

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE ON
PARKS AND RECREATION, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER
EDUCATION, AND COMMITTEE ON VETERANS

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May 20, 2016
Start: 10:05 a.m.
Recess: 03:16 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E:

JULISSA FERRERAS-COPELAND
Chairperson

MARK LEVINE
Co-Chairperson

INEZ D. BARRON
Co-Chairperson

ERIC A. ULRICH
Co-Chairperson

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COUNCIL MEMBERS: (CONTINUED)

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JOSEPH C. BORELLI

PAUL A. VALLONE

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

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Commissioner
New York City Department of Parks and Recreation

David L. Stark
Assistant Commissioner
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Urban Park Service

Liam Kavanagh
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Doctor Margaret Riley
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Donna Linderman
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Loree Sutton
Commissioner
New York City Department of Veterans' Affairs.

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[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Good

morning and welcome to the City Council's 10th day
of hearings on the Mayor's executive budget for
Fiscal 2017. My name is Julissa Ferreras-Copeland.
I am the chair of the committee. We are joined by
the Committee on Parks and Recreation Chair by my
colleague Council Member Mark Levine. We've been
joined by Minority Leader Matteo, Matteo. Today we
will hear from the Department of Parks and
Recreation, the City University of New York, and
the Department of Veteran Affairs. Before we begin
I'd like to thank the finance division staff for
putting this hearing together including the
Director Latonia McKinney, Committee Counsel
Rebecca Chasan, Deputy Directors Regina Poreda
Ryan, and Nathan Toth, Unit Heads John Russell,
Chima Obichere, and Eisha Wright. Finance Analyst
Steve Riester, Jessica Ackerman, and James Subudhi.
The finance... the Finance Division Administrative
Support Unit Nicole Anderson, Maria Pagan, and
Roberta Caturano who pull everything together.
Thank you all for your efforts. I would also like
to remind everyone that the public will be invited

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to testify on the last day of budget hearings on
Tuesday, May 24th beginning at approximately 3:00
p.m. in this room. Members of the public who wish
to testify but cannot attend the hearing you can
email your testimony to the finance division at
finance testimony at council dot NYC dot gov and
the staff will make it a part of the official
record. Today the executive hearing kicks off with
the Department of Parks and Recreation. The
Department's fiscal 2017 fiscal budget totals 480
million dollars which represents 200... 25.3 million
dollars increased from fiscal 2016's adopted
budget. In the preliminary budget response, the
council called on the parks department to include
nine items in the executive budget. The council is
pleased that the department included increased
funding for seasonal staff to ensure adequate
staffing levels during the warmer months when Park
Usage is at its highest, expanded maintenance of
the department's artificial turf fields, and
additional funding for the green thumb program
which manages many community gardens across our
city. However, there were several items in our
budget response that were not included.

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Significantly the council called on the
administration to baseline several of our
initiatives which currently fund services that are
vital to the department's mission such as the parks
equity initiative and the park's maintenance
initiative. The committees look forward to hearing
testimony from the commissioner about why these
recommendations were not included and the ways in
which the council funding supported the agency over
the past... over this past year. In addition, funding
was added to the executive budget for more staffing
in the department's capital division. We would like
to learn more about how the agency intends to
utilize these additional employees to speed up the
completion of capital projects and other
initiatives that are being implemented towards that
goal. Before we begin I'd like to remind my
colleagues that the first round of questions for
the agency will be limited to five minutes per
council member and if council members have
additional questions we will have a second round of
questions at three minutes per council member. I
will now return the mic over to my co-chair; Chair
Levine for his statement and then we will hear

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testimony from the Commissioner of Parks and
Recreation Mitch Silver after he is sworn in by the
council. We've also been joined by Council Member
Cabrera. Chair.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you Madam
Chair. Good morning. Good morning Commissioner.
Pleasure to see everybody. Want to welcome you here
to this joint hearing of the Finance Committee and
the Parks Committee. As Chair Ferreras-Copeland
mentioned we'll be hearing testimony from the Parks
Department on the fiscal year 2017 executive budget
as it relates to the Department's expense and
capital and general agency operations. Normally I
start our budget hearings on Parks with a statement
lamenting what a small portion of our city's budget
we spend on our city's green spaces comparing to
historical figures, listing other cities around the
nation which devote more etcetera, etcetera. But in
lieu of this now familiar restitution I want to
start today by celebrating the great news of
additional park funding which the mayor and the
parks commissioner have proposed in the fiscal year
17 executive budget. I'll start with some good news
on the expense budget before we get to some really

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good news in the capital budget. I'm pleased to
report that the executive budget includes new
funding in line with three priorities the council
identified in its budget response document. As
Chair Ferreras Copeland... Copeland mentioned 12
million for increase seasonal staffing during peak
months, 1.3 million for additional green thumb
garden maintenance and 852,000 for expanded turf
maintenance crews. I'm also pleased that there is
additional funding for two priorities I'd
identified in our March hearing on the preliminary
budget; 500,000 to complete the department's
extensive and informative tree census which will
give every tree... every street tree in New York City
its own web page detailing its species, age, amount
of maintenance, and other useful information and
1.8 million... million for LiDAR mapping and for
digitizing map files that will provide improved
information for planning purposes as well as
greater public transparency. And of course we are
extremely happy with the additional funding for 67
pep officers that was included in the mayor's
preliminary budget released in February. I look
forward to hearing more from the commissioner

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shortly about the positive impact of each of these
allocations. The mayor's total proposed budget for
the Parks Department is 480 million which amounts
to 0.58 percent of overall city spending. Sorry I
couldn't avoid mentioning that. Not all the news
however is good on the expense side. The executive
budget fails to baseline 8.7 million that the
council provided last year to increase the ranks of
gardeners and maintenance workers. When adjusted
for inflation or adjusted for increased wages the
new total actually is 9.6 million. If these funds
are not restored it would mean that 50 gardeners
and 100 maintenance workers would be laid off on
July 1st depriving our parks of critical staffing
and depriving 150 hardworking New Yorkers of their
livelihood. I'm pleased that we're joined today...
the leadership and a number of members of local
1505 which represents these hardworking men and
women and we'll definitely be talking more about
this in the Q&A session. The executive budget also
fails to baseline 1.1 million dollars for tree
stump removal which would result in the current
years long backlog in this important work being
extended to an unconscionable level. And I know

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that my colleague Minority Leader Matteo and I will
be having questions on that shortly. The executive
budget failed to fund several additional priorities
which the council had identified in its preliminary
budget, in its response to the preliminary budget.
These include funding of an additional six million
for 80 more pep officers, 2.4 million to expand the
pool in beach season by one week after Labor Day,
and 6.4 million to hire over 200 new playground
associates. Other items that were not included in
the executive plan that we called for in the
preliminary budget hearing include increased
funding for staffing and upkeep of the city's
10,000 acres of precious natural areas, funding to
hire more part... more park rangers of which there
are only 30 today for the entire city down
dramatically from nearly 200 in years past, expense
funding for smaller vehicle fleets which are
especially important in larger parks like
Riverside, Morningside, and Van Cortlandt, funding
for employee training critically needed to better
prepare staff for specialty roles within the
department and to train those rising through the
ranks into managerial positions. And now for the

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promised really good news. At our preliminary
budget hearing in March I called for a bold new
round of investments in park projects which are too
large or too complicated to be funded with the kind
of million dollar, two million dollars in
discretionary capital which an individual council
member can muster. For major bold investments in
the Marquis parks which serve as anchors for their
communities. We need the Parks Department itself to
have a significant pool of dedicated capital. And I
am thrilled to report that the mayor and the Parks
Commissioner have delivered. The executive budget
includes 150 million dollars for major capital
projects in anchor parks around the... around the
five boroughs. I'm anxious to hear more from the
commissioner about the plan for how these funds
will be allocated. I hope that the plan will
include funding for major midsize marks that are
heavily used and... and have been underinvested in
for decades. Park Slate Saint Mary's in the South
Bronx, Astoria and Forest Park in Queens, Commodore
Berry Park in Brooklyn. I hope we can also finely
complete the much needed construction,
reconstruction of Cromwell Recreation Center on

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Staten Island which was damaged in Superstorm
Sandy. And let's think big by using some of these
funds to create new parks where they are
desperately needed like in Bushwick where a bold
plan would deck over part of the BQE to create
BQGreen or eastern Queens where creation of the
Queens Way would turn an abandoned rail line into
the Queens Way, a miles long linear park, or in the
northwest Bronx where a Daylighting Tibbetts Brook
would unearth a long buried stream to create a new
recreational space. And I hope that we can use some
of these funds for long pending projects which
while smaller are none the less out of reach of the
budget of an individual council member; projects
like the desperately needed renovations of surf
playground in Coney Island, and Quarry Park in the
central Bronx or completion of a long planned
comfort station in the northern part of riverside
park. It's frankly wonderful that we can even have
a discussion on which parks should receive
investment. Investment now made possible by the
administration's provision of 150 million dollars
in new capital funds. And I can't wait to dive in
further on that topic. I want to acknowledge we've

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been joined by several colleagues on the... on the
Parks Committee including Councilman Andy Cohen
from the Bronx, Council Member Cabrera's from the
Bronx... from... sorry also from the Bronx. And I think
that's it. And I'm going to pass it back to our
wonderful finance chair.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Chair. My council will swear you in
Commissioner and then you may begin your testimony.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm that
your testimony will be truthful to the best of your
knowledge, information, and belief? Thank you.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well good morning
City Council Finance Committee Chair Julissa
Ferrerias-Copeland, City Council Parks Committee
Chair Mark Levine, and members of the city council
of finance and parks committee. I am Mitchell
Silver, Commissioner of the New York City
Department of Parks and Recreation. And I'm joined
here today by a number of our senior staff. Thank
you for allowing me the opportunity to discuss the
fiscal year 2017 executive budget for New York City
Parks. I'd like to begin by providing a brief
overview about NYC parks. We are the steward of

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over 30,000 acres of city parkland, 14 percent of
the city's land mass including 10,000 acres of
natural area. We oversee nearly 45 hundred
individual properties ranging from parks and
playgrounds to community gardens and green streets.
We operate more than 800 athletic fields and nearly
1,000 playgrounds, 67 public schools, 51
recreational facilities, 15 nature centers, and 14
miles of public beaches. Most importantly our parks
enjoy over 130 million visits a year; properly the
most visited asset on the planet. And from New
Yorkers and others from around the world we are
truly a destination for all. There are currently
524 capital... active capital projects, contracts for
parks improvement projects, about a third in
design, construction, and procurement. Thanks to
the leadership of Mayor de Blasio and our strong
partnership with the city council New York City
continues to make significant investments in our
parks and open spaces embodied by our framework for
an equitable future. NYC Parks is focused on key
strategic initiatives and outcome oriented goals.
We're working to make our parks cleaner and safer
reflecting that our mission is not simply

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maintaining our parks and green spaces but caring
for them as well. We continue to improve and refine
our capital and operations processes, increasing
efficiency, and delivering services that are
smarter and faster and achieved through innovation.
We're helping New Yorkers live greener and
healthier lifestyles by creating and improving our
open spaces through targeted place making efforts.
And we're undertaking all of these efforts with a
specific mission in mind, increased access to parks
for all New Yorkers in a fair and focused manner
that reflects our dedication to equity. The mayor's
executive budget for FY 2017 reflects these
priorities providing New York City parks with an
operating expense budget of 480 million, at 25
million increase from fiscal year 2016 adopted
budget. The executive four-year capital plan
provides total park capital budget of 2.9 billion
with 417 million in mayoral funding for approved
new capital needs. This budget demonstrates the
mayor's continued strong commitment to improving
our city parks and maintaining the state of good
repair for many of our park properties. For this
reason, I am very excited to be here today to

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discuss the FY '17 executive budget in greater
detail and provide some additional updates about
the state of our park system. Our dedicated
maintenance and operation staff do their best to
keep our parks in a best condition possible. Each
of these individual properties require targeted
maintenance and we are striving to truly care for
our parks and green spaces with all of the
dedication and investment that the work caring
implies. We're delighted that New Yorkers and
visitors from around the world are visiting our
parks in great numbers but we are mindful of the
challenges that this can create for maintenance and
operations of our parks. This administration is
committed to keeping our parks clean and exploring
new approaching to achieve that goal. For example,
as we discussed in previous hearings after
observing the high destination parks we're
receiving increased usage on weekends resulting in
increased trash we instituted for the first time
weekend cleaning schedules for our maintenance
crews to target these hot spots for picnicking,
sports, and other activities. And as we head into
the summer peak season our beaches and pools open

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for operations drawing millions of visitors as we
also see increased levels of usage at other parks
around the city due to the longer daylight hours
and pleasant weather. One additional challenge we
face during the peak summer is managing the
deployment of parks employees that step up to take
on... positions at beaches and pools to help manage
the various operation... operational and maintenance
needs. In the past this had been something of a
strain on agency resources. In light of longer
daylight hours and increased usage at other park
properties outside of our beaches and pools. That
is why I'm very pleased to highlight the mayor's
fiscal year 2017 executive budget includes 12
million in baseline funding for increased... for
increasing our peak seasonal staffing levels,
offering one to one replacement for employees that
take on higher level seasonal positions at our
beaches and pools. This seasonal staffing increase
will ensure that our park districts retain adequate
supervision and staff with proper skills to manage
our parks and playgrounds throughout the peak
season. As a further benefit hiring additional crew
chiefs will enable us to implement a smaller crew

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configuration averaging a five to one ratio
resulting in maintenance crews that are easier to
manage and... to manage and be more efficient. We
will also be able to provide second shift of
coverage allowing us to keep our comfort stations
open longer during the day and provide more
maintenance coverage on weekends when families are
out barbequing and enjoying our parks. This
approach to working smarter and faster through
innovation is reflected in every aspect of the
agency's operation and the mayor's executive budget
demonstrates the strong commitment through
increased strategic investment. We need to manage
our resources in the most efficient and thoughtful
manner which is why we're committed to exploring
new ideas and technological approaches. Our
innovation and performance management division has
made strides in this direction. We're especially
pleased that the executive budget includes funding
for a new data analytics team which will apply
advanced data analysis and modeling methods to
examine our park cleaning and maintenance methods
including cleaning schedules, staff allocation,
work order procedures, as well as security measures

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and the optimal use of our agency's vehicle fleet.
We're also pleased to announce that the executive
budget includes 5.7 million in capital funding to
establish a new regional hub for our mobile
maintenance crews in Queens as recommended by the
agency operation's analysis conducted via our ops
21 project. This will help provide greater coverage
throughout Queens and to help keep local parks
cleaner and serve as the model of efficiency that
we're adopting throughout the city. In addition,
keeping our parks clean and in condition we want to
innovate new approaches to keep our properties in a
state of good repair. New York City has over 180
synthetic turf multi-use athletic fields in our
portfolio. And many are nearing the end of their
expected useful life of eight to ten years. These
fields are popular and well used making their
maintenance all the more vital. The mayor's
executive budget provides 16 million in capital
funding. To fully renovate the oldest synthetic
turf fields in most need of repair. The executive
budget also will have one million in expense
funding for the creation of synthetic turf
maintenance crew which will specifically focus on

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the annual grooming, maintenance, and renovation of
our synthetic turfs. Our investment in these fields
will now be far more productive with additional
ability to maintain them on ongoing basis so we can
get the most out of every public dollar we spend.
We're also incorporating the spirit of innovation
in our capital process. And we... value the city
council's partnership as we work to make it more
streamline and efficient. Since the beginning of
this mayoral administration we have shaved months
off the capital process. And at any given moment
there are over 500 projects in a capital pipeline
either in design, undergoing procurement, or
vendor... choose a vendor for a construction, or in a
process of being built. This tremendous volume of
projects can be a challenge but with the help of
the recent mayoral funding for additional capital
design staff we have cleared the capital backlog.
Our goal moving forward is to have all newly funded
projects enter into design within the same fiscal
year that the funding is received. To help achieve
this objective I'm happy to announce that the mayor
has provided close to two million dollars in
baseline expense funding the executive budget for

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an additional 20 capital division staffers to help
us continue this momentum and to help keep our
projects on track when they begin construction. As
essential mission to NYC parks we are dedicated to
helping New Yorker live greener and healthier
lifestyles. And one of the important ways we can do
this is by encouraging them to get out and enjoy
the city parks and open space. Our local community
gardens managed by the green thumb division are a
tremendous way for New Yorkers of all walks of life
to reconnect with nature through urban farming. At
the end of 2015 the city announced the biggest
addition to New York City Parks Community Garden
System in more than a decade transferring 34
interim garden sites from HPD to NYC parks for
permanent assignment as green thumb gardens. To
support this expansion and provide more resources
and expertise to help them make these gardens even
stronger the mayor's executive budget has allocated
1.3 million in expanded expense funding for
additional green thumb staff as well as 795,000 in
capital funding for water supply infrastructure
improvements. Working for a greener New York also
means it is critical to invest in parks living

assets, our trees. Landscape park trees forest and wetlands and as they provide important benefits that improve the lives of everyday New Yorkers. These benefits include increased property values, absorbing storm water, reducing air pollution and providing valuable shade on our sunny city streets. To better understand these benefits it's vital to have the appropriate data to assess our urban tree canopy. Accurate land cover maps are critical for environmental planning as they provide precise information about our urban forest. The mayor's executive budget reflects 1.8 million in federal CDBG funding to acquire and process an updated data set using LiDAR surveying technology which will assist in generating a new land cover map for New York City. This data will allow us to identify areas of the city that have lost tree canopy and other vegetative cover in recent years. And to help prioritize future greening initiatives to equitably distribute ecological benefits throughout the city. Further NYC Parks will have the ability to use this data in partnership with other agencies to identify opportunities for other types of green infrastructure such as green roofs or bios wells.

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On a related note the executive budget also
provides funding to complete our trees count
census. Beginning this past year and continuing
through this year a team of volunteers and park
staff have been undertaking our third decennial
street census which will give us an accurate count
and assessment of the street base component of our
urban forest allowing more sophisticated management
of our street trees. Using this data our online
information portal and interactive map of every
single street tree in New York City will be ready
for a broad launch this year. So we look forward to
getting you more updates about this exciting online
tool in the near future. All of these investments
and strategic efforts are guided by a clear
principal, distribute city resources in a fair and
focused manner that reflects this administration's
commitment to equity. Our signature effort and the
center piece of this strategic blueprint continues
to be the community park's initiative or CPI with
more than 285 million dollars dedicated to
delivering capital funding, enhanced programing,
maintenance, and community partnership building to
neighborhood parks that need it the most and in a

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way that is inclusive and equitable. Mayor de
Blasio is committed to providing further
significant investments in parks around a city and
recognizes that the larger parks help serve as a
regional anchor providing vital, recreational, and
natural amenities from multiple neighborhoods. To
this end we're very excited that fiscal year 2017
executive budget provides 150 million dollars in
capital funding to provide significant renovations
to five acre parks throughout the city, one in each
borough. This commitment to fairness and equity is
a reflection of our efforts to see that more New
Yorkers have access to parks and open space that
they can enjoy every day. And as part of in a
strategic plan for the city 1NYC the mayor
established that more New Yorkers should benefit
from useful accessible beautiful open spaces and
set a specific goal of saying that the city
increases a percentage of New Yorkers living within
a walk... walking distance to a park from 81 percent
to 85 percent by 2030. To help achieve this goal
the executive budget includes 48 million to
leverage existing resources and private support to
bring the city closer to the target to the develop

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of newly acquired parkland and the conversion of
additional school yards to public playgrounds.
Lastly while discussing the matter of fairness and
increased access to open space and recreational
facilities it should be noted that the great
borough of Staten Island has long been the only
borough without an indoor pool operated by the
city. I am pleased to announce that Mayor de Blasio
seeks to rectify this in executive budget in a form
of 50 million in capital funds for NYC Park's first
indoor pool facility on Staten Island which will
allow even more New Yorkers the benefits of
physical fitness and social interaction that our
recreation center pools offer all year around. I
hope that my testimony today has made it clear that
New York City's proud of its role as a leader in
global and national trends regarding park and open
space planning. We always strive to serve as a
model for cities around the world and meet the
sustainability goals of the united nations' UN
Habit Program, in particular target 11.7 which
state that by 2030 provide universal access, safe,
inclusive, and accessible green public spaces in
particular for women and children, older persons,

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and persons with disabilities. Next week New York
City Parks will be hosting a summit on the future
of parks and open spaces co-hosted by the New
School which we are calling Parks Without Borders.
The daylong conference will bring together thought
leaders in parks and public spaces for... from New
York City and across the country focusing on a role
of the 21st century park system and the next era of
park planning including innovative design, equity,
engagement, resiliency, ecological, and landscape
connectivity. We'll also be announcing the eight
signature projects selections for our recent design
initiative also called Parks Without Borders. And
I'm told that several council members already plan
on attending and we cordially invite you to join us
as well. Our agency is committed to creating a 21st
century park system that serves as a model for
cities around the world and I'll be happy to meet
with you today or to discuss our continued efforts
to achieve that vision in the future. Thank you for
allowing me to testify before you today and for
your dedication providing great parks and open
spaces for all New Yorkers. We look forward to
continue working with the mayor and the city

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council to create a bright green future with more
equitable and innovative park system. We value
partnership and thank you for your support of our
agency and now I'd be happy to answer any questions
you may have. Joining me here at the table is First
Deputy Commission Liam Kavanagh and Matt Dreary our
Director of Government Relations. Thank you very
much.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Commissioner. Thank you for your testimony.
We've been joined by Council Member Maisel. I
wanted to talk about citywide savings, capital
projects, and PEP officers before I pass the mic
over to our chair... co-chair. The department expects
to generate four million dollars in savings for
fiscal year 2017 through the realization of
management and other efficiencies. What are the
efficiencies that you plan to realize to make up
four million dollars and how will you track these
efficiencies through the fiscal year?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well the formula
is expected to be accomplished through the vacancy
savings early on in the fiscal year and some delays
in hiring as attrition occurs. So that is going to

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be our... our primary focus. We're also looking at
the optimization of our staff as well in the field
which can save about 114... the equivalent of 114
staff. So we'll be tracking that... our assistant
commissioner is here that will be tracking that
throughout the year. But the main one is to do that
through the vacancy savings early on in the fiscal
year and some delays in hiring at attrition occurs.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So what
departments do you see that you'll be doing this
in? Because you know we're trying to ramp up
certain services at least from our perspective we
want to give the parks as much support as possible.
So where... where do you see these attritions will
not impact the... I guess the direct services that
you provide.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well the largest
number of our staff are in the maintenance and
operations division... what'll occur. As you know we
do have some... we have a seasonal schedule but it'll
primarily be in the maintenance and operations
division.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So I
guess you're the expert. Help me understand how if

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not... if letting these positions go through the
attrition process how does that not affect your
everyday operation. If it's maintenance and
operations that we're asking you to expend...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I'm calling up our
Commissioner for Finance to go into further detail.
He's actually the commissioner that'll be tracking
this.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right,
especially since the council's funding on
maintenance initiative.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So I
would hope that you're not... [cross-talk]

COMMISSIONER SILVER: It... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
...counting on that.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...across the board
the bulk of our employees tend to be in the
maintenance and operation division.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. So
walk me through your attrition plan that's not
going to really affect...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Okay.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: ...your
maintenance or operation.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: This is Assistant
Commissioner David Stark.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you. Good morning.

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I think
your microphone is off, sir.

DAVID STARK: Okay well I was hoping it
was off. Actually...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Well
it's not that kind of day so...

DAVID STARK: It's not that we're... we...
we will continue to replace everyone that leaves
but due to a lot of new funding coming in its
inherit in the system that there's certain delays
in bringing people on board and filling the new
lines and replacing people as they leave. So
everyone will continue to be brought on, we're not
taking any additional cuts but especially the first
year of new programming there are savings inherit
in that.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So this
is just the gap between...

DAVID STARK: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: ...you
hiring people...

DAVID STARK: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: ...that
you'll have this four million dollars' worth of
saving... [cross-talk]

DAVID STARK: And... and while this is
occurring we're working on tightening our hiring
process so those savings will not occur in the
future because we'll be able to actually contain
that and the savings are only for one year.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.
And when you say tightening what does that mean?

DAVID STARK: We're going through a
process to see how we can start the process of
recruiting and hiring and shorten it.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.
Alright. Well thank you. And how do you... you know
in the past there's a mechanism where you can
measure your efficiencies. How do you plan to track
your efficiencies to see if you're going to be

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meeting your goal? Let's say when the November plan
roles out how do you measure I have two million
dollars in savings, we made our four million
dollars in savings...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: How do
you measure that along the way.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: The... the same
Commissioner is the one that tracks those savings.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Don't
move.

DAVID STARK: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Stay.

DAVID STARK: I try to measure it with
very small pieces of paper that I then throw away.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Uh-huh,
that's our problem.

DAVID STARK: Well we get to see...
there's actually a... a variance report that OMB
creates.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

DAVID STARK: And we study month to
month savings in seasonal, full time, overtime, and
every category is tracked. And once those savings

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are in the books they will not come up later. So we
can try to save a monthly portion of this and try
to hit our targets.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay so
there's a monthly measure that we would be able to
track or that you...

DAVID STARK: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: ...track.
Okay.

DAVID STARK: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you. Commissioner I have to say we are incredibly
frustrated with DDC. This is like our... I know
you're not.

DAVID STARK: Oh.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: The
capital projects usually bear the brunt from us as
council members. We don't understand why it takes
almost a decade to get certain projects done in the
park. I think you've moved the needle significantly
on some projects, not on all. We are completely
discouraged from funding bathrooms because for
whatever reason bathrooms are like the most
expensive and complicated and time consuming thing

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to repair in parks. So can you walk me through... and
I know that you mentioned it in your testimony but
how will these positions support the department's
efforts to expedite design process for capital
projects.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well the
additional staff will really focus more on the
construction side but it'll also allow... allow us to
address the backlog. In terms of the timeline we've
already achieved major efficiencies in the last
year and so I could just not to you on a
construction side from on time and on budget we
went from the 70 percent range to 93 percent and
then on construction up to 98 percent. So we've
already shaved off six months plus off the process.
So I think you're referring to some issues of the
past but we're very proud that now seeing most of
our projects in under four years and in some cases
closer to three years. So that is... my concern was
we peaked a little bit too soon but now we're at 98
93 percent on time on time on construction. So
we're very pleased with the progress we've made on
our capital process. We've addressed both the
design phase, to some extent the procurement phase

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and have focused on the construction phase and
we're seeing significant savings in terms of our
time on all construction...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...projects.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I... I
just want to be clear because there's I guess two
buckets now. There... the priorities when you came in
and you know we have the small parks and you know
are those the ones that are expedited or are they
all from the ones that have been like backlogged
from prior...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: All...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
...administrations?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yeah... all. There
were some projects I inherited. We put in some new
standards and we now meet with my capital staff
every other month to identify those projects that
were having some issues so we can troubleshoot
right away and address some of those problems so we
don't see them slipping too fast. But no it's not
just a community parks initiative projects, it's
all projects starting in October of 2014 we started

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putting in the new practice in place and now we're
seeing a significant improvement in our timelines
across the board.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And how...
how large was your backlog?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I think it was
close to 100... it was over, I'm just told 124 and
now I think we have it down to under 30 and we
expect it to be down to 0 now with the addition of
these new capital staff by next year.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: By when?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Next year.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Next
year.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay
it's going to be my number one question next year.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I will be ready.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
Excellent.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I'm very confident
that... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So I'm
sorry you said 124 projects.

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COMMISSIONER SILVER: It was 124.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And now
you're at 130?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: No, now we're
about under 30 for this year.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: For 30?
You're at 30.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Under 30
backlogged...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Under
30.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...for this year and
we expect it to be...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Oh.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...zero by next
year.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Wow.

Okay, very good. The capital commitment plan
includes funding for 106.2 million dollars for
reconstruction of the Passerelle Pedestrian Bridge
in Queens which you know I'm very grateful for.

This was something that we discussed and you
immediately responded. Can you walk me through the
timeline on this project?

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COMMISSIONER SILVER: I don't know if I
have...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And
while you find that...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Oh.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I just
wanted to...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: It's a DDC project
so we'll be working with DDC.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Ah.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: So of course the
first step is going to be...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: That'll
be never.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND Okay
well... I bring this up because there is obviously a...
secret the governor is planning this air train. The
air train is being considered... the air... this stop,
the Passerelle actually connects to is Willets
Point and the Long Island Railroad which is the hub
that's going to be for the air train. My concern is
while the governor's priority is to get pedestrians
to the airport this is our prime entrance to the

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park. So my priority is that our park is welcoming
and... and that it looks like the entrance to a park
and not a stop on an air train. So it just seems
that this is an opportunity with this investment.
Are you engaging with the state to ensure that this
is a thoughtful and collective project?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes. The answer is
we tend to work with the state on any project
whether it transportation or entrances you want to
make sure that you collaborate. There's no
productive outcome when you start planning in
silos. This is an important asset to the city so
want to make sure that we will work with the state,
they understand this is not just a stop but a major
entrance and our largest park in Queens.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.
Perfect. Thank you. So... and I guess I will follow-
up with the DDC Commissioner who hopefully has a
better timeline right? Yes?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay
great. PEP officers and then we're going to... I'll...
I'll give it to my chair who I know is going to go
into more detail on the PEP officers. The new city

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funded projected headcount for PEP officers is now
292.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Right.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: However,
the department only has 201 PEP officers with 63 of
those currently in... in the training academy. As of
today what is the actual headcount available for
deployment and what is the actual headcount
available for department... deployment by borough?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yeah. It's 201 but
we have approximately 63 that'll be in the academy.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.
And what's... what... when's the... how long is the
training?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: The academy it's...
goes from... they graduate June 6th and the next
academy graduates Augusts 1st. So it'll be 42
that'll be... that'll actually go through the academy
on June 6th and then another 21 on August 1st.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay so
Okay so June 6th class is how many?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: 42.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: 42. And
the remainder is in the August class?

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COMMISSIONER SILVER: 21.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: And that'll bring
us up to 201.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So how
many do we have for... how many PEP officers do we
have available per borough to patrol?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Oh sorry.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right
now.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: In the Bronx 25,
Brooklyn 22, Manhattan 36, Queens 27, Staten Island
19.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.
Bronx 25, Brooklyn 22...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: 22. Manhattan 36...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: 36.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Queens 27.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Uh-huh.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Staten Island 19.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: and that
adds up to 127.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Right, and then
the new needs...

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: 129.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Do you want to go
over the... the new needs?

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: So for the new
needs which will be available, these are the
baselined, there'll be eight additional for the
Bronx, 20 for Brooklyn, 12 for Manhattan, eight for
Queens, 10 for Staten Island, and there'll be nine
for a citywide task force.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And how
did you assess these numbers? How do you... how did
you decide that Brooklyn gets 20 and Queens gets
eight and...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well we work very
carefully... our System Commissioner Dockett is here
that oversees the PEP... Parks Enforcement. We look
very carefully through reports that we get on all
the trends. And so based upon that feedback we've
allocated it based on what we believe to be the
need as well as a citywide taskforce because we
wanted a team that could identify hot spots and go
there on an as needed basis. So this was based upon

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the information that we collect on need across our
system.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And when
do you plan to hire the 67?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: We're doing that
right now.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So
you're hiring...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes. And of course
there's always a lag because we have to both hire
and then they have to go through the academy.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.
Okay. Well I'm going to come back in the second
round but I want to give my chair an opportunity...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: ...to ask
his questions and for our colleague to ask their
questions. We've been joined by Council Member
Lander and Treyger. Chair. And Van Bramer.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you Chair
Ferrerias Copeland. And thank you Commissioner for
your remarks. Thank you for your frequent use of
the images of Parks Committee members in your
slideshow. Greatly appreciate that. The... there's a

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lot of good news here that I'm... I'm anxious to dive
in deeper on but I... I first want to ask you about a
head scratcher. I'm still struggling to understand
the proposed cut or failure... failure to baseline
the 150 gardeners and maintenance workers. The 100
maintenance workers these are CPWs. These really
are the engine to the park system. If... if... if their
job isn't done nothing else works. Tough jobs by
the way. These... these men and women are out in 100-
degree heat carrying heavy equipment and they're
out in the cold breaking ice. And the gardeners'
work too is obviously in a park system just
essential. And I've seen the work that some of
these 50 hires have done around the city and it's
really inspirational. Can you explain the logic of
not continuing funding in a baseline way for these
important workers?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well I concur with
you that we value their contribution. These are
outstanding workers and individuals that help care
for our parks. As you know we're still in the
budget process and now things as we proceed we'll
continue to have a conversation with council about
these very important positions and I'm sure other

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issues that came through on city council's request.
So we still look forward to have this conversation.
The process is not over but I do concur with you
that these are very valuable individuals and... and
very important positions.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: There... there are
times where the city council funds and initiative
which really... just isn't a priority of the mayor so
the city council funds that often repeatedly for
many years. But in this case some of these workers
have formed the backbone of the workforce for the
community parks initiative, is that not right?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: That is correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: About how many
are used in CPI parks?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: It's 102 total and
51 gardeners total.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Okay virtually...
virtually all of them... not virtually but actually
all of them have been deployed to CPI parks?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: About half... about
half are dedicated. I can go through each borough,
about half are dedicated to... see the actual numbers
for Bronx is nine, Brooklyn 16, Manhattan nine,

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Queens 14... roughly about half on the CPW side. And
the gardeners a little bit different. That one
varies but certainly CPWs about half of the 100 are
in CPI zones.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So you're
prepared in... in what has been until now the
signature capital initiative and these wonderfully
newly renovated parks to dramatically scale back
staffing as of July 1st?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Again as we
continue to have this conversation we know that
we're certainly willing to sit down and... and see as
the budget process unfolds how we can take a look
to... to address you know some of these positions but
for now the mayor's budget had focused on the... the
step up and we're willing to sit down and talk
about how we can address some of these positions.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Yeah, okay. Well
I just want to... I want to go on record as saying
how important it is I think to me and... and almost
if not every council member that we avert these
cuts. It'll... it'll really negatively impact the
parks we care about and will negatively impact 150
hardworking New Yorkers. And of course we want to

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protect them as well. Another headscratcher for me
was the failure to baseline the million or so that
we've had in for stump removal. Again sometimes the
council... we... we fund things through our... our own
initiatives that are maybe they're pilot programs
or they're... they're something far afield from the
core priorities of... of the mayoral administration
but in this case stump removal I mean that... that's
really bread and butter operations work of the
parks department. And I believe and... and you can...
you can clarify this that where... even with that
enhanced funding in we are suffering from a long
backlog both in terms of numbers and time on stump
removal which I think my colleagues in the outer
boroughs in particular are suffering with. Can... can
you clarify what... what is the current backlog on
stump removal and... and the logic for not renewing...
not baselining that additional funding?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Right the backlog
is roughly about 25,000 stumps.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Wow.

LIAM KAVANAGH: And if you recall there
wasn't any really significant funding prior to this
administration. And over the last few years there

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have now been more money added for the stump
removal. So as I stated before we're still near the
end of the process and this is certainly I'm sure a
conversation we'll have with the mayor's office and
OMB about this particular issue.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So if there's a
storm on my block and a tree gets damaged and it
has to be cut down as of today how long can I
expect to wait for that stump to be removed?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: If the tree falls...
you weren't asking about the stump; you were asking
if the tree falls down? Could you repeat your
question?

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Yeah. Well once...
once it cut... let's say it's damaged and it's
dangerously falling over on the street corner then
we have to remove it and cut it how long before the
stump itself gets removed?

LIAM KAVANAGH: At the current level of
funding we have... we're removing about 14,000 stumps
a year. So it... it might take a year a half to two
years for that stump to be removed.

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COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: And... and that's
with the million in change that we've put in as a
council correct? It's not...

LIAM KAVANAGH: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: ...currently
renewed. So what... what will the wait extend to if
you're short that funding.

LIAM KAVANAGH: It would reduce the
annual production to about 10,000 stumps a year and
I imagine it would push the expected removal date
out to about two and a half years.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Okay well I... I
think you can understand the frustration of council
members at even the existing year and a half wait
and... and two and a half years really unacceptable.
I'm... I'm going to pause on that topic because I
know that my colleagues in particular minority
leader have follow-up questions on that. Chair
Ferrerias-Copeland had some very good important
questions on PEP officers but there was just one
wrinkle that I wanted to ask unless you already
mentioned this which is on any given shift the
numbers are going to be less than obviously the
total headcount because this is a... I don't know if

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it's quite a 24/7 operation but you're split up
between two...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Two shifts.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: ...or three
shifts... is it two shift, so... On any given shift say
in the Bronx how many officers would be on duty?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I'm going to ask
Assistant Commissioner Dockett to come up.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Sure.

MICHAEL DOCKETT: Hey, good morning. I
don't have the exact par shift number but basically
how it works, PEP officers patrol in pairs. So if
you have three officers that gives you one pair per
day over seven days. Typical deployments citywide
out of a main command in the Bronx which would be
Mill Pond they work 8:00 to 4:00 and 4:00 to 12:00.
They should be turning out at least two units in
the morning and probably two in the evening as
well. So that's four officers going out each shift.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: But... but that's
for the... for the whole... an entire borough?

MICHAEL DOCKETT: No... no that's just for
the main command. Then they have sub commands. So
there's also Crotona Park in the Bronx so they're

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working a seven-day shift and they... they should be
turning out one unit for the park, Crotona Park.
And then an additional unit to patrol that sector
of the Bronx. But each borough has a similar
configuration but is a main command that works from
8:00 to midnight and they turn out units to cover
the entire borough. Then they have subcommands that
focus on a specific sector of... of the borough.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Well doing the
math roughly it seems like it could be about 10 to
12 counting all your commands actually out in parks
at any given moment. And... and a borough like the
Bronx which has... each of our boroughs has several
hundred parks, I think the Bronx has 8,000 acres of
parks. I mean it... it's hard to imagine how unless
they're superhuman they could cover that kind of
territory with 10 or 12 people.

MICHAEL DOCKETT: Well they... they focus
on parks where we're receiving complaints. They hit
all of the big flagship parks. We follow-up on 3-1-
1 requests that come in, information that's coming
in from our maintenance managers where they have
concerns. And then they also get dispatched so if
something is occurring our central communications

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unit dispatches them to that site. With the academy
graduating on June 6th that's a 42 officers that'll
be deployed out to the borough. We had an academy
that started this Monday which will come out August
1st. That'll be another 21 officers put out to the
boroughs. And when the 67 new needs come in on July
1st they'll enter a academy that begins July 11th
and they'll be hitting the park the last... first
week of October. So all of these number of patrol
units that we're able to put up, put out will be
going up.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Can you clarify
how many additional PEP officers are privately
funded. And I think they're all in Manhattan but if
you can tell us what borough.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: 77.

MICHAEL DOCKETT: Yeah there... there are
seven...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: 77.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: And... and those
are... are they only Central Park and Battery Park
City or where...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Brooklyn Bridge,
Riverside, West Harlem Piers, Washington Square,

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Madison Square, Reynolds Island, East River Central
Park, and Hudson River Park.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: And are there
any outside of Manhattan?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Brooklyn Bridge.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: And look I
welcome every additional PEP officer whatever...
whatever the source of the funding but when you've
got only 10 or 12 actually out in parks in an
entire borough and you have more than that
clustered in these small parks that are lucky
enough to have conservancies I think it does raise
equity issues for us. It's just another argument
for increasing the pot of public money for these...
this important function. Thank... thanks to a
legislation that the council's passed we now have
very helpful information publically available on
crime committed in parks. I think now you're...
you're reporting... or the NYPD's reporting on the
top 100 parks crime statistics. And if I'm looking
at my numbers right I'm trying to... I'm trying to...
grasp trends here. In the first quarter of 2015
there were 85 crimes reported in our parks and in
the first quarter of 2016 there were 108 which

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would be an increase of 27 percent. Do I have the
numbers right?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So that... that's
a story that I don't know it's been... if it's gotten
out to the public and it is alarming. Could you
explain your explanation for that trend?

LIAM KAVANAGH: I... we don't know if it's
a trend yet. It's a welcome development that the
police department is now reporting on crime not
just in the 100 largest parks, 11 hundred and 54
different...

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Ah, great.

LIAM KAVANAGH: ...properties across the
city. It started in the... I think it was the third
quarter of 2014. So we... we're just now getting into
our first full cycle of quarters where we're having
reports. This particular comparison, first quarter
2015 2016 there is that increase. Yes, it is
something we're concerned about. However, you... you
also have to factor in some of the environmental
conditions. First quarter of 2015 was the winter of
course and it was a very severe winter in New York
City. This last winter you know we did have a

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record breaking snowfall and a very serious cold
snap in February but for the most part it was a
much more mild winter than what we experienced in
the two prior years. We're not sure if that's the
reason but it often is a factor in the volume of
crime that you see in outdoor spaces. But you know
it's a great development that we're seeing this
information. I think over time as we accumulate
more information and working with the police
department we'll be able to you know refine our
patrol patterns to provide a presence. I mean I
don't want to mislead anybody. The PEP officers are
not you know the... the... the agency that deals
directly with crime. That's the police department.
They do a wonderful job. But we work with them to
make our parks safe. And having this kind of
information is going to help us be more effective.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Well we
understand the... that data points are not enough to
establish a trend but this... this underlies our... our
argument for more PEP officers and... and no they're
not... they're not a substitute for the NYPD but they
are law enforcement...

LIAM KAVANAGH: Yes.

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COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: ...personnel. They
have arrest powers. They are deterrent to crime for
sure. And in some cases have... have acted heroically
to... to intercede in... in... in preventing crime. So
they... I think they... they are relevant to the
question of public safety in the parks. One last
question on PEP officers. So I believe the current
work week is 35 hours for PEP officers, is that
right?

LIAM KAVANAGH: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So why not just
increase that to 40 hours which would be an
effective bump up of... of... of the equivalent to
hiring I don't know another couple dozen officers
without having to go through academies and
recruiting and all that?

LIAM KAVANAGH: It is... it is something
that we have supported as an agency. It is a
contractual issue that simply has not been resolved
yet.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So meaning it
has to be worked out in collective bargaining?

LIAM KAVANAGH: Yes.

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COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Okay. Alright
well... well keep... keep us posted on that. I'm
actually going to pause because we have a lot of
colleagues here and... and I'll come back for a
second round.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Chair. We'll now hear from my... minority leader
Matteo followed by Council Member Cabrera followed
by Council Member Cohen.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Thank you Madam
Chair. Welcome Commissioner. I want to briefly
thank your staff Borough Commissioner Lynda
Ricciardone former Borough Commission Adena Long
and... very... very great staff who is always available
offline to deal with issues. So I... I thank you and
thank you Lynda and Adena. I want to start by
talking about stump removals obviously. Chair
Levine and I have been taking the forefront on this
because obviously it's been an issue on Staten...
Staten Island throughout the city. You've said it
before. We've haven't had funding for a long time.
And I understand where that... the backlog gets... do
you have the numbers? I know you broke it down. Do
you have Staten Island numbers you can...

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COMMISSIONER SILVER: This is to be
removed... additional funding. We do not have the
number of stumps to be removed in Staten Island.
Was that your...

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Yeah I was just
wondering. You said 25,000 backlog. I was wondering
if you had it broken down.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: We'll see if we
can get that number for you. I don't have that.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: And I think I
may have it in my briefing but I will... I will check
too. So the issue is the funding. Does the funding
get you more equipment, get you more personnel?
What does the funding get you to start bringing
down that number?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: We do it by... by
contracts.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes, it's by
contract.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: We contract...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...contracted out.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: And you... and
they provide the equipment?

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COMMISSIONER SILVER: They provide the
equipment... the staff...

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: The grinders?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Parks doesn't
have grinders to go out and do special stump
removals when they need to or...

LIAM KAVANAGH: We do... yes we do.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: But just not
enough to...

LIAM KAVANAGH: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay. I'm just
going to jump around. Can you give me the status of
the... friendship club capital project. We're
rebuilding the Friendship Club in New Drop Beach.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: The design is
completed. It's not at the tail end of procurement.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: It's tail end
what?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Of procurement.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: And do you have
timeframe on construction starting.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...procurement it
should be at some point this year. We have to of

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course see whether we have successful bids. But if
it's the tail end of procurement construction could
start before the year is up.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: We're thinking
this year though?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: If... if it's in the
tail of procurement we get successful bids for it.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay and... and
I'll follow-up with... and make sure that we're...
we're on time. Okay thank you. Recently this
council had passed my legislation for ADs at
baseball fields under parks in... just generally are
you ready for it? How are you going through the...
the procurement process? So it's a RF... oh we're
going to do an RFP. I'm just trying to figure out
where...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Now the law has
passed we're now working on an implementation plan
to make sure that it's deployed as safely and as
seamlessly as possible for those that now have to
get the AED. So the answer is yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: So obviously
because I'm the lead sponsor companies calling me I

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don't want any part of it I could direct them to
your office...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: ...to determine
if... whatever RFP process...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes, you can.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: ...there is and
they can just deal with... directly with you?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: And we're
confident that we'll be ready for next season?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I believe we will
be, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Yes?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Great.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Law takes effect
January 1st but we'll be working in advance to make
sure we can get it to the fields as quickly as
possible.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Great. The rec
center parking lot, the speaker and I put in over a
million dollars last year for... for new parking. Do
you have an update on the status of that project?

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COMMISSIONER SILVER: It is in design
now.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: That's in design
as well.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay. And Linda
I could follow up with you on that. The tree and
sidewalk program, another popular program out...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Mm-hmm.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: in Staten Island
obviously. Do have numbers of outstanding tree and
sidewalk programs? Are you still using the rating
that they have to be...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes, we still...

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: ...a 72... two...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: We are still using
the rating, that's correct. We'll get...

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: If it's under 72
they're not on the list yet or it has to be 72 and
above?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes, that's
correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Do you have the
numbers on that or...

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COMMISSIONER SILVER: We're getting them
right now.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay. And if you
could... you could give them to me offline that's
fine.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: I just need the...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: So we'll follow-up
with stumps. You want to know the backlog as well
as the situation with the sidewalk?

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Trees and
sidewalks.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Right. Okay.
Tree pruning requests; we're still... we're still on
a seven-year cycle and...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: ...is that... the
seven-year cycle, is that because of funding issues
or do you just think that's the adequate timeframe
that Parks should be going back. Do we use parks
personnel or you... are you mainly contracting that
out? And just a last point to the tree pruning and
Linda and Orin [phonetic] do a great job of... of

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answering my requests. They go out and do where
needed but is parks doing enough and do you have
enough resources to get to tree prunings before the
seven years. Because obviously some trees are going
to need it and they can't wait the seven years.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: The industry
standard is a seven year pruning cycle and we
contract that work out.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: So it... it... for
you it's industry standard, not about funding?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well they're tied
together because we were at ten years prior... on the
prior administration it was at ten years. With
additional funding for the pruning we're now down
to seven years to the industry standard. And so
that is a pruning cycle that we're comfortable with
and we use contractors to do that work.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay just in a
hypothetical perfect world if we gave... if you had
more money would that be reduced or you're
comfortable at seven years then?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: If more money was
to be given yes you'd probably get it down to a
six-year cycle but seven is the industry standard.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Thank you.

LIAM KAVANAGH: I... I just want to add
that we... we do prune trees outside of the block
pruning contracts and it's based on need as you
surmise. There are trees that need work outside of
the seven-year cycle. We assess them you know using
objective standards and our staff does prune those
trees when it's necessary where they can't wait for
their seven-year cycle.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Great. Madam
Chair if you'll just put me on the second round,
I'll come back.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.
Just following up, the... there was a parks program
and I'm... I'm sure you still have it but on the
other end on sidewalk repairs when trees... the roots
kind of... So is... how is that program? What's the
timeline on that program? What are you...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: There... submit an
application that is evaluated to determine if it
qualifies.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Mm-hmm.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: If it does qualify
then we will go in and repair the tree and the

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sidewalk. So you have to actually qualify and
submit for that request.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I don't know if
you want any other information beyond that...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I can
probably...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...but that program
still exists.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay
great. Council Member Cabrera followed by Council
Member Cohen followed by Council Member Van Bramer.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you to
both of the chairs. Commissioner I want to
personally thank you and Commissioner Bronx...
Borough Commissioner Iris Rodriguez for the
tremendous work you're doing in my district. You
have truly been a breath of fresh air. I've seen
projects in the previous administration were
literally in lockdown. I was in utter frustration
and now I'm the happiest council member I think in
town when it comes to projects now becoming a
reality. And case in point recently in your
feature... in your presentation Saint James Park, the

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soccer field looks amazing, the basketball courts,
the community is so happy. Can't wait to do another
handball court. So thank you... thank you... thank you.
I wanted to ask you a couple of quick things.
Number one, I didn't see it in the presentation or...
or anything that happy for me, was there plans to
increase bike lanes in parks?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well...

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: The largest...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...not sure, I'm
just trying to... because when we evaluate and do a
park design it has to be of some scale to have a
bike lane in it. I mean the majority of bike lanes
that you're seeing is on some greenways on public
streets. But in parks per say if there's a
connectivity issue where it connects to something
else but I just can't say off of the top of my
head. But as we do a design we always evaluate both
pedestrian and bike paths but that is on a case by
case basis. And we recognize the need for bicycles
as well but the reason why I'm pausing is because
we do have some bike infrastructure in our parks.
But beyond that I think it's park by park site by
site specific.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Also... Thank...
thank you so much for that response. Also this
morning I... I woke up and you know I was reading the
daily news and I don't know if you had a chance to
read an article that honestly I was a bit baffled.
It said, says thousands of pools, public pools, hot
tubs are swimming in filth. And then it mentions
five states, New York included, and it revealed
that almost 80 percent of them were filthy enough
to warrant a safety violation. That's not the case
in New York City, correct?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: We are very proud.
In fact, our staff is working right now. We have
filter... pool filter operators. We test the quality
of our pools on a regular basis when it's open.
We're very proud about how clean and how well
maintained our park and they're right now at work
getting ready for the pools to open later on in
June. So we're very proud of our safety record on
all of our 67 pools throughout New York City.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I would love a
second story to be followed up on the... to be honest
with you after I read that you know first case in
point you read it, it seems scary. You know you be

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like I'll never go to a pool again, you know. And
I... but it... I just... my... my understanding, also
perception of New York City swimming pools, of park
swimming pools that they are very clean and well
taken care of. So I'm glad to hear that.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well I'd prefer it
if some newspapers do cover very positive stories
and there is a great story to be told about New
York City parks and the pools.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Beautiful. My
other question was in regard to... I see this capital
money supports zoos. Is the Bronx zoo included in
that?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: No it is not.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: It's not. Okay.
Which zoos...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I believe it was
for... is Prospect Park, the Prospect Park Zoo.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay. Alright
thank you so much. And again thank you for all that
you do. And I'm looking forward to seeing all the
other projects that we have in the pipeline.
Looking forward to giving more funding this year
towards park as I'm starting to see the ball

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rolling and... and... and I... and a very fast pace and
again thank you for what you're doing. It... it
really... I can't say enough of the work that you're
doing. And also all the capital... I... I can't recall
in all the years that I been here the amount of
capital as it was stated by the chair that is being
dedicated to Park. I don't think there's been a
mayor that I can recall in recent history that has
given so much funding. And he is to be commended
for that. Thank you so much.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thanks so much
to the chairs.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Council Member. We will now hear from Council
Member Cohen followed by Council Member Van Bramer,
followed by Council Member Treyger. We've been
joined by Council Member Grodenchik, Rosenthal, and
Johnson.

COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you Chairs.
Thank you Commissioner for your testimony. I do
just want to echo for one second a comment by my
colleague, Council Member Cabrera, we have with the
leadership of our borough commissioner and... and...

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and parks in general we've... we have untangled some
thorny capital projects together. So I am very
grateful for your... your agency's effort in doing
that and that we've gotten projects that have been
delayed for many years back on track. So that is a
testament to your commitment to dealing with it,
the challenges with capital. I had a question
regarding the weekend cleanup services... sanitation
services. Where are those services being employed
and Van Cortlandt Park could definitely use them.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Okay.

LIAM KAVANAGH: They are being deployed
to basically large parks that attract crowds on the
weekends for barbequing, picnics, sports
activities. Van Cortlandt is very much part of that
plan as well as places like you know Pelham Bay
Park, Crotona, St. Mary's, parks of that nature
which draw big crowds on the weekend.

COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: That's great news
because it... it was always disheartening on Monday
morning to see you know the... the evidence of people
having a good time and enjoying our parks but it...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: And to respond to
you Council Member Cabrera these are... good stories

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that never got told. We... I don't recall receiving
any major complaint last summer about trash and
litter and in fact even our workers appreciated the
fact that they did not come to the park Monday and
to see somewhat of a disaster in those heavily
trafficked parks. So it's one of those great
stories that now we have cleaning seven days a week
on those high destination parks.

COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: That is great
news. I have a question about CPI. Is all that
money allocated? Do we... are all the parks
identified that are getting CPI?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: There's another
round that we'll be looking at for this fall but we
had the first round of 35, another round of I
believe eight or 12 and... another round... so 12 and
there'll be another round announced this fall.

COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: So all the money
has not... has not yet been dedicated to that.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: That's correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I have a
suggestion I will...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Okay.

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COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: ...that I will
definitely raise with you. I did have a question
about... about crime reporting. I think that the
stats are helpful. I am curious though about the
integration between the PEP and the NYPD when
obviously I have a couple of crime issues that have
gotten coverage in the media also in Van Cortlandt
Park and I'm not always clear on what the
relationship is between NYPD and the... and the PEP.
And even... a question came up and I think we
resolved it among ourselves but again in Van
Cortlandt Park it borders multiple precincts. The
park itself is... I believe is in the 50th precinct
but the east side of the park is obviously better
served by the four seven. And it seems to be clear
that that's what happens.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Right. And we want
to be clear. The... the PEP officers enforce park
rules. That is their primary purpose. They're peace
officers. Yes, they're eyes that are out there but
again we work closely with NYPD but they serve to
enforce the park rules and as their... their primary
purpose. But we have a great relationship. All of
our borough commissioners as well as our assistant

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commissioner work closely with all of the NYPD and
their respective borough. And we'll continue to
develop that relationship.

COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I guess that my
question... if you were aware that there was crime in
a park at night would you... would the agency reach
out to NYPD? How... how would that work?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: The answer is yes
because our shifts go from 8:00 to 12:00 so some of
these are occurring after the park closes. That's
definitely something that we would notify NYPD.
Same issue was happening Flushing Meadow Corona
Park. We knew there was activity late in the
evening. NYPD went out there began to monitor the
situation so they can start to address what happens
after hours. So the answer is yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Do you... do you
know how often that happens? Do you keep track of
referrals made to NYPD?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I know I get
alerted by every incident reported by our... PEP but
I don't know specifically... Commissioner Dockett
could come up to see how NYPD actually communicates
with park staff.

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MICHAEL DOCKETT: Hi, Mike Dockett
again. There's... there's interaction with NYPD on a
number of levels from the local park supervisor
that does maintenance and operations that attends
the district... cabinet meeting, the community board
meeting, the park manager interacts with the
policing commander. Our PEP captains interact with
the policing commander, with their community
affairs officers, the borough commissioners and the
chiefs in the boroughs interact with the borough
commanders of NYPD to get ready for the beach
season, the pool season that is ongoing dialogue.
So if an instant like you mentioned in Van
Cortlandt were to occur our PEP captain should be
aware of that. They attend the police community
council meetings where those issues come up. We
have done joint details with NYPD where we go
jointly to address a situation. So when you have
like the Chandler ball fields with the music, the
curfew enforcement, that's kind of a joint effort
there. Our officers could check out a radio from
NYPD when they're doing stake out, that type of
thing. So the coordination happens on many levels.

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COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you. I
appreciate that.

MICHAEL DOCKETT: You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Council Member. We will now hear from Council
Member Van Bramer followed by Treyger, followed by
Rosenthal. And we've been joined by Council Member
Mealy. Majority Leader.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you
very much Madam Chair and Chair Levine.
Commissioner Silver first let me start by saying
that Queens is lucky to have a Commissioner
Lewandowski in our borough. We work very well
together. My first question is... is slightly
different than where a lot of my colleagues are
coming from. I know you know about this issue and
that is your... your naming policies. And we have as
you know a woman who stewarded and took care of
Queens Bridge Park for over 30 years when very
little attention was paid to that park. Ms. McQueen
passed away and we... we want to name the esplanade
after Ms. McQueen. I know that you worked on your
naming policy. You have a... someone has to be
deceased for three years or so to name a park. And

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I just wanted to know if... if there's any clarity on
both the policy broadly speaking and then our... our
request for Ms. McQueen.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Somebody should
have contacted you well over a month ago. I did
make a decision and we are reevaluating the naming
policy. I... I was aware that you're evaluating it.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: I guess I'm
asking you on the record where you're... you're...
you're leaning to because while I understand that...
that naming a park, a whole park is a very
significant issue for you. The question of naming a
field or a lot or a series of benches, that should
be a different consideration and I'm wondering if
that is where you're leaning because Ms. McQueen
did the work, took care of the park, and we should
do this.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Again I made a
decision on this about a month ago. I will check
with staff why you weren't contacted but we'll...
I'll talk to you after the meeting and tell you
what my decision was. But we are reevaluating the
naming policy. I was asking where the three year
came from as well as elements versus park itself.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Great look
forward to that conversation and staying in Queens
Bridge Park we have a terrific capital project to
tear down an abandoned park house and... and rebuild
a beautiful state of the art facility. I'm
wondering if you have an update on that.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well I've just
seen design I'm assuming is going to PDC. I don't
know if you've seen design as well but is
absolutely outstanding. So I was going to PDC, that
means it's now at the end of the design process or
close to it and then the next stage would be do the
actual documents and then move on to procurement.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: I have seen
the design and it is stunning. And it will be a
remarkable addition to Queens Bridge Park. One that
Ms. McQueen was very excited about in its earliest
stages as she was there for the announcement when
we announced the funding, I think it's the initial
funding for the project. I wanted to move to street
trees. I don't know if you've spoken at length
about this but we've had some great success in
planting a lot of new trees all over the city of
New York but there is still of course an incredible

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thirst and desire literally for... for new trees. I
passed by it... an area in my district today and saw
a business owner along Skillman Avenue and she
pointed to three tree pits that had been taken down
as a result of a storm. That work was necessary of
course and now I have a request that is about two
hours old for tree... new trees on Skillman Avenue.
So maybe you can talk a little bit about the budget
for street trees citywide and how quickly you all
are moving on trees.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well we do have a
tree planting budget but I'll... I'll defer to
Commissioner Kavanagh if you wanted specific...
process to submit a request for a tree to be
planted.

LIAM KAVANAGH: It's easy to request a
new tree. Call 3-1-1 and we'll be happy to include
it in our planting. List if it is an appropriate
site, not every site is. Even though we completed
the million tree planting campaign we still have
two years of funding to support street trees at the
level that they were being planted during the
campaign. So for the next two fiscal years, 17 and
18 we are scheduled to plant approximately 20,000

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street trees a year which will you know result in a
net increase in the number of trees.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Right. So I...
[cross-talk] I... Commissioner Kavanagh I appreciate
the process. I guess my question is because we have
successfully planted a lot of trees in our district
so we are aware of the process but how... what is
your timeline? So we request a tree... how much time
is there between a request from a council member's
office or a 3-1-1 call and the planting of a tree?

LIAM KAVANAGH: It can take about a... it
can take a year and a half to two years for a
number of reasons. One is the volume of requests.
We receive a lot of requests and we try to honor
them in first come first serve basis. But the other
factor is the planting seasons. We're limited to
two very specific times a year that we can plant
trees. And you know if you you know contact us you
know at the... just at the wrong moment in that cycle
it can extend the time a little bit. So it... it can
be from anywhere from year and a half to two and a
half years from a time a request is received 'till
you see a tree in front of your house.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: IT's a long
time for a... a new tree but I look forward to
following up with... with you on all those matters
possibly in a second round. Thank you Madam.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Minority Leader, we... I mean Majority Leader. We
will hear from Council Member Treyger followed by
Council Member Rosenthal followed by Council Member
Mealy. We've been joined by Grodenchik... oh
Grodenchik... okay Council Member Cornegy. You may
begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Great. Thank
you... thank you to both chairs. Welcome
Commissioner. I want to begin by first you know
thanking your office as well as Commissioner
Jeffrey from Brooklyn for helping us add additional
Mobi-Mats to our beaches this summer. It's very
very much needed and very much appreciated that
we'll be increasing accessibility for our seniors
and people with disabilities to enjoy the beaches
this summer. I also appreciated your attendance and
participation at our recent community planning
meeting for Lafayette Playground and I... I... I
appreciate that. I... I do want to just add my voice

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to I think the urgent need to better maintain and...
and better staff up parks workers, both maintenance
and PEP and security throughout our parks. This is
a very special and important opportunity to I... I
think also incorporate local hiring into that
process as well. The people who are invested in
those... in these neighborhoods are people that will
work very very hard to keep those neighborhoods
great and safe and enjoyable for all people. So I
want to double down on... on our chairs' comments and
my colleagues' comments in making sure that all of
our parks, not just some of our parks but all of
our parks are enjoyable places for our families in
all neighborhoods of... of... of New York City. I want
to just hone in and... and a couple of items
commissioner with regards to the capital process
and how long it takes for these projects to happen.
I... I mentioned this at previous hearings. I just
want to kind of hone in on this now. Your staff
gave me a presentation on why it costs about 1.8
million, two million dollars to build a... a bathroom
in a park. Because we're in year three of
participatory budgeting in my district and the
requests for bathrooms in parks still comes up and...

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and we asked a question to our residents what would
you do with one million dollars we can't build a
bathroom in a park with one million dollars. And
it's still a difficult time... I have a difficult
time explaining to people. So when they present it
to me they said that we're kind of at the mercy of
outside contractors and their subcontractors and
their subcontractors and their subcontractors. I
believe we really need to work on a plan together
to have the parks department hire people in house,
unionize them, and let them build and design these
comfort stations throughout the five boroughs. Why
do we have to give money out to new designs and new
consultants and new contractors? Why can't we
really give the parks department an expanded roll,
hire people from our neighborhoods, put on a parks
department uniform, let them design, let them
build, let them implement, let them maintain? Why...
why should we be at the mercy of... of... of outside
contractors who then subcontract, subcontract,
subcontract? And I think we will reduce costs. We
will reduce the amount of time it takes to do these
things. So I just want to hear your comments
commissioner on working on this important I think

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worthwhile reform to the procurement and capital
project process.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I know it was
something internally we looked at about repairing
existing comfort stations. To build new ones it's
not just hiring the workers. It's the equipment. It
is having the expertise to actually design it, go
through the process of getting it permitted. So
it's not just having local staff just working but
there are also certain laws that we have to abide
by to see if we actually can accomplish that. Will
we take a look and explore it, absolutely, but for
the time being you're absolutely correct when you
look at the cost of comfort stations as related to
the labor associated to the comfort stations and we
put it out to bid and that's the response to that
we get. We'll certainly consider your
recommendation as something we explored using
internal staff to upgrade and renovate existing
comfort stations, not to build them from scratch.
But it's certainly something we'll take a look at
and my staff will get back to you to see how
feasible that proposal is and this is something we
can do going forward.

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COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Yes,
absolutely. I... I think that this is an opportunity
to really... And... and... and you've... you've made a lot
of headways in trying to... trying to speed up some
of the capital process. There's been more
transparency online and we appreciate that. This
can be the signature reform of really doing things
in house and not be at the mercy of... of... of outside
forces.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: And our concern is
now comfort stations are moving closer toward the
two million, in fact over, mark. So we're seeing as
the market gets more pressure we see the price
going higher.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Commissioner
just last questions and... and I'm finished. I think...
I think we know each other's positions on... with
regards to materials of the Coney Island Boardwalk.
I'd like to hear your position on land marking the
Coney Island Boardwalk. As you know over 50 members
of the city council signed onto the resolution to
landmark our iconic structure. Will you join us in
supporting the land marking of our precious Coney
Island Boardwalk.

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COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well as you know
there is a process. I believe... reviewing it and
Parks will have an opportunity to weigh in.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And I
believe that was auto pilot response.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I look... I... I
look forward to land marking with you commissioner.
Take... thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Council Member. We will now hear from Council
Member Rosenthal followed by Council Member Mealy
followed by Council Member Grodenchik.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so
much Chairs. And Commissioner it's always great to
see you and you know what I'm going to ask.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I do.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So every time
we talk at a budget hearing you report on the
length of time it takes for procurement to get
something from the point it's put in the budget to
the ribbon cutting. And in your first year you said
that you had improved procurement by two months.
I'm wondering how it's going and what I can do to
help. And if money... would money help?

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COMMISSIONER SILVER: If I recall
design... there's three stages and the design is
where we were able to save the most significant
time because the design is really primarily under
my jurisdiction.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Procurement has
about five or six entities that have to touch it.
And then construction depends on the weather and
other factors pretty much will run between 12 and
18 months depending on complexity. So procurement
is the challenge and we have been making some
headway. My staff's been meeting with all the
different entities in the procurement process and
in some cases they've been reviewing it before
their time. So we're seeing some improvement but
certainly we'd like to reform that even further. So
the good news is design we've been able to save
four to six months. Some case of procurement maybe
a month, and then construction, we're avoiding
delays by doing pre-site investigation to avoid
delays further down.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Is that
documentable...

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COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...in... in
cases?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: My staff could sit
down to go point by point through what we've been
able to achieve and some of the opportunities for
change in the future. And we're certainly willing
to sit down with any council member who wants to go
through that presentation.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Great. Thank
you. Is there any agency or entity that's been a
particular challenge? You mentioned that there are
five or six agencies that are outside of your
control. So there's OMB, there's law department,
DOI, MOCS...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yeah, I don't
think it's been a... been difficult or a challenge.
Each one has a role and responsibility in the
procurement process. Our hope is that of the rules
they have to follow there can be some reform but
all of them are doing the best given their
timeframe and some if there's a 30-day timeframe
requirement we'll get it within 20 days. So
everyone's cooperating.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: It's just that
each one has a statutory requirement to follow and
the rules are the rules and so that I think is
opportunities in the future to look about how we
can streamline some of those roles.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Have you
considered having... has the city considered having
all of those agencies do the work concurrently?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I think...

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Could we
change the procurement rules?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...some is law
department, MOCS, Comptroller's Office so I don't
think they could all be done concurrently. MOCS is
taking a look at what can be done concurrently but
a lot of them it does rely on a decision to be made
going forward. So it's somewhat chronological than
parallel. But I don't know if... yes, okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: So I was looking
to see if there was something parallel but we'll
certainly be happy to sit down with you and...

[cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...go over the step
by step process.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And would if...
additional funds help?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: No, not in the
procurement process, it would not. This is just a
case where these are statutory requirements that we
have to go through. And that's basically what the
process is. So additional funds in the case of
procurement I believe would not be beneficial.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Would not help to
advance procurement process.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay. Thank
you very much.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Council Member. Council Member Mealy followed
by Council Member Grodenchik followed by Council
Member Cornegy. And we've been joined by Council
Member Rodriguez.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Sorry about that.
Thank you Chair. Hello, I just want to say thank
you Commissioner and Commissioner Jeffries also in

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regards to our imagination playground in Brooklyn,
the second in the world. Thank you for being there
for that ribbon cutting state of the art. So one
thing I wanted to just ask you a few questions on
is regards to the budget of play... play associates.
What kind of budget do you have for those jobs?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: For play
associates?

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Well that's...
that's where the city council, we put money in...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Oh the... I'm sorry...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: ...playground
associates.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: C... CPWs, they're
called Community Park Workers.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Yes. Do you have
any funds put in that? Because I know the council
members put it in and that's important that some
local people that get jobs every year and I make
sure I put in. So I... I never really knew what is
your budget with that?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Looking at... we
have 224 citywide. Some of these are grant lines.

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So we have 224 play... playground associates and
about nine of the 224 are council funded.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So only nine? How
do... how do you go about placing these individuals?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well we work with
our borough commissioners and they will determine
based on the portfolio where that need is. So we
work just... they make the determinations...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay I would just
hope that we could put more funds in that program
to make sure that a lot of the local people
continue having full time jobs. I always put money
in and I hope all my colleagues do the same thing
in regards to just maintaining the parks. And
that's local people who living in neighborhood they
maintain the parks. And one of the thing... you have
a 74.2-million-dollar budget, your capital money.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Our capital... no
our capital is larger than... our capital is 2.9
billion, ten-year but...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: two point what?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Nine billion.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Nine billion.

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COMMISSIONER SILVER: Of the ten-year
capital budget but the one for this fiscal year is
417 million.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay could you
tell me how do you break it down giving to each
borough. Because I know at one point I don't know
if you was here before, at least about seven years
ago, in Brownsville I had put forth at least about
12 million to put a dome in Brownsville at Betsy
Head Park. And I see other areas get major
construction such as that in other areas but it
seem like where it's really needed it never gets
there. And here it is, I see Bronx only got 3.4
million of yours... And then, excuse me, the zoo get
30.4 million and then in Brooklyn I don't know what
area this is they get 17.8 million. And.. and it
cost at least about 50 million to do a dome that we
could save lives all year around. I felt we can get
Olympic runners, players from an area that so
desperately need it and I... this... well the
administrations felt that's not important but other
areas do get it. And then I see in Manhattan who
has ample amount of money. They getting 30... 35.6

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million. And then here go Queens get 3.5 million.

So how do you really...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: ...balance that
out? Because I know some... certain areas need money
and better parks and here it is we only get a
little bit of your capital and we have to put all
our... whole capital but into our parks.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: So let me be clear
that as you stated our source of capital funds come
from city council, borough president, of course
mayoral funding, and then there are some that come
from state, federal, and other grants. As you know
this... this administration and this mayor is
committed to Community Parks Initiative Approach.
And we have been focusing those resources and if
you look at our budget and where money's been spent
since this mayor has come on board has been very
different. It has been data driven, looking, where
areas of need, and where parks are needed. And all
of our decisions are based upon that premise. And
so I do support that. The mayor put that initiative
out there for 285 million for community parks
initiative. There's now another 150 million for the

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anchor park initiative. And if you look at... and if
you look at the other investments we are very
focused on making sure we have an equitable
distribution of our resources. I can't...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I just like to...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...account for the
prior administration.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: ...see a... a... a...
later on a plan to see how you distribute amongst
each borough. And one last thing; what kind of
maintenance do you do when the trees... you know how
you put the gates around my community, they've been
talking about it. If a tree is growing crooked,
then you put the long gate around it. How often do
you take those gates off after the tree is upright
now? My community is getting upset. They said the
tree is doing fine now but the gate is still there
and it's a nuisance. So...

LIAM KAVANAGH: If you're talking about
the stakes and the straps that hold the tree in
place when it's young...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Yes, but then it
was gates, not just the straps, probably before we
did the straps there were gates around the tree.

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LIAM KAVANAGH: If you could give me the
specific locations. We don't install vertical tree
guards anymore. That...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Right so it's...

LIAM KAVANAGH: ...we haven't done that
in...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: ...been a long time
ago.

LIAM KAVANAGH: ...years. That was a long
time ago.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: It's still there.

LIAM KAVANAGH: If you have specific
areas where the... where you see those things we'll
take a look at them and see what we can do to
remove it.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you.
Looking forward, thank you Madam...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you... thank you Council Member. We've been joined...
we will now hear from Grodenchik followed by
Corney followed by Rodriguez. And we are now
officially running a couple minutes late for CUNY.
So I thank you who are here for the CUNY hearing

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we're going to be starting that right after this
portion of...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: And I'm going to
get you the...

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you
Chairs.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...right numbers for
the playground associates. We're not sure it was
accurate so we'll get you that number on the
playground associates.

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I'll be as
brief as I can be. Thank you Commissioner for being
here today. It's always a pleasure to see our
Queens Commissioner Doddy [phonetic] Lewandowsky
and I want thank you for all the great work you're
doing. Having said all that I just want to follow-
up on some of... the first conversation that you and
I ever had I think was in downtown flushing. And I
met you at a CPI and you know we... we are all
concerned and I know you are concerned about the
construction process. And I want to zero in a
little on the design commission because I have
heard complaints online and offline about how many
times they have looked at things. And can you

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explain to us... I know things go there and I know
they come back but I know sometimes they go again
and come back and go you know back and forth like...
like a tennis ball. And that concerns me because
you know I... I don't mind... you know we want to build
beautiful parks. We have some absolutely stunning
you know parks in New York city... some of the finest
in the world. But what concerns me is that when we
fund toddler playgrounds some of those kids are
teenagers, I may be exaggerating slightly by the
time that we get to... to build them. So if you could
talk about that I'd appreciate it.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: It has been a
transformation with the public design commission,
definitely partners about two years ago, 20 percent
of our projects were approved in the first visit.
Now it's 80 percent. And the rest of the balance is
done by the second meeting if one is required. So
they're now partners. We work with them to
standardize our comfort stations and other projects
they see community parks initiative. We give a
preview in advance. So I could tell you 80 percent
per submission is a turnaround and this is... [cross-
talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: That's huge.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...a commission that
needs to be commended.

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: That's a big
difference.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: So it... what you're
hearing is issues of the past, not what is
occurring now.

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay. And I
just would... would want to echo some of the comments
made by I think the chairs made them. I was on my
way in from Queens before. That if there was any
legislation that is needed we would be happy to
consider that because we don't want... we... we want
our parks to be used and we... we know that as often
as possible you keep them open when you're working
on them but obviously safety has to be paramount.
So if there's anything that you or your... your
council believes that we could be helpful with I... I
just want to echo those sentiments as well. Thank
you chairs.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Chair. I just wanted to acknowledge that we've
been joined by a delegation of the Beijing Foreign

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Affairs Office, the Beijing Municipal Peoples'
Congress, and the Beijing Municipal Committee on
the Chinese People's Political Consultive
Conference. They're up in the balcony, welcome.

[applause]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And this
is our oversight hearing on our 88.2-billion-dollar
budget. We will now hear from Council Member
Corney followed by Council Member Rodriguez.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Good morning.
Thank you Chairs. Good morning Commissioner.
Generally, I don't take my time to restate
questions already asked by my colleagues but I
would be remiss if I didn't echo the sentiments of
how prohibitive some of us find working with parks
and rec. So the comfort stations were mentioned but
everything from comfort stations to in my district
the attempt to facilitate the building of... or
actually the renovation of a dog run which was
estimated at you know between six and 800,000
dollars. So of all the city agencies we find it the
most difficult to try to... and we don't have that
much funds, that many funds in relation to capital.
So every year I've got to do an internal budget

dance in my office about what we're going to fund
through capital because... and... and while we
understand green space to be important in a
district like mine that's increasingly gentrifying
every single day. We want to protect our green
spaces and actually you know build them up to... to a
high standard. It's... it's just increasingly...
increasingly difficult and cost prohibitive with
the budgets that we're allotted through capital to
work. So I'm... I'm almost given a choice of either
doing something as it relates to parks and rec or a
whole bunch of other things as it relates to
schools and upgrading. So I mean I don't internally
feel comfortable having to do that particular
budget dance within my office every year. And I
just wanted to know... oh I just want to say you know
my Commissioner Jefferies we... we... we love and work
diligently with in the borough but it... it is so
cost prohibitive to get anything done for the
reasons obviously the aforementioned reasons state...
stated by my colleagues and many others. I just
really can implore upon the office to try to make
whatever corrective measures that are necessary to
reduce the cost so that I don't have to do a very

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uncomfortable budget dance every year because I
want to facilitate development of the parks in my
district.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: So to be clear
Parks does not... the city does not profit from any
of these parks. These are all estimates we get from
the market. I, like you, want to see them go down
20 30 40 percent. But we have to give an estimate
to council members so that when we go out to start
to bid that we don't have to come back to you for
additional funds because now the prices have
escalated. I agree with you. we put something out
for bid and we get responsible bidders to give us
what they believe to be the cost of what it costs
to build a particular asset. So it's something that
Parks does not control. And we're seeing this
across the board with all of our construction
projects. We just see it going higher as New York
city becomes a very hard pop construction market.
So what we try to do is to see if there's other
ways through mayoral funding that we can support
projects but without that we see cost across the
board just escalating.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So and then in
the remaining amount of my time as the city is
moving forward in increasing MWBE contracting
within all city agencies I wanted to note if in the
pipeline there's an increase for MWBE contracting
opportunities especially with the... with the amounts
that are being spent. I don't know what your... or if
you can articulate to me what the percentage of
MWBE spending is within parks and rec and what we
can do to increase it. We have... I am... I chair the
Committee on Small Business so I constantly work
with Minority Developers who claim not to be
included in the RFP... I mean in the... in the... in the
process. To be able to bid on these jobs. What are
we doing to increase minority participation in
Parks and Rec specifically.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well we have a
whole team that's dedicated to reaching out to the
MWBE community whether we have fairs or other
opportunities to reach out to them. If you know
anyone that is interested contact us and we'll make
sure they'll go on our list and we meet with them
to show them how they can participate. But our
department right now we have awarded 40.6 million

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to MWBE prime. And in terms of subcontractors in
the agency combined we're about 25 percent of all
of our contracts. It is a priority with me. It is a
priority for our agency and we're considered one of
the better agencies pursuing and advancing MWBE
contracts. Anyone you know is interested. We
certainly want to make sure that they have an
opportunity to work with New York City Parks.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Well I... so I
don't know if I got the number correct. You said 25
percent on... on... on... on sub...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Of all contracts,
of all contracts.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Primes and
subs?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: No just for prime
it is... yeah for prime and subs it is 25 percent...

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: That's the
combined number or...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: It's...

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Because it's...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...combined number.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: What we found
is that one... like you know it's like one to three

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percent get the large contract... of contractors in
general and everything else is... is small number
contracts, 100,000 dollars and under. So at some
other time... my time is running out.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: We'll get you the
entire breakdown.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: But some other
time I'd definitely like to sit down with you and
drill down on those numbers so that we can be clear
on minority contracting within Parks and Rec. And
this is not an indictment on Parks and Rec. We're
doing this obviously you know that agency wide. But
I'm tasked with that as... as the chair of... of small
business to see that we can bring those numbers up.
And since I have you here today I just wanted to
know if you knew those numbers, what they are, how
we can increase them. But I'm... I'm willing to work
with your office at a later day.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Alright thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

...Rodriguez.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you
Chair and... and thank you also Chair Levine for his
great job. It's someone that I have a lot of

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respect working very close... Commissioner we need a
indoor pool, community board 12. Black and Latino
children led the number of being drowning because
they don't know how to swim. My district don't have
in the whole community board 12 a indoor pool. We
have Highbridge Park that have a great pool so we
don't have to look for the 50 million dollars that
is needed to build a new one. All we need to do is
to be sure that in the two billion... 2.9-billion-
dollar capital for the next five year to find a way
of how to make those pool indoor. And I think that
knowing that most of those children who live in
that area they don't know how to swim knowing that
there's great partnerships so that... such as the...
and others that they could be great partners. For
me break my heart to know that that pool is only
used for two months in the summer. And there's ten
months when it's empty. And of course we inherit
that situation. I'm not blaming you. So what I'm
saying is encourage you and see how we can work
together. It's not a new... it not a building a new
one, it's about being created. Do we need to put a
bubble, how much it cost, can we build the indoor,
can we have a... a... a group that you based on

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membership? Can you make a partnership with someone
as say... whoever institution but I would like to
make yes, that suggestion for... so thank about it.
How can we look at the great potential of
Highbridge Park. Second suggestion is at the end of
the FDR where we did the whole ribbon cutting for
the Highbridge Park when you look at the north at
the exit of the FDR we have Highbridge Park,
Highbridge Park in the left side.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Mm-hmm.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: And then in
the right side we have the whole green area where
new year restoration we're doing a great job.
During the summer this thousand of community
members using that area for picnic. Building a walk
bridge that connect side of the end of the FDR will
connect those thousand of people that... picnic in
the right side of the... of the end of the FDR to
also have access to the Highbridge Park and it's
only again... recommendation as you know this not
about rest of money capital that I'm putting. All
I'm saying is that there's concrete thing that we
need in our community and I just hope that... you
know that your team can look at those great

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potential opportunity. Question; why five? Two days
ago we have a MTA and they have a plan that for... to
the end... for the end of this year all train station
they will have Wi-Fi. I would like to see a date
when we can say by the end of this year, by the end
of 2017, by the end of 2018 we all parks in New
York City including those in disadvantaged
community they will have Wi-Fi. So what is a plan
that we have a Wi-Fi and can we go after a day so
that we can have Wi-Fi through all the parks?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: We're working with
the Mayor's Office of Technology to expand but just
as you know to date we have 212 sites in 123 parks
with Wi-Fi and we're always looking for
opportunities to expand it. So that is something
you should be aware of that you know we're looking
to increase it but to date we have it in 123 parks.

[background comments]

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Say it again.
Repeat your question.

[background comments]

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: ...twelve.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Oh in your...

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COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Citywide what
percentage of parks today they don't have Wi-Fi and
what is...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well if it's 123...
we have over 1900 parks. So the 123 is only a
fraction, less than 10 percent of all of our parks,
have Wi-Fi.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: So is that...
is that possible to you know at some point to come
out with a plan saying by this day all parks they
will have Wi-Fi.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Again we're
working with LinkNYC to expand coverage as much as
possible. They're using the prior telephone kiosks
for it. We too when we have Wi-Fi in a park have to
put in a fixed location has only a distance of
coverage. This is 30,000 acres so it's not just
putting it in a park. If it's a large park you need
multiple Wi-Fi devices located. But we are looking
to see how we can expand it but is going to happen
over time.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Great. To end
on time we need more staff in the 600 acres that I

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have in Highbridge Park, Inwood Park, and Fort
Tyron Park. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Council Member. We will now hear from the
chair.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you Madam
Chair. Commissioner I'm eager to learn more about
the wonderful capital investment in anchor parks,
the 150 million. Do you have a timeline for when
you'll announce the specific parks?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: We would like this
process to... the terms of the budget process to move
forward for adoption but we are right now looking
to make that announcement my guess is sometime if...
in June would probably be the likely timeframe.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So it would come
after adoption of the budget presumably.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Okay. Could you
tell us more about the criteria you're using to
select the parks?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Very similar to
the CPI looking at the level of investment, the

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location. So it has... a lot of similarities to the
david... data driven approach we used for the CPI.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Sorry about the
background noise. The Sergeants are going to try
and quiet down the large crowd outside. They're
also very excited about the anchor parks
investment.

[laughter]

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Very very
excited.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: They're actually
talking about which park they're going to go to
first so...

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: In the case of
CPI you... you limited the park to those that had
virtually no investment for I think 20 years.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Is that a
criteria you'll be carrying forward?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: For the
continuation of the community parks initiative?

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: For the anchor
parks initiative, sorry, yes.

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COMMISSIONER SILVER: Anchor park
initiative is slightly different criteria. We can
get that to you of how we determine those parks.
But we did look at since they were larger we tried
to find a number, for CPI, the small parks, it was
250,000 over 20 years. I just can't recall the
number we used for the anchor parks.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: But it will be
such a... such a rubric where...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: If they're... they
have to be under a certain threshold of investment
over a period of... of...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: That is correct.
So we have quite a few options to choose from. So
right now we just... once this is adopted we'll go
ahead and select those parks and then make that
announcement.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: And so like the
CPI for the anchor parks will there be a metric of...
of the income in the surrounding areas and a target
of low and moderate income neighborhoods?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: We use yes
somewhat characteristics.

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COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: You use, I'm
sorry what's that?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: We use similar
characteristics...

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Similar.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Yep, got it.
What about usage numbers? I believe that was also a
factor in CPI. You want... you want particularly...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: No we...

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: ...heavily used
parks or is that... is that...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: We did not use
usage, it was density, ...

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Density.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: ...growth, poverty,
amount of investment over 20 years, in some cases
we also looked at our pip ratings. So it was... the
primary driver were the three criteria was density,
growth, poverty, and amount of investment over two
decades.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Yes. And... and
for your making mention of this because I might

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have not heard but is there minimum and maximum
size acreage wise?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: There is but I
don't recall it may be between 50 and 150 but I
can't recall the exact...

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Between 50 and
one...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: 50 and 150 acres.
I'm thinking... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: 50 acres and 150
acres.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: 50, I think it's
about 50 to 150 was the... the size.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Okay. I can
think of some very strong candidates that might be
slightly out of that range. So I don't know how
much flexibility there is but I would hate for you
to miss... miss a park that otherwise qualifies on
every front.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well the program
will probably allow one per borough so it's five
about 30 million each. So I felt with that level of
investment for... these are anchor parks. These are
now more destination parks per borough. So there

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was looking at a criteria that limited to just a
few. But I'm sure if you have a suggestion you can
send it on to me and we'll go ahead and put on the
list.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Right and is
there... is there money in this pool or in other...
other lines in the capital budget for acquisition
and creation of new park lands.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes, there is.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Is that... is that
part of the billion-dollar infrastructure fund?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: No it is not.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So how... how much
is that?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: About 100 million.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So there's 100
million... and I... I'm not sure I heard that number
before. Is that in this year's budget? Is that new?
Or is that...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes, it's in this...
It's in this budget.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So that's for
acquisition and... and construction of new parks.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Acquisition.

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COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Acquisition
only, okay.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Okay. And has
that been earmarked yet?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: No, this is just
as opportunities arise. We're always looking to
expand our park system as the city grows and so
there's just a fund in place if a strategic
opportunity arises we now have those dollars in
place. But this is not part of the neighborhood...
the development fund.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Well I'm very
very excited about that. I think with the growing
city and so many growing neighborhoods and you've
articulated a division of... of serving un...
neighborhoods where they don't have enough parks
today trying to bring them up to speed.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes, and I know
these are very important questions but I have to
say how gratified and pleased that I am about this
budget. There are some things in here as you note
in your testimony that's really a first and that's
really in terms of the increase from last year to

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this year a lot of good things are going to happen
with this executive budget.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: And... and I'm
going to try and wrap up soon because I know
wherever time... trying to make these very very
quick. You articulated some pride in the success of
the pilot for extending the beach... the beach season
last year. It's not clear to me whether such an
extension is funded for the coming season.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: It is not funded
for this season.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: So as of now
your intention is to close the beaches and pools on
labor day, is that right.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: That is correct.
Is that... I said labor day, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: And was... was
that because... maybe I'm wrong so... so you were... you
were not...

COMMISSIONER SILVER: No the numbers
were a bit concerning. We did not see the amount of
usage that we were expecting. We knew that the
numbers taper off significantly starting in August.
And there was one hot day, the day before school.

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But apart from that we did not see large numbers
and Commissioner Kavanagh could explain more but it
wasn't the amount of people we expected going to
the beaches to be...

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Well when
Commissioner Kavanagh was speaking about public
safety in the parks earlier he rightly pointed out
that you can't draw much of a conclusion for a
single year when you have unusual weather patterns.
And it did seem like last fall as opposed to the
previous fall we had fewer very very hot days post
labor day. It would be a shame if we closed the
door on the beach extension simply because of that
one year's weather.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well... well as you
know we are nearing the end of the process and so
as we have these conversations you've... a couple
through this hearing that we'll continue to talk
about before this budget is... moves to adoption.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Okay and... and
finally this is... this is a very pick... question
which should be quick but do you know how much
we're spending a year on pesticides either... either

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from a material perspective or a staffing
perspective?

COMMISSIONER SILVER: I do not have that
number. That's certainly a number we can get you.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Okay I would... I
would like to have that information.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Okay, alright.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you
Commissioner. Thank you Madam Chair.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Chair. Commissioner we have a couple of
questions that we're going to get to you after this
hearing. If you can get them... our response to us as
soon as possible we'll be using them for
negotiating purposes.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you very much for coming today. As I'm sitting here
listening to Council Member Rodriguez I thought how
great would it be we can put a bubble on top of a
pool. I'm just... One in Corona in particular.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Well I heard some
requests for the first time council member so

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we'll... we hear loud and clear; indoor pool, bubble,
bridge... you do have a nice bridge, a nice high
bridge but we'll... we'll get some other bridges. But
thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I know
we had talked about Fisher Pool in Corona so this
might be an option.

COMMISSIONER SILVER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: While we
figure out some design. Thank you. Thank you very
much for coming to testify. We will take a two
minute break as we transition to CUNY.

[PAUSE]

[background conversations]

[PAUSE]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We will
now resume the city council's hearing on the
mayor's executive budget for fiscal 2017. The
Finance Committee is joined by the committee on
Higher Education chaired by my colleague Council
Member Barron. We just heard from the Department of
Parks and Recreation. Now we will hear from James
Milliken, the Chancellor of CUNY. In the interest
of time I will forego an opening statement but

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before we hear testimony I will open the mic to my
co-chair; Chair Barron.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Madam
Chair. Just a brief statement. Thank you Chair
Ferrerias Copeland and good morning. I'm Inez
Barron, Chair of the Committee on Higher Education
and I thank you for attending our hearing on the
fiscal 2017 executive budget for the City
University of New York. Today we welcome Chancellor
James Milliken who is joining us for his third
executive budget hearing. The fiscal 27 executive
budget hearing include... budget includes 1.3... 1.03
billion dollars reflecting an increase of 36.9
million from the fiscal 2016 adopted budget. This
budget supports a variety of exciting projects that
support our city's current and aspiring community
college students linked to success will expand to
help 5,000 New York City high school seniors
transitioning to college, a new pilot tutor core
will connect some of our... connect some of our
university's highest achieving students in stem
fields with public school students. And ASAP
CUNY's widely successful and innovative program to
help community college students graduate on time

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will expand to serve 15,600 students this year. At
the same time other changes to existing programs
are also of particular interest to this committee.
I am sure I speak for a number of my colleagues
when I say that we are all curious to hear about
the new changes to the Joseph S. Murphy institute
for worker education and labor studies. I would
also like to learn more today about preceptorships
in CUNY's nursing programs. I look forward to
discussing these and other topics after hearing
your testimony Chancellor Milliken. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Chair. We've been joined by Council Members
Rodriguez, Cabrera, and Minority Leader Matteo.
Chancellor you will be sworn in by our council and
then you may begin your testimony.

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

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: I do. Thank you.
Let's see, good afternoon. My testimony's accurate.
It said good afternoon, I changed it to good
morning but now I changed it back, so good
afternoon to the chairs of the Finance Committee

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and the Higher Education Committee and to committee
members. As you heard I'm James Milliken. I'm the
Chancellor of the City University of New York. This
is my third opportunity to testify before you and I
want to begin by thanking you for your long support
of CUNY and its deserving students. We're very
grateful for all you do for us and for the 500,000
students that we serve every day. I'm joined by a
number of my colleagues today seated at the table
with me are from my left to right Ginger Waters the
Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, Mathew
Sapienza the Vice Chancellor for Budget and
Finance, and Judy Bergtraum the Vice Chancellor for
Facilities, Planning, and Construction. There are a
number of other colleagues in the audience. We did
not stack the audience however but I will introduce
just a couple of them that I want to point out,
One, Doctor Arlene Torres who has joined us since
the last time I appeared before you as the
university Dean for Recruitment and Diversity. And
I did notice earlier the presence of my colleague
Jermaine Wright who leads the CUNY Black Male
Initiative which I will use as an excuse to tell
Chair Barron's colleagues that we honored her a

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week ago at an event at John Jay with the Black
Male Initiative for support of CUNY.

[applause]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay so
we're probably going to have a lot of moments where
you want to clap. Clapping in city hall is like
this. So it's... you know we can have resounding
claps, just wave your hands really aggressively.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Okay thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: The... the person
leading the clapping who is here I think probably
on his first time and that's why he did it is
Senior Vice Chancellor Jay Hershenson. CUNY is
almost 170 years old and Jay joined somewhere near
the early part of our family. So this is a season
of great hope and promise on our campuses as we
move into graduations which have already begun for
me, a special treat this year that is second only
to seeing so many of my students receive the
degrees they worked so hard to earn is that I have
the opportunity to confer an honorary degree on
First Lady Michelle Obama who will deliver the...

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okay... deliver the commencement address at City
College on June 3. We think CUNY and the first lady
are a great match and we're delighted to host her
and grateful that our graduates will have the
opportunity to hear from her. So as you well know
CUNY has a distinctive mission. Our legislative
mandate says the university must be responsive to
the needs of its urban setting, that we must
operate as an integrated system and that we serve
as a vehicle for the upward mobility of the
disadvantaged in the city of New York. We are
committed to not just carrying out that mandate but
to constantly finding ways to strengthen it. We're
currently engaged in a process of shaping new
strategies that will sharpen our focus and improve
our performance. It's a period of renewal and
reinvigoration of our unique mission to ensure that
we're keeping up with changes in higher education
and the need to equip our students to compete in a
demanding knowledge economy. We must respond to the
reality that by 2020 65 percent of all jobs will
require post-secondary education. An estimate
showed that the US will be about five million short
of those needed numbers. So we need to do more to

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get students diplomas that will open the door to
lifetimes of improved opportunities and to help our
city prosper. The investment that this city makes
in New York City's public university is perhaps the
best way there is to address income inequality. By
opening the door to opportunity for so many
talented young men and women eager to overcome
disadvantage and achieve their potential. By
cultivating the talent and serving underrepresented
communities we ensure that new generations of
community graduates will have economic opportunity
that will benefit not only them but their families
and their communities and that our city remains the
financial media and cultural capital of the
country. Graduates who earn... obtain degrees from
CUNY can typically expect to earn a million dollars
more over a lifetime than high school graduates
which carries particular significance when you
consider that 40 percent of CUNY's matriculating
students are the first in their family to attend
college and 40 percent were born in another
country. And 40 percent come from households with
an annual income of 20,000 dollars or less. But our
students can achieve their goals, earn their

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diplomas, and benefit from them only with the
guidance and support of the CUNY faculty and staff
who serve New York so well. All great universities
are great because of their faculty and that is
certainly the case at CUNY where we have some of
the most talented and committed faculty anywhere.
That's why resolving a long overdue labor contract
with our unions is our highest priority. We're
working with our faculty unions and other unions to
reach agreements. But at the end of the day we
cannot do that without the commitment and
investment of both the city and the state. We're
committed to successful resolution of our contracts
soon. At the same time, we must continue to develop
plans and strategies for CUNY's future to deliver
clear benefits for our students and the community
in the years ahead. Our new strategic plan will set
forth our ideas and what they will bring to our
campuses and to the city. I want to review some of
the objectives today and explain briefly how they
will make your investments in CUNY even more
effective. Our vision entails building far greater
levels of connectivity and integration into our
activities within the university system, between

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CUNY and the city's schools with community based
organizations, with other universities, and with
the employers and unions that offer promising
career paths for our students. These strategies
will allow CUNY to leverage its assets and its
resources better to achieve a number of priorities
among those priorities. We will strengthen
affordable access by continuing a historic
commitment to modest tuition and robust public and
private aid. We will increase successful completion
of our remediation programs and improve early math
performance for STEM majors. We will sharply
improve retention and graduation rates at both our
community colleges and our senior colleges. We will
attract and educate more adult learners including
those eager to advance and change careers. We will
make it easier for students to take courses and
transfer credits between campuses to increase
choice, convenience, and accelerate graduation
rates. We will deepen connections with major New
York employers and labor unions to ensure that we
educate students who meet their needs and widen the
pipelines for internships and jobs after
graduation. And we will sharply increase our

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offerings of online courses, certificates, and
degree programs to offer more ways for
matriculating students to gain credits, more
opportunities for adult learners, and ways for CUNY
to expand its reach. Before many students can begin
their work towards a degree they must overcome
developmental education needs. And we're taking
steps to get students who require remedial work in
areas like writing and math through the process and
into college level courses as efficiently as
possible. More students are entering CUNY Start and
Math Start which are very effective emerging
programs that help students succeed. And we will
soon introduce other ways to get students the basic
capabilities they need to succeed in our classrooms
and allow them to move swiftly towards their
degrees. So keeping CUNY accessible and affordable
remains a core commitment. That's why we're so
grateful that the city council has assisted us in a
huge way by providing 17 million dollars in the
current budget for city council merit scholarships.
This initiative provides financial aid to students
who graduated with an 80 average from New York City
high schools and who maintained a B average at the

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university. These merit based awards are available
to deserving students at both senior colleges and
community colleges. And the funding for this
critical scholarship program should be restored as
part of the city's FY '17 budget. But as you know
affordability and access even if that access were
free is not enough. Our goal is not to have the
most students in college. It's not to have the
highest enrollment in the world. Our goal includes
having those students be successful, to earn their
degree, and to get the benefits that accompany that
degree. And the best way we found to increase
graduation rates is the accelerated study and
associate program or ASAP which is a place at our
community colleges. We owe special thanks to you
for the city's strong support of ASAP going back to
when it was a pilot program. It's been a very
productive investment. I'm happy today to offer our
latest and most impressive results. Our most recent
cohort, three year graduation rate was 57 percent
compared to 23 percent for a comparable group of
full time community college students. Compare that
to the three-year graduation rate nationwide for
urban community colleges which is about 16 percent.

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You can see why we're so excited and committed and
expanding this program. Another strength of the
program is just how it has narrowed the achievement
gap. Just to give one set of examples, the three-
year graduation rate for white males in ASAP rose
20 percentage points compared to comparable
students. For black males the rate rose 30
percentage points. And for Hispanic men 31
percentage points. We are determined to continue to
raise those rates. ASAP costs about 37 hundred
dollars per student now. It has gone down since its
inception and it will continue to go down as we
achieve economies of scale. More important we're
graduating so many more students that the cost per
graduate is falling. We will increase with your
support the number of ASAP students from 7,000 this
year to 25,000 in 2018. We will enroll ASAP... we
will enroll in ASAP all full time students at one
institution, the Bronx Community College. And with
a privately funded pilot we have already expanded
ASAP elements to a senior college, John Jay, for
the first time. As part of our effort to develop
the greater benefits of integration called for in
our organic legislation and to improve student

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retention and attainment we will reduce the
friction in the path from community college to
senior college making it easier to transfer credits
from one college to another, work to simplify
financial aid, build more streamlined and efficient
connections among our colleges so students can take
courses on different campuses when needed. Another
effort that will help our students graduate more
quickly and attract new students is expansion of
our offerings online. Digital instruction will
sharply increase our reach attracting new students,
we hope especially, adult learners and give us an
opportunity for new revenues outside of New York.
There are more than a million adults in New York
City with some college credit and no degree. We
want to offer them a chance to obtain diplomas and
boost their careers. In addition, there are many
other adults who need new credentials to advance
their professions, who are contemplating career
changes, and so they need new certificates or
competencies. One step in our effort involves the
Murphy Institute which includes programs for
working adults as well as providing education for
the next generation of leaders in labor. I support

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the evolution of the murphy institute to the murphy
school. But this transition will require additional
support if the school is to achieve its potential.

And our request includes much needed funds for this
purpose. Earlier I introduced Dean Torres who leads
our recruitment diversity efforts prior to assuming
the deanship Doctor Torres led CUNY's Latino
faculty initiative. She's leading the

implementation of our university diversity action
plan and partnering with the campuses and other
organizations to continue to develop ways to
strengthen the pipeline of candidates from which
Cunity [phonetic] which CUNY can recruit for
faculty staff and administrative positions. Briefly
turn to the capital budget, the city council's been
an outstanding partner to CUNY and especially our
community colleges by providing support for major
new buildings at BMCC Bronx Community College,
Hostos Community College, major library renovation
at Medgar Evars, in addition to critical
maintenance work at all campuses. Critical
maintenance continues to be a priority at our
community colleges and we are still in need of your
support for the long term effort. We have over

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seven million square feet of space at our Community
College, three quarters of which is over 40 years
old. The most serious need remains, infrastructure
systems that support our facilities. We believe
that number is 750 million to keep the backlog of
deferred maintenance from growing. So you will
continue to see requests from us for critical
maintenance for the community colleges. In recent
years the council's provided over 200 million
dollars to CUNY and funded about 100 projects. In
particular community college where the need is the
greatest. Because of this support we have been able
to address some of the most challenging issues. For
instance I'm happy to report that we are making
good progress on the construction of the new façade
for LaGuardia Community College center three
building. Center Three's enormous façade is 100
years old and must be replaced if the building is
to be preserved. The council's been generous to our
senior colleges as well providing funding for new
programs, special initiatives, and equipment.
Recently you provided support for Brooklyn
College's new graduate school at Steiner Studios
which opened last year which we believe is a

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positive addition to our offerings. Our school will
bring diversity to an industry that has been
conspicuously lacking in it and open the door for
high paying jobs for our talented students. You've
also supported the renovation of the child
development center at Medgar Evers another priority
of mine. I've touched on a number of initiatives
and priorities. I want to stress that your support
and guidance have been and continue to be essential
elements in our success. And happy to respond to
your questions, address issues that interest or
concern you can get your advice, your generous
support for so many years has made CUNY one of the
most impactful universities in the Country. And
with the changes we are planning and with your help
it will be a model of the 21st century global urban
university. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Chancellor. And I'm sure you're going to be
getting a lot of our advice today. I wanted to talk
about something you mentioned in your... in your
testimony; faculty and staff contracts. My
colleagues and I were relieved and I'm sure you
were as well that the state budget restored the 485

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million in support for senior colleges that was at
risk this past winter. Unfortunately, it did not
include the governor's proposed 240 million dollars
in support of retroactive salary increases for CUNY
faculty and staff which would have helped the
university reach a contract agreement after more
than six months without one. Where is the
university... six years, sorry, where is the
university now in negotiations with professional
staff converse in DC 37?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Thank you. As I
mentioned in my prepared remarks and I say it every
opportunity this is the highest priority of the
Board of Trustees of CUNY and certainly mine. Very
few people would like to see resolution of this
quickly more than I would. We are continuing to
negotiate at present with our unions, principal
unions being PSE, DC37. As you think you know a
mediator has been appointed for our negotiations
with PSC but we have been meeting with PSC
leadership both in mediation and informally in
addition to that to try to advance the contract
discussions. The legislation that pertains to CUNY
and its labor contract requires that we consult

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with the city and state as we are negotiating which
we are doing and will continue to do. Even if it
didn't require that as a practical matter we cannot
settle what I think most of us would consider to be
a fair contract with our unions. Without an
investment by both the city and the state as you
know there's a significant amount of retroactive
obligation dating since you know 2009 and 2010.
CUNY has been working and in fact engaged in
reallocations with our senior colleges to prepare
us for supporting a contract in the out years. But
we can't reach what I consider to be a fair
agreement without an investment by both the city
and the state in this contract and that's why we in
addition to negotiating with our employees are
consulting with the leadership of the city and the
state at the same time.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And do
you find that the state conversations are I the
positive direction? Are they neutral? Are they...

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: I... I think there
is interest in all quarters to reach resolution of
this matter.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay
that... I'm going to take that as a yes,
conversations are moving great.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Thank you...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And
you're going to be just...

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...for letting me
wiggle off that.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: ...moving
this issue very quickly because at the end of the
day you know unions are... are... these are New Yorkers
that need stability and need to be able to plan and
plan to buy a home some day like everyone else that
they may desire to do that. And until you don't
have stability in your job you can't do that, you
can't plan. And they have kids that they want to
put through college too. So I can only imagine what
it's like to work for a university and not have the
stability of knowing that your kids could one day
go to school also.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: I appreciate that.
I... I do not consider people sitting across from me
adversaries, I...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

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CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...consider them
colleagues. And I spent 27 years now in public
higher education where the principal responsibility
of the senior leadership is to be in a position to
effectively recruit and retain and support the
talented employees and that continues to be my
goal.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
Excellent. Well we hope that you are able to get an
expeditious solution to this. Fiscal 2017's
executive budget includes 12.6 million to increase
the state's per capita base aid rate from two... 25
hundred... well 20... 2,597 to 2,697 per student
enrolled at CUNY community colleges. While this
figure now represents the highest base aid rate
since fiscal 2009 it does not reflect a request
increase of 250 per student. What will the new per
student base aid rate allow the community colleges
do. And what won't the community colleges be able
to do because of this difference?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: That's a great
question and I'm going to... I could tell you what
Matt Sapienza told me but instead I think I'll just
have... cut out the middle man here.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Sounds
great.

VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Thank you.
And thank you Chair Ferreras for that question. And
as you pointed out it's one of the critical things
that we want to make people aware of at the
community college base aid rate is that we're very
grateful that we have a hundred dollar increase
this year as part of our state budget and this
brings us up to as you said 2,679 dollars per
student. However, it has not been this high in... in...
going back until 2009 when it was 2,675. So post-
recession we had four straight years of decreases
in the base aid rate. It went down to as low as
2,122 dollars per student. And again we're very
grateful for the state support that's now occurred
the last few years to bring us back up there but
our community colleges have less purchasing power
this year then they had in 2009 when you consider
inflation. And the other thing I want to point out
about this... what makes it so difficult for our
community colleges is we have historic enrollment
levels. So post-recession when we were getting
declines in... in community college base aid we were

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also experiencing unprecedented enrollment levels
at community colleges. So it really created a
strain on our community colleges at that time.
Coming out of it now with additional state aid and
of course with additional city support... and so our
community colleges we use those funds to hire
additional full time faculty, additional advisors,
help maintain the buildings in a better way. So the
use for a whole host of areas, and each college
will use it for their specific needs but we are
grateful for the support. We hope that it continues
and hope it gets us back to the level that we had
in 2009 in terms of the purchasing power we had
then including inflation, including the increase in
the enrollments.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So what
would be the correct number, let's say 2018, for
you...

VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Now...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: ...to be
able to get...

VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: If you... if...
if one would imply inflationary increases to that
2,675 figure that was in 2009 for... for now seven

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years the number should be over 3,000 dollars per
student.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. I
want to talk about the merit... merit based
scholarship. In our preliminary budget response to
the mayor this year the council called for the
administration to baseline the 400 dollar per
semester merit based scholarship program that the
council has supported since fiscal 2015. This
scholarship allows students to pay for tuition,
textbooks, computers, metro cards, and anything
else they may need to help them succeed in college.
How many students at CUNY have qualified for the
scholarship this year? And what does the university
feel the effect of this scholarship has been on the
enrollment achievement for New York City High
School students at CUNY in the past two years?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Thank you. So
16,000 CUNY students received scholarships this
year. So what is the... what do we think the effect
is... First of all you know there are two essential
goals that I mentioned in my testimony; the first
being affordable access to higher education, the
second being success in retention... degree

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completion. We believe the scholarship is an
important part of the menu of aid that is offered
and the fact that it is a merit scholarship is I
think a... a terrific signal to New York City high
school students that if you achieve... if you have a
B average, keep that B average, that you will be
eligible for the city council scholarship. So I... I
think it's a terrific program. We're delighted that
it's in place and it is complementary with other
CUNY programs.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you. We agree. We just needed that for the record.
I want to talk about the CUNY institute and
citizenship now and then I'll hand it over to Chair
Barron. The council has funded a... the center for
Puerto Rican studies in the Dominican Studies
Institute since fiscal 2009. How many research
institutes does CUNY host in all and how are the
other research institutes funded?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: That's a great
question.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I try.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: And I have to say
I don't have the slightest idea how many total

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institutes there are at CUNY. Does anybody... I'm
throwing a lifeline and I see a lot... people looking
the other way.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yeah
they're going to let you drown on this one.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: I'll be happy to
get you that answer Madam Chair. I don't know how
many others are...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I guess
where we're trying to get is the council has made
this a priority and we really believe in these
institutes and it just seems that other institutes
have been able to survive in CUNY with more
stability when... And you know we want to figure out
what has the structure been and is this something
that maybe CUNY could take on so that we can
perhaps take some of this funding and put it
towards merit based scholarships or... you know or
other things that will support CUNY but maybe this
is something that... It's obviously proven it works
but these institutes are still different and they
have to go through the year to year process of our
funding.

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CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Yeah. So two as
you know are newer, newest the Haitian studies
institute.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yes.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: And then the
Mexican Studies Institute. The Puerto Rican Studies
Institute... is an internationally known institute
for the quality of its... its research... its work. And
the Dominican Institute has been a very successful
adventure as well. So I would be happy to undertake
this homework assignment to get you a comparison of
how various CUNY institutes are supported. I know
some receive some private support but nowhere near
enough to... to maintain all of their activities. But
I'll be happy to provide that information to you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

Excellent. I am a big fan of CUNY citizenship now.
I think it changes lives. I think when my office
and maybe Cabrera's office I believe are the two
busiest offices using citizenship now in Fiscal
2016. The council allocated a total of one million
dollars to provide citizenship and legal services
in each council district through CUNY citizenship
now's initiative. This program has been wildly

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successful and it's given much needed support to
thousands of residents in our city. Can you briefly
review the services that are provided them through
the initiative and how it may vary from one council
district to another and if the council were to
increase its support for initiatives how would the
additional funding be used?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Thank you very
much for that question and I share your enthusiasm
for Citizenship Now. If you need a... a jolt to... to
improve your day spend a little time at the call in
at Citizenship Now and get a sense of what in my
view are New York values and what are... and how CUNY
is so tied to the movement of so many people into
our city and our country successfully. So this is...
I... I think a very impressive record and I'm... I'm
pleased to be able to respond for what we have done
with your million dollars, what Allen and his
colleagues have done. In FY '16 we served 5,000
immigrants with deferred action for childhood
arrivals, held temporary protective status, green
card renewals, and work authorization applications.
We did this in the seven-month period from July one
to January 31 2016. We served a total of 37 hundred

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89 constituents at 30 council member sites and
Saturday events. We had application assistance
events held twice a month supported with your
funding. We held 11 co-sponsored events during this
period. At city council offices which are important
hubs for us, each month we provide approximately
140 days of service citywide, 14 one day per week,
10 twice per week, and six bi-monthly. And our
attorneys assist with both simple and complex
cases. Where necessary we refer constituents to one
of our six CUNY immigration centers operating in
all boroughs. Services include referrals for cases
outside our scope of service such as deportations
or employment based petitions. With the additional
request of 500,000 dollars we would use the funds
for additional day of service at council members'
offices and districts with high concentration of
immigrants. Increase city council citizenship co-
sponsored events and our six immigration centers
will designate hours to assist constituents with
complex cases referred by attorneys assigned to
city council members' offices.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great.

Well you don't have to convince me but we needed it

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for the record. I also wanted to ask and I... I
don't... I guess this... I don't know if this happened
but a lot of the prep work for... or the... the testing
for the citizenship application, the citizenship
test or exam is the right word, what's CUNY's prep
role for that? Do we have an opportunity to maybe
refer people to classes? Is that happening? Can we
do that.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Okay I'm looking...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: That's
another special question.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...at Allan because
I don't... Yeah that...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Allen.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...it's a... a level
deeper than...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Come on
up Allen, or come on down I should say.

ALLAN WERNICK: And thank you for the
kind words about Citizenship Now.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Can you
state your name for the record.

ALLAN WERNICK: Oh I'm sorry. Allan
Wernick, I'm a professor at Baruch College and

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Director of CUNY Citizenship. Now we have a grant
through... through the State Office of New Americans
where we're able to provide exam preparation
classes. We also at citizenship although I... I
should say it's a very limited program. And we also
refer people to our very robust English language
acquisition program so... for speakers of dominant
foreign languages that CUNY has throughout the
system.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So you
would support additional funding to adult literacy
that the council's also considering? You would
think that that would be supportive for CUNY also?

ALLAN WERNICK: Yes. Yes and... and... and
also the... there... there're additional resources for
specific exam prep would also be very welcome.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.

ALLAN WERNICK: Which is separate of
course than just language acquisition.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right,
exactly. Okay, and separate from the 500,000.

ALLAN WERNICK: And separate from the
500,000.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.
Excellent. Thank you. How do you get here and then
I have to give you more money at the end of the
testimony? It's working out. Chair Barron.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Madam
Chair. Thank you to the panel for being here. At
the adoption of the state's 2016/17 budget this
spring the Cuomo administration announced that the
state plan to hire a management consultant to
address administrative overhead at CUNY. We know
that at CUNY the headcount is for full time 4,441
pedagogue and for full time non-pedagogues 1,907
for a total of 6,348. So what is your response to
the governor in terms of assessing that... asserting
that CUNY when compared to SUNY has an inflative
administrative overhead cost? And do you have a
formula for determining what you think would be the
ratio for assessing or deciding what would be the
appropriate number of instructors based on
enrollment. We know enrollment has gone up which is
why in the report it indicates there's a tuition
increase that's not due to a rise in tuition but
based on the fact that you expect that there'll be
an increase in enrollment so that's what's

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generating that increase in tuition. So do you have
a response to the governor in terms of what he's
saying is in excess at CUNY?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Thank you Madam
Chair. I have publically said on a number of
occasions and... and... and have written about the
administrative cost at CUNY. First, I would say
that we are very much interested in... in operating
as cost effectively as possible and as efficiently
as possible. Any responsible administrator in my
view has the goal of moving resources from lower
priorities to higher priorities. And most of our
priorities are involved in attracting and keeping
and seeing that they... students succeed. So we will
always try to do that. And CUNY has a pretty good
record I think, a very good record over the last
decade or so about analyzing its operations and
combining operations in a shared service model in
which many other universities are considering
today. So things like facilities and public safety
and admissions and... and others are IT are done in
one location because CUNY has the advantage of
having all its campuses located in one city. So
we're able to do some things I think that other

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university systems spread over large geographic
areas are not able to do. There are comparisons
that I think are appropriate and used by
universities around the country. I happen to think
the most accurate is by looking at the audited
financial statements of institutions and comparing
the administrative cost in the audited financials
which is based on a common definition used by
institutions across the country from a... from an
association of university business officers. And
in... in... there are some that are more efficient than
CUNY. We're roughly about the same as SUNY in that
comparison looking at the administrative costs in
audited financials. So we will... I have assured the
governor in the legislature as I will assure you
and the mayor that we will continue to do
everything we can to operate cost effectively to be
good stewards of your investments in CUNY and do
everything we can to put the most resources at
effective service of our students and the
community.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: In looking at
the 24 CUNY campuses what percentage of the total

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budget... budget supports the instructional services
that our students receive?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: That's a terrific
question for the Vice Chancellor for Finance who
I'm going to ask to respond to that.

VICE CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Sure. Chair
Barron for both the senior and the community
colleges the percentage of the budget that's spent
on instruction is well over 50 percent. I'll get
you the... the specific numbers but they're in the
high 50s... about... I think it's about 57 percent on
average but... but we'll... we'll get you the specific
numbers for both the seniors and community
colleges.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. At
the time of our fiscal 2017 preliminary budget
hearing the state had proposed expanding CUNY 2020
in it what they call predictable... they started
calling it rational but they got called out on that
so they changed it to predictable tuition increase
program by another five years. And that would have
increased the annual tuition for full time students
at senior colleges by 300 dollars a year through
fiscal 2021. We're very pleased to know that the

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Board of Trustees had in fact voted to not have a
tuition increase at the community colleges but
we're so much more pleased to know that that did
extend through the senior colleges and so that the
adopted budget freezes the current tuition rates
across all SUNY and CUNY campuses but that's just
for 2017. So to all my students that are here we've
got to stay vigilant, we've got to stay on the
case. We've got to organize. We've got to fight. We
got to protest. We got to beat back those
increases. I'm glad one person's... We got to beat
back those tuition increases that may be looming in
the future. And I do have a bill which talks about
examining what it would take to go back to free
tuition. What would be involved in making that a
reality. And I'm not one of... oh that brought a lot
of... good. I'm not one to say oh that could never
happen. That could never be the reality. And I know
that when you first came I had read a part of your
history which said that you favor that there be
free tuition at the community colleges. So I wanted
to ask you about your position on that. Is that
still your position? Can we work on that? Can we
expand it to the senior colleges as well? We know

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President Barak Obama also looks at ways that we
can have free tuition for the two... first two years
of school.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Thank you Chair
Barron. So my... my position I do not believe has
changed on this matter and... and it may be... may be
that I don't do a very good job of explaining it.
But my... my position in that I have supported in
testimony publically even before coming to New York
is that we've had a hundred years of
nondiscretionary support for K12 education with
high school being the... high school degree being the
gold standard for citizenship, for employment,
etcetera in this country. And I believe it's time
to reexamine that at a time when as I said in my
testimony the vast majority of new jobs require
education beyond high school. So I have been in
favor of extending that two years to 14 years,
beyond high school, which would include community
colleges. And that would then include the funding
necessary to support attendance in community
colleges. Now absent that you know I... absent that I
have not been an advocate of free tuition at the
community or senior colleges for several reasons.

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One is practical and looking at what has happened
with higher education funding for the last 30
years. Since 1985 I believe state support across
the country has gone down as a percentage of total
funding and tuition has been part of... substantial
part of what has made up the difference. If you
look at our own experience during what I will refer
to as a predictable tuition period of the last five
years the vast majority of investment came from
tuition increases, not state increases. And it
allowed the hiring of a thousand new full time
faculty. The... the university has to be able to as...
in a period of growth we grew about 50,000 students
during that same period. The period of growth we
have to be able to provide more faculty, more
advisors in particular, and more resources to
support students. Would I like to see a more
significant level of public involvement, the state
and the city supporting CUNY? Yes, certainly. And
that's part of what we're talking about today. But
in the absence of that I don't... I would not take
the first dollar, the next dollar of support to use
to defray tuition cost for the... for those students
that don't qualify for financial aid. I would

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probably use that next dollar for student support
and success so that those students have a better
chance of graduating. Our graduation rates need to
improve and that will be a part of our plan and I
mentioned it earlier, need to improve significantly
at both our community colleges and our senior
colleges. ASAP is... has been the best way we have to
do that but we need to continue to invest in
advising and in more faculty. And I... it's my
obligation to try to find a way to do that.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So if you're
talking about extending the basic education to K...
to become K to 14 would those additional two years
be academic instruction or do you think that there
might also be a structure that would allow students
who don't want to pursue the academics but trades
to have the opportunity to do that during their two
years so that perhaps they could be journeymen or
apprentice will go out in that regard and be in the
workforce but yet still within the K to 14... how
would that work?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Well my interest
and my position has been about continuing full time
education opportunities for students beyond...

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I'm sorry could
you say that again I was distracted.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Sorry my... my
particular interest you... you may find if you... if
you polled the... the room or you may find others
with different views. My...

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...particular
interest is in formal... the formal education and...
and in particular what... what public higher
education has to offer beyond high school that we
make that more widely available.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So then it would
not... You wouldn't be able to qualify if you were
going part time in K to 14 setting those additional
two years, you would have to go full time?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: I... it could
probably work a number of ways but with...

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...funding...

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: We'll...

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...base then...

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: We'll have to...

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...people would...

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: ...sit and have a
converse...

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...be able to go
full time because...

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: ...and talk about
that.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...so they would
complete more quickly.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. You talked
about additional dollars going to hire a staff.
What percentage of the increases that we have
gained during the last five years has resulted in
an increase in full-time staff as opposed to part-
time or the adjuncts?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Just to be clear
when you were talking about the faculty positions
that...

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Correct.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Okay. And so as I
mentioned it was like 994 full time faculty that
were hired but I'm not sure what the percentage
would be of that... as the total of what percentage
would be of... of adjuncts. I don't know whether Matt
or Ginger would have that.

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VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Yeah we'll
get you the numbers in terms of the percentages.
But I do want to point out that in the first four
years of the... of the predictable tuition policy
that was passed by the state in 2011 the two
largest components that we invested in were as you
said Chair Barron hiring of additional full time
faculty and as the Chancellor mentioned we created
about 1,000 new full-time faculty lines at the
university so quite a significant increase. And the
second thing that we invested in was financial aid.
We invested about 75 million dollars of the revenue
from the tuition increases additional financial aid
support for our students. So those were the two
items that our campuses invested in the most. We
did give the colleges some flexibility in making
determinations as to how that tuition revenue will
be used for their specific campus. And so there is
some... some differences in... in each individual
campuses but by far the two largest components were
full time faculty and financial aid.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And as we talk
about recruitment and new hires how is CUNY moving
forward in regards to advancing those that are

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already there to hire physicians, getting them into
professorships, supporting them through their
graduate work, how's CUNY doing? I know they have a
five-year plan and I had some questions about how
that plan was moving and how successful it's been.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: So that's another
good question. I'm trying to see if I have the
information. Ginger do you... the answer...

GINGER: Well I have some of the
information. Thank you Chair Barron. One of the
things that we're... we have been doing is working
with programs that will work with our faculty who
are currently here. One of them is the faculty
fellowships program which comes out of our
diversity initiatives. And we bring in faculty who
are already here but need to be able to focus on
their research, their first manuscript in order to
be able to put together their portfolios for tenor
and promotion. So we're working with the groups
that are here in moving them along. There are also..
there's another program that we are very excited
about where the Mellon Foundation has given Queens
College close to a half a million dollars to work
with advancing faculty through the ranks, also to

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allow them to recruit more diverse faculty. This is
right now at Queens College but we're hoping to
expand it so that we can bring more people in and
help them again move through the ranks particularly
of the faculty. So that's one of the programs that..
two of the programs that we have in place already.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

Moving onto the Murphy Institute. Over the past
several years the murphy institute of worker
education and labor studies has lobbied to create
its own school. So I know that we're moving forward
down that track but what is the timeline that we're
on and do you have any ideas about what that
transition will look like and when we can expect to
see in fact exist as a school.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Thank you. There's
some work that has to be done and some investments
that need to be made. But our goal is... my goal is
to take this to the Board of Trustees later this
year. There are a series of academic decisions that
have to be made with regard to the... the school. And
we have a... I have a team of people working on that.
But... but our goal is to make sure that the... that I

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have a proposal for the Board of Trustees before
the end of 2016.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And what does
the timeline look... once the board adopts that, if
they accept that what would the timeline be? And
how will the courses and programs that are offered
by the Murphy Institute change as a result of this
move to become a school?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: You know those... I
think those are all questions that are being
addressed now as we work towards a proposal to the...
to the board. But it would be... you know following
the board's action the designation would change
probably immediately. When... then there would
continue to be transition activity I believe beyond
that. So I... I... you know and as with any organic
school institute program it will change over... over
time. There... we have high hopes for the new Murphy
School and we are working now to make sure both the
city and the state that we have the support that we
need to see those plans be successful.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And would you
like to share anything about our new school of
medicine? Do you have any information that you'd

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like to boast about or share in terms of what...
what's happening there?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: The... the... the new
school of medicine is awaiting final approval in
Albany as part of the approval process. I am
extremely excited about it. It is the next logical
step in the 40 year successful Sophie Davis
Program. It will continue to offer what must be the
most diverse medical class in America the
opportunity to become doctors, almost 50 percent of
our students have been black and Latino which
compares to about 11 percent great nation on
national averages. 70 percent of the graduates from
our programs have gone on to work in federally
designated underserved areas. It is such a perfect
fit for CUNY and an important resource to the city.
And so I am... I could not be more excited about
seeing us get to the finish line and have our
students who move through the Sophie Davis Program
enter the CUNY School of Medicine.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Moving onto the
CUNY nursing free preceptorships there was recently
a hearing that we held to higher education about
CUNY's nursing programs. And we heard testimony

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about the diminishing or disappearance of the
preceptorships student nursing internship that
allows students to work one on one with registered
nurses at local hospitals and health based
organizations to meet their clinical requirements
for graduation. So I wanted to know what is the
status, is it diminished? Is it gone? If it's a
requirement, then how will students be able to
satisfy that intern program?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: So I... I learned
about this when I read and talked to people about
your hearing and discussion on this. And so Doctor
Margaret Riley who is the Academic Director of
Nursing is here because even though I learned about
the issue following your hearing I'm probably not
in the best position to respond to that. So...

DOCTOR RILEY: Madam Chair, Council
Members, thank you for the opportunity to speak on
this issue. Preceptorships are...

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Would you give
us your name for the record please?

DOCTOR RILEY: Certainly. My name is
Doctor Margaret Riley and I... [cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And I don't know
if the... Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole
truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony
before this committee?

DOCTOR RILEY: Yes, Ma'am.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.
Please go ahead.

DOCTOR RILEY: My name is Doctor
Margaret Riley. I am the Academic Director for
Nursing at the CUNY School of Professional Studies.
In regard to the issue of preceptorships those are
a component of clinical nursing education but they
are not the only component. CUNY as well as other
nursing schools work very diligently to make sure
that students who are educated to be nurses have
the opportunity to engage in clinical experiences
in a variety of settings. Those clinical
experiences are arranged and contracted in schools
and clinical agencies. Students are supervised
directly by clinical instructors. In some programs
at the end of the clinical experience, at the end
of the educational experience students have had an
opportunity to engage in something called the
capstone process. And that is where a preceptorship

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comes into play. And that usually is something that
is arranged again through the good will of the
school as well as the clinical agency. It is done
on a volunteer basis by the agency staff who are
willing to give some time to the students on a one
on one situation so they can experience what actual
nursing would be like in the real world. And they
often mirror the particular preceptor's schedule.
With increasing requirements in hospitals,
organizations, and institutions the ability to do
this has been more limited. And some agencies and
institutions are reserving those faculty... I'm sorry
those staff in order to be preceptors for their new
hires as opposed to using these arrangements for
students. So students do have opportunities to
engage in clinical practice under the direct
supervision of faculty who are in the clinical
agencies with the students. And they engage with
patients' healthcare activities, etcetera.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So are
preceptorships a requirement for graduation?

DOCTOR RILEY: They're not a requirement
for graduation. They are a component of an
educational program that a school develops. They

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are not a component of all school programs. They
are components of some school programs. It is a
wonderful feature for students to help make that
transition because they are still within the
protected environment of their school and receive
guidance from both preceptor as well as a faculty
guide who is not always physically present when the
student is engaged in this activity.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So the schools
that require it will continue to make arrangements
for the students in the program to have the
preceptorships?

DOCTOR RILEY: Schools work very hard to
do that but we're also dependent on the goodwill of
the institutions being able to give volunteer
faculty to be perform this particular service.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So if it's
required by a particular school, and I don't know
which of the schools require it, and if the schools
are not providing it is the student then expected
to go find it on... on his or her... on own?

DOCTOR RILEY: No. The experience... the
requirements for clinical education are that they
meet learning outcomes. And those learning outcomes

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and the ways to meet those learning outcomes are
determined and decided by the school program.
Preceptorships are one component, one way that
learning outcomes can be met. There are other ways
for those learning outcomes to be met.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Thank you.

Back to the capital plan. CUNY's fiscal 2017
executive capital plan includes seven million
dollars in new funds to support construction
related to ASAP. Can you tell us about the project;
how it will look, what... where will the construction
take place, how will the sites be chosen.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: You know when you
started that question I thought I was going to get
to answer it but then there were too many levels of
detail for me to respond to. So it's a good
question and I'm going to turn it over to Vice
Chancellor Bergtraum.

VICE CHANCELLOR BERGTRAUM: So the ASAP
Program is...

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...have to introduce
yourself.

VICE CHANCELLOR BERGTRAUM: Oh Judy
Bergtraum, thank you. For the ASAP Program a few

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months ago we go the community colleges together
and we discussed basically what their needs would
be. Based on that we made the request that resulted
in seven doll... seven million dollars for the
capital and a million dollars for equipment and for
furniture. And our first survey we have two schools
that we think we're going to have to find
additional space for. And we were funded for that.
And the rest of the schools we're going to have to
do renovation at the campuses. And how we're going
to do this is in the next two months we're going to
sit down with the campuses and we're going to see
what their needs are and that's what... that's how
we're going to allocate the money based... based on
their needs.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So it'll... it's
not yet finalized as to where these sites will be?

VICE CHANCELLOR BERGTRAUM: We know
where the sites are going to be but the amount of
work and what we're going to do that's what we're
going to be working on.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And what will
those... where will those sites be? How many and
where will... which ones are they?

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VICE CHANCELLOR BERGTRAUM: The sites
will be at every community college and...

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Every community
college?

VICE CHANCELLOR BERGTRAUM: Every
community...

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

VICE CHANCELLOR BERGTRAUM: ...college.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And then finally
in terms of the programs that you're bringing
forth; the tutor core and the program that will
have... what is it, 60 students selected and 30
schools selected to have a teaching assistant
program, how will those schools and students
selected?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Okay that's a good
question. This is... I... I'm very excited about this
program. Let me start by that. And it would scale
up over time but I think this is... let me just say
that I think it's a tremendous opportunity both for
public school students to see... to have role models
in the classroom who are currently successful
college students. And I think it's a terrific
opportunity for our college students to serve in

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that role and also to hopefully encourage them..
teachers. So if I knew I can't remember how we were
going to choose them so I... Cass... going to answer
this question?

CASS CONRAD: Good afternoon.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Good afternoon.

Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth,
and nothing but the truth in your testimony before
this committee?

CASS CONRAD: I do. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Good. Would you
give us your name please?

CASS CONRAD: Yes. I am Cass Conrad. I
am the Executive Director for School Support and
Development at CUNY. So the... we are also very
excited about the tutor core and the opportunity
that it will bring to CUNY students. It also draws
upon experience that CUNY currently has with
similar type programs such as the CUNY service..
[cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Can you get a
little closer to the mic?

CASS CONRAD: Sure.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Or pull it
closer to you... pull it closer.

CASS CONRAD: So we're very excited
about the CUNY tutor core and the opportunities
they'll provide both for the CUNY students and the
public school students that will be served by these
tutors. In response to the question about how will
the tutors be selected... we will actually be drawing
upon the experience that we've had with other
similar CUNY programs such as the CUNY service core
and the CUNY internship programs in which students
apply based on their background and experience...
they have a written application as well as a fairly
rigorous interview process to ensure that we have
students who are high... highly qualified for these
programs. We'll be working very closely with the
Department of Education to identify which schools
actually host the CUNY tutor core in its first
year. It'll be a collaborative process for that...

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I'm always
concerned about who gets selected and that there's
always an opportunity for all schools to
participate and to have the advantage of in fact
getting a person who can come in and assist the

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teacher in the classroom, help reduce the class
size. And so I'm always concerned about the
process. So I'll be talking with the DOE about
that. I want to thank you and I turn it back to the
chair. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Chair Barron. We've been joined by Council
Members Miller and Cumbo. We will now hear from
Council Member Rodriguez followed by Council Member
Cabrera.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you
Chairs. I have a few things to say. One is that
congratulation to the men and women of the Murphy
Institute. Especially CWA, you did a great job as
now the Murphy Institute... Murphy School... We were
there you know when there was administration trying
to go after you and they close all the doors you
never gave up. And that's all the youngster who are
here, the next PHD, the next scientist, the next
leader... president. You should... each look at those
role model people that never gave up, people that
following also former Chancellor Murphey as someone
that the New York Time describe it was someone
always committed to support working class and

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middle class. And I think that you know that's our
responsibility, our generation, look back, learn
from the previous leaders, have a vision for the
future. So I think that... sitting there who are
freshman or doing your master degree never give up.
And PHD or more... that's all we should be aiming
for, nothing less. I think that... I'm going to be
asking now for my African American brothers and
sister from the Irish from the Italian, your
support to me as a Dominican born and raised in a
I... in a island where today we are 747,473 of the
New York City population. We need to do what the
New York Time say that Chancellor Murphy he did...
the time say in an effort to make the
administration more reflective of a student's
enrollment he sold our mem... out members of minority
groups for top positions. Dominicans need to be in
top positions. We are the second... we are the
largest number of a student in CUNY when we are
compared to a student from other countries. I'm
happy and celebrate as someone that always take my...
for my struggle from the social class perspective
to be working with my white, black, Asian, and
everyone. But I can say there's three Puerto Rican

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president of CUNY University that we already have;
at the Bronx Community College, at the Lehman
College, Mr. Morales Staten Island. We have not
have one Dominican being president of any of the 21
campus that we have. We have not seen any
Dominicans in the top positions. And again it's
nothing against... I can... I can tell you that the
Dominicans we are so proud. With Jay we have found
a friend. With Jay we have found someone that went
to... the school that... a co-founder, opening the
door. John had been working with us very close.
It's not lack of people that we... a conversation
but... this being here saying... black presidents at
CUNY. Because there's none. Then today I say what
is the Dominicans... the largest student population
in... in CUNY? The 747,000 New Yorkers in the city
and when we compare a city where we have people
from more than 150 countries, 36 percent born in
another country not having Dominicans in the top
leadership position when we have the men and women
ready to... those position I see as a challenges and
I invite you to continue as we have started the
conversation but I would like to see some program.
Because our people are saying is we are the... the...

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we are the... We are the... We have the... you know we
have a... people with a skills and if we go back to
Chancellor Murphy he did what he needed to do,
going after including people from those minority
group to be sitting in the table. So I... I mean my
colleague here we were looking at say with all
respect to the previous chancellor while we can
look on you as someone... first of all that you
welcome ideas as you have when we start a
conversation. With Jay and John we... start a
conversation, in this case Dominican, but we would
like to see some action. We would like to see some
Dominican sitting here. We would like to see some
Dominicans in the leadership position of CUNY
because the numbers speak by self and we are 20...
close to 26,000 a student going to CUNY. So what
can we expect when it come to have our seat in the
table?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Thank you for that
question Council Member Rodriguez. So CUNY is
working hard... harder I think than it has in the
past with... I mentioned we have a new dean for
diversity. With Ginger Waters' leadership we have
put in place a five-year diversity action plan. We...

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we have for the first time required diversity plans
from each of our colleges. And the designation of a
lead diversity office or on each one. There's...
it's an... there's an important effort going on as
Vice Chancellor Waters mentioned to... to enrich the
pools of our candidates. So when we have openings
for the highest positions we have candidates who
are underrepresented in those positions a day. It's
among the most important things I think that we can
do and if we can't find enough candidates to enrich
the pool from outside of CUNY then we need to have
our own programs which we have to grow our own and
to continue to help our own administrators progress
to the highest positions. So I think you will see
progress. We are committed to it and it's a part of
our priorities moving forward.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Council Member Rodriguez. Council Member
Cabrera followed by Council Member Rosenthal
followed by Council Member Miller.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you to
both Madam Chairs. Chancellor thank you for coming
today. I have to tell you... as I always say I'm a
fan of CUNY. I believe in CUNY. I believe it is the

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best opportunity for our young people and adults to
get the best possible education for the price that
it is... that we have now in tuition. The... will be as
we saw with expression of our young people
something that if we had it... community colleges you
know afforded as Madam Chair expressed that I
believe will be 90 million dollars if I recall in
previous hearings that we had to have free tuition
for them... that... I want to echo the sentiments
that'll express. But Madam Chair also I want to
second what Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez just
mentioned regarding Dominicans sitting at the table
is the fastest growing... right now in the Bronx it
is the largest population of... of an ethnic group. I
also want to accentuate if I can for Dominican
studies degree to have a full flesh real Dominican
studies degree, if you could look into that. In
light of the fact that we're seeing this part of
the population growing. Also I wanted to give a
shout out... I don't know if they're still here but
the Bronx Community College... oh there they are,
alright they're here, so good to see you. They're
in my district and this is where I come with the...
with the big question and... and it's related to

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Bronx Community College since I been here in the
last six year have been the college in... with the
need of... of the highest need and the greatest need
of infrastructure of capital improvement. And I
mentioned this everybody sitting at the table and
off the table. They know I always bring this up
because Bronx Community College is very dear to my
heart and I have put my money... the peoples' money,
of capital, it's not my money, it's peoples' money
where my mouth is as the saying goes because I get
funded. And this year I'm looking to... to allocate a
substantial amount. But I... can you share with us
briefly what are the long term plans? And I'm very
grateful the library... the library is the best
looking library I think of any college that I have
seen in New York City and... and I know the
infrastructure is going and the plumbing and so
forth but I... I want it to become a first class
place in light of the fact that the Bronx always
gets stigmatized with having the worst.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: So thank you very
much Council Member for the question. I will say to
you my first visit any CUNY college was to the
Bronx Community College. And I was stunned by the

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magnificence of the architecture but also the
critical maintenance needs of the buildings there
such as Gould [sp?] Memorial Hall which is in
significant need of rescuing and should be one of
the few architectural masterpieces in... in New York
City. It... it is the collection of some of the best
architecture when you look at the... the white... what
he considered to be among his masterpieces, Breuer
you know they have the whit... Whitney building in
New York. You've got a whole campus of Breuer
there. And now the Sterling Library which I agree
with you is spectacular. And as soon as the
infrastructure work is done in the center I think
this fall we'll have a beautiful green, a
traditional looking quad. I think Bronx will be one
of the most beautiful campuses. And before I turn
this over to the Vice Chancellor for the specific
response, so on the capital plan going forward, I
just want to... I know you know this well but I just
want to use this opportunity to restate that when
we... we chose a college... one of the reasons that we
chose the... the Bronx Community College is because
it felt like it had an opportunity to move up. It
certainly had a need for attention from CUNY and

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from the city and state. And so I could not be more
pleased that the new president agreed with me that
we would make it the all ASAP campus and
demonstrate to the world that we can scale this
program successfully and increase graduation rates
into the 50s at... at... and which will make a
tremendous difference for that college which at one
point had the lowest graduation rates at CUNY. So
I'm really excited about that. And I'm excited
about my Broncos being here as well. So Vice
Chancellor Bergtraum.

VICE CHANCELLOR BERGTRAUM: We thank you
for your support of Bronx Community College.
There's a great need there but we are making great
progress. And as the Chancellor described the
reason we can give back the quad is because we've
done all the infrastructure work below. We're now
moving to the east side of the campus and we're
going to do the infrastructure on the east side of
the campus. After that we're going to do the
electrical upgrades. And... plans for the future... I
can now say to you that we're going to now go
inside and renovate some of the buildings. We're
going to renovate part of Meister Hall for their

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success center. We're going to renovate the old
high school Nichols Hall for ASAP. So you need the...
the infrastructure first and we're getting there.
And then we're going to go inside the... the
buildings and renovate that beautiful campus.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: So I'm very
happy to hear that there is a plan and the future
set in the... plan set for the future. And I'm
looking forward for the plan set for the future's
future, what comes after that, until we fully
complete this campus. And I... I do believe and I
have full trust in... in your administration to... to
bring into fruition. I only have one minute so I'm
just going to shoot a couple of questions and then
I'll wait for your answer. And that is one is the
own line. I'm so happy. I've been... I've been
sounding the trumpets regarding this for years,
regarding an online. I used to be a college
professor. I run an online forum... first online
counselling graduate program, the only one in the
state of its kind and another college, private
college but never the less I saw how valuable it
is. You don't need classrooms. There is a cost
involved but you... this... there's a tremendous

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savings for the college. I would love to see full...
many of the full-fledged programs, the ones that
you can do online to be made available to the
students. And now... and in closing I want to thank
you for the fantastic work the CUNY citizenship is...
is doing in my office. I mean the waiting list is
just unbelievable amount of people that are... are so
interested in this. And I want to compliment and...
and those who were in a selective panel, selection
panel for the wonderful new president that we have
at BCC. He's doing a tremendous job. He's just so
welcoming. And with that I'll leave you with the
online question.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Thank you. I
couldn't agree more about Thomas Isekenegbe. I'm
delighted that he accepted and... and hard to imagine
someone with more enthusiasm for his... his work. You
and I agree on this and we talked about it I think
after last year's hearing about the need to
increase online education. Fortunately, we have a
record now of being among the highest quality
leading ranked programs in the country and the
recent stories on this in US News. It's a terrific
base. But we have a ways to go. And we agree on it.

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We met last week on... on which degree programs we
should be looking at to provide the highest demand
programs. I look at online as doing several things.
And I realize although you and I agree everybody...
there may be some skeptics. First I think despite
the fact that we have 24 colleges not everybody can
attend those colleges for whatever reasons. Young
people are growing up so much more adept at using
technology and familiar with it that it becomes
easier and easier for us to put programs online and
have them be able to take advantage of it. So I
think we do a great deal for access with more
online. I think for adult education and retraining
and bundling of courses so people can advance in
their careers. Working with unions and businesses
to develop a package is a great opportunity for us.
And third I believe that with a CUNY brand we could
scale these programs in such a way that we could
attract students from outside of New York. And this
could be an additional revenue opportunity for us.
So I think for all those reasons... first expanding
access to the... to the New Yorkers that we serve by
far in a way the most important but...

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COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so
much. Thank you so much Madam Chairs.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Council Member Cabrera. I just want to note
that you got like eight minutes and I think it's
because the Sergeant at Arms is from the Bronx. I'm
just saying.

[laughter]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: But
thank you for your... for your questions today.
Council Member Rosenthal followed by Council Member
Miller followed by Council Member Cumbo. And we've
been joined by Council Member Gibson.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so
much Chairs and Chancellor nice to meet you. So I...
I'd like to understand... I'd like to ask you some
budget questions as it relates to faculty salaries.
I know you're in the midst of negotiating a
contract. I hope it works out to the benefit of our
faculty who are doing the real heavy lifting and
who I support. I'm wondering what the multiple is
if you look at sort of a midlevel faculty person
compared to a midlevel administrator in your office
in central... your central office, I don't know what

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you call it but a central office, what's the
multiple?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: I'm... I'm not sure
that offhand I can give you a comparison between a
midlevel faculty and a midlevel...

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You can pick...

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...administrator.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...any number
you want. I'm trying to get a sense of the answer
to that question. So pick a faculty salary that you
are familiar with. Is it on the high end? Do you
want to go with dean and then compare it to a dean
type level in your office? I'm just trying to get a
sense of the multiples... is it two to one? Is it
three to one? Is it four to one... five to one?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: You know...

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Range. You
can say two to one to five to one.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Yeah I... I... I'm...
I'm reluctant to estimate that without having the
numbers in front of me. Maybe the Vice Chancellor
has a better sense of that...

VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: We can get
you the... the average salary... [cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'm...

VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: ...for a
faculty and an average salary for an administrator
but in using the... the criteria that you just set
out Council Member Rosenthal I would say it's less
than two to one. I don't believe it's more than two
to one in terms of an average administrator's
salary versus average faculty salaries but we'll...
we'll get you the information.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So I'm really
only thinking about your central office. I don't
mean the average administrative...

VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Yeah. No I
understand. And I'm fairly confident that it's less
than two to one but we'll get you the...

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: How hard is
it? Can I get that this afternoon? Is that a hard
thing to figure out?

VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: We can get it
to you within a matter of hours of getting back to
the office.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Great I... my
email address is H Rosenthal at Council dot NYC dot

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gov or you can pass it on through the finance
staff.

VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: and the
reason I bring it up is because I think it's... I'm
surprised to hear you say that. And I'll tweet out
what you let me know because I think... I don't think
it'll be the multiple that you're suggesting. And
very concerned about a university that's doing
god's work with taxpayer funds paying its
administrators exorbitant amounts of money out of
proportion with the amount of money that its most
important personnel, its teachers, how much they
get paid. And I think it's unacceptable. And when I
think about the work of the CUNY institutions in my
district and the level of the... the... the amount of
money for the salaries and their administrative
offices I would guess... hazard to guess that they
are a fraction of what the overhead administrative
costs are... or salaries are for your administrators.
And I would argue their work is just as important,
as complicated, and as... as important as any other.
And I... I'll... you know I see you smirking and I get
it. It's a challenging question. But there's a

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reason for it. You know I used to work in the
city's budget office overseeing the healthcare
budgets and one year the head of the hospitals
corporation came in and said when we are doing cuts
and it's going to impact patient care and I went
back working with central office, did an analysis,
and cut their central office by 10 million dollars
and they took it without blinking. And what I want
to know being the steward of the taxpayer's dime
here what you're doing in your office to make sure
that your salaries and your expenditures are not
out of proportion with what other... what your
colleges are doing, what your senior colleges...
anything like that. Have you made moves in that
direction?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Thank you for your
question. I'll... there's several embedded in there
and I'm going to respond to each of them. I'll
start with the last one. When we did a mandatory
reallocation last year because our mandatory costs
were not funded I directed my office to take twice
the level of cuts that the campuses did which we
did. We are doing the same thing again for next
year. If you look at national averages, we're in a...

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okay I'll answer the question and then... We are in a
competitive market for both faculty and for
administrators. And we are not high in those
comparisons in either group. I'll be the first to
say that I hope that we are able to pay our faculty
more. And you were not here when I talked about the
labor contract and that I believe that universities
are great because they have great faculty and that
is our highest obligation to recruit and retain our
faculty and staff. So we will continue to have that
as a priority. I doubt, but I don't want to
speculate again, the assumption that there's a
great difference between the central office and the
colleges but I do know that we have taken upon
ourselves to reduce our budget significantly
greater than the colleges and I don't... I think
that's appropriate.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...question in
the decreases, did you decrease central staff
salaries as well or was it positions?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: We've not had an
increase in central staff salaries in over six
years and we did not decrease the specific
salaries. We... provided we did not hire additional

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people. And we froze a bunch of the non-personnel
expenditures to get to that number.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay thank
you Chancellor.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: And it was almost
10 percent.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you. Council Member Miller followed by Council
Member Cumbo followed by Council Member Gibson.
Just a reminder if anyone's here for the veterans
hearing I know we are running now 35 minutes behind
so we will be starting this right after... we'll take
a two-minute break to change documents and then
we'll have veteran... our veterans hearing. Council
Member Miller.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you Madam
Chair. Thank you Chancellor and your team for
coming out and... and really... staff. First of all, I...
I want to thank you for the labor... from the labor
community for the labor school. And you know I know
it's... it's taken some doing but I do have some
questions about that. And would you tell... could you
tell me what that's going to look like? What are
the plans...

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CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: ...following...

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: I hope I get this right because I... my response now mirrors the one I gave earlier. But we... we're working hard on this now. We have a task force working on it. There are a number of academic administrators and faculty working on this. We're shaping it. I will plan to present a proposal to the Board of Trustees before the end of the calendar year but much of the discussion is... is in flux at the moment. But so that... that's our goal to... to take a... that I will take a recommendation of the Board before the end of the calendar year.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Excellent. And... and of course the board and the members of the institutes themselves are involved in these conversations, in this planning?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: They are involved. Ultimately the planning for a school will be an academic decision based on the academic considerations but... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: ...excellent.

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CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...welcome the
involvement of the stakeholders in this discussion
as we do in any discussions. And they have been
involved.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay. And on the
human capital side and... and I do... and I'm... forgive
me for my tardiness here but in and out a lot going
on and I'm sure it's been discussed but the
negotiations with the faculty and staff there. Do
we... have you budgeted for that? And how is that
coming along? And what can we expect to... what are
your expectations in terms of the professors as
opposed to adjunct? And are we looking to increase
those numbers to meet the need of the student body?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: So we... we did have
some discussion about this and we're in the process
of negotiating with our principal unions and first
the PSC with whom we've been negotiating for some
time.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Mm-hmm.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: We... as you know
we're in mediation but also continuing to have
informal discussions and formal ones with the PSC
in addition to the mediation. I think everyone is

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interested in resolving this as soon as possible.

The core issue here is funding. And contracts that
have been out of date since 2009 and 2010 of a
significant amount of retroactive needs to resolve
them. And that will require investment by both the
city and the state. And so we are continuing to
consult with the administration of the city and the
state as we move forward in negotiating with our...
with our unions.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So obviously
from... from the council's perspective we put a high
premium on that. We... we... we... you know we value
CUNY. We certainly value those educators and... and
that staff as well. So we... we'd love to see it get
resolved But also that we have demonstrated through
our investment that we do that and we would hope
that those conversations with the administration on
the city and state level continue as well as for
that this issue can be resolved and that we can get
back to the business of... of educating students.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Certainly agree
with you sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay, thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Council Member. Council Member Cumbo followed
by Council Member Gibson.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you Chair
Ferrerias-Copeland. Thank you Chair Barron. Thank
you so much for being here today Chancellor. I
wanted to ask questions. At the ACS hearing there
was a great deal of information that was provided
about foster care and young people that are aging
out the foster care system. And I understand that
there's going to be a greater emphasis in terms of
capturing the interest of those young people that
want to go onto CUNY and have a CUNY education. Can
you talk about previously what that looked like in
terms of how you worked with young people aging out
of foster care and what was provided and what will
be happening different moving forward this year as
far as that particular initiative, how will it be
supported? What will be the criteria, how will
young people be supported through this initiative?
Because I'm very excited about this.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: thank you for the...
the... the question. And it... it's a very high
priority of mine personally. I think that we have

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the opportunity both at CUNY and with the community
based organizations in the city all have an
interest coming together to provide a number of
things for students who are in the foster care
system and interested in college. One would be to
provide opportunities for them to live at CUNY. I
think today we lose some students because we don't
have enough space for residential space. That's
number one. Number two I think we need to provide
additional supporting services. And we're both
talk... we're talking about this inside and with the
other organizations... ACS and others that... that New
Yorkers for children foundling and others who are
interested in exactly the same thing that we are.
So looking at bundling those kinds of supports that
will make sure that these students can attend CUNY
if they so choose and we can provide the space and
I hope we can. They could live at CUNY and that
they could have the... both academic support and
other support that they need to be successful. With
regard to the specifics of the program I will ask a
colleague if you wish to respond...

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: That would be
very appreciated because what I want to understand

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is do you simply qualify for the program by having
a high school diploma? Because I know that that's
not your traditional criteria. So is it if you have
a high school diploma and you're in... you're aging
out of foster care or you're in foster care is that
really the criteria that's needed?

DONNA LINDERMAN: Do I need to be sworn
in? My name is Donna Linderman. I am the University
Dean for Student Success Initiatives at CUNY and
the Executive Director of the ASAP Program. Can I
just...

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

DONNA LINDERMAN: I do. Thank you for
your question. I am... I'm delighted to be overseeing
some of the foster care work that is going on at
CUNY. I oversee the ASAP program and the CUNY Start
Programs on behalf of the university and I'm part
of the foster care collaborative that is convened
by the central office which includes individuals at
CUNY, ACS, community based organizations, and
foster care agencies serving students in and aging
out of foster care who wish to come to CUNY to

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pursue a degree. I'd like to talk to you about a
couple of initiatives that I'm directly involved
with. Earlier this year the Conrad Ann Hilton
Foundation made a... a four year grant to CUNY Start
and ASAP to create strategic partnerships with
foster care agencies, community based organizations
working with foster care youth and ACS to create a
referral service to welcome foster care youth into
CUNY and to create a supportive pipeline through
the CUNY Start Program and/or ASAP. These programs
operate at eight of our... at nine of our colleges
that offer the associate degree and the... the... the
goal of the program is really to respond to the
fact that many youth in care or aging out of care
have a hard time connecting with CUNY, entering
expeditiously, and then moving through a degree
program. A couple of barriers are remedial
education. You... I believe you heard earlier that
CUNY Start is one of our most comprehensive
programs that help students preserve their
financial aid and address their remedial needs in a
pre-matriculation semester and now an eight-week
math program that we piloted. So through these
strategic partnerships we welcome young people into

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CUNY Start and then we create a direct pipeline
into the ASAP program for these students. In
dialogue with our partners and based on what we've
learned from folks across the country it seems like
some of the other barriers are fee waivers,
transitioned to matriculated status filling our
financial aid forms, creating connected community,
our pipeline program through CUNY Start and ASAP
addresses some of those needs. We have social
engagement liaisons who work with some of the
students. We ensure that they can take winter and
summer courses so they can gain and maintain
academic momentum, and we're very excited about the
fact that at couple of our colleges that do have
resident halls such as the college of Staten Island
and Queens College that there may be opportunities
for youth and care to live on campus and to
potentially receive some of their services in a
residential setting. I'll also just add that the
Seek CD program received funding through the state
to create a similar pipeline for students that join
the Seek CD program. So a set of wrap around
services that fill any gaps that the program does
not already meet. Students do have to be admitte4d

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to CUNY but the fact that we have the CUNY Start
offering for students that might have more
significant needs allows them to preserve their aid
and then move into a degree program. So we're very
excited about that. I'm also part of a... a dialogue
with founding, Queens College, and ACS to
potentially create a very comprehensive resident
based program at Queens College that's under...
that's in dialogue right now. And the students
would have some of their unmet housing needs taken
care of.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Well...

DONNA LINDERMAN: It's very exciting.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: ...when you have
more information about it. And perhaps my question
obviously can't be answered in a five-minute
timeframe. But wanting to see if it's something
that can be I guess very clearly understood like
the scholarship program, the city council
scholarship program. You have to have a B average.
You have to have this and this and once that... you
get this. Because I think it's a wonderful
opportunity and something that students that are
aging out from the very beginning, if they

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understood that this was a goal that if you achieve
this particular goal there's an opportunity for
housing. There's an opportunity for you to have a
tuition free opportunity, that there's all of this
support and placement that will be in place I think
it would be a great goal for them to see some light
at the end of the tunnel and that information
should be out as clearly as possible and as
concisely as they can understand it. Because so
many young people don't know what's going to happen
to them following aging out. So would certainly
want to see that and would want to have more
information about it.

DONNA LINDERMAN: Agreed.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

DONNA LINDERMAN: Thank you Council
Member. Council Member Gibson.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very
much Chair Ferreras-Copeland and Chair Barron. And
good afternoon Chancellor Milliken. Good to see you
and your vice chancellors here. I know a lot has
been said so I first want to thank CUNY for the
incredible work you do every day. I am a proud
graduate of Baruch College and I am always always

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proud to say that I am a graduate of CUNY. I am a
firm supporter of all the initiatives you have; the
CUNY citizenship program, I have waiting lists in
my office because that's how much of a demand we
need in terms of citizenship classes and the
pathway to immigration. I was a former assembly
member so Council Member Barron and I championed
the CUNY childcare program which I'm another fan
of, CUNY Leads, and many other programs; raising
the base aid, and the operating dollars, and the
FTE, and everything that we fought for. So I just
wanted to commend you on a couple of things and
then just ask two questions. I am very thankful
that the CUNY prep program was baselined by the
administration. And I'm equally as thankful that
it's named in honor of its founder; the late Doctor
Derek Griffith. And I'm going to thank you for
recognizing Doctor Griffith in the work that he did
in CUNY Prep. I am proud that the scholarship
program that we continue to fund has not only given
16,000 students an opportunity to go to college but
the number continues to grow. I pray for the day
when we finally pass a dream act in this state
recognizing that we must continue to provide our

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young people with an opportunity to get to college.

So if I am ever ever proud of CUNY I think you can
see just the work that we've done together is
really a testament to our commitment. I wanted to
ask quickly the mayor's young men's initiative,
there is a new fatherhood academy at Hostos College
in the Bronx. And I wanted to know if you could
speak a little bit about the fatherhood academy and
your work with Hostos. And then since I'm on the
topic of Hostos. Council Member Cabrera talked
about... a lot about Bronx Community College which
I'm very proud to support as well. I live down the
street from BCC so I'm proud to see all the
students every day. But Hostos is also going
through a major transformation in building our new
arts and sciences building. So I wanted to find out
in terms of capital where we are with Hostos
capital plan. And could you talk about the
Fatherhood Academy at Hostos as well?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Thank you very
much. Thank you especially for the first part of
that; the lauding of CUNY. I'm very grateful for
that. So the fatherhood academy, I... I can't speak
in detail about that. The first of our programs I

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know was at LaGuardia and it's now expanding beyond
that. It... terrific program there. I met many of
the... of the young men, made some good friends in
that program so I expect the same thing at Hostos
but I'm not sure. I'd be happy to provide any
additional detail to you on how it's going.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Do you know when
it started? Has it already started at... at Hostos?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: I... I...

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...have a date?

VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Council
Member Gibson there was a fatherhood academy at
LaGuardia Community College.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right... right.

VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: ...start as a
very successful. We were very grateful in last
year's budget that mayor provided funding for it.
So it started at LaGuardia, now it's expanding.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: To Hostos.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: And what about
Hostos' capital?

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: So as you know we
have a very exciting new project planned there with

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some support from the borough president and... and
others for planning. But there's still a... a heavy
lift on getting the remainder funded for
construction. But I'll turn this over to Vice
Chancellor Bergtraum to respond more generally to
the... the...

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: ...capital plans at
Hostos.

VICE CHANCELLOR BERGTRAUM: As the
Chancellor said we're looking for funding for the
new allied health building... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Can you speak
into the mic? I can't hear you.

VICE CHANCELLOR BERGTRAUM: We're
looking for funding for the new Allied Health
building. But at the same time we are renovating
quite a bit of the space like at 500 Grand
Concourse...

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Mm-hmm.

VICE CHANCELLOR BERGTRAUM: ...we
renovated the... the fifth floor, the first floor,
and now we're going to the fourth floor, then we'll
be basically going to the third floor. You know the

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issue that this raises it sounds... we have funds to
do this and... and it will happen but we still have
to run the college at the same time. So it's a
little... [cross-talk] bit of a stress on the school
but we're renovating a little bit at a time.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. I
appreciate the attention given. Hostos has not had
a new building in I don't know how long. So this is
the first of its kind in... in many many years so I
know you know the council and you know myself,
we're very committed to making sure that every year
we can continue to provide the support. I know it's
a very ambitious plan but necessary and needed.
Hostos, BCC, and Lehman College are all growing
exponentially. So I want to make sure that we are
able to meet that demand.

VICE CHANCELLOR BERGTRAUM: And by the
way... just... the ASAP program for Hostos we're going
to be looking for additional space outside the
campus... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: The post office
right across the street on the... [cross-talk]

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VICE CHANCELLOR BERGTRAUM: Well we're
talking to the post office but they needed... they
need additional space.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Okay and
then I know my time is up but I really want to
commend you in addition to Council Member Cabrera,
Doctor Isekenegbe our new president of Bronx
Community College is phenomenal. Not only is he
qualified but I'm very proud on behalf of my
community of West Africans that he is the first
West African president in the CUNY system. I think
it's commendable and speaks to our diversity to not
only attract the best and the brightest and most
qualified but to recognize that diversity in our
college presidents is absolutely critical to making
sure that CUNY is reflective of our city. So I
thank you for that. Thank you Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Council Member. Thank you Chancellor. We have
additional questions that we would like to get to
the committee. And I think out of all of our
questions we can't talk about diversity in our
presidents enough. So I hope that you take all of
this into serious consideration. Sure.

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CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN: Can I... just one
point that I... I probably should have made earlier
in response to a question but... but... and I... and I
completely agree with you but I just wanted to
point out that in the executive compensation plan
titles, those highest administrators across CUNY I
want to thank Ginger and her colleagues because if
I look at the results from 2014 to 2015 you know
the... the greatest change in the... in the percentage
and number of administrators are... in black and
Latino administrators in the executive compensation
plan so while I will be the first to agree that we
have room to go and we're not there but I am
pleased to see that in the... in the last year that
we have, can show performance for we made
significant gains. So I... I'm pleased with that and
I wanted to make sure that that was in the record.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Well
very good. It's on the record and we appreciate it.
And we thank you for coming today to testify. We
thank everyone also for coming for... to support CUNY
and to be in... in the room with us. Thank you very
much. If you'd like to stay for Veteran Affairs you
can. We are going to take a two-minute break as we

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change documents. And we will begin the first ever
hearing on Veterans and the Executive Budget.

[PAUSE]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We will
now resume the city council's hearings on the
mayor's executive budget for fiscal 2017. The
finance committee is joined by the committee on
Veterans Chaired by Council Member Ulrich. We just
heard from CUNY and now we will hear from the
Commissioner for the Department of Veterans,
Retired Army Brigadier General Loree... Loree Sutton.
In the interest of time I will forego making an
opening statement. But before we hear testimony I
open the mic to my co-chair of this committee;
Chair Ulrich.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you. Thank
you Chair Ferreras. Today is really a historic day
and we're very excited that this is the first
hearing, oversight hearing, budget hearing over the
newly created department of Veterans' Affairs...
Veteran Services. And I would be remised if I did
not thank my colleagues in the council who worked
very closely with me to pass the bill which
established the agency and as well as the de Blasio

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administration and for their help and assistance in
passing the bill and signing the bill into law. And
this hearing is just a first step in a new chapter
and a new beginning for our... for our city's
veterans. So it's a great thing. We're discussing
as the chair mentioned the 2017 executive budget
for the newly created department of Veteran
Services. We understand that the administration is
proposing 3.8 million dollars in funding for
approximately 33 staffers for the new department
and the upcoming fiscal year. And that is a massive
improvement over the... the budgets that MOVA had for
many years which were in the realm of 500,000 and
five people or six staffers. So we're really really
excited about that. I also want to thank our
speaker; Melissa Mark-Viverito. I know that she is
held up in budget meetings right now but she's on
her way up. She will be joining us for this hearing
and we're very grateful for her support and for her
leadership not only with respect to advocating for
the new department but for her support on all
veterans issues, especially the veterans initiative
with the council started several years ago. And
finally I want to thank the members of the veterans

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committee who have joined us here today; on my
right Council Member Joe Borelli from Staten
Island, also Councilman... Member Maisel who is here,
Council Member Cabrera... Fernando Cabrera who is
here, Council Member Matteo who is an honorary
member of the committee as are all of my
colleagues, and last but not least my good friend
and colleague from Queens Council Member Vallone
who really was instrumental in helping us get the
bill passed. And I know that he wanted to make a
brief statement before we hear from the
administration. And then we will open it up to
questions. So I'll turn the mic over to Council
Member Vallone.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you to
both our chairs and I... real quickly commissioner
and General I... it's been an honor to watch this
happen. It's been an honor to be on the Veterans
Committee with our Chair Ulrich and with Julissa-
Ferreras at the Finance Chair taking us to this
day, seeing all the advocates out there and... and
the audience and guiding us from the first day on
teaching us what we needed to know and how we
needed to get to this day. And people in the

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beginning said that'll never happen and now we're
doing a budget. So if we could get a pass this year
because I don't think anybody's really upset on
anything that's in this budget because we have a
budget so that's a good first step to have.

[laughter]

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I think next
year we could say hey compared to last year we want
to talk about... But we... we always want more and
that's why we'll always advocate as a council for
more for our veterans. And I think with Memorial
Day coming up this weekend it's a perfect time to
have our first budget meeting as this city gets
ready to do the right thing and give the parades
that are so rightfully deserved but as we always
say every day is veterans day. So especially in our
district we have the largest parade in the country
outside of 5th Avenue which you marched at last
year so we thank you for that. So we're very
excited today and I thank you again Chair Ulrich
for keeping... visions and making this day happen.
And I look forward to this hearing.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you. Thank
you Council Member Vallone. I... I want to also thank

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very quickly our Veterans Committee staff; Eric
Bernstein, Michael Kurtz, John Russell, James
Subudhi for help... Subudhi I'm sorry for helping us
organize today's hearing. And we have been joined
thankfully by our speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito
and...

[background comments]

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Okay. In a few
minutes... so we'll hear from the administration and
then the speaker will take it from there. Thank you
Commissioner Sutton as always for your... for your
wonderful leadership and... and for what you're
doing. And you are the first commissioner of the
Department of Veterans Services. Congratulations
and thank you again.

[applause]

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Thank you.

[applause]

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Good afternoon
Madam Speaker, Chair Ulrich, and Chairs...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I'm... I'm
sorry Commissioner I just want to make sure that we
swear you in. So if our counsel will do that.

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

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: I do. Good
afternoon Madam Speaker Mark-Viverito, Chair
Ulrich, and Chair Ferreras-Copeland as well as
respective members of the Committee on Veterans and
the Committee on Finance. My name is Loree Sutton
and I am honored to serve as the first Commissioner
of the New York City Department of Veteran
Services. Thank you for this opportunity to meet
and review the fiscal year 2017 executive budget
with respect to the city's newest agency. Let me
start by acknowledging this historic moment and
your indefatigable dedication to the wellbeing of
New York City's veterans and their families.
Looking back this past year brought forward a
convergence of leadership; the mayor, the speaker,
Mr. Chair, and the Committee on Veterans, the
Veterans Advisory Board, Team MOVA now DBS, and the
impassioned community of New York City's veterans
advocates whose collective timely achievements
characterized by strong collaboration, constructive
partnerships, substantive legislation, and

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pioneering achievements are briefly summarized
below. The newly appointed veteran advisory board
was strategically selected to ensure a diverse
range of service backgrounds, community engagement
interest, and professional expertise. We are the
first city in the nation to add a veteran
designator to the municipal NY... IDNYC, municipal ID
card program thereby facilitating enhanced access
to veteran specific services and benefits for
veteran New Yorkers. The city's commitment to
veteran mental health as an integral element of
Thrive NYC led by our first lady Chirlane McCray
includes program element support for increased
outreach, 3-1-1 improvements to connect New York
City veterans and family members to the veteran
crisis line as well as city resources and services,
and provision of holistic services through an
integrative health model of care. On the career
front expanded employment opportunities for
veterans and their families continue to grow with
over 25 hundred veterans and their spouses placed
in jobs through the city's small business services
workforce one centers. Our productive working
relationship with the city council achieve multiple

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legislative initiatives voted into law culminating
the landmark bill signing of Local Law 113
authorizing the establishment of a separate agency,
the Department of Veteran Services to better serve
our veteran community. As of April 8, 2016 the new
law is now in effect. And our transition to full
operational capacity is well underway. Through
concerted leadership, community partnerships, and
collaborations we also supported and participated
in multiple special events drawing national
attention. Also MOVA moves back in October to our
newly renovated 22nd floor office space at 1 Center
Street in the David N. Dinkins Municipal Building
named after the former mayor, one of our city's
most renowned veterans. Initiating a new city
tradition Mayor de Blasio hosted a flag ceremony
followed by the posting of all service flags at the
entrance of city hall; a gesture of respect
throughout Veterans Week honoring service to
country. We also partnered with the Department of
Parks and Recreation, the Mayor's Office of People
with Disabilities, and the city council in support
of reduced fees at New York City Parks Department
Recreation Center for seniors, young adults,

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veterans, and persons with disabilities. Under the leadership of the mayor in collaboration with the speaker and the city council the city supported an unprecedented increase in our budget and staffing capacity, a historic investment already yielding increased citywide outreach and impact. Last December a federal government validated New York City's benchmark success in effectively ending chronic veteran homelessness. Under the mayor's leadership veteran homelessness overall has decreased by over 70 percent since January of 2014. Indeed, what an incredible year it has been leading us to today's FY 2017 executive budget hearing in which we are focusing on the city's new Department of Veteran Services. The mayor's fiscal year 2017 executive budget designates approximately three million dollars for personal services and nearly one million dollars for other than personal services for the Department of Veteran Services initial year of operations which commences on July 1, 2016. DVS is currently selecting highly qualified senior executive staff members for the new agency and will continue to build the team and ramp up capacity over the ensuing 12 months

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yielding DVS's full operating capacity by July 1,
2017. With the creation of the Department of
Veteran Services the city will now have the
capacity to develop a sustainable long term
strategy grounded in city leadership,
public/private partnerships, and community
engagements. Executing this strategy will yield the
robust program development, direct services, and
the research policy and advocacy work needed to
leverage the strength and support the needs of our
virgining population of approximately 500,000
veterans, service members of all components, and
family members here in New York City. Next is a
brief summary identifying key elements of DVS
during its first year of operation. First of all,
our vision to honor and serve veterans and their
families as our city's leading natural renewable
resource. Our mission; the Department of Veteran
Services is dedicated to improving the lives of New
York City veterans and their families. Marshaling
the collective resources of the city of New York
the department will achieve the following
objectives; ensure that all veterans have permanent
affordable housing and access to the support

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services needed to find and maintain their home,
implement the best Thrive NYC integrative health
program to foster the physical, mental, and
spiritual wellbeing of veterans and their families,
expand education and career opportunities for
veterans through a rapidly growing network of city,
public, private, and not-for-profit partners, and
finally provide the human and technological
infrastructure for veterans and their families to
gain citywide access to benefits, resources, and
care through a leading coordinated service network.
Moving on to our structure and function. The new
agency includes three operational units aligned
with DVS key strategic priorities. Each led by an
assistant commissioner with direct policy,
programmatic, management, advocacy, and constituent
support responsibilities augmented through outreach
teams that provide and coordinate services for
veterans and their families. Designed to function
as a matrix leadership organization DVS will task,
organize, informal teams aligning strategy,
structure, processes, rewards, and staff to focus
on complex cross agency challenges. Many of DVS's
administrative functions will be delivered through

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working with multiple city entities to establish
memoranda of understanding over the coming year.
The new agency has three new executive lines of
support; communication, external affairs, and
administrative support. Importantly this new
increased capacity will allow DVS to exercise
centralized import, direct oversight, and citywide
ombudsmanship to maximize the effectiveness and
efficiency of all contract funds appropriated for
the benefit of New York City veterans and their
families. Further DVS will hire a senior advisor
for public/private partnerships and development as
well as a chief information officer to work
collaboratively across the agency and create a
coherent strategic communications and
intergovernmental affairs strategy. Advanced
platforms and systems for technology and
telecommunications and enduring public, private
partnerships required for DVS to deliver and
sustain the highest quality services and support.
During our first year DVS will focus upon multiple
actions and priorities including hiring exceptional
professionals to launch the new agency, fill the
cohesive team, create a generative culture and

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develop the infrastructure policies, operating
procedures, services, and programs needed for a
startup organization such as DVS to flourish. With
military veteran status a plus we are looking for
service driven and mission focused team players
united in our commitment to make history by
improving veterans lives in the greatest city in
the world. Next we are effectively ending veterans
homelessness in New York City and sustaining the
gains. Let me take a moment to just point out
Nicole Branca who joined our team last August and
has just been rocking the world working with the
city and community agencies in partnerships all of
which led to the gain that was announced and
validated by the federal government in December and
there's much more to follow. We're developing the
systems and applying resources to ensure that all
veterans who become homeless are rapidly rehoused
in permanent affordable housing with the services
they have earned and deserve. Specifically, DVS
will work with its city and community partners
focusing on meeting functional zero, ending
homelessness for veterans currently in shelter and
developing a rapid rehousing system for housing new

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veterans within 90 days of entry. Mitigating
recidivism by bolstering after care services
through a dedicated coordinator who will drive
assessment priorities and fully leverage the vital
veteran peer coordinator role, leading efforts to
systematize the assessment and housing placement of
veterans across systems and resources scaling the
system to then benefit all homeless New Yorkers.
Amplifying the first lady's Thrive NYC mental
health roadmap through implementing the core four
integrative health model to address the full impact
of war on the human, mind, body, and spirit for our
veterans and their families. Applying a peer based
community approach that increases engagement and
lowers stigma and cost. Year one work includes
forming a consortium of New York City service
providers to participate in implementing the core
four model which leads with trained peer
intervention and integrates education, culture, and
the arts with holistic services and clinical care
for veterans and their families. Conducting
citywide outreach to better connect veterans and
family members with a comprehensive range of
resources specifically tailored to their needs and

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strengths. Enhancing access to holistic services in
non-clinical settings and engaging in the Thrive
NYC education campaign to erode stigma and foster
engagement. Executing DVS's strategy for recruiting
and connecting veterans and their families to city
careers, services, and resources through a phased
action plan aimed at redesigning the DVS website
for direct access to city job opportunities,
collaborating with DCAS citywide recruitment and
Workforce 1 Centers and the public private sectors
to identify human resources best practices for
citywide agency dissemination and adoption.
Standardizing citywide intake forms to foster self-
identification of veterans and families.
Establishing the New York City Veteran Business
Leadership Consortium designed to enhance business
and procurement opportunities for veteran business
owners, launching vet connect NYC, a digital
platform and portal with coordinated service
network. Connecting veterans and their families
with comprehensive referrals, counseling, and
benefit support including ready access through 3-1-
1 digital platforms to the veteran crisis line. We
are currently working with the Mayor's Office of

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Contract Services to prepare a free solicitation report which will provide a description of the required services and software as well as other detailed requirements that will yield the most appropriate and effective procurement mechanism. Building upon the taskforce on behavioral health and the criminal justice system and its progress to date through applying a systems lens to fully assess veterans needs in the criminal justice system including coordinated access to housing, employment, legal, and health services. Improving access to veteran benefits by training a team of outreach workers and establish a satellite office in each of the boroughs to provide assistance directly to veterans in their own communities. Collaborating with the mayor's fund to advance New York to establish and maintain strategic partnerships with private entities, nonprofit organizations and foundations to generate support and foster bold investment designed to launch advanced rapid prototypes and scale sustainable social impact initiatives to benefit New York City veterans and families of all generations. Developing and implementing a digital

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transmedia plan including launching this new
website platform to facilitate interaction and
access to resources, engaging strategic media
outlets to amplify DVS key messages and activities
expanding the interactive universe of veterans
connecting with DVS by setting and meeting social
media targets for maximal awareness, engagement,
and activities. Continuing DVS collaboration with
city agencies and veteran service organization
partners to assist and organize major veterans
commemorative ceremonies and special events which
honor service. At this time of year, we are
especially delighted to welcome the over 4,000
sailors, marines, and coast guard members for
preparing to visit New York City during fleet week
whose 2016 calendar of shipboard and community
services and activities is brimming with amazing
experiences throughout the city. At the end of this
momentous week New Yorkers will solemnly observe
memorial day commemorating the service and
sacrifice of those who are no longer with us. We
offer our thoughts and prayers as always with their
loved ones with a special moment of recognition and
gratitude for our gold star families. Families

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serve too and we owe them our heartfelt respect. In
closing I want to thank all who have worked so hard
to make our new department a reality. We are truly
all in this together. Working as a team we have
achieved so much. And yet I know you will agree
that our most important work is still in front of
us. To this end I remain absolutely confident the
mayor's executive budget provides the necessary
resources to fully accomplish the DVS mission to
improve the lives of New York City Veterans and
their families. Further, my optimism knows no
bounds as we prepare to embark upon this next leg
of our historic journey together. In short I am
extraordinarily proud to serve shoulder to shoulder
with each of you. Chair Ulrich. I want to take a
final moment to again express my gratitude for your
tyler... tireless leadership and for today's
opportunity to meet with you for the first time as
the Commissioner of the New York City Department of
Veteran Services. Thank you for your service. At
this time I am pleased to address your comments,
ideas, and questions. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Alright well
thank you so much Commissioner. I think it has a

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different ring than Director of Mayor's Office of
Veterans' Affairs. But again as... I definitely want
to echo your sentiments to the leadership of our
Chair of our Veterans Committee here Eric for
everything he's... he's done to make today a reality
and that we're having our first veterans hearing,
budget hearing. And I'm not going to read my... my
opening statement. Basically we all know obviously
the... the challenges that our veterans face and our
interest has always been you know how do we break
down the barriers and ensure that the services that
they need are most directly provided to them and
understanding that a lot of the purview on
veteran's affairs falls to the federal government.
There's a lot more that we need to do at a local
level that wise, why the impetus for this
committee... for this commission and for the... the
agency to be set up. And so thank you for your
leadership, your testimony very thorough about the
thinking that has gone into how do you... how you
going to fulfil right, the vision that you've laid
out in the mission for the agency. And there's a
lot of work to do. So we want to continue to be
partners with you. And you please let us know in

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what ways we can continue to do that. I did want to
just have a couple of questions... just something
that you said in your testimony that I wanted a
little bit more clarification on which was in the
bottom of page three if I'm not mistaken where you
said that many of DVS's administrative functions
will be delivered through working with multiple
city entities to establish memorandum of
understanding over the coming year. Explain that a
little bit more. Is it that some of these functions
are going to be done through different agencies? I
mean if you could just explain that a little
further.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Sure. So as an
example we know that our human resources functions...
we will not be establishing a whole HR agency but
we will have a designated individual which in the
case of DVS will be our new Director of
Administration who will be our point person who
will coordinate and represent DVS's interest but
work through the mechanism and infrastructure
that's already set up through an agency for example
like DCAS.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Right.

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COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Currently we're
working with MOCS on this procurement strategy. We
anticipate that going forward through this next
year while we will set up an entire contracting
agency we certainly again with our director of
administration will for the first time be able to
exercise centralized input and direct feedback and
oversight and ombudsmanship of all funds which are
appropriated for veterans and their families. So
those are a couple of examples...

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: So maybe some...
in some... in some cases maybe some back office...

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: ...back office...

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: ...that
administrative stuff that could be done through
other agencies that are...

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Exactly.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: ...more set up to
do that. How many... how many memorandum of
understanding are you setting up. How many agencies
are you...

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: You know...

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: ...doing that
with?

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COMMISSIONER SUTTON: ...we're... we're
looking forward to... to welcoming two new senior
members of our executive team by the end of this
month and we've got... you know we've done some white
boarding but we don't have a final answer on that.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: I would anticipate
there will be at least a handful but I'll... I'll
know more... I'll have more clarity as we go forward.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Okay. Well one
of the challenges and just in line of another
question here is that you know we... we provide close
to a million dollars in initiative funding to... to
provide services to our veterans. And one of the
frustrations in... and inefficiencies I guess is that
that money is literally spread out to different
agencies. And it really makes it difficult to... for
veterans I'm supposed to figure out how to navigate
that process which I'm sure part of your function
is to help streamline that right, that you can be
an entry point. But could you speak a little bit
about that about how do you plan to streamline
versus the initiative funding that we provide that...
that you... in order to be more efficient.

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COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Sure. So for
example we're looking forward to learning of the FY
'17 initiative funding that will go to veterans and
their families. And this will allow us to
collaborate in ways that we've never been able to
partner and collaborate before. And from the very
beginning of the fiscal year we will then be able
to have complete visibility of these funds, work
with the relevant city agencies to make sure that
we shape the content of those statements of work
that we exercise direct oversight as well as input
and then service ombudsman so that we can work with
the individuals with the agencies that are the
recipients of those funds and make sure that we... we
help them get through this... detailed and necessary
due diligence process that's established for city
contracting. So we think that this is going to be
a... a really a... an enormous step forward for
allowing us to inject the veterans voice, the
veterans presence and expertise and then that
oversight and ombudsmanship to make sure that the...
the process goes forward as effectively and
efficiently as possible.

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SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: I have just one
more question and then I'll pass it off to the
chair. But obviously you know this is a... the... just
about the 11th year in... I'm in currently my 11th
year serving in the council and obviously the first
time ever that in my tenor that we've seen the
establishment of an agency. So it really is
exciting to be able to really work hand in hand
with you as its shaping up and really be true
partners with you in that to provide our insight
and our continued support into that process and
again through the leadership of our chair. You do
mention that one of the things that had been
discussed for a while is the creation of these
satellite offices. And I know that the first one in
Queens was established so what's the timeline or
the thinking for other satellite offices?

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Sure. So we're
working right now with Staten Island. And we
anticipate that we will launch our Staten Island
satellite office by the end of June.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Oh wow.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: And we're very
excited to... well I won't announce it until we

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actually have... [cross-talk] but Matt Basil is our...
our new outreach specialist and Sergeant Denarius
is already in... in business at the Queens Borough
Hall. And then we anticipate that in July we will
be opening our third..

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Oh wow.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: ...satellite office.

That will be in the Bronx. And then as our new
Assistant Commissioner for Education, Employment,
and Entrepreneurship comes on board that individual
have the opportunity to fill out our community
outreach invest... outreach specialist. We have a
couple of openings there and that will of course be
for then opening up the Brooklyn Satellite Office
as well as in Manhattan. So I would anticipate by
the time we get to veterans day of this year those
satellite offices in all five boroughs will be
humming and blinking. How cool is that?

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: That is very
very great. And again thank you Commissioner. You
are definitely energetic, enthusiast, and very
driven. And it's been a real pleasure to work with
you on behalf of the veterans of our city. And I'll
pass it off to our chair really has... has made this

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all happen and... and appreciate his leadership.

Council Member...

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Thank you...

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: ...Ulrich.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: ...Madam Speaker.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you. I

want to thank again the speaker for her
extraordinary leadership and support in the... in the
legislative process that brought us here today.

It's never easy but we work together very with my
colleagues, the public advocate, the administration
in the final days to bring it to fruition and... and
just to sit here and be a part of history today the
council for many many many years to come, forever,
will now have a formal role in the budget process
in determining how we serve veterans, how much
money we're spending on veterans. And we are more
accountable. The administration is more
accountable. We are all accountable now for how we
serve veterans and what we're doing for veterans.

And I am predicting one day when thanks to term
limits and other things none of us will be in
office 10, 15, 20 years from now. This city is
going to be doing extraordinary things for

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veterans, big things for veterans. I... they're going
to be building buildings for veterans one day and I
think it's because the council laid the groundwork
in the foundation for creating this agency. And by
the way we are now leading the country and setting
the bar so high for other cities to follow because
New York is saying if we can have an agency for
veterans others... every city... every big city in
America should be having an agency for veterans. So
again I just want to thank my colleagues and
especially the speaker and... and... and you. I mean
you have just been extraordinary. You have done a
phenomenal job. You... you came into a position that
they gave you lemons and you made lemonade. I mean
you walked into a job where you had five people in
an office in lower Manhattan and a budget of only
500,000 dollars. And I think you stretched it so
then and... and as far as you could to just do as
much good. And you went around the city meeting
with different elected officials and advocates and
people that are doing good work for veterans. And
now you finally are going to have a real working
functioning staff of 33 dedicated people. And I
think getting to the speaker's point is really

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important. It's not just going to be an office
space that of lower Manhattan. Disabled veterans,
veterans and their family members who live in the
Bronx, who live in Queens, who live in Staten
Island, who live in Brooklyn. They can go to
borough hall. They can go to an office that is
designated by you to get access to services to
actually have a face, someone to talk to, you know
not have to do everything on the phone or online.
They can actually go somewhere and get help filling
out paperwork for the VA or signing up for programs
or... or of things that they need for their families,
for their sustenance. I think that's very
meaningful. And by the way I don't think we're ever
going back to those days of... of five people in an
office in Manhattan and only 500,000 dollars. That
was an injustice I think over many many
administrations that the de Blasio administration
and this council corrected permanently. And... and so
I'm just delighted. And your testimony as far as
I'm concerned was... was some of the best testimony...
the chair of the Finance Committee was saying that
she's heard. I mean she's... how many of these have
you sat through?

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: [off
mic] About 60 plus hours.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: 60 plus hours
she sat through of testimony. She said this really
is some of the best testimony that we've heard and
we're really really excited. I will save my
questions to the end because I know that some of my
colleagues have other hearings and I want to be
courteous to them and to their time so... Joe... of
course well we've been joined by advocates as well.
I know Joe... Joe Bello is here and he's... I think
he's representing the... the VAB and... as an important
point to be made; at the executive budget hearings
there is no public testimony until the end. And
that will take place I was just advised Tuesday,
May 24th at 2:30 p.m. So if any member of the
public wants to comment on the record on anything
that was said today by me, by the commissioner, by
any of my colleagues, or anything that's contained
in... in the briefing prepared by the finance
division or the administration I will be here, the
chair of the Finance Committee will be here. We
will listen to that testimony. And we don't pretend
to have all the answers. We want to hear what

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people have to say and if they think we can do a
better job we want to know how and we want to do
that. So we're looking forward to that hearing.
Again, Tuesday, May 24th 2:30 p.m. Any member of
the public, any advocate, anyone who's concerned
about these issues you should come to that hearing
as well. Again I have some questions. I want to
save it to the end because I have colleagues that
have to go and I want to be courteous to them.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you very much. And we... I have one question that I'd
like to ask and then I'll come back. And
congratulations. This is a great day. I also think
it's poignant to acknowledge that it's a great day
for women vets. What you represent is not only
amazing for all of our veterans but for women vets
I think in particular. It means a great deal for...
for many of them who have faced a lot of challenges
and may be coming to your agency now, your agency,
to receive resources and services like they may
have never been able to. So I wanted to ask MOVA's
fiscal 2017 preliminary budget was roughly 622,000
dollars and five positions as was mentioned by the
chair. Stark contrast. With more funding in

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staffing than MOVA is DVS in a better position to
seek federal and state funding for veteran
services? For example, will there be a staff person
who's dedicated to seeking those funds?

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Well great
question Madam Chairman. Thank you so much for your
comments and I... I must say we... you know I do take
my role seriously as a role model for my fellow
women veterans as well as for those who are still
contemplating their futures like our girl scouts
from Troup number 3484 that just yesterday were on
the steps of city hall and Pipa [sp?] who was one
of their members, she took the prize for selling
the most boxes in her troop, 15 hundred boxes. She
gave a speech. I said afterwards to Deputy Mayor...
the rest of us sitting there, mark my words it will
not be long before Pipa, we will either be working
for her, saluting her, or voting for her. So...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: There
you go.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: ...the future is
nipping at our heels and that's a good thing.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great.

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COMMISSIONER SUTTON: I would say that
in terms of these kinds of partnerships bringing
in... maximizing our ability to bring in resources. I
mean let me just point as an example again to
Nicole Branca who when she came in last August
within a month she had already submitted a
competing grant application through the mayor's
fund that was successful in bringing 250,000
dollars from Deutsche Bank and Enterprise
Solutions. So that was just within the... the... the
first month. I also want to introduce you to Ellen
Greeley who just came on board about two months ago
as my special assistant. Ellen has experience
working with the council. She's worked all over
city government as well as the city. And she has
grant writing experience. We're also very pleased
to be bringing on a director of public/private
partnerships and developments. So we want to take a
very holistic... [background comments] comprehensive
approach to this. And I must say that we're also
working closely with... already with our... our
colleagues at the New York state Division of
Veterans' Affairs. Jamal Othman who was here today
is the Deputy Director. He worked with us very

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closely in training up those community outreach
specialists. Before we can set up the satellite
offices we get them trained up through the state
office and then accredited through the VA. So you
know now that we're really building this capacity
you ain't seen nothing yet. We're... we're... we're
going to go wherever the resources are that we can
bring back to New York City veterans and their
families.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: That is
excellent because actually for... [cross-talk]

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Mm-hmm,
go ahead.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: No just... just a
question because I didn't think about it. Of... of
the total number of... of the total number of
veterans that you're working with...

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Mm-hmm.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: ...what's the
gender break down, curious.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Okay. So the
gender breakdown... I'm going to ask...

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SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: ...roughly, I
mean...

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: ...I will tell you
as others have asked us what the veteran breakdown
is. By the end of this month, so by the first of
June we will have 16 staff members on board meaning
we have those two executives that will be coming on
board next week. Out of those 11 are veterans.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: No I meant... I
meant of the services provided to veterans, of the
veterans that you're serving is there... [cross-talk]

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Oh oh... oh oh...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: The
population.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Oh oh...

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Like what's the
pop... right.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Okay. The...

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: The percentage
of women that you would...

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: You know I'll need
to get a more detailed breakdown of that.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Right.

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COMMISSIONER SUTTON: I will say that
for example this last week we worked with 106
constituent walk-ins, emails, calls, requests, and
assistance and I think less than 10 of those
requests were women.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Wow.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: So we know that
women veterans are out there and we know that this
is going to be a real target population for us to
reach out... in fact we already have a pilot
initiative, a partnership with cultural affairs;
Tom Finkelpearl and his team, an artist in
residence program working with Harlem Vet Center,
and our particular focus with this program is
connecting with women veterans and bringing them
out of the shadows, bringing them out of isolation.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Oh that's great.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: So we've got a
ways to go. We know also actually we have a... a
woman homeless veteran, one of our nine remaining
street homeless veterans. And she's been on the
street for a number of years. And just this last
week we finally... we've been building that
relationship of trust and letting her know anytime

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she's ready to come in out of the cold we're here
for her. And she has agreed as of this last week
largely because of those bonds of trust that our
veteran peer coordinators have built she's coming
off the street.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Oh that's great.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

Excellent.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: So we're... we're
very very excited about not just you know
underserved populations or subsets of veterans like
women, also members of the LGBTQ community. This is
our opportunity over these next several months for
us to be able to reach out, engage, bring them in,
upgrade their discharges, connect them with the
services that are congruent with their culture,
with their needs, bring them fully into the fold of
veterans here in New York City. And we're very
excited about that as well as a number of other
initiatives. But you're exactly right we... we... we
now have a vision that goes much more broadly than
anything that we've ever been able to anticipate
before. It's citywide and it's also very focused on

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individuals and underserved groups within the
veterans community including families.

SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Yes. Thank you
so much Commissioner. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Thank you so much
Madam Speaker.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Speaker. And I just wanted to follow-up with
that point. When we talk about the metrics you're
now an agency so we have to measure your activity,
what you're doing, and... and I think many of your
successes because I do believe you will be very
successful. What MMR metrics do you imagine having
for this agency?

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: You know actually
Madam Chair we've got a... an appointment next
Tuesday I think it is with the Mayor's Office of
Operations and that's exactly what's on the agenda
and we're going to whiteboard you know kind of an
early start I anticipate since we're just still you
know getting out of the gate here.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: The first you will
see of our metrics that will go through a process

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really of determining and identifying it'll be in
the... the preliminary report...

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Next
year.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: ...probably next...
next... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: For FI...
FY '18.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: So any input that
anyone has we're all ears. But we're very excited
about his because you know until you're in the MMR
I mean it doesn't seem like you're real. And so
we're excited about being real and... so more to
follow.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So this
is just... I would love to hear your thoughts but
you're obviously hiring incredibly capable New
Yorkers. Do you see any opportunities within the 33
positions such as yourself to be able to bring on
experienced veterans?

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Oh... oh yes.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So...

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Our... our new
Deputy Commissioner coming on board shortly as well

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as our new Assistant Commissioner for Education,
Employment, and Entrepreneurship both very
extinguish... very distinguished experienced New York
City veterans.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

Excellent. That's exactly what we wanted to hear. I
will pass it back now to Chair Ulrich.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Great.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you. Again
we have some of my colleagues here. I want to
recognize them. I know Council Member Miller from
Queens as well, Daneek Miller, a very strong
advocate for veterans. He has a lot of veterans in
his district.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Mm-hmm.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: I know because
I've met so many of them. They're really great
people. Questions; first we're going to go to
Council Member Borelli and... and then Council Member
Miller. So...

COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you very
much and congratulations on your first successful
testimony before the council... well in terms of
budget. I guess my original question was answered

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in another member's questioning about getting out
there in the boroughs. You mentioned that you're
going to open a Staten Island office first. And I
just wanted to know where that was going to be, and
what consideration you used to determine where it
was going.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Yeah so we're
taking really a borough by borough approach. We
know that there's not a cookie cutter response
that's going to work best in every borough. When it
came to Queens as an example it... it made sense
because of the transportation hub and the
supportive, the local veterans community there and
the Queens Borough President made sense to... to
establish the first satellite office there in
Borough Hall. When it comes to Staten Island our
community outreach specialist, I think I mentioned
him before, Matt desiel [sp?], he is a proud
graduate, alumnist [phonetic] of the college of
Staten Island. And so given the transportation
issues that affect veterans accessing services in
Staten Island our thought is well listen you know
the... the central location and the familiarity we
had talks with the senior leadership there and it

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looks like we're in the process of working at an
MOU right now.

COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Mm-hmm.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: But it looks like
the college of Staten Island may very well be a
nice home base for the Staten Island satellite
office. But let me make very clear that this is not
just going to be an office where our outreach
specialist will be parked, okay. They will have
published... posted office hours and veterans and
their families will be able to make appointments or
drop by during those office hours. But they're also
going to be available to get out there to the
halls, get out there to the... the places where
veterans and their families are... are... are meeting
whether it be a bar-b-que, whether it be a planning
meeting, whether it be a... an important event or
ceremony they're really going to be able to engage
in a whole different way that what we've ever been
able to do before. So we're looking forward to
taking that same approach borough by borough. We
haven't yet landed on what the best place we think
will be in the Bronx or the other boroughs but that
was our calculation that went into the first...

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COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: So good. I'm
glad to hear. I think all too often government gets
centralized in one location and it... and especially
with the population like veterans who you know live
out in the community, their residence I think it's
much better to have more of a decentralized
geographic based... If the College of Staten Island
doesn't work out I'd be happy to work with you to
find another location. But I'm... I'm very glad to
hear it. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Terrific. Thanks
so much Council Member Borelli.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you
Council Member Borelli. And we will now hear from
Council Member Miller.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you Chair
Ulrich. Wow, that's a first. Thank you Chair
Ulrich. It's so good to see you again.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Indeed.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So... so obviously
the last time that we met you were in the district
and we were really... we were trying to open the
veteran housing and it was... it was with... not
without its battles. And we are up and running and

1 doing very well there. Thank you for all of your
2 assistance there. That is yeah... that is... has been
3 great. So one of the questions that... that I... I do
4 want to ask is when you talk about the services,
5 all the wrap around services that are being
6 provided to the veterans there, and as the chair
7 Ferreras asked about the persons or... or... or those
8 are providing the services while they're doing a
9 fantastic job they're not necessarily from the
10 veteran community. And so I... that was my concern
11 going in. But I have not seen an adverse effect of
12 it. But I would like to see someone who you know...
13 who has a little more familiarity... familiarity with
14 the veteran culture and... and really in being able
15 to address those needs. And they're doing a good
16 job now but we want to ensure that... that all of...
17 all of our... our efforts are really being rewarded
18 and that that population is being served. So when
19 we... are there agencies out there that... that...
20 veteran agencies specifically that we can contract
21 that... with... that... that provide those services?

23 COMMISSIONER SUTTON: You know I think
24 that would be probably a good focus for us to sit
25

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down and... and brainstorm a little more in detail
that... about specifically what you're looking for.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Mm-hmm.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: I know that
certainly one of the great resources... in fact let's
see... we were just talking a moment ago, Joe Hunt is
over there and Kevin Fisher about their experience
using the NYC Serves, coordinated service network.
And we can certainly link you up with that
resource. Also I'm looking at Joe Bello here who is
our secretary for the veterans' advisory board. And
we are engaged and engaging with every borough,
every community to precisely get at these kinds of
issues. What are... and now that we have city wide...
we're establishing citywide presence how can we
increasingly engage to get the... to this level of
granularity in terms of connecting to the necessary
resources...

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Right.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: ...that are cultural
congruent and fit...

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So...

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: ...the needs.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So are... are...
have we taken a look at some of the best practices
geographically whether it's in... in... you know in a
local immediate area or nationally?

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: We've looked...
[cross-talk] nationally. There are several models
out there that are community based and we are
learning from every single one of them as well as
we are being contacted increasingly and we're
sharing what we know. We know that no one has all
of the answers but together we're learning and over
this next year we will be in a position to be able
to... to share increase... we'd like to be a convener
for example. Let's say maybe next spring to convene
the major cities to come here to New York. We're
not there yet in the planning process. And we don't
want to get too far out in front of ourselves.
First we got to get the... the... the you know sort of
foundational staff in place. But there's really no
limit to what we can do both locally as well as
much more broadly to bring the best expertise in
services and care and resources back to New York
City veterans and their families.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay. And... and
finally I'm going to be selfish here. I leave here
I have to go to veterans' hospital in... in Fort
Hamilton to pick up my dad because the... the Saint
Albans, bus leaves at 2:00 to bring him back and he
wasn't finished so I now have to go and pick him up
to... to get over there. So my question is what
affiliation, and do you have or what relationship
does... will this agency have with the veterans'
hospitals and... and being able to provide those
services for our local vets?

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Sure. Well for
starters I'm enrolled for my own healthcare at the
Brooklyn Fort Hamilton VA so I know it directly in
terms of the services that are provided. And I
would say that beyond that very personal experience
we are engaged with the VA here in New York City on
a regular and ongoing basis. Let me give you an
example. About two weeks ago I got a call from
Martina Parauda who's the executive here for the VA
system in Queens and in Manhattan and Brooklyn. And
they had had a woman veteran who had been
hospitalized psychiatrically; had been known to be
suicidal, very depressed, who had been reported

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missing by her mother. And we you know teamed up
with the VA and with the NYPD and a number of folks
in the community and... and... and work together to... to
bring a... a positive closure to that situation. When
the VA's making policy changes again Martina
Parauda and our colleagues in the Bronx will... will
contact us so that we can communicate accurately
what's going on. One example is the 30th street...
you know the chapel street facility which has
historically been you know really a... a one stop
shop for homeless veterans. But now that we've made
so much progress with decreasing the... the number of
homeless veterans here in New York City it didn't
make sense to keep it open at the same level as
before. So those are the kinds of things that we
will continue to do. And it's not just at the local
level. We also work regionally. The... headquarters
is in the Bronx. We work very closely with the
regional VA leadership. And then for example as
recently as yesterday Rosey Cloud whose works at
the VA Central Office and is very involved in the
secretary's economic empowerment program. We're
preparing to bring on board a VA economic
empowerment liaison who will be co-located with the

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new department. So we're... and you know we work with
the Department of Labor at the state Level. We're...
we're... we're working every single agency,
individual, organization that we know to work with
to maximize our positive impact for New York City
Veterans and their families. And if you've got some
ideas that maybe we haven't thought of yet please
keep those... keep that communication coming because
we're... we just couldn't be more excited about this...
this threshold in our history.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you so
much.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Thanks so much.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you Mr.
Chair, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you. Thank
you Council Member Miller and you better leave to
go get your dad soon. Don't... don't keep him
waiting. Thank... thank him for... for his service. You
know my...

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: ...my great
grandfather is 94. He lives in a nursing home in
Coney Island and he is a World War II veteran and

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we're so blessed really to have so many of them in
our city and... and still in our midst. And... and we
have to keep their... their sacrifices and their
stories alive and you know do right by them and
help all the new veterans that are coming back, the
younger vets from Iraq and Afghanistan and... and
other places. So shifting back to the... the budget
here. I know we discussed that on July 1st we
expect to have 33 positions at the department. The
breakdown that we have from the finance division
says there are eight positions that will be
dedicated to the central administration; nine for
community outreach, eight for homeless prevention...

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Mm-hmm.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: ...and eight for
mental health I think it says.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Mm-hmm.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: But out of the
33, 15 are newly funded and 18 are transferred from
other various agencies. And positions in the new
department aside from the senior staff positions
are coming from budgets that were shifted from the
Department of Homeless Services for instance. And
what I'm concerned about is... is... is it going to

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stay there? I want to make sure that... that these
positions stay in the department, that they're not
just there temporarily and then when we get to the
functional zero you know that money gets taken out
of your budget and those individuals get reassigned
back to DHS. I think it's really imperative that
you have a sense of permanency here.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: That's a great
point Mr. Chair. And what we are working right now
with the agencies, with HR, with City Hall on are
the transfer arrangements so that those individuals
for example Madam Speaker, Mr. Chair last year
about this time when we were able to increase...
working with the mayor increase our investment in
outreach specialist and to bring on board
individuals like Nicole and our policy analyst as
an example. Those... all of those positions are being
transferred from the agencies where we hired them
last year. So in the case of the homelessness unit
that was DHS. And then in the case of the Community
Outreach Specialist that was HRA now known as DSS.
And so all of those positions are coming into the
DVS fold. So they will be DVS line item funded
staff members.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: That's...

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: And we are very
very excited about that. Because that just makes...
you know in terms of a startup like ours to you
know really create the culture and build a cohesive
team going forward it's really important to have
that unity of effort. And so we... we are working
very quickly, very rapidly, and relentlessly
towards that end and we... we... we're excited about
that.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: So that... that's
great. And I know the fiscal 2017 executive plan as
you mentioned transfers, I found the number,
560,000 dollars from DA... DSS HRA to DVS as you
mentioned. And this funding is for the veteran
service officers that will be conducted to do
outreach and... and work with veterans to get them
connected to services that we have and also private
non-for-profit partners that we're working with.
But again my... my concern is that they've
transferred in. I don't want to see them
transferred out. And maybe that's a question for
next year's budget hearing which we'll probably be
having. And that'll be a discussion for later on.

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But we really want to fight for as many city
resources to be under your command and under your
control so that you can carry out the mission of
really extensively reaching out and doing the good
work that we want you to do for veterans. So you
know it's transferred in. Again we don't ever want
to see it transferred out and maybe next year is...
the department is moving forward in our discussions
of OMB and to the next budget cycle we'll be
looking to see if we can somehow baseline some of
those fund... some of those funds so that those
positions are left intact.

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Mm-hmm.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Because we
remember that the veteran service officers under
MOVA, this is going back a few years, they were
funded by the Robin Hood Foundation. And then when
the Robin Hook funding dried up those positions
were transferred out or disappeared or were
eliminated. And we don't ever want to be in a
situation where you've got eight very dedicated
trained folks that are helping veterans and for
whatever reason they are eliminated or transferred
out.

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COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Well Mr. Chair let
me use this as an opportunity to just elaborate on
that point because you know as some folks have said
well once you reach functional zero with ending
veteran homelessness then you're not going to need
those folks again. You know that's been a comment
we've gotten from you know folks in the community.
And it's important to make this point that as hard
as we have worked across city agencies and our
community partners and at all levels of government
yes we've... we've had phenomenal success. In fact,
as of Wednesday we had a record low of 415 homeless
veterans this week, .7 percent of the total
homeless population here in the city. This last
year we moved 1,000 homeless veterans in 2015. This
year we've already moved 801. And as hard as we
have worked at that our most important and most
difficult work still lies in front of us. So those
same veteran peer coordinators and the policy
analysts and our assistant commissioner expertise
as well as our after care coordinator that we're
bringing in... we had over 600 applications by the
way for this one position. I mean the word is out.
Folks want to work and be part of this new... new

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organization. But our... our most important and
difficult work still lies ahead. And that is to
really design and build the systems that will
sustain the gains that we had made and then be in a
position to scale those processes, those systems,
those practices to the rest of the city's homeless.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: I mean far... far
be it from me to be a republican advocating for big
government as I've often been teased by some of my
colleagues but I think it's really important that
we have... including the chair... but I don't think
it's big government, I think it's smart government.
And its government doing what government should be
doing which is the right thing. I have two more
quick questions and then I'll... I'll hand it back to
our finance chair to see if she has any final
questions or remarks. But with respect to the
veterans' advisory board is there any funding
that's set aside to support them, to help them,
what assistance will the new department provide the
VAB to help them carry out their mission and
outreach...

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: ...and what
they're doing? And the second question I have is...
is a little off topic but just wondering if there's
anything in the budget or anyone on your staff that
is hired or will be hired that will be working with
the veterans' treatment courts? Because you know
the criminal justice reform issues I know are a big
priority for this council. And we know how
successful the veteran treatment courts are in the
city and across the state. And we want to know that
the department is working collaboratively with the
DAs and the courts and is... will there be someone on
your staff working on those issues as well?

COMMISSIONER SUTTON: Yes. The answer to
that is yes. If you look at the job descriptions
and specifically to the senior advisor for
public/private partnerships and development written
into that job description... description is exactly
that. We want to lead in fact with following up on
the work that's already been done through MOCJ and
the entire interagency and cross city taskforce,
the behavior health task force for the criminal
justice system and to double down on that effort.
And our person who will be leading that will be our

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P3 senior advisor, public/private partnerships and...
and development working across the agency and
across city government as well as beyond. But we...
we recognize the importance of this issue. Last
September I believe it was when we had a hearing on
the needs of veterans and the criminal justice
system we completely agree with the importance of
this issue. And in fact let me just say that I am
so excited that just in the last month as you well
know Manhattan has opened its veteran treatment
courts. Staten Island is well on its way towards
doing so. And we... we... we look to engage much more
fully building upon the existing foundation of work
that has been done. So thank you so much for... for
your commitment to this... to this issue Mr. Chair.
So the VAB portion... remind... oh in terms of the
budget. So what we provide the VAB. I mean as you
know they're an independent entity separate from
now DVS. We provide staff support. We coordinate
directly with the VAB. We help facilitate their
meetings in terms of the AV requirements. We also
provide refreshments. And while we haven't yet
started the new fiscal year as part of our other
than personal services we've... we have several line

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items that I think may have some applicability for
the VAB. We haven't discussed this personally yet
with the VAB but we plan to. We have our next VAB
meeting on June 16th in Staten Island. We look
forward to that. The VAB by the way, let me just
recognize and give a shout out over these last
several months. Since the mayor signed the
legislation in December the VAB has dedicated both
an email account as well as each of its VAB
meetings to you know really engaging with veterans
and... and... and reaching out to get input on what our
veteran constituents and their families are looking
for in our new agency. So in... in the other than
personnel services, the OTPS budget we have some
money set aside for consultation. So for example
perhaps there's a role for board building, board
development. But we're not going to impose anything
on the VAB but instead we'd like to work
collaborate... collaboratively particularly now that
we have an OTPS budget that will allow us to think
more broadly than in the past. So we're looking
forward... you know the... the VAB as you know Mr.
Chair has just really thanks to the leadership of
the Speaker and the Mayor newly appointed and

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reappointed. They've got their bylaws in hand now
and really rolling into the new fiscal year as are
we with our new agency. So it's... it's going to be a
breakout year, FY '17.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you Chair. Thank you Madam Speaker. Thank you
Commissioner for coming to testify before this
committee. It is truly an honor to be part of this
historic moment. And we look forward to engaging on
your behalf but also on behalf of all the veterans
as we finalize this budget for FY '17. This
concludes our hearing for today. The Finance
Committee will resume executive budget hearings for
Fiscal 2017 on Monday, May 23rd at 10:00 a.m. in
this room. On Monday the Finance Committee will
hear from the Department of New York City Police
Department, the five district attorneys, and the
special narcotics prosecutor. As a reminder the
public will be invited to testify on Tuesday, May
24th, the last day of budget hearings at 2:30 p.m.
in this room. For any member of the public who
wishes to testify but cannot make it to the hearing
you can email your testimony to the finance
division at finance testimony at council dot NYC

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dot gov and the staff will make it a part of the
official record. Thank you. And this hearing is now
adjourned.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date June 15, 2016