input from the communities and,
25 you know, the elected officials and the groups

2 that are active as well as our own engineering
3 staff. I have a team of engineers that are out
4 there looking for these opportunities to sort
5 of shorten the approach. So they hit it from
6 more than one way. And we're also as I know
7 Council Member Richards is aware, we've piloted
8 the idea of what we call reverse seepage
9 basins, which essentially basins we put in the
10 ground that allow the ground water to hook up
11 to the storm system, where the storm system's
12 available and while it is not raining to avail
13 itself of that storm system and let the water
14 out. Our partners with the Department of
15 Environmental Conservation have been very
16 helpful in collaborating with us, right,
17 because we need their assistance in doing that.
18 We put three in. One is still actively taking
19 water on the order of a quarter to a half an
20 MGD a day, which is, you know, not an
21 extraordinary amount, but it's really an
22 incremental thing. The other two have sort of
23 equilibrated [sic] which means that the ground
24 water table has basically leveled off at the,
25 you know, the highest of the lowest level that

2 we can get it to. We have a report I was
3 reading a draft copy recently that we should
4 have out by the end of June that talks about
5 other opportunities. I think we've identified
6 about another 10 locations that might be
7 possible, and now we have to do sort of that
8 next level of triage to see that they're going
9 to work. So it's multiprong, multifaceted
10 approach and, you know, we can never go fast
11 enough obviously if it's flooded your area, I
12 understand that. But we really are trying to
13 take it, and the Mayor's office has asked us to
14 really try and look at it through a fresh set
15 of eyes and to seize any opportunities that are
16 out there.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you.
18 That was pretty comprehensive and that's what
19 we normally get when you guys come out. What I
20 would appreciate if we could also commit to
21 your team coming out and doing your normal town
22 hall but in a more, far more instructional way
23 than we've done, kind of like the throwing
24 darts back in the forth. In the past I think
25 that we've gotten to the place that we know

2 that everyone is committed to solving this
3 problem and that everyone can play a role. So
4 those small things that you talked about when
5 we do our homeowner workshop, a real component
6 can be how do you safeguard your home from the
7 floods in this, and you know, we all should be
8 able to play a role. And I know that we're all
9 along in this one, but I want to take the
10 privilege in asking. Now, there's been some
11 long term DEP studies going on and one of your
12 counterpart agencies is always blaming the lack
13 of completion of this study on DOT projects
14 that can't move forward. There's about 10 DOT
15 projects that cannot move forward because of
16 the drainage study that has not been finished
17 and passed on inner agency.

18 JIM ROBERTS: Council Member, I
19 apologize. I'm not--I know there are a couple
20 of projects that we are actually looking to do
21 that are running up against some budgetary
22 constraints on the DOT side, but I'm not aware
23 right--I mean, if you have the details we'd
24 certainly be able to look at it.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Yep, I'll
3 pass it on. It's called the Trunk [sic]
4 Drainage Study, and it's been a number of
5 years, and they often say they can't complete
6 projects because they need to have some
7 information from you guys to make sure it's
8 consistent in what needs to be done. So
9 there's--you know, we can back and forth. I
10 certainly appreciate you guys coming out and
11 providing us with this information and I'm sure
12 we could--I thank you so much.

13 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: Thank you. And
14 we'll be happy if you'll--you've had some ideas
15 about how you'd like to set up a meeting. We'll
16 be happy to work with you on that.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So I am--
18 wanted to just piggyback and I know that you
19 talked about some new technologies or some
20 nuances to how we handle catch basins, but when
21 we heard from Commissioner Garcia, she talked
22 about street sweepers being generators, and
23 thinking about innovative ways and multiuse for
24 some of our infrastructure. Have other cities
25 or have we seen opportunities where we have

2 more efficient catch basins? Because it seems
3 like our systems, and clearly you know we're an
4 old city. We're dated. Are there other cities
5 that are doing better with the different type
6 of catch basin?

7 JIM ROBERTS: To my knowledge that
8 there really aren't. I think one of the
9 challenges frankly that we'll be facing over
10 the next several short term years is really the
11 sort of finalization of some of the other
12 enforcement or clean water act provisions, what
13 we call MS4, which deals with storm water and
14 how that gets managed, and there are I think
15 some pretty lofty expectations about using
16 those catch basins potentially to clean the
17 water before it gets to the water bodies, and
18 it becomes frankly a little bit critical. Catch
19 basins by themselves are relatively simple
20 devices. They just allow for, you know, the
21 water to flow and to keep the floatables, you
22 know, the cups and those types of things out of
23 the water stream. And by in large, you know,
24 when we have major problems, the issues tend to
25 be these, you know, where the debris on the

2 street has sort of clogged. I always use the
3 analogy of hair on the drain in the tub, and
4 you know, not that we don't have basins that
5 need to be cleaned and we certainly do clean,
6 you know, thousands of them, tens of thousands
7 of them a year, but they're relatively simple
8 and frankly, the simpler the better. As we find
9 out every once in a while technology can
10 sometimes be not your friend. You know, so
11 these work by gravity and they tend to be
12 pretty reliable.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you. I'm
14 going to give it over to my Co-Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Alrighty. So
16 I wanted to touch on PlaNYC, and wanted to know
17 are you guys still looking? I know in your
18 testimony you mentioned PlanNYC. Just wanted to
19 know is there office of long term planning and
20 sustainability, is that still going to be a
21 function that your office works with and are
22 you guys looking to follow through on many of
23 those particular initiatives that the Bloomberg
24 Administration came up with to their credit
25 which were good ideas. So I'm wondering what

2 role the P is playing in that, and wondering is
3 the office staying in your, you guys, in your
4 catchment or what role are you guys playing
5 with them, for that office?

6 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: Well, the
7 Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning
8 Sustainability was part of the Mayor's Office,
9 and my understanding is that it will probably
10 stay there.

11 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: And they have
13 had some turn over in staff, but there's still
14 staff there working and we work with them.
15 Particularly, we have been working. They are
16 working side by side with the group doing
17 resiliency and that's an area that particularly
18 interests us because of our wastewater
19 treatment plants and our pumping stations that
20 were so badly hit by Sandy, and so we have a
21 plan that we developed that we released
22 internally and externally last fall 2013 that
23 lays out what we need to do with our
24 infrastructure to make it able to withstand the
25 significant storm surge, and we are moving

2 ahead now that we have those standards to start
3 to apply them to our wastewater treatment
4 plants and develop. Some of them we already
5 have underway actually. Some of them we--at
6 Rock Away, we just completed a project to raise
7 the electrical system for example, if I have it
8 right, and so we're moving ahead with some of
9 them. Some of them are much more significant
10 and will take longer planning because we'll
11 have to keep the plant operating around major
12 construction. But we are moving ahead with all
13 of that and putting that in our capital budget.

14 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay. Can you
15 just talk on water main breaks? That's another
16 big issue. What are we looking to do with
17 water mains? Are we, you know, investing more
18 in that particular infrastructure? Because
19 we've seen a lot a breaks and one just last
20 week, and it just keeps happening. So are we
21 looking at investing more in our water mains?

22 JIM ROBERTS: Okay. Yeah, and we
23 have seen un uptick in water main breaks this
24 past year, but frankly, the trend over the
25 preceding years was and really continues

2 downward. We think we made significant progress
3 in that area, notwithstanding that we are and
4 the Mayor's Office has supported us in
5 additional funding to accelerate our ability to
6 replace on top of our normal capital
7 expenditures, about 100 million dollars worth
8 of sewer and water in areas where we know that
9 the infrastructure's older, where it has a
10 break history and, you know, so we're actively
11 moving forward with that. And it might interest
12 you to know that when you compare New York
13 City's sort of break statistics, water main
14 break statistics, which they look at nationally
15 on a hundred mile basis, we range somewhere
16 between four and a half to six breaks per
17 hundred miles, and the national average and
18 very much accepted is somewhere between 22 to
19 27 breaks per hundred miles. So we're really,
20 while one break is sort of a bad day and
21 usually wakes me up at night, you know, we do
22 think that we've made some progress on it.

23 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Then my last
24 question is on the rapid repairs program. So
25 there's still 30 million dollars, I think, that

2 has not been paid out to contractors and was
3 wondering what is the--are we going to see
4 progress in that as we move forward?

5 STEVEN LAWITTS: Yes, Mr. Chair. So
6 there is still ongoing dialogue between us and
7 a number of the rapid repairs contractors
8 because they submitted their invoiced and you
9 may know the total size of that program was
10 approximately 650 million dollars. So as you
11 just pointed out there's a little bit more than
12 30 million dollars that is still caught being
13 negotiated between us and the contractors. In
14 many cases we're requesting additional
15 documentation from the contractors so that we
16 can assure the city and ultimately FEMA that
17 we're getting everything that we pay for. One
18 example is a contractor might have submitted an
19 invoice for replacing 400 feet of electrical
20 wire in a house which for the size of that
21 house seem excessive. So, we ask for
22 documentation and when we get that
23 documentation and it's satisfactory, we'll
24 release additional payments.

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2 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: That's--that
3 was my last question. Just wanted to lastly say
4 that on the green infrastructure I'm very happy
5 to hear that we're going to really look at ways
6 to be creative for all communities. So we look
7 forward to having that dialogue. Thank you. I
8 think we heard a lot of good things today.
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you,
11 Commissioner, and congratulations. I think this
12 city's headed in the right direction and I'm so
13 happy that you came bearing so many great
14 pieces of news for us and the council that
15 we're able to update our constituents. I really
16 thank you for testifying today. This concludes
17 our hearings for today. The Finance Committee
18 will resume executive budget hearings on
19 Friday, May 30th. Tomorrow is our general
20 stated council hearings. Friday, May 30th at
21 10:00 a.m. the hearings will be held in this
22 room. On Friday we will hear from six agencies.
23 We will hear from DCAS, the Board of Elections,
24 the Office of Administrative Trials and
25 Hearings, the Law Department, the Campaign

2 Finance Board and the Financial Information
3 Services Agency. As a reminder, the public
4 will be allowed to testify on the last day of
5 budget hearings on June 6th at approximately
6 4:00 p.m. The public session will be held in
7 this room. For members of the public who wish
8 to testify but cannot make the hearings, you
9 can email your testimony to the finance
10 division and the staff will make it part of the
11 official record. The email address is
12 financetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you.
13 This hearing is now adjourned.

14 [gavel]

15 COMMISSIONER LLOYD: Thank you Chairs
16 and Members.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date 06/11/2014