

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Jointly with

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

And

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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May 12, 2025
Start: 10:05 a.m.
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Justin L. Brannan
Chairperson

Shaun Abreu
Chairperson

Crystal Hudson
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Diana I. Ayala
Gale A. Brewer
Selvena N. Brooks-Powers
David M. Carr

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

Amanda Farías
Kamillah Hanks
Farah N. Louis
Francisco P. Moya
Chi A. Ossé
Keith Powers
Yusef Salaam
Pierina Ana Sanchez
Althea V. Stevens
Nantasha N. Williams
Julie Won
Chris Banks
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Julie Menin
Sandy Nurse
Vickie Paladino
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Sandra Ung
Inna Vernikov
Susan Zhuang
Linda Lee
Darlene Mealy
Lynn C. Schulman

Javier Logan
Acting Commissioner of New York City Department
of Sanitation

Joseph Antonelli
Deputy Commissioner of Management and Budget at
Department of Sanitation

Joshua Goodman
Deputy Commissioner of Public Affairs and
Customer Experience at Department of Sanitation

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

Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez
Department for the Aging Commissioner

Jose Mercado
Department for the Aging Chief Financial Officer

Elizabeth Grellier
VNS Health

Anita Kwok
United Neighborhood Houses

Kevin Kiprovski
LiveOn New York

Bryan Ellicot-Cook
SAGE

Catherine Thurston
CEO of Service Program for Older People

Niki Cross
NYLPI Environmental Justice Program

Rhonda Keyser
Cafeteria Culture

Domingo Morales
Compost Power

Justin Green
Big Reuse

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

Jeanette Estima
Citymeals on Wheels

Brianna McKinney
Project Guardianship

Navdeep Bains
Asian American Federation

Zhikang Ling
Homecrest Community Services

Mohammad Razvi
CEO of Council of People's Organization

Jim Martin
Association of Community Employment Programs for
the Homeless, ACE

Chanelle Schwartz Sanchez Batraverse
Highbridge Builders

Rachel Neches
Center for an Urban Future

Eustacia Smith
Westside Federation for Senior and Supportive
Housing

Christopher Leon Johnson

Cynthia Maurer
Visiting Neighbors

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

Joyce Bialik
Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board

Claire Mifflin
Center for Zero Waste Design

Sandy Renz

Carina Kaufman

Mary Sullivan
Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory Board

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning and
welcome to today's New York City Council hearing on
finance joint with Sanitation. If you'd like to
testify today, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms
in the back to fill out a testimony slip. At this
point, no one may approach the dais at any time
during today's hearing. Please silence all
electronic devices. Chair, you may begin.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you,
Sergeant. Okay, good morning. [gavel] Welcome to the
first hearing of the FY26 Executive Budget process.
I'm Council Member Justin Brannan, proud to chair the
City Council's Committee on Finance. Today, we're
going to kick things off with the Department of
Sanitation followed later today by the Department for
the Aging. I'm joined by my colleague, Council Member
Shaun Abreu, Chair of the Committee on Sanitation and
Solid Waste Management. We've been joined so far
this morning by Council Members Louis, Ayala, Carr,
Nurse, Moya, Menin, Zhuang, and that's it for now.
Welcome Commissioner Lojan and your team. Thanks for
being here and taking the time to answer our
questions today. On May 1st, the administration
dropped their Executive Financial Plan for FY26

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through 29. It includes a proposed FY26 budget of
\$115.1 billion. The Sanitation slice of that is
\$1.97 billion which is about 1.7 percent of the total
plan. That's a \$70 million increase over the
Preliminary Budget, mostly to continue critical
services like curbside recycling and containerization
at homes and institutions. As of March, Sanitation's
headcount was up by 259 over last year's budget.
Talk about priorities here: in the Council's
Preliminary Budget response, we made some very clear
asks. We asked for \$7.7 million to formalize a
permanent Vendor Enforcement Unit. We asked for
\$10.7 million for a waste bin program so every
eligible New Yorker has the official NYC bin, \$10
million in capital for more illegal dumping cameras
across the City, and we called for baseline funding
to clean up neglected lots and to keep our
neighborhoods looking good. We believe that a clean
city isn't just nice to have, it's essential. It
improves health, safety, pride, and property value.
It makes everything else possible. I always say a
clean city is a safe city, and a safe city is
ultimately the foundation for everything else. We
also like to say around here budgets aren't just

spreadsheets. They are moral documents. They reflect what we value and what we're willing to fight for in this council, and this City Council is committed to delivering a final budget that puts New Yorkers first, and that means cleaner streets, safer neighborhoods, and stronger communities. And we consider DSNY as a partner in that work. So today I'll mostly be focused on the PEG restorations and what that means for the Department's ability to continue doing its job, but for now, I want to turn things over to my co-chair for this hearing, Council Member Shaun Abreu for his remarks.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you, Chair Brannan. Good morning everyone and welcome to the Fiscal 2026 Executive Budget hearing for the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. My name is Shaun Abreu and I'm the Chair of the Committee. This afternoon we'll be discussing the Department's \$1.97 billion Fiscal 2026 budget as presented in the Executive Financial Plan and the Executive Capital Commitment Plan for DSNY for Fiscal 2025 to 2029 which totals \$1.6 billion. I'd like to begin by thanking members of the Sanitation Department for their hard work over the past year.

The front-line responses of sanitation workers have
bene on full display throughout the year, and because
of their actions, our city is a cleaner place. The
Sanitation Department members are known as New York's
strongest for a reason, and I believe that nickname
is aptly given. The Sanitation Department's Fiscal
2026 budget totals \$1.97 billion with 9,587 fulltime
positions. The Fiscal 2026 budget as presented in
the Executive Financial Plan is \$25.1 million more
than the Fiscal 2025 budget at adoption. Budget
actions in the Executive Plan increase DSNY's budget
by \$33.1 million in Fiscal 2025 and \$40.5 million in
Fiscal 2026 compared to the Preliminary Plan. The
plan includes an additional \$36.1 million for higher
than projected PS and OTPS spending across multiple
program areas and litter basket service. The
Sanitation Department's Fiscal 2025-2029 Capital
Commitment Plan totals \$1.6 billion and supports 154
distinct capital projects. The Committee has held
oversight hearing on various topics over the past
year about the City's containerization of refuse and
organic waste in commercial waste zones. The
Committee would like to revisit these items and
others including lot cleaning which was provided a

partial restoration in the plan, community
compositing and New York City bins reimbursement. I
would also like to discuss various restorations to
the Mayor's Get Stuff Clean initiative such as TNT
and parks perimeter cleaning. It is essential that
the budget that we adopt this year is transparent,
accountable and reflective of the priorities and
interests of the Council and the people we represent.
At the-- as the Chair of this committee, I will
continue to push for accountability and accuracy and
ensure that the budget reflects the needs and
interests of the City. This hearing is-- it's a vital
part of this process, and I expect DSNY would be
responsive to the questions and concerns of Council
Members. I look forward to an active engagement with
the administration over the next month really to
ensure that Fiscal 2026 Adopted Budget meets the
goals the Council has set out. I would like to thank
our committee staff for their hard work, Financial
Analyst Tanvir Sing [sp?], Unit Head Aliyah Ali
[sp?], Committee Counsel Morgan Barrett [sp?], Policy
analyst Ricky Chawla [sp?], and my Chief of Staff
Julissa Quigley [sp?]. I'd like to welcome and thank
Commissioner Javier Lojan, our sanitation workers,

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2 and the department civilian staff for the work that
3 they do. I'm looking forward to hearing from the
4 Commissioner. The Committee Counsel will now swear
5 you in.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, before we
7 jump in, I want to acknowledge also we've been joined
8 by Council Member Restler. I also want to thank our
9 incredible Council Finance Division staff who makes
10 these hearings possible. We're about to head into a
11 long month of executive hearings. Shout out again to
12 Aliyah Ali, Tanvir Singh, Brian Sarfo [sp?], my
13 Senior Advisor John Yedin [sp?], and the entire
14 finance team back at mission control. You are truly
15 the unsung heroes of this budget season. As a
16 reminder, public testimony on today's Executive
17 Budgets, both Sanitation and later Department for the
18 Aging, will take place after the agency panels. So,
19 if you'd like to speak, please fill out a witness
20 slip with the Sergeant at Arms. And now I'm going to
21 turn it over to Brian to swear in our witnesses.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good morning. Do you
23 affirm to tell the whole truth and nothing but the
24 truth before this committee and respond honestly to
25 Council Member questions? Commissioner Lojan?

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2 Deputy Antonelli? And Deputy Goodman? You may
3 proceed.

4 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Good morning, Chair
5 Abreu, Chair Brannan, and members of the Committees
6 on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management and Finance.
7 I am Javier Lojan, Acting Commissioner of the New
8 York City Department of Sanitation, and I am joined
9 today by Joseph Antonelli, our Deputy Commissioner of
10 Management and Budget, and by Joshua Goodman, our
11 Deputy Commissioner of Public Affairs and Customer
12 Experience. The Department of Sanitation serves
13 every part of the City, and in my 26 years here. I've
14 seen thousands of Sanitation Workers take pride in a
15 clean street, but as you all know, historically, key
16 cleanliness programs like litter basket service had
17 been subject to a budget dance between the Mayor and
18 this Council, in which funding levels were set year-
19 to-year based on political considerations. This
20 creates doubt both among the public and within the
21 Department about the service we can provide. Instead,
22 as part of the Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Budget,
23 better known to New Yorkers as the best budget ever,
24 Mayor Adams has once again proven himself to be a
25 staunch and unflinching advocate of clean streets,

this time by committing to move beyond the decades of political posturing around street cleanliness and allocating resources to Get Stuff Clean not just this year, not just at the handshake, not just for a photo-op, but baselined, which means forever. This budget includes funding to continue the current level of litter basket pick-ups citywide, \$29.7 million growing to \$31 million in FY28 baselined. This is likely the highest baselined level of funding for litter basket service in history. Basket service in particular had been often negotiated year-to-year at the last minute, and decreases led directly to more overflowing baskets and more rats. The Mayor's budget also baselines \$1.4 million to support positions dedicated to cleaning park perimeters, something that had been part of the Get Stuff Clean initiative and will now continue permanently. These are areas used by New Yorkers every single day that often look like City streets but, previously, did not always receive regular cleaning due to bureaucratic quirks. The DSNY Lot Cleaning Unit, responsible for maintenance of city-owned or maintained vacant lots, is now baselined at \$820,000 for FY26 growing to \$1.6 million in FY29, preventing these areas from becoming

eyesores and attracting pests. Further, the Targeted Neighborhood Task Force is baselined at \$3.6 million, growing to \$6.3 million annually in FY 2029. This funding will support almost 60 employees who provide regularly scheduled cleaning of often neglected pedestrian spaces where DSNY did not have jurisdiction, like underpasses, greenways and medians. Through this program, over 1,500 locations across the city are receiving regular, scheduled cleaning for the first time. And something that I know is of particular interest to many of you, this budget includes \$1.1 million in permanent funding for DSNY's Precision Cleaning Initiative, which provides targeted cleaning to high-need areas and assists the City's interagency homeless encampment taskforce. These are permanent high levels of funding to protect the cleanliness and quality of life of our neighborhoods, and not a moment too soon. I will now provide updates on a number of strategic initiatives underway at DSNY. In October 2022, the Adams administration kicked off the Trash Revolution by changing set-out times for both residential and commercial waste from 4:00 PM, one of the earliest set-out times in the country, to 8:00 PM effective

April 2023, while also allowing earlier set-out times if the material is in a container. This incentive of containerization was paired with major changes to DSNY operations, picking up more of the trash far earlier, including ending a practice by which up to one fifth of trash had been left out for a full day. Just over one year ago, container rules went into effect for all businesses of every type in New York City, requiring them to get their trash off the streets into a secure bin. We wrote 70,000 warnings to businesses as this rule went into effect, and have written tens of thousands of summonses since, gaining broad compliance and bringing bins to restaurants, delis, bodegas, drug stores, boutiques, and everything else in our commercial corridors. The first containerization requirement for residential buildings in more than 50 years went into effect November 12th of 2024, requiring all buildings with one to nine residential units to use bins. This can be either their own, or the official NYC Bin, the cheapest high-quality bin available. This program was designed thoughtfully so that these bins would be by far the cheapest of their quality on the market around \$50, a reasonable responsibility for most New

York City property owners. I understand that members of this Council still felt a strong desire to distribute free bins, as seen in the passage of Intro 1126. While I share your concern about cost burdens on homeowners, this bill requires DSNY to use data on the STAR and E-STAR tax exemption to determine eligibility. This is state data which by law DSNY cannot access. Unfortunately, the program as described into law will be extremely expensive and difficult to operationalize, will not reach communities of the greatest need, and is ripe for abuse. New Yorkers have purchased over 800,000 of these bins at www.bins.nyc or at New York City Home Depot locations, and they have fundamentally altered the look and feel of our streets, replacing piles of black trash bags that attracted the rats, impeded pedestrians, and generally made New Yorkers feel that no one cared about their neighborhoods. These bins may look like simple pieces of plastic, but they have led to double digit percentage decreases in rat sightings citywide. Since June 2026, this will be the only bin permitted for trash, to facilitate safer, cleaner mechanized collection. As you all know, I was a Sanitation Worker, and I am still one

at heart, and it pains me that fully half-- half of our line of duty injuries are sprains and strains from throwing bags. The two Sanitation Workers operating a truck with mechanical tippers will have one less thing to worry about. That gets us to 70 percent of trash already covered by containerization requirements, but we have a plan for the remaining 30 percent. Installation of stationary on-street containers called Empire Bins is well underway in Manhattan Community District 9 for the first full-district containerization pilot, with these bins to be serviced by new automated side-loading trucks. This is one of those innovations where we talk about it so much that it may be hard to maintain sight of just how fundamentally it changes the way that trash is stored and collected in New York City, and thus our experience of the streets in general. Consider the fact that even a small-scale test of on-street containerization on the 10 blocks in Hamilton Heights led to a 60 percent decrease in rat sightings. This will make a difference forever. The new West Harlem pilot will take those huge piles of trash that are generated by the largest buildings off the streets and, instead, store them in secure containers just

like you'd see in Europe, South America, or Asia,
years faster than anyone thought possible. West
Harlem will see just over 1,000 Empire Bins, covering
more than 80 percent of their apartment units.
Unlike in other parts of the world, the bins are not
shared by the entire block. Bins will be assigned to
a single large building, using our density, which had
long been thought of as the Achilles' heel of
containerization, to our advantage, by allowing for
greater oversight. Property owners will have access
cards and designate appropriate staff to be able to
access the bins. DSNY outreach staff is on the ground
in the neighborhood now explaining this process, and
upon completion of installation, use of these on-
street containers will begin June 1st, and we will
begin analyzing results and outcomes right away. But
I must caution the members of this Council, as I have
done at previous hearings: if you would like to see
this international best-practice expand beyond West
Harlem, if you would like to defeat the piles of
trash and the rats once and for all, there is pending
legislation that must pass. Council Member Hudson is
the lead sponsor on a bill many of you have already
joined; the Removing Animals from Trash Act, or RAT

Act, is absolutely essential to the expansion of this program. Without that bill becoming law, this will be just another pilot. We can have clean sidewalks, clear corners, and passable curb cuts. We really can, if we just see this through to the end. Just like with containerization initiatives, our citywide composting program is something that many of the cynics believed we couldn't have, and New Yorkers are proving them wrong every single day. While curbside composting programs have existed in New York City for the last decade, until last October, none had ever served more than approximately 40 percent of the city. When Mayor Adams took office, he committed to developing a universal program that works for New Yorkers, and the team at DSNY set to work developing a model built for long-term success. The resulting program is now running in the entirety of our city, providing residents with simple, universal weekly collection of leaf and yard waste, food scraps, and food-soiled paper products on their recycling day. That simplicity is the most important part of the program. There's no need for sign-ups, special dates to remember, or specific locations to visit within limited hours. Simply place your materials out on

recycling day, your Sanitation Workers will collect it from your home, and we'll ensure it's put to good use. This is a composting program for all New Yorkers. Make the separation of compostable material easy, and people will do it. I've seen these programs operating for a long time. I've never seen numbers like what New Yorkers diverted in April, when they set weekly tonnage records three weeks in a row. New Yorkers want to help the environment. They want to fight rats, and with this program, they're doing both. Composting has a benefit not just for our environment more broadly, but also for New York City gardeners. We give tens of millions of pounds of high-quality New York City compost away for free during the spring, summer, and fall, but for many years, you had to either catch a pop-up event or drive to a site on Staten Island to get it. Last year, we added a second site in Greenpoint that is accessible by cyclists, pedestrians, and public transit, and earlier this year, we added a third site in Astoria. I'm proud to share that New Yorkers are composting so much that we will add a fourth site in Eastern Queens before the end of this season, and we are working to identify locations in the Bronx and

Manhattan as well, bringing this service to every borough. Some of you have asked me whether the success of the curbside composting program means the popular Smart Composting Bins are going away. These 400 bins, where residents can drop off their compostable material 24/7 through an easy-to-use smartphone app, are complementary to curbside service and will continue to operate. We are making great strides in residential diversion by applying simple, easy to understand rules citywide, and we believe the same should be true for commercial organics. While the Commercial Waste Zone system will improve commercial diversion, in that DSNY is requiring carters to charge businesses less to collect recyclables and compost than to collect trash, we were thrilled to see that the Council is also considering a bill to allow DSNY to require source separation at all commercial establishments. We believe this will bring clarity to a confusing system, and will help the environment while fighting rats. Now that we've mentioned Commercial Waste Zones, I'll provide a fuller update on that program and our implementation of Local Law 199 of 2019 for anyone who may have missed the recent oversight

hearing on this topic. This law was designed to reform the commercial waste hauling system by establishing new safety standards for workers in the commercial carting industry, improving service for businesses, increasing diversion rates, and reducing vehicle miles traveled as well as harmful emissions from waste hauling vehicles. When fully implemented, we are looking at about 12 million fewer miles traveled by commercial carting vehicles. And making good on a promise from when this program was created, businesses will pay less for the collection of recyclables and compostable material than they do for trash at a citywide average of 32 percent less for recycling and 18 percent for compostable material. That means businesses will have a meaningful financial incentive to separate their waste properly. In January, after years of planning and months of outreach, the first of New York City's 20 non-exclusive Commercial Waste Zones came online in Corona, Elmhurst, and Jackson Heights. Because it was done thoughtfully, this has been a successful launch, and not a single one of the thousands of businesses in the zone has made a complaint to DSNY of any issues with service or billing. We are routinely

writing safety violations there and are seeing very strong compliance, likely due at least in part to the significant fine escalators built into the CWZ program, with a total of about 200 violations written since implementation of the zone began in September. Following a thorough data analysis of the first zone and of conditions across the City, we recently announced that the next two zones will cover the entirety of the Bronx beginning later this year, with a full citywide implementation complete by the end of 2027. This is an important program, but it is a program that was destined to fail if it were rushed. We are doing it right. The expansion of DSNY quality of life enforcement under the current administration is not restricted to the Queens Central Commercial Waste Zone. Since April 2023, Sanitation has been the lead agency on enforcement of the City's laws around street vending, also a topic of a recent oversight hearing by the Committee on Consumer and Worker Protection. Our Sanitation Police Officers enforce these laws with a focus on cleanliness and pedestrian access, and they conduct routine enforcement operations rooted in the belief that all New Yorkers, across every neighborhood, in every

borough, deserve clean, safe sidewalks. While we take a warnings-first approach, often posting dozens of warning signs throughout an area before taking any enforcement actions, we also engage in robust enforcement to protect cleanliness and quality of life, and DSNY issued around 4,000 vending-related summonses in 2024. Street vendors are a part of vibrant neighborhoods, but the rules exist for a reason, so that those neighborhoods can be enjoyed by all, and New Yorkers appreciate our enforcement, as shown by the overwhelming support for Proposition 2. The expansion of DSNY vending enforcement under that ballot measure is in early implementation stage. On the same day that DSNY became the lead agency on street vending enforcement, we were also designated to manage the City's graffiti removal program. We brought our operational knowledge to the organization of this program, and in the FY25 PMMR, the number of graffiti service requests closed is up 80 percent. Recently, DSNY began enforcing the rules around mobile carwashes per a new law sponsored by Council Member Salamanca and passed by this Council. While this work is only just the beginning, we are encouraged by early results about the impact this can

have on cleanliness and quality of life. We are also continuing our interagency work around ghost cars and abandoned vehicles, through which tens of thousands of abandoned vehicles have been removed from our streets, in addition to over 10,000 more ghost cars since the Ghost Car Taskforce was launched in September of last year. These are unlicensed vehicles that not only steal public space and toll dollars, but are also untraceable if used in crimes. And like with containerization efforts, getting this done just helps fight the feeling that the City doesn't care about your neighborhood. I assure you, we do, because it's our neighborhood, too. And with winter now behind us, I am proud to say that you weren't forgotten during snow season, either. If you grew up here, you likely remember the old days of primary, secondary, and tertiary streets. That kind of division in service level is over. Thanks to higher headcount and new technology for internal monitoring, every street is on a route, and every route can be dispatched at the same time for snow operations as soon as conditions warrant it, a practice we call Snow Equity. And I want to preview something exciting for you: all-new brine flushers

are on their way, reducing the City's dependence on
rock salt and proving that even in a perfect science
like snow removal, there is always room for
innovation as part of the Trash Revolution. We'll
have more to say about that at the next snow hearing.
In the winter of 2024-2025, DSNY responded to 14
winter weather events and observed 12.5 inches of
accumulating precipitation. Half of these events
were in February alone, and Sanitation Workers were
on 12-hour shifts for weeks to address those
conditions. Thanks to their efforts and the
administration's investments, they were able to get
the streets open, even servicing car lanes and bike
lanes at the same time. I want to take this moment
to thank our sanitation workers for their efforts,
for being the heroes with the plow just as they have
been for decades. With their work in mind, I will
now turn to the FY 2026 Executive Budget, the Best
Budget Ever, which baselines critical cleaning
services forever. The Executive Budget includes
\$2.03 billion in expense funds for Fiscal Year 2025
and \$1.97 billion in Fiscal Year 2026, reflecting
increases of \$81.4 million and \$41.2 million,
respectively, from the budget adopted last June. The

Fiscal Year 2026 budget includes \$1.2 billion for personal services to support a total budgeted headcount of 9,618 full-time positions, including 7,957 uniformed positions and 1,661 civilian positions, and a \$757.7 million for other than personal services, or OTPS. DSNY's Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Capital Budget includes \$3.54 billion in capital funding in the 10-year plan, \$1.16 billion of which is for garages and facilities, \$2.25 billion for equipment, \$66.62 million for IT, and \$59.87 million for solid waste management infrastructure. The Capital Budget includes funding for several major facilities projects, including: \$488 million in funding for the construction of a new garage for Bronx Districts 9, 10, and 11, with demolition; \$284 million in funding for the construction of a new garage for Queens District 1, which is slated to begin design next fiscal year; upgrades to the facility that serves as the home for the Bronx District 12 Garage, which has an overall budget of \$55.0 million and will begin construction next year; and the \$17 million finishing touches of the \$212 million build-out for the brand-new home for Staten Island District 1 and 3, which is slated to be

2 completed this year. That project, along with the
3 new BK3, means we will be opening three new garages
4 at two buildings this calendar year, a rare milestone
5 for this Department and a sign of this
6 administration's serious investment in the safety and
7 well-being of Sanitation Workers and the
8 neighborhoods they serve. Thank you, and we look
9 forward to taking your questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you,
11 Commissioner. I want to ask a few questions about the
12 rising cost of waste export. Could you tell us what
13 is the Sanitation Department annual expenditure on
14 waste export, and does this compare to waste export
15 costs over the past five years?

16 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, the total export
17 expenditures for FY25 is \$495 million.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And beyond
19 inflation and contractual price adjustments, what
20 other factors contribute to the increase in those
21 costs?

22 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: The only thing that
23 would increase that would be overall tonnage
24 increases.

25 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Overall what?

3 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Overall tonnage
4 increases.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What do the terms
6 of DSNY's long-term waste export contracts impact
7 current and future budget projections?

8 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: I'll pass it to
9 Deputy Commissioner Antonelli for that.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: The terms
11 of the contract, the only thing that's variable in
12 there, again as you mentioned, was whether there are
13 adjustments for inflation. That's really the only
14 variable cost in there, because we have the-- you
15 know, there's three inputs. There's the fixed costs
16 which are contractual obligations, which are in there
17 and are sent, the variable cost per ton which is, you
18 know, what you had mentioned, and then the third
19 variable would be how much tonnage we do bring.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Have any of the
21 waste reduction initiatives helped lower those costs?

22 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah. So, as I
23 mentioned in my testimony, the increase in composting
24 material diverted has helped reduce some of those
25 costs. We're only in the first full month since it
became mandatory, but we're seeing some promising

2 weights, increased in organics weights, and then
3 we've seen decrease in refuse waste as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Has the solid waste
5 management plan's reliance on borough-based waste
6 management facilities impacted the overall cost of
7 waste export?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So, Mr.
9 Chair, this has been the case since we closed the
10 last local land fill in 2001 at Fresh Kills. This
11 system of waste export has fixed costs as Deputy
12 Commissioner Antonelli mentioned, but the alternative
13 cost is to operate landfills within the City. You
14 know, the long-term plan for bringing these costs
15 down is to increase diversion, and we're seeing
16 really promising results one month out from the full
17 rollout of the citywide curbside compositing program.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Where does most of
19 our garbage go?

20 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, some of it goes
21 to our waste to energy plants which is in New Jersey,
22 and some of it goes to landfills outside of New York
23 City.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And I want to ask
25 about the marine transfer stations. How do the

operational costs there compare to truck-based or
rail-based waste export? Basically, are the marine
transfer stations cheaper to operate than the old
way?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: They're
certainly more environmentally friendly to operate
than the old way. As far as a cost per ton, it's
hard to estimate because there's no other city of our
scale, right? So, to develop an apples-to-apples
comparison, would it be cheaper to do truck, there's
not much to look at. We know that this is vastly
more environmentally friendly than driving 24 million
pounds of trash a day out of the city by truck. In
every one of those-- you know, when you see the
barges leave like southwest or 91st Street and
they're loaded with dozens upon dozens of those,
every single one of the containers is a truck kept
off the street. So, you know, long-term the
environmental and economic impact to the City of
reducing the particulate matter in the air is
obviously something that would be very difficult to
estimate reliably. This is a system that's been
working well for the 20 years since it began, 10-ish

since it reached complete rollout with the completion
of 91st Street.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: No, I agree. I
mean, are there plans to optimize the use or expand
the use of the marine transfer stations versus the
overland transport?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, one of the
things that we always look at is to try to maximize
efficiencies. I think one of the limitations is we
have a certain tons per day limitations. So, but
we're always happy to maximize that where possible.
Sometimes in an MTS like 91st Street, it would
require us to add a third shift, and right now we're
not really seeing that volume coming there. So, we
don't think it's feasible financially for us at this
time.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I just have one or
two more and I want to hand it over to the Chair.
Lot cleaning-- the Executive Plan includes an
additional \$826,000 in FY26 which grows to \$1.6
million baselined in the out-years for the DSNY lot
cleaning program. In the first four months of FY25,
DSNY received a little over 1,400 lot cleaning
requests, but only managed to clean 26 lots. So, how

will the additional funding enable DSNY to close that
gap of service?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, the additional
funding allows us to maintain that level of service.
You know, a lot of times we are-- we have to manage
across the five boroughs. So, we were funding
previously at historical higher numbers. Right now,
with the positions that we have funded in the
Executive Budget, we're able to just maintain the
more critical lots where our-- you know, we have
access warrants or, you know, if there's any kind of
safety issues, where we see any needles or rat
complaints. So, we try to prioritize where
necessary.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So you're confident
that that money would help close that gap?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, it will help us
maintain the current level of service. I don't know
if it'll help us close that gap that much quicker.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Alright, but
current level of service FY25 you had 1,400 requests
and it says on 26 lots were cleaned.

2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Correct. So, that's
3 the same amount of staffing we have right now for lot
4 cleaning.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So, the additional
6 funding added in the Executive Budget is not really
7 going to make a demonstrable difference?

8 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: It's going to make a
9 difference. I don't think it's going to help us close
10 that large gap.

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: How much do you
12 think you need?

13 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, I mean, we could
14 always do more with more. We have been previously
15 funded at higher levels, so we'd have to kind of
16 explore and see what that need would be, but right
17 now it would just allow us to keep the-- maintain the
18 current level of service.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What's the-- could
20 you tell us what the current backlog is of lot
21 cleaning requests that haven't been addressed?

22 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Sure. There are
23 about 1,773 lots in backlog.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Best Budget Ever.
25 Can you tell us what-- so, the additional money, what

will that get us in terms of staff positions or
expanded service hours, that kind of thing?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: For lot cleaning?

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, it's about--
it's 15 positions. It's about 10 daily heads.
That's generally what we would run on a daily basis,
and then depending on how large the lot sizes are, it
depends on how many we can close within a week.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And how do you
triage that? If you've got 1,700 open cases, how do
you triage which one to do first?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, any-- so we
always focus on ones that have any open access
warrants. Some of the private lots we need to get and
access warrant through DOHMH. Obviously the more
egregious ones that pose any kind of health risks
where's, you know, a high concentration of rats or
needles, any lot close to a school, any lot close to
a park, and then obviously where we see high
concentrations of 311 or executive correspondence
requests.

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Has the Department
3 explored any partnership with other city agencies or
4 CBOs to assist?

5 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Well, sometimes we
6 get assistance from HPD, but that's really-- you
7 know, right now that's really the only partnership
8 that we have in some of these locations.

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Last topic
10 from me is going to be about the new bin requirements
11 enforcement. We're hearing from a lot of BIDs,
12 organizations like ACE [sic] and the Doe Fund,
13 etcetera, which have long provided supplemental
14 sanitation services to neighborhoods across New York
15 City. A lot of my colleagues allocate funding to
16 these groups to help support your efforts. Under new
17 regulation, these groups will be fined if they place
18 their collected trash bags next to the DSNY corner
19 baskets, despite having done so for decades as part
20 of a partnership with the City. What financial
21 assistance, if any, is DSNY providing to BIDs and
22 other nonprofits to help them comply with these new
23 requirements?

24 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, I think one of
25 the things that's been effective for us since the

rule was published, was we've met with-- we reached out to every single BID. So, there's 76 BIDs. We've met with 65 of those 76 BIDs and we've conducted 33 walk-throughs including ACE. One of the things that we stressed with them is that it's not a one-size-fits-all solution. So, on-street containerization is one of those options, but we also work with them on maybe maximizing the service as far as being more efficient as far as the time we service them, finding a central location to pick up the bags, trucking to our garage. So, that where we work with them, and it's been pretty-- really productive meetings and conversations. We're going to continue to do that as many-- as much as possible with these bids and other organizations.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So, the financial burden of compliance here has estimated about \$4 million just for ACE alone. These are organizations that have historically supplemented the City sanitation services. Was that taken into account when this decision was made?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Sure. So, absolutely. We recognize there would be some kind of financial impact. I think one of the things, as I

mentioned before, is that we're not saying that on-street containerization is the only solution. So, another solution that I failed to mention is, you know, maybe adding additional baskets in certain corridors, this way they don't have to be rebagged as frequently. So, there's different methods, and we'll continue to find any alternatives that, you know, we find as we continue these walk-throughs.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Was thought given on what the impact might be on DSNY's own sanitation resources if organizations like ACE and the various BIDs are forced to suspend their supplemental services?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah. I mean, of course. If here is-- if they decide that they can't function anymore, it would be a big impact, but I think my goal is to continue to work with them as much as possible. As you know, we've extended the warning period 'til the end of the year, and I think as long as we have any good faith effort conversations with any of these organizations, we're going to-- our goal is never to summons any of these organizations. It's just to work with them and find solutions for them.

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So, the warning
3 period extended to the end of the calendar year?

4 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Correct.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. We've also
6 been joined by Council Members Ariola, Ossé, Brewer,
7 Banks, Salaam, and Sanchez. Going to-- thank you,
8 Commissioner. I'm going to turn it over to Chair
9 Abreu.

10 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Hello, Commissioner.
11 Thank you so much for joining us today.

12 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Good morning.

13 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: in April 2025, New
14 York City began enforcing its mandatory composting
15 law resulting in nearly 2,000 fines issued in the
16 first week. This enforcement led to a 240 percent
17 increase in compostable material collection compared
18 to the same period the previous year. However, the
19 City soon paused most fines to focus on education and
20 outreach, acknowledging the need for greater public
21 understanding of the program. This shift raises
22 important questions about the financial and
23 operational aspects of the composting initiative.
24 What is the current collection rate of compostable
25

materials citywide, and how does this compare to the
City's targets for waste aversion?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, I think one of
the things that we were happy to see was that in the
first full month when the composting program became
mandatory. We saw just over 18 million pounds of
residential compostable material diverted from
landfills, which is almost a 400 percent increase
over the same period last year. So, our April 2025
diversion is a preliminary number of 20 percent which
is up from the same period last year which was 17
percent. And 17 percent was a number that was pretty
stagnant for a long time. So, we saw a three point
increase which is pretty substantial, and that's just
due in part from the composting, curbside composting
program. And also I just want to highlight that in
one of those weeks we saw record-setting number of
just over 5 million pounds diverted, so which is one
of the highest weeks we've had in history.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Is-- did you provide
the current collection rate of compostable materials
citywide right now?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Oh, as far as the--

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: [interposing] Of like
3 the overall--

4 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] yeah,
5 so we were at-- previously, we were at a one percent
6 capture rate, and now at the end of April it's up to
7 five percent capture rate.

8 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Alright, so that is an
9 increase, obviously, much lower. And what's the
10 City's targets for waste diversion and how does it
11 compare, the five percent--

12 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] Right.
13 So, obviously we'd like to be a lot higher. A third
14 of the waste is compostable. So, you know, it's the
15 first month, just a real great step in the right
16 direction. So we would like to see that higher, but
17 you know, I think it's a good step from seeing that
18 kind of progress.

19 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: How much revenue has
20 been generated from composting fines since
21 enforcement began, or at least up until-- before it
22 was suspended.

23 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, we don't-- we do
24 not directly collect any revenue. The revenue
25

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2 generated from the fines is monitored and tracked by
3 the Department of Finance.

4 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So, you don't have
5 that detail?

6 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: No. no, I mean-- so
7 when we issued the summonses, they averaged from \$25
8 to \$100. So, you know, just do a math [inaudible].
9 We wrote 4,000 summonses. I mean, if we--

10 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: so, 4,000 times 20,
11 25?

12 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah, 25 to 100, an
13 average.

14 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. Well, we can
15 do that math. I think it's not too hard to do that
16 one. Has the suspension of most composting fines,
17 has it impacted the City's waste diversion goals, and
18 what financial implications does this have for future
19 sustainability initiatives?

20 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, I don't think
21 it's impacted the goals. What we shifted to-- was it
22 education and outreach model. So, what we've started
23 doing was taking our existing field supervisors and
24 having them focus on interactions. So, since the
25 pause we've conducted outreach to over 3,200

residences across the City, and our goal is to speak to the homeowners or any of the residents in the home, and you know, inform them of the program, and kind of get any feedback from them that they may have. One of the biggest feedbacks that we realized is that a lot of the residents think they need to have a specific bin, and we tell them you can use any, you know, bin that's 55 gallons or less with a tight-fitting lid, and if they have any leaf and yard waste, they can just put that in a clear plastic bag or a paper bag. So that's been really helpful. A lot of people don't realize that they can use any bin.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Do you find that the rate of composting has not changed whatsoever since the suspension of fines?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: No, not at all. If anything it's gone up. So that's been very promising to see. It's been pretty consistently high.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And you mentioned that there were 3,200-- was it home visits?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yes, 3,200 home visits.

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2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And where did they
3 take place?

4 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: All across the five
5 boroughs.

6 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. And how were
7 these places chosen?

8 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, we have gone to
9 areas where we're seeing lower levels of
10 participation. We're also going to areas that have
11 one of the higher density locations that have 30+
12 unit buildings.

13 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So low participation
14 in high density fair to say?

15 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah.

16 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. Who within DSNY
17 is tasked with issuing these fines?

18 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, we have--

19 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: [interposing] And
20 what's the headcount for this response [inaudible] my
21 apologies.

22 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Okay, yeah. So we
23 have supervisors that are scheduled, assigned daily
24 to sectors. So there's 232 sections across the City.
25 About 203 of them are assigned daily, and those are

2 the supervisors that are tasked to issue these
3 warnings, the outreach, and ultimately fines for 30+
4 unit buildings.

5 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What is the PS and
6 OTPS budget relating to composting operations?

7 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, the total PS
8 baseline budget for organics is approximately \$33.4
9 million, and that's covering approximately 299
10 uniformed positions.

11 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What is the actual
12 spending to-date this year?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: Yeah,
14 sure. So, the PS spending is rolled up in our entire
15 PS budget because it's just a part of collection
16 operations, so we don't track organic spending on PS
17 separately. However, in terms of processing, the
18 organics processing expenses through the end of
19 January which is the latest invoice we have is \$5.5
20 million.

21 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What are the project
22 costs associated with the City's composting education
23 and outreach programs?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So, as the
25 Commissioner mentioned, at the moment we're doing

this with existing resources. We have dedicated in-house outreach staff who are currently focused on organics outreach. There's no additional or dedicated line item for it, but we're doing this outreach every single day.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: It's fair to say that the administration suspended fines because voters, as the Mayor said, was confused, right, regarding what composting is, what it looks like and, you know, what's compostable or not. So, is it the administration's position then that we don't need any additional line items for funding composting education?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN:
Everything's a matter of priorities, Mr. Chair, right? So, first of all just to clarify, I know it's come up a couple times, only some fines were suspended. Many fines can still be issued on this topic. But we are now shifting our existing in-house resources to continue outreach and education, working with our partners, the community composters, on this as well, making sure that everybody knows by the end of the year what to do and how, and fortunately it's bearing out in the tonnage numbers.

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Look, at a hearing
3 last year with OMB Director, you know, it was very
4 clear that there was no need for additional funding
5 for composting education and the Council argued that
6 there was a need, and the reason the administration
7 stopped the fining was because voters were confused.
8 So, when a voter is confused, that means that they
9 need education and they need more outreach beyond
10 existing resources. Clearly, the existing resources
11 were not enough, and so it is at least our position
12 that we need to discuss what that projected cost is
13 going to look like beyond existing resources, but
14 I'll proceed. I'm going to now pivot to DSNY's
15 cleaning efforts and then I'll let my colleagues ask
16 a few questions. The Executive Plan includes
17 targeted investment in key sanitation programs such
18 as precision cleaning, greenway and park perimeter
19 litter basket service, and the baselining of litter
20 basket pick-up. While these efforts aim to address
21 persistent littering and service gaps, several
22 programs remain under funded or only partially
23 restored. Most notably, the Syringe Litter Clean Up
24 initiative which received no funding despite growing
25 public health concerns. Beginning with precision

cleaning-- the Executive Plan includes an additional \$1.1 million in Fiscal 2026 growing to \$2.2 million in the outyears to support 21 new uniformed positions in the precision cleaning program. This program targets locations with persistent illegal dumping and littering issues, particularly in areas flagged through 311 complaints. The investment is a promising response to recurring quality of life complaints, but oversight is needed to ensure it reaches the neighborhoods that need it the most. How will the 21 new uniformed staff be deployed across the boroughs to maximize coverage of the most problematic dumping and littering hotspots?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, we use a combination of 311 data, field observations where we use a data collection app, and we're able to then analyze that data later on. We have weekly meetings with every borough, and we bring down each borough command the district supers and those are one of the things that we analyze. The other thing that we do with precision cleaning is that we work closely with the interagency Homeless Encampment Taskforce and obviously wherever the need is there we work with them on staffing the PCI crews there.

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: When you say data
3 collection app, which app are you referring to?

4 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: The apps called
5 Folcrum [sp?].

6 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. What
7 performance indicators or benchmarks will DSNY use to
8 measure the success of precision cleaning in its
9 first year of implementation?

10 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, I think one of
11 the things we look for is seeing how much of the
12 conditions that we've cleaned. So, current Fiscal
13 Year 25 to date we've cleaned 6,600-- I'm sorry,
14 6,600 locations. So, I think as we look at last
15 year, we cleaned 1,600 locations. So, we're going to
16 analyze last year's data, compare it to this year's
17 fiscal year cleaning locations and see, you know, has
18 it been efficient, has it been productive, and again,
19 use the mobile field collection app and see if that
20 gives any insight on effectiveness at these
21 locations.

22 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Does DSNY anticipate
23 any additional funding need or expanded headcount
24 beyond the 21 positions to meet the full demand for
25 precision cleaning across all five boroughs?

2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, the FY26 restores
3 the PEG made in November 2023. So, therefore, we do
4 not anticipate any additional funding for that.

5 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Alright, my last few
6 set of questions before I let my colleagues ask.

7 Litter basket pick-up service: the Executive Plan
8 includes and administration baseline \$29.7 million
9 beginning in Fiscal 2026 for current litter basket
10 service growing to \$31 million by Fiscal 2028. This
11 funding maintains the current level of service which
12 help contribute to a record drop in 311 litter
13 complaints in Fiscal 2025, but leaves little room for
14 growth or expansion in underserved areas. What
15 specific services, frequency, coverage area, and
16 staffing are supported by the additional \$29.7
17 million for litter basket pick-up, and how are these
18 resources allocated by borough or district?

19 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, one of the great
20 things that we are seeing is that with this level of
21 funding the ability to baseline the level of service
22 that is in this Executive Budget allows us to
23 maintain the level of service that we've had in
24 previous years. So, we're seeing the impact of
25 regular high levels of funding. Overflowing litter

basket complaints are down over 21 percent through
the end of April this year compared to this previous
at the same time last fiscal year. So, now that we
have this baseline funding, I think now one of the
things that we are going to look to do is have a more
dynamic seasonal approach. Previously, we'd have to-
- we could never count on that high level of funding.
So the Adopted Budget I think now we're going to be
able to analyze that a lot better and have a long-
term plan on different corridors across the City.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: How many DSNY
personnel are currently assigned to daily litter
basket pickup, and is the Department anticipating any
hiring needs to support the increase of \$31 million
by Fiscal 2028?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, the current
baseline funding level, it's about 800 crews, so
1,600 sanitation workers a week, and we do not
anticipate having to hire outside of its normal
hiring schedule right now.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: What'd you say the
number was?

2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: It's 700-- it's
3 about 800. So, it's 793 crews a week, so a little
4 under 1,600 sanitation workers.

5 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And my last question
6 for now is with funding only covering the current
7 service level, what would be required to expand
8 litter basket coverage to high-need areas that still
9 report overflowing conditions or lack sufficient
10 basket placement?

11 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, I think one of
12 the things to remember, Chair, about the overflowing
13 litter basket complaints in areas that, you know, may
14 not have the increased level of services that a lot
15 of times it's due to misuse. People are consistently
16 putting household trash in the baskets and then the
17 basket overflows. So, I think a lot of times it's
18 really due to that more than just the need of
19 increasing service. So, you know, I think right now
20 what we have is sufficient enough. We try a lot of
21 times to remove the basket and see if that makes a
22 difference, but then a lot of times we get requests
23 to put it back. When we put it back, then we get a
24 lot of overflowing litter basket complaints, and then
25 when we go out and evaluate it's because of misuse.

3 So it's a-- you know, we try to have a delicate
4 balance between the two, and without having to add
5 additional service to them.

6 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I mean, look, regard--
7 whether it's misuse or not, right, because our
8 constituents still have to live with those
9 consequences, and so you know, I think it's important
10 for the Department to keep that in mind.

11 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Absolutely.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Chair?

13 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Chair
14 Okay. We've also been joined by Council Members Ung,
15 and now we have questions starting with Council
16 Member Ayala followed by Carr.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Good morning. I
18 have three questions, and well, actually another. I
19 just happened to get an email from somebody. I would
20 love for you to hear what it is that, you know, we
21 have to address in our communities. And this
22 gentleman just, you know, emailed demanding that I
23 give him a response as to why there's been a surge in
24 sanitation resources to address the filth and
25 deterioration of our sidewalks, which is pretty
common. And that leads me to the question regarding

funding across districts. Is it equitable funding?

Do each-- does each district get the same amount of money and resources. And if not, how does DSNY determine how much funding goes to which district?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, one of the things that-- yes. I mean, it's equitable. We-- part of our approach every-- with every function whether it's litter baskets or PCI or TNT is that we always look to be equitable, because every neighborhood is just as important as the next. So, that's where we-- that's where we use the filed observations and 311 data to try to see where the gaps are, and we make adjustments on a monthly basis where necessary.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Is that right, though? Because my understanding is that Council Member Julie Menin, for instance--

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Her district gets more funding than my district, and I've been told that it's because she has more blocks in her district than I do in mine, but her community is also super-- not that she doesn't need the services. I'm not advocating to take-- you know, she can continue to have what she has, but her district, you know, is

relatively cleaner than mine is, right? I have a lot of density. I have a lot of social service providers and programs. There's a lot of poverty in my community. So, there are a lot of different reasons, right, lack of education, lack of garbage cans, that contribute to the garbage build-up in my community. So, I would assume that because of those circumstances, because I see that this is not just, you know, in my district, but in mostly primarily Black and Brown communities where there's a lot higher density of poverty that the streets are significantly dirtier. What is that-- what formula are using to determine then, you know-- what tells you that we need equitable distribution of funding if there's a greater need in a specific areas of the city?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, again, 311 data is one part of it, and I know that's not--

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: [interposing] Yeah, my constituents don't call 311.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: A lot of its also-- the main focus is our field observation. Our supervisors-- we have supervisors assigned to every sector every day, and part of their job is to report

any conditions whether it's, you know, drop-offs,
dump-outs, overflowing litter baskets, and that's
part of what we do every week when we have these
borough commands down, and when we see these numbers
go up or these kinds of conditions, we also make
adjustments where necessary. It's not like we're
just going to say, okay, it's fine just because it's
a certain district. No, it's equitable across every
community district.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: But it doesn't
look equitable. That's what I'm trying to determine.
How much funding does each district get?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: In terms of-- I'm
sorry?

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: For services,
right? I'm Community Board 11, for instance, how
much funding is allocated for Community Board 11 for
cleanup services?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, we don't really
allocate specific funds to it. It's more just the
number of posts. So, I can give you the number--

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: [interposing] Okay.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Sorry, I'm just--
I'm going to get that number.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: That's fine. So--

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN:

4 [interposing] If you don't mind, Deputy Speaker, I'd
5 just like to add a couple of things. The service is
6 not equal, it's equitable, and it's based on the need
7 in the district. Not every district has the same
8 needs. You ran a comparison, for example--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: [interposing] Yeah.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: Council
11 Member Menin's district. We run derelict vehicle
12 services in your district, right?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Yeah.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: People
15 abandon cars. She gets virtually zero, because it's
16 not a problem in her district. If Council Member
17 Menin-- I'm sorry to pick on you, Council Member,
18 just because she used as the example-- were to say
19 well how come Deputy Speaker Ayala gets derelict
20 vehicles services and I don't? We would say because
21 you don't have the issue. Your district receives far
22 more of different types of cleaning services tailored
23 to the needs of the district. Also, probably worth
24 mentioning that many members of this Council opt to
25 supplement with discretionary funding to DSNY. Please

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2 correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe DSNY does not
3 currently receive discretionary funding from your
4 office.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: No, but I still
6 fund those same services through another
7 organization. I don't feel like I should have to
8 supplement cleaning services through Sanitation,
9 because that's-- you're a city agency and that is
10 your responsibility.

11 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Council Member, and
12 I have the numbers here. So, your district actually
13 gets 11 more weekly basket trucks than CB5. So, we
14 are, you know, looking at that and allocating where
15 necessary. So, you are getting more weekly basket
16 trucks than Council District 5.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Well, I will tell
18 you that I represent East Harlem and the South Bronx,
19 and both parts of my district are horrendously filthy
20 on a daily basis, and I don't-- you know, I do see
21 sanitation workers out there cleaning, and I you
22 know, I get that there's also a responsibility on
23 behalf of New Yorkers, right, to do the right thing
24 and to throw the litter in the baskets, but I also
25 have an overwhelming vacancy of, I don't know,

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2 vanishing garbage cans throughout the years. So, in
3 my community not everybody has a garbage can to
4 throw-- to dispose garbage in. and I just-- I cannot
5 accept that response, because I-- my understanding is
6 that each garage has their own budget, and that my
7 budget is significantly lower than that of my
8 neighboring Council Member. I'm not suggesting-- I'm
9 just trying to understand--

10 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] Right.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: why, because it's
12 visible to whoever wants to look, that the amount of
13 garbage that's generated in communities of color is
14 higher. So, I supplement cleaning services through
15 ACE. I supplement services through Uptown Grand
16 Central. I also supplement services through Union
17 Settlement, and I still cannot keep up with the
18 demand of garbage.

19 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, I think one of
20 the things also that-- and I'll be glad to, you know,
21 share any pictures with you. We have these cleanups
22 done daily and we take photos, before and after
23 pictures, because we also like to make sure that the
24 work is being preformed right.

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: When I call your
3 staff they're very, you know, responsive.

4 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: They're great. I
6 don't think that it's the staff. I think that-- I
7 don't think that it's the workforce. I think that we
8 need additional services. I think that we need, you
9 know, more cleaning services. I see a lot of
10 sanitation workers during the morning. I don't see
11 them throughout the day, unless they're picking up
12 garbage. I don't necessarily see them, and
13 throughout the day-- I mean, when I'm driving to
14 work, there's garbage everywhere, and I just-- I
15 don't understand how it's possible when we've
16 increased funding for litter baskets removals. We've
17 increased funding, you know, to supplement cleaning
18 services. I mean, I think on our end we're doing
19 everything that we can to address these issues, but
20 quite frankly, while I have seen a reduction in the
21 rat population, and you know, I'll give you that, I
22 have not seen the results of this, you know, cleaner
23 city in my community, and that bothers me because it
24 gives the impression also to my constituents that we
25 don't care, that as elected officials we don't care.

2 And here we are putting in money and resources and
3 time and it just doesn't look that way, and I think
4 it's that we need more, right? We need more
5 headcount.

6 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: We need, you know,
8 maybe to clean twice a day. I don't know. I don't
9 know what that looks like, but I would love it if
10 that was a conversation that could be had and that
11 there are, you know, resources that you need in terms
12 of the budget, that we could negotiate that and we
13 could try to figure it out.

14 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: But there is a big
16 disconnect in between what, you know, you're
17 testifying to and what we're seeing in our
18 communities, and I think if you just drove by today
19 you would see that it's-- you know, it's not an
20 exaggeration.

21 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: But I also want to
23 credit the staff, because I know that your team works
24 really hard, and they've been excellent to, you know,
25 to our office, but the South Bronx looks equally as

bad. And then my final question-- I'm sorry Chair.

Regarding the Community Board 11 garage, do you know
when you're expected to completely vacate the garage
on 99th and First?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right now, we don't
have an end date, but we'll be glad to sit down with
you and your team and kind of work out those details
in the future.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Okay, I would--

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] And
just also, I just want to add, Council Member, that
I'll be glad to either do a walkthrough with you and
kind of see some of these issues that you're seeing,
because not all of them are attributed to our lack of
cleaning. Some of them could be other reasons, so if-
- obviously--

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: [interposing] Yeah,
I'm not saying that they're not cleaning. I'm saying
they're not cleaning enough because we all get-- you
know, we all get what we get.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: But in some
communities, there's a need for more.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: If nobody's
3 acknowledging that, if nobody's saying that, and
4 we're continuing to be okay with what we're doing,
5 then we're never ever going to address this issue in
6 communities like mine. So, you know--

7 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing]
8 Understood.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I appreciate the
10 work of DSNY, and I, you know, I pray that you get
11 more money, but I really just want to be able to walk
12 down a nice clean street in my community. It would
13 be really nice.

14 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Thank you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Questions from
17 Council Member Carr followed by Menin.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you, Chair.
19 Commissioner, as always, good to see you and your
20 team. I just want to begin by thanking you, the
21 Community Affairs, Intergovernmental Affairs shops
22 [sic], and of course Borough Operations for their
23 phenomenal jobs they're all doing in collaboration
24 with my office and others. One of those positive
25 collaborations has been in the area of illegal

dumping, but it continues to be a persistent challenge. I just did a beach cleanup with some Local Law not-for-profits, and you know, we're taking tons of contractor waste out of these areas. And so despite the increase in camera deployments and other means, I think we still have to focus on this. And so I was just wondering what is the Sanitation Police headcount citywide and expected in the coming fiscal year, and what is the distribution to Staten Island and southwest Brooklyn?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, the total headcount citywide for our Sanitation Police Officers which include supervision are 159 total post positions.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: And do we know where they're distributed, you know, by borough at this point?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: No, so one of the things that we try to do is that, you know, 159 for all community districts are a lot. So, we try to assign them, you know, monthly or weekly as necessary. So, we don't really have-- we really don't have like a set number for each borough.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Because in the
3 past, you know, we've had-- there are times where
4 Staten Island I think had one Sanitation Sergeant
5 assigned, and obviously, you know, that's a lot of
6 ground to cover for a single person. It's a lot of
7 ground to cover for 159 people citywide. I think
8 that's kind of the point of my question is unless we
9 really start improving on that headcount, it's going
10 to really be hard to have a persistent enforcement
11 action which is really what you need. You need--
12 it's a war of attrition, right? And so is there any
13 plan to increase the headcount in the coming fiscal
14 year?

15 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right now there's
16 not, and we'd love to work with, you know, OMB and
17 the Council on that, but you know--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: [interposing] And
19 are you at your budgeted headcount or do you have
20 room for some hires?

21 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: No, we're at our
22 budgeted headcount.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Okay. Well, I'd
24 love to collaborate with you more on improving those
25 numbers in the future. One of the other areas I

wanted to talk about is one that, you know, I think I
ask every time you guys testify which is curbside
electronic waste collection. That program was
suspended two fiscal years ago. I know that there's
more drop-off locations being done by the agency
based on the testimony at the last hearing. it's a
very small piece of the budget pie to bring that
program back, and ultimately the stage for a citywide
expansion which was planned I think around fiscal
year 18 and then, you know, COVID ensued. So,
there's no place for people to return their
electronic unless they happen to have a model that's
accepted by one of the stores they bought it from,
and we only had one drop-off site in Staten Island
that's permanently there. So, is there any wiggle
room, any opportunity for us to restore this program
so Staten Islanders can get the curbside pickup they
used to get, particularly in light of the fact other
boroughs get more benefit from e-cycle because
there's just more buildings that meet that
requirement with 10 units or more.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Well, one of the
things we did, Council Member, with that site in
Fresh Kills was that we were able to expand the

2 number of days that we have the drop-off site. So,
3 we just expanded that in December. So, we're happy
4 to look to see what kind of numbers they're yielding,
5 but we think that is going to be beneficial hopefully
6 for the residents of Staten Island, adding those two
7 extra days to the drop-off sites in Fresh Kills.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Okay. Looking
9 forward to talk to you more offline. Thank you,
10 Chairs.

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Questions from
12 Council Member Menin followed by Nurse.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Great. Thank you
14 so much, Chairs. So, a question about litter basket
15 pickup. So, in my first year in the Council and in
16 each subsequent year I've allocated \$120,000 to
17 increase litter basket pickups to four times a day in
18 my district. I've also allocated \$160,000 to ACE on
19 the rat mitigation program that we're doing. As you
20 know, my team and I we search what almost every other
21 major city is doing on rat mitigation, and we found
22 this novel technique using the carbon monoxide to
23 fumigate the tree pits. We have our own exterminator
24 who we then utilize through ACE and we send our
25 exterminator out at any block in the district that

needs it. We've seen an unbelievable effect of this in our council district. So, my question is would the additional funding that you're saying you're going to be doing on litter basket pickups-- we are still, despite the amount of funding that my office is doing, we are still seeing a lot of complaints along First Avenue in particular. How are you going to be deploying the additional funding? How are you making decisions about where additional litter basket pickup is needed? If you could just answer that first.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Sure. I think one of the things that we're going to look to do is change the shifts that they run on. So, right now, we run-- the traditional shifts are the midnight shift, and then we have some on the 4:00 p.m. shift. So, I think we're going to look to see if we can leverage having a mid-day shift, so an 11:00 a.m. shift to see if that can mitigate any of the issues. And we think that-- we've tried it in some areas, and we found it to be effective. So, you have a small gap rather than waiting from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to have some of that service. So, that's one of the things we'll

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2 look to do across some of the districts with the
3 additional funds.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: And on rat
5 mitigation, I know I ask this every year. I just
6 feel like why is the City not utilizing this
7 technique that we found really great success around?

8 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: I believe that's
9 more of a question for DOHMH. We really don't do that
10 kind of mitigation, but yeah.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Well, just because
12 you're touting this-- you know, you talk about the
13 Trash--

14 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] Right.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Revolution.

16 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: And you talk about
18 the decrease in rat complaints. So, what kind of
19 conversations are you having with DOHMH about
20 utilizing a technique like that to fumigate the tree
21 pits?

22 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: yeah, and I think
23 one of the things that we like to highlight is that
24 the big part of that is containerization, and that
25 has-- that has seen a decline in rat sitings. We

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2 work closely with DOHMH and be glad to bring that up
3 with them when we meet with them regularly and see if
4 there's any traction on that end from them.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Yeah, I think that
6 would be great. I mean, I've had many conversations
7 with the Rat Czar about it. I just think it would be--
8 - it would make a lot of sense to look at that in a
9 targeted way around the City. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Questions
11 from Council Member Nurse followed by Restler.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you, Chairs.
13 Actually, you both asked my questions, but I did want
14 to follow up on the-- you had mentioned that you were
15 seeing some promising numbers in the waste diversion
16 as-- organic waste diversion as it relates to export
17 costs, and I was wondering if maybe in the next
18 couple of days you could send an email with what
19 you're seeing so we could understand the ratio cost.

20 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Sure.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: And also, what you
22 project should we hopefully get back on track with
23 making this mandatory. So, I wanted to request that.
24 And yeah, I also just want to-- I guess since they
25 already asked, I won't bother. But just want to

double-down on the comments that, you know, the new rule, the Clean Curbs for BIDs [sic]. You all put forth this rule. We do need help and we think you should pick that cost up. I think it's like \$5 million. We've cost it out. To help BIDs get on track, get these containers installed. It's going to be very costly for them, even just my-- I have one BID now. They're like a \$400,000 annual revenue. It's going to be like \$100,000 just to get that up and running. It's a very long BID. So we do need help, and we think that since you all put this forward, it'd be great for you to follow through with the solution part. So, I'll leave it there. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Council Member Restler?

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: great. I want to thank Chair Abreu for his great leadership of this committee, and I think that-- I feel like we're starting our Executive Budget hearings with Sanitation, because it's Chair Brannan's favorite committee. There's nobody who's more obsessed with how clean our city is than Chair Brannan, so I am

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2 grateful for that, and grateful for the leadership of
3 the Department of Sanitation. I just want to ask a
4 few questions, firstly, on federal funding. So,
5 according to our review, about 10 percent of the FY25
6 budget for the Department of Sanitation is federally
7 funded. Is that right, \$200 million?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: Yeah,
9 that's approximately correct, yes.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Great. Have we
11 received-- have you all received any guidance from
12 the Office of Management and Budget or City Hall on
13 the status of federal grants? Are these all
14 confirmed and received?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: Right.
16 So the funding that you're referencing is all for
17 activities that already happened prior to the end of
18 last calendar year. So, it only covered the first
19 half of this fiscal year.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: None of the
21 federal grants applied to the second half of the
22 fiscal year?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: Correct,
24 because that was all American Rescue Plan funding
25

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2 that went towards waste export and litter basket
3 service.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And you've been
5 reimbursed for all that funding?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: I don't
7 know if we're received. I'd have to check to see if
8 we've received the amount, but the service period was
9 during last calendar year, so it's not impacted--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing] So
11 you're not anticipating any significant federal
12 funding for your FY26 budget?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: No.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: What percent of
15 your-- how much funding in FY26 are you anticipating
16 is federal funds?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: I mean,
18 less than a percent, not anything of any sort of
19 significant. Our budget is almost entirely city-
20 funded. That federal funding that you're referencing
21 was kind of one-time federal funding.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And it's been
23 nearly completely reimbursed?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: Yes.
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay, great.

3 Composting-- so I've been troubled that the really
4 great work that has been done by the Department of
5 Sanitation to help ensure that we have curbside
6 composting citywide has been undermined by the
7 leadership at City Hall. It's been reported that
8 DSNY collected 2.5 million pounds of compost during
9 the first week of April after fines went into effect.
10 Last week, how many pounds of compost did we collect,
11 now that the City Hall has prevented you from
12 implementing all of the fines that New Yorkers, you
13 know, may have earned?

14 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: It's more than that.

15 More than, Council Member.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: It's gone up?

17 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah. So, the pause
18 happened in the middle of April, so approximately
19 April 16th. So, for that week we collected 4.5
20 million pounds. The following week which was the
21 first full week on the pause we collected-- which was
22 the record setting-- was 5.3 million pounds. The
23 week after that which was the week of April 28th we
24 collected 5.2 million pounds.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So, it did go
3 down?

4 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, it went slightly
5 down, but--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing]
7 Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: it's still one of
9 the highest weeks.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Yeah, no, no,
11 positive-- I mean, progress, but down.

12 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] Yeah,
13 and then this week we still have to reconcile the
14 numbers, but it looks like it's over 5 million. It's
15 going to probably be a lot higher. So, we haven't
16 seen a big decline, because previous to April-- the
17 first week of April, we were at like 2.5 million.
18 So, we have seen those-- the numbers stay in the 5
19 million mark which is really promising.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: But modest
21 decline all the same as a result potentially of City
22 Hall's decision to not implement fines.

23 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: No, the third week
24 was one of the highest weeks ever--
25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing] I
3 just mean the 5.3 down to 5.2 and then last week it
4 sounds like just over five. We may be trending--

5 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] Well--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: in the wrong
7 direction.

8 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Well, we're not sure
9 about last week because we still have to reconcile
10 the loads that we offload by the end of last
11 Saturday.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay. Look, do
13 you have any timeline horizon from City Hall, any
14 direction whatsoever on when these fines are going to
15 be back fully in effect?

16 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right now, we
17 anticipate that this will be until the end of the
18 year, but we are still--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: [interposing] The
20 calendar year?

21 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Calendar year.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Wow.

23 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, but we're still
24 able to, and we are intent on writing violations to
25 some of the buildings with 30+ units.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And does the
3 Department of Sanitation think this is the
4 appropriate policy to not implement fines--

5 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] Yeah.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: after years of
7 education and outreach for curbside composting?

8 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah. So, one of
9 the things I mentioned, Council Member, is that we've
10 shifted into that outreach and education, and I
11 mentioned previously that we've conducted outreach to
12 over 3,200 locations citywide, and we are seeing them
13 to be very productive interactions. So, our field
14 supervisors that are assigned to these geographical
15 areas are trying to make contact with anybody that
16 lives at that building, and we are finding that some
17 of them are still a bit confused about the program,
18 and we're just explaining it to them, and it is being
19 helpful. So, they're being very productive.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Yeah. Look, I
21 think that we obviously passed this law. We care
22 deeply about it. I know that the Department of
23 Sanitation does as well. We saw a major increase in
24 the amount of pounds that were being collected and
25 the compost that's being collected when the fine

started to take effect. And I'm concerned that an 8-month+ delay in implementing this policy is going to move collection in the wrong direction. And our-- you know, the rat conditions in our city can't wait. Our climate goals can't wait. We have the infrastructure to be able to collect more compost. The way we will do it is to ensure there's some accountability, and we tell New Yorkers these are the rules and they have to follow them. So, I hope that this pause will not be as extended as City Hall anticipates, and we should push for speedier implementation. Thank you for the extra time.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Question from Council Member Louis followed by Williams.

COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Chair and good morning, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Morning.

COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: I want to thank your team for their leadership and their support in Brooklyn. I just have four quick questions, so I'm going to just do rapidly, then you all could respond. Which park perimeters and greenway locations will be directly serviced through the restored \$1.4 million in FY26 funding, and how are these sites selected?

And is DSNY actively coordinating with the Parks Department to create joint rapid response strategies for park perimeters experiencing illegal dumping? Because we experience that a lot in central Brooklyn. I also wanted to know-- and you mentioned the misuse of litter baskets and enforcement. I wanted to know with civilian enforcement funding in Brooklyn held flat at \$685,000 between FY25 and FY26, can DSNY ensure this body that enforcement against alternate side parking violations and other quality of life infractions like household trash being thrown in front of businesses will continue to-- will not continue to disproportionately impact central Brooklyn? And my last question is in regards to DSNY bins. How does DSNY plan to accommodate income-- low-income older adults and households in need who cannot afford compliant bins, particularly given the \$10.7 million request for reimbursement was unmet in the Executive Budget? And I mention that as well because in your testimony you mentioned that the agency does not have access to STAR and E-STAR, but I haven't heard a solution within that testimony. So, those are my four questions.

2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Okay. So, let me
3 see if can get the--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: And I could go
5 back. I'm limited on time.

6 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, as far as the--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: [interposing] The
8 greenway.

9 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: the greenway, the
10 parks permit, we weigh-- there are about 600
11 locations across the City and we work closely with
12 Parks to identify which are those more higher
13 trafficked area, but we work with them regularly, and
14 you know, we obviously are happy to make any
15 adjustments where we're seeing--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: [interposing] But
17 who picks the location? Is it DSNY and is it Parks?

18 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: DSNY, but we work
19 closely with Parks on any feedback they give us. So,
20 we're happy to make those adjustments, but also, it's
21 our supervision that makes those adjustments. I
22 think the next question was about illegal dumping in
23 the parks.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: In the park.
25

2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: In the parks. So,
3 your question was specific to what--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: What is the
5 coordinated or rapid response being that parks is
6 doing this solo. Is there something that you all are
7 working together as a strategy?

8 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, I think we're
9 working together with them on some. I think they just
10 announced recently some installation of illegal
11 dumping cameras, so we're working closely with them
12 on our-- you know, we have the model that we use for--
13 - the 331 cameras that we have across the city.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Right.

15 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, we're working
16 with them on that and assisting where necessary. As
17 far as any kind of enforcement inside the park, that
18 was part of Proposition Two. That gave us the
19 authority to go in there, but we don't have the
20 resources right now to go inside the parks, but you
21 know, we work with them closely on any locations or
22 on the perimeter, and we-- you know, we're happy to
23 work with them wherever they see necessary.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: And the last one
25 regarding low-income older adults.

2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Correct. So that,
3 right now, we are not appropriated any funds for that
4 bill. One of the things that we had, you know,
5 initially suggested was to only focus on the
6 disability homeowner exemption or the senior citizen
7 homeowner exemption which was a lot lower of a cost,
8 but right now we have no--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: [interposing] But
10 does the agency have its own solution while you guys
11 are trying to figure it--

12 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] So, it
13 depends on how much the funding levels would be.
14 Right now we have not appropriated anything. I think
15 our estimates were upwards of \$34 million which would
16 be if we get that amount and we have to reimburse
17 everybody and give everybody a bin, then we'd have to
18 scale up a lot bigger of an operation. So right now,
19 until we know what funds are appropriated, we really
20 don't have a sense of that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Alright, thank
22 you. Thank you, Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. We have
24 questions from Council Member Williams followed by
25 Brewer.

2 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: Thank you so
3 much, Chair, and before I start I just wanted to
4 shout out garage 12 and 13 and Chief Kavanaugh [sp?]
5 who are always really helpful. I wanted to quickly
6 follow up on something that the Deputy Speaker
7 mentioned because you said that the funding is not
8 equal, it's equitable. So, I just wanted to
9 understand the criteria you use to determine how to
10 fund the different garages, because your criteria
11 might not be criteria that we think should be a part
12 of how you make up which garage to give what.

13 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah, I mean, my
14 goal is to have no litter on the street or no dump-
15 outs, right? So, the criteria is we get locations
16 that are reported dirty, whether it's 311 or field
17 observations, and the goal is to get those numbers
18 down. So that's really the goal here. We also try
19 to maximize any kind of operations we have. So, if
20 we have any kind of litter basket crews out there, we
21 try to have them also service any kind of drop-offs
22 or, you know, areas that have been illegally dumped
23 that it's, you know, something that is within the
24 scale where they can handle. But ultimately our goal
25 is not to leave a condition laying around for weeks

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2 at a time, and that's part of what we use the trash
3 dash meetings for where we--

4 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: The trash
5 what?

6 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Well, it's one of
7 the meetings that we have when we have the borough
8 commands down and the district supers, and--

9 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: [interposing]
10 So you pretty much use 311 data and--

11 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] And
12 field observations.

13 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: observational
14 data--

15 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah.

16 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: from Sanitation
17 workers.

18 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Supervisors and--

19 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: [interposing]
20 And supervisors.

21 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: management staff.
22 So, all of them are required to-- you know, we also
23 take complaints from elected officials, Community
24 Boards. So all--
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: [interposing]

3 All of that gets factored into how you budget out for
4 each garage.

5 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah, yeah.

6 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: Okay. So, I
7 just had a question on the lot cleaning program. So,
8 I know that the chair asked you a series of
9 questions, and I know this is supposed to be the best
10 budget ever, but just trying to understand how you
11 are going to address the extensive lot cleaning
12 backlog if the PEG restoration only keeps things
13 status quo, and as far as I know, there's only about
14 10 Sanitation workers that are assigned to a city of
15 8 million with tons of lots spread across the five
16 boroughs. It does not seem like a best budget
17 allocation to address a very serious issue.

18 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, yeah, I mean,
19 yeah. We have over 1,700 lots that are backlogged. I
20 think we'd be happy to work, you know, on future
21 budgets, but I think at least now it gets us that
22 baseline where previously it wasn't, and we always go
23 after-- our goal is to try to clean them all, but
24 we're going to go after the most egregious ones and
25 anything that's obviously like a big health risk.

2 So, we're just going to work closely on making that
3 more efficient and working with the administration on
4 future budgets.

5 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: Okay. Because
6 I do give a lot of discretionary to my garages.

7 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

8 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: And they still
9 have this problem, because I have a ton of vacant
10 lots, and it's very difficult to get them to go out
11 and clean them, even though they want to, and
12 sometimes they find the resource to do it which is
13 why I gave Chief Kavanaugh a shout out, but they do
14 not have the resources to truly do a robust job
15 around cleaning the lots.

16 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

17 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: The other
18 question I have is how do you check the patterns of
19 chronic illegal dumping by location and frequency? I
20 know the previous commissioner did give me data on
21 the 311 complaints. So, my district has the highest
22 out of all of New York City for illegal dumping 311
23 complaints, but the funding and resources to support
24 illegal dumping does not match that. So, you just
25 testified that you do use the 311 data.

2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

3 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: But I don't
4 think that between garage 12, particularly which CB12
5 has the highest rate of 311 complaints for illegal
6 dumping, the resources fit that data. And I don't
7 know if that's still the case. This was a few years
8 ago when she just started, but just wondering how you
9 are continuing to track that.

10 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah, no, we still
11 continue to track that. Let me see if I can get some
12 of those stats for you.

13 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: And do you
14 coordinate with other agencies, PD, DOT, or local
15 BIDs? I know in my district I've been working with
16 the Queens DA, but this is not standard across the
17 City. Like, there's not a lot of interagency
18 coordination around how to even address illegal
19 dumping.

20 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: No, we work closely
21 with all the city agencies. I mean, the NYPD has
22 access to our illegal dumping cameras as well. And I
23 have some stats for you on your district. So, D11
24 cameras you have yielded six impounds and seven
25

summonses in calendar year 25 to date. So, we've
been--

COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: Okay. Are you
scheduled to place more cameras? Because I know I
funded a few. The Mayor's Office funded a few.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right. So, not at
this time we don't have any funding for additional
cameras.

COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: And have you
ever thought-- this is my last question. Thank you,
Chair. Have you ever explored or thought of piloting
a community-based deterrence program? So, it's very
difficult if people have cameras. I know recently
you guys sort of tweaked the law where it's like you
got to catch them in the act. You're not really
allowed to use cameras that are not DSNY cameras.
It's very particular. And so, has there been any
efforts to have the community help you address this
issue? Because clearly you don't have enough
enforcement workers. You don't have enough funds to
place cameras, and you struggle to pick up the actual
trash in relatively timely fashion. So, have you
thought of other alternatives to help with this
issue?

2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right. So one of
3 the things with illegal dumping is that-- and a
4 citizen or somebody that observes illegal dumping
5 that's done to a vehicle, there is a program that
6 they can call us and contact us, and we can write a
7 summons based on their observations. They'd have to
8 sign an affidavit, but that is something that is
9 currently in place right now.

10 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: Okay. I would
11 just encourage you to think about to use, like,
12 civilian cameras for some of these things. I know
13 again we have tried to do that, but it's always the
14 issue with Department of Sanitation being able to use
15 private footage to catch cars who are dumping.

16 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

17 COUNCIL MEMBERS WILLIAMS: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Yeah,
19 the Council budget response calls for \$10 million in
20 capital for more illegal dumping cameras, just to
21 note. We have questions from Council Member Brewer
22 followed by Salaam.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
24 much. So, first of all, thank you, Commissioner, for
25 all your support and also Superintendent Glen Baldwin

[sic] from District seven. Alternate side of the street parking, these freaking people do not move their damn cars, and I don't know what to do. I have worked with PD and your wonderful local superintendents to try to get in some blocks. We go out in the morning. We put up signs: do not park. But it's very, I would say, labor-intensive. We can't do that on, you know, 300 blocks.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: So, I'm happy to undo the City Council law that says you can't put a sticker on. I put stickers all over these damn cars. So I don't know if you have any other ideas, but it's really curbing your ability to clean the streets. I don't know if it's just on the upper west side, but I think it's elsewhere also. They're not moving. I don't know what's in them.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: I could just tell you anecdotally from my experience. I was a field supervisor at one point, and those were the most effective things that we can do to deter vehicles not moving for alternate side parking which were the stickers. So, to your point, we'd be happy to work--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] We
3 should undo the stupid law that took the stickers
4 away and put them back.

5 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: I agree with you.
6 I'm happy to work with you on that, because that was
7 very effective.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I can't get them
9 to move. I mean, literally, myself I go out and I
10 cannot-- we've all been trying. Alright, so we're
11 back to stickers, because they're not moving. Second
12 is on the issue of street vendors. Are you 100
13 percent now responsible for their enforcement, or are
14 you working with Consumer? How does that work?

15 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, we are
16 responsible-- overseeing that. We don't oversee any
17 vendors that are involved in any kind of counterfeit
18 vending. That's under the purview of NYPD still, and
19 we are currently not inside any parks. That's under
20 the purview of Parks Department.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right. So, it's
22 mostly the food vendors primarily, then.

23 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Correct.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, and that's
25 100 percent your issue. Because sometimes there's a

2 dispute as to whether two people need to be on two
3 different tables, etcetera. So, I just-- you should
4 know that there's a lot of discussion about we still
5 have to get some of these rules to be correct.
6 Graffiti, I know you do take it off. How do you
7 decide where you're going to go? Is it just a 311
8 complaint? Do you try to batch them together,
9 etcetera?

10 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah, 311 complaints
11 and that's one of the things that we highlighted is
12 that we have closed those 311 complaints very, very
13 quickly since we took it over, but we also take any
14 external request whether it's Council Members or
15 Community Boards, but yeah, we usually get to them
16 really, really quickly within the allotted time.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Because it
18 seems like when people do it and they come right
19 back. I am not happy, as you know, about Council
20 Member Hudson's law potential that says you have to
21 keep-- as a co-op or owner over nine, I guess, units,
22 you have to pay for this containerization. Is that
23 true in other cities? Is that how it works? I mean,
24 people are already upset about everything in the
25 world, and I just-- it seems to me that Sanitation is

supposed to be paid for by the public. In other words, it's a public good. And so I understand maybe a one-time cost, but they'll be paying it over and over again. I know you have to maintain them. I've listened to your discussion. But it does seem to me that that seems to be an unfair burden on individuals. Those of us under nine-- I'm one of them-- we don't pay. We get our \$51 bin which I like very much. Nobody has stolen it. And we-- that's it. But how is it that you think those who are over nine units will be happy paying or it won't be an issue, or do you think it's right?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Well, I don't-- obviously, nobody's going to be happy about paying it, but I think it's-- in order for us to maintain three bins, and obviously there's going to be a lot that can happen with them. But before we get too far ahead, I think the pilot NM9 [sic] will--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]
They're not paying.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right. But the pilot will teach us a lot of things about some of the things that these bins will encounter. I think having that is an investment, and I know that it's

2 one of these things that, you know, people complain
3 about, but having bags on the street is obviously
4 painful to see. So, I think once you see these
5 container fully operational in District Nine, I think
6 a lot of people will see some of the benefits and
7 maybe see differently.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'm not agreeing
9 with you, but I hear what you're saying. Finally,
10 abandoned vehicles. Manhattan does not have a tow
11 pound. NYPD's problem, not yours, but it's sort of
12 everybody's problem.

13 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: To the credit of
15 Cuomo, Andrew, we got Pier 76 is now an open pier, no
16 tow pound. Where do you take the Manhattan
17 abandoned, and is that an issue? In other words, I
18 get told sometimes we have no place to put the car.

19 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right. That's--
20 NYPD strictly handles the road tow vehicles. We
21 handle the derelict vehicles that have certain
22 criteria, valued-- a vehicles valued under \$1,250,
23 and those are taken to-- taken by our vendors in
24 their yards. So, we right now--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] So
3 you don't have a problem placing them?

4 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: We don't have an--
5 we don't have an issue with the derelict vehicles.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. And just
7 finally, I know this sounds like an upper west side
8 thing, but they don't like to wake up at night to
9 the-- I don't know if it's the private carters or
10 you, but are your-- most of your Sanitation pick-ups
11 during the early morning, or some of them are at
12 three o'clock? Depends on perhaps the day.

13 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] But
15 I am swamped with my lovely constituents complaining
16 about being woken up.

17 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right. So, it
18 depends where, but in Manhattan the majority of the
19 daylight shifts starts at 5:00 a.m. So,--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]
21 Okay. They're not complaining about 5:00 a.m. It's
22 the three and four and the--

23 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] Okay.
24 Yeah, I think in Manhattan we're about 10 to 15
25 percent of the collections are on the midnight shift,

but I'm happy to look to see what areas are you
getting complaints about and maybe making some
adjustments where necessary.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
much.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Questions from
Council Member Salaam followed by Ariola.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Thank you and
good morning.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Morning.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: I've got a few
questions. One is about the field observations.
What we've seen in my district and I think has been
echoed as well throughout is that often times we may
see Sanitation come and pick up trash, and in some
communities they get off the trucks if there's trash
that's left on the ground and then they sweep it up
and put it into the Sanitation trucks as well. I was
just driving here this morning on 111th Street and
Madison Avenue there was trash that was picked up,
but there was a whole bunch of trash that was left in
the street, and I was just wondering in terms of
that, is it the 311 that someone would have to call
to get that to be picked up again, or?

2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Well, yeah, anybody
3 can call 311 in that instance, but the crews are
4 required to clean up that kind of spillage. So, I
5 mean, we'd have to look into that instance and see
6 what happened there, but they are required to clean
7 up after that kind of, you know, the circumstance
8 that you mentioned.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: And then my next
10 question is regarding-- so there's a lot of residents
11 in my district that are very diligent in terms of
12 trying to make sure that they capture some of the
13 illegal dumping that's happening. Of course, it's
14 very distressing when my community receives fines
15 from the Department of Sanitation, and our Chair
16 mentioned that there's a commitment to strengthening
17 the enforcement by implementing new cameras. Is
18 there a plan as to where these cameras will be placed
19 or greater enforcement will be focused so that the
20 residents in my community are not unjustly impacted?

21 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right. We'll be
22 happy to work with you on any locations. One of the
23 things that we find when we-- what we found, rather,
24 when we were installing the 331 that we have
25 installed is that some of the locations are more--

are experiencing more of illegal drop-off more than
illegal dumping. So, an illegal drop-off is somebody
from a home taking a bag and dumping it in a corner
or in front of another property, and that doesn't
constitute illegal dumping. Illegal dumping has to
be from a vehicle. So, sometimes where we-- a
Council Member would want a camera up, it really
wouldn't yield any kind of, you know, returns as far
as catching illegal dumper. So, but I'll be happy to
work with you and your office on, like, you know,
moving some of the current ones or, you know, future
locations to see what-- how beneficial they may be.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Definitely. I
got a question about the budget itself. So, DSNY
expressed concerns that implementing the
reimbursement system would cost \$36 million. What
assumptions inform this projection, and how does it
differ from the Council's \$10.7 million dollar
estimate?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, we're still
evaluating the cost impact, but just to give you a
sense of what some of that estimate came from is that
they're currently 265-- a little over 265 eligible
households that are one and two-family homes that are

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2 enrolled in STAR or E-STAR. A little over 164 of
3 those are one-family homes, so we make an assumption
4 that they would receive one 45-gallon bin which costs
5 \$54.60. So, that is \$9 million. And then a little
6 over 101,000 [sic] are two-family homes, and we'd
7 assume they would receive two bins each at the same
8 cost and they would be \$11 million. So, that alone
9 is \$20 million. And then when you factor in the
10 reimbursement piece and the cost to stand up an
11 application and staffing is where we come up with
12 the-- it's upwards of \$34 million was our estimate.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: I just have one
14 last-- so my last question, if DSNY does not-- is not
15 appropriated the full funding amount to implement
16 this program, what elements of the legislation would
17 be most at risk, our bin distribution reimbursements
18 or administration capacity, and how will services be
19 impacted?

20 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, I don't think
21 the services would be impacted. I mean, right now,
22 residents can use their own bin that's 55 gallons or
23 less, but one of the things that we had suggested
24 previously to consider was used-- instead of the full
25 STAR and E-STAR population would be to use the senior

2 citizen homer [sic] exemption and disability homer
3 exemption which is a lot of lower cost, and obviously
4 it's a lot less than what the \$34 million that we're
5 estimating.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Council Member
8 Ariola?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you so
10 much, Chair. Thank you so much, Commissioner. Thank
11 you for being so available and your team being so
12 accessible. I really appreciate all the work they do
13 in my district. I want to just continue what Council
14 Member Salaam was saying, because this program, this
15 Intro 1126 is really limited to STAR participants.
16 So, I think the number is much less, and so you know,
17 and it goes into effect in April, and yes, it's going
18 to take a little bit of, you know, working up and
19 getting some numbers, but it is a law now. It's no
20 longer an Intro. It's a law, and it's a law that has
21 to go into effect, and I think it's much less than--
22 in fact, the Council estimated it at \$10.7. It was
23 very disheartening to see that the Mayor did not put
24 that in his budget, because these are his taxpayers.
25 These are his voters, and it should be done. So

that's just my soapbox. The other thing is-- talk about lot cleaning and the Targeted Neighborhood Taskforce which is terrific, but I see the numbers that are here and you say that they're lower than they were in the past. At its peak, what were you getting, budgeted amount, for these particular initiatives?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, for lot cleaning, the headcount previously was 76 Sanitation worker positions.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: And how many-- what was the money, the dollar amount?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: I'd have to get back to you on the dollar amount, but it was 76 positions. And the TNT, the higher positions were 141 Sanitation worker positions.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: And now 60?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: It's down to 57.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: 57. So, what I didn't see mentioned here was graffiti. Does that include graffiti removal still?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yes, graffiti is actually in EDC's budget. So that was funded for the next fiscal year.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Okay. And in--
3 being a Council Member that does provide funding for
4 extra basket pickups, especially along Jamaica
5 Avenue, it does make a difference. And you could see
6 why we'd have to supplement because of the deficits
7 that you're seeing in your budget and in your
8 headcount to get the job done and that's why you have
9 the backlog that you do. So, it's understandable.
10 So we have to really push on the administration to
11 really increase your budget, increase your staffing
12 to make sure you have all the capabilities you need
13 to do a good job, because when you go into a
14 district, if it's dirty people don't want to move
15 there, they don't want to stay there, they don't want
16 to send their children to school there, and that's
17 not something that we want for our districts. But
18 the extra pickups that we do provide through funding,
19 that helps quite a bit. I'd also like to echo a
20 number of my colleagues in saying I'm happy that
21 you're working with the BIDs and the CBOs, because we
22 would hate to lose them. They really do pick up a
23 lot of slack. They do a lot of work, and it is a
24 great program for re-entry into the workforce. So,

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2 anything you can do to help them [inaudible]. Thank
3 you so much for the time.

4 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Council
6 Member Ung?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER UNG: Thank you, Chair,
8 and thank you, Commissioner and the team, for our
9 partnership through all the years. I just want to
10 follow up the question I had last time about Intro 97
11 that became Local Law 67. It's about the, you know,
12 the violators, the super fines for [inaudible]
13 violations. I believe last time you said that is
14 being issued, that this has been in effect.

15 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER UNG: However, I have-- is
17 there any updates, the numbers in my district,
18 because I feel, and I don't think I'm the only
19 district feeling this way, that a lot of-- frankly, a
20 lot of businesses I don't really see much improvement
21 in what's going on. So I really would appreciate an
22 update on those numbers.

23 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah, it has been
24 fully implemented. One of the things that-- with
25 that law is that we have to wait for them to be

adjudicated in order for the escalator to come into play. So, I think it would take some time to actually have what those numbers are, but it has been fully implemented and that's one of the things that we are looking at as far as the results it yields and all the community districts.

COUNCIL MEMBER UNG: Okay, thank you.

And my second question is about vendor enforcement which I think you all know it's my top priority in my district. I know there's only 40 to 45 Sanitation Enforcement Officers for citywide. Is there any plans to increase this in FY26?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: No. Right now, that's the amount. I think we've reached the saturation point as far as positions. I think we'd be happy to work with you on seeing what that number would be, but I think right now there is no plans to increase that headcount.

COUNCIL MEMBER UNG: Well, I will speak for myself. I think that's rather unfortunate, because I think, you know, myself including many others have, you know, expressed a dissatisfaction, I guess, with their vendor enforcement, but yes, I

2 would like to talk to you more about vendor
3 enforcement in my district. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Council Member
5 Stevens?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Hello, good
7 morning. Good afternoon.

8 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Morning.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: A couple minutes
10 for afternoon. Well, one I just wanted to add my
11 thoughts to the same thing that Deputy Speaker Ayala
12 was talking about, just the comparison in districts
13 and how the lack of additional efforts, because I
14 think people hear equity and they think equity is we
15 all get the same thing, but we all don't need the
16 same things. And so, I really need that to be taken
17 into consideration in District 16 in the west Bronx,
18 because my streets are filthy. One of the things that
19 I get the most complaints about is just how the
20 streets are filthy. I know people don't move their
21 cars for street cleaning, but there's no enforcement
22 either. Literally up the block from our office on
23 Elton, cars have not been moved in months, and not--
24 the truck doesn't even go there anymore. Garbage
25 cans, there's no garbage cans throughout my district.

1 You find them on 161st where the Yankees are and by
2 the courthouse, but once you start to walk down
3 Webster or Morris, there are absolutely no garbage
4 cans. I know for a fact that my predecessor paid for
5 multiple garbage cans throughout the district that
6 have been removed. And so those things are just
7 unacceptable. So how do we expect people to keep
8 things clean when there's not even a place for them
9 to put their trash? And so really thinking about
10 what is the plan to ensure that the equity, looking
11 like our communities who need more are getting more.
12 In addition to, can you please stop moving the
13 garbage cans in my district and put them back. I do
14 not think it's okay for me to have to use my
15 discretionary funding in a district that has extreme
16 need on replacing garbage cans that Sanitation
17 removed. So, can you please tell me your plan to put
18 garbage cans back in my district and me not having to
19 pay for them.
20

21 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah. And I-- just,
22 Council Member, sometimes it's not always us removing
23 them. We get requests all the time to replace
24 baskets in areas, and for some reason they get
25 removed. That happens all the time. But we--

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: [interposing] So
3 could we figure out who's removing them?

4 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: I'm sorry?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Could we figure
6 out who's removing them? Because I don't think
7 anyone is taking them upstairs in Webster projects.
8 So could we figure out where they went? Could we--

9 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] Yeah.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: do some of that?

11 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Be glad to work with
12 you and your office and see where those locations are
13 and replacing those.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: I mean,
15 honestly, the only places in my district-- we can
16 have a ride-through it together. There is no garbage
17 cans. There is none, and again, the same sentiments--
18 - when we call, the folks, the garages are great.
19 They're always trying to be responsive.

20 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: But that is just
22 not enough.

23 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: I'll be happy to
24 work with you and seeing where the locations are and
25

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2 seeing why they're being removed, and seeing-- find a
3 resolution for them.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Absolutely,
5 because I don't have money to keep replacing them.
6 Again, I know for a fact my predecessor had dedicated
7 and spent money before I got there, because she was
8 trying to set me up for success.

9 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yep.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: And they were
11 removed. And we can also talk to her, because she's
12 currently the Borough President, so she also knows,
13 right? And so, I think that also thinking about the
14 street cleaning, it's not happening. I think one of
15 the things that Council Member Salaam also spoke
16 about is the garbage. When they do pick up the
17 garbage, they leave loads of trash in the middle of
18 the street. So, it's like diapers and clothes--
19 like, all on the ground and they drive off. That's
20 not done in other communities. And so I would really
21 appreciate when you guys are in my district that
22 there's an extra level of care as well as it is in
23 other parts of the City, because it's not being seen,
24 because I get so many complaints about it.

25 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Absolutely.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Specially on
3 Park Avenue, when you go down Park, it's a complete
4 dumping zone. I have put dumping cameras up. It has
5 not alleviated. So, I need more understanding of
6 even around the dumping. What does it look like when
7 you have a dumping camera and people are still
8 dumping there? What is the solution? Because that's
9 not working either.

10 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah, and just to
11 get back to your point, if you have-- if you had
12 litter baskets that were funded, then they should
13 still be there. So again, glad to work with you on
14 seeing why they've been missing and replace those.
15 Shouldn't have to pay for it if they were paid for
16 already.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: And even if they
18 weren't, there is none in my district. So, we can
19 also go through so you can see how [inaudible].

20 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Definitely.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: And how is that
22 possible? When I go on Fifth Avenue and there's a
23 garbage can on every single corner. That's not okay.
24 And so, when people go downtown and they see that and
25 they come back to my district, do you know what they

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2 say? You're not doing your job. Why are you not
3 fighting for us? And that's not okay, because I am.

4 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: And so, I need
6 us to come up with a real solution. If I go to a
7 community and they have a garbage can on every
8 corner, I need to see that. And then last time I was
9 told, oh, they paid for them. So, if I paid for them
10 and you removed them, what are we doing?

11 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: No, I agree with
12 you. If they paid for them, they should have them.
13 There's--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: [interposing]
15 But I shouldn't have to pay for them. I shouldn't
16 have to pay for them.

17 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah, great.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Majority Leader
20 Farías?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: Thank you, Chair.
22 Thanks, folks, for coming. Sorry, I came in half-way
23 through your answering Council Member questions, so
24 if any of these were already repeated, please let me
25 know. I just want to talk about the addressing of

issues around chronic dumping. I've already heard a couple of the members bring it up, and if there's any supplemental services for areas in our districts around our IBZs and how that's tackled. And then I have a question just on DSNY cameras. For example, they typically have to be coupled with expense dollars when we place them in our communities. Can you folks talk more about how you're looking at expanding your expense budget every cycle to meet the requirements that-- or at least to meet us on our side where we're at on placing cameras throughout our districts? You know, I have several areas that have been recommended to me that the district has recommended that you folks agree with needing cameras, but my minimal expense budget that's at capacity can't also give the capital and meet you at the expense items. So, if we can have just a dialogue around how we're tackling that, and if every budget you are asking the administration for more expense and it's not being met?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right. So, your first question was about illegal dumping, and--

COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: [interposing] And the manufacturing and IBZ zones, and if we have

2 supplemental services or what's the-- how are we
3 tackling those areas?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOODMAN: So, nice to
5 see you, Majority Leader. The IBZs specifically are
6 a good example of the kinds of places where we look
7 at for camera placement. The program is not specific
8 to them, but they absolutely meet a lot of the
9 criteria, right? You know, so much of the program
10 with illegal dumping is that crooked contractors,
11 people from out of town see these areas that they
12 perceive as out of the way, right? No one comes
13 here. It's industrial. There's nobody here a night,
14 but obviously it's not out of the way. It's
15 somebody's neighborhood. It's my neighborhood or
16 your neighborhood or somebody else's neighborhood.
17 So, while we don't target them in particular, you are
18 right that they hit the criteria of the kinds of
19 places that often incidentally get cameras.

20 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah, and then the
21 question about the expense budget, DC Antonelli will
22 take.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: Yeah, I
24 think the challenge that we have is that when a
25 camera gets funded, the total cost of the camera over

2 five years is \$31,000, but only \$15,000 of that is
3 capital and the other \$15,000 is expense. So, it is-
4 - it is challenging for us when we receive that one-
5 time capital funding and then we don't receive
6 anything in the out-years for the expense.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: Yeah. I mean, my
8 question is how are you tackling that in your annual
9 budget asks to the administration? If every single
10 one of us gave, for example, \$85,000 for five or six
11 cameras and we took care of the capital receipt, how
12 are you-- I mean, none of us here can empty out,
13 like, our Greener NYC pot to give you expense. Maybe
14 we could one year, but consistently probably not
15 every year since a majority of us are also using, you
16 know, supplemental sanitation services to take care
17 of our streets and our, you know, our corridors and
18 our neighborhood corridors. So, my ask is what's the
19 work or what's the, maybe, lack of response from the
20 administration on expanding your expense so we can
21 take care of half of the receipt and the other half
22 could be taken care of.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: To date,
24 we haven't received any additional funding for that.

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2 So, each year we do have to, you know, reallocate our
3 internal resources to pay for those ongoing costs.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: And do you folks
5 have a-- maybe like a-- you know how we have capital
6 plans saying like over five years we're going to try
7 to tackle x amount of things. Do you folks have on
8 that side-- like, we'd like to have cameras over the
9 next five years in these 50 locations, so the
10 expanded expense budget or discretionary budget has
11 to go up this amount. Have those conversations
12 happened with the administration?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: I mean,
14 we have disclosed the ongoing costs. We do that as a
15 regular part of our-- when we purchase cameras.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: Okay. So, it's
17 just necessarily-- it's not necessarily being met as
18 like an internal plan over a course or period of
19 time. It's like case by case basis where you folks
20 find the need and then you re-adapt your resources to
21 move expense dollars.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANTONELLI: Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: Got it. Thank
24 you. Thank you. Chair.

25

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Of course. Alright, my last set of questions unless my other colleagues here have any additional questions they'd like to ask. Commissioner, the plan includes the restoration of funding that was removed in November 2023 for the park perimeter and greenway basket service, including the restoration of 15 uniformed positions with \$1.4 million in allocated funds in Fiscal 2026, \$1.5 million in Fiscal 27, and \$1.7 million in Fiscal 28, and \$2.4 million in Fiscal 29. The restoration ensures continued service for maintaining clean park perimeters and greenway basket areas. Are the additional \$1.4 million and 15 uniformed positions in Fiscal 26 sufficient to meet the scope of cleanliness needs for parks, for park perimeter and greenways?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, the baseline funding supports 18 positions dedicated to this. So, this is just perimeter so it's supplemental to parks. The 600 locations that I referenced earlier we feel is adequate for the high traffic areas, but we're always happy to work with parks or any members of the Council on areas that they're seeing that there's a lapse in service where we can make adjustments when necessary.

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And the 600 locations
3 out of how many total locations that could fall
4 within this if fully-funded?

5 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah, I believe
6 there's 1,700 parks.

7 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. So, you could
8 do more with more.

9 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I mean, that's always
11 the case, right? What metrics will DSNY use to
12 evaluate whether current basket service levels are
13 adequate, and how will these metrics inform any
14 future funding or staffing requests?

15 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, I think our--
16 what I mentioned before we call Trash Dash which is
17 our internal application where we track the different
18 types of data which is 311, field observations, any
19 kind of external complaints, and we track that and
20 seeing any year over year increases or decreases, 28-
21 day, and then a week-to-date. And we're looking to
22 see that type of data to see where we need to make
23 any adjustments. For-- as I mentioned before, for
24 the current fiscal year to-date, the same period, we
25 have seen a 21 percent decrease in 311 complaints,

but we're always happy to get any kind of feedback from any external entities seeing where those lapses are.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Staying within the park perimeter and greenway basket services for a second. Were any areas prioritized or removed from service routes after the 2023 PEG, and if so, have all of them been fully reinstated under the current restoration?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: We don't believe there were areas that were de-prioritized, so it just maintains the current level of service that we have this current fiscal year.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So, are all the parks that were subject to it still-- were they reinstated or where there were others that were removed?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: There were some that were removed, but I think the ones that we work with Parks on were the ones that felt-- they were priority and needed the most attention.

CHAIRPERSON ABREU: It would be helpful for me-- for us to know which ones were removed.

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah. Sure.

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: How is DSNY
3 coordinating with Parks and other agencies to ensure
4 this program meets community expectations, especially
5 in high-traffic or historically under-served areas?

6 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, we meet with
7 them regularly and, you know, any feedback they get
8 or any observations we make, we're-- you know, we
9 take that into consideration, and you know, it's a
10 dynamic process. So, we're not married to any one
11 particular location.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: now, transitioning to
13 syringe cleanup. Despite a clear need and the
14 Council's \$1.1 million call for 16 new staff to
15 expand syringe litter cleanup and environmental
16 enforcement on budget response, the Executive Plan
17 includes no additional funding for this critical
18 public health function. This leaves high foot
19 traffic in vulnerable areas without dedicated
20 capacity to address used syringe collection which is
21 an ongoing risk to both sanitation workers and the
22 public. What is DSNY's current capacity for syringe
23 litter cleanup, and how many incidents are logged and
24 responded to each month with existing staff?

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2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, right now we
3 have six DSNY officers.

4 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Six?

5 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Six dedicated to
6 syringe removal citywide. And for the current fiscal
7 year to date we've removed over 102,000 needles
8 which--

9 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: [interposing] 102,000?

10 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: 102,000 needles,
11 yeah. And one of the things when we get a 311
12 complaint on discarded needles, we're required to
13 remove that immediately. So, we respond regardless
14 of what we have to those locations and remove those
15 needles.

16 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And what's the
17 monthly rate? Is it 100,000 divided by 12, is that
18 would it'd be? Or that would just be the--

19 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] Yeah,
20 I'd have to get you the specific numbers for that.

21 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. What would the
22 \$1.1 million proposed by the Council have covered in
23 terms of new headcount, equipment and enforcement
24 expansion? And what scope of services could be
25 provided with these additional funds?

2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, you know, we did
3 read the response and we saw that it included one
4 civilian and 15 uniformed staff, but we'd be happy to
5 discuss it further, because I guess we don't fully
6 understand exactly, you know, the calculation behind
7 that. So, we would love to work with you to see that
8 so we can reconcile with what we think that'll cover.

9 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I think we would be
10 more than happy to have that meeting.

11 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And certainly, again,
13 we can do more with more with those additional funds.
14 You know, it could be several hundreds of thousands
15 that get picked up versus the 100,000, right?

16 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah.

17 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So, we hear a lot
18 from, you know, places like in east Harlmen, for
19 instance, where-- you know, and places in central
20 Harlem and even west Harlmen where this is an ongoing
21 problem. It affects our districts. And my last two
22 questions-- actually, my last question. Does the
23 DSNY plan to revisit this funding need in future
24 plans, and what short-term measures if any are being
25 considered in the meantime?

2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, right now,
3 Chair, we don't have any plans to revisit the funding
4 at this time, but we're happy to, you know, work with
5 Council and the administration on what that increase
6 would be if necessary.

7 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Well, we plan to
8 revisit those conversations. Thank you so much to--
9 my apologies. We have Council Member Salamanca who's
10 joined us and has questions.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you.
12 Good afternoon, Commissioner. Want to start off by
13 just saying thank you for the openness and the
14 working relationship that we have, being able to
15 access you and your team and a response in a timely
16 manner. It's really appreciated. And I want to
17 thank you because just recently your team which we
18 just posted today cleaned up some illegal dumping
19 that occurred in the Osborne [sic] community, and I
20 know that you saw it firsthand when you did the walk-
21 through with us. I just have a very simple question.
22 Composting, my neighbors are asking me are we doing
23 it or are we not doing it. Can you please give me an
24 answer?

COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah, of course.

So, it is mandatory. We are doing it. We have focused-- we have shifted our focus on outreach and education. So, one of the things that we want to do is to have any interactions with anybody that may be confused of exactly what's needed. A lot of residents we find from our current outreach interactions which was 3,200 recently, interactions so far since we had the pause, is that a lot of residents don't realize that you don't have to use a specific bin, you can use any bin. Obviously, the brown bin is ideal because it has a latching lid, but you can use any bin that's under 55 gallons or less that's tight fitting-- with a tight-fitting lid, or if they have just yard-- leaf or yard waste, they can use even a clear plastic bag. So, they don't need-- some people are saying oh I need the paper bag, lawn bags, and that's not-- with this program you can use even a clear plastic bag. So those are one of the things that we're looking to do. If there's any areas that you feel will benefit from additional outreach, we'd be glad to shift our focus there to those areas.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright. And
3 think there's a confusion and my neighbors are asking
4 because they saw in the press that the administration
5 said that they were going to slow down on the
6 violations for those that are not complying. So, if
7 there's no violations, you know, their perception is
8 that it is--

9 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: [interposing] Right.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: It's not
11 necessary to compost.

12 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: We are still able
13 to-- we're still planning on issuing violations to
14 any of the persistent violators. So, any buildings
15 with 30 or more units, we will visit them. We're
16 going to give them four opportunities to get it
17 right. So, they'll get four warnings. After the
18 fourth warning, if they're still not in line, then we
19 will issue a violation.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: And then
21 finally, you know, is there a back order when you
22 order the bins online through the City, DSNY?
23 Because I ordered mine like a month ago, and I still
24 haven't received it in the mail, and I was just
25 curious.

2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Are you talking
3 about the trash, the-- or the compost bin?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Because
5 Sanitation came out with new bins, right, like
6 medium-size bins.

7 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yes.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I have a 45
9 one and wanted to get a smaller one, and I wanted to
10 get another compositing one. And you know, I did it
11 online on a Stated date, two Stated's ago, and so I'm
12 curious if it's delayed for me, it must be delayed
13 for everyone else who's ordered it.

14 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Right. So, I think
15 with the trash bins, they-- there is some time that
16 the concessionaire takes to deliver them, but with
17 the compost bins there is a slight delay, but we're
18 happy to see your order and see what the delay is
19 because it shouldn't be that long.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you.
21 And I want to give a big shout out to your Chief
22 Frank Litera [sp?]. He is accessible and he's
23 helping me clean up the borough of the Bronx.

24 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Thank you.
25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you, Mr.
3 Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Council Member
5 Brewer?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. Just
7 between Acris [sic] and you, if you-- do you keep a
8 database as to the buildings that are not complying
9 with composting? Because I could go contact them. Is
10 that something that exists, such a database?

11 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah, we have-- we
12 track that in our internal, our system.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Alright. So we
14 would love to have that list and we could contact
15 them.

16 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Sure.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Thank you.
18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I wanted to ask
20 questions on behalf of Council Member Sanchez since
21 she can't join us today. Can you define illegal
22 dumping? Is this just dumping that comes from a
23 vehicle or is that term broader?

24 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Any dumping that
25 occurs from a vehicle that's one cubic yard or more.

2 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. Second, what
3 term does DSNY use for folks who dump household and
4 other trash at baskets and random locations? What is
5 DSNY's approach to this problem?

6 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: So, we do actually
7 have-- I directed my enforcement division to shift
8 focus on that, because we are getting-- like I
9 mentioned previously, when we see overflowing litter
10 basket complaints, one of the issues are people
11 improperly using the baskets. So, I have shifted my
12 enforcement division to look into that and focus
13 that. We are able to write violations which is a
14 \$100 fine for anybody that we observe, you know,
15 putting household trash or commercial waste in the
16 litter basket. Obviously, you know, education is
17 key. So, we may do warnings first. So that would be
18 our approach to that kind of issue, but we are
19 focusing that more-- shifting focus for that now.

20 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Would the Department
21 consider that type of behavior to be like fall within
22 an illegal dumping, or? It's just interesting that
23 one is called illegal dumping and the other isn't,
24 and it all seems like it's illegal dumping.

2 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Yeah, but it's
3 defined by law. So, I mean, one bag is more of a
4 improper disposal and that's where the fine comes
5 from and then illegal dumping from a vehicle. I
6 guess the intent is really more taken into account
7 there from a vehicle over one cubic yard is where
8 that line is defined.

9 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: That's fair.
10 Commissioner, your staff, I want to thank you for
11 coming to testify today. You are hereby excused.

12 COMMISSIONER LOJAN: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And we'll take a
14 short break until the Aging-- Committee on-- the
15 hearing on Aging. Thank you.

16 [break]

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, good
18 afternoon and welcome to the second hearing of our
19 day. This one is focused on the Department for the
20 Aging. I'm Justin Brannan. Chair of the Council's
21 Finance Committee. I'm joined by Council Member
22 Crystal Hudson who chairs the Committee on Aging. We
23 have been joined by Council Members Louis, Brewer,
24 Farías, Hanks, Hudson, Sanchez, Williams, Salaam, and
25 a big thank you to Commissioner Cortes-Vazquez and

your team for being here today. DFTA's proposed FY26 budget is \$554.4 million. It's less than half of one percent of the City's total proposed budget. That said, it's a sizable jump up \$128 million or 30 percent from the Preliminary Plan. Most of that increase goes towards long over-due investments in case management, connecting homebound older adults to services like meal delivery and homecare. As of March, the agency had 25 vacancies compared to its headcount in FY25. In the Council's Preliminary Budget response we asked for \$6.3 million to reduce case management backlog. The administration's response was just a third of that, and that's not enough. We can't short-change seniors, especially when the City's aging population is growing fast and getting more diverse. In my own district, we're home to one of the City's original NORCs, so I see these needs every single day. Our senior centers need love. Our case workers need support, and our older adults deserve to age with dignity and the services that they've earned. My questions today will mainly focus on capital funding, case management and the rates for food reimbursement. But now I want to turn

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2 it over to Council Member Hudson, the Chair of the
3 Committee, for her remarks.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much,
5 Chair Brannan, and good afternoon. My name is
6 Crystal Hudson and I serve as Chair of the Committee
7 on Aging. Welcome to the Committee's hearing on the
8 Executive Plan-- excuse me-- Executive Financial Plan
9 for the New York City Department for the Aging, known
10 as NYC Aging. Thank you also and again to
11 Commissioner Cortes-Vazquez for joining us.

12 Following testimony-- and I want to acknowledge that
13 we've also been joined by Council Member Brooks-
14 Powers. Following testimony and questions with NYC
15 Aging, we'll hear testimony from the public at
16 approximately at 2:00 p.m. for both committees.

17 Thank you to those older adult advocates and
18 community members who have joined us today. I'll
19 keep my comments here brief and request that the
20 Commissioner keep her oral testimony brief as well so
21 we can move onto questions from Council Members.

22 Older adults and the older adult provider network
23 have faced unprecedented challenges in the past few
24 years as the City has moved forward from the
25 pandemic. These challenges are compounded by agency

budgetary constraints as well as inflation and an
ever-increasing cost of living. NYC Aging has a
critical role to play in assessing and meeting the
needs of older adults in our city. By collaborating
with the provider network and the Council, the agency
can harness best practices and scale innovative
approaches to best serve our city's older adult
population. NYC Aging's Fiscal 2026 Executive Budget
is \$554.4 million which is thankfully \$128.3 million
more than the Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Budget. The
Council and I were very happy to see the budget gap
at NYC Aging addressed in the Executive Plan. The
additional funding is needed to support vital
programs for older adults across the City. Although
this increase was welcomed news, it does not provide
the agency with the funding needed to appropriately
provide for the City's older adults. NYC Aging's
client population comprises nearly one-fifth of the
City's population, yet it's budget remains less than
one half of one percent of the City's overall budget.
The Executive Plan includes three new needs for NYC
Aging totaling \$19.7 million in Fiscal 2025, \$103.2
million in Fiscal 2026, and \$75 million in the out-
years. These funds are allocated for indirect cost

rates, case management and older adult services. The plan also includes a PEG restoration of \$23 million in Fiscal 2026 and \$37.7 million in the outyears to restore several OAC PEGs which together with the new needs increases the agency's Fiscal 2026 baseline budget to the Fiscal 2025 funding level. Although this is great to see, vital investments are still needed to enhance funding for the provider network on both the expense and capital sides in order to approve the level and quality of services required to meet the needs of the City's older adult population. NYC Aging's capital commitment plan, the smallest of any of any city agency totals \$85.1 million across fiscals 2025 through 2029. With over 300 Older Adult Centers and NORCs now in the NYC Aging network, this funding is insufficient to properly address all infrastructure needs. The Agency's capital program should be enhanced to provide for critical needs including refurbishing centers, upgrading kitchens, and connecting older adults to much-needed technology and resources. In the Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Budget response, the Council called on the administration to add \$50 million to NYC Aging's capital budget, but fortunately no additional funding has been added to

fulfill the Council's proposal. In today's hearing, we would like to get a deeper understanding of NYC Aging's expense budget, it's capital plan, the impact of newly added funding, and the future of key agency services and programs including case management, home delivered meals, and older center programs. As we move towards adoption of the Fiscal 2026 budget, I look forward to working collaboratively with providers and the administration to help the agency appropriately provide for the City's 1.8 million older adults. I'd like to thank the Committee staff who have helped prepare this hearing, Simuel Fameed [sp?], Financial Analyst, Julia Herramas [sp?], Unit Head, Christopher Pepe [sp?], Senior Legislative Counsel, Chloe Rivera [sp?], Senior Policy Analyst, and my Chief of Staff, Andrew Wright [sp?], and all the other dedicated staff. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Before I turn it over to the Committee Counsel to swear you in, just acknowledging we've also been joined by Council Member Schulman, Banks, Zhuang, and Hanks. And now, Brian will swear you in. Thanks.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good afternoon. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and

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2 nothing but the truth before this committee and to
3 respond honestly to Council Member questions?
4 Commissioner Vazquez?

5 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I do.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Chief Financial
7 Officer Mercado?

8 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: I do.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may begin.

10 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Is this on?
11 Alright. Good afternoon, Chair Brannan and Chair
12 Hudson and the members of the Finance and the Aging
13 Committees. As you know, I am Lorraine Cortes-
14 Vazquez, Commissioner of New York Department for the
15 Aging, lovingly known as NYC Aging. I am joined by
16 Jose Mercado, our Chief Financial Officer. And I
17 thank you for this opportunity to discuss our
18 Executive Budget for FY26. It is so fitting that we
19 are speaking with you today in May which as you know
20 is Older Americans Month, and this month is a
21 national time to acknowledge and promote the
22 contributions of older adults. It is also an
23 opportunity for us to affirm our commitment as the
24 largest area agency on aging in the United States to
25 providing aging services and making New York City a

truly age-inclusive community. This year's theme of the Older Americans Month is "Flip the Script on Aging." I believe that truly embodies the work we are doing every day at NYC Aging to meet the growing needs of New York City's quickly approaching two million residents over the age of 60, while also combatting the pernicious nature of ageism throughout the country. We flip the script every day at our older adult clubs through dance, art, exercise, as well as serving meals or when we connect someone to workforce which leads them to sustaining economic security and employment after the age of 60, as well as many other programs. We are proud that we have been able to join by national leaders in flipping the switch and tackling ageism head-on. We walk the talk every day and encourage all to do the same, combatting ageism every day at every opportunity as it needs to be heard, and I thank both of you for acknowledging that in your opening statements. NYC Aging's work to eliminate ageism and ensure the dignity and quality of life for older New Yorkers is beyond the month of May. It is showcased every day in how we provide high-quality services and resources to older adults, despite a difficult budget cycles

and fundamental changes to the federal landscape. To support this important work, our FY26 Preliminary Budget projects \$554.4 million in funding of which \$432 million is City Tax Levy funds. This includes allocations to core programs you're all familiar with, including the \$263 million to support Older Adult Centers, the \$73 million for home-delivered meals, the \$53.2 million for case management. I refer to these as core programs because they are intrinsically connected to providing meals and food to older adults. While we don't typically look at home-delivered meals or meal programs, it's just meals. We look at them as food is medicine. These are essential services for healthy living, supporting cognitive brain health, and preventing social isolation. This work is done by older adult clubs, home-delivered meals and our case management service providers. They combat poverty and financial insecurity while also connecting older adults to in-home services which address their needs when struggling with the daily activities of living. They are essential to a community care plan. The alternative is institutional care which we all know is rather costly. There are also allocations of

\$37.7 million to support homecare to the home-bound elderly adult who are not Medicaid eligible which allows older adults to age in place, the communities in which they helped build, and 17 million for NORC programs which provide similar services at OACs, but other than meals for recreation and combating social isolation, but also includes some nursing services. Finally, \$9.2 million for caregiver services supporting the 1.3 million caregivers and their care-receivers in their city-- in this city, and \$6.1 million for transportation services allowing older adults to be connected to community centers, houses of worship, shopping, and medical appointments. These numbers only tell a portion of the story beyond the services included in NYC Aging, but they show the human side of the work that we do every day to make New York City fully age inclusive. This is not possible without a network of nonprofit providers. On the human side, I'm also proud of the work that our agency employees and our providers who serve older adults daily. Even when NYC Aging staff are spending time in the field connecting with provider staff or other older adults, they still prioritize their daily work and tasks which makes this agency an

incredible part of city government. I was a little disheartened to hear comments made recently in this room about NYC Aging staff ignoring their responsibilities to process contract payments, because they spent too much time in the field with older adults or our providers. Those two actions go hand-in-hand, and it is integrated into their work. We believe that to serve the public, you need to know the public. More importantly, I believe our record of on-time payments speaks for itself, as does the positive partnerships we have with our contractors. This is not to say that there aren't any issues to be addressed. There are issues, and we address those. We address those usually head-on, but our approach is always to resolve these as partnerships of equal. As we discussed in March during our Preliminary Budget hearing, there are key challenges in the City financially, and NYC Aging is always prepared to prioritize the needs of older adults and across aging services while limiting the impacts of these challenges. We are pleased to see that on the FY26 Executive Budget in addition to there being no mandatory services exercised, the Mayor and OMB kept their word and funded the backfill by the expiring

stimulus dollars and programs to eliminate the gap,
the PEGs, for the core programs I mentioned earlier.
Nevertheless, we are keenly aware of the change in
the federal administration and the need for an
improved per capita funding formula to increase state
dollars and result in a fair share funding for the
City by the State which has led to confusion in
funding sources, especially those in federal grants.
These are ongoing issues that we monitor day to day,
and continue to assess the potential impacts to aging
services where we have developed several possible
scenarios. We also continue to advocate to our state
and federal partners to share the financial
responsibility of serving older New Yorkers living in
New York, and I've always asked you to be our
partners in raising that advocacy voice. Since I was
last here in March to discuss the Preliminary Budget,
we are proud of our work done with the work of our
nonprofit partners in addressing some of the notable
recent successes and upcoming items we are looking
forward to. In FY24, NYC hit a post-pandemic record
of 10 million meals served to older New Yorkers
throughout the five boroughs. This includes 6.1
million meals served at the 300+ OACs in the network

and 4.2 million meals delivered by our home-delivered meal providers. We are pleased to share that we are on track to match that number again in FY25, and we're confident that the aging population as it grows in New York City, the US, New York City will be providing more than 10 million meals annually and the years to come. This is an incredible achievement when considering the dollar for dollar impact of meal provision has as an antipoverty measure in the lives of older adults. When the Older American Act was passed 60 years ago this July in 1965, a key reason for creating this pivotal legislation was to address the older adult poverty nationwide through nutrition and supportive services. While what it means to be an older adult may have changed since the 1960s, the basic needs for dignified aging, meals, health, agency, and income remain the same and will do so in the future. It does stem poverty and that is key to us, to ensure that New York older adults can stay in the city and avert poverty. I also say that food is not the only [inaudible] services-- I always say that-- which New York City provides, but it is an important aspect of the work we do. The FY26 Executive Budget includes more than a \$10 million

increase for home-delivered meals providers, further helping our contractors to weather some of the rising food and transportation costs while we also account for future growth in the homebound older adult population. We strive for innovation and quality of meal services. We're excited to-- and this is for you, Gale-- we're excited to host the first-ever plant-based cookoff. I knew it. The plant-based cookoff which was sort of like our version of Top Chef, and we were able to select three fabulous plant-based dishes that are already served at the Older Adult Clubs. This was a great way to showcase the innovation done at centers around food is medicine and also taking this required health mandate and having a little fun with it in an objective way, and improving the lives of older adults through healthy eating. I appreciate the Council's shared goal and commitment to older adults and supporting the work of NYC Aging, especially as we navigate the uncertainty in the Federal Government. It feels that every day is a new change, a new crisis or a fundamental shift in the way social services are provided to Americans. Even amidst these uncertainties, NYC Aging continues to meet the older

2 adults that we plan for, and we're planning for worst
3 case scenario and moderate case scenarios. We're
4 also mindful of our joint advocacy role and work to
5 ensure that federal dollars are available to aging
6 services in New York City. Regardless of what may
7 come in the future, centers are still open,
8 nonprofits are working, meal programs are
9 functioning, case management continues, and the
10 Cabinet for Older New Yorkers is still meeting and
11 addressing the aging needs and breaks down
12 communication silos which hinder agency's effort to
13 make New York an even more age inclusive city. We
14 are proud of these recent successes and some key
15 programs supported, and that shape our services and
16 improve the lives of older adults. As we announced
17 in last February, from Columbia University and Robin
18 Hood Foundation, the share of older New Yorkers
19 living in poverty is now 25 percent, double the
20 national average. Because financial insecurity
21 remains the most critical need of older adults, it
22 highly-- and it is highly correlated to food
23 insecurity, NYC Aging is continuously evaluating our
24 efforts and exploring areas of improvement. While
25 workforce programs continue to be a way for older

adults to avoid long-term poverty, meals programs are also a lifeline to older adults struggling with financial and ultimately food insecurity. This includes enhancing meal options for recipients, embracing the diversity of our city by increasing the availability of culturally-aligned meals, and promoting uniformly high-quality and nutritious meals. In FY24, our network of 15 home-delivered meals providers provided 4.2 million meals to 24.6 thousand clients. Combined with the meals served at OAC, New York served a record-breaking 10.3 million meals in FY25, underscoring the importance of these meals to older adults. We're happy to mention again that this year's reimbursement rate has increased from \$11.78 in Fiscal 23 to \$13.78 in Fiscal 25, although we know that costs are escalating on a daily basis. Over the past few years, these rates have gradually risen to help meet the needs our providers serving these critical needs. These have been key improvements to service and our providers and have been met in a partnership between this administration and the Council leadership. As the number of older adults continues to grow, it is imperative that we continue to grow the community care support services

which allow older New Yorkers to remain in the communities that they build and to truly age in place. We do this through homecare and caregiving services which greatly serve those who are homebound or in need of additional supports. Homecare services are provided through Medicaid reimbursement, and for those who are not Medicaid-- under Medicaid programs. So, these services are provided through the expanded In-home Services for Elderly, commonly known as ISEP, where case management [inaudible] are reimbursed to providers. Currently, we are advocating that New York State legislation make permanent the inclusion which last year passed a rate of 55 salary match for ISEP homecare workers, which brings them into parity with Medicare-- Medicaid, I'm sorry, homecare workers who already receive these raises. As you know, this was a key component of community care and is able to help people age in place. It is the overwhelming preference for older New Yorkers. We welcome your support and advocacy in this regard. These are the same workers, they're just under a different funding stream and should get the same salary. Without this ISEP clients are at a disadvantage where Medicaid homecare workers are incentivized to take on those

clients because the pay is higher. There's no distinction between ISEP and Medicaid homecare workers. They are primarily women of color. This is exacerbating the inequity between other salaries. Currently, the homecare program at NYC Aging is funded at \$37.7 million for FY26, but that does not include this wage increase that I'm talking about. This occurred in previous years and was resolved as part of the advocacy from the Council, from our advocates in the field, and to ensure that we have equity in pay for these workers who are frequently women, as I said, women of color. There's no need to leave them out of necessary pay increases for critical aids and services. Many older adults are caretakers for their aging parent. Many are caregivers who also have full-time job. The caregiver program offers options for respite care through homecare and participation in social adult daycare. There are estimated 1.3 million New Yorkers who function as caregivers. Without the support for care for daily living activities and respite care, many of these caregivers-- caretakers, I'm sorry-- would not have the financial means or ability to leave the care-receiver in someone else's care or

they take a needed break from their caregiving responsibility. We know the cost of maintaining an older adult in institutionalized care is far higher when compared to the cost of these community care options such as supporting caregivers. On average, the cost is \$160.9 thousand to house an older adult in an institution, while the average of community care service is \$32,000 per person per year. In FY26 funding for the caregiving program is currently projected at \$9.2 million. Caregiver support positively impacts the health and wellbeing of older adults while aligning with the cultural background of the individual. Why is community care so incredibly important to the future of older New Yorkers? These integrated services for home assistance which is care for daily living needs such as bathing, cleaning, food prep, shopping, transportation, meal provision can all keep an older adult in the community longer which is their desire, and it is a shared goal between this administration and the Council. As you all have heard over and over again, I have personal experience with this, as did the City Council Chair. My mother wants to remain in her home. She needs additional care benefits that they come from her

family or the surrounding community, but she wants to remain at home, and we will do everything possible to make that happen. I continue to be proud, again, of the work of NYC Aging and our providers which we accomplish with the resources that we have. This year has shown where NYC Aging is prepared to prioritize vital programs that truly meet the need of older New Yorkers and continue to advocate for innovations in aging services with a look to the future. Even in the face of challenges, we continue to be good stewards of public dollars. That said, given the need for further investments from our state and federal partners, we continue to be concerned about the current uncertainty of what the changes may be that will affect NYC Aging. It is imperative now more than ever that NYC-- New York City receive its fair share of funding both at the state level and the federal level. We are grateful to the Chairs and Committee Chairpersons and your ongoing partnership and your support of older New Yorkers. And finally, as I've said before, we're looking forward to big anniversaries this year at agencies which are vital. On July 14th we will celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Older Americans Act signed in 1965. This

legislation is fundamental to the services we
provide. If the OAA was a person, they would qualify
for our service, and that's something to acknowledge.
Similarly on August 14th we celebrate the 90th
anniversary of the Social Security Act. Signed in
1935 by President Franklin Roosevelt. This was one
if not the most pivotal piece of anti-poverty
legislation ever enacted in modern democracy and
every day we hear about threats to social security,
and this is causing great fear among older
populations which rely solely-- many who rely solely
on social security. Finally, on November 4th of this
year, NYC Aging will celebrate its 50th anniversary,
and we're excited to showcase all the golden ways we
have served older New Yorkers since 1975. Look for
upcoming announcements as we celebrate these
milestones. Whether it's 50, 60 or 90, there's a lot
to talk about in the lives of older New Yorkers in
2025. And I also want to invite you to join us May
28th for National Older Adult Health and Fitness Day
in Foley [sic] Square. We had a fabulous time last
year. We expect to have the same thing this year
where we have laughter, yoga, flexibility structures,
some major dance entertainment. But we appreciate

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2 your dedication and your advocacy for older adults,
3 and we want to see you there grooving and dancing
4 with us in Foley Square. Thank you for your time
5 today. I look forward to your questions.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you,
7 Commissioner.

8 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And I will
9 answer your questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you,
11 Commissioner. We've also been joined by Council
12 Members Carr, Lee and Stevens. I want to jump right
13 into the federal funding concerns. Federal funds
14 make up 14 percent of New York City Aging's Fiscal 26
15 budget and 16 percent in FY25. What are your
16 department's primary federal funding sources and what
17 programs and services do they each support?

18 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I will
19 start and then, Jose, you jump in. Primarily, our
20 case management which are our three B services and
21 the bulk of it is meal services, home-delivered
22 meals, our C1 and C2 which are the congregate meals.
23 And then they also provide services for elder abuse
24 and that's it.

25

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. What grants
3 or programs are we most concerned about being at risk
4 of being cut?

5 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I think
6 that the ones in jeopardy, we don't know to be honest
7 with you. Every day it changes. But so far, we've
8 seen some impact on our workforce which is our Title
9 V programs and our older worker programs which are
10 essential to stem poverty, and so we're getting back
11 and forth on that. Sometimes it's closed. Sometimes
12 they're rescinded, but fortunately we have a very
13 aggressive fiscal officer who was already drawing
14 down the federal dollars and advances. So, we feel a
15 little more comfort there. We're concerned about the
16 case management, the 3B dollars, and of course, core
17 to all of our services are nutrition services. So,
18 any impact on that will severely impact our ability
19 to continue.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Have you assessed
21 how the agency would be impacted if there are cuts to
22 these programs?

23 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We for the
24 last two months have been going through several
25 scenarios. We've had a worst-case budget. We have a

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2 moderate, and then we have the reprieve which we know
3 will still have an impact. And so, we've done all of
4 those scenarios, but it's so difficult to plan when
5 the information is ever-changing.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And has City Hall
7 asked for that assessment from you?

8 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: We've
9 been sharing this information with OMB.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. So, the
11 Older Adult Center PEG restoration-- the Executive
12 Plan includes a PEG restoration of \$23 million in
13 FY26 and a baseline restoration of \$37.7 million
14 starting in FY27 for Older Adult Centers. Can you
15 clarify which PEGs this funding is restoring?

16 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: So,
17 these were underspending in the Older Adult Clubs.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And when were the--
19 when were the PEGs originally instituted?

20 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Some of
21 these PEGs go back to 23.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: FY23?

23 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Could you talk
25 about what impact these PEGs have had on the agency?

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2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Well,
3 they were all PEGs. They were for the future, so it
4 had no impact since they were all restored.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And after that
6 restoration, are there any outstanding PEGs?

7 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: No.

8 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: No.

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What's the current
10 budget for Older Adult Centers in FY25 and 26?

11 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The current
12 one for Older Adult Centers for 25 is \$257.9
13 thousand-- million, sorry. And for 26 is \$262.9
14 million.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And how much of
16 the-- how much of that's been spent to-date in FY25?

17 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Roughly
18 about 80 percent of it.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Council's
20 FY26 Preliminary Budget response called on the
21 administration to add \$6.3 million to the Department
22 of Aging's budget to enhance case management
23 programs. The needs for these funds, we believe, is
24 evident as there were 491 older adults awaiting case
25 management services at the end of 2024. Did your

2 agency advocate for additional funding for case
3 management in the Executive Plan?

4 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We have
5 long extensive conversations with OMB about what our
6 needs are. The challenge that we're also having in
7 case management is that in addition to with the
8 allocation that we have, we are spending more time
9 per client because the situations are getting-- the
10 case management are getting more complex. So, we're
11 serving less clients, but with more hours and
12 spending the same amount of money.

13 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Was there a dollar
14 amount that you requested?

15 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: In our
16 conversations with OMB there many requests that go
17 back and forth in terms of case management, as well
18 as all the other categories.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: The current case
20 management budget is what?

21 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: \$51.1
22 million, close to \$51.2 million, and it'll be \$53.2
23 million in FY26.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Do you think that's
25 enough?

2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I always
3 say that the resources-- the needs outpace the
4 resources.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So, how many older
6 adults are currently on the case management waiting
7 list?

8 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Let me get
9 you that. No, that's the wait list. You want the
10 wait list?

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah, how many--

12 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
13 [interposing] Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you wanted how
14 many people served under. The wait list is 492-- I
15 mean, 491.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Is that higher or
17 lower than normal?

18 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I would say
19 that that is sort of keeping pace with where we find
20 ourselves now.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Let--

22 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
23 [interposing] And we always had this conversation
24 with City Council about what was a waiting list, and
25

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2 we finally have succumbed to your definition of what
3 a waiting list is. Because we would--

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: [interposing] Isn't
5 that clear, though? I mean, a waiting list is a
6 waiting list, no?

7 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Well, yes
8 and no.

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: How do you define
10 it?

11 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: How did we
12 define it? We defined it because we do a basic
13 assessment for everyone, and then what was really
14 driving the waiting list for us a lot of the time has
15 been the fact that the follow-up services might not
16 have been implemented, and so that that person was
17 waiting for a service, but not for case assistance
18 because they're already designated a client. So, it
19 was-- yeah, right. So, we went back and forth. We
20 went back and forth for about how many months on
21 this? About 12, 13 months on it, and then we just
22 conceded.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Last for me is with
24 regard to the indirect cost rate adjustment. The
25 Executive Plan includes an additional almost \$20

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2 million in FY25 and FY26 for indirect cost rates for
3 human service providers. Can you tell us how that
4 amount was determined?

5 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: So,
6 this calculates the increases-- the increase in
7 direct rate for each provider.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So, why was the
9 additional funding necessary?

10 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: We did
11 not implement the indirect rates.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Say that again.

13 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: We did
14 not implement indirect rates for 25. Or so this
15 basically allows us to implement them for 25 and 26
16 going forward.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So, is that why the
18 funding was only allocated in FY25 and 26 and not in
19 the outyears?

20 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right.

21 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: That's
22 correct. That's correct. So, you know, the ICR
23 changes every three years. So, they're just
24 basically funding it for 26, assuming the 26 is also
25 the 27.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So, what's the
3 baseline funding amount in FY25 and the outyears?

4 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Well,
5 right now it's-- give me one second. It's \$26
6 million.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: How much?

8 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: \$26
9 million.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: \$26 million?

11 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: \$26
12 million.

13 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: \$26
14 million.

15 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I also want
16 for the record to note that we establish a baseline
17 ICR for all nonprofits. We have many nonprofits,
18 especially the small ethnic or community-based
19 nonprofits that did not have an ICR, and we
20 determined that every nonprofit should have an ICR.
21 we gave a baseline 10 percent to every nonprofit.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. I am going
23 to turn it over to Chair Hudson. Thank you very
24 much.

25 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much
3 again, Chair Brannan and Commissioner. NYC Aging's
4 Fiscal 2025 budget totals \$570.9 million in the
5 Executive Plan while the budget for Fiscal 2026
6 totals \$554.4 million. This represents an increase of
7 \$20.2 million for Fiscal 2025 and a \$128.3 million
8 increase for Fiscal 2026 from the Preliminary Plan.
9 Notably, Council discretionary funding which totals
10 \$41.6 million in Fiscal 2025 is not yet included in
11 the Fiscal 2026 budget. We were very happy to see
12 this infusion of much-needed funding to NYC Aging in
13 the Executive Plan. Can you confirm that the
14 additions made in the Executive Plan address the
15 Agency's fiscal cliff and that all programs are fully
16 funded at the current level in Fiscal 2026 and
17 beyond?

18 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: As I told
19 you in the Preliminary Budget hearing that there was
20 a commitment made to both you by the OMB Director and
21 to me, and that commitment has been met. The fiscal
22 cliff has been funded.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. With these
24 additional funds in place, can you confirm that no
25

programs will need to be reduced or centers closed in
the next fiscal year?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: There will
be no centers closed in the next fiscal year.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, does that mean
that programs might be reduced?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Program
might be reduced, but it has nothing to do with the
fiscal cliff.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Is NYC Aging
requesting any additional funding from the
administration for the adopted plan, and if so, how
much and for which programs?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We're in
conversations with them about several of our unmet
needs, and we're in those discussions now, presenting
those now.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Can I get
like a yes or a no?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yes, we're
in negotiations with them.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Slick. I'll take
it. Are there any outstanding areas you can flag
that still require additional funding?

2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I would say
3 that the three areas that we have the most concern
4 about is this explosive caregiving crisis that the
5 city as well as the nation is facing, and I think,
6 you know, being forward-thinking we need to start
7 looking at that. I also think that workforce is
8 another area that we've been in conversations about,
9 because workforce is becoming more and more of a
10 desire for older adults as they remain in the
11 community, but it's also becoming a mandate so that
12 they can stay and thrive in this city so that they
13 can have additional income beyond an opportunity,
14 other forms of social isolation, and I believe, you
15 know, concurrent with that would be homecare
16 services, again, to support community care, but all
17 of these discussions are being made with OMB at this
18 time and I believe that there are conversations in
19 earnest, and also of course, transportation.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. Many
21 providers continue to be concerned about the next OAC
22 RFP. OAC contracts were set to end on December 31st,
23 2024. NYC Aging extended these contracts for 18
24 months and pushed out the release of a new RFP to the
25 end of the current calendar year. Does NYC Aging

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2 still plan to release the next RFP for Older Adult
3 Centers at the end of calendar year 2025?

4 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yes, that
5 is the plan, and the-- you know, and it's one of
6 these decisions that we have to make both as an
7 administration and in partnership. You don't want to
8 have a noncompetitive process in this business,
9 right? So, you do want to have RFPs. Also, don't
10 want to release an RFP that's not going to fully fund
11 things. So, as we're navigating the fiscal
12 situation, we need to make sure that these programs,
13 we can have an RFP that's fully funded. And so that
14 will determine the decision as to the actual release
15 of the RFP.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Do you anticipate
17 contracts would be in place by July 1st, 2026?

18 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: That would
19 be the goal if we do it in December. If we do it
20 beyond that, then--

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Shifts.

22 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: it shifts.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Are there any
24 changes to OAC services or contracts that NYC Aging
25 is planning to make in the new RFP?

2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I think we
3 look for-- like we have in the past, we look for
4 innovations. We look for the things that we've
5 learned from the pop-up kitchens. We look at the
6 things that we've learned from the social isolation
7 programming. You know, we're in conversations with
8 the providers now with a few of them, like, what
9 would the center of the future look like? Because we
10 really want to stay current, because the older adult
11 as they're aging in, their needs are very different
12 than the 75 and 85-year-old older adult that goes to
13 those centers. So, we need to keep looking at how do
14 we satisfy this diverse aging population and the
15 whole spectrum.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Is NYC Aging looking
17 to expand the OAC network and include more
18 organizations or different types of services in its
19 next RFP?

20 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I think we
21 look for the best possible program design and we look
22 for obviously the most publicly-- public-- best use
23 of public dollars.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I think we all are
25 interested in the best use for public dollars.

2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right.

3 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: so, we can
4 appreciate that. The Executive Plan includes an
5 additional \$81.5 million in Fiscal 2026 and a
6 baselined \$75 million from Fiscal 2027 through Fiscal
7 2029 for senior services. This addition baselined 16
8 positions at NYC Aging, bringing its total budgeted
9 headcount to 340 in Fiscal 2026 and beyond. Can you
10 provide a breakdown of how this additional funding
11 will be used?

12 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Where we--
13 okay, let me go. Where-- you know, we don't have a
14 wide bandwidth of positions. So, the areas where we
15 would-- we always invest would be around those that
16 either monitor programs, provide technical
17 assistance. So, we're looking at the program
18 officer. We also want to continue to have a very
19 high functioning fiscal operation which we currently
20 have to ensure that we can continue our on-time
21 payment record, and so those are the primary areas.
22 It's either going to be finance or it's going to be
23 community services. And of course, in our case
24 management area, we want to continue to provide that
25

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2 kind of work, and of course, the workforce area. So,
3 they basically center around the core programs.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Sorry. Okay. Can
5 you share how much will be earmarked for OACs, NORCs,
6 home-delivered meals, and will any funding be applied
7 for other programs?

8 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I don't
9 understand the-- how much we're committing to OACs
10 and NORCs?

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And home-delivered
12 meals.

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Okay.

14 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: So,
15 what we'll do-- for example, you guys, City Council,
16 requested for unit of appropriations. So, we'll be
17 moving-- you'll see mods sometime in July,
18 [inaudible] mods in July to basically move money
19 around to make sure that all budget codes can fund
20 all existing contracts.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you.
22 Can you explain the difference in funding levels for
23 Fiscal 2026 and the outyears of the plan? Will this
24 impact the level of services that will be provided?

25

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2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah.

3 That's the fact. In the outyears, it is not-- there
4 will be PEGs if those do not get addressed in the
5 outyears. There'll be a shortfall.

6 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: So,
7 we're working with the admin-- so, as you mentioned
8 there is basically a gap between fiscal years. So,
9 that's [inaudible] so we're working with OMB to--

10 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
11 [interposing] We're working with OMB to address those
12 gaps, but there is a gap.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you.
14 I'll circle back to that in a moment if I need to.
15 Can you confirm if that's the gap of \$6.5 million?

16 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It's more
17 than that.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: It's more than that?

19 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Do you have an
21 estimate?

22 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, we
23 do.

24

25

2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Well,
3 it's a different-- to your point, it's the difference
4 between the \$81 and the \$75, yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Well, that's the six-
6 - that's the \$6.5, so that's why--

7 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO:
8 [interposing] Yeah, yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: we were trying to
10 figure out if that's the same.

11 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Despite the
14 large number of facilities that make up NYC Aging's
15 older adult provider network, NYC Aging's capital
16 plan remains the smallest of all city agencies,
17 totaling just \$85.1 million for fiscals 2025 to 2029.
18 The Agency's Executive Capital Commitment Plan is
19 only 8.6 percent greater than the Preliminary Capital
20 Commitment Plan. Two of the largest capital projects
21 in the plan include \$19 million for the renovation of
22 Older Adult Centers and \$28.4 million for the
23 relocation of NYC Aging's headquarters. How many
24 Older Adult Centers are planned to be renovated with
25 this \$19 million in capital funding?

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2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: So, we
3 responded to that in the January Plan with the May
4 let-- so we sent a letter on May 2nd that basically
5 outlined all the money that was going to be spent.

6 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah. I
7 believe there's 19 programs. There's 19 programs
8 that we are looking at, but we also have \$6 million
9 from-- that doesn't include Reynoso's [sic] money,
10 right?

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: 19 projects? 19
12 capital projects?

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: 19
14 projects. That's what's on-- that's what's on the
15 books now.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, the \$19 million.

17 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The \$19
18 million--

19 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO:
20 [interposing] It's around 15 projects. If you look
21 at the May 2nd letter, it outlines all the different
22 projects.

23 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: [inaudible]

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, so 15. Has
25 NYC Aging determined the locations to be renovated?

2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: They're
3 in the letter, yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

5 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yes, we do.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Do you know roughly
7 how much will be allocated per location on average?

8 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So, the
9 range is from \$180,000 to \$6 million.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: One project
12 is \$6 million.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And what capital
14 improvements are eligible with this funding?

15 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Well, we
16 give priority to health and safety issues, and then
17 we also look at the plan for the kitchen renovations,
18 HVAC, because HVAC is very important to us, because
19 we serve as cooling centers also. So, those are the
20 priority items, but the goal is based on a
21 conversation that we had and the commitment we had
22 jointly last year was to come up with a master plan
23 for creating state-of-the-art kitchens, and that is
24 still part of the plan.

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Great. Do you plan
3 to advocate for increased funding for the capital
4 plan, and if so, how much additional funding is
5 needed to adequately address the Agency's capital
6 needs?

7 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The issue
8 with capital for us, and I don't know if this is
9 tangential to your question, but the issues with
10 capital for us is that we are not the administrators
11 of our capital. I mean,--

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Right.

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: we manage
14 the capital, but we're not the administrators,
15 because the Charter doesn't allow us to do that. So,
16 we have a plan and we work with EDC and Environment--
17 EDP, Economic Development, who actually execute on
18 us, and then we are part of their cue. If they have
19 larger projects-- our projects-- so once we could
20 adjust that, then we could have a better handle on
21 how to move forward because we make plans and
22 propose, but we do not have oversight or ultimate
23 responsibility for the implementation of that plan.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: But I would say
25 whether or not you have oversight over the actual

2 implementation it would still be incumbent upon you
3 to make the request for additional capital money for
4 relevant projects. So is that something that you
5 would say that you would advocate for increased
6 funding for the capital plan?

7 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It's
8 something that we would seriously look at and
9 present, yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. And then
11 what's the current status of your headquarters
12 relocation?

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We
14 anticipate that they-- the final decision will be
15 made soon, because it's important to 330 people who
16 work in the facilities where we're housed now, and we
17 hope that that decision will be made soon so that
18 this could happen early in the next year, no later
19 than early in the next year.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you.
21 Just a couple more questions and I think we're going
22 to move on to member questions. During last year's
23 Preliminary Budget hearing, NYC Aging testified on
24 various new needs requests that were made to OMB.
25 This included new needs requests for case management

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2 and homecare which have still not been added to the
3 budget. Can you provide the Committee with the
4 budgetary requests that were made to OMB and the
5 Mayor as part of the Executive Plan process?

6 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: What I
7 could do is submit to you after this hearing some of
8 the new-- the unmet needs requests that we have made.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Thank you.
10 And how are new need requests determined and how are
11 metrics taken into account when making the requests?

12 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The unmet
13 needs because none of the NYC Aging needs are new.
14 They are unmet given the population growth. Those
15 are unmet needs. Those are determined based on a
16 community care approach and ensuring that we have
17 enough services to keep older adults in the community
18 as-- for as long as possible and so that they can
19 thrive.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And then what's the
21 current status of these requests?

22 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We're in
23 negotiations.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: The Council's Fiscal
25 2026 Preliminary Budget response called on the

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2 administration to add and baseline \$7.3 million for
3 the home-delivered meals program to bring the per-
4 meal reimbursement rate up to \$15.31 from \$13.78. At
5 adoption last year, \$4.8 million was added in
6 baseline starting in Fiscal 2025 to increase
7 reimbursement rates for home-delivered meals. The
8 additional funding for reimbursement rate increase
9 was not included in the Executive Plan. Is NYC Aging
10 advocating for an increase to meal reimbursement
11 rates in the adopted plan?

12 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It's part
13 of the current negotiations with OMB.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. So, taken
15 that into consideration, what reimbursement rate
16 would be appropriate and how much would such an
17 increase cost?

18 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We looked
19 at-- have we come up with the dollar amount from
20 \$13.78 to what?

21 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: To
22 \$14.78.

23 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: To \$14.78.
24
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. How has
3 the rollout of the current year's reimbursement rate
4 been going?

5 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: So, for
6 HDM? So, all providers have been paid retroactively
7 from July 1 and prospectively as well.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Have you
9 received any feedback from providers?

10 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO:
11 Thanking me-- they have thanked us for the rate
12 increase.

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I know. No,
14 we have not received feedback on what their shortfall
15 is. It's something that we're always welcoming,
16 those conversations. As you know, we have a monthly
17 meeting with all of our providers, and so if there
18 were a definitive rate amount, we would have heard
19 that by now, but we're looking at cost.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: okay, thank you.
21 How many meals has NYC Aging reimbursed so far in
22 Fiscal 2025?

23 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: For
24 HDM?

25 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Or total?

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2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: HDM?

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah.

5 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: \$4
6 million.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: \$4 million.

8 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And how many meals
10 are pending reimbursement?

11 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Those
12 are still being assessed.

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: What we
14 anticipate the total meals to be.

15 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Well,
16 for--

17 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
18 [interposing] I'm sorry, I'm asking a question.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: No, yeah, thank you.
20 I appreciate it.

21 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: It's
22 okay. We're basically looking close to another
23 500,000 meals per month.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: 500,000.
25

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2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Per
3 month.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Per month. 500K per
5 month.

6 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Units,
7 right.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And what's delaying
9 the reimbursements?

10 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Well,
11 they're basically being-- they're coming in. So, as
12 they come in, we pay them. So, we don't have-- for
13 example, we have no late invoices for HDM.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

15 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: As soon
16 as they come in, less than 30 days, they get paid.

17 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We have no
18 waiting list for HDM either.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right. Okay. Okay,
20 great. I'll turn it over to Council Member
21 questions. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. We've been
23 joined by-- nobody new. Okay, we have questions from
24 Council Member Brewer followed by Louis.

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Just for the
3 record, if it's raining, you know, people don't show
4 up. I understand, but Wednesdays are a bad day to go
5 to a senior center. Why? Vegan stuffed peppers,
6 quinoa, and California blend vegetables, nobody wants
7 to eat that. So, don't go Wednesdays. I just want to
8 make that for the record. My questions-- so, the
9 issue of transportation. I know that's more under DOT
10 or MTA, but are you working with them to come other
11 ideas for expanding transportation services? Is that
12 something that you focus on? I know that it's
13 tangential, perhaps.

14 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yes. No,
15 it's not tangential, because one of the things that
16 we're so impacted by the lack of quality service from
17 Access-A-Ride that we have asked for legislation to
18 create an ombudsman role where we would have a direct
19 link to their operation, at least to inform them in a
20 timely fashion of what some of the concerns are and
21 at least find out if their particular communities.
22 So, we'll see where that legislation goes, but we
23 know that that is a key issue for us, because so many
24 New York-- older New Yorkers depend on Access-A-Ride.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I appreciate
3 that, because we get so many complaints.

4 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Next, in terms of
6 the NORCs, as you know, like you are many of us were
7 huge supporters. I know you talked about it a little
8 bit with the Chair. Are you talking about-- there's
9 obviously increased amount suggested by the Speaker's
10 and the Council's budget response, and are you
11 thinking-- have you asked OMB for more money? Do you
12 get requests for more NORCs? How do you look at that
13 program, and do you think it should be expanded?

14 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We have had
15 some conversation with some-- I believe Banks,
16 Council Member Banks, we've been talking about a
17 possible NORC. It's a process and we are not
18 thinking of reducing NORCs. You've heard me say in
19 other testimonies, I believe that every community in
20 New York City if the population growth continues will
21 be a NORC, and so that the need for NORCs will be
22 greater. We're in conversations with OMB about NORCs
23 and older adult clubs, you know, in equal measure.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Because I know
25 the Council's asking for \$5.7 million more which

2 would recover some of that. So, you are asking
3 actively OMB for more funding.

4 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We are in
5 conversations with OMB about what the unmet needs are
6 and where the growth potential needs to be.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Alright.
8 And I'm a big supporter of OACs, because we have a
9 digital challenge in terms of older people. So, I
10 understand there was just an RFP on this topic and
11 some of-- for profit groups got money and three
12 nonprofit. So, is that instead of OACs, or how are
13 we focused on digital literacy?

14 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I'm going
15 to have to get back to you on that, because I'm not
16 fully aware that the selection has been made. I know
17 that we put a negotiated acquisition out to see how
18 we could best serve the technology needs. So, I'll
19 get back to you on that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Because I
21 understand there was a \$500K loss to OACs, and I was
22 concerned. Alright. And then just finally, I know
23 case workers-- case work is obviously something that
24 you brought up. How many persons per case worker
25 should we have in terms of those who are seeking case

2 work? And are we anywhere close to that number in
3 terms of the-- the range of services that people
4 need-- we're all dealing with family members,
5 friends. I am. You are. It is so time consuming to
6 deal with anybody's problems. I've spent hours on two
7 or three people.

8 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right. The
9 ratio right now is the average is about 59 to one,
10 alright. The estimate by the experts in this is that
11 it's 65 to one would be an adequate amount. The
12 challenge for us is now in terms of case management
13 is that the cases are getting more complex and the
14 needs are getting--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] So,
16 complex.

17 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: greater.
18 So, the service hours are being used in a greater
19 amount per client than what was typical amount of
20 time so that we find ourselves-- even though the
21 ration for client to worker is a fair ratio, it's the
22 number of hours available, the total number of hours
23 available.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: It's really
25 apples to oranges in some ways.

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2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Say it
3 again.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: It's like apples
5 to oranges. In other words, we're not-- maybe not
6 even be the right average, that's what I'm--

7 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And then just
9 finally--

10 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
11 [interposing] It--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] Go
13 ahead.

14 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And that's
15 a good point and thank you, because we're going to
16 have to re-evaluate that because the needs and the
17 cases are getting so much more complex.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And just finally,
19 back to my food thing, I know that DCAS deals with
20 you, Correction and HRA. So, do you do local
21 sourcing? Obviously, you got senior centers-- I
22 mean, you call them those older adult things. I call
23 them senior-- whatever. Those centers are, you know,
24 diverse. Do they do their own food sourcing? Do
25 they work through you? We're trying to get more New

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2 York State farmers to be able to be purchased from
3 the City of New York as opposed to California, those
4 God awful California vegetables.

5 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah. I am
6 really proud of the way that our not-for-profit
7 network sources its food. I mean, they do so-- they
8 are very much in tune with the farm-to-table. Very
9 much in tune, particularly as we go into food as
10 medicine. So they are-- they have a variety of ways
11 of sourcing that, but that is solely their
12 responsibility on how they source food.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: So, you don't
14 keep track of that whether it's locally sourced or
15 otherwise.

16 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I think we
17 do keep track of that. I'll get back to you on
18 exactly how--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]
20 Okay, if you do, I'd love to know--

21 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: we do that.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: If you do, I'd
23 love to know.

24 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah. I--

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] I do
3 have a law that passed many years ago that says we're
4 supposed to keep track, and to be honest with you--

5 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
6 [interposing] Yeah, and we probably--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: it's not well
8 tracked.

9 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: do. I just
10 don't remember, but I'll get back to you with a clear
11 answer on that.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Don't go
13 Wednesdays. Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Go
15 Wednesdays, the food is good, and the plant-based is
16 delicious, and we have Top Chef winners.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Gale, I'll eat your
18 stuffed peppers if you don't want them. Council
19 Member Louis?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Chair,
21 and good to see you, Commissioner. I have three
22 questions, one on NORC, one on older adult
23 renovations-- Older Adult Center renovations, and
24 minor home repair pilot. So I'm going to just ask all
25 the questions. I wanted to know what's DFTA's current

strategy to meet the needs of a rapidly growing aging population without proportional NORC enhancement support, and how is DFTA ensuring that underserved neighborhoods, particularly in Central Brooklyn, and similar districts are not de-prioritized in their absence of new funding streams for NORCs in FY26. So that's the NORC question. Because you mentioned units of appropriations before, but there are certain districts that still haven't received this allocation. And I've worked with the Older Adult Club located in Glenwood Houses in my district. Glenwood Houses--

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:

[interposing] Which houses?

COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Glenwood Houses, NYCHA, in my district where capital improvements have been delayed due to NYCHA-related operational issues. These delays often led to projects stagnation and reduced quality of life for our older adult particularly, HVACs. They probably may go another year with no cooling system. So, I wanted to know what steps is DFTA taking to ensure that half completed or stalled projects are not abandoned due to funding expiration. And the last question is on

minor home repair pilot program. What is DFTA's contingency plan should federal appropriations be reduced or eliminated in future fiscal years, especially given the increase from \$158,000 to \$602,000 between FY24 and FY26?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So, in terms of your first question about underserved communities, right, one of the things that we look at constantly, and it'll-- we'll be very aggressive about it during the RFP process, is we look at where the population shifts occur.

COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So, where older adults are moving to or moving from are very different where sometimes traditional Older Adult Centers have been. We've seen that in Manhattan a lot. There's more of a shift for people moving uptown rather than downtown, and yet, we have an incredible amount of Older Adult Centers in the lower eastside. So, we're doing that by borough. There's challenges with that, because everybody loves there Older Adult Center and nobody wants it to move, but maybe that's not where the population is. And so those are the kind of discussion we do, and we will

never do it in the absence of people or the stakeholders involved, right? But it really has to be where demand in services and needs are, right? So, we're looking at that all the time. Tough, tough, tough process. Nobody wants their center to leave, and everybody wants a new center. We have a finite amount of resources, and we have to respond to where older adults are. In terms of Glenwood, I don't know that particular one. I can give you a very definitive answer on that one, but what I can tell you is that we have a liaison with NYCHA now, with New York City public housing. We have a relationship, and we work on tickets, you know, like-- you know that ticket process.

COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: The ticket system is the problem, but yeah.

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And we work on those things to escalate the situation-- to make sure that we can escalate what the problem is, and we always go by the health and safety first, right? And so we have been working with that. In terms of HVAC, where there is a NYCHA HVAC to the extent that we share that cost that we put full attention on those because they're also cooling centers. But you-- I

mean, you may not have heard me say this before. You may have. Where we say we're responsible from the all out, all the cosmetics, and NYCHA's responsible for infrastructure and the wall in, and that is where we negotiate how we-- how this gets paid, and how fast the repair could be made.

COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: It would be good to strategize on that. But Chair, if it's okay with you, if the Commissioner could answer the last question on minor home repair.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah, of course.

COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: The minor home repair pilot program.

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Oh, the minor home repair-- that is out now, right, for-- it's out now for an RFP. So we're looking at-- and we're looking at that, and one of the things I believe we put in the RFP and if I'm mistaken I will correct it later on. But we also are looking at can we do minor repairs also for people who were elderly crime victims. And so we're looking at expanding that to make sure we have that covered, even though we know that there is some funding for elderly crime

2 victims, there might not be enough. And so we're
3 looking at expanding that to include that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: and it would be
5 good to know the contingency plan, you know,
6 regarding-- you know, with the federal climate. We
7 could talk about that another time, what the
8 contingency plan will be by the Aging--

9 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
10 [interposing] Yeah.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Chair.
12 Thank you, Commissioner.

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I'd be more
14 than happy to share that with you when we get a clear
15 picture about where they're going.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. We have a
18 question from Council Member Banks followed by
19 Salaam.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Thank you, Chairs,
21 and to Commissioner, good to see you. How is this
22 budget supporting the Aging in Place programs,
23 particularly homecare assistance for seniors with
24 limited mobility who prefer to remain in their homes?
25 And I think we've had a conversation about the

leasing agreements with those NYCHA development that
have converted over. I know at Millennium
Development there's a particular issue with their
leasing agreement. [inaudible] of the lease agreement
since the relocation from the main center. So, I
just want to know that are the resources put in place
to help those particular centers that have been
relocated, and in this situation where it's now found
a home now and because of not having a lease, it's
hampering them getting any type of capital investment
needed in that particular space. So, I want you to
chime in on that as well. And I also want to know
what is being done to improve food access for seniors
living in food deserts, especially in neighborhoods
without food grocery options, and additionally for
seniors who have been victims of EBT or SNAP fraud?
What steps is the City taking to supplement or
replace their food benefits quickly, rather than
forcing them to wait weeks for reimbursement? I just
want to know what is-- what are y'all doing to assist
those seniors?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: So, what I
can tell you is from the scam perspective, we work
very closely with DSS on those kinds of issue. I

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2 don't know exactly what their timeframe is. I don't
3 want to speak on behalf of DSS.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Okay.

5 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: In terms of
6 reimbursing that. But what I do know is that our
7 elderly crime victim program works very closely in
8 those kind of situations, and where necessary we can
9 give some cash assistance in--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: [interposing]
11 Excellent. That's good to hear.

12 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: But it's
13 small and it's-- you know, it's not and always the
14 case.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Well, at this
16 point anything helps.

17 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right, and
18 I agree with you. And in terms of the-- we're in
19 constant conversation with NYCHA about the-- you
20 know, that the RAD-- we have an agreement that the
21 RADs have to follow the same protocols and procedures
22 that NYCHA has had with those facilities that we
23 have. We have 108 of our Older Adult Clubs in NYCHA
24 facilities, so that's very important to us. But it'
25 a constant, you know, conversation with NYCHA. I

believe that we're getting closer and closer to a workable agreement in that the RADs are adhering to the same principles that NYCHA has had with community-based organizations, and that you know, rent is not an option, because OMB has basic-- we could not afford to pay rent for all of those youth programs and Older Adult Centers housed in NYCHA facilities. That has still been in discussion. There's been-- the decision has been that there's no rent as of this moment.

COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Excellent, okay. And if I may have one more question. The 42nd Council District has one of the largest senior populations in the City, yet some of the centers in the district lack DFTA contacts, particularly Boulevard Houses which had lost their contract about five years ago when it was under Wayside Senior Services. Now Fort Greene Senior Services has the-- well, it doesn't have the contract there, but they're being funded through discretionary funding. We wanted to know how does this budget address those disparities and ensure reliable services if go forward [sic] with those particular seniors, is there any assistance to help those?

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2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Give me the
3 name of the program again.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Fort Greene
5 Senior--

6 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
7 [interposing] No, no, Fort Greene I know.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Oh, Boulevard
9 Houses.

10 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Boulevard.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: They're actually a
12 RAD-converted development.

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Right.
14 I'll get back to you on that once I get information,
15 alright?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Okay. Thank you.
17 Thank you, Madam Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Council Member
19 Salaam.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Thank you, Chair,
21 and thank you, Commissioner.

22 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Hi.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: A question about
24 the Federal Government-- they're considering a cut of
25 \$880 billion in spending in the next 10 years, a move

that threatens funding for Medicare programs-- or
Medicaid programs, rather. So, what I wanted to ask
was how would this affect older adults in New York
City?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It would--
it's not under the purview of the Department for the
Aging, of NYC Aging, but what I can tell you is that
every long-term care older adults, every older adult
receiving long-term care will be affected. Every
older adult receiving other medical services will be
affected. The impact will be great on the older
adult population. That coupled with the Social
Security conversations also present a threat to the
older adult population.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: And I know you
said every--

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
[interposing] And just know that long-term managed
care is the bulk of the in-home services that older
adults receive, because the ISEP [sic] services are
just a small portion. Those state, non-Medicaid
homecare services are a small portion of all of the
services that older adults receive in their home.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Is it possible
3 also in that answer for there to be maybe a zeroing
4 in on the demographics that might be more affected
5 than others?

6 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah,
7 because those with the greatest needs and the lowest
8 income are those that are going to be affected.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Got you.

10 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: That's who
11 the Medicaid client is and that's the Medicaid client
12 receiving essential in-home services.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Is there a plan to
14 address a budgetary deficit that might arise from
15 something like that?

16 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Well,
17 Medicaid is not under our purview, but what we have
18 been looking at is some scenarios based on the
19 federal funding that NYC Aging receive, but it is not
20 around Medicaid or long-term managed care. It will
21 affect, as I said earlier to Chair Brannan as well as
22 to Chair Hudson, it'll center around case management,
23 home-delivered meals, congregate meals, and things of
24 that nature. And transportation and elder abuse.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Well, thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Council
3 Member. Just have a couple things. With regard to
4 the Untied Senior Center of Sunset Park--

5 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
6 [interposing] Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: the issue there
8 where the landlord is trying to raise the rent by 70
9 percent which is not possible. What support is DFTA
10 able to offer there?

11 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Great. SO,
12 we offer-- we said anywhere from five to 10 percent
13 which is our normal adjustments. We offer that to
14 the landlord, and obviously you know that that met
15 with a no. And what we've also done is I went to
16 DCAS once I visited the center about a month and a
17 half ago, two months ago, whenever it was. I went to
18 DCAS to start looking at City-owned property in the
19 area so that we could house-- see if we could find
20 another location for them within the Sunset Park
21 area, and we're working on that diligently. But just
22 know for us the most important thing is to make sure
23 that older adults continue to get the services. And
24 so what we have is a plan where we send older adults
25 to some of the neighboring communities, which is

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2 already being done by the way, to make sure that
3 there's no break in service for the older adult.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: But you're in-- doo
5 you have a line into the landlord there?

6 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: No, we
7 don't negotiate with the landlord. We negotiate with
8 the olde adult provider and who has the direct line
9 with the landlord.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I have a couple
11 questions--

12 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
13 [interposing] The landlord went from a 90 percent
14 increase to a 70 percent increase.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah, yeah, very
16 generous.

17 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: You know,
18 what I proposed, and I think I've spoken to you,
19 Chair Hudson, about this is we need to start looking
20 at commercial spaces who house nonprofits and see if
21 we can come up with some reasonable rates and--

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] We're
23 working on that separately.

24 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, yeah.
25 So--

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I have a question
3 from Majority Whip Selvena Brooks-Powers who had to
4 leave. As the population of older adults continues
5 to grow in our city, her question is specifically
6 around what DFTA is doing specifically to help meet
7 that increasing need in southeast Queens. Could you
8 speak to that?

9 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Sure. This
10 administration has invested in additional \$3.6
11 million in southeast Queens specifically to address
12 some of the growing needs there, and we continue to
13 do that. As I said to the Councilwoman that, you
14 know, we always look at population shifts and start
15 trying to address those as the opportunity arises,
16 but they-- sometimes the Older Adult Centers are not
17 exactly where the population shift occurs, and so we
18 need to navigate and negotiate those.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Chair Hudson?

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much.
21 The Executive Plan includes an addition of \$157,515
22 in Fiscal 2025, \$601,859 in Fiscal 26 and 27, and
23 \$450,288 in Fiscal 2028 from federal funding sources.
24 What is the federal funding source?
25

2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The federal
3 funding source for us would also be the Older
4 Americans Act, C1, C2, B1, and B3, right? I think I
5 forgot one of the B's, but somewhere-- B1 and B2.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, and what
7 program will this funding be utilized for or
8 programs?

9 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Primarily
10 home-delivered meals and congregate meals, those are
11 the C1 and C2. The B's are case management, elder
12 abuse and crime, and then there is--

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Sorry, case
14 management, elder abuse, and?

15 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And the
16 crime services, and then there is the-- I'll tell you
17 in a minute. I'll ask you in a minute whatever I
18 forgot. Then we also have the employment programs
19 under other federal funding, right? Through
20 Americore [sp?] and foster grandparent also is funded
21 by Americore or under the same house that funds that.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And how is NYC Aging
23 planning to implement this program or these programs?

24 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We continue
25 to look at these scenarios once we get a clearer

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2 picture of where they're going we'll be able to
3 address that. But we're looking at this on a regular
4 basis, and we've come up with, you know, three or
5 four scenarios.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Multiple scenarios,
7 okay.

8 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Excuse
9 me, Commissioner.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes.

11 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Sorry,
12 Chair Hudson. You're talking about the \$157,000 in
13 25, correct?

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes.

15 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO:
16 \$600,000 in 26. So, I just want to make a
17 correction--

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Yep,
19 and \$450 in 28.

20 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO:
21 [inaudible] correct it. So, it's actually-- it's a
22 grant. It's a housing-- it's a minor home repair
23 grant that we just got. So, we basically-- we're
24 instituting part of it in 25, the rest of it in 26.

25 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So this is from HUD?

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2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Yes.

3 And again, so we're still waiting for the actual
4 award to be given to us. We're negotiating it.

5 Again, given the-- what's happening in the Federal
6 Government, it's pretty hard to pinpoint when we
7 basically will get this award.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And sorry, it's
9 specifically for what?

10 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Minor
11 home repairs.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Minor home repairs.

13 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Similar
14 to what the Councilwoman was discussing about the
15 pilot, the one that we're piloting right now.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yep.

17 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: This is
18 another one on top of that.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Got it.

20 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: so,
21 there's the RFP for that one, but then we just got a
22 grant separately for that. So there are two
23 different-- two similar programs running at the same
24 time.

25 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Understood.

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2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: This is
3 100 percent federal funds.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. And you're
5 scenario planning for this as well?

6 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I don't know
7 if I understood your question.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That's okay. I think
9 I had that one and another one, so we're good.
10 You're scenario planning for that as well, or would
11 the program--

12 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO:
13 [interposing] Yeah.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: just cease to exist
15 or what?

16 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO:
17 Correc.t So, right now, for example, it's a
18 [inaudible] five [sic] program, [inaudible] five. So
19 we initially had conversations prior to all these
20 different things happening, so we plan-- this is
21 actually right now it's planning to hire the
22 individual who would actually go out and do the
23 assessments of the homes before they can actually be
24 then--

2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:

3 [interposing] I know, but what if we don't get the
4 money?

5 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Right.

6 So, part of that, again, this isn't-- we haven't
7 hired this individual yet. So, we're still waiting
8 for this. We're planning for the person to be hired
9 or not. We're still waiting. In terms of funding,
10 sorry.

11 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: These are

12 100 percent funded by federal dollars.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: No, I understand.

14 I'm just thinking, you know, a lot of these decisions
15 come down without any real notification. So--

16 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO:

17 [interposing] So, currently based on what we have
18 internally, we can cover this for this year, in terms
19 of-- for example, if the individual comes--

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] This

21 fiscal year or this--

22 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: 25,

23 yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Two
3 months that come in. Then July-- again, everything
4 is we take this going forward--

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Right.

6 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: and see
7 exactly what's happening. So, again, as the
8 Commissioner mentioned earlier, we're looking at
9 different scenarios. This is the one that we feel
10 for 25, because of the way we're at we can manage
11 this if the person comes on board. Starting July
12 when the actual program kicks off which is literally
13 going out there and looking at-- assessing. So that
14 is basically-- we're all planning this month to month
15 to see what happens.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, but when do
17 you hire-- when do you plan to hire the person?

18 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: So, the
19 person basically is-- right now, there is par [sic]
20 in process for this individual.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

22 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: So--

23 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:

24 [interposing] And it could be anywhere because it's a
25 par in process, it could be anywhere between two

weeks and three months before, you know,-- because
you know, we have the two for one ratio.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Right.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. The Executive
Plan includes an additional \$203,947 in federal
funding for Fiscal 2025 only in related to Medicare.
How will this funding be used, and how does it relate
to Medicare?

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: So,
this is-- again, this is a grant. So, this is the
MIFA [sic] grant that came in for 25. And so, this
is just adding additional money to cover the existing
cost of the program.

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: What grant
is that?

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: The
MIFA.

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Oh, MIFA.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And was this funding
only added for one year?

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: For
this year, yeah. So, there is-- so part of this is
the additional funding for 25. So, there is part of

the grant is also baselined. So, as we get more
money, we will then add it for 26.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, great. Thank
you. The Council's Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Budget
response called on the administration to add \$5.7
million in baseline funding to NYC Aging's budget for
NORCs, increasing the total budget to \$14.4 million
to expand the program's reach and improve services
throughout the network. Did NYC Aging advocate for
this additional funding during conversation with OMB
regarding the Executive Plan, and if so, how much was
requested?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It's part
of our larger negotiation. I can't give you the full
dollar amount right now. I mean, I will share with
you later on all of the unmet needs request.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. So, you don't
have a specific number that you requested?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: No.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Can you confirm the
current budget for NORCs in Fiscal 2025 and in the
outyears?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: For NORCs,
it's \$16.6 million for 25 and \$17 million for 26.

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2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. And is
3 NYC Aging advocating for additional NORC funding?

4 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: As we do
5 with all of our-- all of the other services, you
6 know, as we see the need growing and as I said to the
7 Councilwoman, shortly every community will be a NORC,
8 and it will be eligible for a NORC in New York City.
9 It's part of our ongoing conversation with OMB.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Gogin back to
11 capital requests. Much of the NYC Aging provider
12 network's infrastructure is in need of renovation.
13 Many Older Adult Centers and naturally-occurring
14 retirement communities are collocated and have large
15 capital needs. How many capital requests has NYC
16 Aging received so far in Fiscal 2025?

17 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: The 19 that
18 we're working on, how many have we--

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] How
20 many requests have you received?

21 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: So,
22 it's part of that May 2nd letter--

23 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
24 [interposing] I know, but what-- how many received?
25 I know that 19 are being worked on.

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2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: 15, 15 projects, \$19
3 million.

4 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Right.
5 Give me one minute, and I'll-- it's in the letter
6 that we--

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] You can
8 have two if you'd like.

9 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Nine.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Nine, okay.

11 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: For 25.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And what--

13 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
14 [interposing] I have it right here. Go ahead.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: What types of
16 requests have you received? And can you just give me
17 the comparison to 24? So, nine in 25.

18 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Zero in
19 24.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Zero in 24. What
21 types of requests are these?

22 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Kitchen
23 equipment, some flooring, most of it is around
24 kitchen renovations.

25 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We've had
3 one or two major ones like an elevator, and we had
4 HVAC which are very costly, but primarily it's around
5 a kitchen, kitchen management.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. And how many
7 capital requests have been fulfilled so far this
8 fiscal year of the nine?

9 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Denied?

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Sorry. Of the nine.

11 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Oh, of the
12 nine.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: How many capital
14 requests have been fulfilled so far this fiscal year?

15 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: So,
16 there's still in progress. They aren't--

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] All
18 nine are in progress?

19 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Yeah.

20 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: So, none have--

22 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ:
23 [interposing] But they're different stages.

24 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Right.
25 They're different stages.

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2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: been fulfilled yet.

3 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Yeah,
4 so some of them are in different stages. So we have
5 some that will be done by June 30th and some will
6 roll over to next year.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

8 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: We can
9 give you a status of them.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: How do you
11 prioritize capital need requests from the providers?

12 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It's health
13 and safety first. Health and safety, and then it's
14 alignment with the kitchen plan, and those are
15 prioritized already.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: But then as
18 with everything else, we get a flood and that becomes
19 the priority.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I had a question
21 about the Older Adult Centers and non-NYCHA or non-
22 city-owned facilities. Are there any Older Adult
23 Centers in non-city-owned or non-NYCHA facilities?

24 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Oh, yeah,
25 yeah.

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. So, do those
3 providers get rent included in their contracts?

4 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And why does the
6 agency include rent for those providers and not for
7 the NYCHA providers?

8 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I can't
9 give you that total answer, but I can tell you that
10 history-- and this is-- part of the agreement was
11 that the City would provide NYCHA with the community
12 services that were part of the funding requirements
13 for public housing, and it has done so through Older
14 Adult Clubs as well as youth programs, and I think
15 that was a long-term agreement. That decision is way
16 beyond our capacity. That's a city decision, and at
17 this point there has been no funding for rent in
18 NYCHA facilities.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. I think
20 Council Member Brewer had another question.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Just quickly.
22 The biggest issue is dental, and I know it's a hard
23 topic. Obviously, if you're covered, fine, but when
24 you're not it's hard. Is that something that comes
25

across your radar at all in terms of dental for older adults?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: You know, if I were to think of the health needs, the biggest one for us is not dental, it's hearing, and how we are trying to address that, and we're working-- looking at all possible ways, because one of the things that Doctor Katz has told us is that there are ways you can mitigate hearing loss for a large swath of the population, and we're looking at possible legislation to include hearing or provided as part of a benefit. But we're way off on that, but that is-- if I were to think of the two health needs, the first one that comes up is hearing, support around hearing.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Alright, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: The Executive Plan includes 328 budgeted positions for Fiscal 2025 increasing to 340 positions in Fiscal 2026 and in the outyears. As of March 2025, 303 positions were filled with 25 positions vacant. Which programs or areas are these vacant positions in?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Primarily in the program officer role.

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT WITH COMMITTEE ON AGING 211

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Program officer.

3 Does the Agency have adequate headcount to
4 effectively run all of its programs and initiatives?

5 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: No. we are
6 always negotiating with OMB around an adequate amount
7 of headcount, and we have a shifting 14 positions to
8 make sure that we have-- can complete all of our
9 assessment and mandated functions, and we-- even
10 though the positions have been baselined, we're
11 negotiating with OMB on making sure that they're
12 fully funded.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: What would be an
14 adequate number in terms of headcount?

15 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: It depends
16 on the resources, but--

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Well,
18 that's what I'm trying to get to.

19 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah. So,
20 I can't give you that answer right now, because it
21 really depends on the resources that we have, the
22 number of programs, and then that would really
23 determine a parity between function and staffing
24 needs.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT WITH COMMITTEE ON AGING 212

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. How is NYC
3 Aging actively working to fill these vacancies?

4 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We are very
5 aggressive in terms of advertising, word of mouth,
6 and internal referrals. One of the things that we're
7 always grappling with is do we hire and promote from
8 within which is always the goal, but to make sure
9 that we can do that without compromising this two for
10 one, and you know, this whole process that we have to
11 go through to fill vacancies.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Thank you.
13 In the Fiscal 2025 Adopted Budget, \$11.1 million was
14 added to provide additional support to the HDM and
15 OAC programs. This funding was only added in Fiscal
16 2025 and was not baselined. How has this additional
17 funding been utilized?

18 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Can you
19 repeat the question again, sorry?

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah, absolutely.

21 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: HDM.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: In the Fiscal 2025
23 Adopted Budget, \$11.1 million was added to provide
24 additional support to the HDM and OAC programs. This
25 funding was only added in Fiscal 2025 and not

baselined. How has this additional funding been
utilized, the \$11.1 million?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: I believe
that was part of the cliff restoration, but we will
get back to you exactly on how it was utilized.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Do you know if
it was part of the funding that was added in the
Executive Plan?

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: We'll
get back to you, because there's difficulty trying to
find that.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Figure out
that dollar amount.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER MERCADO: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We're
trying to figure out that exact dollar amount, and I
don't want to misrepresent.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: No, I appreciate
that. Okay. And the NYC Aging's term and condition
report on Older Adult Centers utilization data was
provided to the Council for calendar year 2024, but
this report did not include the weighted utilization
percentages, a vital component of the reporting

requirement. The Council still has not received this data. When does NYC Aging anticipate this data will be provided to the Council?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: That is a technological issue that we're having with Passport, and so when we can reconcile the data between Passport and our STARS program, we will be able to give you the most current data, and we're also in the process of changing of STARS data management to [inaudible], and in that system that will be reconciled. So, we're in a data maze of data speaking to each other and being able to give you the adequate numbers. The-- not adequate numbers, because the numbers are adequate, the most up-to-date numbers.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Understood. Thank you. What information can NYC Aging share with us today regarding utilization rates across the OAC network?

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: We're about 90 percent. We're really pleased that the numbers have been--

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Sorry, what was the percentage?

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT WITH COMMITTEE ON AGING 215

2 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah, we're
3 at 90 percent rate in terms--

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] 90?

5 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: 90, yeah.
6 Frankly, yeah, we're at 90 percent rate.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Just wanted
8 to make sure it was 90 and nine.

9 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: And we keep
10 looking at pre-pandemic as the number in the panacea
11 and I think that we live in a new world, and I don't
12 know that that should be the data which we are always
13 measuring against.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Yeah, I guess
15 we can't, you know, keep going back to the old status
16 quo.

17 COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Yeah. And
18 we also have to take into account that more older--
19 more people are turning 60 and their needs are
20 different, and so until we can address what those
21 needs are, we will always see ourselves at a
22 different pace.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Thank you so
24 much. That concludes our questions. I don't think
25

any other members have questions. Okay, great. Thank
you so much, Commissioner, and CFO.

COMMISSIONER CORTES-VAZQUEZ: Thank you
very, very much. Thank you for your time, and thank
you always for your commitment and serious commitment
to older adults.

CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you,
Commissioner. Alright, we're going to take a five-
minute break and then we're going to open it up for
public testimony.

[break]

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, Sergeants are
ready? Okay. We're going to open it up for public
testimony. I want to remind members of the public
that this is a government proceeding and that decorum
shall be observed at all times. As such, members of
the public shall remain silent at all times. The
witness table is reserved for people who wish to
testify. No video recording or photography is
allowed from the witness table. Furthermore, members
of the public may not present audio or video
recordings as testimony, but they may submit
transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at

Arms for inclusion in the hearing record. If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant at Arms and wait to be recognized. Once recognized, you'll have two minutes to speak on today's hearing topics which are the Sanitation and the Aging FY26 Executive Budgets. If you have a written statement or additional written testimony you wish to submit for the record, please provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant at Arms. You may also email written testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72 hours of this hearing. Again, audio and video recordings will not be accepted. So, I'm going to call the first panel. We have Catherine Thurston, Bryan Ellicot Cook, Kevin Kiproviski, Anita Kwok, and Elizabeth Grellier. Okay, you want to start from my left, your right? Just make sure your mic's on.

ELIZABETH GRELLIER: Hello.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Go ahead.

ELIZABETH GRELLIER: Chair Hudson, Chair Brannan, and members of the New York City Council Committees on Aging and Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify on supporting naturally-

occurring retirement communities or NORCs in New York City. We deeply appreciate your ongoing support which has enabled VNS Health to provide nursing services to 38 NORCs across the City. For 130 years, VNS Health has helped people live, age, and heal where they feel most comfortable, in their homes and communities. As the largest nonprofit home and community-based healthcare provider in New York, we serve over 70,000 residents daily with a wide range of services. Thanks to City Council funding, VNS Health currently serves approximately 20,000 older adults across 38 NORCs, addressing over 40 health conditions. Our NORC nurses provide comprehensive health services including health assessments, education, and support navigating the complex healthcare system to meet the needs of older residents in their homes, enable them to live independently, and delay hospitalization. Our nurses speak English, Spanish, Russian, Mandarin, Cantonese, and French Creole, and have provided more than 16,000 hours of nursing to older residents so far in Fiscal Year 2025. The demand for NORC nursing services is growing. The 65 and older population in New York City continues to increase, and we are receiving more

and more requests for nursing services. These services are not reimbursable by insurance, and our program relies on the funding it receives. Budget cuts to programs that support Aging could jeopardize long-term sustainability and the care our older residents need. Though we serve 38 sites, we know there is more need than we can meet. For Fiscal Year 2026, we're requesting funding to expand our care to three additional sites. The provision of nursing services has also become more expensive. Reflecting higher wages and related costs for our nurses effective this year, VNS Health has increased its nursing rate to allow us to retain and recruit nursing professionals during the current nursing shortage. This has resulted in a cost increase to cover a current level of NORC nursing services which is necessary to provide consistent care and timely connection to providers for our patients. Our limited increase also reflects our commitment to our NORC partners and a recognition of the immense importance of this care. Thank you again for your support of NORCs and NORC nursing. We greatly appreciate it, and we hope you all will support us in funding in this fiscal year. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

3 ANITA KWOK: Thank you, Chairs Hudson and
4 Brannan for convening today's budget hearing on
5 Aging. My name is Anita Kwok, a Policy Analyst for
6 United Neighborhood Houses and Association of
7 Settlement Houses in New York. We're really grateful
8 for the Council's support on aging services by
9 including many of our priorities in the Preliminary
10 Budget, and when the Mayor released the Executive
11 Budget, we were really relieved to see that the NYC
12 fiscal-- the NYC Aging fiscal cliff cuts were
13 restored with an \$81.5 million investment in FY26 and
14 \$75 million restoration to baseline as well as
15 restoration of \$23 million in OAC PEG cuts in FY26
16 and \$37.7 million in the outyears. So, now, we urge
17 the Council to fight to restore funding in the FY26
18 budget and make these new investments in the aging
19 services network. Older adults were just outside
20 City Hall demanding no more cuts and to fund aging
21 now, so thank you, Council Members Hudson, Banks,
22 Nurse, and Gutiérrez for stopping by. Yeah, this is
23 a growing population with growing needs without
24 resources to handle ongoing inflation. So, UNH urges
25 the City to take the following budget actions to

support older New Yorkers. One, increase food budgets at Older Adult Centers with \$57 million investment to meet inflation needs. This week, UNH is actually releasing a report on the impact of congregate meal programs on OACs and more details about cost increases highlighting the urging need to invest \$57 million in the budget. We look forward to sharing it with the Council. Two, invest \$28.6 million to operationalize Council Member Linda Lee's Intro 770 which would require the City to pay meals seven days a week. Expanding home-delivered meals is really critical to addressing food insecurity. Three, invest \$44 million for the case management program to help with case loads and staffing. Case loads have increased and [inaudible] have been eliminated, and there's a really high need for case management right now without the funds. Four, create a recurring capital fund of at least \$5 million for programs and repairs. Thank you to the Council for including the \$50 million in its Preliminary Budget response for capital needs and aging services programs echoing our cries for a recurring capital fund in this amount each year for NYC Aging. And four-- five, restore Council initiatives which

provide enormous support for our older adults and the programs that support them, including growing the NORC City Council initiative to \$6.2 million. We thank the Council for all of its support for Aging, and urge them to fight for these essential enhancements in FY26. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

KEVIN KIPROVSKI: Good afternoon. My name is Kevin Kiproviski and I'm Director of Public Policy for LiveOn New York. Thank you all for the opportunity to testify on the Aging budget today. LiveOn New York's members include more than 110 community-based nonprofits that provide core services under the NYC Aging portfolio and many other home and community-based services in our city. First of all, we're really grateful that the fiscal cliff is filled. That would have been a catastrophe of unprecedented proportions in this city with 90 centers closing. So, we're really glad to be past that. But even in the case where we maintain the status quo, our system is not prepared for the current needs, and is definitely not prepared for the increase in needs that we will be seeing in the aging population in our city in the next five to 10 years.

Right now, the Center for the Urban Future and AARP have published a report that shows that over 50per; of older adults in our city have no retirement income at all, none whatsoever. And one of the only systems providing them services is the New York City Aging older adult system to get meals, to get assist with their food and our city funds that mostly with City Tax Levy funding. It is one of the most incredible systems in the country. I know that. I've spoken to a lot of other aging providers in the country. We have a great one, but unfortunately, we are not investing in it enough to ensure that it stays viable for the future and we'll be able to meet expanding need. Second, our own housing report from LiveOn shows that older adults are becoming homeless at a rate three times higher than younger demographics due to skyrocketing rents. And one of the biggest ways that people stay in their homes is by getting services from, you know, the City to prevent them from being evicted. And again, Older Adult Centers are one of the places where people can get these services. We're going to call with a bunch of our other members for three major areas of investment. One, \$500 million for OAC's state of good repair. That's every

Older Adult Center in the City ensuring that it can remain open and ensuring that its services can grow and meet the needs of a city that will be expanding its older adult population by 25 percent in just five years. Two, \$44 million for expanded case management. As we heard the Commissioner say, higher needs clients are taking more resources which means fewer people are getting the services they need. We need to expand these contracts to include more case managers, more intake staff, and more resources so that we're meeting the needs our city has today and the needs that we will have. And the last one is \$78 million for increased nutritional support. There's been no investment to meet any of the inflationary cost demands on providers for the last five years. and also, we are seeing a need to fully fund weekend meals with Council Member Lee's intro. We would not want to see an unfunded mandate that puts providers in a terrible position, so we're calling for \$21 million additional dollars to make sure that that is funded fully throughout seven days a week for all meals. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

2 BRYAN ELLICOTT-COOK: Good afternoon,
3 Chairs Hudson and Brannan and members of the
4 Committee. My name is Bryan Ellicott-Cook, and I'm
5 the Director of Government Relations at SAGE, the
6 country's oldest and largest organization dedicated
7 to LGBTQ+ older adults. Since 1978 SAGE has advocated
8 for policies that help LGBTQ+ elders age with dignity
9 and security, and we deeply appreciate the Mayor's
10 Executive Budget addressing that million-dollar
11 fiscal cliff, but we still need more. In the midst of
12 the rising tide of anti-LGBT rhetoric and policies
13 from Washington, many LGBTQ+ older adults live in fear
14 and uncertainty about their rights, their healthcare
15 and their overall wellbeing. For thousands of our
16 city's queer elders, SAGE is a vital source of
17 support providing essential services, advocacy, and a
18 welcoming community to ensure that no one is left to
19 navigate these challenges alone. To meet these
20 growing needs, we are seeking increased support to
21 serve the important and often invisible population.
22 LGBTQ+ elders are frequently isolated, disconnected
23 for services, and without the vital support of
24 traditional biological family structures. They are
25 far more likely to live alone and less likely to rely

on family members for caregiving. SAGE bridges that gap through culturally-competent care building trust in community for our elders in New York City, and to meet that growing demand, SAGE is specifically asking for a request across our funding for FY26, and it's all in my testimony. But we are also here to also with LiveOn to prioritize \$500 million to repair Older Adult Centers, \$44 million to expand case management staffing and reduce caseloads, and \$78 million for nutritional services including weekend meals for homebound elders. LGBT elders have given so much to our city, and we ask to invest in their futures. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

CATHERINE THURSTON: Good afternoon. I'm Catherine Thurston, the CEO of Service Program for Older People, or SPOP. Thank you, Chairs Brannan and Hudson, for this opportunity to address the New York City Council Finance Committee and Committee on Aging. SPOP plays a unique role in supporting the health, emotional wellbeing and independence of older New Yorkers. we are the only agency in New York City that is exclusively dedicated to community-based mental health for older adults, and we provide

outpatient treatment to 1,000 adults each year.

We've been doing this work for over 45 years, and we offer services via telehealth at our offices on the upper west side of Manhattan and at satellite locations in Brooklyn, the Bronx and Manhattan. The benefits and outcomes from age-affirming mental healthcare are significant. The overwhelming majority of our clients experience reduce mental health symptoms, increased social connectedness, and improved wellbeing. Over 90 percent report they now are less likely to call 911 or visit an emergency department in the event of a mental health challenge. Our clients all grow older, but they do so in a healthier way. We understand that seeking mental healthcare can be a challenge, and we've developed strategies to partner with hospitals, aging service providers, and NYC Aging-funded Older Adult Centers to address stigma and connect with those who are most vulnerable and isolated. All of our clinicians are experienced in providing age-affirming mental healthcare and we offer individual and group therapy along with other services and linkages to community-based services to support aging in place. Looking ahead, we are deeply concerned about the proposed

Medicaid funding cuts and the dissolution of the Administration for Community Living which regulates and disseminates all federal funding related to the Older Americans Act which will cause massive harm to older New Yorkers, particularly those who are most marginalized. I therefore urge the Committee on Finance to advocate for robust funding for programs and services that support the wellbeing of older adults, including community-based, age-affirming mental healthcare. Thank you for your work on behalf of all older New Yorkers, and for this opportunity to testify today.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you all. Thank you all very much for your testimony. Okay, our next panel we have Justin Green, Niki Cross, Dominico Morales-- Domingo Morales, I'm sorry-- and Ronda Keyser. Want to start?

NIKI CROSS: Good afternoon. My name is Niki Cross and I'm a Staff Attorney with New York Lawyers for the Public Interest with our Environmental Justice Program. Thanks for the opportunity to speak on behalf of NYLPI regarding the Sanitation hearing. the Independent Budget Office and State Comptroller DiNapoli both found that New

York City's economic outlook remains strong and projects significant budget surpluses. Despite federal threats, the solid waste system remains under municipal control, and reducing disposed waste is still one of the best local strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from solid waste which make up about 12 percent of New York's economy-wide emissions. Our city's waste reduction programs are at the critical crossroads. In recent years, the City Council has passed landmark legislation seeking to reform the solid waste system including citywide curbside organics recycling, a citywide commercial waste zone program, and the Zero Waste Act with the goal of diverting 100 percent of recyclable waste from landfills and incinerators. However, we're troubled by the slow pace of implementation of these programs and our concern that underfunding and further delays create unnecessary barriers to achieving our mandated goals to make our sprawling solid waste system more equitable, safe and sustainable. DSNY's 2024 Zero Waste Report shows that overall waste diversion lags at a troublingly low 17 to 20 percent, and that only about one percent of residential food waste was recycled in the

curbside smart bin and community-based composting programs. Meanwhile, the amounts of waste generated, disposed and recycled by the sprawling commercial sector are still unknown and are largely unregulated as DSNY has implemented only one of 20 zones and has set a timetable to implement only two additional zones this year. DSNY continues to claim that this slow roll out is required for effective implementation, but also contradictorily says that the program has seen zero problems in its first zone. We continue to call for adequate funding for a robust and rapid roll out now, not a trickle of zones over many more years. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

RHONDA KEYSER: Hello. Thank you, Chair Abreu and to the Council for this opportunity to speak. My name is Rhonda Keyser. I'm Cafeteria Culture's Program and Policy Director. I come to you today straight out of a program teaching the second graders the worm dance going over at that-- they learned with Domingo. And they were also learning about food waste and teaching their peers about food waste. This is a program that we're doing where we are reducing waste at the source. Thank you very

much for mentioning that. The students are reducing food waste by-- from their cafeteria. Between 35 and 80 percent of overall food waste they're reducing it, but they're also eating between 15 and 30 percent more food per student through this program, and it's not about austerity or scarcity, it's about agency, and that's what our programs do. Our students have agency. As some of you may remember from the last budget hearing when two groups of our students came to testify. They just got over math testing, so we didn't really have time to do that this time in their schedule. But we're very excited to scale up the program that we've been working on. We really appreciate the City Council's budget allocation to compost project-- compost network folks and also to us. We started with a partnership with Domingo Morales at Compost Power and we've chosen schools deliberately that were near his sites so that students could see a working compost site that's active and that's accessible to them, that they have access to the resources that they're going to get from these sites. So, we want to scale up both our food waste reduction program and also our student's

opportunity to interface with compost sites. Thank
you.

DOMINGO MORALES: Thank you, Chair Abreu
and City Council, for having me. My name is Domingo
Morales, founder and CEO of Compost Power, an
organization that prides itself, as Rhonda said here,
on making composting cool by removing the negative
stigmas associated with composting such as increased
rodent pressure, foul odors and other landfill
conditions. We operate in public housing, showing
residents that compost locally can reduce rodent
populations and increase rodent-free greenspaces
throughout the City. Finished compost can be used to
grow food locally, mitigate erosion from storm water
runoff, reduce methane emissions, and reduce the use
of chemical fertilizers and pesticides while
simultaneously creating jobs when making composting
cool for New York City residents. Compost Power was
funded by City Council last year, and what did that
prove? That proved that with investment we can do
great things. It proves that with the City support we
can create tools like the rodent reduction rubric, a
tool that we helped create to enable composters and
community gardens to reduce rodent populations in

their community. Last year, City Council made a statement that it cares about New York City Housing Authority. One in 17 New Yorkers who have been historically left out of DSNY's vision for a zero waste city. Before Compost Power was funded through the community compost with discretionary funds, we were funded by individual City Council Members and we are always grateful for that support that we get from the City. However, last year was so special because we were recognized by the entire Council. As an organizations that serves all five boroughs, we are thankful that we have a City Council that cares about their people. I'm not here to tell you what to do with your funding next year. I'm just here to tell you how your funding impacted New York City last year, and I'm also here to inform you that the funding you gave to community composting last year was not in vain. We worked hard to create the New York City Community Compost Network with almost two dozen CBOs. We know what the true enemy is. The true enemy is being unsustainable, taking our taxpayer dollars and wasting them on programs that don't work or even worse, spending valuable time bickering over who has the perfect solution. So, I'm

here to show support for City Council. I'm here to tell you that no matter what you do with the funding this year, we're here to support you to make New York City the best city that it can be. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

JUSTIN GREEN: I'm Justin Green. I'm the Executive Director of Big Reuse. Thank you to Chair Brannan, Chair Abreu and my Council Member, Chair Hudson. Appreciate you having us. I'm also part of the network with Domingo and Rhonda, the Community Composting Network that spans the city with environmental groups doing amazing work. Some of the work that Big Reuse does is with the funding from last year when we had opened 30 food scrap drop-offs across Brooklyn, Queens, Bronx, and Roosevelt Island. We worked with a designer to manufacture and design a rat-proof compost cubes that we're installing in community gardens across the City. We're reopening two mid-scale composting facilities, one in Gowanus, one in Central Park. We delivered compost to over 75 schools and helped promote use of compost in parks and gardens, trained master composters in Brooklyn, had 150 outreach and community events, supported care for street trees, a thousand street trees with 2,000

2 volunteers, and helped support composters at Bronx
3 River Alliance in Gowanus Canal [inaudible]. The
4 funding is-- you know, supports work and an approach
5 to composting that builds community that improves New
6 York City soil and does a lot more in addition to the
7 curbside. So, it's important for-- as we roll out
8 curbside to keep supporting community composting to
9 educate New Yorkers. So many New Yorkers have no
10 idea of the value of composting and our work
11 demonstrates that in really tangible ways that people
12 get their hands dirty [inaudible]. So, we urge you
13 to keep supporting the computing composting programs
14 that you brought back last year. Thanks so much.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Thank
16 you all very much.

17 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I want to thank you
18 guys as well. Keep doing the good work.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, our next
20 panel we have Mohammad Razvi, Brianna McKinney,
21 Zhikang Ling, Navdeep Bains, Jeanette Estima. You
22 want to start? Go ahead.

23 JEANETTE ESTIMA: Hi, thank you, Chair
24 Brannan and Chair Hudson for the opportunity to
25 testify today. My name is Jeanette Estima. I'm the

Policy Director at Citymeals on Wheels. Congregate and home-delivered meals programs are a critical part of this city's anti-hunger infrastructure, and these programs must be shored up in the face of possible federal cuts, but even still, they are not going far enough to address the problem. When we surveyed participants, we found that 50 percent had experienced food insecurity, and that went up to 60 percent when we looked only at home-delivered meals participants. Addressing this need will require expanding the programs and creating new ones that bring food directly to homebound older adults. That's why we piloted several new programs this year that bring more food to older New Yorkers in new ways. The Breakfast Box is essentially a second meal program currently serving about 2,000 people, and we're hoping to double that next year. And our Mobile Groceries program brings monthly bags of food directly to homebound older adults. We're grateful for the Council's \$500,000 to support our emergency meals program which provided 273,000 meals in FY24, and we ask for a renewal of that amount for FY26. Additionally, we're asking for \$200,000 to support our innovative pilot programs. Finally, we urge the

Council to pass Intro 770 to require the home-delivered meals program to provide one meal a day, 365 days a year, and to secure the \$21 million needed to do so. We also ask for an investment of \$57 million in the congregate meals program to address years of cost increases. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

BRIANNA MCKINNEY: Good afternoon, Chairs Hudson, Brannan, and members of the Committees. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Brianna McKinney and I'm the Chief Advancement Officer at Project Guardianship. We're a nonprofit that provides person-centered guardianship services to New Yorkers who have no one else, no family, no friends and no financial means to manage their affairs. We also advocate for reforms to improve and modernize New York's guardianship system. Guardianship plays a vital role for people who can no longer safely make decisions due to advanced dementia, serious mental illness, and other conditions. A guardian ensures access to medical care, manages finances, secures benefits, and meets basic needs like housing and food. It is a tool of last resort meant to be limited in scope and used

only when no other option exists. When no longer necessary, it should be swiftly terminated and rights restored. Yet, today, courts across New York struggle to meet the legal mandate to appoint a guardian in every case where one is needed. In one-third of cases statewide and up to half here in New York City, judges report that they cannot appoint anyone because no qualified guardian is available. Those who are poor, alone, or marginalized fall through the cracks because there's no public system to support them. The consequences ripple across hospitals, courts, and social services, delaying discharges, postponing proceedings, and leaving thousands unprotected. We were encouraged by the Council's recent passage of Resolution 0561 which calls for a statewide public guardianship system in partnership with experienced nonprofits. Unfortunately, New York State did not heed the Council's call in their Fiscal 26 budget, allocating only \$1 million annually for guardianship services, an amount that's woefully disconnected from the scale of the problem. With proposed federal cuts to Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, and Social Security, this crisis will deepen. Guardians can coordinate care,

but they cannot replace the safety net. Yet when done right, guardianship reduces unnecessary hospitalizations and nursing home placements allowing people to age in their homes and communities, and saving approximately \$67,000 per individual per year, largely in Medicaid costs. Meeting the statewide need would generate over \$85 million in annual savings. We urge our city leaders to take action by funding expanded nonprofit guardianship services and helping build a stable, accountable infrastructure of care. Thank you for your leadership and the opportunity to testify today.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

NAVDEEP BAINS: Thank you, Chair Crystal Hudson and the Committee on Aging as well as Chair Justin Brannan and the Committee on Finance, for holding this hearing and giving us the opportunity to testify. I am Navdeep Bains, Associate Director of Advocacy and Policy at the Asian American Federation where we proudly represent the collective voice of more than 70 member nonprofits serving 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers. Asian older adults are the fastest growing older adult communities citywide, making up 14 percent of New York City's senior

population. This population growth was coupled with a rise in poverty and currently 42 percent of Asian seniors are low-income, making them among the city's poorest seniors. Moreover, 25 percent of Asian seniors experiencing poverty live alone and face isolation and 84 percent of our seniors have limited English proficiency. I want to discuss the state of our aging population and how the city's budget can best serve their needs. Despite ongoing threats to federal funding cuts in growing anti-immigrant policies, our member organizations like Coco [sic] and Home Craft [sic] have persevered and continue serving the community. Specifically, our seniors working group includes 12 member organizations serving 10 different Asian ethnicities and it is essential for these organizations to receive continued support from the City to maintain their work. The issues impacting the Asian elderly population includes food insecurity, fears of anti-Asian violence, a lack of funding for Older Adult Centers and a lack of mental health support. We're grateful to see the Mayor's budget backfill expiring stimulus dollars related to PEG initiatives, but we're worried that the budget-- that when budget

negotiations take place and a further lack of investment from the Federal Government is taken into account, funding for our older adult services could be some of the first on the chopping block. So we want to make some recommendations. Increased funding to older adult service providers can expand this funding to include time and expenses spent on case management and digital literacy. Continue funding a network of linguistically and culturally-competent food service programs that provide a variety of food benefits to older adults. Expand funding to include culturally-competent in-language mental health services for older adults, and continue to support AAF's Older Adult Initiative to fund our research, our advocacy and our programming to highlight the unique needs of Asian seniors. Thank you for listening to our community's needs, and thank you so much for all the work that y'all do to continue to support our community.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

ZHIKANG LING: Good afternoon, Chair Hudson, Chair Brannan. My name is Zhikang Ling. I'm the Center Director of Homecrest Community Services, Bensonhurst Older Adult Center funded by NYC Aging. I

have worked at the center for 12 years from a part-time program assistant to a Center Director. From all my experience, I see the needs of older adult growing each year. Whether it's access to nutritious food [inaudible] program or simply a safe space that where they feel safe and supported. Our center serve hundreds of older adult each week with meals, social services, finish [sic] classes, and community activities. We see daily how vital these services are for [inaudible] securities, isolation, and health challenges among our older population. We are really grateful that most recent Executive Budget did not move forward with the previous need proposed \$100 million cut to aging services. The decision recognized the critical role these services play in the lives of older New Yorkers. But still, New York City's aging population is one of the fastest growing groups. We urge the Council to further invest in Older Adult Centers to help us retain and hire staff, expand programs, and address mental health needs. Supporting Older Adult Centers is an investment in [inaudible], communities and [inaudible]. We respectfully urge you to prioritize funding for older

adults in the City's budget. Thank you for your
continued commitment to New York City's older adults.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

MOHAMMAD RAZVI: Good afternoon, Chair
Hudson and Chair Brannan and esteemed Council
Members. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.
My name is Mohammad Razvi. I'm the Founder and CEO of
COPO, Council of People's Organization. It is the
largest service provider for Muslim Arab South Asians
in Brooklyn. We serve about 40,000 individuals
annually, and many programs that we have, one of them
is the Senior Center which is possibly the only
Senior Center in Brooklyn funded by the Department of
the Aging. It is the only halal Meals on Wheels
program possibly in the city, state and the country.
I have given my flyer with the testimony. So, in the
flyer you will see the actual halal Meals on Wheels
truck and more importantly, the food pantry, the
halal food pantry that we run are the foods that we
give to our seniors. It is essential that we
continue to support our seniors and the programs for
food, and that's what we're advocating tremendously.
With addition to the mental health counseling,
because we have found many seniors who are in need of

2 that service. And it's imperative that you continue,
3 and I'm so glad that you continue to support DFTA and
4 the Commissioner, because Commissioner and DFTA was
5 the one who actually initiated the first program for
6 us for the halal Meals on Wheels and for such a
7 center in Brooklyn. They actually also utilized the
8 capital grant to help us fund a first kitchen for the
9 community. We totally support their advocacy on
10 getting the resources and we request that City
11 Council put a policy in place which states what is
12 halal, because many individuals are pretending that
13 kosher is same as halal, and halal is not same as
14 kosher. So, please, these are one of the most
15 important things. It is not the same, although
16 diverse communities that can sometimes eat food, but
17 it's not the same. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you all very
19 much.

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Now we have
22 Jim Martin and Chanelle Schwartz Sanchez Batraverse.
23 Want to begin?

24 JIM MARTIN: Good afternoon. My name is
25 Jim Martin. I am the Executive Director of ACE New

York, the Queens-based nonprofit organization. For over 10 years, ACE has worked in partnership with the City Council and Department of Sanitation, removing municipal trash from city sidewalks, gutters, parks and abandoned areas, keeping the City safe and clean for all New Yorkers. We remove in excess of one million garbage every year from city streets.

Beginning August 1st, supplemental sanitation providers like ACE will be required to place all trash bags in containers located on city streets for DSNY collection as part of DSNY's containerization initiative. The Department of Sanitation will begin issuing fines for organizations for noncompliance come January 2nd, 2026. We have estimated the cost to purchase, ship, install, ensure, and maintain the necessary amount of containers at several million dollars. As a nonprofit on a limited budget, ACE does not have the funds necessary to be in compliance with this policy. Should these expenses be passed on to our City Council partners, it would greatly limit their ability to fund the vital services we provide to over 40 council districts every year. Ultimately, the burden of purchasing these containers may result in ACE closing its doors after nearly 34 years of

service to New York City, meaning the 165 ACE employees who provide these services would lose their jobs. These men and women, as many of you know, have graduated our vocational program, have overcome homelessness, incarceration, and addiction, and this job has been a lifeline for them as they begin their journey toward economic independence. Though unintended, this is a real and incredibly cruel consequence of DSNY's containerization rule. I'm here today to urge City Council and the Mayor's Office to fund the purchase of these containers in the FY26 budget. The implementation of DSNY's containerization initiative, while a positive step towards rat mitigation and a cleaner more orderly street, places undue burden on ACE and other similar nonprofits, in fact, punishing them for partnering with the Department of Sanitation help keep city streets clean and safe. The work ACE does every day helps benefits the City, its businesses and residents. The trash we remove is not ours. It is municipal waste. They should not be left to shoulder the cost of purchasing these containers. That responsibility should fall to the Department of Sanitation and the City of New York. Very quickly, I

want to thank the Council for your support in pushing the administration on this matter. It means the world to me and the men and women we so proudly serve. If I could be of more service in this regard, please let me know. Thank you all for your continued support.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

CHANELLE SCHWARTZ SANCHEZ BATRAVILLE:

Good afternoon. I'm Chanelle Schwartz Sanchez Batraverse, a high school senior at the Brearley School on the Upper East Side, organizer and funder of Highbridge Builders, deeply invested in the intersection of urban policy, economics, and law with a focus on equity, systemic clarity, and public service. I was born and raised in the Bronx, Highbridge, to be exact, which is proudly served by Council Member Althea Stevens. My building stands directly in front of Highbridge Park in a friendly family neighborhood that loves its dogs. I've witnessed firsthand how infrastructure and equality shapes perception. When classmate's parents from the Upper East Side were hesitant to visit my home, it wasn't about the people, it was a reaction to broken infrastructure, decades of disinvestment, and a Bronx

is burning narrative that persists despite our vibrant community. I founded Highbridge Builders to challenge this narrative, turning those neighborhoods into our community through meaningful action. I'm here today to address the specific sanitation inequality that connects directly to the work of this committee. Highbridge Park connects Manhattan and the Bronx through a pedestrian bridge. The Manhattan side features numerous free dog waste bad dispensers while the Bronx side has none. With high dog ownership in our area and Manhattan residents frequently crossing into our neighborhood to walk their dogs, this disparity is particularly problematic. Given that our median household income is less than half of the adjacent Manhattan neighborhoods, many residents simply cannot afford to purchase dog waste bags regularly. This creates a cycle that reinforces negative stereotypes. Without access to proper disposal resources, our sidewalks accumulate waste, further cementing the harmful perception that the Bronx is inherently less clean. This isn't a complex issue. It's a clear inequity with a simple fix, and to be clear, this isn't about increasing fines or criminalizing people in a

neighborhood that's already overpoliced. Highbridge needs support, not punishment. We're offering a simple, positive solution giving residents the tools to care for their streets without adding pressure or stigma. I respectfully request that this committee consider supporting legislation like Intro 0281-2024 by Council Member Menin which proposes installing dog waste bag dispensers throughout the City with priority for underserved areas like Highbridge, allocating modest funding for at least two additional trash cans in our neighborhood, partnering with Highbridge Builders to spread awareness about pooper scooper laws using 311 to report dog waste and to host dog licensing events since the City uses that data to track issues, count dog, and guide funding. This is a low-cost, high-impact investment. Cleaner streets increase community pride and a powerful message that this administration values equitable service delivery across all boroughs. I'm encouraged by efforts like Council Member Power's Scoop the Poop PSA campaign which demonstrates how public education can reinforce civic responsibility and by Council Member Brewer's advocacy around responsible pet ownership, and as the Zero Waste Act championed by

Council Members Nurse and Hanif shows waste equity must be addressed with just not-- not just with penalties but with infrastructure, education and access. Highbridge Builders volunteers stand ready to partner with the Department on implementation and maintenance. Thank you for your leadership on these issues and for allowing me to speak on behalf of Highbridge today.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Thank you both very much. Okay, now we have Sandra Martinez, Eustacia Smith, Rachel Neches, Constance Lesold. Sorry if I mispronounce anyone's name. Okay, want to start from the left?

RACHEL NECHES: Good afternoon. Thank you for this conversation today. I'm Rachel Neches. I'm the Data Researcher at the Center for an Urban Future. Thank you to Chair Hudson and Chair Brannan and members of both committees for the opportunity to testify. Our new report out today, the Emerging Financial Security Crisis Facing New York City's Older Adults, revealed a deeply troubling reality. Over the last decade, the number of older adults living in poverty has increased by 41 percent rising to more than 250,000 older adults. Many more are on

the brink. Nearly 60 percent of those aged 70 or over report having no retirement income. Nearly one in five lack social security benefits. This crisis disproportionately affects communities of color. Over the last decade, poverty rates among Asian older adults grew by 82 percent, and among Hispanic older adults by 42.1 percent. Immigrant New Yorkers, many of whom have spent their lives working in low-wage jobs without access to retirement benefits and receive much less in social security face a poverty rate of around 21.7 percent compared to 14.9 percent among US-born older adults. Although recent restorations helped divert significant service cuts, aging services still receive less than half of one percent of the City's budget, even as older adults now make up a record 16.1 percent of all New Yorkers. To meet rising needs, the City will have to commit to long-term increased funding that will allow DFTA to expand access to essential programs, reverse the alarming rise in older adult poverty, and invest in innovative pilot programs and challenge grants. We also recommend a \$50 million investment in capital improvements to shore up New York City's crumbling aging services infrastructure. By allocating

additional capital funding to upgrade these facilities, the City can ensure that they remain safe, accessible spaces while taking steps to modernize buildings to meet the challenging needs of today's older adults. In addition to restoring funding for DFTA and investing in capital needs, the City should allocate \$20 million to expand social work staffing at community-based providers and Older Adult Centers. These professionals are essential to helping older New Yorkers navigate and access these benefits and services that enable them to age with dignity, and these investments will likely prove even more essential in the face of anticipated federal cutbacks. Finally, DFTA cannot meet this challenge alone. A truly age-inclusive city will require all agency to embed older adult needs into their strategies, programs and capital plans. This will mean making parks, libraries, and cultural institutions more accessible, investing in age-friendly transportation options through DOT, supporting older entrepreneurs through EDC and SBS, and expanding efforts to prevent age discrimination in the workplace. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

3 EUSTACIA SMITH: Good afternoon. Thanks,
4 Chair Brannan, Chair Hudson and the Committee, for
5 the opportunity to testify. I'm Eustacia Smith and
6 I'm the Director of Advocacy for Westside Federation
7 for Senior and Supportive Housing. We've provided
8 housing and services for older adults in New York
9 City for nearly 50 years. We also run three Older
10 Adult Centers serving over 1,300 older New Yorkers,
11 providing them with nutritional support,
12 socialization, education, and connection to services.
13 Our participants are able to remain stably housed in
14 the community because we're able to provide them with
15 a range of services that keep them from falling into
16 emergencies that would displace them. Our services
17 are sometimes life and death essential, but we can't
18 keep them going without increased funding. Our budget
19 has stayed flat while the cost of food and other
20 operating expenses has gone up dramatically. We have
21 no wiggle room. Each increase in cost means we have
22 to cut something else essential. Is it the meals
23 that keep our elders from wasting? Is it the case
24 manager who makes sure people can access their
25 benefits? Truthfully, cutting any of it is

dangerous. Here's a real world example from our center at the Red Oak on 106th Street where we serve 150 meals per day. Right now, our refrigerators are broken. It's the third time this year. We don't have the budget to fix them nor to get new fridges we really need. It's nearly impossible to prepare meals without working refrigerators. Our staff has spent many, many hours figuring out how to work around the broken refrigerators to still get the meals out. That's time when they should be providing services, but can't. Why do those meals matter? For some participants, the meal at our center may be their only meal of the day. Why do the case managers matter? Case managers play a critical role in keeping older adults housed in the community even as their needs change over time. It prevents people from losing housing. It reduces hospitalizations and limits the need for nursing home care. It's humane. It keeps communities whole, and it keeps public cost down. Older adults are the fastest growing group of people experiencing homelessness. They're also a fast-growing New York City population set to grow by 25 percent by 2040, yet city funding for older adults is disproportionately low. We call on our city to

scale up investment in older adult services,
implementing new funding of \$78 million for
nutritional support with \$57 million to meet the
rising cost of food and \$21 million to provide
additional meal services, \$44 million for expanded
case management, \$5 million five-year emergency
repair discretionary funds for Older Adult Centers
that need small-scale repairs or equipment
replacements, and all of the recommendations that are
part of the Age Strong New York City campaign
organized by LiveOn. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED: Good afternoon, esteemed
members of this Committee on Finance hearing. We are
honored to be here today representing our President
and CEO Doctor Anderson Torres of Regional Aid for
Interim Needs Inc, also known as RAIN, an
organization that has proudly served the older
community along with those in homecare since 1964. It
is our privilege to continue this essential work.
Our dedicated staff reflects the diverse communities
we serve, and we are humbled to carry forward the
legacy of our late founder Beatriz Castilla Catullo
[sp?], affectionately remembered as B. Our 13+ Older

Adult Centers are more than facilities, they are lifelines. Many of our members describe them as a home away from home where they find friendship, connection and purpose. In these centers, older adults reduce feelings of isolation, depression and anxiety by engaging in meaningful activities and building supportive social networks. We live in a society that too often overlooks the needs of older adults. Today, we appeal to you to stand with us in promoting equity in aging inclusivity and fund our Older Adult Centers. We need a city that works for all ages, integrating care in a way that honors every stage of life. You may ask what does that look like? We answer, it looks like a model that engages, invites, and empowers older adults, a model that bridges generations and amplifies the message that seasoned [sic] New Yorkers are vital contributors to our communities. Our Older Adult Centers are not passive spaces. They're interactive hubs of cognitive stimulation, creativity, and empowerment. They also provide spaces where their risk factors are assessed on a regular basis. Through diverse programming we challenge the mind, encourage lifelong learning and promote mental agility. We're a

community of collected voices who live experiences that enable us to mentor others and thrive through inclusion. Our thoughts matter. Our contributions matters. In times of need you will find many of our older adults continuing to serve as pillars of their families and communities. It is essential that we are seen, heard, and considered in policy decisions. We want the champions in our professional networks who have already advocated for programs that support our work, but today, we ask you to reflect what is essential for an older adult to truly thrive in New York City. Who is the older adult we serve? At RAIN we create spaces that honor the individual's story and listen to their needs. Without these centers, the health and wellbeing of older adults will decline and that will ultimately impact the city's healthcare and financial stability. Socialization is not a luxury. It is a critical component of health. Without it, the city will raise [sic] rising levels of illness, hospitalization, and cost. Every day, our centers teach older adults the importance of staying active, eating well, and nurturing mind, body and spirit. Today we ask you what would you want for your own parent or grandparent or yourselves

at this stage in life. We are grateful to those who
continue to advocate for policies that will support
funding of older adult programs and uplift those who
have paved the way for all of us. And finally, we
must challenge outdated stereotypes of Older Adult
Centers as places where people simply sit all day.
The older adults we serve are engaged, active
citizens. They vote, advocate, embrace technology,
improve their health and contribute meaningfully to
society. They want to thrive, but they can only do
so if they continue to invest in an integrated
community model or of care that promotes both
cognitive and physical wellbeing. That's why your
support and more importantly your funding is critical
now more than ever. Without sustaining increased
funding for Older Adult Centers, we risk unraveling
the very safety net that keeps thousands of older New
Yorkers healthy, engaged, and independent, the same
ones you have funded in the past. We urge you to
champion this cost to secure the funding resources
that will allow us to continue this vital work and to
ensure that older adults in our city are not left
behind. Your investment today is an investment in

2 the health, dignity and future of New York City.

3 Thank you.

4 UNIDENTIFIED: Good afternoon and
5 Councilman Brannan I congratulate you on your being
6 able to listen to all of this very difficult
7 testimony from beginning to end, and I do thank you
8 very much for your work, all of you on the City
9 Council in trying to keep the senior life of New York
10 City livable, especially in the face of what is
11 coming down from Washington. I myself am unhoused
12 right now and am paying rent though to good friends
13 who live-- I'm sorry she's not here in the district
14 of Council Member Hudson. I am very grateful to the
15 other people of this city, some of whom are seniors,
16 who are helping each other with housing. Housing has
17 always been the biggest problem of seniors. I work
18 for Assemblyman Woody Lewis [sp?] for years ago and
19 housing was the biggest problem then and it still is
20 now. The-- I have with me Carolyn Johnson who is the
21 President of the Albany Senior Center and also the
22 President of the NYCHA Albany Houses. She has two
23 incredible jobs to deal with, because the Albany
24 Houses are also a nonprofit and are not-- the City
25 does not own the building, neither do they own the

other buildings under Fort Greene. So that is really why we're here today. We're here to learn, because we've heard of how difficult it is for these senior centers to stay open and it's what we want to see, because we need the activities, the food. We need that experience of the case management which I am using and used to be a case manager myself. We also - Carolyn has pointed out how important it is that the peers are helping each other in these places. And I would point out that we are in Crown Heights. We are in a rapidly changing community everywhere with ethnic groups that are competing at times for scarce resources, and the seniors who come to these centers from all these different ethnic groups and come and try to get together across their religious and their racial and their every other kind of similarities and differences. It is very important. I believe that we are a stabilizing factor in our neighborhoods, because we go to those centers and we learn how to work out problems and work together. So, when you are trying to get that money out of OMB which I know is probably the hardest place to get it, I hope you will remind them that we are helping to keep the peace in New York City. We have the

2 experience. We have the years of doing it, and we
3 are still doing it. So, thank you very much for your
4 time, and there's a lot more I would have liked to
5 say, but you know--

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: [interposing] Thank
7 you.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: I think we said it,
9 Carolyn.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you very
11 much. Thank you all very much. Okay, we're going to
12 move to-- we have one more in-person, Christopher
13 Leon Johnson.

14 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Ready, Chair?

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yes, go ahead.
16 Thanks.

17 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Hello, Chairs
18 Brannan, Abreu and Hudson. I know you were in the
19 Land Use hearing, so-- but thank you for having this
20 hearing today. Thanks for staying out here, Mr.
21 Brannan. I'm calling on the City Council to allocate
22 \$6 million, \$2 million each to Workers Justice
23 Project, Lo Comena [sp?], and the Street Vendor
24 Project for sanitation related purposes, because they
25 are known for doing their work and not cleaning up

after themselves, or if they do certain things, they don't know how to properly dispose. So I'm calling on the City Council to give them some money to help with that situation. I am calling you, the Chair of the Finance Committee, to look into the Mayor's Office in asking why that the deliverista hub is not built outside of City Hall. You're the Chair. You're the Finance Chair. You should be asking the Mayor or the Department-- any of these departments like why that sanitation hub is not built. I know I can't be political, but I know that you deserve that labor endorsement from NYCCLC, and I believe the way you should get it-- you can get it, Mr. Brannan, is by proving to them that you can get that deliverista hub outside City Hall. I believe that once you get that deliverista hub outside City Hall, Mr. Brannan, you will get that CLC endorsement over-- they'll probably revoke that endorsement from Mark Levine and they'll give it to you. So, I'm calling on you, the Chair of the Finance Committee, Mr. Brannan, to find a way. You have enough time before June to get that deliverista hub built. I know this is a sanitation hearing. You could easy call for the Sanitation Department to get that sanitation hub removed. They

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT WITH COMMITTEE ON AGING 263

2 already got-- it's already been approved by the City
3 Council Planning Commission, and build that hub. You
4 need to build that hub on behalf of the immigrants
5 here. I know you spoke out here on Saturday in trying
6 to defend the Mayor of Newark, New Jersey on behalf
7 of immigrants. Those deliveristas are immigrants.
8 If you really care about the immigrants, Mr. Brannan,
9 and this is your time to prove it-- it's your time to
10 bring it home for the Comptroller's race, you need to
11 build that deliverista hub. You need to find a way
12 to get that deliverista hub built for the Workers
13 Justice Project. At the same time, we need to really
14 preserve Corona Plaza, at the same time protect our
15 immigrants. So, thank you, Mr. Brannan. Get that
16 deliverista hub built, bro. Please.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

18 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, now we half
20 folks testifying on Zoom. First is Cynthia Maurer.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

22 CYNTHIA MAURER: Hello. Can you hear me?
23 Okay, good.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yes, go ahead.
25

2 CYNTHIA MAURER: Okay, first of all,
3 thank you for this opportunity to once again come
4 before you and testify on behalf of our older adults.
5 Visiting Neighbors has been around for 53 years. We
6 celebrated this spring, and we couldn't have done it
7 without all of the support of our City Council.
8 Thank you for being our champions. I first have to
9 say that. We work with the City's oldest
10 [inaudible]. We help people from 60 on up, but
11 usually when people are 60 or 70s they are actually
12 rather frail or they have an incident or they had an
13 accident and they need us temporarily, or they're
14 dealing with cancer, something serious. Most of our
15 clients are over the age of 85, and we have 33
16 seniors who have hit the 100 mark this year. So, we
17 are really working with the oldest. Our eldest is
18 107. Through programs of neighbors helping
19 neighbors, Visiting Neighbors professional staff help
20 alleviate loneliness and isolation, provides mental
21 stimulation, emotional security, shares information
22 on wellness and health-related concerns. That's
23 physical, emotional, mental, and has important
24 conversations. Every conceivable thing that you can
25 think of that we need to our seniors about, we do,

including the concept of the term seniors. We actually just had a session on what's in a name, and how do they feel about seniors versus older adults. Quite interesting. When they get a lot older, that is less of a concern than actually the services available to them, and they love senior discounts. So no matter what, that's going to stay in the play. We are here about health advocacy, friendly visiting, shop and escort, therapeutic walking-- that's getting out and moving, just having that arm to safely hold onto as you cross the city streets. A lot of people are not paying attention. They're on e-bikes. They're in a rush, on their cellphone, and we want to keep our seniors safe. Fall prevention is--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you. Your time's expired.

CYNTHIA MAURER: Oh, okay. But thank you very much. I just-- you know, we need you to continue to do what we do so that we can keep our older adults as safe as-- and in their own cherished homes as long as possible. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Now we have Joyce Bialik.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Joyce Bialik?

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, we'll go to
5 Claire Miflin.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

7 CLAIRE MIFLIN: Hi. I'm Claire Miflin
8 from the Center for Zero Waste Design. Thanks for
9 this opportunity. We fully support waste
10 containerization, but we think changes are needed,
11 because DSNY plans are bad for zero waste goals,
12 requiring containers just for trash, even though it's
13 food waste that brings the rats, and we don't think
14 the City should be investing in trash-only
15 infrastructure which will reduce the diversion rate
16 of recycling and compostable material. It's bad for
17 labor. Building staff and sanitation workers are
18 still going to need to lug heavy bags around, and
19 it's bad for public space. Our sidewalks are full of
20 bins blocking storefronts and pedestrians, bad for
21 retail activity and the quality of life. It's also
22 tough for BIDs, because DSNY are asking them to use
23 these enclosures full of bags that make sidewalks
24 dirty and were deemed impractical in their own Future
25 of Trash Report. We think that in the next budget

there really should be money to pilot other solutions. The CB9 pilot, there's only about three buildings over 300 units in CB9, so it's not a very good test case for large residential buildings, because those large buildings would require like eight to 20 empire bins in front, whereas instead DSNY should be piloting four wheel bins which can be added to the bottoms of the chute. They take up less curbside space, don't require lifting of bags, no maintenance of on-street containers, and no new trucks. So we really would encourage that there be budget to do some of these other pilots which would save a lot of money. I'm also part of the Save our Compost Group. I'm so glad the Council supported it. I think it needs to be ramped up greatly so it can be applied to parks and greenspaces citywide to engage communities, restore soils, reduce flooding, increase the health of trees. And then lastly, given that the city rules require DSNY collect the yard waste from [inaudible]

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you. Your time's expired.

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SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT WITH COMMITTEE ON AGING 268

2 CLAIRe MIFLIN: At least like to see the
3 data. I just think DSNY should fund composting in
4 pots required by Local Law 118. Thank you so much.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Claire.
6 We'll go back to Joyce Bialik if you're there.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

8 JOYCE BIALIK: I can't-- unmute me. Okay,
9 thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Go ahead.

11 JOYCE BIALIK: Yes, so I represent the
12 four Solid Waste Advisory Boards, and I'm going to
13 talk about the 2024 Council bill known as Testing
14 Drinking Water for the Presence of Microplastics,
15 Intro 692, and concurrently about including funds in
16 the budget for implementation. Microplastics are
17 known endocrine disrupters and are linked to other
18 negative health outcomes including cancer and
19 diabetes. They have been found in our air, water,
20 food, soil, blood, brain, and in both side of the
21 placenta, that means parents and baby. It seems that
22 wherever we look for them we find them. We know
23 there are microplastics in our drinking water, but we
24 don't know, we haven't been measuring the amount. So
25 we don't know how to answer the basic questions. Are

microplastics in our water increasing over time?

Does it vary by location or season? The Manhattan

SWAB conducted initial testing in Manhattan and

Queens tap water, and we found more in Queens tap

water than in Manhattan's. So, the first step of

measuring microplastics then allows us to pose

questions. Why? Why is this the case? And seek

solutions. In an interview with Gothamist, Council

Member Sandy Nurse, the bill's prime sponsor said,

"We're seeing a proliferation of plastics and

different types of plastics in everything." If we

find that it's in our water, that to me would allow

us then to hold producers accountable. It could help

us create better waste systems. The current bill

Intro 692 has 20 co=sponsors. Let's bring a

microplastic testing bill over the threshold this

year, and include funds to implement testing and

monitoring in the budget. We are--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Your time
is expired.

JOYCE BIALIK: [inaudible] tap water for
other contaminants. Whenever and wherever the city
conducts these tests, the city should also test for
the presence in levels of microplastics. And thank

you for this opportunity to speak, and thanks for
coming back to me. I couldn't unmute. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Now we
have Sandy Renz.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

SANDY RENZ: Okay, hi. My name is Sandy
Renz, and I have lived in Gowanus Brooklyn for almost
40 years, and thank you for letting me speak. We all
have one crucial issue and that is saving the planet.
Composting is an economical, practical and completely
doable habit-forming activity that can be part of the
New York City arsenal to combat climate disaster. In
most of the city, community composting is the only
true composting that happens, and true composting is
the best route for this waste. I have worked at Big
Reuse's community composting site and have personally
seen how supportive and responsive residents are even
if the composting site was not the easiest to get to.
From what I just heard from the Commissioner and the
Department of Sanitation, the New York City community
is participating enthusiastically with the organic
collection. This organic collection has lowered the
transport cost and there is not enough compost to
give out to the public, and this service needs to be

2 expanded. Thank you, and please continue to fund and
3 support community composting. And also, I think you
4 should support the funding for seniors that all these
5 people have so eloquently spoken about. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Now, we
7 have Carina Kaufman.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

9 CARINA KAUFMAN: And I think it's working
10 now, sorry. Good afternoon. My name is Carina
11 Kaufman Gutierrez and I'm the Deputy Director at the
12 Street Vendor Project. Thank you, Chair Brannan, for
13 the opportunity to testify today. Just last week this
14 council held a public hearing on legislation that
15 will overhaul the dysfunctional status quo street
16 vending, allowing our city's smallest businesses to
17 grow within a regulated, predictable, and enforceable
18 system that bolsters the city's business and
19 hospitality sector overall. During that hearing,
20 DSNY testified about their role as the lead agency
21 for coordinating enforcement of street vending rules,
22 and additionally, when asked how passing Intro 431
23 would impact their work, DSNY testified that their
24 interactions with licensed vendors are far more
25 productive than interactions with unlicensed vendors

in terms of actually addressing the issues such as
time, place and manner violations. I wanted to
highlight these remarks to bring to this council's
attention, because I really encourage the Council if
they really want to address compliance to move
forward with urgency on Intro 431, because in terms
of the current situation, perhaps no industry in New
York faces enforcement from as many agencies and
departments as street vending. And in 2024, DSNY
conducted more confiscations than tickets, over 4,300
versus just over 4,000 respectively in tickets. This
ticketing, researchers with Cornell University found
as both costly and ineffective, that DSNY operates at
a nearly \$21 loss per every \$1 that is recouped. In
terms of the amount of summonses issued, both civil
and criminal, despite DSNY being the lead agency,
NYPD in fact was the agency that issued the highest
number of summonses in 2024, over 9,000 total. This
was actually five times higher than in 2019 when the
agency was the agency in charge of street vendor
enforcement. Now, council has proposed over \$7.7
million in street vendor--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Your
time's expired.

2 CARINA KAUFMAN: [inaudible] budget, yet
3 nothing for vendor education or support. And I would
4 very much encourage council to move forward on street
5 vendor reform so we can create opportunities, create
6 thousands of jobs and generate millions of dollars
7 for the local economy as the IBO estimated would be
8 \$59 million annually. Thank you so much.

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Now we
10 have Mary Sullivan.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

12 MARY SULLIVAN: I'm not sure if you can
13 hear me. Oh, great.

14 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yes, go ahead.

15 MARY SULLIVAN: Again, thank you, Chairs
16 Brannan and Abreu, for this opportunity to address
17 you today. My name is Mary Ellen Sullivan. I'm the
18 new Chair of the Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory Board,
19 and my testimony today will reiterate the overall
20 priorities of the four solid waste advisory boards
21 across New York City. The budget hearing comes at a
22 propitious moment as we transition from the City's
23 2006 to the 2027 Solid Waste Management Plan. After
24 three decades of diversion efforts, the takeaway is
25 clear. It's not just how much we spend, but how we

spend it. Today, 80 percent or roughly 2.8 million tons of residential waste is exported to landfill and incineration annually at a projected cost of about \$500 million in 2026, very similar to what we heard earlier from the DSNY. Organics make up 40 percent of exported waste, but only four or five percent is captured, and it's not compost until it's actually composted. Local Law 85 mandates source separation, but we must fund the New York City community composting network and pass Intro 696 to realize compostable environmental, social and fiscal benefits. The city's newly released New York City Climate Budgeting Report references \$189 million in capital investments in net zero emissions projects for Fiscal Year 2025 to 2035 that reduce emissions from organic material, solid waste, and wastewater treatment. As the four SWABs we would like clarification on what exactly is included in these projects and how they will benefit diversion efforts on our mandated journey to zero waste. Textiles are five percent of exported waste. Intro 256 would study recycling mandate to expand local textile reuse and--

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Your
3 time's expired.

4 MARY SULLIVAN: recycling infrastructure.
5 Sorry, real quick. Intro 697 requires DSNY to
6 continue waste characterization studies, and it
7 should include reuse and prevention data. Intro 692
8 we heard about from Joyce Bialik. We'll skip that.
9 Much of the success of New York City's solid waste
10 management plans hinge on funding outreach and
11 education, ensuring residents fully participate in
12 recycling and composting so we can reduce our
13 reliance on waste export as called for in the City's
14 2006 plan. We the four borough-based Solid Waste
15 Advisory Boards urge you to double-down on your
16 commitment to the New York City Composting Network by
17 including the network's full funding request into the
18 budget. This vital program excels at community
19 outreach and education, a skill that is desperately
20 needed right now. Funding and integrating community
21 compost into the city's long term waste management
22 strategy is long overdue. Thank you very much, and
23 you can see more details on our cross [sic] SWAB
24 priorities in our submitted testimony.

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Okay,
3 if we have inadvertently missed anyone who has
4 registered to testify today and has yet to be called,
5 please use the Zoom hand function and you'll be
6 called in the order that your hand has been raised.
7 Okay, with that, we're going to close out day one of
8 FY26 Executive Budget hearings. Thank you.

9 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date June 21, 2025