

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

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

B E F O R E: MARK LEVINE
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Darlene Mealy
Fernando Cabrera
James G. Van Bramer
Andrew Cohen
Alan N. Maisel
Mark Treyger

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

Matt Drury, Director of Government Relations
NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

Marsha Brown, Director of Horticulture
NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

Diane Jackier, Chief of Capital Strategic Initiatives
NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

Emily Walker, Director of Outreach
Programs at New Yorkers for Parks

2 [sound check, pause] [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay, good morning
4 everybody. Welcome to our hearing of the City
5 Council's Committee on Parks and Recreation. I'm
6 Mark Levine your chair. We're going to be hearing
7 two bills today, one that I am pleased to sponsor,
8 which is Intro 1680 that will significantly improve
9 the level of reporting required by the Parks
10 Department on capital projects, and a second bill
11 whose lead sponsor is our Majority Leader Jimmy Van
12 Bramer, and that is Intro 1466 relating to pesticides
13 in playgrounds, which he will be speaking on when he
14 joins us. This is a busy day for the Council to have
15 a big hearing on a little matter over at NYCHA, which
16 is occupying many of our colleagues at this moment.
17 So, I'm going to say a few words on Intro 1680
18 before we pass it off to the Administration. This is
19 a--this is yet another effort to tackle the biggest
20 challenge that we believe the department faces, which
21 is the time it takes different city capital projects
22 and the--the cost involved in capital projects. When
23 we delve into this during our last hearing, we--we hit
24 upon some inconsistencies between the way the Parks
25 Department reports on capital projects in the Mayor's

2 Management Report, and the way we as Council Members
3 and the public perceive them. It took awhile to
4 unpack, but what we learned is that the department
5 reports on the construction phase exclusively when it
6 reports on on-time and on budget success and,
7 therefore has a very high on-time and on-budget rate
8 I guess, I guess 85% on time, 87% at or under budget,
9 but the truth is there are actually four phases to a
10 capital project. There's--there's the--the pre-
11 designed phase, which begins when the public learns
12 the good news that a project has been funded. It
13 usually appears in the press, in our newsletters.
14 Then there's a phase for procurement. Sorry, for
15 design. Then there's a third phase for procurement
16 and finally a construction phase leading up to the--to
17 the ribbon cutting, and management 101, you can't
18 manage what you're not measuring. So, we think it's
19 critical that we measure the--the full breadth of the
20 capital project--process, and that is the intent
21 behind our bill. I should not that one thing that's
22 grown out of our concern and administration shared
23 concern about the capital process is a task force
24 that has been underway comprised of a number of
25 Council leaders including our Chair of Finance

2 Julissa-Ferreras-Copeland, myself, Council Member
3 Brad Lander, Council Member Andy Cohen, Council
4 Member Helen Rosenthal, Debbie Rose, and I think
5 that's it, along with leaders from various
6 departments of the Administration, not only Parks,
7 but I think half a dozen others, the Law Department
8 as well to look at every aspect of the capital
9 process, and some—some recommendations have emerged
10 out of that. It's still—it's still very early on
11 and—and early days for the task force, but one
12 relates to Local Law 63, which requires a 60-day
13 waiting period I believe during a period of comment,
14 and we've talked about reducing or eliminating that.
15 So, progress on the horizon there. But we continue
16 to believe that accurate information reporting
17 available to us as policy makers and the public as
18 well is essential to getting this under control, and
19 that's our intent behind Intro 1680. So, I'm going
20 to pause now, and pass it off to the Administration
21 before we allow for questions from the folks on side,
22 and I want to ask Committee Counsel Kris Sartori to
23 administer the—the affirmation.

2 LEGAL COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the
3 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in
4 your testimony before this committee today?

5 I do.

6 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: I did not
8 acknowledge our stalwart ever-present and always
9 witty colleague on the Parks Committee Alan Maisel,
10 who's here with us and, of course, we were joined
11 earlier by Council Members Fernando Cabrera and Andy
12 Cohen, who are also both Parks Committee members, and
13 with that, I'll pass it off to you, Matt.

14 MATT DRURY: Thank you. Good morning
15 Chair Levine, and members of the Committee on Parks
16 and Recreation. My name is Matt Drury, Director of
17 Government Relations of New York City Department of
18 Parks and Recreation. Joining me today on this panel
19 are Marsha Brown, Director of Horticulture and Diane
20 Jackier, Chief of Capital Strategic Initiatives for
21 the agency. Thank you for inviting us to testify
22 today regarding Intro 1466 pertaining to cleaning
23 park play equipment after the spraying of pesticides
24 and Intro 1680 regarding the reporting of park
25 capital expenditures. (coughs) Starting with Intro

2 1466, I'd like to begin by providing some context
3 about New York City parks. We're the steward of
4 approximately 29,000 acres, 14% of New York City's
5 land mass including 10,000 acres of natural areas.
6 We oversee more than 5,000 individual properties
7 ranging from parks and playgrounds to community
8 gardens and green streets. We operate more than 800
9 athletic fields and nearly 1,000 playgrounds, 66
10 public pools, 48 recreation facilities, 17 nature
11 centers and 14 miles of beaches. Each of these
12 individual properties requires targeted maintenance
13 and it's important to note some of the specific
14 challenges we face in keeping New York City's
15 parkland in the best condition possible. In
16 accordance with integrated pest management, also
17 known as IPM practices and strategies, herbicide
18 applications are used in New York City Parks when
19 other efforts will not suffice. Though our
20 preference is to avoid the use of herbicides where
21 possible, even in an ideal world mechanical or manual
22 efforts alone would neither reverse the damage done
23 by invasive species nor support the broad scale
24 successful establishment of healthy suitable plants
25 in our parks. More nuanced and targeted strategies

2 including herbicide applications are occasionally
3 necessary for us to reverse the damage of invasive-
4 invasive plant colonization. Though our maintenance
5 and horticulture staff do a tremendous job keeping
6 our parks looking their best, mechanical and manual
7 efforts require significant resources often requiring
8 frequent visits to a given site several times a
9 season or as a single herbicide treatment can
10 maintain these areas for an entire season. We rarely
11 apply herbicides in horticulture beds in parks and we
12 never apply herbicides in playgrounds, athletic
13 fields or dog runs. When it is determined that the
14 application of herbicides or other pesticides is
15 necessary, our staff tries to strategically target
16 the application. Further, while applying herbicides,
17 our trained staff typically uses a hand wand
18 applicator at ground level to specifically target the
19 weed. New York City Parks does not use any broad
20 application techniques. Our goal is to directly
21 target the weed with as little herbicide as possible.
22 In instances where herbicide application is
23 necessary, New York City Parks understand the
24 importance of advance notice and transparency to
25 ensure that local residents and park users are made

2 aware. In accordance with state and local law, New
3 York City Parks provides on-site notification signage
4 24 hours before an herbicide application is
5 completed, and it remains up for 72 hours following
6 the application. Intro 1466 would require the
7 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to develop a
8 rule in consultation with parks to establish a
9 minimum distance within which pesticides cannot be
10 sprayed in proximity to playground equipment.
11 Further, the bill would require Parks to clean
12 playground equipment in the event that pesticides are
13 sprayed within the minimum distance established by
14 the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Since
15 we do not use pesticides within children's
16 playgrounds and play areas, we agree with the spirit
17 of the legislation, but do believe the bill to be
18 duplicative of our current practices and thus
19 unnecessary. New York City Parks is confident that
20 our current integrated pest management approach and
21 compliance with federal, state and local laws
22 properly address safety concerns for all of our park
23 users.

24 Turning to Intro 1680, which addresses
25 public information regarding Parks capital projects

through the agency's online Capital Tracker.

Throughout the duration of this mayoral

administration, New York City Parks has undertaken a

comprehensive and focused effort to streamline every

portion of the capital process within our control and

to provide an unprecedented degree of public access

to information about these efforts. We've seen

significant and tangible improvements in our capital

process including increased efficiency and shorter

delivery timelines for our projects as well as

greatly improve communication and engagement with the

public and increase transparency regarding the status

of our capital projects. Our Online Capital Project

Tracker launched in the fall of 2014, and codified by

Local Law 98 of 2015 as Administrative Code Section

18-145, make the capital process the most publicly

transparent its been throughout the agency's history.

Trackers and online searchable tool updated daily

that allows anyone be it an elected official,

supporter of a specific park or just your average

curious New Yorker to look up a specific park and

learn more about the status of any capital project.

We're proud to update the Council that since the

launch of the Tracker it's been viewed nearly 400,000

times. Over the past year the Tracker has been viewed nearly 150,000 times, a 35% increase in page views from the previous year, 2016. New York City Parks is constantly refining and improving our communications efforts, and we're open to discussing further improvements that Council Members or other stakeholders would like to see made to the Capital Tracker. However, we believe these potential changes and adjustments should not be codified in local law because the agency needs the flexibility to adjust the details of engagement and transparency efforts as conditions evolve. Moreover, layering additional administrative and reporting requirements into a process already governed by a complicated web of state and local laws may serve to only further hamper our ability to increase efficiency and improve delivery times. Finally, our Borough Commissioners and Capital staff proactively provide project updates to Council Members and community boards and are always available to discuss capital projects in greater detail with them and other public stakeholders who may be interested. We appreciate the Council's interest in advocacy regarding these topics, and we look forward to continuing to work

2 with you and your colleagues to make New York City
3 parks and playgrounds better than ever. Thanks for
4 the opportunity to testify today. We'd be happy to
5 answer any questions you may have. [pause]

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: I am going to allow
7 Majority Leader Van Bramer to do most of the
8 questioning related to his bill, but I-I just want to
9 clarify something. So, you say that you never use
10 herbicides in playgrounds, but you on occasions use
11 pesticides, which I assume would be for rat control.

12 MATT DRURY: Yeah, so Rodenticide would
13 be one example of an instance in which that is a
14 pesticide but not an herbicide. So, yeah, I believe
15 containerized rodent--

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] And--
17 and how--how often do you--is there--how many times a
18 year or how many playgrounds a year do you use
19 rodent-Rodenticide.

20 MATT DRURY: So, I don't believe I have
21 those numbers with me. I mean we can--particularly to
22 the bill to discuss sort of spray pesticides, which
23 are traditionally herbicides. So, I-I can get--we can
24 get those numbers to you, but I don't have them in
25 front of me.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: But I—I thought that
3 what your—your point was that because this is so
4 rare, this is essentially unnecessary. Is that not
5 your point?

6 MATT DRURY: For—for the spraying of—the
7 spraying of herbicides is--

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] Right.

9 MATT DRURY: --extremely rare, if any
10 impact, you know, it's practically non-existent.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] With
12 spraying an herbicide. So, when it's rodent control,
13 it is--

14 MATT DRURY: [interposing] It's not
15 sprayed. It's containerized--

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --it's more
17 contained potentially?

18 MATT DRURY: Correct.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right, and remember
20 the bill would apply to both containerized--

21 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Actually no.
22 The bill—the bill as written applies to sprayed
23 pesticides I believe.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Got it, and so your--
3 your statement is that there is no use of sprayed
4 pesticides in playgrounds ever?

5 MATT DRURY: Um, there may be a--I think
6 there's an instance where insecticides there may be a
7 wasp like a wasp nest I believe is--is occasionally in
8 a tree that may be nearby a children's play area
9 depending on where the tree and the wasp nest are
10 located those are applied again directly to the
11 wasp's nest and in an effort to, you know, minimize
12 some of the--

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] The--the
14 only time a sprayed form of--

15 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Pesticides.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Pesticide--herbicides
17 are not sprayed in playgrounds ever--

18 MATT DRURY: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --and the only time a
20 pesticide would be sprayed is--is not for rodent
21 control, but for some sort of airborne pest like a
22 wasp--

23 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Correct.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --is what you're
25 saying? And could you--could you even ballpark how

2 often that occurs? Is that ten times a year, a
3 hundred times a year, a thousand times a year?

4 MATT DRURY: I mean I think it would--it
5 would number in--in perhaps in the teens at--at most
6 and we can--we can follow up on the specific count,
7 but it's exceedingly low in our view.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Got it. Okay, I'm
9 going to leave further questions on that topic to the
10 sponsors of the bill, who are expected to join us
11 shortly. Okay, so on--on the topic of--of capital,
12 what--what is the average time from the moment of
13 funding to ribbon cutting for Parks capital projects
14 at this point?

15 MATT DRURY: So, as we've discussed
16 previously, the point at which a project is being
17 fully funded is not a data point that's captured by
18 the agency. So, we aren't able to determine, you
19 know, an average length or, you know, from
20 quote/unquote "funding," which can happen in various
21 phases and manners, you know, including, you know,
22 defunding or the re-routing or, you know, or
23 receiving (sic) the funding. You know, those are--
24 those are all sort of evolving moves that can happen
25 within the funding of a given project, and then, you

2 know, through completion. So, at the point at which
3 quote/unquote it's "fully funded," is-is not a data
4 point that's captured currently by the agency.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: It's not a data point
6 that's captured by the agency. We're often informed
7 that a project is either fully funded or not, right.
8 So, it sounds like the agency doesn't know. I don't--
9 I don't know what you mean by it's not captured.

10 MATT DRURY: I think I'd characterize it
11 in a way that I think the agency believes it's not a
12 point in time at which a switch is flipped. It's
13 more of a state of being, pardon the expression that
14 a project can exist and be fully funded, and
15 therefore is eligible to move forward, but that's a
16 determination that can evolve and change over time.
17 So, I think the notion that there is one point in
18 time in which it's fully, you know, fully funded and
19 some sort of clock should begin running is-is
20 something that's ridiculous. (sic)

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] But
22 you-you articulated or-or it was the Commissioner or
23 someone else in past hearings that your goal is to
24 start design work within a year or I think within the
25 same fiscal year or--

2 MATT DRURY: Fiscal year. That's right.

3 So, you know, one could argue I suppose the beginning
4 of a given fiscal year in which a project is seen fit
5 to move forward, you know, but again that's sort of
6 an arbitrary determination, and not an exact point in
7 time in which that determination was made.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: So, how do you even
9 know if you're meeting that goal? You say--again, the
10 goal was either to start design during the Fiscal
11 Year, or-or to enforce on that.

12 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Right. So, if--
13 if a project is determined to be fully funded, and it
14 begins by June 30th of a given fiscal year, then it's
15 begun in that fiscal year. So, when it was
16 determined to be fully funded is less relevant.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: But how do you know
18 which fiscal year that it was funded in?

19 MATT DRURY: Oh, it would be the current
20 fiscal year we're in and so if a project is deemed
21 fully funded, then it's slated to begin that fiscal
22 year.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay, it just--it--it's
24 pretty clear that at any given moment the Capital
25

2 Division knows whether a project is fully funded or
3 not right?

4 MATT DRURY: Well, in the—in the—in the
5 degree to which it's on, I suppose like a work queue
6 or plan, that's true.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right. I mean
8 because we as Council members often hear: Sorry, we
9 can't move forward on a project because it's not
10 fully funded.

11 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: So, some—someone
13 over there knows, right, and maybe they're not
14 recording that movement from unfunded to funded, but—
15 -

16 MATT DRURY: [interposing] True.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --someone there
18 knows. The Council member knows, you know, because
19 we're—we're waiting for that--

20 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --and the public
22 doesn't know, but—but it really is the moment that
23 the clock starts ticking. It's the moment that it
24 gets in the queue. It's the moment that you start to
25 allocate resources. It's the moment that you line it

2 up for—for design work, et cetera. I mean it's—it's
3 a very impactful moment when the money is there. No?

4 MATT DRURY: I mean I think we argue that
5 the most impactful moment is the point in time at
6 which we actually currently consider to be the start
7 of the project, which is that public engagement
8 normally represented by a—by a well advertised
9 community scoping session to—to commit, you know,
10 commit to beginning design, outlining, you know, what
11 the public wants to see out of the project.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right.

13 MATT DRURY: We think that's really the
14 most logical place at which the public really most
15 fully interacts with the—with the project as a
16 reality.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay. The—the second
18 best measure of the duration of a capital project,
19 which can move off the pre—pre-design phase, which I
20 think you can see is generally between 6 and 18
21 months. They're your goals so you're under 12, but
22 even if you chopped off that period, what's the
23 average time from the time of start of design to
24 ribbon cutting for capital projects?

2 MATT DRURY: It's been averaging about
3 between 3-1/2 and 4 years. The design process
4 roughly takes about 12 months on average. The
5 procurement process is largely out of our hands and,
6 you know, highly dictated by a complex set of, you
7 know, local law comptroller directives, et cetera.
8 It takes about nine months, between nine months and
9 12, and then construction can range between 12 and 18
10 months. So, say around 3-1/2 years.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay. So, then if
12 predesign is—I'm going to be generous and call it 6
13 to 12 months, but we know sometimes it's longer than
14 12 months--

15 MATT DRURY: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --and the rest of the
17 process is 3-1/2 to 4 years, right? So, then--then
18 from the perspective of the public who read about in
19 the local newspaper that we just got \$5 million to
20 renovate their park, the time is really 4 to 5 years
21 on average.

22 MATT DRURY: Well, I think some of the
23 difficulty in--in the notion of what you describe as a
24 pre-design phase is that it's--it's less a phase
25 that's undergone actively by the agency, and it's

2 more a period during which a given project is being
3 proposed, discussed, considered--

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] Right,

5 MATT DRURY: --by Council members as
6 they, you know, because as times funding supplied to
7 the agency, you know, without consultation with the
8 agency--

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right.

10 MATT DRURY: --you know, would one argue
11 does that, you know, begin the clock running? I
12 think we would argue that's--that's, you know,
13 intellectually unfair, and that without full
14 discussion and--and some degree of consideration about
15 whether the project is feasible and appropriate and
16 what--you know, what approximate level of funding
17 would be appropriate to be fully funded.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right.

19 MATT DRURY: You know, I think that's one
20 of the levels of concern we have about, you know, the
21 contract.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] And so
23 where does--you--you described the time between design
24 and ribbon cutting to be on average 3-1/2 to 4 years.
25 That's--that's correct, right?

2 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: You said--okay. So,
4 where can I see that? Where--where can I--how--how can
5 I--You, let's say you do what, 90 to 100 capital
6 projects a year, I forget the exact number, but
7 someone--

8 MATT DRURY: Somewhere yeah closer to
9 150, but sure.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay. So, where can
11 I see the time--the time that those 150 took last?

12 MATT DRURY: So, the beginning--so on the
13 Capital Tracker for each capital project, the--when a--
14 when a given project completes a phase--

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right.

16 MATT DRURY: --its beginning date, which
17 again we define as sort of the beginning at the start
18 of design, public scoping session or what have you,
19 and then it's completion date both expected and
20 actual are registered and captured on--on each
21 individual project page.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay, so--

23 MATT DRURY: [interposing] That is
24 available.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --the Capital
3 Tracker represents the date the design started, and
4 then ultimately completion?

5 MATT DRURY: Correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: And that's not
7 compiled but is that open data accessible like if I
8 wanted to--

9 MATT DRURY: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay. So, I don't
11 know if someone's done the compilation and the
12 averaging, but what are the year-to-year trends on-on
13 total time. You say right now it's three-it's-it's
14 3-1/2 to 4 years. What would it have been last year
15 and the year before? What are the trends?

16 MATT DRURY: Yeah, I-I think I can only
17 give the current characterization. We'd have to
18 circle back with our team and figure out a more
19 historical data. I also think that's problematic in
20 a way. Deeper historical data would probably be
21 difficult because we only began identifying the start
22 of a given capital design process. Choosing that
23 point in time as-as sort of-as technical as it
24 sounds, that's a decision that was only made in 2000-

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] Well,
3 so what's the first year that you feel that's a
4 complete data?

5 MATT DRURY: 2014--

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay.

7 MATT DRURY: --was the first year in
8 which a start of a program--

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] So,
10 we're now in FY18, right?

11 MATT DRURY: Right.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: So, we're in the
13 fourth year. You're '14, '15, '16 and '17 and now
14 soon you'll have '18.

15 MATT DRURY: Correct.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: And so you have four
17 years of complete data, right?

18 MATT DRURY: Yeah. In terms of projects
19 that have completed and--and the median timeframe is--
20 is--I don't have an exact number for you but it is
21 within the 30 to 45-month range that we've discussed.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: And so, 30 to 45.
23 You said it's 30 to 45 months?

24 MATT DRURY: Yeah, that's the ballpark.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay. So, it's a
3 pretty-pretty wide range, but isn't this like an
4 average? This is the number. There's an average.
5 You have 150 projects. You divide them all. If you
6 divide by 150 you get how many months?

7 MATT DRURY: Yeah, I don't have that
8 information with me.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Alright, but that-
10 that seems like it would be pretty easy to tabulate.
11 So, I'm going to assume that if it's between 30 and
12 45 that it's 37-1/2 and I don't know what the average
13 is, but from design to and-but-but you don't know
14 what it would it have been for the previous three
15 fiscal years that we do have full data on?

16 MATT DRURY: That's correct. I don't.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right. I think you
18 understand why I'm-why I'm drilling down.

19 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: You know, we're
21 never going to get out of this disparity between-this
22 disconnect between what we experience and what the
23 public experiences on what feels like 4, 5, 6, 7-year
24 timelines.

25 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: And what it says on
3 the MMR, which is 87%--85% are on time, right. So,
4 there's just a few glaringly missing pieces of data
5 like the average time that the 150 capital projects
6 took last year, and we have—I—I know that the
7 commissioner prioritizes.

8 MATT DRURY: Sure.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: I know he cares
10 about this. I know he's pushed internally. He's
11 spoken about this. But until we have data on
12 progress, we can't pop the champagne.

13 MATT DRURY: Sure. Understood and I
14 think—I think one of the things we're greatly looking
15 forward to is to amass more of these projects that
16 have both begun and completed under this—this recent
17 rubric. So, I think it's more about—as more of these
18 projects head towards completion in the next fiscal
19 year or two, I think we'll have a much better body of
20 data to both discuss and present. But currently, I
21 think there isn't. I wouldn't argue. There's sort
22 of a—a critical mass of those projects that have both
23 begun under the—the rubric and completed those
24 structures.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right. So, the
3 heart of this bill 1680 is really getting if not
4 four, at least three of the four phases accounted
5 for, right, we-we only have one phase accounted for
6 out of the four of the capital project-process?

7 MATT DRURY: Yeah, I mean--

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] Right,
9 so wouldn't it be better even for you to at least get
10 the three phases that we all agree have a very clear
11 start and end dates accounted for.

12 MATT DRURY: Yeah, I mean those are--
13 again, I think those--the beginning and end of those
14 three phases are represented and captured on the
15 Tracker. Those--that is currently available, and I
16 think the bill as it's written I don't believe would
17 impact that. I think that is--so, that is a--that is
18 a--that is a metric that is available on the--on each
19 project's page.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right, not only the
21 MMR. I mean the--the short terms of the MMR are not
22 addressed by this bill, but it's--it's closely related
23 for sure. Let me ask you about a--a tangential
24 problem of the capital process, which is there are
25 cases when there are surplus funds, and that could be

2 because once in a while things do come in under
3 budget.

4 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: It can also be
6 because the scope of the project changed, and maybe
7 you couldn't be as ambitious as you originally hoped
8 and, therefore, there could be 50, 100 or two or
9 three hundred thousand dollars that's over. There
10 might even be cases where you had multiple funders
11 jumping in, the borough president—and—and the Council
12 Member and maybe even the Parks Department, and
13 there—there's some double—double effort there, and so
14 you can wind up with—with surplus—surplus money.
15 What happens to that money?

16 MATT DRURY: So, I'm less conversant with
17 the, you know, our budget staff is not present here,
18 and in some ways—oh, I do know they work closely with
19 Council finance regarding the rescindment and
20 reassignment of Council funds. My understanding is
21 that Council Finance is chiefly responsible for
22 tracking and making those reaffirmations. So, I
23 can't really speak to the exact machinations of how
24 it's completed, but I—my understanding is it's a
25 process where we're approached by Council Finance or—

2 or similar central staff and that discussion is held
3 I believe in consultation with the Council Member,
4 but maybe—I mean I can't say that--

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] Look,
6 anecdotally, I'd like to know the protocols, but
7 anecdotally we know of cases where there were surplus
8 funds and the Council Member didn't know and Council
9 Finance didn't know, and it's a lost opportunity and
10 it—those are ultimately tax dollars and ultimately
11 public money, ultimately those—most of that money
12 usually came through either the City Council or the
13 borough president. All of it in most cases probably.
14 So, it shouldn't be possible for that to live on kind
15 of under the secret purview of the staff of the Parks
16 Department without us knowing.

17 MATT DRURY: Yeah, my—my anecdotal
18 understanding and there—if there was an exception or
19 two, my anecdotal understanding is that Council
20 Finance is—is quite well aware the funding of their
21 staff but, you know, there are various projects, but
22 if there were exceptions made, you know, and those
23 sort of—Sorry, say again.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: I mean there--there's
3 at least half--I'm going to pass. Yeah. [background
4 comments]

5 MATT DRURY: Yeah, I believe that--

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay.

7 MATT DRURY: --the re-designation of
8 those Council funds are--are, as I understand it need
9 to be done with some sort of authorization from the
10 Council Member. You know, we're happy to dig into a
11 specific instance--instance that happened, but we'd
12 obviously need to kind of share those conversations
13 with the Council.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] I'm--
15 I'm going to allow my colleague Council Member Maisel
16 to jump in.

17 MATT DRURY: Sure.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: Hi, good morning.
19 So, I'm actually just to follow through I was going
20 to actually ask what, if you're--let's say you have
21 \$50,000 left over from a project, what authorization
22 would you have to spend that money on anything else?
23 My thinking actually until we had this hearing I
24 always thought that, you know, whatever was left over

2 was, you know, maybe combined into something else,
3 which then Parks decided to do on their own.

4 MATT DRURY: No, my understanding is that
5 generally speaking those sort of rescindants and
6 reassignments of Council funds need to be done in
7 consultation with Council Members--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: So, like--

9 MATT DRURY: --or perhaps Council Finance
10 at central staff has some role to play there, and our
11 budget staff isn't present today, so it's hard for
12 me to speak to those accurately.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: [interposing]
14 Yeah, so--so basically I mean I've had a number of
15 projects, which very few have actually been
16 completed. Most of the projects in my--my Council
17 district were started under Councilman Fidler--

18 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: --and I'm reaping
20 the benefits because everybody thinks I did it. I
21 got great pains to explain no, no, this was
22 Councilman Fidler. I'm assuming my successor will
23 have the same benefit because the projects I
24 institute will probably go into who knows when. But
25 it would be nice if we had a listing of what each

2 project was--what it cost each project. So, if a
3 project was told to be \$5 million and it turned out
4 not to be \$5 million, I know if it was--if there's not
5 enough money when they get back to us and they--they
6 want more.

7 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Yeah, look--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: --if the--if the
9 project is underfunded, it would be nice if we
10 actually had a listing of all the projects what all
11 the projects cost.

12 MATT DRURY: Yeah, I mean, yeah, we're
13 happy, and generally speaking I believe our--our
14 budget staff works directly with Council Finance who
15 in that regard review those--those types of projects
16 regularly. I believe it's annually.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: Yeah.

18 MATT DRURY: But we're happy obviously to
19 discuss the legislation. (sic)

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: [interposing] I
21 mean do we need legislation to say that, you know,
22 please give us a--at the end of the Fiscal Year what--
23 this is what we spent. This is what we--what we need.
24 This is what we have left over?

2 MATT DRURY: Yeah, I mean I think we're
3 open to working with whatever, you know, the
4 discussion is.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: And I don't
6 really know why that has to be legislated. It seems
7 to me it's just something that's just a matter of
8 course.

9 MATT DRURY: No, I think that—I think
10 that you're absolutely right. I think that's
11 something, you know, out of—generally speaking our
12 main point of contact when it comes to Council
13 funding is the Council Finance staff. So, we're
14 happy to kind of expand those discussions, and go
15 from there.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: Yeah, it will be
17 nice to include this. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Council Member
19 Cohen, if you have questions on anything related to
20 capital process or the pesticide, though, you—you
21 give it a secret signal and—and we'll allow you to
22 jump in.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: [off mic] Well,
24 we've been—I will cut on that exactly where we are.
25 (sic)

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: Mr. Chairman, I
4 have one other question to go back to the pesticide
5 issues. So, you have a lot of buildings, and I
6 imagine a lot of New York we have our—our most common
7 wildlife, which is roaches. So, I'm assuming they
8 use insecticides in all those buildings.

9 MATT DRURY: Roach traps are occasionally
10 deployed.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: But do you have a
12 spray that you use--

13 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Sprayed
14 insecticide on the bathroom roaches.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: --all bathrooms
16 and--?

17 MATT DRURY: No, I believe it's—it's our—
18 our treatment for roaches is—is generally traps or,
19 you know, bait.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: Okay. Alright,
21 thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay. My staff is
23 showing me emails of—of updates on surplus money in
24 our district, which some of has been sitting idle for
25 years that we didn't know about until very recently.

2 You know, we—we—we can pursue this with you one-on-
3 one, but it—it—it does—it's clear that the protocols
4 are not airtight. This is not only unique to my
5 district, but it shouldn't require investigative work
6 by Council Finance to—to uncover that.

7 MATT DRURY: Right.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: So, we'll—we'll
9 pursue that with you--

10 MATT DRURY: Sure, absolutely.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --directly.

12 MATT DRURY: Sure.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: So, so once a
14 capital project is fully funded, it sits amongst
15 dozens maybe even over 100--

16 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --that are in the
18 queue. How do you prioritize which project goes
19 first?

20 MATT DRURY: I think there's a—a complex
21 set of conversations in terms of assessing the
22 projects that are—have been deemed to be fully funded
23 at any given point in time and, you know, obviously
24 projects that have a, you know, public safety
25 concern, a sink hole or something of that nature, is

2 usually, you know, expedited, too. But otherwise, it
3 thinks a factor of geographically there are teams
4 that are assigned on our—on our capital staff, and
5 balancing their current workload with skills and
6 expertise within the staff. I think there's sort of,
7 you know, sort of comics. You know, it's art, not
8 science obviously. I think like any sort of
9 managerial exercise there's a variety of, you know,
10 different ways. So, it's—it's not as if there's a
11 score that's granted to a given project and then it's
12 ranked somehow over, but there's sort of a natural
13 flow that sort of works out with projects and we—and
14 again, we try our best to expedite all those as soon
15 as possible.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: What's the current
17 staffing level of the Capital Division?

18 MATT DRURY: You know, I don't actually
19 have those figures with me.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: It's about 500?

21 MATT DRURY: I think it's a little more
22 than that, but we can get back to you with the
23 specific count.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay, and how would
25 that compare to say five years ago?

2 MATT DRURY: Well, there would definitely
3 be increases on the staffing side, funding provided
4 by the Mayor has quite generously expanded our
5 Capital Design staff, resident engineer staff, and
6 others, which we think has actually--has actually led
7 quite considerably to us being able to pick up the
8 pace of these projects and keep them moving.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: So, is it your
10 position that it's adequately staffed at this point?

11 MATT DRURY: I think we are currently
12 assessing and constantly assessing our--our workflow
13 and, you know, we can always-- You know, I think we
14 do a great job with the resources we have, of course,
15 but I think we can do--we consistently remain in
16 dialogue with the Mayor, OMB and other entities to
17 kind of discuss and address those--those needs.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: It's not clear to me
19 given the increase in staffing over several fiscal
20 years, but that--a staff resource challenge is the
21 cause of the delays, but if it were to be the case, I
22 think the Council would be very open to additional
23 hiring in the Capital Division, if--if we're really
24 follow next. (sic) But at this point having added
25 significant staff, I think over 100 it could run.

2 It's not clear to me if that's the—if that continues
3 to be a challenge, but that—that is an important
4 question for us. I'm going to pause and pass it to
5 my colleague Andy Cohen.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Okay. Thank you,
7 Chair. You know, I am going to preface I have found
8 in dealing the Capital process to be very, very
9 frustrating. But I—I—I will preface it by saying
10 it's not—it's not just—it's not the Parks Department.
11 It's not like you guys don't want to do the work or
12 that you're, you know, I feel like, oh, they're a
13 bunch of slackers over there. That—that's not—I
14 think that there is but, there are profound
15 structural issues I think that are—are making this I
16 fund untenable. Like, you know, just as a preface on
17 that. Look, I'm not convinced in the next four years
18 that I'm going to put a dollar into capital for the
19 Parks Department because I know that I will not see—I
20 will not see the, you know, any sign of life on
21 those—those dollars after, you know, while I'm—while
22 I'm in office. Like I'd be lucky if the projects I
23 funded in the first year of my time in the Council
24 that those come to fruition before my last year. I
25 have to tell you, I'll be surprised. I'll be

2 pleasantly surprised, but I will be surprised, and
3 again, you know, if I put my money in DEP, then I
4 could—would yell at DEP like I—because I don't—I'm
5 not sure that they are in any—in any agencies in a
6 significantly better position than you one way or the
7 other, but it is profoundly frustrating. I'm not
8 convinced that the Parks Department has been
9 completely candid about the state of affairs and—and
10 how long it takes to get things done. I mean this,
11 you know, it's a little bit up to me. In my humble
12 opinion, it's a little bit slight of hand that, you
13 know, well, if we just—you know, we won't—I fund the
14 project on July 1st or June 30th and the fact that it
15 sits in the queue for a year and a half before the
16 scoping meeting, well we just aren't—we're not going
17 to count that time any more. And look, we've put the
18 year and a half off because we didn't count that
19 time. That doesn't really actually help. That
20 doesn't make anybody feel any better or that the
21 projects are getting done any sooner. That's just,
22 you know, and—and tracking, you know, we could track,
23 but I could tell you with the tracking that is real
24 is that like it's going profoundly slowly that-- And
25 again, these—the contracting process, the—the issues

2 with the contracting process are not—they're not—you
3 didn't make the rules, you know, but—that I had a,
4 you know, a skate park that was funded by my
5 predecessor that is, of course, now because we went
6 with the lowest bidder who we knew could not do the
7 job, and is now bankrupt, like—but we can't come up
8 with a cadre of qualified bidders like the, and—
9 Again, now, it's not your fault, but—but like I just—
10 it's—it's insane on some level the way we do business
11 and the way that—that your agency and again, the city
12 does—tries to do these capital projects like it—it
13 just defies logic. Like if the taxpayer really
14 understood what is happening, they would be beside
15 themselves, and also I mean the fact that we can't
16 even like how much a project is going to cost. It's
17 like we can use a Ouija Board and we get a closer
18 estimate than—than we're getting now, and—and I'm
19 just, you know, I'm fortunate despite my tone believe
20 it or not, that I actually—I feel like I have a good
21 relationship with the Administration. Because now
22 when you come back and tell me we're not, you know,
23 that we're 50% off or 100% off, I say that's nice.
24 Go tell the Mayor because I'm not giving you any more
25 money, and fortunately the Mayor has been a good guy

2 and he's com up with the money. But, like I'm not
3 doing it. I just don't care. Whatever happens,
4 happens. You tell me, Council Member, we're going to
5 build you this park for X amount of dollars, I get
6 you X amount of dollars. I just don't want to hear
7 it any more. I've had too many meetings where, you
8 know, I had more hair when I got to this Council, and
9 I'm just not doing that any more. So, there's no
10 question in that, but I-I did feel that, you know,
11 the-the frustration is really, it is palpable. I
12 was, you know, a parks advocate in a prior life. I,
13 you know, I served on a Friends of Group. I-I care
14 deeply about parks, and I and I with great enthusiasm
15 when I got to the Council to be able to deliver
16 capital for-to the Parks Department, really was one
17 of the most satisfying things in the beginning of my
18 term, and it-it is not-it has not ended up that way
19 in my first term. Again, there's no question in
20 that, but just I feel better. [laughter]

21 MATT DRURY: No, for what it's worth, we
22 understand and share your frustration. There are
23 certain elements in connection. You know, we've
24 brought on additional estimating staff, and that's-
25 that's-you've-you've locked on a few key components

2 that have been really challenging for the agency and
3 frustrating to us internally, and one of them
4 specifically is just the absolute explosion of
5 construction costs here in New York City. I believe
6 there was a—a construction study completed a couple
7 months ago that—that determined that New York City is
8 the most expensive city in the world to construct
9 full stop. I think we beat out Zurich or someone
10 like that. So, hurray for us, but it's a—it's a, you
11 know, determining how those bids will come in because
12 it is an open public bidding process, you know,
13 obviously that's something, you know, getting those
14 results back, we take no—you know, we take no joy in
15 that. That's something again working internally and
16 trying to identify those additional funds. You know,
17 we—we understand that frustration, and we do our best
18 to work with you through those.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I know that every
20 year the testimony is the same that—that construction
21 costs are going up. I don't—like if you—it
22 shouldn't—nothing should cost what—what you tell us
23 it costs in the first place. So, let's put that
24 aside. If you told me, you know, I mean we talked
25 about the—the \$3 million comfort station. But you

2 told me the comfort station was \$4 million so that
3 you built in an extra million because, you know,
4 what's an extra million between friends. But-but
5 then we get you the \$4 million and it's still not
6 enough. Like--

7 MATT DRURY: [interposing] No, I think
8 you're right. Look, I think we've increased—we've—
9 we've tried to build in and build in assumptions,
10 and—and the—the increasing costs for these projects
11 has out—have outpaced even that. So, I think that's
12 something we've been—we've been shocked and surprised
13 by. We're discussing internally. You know, I think
14 there is a degree to which the discretionary funding
15 model, you know, I can understand how that is, you
16 know, maybe not necessarily the best fit for—for us.
17 So, if you decide in certain—in—in the future to
18 route your discretionary model, you know, funding in
19 certain ways, I think we can understand that in this
20 construction environment that that can be two
21 difficult things to balance.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you, Mr.
23 Chair.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Well, we've been
25 joined by our Majority Leader and Parks Committee

2 member Jimmy Van Bramer, sponsor of our eventual-
3 whatever number he's about to talk about, [laughter]
4 and I'm going to pass the-the floor to him.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you
6 very much, Mr. Chair and that will be 1453-

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --for those
8 who are at home, and keeping track of this. So, good
9 to see you. Thank you, Mr. Chair for-for hearing
10 this important piece of legislation, which I think
11 Parks acknowledges is a real concern for a lot of
12 families and particularly with young children that
13 whenever there is any kind of spraying or abating
14 around our parks that their concern is about the
15 equipment once all of that work has taken place. We
16 have certainly heard from parents. No, I-I read your
17 testimony, and understand that-that you believe that
18 you're already doing a lot of this stuff, but I know
19 that when there's any kind of spraying going on the
20 city DOHMH recommends that families clean their own
21 play equipment at home for example. If you're in a
22 neighborhood and there's cleaning, there's spraying
23 going on, that that folks are, you know, in their own
24 back yards are cleaning their-their equipment. So,
25 I-I don't understand why we wouldn't do that also in

2 the parks and-and I really don't understand why there
3 would be any disagreement with the bill because if
4 we're just adding an extra layer of protection and an
5 extra layer of-of security for parents for young
6 families who are concerned about this issue, as you
7 know, there's a lot of concern, why would there be
8 any disagreement from the Administration on something
9 like this. Which seems to me, you know, so commons
10 sense and so easy to do particularly if you are doing
11 a lot it already.

12 MATT DRURY: Right. I believe you may be
13 referring to the-in terms of the recommendations that
14 have been made by Health and-and we can defer to them
15 on that, but I believe you're referring to the West
16 Nile aerial spraying. So, those are sort of
17 broadcast sprays, if you will, and that's where
18 those. Whereas, the-the spraying of-of herbicides
19 in-in parks is never completed in or frankly even in
20 proximity to children's play equipment. So, I think
21 that we as an agency don't-don't think there's
22 really, you know, there's not a point at which it
23 would be sort of broadcast sprayed at a large enough
24 level ever to-to trigger the-the need to clean a
25 specific piece of play equipment. The spraying of

2 herbicides that does accomplish—is accomplished is—is
3 done with sort of a hand wand that's—that's much,
4 much, much more targeted specifically at ground level
5 and usually at the base of the given weed.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Right, but if
7 there are parents of young children who see all of
8 that work going on--

9 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --and--and--and
11 then say to, and say to us, you know, let's just make
12 sure Parks goes in after any kind of work is being
13 done like that, and--and make sure you scrub down that
14 equipment well, what's--what's the harm in that?

15 MATT DRURY: I mean I guess it just—I
16 guess it stands largely as an operational question
17 that if--that if herbicides are being specifically
18 targeted and sprayed in a, you know, along a
19 sidewalk, you know, I guess—I think the notion that
20 other play equipment or other elements that are
21 within the confines of that given park, you know,
22 aren't coming in contact with the--the spray that's
23 being applied, you know, literally three inches about
24 the ground.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: But-but we
3 have lots of different kinds of parks, right. If you
4 look at Hunter's Point South Park in Inland City, a
5 lot of things sort of come together in one--

6 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --in both
8 the-the-the nature of the environment, the play
9 equipment. You know, in some of our less well
10 maintained parks, you have certainly growth happening
11 all over even in play equipment. It's part of why
12 we're putting so much capital dollars into our parks.
13 Because you've got a hard playground, you see one set
14 of circumstances, and-and then if you go to Hunter's
15 Point South Park, you-you certainly see another set
16 of circumstances. I would argue that given the
17 totality of the system, the-the work that you're
18 doing in all of them, and-and some of the inequities
19 that exist, that this extra layer of protection to
20 create peace of mind for all of the parents of young
21 children is well worth the effort, and I think-- You
22 know, I-I think it's-it's a-it's a good piece of
23 legislation. Again, as we look at broader questions
24 around this, this in the interim is a good common
25 sense step to make sure at a minimum. And look, it

2 you're talking about the safety of children, you
3 can't do enough really. You know, you—you can't say,
4 look, we're—we're doing enough to keep the kids safe.
5 If—if parents in my district and citywide are saying,
6 you know, let's take this one extra step, and—and if
7 you're doing any kind of work, let's just wipe down
8 all the equipment and make sure it's clean again.
9 You know, I—I think that's fair, and—and works, and
10 it is in the best interest of children in the city of
11 New York.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Alright. Did you—do
13 you have any additional comments on that? Then,
14 alright. Thank you, Mr. Majority Leader. (coughs) I
15 mentioned earlier that the Capital Task Force has
16 identified Local law 63 as right for reform. Could
17 you explain what that law does?

18 MATT DRURY: You know, to be completely
19 frank, we can to discuss sort of the bill that's
20 being heard. So, I mean, you know, I—I don't want to
21 mischaracterize or—so I think at this point in time
22 especially as conversations are ongoing, you know, I
23 think that we prefer to kind of route the discussion
24 of—of that specific pieces of—piece of Local Law
25 through—through the Task Force that's currently

2 reviewing it. So, it doesn't feel like the right
3 time to do that.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay, okay.

5 (coughs) For the—for the record my understanding is
6 that it was put in to prevent outsourcing of work
7 without sufficient review, and that in practices that
8 work is pretty much all being outsources. It's
9 starting to seem like it's just adding unnecessary
10 time to projects. It would be great if—if you can
11 get back to us just with the question of how many
12 projects are actually delayed by that law? If
13 there's other work happening simultaneously, then
14 maybe there's none of that savings if you roll that
15 back, but boy if we're really losing two months on a
16 lot of projects because of—of a delay to consider
17 outsourcing when that's—we're conflicting out for
18 everything anyhow, that's seems like it needs to be
19 updated in a big way. Just to give you an example of
20 the kind of product you see on the Capital Project
21 Tracker, I'm looking at—at a construction of a—I
22 guess on a—a reroofing system, and a Bronx
23 playground. It looks like multi-site contract, and
24 design started in 2013. There's a little bit of a
25 delay there. It finished in February of 2014.

2 Procurement started in February of 2014. There was
3 a—a year and a half delay on that phase. It ended in
4 March 2016, and there was construction started in
5 2016 scheduled to go three years, and those start
6 dates, projected completion dates, and actual
7 completion dates of those three phases are there,
8 which is obviously very helpful. But there's no
9 explanation for the delays, and so you have for
10 example procurement, which was supposed to last eight
11 months, ended up lasting 25 months. That's the kind
12 of thing that I think the public would like to
13 understand. I would if I could give you the name of
14 this. I mean a contract number doesn't matter. I
15 could read it out, but it's sounded like this--

16 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Sure, you
17 know, I understand.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --this--this case.
19 But why not just simply list in the case—maybe it's
20 an arbitrary amount if it's delayed more than three
21 months or even more than six months that you list the
22 reason for the delay.

23 MATT DRURY: Actually, at a point in
24 which during the current phase if a project has
25 continued past its expected completion date, there--

2 there is some broad context that's provided that, you
3 know, note that the project is delayed, and to
4 provide a series of reasons that often lead to
5 delays. So that's—that's noted in some degree or
6 fashion. I think one of the problems with I think
7 the—the notion that you're trying to get at is that
8 some of the information would be anecdotal. In some
9 cases speculative and, you know, so supplying
10 narrative information on a tracker like this can be
11 problematic for a variety of operational and legal
12 reasons. So, I think there's a degree, which the
13 tracker focuses on, you know, concrete points of data
14 that we find to be more valuable for either analysis
15 or for just general public awareness.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: What would be the
17 legal challenge with these?

18 MATT DRURY: I think the characterization
19 of a given delay of a project, you know, can be seen
20 different ways by different people and in certainly
21 in, you know, just—this is just an arbitrary example,
22 but if, you know, contractor, you know, performance
23 was one of those elements, I think there is some—
24 there may be some appropriateness or, you know, legal
25 concerns about how that's characterized. So, I think

2 more broadly just, you know, ideologically I think
3 the motion that we would be describing sort of the
4 story or narrative of how a project got where it got
5 can be told a variety of different ways depend-
6 depending on one's perspective. So, I think the-we
7 think the-the strength of the Tracker is that it
8 focuses on more hard and fast sort of data points.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right, but there-
10 there may be some-some activity in certain reports on
11 the causes for delays, but there's probably a lot of
12 objective incidents that-that we can all agree on.
13 Like if the contractor defaults, you know, that's-
14 that's not subjective. The contractor defaulted.
15 So, you know, maybe this is about identifying
16 discrete incidents that everyone agrees on that are
17 not subjective that would at least give the public a
18 sense of, you know, what the heck is happening when
19 what was supposed to be an eight-month process
20 becomes a 25-month process, right. Okay, so this is
21 a very small one, but just kind of a pet peeve of
22 mine. I've tried to navigate to the Capital Tracker
23 from your home page--

24 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --and I've never
3 been successful doing that. You can Google and find
4 it through that route, but I mean there's certainly
5 no--there's no obvious way from the home page. No one
6 who didn't know that this existed and thought to
7 Google it would ever find it. One obvious approach,
8 and I--which I don't believe has been implemented, is
9 if I were going to go to the home page of a given
10 park, and every park does have a page now--

11 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --that there might
13 be a link there.

14 MATT DRURY: Yeah, well, for each
15 individual park property page, if there's ongoing
16 capital work there, that project is actually
17 highlighted. There is on the sidebar there is sort
18 of a link that will take you directly to that park
19 capital project for that--that park.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay, so--so if I go
21 to an individual park and link, but if I--but if I
22 just wanted to find the Tracker--

23 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Sure.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --I'm--I'm sure
25 you're not hiding it, and I'm not--I'm not--

2 MATT DRURY: [interposing] No, no, no.
3 We're very, very proud of it, the 400,000 hits we've
4 had, you know, we're--

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] Right.

6 MATT DRURY: --you know, we're--we're
7 delighted. We'll take a look at it. We're happy to
8 consult with our new media team. I, you know, had a--
9 I had a bookmark my computer so it goes straight
10 there, but I understand not everybody else will have
11 a--

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Right

13 MATT DRURY: --have that.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Is--is there an easy
15 to remember--remember the URL? Is it like--is it like
16 parks.gov/--

17 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Capital
18 Tracker or something like that. Yeah, like I'll
19 explore it. I forget exactly what the direct URL is.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay.

21 MATT DRURY: But we'll double check that.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Alright.

23 MATT DRURY: We're always happy to
24 discuss, you know, I think we have certainly
25 highlighted it on our home page in the past. You

2 know, I think the home page sort of evolves over
3 time. So, maybe there have been times. But
4 certainly I believe, if I'm—if I'm remembering
5 correctly there's a row of key links up top one of
6 which is parks or about parks, and then of that
7 Capital Tracker is one of the three or four that sort
8 of pops up. So, it's--

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] Okay.

10 MATT DRURY: Yeah.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Alright. I'm going
12 to pass it to my colleague Andy Cohen.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I just have a
14 follow-up just on—the Chairman's point, as an
15 example, I mean I'm—I'm harping on this my—on my
16 state park, but if you look at the Capital Tracker, I
17 would not say that it is a filing of information as
18 to what the problems are there, but that project is—I
19 mean it just says like it's under construction, which
20 I can tell you if you go there, it's not. [laughs]
21 I'm—I'm—I—maybe I noticed, and I just can't remember,
22 but in terms of—is anything done in-house? Like I
23 know we like and to her credit, you know, I love my
24 borough commissioner. She really—if there—if there
25 is a way, she finds it to be done, and there are

2 things that we've done together. We've sort of
3 cobbled stuff together. Are there capital projects
4 that they're with--like would be defined as capital
5 projects that are done in-house?

6 MATT DRURY: I guess in terms of the con-
7 you mean the construction or the design or it? Just
8 to clarify your question.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Well, I'm-I'm-I'm
10 not sure. I mean--

11 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Oh, okay so-

12 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: --I mean, you
13 know--

14 MATT DRURY: -so we have capital design
15 staff that certainly work in-house to design, you
16 know, the improvements for a playground. You know,
17 they--they're a key feature. You know, they're
18 featured at that public scoping session. You know,
19 they're--they've got the pen and paper, you know, on
20 the drafts board doing the work. There are times for
21 larger complicated or sometimes a cluster of--it makes
22 sense to cluster a group of projects together, and
23 that can be--go out to RFP for a design consultant to
24 accomplish. So, both--so the design of a project can

2 be accomplished both with in-house staff and the
3 consultants.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: And you design
5 most of the projects?

6 DIANE JACKIER: [off mic] Seventy
7 percent.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: 70?

9 MATT DRURY: There's about 70% that are
10 completed by in-house staff of the landscape jobs.
11 Architecture is actually more consultant based.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Alright. So, I
13 understand the difference.

14 MATT DRURY: Yeah.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I understand the
16 difference. It-but what about construction?

17 DIANE JACKIER: [off mic] So the
18 construction is overseen by in-house Park staff.

19 MATT DRURY: Yeah, but-so the
20 construction is overseen by in-house Park staff, our
21 resident engineers, what have you. The work itself
22 is-is that is, you know, the contractor who publicly-
23 -

24 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: [interposing] All-
25 all of it?

2 MATT DRURY: I wouldn't—I mean I—I
3 suppose if a, you know, I—certainly our Maintenance
4 Teams our M&O staff like County in each—in each
5 borough like that's not bad--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: [interposing] But
7 that's not—that's not--

8 MATT DRURY: [interposing] That's not a
9 whitewater (sic) thing. That's not a good--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: [interposing]
11 That's not a capital project.

12 MATT DRURY: Yeah, capital projects by—I
13 think by definition are—are generally, you know, up
14 for public bid and assigned, you know, to a
15 contractor.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Has there ever
17 been any like there are times when things that are
18 not monumental but like that they're more than
19 maintenance, but they're not—we're not building a
20 pyramid, and there's really like no way. Like
21 sometimes like I have a basketball court I'd like to
22 get—it just needs to be repaved.

23 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: It could be
3 repaved. I mean like it should be like a \$50,000
4 job--

5 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Sure.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: --where someone
7 comes with a truck, they pour the stuff, they make it
8 flat and smooth, they paint some lines. We play
9 basketball. Instead, of course, this is a \$3
10 million-it-it-but they're-they're-if-if we had
11 somebody-if we have some aspect of the Parks
12 Department that could do some-like I said it's more
13 than maintenance but, you know, I understand--

14 MATT DRURY: Uh-hm.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: --that they don't
16 have--

17 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Yeah. No,
18 actually, and-and you raise a really good point,
19 which is that we do actually have a division our
20 Citywide Services Division. We commonly refer to
21 them as Five Borough, and they are-you might describe
22 them as sort of a hybrid where it's sort of projects
23 that are sort of above just like in normal
24 maintenance fixing a bench what have you, and
25 actually we're exploring some really exciting pilot

2 approaches in which they're taking for example
3 interior reconstruction of a comfort station. So,
4 not a full reconstruction of the building itself, but
5 sort of more of the interior fixtures what have. You,
6 and I think we just—I think we just completed a
7 pilot in which the Five Borough Team was able to do
8 some interior reconstruction and improvements for a
9 comfort station in Staten Island. I think that was
10 just completed. So, we're still kind of going
11 through, you know, what with the cost impact,
12 timeline and those sort of things. So, I don't have,
13 you know, I don't have that information with me, but
14 I think we are exploring opportunities, you know, to
15 kind of use in-house staff, you know, in a different
16 better sort of non-capital towards some of those
17 improvements. Having said that, I think I just want
18 to broadly flag that-- Oh, sorry, and similar to
19 your example, I think we actually are using the
20 similar team to accomplish sports coding and some
21 sort of, you know, limited repaving, and things like
22 that, and we actually are exploring some in-house
23 opportunities to avail ourselves there more. Having
24 said that, I think a lot of, you know, to the laymen
25 especially me including me, you know, a redesign or

2 reconstruction project can be often much more
3 complicated than might appear to, you know. So,
4 things like grading, you know, utility connections,
5 you know, a variety of complicated, you know,
6 architectural and engineering decisions. So, just
7 for what it's worth like sometimes these projects are
8 more complicated than one might think, you know, but,
9 you know.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: No, I-I totally
11 understand, you know, like you can't get a light
12 because the power source is--

13 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Right.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: --or you can't
15 what-I understand that, but it-I think it would go a
16 long way to building some good will like, if we
17 could, if there were repairs again that are more than
18 just a repair, but like the-the work that could be
19 done that would put-not take a park out of
20 construction for five years, that would not-that
21 would allow people to use it the way they wanted to
22 use it. I have people who don't want a capital
23 project like the park is in terrible shape, but they
24 want it-the-the idea that they would be out of the
25 park for an extended period of time. You know,

2 soccer fields, baseball fields like where are we
3 going to go if, you know, I know the field is, you
4 know, it-it floods every time it rains, but where
5 would we go if we-if this park was taken apart?

6 MATT DRURY: Yeah, actually to that end
7 we're actually exploring sort of an initial internal
8 reviewing study for-for defining sort of classes of
9 some of our properties that could benefit, you know,
10 let's say like a synthetic turf field that can
11 benefit from sort of just ongoing maintenance as
12 opposed to just letting it, you know, go for 8, 9, 10
13 years at which point it needs a full reconstruction.
14 So, we're exploring ways, and we've been working with
15 OMB and we've been doing some sort of pilot
16 approaches to see where sort of steady ongoing
17 maintenance of that, which can be done at a much, you
18 know, obviously lower price, and is not a disruptive
19 use of the field. How that can be accomplished and
20 we're sort of weighing where that, you know, how that
21 has-- So, we're-we're exploring very many of those
22 options with you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Alright thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you,
25 Councilman Cohen, and thank you to the

2 Administration. We're going to pass off to our next
3 panel, which will consist Emily Walker from New
4 Yorkers for Parks. [background comments, pause]

5 EMILY WALKER: [off mic] This is right?

6 [on mic] Yes, okay. Good morning. My name is Emily
7 Walker and I'm the Director of Outreach and Programs
8 at New Yorkers for Parks. I want to thank the City
9 Council Committee on Parks and Recreation for
10 inviting us to speak on this important issue today. I
11 should clarify I'm speaking about Intro 1680. As the
12 citywide independent advocate for parks and opens
13 spaces throughout New York City, the process of
14 capital improvements in parks has long been of great
15 interest to us. NY for P has long understood that
16 the capital process for parks is a broken one, and
17 the new legislation being discussed today reflects
18 that deep frustration with the process, a frustration
19 we believe is shared by everyday New Yorkers, members
20 of the City Council, and the agency itself. While we
21 have stated this before, we believe it is still worth
22 noting that the nature of parks makes them inherently
23 more challenging to improve. There are simply more
24 stakeholders, more varied kinds of construction
25 projects and a procurement system beyond the agency's

2 control that result in some of the frustrations we've
3 heard expressed today. Despite these frustrations, we
4 do want to commend the New York City Parks Department
5 on the changes it has implemented regarding the
6 capital process. Many of these changes have made the
7 process more transparent to the public such as the
8 development of the Parks Capital Tracker tool. While
9 this tool provides an invaluable serve to the public
10 in terms of understanding the process of how parks
11 get built, we would encourage New York City Parks to
12 make this tool more readily available to the public
13 through the home page of the New York City Parks
14 website, though it is still not quite apparent where
15 to find this tool within the site without having to
16 navigate to a subpage. There is valuable information
17 kept within the Capital Tracker that could clarify
18 the statues of park renovations for the everyday
19 users of the given space, but without this easy or
20 intuitive way to find this tool, it will fail to
21 serve its purpose in changing the public narrative
22 about Park capital improvements. Recent mayoral and
23 Council funding commitments to the Capital Division
24 at Parks have allowed the agency to continue to build
25 their ranks of staff, which has also resulted in a

2 more streamlined capital process than before.

3 Regarding today's legislation specifically, we
4 recognize the need for more clarity about where
5 things stand in the capital process especially in
6 light of these significant funding commitments that
7 are made often by Council member citywide to improve
8 parks in their districts. We do have some concerns
9 that some pieces of the legislation may have the
10 unintended effect of slowing down the overall process
11 by adding another layer of required reporting without
12 commensurate funding to provide additional staff to
13 take on these tasks. However, we do agree with the
14 following changes to the tracker with some caveats.
15 Namely, sharing information on project delays would
16 go a long way toward accountability and transparency.
17 Though we do not feel that New York City Parks
18 currently has enough capital staff to regularly
19 report on these delays, so we want file that concern.
20 Attaching the Council District and Community District
21 information to a given project in the Capital Tracker
22 makes sense, as this information—this is information
23 that already exists on the New York City Parks'
24 website for each open space in the agency's purview.
25 However, the Capital Tracker again should be more

2 easy to find on the Parks' website to begin with. We
3 would also like to see clarity on the reporting
4 requirements that ask for the average amount of time
5 for project completion as well as the total number of
6 capital projects currently under the New York City
7 Parks' jurisdiction. For the first requirement, it's
8 unclear if the average would be a mean or a median,
9 and we believe this distinction would impasse the
10 reported figure that the Council seeks to know. We
11 also believe that the requirement around the total
12 number capital projects is unclear as written. Since
13 many projects in the pipeline are only partially
14 funded, it's unclear if projects that have had some,
15 but not all funding allocated would be included in
16 this tally. Additionally, the legislation as written
17 doesn't stipulate how to account for capital projects
18 that are bundled across the borough, which is a
19 common tactic used by the agency. NY for P does
20 believe that more steps could be taken to make the
21 capital expenditure process more transparent, and we
22 hope our comments today have helped the Council and
23 Parks Committee consider ways to reasonably improve
24 this process for both the City Council members that
25 provide vital funding for park improvements in their

2 districts, as well as the everyday New Yorkers who
3 benefit from these improvements. We look forward to
4 working with both the Council and York City Parks on
5 continuing to reform the system with capital
6 projects. Thank you for the opportunity to speak,
7 and I welcome any questions you might have.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you for your
9 testimony. I don't want to put you on the spot, but
10 in terms of the Tracker, I mean like not that—I have
11 my own tracker bill. Like there's, you know, when I—
12 I that keeping track of these projects is important,
13 but I mean to some extent I feel like, you know,
14 alright we're going to track the Titanic as it
15 crashes into the iceberg like that's interesting I
16 suppose to watch. It was dramatic in the movie, but,
17 you know, I'd like to try to get the projects to go
18 faster. I—I—I mean and I—and I think, you know, you
19 testified in hearings in the—in the past, but do you
20 think that there's anything in particular besides
21 tracking the areas that—that New Yorkers for Parks
22 has really identified as sort fundamental to the—the
23 amount of time it takes to get these things done? Is
24 there, you know--

2 EMILY WALKER: Well, I think certainly in
3 conversations we've had with your team, Council
4 Member Cohen, and I know with Council Member Levine's
5 office as well, you know, we view that there are
6 steps in the process that are out of New York City
7 Parks' control that are more controlled by OMB for
8 instance that perhaps slow down the—the procurement
9 process. You know, I think one concern that we heard
10 expressed by the agency today, and that we certainly
11 hear. For instance, it's participatory budgeting
12 season. So, that's very much a process that we are
13 involved in organizationally and—and in having
14 conversations with folks who are both involved as
15 delegates, but also at the agency level and just
16 hearing that some of the projects that may be at a
17 lower cost point, are being rejected by contractors
18 who are receiving those bids because they can receive
19 more funding to do other projects that maybe have a
20 higher price tag. I think that's something that New
21 Yorkers for Parks believes is out of the agency's
22 control, but has the very real impact of slowing down
23 the capital process and adding to the frustration
24 that Council members like yourselves see that
25 everyday New Yorkers who have long advocated for

2 improvements would like to see, and have worked
3 really hard to get the funding committed for. So, we
4 think there--there is few different layers. We don't
5 have I think a silver bullet answer, and we certain
6 look forward to ongoing conversations with you about
7 how we can try to make this process more equitable
8 and speedy for folks who are waiting to see improved
9 open spaces in their community.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I'm not trying to
11 put you on the spot by putting you on the spot, you
12 know, it--I mean, you know, I believe that--that there
13 needs to be structural changes that--that I--I don't
14 believe that--that the capital process-- Again, it's--
15 it's charter mandated. It's not just, it's not just
16 parks, but that there--but if there were things that
17 we could do at the Parks Department that--that we--
18 either we could encourage the Administration to do,
19 or we could mandate through legislation, I mean we
20 would be eager to do that, but I--but, you know, even
21 in the--in the answer that you just gave, I mean it
22 sort of seems like we're all saying the Parks are
23 nice people. They're doing the best they can, but
24 it's not getting done.

2 EMILY WALKER: I think that's a fair
3 point, and certainly, you know, I think that having
4 these conversations between both the Administration
5 at the mayoral level and the Council level we're
6 eager to hear how the task force is moving forward
7 because we do think that that is, you know, one
8 potential way. I think there--there are snags in the
9 process on the--the City side that--that the Council
10 has very valid frustrations with, and we would
11 encourage the task force to really look at those
12 things. I don't want to pretend I'm necessarily the
13 expert on--on what those changes could be. I'm
14 certainly happy to continue conversations with our
15 Executive Director, who unfortunately couldn't be
16 here today, and look forward to continuing dialogue
17 with the Council about how we can work with this
18 process to make it better because we understand that
19 it's not where it needs to be. There have been some
20 minor improvements, but it--it is not enough, and we
21 understand the frustrations because we certainly hear
22 them from the Council side. But we also hear them and
23 in particular I hear them as the outreach staff
24 member in New Yorkers for Parks from folks in
25 neighborhoods who have really worked hard for years

2 to get funding committed for projects, and then still
3 have to wait a really long time see those projects
4 come to fruition. So, we agree that we're not there
5 yet, and we—we hope that we can work together to find
6 a constructive way to make the construction process a
7 little more expedient.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I won't put you on
9 the spot any more. Thank you.

10 EMILY WALKER: [laughs] Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Council Member Cohen
12 and some colleagues in Albany have suggested a more
13 radical solution, which would mirror the School
14 Construction Authority. It's creation of a Parks
15 Construction Authority with the idea that it would
16 exempt the process from some of the bureaucratic
17 burdens that we currently face.

18 EMILY WALKER: Uh-hm.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Has New Yorkers for
20 Parks taken a position on this?

21 EMILY WALKER: We have not yet taken a
22 position. We have had preliminary conversations with
23 Council Member Cohen and his team. It is a proposal
24 that we're weighing. I think we do have some
25 concerns, but it's something that we have not yet

2 decided how we are going to—to come down on—on either
3 side of the issue, but it is something that we are
4 taking a look at, and we look forward to having more
5 conversations with both you, Council Member Levine
6 and Council Member Cohen as this process--

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] And
8 what—what are your concerns?

9 EMILY WALKER: I think, you know, as a
10 community based organization that seeks to empower
11 everyday advocates, sort of our initial read is that
12 have some concerns about removing the public input
13 process, number one, and I know that's something
14 we've expressed to Council Member Cohen because why
15 we understand it might make the process move along a
16 little quicker, we're concerned that that might
17 remove the ability for community members to have that
18 important level of input in what happens in their
19 local parks. I think, you know, one of the
20 overarching concerns our organization has had for
21 years and—and still has is that part of the problem
22 with the capital process is also just related to the
23 fact that New York City Parks doesn't have a robust
24 discretionary capital budget in the way that some
25 other capital intensive agencies do. That's

2 something we've pushed for year after year, as you
3 know in the budget process, and ultimately that's an
4 investment that needs to be made by the Mayor and—and
5 that just isn't something that has happened. We've
6 seen great investments that help with specific
7 capital programs such as the Community Parks
8 Initiative or the Anchor Parks Initiative. Those are
9 fantastic starts, but without having that flexible
10 large budget to really put in that stop-gap funding,
11 for projects that maybe Council members have put in
12 some funding, but haven't been able to fully fund in
13 any given year. You know, I think that is inherently
14 something that New Yorkers for Parks believes is
15 ultimately one of the things that slows down the
16 process to a degree that other agencies like DEP and
17 even maybe SCA don't have to deal with. So, I think
18 for us not having that be a component of the Parks
19 Construction Authority legislation as written, we
20 would want to see that funding sort of also accounted
21 for in the process because we still ultimately
22 believe that is one of the most fundamental issues
23 with the capital process, and why it takes so long
24 because it can't be all on the—the backs of Council
25 members to really fund these projects, and make them

2 happen. It's fantastic that Council members provide-

3 -

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: [interposing] But
5 Parks really does have a pool of money or capital
6 projects, which is very small. I believe it's-it's
7 other than the high profile projects that you
8 mentioned, which are-are really-they're wonderful,
9 but they're one-shot.

10 EMILY WALKER: Right.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: There's-there's one
12 infusion of capital for anchor parks and, and then
13 it's gone, but you're talking about a need every year
14 to replenish this-this pool--

15 EMILY WALKER: Obviously.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --and I-the last I
17 heard, it was somewhere in the \$30 million maybe the
18 \$50 million range. It was used for things like a
19 retaining wall--

20 EMILY WALKER: Uh-hm.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --or-or
22 reconstructing I don't know, a bridge at a park that
23 needed to be rebuilt.

24 EMILY WALKER: Uh-hm.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Is that about the
3 right scope? Is that about the—is that an accurate
4 amount as far as you know? Is it in the \$30 to \$50
5 million range?

6 EMILY WALKER: I don't know off the top
7 of my head. I would have to double check on that.
8 If that is the range, we don't think that's enough.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Well, I—I would
10 agree on that. You—you can—you can barely build a
11 bench for \$30 to \$50 million these days.

12 EMILY WALKER: Correct.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: So, okay, thanks—
14 thank you for your—

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: [interposing]
16 Could I just—

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Yeah.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: --say one more.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Yes, please.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I will say it's—
21 it—it-it in part based on our conversation, but I
22 think that—that—that we're hoping to codify like the—
23 the—the scoping aspect of the—the process now, which
24 we—I think works phenomenally well like going to a
25 scope. You know, it's—it's part of—it feels a little

2 bit like a tease sometimes, but I mean I've been
3 involved in great scoping meetings where the
4 community comes out. We really--there's a great
5 dialogue with the Parks Department, and we come up
6 with a design that people really are excited about,
7 and then we never hear from it again. But, I-I-I
8 think that--that you input was valuable, and I think
9 that that's one of the things that we're hoping to,
10 you know, as, you know, if and this process moves
11 forward in a PCA that--that codifying and scoping the
12 way it is now with the things that work should be
13 preserved. So, I just wanted to give that update.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Very good.

15 EMILY WALKER: We hear that.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you for that
17 update--

18 EMILY WALKER: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: --and thank you for
20 your testimony.

21 EMILY WALKER: Thank you, Council Member.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: And this concludes
23 our hearing. [gavel]

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1 COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

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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 December 20, 2017