

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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March 25, 2025
Start: 10:28 a.m.
Recess: 4:53 p.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Pierina Ana Sanchez, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Alexa Avilés
Eric Dinowitz
Oswald Feliz
Crystal Hudson
Lincoln Restler

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Gale A. Brewer
Rita C. Joseph
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate

A P P E A R A N C E S

Ahmed Tigani, Acting Commissioner of New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Kim Darga, Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Development at the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Gardea Caphart, Deputy Commissioner of Finance and Administration at the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Lucy Joffe, Deputy Commissioner of Policy and Strategy at the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development

AnnMarie Santiago, Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Enforcement and Neighborhood Services at the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development

James S. Oddo, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Buildings

Gus Sirakis, Deputy Commissioner for Development and Technical Affairs at the New York City Department of Buildings

Gina Ugarte, Deputy Commissioner of Finance at the New York City Department of Buildings

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

Guillermo Patino, Deputy Commissioner of Policy and Legal Affairs at the New York City Department of Buildings

Laura Popa, Deputy Commissioner for Sustainability at the New York City Department of Buildings

Yegal Shamash, Deputy Commissioner for Enforcement at the New York City Department of Buildings

Mark Sanabria, Deputy Commissioner for Administration at the New York City Department of Buildings

Kenny Margarito Alvarez, Supportive Housing Network of New York

Judith Goldiner, Legal Aid Society

Damon Gilbert, Equal Justice Fellow with New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Victor Lee Walker, self

Doreen Burton, self

Joelle Ballam-Schwan, Supportive Housing Network of New York

Gladstone Johnson, Executive Director of the Bronx Neighborhood Housing Services

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

Angella Cummings, Executive Director of
Neighborhood Housing Services of Brooklyn CDC

Tonya Ores, Chief Executive Officer for
Neighborhood Housing Services of New York City

Christie Peale, Chief Executive Officer and
Executive Director of the Center for New York
City Neighborhoods

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

Alison Wilkey, Director of Government Affairs and
Strategic Campaigns with Coalition for the
Homeless

Euralio Mares, self

Gladys Cruz, self

Pilar de Jesus, Senior Advocacy Coordinator in
the Housing Unit at TakeRoot Justice

Jackie Del Valle, Coordinator of Stabilizing NYC
at TakeRoot Justice

Paula Z. Segal, TakeRoot Justice

James Cogger, Manager of Community Justice Connect
of the Center for Justice Innovation

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

Gabriela Sandoval Requena, Director of Policy and Communications at New Destiny Housing

Oksana Mironova, Housing Policy Analyst with the Community Service Society of New York

Cameron Molyneaux, President/Chapter Chair of A Better New York Legal Assistance Group

Sharon Brown, Rose of Sharon Enterprises

Pamela Herrera, Land Justice Coordinator at the Western Queens Community Land Trust

Helen Taylor, Supportive Housing Network of New York

Jonathan Cohen, Housing Managing Attorney at Catholic Migration Services

Todd Baker, Project Manager at the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition

Christopher Leon Johnson, self

Will Spisak, Senior Policy Strategist for New Economy Project

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Testing, testing. This
3 is a New York City Council Preliminary Budget hearing
4 on Housing and Buildings recorded on March 25, 2025,
5 by Sergeant Ben Levy in the City Hall Chambers.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Can everybody settle
7 down? We're getting ready to begin.

8 Good morning, and welcome to the New York
9 City Council Preliminary Budget hearing on Housing
10 and Buildings.

11 At this time, can everybody please
12 silence your cell phone.

13 If you wish to testify, please go to the
14 back of the room to fill out a testimony slip.

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

18 Chair, we are ready to begin.

19 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: [GAVEL] Good
20 afternoon, and welcome to this morning's Preliminary
21 Budget hearing on the Committee of Housing and
22 Buildings. I'm Council Member Pierina Sanchez, the
23 Chair of this Committee, and I would just like to
24 start with a disclaimer. This is my first hearing
25 back after maternity leave that was never really

2 leave, but I'm playing nursing bingo, so I have
3 nursed while door knocking, I have nursed at a
4 fundraiser, and let's see if today I can nurse on the
5 floor during a hearing.

6 Thank you all so much for being here
7 today. The City Council will conduct oversight on two
8 agencies, HPD and DOB, in relation to the Mayor's
9 Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Budget and Fiscal 2025
10 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report.

11 I want to acknowledge that I'm joined
12 today by Council Members Dinowitz and Avilés and
13 several Colleagues who will be joining us shortly.

14 Council Colleagues, members of the
15 Administration, and congratulations to Acting
16 Commissioner Ahmed Tigani. I'm excited to Chair this
17 hearing with you. Council Colleagues, members of the
18 Administration, and New Yorkers listening in. We are
19 at an inflection point. Our city faces not one, but a
20 series of housing crises. A stark imbalance of power
21 between landlords and tenants, fueled by rampant
22 inequities, a federal administration that is
23 dismantling housing support for those most in need, a
24 land use regime that distributes housing unfairly,
25 asking the same communities again and again to bear a

2 disproportionate burden, a lack of supply overall and
3 of truly affordable housing in particular, and a
4 deteriorating building stock that subjects our
5 neighbors to living conditions that no one should
6 have to endure.

7 But at the same time, there is growing
8 momentum to leave the status quo behind. Communities
9 are organized and have secured major housing wins in
10 the fight for social housing. A special shoutout to
11 the tenants and organizers in my community at 2201-05
12 Davidson and 705-709 West 170 in Council Member de la
13 Rosa's District in their continuing fights. And in
14 City government, we are taking bigger swings at
15 systemic change, though we must, of course, go much
16 further. In the past year, the City has taken
17 important steps to start to turn the tide, many of
18 which I was proud to champion. City of Yes, an
19 overhaul of our City's zoning code paired with the
20 Council's City for All, a comprehensive set of
21 housing and infrastructure investments, totaling 5
22 billion dollars. Local Laws 126 and 27, which cleared
23 the way for safer basement apartments and accessory
24 dwelling units across the city. Local Law 119 from
25 Council Member Chi Ossé, which will ban forced

2 broker's fees. Local Law 79, a proactive inspection
3 program for New York City's most at-risk buildings.
4 And Local Law 122, a relaunched and reformed J51 tax
5 abatement, which will finance rehab work for
6 thousands of homes with added protections. Finally,
7 Local Laws 101 and 102, which would have expanded the
8 eligibility for the City's eviction prevention
9 vouchers, or CityFHEPS, had the Mayor not decided to
10 veto the legislation and refuse to implement it after
11 the Council override, and we continue to fight this
12 duly enacted law in court. This, as we will discuss
13 today, is more important than ever, as the Trump
14 administration reneges on nearly 8,000 emergency
15 housing vouchers that were issued only last year.

16 These steps, however, are simply not
17 enough to deliver what New Yorkers deserve, a city
18 where all can afford to live, where they can afford
19 to stay, where they can put down roots and raise a
20 family without fear of displacement. At today's
21 hearing, we ask, what investments are needed to
22 achieve that city? Does the Mayor's Preliminary
23 Budget deliver on these investments? And if not, how
24 can we work together between now and June to ensure

2 that our City's Housing and Buildings agencies have
3 the resources they need to fulfill their mission?

4 I won't bury the lead. The Preliminary
5 Budget, in our view, falls far short of the level and
6 types of investments that we need. First, the City
7 continues to underinvest in HPD's preservation and
8 enforcement work. While this Administration takes
9 victory laps on the record-breaking new housing that
10 they have created, our legacy of affordable housing
11 continues to deteriorate. This is due to woefully
12 inadequate investments in the programs that can
13 preserve this housing and hold negligent landlords
14 accountable. For instance, through the end of Fiscal
15 2024, there was a 24 percent jump in housing
16 violations citywide, a 15 percent vacancy rate in the
17 HPD Preservation Office, and preservation projects
18 made up just 20 percent of all starts, just 24
19 percent of completions in the first four months of
20 Fiscal 2025. And the Department of Buildings
21 continues to have 200 vacancies, with actual staffing
22 levels remaining flat since Fiscal '22, despite the
23 rising need.

24 Second, the City has not fulfilled its
25 capital commitments from City of Yes. At adoption

1 last year, HPD had 10.1 billion dollars committed for
2 Fiscal '26 through '30. In the Preliminary Capital
3 Commitment Plan over the same five-year period, that
4 number increased to just 10.7 billion dollars. This
5 is a far cry from the Administration's commitment to
6 add 1 billion dollars in the next five years in
7 housing capital. And that is not the only commitment
8 that appears unfulfilled in the Preliminary Budget.

9
10 Third, chronic delay has become the norm
11 across the Administration. But at HPD, discretionary
12 contracts are massively delayed with some
13 organizations, such as the CBOs, the community-based
14 organizations, that make up Stabilizing NYC, still
15 waiting to be paid out from Fiscal Year '22 for work
16 that has long since been completed. And OMB continues
17 to delay final approval for key staff positions, with
18 delays lasting eight months or longer after an
19 individual receives an offer. I don't know about you,
20 but I would try to move on with my life if that was
21 the delay. That's not acceptable.

22 We can make the FY26 budget the most pro-
23 housing, pro-tenant budget in New York City history,
24 first, by supercharging HPD and DOB's preservation
25 and enforcement work, second, by pouring more capital

2 funds into the outyears, especially for preservation,
3 and third, by continuing to add staff capacity and
4 removing bureaucratic roadblocks that have made
5 endless delay the norm.

6 Today, I look forward to hearing from,
7 first, the Department of Housing Preservation and
8 Development and then the Department of Buildings, and
9 finally, the public at about 2:30 p.m.

10 A reminder for members of the public who
11 would like to testify, please fill out a witness slip
12 with the Sergeant-at-Arms so we can include you in
13 the speaking list.

14 Lastly, I want to thank all of the
15 Committee Staff who helped to make today possible,
16 Jack Storey, Emre Edev, Michael Sherman, and Chima
17 Obichere in the Finance Division; Austin Maloney,
18 Andrew Bourne, Dirk Spencer, Jose Conde, Brooke Frye,
19 Reese Hirota in the Legislative Division; and
20 finally, my District team, Maria Villalobos, Ben
21 Ratner, Kim Castellanos, Gerard Fernandez, Paola
22 Olivo, Joanna Yege, and Carla Dominguez, who ensure
23 all of our work is connected to our community's
24 experiences.

2 Congratulations, Acting Commissioner
3 Tigani.

4 I will now pass it to our Committee
5 Counsel to swear in HPD and administer the oath.

6 I'd like to acknowledge that we've been
7 joined by Council Member Restler and Public Advocate
8 Jumaane Williams.

9 Public Advocate, would you like to make
10 your remarks now, and then we'll turn to the
11 Administration.

12 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: Thank you very
13 much, Madam Chair. Just want to congratulate Acting
14 Commissioner. Congratulations, couldn't happen to a
15 nice and more attentive guy, so I appreciate that,
16 and I want to shout out my 16-year-old, _____ who's
17 here today out of school. Thanks for joining me.
18 Junior in high school.

19 My name is Jumaane Williams. I'm the
20 Public Advocate for the City of New York. Thank you
21 very much to Chair Sanchez and Members of the
22 Committee on Housing and Buildings for holding this
23 hearing and always allowing me the opportunity to
24 provide a statement.

2 Our housing agencies have faced high
3 attrition rates with HPD experiencing 45.6 percent
4 change from pre-pandemic to current trends. As of
5 February 2025, HPD's vacancy rate is 13.8 percent,
6 with a total of 382 vacancies. HPD has bounced back
7 from the pandemic lows with production, Fiscal Year
8 2025, increasing from the low point of the previous
9 two Fiscal Years. However, the vacancy rate from last
10 month is still very high. It's my hope that HPD
11 continues to prioritize hiring to fill the gaps to
12 ensure it does not negatively impact the agency's
13 capacity.

14 According to the Preliminary Marriage
15 Management Report, MMR, in the first four years of
16 Fiscal Year '25, HPD issued 13 percent more
17 violations compared to the same period Fiscal Year
18 '24 for hazardous conditions, including 15 percent
19 increase for Class A, non-hazardous violations, 13
20 percent increase for Class B, hazardous violations,
21 and 11 percent increase for Class C, immediately
22 hazardous violations. In addition, HPD's Section 8
23 voucher utilization rate has 89 percent in the first
24 four months of Fiscal Year '25, which was a 8 percent
25 decrease compared to Fiscal Year '24. The rate is

2 much lower because of the transfer from NYCHA that
3 saw 3,000 vouchers added to the agency's baseline,
4 which has, in turn, increased the number of vouchers
5 issued by 26 percent.

6 DOB faces similar staffing changes with a
7 higher attrition rate of 68.3 percent, changed from
8 pre-pandemic to current trends. As of February 2025,
9 I know DOB will be later, just putting on the record
10 now. DOB's vacancy rate is 12.41 percent, with a
11 total of 216 vacancies. Compared to HPD, DOB has been
12 falling behind from the pandemic lows with production
13 in Fiscal Year '25 being minimally compared to the
14 previous Fiscal Years. It's critical that we ensure
15 that also DOB is able to fill all its vacancies for
16 this year.

17 There's been a concerning trend in
18 building safety in the past couple of years. 2023 was
19 the deadliest year for the construction workers.
20 There were 30 construction deaths on the job, which
21 was the most in a decade. According to the
22 Preliminary MMR, construction-related incidents with
23 injury decreased from 237 to 143, and construction-
24 related injuries decreased from 266 to 146. DOB has
25 put several steps in place to prioritize and ensure

2 the safety of workers. In addition, the average
3 inspection response has been negatively impacted due
4 to being understaffed. The average wait time for
5 construction inspection increased 4.2 days. Plumbing
6 inspection increased 3.19 days. Electrical inspection
7 increased 9.4 days, and more than doubled from
8 before. I'm hoping to hear from the Administration
9 some concerns and asks for this budget cycle. Also
10 notice that 214,000 that was set aside for the asylum
11 seekers was removed. We're interested to find out
12 where that money is going, and is it possible to
13 substitute that money for a different need within
14 HPD.

15 The current federal administration is
16 dismantling agencies, including HUD, and it is
17 currently facing agency cuts and massive layoffs
18 during a housing crisis. One department in particular
19 that is seeing the deepest cuts in the Office of
20 Community Planning and Development. This office funds
21 disaster recovery and programs that help local
22 communities build affordable housing. In addition,
23 this office provides more than 3.6 billion dollars in
24 federal funding for rental assistance, substance use
25 treatment, mental health, and outreach to get those

2 living outside into housing and shelter. HPD runs an
3 emergency housing program for people who need to be
4 relocated because of the fires. I'd like to find out
5 how HPD is impacted by these cuts, and if folks are
6 on the verge of homelessness.

7 HUD has only one staff person for the
8 entirety of the State of New York, which has a
9 population of approximately 20 million. What is the
10 City planning to do to protect the federal funds and
11 capital projects? Also, how is the City responding to
12 a potential probable backlog in administration of
13 Section 8 applications?

14 I hope during today's hearing, the
15 Administration will provide information on the issues
16 that I just highlighted in my statement. We cannot
17 have unsafe and weakening infrastructure that puts
18 New Yorkers at risk. I'd like to know if the
19 Administration plans to respond to the federal
20 government and meet the goal of being fully staffed
21 for HPD and DOB.

22 I'll just end by saying a few weeks ago,
23 I was here on a Public Safety hearing. The only thing
24 discussed during that Public Safety hearing was law
25 enforcement. Just want to re-up the fact that all of

2 these issues, whether it's education or housing,
3 really, really have to be a part of the public safety
4 discussion. I hope soon we'll talk about it as such.
5 Thank you so much.

6 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, Public
7 Advocate.

8 And with that, I'll turn it over to our
9 Counsel to administer the oath.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair. If
11 anyone from HPD plans on testifying today, please
12 step up to the dais.

13 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Now it's a party.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. Please raise
15 your right hand.

16 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
17 whole truth, and nothing but the truth and to answer
18 all Council Member questions honestly?

19 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I do.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: I do.

21 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Yes.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. You may
24 begin.

2 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Thank you.

3 Good morning, Chair, Members of the Committee,
4 Committee Staff. We appreciate being invited, myself
5 and the rest of the HPD team, to today's hearing.
6 It's a privilege to discuss the critical work we're
7 doing at HPD and our shared responsibility to ensure
8 every New Yorker has access to safe, affordable
9 housing.

10 I'm here today as Acting Commissioner of
11 New York City's Department of Housing Preservation
12 and Development. It's a new title, but at its core,
13 the job has not changed. When I walk through the
14 doors of HPD each morning, I focus on three things.
15 First, my job is to care, to believe deeply that
16 housing isn't a privilege, it is a necessity, to
17 treat everyone who needs our help like they could be
18 your parents, our friends, or even my son. Second, my
19 job is to take action, not just to talk about
20 solutions, but to deliver them every single day so
21 that more New Yorkers can find stability, security,
22 and a real path forward. Third, my job is to build
23 momentum because this work doesn't happen overnight
24 and the progress we make today is what will put more
25 families into homes tomorrow. My focus comes from

2 being a New Yorker through and through. I was born
3 and brought up in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, and while my
4 mother might disagree, I often feel that I was raised
5 by the entire city. I need to say I hate talking
6 about myself because this moment when so much is at
7 stake, I'm not what matters. But my story, how I
8 ended up in this seat, in this building, at this
9 hearing, is a story of so many New Yorkers. Our city
10 made space for family with government support,
11 including rental assistance, allowing us to find
12 community and create incredible lives where now we
13 have the chance to give back, and I get to raise my
14 own family in New York City.

15 To be clear, I'm not here because it's my
16 obligation to give back to the city that gave me so
17 much. I'm here because it is an honor. And speaking
18 of honors, I worked alongside many of you for years,
19 some of you for decades. We've debated, collaborated,
20 and pushed each other. That's resulted in better
21 product and better outcomes for New Yorkers. So it's
22 my intense joy to say that today, my job is about
23 making a commitment to you and your constituents.
24 After all, our budget is a commitment to taking
25 action. My commitment, HPD's commitment, is to not

1 just set ambitious goals, but to deliver real,
2 lasting results that makes this city more livable,
3 more affordable, and more just. I know firsthand the
4 decisions we make in this room do not just live on
5 paper. They shape real lives, just as they once
6 shaped mine. But this job, this agency, and this
7 hearing isn't about me, they aren't about you.
8 They're about people who are counting on us, the
9 families on the brink, the seniors trying to stay in
10 their communities, the kids who just need a fair
11 shot. And our responsibility, my responsibility, is
12 to make sure we don't let them down. That's why HPD's
13 commitment is unwavering. With uncertainty, fear, and
14 confusion weighing, now's the time to turn ideas into
15 action. And finally, before I begin the overview, I
16 just want to take a moment on behalf of the agency to
17 thank Deputy Mayor Carrión for his steadfast
18 leadership of HPD over the last three years. His
19 commitment to community and housing equity has been
20 crucial to HPD's recent successes, and we only expect
21 more success to come under his direction in his new
22 role as Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic
23 Development, and Workforce.
24

2 So, to get real results, we need to start
3 with a clear understanding of both our resources and
4 our challenges. Here are some key figures that
5 reflect our work and our commitment:

6 1.69 billion, HPD's total expense budget
7 for Fiscal Year 2026.

8 1.31 billion, HPD's operational and
9 programmatic budget, with 375 million going to NYCHA.

10 20, the number of individual funding
11 sources that flow into HPD's budget.

12 492 million, the amount, that's 38
13 percent, that comes from the City's own resources,
14 underscoring our collective investment in affordable
15 housing.

16 815 million, a significant portion,
17 that's 62 percent, comes from the federal government.

18 7.6 million, under 1 percent comes from
19 the State and other sources.

20 2.39 billion, HPD's total capital budget
21 for Fiscal Year 2026, excluding the 875 million in
22 pass-through funding for NYCHA's PACT program.

23 20.73 billion, HPD's Fiscal Year 2026 to
24 2035 10-year capital budget.

2 It's not all about what's coming into the
3 agency, it's about what we do with it. These
4 resources support teams working on critical areas,
5 from neighborhood planning to enforcement. Our
6 inspectors make sure that every family in the city
7 can lay their head down in a home that offers safety,
8 warmth, and the chance to prosper.

9 Here are some key staffing numbers.

10 2,383, the full-time staff working on
11 behalf of New Yorkers. This includes 316 staff
12 dedicated to building and preserving affordable
13 homes, 382 inspectors and supervisors keeping our
14 city safe and ensuring homes are secure for every New
15 Yorker, 431 staff dedicated to getting New Yorkers
16 into the homes we've created and using the vouchers
17 allocated to us. 383 positions are still open, and
18 our vacancy rate stands at 14 percent.

19 City of Yes, I just want to take a moment
20 to talk about City of Yes. Last year, we made history
21 with the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity,
22 modernizing our zoning laws to unlock new housing
23 opportunities across the five boroughs. We took bold
24 steps to cut outdated restrictions, streamline
25 approval processes, and remove barriers that have

2 long hindered housing production. These reforms are
3 already making it easier to build where it makes
4 sense, near transit, in high-opportunity
5 neighborhoods, and in areas that have the capacity to
6 grow. By enabling more mixed-use development, we are
7 not only expanding housing options, but also
8 strengthening our commercial corridors and small
9 businesses, ensuring that more New Yorkers can live
10 closer to jobs, schools, and essential services. City
11 of Yes was a crucial step toward a more inclusive and
12 sustainable and economically vibrant New York, but we
13 must continue building on this momentum to meet the
14 full scale of our housing crisis.

15 Now that the zoning has been approved,
16 HPD has turned to implementation of new programs and
17 commitments we've made to the City Council. We are
18 bringing in new staff to manage the Universal
19 Affordability Preference Program, otherwise known as
20 UAP, and our capital commitments. We're developing
21 resources for homeowners who want to add ADUs,
22 helping more tenants stay in their homes through our
23 expanded Partners in Preservation Program, and have
24 been adjusting our projects to take advantage of the
25 new floor area, the new development space, revised

2 parking requirements, and other zoning rules. So
3 we're building the foundation, and now it's time to
4 deliver.

5 Over the past several years, we've
6 crafted bold policies, secured new incentives, and
7 streamlined the process to make housing development
8 faster and more effective. Last year, those efforts
9 resulted in record-breaking housing production, but
10 we know the urgency of the crisis demands even more.
11 In 2025, we are doubling down on our commitment,
12 using every tool available to not only build and
13 preserve homes, but ensure they reach the New Yorkers
14 who need them most. We are harnessing new tools to
15 drive private development and maximize opportunity to
16 build and preserve affordable housing. The 421-A
17 extension is now fully implemented, unlocking up to
18 71,000 new apartments citywide, including 21,000
19 affordable homes. The 467-M program, which
20 incentivizes conversion from commercial to housing,
21 and the abatement, which incentivize affordable
22 housing in high-cost areas, has already led to
23 approvals for 485 affordable units. 485-X is now
24 operational, with applications beginning to roll in,
25 and we expect the first projects utilizing the

2 Universal Affordability Preference to begin this
3 year. Meanwhile, we've expanded our preservation
4 toolbox. Too often, preservation is considered
5 secondary to new construction, but it's a key way for
6 us to create and protect affordable housing. We
7 launched the Community Partnerships for Affordable
8 Renovation Program, where we work with CDFI partners
9 to make it easier for owners to navigate assistance.
10 And J51 is back, providing critical tax benefits to
11 rehabilitate aging buildings and keep them livable
12 for decades to come. Our enforcement and preservation
13 teams are working hand-in-hand to get this message
14 out to owners that HPD is ready to help them meet
15 today's economic challenges.

16 And we're refocusing on home ownership.
17 For many, owning your own home is a critical way to
18 build wealth for yourself and your family, while
19 creating stability for your community, yourself, and
20 the City's housing market. We've established the
21 Office of the Homeowner Advocate, with help from the
22 Council, of course, and launched a Homeowner Help
23 Desk and a new Home Fix Repair Program, and recently
24 announced the expansion of Home First, our down

2 payment assistance program for first-time home
3 buyers.

4 At the same time, we're bringing new
5 affordable housing to life on key public sites across
6 the city, transforming underutilized spaces into
7 vibrant, mixed-use communities with affordable homes,
8 retail, and open space. These developments will
9 create thousands of homes, many deeply affordable and
10 prioritized for New Yorkers who need them most,
11 including formerly homeless and working-class
12 families.

13 Despite rising costs and new economic
14 challenges, HPD is laser-focused on turning policies
15 into places people can call home. By leveraging every
16 available resource, from public land to private
17 investment, from zoning reforms to tax incentives, we
18 are making real progress toward building a more
19 affordable, inclusive, and livable New York.

20 It's not enough to just build housing. We
21 need to make sure we're connecting people to people
22 who need support with homes, whether it's through
23 supportive housing, vouchers, or just knowing how to
24 use our Housing Connect portal. That's why we're not
25 just building housing. We're making sure New Yorkers

1 can access it. Each year, we administer rental
2 subsidies to approximately 45,000 households,
3 ensuring families have stable, affordable homes.
4 Through the NYC Housing Lottery and Homeless Set-
5 Aside Placements, we've helped secure 40,000
6 affordable homes in just three years. By streamlining
7 procedures and eliminating unnecessary barriers, like
8 credit checks for voucher holders, which has
9 streamlined access to housing for over 4,000 families
10 annually, we're making the system more efficient and
11 accessible.
12

13 Beyond housing, we're also investing in
14 stability and opportunity. This year's graduates of
15 the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, which is a
16 program in the Section 8 program that assists our
17 clients there, collectively saved over 1.3 million to
18 invest in their future, contributing to a total of
19 14.4 million awarded since the program began. And for
20 families transitioning from shelter to permanent
21 homes, we've provided 2 million for essential
22 furniture, helping them settle in with dignity. We've
23 also revitalized the Ready to Rent program,
24 connecting free financial counseling with application
25

2 support, so more New Yorkers can successfully
3 navigate the affordable housing process.

4 This year, we are intensifying our focus
5 on reducing the time and administrative burden
6 involved in lottery and lease-up processes. We have
7 successfully advocated at the federal level to reduce
8 documentation that applicants and owners submit and
9 review. Ongoing feedback sessions with industry
10 partners are prompting us to remove a slew of
11 cumbersome or outdated requirements like paper
12 notarization, post office rules, and paper
13 application processes. And across our placement and
14 rental subsidy programs, we are deeply involved in
15 building new tools, technology, and data systems to
16 automate and simplify what are large programs with
17 complex processes and deliver user-friendly and
18 efficient experiences for all of our staff and our
19 stakeholders.

20 Our enforcement and neighborhood service
21 teams continue to be on the front lines, protecting
22 tenants and holding bad actors accountable. In 2024,
23 we secured two warrants for the arrest and civil
24 commitment of notorious landlord Daniel Ohebshalom,
25 ensuring he faces consequences for the hazardous

2 conditions at two Washington Heights buildings. In
3 addition, we won a housing court case to appoint a 7A
4 administrator for 410 West 46th Street, removing him
5 from the day-to-day management of the building and
6 ensuring tenants receive the repairs and oversight
7 they deserve. These actions send a clear message.
8 Landlords who neglect their buildings and put tenants
9 at risk will face serious consequences.

10 At the same time, we're expanding key
11 enforcement programs to protect more New Yorkers from
12 dangerous conditions. Our Self-Closing Door Proactive
13 Inspection program is helping limit any loss of life
14 and homes by ensuring critical safety mechanisms are
15 in place at high-risk buildings. The Heat Sensor
16 program is requiring sensors in more buildings with
17 recurring heat violations, helping to ensure tenants
18 don't suffer in the cold. And with our Certification
19 Watchlist, we're cracking down on landlords who
20 falsely claim to have corrected violations, requiring
21 more re-inspections to hold them accountable. We've
22 also strengthened our enforcement of lead-based paint
23 laws, securing 150,000 in civil penalties against one
24 landlord responsible for hazardous conditions
25 affecting over 790 units. To better inform tenants

2 and property owners, we updated the ABCs of Housing
3 Guide in 2024, providing clear and accessible
4 information about housing rights, safety regulations,
5 and available resources. Meanwhile, our lead
6 exemption online portal and redesigned HPD Online are
7 making it easier than ever for owners to comply with
8 the law and for tenants to access critical building
9 data. These efforts are making our City's housing
10 safer, fairer, and more transparent for all New
11 Yorkers.

12 When one of the thousands of dedicated
13 public servants at HPD walk through the doors of 100
14 Gold in the morning or any of our offices across the
15 five boroughs, we are collectively focused on the
16 work, the projects that need to move forward, the
17 deals that need to close, and the community meetings
18 we need to lead. But I know when I leave at night and
19 head home to Queens, I'm thinking about the people we
20 serve. I think about the family on the verge of
21 homelessness who can't afford to wait for housing
22 costs to come down. I also think about the family who
23 just moved into an affordable home, one that they
24 found through Housing Connect in a neighborhood that
25 they love. I think about the senior trapped in an

2 inaccessible apartment, struggling to live with
3 dignity. But I also think about the senior who just
4 moved into a home that's safe, affordable, and built
5 with the community in mind, on public land, with a
6 center where neighborhoods can gather and support one
7 another. And then I think about the kid who feels the
8 weight of their family's housing struggles, even if
9 they don't understand why. But I also think about the
10 kid who gets to grow up with stability in a home made
11 possible not just by government, but by our partners,
12 non-profits, faith-based groups, developers, our
13 elected leaders, working together to build a future
14 for the city. That kid could be yours, that kid was
15 me. As Acting Commissioner of HPD, I bring all of
16 that with me. My experiences as a public servant, my
17 time as a colleague, and most of all, my perspective
18 as a New Yorker who will never forget why this work
19 matters. I promise you this, I grew up in a New York
20 that made space for my family, and now I'm here to
21 make sure we do the same for even more people. Thank
22 you for the opportunity to give testimony. We're
23 happy to take any questions.

24 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much,
25 Acting Commissioner. I really appreciate your

2 approach to these remarks. I told then-Commissioner
3 Carrión last year that that was the best testimony
4 opening a budget, but you may have just beat him.
5 Thank you. Thank you so much for your testimony.

6 I'd like to acknowledge we were joined by
7 Council Member Hudson.

8 I'm going to ask a few questions to
9 begin, and then I'm going to turn to Council Member
10 Avilés followed by Dinowitz and Restler.

11 So, to start, and first of all, and you
12 all know how much I appreciate the work that takes
13 place every single day at HPD, but I do want to start
14 with this troubling trend that we are seeing. We have
15 seen an increase in signs of decay of our housing
16 stock, with a 24 percent increase in housing
17 violations citywide, 30 percent increase in B
18 violations, which are hazardous, 30 percent increase
19 in the C-class violations, which are immediately
20 hazardous, and troublingly, the number of units
21 affected by emergency repair work has increased by
22 130 percent. These are more than just numbers on a
23 spreadsheet. As we all know, they're indicative of a
24 decrease in standard of living every day for New
25 Yorkers who are struggling to get by already.

2 Notably, in the Preliminary Mayor's Management Report
3 and the Administration's housing plan, Housing Our
4 Neighbors from 2022, there's no specific target for
5 preservation starts or completions. The PMMR doesn't
6 include metrics on the length or preservation of
7 projects, nor targets for preservation timelines. So
8 the question is, why doesn't the Administration have
9 specific preservation goals? What should that goal
10 be, and what additional resources would you need to
11 reach it? Can you commit to adding specific
12 indicators to the MMR and PMMR for preservation
13 targets, preservation timelines, broken down by
14 program?

15 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Thank you for
16 the question, Chair. So just to give the full world
17 picture, we'll start off on enforcement and then move
18 into what is an answer that has a lot of different
19 moving parts to it. But from the enforcement
20 perspective, we definitely take this seriously. It's
21 something that we've actually made additional
22 investments going back to the November Plan, November
23 mod, where we added additional heads in November to
24 increase our enforcement capacity. So, the idea here
25 is that we attack the issue of preservation from

2 enforcement up and through our development finance
3 piece, but it also includes staff resources in our
4 housing access office, which is rent subsidy and
5 rental assistance, in addition to the work that we do
6 with our planning and neighborhood work. For us,
7 preservation has always been a tremendous part of our
8 numbers, our total success story at the end of the
9 year. Usually it's about half, if not more in some
10 years. However, we definitely are at a place right
11 now where in 2025, we have been following and working
12 hard to increase the amount of capital and expense we
13 put there. So from the enforcement side, we have seen
14 increases either in the November Plan and through the
15 investments in City of Yes to our headcount in almost
16 all of our categories of enforcement. And we have
17 seen, as you point out, an uptick in both violations
18 and increase in the number of inspections that we do
19 per year. Plus, if you look at the weather pattern
20 from last year to this year, we did see a colder
21 winter heat season, but I will say proudly that our
22 inspectors stepped up to the challenge. We were able
23 to commit to and do a tremendous job responding to
24 not only the inspections, but being able to deploy
25 resources, whether it came to emergency repair

2 charges or pushing to get repairs when we were
3 issuing violations.

4 Additionally, as these buildings come to
5 our attention, either through our enforcement work,
6 because not only will we issue out the violations,
7 but we'll also see how we can connect this to some of
8 our other programs, like emergency repair, underlying
9 conditions, or whether or not those buildings end up
10 being part of more intensive programs, like the
11 Alternative Enforcement Program, or the work that we
12 do with housing litigation through comprehensive
13 cases. We are often working with owners who want to
14 do the work, but need assistance on how they can make
15 the repairs through total rehab. So, I had mentioned
16 J51 earlier, which was one of the few tax abatement
17 programs we had that we can deploy in buildings that
18 were seeing building and financial distress. Many of
19 the buildings, the owners are coming in to talk to us
20 about preservation programs, so they work through our
21 preservation finance team to use any one of the half
22 dozen or so preservation pipeline term sheets to
23 repair their buildings, and then we are also talking
24 to owners who may have vacancies, or looking at their
25 overall operating expenses, which have gone up. We've

2 talked about this in other hearings before, whether
3 it's the cost of fuel, labor, obligation to meet
4 certain legal mandates, insurance, their costs have
5 gone up, so we sometimes see this as an opportunity
6 to match them with voucher holders and bring stable
7 payments into the building to help with overall
8 operating costs so I would say that the overall
9 picture of that is to look at from the enforcement
10 side, we are putting more investment into our
11 enforcement staff and looking at what we can do to
12 push for repairs and stay on top of that work. And
13 for owners who need to make these repairs due to
14 increasing costs and building and financial distress,
15 we go from J51 as an initial tool we can use up and
16 through our preservation term sheets and then
17 supporting that with additional rental assistance if
18 we can so that the operating costs can meet what they
19 need to do to keep people in safe, habitable homes.

20 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. I am
21 actually going to turn it to some Colleagues while I
22 check in on a screaming child, but I am listening and
23 have some follow-ups. That's my girl. So Council
24 Member Dinowitz, I'm going to turn it to you.

2 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Oh, and we
3 can answer the question about the MMR. I think Kim is
4 ready to talk a little bit about that. Oh, do you
5 want to wait? We can come back to that.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: We can wait
7 until you're back.

8 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: We're going
9 to come back to that, okay.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Remember, family
11 first.

12 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Every time.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Okay.
14 Congratulations, by the way. This is very exciting to
15 have you here.

16 Thank you, and thank you HPD. How many
17 affordable Studio one-, two-, three-, and four-
18 bedroom apartments has HPD financed in the past three
19 Calendar Years?

20 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: We can pull
21 that number up. I can tell you from memory, generally
22 our term sheets have that set amount. You have to
23 look at each term sheet. Additionally, we have
24 different programs. We have multiple multifamily

2 programs that has that as half or a little bit less
3 of the percentage than our senior and our supportive.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Yea. I mean,
5 senior housing aside, that's like a very specific
6 type of housing. I can tell you your term sheets
7 incentivize 70 percent studio and one-bedroom
8 apartments. This is something that's been brought up
9 at this hearing time and again. And what we see is
10 neighborhoods saturated with studio and one-bedroom
11 apartments, I've been asking for this data for a
12 while and have not received it, and so I'm asking
13 today, as we discuss the budget, how many of those
14 apartments disaggregated by number of rooms have been
15 financed?

16 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I can say
17 today we'll prioritize getting you the full aggregate
18 and detailed number. I will just also say that when
19 we look at stats about the availability of units and
20 where we're finding a significant challenge of
21 connecting people to affordable homes, there are many
22 individual or two-person households, which our studio
23 and one bedrooms also serve, so it is often us trying
24 to connect the data with the development capacity
25 we're trying to build to create affordable

2 connections, but I will acknowledge that there's
3 absolutely a lot of feedback we've gotten on this
4 question. We have seen sometimes in our ability on
5 public sites to work with the financing and then also
6 the actual footplate of the site, right? You need a
7 building that meets a certain number of units so we
8 can make both the affordability goals and all the
9 rest of the goals with our term sheets work. That
10 said..

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: But every time,
12 yeah, it just seems every time HPD, I think, and the
13 Mayor want to have a great press release, which says,
14 we've done X number of units, but I think most of us
15 who look for an apartment aren't interested in unit,
16 we're interested in apartment size, number of
17 bedrooms. So, whereas you see numbers on a
18 spreadsheet, we see people, people and families who
19 need apartments, and it's just been a real struggle
20 just to simply get data on what you're financing. I
21 could speak about a particular development in my
22 District where I've been back and forth with HPD on
23 where unfortunately you're not budging on the
24 financing. It's 160 Van Cortlandt Park South. And
25 we're really glad that it's 100 percent affordable.

2 However, it's 70 percent studios and one-bedrooms.

3 And that may make sense in the aggregate in some
4 neighborhoods, but it doesn't make sense when the
5 site is adjacent to a school, when there are two
6 family shelters in the neighborhood, when it's across
7 the street from a park and a playground. This is the
8 perfect site where HPD should have looked in by
9 neighborhood, looked at the surrounding area and
10 said, we should be financing more of these family
11 sized units, and instead it went to the default,
12 which is shoving as many units in a building as
13 possible. And we are very glad that we're getting
14 more units and they're 100 percent affordable, but I
15 think HPD should be looking at how can we meet the
16 different needs of each individual neighborhood.

17 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So just two
18 things. One, that's actually something that we've
19 talked about as part of this year's State of the
20 City. The Mayor had announced that we're launching a
21 new program to look at increasing in targeted areas,
22 additional two and three bedrooms where we can...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: So can I ask
24 just about that? Can you commit to going back,
25 looking at the financing of this particular site that

2 is adjacent to a school in the neighborhood of two
3 family shelters across the street from a playground?
4 Can you go back and relook at the financing to see if
5 anything could be done to increase the number of two-
6 and three-bedroom apartments, number of family size
7 units?

8 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, Council
9 Member, obviously we'll talk about any project that
10 you need us to talk about and look at, but there are
11 two parts I would say here. One is through the
12 development pipeline and HPD is proud of the work
13 that we do, but we are thinking about the larger
14 housing market as well. And a couple of years back,
15 thinking about families first, we actually adjusted
16 our payment standards on our vouchers, which allowed
17 for more flexibility to allow larger families to use
18 that voucher to access larger units. So when we are
19 doing our work, the production side and the
20 investment side and the term sheets, they come with
21 their challenges. We'll look for other opportunities,
22 but for us, it's also making sure that we are using
23 all our tools. So rental assistance is another way
24 that we're able to make gains for families.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: I want to be
3 clear on the time, and I don't mean to interrupt you.
4 If I may ask one more question, Chair?

5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you. So I
7 would like to, like I said, look back at that and see
8 if we can rework the financing. Everyone can make the
9 same amount of money, but we can just have more of
10 the units that are for the people who really need it
11 in the neighborhood.

12 Just a very quick question. It's yes or
13 no. Are you on track to implement Local Law 44 of
14 2024, which requires HPD to provide residents of
15 City-run Mitchell-Lama's pre-filled out SCRIE forms?

16 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: We are on
17 track.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: You are on
19 track.

20 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: We're working
21 to get this done this spring.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Excellent news
23 that you are on track. And I look forward to
24 continued conversations and more conversations, one,
25 getting me the data about two-, three-, four-bedroom

2 apartments that you financed, the specific site at
3 160 Van Cortland Park South, and want to actually see
4 what that looks like for HPD to be financing and
5 incentivizing developers, the people who build the
6 buildings, that they could still make money, and it's
7 in their best interest to build more units for
8 families, which is something the Mayor says he wants,
9 but we have yet to see how the term sheets will be
10 changed to incentivize that construction. Thank you,
11 HPD. Thank you, Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, Council
13 Member Dinowitz. And I just want to echo, that is a
14 concern that we hear all the time, not only the need
15 for family-size units to be subsidized through HPD's
16 programs, but also the size of the rooms within those
17 family size units is something that the Council
18 Members talk about a lot so look forward to more on
19 that.

20 Please, if we can go back to the
21 question. I know, baby girl. Oh, bingo. Yep. If we
22 can go back to the question on the MMR and PMMR
23 targets regarding preservation.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: Sure. So, we
25 set an overall production target. In general, we've

1 been trying to, with preservation specifically, we
2 look at the applications we're getting in, and then
3 we budget for what we need in the upcoming year in
4 order to address the demand that we're seeing.

5 Preservation demand can really change a lot depending
6 on characteristics within the market. As you said, we
7 are seeing increased demand recently. And we also,
8 there's a lot of variation within preservation
9 itself. We serve everyone from single-family
10 homeowners to rent-stabilized properties, Mitchell-
11 Lama co-ops, HDFC, so really wide range of
12 properties, and so looking at the applications and
13 what's coming in is really important so we can make
14 sure that we're allocating the capital resources
15 specifically where we need them. Just on the capacity
16 front, we have made a lot of progress on staffing, so
17 the vacancy rate there has dropped a lot. We also
18 supplemented those kind of staff resources with
19 hiring temps to help us get through some of the
20 backlog that we saw when we lost a lot of staff
21 during the pandemic. We also are very fortunate and
22 appreciate your support through City of Yes. Both on
23 the capital side, we do expect that a significant
24 amount of those resources will go to preservation,
25

2 but also we added staffing capacity in preservation
3 finance specifically.

4 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Do we have a sense
5 yet of what the breakdown of how much preservation
6 capital or how much capital will go to preservation
7 from sheets and projects?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: So, we're
9 still evaluating the pipeline for next year, but I
10 think over the next month or two we will have a
11 better understanding of what to expect.

12 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: And then the
13 only thing I would add is at the State level, as they
14 talk about the additional 1 billion that we're
15 grateful for the State, we want all of this to work
16 in concert with each other, so we're looking at that,
17 the City piece, and of course the federal component
18 and discussion about where those budget pieces will
19 land will impact how we make the best mix.

20 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Council
21 Member Avilés. Yaya wants you to go.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great. Thank you.
23 Thank you, Chair, and congratulations. Sunset Park is
24 very proud.

25 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Thank you.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you so much.
3 So I have a couple of different questions.

4 For the record, can you tell us the 375
5 million in your testimony that you noted specifically
6 for NYCHA, what it's for? It's the second bullet
7 point on the second page.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Thank you,
9 Council Member. That's money that goes to NYCHA that
10 we don't control the programming for. It only passes
11 through our budget.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: So you just send
13 it over to NYCHA and you have no idea what it's
14 about?

15 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I mean, there
16 is money in our programs to support the NYCHA PACT
17 program, but yes, the oversight, the execution of
18 that happens with NYCHA and their executive
19 leadership.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: So you do note the
21 875 million specifically for PACT, and this is a
22 separate pot of money from that. So I guess, does
23 NYCHA report back what they're doing with 375
24 million?

2 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I think they
3 have information that they will provide OMB, but
4 again, we are, as partners with NYCHA on a number of
5 different programs, this is one way that we help
6 support their programming financial support.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay. So, we'll
8 follow up with NYCHA.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah, and
10 also just to clarify that the 875 million mentioned
11 is on the capital side, so the 375 is expense and the
12 875 is capital.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah, yeah. Okay.
14 In terms of public land, what is HPD's position on
15 how the City should be approaching utilizing public
16 land?

17 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So HPD has a
18 long and proud tradition of building 100 percent
19 affordable on public land. I will say that we are
20 looking now, especially given the dramatic need for
21 housing, when you think about specific EOs and
22 initiatives, so we have a citywide initiative looking
23 at public assets, particularly City buildings, places
24 where not only we need to build housing, but maybe we
25 have an out-of-date facility where there are City

2 workers who could benefit from a new workplace and
3 deserve a better work situation. So, in those
4 projects, we've been looking at mixed-income
5 opportunities, especially where the mixed-income
6 opportunity might yield a project where there are
7 more units constructed that would have otherwise not
8 been built in those areas. An example would be 100
9 Gold, where we are estimating somewhere in the
10 neighborhood of 2,000 units, 500 of which would be
11 affordable based on that number and would represent
12 10 times what has been built in that neighborhood
13 before. But for the majority of our public land,
14 especially those public land parcels, those
15 combination of sites where there's streamlined
16 ability to build, there's less complication, we have
17 been putting out 100 percent affordable projects one
18 after the other. 24 in 24, last year's commitment, is
19 a really good example where we estimate from the
20 eight or nine sites we're involved in 2,000 units of
21 100 percent affordable projects.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah. Thank you. I
23 think it's important for the record, obviously public
24 land, we should be building 100 percent affordable. I
25 have a situation where they're trying to build

2 majority market rate housing on public land, which I
3 find an abomination, dereliction of duty among other
4 things, but we're not going to deliberate that now.

5 In terms of, can the agency supply the
6 Council with a copy of their Preliminary Racial
7 Equity Plan?

8 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: That would be
9 a question I would defer to, we're working with the
10 Mayor's Office on Equity, but we can take that back
11 and respond to the Council immediately.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay. I'm sure
13 you're aware that this report is 400-plus days
14 overdue so we're eagerly awaiting its release.

15 In terms of extremely cost burdened
16 households, 20 percent AMI for a three-person family
17 is 25,420. These are families who need rents that are
18 1,100 less, for which the HVS found a tiny vacancy
19 rate of only 0.39 percent. How long does it take on
20 average for an ELI income affordable project to move
21 through the pipeline, and has that been increasing or
22 decreasing?

23 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So over time,
24 due to increasing costs and many of the complications
25 we talked (TIMER CHIME) about earlier, labor, the

2 lending environment, and our own budget capacity
3 constraints, which have gotten better, but started
4 from a place where we were dealing with backlogs and
5 continue to deal with backlogs, the time in the
6 pipeline has gotten longer. So our projects, and in
7 particular you're probably referring to our ELLA
8 projects, extra low and low income housing, though I
9 will point out that in most of our term sheets, we
10 are building housing for individuals who are the most
11 vulnerable, who are in the lower end of the spectrum.
12 The timeline for that has certainly gotten longer,
13 but we have seen different adjustments on each of our
14 term sheets so, at certain points, we may be in a
15 better position with funding for supportive housing
16 or senior housing, and we'll have a shorter timeline
17 for that. But overall, we have seen it creep to a
18 longer side. That being said, we're at a point where
19 we have more resources than we had before, we have
20 more staffing, and we've been looking at process
21 efficiencies to try to reduce that timeline. We know
22 that that's something we have to continue to work on
23 and do better.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: So, what is the
25 timeline?

2 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So right now
3 we are telling developers who are in our pipeline, it
4 will be five years or longer, depending on available
5 resources and conditions at that time. There's a mix
6 of things that we also have to consider. So it's not
7 only City resources, but it's also the availability
8 of federal low-income tax credits, the availability
9 of Home Funds, which is a funding source we use
10 primarily for our senior projects, and both of which
11 have been the top of topic when we were talking about
12 HUD funding and federal appropriation. So as those
13 funding sources become either more flexible, in the
14 case of the low-income tax credits, where if we were
15 to get legislative changes that made it more flexible
16 to do more of that work, or with Home Funds, where we
17 saw the federal budget appropriate at a level that
18 meets the need we've told them we can use, if we have
19 those funds, then the pipeline can get shorter. There
20 isn't a scenario given the increasing costs of these
21 projects and some of which are costs we're still
22 considering as we think about tariffs or other
23 federal legislation coming down the pipe. We can't do
24 this with City budget alone so we need the federal
25 partner to assist us. Additionally, in absence of

2 that, this is why we come back to mixed-income
3 strategies so this is why we're trying to use non-
4 subsidy strategies to build large amounts of
5 affordable units, especially for those extra low and
6 low-income families. The full answer, I think, is
7 important, but directly to your question, we're
8 saying five years or longer, but that can change
9 based on the availability of resources.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: And one last
11 question, Chair, if I may. How many ELI projects do
12 you have in the pipeline currently?

13 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Again, so
14 most of our projects include tiers of extra low and
15 low-income projects. And the reason why we do that,
16 A, because we have stress and need for housing at
17 multiple levels of income. Again, 80 percent and
18 lower is considered low-income housing, and many of
19 those are households we work with through our
20 constituent services every day. I would say up to 93
21 percent of the units that we build have been financed
22 for 80 percent AMI units or lower.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: You consider 80
24 percent AMI low-income? I mean, in New York City,
25 but...

2 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Yeah, well,
3 in New York City, if it's a family of three, it's
4 110,000 dollars a year so if you talk about two wage
5 earners who are making 50 or 55,000 dollars a year
6 together raising a child in New York City, yes, that
7 family is (CROSS-TALK)

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: No, it definitely
9 (INAUDIBLE). I'm just surprised by 100,000 is not the
10 average AMI in our community. In fact, 40 is where
11 we're hovering, and anything above that is
12 unaffordable housing.

13 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I would say
14 two things. One, the standard is set by the federal
15 government, right? We're using federal AMI standards.
16 And then the other thing, which I'll just point out,
17 I know people know, but I'm not sure if the full
18 public knows, there have been changes to many of the
19 programs, especially in the last couple of years, to
20 go further and target that. So the changes in City of
21 Yes to allow for Option Three of 40 percent of AMI.
22 And even in 467-M, which is the Commercial to
23 Residential Conversion Program, there is a specific
24 layer for 40 percent of AMI. So, I think there's
25 certainly a recognition that in our programs, we have

2 to be more targeted, but we cannot forget that we
3 have, and I know that you don't, that there are
4 multiple levels of low-income households that we need
5 to help with our housing.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JOFFE: And if I may
7 just add also, I think what Commissioner Tigani
8 referenced between the full range of our programs,
9 between particularly the full as-of-right and also
10 our subsidized programs, when you look at our
11 subsidized housing production, which is really where
12 HPD can prioritize where we put our money
13 programmatically, we see 68.6 percent in the last
14 calendar year of subsidized new construction,
15 affordable for up to 50 percent AMI. So yes, like
16 while we have larger numbers that are 80 percent AMI
17 or below, really when you do look at that subsidized
18 production, we are directing our resources to those
19 lowest income New Yorkers.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Got it. Thank you,
21 Chair.

22 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. I just
23 want to follow up on Council Member Avilés'
24 questions. I believe last year during either prelim
25 or exec, when we asked this question about the size

2 of the HPD pipeline, then Commissioner Carrión, now
3 Deputy Mayor, mentioned the number of 750 projects in
4 the pipeline, so can you tell us if there's an
5 updated figure there, and if you have that breakdown
6 for the number of projects in the pipeline, how many
7 are ELI using that term sheet particularly?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: So, the
9 overall pipeline has remained pretty steady because
10 we get new projects all the time. I just want to
11 clarify a little bit. So, every new construction
12 project we finance has units for extremely low income
13 households, every single one of them, and that is the
14 same in preservation as well. It is very rare to see
15 a project in preservation that doesn't have ELI
16 units, right? Our assistance really helps the
17 buildings that are more deeply affordable in order to
18 remain viable, healthy buildings longer term. So, the
19 overall timeline really depends more on other
20 factors, right? As I was saying, we had a backlog in
21 preservation for a long time, we've been working
22 through, we were really trying to prioritize projects
23 with the most urgent needs, which tend to also be
24 buildings where there's deeper affordability. In new
25 construction, we are trying to advance the pipeline

2 as quickly as we can, as the Acting Commissioner
3 said. We are limited on the federal resource front,
4 which really impacts new construction, because we're
5 highly dependent on availability of low-income
6 housing tax credits in particular, where we haven't
7 seen growth of that resource in a very, very, very
8 long time. So, I just want to reiterate every project
9 that we have an ability to make a discretionary
10 decision about, we are targeting affordability for
11 extremely low income and very low income households.
12 And you can see that I think in the records that we
13 have, I know this sounds like just numbers, but it's
14 not, right? Like over the last couple years, we have
15 financed the most housing for households exiting
16 shelter. We have financed the most supportive
17 housing, right? In new construction, we've had some
18 of the highest production for extremely low income
19 households ever. So, it really is deliberate
20 decision-making on our end to make sure that where we
21 have a choice, we're investing those resources to
22 provide households that are the most vulnerable to
23 the forces within the market housing choice.

24 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: And one more
25 followup, then I'll ask a question, I'll turn it over

2 to Council Member Restler, just came back and he was
3 on the queue and then Council Member Salamanca.

4 If you can just make it concrete for the
5 public, right? We have about 750 projects in the
6 pipeline. How long would it take to get through those
7 750 projects particularly? Or if it's easier or more
8 concrete to answer this question in a different way,
9 how many projects do you close per year, whether by
10 number of projects or size of financing?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: I don't have
12 the project information here, but we finance hundreds
13 of projects a year. We finance more projects in
14 preservation than we do in new construction outside
15 of the as-of-right program areas. So certainly 45-X,
16 421-A, there's a bigger volume than on the subsidized
17 production front. How quickly we could get through
18 that pipeline depends on a lot of factors. Certainly,
19 we have a very robust capital budget. We've been very
20 blessed with support within the Administration and
21 advocacy by City Council to make sure that those
22 resources are sufficient and we appreciate that. Our
23 capital budget has grown, which has been really,
24 really helpful and allowing us to be able to navigate
25 the pipeline in advance projects. It's also a

2 function of staffing. But there are also things out
3 of our control, right, so how quickly a developer can
4 manage some of the due diligence and approvals that
5 are not approvals that are just ones that we can
6 grant, right? So maybe a project needs a waterfront
7 certification, maybe they need a lending approval,
8 maybe they're trying to deal with some complicated
9 remediation, environmental remediation questions,
10 maybe it's an HDFC co-op and they need board approval
11 and it takes them a while to make sure that all the
12 residents are comfortable with the plan. So even if
13 we had significantly more resources, we couldn't
14 necessarily significantly advance the pipeline
15 immediately because there's a lot of other questions
16 there at stake besides just how much capital is in
17 the budget or how many staff we have.

18 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: And the only
19 thing I'll add is, and this Council has brought this
20 up before and the Administration has taken this
21 seriously. So, we are talking about multiple agencies
22 having to work together to move one project forward.
23 So people are familiar with the Get Stuff Built
24 report. We have multiple recommendations that we're
25 working on with DEP, with DOB, with our partners at

2 the State level with DEC. These permissions and
3 regulatory pieces add considerable time to it so in
4 both cutting that time, we can save tremendous money.
5 It's the reason why the Green Fast Track was a
6 priority. By removing environmental pieces that don't
7 seem to work out to actual issues, 95 percent of the
8 time we saved 100,000 dollars in four months. So if
9 we can save these dollars through the regulatory
10 piece, if we can take projects that would otherwise
11 use subsidy, but have them use programs like J-51 so
12 we can make room for something else, if we can get
13 more resources and support that with additional staff
14 in place, those are the things that would feed into
15 the answer. So, that's why it's difficult to give you
16 a certain range.

17 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Great. Thank you.

18 I'm going to ask that we try to, just to be
19 respectful of their time, if you can answer this as
20 succinctly as you can, the Preliminary Plan includes
21 13 positions and 1.5 million dollars for FY26 for
22 preservation finance capacity. What specific capacity
23 challenges will these 13 new positions address? Can
24 you walk us through your, well, you already did walk
25 us through the preservation or the full pipeline, but

2 specifically, can you talk to us about the
3 bottlenecks and how these new positions will address
4 those bottlenecks?

5 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, I can
6 start off and Deputy Commissioner can join me, but
7 generally speaking, projects that come in fill out
8 pre-application with us to give us initial data about
9 their project. Often at that point, when we're ready
10 to assign a project manager, which is one of the
11 things this will help us do more readily and there
12 are multiple different term sheets and program areas.
13 Maybe you are a HUD finance building and so there's a
14 certain term sheet for you. If you're a rent
15 stabilized building, there's a certain term sheet for
16 you, not rent stabilized, etc. In addition to that
17 initial application, we ask people to put together a
18 physical needs assessment because if we're going to
19 put money into our project, whether it's Reso A given
20 by a Council Member, or if it's our own funding, we
21 need to do and see the entire extent because we don't
22 want that project to come back two or three years
23 later. So, when we're in the project, we're looking
24 at the full gamut of work. And then everything that
25 comes in later, it's about scoping the project,

2 making sure the scope is responsive, identifying what
3 funds we need versus that they're able to leverage or
4 looking at questions like the rental collection in
5 the building, what their tax arrear situation is, do
6 they have any title issues that's a problem for us,
7 and then trying to get all of that resolved to get to
8 a closing. But Kim, please.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: Yeah, and
10 specifically on the funding front, we are seeing a
11 lot of HDFC co-ops, Mitchell-Lomas that have growing
12 needs, and so both on the staffing front, as well as
13 in the capital budget allocation front, we are trying
14 to make sure that we have additional support and
15 resources for those properties. In addition, we have
16 some older supportive housing projects that we want
17 to make sure that we have staff that can help manage
18 as well as make sure we have the resources to support
19 them.

20 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: All right. Thank
21 you. What is the overall headcount for preservation
22 finance today? And what is the average caseload for,
23 or project load for a project manager?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: The workload
25 varies by program. For projects in pre-development,

2 probably eight-plus projects. The overall headcount,
3 I don't know if my colleague has it.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: So as of our
5 February roster, we have about 54 staff for
6 preservation finance.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: And we just
8 added additional capacity there this year.

9 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: In addition
10 to the temp services and the support services Kim
11 mentioned earlier.

12 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Do you have an ideal
13 workload for these project managers? Is eight? I told
14 you, stay. There's just a couple more, and I have a
15 feeling that Council Member Salamanca has a few for
16 you too.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: So, we do
18 still have a backlog, so we're very cognizant of
19 making sure we're not... ideally to move through the
20 backlog, you could try to assign more projects to the
21 staff, but we just don't feel that we would be able
22 to successfully manage projects that way, so we think
23 that staff are essentially at capacity right now. And
24 that's why as part of the City of Yes discussions, I
25 know there was a lot of interest in making sure we're

2 supporting some of the Mitchell-Lama co-ops, HDFC co-
3 ops. That's also where, interestingly, we are seeing
4 some of the highest demand and where we have some of
5 the longer backlog, and so that's where we in
6 particularly are trying to increase capacity so we
7 can move more of those projects forward.

8 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I'm sorry. Last one,
9 but just to beat the horse dead, sorry horse, how
10 much more capacity would you need to be able to do
11 what HPD can do to move projects faster through the
12 pipeline?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: To advance the
14 projects in the backlog, we would have to get back to
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Darn, I thought I
17 was going to get you. Okay. Thank you.

18 I'd now like to turn it over to Council
19 Member Lincoln Restler.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so
21 much, Chair Sanchez. It is great to be joined by
22 Anaya, and you just are like the most impressive and
23 inspiring person, so it's great to be with you.

24 All right. I will continue to say no
25 more. I'm going to say nice things, but I'm not happy

2 about it. I am just like genuinely thrilled that
3 Acting Commissioner Tigani is before us today. I
4 can't think of somebody who cares more about like
5 working people in New York City than you, and having
6 you in this just critically important job, like gives
7 me hope for working people across the city. All
8 right, that's the last nice thing I'm going to say.

9 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: You have to relish
10 in that.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: HPD's website
12 indicates that, quote, preserving affordable housing
13 means making sure homes that are affordable now stay
14 affordable into the future, and in the midst of a
15 housing crisis that is pricing too many New Yorkers
16 out of too many neighborhoods, it's one of our best
17 tools to keep people in their homes. However, if
18 someone visits the page for the Participation Loan
19 Program, or the Multifamily Housing Rehabilitation
20 Loan Program, or the Housing Preservation
21 Opportunities Program, they're met with the following
22 message, quote, thank you for your interest. We are
23 sorry to inform you we currently have limited staff
24 capacity and a significant backlog of projects, and
25 as a result, the assignment of a project manager can

2 take up to a year. I think that Deputy Commissioner
3 Darga was just getting at this to the Chair's
4 questions as well, but geez, that's not good. So how
5 many more project managers do we need to get that
6 timeline down to, let's say, a two-week response?

7 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: If I can
8 start. Thank you for the question, Council Member,
9 the first thing I would say here is that, right now,
10 because we had limited tools, we continue to have
11 limited tools, but we have more tools now than we
12 just had several months ago. There are buildings that
13 asked for help that may benefit from other tools that
14 didn't require a full preservation refinancing. So
15 again, I mentioned J-51 because there were a lot of
16 repairs and physical and financial distress that
17 could be addressed through that program that I think
18 will allow buildings that would otherwise have to go
19 through that process to go further and faster and
20 help those tenants in those buildings more quickly.
21 And so that program just recently has been launched,
22 and we're working on getting those buildings assessed
23 and we'll understand better how the backlog is
24 reduced without those buildings as part of the
25 overall count.

2 The second thing I would say is that
3 there are operating expenses that we are trying to
4 also address by tying owners who have vacant units to
5 vouchers and continuing to do assessments to see,
6 again, is this something that you need a full
7 building renovation or is it about operating expenses
8 and we can either attack it by using rental subsidies
9 as a way to ground you. But to do a more full
10 accounting, as the Deputy Commissioner said, we will
11 need to come back to you on that. I will say that as
12 we increase the number of tools that do not require a
13 discretionary process or require a full rehab
14 financing because there's buildings at different
15 stages, we'll be able to move buildings more quickly.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: Just one
17 addition, just on the capacity front, and we've been
18 trying to think about ways to manage this question,
19 both thinking about staffing and rebuilding the team
20 that was really dramatically hit during the pandemic,
21 but also through other ways, and that includes
22 looking at process. As the Acting Commissioner said a
23 few minutes ago, we actually launched the Community
24 Partners for Affordable Renovation Program in the
25 fall where we are partnering with lending

2 institutions who are doing a lot of the early kind of
3 loan review, due diligence work, and submitting a
4 package to us to help us manage our resources more
5 strategically. We also are hiring consultants that
6 are going to do some of the early loan packaging for
7 us so that we get a more complete package when we can
8 assign somebody, we can move faster through the
9 process on our end. You may recall from some of the
10 prior budget hearings, we added some funding to kind
11 of add strategic capacity in the Office of
12 Development and Legal by hiring temps to help manage
13 the backlog. So, in addition to the permanent staff,
14 I think at this point we have approximately two dozen
15 staff in the Office of Development that we're hiring
16 on a multi-year kind of contract basis in order to
17 help us advance those projects as well. So, we're
18 really trying on a number of fronts, both in the
19 process front, the using other partners front, and on
20 the temporary staff front to increase our capacity to
21 be able to address this question.

22 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: And I think
23 that Deputy Commissioner mentioned it, but in the
24 Office of Legal, we have five M/WBE firms that are

2 helping with the transaction conversations so those
3 move quickly too.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And I just have
5 to point out, if visitors go to HPD's website looking
6 to apply for preservation financing, they're asked to
7 fill out a Microsoft form preliminary application.
8 Why do applicants need to go through a Microsoft
9 form? Is this something the Department uses because
10 of staffing challenges and backlog? I mean, there's
11 been additional applications, I presume they have to
12 complete. Could you just explain that to us?

13 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: More often
14 than not, we lose a lot of time in the back and forth
15 where there isn't complete information provided, so
16 someone may come in with some guidance about what the
17 term sheet is they need to use and what direction
18 they need to go in, and there are some people who are
19 more expert in this work. We see in our new
20 construction side, there's a lot of technical
21 expertise and experience that doesn't always exist on
22 the preservation (TIMER CHIME) side in particular. So
23 this helps us get to the questions we need to so we
24 get them to the people they need to talk to faster
25 and we can move into the process points like getting

2 a physical needs assessment more quickly. This is, in
3 fact, helping us get the work done faster.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Can you just
5 remind me how many positions are being added at HPD
6 as a result of City of Yes?

7 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So 94
8 overall.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: 94. So I just
10 think it's notable that you all have been trying and
11 grinding and fighting it out with OMB at every step
12 of the way to help address the vacancies in your
13 agency and make sure that you have a bare minimum of
14 staff in place, but it's the City Council that when
15 it came, when City of Yes came to our doorstep,
16 thanks to leadership of Chair Sanchez and Speaker
17 Adams, they said we need HPD to be able to do their
18 jobs. You can't do it by starving them, which is what
19 Mayor Adams and Director Jiha have done at every step
20 of the way over the last three and a half years and
21 it was this City Council that said, we need to add 94
22 headcount to HPD so that we can actually get this
23 backlog under control, that we can ensure that it
24 doesn't take a year to respond to applicants who want
25 to pursue housing opportunities in our communities,

2 that we can actually move forward on affordable
3 housing at scale. I am so frustrated that this Mayor
4 has not made the affordability crisis a priority and
5 has failed HPD in my opinion for the past three-plus
6 years. You're not going to say any of that, I'm
7 saying it, but it was this City Council that fought
8 for nearly 100 new jobs. It's an unusual thing that
9 we wouldn't say we need new parks investments or
10 infrastructure investments or fancy affordable
11 housing projects in our district. We said we need
12 staff at HPD because we understand that for good
13 things to happen across our neighborhoods, you all
14 need headcount and you don't have enough today and
15 we're trying our best, but we need a Mayor who's an
16 actual partner.

17 I have other questions, but I'll shut up
18 now and try and come back for a second.

19 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Council
20 Member, I will say I really do and we really do
21 appreciate the Council's advocacy on behalf of the
22 agency, the support and the lines. I will say if you
23 look through the budget though, both the
24 Administration, HPD, our conversation OMB, additional
25 lines, additional investments and budget has gone

2 forward and our record overall has been to rebuild
3 the agency, to meet record levels of both creation
4 and preservation, to hit completions which is a
5 indicator that we don't talk enough about but the
6 actual construction of building the unit and putting
7 the money into increasing the processes so people get
8 into housing faster. That being said, I will say
9 again, truly appreciate the advocacy of you, the
10 Chair and others here at the Council.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I appreciate
12 that. It's just normally Council Members are looking
13 to fund fancy projects where we get to cut ribbons
14 and look good and, in this instance, we put a bunch
15 of our political capital into getting 100 headcount
16 at your agency because we understood that you did not
17 have the person power to do your jobs and that that
18 undermines our ability to get affordable housing
19 projects built across each of our districts and
20 across the city, and so that's usually the job of a
21 Mayor. That is typically the responsibility of City
22 Hall and OMB to look and analyze and assess what
23 resources agencies need to be able to execute
24 effectively, but we've had to step up and fill those
25 basic functions because of the failures of this

2 Administration. Again, that's for me to say, not for
3 you. I just, I couldn't be more disappointed.

4 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you
5 so much Council Member Restler, and I'll also join in
6 giving kudos to this body. We have your back. We want
7 to make sure that you have the adequate staffing.

8 I now want to turn it over to Council
9 Member Salamanca. Thank you for your patience. I know
10 you have to run to Chair your own hearing. Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you,
12 Madam Chair.

13 Good afternoon. I just wanted to start
14 off by saying how proud I am of you. I know that they
15 have you as the Acting Commissioner. We have to
16 figure out how to get that word "act" out. I think
17 you've done a fabulous job both working at the
18 Mayor's Office and going to Buildings and now your
19 growth here in HPD.

20 But Commissioner, I have concerns about
21 the sizes of the units that we are approving or that
22 we're building here in the City of New York. I've
23 approved over 10,000 units of 100 percent affordable
24 housing in my nine years here in the Council. As I'm
25 visiting these buildings, the unit sizes or the

2 bedroom sizes are matchboxes. They're small. You
3 could barely fit in a bed and a stand and a TV stand
4 there. And as I'm visiting also, there's been an
5 increase of 421-A development happening. I don't
6 know, they started the foundation before it expired
7 and I'm visiting some of these units and those units
8 are even smaller than the ones that we negotiated
9 here in HPD. What oversight does HPD have on the unit
10 sizes of these 421-A projects?

11 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So just thank
12 you for the question and thank you for your advocacy
13 of getting so many units through.

14 Just to talk quickly about it, apartment
15 size and unit size is governed by the Multiple
16 Dwelling Law, so it starts with State regulation over
17 the minimum. So that's the minimum of what's
18 required. And then generally speaking, anything that
19 has to do with the New York City Building Code and
20 what's the minimum versus the maximum would live
21 within the Building Code. For HPD-subsized projects,
22 we do try to think of a thoughtful, efficient design
23 that not only, again, tries to get as many units but
24 also incorporates things like sustainability
25 features, ADA accessibility features. We have heard

2 about the push for different unit size. It for us
3 really is a question of trying to get a reasonable
4 number of units because we're in this housing crisis
5 but also sometimes the lot configuration or the
6 building envelope zoning constraints, those can
7 contribute to what kind of and how many units and how
8 big those units are, so we do try to take every
9 project in front of us and maximize it. We've heard
10 about the number of larger apartments, but we also
11 try to maximize unit size when we can but there are
12 other considerations that we have to take.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I don't have
14 much time. Council Member Darlene Mealy did something
15 very smart a few months ago. She was going to kill a
16 project if they did not increase the square footage
17 of those units, and I wish I would have used that
18 philosophy when I started here nine years ago but,
19 for my Colleagues that are here, take that into
20 consideration. HPD, you need us to approve these
21 projects and you need to work with us in terms of
22 bigger unit sizes, and it's just unfair to the
23 families that were housing where we're putting them
24 into these small, small units.

2 Another issue that I'm having is a
3 closing of projects. I don't understand why a project
4 like La Central or Whitlock 2, you have to break it
5 up into phases. Whitlock project, Phase One is almost
6 completed. Now they have to wait for the closing of
7 Whitlock 2 which, in return, you know, construction
8 is not nice in the community. It's ugly, right?
9 There's traffic, there's debris, and it's
10 uncomfortable. There could be noise, and what HPD has
11 done by not closing on Phase Two much sooner or in
12 one shot, you've inconvenienced the community when it
13 comes to our construction, and the AMIs that we're
14 approving here in the Council change when that
15 building, when you finally close, so if I approve an
16 AMI structure in 2021 and you close in 2026, the rent
17 is much higher than what it was approved in 2021 and
18 we as elected officials seem as if we're not being
19 honest with our communities. What can you do to close
20 on these big scale projects much quicker and instead
21 of splitting them up, just close them up all in one
22 shot?

23 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, I would
24 say just the price tag of closing a project of that
25 size. I mean, we are encouraged, we like seeing

2 multi-phase projects but individual projects,
3 standalone buildings as their own, they can come at
4 hundreds of millions of dollars. A multi-phase
5 project with three or four buildings can easily
6 significantly swallow both the federal resource and
7 the local subsidy, and we've made commitments
8 throughout the city to build housing in every borough
9 because we want accessibility and chance for housing
10 to happen in every borough. We try to think equitable
11 about it. We try to look at making sure we're making
12 investments in every borough. That may prevent us
13 from being able to take a full project that's multi-
14 phase, it's multiple buildings and go after that
15 project in one shot (TIMER CHIME) so we are trying to
16 close as fast as we can. We talked about earlier
17 about the resource constraints. As we see more
18 resources at the federal and local level, we'll move
19 faster to get the projects done. But on the
20 construction coordination, we try to work with DOB
21 and developers. I was at DOB, I agree with you. It
22 can be very inconvenient for communities and we try
23 to figure out mitigations.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Yeah. And then
25 I want to close with this. I've been in

2 communications with my Colleague, Council Member
3 Narcisse, Mercedes Narcisse. I think what happened to
4 her in this project at 2134 Coyle Avenue was
5 irresponsible and wrong. Where we came here, we
6 approved an affordable housing project where the
7 community was not in favor of it. The Councilwoman
8 went out of her way to speak to community members to
9 get them on board. She did that. We approved the land
10 use. We rezoned it. And then the property owner and
11 the developer did a switch and bait on her and gave
12 that property to someone else and now a shelter's
13 being built there. This is how you lose trust in a
14 community, and I hope that you find out who the
15 lobbyist is, who the developer is, and who the
16 general contractor was that signed in because I'm
17 pretty sure that you did all the numbers.

18 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: It's not an
19 HPD project.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: It was not an
21 HPD project, 2134 Coyle?

22 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: My
23 understanding is that this was a mixed-income project
24 that didn't come through the HPD pipeline. There was
25 a discretionary project, but they may be subject to

2 either MIH or 421-A, but it wasn't a subsidized HPD
3 project.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Well, I hope
5 that we take notice, HPD takes notice of who the
6 developer was, the lobbyist was, and who the general
7 contractor was, and that there's a red stain on their
8 record for doing a bait and switch on Council Member
9 Narcisse and on this Body. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, Council
11 Member Salamanca, and I also want to thank you for
12 the way that you work with each of us as Land Use
13 Chair to advocate so we can get these all to the
14 finish line. Thank you.

15 I want to acknowledge that we've been
16 joined by Council Member Feliz and Council Member
17 Brewer.

18 I'm going to ask another set of
19 questions, and then I believe Council Member Brewer
20 has questions so we'll turn to her.

21 So, I want to turn next to Neighborhood
22 Pillars. Yaya is super into this, by the way.
23 Neighborhood Pillars, as folks know, is the program
24 that provides low-interest loans and tax exemptions
25 to non-profits and mission-driven organizations to

2 acquire and rehabilitate buildings across the city
3 using low-interest loans and tax exemptions. So, in
4 the Administration's own housing plan from 2022,
5 Housing Our Neighbors, there was a commitment to
6 revamp this critical preservation program, but that
7 plan has not reflected reality. After the
8 administration refused to include any new funding for
9 Pillars in Fiscal Year '23 and Fiscal Year '24, the
10 Council finally secured 30 million across Fiscal
11 Years '25 and '26 in the last budget negotiation. It
12 has been nine months since adoption, and HPD has
13 still not relaunched this program or updated the term
14 sheet. Why is that, and can you commit to relaunch
15 Neighborhood Pillars before the end of this Fiscal
16 Year?

17 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, I can say
18 that relaunching Pillars has continued to be a
19 priority for us. There are a number of things that we
20 continue to have conversations on, both inside the
21 agency and with stakeholders in our community, the
22 non-profits and basically the preservation partners
23 we ultimately work with on this term sheet and
24 effectuate in real life to make projects move, so the
25 commitment to doing this is there, and in fact, we

2 are at a point where we are very close, ready to go.
3 We understand that Council Finance had raised some
4 questions, so we have a meeting with them next week
5 to talk about it. We didn't want to take the next
6 step without having that conversation first, and we
7 are excited to be able to move on that and other term
8 sheets as well.

9 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: So. can you commit
10 to relaunching by the end of the year?

11 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Chair, the
12 most responsible thing I could do is commit to making
13 sure that we talk to Council Finance, but our
14 intention is to make this the year that the term
15 sheet gets published. We want this term sheet out
16 there, we want to start doing the work.

17 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: My understanding is,
18 and not to, again, beat a dead horse, but that we've
19 been reaching out and we've been asking and we
20 haven't heard back, so when is your meeting with
21 Council Finance?

22 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: My friendly
23 amendment to that is as a person who has been reached
24 out to, always communicating back that we are working
25 on this and that we are continuing to go through

2 those questions. Again, there were some actually some
3 good feedback through City of Yes and the community
4 conversations in City of Yes that has been part of
5 our conversation internal, and the next step will be
6 to meet with Council Finance to be able to talk
7 through where we've landed and make sure we get this
8 term sheet out as fast as possible.

9 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay. Thank you. So,
10 in addition to the term sheet itself, continuing the
11 conversation, the thread on staffing, what is the
12 total budget for Neighborhood Pillars in the
13 Preliminary Plan on the capital side? And given the
14 critical importance of this tool for preserving
15 distressed buildings, what additional capital and
16 staffing resources is HPD putting towards this
17 program over the next five years?

18 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I'm going to
19 turn to our DC for budget on that.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: So in terms
21 of Neighborhood Pillars, so first with the capital
22 budget, with the funding, we do move funding around
23 depending on what projects are, what was added for
24 Neighborhood Pillars is about 42 million right now as
25 it stands across the financial plan. And in terms of

2 preservation, we look at it overall, our overall
3 preservation capital plan over the 10-year capital
4 plan is about 5.8 billion dollars right now.

5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. And what
6 is the budgeted headcount affiliated or associated
7 with the Neighborhood Pillars program? What is the
8 vacancy rate?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: So, we don't
10 have as far as that particular program, but that's
11 under our overall preservation finance team that I
12 mentioned earlier that currently has an active
13 headcount of about 54 people, and we'll continue to
14 hire.

15 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: A little bit out of
16 my own order here, but there is, let me just get it
17 here. She's doing it with one hand y'all. Som the
18 Preliminary Plan includes 17 new positions for State
19 housing incentive staff, so how are the staff
20 assigned? Are they assigned by incentives and
21 programs or is it caseload? Is it project load?

22 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, they're
23 assigned, and I'll let Kim pick up where I probably
24 will leave off or not touch on, but they're assigned
25 both in the program areas that both oversee, they

2 take in the application, oversee, process, and
3 execute. At the end of the day, they're also
4 investments in our legal team that support the
5 transactions here. And additionally, as you know, in
6 the new 45-X, there is a commitment to M/WBE's
7 contract commitment, and we have additional resource
8 in our Office of Equal Opportunity Inclusion Program
9 to make sure that we're looking into those projects
10 and they're making their M/WBE commitment.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: There are two
12 parts just to add to that. So that's specifically to
13 help us implement the new state tax incentives, so
14 421-A extension, 45-X, 467-M and now J-51, the
15 reformed J-51 program. So. everything that the Acting
16 Commissioner said, plus we also are increasing
17 capacity on compliance and enforcement.

18 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. And before
19 turning to Council Member Brewer, I just want to do a
20 little bit more followup on term sheets, right? So
21 stepping back from Neighborhood Pillars, last year,
22 Commissioner Carrión and OMB committed to updating
23 term sheets for both new construction and
24 preservation programs across the board. One year
25 later and HPD's website as Council Member Restler

2 highlighted earlier, shows that term sheets are
3 outdated. Some go as far back as 2018 that haven't
4 been updated. So, can you talk to us about the status
5 of the updating of the rest of these term sheets? Why
6 haven't they been updated? Is it a staffing
7 challenge? Is it insufficient capital to put into
8 these programs? Why haven't you been able to get the
9 Administration to prioritize this for HPD?

10 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I think three
11 things. One, the funding and both the expense and the
12 capital availability has changed a couple of times
13 over the last 10 months in particular, so the money
14 that we have to count on, the ability to make sure
15 that we know which area to properly apply it to so
16 that we can execute the most number of units we can
17 most efficiently. There have been a number of changes
18 just in construction and lending alone that we're
19 trying to respond to in our term sheets. Again, our
20 term sheet, HPD is a gap filler. We're largely
21 working in a pie where they're also leveraging either
22 funding from CDFIs, general bank institutions, and
23 we're trying to make sure that as those changes
24 happen, as they're reacting to trends in the market,
25 our term sheet is not only being comparable but

2 allows us to continue to advance new policy ideas.

3 We've also updated the requirements. We've increased
4 and boosted things like sustainability. And as we can
5 identify outside sources like NYSERDA funds that
6 helps us pay for that, we're able to figure out
7 whether we need a traditional source or we can count
8 on State sources to do that. So that mix, those
9 questions, plus we did spend considerable, I'm going
10 to say Kim spent and her team spent considerable time
11 in round table discussions, meeting with the people
12 who build these buildings, non-profits, faith-based,
13 the for-profit affordable housing sector to figure
14 out what we need in order to be successful. All of
15 that work took more time, but we are in a position
16 where we think in the next couple of weeks we'll be
17 able to quickly make these available. And I will say
18 this, in the interim time, while we've been working
19 with our partners to make sure that we can get these
20 projects financially feasible. We would never close
21 something, even if the term sheet's from 2018. We
22 work with them individually, we work with OMB to make
23 sure they can go out the door and they can work. That
24 being said, the term sheets create predictability,
25 consistency, and they send a signal to invite more

2 people to do work with us, which we recognize and
3 that's the reason why getting these out is so
4 important.

5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. You know
6 what's coming. You know what the next question is.
7 Can you commit to releasing updated term sheets by
8 the end of this Fiscal Year?

9 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: We've made a
10 commitment to, before we release, to have, you know,
11 to make sure that we've checked all the boxes, so I
12 think we are in a good place to say yes to that. I
13 will say, you know, we know that there may be
14 questions from the Council and we'll probably have to
15 field some, but yes, I think we feel good, in a good
16 place, at least on a number of the major term sheets,
17 to be able to do that this year, and we can provide
18 updates. I think, you know, Richard has my cell phone
19 number and he is not afraid to use it.

20 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: So do I.

21 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I know. It's
22 true. It's also true. Most people in the Council, but
23 yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: We all do. Great.
25 Thank you, thank you, Acting Commissioner.

2 I now want to turn it over to Council
3 Member Gale Brewer.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
5 much. I second all of the accolades for Ahmed Tigani.
6 I'll just leave it at that.

7 So HDFCs. Now, I was teaching this
8 morning at Hunter, so I don't have the fact that you
9 may have already been asked about this, but I wanted
10 to know how many have still to be going from TIL to
11 HDFC or whatever you call it now, ANCP, and what's
12 the budget for conversion, how many units, etc.

13 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: All right.
14 Give me one second.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I guess they're
16 mostly Manhattan, I don't know. And then the
17 timeframe, and there's a lot of discussion about, you
18 know, we need to have more affordable housing, but
19 it's frustrating when it's sitting right in front of
20 us.

21 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: No, I
22 understand. And I'll say that, you know, the one
23 thing I want to highlight is that, especially through
24 the conversations we had, I want to say it's two
25 summers ago at this point, two summers ago where we

2 met with both you and other Council Members, and we
3 toured buildings together. We have made several
4 changes and just released a new ANCP term sheet that
5 I think is responsive to what we've heard from
6 members of the community and from Council, including
7 the question of private debt on those buildings so
8 thank you for that feedback.

9 But to your question specifically, you
10 know, as a result, we have financed 25 ANCP projects
11 with 57 former TIL buildings or 795 units. There are
12 69 buildings remaining in TIL.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: 69 left to go.

14 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Yep, with 33
15 percent, 23 buildings in pre-development right now.
16 So, 69 buildings left in TIL and 23 buildings in pre-
17 development left to go.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And is it your
19 impression, except for maybe the one that I know in
20 150th Street, that most of them are willing to go
21 into ANCP or you're still working on it?

22 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I think we've
23 done a couple of things. One, we've doubled down on
24 our community engagement and hired a very experienced
25 and incredibly talented Deputy Director who's doing

2 community engagement in a way we didn't do before so
3 that has helped already in conversations and moving
4 things forward. The updated term sheet is something
5 we're socializing now and will be reflective of
6 things that we've heard in the community. And then
7 the last thing is that we're in a position with State
8 support of the Affordable Housing Opportunity Program
9 and our own homeownership investment, and then now
10 we've actually been able to staff up in a way that we
11 weren't before. The combination of these things
12 allows us to hit the ground running with more people
13 so we believe that we're on track to be more
14 successful.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. So, you've
16 got the 69 buildings, and then I guess somebody's
17 paying attention to the buildings that have already
18 converted to make sure that they're following the
19 rules. Those buildings on 88th Street, those three
20 apartments, they're still not following the rules,
21 just so you know. Those ones that I brought to your
22 attention a while ago.

23 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: We can come
24 follow up.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: They're putting
3 people in who do not meet the criteria.

4 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Okay.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Supportive
6 housing, same problem. Maybe this is more of a not
7 occupying the apartment quickly enough. I mentioned
8 before, and I don't want to mention the non-profit
9 and there may be others, that one non-profit has 100
10 vacancies right now in supportive housing, 100. And I
11 guess my question is, do you know if that's normal? I
12 mean, do you keep track of how many vacancies? And
13 then of course, I know you're trying to speed up the
14 occupying the units, but that's a lot.

15 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Yes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: So how are we, I'm
17 just saying there's so many units out there that are
18 available, and so I'm trying to, do you have any
19 sense of how fast it takes to get into a supportive
20 unit? How are you changing the way in which we're
21 occupying them, if at all? 100 is available right now
22 with one non-profit.

23 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, if
24 knowing any specific information is good. Just in
25 general, we've heard a lot about the re-rental

2 policies. And in the past, what we've done, we had
3 two exceptions that we were using before. One was
4 that if a building opted to commit 15 percent of the
5 total units of the building to formerly homeless set-
6 aside, we would be able to find a way to use open
7 market solutions as well as long as the units were
8 eligible. Part of it had to do with the system that
9 we built. Housing Connect has gone through two
10 iterations so far, 2016 and 2020. Having a
11 centralized system where people have optics in and be
12 able to see clearly what's available is great and is
13 good, and this is more general, not the supportive,
14 but sometimes the tech doesn't work the way we need
15 it to work. We've got a contract in place now that
16 we're updating that technology. But in the interim,
17 we have units that are available and people who are
18 not getting access to those units, so we had put in
19 two (TIMER CHIME) solutions recently. We don't think
20 that we're solving all the problems so we're actually
21 working in the next couple of weeks to roll out more
22 short-term interim ideas while we work on a long-term
23 solution on the tech.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. I guess my
25 question would also be to call the supportive housing

2 from FIPS to Volunteers of America, blah, blah, blah.

3 How many vacancies do you have?

4 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Our partners
5 at HRA are the ones who track that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: They're supposed
7 to do that?

8 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Well, we
9 actually, supportive housing is a multi-agency.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I understand that.

11 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So HRA tracks
12 that. However, we are working on a new dashboard.
13 We're using Home ARP funds right now to build a
14 dashboard so that instead of passing spreadsheets and
15 going through sort of a really bad connectivity on
16 information, we're building a single dashboard so
17 that HPD, DSS, HRA will be able to see in real time.
18 It was one of the innovations we identified last
19 year, and we should be in procurement fairly soon.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: When do you think
21 that dashboard might be completed?

22 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, we're in
23 procurement this year and then we're going to figure
24 out with the vendor how quickly we can develop a
25 scope. We'll probably use..

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: In the interim,
3 I'm just suggesting an intern can call everybody and
4 say how many vacancies do you have?

5 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: We can get
6 that information.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And then you can
8 work together maybe with other agencies to put
9 somebody in that unit. I mean, you're talking, I'm
10 guessing, I hate to say this, but you're probably
11 talking 600 or more vacant supportive housing units
12 right here.

13 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, Council
14 Member, I don't know what the number is, but I know
15 the HRA...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know. It's 100
17 at one.

18 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, I know
19 the HRA knows the number today. We can make sure we
20 get that information.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I bugged Molly
22 about it. She didn't want to hear about it.

23 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: We will
24 follow up with you, but this is one of the things
25 we're working on.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Just a
3 number of vouchers. I have the unfortunate, have to
4 deal with the ABC site. They left, Extel purchased
5 it. I'm trying to get more affordable units into that
6 location. So, in Manhattan, I know you're loathe
7 sometimes to use vouchers. You want them to go to the
8 Bronx or elsewhere. I want vouchers in Manhattan. So,
9 if you already have, say, 20, 25 percent of a project
10 that is affordable, can you add vouchers to it?

11 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I mean, we
12 actually routinely ask owners if they, well, there's
13 two things. One, we'll routinely ask owners who are
14 using our programs, 421-A, 485-X in the future,
15 whether they want to volunteer units to our formerly
16 homeless set-aside program, and many of those
17 individuals do come with vouchers. Additionally,
18 where vouchers are available, we may connect them
19 with veteran affairs because we do a lot of work
20 trying to connect our VASH vouchers. That being said,
21 this is the moment where I will say that we are in a
22 question about the federal funding situation with
23 Section 8 vouchers, so we're monitoring that. Right
24 now, people know about the Emergency Housing Voucher
25 Program, and we're trying to make clear that this is

2 one of the things where people have vouchers. They
3 can go into buildings, but...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: These buildings
5 aren't built yet.

6 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: At the end of
7 the day, we need the funding available to do it, and
8 so we're making sure the federal government gives us
9 that funding to answer your question.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: These buildings
11 aren't built yet. What I'm saying is you got X number
12 of affordable, I'm trying to get more, and you can do
13 that with vouchers. You say to the owner, the HPD
14 will supply, I'm making this up, another 50 vouchers
15 if you build the apartments.

16 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, I would
17 say that what we would do is we would work with our
18 colleagues at DSS. We would work to figure out a way
19 to see if individuals with vouchers, whose payment
20 standard meets the rent for the apartment, and
21 connect them with those units.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, next. Ward's
23 Island, why are we not deciding? This is my thing
24 I've been talking about for years. Big open land,
25 does have a, as you know, Fire Department is there, a

2 couple of shelters, blah, blah, blah, and of course
3 the State has the hospital there, which is mostly
4 vacant. So, my question is, why are we not having a
5 study group to discuss why it can't become another
6 Roosevelt Island or something to that effect? Land,
7 Manhattan, available for housing, make it a Mitchell-
8 Lama. Is that something that you'd be interested in?
9 I've been trying to get everybody to think about it.

10 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, there's
11 actually a citywide housing activation task force
12 going on right now. It was a Mayor...

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Is Ward's Island
14 on the list?

15 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I'm not sure,
16 but that's the recommendation we'll take back today.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Windermere
18 is 57th and 9th Avenues, empty. Goddard would like to
19 buy it. It would give you about 500, 600 units, maybe
20 more. Sits there, empty. Owner wants to sell. Owner
21 wants 70 million. Goddard thinks it's worth 30. Maybe
22 50 in the middle. I keep mentioning it. We're all
23 looking for housing, but it sits in the middle of our
24 eyes, all over the place. And then all the buildings
25 that H and H is leaving, I'm trying to get them to go

2 to non-profits. I don't hear anybody discussing that.
3 The minute H and H leaves, if it's a hotel, it may go
4 back to a hotel. But there are SROs out there. So, we
5 should be jumping on them to purchase them, buy a
6 non-profit, helping them. Just a suggestion.

7 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: We'll follow
8 up both on the Windermere. And again, we have
9 projects that come to us. There are steps, like
10 making sure that there's an appraisal and acquisition
11 price, but there are tools that we have to help non-
12 profits as well so we can follow up on that, plus any
13 other buildings, and we'll talk to H and H about the
14 issue you just raised.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. And then
16 finally, 100 Gold. I know that it's going to be
17 public. It's going to be private and non-profit, I
18 guess. But the community board wants, as I'm still
19 paying attention to the community boards all over the
20 place, they wanted it to be a community land trust.
21 Why couldn't it be, this is City-owned land, why
22 couldn't it be a community land trust that's 100
23 percent affordable?

24 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I would say
25 three things to that. One, there's an RFP now, so any

2 respondent, there's nothing that precludes any
3 particular coordination or organization of teams. So,
4 if there's a team that wanted to come in with that
5 proposal, they could. But there are three things
6 we're trying to solve here. One, Lower Manhattan has
7 not built significant affordable housing in this way
8 in a long time.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: (INAUDIBLE) World
10 Trade Centers, they didn't want to deliver.

11 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: When you look
12 at the number of units created over the last 10
13 years, this project could deliver 10 times what that
14 number is.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah. We want it
16 all to be 100 percent affordable.

17 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: The other
18 piece of it is that 100 Gold, which houses several
19 City agencies, and these public servants work in a
20 building that needs 230 million dollars of capital
21 repairs. This is also an opportunity to put those
22 public servants in a place where they can work, but
23 work in a modern office as well, including us here,
24 and so weighing both the additional proceeds that
25 needs to do that, delivering the housing, and again,

2 if there's additional money that goes beyond that
3 increasing affordability would be one of the things
4 we would try to do.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. But
6 Community Land Trust might've been something to
7 include as part of this discussion.

8 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: It's not
9 precluded, and so teams should..

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All right, you can
11 see we go back and forth. Thank you very much, Madam
12 Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, Council
14 Member Brewer.

15 I'm voting on Land Use. They all are
16 overlapping, these hearings. I don't think you're on
17 the Committee, so Council Member Restler, I'm going
18 to go to you so I can vote.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so
20 much, Chair Sanchez, and this has really been quite a
21 love fest, huh? It's like almost too much.

22 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I'm not going
23 to respond to that, Council Member.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: All right, all
25 right.

2 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I don't think
3 too much is there.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So, I am going to
5 bother you now about a site in my District that we've
6 had some tense conversations before, which is Bedford
7 Gardens, so this is a 600-plus unit Mitchell-Lama
8 development that the owner proposed 80-plus percent
9 rent increases. HPD helped negotiate down to eight-
10 plus percent rent increase over a multi-year period,
11 and now the owner is proceeding with 80 tenants that
12 they're trying to evict, and I'm just devastated.
13 We're trying to connect every last one of them to
14 legal services. There's a variety of different
15 reasons that they're pursuing eviction proceedings,
16 but this kind of scale is just heartbreaking, and we
17 really need help. So firstly, I know we always get
18 into cute conversations with NYCHA about what to do
19 with overhoused tenants, but in a situation like this
20 where you have a 100-year-old woman who's in a two-
21 bedroom apartment and she's facing a rent increase
22 that's so extreme she can't pay it and is now at risk
23 of eviction, what can HPD do to help?

24 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, two
25 things. In addition to the negotiations, there were

2 vouchers that were provided through the NYCHA
3 project-based voucher RFP, so if that individual is
4 connected to a voucher in that way, there's a
5 different set of pre-determination and eviction
6 prevention tools that is built within the Section 8
7 program. Again, if the overhoused status has to do
8 with their voucher status versus the housing company
9 rule status, those are two different strategies.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: We have both
11 challenges.

12 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: In the
13 voucher situation, there are certain rules just
14 having to do with the fact it's a federal voucher.
15 There are payment and household standards that need
16 to be evaluated. That's how you get your voucher
17 standard and your payment standard, and violating
18 those rules may be outside the Public Housing
19 Authority, the PHA's hands.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: But we find
21 flexible ways around those rules as necessary..

22 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: On the
23 federal side..

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: With Section 9
25 housing every day, right? Why is there such a radical

2 difference here that people are going to be kicked
3 out, 100-year-old woman's going to get kicked out on
4 the street in this situation, but in the Section 9
5 development across the street, we look the other way
6 and allow that elderly lady to stay in her home
7 because it's too challenging for her to move.

8 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I can't speak
9 for the Section 9. The other thing that usually comes
10 up, and this is something going back to sequestration
11 when the right-sizing piece was part of those budget
12 cuts, there is sometimes a way to have it be limited
13 to whether there are units of the appropriate size
14 available in the unit before a transfer happens.
15 Again, without knowing the specific situation, it's
16 hard to figure out what the right remedy would be,
17 but I would say Section 9, Section 8 are different
18 programs. With the Section 8 piece, there are
19 specific regulations around both what the voucher
20 payment is related to the family composition behind
21 the voucher that's issued. I know that you've been in
22 some conversation with the team. I don't have all the
23 details, but I can go back and come back to have a
24 more detailed conversation with you about that.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Yeah. I mean, I
3 just feel like you all put a healthy amount of energy
4 and effort and time and resources into negotiations
5 with Crouse to try to limit extreme rent increases to
6 less extreme rent increases, and NYCHA leadership put
7 a great deal of time and effort and energy to put
8 Bedford Gardens at the top of the list in terms of
9 allocating new Section 8 vouchers, and now we're
10 about to see all of that hard work basically go up in
11 smoke because we're going to see every sixth tenant
12 in the development kicked out, and I don't think
13 that's the outcome that you want, I don't think it's
14 the outcome that NYCHA wants, it's certainly not the
15 outcome that me and every elected official
16 representing the South Williamsburg community wants
17 or the residents want, and we just need some help in
18 figuring out how to push back more effectively
19 against Crouse to keep neighbors in their homes.

20 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: We can follow
21 up with you on that.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you very
23 much, Commissioner.

24 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, Council
25 Member Restler.

2 I now want to turn it over to Council
3 Member Joseph, and then I'll come back for my
4 questions.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair.
6 Happy to see you here with your little one, of
7 course.

8 Good afternoon, how are you? I'm Council
9 Member Joseph representing the 40th Council District.
10 I don't even know where to begin. We have quite a few
11 AEP programs in our District, quite a few. I get them
12 almost every week. So, tenants are still reporting
13 problems with the AEP programs. So, how much staffing
14 do you have for the program compared to what it's
15 been in the past?

16 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, I have
17 with me the Deputy Commissioner for Enforcement right
18 now. I will say that staffing has increased, and I'll
19 let our DC for Budget talk through the numbers.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah, thank
21 you, Council Member. So, for that program, with the
22 November Plan that just passed, prior to this plan,
23 we added an additional 13 staff members and 1.1
24 million to support that program. That program is part
25 of our Enforcement and Neighborhood Services, of

2 course. And our AEP program right now has an active,
3 AEP and 7-A program combined, we have an active
4 headcount of about 50 staff. And so, with the 13
5 additional, we're looking to continue just hiring and
6 building out that team.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: So, how long does
8 it take when a building gets into AEP program? How
9 long does it take to get in? How long does it take to
10 get out? Because I'm still getting phone calls on a
11 daily basis about these buildings. And so, the
12 purpose of the AEP is to take over, enforce, make
13 repairs. I'm still getting calls.

14 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, the first
15 step is that every January 30th, an analysis is done
16 where 250 buildings that meet certain conditions
17 around the violations, the amount of emergency repair
18 that we're doing, simply buildings and portfolios
19 that are struggling the most are put into this
20 enhanced program. A coordinator is assigned to that
21 building, both owners and tenants are notified of
22 this work, and there's a four-month period where
23 there's an initial set of engagement, extra
24 oversight. We are pushing to see them drill down and
25 not only do the work, but also certify that the work

2 is complete. They have to demonstrate to us that
3 they've done it correctly. At the end of that period,
4 if they have not done that, there's an order to
5 correct that goes out where their failure to make
6 those corrections does increase in both the monetary
7 penalty that's assigned to it. So, the targeted
8 staff, the sort of the work list and the workout plan
9 that they have to address, plus at the end of that,
10 they have to get permission to leave the program. If
11 they can't get permission to leave the program,
12 there's an order to correct that comes with increased
13 penalties and fines. And to your point, yes, there
14 are buildings that continue to leave the program. And
15 Deputy Commissioner, if there's additional findings,
16 because we issue a report out to the Council every
17 year that talks about both what we're seeing and
18 recommendations moving forward.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Thank you,
20 Council Member. Yeah, so the AEP program, as the
21 Commissioner said, chooses buildings in January. You
22 have until the end of May, basically, to try and get
23 out of the program before you get the order to
24 correct and the fees that automatically come with
25 being in the program. Our staff is out there. As

2 buildings come into the program, they're out there
3 frequently. If you have any specific buildings in
4 your District, we're happy to meet with you on those
5 buildings. I'm not aware of, you know, where the
6 buildings are, but certainly we're interested in
7 getting your feedback and dealing with the particular
8 problems at the buildings that you'd like to talk
9 about.

10 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: And I would
11 just say that since, as of January 31, 2024, HPD has
12 imposed about 27.3 million dollars in AEP fines.
13 Examples of what they see once they pass that four-
14 month period is a 500-dollar-per-dwelling-unit cost
15 on building-wide inspections. For inspections having
16 to do with C violations, it's 200 dollars per
17 complaint that comes in. So if the complaint comes
18 in, if they're the AEP program and it's beyond that
19 point and the order's in place, that's where the
20 extra penalties and fines go.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: How many buildings
22 do you have in the AEP program?

23 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: I think the
24 number...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And I think the
3 AEP program needs some more teeth because there are
4 some landlords who know the loopholes and they don't
5 really follow you. They don't really care. Because
6 there's one particular building in my District, a
7 couple of them, and I go to my buildings. My
8 constituents will tell you I will show up in a space
9 to go and visit. And I went to one particular
10 building, I don't see anything happen. That tenant
11 still has a hole in her apartment from the first
12 floor and that building was in the news and that
13 building is part of the program. So, if we're going
14 to create these programs to make sure landlords are
15 being held accountable, doing their repairs when
16 they're supposed to, we need some teeth because
17 they're not listening to you, they're not following
18 your instructions. Is there any way to meet with your
19 AEP coordinators with tenants as well, let them know
20 that they're in the building, what they're doing,
21 what's the expectation?

22 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Because we want to
24 see that, right? Housing is... I've seen some of the
25 most dilapidated buildings and of course the

2 landlords still don't care. So I would really (TIMER
3 CHIME) love... Chair, can I? Chair, may I continue?

4 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Please.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Oh, thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: You're laying me up
7 right now, so thank you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Yeah, so that's
9 where I'm at so I would love to set up a meeting with
10 you and my team. And when you're coming to that
11 meeting, I would love to see the list of buildings in
12 my District, I represent the 40th Council District,
13 to have all of these buildings that are in the AEP
14 program to see where they are so we can do an
15 assessment. There should be a needs assessment.
16 Assessment, have they met the threshold? Have they
17 not? And what do we do moving forward, right? We
18 don't just throw money at programs and they don't
19 work. And I think AEP is one of them, I'm sorry. But
20 for me, from what I've seen since I've been a Council
21 Member almost four years, buildings in AEP are not
22 moving. The intention is there, the great idea is
23 there, but I don't see it moving in the direction
24 that it should be moving. So for DOB, right? DOB is
25 here yet and they haven't arrived. Okay, so I'll be

2 waiting for them. So in the level of fine (INAUDIBLE)
3 to get landlords of the building in the AEP program
4 into compliance in a timely way, is that, how does
5 that work?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: Yeah, so
7 thank you, Council Member. Som we've discharged
8 thousands. The AEP has been around for 18 years, 20
9 years. We've discharged thousands of buildings from
10 that program, but there are buildings that are
11 recalcitrant and stay in the program. And so we do
12 have some ideas, and as the Commissioner referenced,
13 we do a report every two years on AEP, and we do have
14 some ideas to improve exactly what you're getting at,
15 and the Council has actually already reached out to
16 us to start talking about changes to AEP, so we'd be
17 happy, in addition to having specific building
18 conversations with you, to hear your ideas about
19 other improvements we can make to the program. But we
20 do believe that overall, we've seen thousands of
21 system replacements across buildings in New York
22 City. We do millions of dollars in emergency repair
23 through that program. We are attempting to work with
24 some of the worst buildings in the city, and it is a

2 very tough nut to crack, but we're always trying to
3 move that program forward.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: There should be a
5 program, if these buildings are the worst, the City
6 should take them over and make them into HDFCs and
7 let them, as Council Member Brewer alluded, community
8 land trusts. Give it back to the community if the
9 landlords are not doing their part, right, so it's
10 supposed to render service and they have not done
11 that. Because I visited and I went to parent, not
12 parent, I'm such an educator, tenant association
13 meetings.

14 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, Council
15 Member Joseph, there's two things. One, there was a
16 program, the TPT, the third-party transfer, but there
17 was a lot of questions about how that program was
18 organized, what the rules and regs are, and we're
19 working right now with the Council to see that come
20 back in a way that really does the goals that you've
21 talked about. Additionally, I'll say that when, even
22 though we don't take over the buildings, as the
23 Deputy Commissioner said, we spent a tremendous
24 amount of money through our other program, the
25 Emergency Repair Program, which we do in AEP

2 buildings and the non-AEP buildings to make repairs
3 on hazardous and life safety issues that owners can't
4 or won't do. Here, we've spent over 62.2 million over
5 the program cycle on repairs. We pay for utilities
6 when utilities are shut off and system replacements.

7 And to answer your first question, we
8 have over 3,600 buildings as of January 2024 in the
9 program, but we have seen 3,015 buildings exit the
10 program of AEP. So that being said, every program,
11 especially at a time where expenses and the situation
12 is where it is now for both tenant and owners, could
13 use improvement. We'd love to talk to you about what
14 your ideas are.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Do you monitor the
16 buildings once they exit to make sure they're
17 following the course?

18 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So... sorry, go
19 for it.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: No, that's
21 okay.

22 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Okay. So we
23 have staff that are working throughout the AEP
24 portfolio. Usually, our focus is on the new buildings
25 that come in because they are the first ones that

2 need to be adjusted to the program requirements and
3 what needs to happen. Separately though, as the
4 complaints come in through the system, every 3-1-1
5 complaint where an AEP building is still in the
6 program has the order in place, is governed and the
7 violations go through that framework.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANTIAGO: And I do
9 just want to add also, going back to something that
10 we started with at this hearing, new preservation
11 dollars are available, new preservation programs are
12 coming. One of the main things that we hope to do in
13 the next few months, which J-51 just announced, is
14 really reach out to a lot of these AEP owners to see
15 if they could benefit from the opportunities to get
16 the financing to bring their buildings back. The goal
17 is to really, a lot of these buildings are smaller
18 buildings too, to try and get these buildings back to
19 financial health and stability. That's where we all
20 want both the owners and the tenants, so we look
21 forward to bringing that to the program.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: On that note, what
23 support do you have for small landlord owners? Is
24 there any support?

2 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: There is. I
3 mean, depending on the unit size, not to belabor or
4 beat a horse or whatever analogy we were using
5 before, so the J-51 program, which is something that
6 I think a lot of buildings will be able to benefit
7 from, will have to go back to the State Legislature
8 for renewal soon, and we hope to have support for
9 that. Additionally, we have talked about our
10 preservation term sheets, and depending on your
11 situation, whether you have rent-stabilized units,
12 not rent-stabilized units, that's something where we
13 have different ways of helping them. There are term
14 sheets for that. And if it's operating subsidy, some
15 of the best ways we are able to help is connecting
16 people with vouchers into available units, given the
17 steady reliability of voucher payments for operating
18 costs.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, Council
21 Member Joseph. I swear she's not a plant. You
22 might've thought she was a plant.

23 But just following up on her line of
24 questions. No, don't wake up, don't wake up. Okay.
25 Following up on Council Member Joseph's line of

2 questioning, I appreciate hearing that AEP owners are
3 going to receive special outreach regarding J-51.

4 We've had many conversations where the agency has
5 brought Article XI applications to me, and I'm like,
6 why is this the building that's being considered for
7 an Article XI when there are buildings in much worse
8 shape, so I hope that the agency can really take that
9 approach of going after the worst buildings of

10 buildings in worst conditions for any of the
11 incentive programs we have, right? And, no, Council
12 Member Joseph is not a plant, but she did ask some of
13 the questions that I was going to ask, right, because
14 we do have buildings across the City of New York that
15 have been through many enforcement programs, whether
16 it's 7-A, or it's Underlying Conditions, or it's
17 Alternative Enforcement, where the Alternative
18 Enforcement Program is supposed to be one of the
19 harshest programs that we have. You don't fix it
20 within a couple weeks, then it's going to escalate,
21 and you're going to get more inspectors, you're going
22 to get more fines, and still we have buildings that
23 are falling apart. And so, it's in that context that,
24 you know, and I'm a bit biased and been thinking
25 about this policy for so many years, but it's in that

1 context that I believe that one of the most important
2 bills that the Council can pass with the
3 Administration's support is Intro. 1063, is the
4 Housing Rescue and Resident Protection Act, which
5 would revamp the third-party transfer program, right,
6 really challenging some of those really bad outcomes
7 that we saw in the past, and making sure that the
8 program can go after the worst owners.

10 So, on that front, I wanted to ask a
11 couple of questions just as we continue negotiations
12 around third-party transfer reform and Intro. 1063.
13 So first off, looking backward, what was the cost for
14 HPD to administer the program on average in past
15 years, or past rounds, rather? If you can break down
16 the cost by category, so for instance, how much
17 stabilization capital was HPD pouring into buildings
18 that went through third-party transfer? How many
19 staff were dedicated to making the program work
20 internally within the agency? And if you can give us
21 any sort of indication in terms of what were the
22 volume of buildings that we're talking about with
23 these cost estimates, or rather, cost lookbacks, and
24 if we have any information on the average number of

2 violations that these buildings had that went through
3 third-party transfer in the past.

4 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, Chair, I
5 think we're going to have to come back with certain
6 data points on that. There are some that I can give
7 you now looking at Round 10 specifically. So first,
8 from the inception of the TPT program through the end
9 of 2023, we've spent somewhere around 79 million on
10 that program. The City does collect some municipal
11 charges. The City collected 35 million over that
12 time, and then specifically for Round 10 costs, it
13 was about 164,000 dollars per unit on capital on
14 average, plus tax exemption on top of that.

15 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Sorry, could you
16 repeat that number?

17 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: 164,000
18 dollars in capital per unit on average. You asked
19 specifically for the tax exemption piece, that I
20 don't have, and then there's other assistance like
21 the staff support and other pieces that we'll try to
22 get back to you on. Neighborhood Restore, which is
23 our partner in this, spent about 24.4 million for
24 Round 10, and then there's about 400K annually funded
25 for emergency funding, so making sure that buildings

2 are still habitable and moving forward. I'm not sure
3 if I'm missing anything.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: Yeah, I think,
5 so there are four main costs if we look back in
6 administering the program. There are staffing costs,
7 and that's not just for HPD, it's Department of
8 Finance, DEP, and the City Law Department. In
9 addition to staffing costs, there are costs incurred
10 by Neighborhood Restore once they take title to the
11 property that's ongoing administrative costs. There
12 was a lot of seed capital initially in the early
13 rounds, and now there's a small amount that we
14 allocate for utilities, fuel, but most of the cost
15 comes from ongoing fees that they generate when we
16 finance projects, and so that is built in really
17 largely to the capital budget at this point in time.
18 And then the next major cost historically came from
19 capital, which the Commissioner just mentioned, was
20 164,000 per unit in Round 10 thus far. We do expect
21 going forward that will increase, like costs have
22 increased across the board, and we'd be probably
23 closer to about 250,000 per unit now. We also believe
24 that going forward, and this came up a lot in the
25 discussions around Round 10, that we need to make

2 sure we're building in more technical assistance and
3 support for buildings that are at risk of TPT or that
4 are in the in-rem action, and so there was a lot of
5 discussions as part of the TPT working group about
6 creating an owner resource center, and that is
7 something that we are really committed to make sure
8 happens going forward. There are some wild cards out
9 there too, so as we talk about reform of the program,
10 I think there are a lot of questions about how
11 extensive we want the outreach to be. There are
12 questions around how we look at value of property and
13 what process we're using that could certainly add
14 costs, and there are other legal questions we're
15 still working through, and as we work through those
16 questions with City Council and the City Law
17 Department, there may be other costs that we have to
18 be able to manage, and so I think we have the basic
19 understanding of the past and I think there's still
20 some questions about as we work with Council to
21 finalize what the program looks like, what that will
22 be going forward.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. And when
24 you say, so again, focused on past administration of
25 the program, 164,000 dollars on average per unit, is

2 that the only capital expense that there was? Was the
3 Neighborhood Restore funds, obviously staffing costs
4 are expense, but Neighborhood Restore costs incurred,
5 is that capital or expense?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: Initially,
7 there was seed capital that went to Neighborhood
8 Restore. In more recent rounds, what we do is we add
9 an acquisition fee to the budget, and that
10 acquisition fee goes into a reserve held by
11 Neighborhood Restore, and that then helps them manage
12 ongoing administration. So, if the building that is
13 transferred as part of the program, let's say there's
14 not sufficient revenue to cover kind of emergency
15 repairs, there's a pot of resources. We also have
16 supplemented that historically through a combination
17 of CDBG and expense funding. More recently, it's
18 expense funded. I'm looking at my colleagues from
19 budget.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yeah. And so
21 on the expense side in our budget, we have 800,000 a
22 year right now. It used to be a split of CDBG and tax
23 levy dollars, but now it's all tax levy dollars, and
24 400,000 of that goes to Neighborhood Restore, as

2 mentioned earlier, and it's another 400 that we spend
3 on different utilities as needed.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: Yeah, so at
5 this point in time, the primary source for
6 Neighborhood Restore's ongoing administration is
7 through the capital budget.

8 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay. Thank you. And
9 just to, you know, we're continuing to have this
10 conversation, but, you know, I think Council Member
11 Joseph's frustration with buildings just taking
12 advantage, Ohebshalom in Council Member De La Rosa's
13 District, the owners of 2201 Davidson in my District,
14 these folks cannot continue to own properties in the
15 City of New York with us, not having the stick,
16 right, the ultimate stick of taking the property away
17 after a fair process, so I really look forward to
18 getting this to the finish line.

19 And I think you answered a couple of
20 these, but just a couple of looking forward questions
21 in terms of where the program could go. You mentioned
22 some of these, but we have rising costs, we have
23 proposed reforms that are focused on the most
24 negligent landlords and the most distressed
25 buildings, right? We're not going to be capturing

2 some of those, the kinds of properties that we
3 captured in Round 10, which weren't actually all that
4 distressed, and we have a new legal landscape, so
5 when you cite the, you know, when you predict for a
6 cost of 250,000 dollars per unit, are you taking this
7 into account, these dynamics into account, and what
8 increased funding would you need broken down by
9 category, expense versus capital?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DARGA: So, I think
11 one thing that is really tricky in predicting the
12 future, well, not only are we still working through
13 some of the big legal questions, but I think one of
14 the biggest challenges is predicting the redemption
15 rate for properties, so historically, the redemption
16 rate was over 80 percent of properties from the
17 commencement of an in-rem action until transfer. We
18 expect, as we reform the program and focus on the
19 properties with the highest amount of financial and
20 physical issues, that that redemption rate could drop
21 really significantly. So, if we look at the last
22 round of TPT, there were 420 buildings at
23 commencement, just over 60 transferred, so the costs
24 that we were referencing are related to just over 60
25 buildings. That is aside from staffing costs, right?

2 Let's say going forward, we end up with the opposite,
3 where only 20-ish percent of the buildings redeem,
4 the cost is significantly higher, so I think as we
5 reform the program, I think we want to be in a
6 position where we have some ability to set the number
7 of properties that make sense per round, because what
8 we're going to want to do, at least in that first
9 round, after any legislative changes, is make sure
10 that we're setting the program up to be successful,
11 right, so if we start with 400 and we end up
12 transferring 350, the cost to the City would be much
13 higher than if it's less than 60 buildings.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: But hopefully we'll
15 all work ourselves out of a job, right? Yeah. Very
16 expensive up front, and then when owners realize that
17 they will lose their properties, yeah.

18 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Yeah, I just
19 want to add, this is where coming back to something
20 that the Deputy Commissioner said about the Owner
21 Resource Center, because it's really important. In
22 the same way that the Homeowner Help Desk, now it's
23 baselined citywide, is going to be a tremendous
24 assistance already to homeowners who have been going
25 through the tax lien sale, we want something for

2 owners who are, because there are a significant
3 number of owners who are caught in the enforcement
4 programs who want to do good work, they want to
5 repair the buildings, they want people to live
6 habitable, especially the smaller buildings that CM
7 Joseph spoke about, but either they lack technical
8 expertise, they need assistance, they need a place to
9 go, and so us putting that as part of this discussion
10 and anchoring it, I think is a good compliment to
11 what we've done for one- and four-family owners, and
12 also makes this a more equitable program when we move
13 forward.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JOFFE: And I'll just
15 add, this is a good example of a program that spans
16 offices at HPD across enforcement, development,
17 policy, legal, where resources are really spread
18 around and need is spread around and staffing
19 capacity will need to be balanced across each office.
20 It's not just going to be project managers on Kim's
21 team or inspectors on AnnMarie's team, it's really
22 something that we're thinking about holistically as
23 an agency, and so just a reminder, I think with all
24 of our discussions on staffing and capacity, that we
25 balance needs across the entire agency to limit

2 bottlenecks and make sure that we're moving to
3 advance all of our initiatives equally and equitably.

4 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: No, thank you, I
5 appreciate that, and I think it's also worth noting
6 that we're talking about a program that will have a
7 very high upfront cost as we relaunch, right, but
8 then over time, we're talking about increased
9 revenues for the City of New York, we're talking
10 about adding properties back to the tax roll, so
11 there's every single argument for this
12 Administration, the next Administration, whoever it
13 is, to really prioritize this, both to safeguard New
14 Yorkers' health and safety, but also the fiscal
15 health of the City of New York.

16 I get to ask all my questions now, yes,
17 okay. Unless my Colleagues have other questions, but
18 they'll let me know.

19 Okay. So, I have a couple of more topics
20 I wanted to touch on, if we could just go rapid fire,
21 because I know we have Department of Buildings and
22 members of the public are also here waiting, but I
23 want to touch on the discretionary funding from the
24 Council, I want to touch on the delays, right? The
25 Council has heard and continues to hear reports of

2 significant backlogs with Council discretionary
3 awards contracted through HPD, so can you tell me
4 about what is the status here? We saw that the City's
5 Chief Contracting Officer has stepped down, but we
6 also saw that there is a creation of a new office, a
7 new role with Michael Cedillo, so how are these
8 different pieces working together, and is there any
9 way that HPD can commit, I'm going to ask you this
10 over and over again, all right, but commit to
11 ensuring that you are able to get the funding out the
12 door to support our non-profits doing critical work?

13 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Yeah. I mean,
14 I think you've said everything I would say. We
15 absolutely understand what this has meant in a
16 negative way for our partners. These are many of the
17 same people that were working on Partners in
18 Preservation or Homeowner Help Desk, like these are
19 the same non-profits we need to be solvent so that we
20 can actually work with them on the ground to get this
21 done. I mean, there's been, I think, a couple of
22 drivers which has been talked about, us moving as a
23 City, you know, this is a citywide problem. HPD and
24 other agencies have been thinking and working with
25 MOCS, working with the Mayor's Office of Non-Profit

2 Services to figure out how to do this and how to
3 tackle this issue. You know, for us as an agency,
4 we've been part of the process in the transition from
5 Accelerator to PASSPort, working through those
6 technology issues as they've come up, and I think
7 that MOCS has worked to progress and make changes and
8 try to improve that situation. For us, a lot of our
9 resources also were pulled in many different ways
10 when we were brought in to address the humanitarian
11 crisis with the city. A lot of our role in particular
12 involved handling, contracting, and transactional
13 work from the fiscal side, which doubled up on the
14 responsibilities. It's not, you know, it's something
15 that we were proud to do and something that we were
16 called to do, but it did affect some of our capacity.
17 And then staffing shortages in those roles definitely
18 contributed, but we have since been able to get
19 additional staff members. We worked with OMB to get
20 exemptions specifically for those lines in this work
21 around fiscal and contracting and processing so that
22 we can do that work more quickly. We have been
23 meeting more regularly with the groups, and we find
24 that at least getting the communication about where
25 we are is a step in the right direction, though

2 there's many more steps that have to move forward.

3 Along with other agencies, we committed to shifting

4 our contracts from one year to three years so that at

5 least moving forward, we can have some time to really

6 focus on that backlog in the past years. And then,

7 you know, separate and apart from that, there's been

8 both a catchup on training and new measures that have

9 to be instilled into our workforce and our outside

10 partners so that we're using these new tools, whether

11 it be PASSPort or new local law standards, anything

12 that's new, which there has been a number of things

13 over the last couple of years, making sure everyone

14 knows what it is to not let that be a hang up on

15 time.

16 Finally, there are other things that

17 we're looking at this process. Again, either it's

18 procurement or local laws that have built out the

19 contracting submission and registration process to

20 see if there are things that may be outdated,

21 unnecessary, or duplicative that are outside what the

22 tech is trying to do but could be measures that we

23 work with the Council and try to streamline that as

24 well.

25

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JOFFE: And I'll just
3 add, we've implemented quarterly calls with the
4 Council Finance Team to make sure that we're
5 addressing questions proactively, answering any
6 questions about the backlog. We understand a lot of
7 these groups come directly to their representatives
8 and we hear about it through Council so we're making
9 sure to have proactive outreach and engagement with
10 our partners at Council to keep y'all informed about
11 any updates on our end and just to keep those open
12 lines of communication.

13 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you
14 so much.

15 And I look forward to continuing to have
16 those conversations and getting rid of the complete
17 backlog, right, on all these fronts.

18 Housing Connect. You touched on this
19 briefly with Council Member Brewer, and you mentioned
20 that there were some fixes that were being
21 considered, but you didn't say what they were, so let
22 me ask the question, but that's the prompt. Housing
23 Connect, the City's affordable housing lottery
24 system. As Gothamist reported last month, hundreds or
25 maybe even thousands of quality affordable apartments

2 are sitting empty because of the City's burdensome
3 marketing requirements for re-rentals so, if somebody
4 moves out from an affordable unit, now getting that
5 home occupied again faces a huge time delay. Housing
6 providers are eager to rent these apartments to New
7 Yorkers in desperate need of a home, but HPD's
8 marketing handbook effectively prevents them from
9 doing so. What is HPD doing exactly to fix this
10 problem? What is being proposed? And how many units
11 are sitting vacant that you could see rented out more
12 quickly?

13 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So just to
14 take a step back, the marketing guidebook does two
15 things. It is focused on making sure people can get
16 into units, both on the initial lottery and the re-
17 rental. And this is a conversation that we've been
18 having with the Council for years, ever since there
19 was a local law passed by the Council that sets the
20 framework for how we make sure that we do this in a
21 way that works. But additionally, the guidelines are
22 here also to make sure that it's done in an
23 equitable, fair, and transparent manner. I was here
24 not many months ago when we were discussing the
25 broker fee hearing, and we were talking about what

2 the market does generally and how renters interact
3 with the market and feel confident or not confident
4 that they're being considered for apartments, so the
5 marketing guidelines are there and they are designed
6 to create that kind of consistency, predictability,
7 and a level playing field between both the people who
8 are looking for housing, and in this case, people who
9 are working with our programs and delivering, and
10 we're grateful for, delivering affordable housing. I
11 had mentioned that earlier, this has been an
12 iterative process where we are trying to balance the
13 two things, but it's definitely come very clearly to
14 us that there's more that we need to do. There are
15 technology solutions that we had hoped to be more
16 effective more quickly. We have made waivers and
17 exceptions in the past. We look at things on a case-
18 by-case basis, but it is very evident that more
19 wholesale improvements need to be made. So, we are
20 now working through a new set of marketing guideline
21 updates, which actually incorporate streamlining that
22 we fought for and won at the federal level so that
23 people who are eligible for housing do not have to
24 prove as hard that they are eligible for that
25 housing.

2 Additionally, on the re-rental side,
3 there's more technology improvements that we need to
4 put in place, and so we are looking at very soon
5 putting in some additional interim solutions beyond
6 what we've already done to create waivers and
7 exceptions that we believe will speed up that
8 process. And then at the same time, we're going to
9 look long-term at our technology and see what a more
10 permanent solution is. Because at the end of the day,
11 we want to get more heads on beds, but we also need
12 to make sure that we do it in a way where people feel
13 confident that when they apply, that their
14 applications are being looked at, that they're being
15 considered. That being said, we know from our non-
16 profit partners and our housing providers out there
17 that they have smart systems, that they are doing
18 good work in their communities, and we want to
19 implement some of those solutions as well.

20 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Just to
21 follow up on one specific example that I've heard
22 over time, the marketing handbook sets additional
23 onerous requirements for re-rentals. For example,
24 providers are asked to do outreach to individuals who
25 never express interest in living in a specific unit,

2 in a particular unit, and that outreach could result
3 in hundreds of days of delays. So that's not a
4 technological issue. That is a policy problem. Can
5 the agency commit to a distinct policy for re-rentals
6 that streamlines the rental process for these units
7 and gets heads on beds more quickly?

8 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, that's a
9 question we've been looking at. So, just taking a
10 step back, there were two ways that you can be part
11 of the re-rental process. Either you as, through your
12 application, given the fact that we have so many
13 people who apply for a single unit, hundreds, if not
14 thousands, of individuals who are applying for units,
15 in your profile you can elect to say that I want to
16 be considered for a re-rental that comes up. There
17 are also other criteria we ask for to help to target
18 that a little bit more directly to better matches.
19 There is what we call a mini lottery that's run and
20 people are selected and we ask the owners to go
21 through and talk to those individuals. What we've
22 heard from owners is that more often than not,
23 they're hitting a wall with individuals who may not
24 be interested or looking for a different kind of
25 building and it's preventing them from moving people

1 in. That's why one of the waivers that we put in
2 place last year was that if they went through a
3 certain number, the number we had decided on was 250,
4 then if they still did not find anyone through the
5 mini lottery, they can open up to the market. We're
6 still hearing that that process is taking too long
7 with that waiver, which is why we're considering
8 something new. Additionally, also the other option
9 you can do is you can pull a waiting list, but we
10 were hearing that there are questions about, I
11 already have a waiting list or this waiting list also
12 has people who may not be interested, we want to do
13 something a little bit more targeted, so I think
14 there's a more immediate short term, quicker solution
15 that we need to put in place so that when we put the
16 technology group together, which we're doing now
17 about the longer term fixes, we can get it right, but
18 without sacrificing the opportunity at the moment.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. I look
21 forward to talking about this more at length. We
22 might have a future hearing specifically on this
23 topic just because we need to make sure that, to use
24 your words right, to get heads on beds as quickly as
25

1 possible when we have the resources so thank you for
2 that.
3

4 I think that the last round of questions
5 that I want to ask and putting my Colleagues, just a
6 heads up if you have any other questions for HPD, let
7 me know, but the last round of questions I want to
8 ask is about the threats coming from the federal
9 government. So most salient on my constituents'
10 minds, when the emergency housing voucher lottery
11 opened up last year, there was a lot of excitement,
12 there was people felt hope for the first time in a
13 long time that they might actually get a voucher, and
14 of course, nearly 8,000, maybe 7,500 people did get a
15 voucher, families did get a voucher through the
16 emergency housing voucher program. Of course, that as
17 of yesterday's news is under threat. We're talking
18 about a program that was supposed to be funded until
19 Fiscal Year '30 is now scheduled to have funds dry up
20 at the end of the year. So, specifically on emergency
21 housing vouchers, how much federal funding does HPD
22 receive for emergency housing vouchers? Given the HUD
23 letter from earlier this month on this program and
24 yesterday's article in Gothamist, how will HPD ensure
25

2 that nearly 8,000 New Yorkers who depend on these
3 vouchers continue to stay housed?

4 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, I'll let
5 Gardea talk through the numbers, and I can answer in
6 a second.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Yes. Thank
8 you, Council Members. So, for the emergency housing
9 vouchers, we get approximately 50 million a year to
10 cover the over 2,000 vouchers that we have allocated
11 to us.

12 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I'm sorry, that was
13 one five, 15 million?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: No, no, five
15 zero.

16 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Five zero.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CAPHART: Five zero,
18 50. And so yes, we also saw the notice come out. So,
19 we do get annual letters of our allocation for each
20 calendar year. The letter that you referenced came
21 out in early March stating that the 2025 allocation
22 will be the last allocation, and that's what we were
23 all pushing back against and continue to push back
24 against because as you mentioned, our understanding
25 has been all along that we will start reissuing

2 vouchers but for those that remain, it will phase out
3 over time to 2030 and that's what we're expecting.

4 And also that letter, one of the confusions there is
5 that it also alluded to another allocation for
6 Calendar Year '26, so we are seeking clarification on
7 that as well. We are in touch with our colleagues at
8 OMB, just monitoring the situation in terms of that
9 funding to see what we can do as a City to push back.
10 But the key here is to continue to push back because
11 that's a commitment the federal government made to
12 the City of New York, to our residents, and we'll
13 continue to fight to maintain that funding.

14 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Yeah. And
15 I'll just add a little bit more shape to it. So, we
16 as a City, 17 different agencies came together in
17 order to make sure that we can execute this program
18 and get every voucher vouchered by the due date which
19 was December 2023. And, generally speaking, and this
20 is not the only special purpose voucher the City of
21 New York has, special purpose vouchers are something
22 that the federal government has done for other
23 groups, for other reasons. When they have a timeline
24 to it, you have an arc where through attrition, most
25 households leave the program for very benign reasons,

2 they no longer need the voucher, they move to another
3 state, etc. There was an arc where we would have
4 already envisioned having to integrate households at
5 the end of that period into our standard housing
6 choice voucher program. We know how to do it, we've
7 done it before. Obviously, I'm upset about the EHV
8 too. But the acceleration puts us in a difficult
9 place because right now, as we're dealing with those
10 questions, we're dealing with the question about our
11 section eight funding overall, which would have been
12 the backup source for this so this is what we're
13 doing. So, right now, we have been actively talking
14 to national organizations and working with public
15 housing authorities across the country, not only to
16 collect information, but also, as you know, there are
17 different heads of different regions within HUD, and
18 we're working to see if there is consistent
19 information. We are collecting information about this
20 nationally. 70,000 vouchers nationally were issued,
21 11 percent of those coming to New York. So, baseline,
22 the most immediate solution would be to integrate a
23 household that has a special purpose voucher.

24 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I'm sorry. I'm going
25 to request a 30-second break.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Sorry,
3 Commissioner.

4 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I'm here for a
6 second.

7 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So first, as
8 Gardea pointed out, there's information in the actual
9 notice that was issued that we're collecting and
10 collaborating with other cities across the country
11 that were also recipients of this to make sure we
12 understand the facts of what they're changing and
13 what they're not changing. The second move is those
14 individuals that have these vouchers, we would
15 traditionally incorporate them into our standard
16 allocation, but as I mentioned, we also have to
17 monitor and watch that as well. What I think the
18 baseline piece here is, similarly to what has
19 recently happened with the cuts to Community
20 Development Funding Institution, the CDFI funds,
21 there's bipartisan support for Section 8. There's
22 bipartisan support for vouchers. So, we would look to
23 activate that support while we work on the program to
24 make sure we are consistent in talking to HUD about
25 exactly what their plans are. And separately, we are

2 doing a wholesale take of what the Section 8 program
3 can do in order to help preserve options for these
4 families if and when this funding goes away.

5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. And that
6 makes sense, and we absolutely have to push back.

7 My last question is more broadly. 70
8 percent of HPD's code enforcement budget comes from
9 Community Development Block Grant funds, so how are
10 we feeling about the security, the stability of these
11 allocated funds and what is HPD's plan if we're to
12 face cuts on that front?

13 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: So, I think
14 the same question was posed to the OMB Director. We
15 have a number of individuals who are closely tracking
16 and monitoring discussions in D.C. about CD writ
17 large. We continue to just understand where those
18 changes might happen. And until we know more, we're
19 not sure what best way to plan. We have different
20 funding sources. We count on the federal funding
21 sources, and it would be a very difficult source to
22 replace writ large, so it's a matter of
23 understanding. We know where the continuing
24 resolution has settled. We're waiting for the
25 President's budget to come out soon for Fiscal Year

2 '26, and then we'll have to understand basically what
3 the uses are, what our federal funding sources are,
4 and what kind of choices we have to make moving
5 forward.

6 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Great. Thank you.
7 Just want to make sure I didn't miss any of my key
8 questions. I think that is all I wrote. Look at that.
9 Or the team wrote.

10 Well, thank you. Thank you so much for
11 your participation in this hearing.

12 We're going to hear from Department of
13 Buildings next after a short break. It's 1:05. We'll
14 say we'll start back at 1:15. And thank you again,
15 HPD, for all of your responses. I look forward to
16 further negotiation through the Executive Budget.

17 ACTING COMMISSIONER TIGANI: Thank you so
18 much, Chair, and thank you, Members of the Committee.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Can everybody settle
20 down? We're getting ready to continue. Everybody
21 settle down. We are getting ready to continue.

22 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: All right. Good
23 afternoon, everyone. Big shoutout to all the moms
24 who've done this before I did. This is fun juggling.

2 Good afternoon, Commissioner. It's so
3 good to see you. So we're just going to jump right
4 into your testimony, and then we'll move to
5 questions.

6 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Sure. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Do we need to? I'm
8 so sorry. First, we're going to have the Committee
9 Counsel administer the oath.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please raise your
11 right hand.

12 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
13 whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and to answer
14 all Council Member questions honestly?

15 ADMINISTRATION: (INAUDIBLE)

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You may
17 begin.

18 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Good afternoon, Chair
19 Sanchez and Members of the Committee on Housing and
20 Buildings. I'm Jimmy Oddo, Commissioner of the New
21 York City Department of Buildings. I'm joined today
22 by several members of the Department's leadership
23 team. Gus Sirakis, the Deputy Commissioner for
24 Development and Technical Affairs; Gina Ugarte, the
25 Deputy Commissioner for Finance; Guillermo Patino,

2 Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Legal Affairs;
3 Laura Popa, Deputy Commissioner for Sustainability;
4 Yegal Shamash, Deputy Commissioner for Enforcement;
5 and Mark Sanabria, Deputy Commissioner for
6 Administration. And, Madam Chair, I'm happy that
7 we're in the big room of the Chambers so that the
8 dais could be complete because the wonderful public
9 servants at the dais are the reason why this agency
10 has held it together during some difficult financial
11 times, and the good things you're going to hear about
12 in the testimony and in response to your questions,
13 and there are good things, are the work of the folks
14 at the dais, the men and women behind them, and I'm
15 going to try to do a better job of incorporating
16 their responses to your questions.

17 Before I discuss Fiscal Year 2026
18 Preliminary Budget, I want to take a moment to thank
19 you, Chair Sanchez, as well as the Members of this
20 Committee and countless other Council Members who
21 have worked closely with the Department during my
22 tenure as Commissioner over the past two years. When
23 I was appointed Commissioner in 2023, I made it clear
24 that keeping buildings and construction sites safe
25 would be my top priority. Working together, we have

2 made strides to make New York City's built
3 environment safer and more livable. This includes
4 partnering to advocate for additional resources for
5 the Department to take a proactive approach to
6 building safety, additional resources to address
7 quality-of-life issues facing New Yorkers, and
8 working together to solve local issues raised by your
9 offices, other elected officials' offices, and
10 community boards. I look forward to continuing to
11 work together on behalf of all New Yorkers.

12 Turning out to the budget, the Fiscal
13 Year 2026 Preliminary Budget allocates approximately
14 220 million dollars in expense funds to the
15 Department. Of this funding, approximately 176
16 million is for personal services, which supports
17 1,805 budgeted positions, and 44 million is for
18 other-than-personal services, which primarily
19 supports contractual services, equipment, and
20 supplies. This funding is critical to supporting the
21 Department's mandates and priorities. Of note, the
22 Department has received 60 additional positions to
23 establish a proactive enforcement program, 25
24 additional positions to strengthen its enforcement of
25 required periodic gas piping system inspections, 10

2 additional positions to enforce Local Law 97 of 2019,
3 38 positions to fulfill our mandates under the City
4 of Yes for Housing Opportunity, and 45 positions
5 related to other housing initiatives, including the
6 legalization of basement apartments. Before I discuss
7 these initiatives further, I will discuss the
8 Department's performance over the past year.

9 In Fiscal Year 2024, the last full Fiscal
10 Year, approximately 280,000 construction jobs were
11 filed with the Department, and we issued 169,000
12 initial and renewal construction permits combined.
13 This represents a slight decrease in construction job
14 filings from the previous Fiscal Year. Despite the
15 decrease in filings, the average time to review
16 filings slightly increased across the board last
17 Fiscal Year. However, the Department continues to
18 maintain strong service levels, with customers
19 waiting just over three days for their job filings to
20 be reviewed for the first time. The slight uptick in
21 the time it takes the Department to review filings
22 can be attributed to an increased number of
23 resubmissions after the Department conducts initial
24 review of the filing and issues objections. Our goal
25 is to continue to promptly complete our initial plan

2 reviews and to improve the quality of such reviews by
3 continuing to train our plan examiners to ensure that
4 plan review is efficient and consistent to reduce
5 resubmissions. The wait time between a construction
6 inspection request and an inspection, which occurs
7 after a construction project is completed by a
8 contractor, continues to be short last Fiscal Year,
9 with customers waiting about four days for a
10 construction inspection, five days for an electric
11 inspection, and three days for a plumbing inspection.
12 However, we are beginning to see increased wait times
13 across the board this Fiscal Year. The biggest impact
14 on development inspection service levels has been a
15 reduced reliance on overtime due to overtime
16 reduction efforts by the Department. Last Fiscal
17 Year, the department reduced its overtime spending by
18 4.7 million dollars, which represents a 50 percent
19 reduction from the previous Fiscal Year. In order to
20 improve service levels, the Department is being
21 judicious about allowing for overtime, where it is
22 seeing heightened demand for inspections, is piloting
23 the use of self-certification for certain low-risk
24 inspections, and is prioritizing recruiting for
25 inspectorial vacancies. We continue to respond to

1 complaints from members of the public expeditiously.

2 We are responding to the most serious complaints,

3 Priority A complaints, which are those complaints

4 that relate to conditions that may present an

5 immediate threat to the public within hours. We are

6 responding to Priority B complaints, which capture

7 violating conditions that, if occurring, while

8 serious, do not present an immediate threat to the

9 public, within 13 days. As a result of responding to

10 these complaints and our proactive inspections

11 concerning construction safety, we issued

12 approximately 44,000 OATH summonses last Fiscal Year.

13 This is a slight decrease from the previous Fiscal

14 Year and can be attributed to the education campaigns

15 by the Department intended to provide more

16 transparency to the construction industry regarding

17 conditions that will result in enforcement actions

18 being taken, greater adherence to construction

19 regulations by the industry, and the continued

20 implementation of the Homeowner Relief Program, which

21 provides small property owners with the opportunity

22 to address violating conditions before receiving a

23 summons or monetary penalties.

1 To ensure that safety regulations are
2 being complied with, the Department continues to
3 conduct complaint-based inspections and proactive
4 inspections of larger construction sites. Last Fiscal
5 Year, the Department conducted 204,000 enforcement
6 inspections, which was 24,000 more inspections than
7 the previous year. This includes inspections that
8 were conducted because of the nearly 102,000 3-1-1
9 complaints the Department received. Despite
10 conducting more inspections, the Department found
11 fewer violating conditions during such inspections,
12 which demonstrates that there is a greater adherence
13 to construction regulations by the industry,
14 including with site safety training requirements. To
15 date, the Department-approved course providers have
16 issued approximately 456,000 site safety training
17 cards, which includes supervisory site safety
18 training cards. I'm pleased to report that the number
19 of construction-related incidents that resulted in an
20 injury or a fatality to a worker decreased last
21 Fiscal Year, with an 8 percent reduction in the
22 number of incidents that resulted in an injury, and
23 that we continue to see a decrease this Fiscal Year.
24

2 Turning now to the Department's priority
3 initiatives. First, of course, is establishing a
4 proactive inspection program. Last year, the City
5 Council passed your legislation, Chair, Local Law 79
6 of 2024, which we were extremely supportive of, which
7 tasked the Department with establishing a proactive
8 enforcement program. Following the passage of the
9 law, the Department received an additional 60
10 positions, which includes inspectors, plan examiners,
11 data analysts, and attorneys to stand up the program.
12 To date, the Department has primarily focused on
13 hiring and filled 25 positions, with an additional 16
14 positions in the hiring pipeline. With these
15 additional resources, the Department will use its
16 data to identify and hold bad actors accountable,
17 identify sensitive buildings that may be impacted by
18 neighboring construction to get ahead of incidents,
19 and perform re-inspections of immediately hazardous
20 violating conditions until such conditions are
21 corrected. We look forward to keeping the Committee
22 updated on this important work in the coming months
23 as we work to implement this important program, which
24 will fundamentally change how the Department
25 approaches building and construction safety. If I

2 can, Madam Chair, just ad lib a minute and vary from
3 my prepared remarks, and that is to publicly thank
4 you again. As you know, I was a Member of this Body
5 for almost 15 years, and I was a damn good Council
6 Member, and I've been around damn good Council
7 Members. I have seen Members on both sides of the
8 aisle in this Body on every level of government have
9 an incident in their District, show up to the
10 initial, or maybe the first week's worth of press
11 conferences, and then give it drive-by attention. The
12 owner of that building in 1915 Billingsley didn't
13 show up for three days. You were there that night,
14 and you were there the rest of the way and, when we
15 came to you with a concept, you listened, you
16 collaborated, and you codified this program. And I'm
17 telling you, Madam Chair, there will be another
18 building in your District or a building in someone
19 else's District that won't endure the fate of 1915
20 Billingsley because of this program. We are immensely
21 proud, and you're going to hear from Deputy
22 Commissioner Shamash, even though we haven't staffed
23 up fully, we're already out in the field with the
24 staff that we have doing these inspections, and it's

2 a legacy item for you, and you should be extremely
3 proud on this side of the dais we are.

4 Speaking of legacy, Reducing Greenhouse
5 Gas Emissions, Laura Popa. In addition to enforcing
6 the energy code and existing laws that require
7 certain buildings to report their energy and water
8 use and to perform a retro-commissioning, the
9 Department continues to implement Local Law 97 of
10 2019, which requires the city's largest buildings to
11 increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas
12 emissions over several compliance periods,
13 culminating in achieving net zero emissions by 2050.
14 Implementation efforts have included promulgating
15 rules and issuing guidance to inform property owners
16 about how to comply with the law and growing the
17 sustainability team, which is tasked with enforcing
18 the law and serving as a critical resource to
19 building owners in the industry as they work to come
20 into compliance. As I mentioned earlier in my
21 testimony, we have recently added 10 additional
22 attorneys to the sustainability team who work on
23 enforcing the law. These additional positions grow
24 the sustainability team to 112 people, which means
25 the team has grown by 60 percent since last year,

2 Council Member Restler. Most recently, we achieved a
3 major milestone as it relates to implementing the law
4 with the reporting portal for compliance reports
5 opening earlier this month. Building owners have
6 until the end of June to submit their compliance
7 reports, and they can also apply for an extension
8 through August 29th. Leading up to the deadline, the
9 Department is offering a series of educational
10 webinars for building owners and sustainability
11 professionals to provide guidance on how to file
12 compliance reports.

13 Improving quality of life. We are taking
14 significant steps to improve quality of life for New
15 Yorkers and to improve building safety by taking a
16 multifaceted approach to removing sidewalk sheds more
17 quickly while re-imagining the sidewalk sheds that
18 are needed to protect the public and in connection
19 with construction work. This builds upon the work of
20 the Department to address longstanding sidewalk
21 sheds, including performing regular inspections and
22 taking legal action to hold building owners
23 accountable for maintaining their buildings. The
24 additional resources allocated to the Department in
25 the current Fiscal Year are supporting our efforts in

1 this area. We are working closely with three
2 architecture and engineering firms to deliver on two
3 major initiatives, which includes redesigning
4 sidewalk sheds to make them less obtrusive and more
5 aesthetically pleasing, and to study Local Law 11,
6 which requires buildings greater than six stories in
7 height to have their façades inspected periodically
8 to determine whether any changes to the program are
9 needed. We expect to conclude our work with these
10 firms this summer and look forward to updating the
11 Committee on this work. We have also released
12 guidance to the construction industry regarding the
13 use of netting in lieu of sidewalk sheds and rules
14 regarding the installation of art on sidewalk sheds.
15 We are also working closely with the Council to give
16 the Department more enforcement tools, hopefully
17 bills will be passed tomorrow, to hold building
18 owners accountable when they put up sidewalk sheds
19 and do not take action to repair their building
20 façades in order to remove such sidewalk sheds.

22 Lastly, increasing efficiency through use
23 of technology. Last year, the Department and the
24 partnership fund for the New York City launched the
25 Buildings Tech Lab, a public-private initiative to

2 find, evaluate, and test innovative technology
3 solutions that will support the Department's work,
4 including to better manage internal processes to make
5 plan reviews, permitting, and inspections more
6 efficient, and to better utilize data in its work.
7 Eight finalists were recently selected to enter a
8 proof-of-concept phase during which they will work
9 with the Department to further develop and test their
10 proposals. Following this phase, certain companies
11 will be selected for a year-long pilot, which will
12 come at no cost to the Department. The Department is
13 appreciative of the partnership's support. Thank you,
14 Kathy Wild, with this effort and looks forward to
15 working with the companies that have been selected to
16 incorporate innovative technologies into our work
17 with the goal of working more efficiently.

18 Last year, the Department also launched a
19 new innovation review board tasked with evaluating
20 cutting-edge technologies that potentially can be
21 used in the construction and development industry.
22 The board consists of volunteers from the
23 construction, real estate, labor, technology,
24 architectural, and engineering communities. These
25 volunteers will join Department subject matter

experts and other City agencies in regular meetings to discuss emerging technologies that could be implemented to improve efficiency, safety, sustainability, and resiliency. Ideas selected by the board will be supported by the Department to promote wider adoption throughout the industry.

Lastly, supporting residential development. Finally, the Department serves a critical role in supporting residential development. The zoning text amendment, City of Yes for Housing Opportunity, which was adopted late last year, is expected to make it possible to build more housing in neighborhoods across New York City with a projected 82,000 homes being created over the next 15 years. Additionally, at the end of last year, the City Council passed local laws which create a pathway for the creation of legal basement apartments and ancillary dwelling units. Given these recent developments, the Department has been hard at work training its plan examiners on these regulatory changes so that they are prepared to handle related filings. The Department is also hiring additional staff to handle the projected increase in filings, as

2 well as to respond to complaints from members of the
3 public as our housing landscape transforms.

4 Thank you for the opportunity to testify
5 before you today. We welcome any questions you may
6 have.

7 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much,
8 Commissioner. It's really been a pleasure to work
9 with you and with the agency's leadership. I'm very,
10 very proud of the local law that we have passed
11 together, and we'll continue to fight for and argue
12 and whatever we need to do just to make sure that all
13 the positions that we need are filled at DOB so thank
14 you for your partnership. You may have heard that
15 beautiful child with those amazing lungs. I made
16 that, so I'm going to go and get her real quick. But
17 I'm going to turn it over to Council Member Restler
18 to ask his questions and help me Chair real quick,
19 and then we'll turn it over to Council Member Brewer
20 and I should be back with her by the time they're
21 done.

22 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Absolutely.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Great. Thank you
24 very much, Chair Sanchez. You remain totally amazing.

2 I have to tell you, Commissioner, that
3 usually these hearings are like such a Jimmy Oddo
4 love fest, and I just wonder how you felt if you were
5 watching HPD earlier. Like tough to match the love
6 that was given to Ahmed, so like I don't want you to
7 feel left out or anything. We love you too. But he
8 set a high bar. I know you're a former colleague of
9 Gale Brewer, but you didn't work for her like Ahmed
10 did so it's good that we have leaders at both HPD and
11 DOB that I think the Council works so well with and
12 who we have a lot of confidence in, and I'm grateful
13 for how responsive you and your team are to issues
14 that we raise.

15 There are a few topics I wanted to dig in
16 on today. The first is just a general frustration
17 around afterhours variances, and I appreciate that
18 there are City projects that have a public purpose
19 that we're trying to get done quickly. I appreciate
20 that there are projects that even have some
21 affordable housing, even if they're primarily market
22 rate housing, that we're trying to get done quickly,
23 but the scale of afterhours variances that we
24 experience in District 33 is just profoundly
25 disruptive to neighbors. And I want to highlight in

2 particular the jail project. I'm a big supporter of
3 the Borough-Based Jail Project. I want us to close
4 Rikers Island as soon as possible. But right now,
5 constituents in my District deal with construction
6 that starts at 7 a.m. in the morning and goes until 4
7 a.m. so there's a slight reprieve from 4 a.m. to 7
8 a.m. where kids can sleep, but we've had
9 jackhammering in the street going until 4 o'clock in
10 the morning for the last two weeks. The regular work
11 hours go till midnight, and the plan is for those
12 work hours to stay until midnight for the next four
13 years. This jail, as you probably know, in the heart
14 of Downtown Brooklyn, Boerum Hill, is a very densely
15 populated area. I have many thousands of constituents
16 who are woken up by the noise at this site every day
17 and every night. And when we've reached out to the
18 Department of Buildings to modify these AHVs, we
19 sometimes get a receptive response and then City Hall
20 overrules us, and I'm really frustrated. I'm just
21 deeply, deeply frustrated that the City isn't more
22 concerned about being a better neighbor over a five,
23 six, seven-year construction project than we've seen
24 to date, so how can we work together for more
25 reasonable AHVs at the jail site in particular?

2 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah. So first, just
3 in order, Ahmed deserves all the love that he got. We
4 wish the Acting Commissioner well. Secondly, the love
5 last year was felt, and I was very appreciative to
6 you and to all the Council Members, the love was felt
7 by the team, and the team at DOB is really who
8 deserves it.

9 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah. You touch on a
10 very important issue and you touch on maybe one of
11 the thorniest examples of that important issue, and I
12 think, you know from our conversations, getting those
13 jails complete is a priority of the Administration
14 and the decision to continue construction on that
15 timeline, which was actually a delayed timeline, was
16 made and that wasn't going to be changed. I think if
17 you look at the raw numbers, just sort of from Fiscal
18 Year 2021, handing out around 15,500 of the initial,
19 oh, let's go with the totals, like 49,000 in total,
20 rising up to Fiscal Year 2024 at 61,000. It's a large
21 increase. We want to live up to our dual roles of
22 being an economic development agency and a public
23 safety agency. We don't want to be the hindrance, but
24 we have to make sure that every afterhours variance
25 is grounded in our standards of public safety or

2 construction with minimal noise or undue hardship.
3 And frankly, that valve on the spectrum, I think it
4 may have gone back in the wrong direction of issuing
5 too many. Put the jail side aside, we certainly will
6 work with you on individual locations that you think
7 are problematic. We've done that with a bunch of
8 Council Members..

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And your team is
10 responsive to a degree. Your team is always
11 responsive. Let me start with that, which I
12 appreciate. The Brooklyn office, Commissioner, Deputy
13 Commissioner on down, your intergovernmental team,
14 everybody's always responsive. I really do appreciate
15 that. It's never a feeling like we're screaming into
16 the void at DOB so thank you firstly.

17 What I would say though is it always
18 feels to me what the message I get back from the DOB
19 staff is (TIMER CHIME) they're concerned about the
20 pressure they're getting on the developer side if
21 they don't grant these AHVs, and I don't really
22 understand it. I'll give an example. We have a
23 horrible developer on the waterfront in Williamsburg,
24 the Naftali group. They're building a 1,000-unit
25 development. This was a project that was rezoned back

2 when you were in the Council in 2010, 2011. There
3 were lots of promises around affordable housing, unit
4 size, different things that they were going to do.
5 None of that has been followed through upon. They've
6 made lots of different promises to my office and to
7 DOB about how they were going to be good neighbors.
8 They haven't been. They lie and they lie and they lie
9 again. We, yesterday, got a commitment from the
10 Brooklyn Commissioner that weekend AHVs were finally
11 going to be lifted. We still have extensive weekday
12 AHVs for this developer who I just think has been a
13 bad actor and doesn't deserve it. And when a
14 developer is such a problematic neighbor and doesn't
15 actually follow the rules and promises they're not
16 going to be doing noisy work at certain times and
17 then goes ahead and does exactly that, there should
18 be accountability. And so I get, we want to see
19 projects get done on reasonable timeframes. Building
20 in New York is hard. I'm not a crank. Like, I don't
21 know. I'd like to think I'm not a crank. Maybe none
22 of us think we are.

23 COMMISSIONER ODDO: You're too young to be
24 a crank.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I'm 41.

2 COMMISSIONER ODDO: There's still time.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: But in all
4 seriousness, we've had more new housing starts in our
5 District over the last 15 years than any other
6 District in the city. We have a ton of development,
7 and I'm proud of the development we have. But when we
8 have developers that are bad actors, I want DOB to be
9 my partner in saying, you don't get the benefits, you
10 don't get to work outside of normal business hours,
11 you don't get any extra leeway because you don't
12 deserve it, and so they're an example of it. The jail
13 though, I have to say, right now I'm getting hate
14 mail from constituents who are dealing with 21 to 22
15 hours a day of work on site. It's really gotten to a
16 place where it's too much. And I'm giving Tom, I'm
17 giving DDC an earful as well but, at the end of the
18 day, you're the ones who issue the permits. You're
19 the ones that say yes or no. I realize that it's a
20 complicated dynamic with City Hall setting the
21 policies and priorities here, but I hope you hear
22 that me and my constituents feel like we have just
23 gone too far.

24 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, Council Member,
25 let's do this. We will set up a meeting with you and

2 our team and let's go District wide and look at those
3 problematic sites, all right? We'll go site by site.
4 The jail site, as you know, is sort of in a different
5 orbit, but let's go District wide.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I get that it's a
7 different orbit, but I can't ignore it, and I'd
8 appreciate if we could talk about that too. If you
9 want to have that conversation with Commissioner
10 Foley, with Commissioner Rodriguez, some of these are
11 DOT permits in the street. I'm happy for everyone to
12 come together and have a conversation.

13 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Let's have a
14 conversation, and we'll include that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER ODDO: With respect to this
17 notion of feeling pressure, I will say that one of
18 the beautiful things about midlife is I don't feel
19 any pressure anymore. I really don't. I certainly
20 don't feel pressure from developers. So I don't know
21 if there's anyone on our team. We have a mandate,
22 again, we are a unique agency of being a regulator
23 and a public safety agency, but we're also an
24 economic development. We want to carry out that
25 mandate, but within carrying out that mandate,

2 there's no pressure. Those days are over. So, let's
3 set up appointment. Let's go down location by
4 location.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I appreciate it.

6 COMMISSIONER ODDO: And if you want to
7 include some of our colleagues to talk about the
8 bigger location, we can.

9 Is there anybody on the team wants to
10 talk about AHVs any?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: I'll just
12 add that we do have an inspectorial unit that works
13 outside of normal business hours to make sure that
14 these construction sites are following the specific
15 requirements in the AHVs and to ensure that they're
16 working on the specific items that we've allowed.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I appreciate
18 that.

19 And I was going to ask some Local Law 97
20 questions, but I'll just say in closing that,
21 Commissioner, I appreciate that you've given the team
22 the latitude and the leeway and empowered them to do
23 a diligent job in crafting rules and regulations for
24 this incredibly complex local law, and I think that
25 your team led by Deputy Commissioner Popa has done a

2 thoughtful job, and I had a lot of concerns and
3 anxieties that the Mayor would be interfering in
4 nefarious ways and I haven't seen it to date, and my
5 goal here is that every building in New York City
6 takes steps to decarbonize, and I think that you all
7 are doing a thoughtful job in working with folks and
8 trying to provide technical assistance and support so
9 that it's not about fees and fines and penalties, but
10 it's about helping buildings get the support they
11 need to actually take the steps to reduce their
12 carbon emissions and make our city more sustainable
13 so I'm grateful for that orientation and approach.
14 There'll be a time for aggressive enforcement, and
15 there are certainly bad actors who will need that to
16 feel the pain, but my hope is that for the community
17 churches and the middle- and low-income co-ops and
18 the folks in our community that are on a worst
19 landlord list that are struggling, that we're not
20 going to try to issue fines and fees because they
21 didn't file the right paperwork now, that we're
22 helping them and engaging them constructively to get
23 them on a track so that by 2029, they're taking the
24 necessary steps to start decarbonizing their building

2 so I think that you and the team have been oriented
3 the right way on this, and I'm grateful for that.

4 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Council Member

5 Restler, I will share with you something that I told
6 to Deputy Commissioner Popa, and that was in one 24-
7 hour period, or one day when I, during my Council
8 tenure, I was called a right-wing reactionary and
9 then a RINO, and I thought to myself, well, ain't
10 that the damndest thing. Deputy Commissioner Popa and
11 her team take incoming from some folks in sort of the
12 environmental community and then the real estate
13 industry simultaneously. And I think it's an
14 indication...

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And everybody in
16 between.

17 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah. And I think it's
18 an indication that she and her team have attempted to
19 be rational and reasonable, particularly most
20 recently in the extensions, and she continues a
21 common-sense approach in carrying out this unique
22 piece of legislation so thank you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: But it wouldn't
24 work if you didn't also bring a reasonable and
25 common-sense approach from your seat as Commissioner

2 so I want to say I'm grateful to her, but I'm also
3 grateful to you.

4 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And you've just
6 always been an exceptionally pragmatic, solution-
7 oriented leader in government in all the years that
8 I've worked with you, and that's the commitment that
9 you bring to working with our offices every day, and
10 I'm grateful for that.

11 COMMISSIONER ODDO: My job is to get the
12 most out of the good folks I surround myself with,
13 and I think their potential is being seen every day.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you very
15 much, Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, Council
17 Member Restler.

18 I just want to acknowledge that we are
19 joined by Council Member Dinowitz and Joseph.

20 Okay, and I'm going to allow my
21 Colleagues to ask questions first, and first up is
22 Council Member Dinowitz.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you,
24 Chair. You're doing a lot this hearing, and you're
25 doing it well.

2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: This is Yaya. She
3 has lots of opinions.

4 Just kidding, we're going to go with
5 Council Member Brewer.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. The
7 Commissioner's a good guy, I agree. At some point,
8 sir, you should tell the story of the Latin names
9 that you gave to streets in Staten Island. That's
10 quite a story.

11 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Council Member, feel
12 free to use up some time and tell that story.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'd be glad to.

14 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Council Member, if you
15 could repeat any of the three names that I gave...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know one was
17 like, you schmuck in Latin, another one was you eff
18 in Latin, and the third one was something worse in
19 Latin, and those streets are still there.

20 COMMISSIONER ODDO: It was greed, various
21 versions of the word greed, Ardita Place, I think,
22 was one of them, and Forbury Lane or something.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah, something
24 like that. I love that story. On landmarks buildings,
25 I'm having a fight, as you might know, about a church

2 that I landmarked with your assistance many years
3 ago, and now the owner, meaning the presbytery, wants
4 to tear it down so we're trying to keep it. We're
5 working with LPC, sort of. So, how frequently do you
6 meet with LPC to discuss at-risk landmark buildings?
7 I didn't know if it was a regular meeting. And is it
8 appropriate for buildings to approve building permit
9 for necessary repairs of a landmark building without
10 the cooperation of the building owner? We have a
11 situation with lots of money from the cultural
12 organization that has a lease, lots of cultural
13 organization activity taking place, and scaffolding,
14 I don't know, 25 years, been up there, something like
15 that. Fix the roof, we have the money, and the owner
16 will not sign off to fix, to let us fix the roof.

17 COMMISSIONER ODDO: I will handle the
18 first part of your questions, and Deputy Commissioner
19 Sirakis will handle the second part. In terms of our
20 relationship with LPC, before getting to the agency,
21 as you recall, I was former Deputy Mayor Joshi's
22 Chief-of-Staff...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER ODDO: And we had an
25 unfortunate incident between DOB and LPC where, well,

2 there was an unfortunate incident, and then Deputy
3 Mayor brought the two agencies together, and the idea
4 was to reboot the relationship, so it's an improved
5 relationship from that point. We haven't met
6 regularly, and there's no series of meetings, but
7 when an issue arises, we certainly communicate.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SIRAKIS: Sure.

10 Specifically to the coordination with LPC, we are
11 working on a digital solution that allows more
12 transparency between the two agencies as to where a
13 project is in a given status, but that's more on the
14 calendar versus landmarking timeframe. As far as
15 building ownership and whether or not they will sign
16 off on the work, if we know of a dispute with an
17 owner from that standpoint, typically we do need the
18 owner's authorization, or typically a court order at
19 that point to authorize the, I guess, the tenant
20 who's not the owner to perform the work. From that
21 standpoint, obviously, the Manhattan Borough Office
22 is always available to answer questions and
23 coordinate there.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Well, this owner
25 won't get permission because he wants to tear the

2 building down so I'm just saying so we're going to
3 have this scaffolding up for another 30 years.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SIRAKIS: Yegal, maybe
5 you want to?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: Yeah, in
7 terms of coordination between the two groups, the two
8 agencies, we've instituted a few automatic data feeds
9 between the two agencies. Anytime we issue violations
10 or (INAUDIBLE) DOB orders, emergency declarations,
11 unsafe building notices, landmarks, LPC gets an
12 instant feed on that information, and vice versa.
13 When they see an application come in that might have
14 underpinning or supportive excavation that internally
15 they see might be an issue, they'll refer that
16 application over to DOB, and our engineers will take
17 a specific look at it. We do not have specific
18 meetings, but the communication between the two
19 agencies is constant. And if there is an incident on
20 a building, specifically that is landmarked, we will
21 work very closely with LPC to make sure that they
22 understand what the emergency orders are and what
23 we're expecting from the owner to perform, and vice
24 versa. They'll work with us and tell us if there
25 somebody else involved, is there a new owner in the

2 background that might be looking to purchase the
3 building and can renovate the building rather than
4 the demolition of the building?

5 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Council Member, can
6 you give me the address?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: 165 West 86th
8 Street, Amsterdam and 86th Street.

9 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Okay.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: West Park
11 Presbyterian Church. I landmarked it, you landmarked
12 it.

13 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Okay.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And so (TIMER
15 CHIME) now the Presbyterian wants to tear it down and
16 make condos. We're fighting like tooth and nail to
17 keep it standing, have a cultural center. Every
18 celebrity living in Manhattan supports it and has...

19 COMMISSIONER ODDO: We want to take a look
20 also on the longstanding shed.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yes. Well, we
22 can't get it down. The roof is a mess, so we need to
23 fix the roof, and we need to have the owner not sign
24 off. We believe that the longstanding tenant could
25 sign off. So, everybody at City Hall is aware of

2 this. Everybody in New York City is aware of this.
3 It's a big issue so thank you.

4 And then with the toolkit, I think in
5 your predecessor, the Mayor and your predecessor,
6 talked about a toolkit regarding tools with which to
7 solve landmarks and buildings, and it's never been
8 released. So just something, if you have the
9 opportunity to release it, that would be great. It's
10 a toolkit that says these are ways in which we can
11 work together. That was previous to you.

12 Then the other thing is, oh my God,
13 tomorrow, of course, we're passing, I'm sure, good
14 legislation on scaffolding, thanks to you in here,
15 but I must have 30 emails from buildings who woke up
16 and they're going to be paying more in some cases,
17 and I just didn't know if you're aware of this. I
18 mean, I don't know all the details. I got all these
19 emails coming in that basically we understand the
20 need for this legislation, but they're going to be
21 paying more under certain circumstances. I don't
22 know, it has to do with filing fees so are you aware
23 of this?

24

25

2 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah. So, I just want
3 to frame it a little bit and then I want to have
4 Deputy Commissioner Patino speak to the building.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: 30 emails.

6 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, the target
7 audience for the Get Sheds Down program are sheds
8 that are up without underlying work happening. We
9 believe in the efficacy of sheds, the importance of
10 sheds. Sheds are a tool to protect the public. It's
11 when the shed is up, there's no underlying work being
12 done for months and years, and then the shed leads to
13 all kinds of quality-of-life issues. That's the
14 genesis of what's driving both the Council Members
15 who've introduced bills, borough president and what
16 our motivation is. Guillermo's going to discuss some
17 of the bills to your point.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PATINO: Hi, Council
19 Member.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Hi.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PATINO: There might
22 be three pieces that you might be hearing about so
23 one is more frequent permit renewals. Our intention
24 there is not to make the permit renewal process more
25 onerous for building owners. We just want more

2 regular feedback in terms of the work that's
3 happening in that building in furtherance of removing
4 the sidewalk shed. And the other two pieces you might
5 be hearing about is...

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The 90 days, what
7 I'm hearing.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PATINO: The 90 days,
9 right. And the other two pieces might be the
10 penalties so some penalties will apply to all sheds.
11 Some penalties will only apply to Local Law 11
12 buildings. But most importantly, we won't be imposing
13 any penalties if a building owner is taking steps in
14 furtherance of removing the sidewalk shed, and we're
15 looking to work with the building owners. There's
16 things like extension requests that they can avail
17 themselves of. We're going to be taking a broad
18 approach at what it means to be conducting work at
19 the building.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: It's a 90-day
21 refiling fee for Intro. 393-A. It's going to be based
22 on the current one-year fee and amortized for each
23 90-day period, so it's in the rules, but what's the
24 intention? People feel they're going to be paying
25 more money. And so I just think it's something to

2 look at. I don't know if it was an unintended
3 consequence of what we're passing or not, but Council
4 Member Dinowitz says we're just, I mean, I got,
5 they're coming in right now, these folks, so somebody
6 has either indicated that this is what's happening
7 and is sending down emails to get others to send
8 them.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PATINO: So the
10 current renewal fee is about 130 dollars so that
11 they'll have to pay quarterly rather than annually.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Well, all
13 right. We'll have to talk about it further. There's a
14 lot of concern.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PATINO: Happy to work
16 with building owners in your District to address
17 concerns because we'll have further internal
18 conversations around implementation.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Maybe we have to
20 do a new LS on it, so.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PATINO: Well, some of
22 these, we'll be able to address certain issues
23 through rulemaking and, of course, the fee is
24 something we can take a look at as well.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PATINO: Yeah, but we
3 have time before the bills take effect.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Might be helpful,
5 okay.

6 Just quickly, Laura Popa, we love you
7 also. Are you finding, because obviously we send you
8 buildings that are problematic, the buildings that
9 have great leadership, they just feel they cannot
10 under any circumstance comply. What happens to those
11 buildings? Even though they're trying every way
12 possible, what, I mean, do you feel that every single
13 building can comply? I mean, I don't know, but I've
14 sent them to you, but I don't think it's working.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: Right, so in
16 the first compliance period, the emissions levels are
17 set quite high so most buildings, with the exception
18 of, you know, some super manufacturers, can comply,
19 but they might not be able to comply at this point in
20 time, right, like last year. And so building owners
21 who are working with us, we will work with them
22 through a mediated resolution to give them a little
23 bit more time, as long as they show that they have
24 the permits, they're doing the work so that's not a
25 problem. You know, any building you sent to us, we

2 called and we hooked them up with their case manager,
3 and so we will see what they say in their compliance
4 report, which we're receiving. In the past three
5 weeks, we opened up our portal so building owners
6 have started to comply. And over the next six months,
7 they'll be able to report and so, as we get them in,
8 we'll be able to gauge the compliance numbers better.
9 But we will work with any building owner who is
10 working with us.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. I mean, I
12 assume there are some buildings that can't comply, I
13 mean, they're older, I don't know what the issues
14 would be. But then come '35, they're going to be
15 paying a lot of money.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: Right. So, we
17 are taking it one kind of year at a time to see what
18 does this first compliance period look like, where
19 the emissions limits are set quite high, what have
20 building owners done, and then we'll assess in order
21 to determine rulemaking or changes to the law if
22 needed going forward so that's something we have to
23 monitor.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. All right, I
25 hope it works. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, Council
3 Member Brewer. We will now turn to Council Member
4 Dinowitz.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you.
6 Commissioner, how are you? And team, like your entire
7 Department here. It's amazing. I also want to talk
8 about the sheds, the scaffolding. I think most people
9 agree, they're not very nice to look at and buildings
10 also want them down as quickly as possible. I think
11 the disagreement is how quickly they can get them
12 down is not due to the buildings in my District,
13 particularly the co-ops, but what they complain about
14 is, to put it nicely, you guys, that they're doing
15 Local Law 11 work in their building and it takes a
16 very long time for an inspector to come and inspect
17 the building. An inspector comes and says, oh, I've
18 noticed a little crack, it's superficial, but you
19 have to fix it. They fix it. They wait weeks again
20 for an inspector to come, and they find a different
21 problem and they fix that. They wait weeks again for
22 an inspector to come. They find a different
23 superficial problem. All the while, we have to look
24 at these ugly sheds and it's costing the buildings
25 thousands and thousands of dollars. And of course,

2 this is every five years, this cycle. And so my
3 question is, do your inspectors use a rubric and sign
4 off on saying, I have certified everything is good
5 except this, I'm going to come back, and it's on the
6 inspector to certify that everything's good because
7 it feels like they're flying by the seat of their
8 pants. That is the feeling of the buildings who are
9 going through this process. And I'm sure your
10 inspectors are very talented and qualified people,
11 but what's happening on the ground is they're coming
12 back repeatedly. They're waiting weeks between times.
13 Inspectors are coming. And all the while, these sheds
14 are staying up, costing the buildings thousands and
15 thousands of dollars.

16 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Council Member, I'm
17 going to have Deputy Commissioner Shamash speak to
18 our Local Law 11 process.

19 If I could just say something to kind of
20 frame this. I wish I had a nickel for every time DOB
21 is blamed for the actions or inactions of other
22 folks. It's very convenient and it's a very
23 believable excuse.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Give those
3 nickels to my buildings so they could pay for the
4 sheds.

5 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Or we could hire more
6 staff here at DOB with those nickels.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: That'd be great.

8 COMMISSIONER ODDO: And Deputy
9 Commissioner Shamash will go through the process, but
10 let's be clear. These building owners have hired a
11 qualified engineer that will do the Local Law
12 inspection, and the Deputy Commissioner will walk
13 through with you sort of the timeline. The notion
14 that these sheds are up too long, costing folks money
15 because there's a delay on the agency's part in
16 inspecting or responding is just not accurate. Yegal.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: I think
18 maybe let's start with our Local Law 11 study. So, we
19 have hired Thornton Tomasetti to study everything
20 Local Law 11 related or what we refer to as FISP,
21 Facade Inspection Safety Program. So Thornton
22 Tomasetti, internationally renowned firm. We've been
23 working with them for the past six plus months on
24 studying everything related to Local Law 11, from the
25 inspections to the cycle duration to the amount of

1 hands-on and how the procedure and the process works,
2 so we're very excited to continue working with them.
3 We're hoping that this summer the results of the
4 study will be published, and we can make any changes
5 that they recommend and work with them and the
6 Council to make any changes necessary, so I just
7 wanted to mention that the study is ongoing and all
8 of us at the table is very excited about the study.

10 In terms of the process, the Commissioner
11 is right on. In terms of the repairs on the building,
12 if the building is, say for SWARMP, the Department
13 does not perform an independent inspection. They can
14 do those repairs, they can do that maintenance work,
15 and complete the repairs and take the shed down. It's
16 only when the building is filed unsafe by the
17 building owner's engineer after they do their
18 inspection and they file unsafe with us that we do a
19 corresponding inspection. And what we've outreached,
20 and I've been at the Department now 11 years, is to
21 very clearly the owner's engineer in the report that
22 they submit to us have to outline the conditions on
23 the building and very clearly outline those
24 conditions on the building. It's very clearly
25 articulated they have to have a mapping of all the

2 conditions on the building. So, if our inspector goes
3 (TIMER CHIME) to the building and they see a
4 condition that is not on the mapping, then there's
5 something wrong with the report that was submitted to
6 us, and that's what we're flagging. And if they do
7 identify the condition and they tell us it's safe or
8 they tell us it's SWAMP, then we'll accept that. But
9 the differential comes in on when there's a condition
10 on the building that is not identified in the owner
11 engineer architect's report, and that differential is
12 what we're flagging.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: So I just want
14 to make sure I'm hearing a couple things right. Do
15 you mean inspectors typically don't come to a
16 building for Local Law 11 inspections? Is that right?
17 Is that accurate? Is that what you're saying?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: So the
19 inspection occurs initially by the owners, the
20 building owners, engineer architect.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: But in a typical
22 process at no point typically will a DOB inspector
23 come. That's what I'm hearing.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: That's
25 correct.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Okay. So I'm not
3 sure what it is in my District then because I have
4 building after building telling me that they're
5 awaiting a DOB inspector to come, and building after
6 building is telling me that a DOB inspector will come
7 and notice one thing. The repairs will be done, and a
8 DOB inspector will come back and notice a different
9 thing where the work has to be done so I'm not sure
10 what the disconnect is. If someone's impersonating a
11 DOB inspector or the DOB inspectors are doing spot
12 checks and just doing it in the Northwest Bronx, but
13 there is a problem happening in the buildings in my
14 District where they're waiting for something to
15 happen on the DOB end before the sheds come down.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: If the
17 building owner does file it unsafe and they submitted
18 what's called an amended report to us, which is
19 they're changing the status of that building from
20 unsafe to safe or SWAMP, then we will do an
21 inspection. But because they filed the building
22 unsafe, we'll follow up and make sure that the
23 repairs were done and repairs were done correctly.

24 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Council Member, why
25 don't you take a sampling, pick five or six

2 locations. Let's set up a meeting. Let's look at
3 those five or six locations. Let's see if there's
4 some commonality and we kind of get to the bottom of
5 what's happening.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: I really
7 appreciate that because the way you're describing it
8 is not the experience that we have in the Northwest
9 Bronx. It's just not how it is. And so when I'm
10 looking at the legislation and the calls that we're
11 getting, she's getting more emails as we're speaking.
12 I've gotten the emails, I've gotten the calls, but
13 we've been dealing with this problem for years, long
14 before any legislation was proposed, and so I'd love
15 to work with you on that, but it seems either the
16 Northwest Bronx is ignored or targeted and..

17 COMMISSIONER ODDO: We will set up a
18 meeting. And again, I just, it's a good time to
19 remind folks. We have 1.1 million buildings in the
20 city. We have 500 or so building inspectors. Whether
21 it's the Local Law 11 façade, buildings higher than
22 six stories, whether it's parking garages, we rely on
23 design professionals to a large degree, right? So as
24 the Deputy Commissioner and I were saying, the folks

2 actually doing these are these qualified exterior
3 wall professionals.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Great.

5 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Some are good. Some,
6 as in the case at 1915 Billingsley, are not. But the
7 building owner hires these external, qualified
8 inspectors to do this work. And as the Deputy
9 Commissioner explained, when of the three categories,
10 when they file an unsafe, there are requirements to
11 put up sidewalk sheds, etc., that's when... Now, what
12 you're describing is what I used to complain about
13 health inspectors. When I was a Council Member, they
14 come for A, they then find B, C, and D. I'm not sure
15 that's the case with our inspectors. Perhaps these
16 are unsafe buildings with an unsafe designation that
17 we come back and we find the work to repair it
18 unsatisfactory, and we've come back twice. But let's
19 set up a call. We'll do a sampling of these
20 buildings, and we'll figure out what's happening.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: I just
22 wanted to mention one other thing. As part of the
23 Thornton Tomasetti study, they are going to publish a
24 guide for these inspectors, the qualified exterior
25 wall inspectors that the owners are hiring, and the

2 guide will help out, not only with determining
3 whether the conditions are safe or SWARMP or unsafe,
4 but also how to deal with the administrative
5 requirements and the requirements that go along with
6 the filing the report so this guide will hopefully
7 help out with that as well.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Great. I
9 appreciate that. I'm looking forward to meeting with
10 you and your team and some of the buildings, the
11 board members of those buildings and managers in my
12 District. Because believe me, they don't want the
13 sheds up either. It's costing them money and it
14 doesn't look nice so I want to make sure that we're
15 talking about the same thing. We are all in
16 agreement. We want those down, and we all agree we
17 want people to be safe. We want to do all these
18 things without being onerous so I'm looking forward
19 to that meeting. Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you,
20 Deputy Commissioner.

21 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much,
22 Council Member Dinowitz.

23 And I'll turn it over to Council Member
24 Joseph, and then I'll turn to my questions.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Commissioner, one
3 of my favorite people in the city. I have to say that
4 on the record. Thank you so much for all that you do.

5 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: So over the past
7 year, right, I know I've called you lots of times,
8 but I'm still looking for guidance on this, right? We
9 have filled numerous complaints about elevators,
10 outage in large apartment buildings, six floors, and
11 a lot of these buildings have older adults in these
12 buildings so my seniors are like I can't go to the
13 doctor, I can't go to the grocery shop, and I had one
14 older adult that she was discharged from the
15 hospital, but we couldn't get her back into the
16 apartment because there's no elevator. So how quickly
17 is DOB usually be able to inspect, put an elevator
18 back in service from the time the tenant report the
19 outage? What does your timeline look like?

20 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Council Member, I'm
21 going to have Deputy Commissioner Shamash just
22 explain the process because we're not the ones that
23 do the work to get it back in service, and then I
24 want to give you some numbers because there is an
25 issue in terms of our service level going in the

2 wrong direction. But before I get to that candid
3 conversation, I want to have the Deputy Commissioner
4 sort of frame out the process for you a bit.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you,
6 Commissioner.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: In terms of
8 elevator inspections and compliance, we do have
9 annual inspections that are required for elevators,
10 both periodic and what we call a Category 1 test, and
11 then every five years, we have more intensive tests,
12 a Category 5 test for those specific elevators. If
13 there are unsafe conditions found, those have to be
14 repaired within a specific amount of time that's
15 specified in the law and the rule. Depending on the
16 level of the repairs, the majority of times they can
17 perform those repairs without a follow-up inspection
18 from us. However, if there is an upgrade or a new
19 elevator being put into service, then we will have to
20 perform an inspection. Recently, the Department did
21 launch a pilot program in terms of self-
22 certification, in terms of the repairs, and in terms
23 of the installation of the new elevators for single
24 elevator buildings and multiple dwellings. We are
25 allowing the elevator companies to self-cert that

2 final inspection, which means the Department does not
3 need to perform the inspections ourselves. They just
4 have to notify when those inspections are, and we can
5 just audit those as we see fit.

6 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, that's where I was
7 going to go to, Council Member. I alluded to in the
8 testimony that we are embracing some sort of
9 tailored, safe expansion of our professional
10 certification process, and the decision was made by
11 the team in looking at the data, the safest universe
12 of elevators to try this pilot of professional
13 certification, as Deputy Commissioner mentioned, with
14 those self-certifying alterations and modernizations
15 on an elevator in a multiple dwelling that has one
16 elevator. We think that has a history of being the
17 safest, to free up those inspectors to attack our
18 service levels. And just to give you some context, we
19 had service levels in 2019, one to three days, in
20 2020, four days. Our service levels were along those
21 lines up until around October of 2023, and then you
22 see the spike, and it's a direct result of the
23 reduction in overtime and the fact that we always
24 have this constant battle of recruiting and
25 retaining. If you look at a service level in this

2 agency going in the wrong direction, there is a major
3 reduction in overtime and the staffing challenge. So,
4 the idea here is to allow professional certification
5 for this universe, free up some staff time, so that
6 the time on our end of us getting to the work done in
7 the private sector is as short as possible.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: So when HPD refers
9 a job to you, emergency repair, how quickly are the
10 agencies able to put the elevator back in service
11 when it becomes an emergency? Do you have a division?
12 Because I know I've called, and there are times where
13 you guys work on the weekend to make sure that
14 elevator's up and running. Everybody looks confused.
15 That's not good.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: DOB does not
17 perform the emergency repairs. (TIMER CHIME) HPD
18 performs the emergency repairs.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Is that in
20 partnership with you? Once they do the emergency
21 repairs, how long does it take for you to inspect
22 that elevator and get it back up and running?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: If HPD's
24 performing the emergency repairs themselves, then
25 they perform the inspections themselves.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: It doesn't come
3 from your office?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: No.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Okay. That's what
6 I wanted to know. Chair, I'm done.

7 COMMISSIONER ODDO: And of course, Council
8 Member, any time you have an individual location, I
9 think you may have my phone number.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I do.

11 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Thank you.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I do, and you have
13 mine.

14 COMMISSIONER ODDO: I do.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And so we can
16 always communicate, because there's so much more to
17 do, and I spoke to HPD about that. There's so much
18 ways to improve the service that we deliver for our
19 constituents and across the city, right, so it's not
20 easy work, but it can be done.

21 COMMISSIONER ODDO: You know I respect the
22 work you do. It's always a good time when you call.
23 You make work fun. Thank you.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. Thank
25 you, Chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much,
3 Council Member Joseph. I want to say Chair Joseph,
4 because I'm always at the Education hearings. Thank
5 you so much, and I'm glad.

6 Let me know, Council Member Brewer, if
7 you have any other questions, but I want to jump into
8 mine. I have many, as usual, but I first just want to
9 start off with, I tried to say it earlier, but I'm
10 not really sure what I said, because I'm a little
11 sleep-deprived, but just want to reiterate the
12 gratitude. You know, we had a terrible fire just last
13 week in my District on Burnside Avenue. We lost eight
14 businesses, just completely gone. Those structures
15 are no longer safe, you know, and it's a really big
16 hit to the community on Burnside Avenue, and we have
17 another dozen or so altogether that are impacted, and
18 I just always have a, even in those hard
19 circumstances, it's a breath of relief when I see the
20 familiar faces, our Associate Commissioners,
21 Assistant Commissioners on site being responsive, and
22 always, thank you so much for the work that you do
23 and for how responsive your staff is in every
24 division in my community, and I know to my Colleagues
25 as well.

2 And yeah, so proud of Local Law 79 and
3 the Proactive Inspection Program that we were able to
4 stand up together, and I'm very happy to hear that
5 there are these 25 positions that have been brought
6 in and that the work has already started, even with
7 staffing still ongoing.

8 So, I'm going to start with some of the
9 commitments that we have been fighting, and the word
10 is not fight, it's, you know, like, pushing really
11 hard, but that we as Council Members have prioritized
12 with respect to DOB. In the City of Yes negotiations,
13 we were able to secure additional lines for
14 Department of Buildings. So, my first question there
15 is, in the Preliminary Plan, additional resources
16 were added for the Department of Buildings. Can you
17 share how many lines the Department of Buildings
18 received, and do you think that that additional staff
19 that was included in the Preliminary Plan is
20 sufficient to address the growth in applications,
21 permits, inspections, and technical assistance that
22 over time we'll see as a result of City of Yes?

23 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So I'm going to have
24 Deputy Commissioner Ugarte break down specific, or
25 Sanabria, or both, break down the specific numbers in

2 some detail of the basement legalization in the City
3 of Yes. The quickest, most direct, most candid, and
4 the right answer to your question about is it enough
5 is, we shall see. I think the conversations between
6 DOB and OMB have been frank, and we have to see what
7 materializes and when, and I don't know if anyone
8 knows for sure the answers to those. So, let's have
9 the Deputy Commissioner explain the 36 that we got in
10 this Fiscal Year of the basement legalization, and
11 the 30 of the City of Yes, and we can break it down
12 into some detail. Gina.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER UGARTE: For basement
14 legalization, we received 36 positions in Fiscal Year
15 '26. That is 36 of 45, which was of total allocation.
16 That was the request that DOB did submit, so we are
17 thankful that we received all the funding as
18 requested for basement legalization. That breakdown,
19 as it pertains to the categories of positions are 30
20 inspectorial, and six technical, six administrative,
21 and three clerical. So, of the 36 that we received
22 this year, that's the breakdown of the 45 in total.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Sorry, can you just
24 repeat those numbers again, the breakdown?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER UGARTE: Sure. I
3 apologize. Of the 45 positions received for basement
4 legalization, we received 30 positions in
5 inspectorial lines, six technical, six
6 administrative, and three clerical.

7 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Was there
8 anything that you requested that was not included?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER UGARTE: For City of
10 Yes, we received 38 positions, and that breakdown is
11 23 inspectorial, eight technical, four
12 administrative, and three clerical, for a total of
13 38.

14 Now, we received 66 of the total 83
15 positions in Fiscal Year '26. We're receiving the
16 additional nine positions for basements, which
17 include inspectors and another technical, by Fiscal
18 Year '28, and for City of Yes, we're receiving the
19 additional seven positions, inspectorial, and an
20 additional position on the technical side by Fiscal
21 Year '28. I want to reiterate what the Commissioner
22 stated with respect to funding. We believe we
23 currently have the resources needed as it stands
24 today. However, we're closely monitoring our
25 construction permit filings to ensure that if those

2 numbers go up, we work actively with OMB and City
3 Hall to ensure that the agency has all the resources
4 that we need. This is something that, to echo, we
5 fought and agreed that we thought we needed more. We
6 got what we received, but it's something that we will
7 continue to actively monitor.

8 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Chair, if I could just
9 add that, I think, historically speaking, when it
10 comes to new needs, this agency's been given
11 inspectorial and enforcement staff, but have not
12 received the sort of requisite support staff to carry
13 out the additional work. So, the inspectorial and the
14 enforcement team does its work, but then downstream
15 of that, there's a whole bunch of work that has to
16 happen, payroll, etc., etc. I think we as an agency
17 need to do a better job in ensuring when there's a
18 new initiative that the staffing cuts across the
19 agency because that's where the work is. And also, I
20 think it's critically important, and we've kind of
21 learned this lesson the hard way in the last couple
22 of years. Anything, whether it is an act of the City
23 Council, whether it is a City Hall initiative,
24 whether it's a DOB initiative, a rule change,
25 anything and everything has a DOB now implication. It

2 has to be operationalized. And to date, all of these
3 new initiatives have been passed with no additional
4 funding for DOB now, and that puts us in a unique
5 position so I think moving forward, whenever we have
6 a local law, we're going to experience this, I guess,
7 tomorrow and in the coming weeks with the shed, a
8 City Hall priority, a City Council priority. We have
9 to always think of the staffing that comes with it.
10 The staffing is not only the sort of front line and
11 the field staff, but the support staff. And also
12 there is, because we have to operationalize this on
13 our platform, DOB now is a living, sort of breathing,
14 expanding thing, we have to have funding, and we need
15 to do a better job of articulating that to our
16 partners in the Council, at City Hall, and OMB.

17 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yeah. I mean, what's
18 coming to mind for me is that through the City of Yes
19 negotiations, there were to be 200 additional staff
20 lines between HPD and DOB. Earlier today, we heard
21 from HPD, they have added 94 positions, and then you
22 have just mentioned 38, and so there's a need at DOB,
23 there's a commitment that we have from the
24 Administration through negotiations around this other
25 initiative, so were you aware that there are other

2 lines that have not been committed to or that have
3 not been accounted for?

4 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So our number, let's
5 just be, so we're on the same page, our total number
6 is 83 lines.

7 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: From City of Yes for
8 Housing?

9 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Well, from City of Yes
10 for Housing, 38, if you want to divide it to the ADUs
11 and basement legalization, 45. And can I just say,
12 maybe just to perhaps bolster your own point, but
13 when I say we don't know what's going to materialize
14 when in terms of the staffing, Deputy Commissioner
15 Sirakis did this flowchart for me, and I will get
16 this to you.

17 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I like flowcharts.

18 COMMISSIONER ODDO: This is basically our
19 internal process that we think to date on what needs
20 to happen on the basement legalization, authorize the
21 application review, maintenance, and it's a 10-year
22 process. We have milestones on this, three months,
23 one year, two years, five years, seven years, 10
24 years. So who navigates this and when? If they
25 navigate this quickly, will the demand be such that

2 we need more staff for this particular part of this
3 whole... so yeah, I mean, I think last year we
4 established a precedent for me. I'm not going to be
5 shy and I'm not going to be a Commissioner, I can't
6 look these men and women in the eye and say we have
7 enough. We are an economic development and a public
8 safety agency. The more resourced we are, the better
9 it is for economic development and public safety. For
10 now, these are the numbers. We're going to see what
11 comes down the pike in terms of work and get on that
12 red phone to OMB and City Hall if we see the volume
13 manifesting as such.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: No. I appreciate
15 that and thank you for your advocacy of the team that
16 you are leading, but I just want to state again for
17 the record and I know I see City Hall liaisons here,
18 there was a commitment and it is not reflected in the
19 budget. What are we doing if we are negotiating for
20 the best interest of our city and we're not seeing
21 those commitments? Where did he go? Yeah, there he
22 goes. All right, you know who you are. Please, please
23 bring that to OMB. Matt, please bring that to OMB.
24 There is a commitment. We want to see these staff
25 lines in these agencies. They are receiving

2 additional responsibility, and we need to keep New
3 Yorkers safe as we do these legalizations and we
4 change these policies so thank you, Commissioner.

5 So next, you know, sort of on the same
6 vein but moving more specifically to proactive
7 enforcement. So, the November Plan included 60 new
8 positions for the Department's proactive enforcement
9 initiative in Fiscal 2026 and 56 new positions in the
10 current Fiscal Year. DOB plans to use these
11 predictive analytics through this, you know, coming
12 from this great bill to better target buildings with
13 unsafe conditions, negligent owners, and bad actors.
14 Can you update the Committee on hiring, I think you
15 said 25, but can you update the Committee on hiring
16 for these positions? How many have been filled? And
17 have you seen any results so far in the current
18 Fiscal Year?

19 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, I'm going to frame
20 this out sort of overarching numbers in total
21 breakdown of the 60 lines. We will let Deputy
22 Commissioner Shamash talk about some of the immediate
23 results we've seen from the piloting various
24 initiatives. And if Deputy Commissioner Sanabria, you
25 can give an update on the hiring.

2 So, on the inspector of the 60, 48
3 inspectorial, three technical, nine administrative.
4 Yegal, you want to talk about some of the program in
5 general?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: Sure, and I
7 think I heard you say that you love spreadsheets and
8 you love flowcharts, so same here.

9 I just want to also mention before I just
10 spew out a whole bunch of numbers for you, that we
11 have internally officially renamed this. We are now
12 calling this Project ESPO after Joseph Esposito, our
13 former DC, my former boss, and we came up with a
14 little catchy breakdown for that, it's Enforcement
15 Bureau's Strategic and Proactive Operations so
16 apologies for renaming.

17 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I love it, he
18 deserves it. Thank you.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: I'll break
20 it down into the three different groups that we have
21 it in. First and foremost, it was a Herculean effort
22 to get these three initiatives going. We have three
23 great Assistant Commissioners, Olga Suto, who is
24 leading up proactive inspections; Ronaldo Hylton, who

2 is leading up staying vigilant; and then Sal
3 Agostino, who's heading up heightened enforcement.

4 I will start with proactive inspections.
5 We have performed 60 inspections to date. In terms of
6 heightened enforcement, we have inspected 467
7 locations that we believe bad actors are doing work
8 at. And then staying vigilant, we have done 234
9 inspections for a total of 761 inspections. On those
10 761 inspections, we have issued 331 violations. As
11 the Commissioner said, we are not fully staffed. From
12 supervisor up, we are pretty close to being fully
13 staffed, but the inspectorial group is what we are
14 currently actively recruiting for and bringing in,
15 and what we're doing is we're taking mature senior
16 inspectors from other units, not trying to strip
17 those units dry entirely, but get a mix of new people
18 and senior inspectors into the units to perform the
19 work so trying to blend in the experience within the
20 units. In terms of proactive inspections, Olga's team
21 has a group of inspectors, they have a group of plan
22 examiners, and what they're charged with doing is
23 taking a look at where folks are doing development,
24 whether that's a new building or an alteration with
25 an enlargement, and seeing if there's a sensitive

2 building next door. If that sensitive building is
3 landmarked or has numerous violations or maybe it's
4 the type of building or the age of the building. And
5 what they're looking for, and we're using a GIS map
6 to collate all of this information together, and our
7 analytics team has put this map together and it's
8 really amazing, we'd love to show it to you if you
9 want to come by and take a look at the maps. It's
10 really amazing, so we can catalog what we think are
11 sensitive buildings and then see what work is
12 happening next door, take a look at those plans on a
13 proactive basis, and then also do inspections. So
14 that's what Olga's team is heading up.

15 The heightened enforcement against bad
16 actors, and I think this is really the key to your
17 local law, is for example, we can take a look at 1950
18 Billingsley. We did a sweep of the other buildings
19 that that owner had, and normally that would be the
20 extent of what we would do. We would take a look at
21 the other buildings and we would stop there so, if
22 you can imagine that to be a spider web with the
23 owner of 1950 Billingsley in the center and all the
24 addresses of other buildings, that's one spider web.
25 But this unit takes it to the next level. We're not

2 only looking at the other buildings he has, but who
3 are the professionals that he's using? Who are the
4 licensees that he's using? Who are the contractors,
5 the permit holders that he's using? And then creating
6 a spider web using those folks as the center of the
7 spider web and not just the building owner, and
8 taking a look at what those folks are doing. Now if
9 we take a look at four or five of those professionals
10 and maybe one or two of those have already been
11 disciplined by us so we focus on that group, and same
12 with the licensees and same with the permit holders.
13 So we're taking it to the next level with that group,
14 and it's really focusing on those specific
15 individuals and we can take a look at a large number
16 of lists, whether that's the bad owners list that
17 gets published every year, whether that's a list of
18 professionals that we have disciplined, whether
19 that's a list of licensees that we're looking at that
20 we've disciplined in the past, or maybe we find
21 somebody new and we pass that along to our fabulous
22 attorneys at the Department. So, part of the
23 proactive enforcement was a whole bunch of lines for
24 attorneys as well so we pass along those cases and
25 that's what make this unit different than just a

2 regular inspectorial unit. They have investigators
3 that go along with it to put the cases together for
4 our attorneys, work with our attorneys, and really
5 discipline these professionals. What we've learned
6 from longstanding sheds is violations are not enough.
7 You really need to wake up the owners, you need to
8 wake up the professionals and really take a hard look
9 at them, and . And the best way by doing that is
10 getting our attorneys after them.

11 And last but not least, staying vigilant
12 is two pronged. We're looking at bringing back our
13 Class 1 violation re-inspections, but being cognizant
14 of the Homeowner Relief Program and making sure that
15 we are still abiding by that Homeowner Relief
16 Program. In that program, we issue requests for
17 corrective actions and homeowners in one- and two-
18 family dwellings have 60 days to correct those
19 violating conditions. As part of staying vigilant,
20 we're also following up on those requests for
21 corrective actions. So that two-pronged effort with
22 regards to staying vigilant.

23 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Madam Chair, if I
24 could just add and start with the last point that
25 Yegal just made. I think it's part of this Project

2 ESPO that doesn't get as much shine as other parts,
3 but it's critically important. Think about what he
4 just said. The Class 1 hazardous violations are the
5 most serious ones the Department issues, and there
6 was a period of time where we had a unit within the
7 agency that would systematically, continuously go and
8 reinspect those most serious violations. That had to
9 end because of budget cuts years ago. We are
10 reinstituting that process so now our team has a
11 universe, we know where they are, and we will
12 continue to go out, inspect those locations until
13 we've exhausted that universe. Hopefully we will find
14 conditions repaired. Hopefully we don't find serious
15 conditions but, if we do, we now have found it before
16 the corner of a building has come down, so that's a
17 component of this initiative, again that your
18 fingerprints are on, that is outstanding. Second
19 point I wanted to make is once we've ID'd sort of the
20 worst of the worst, we might need Council help. We've
21 had these conversations as the Deputy Commissioner
22 just alluded to. So, you have licensees. Well, what
23 can we do to those licensees to hold them
24 accountable? You have contractors. What can we do to
25 general contractors to hold them accountable? Owners,

2 is there more that we can do? So, we need to come
3 back to you, or work with you, and partner with you
4 again to figure out, once we've ID'd this universe,
5 these are the worst of the worst, what other tools
6 can we have to hold them accountable? And lastly,
7 Deputy Commissioner Shamash's team, again, not fully
8 staffed up yet, but out in the field, working off of
9 DOB NOW data. What we've learned through the building
10 tech lab process is there are entrepreneurs out there
11 with some incredible products to take data and do
12 their own proprietary formulations and spit out a
13 list of what they deem locations to look at, and
14 that's really exciting to us. We are using our own
15 data, which is plentiful, as the Deputy Commissioner
16 Sirakis once said, like we barely scraped the pile of
17 DOB NOW data, but there are entrepreneurs out there
18 who are, sort of, on the cutting edge, and maybe
19 through this building tech lab process, we can add
20 that to our portfolio. Lastly, we promised you just a
21 quick update from Deputy Commissioner Sanabria on the
22 hiring efforts of the 60.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANABRIA: Good
24 afternoon. So, with regards to the proactive
25 enforcement, as both...

2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Bring it to you,
3 bring the mic to you.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANABRIA: Can you
5 hear me now? With regards to the ESPO project, we
6 have 56 lines funded for this Fiscal Year, four for
7 next year. Of the current lines, we have 25 active
8 members in those positions, another 16 pending
9 candidates, which would staff us up to 41 within a
10 short relative time period, and we're still
11 recruiting for the remaining 15 vacancies.

12 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: How long is it
13 taking from candidate identification, DOB knows you
14 want to hire a person to when you're able to bring
15 them on board?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANABRIA: Depends on
17 the title. So, our inspector titles are exempt from
18 the hiring for the one for two with OMB. So, when
19 we're hiring for inspectors, and I'll give you a
20 snapshot on the level of effort that it takes for
21 recruiting, but they tend to go faster than the non-
22 inspectorial positions. Those non-inspectorial
23 positions can take anywhere from a month to two
24 months, depending on the timing with OMB submissions,
25 depending on the background process. So, we

2 scrutinize all our applicants very closely to verify
3 the work experience to bring on board. With regards
4 that the HR team at DOB has been doing a tremendous
5 job. In this Fiscal Year alone, we've made over 4,000
6 outreach efforts to get people in the door. Just give
7 me one second. So, we've had over 4,000 phone calls,
8 over 375 people interviewed, we've offered jobs, and
9 we've on-boarded 100 new candidates since the
10 beginning of the Fiscal Year, with another 75 people
11 in the pipeline, basically preparing their background
12 application of people that we're ready to on-board.
13 And with regards to new need programs that were
14 funded in this Fiscal Year, we had 98 positions,
15 inclusive of this ESPO proactive project, and of
16 those 98 positions, we've identified and started 34
17 of them, with another 26 pending candidates, bringing
18 that total to 60. So, we're still recruiting for 39
19 positions, but we're making tremendous efforts in
20 terms of taking those lines and putting people in the
21 seats and trying to fill them as quickly as possible.

22 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Chair, if I could just
23 add one other, I have to say it publicly, but Deputy
24 Commissioner Sanabria and Deputy Commissioner Ugarte
25 deserve tremendous credit for changing our internal

2 PAR process. Forget about the OMB process.
3 Internally, we had our own issues. It was like the
4 place where information and hope went to die. The PAR
5 process, you talk to any of the Assistant
6 Commissioners or Deputy Commissioners, they will tell
7 you it is completely different. Also want to give a
8 shout out to our Chief-of-Staff, Jason Razefsky, for
9 calling BS on the process. But Mark and Gina have
10 changed it so that internally, Deputy Commissioners
11 and Assistant Commissioners know where their hirings
12 are at and they've turned it around. And I'm also
13 really proud of the fact that in the two years that
14 we've been a team, we have 120 internal promotions,
15 and we're giving folks a pathway, folks who have
16 demonstrated that they're doing an excellent job.
17 We're trying to move them up and they're the next
18 generation of leadership. And again, that process has
19 been expedited by the two Deputy Commissioners to my
20 right.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANABRIA: If I could
22 just add, so to the Commissioner's point about
23 internal hiring and promotional opportunities, we
24 look to grow to our staff in terms of retention,
25 right? Everybody wants to stick around and grow with

2 the agency and we try to build a sense of community
3 and family at the agency. I'm a product of that. I
4 was an unpaid intern 30 years ago and I'm here today.
5 We have a very robust youth program, over 15
6 different programs with 174 kids that have gone
7 through that program. We continue to take employee
8 engagement opportunities to keep the staff, but there
9 are challenges for us in doing so so we're working
10 very hard to bring in as many candidates as we can.

11 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I really love to
12 hear that. Thank you. Thank you for sharing. Unpaid
13 intern 30 years ago. Wow. That's incredible. And
14 that's what we should be doing, right, across our
15 agencies.

16 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Only to be outdone,
17 excuse me, because this is be fun when we get back to
18 280. Only to be outdone by 38 years ago, a high
19 school, what was the co-op program? Right? Cheryl
20 Leone. Now they commute together so they'll be
21 talking about this later tonight so we'll have a
22 little fun.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: That's incredible.
24 That's incredible, and that's what we want to hear.
25 Thank you so much for that.

2 So, continuing on development and
3 enforcement staffing, according to the PMMR, the
4 agency's average inspection time, you talked a little
5 bit about this in your testimony, Commissioner. The
6 average inspection time in all categories was
7 impacted by ongoing budgetary constraints and reduced
8 staff capacity. At last year's Prelim Budget hearing,
9 we spoke at length about the cut to DOB staffing that
10 removed 134 positions in Fiscal '24 and 90 positions
11 in Fiscal '25 and the outyears. That reduction capped
12 a pattern that saw over 500 positions removed from
13 DOB's budget since Fiscal Year '22. This Preliminary
14 Plan, we're happy to see and hear about the
15 successful efforts, but we're happy to see the
16 department has added headcount. Are these new
17 positions, or are they a restoration of previous
18 cuts, one? What specific needs will the additional
19 development and enforcement staff address is the
20 second question. And third, as a result of City of
21 Yes for Housing Opportunity, does the Department
22 anticipate any increase? We talked about this a
23 little bit too, but anticipate any increase in
24 filings, applications, and complaints? What are you
25 expecting?

2 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Right. So, in terms of
3 the additional lines from the November and January
4 Plans, we referenced already, right, the 60 positions
5 on proactive enforcement, 25 to carry out Local Law
6 152, the 10 additional attorneys for Local Law 97,
7 and of the basement legalization and the City of Yes.
8 Those are the new lines that we received.

9 In terms of just overall service levels
10 and the service levels you alluded to, Chair, again,
11 show me a service level going in the wrong direction,
12 you will see steep overtime reductions and staffing
13 challenges that come in the form of hiring and come
14 in the form of retention. And I just want to remind
15 everyone, the two PEGs that we took, the 18 million
16 and change, the 210 lines, those lines were
17 overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, vacant. Those
18 vacancies, though, created accruals that allowed our
19 agency to escalate our overtime way above the
20 budgeted amount. We had to take overtime that was
21 over 9 million dollars when it was budgeted at 3 and
22 change, 3 million, and turn that off and then figure
23 out how to turn it on and off as we saw levels spike.
24 But there is no doubt that downstream from that,
25 you're seeing an impact on service levels.

2 I'll just give you a quick snapshot. We
3 had done a snapshot back in October of certain
4 service levels that were going in the wrong
5 direction. I don't need to tell you the specifics,
6 but I just want to share with you, if you look at the
7 service level and go, hmm, why is that going up?
8 Headcount down 10 percent, OT down 78 percent.
9 Another service level, headcount down 8 percent, OT
10 down 93 percent. Headcount down 10 percent, OT down
11 78 percent. OT down 82 percent, OT down 84 percent,
12 78 percent. You get my point. And okay, we licked our
13 wounds, we kept it together. The service levels
14 didn't explode, but there's a certain period of time
15 where you could point to that and then that answer
16 doesn't cut it, and I think that's the point that
17 we're at, and I think that's reflected in a few
18 things. That's reflected in us strategically in a
19 very narrowly tailored way, adding back some
20 professional certification. Mentioned it on
21 elevators. We're considering it on a certain universe
22 of electrical inspections. By the way, just so you
23 know, what we giveth, we also taketh away. There's a
24 bulletin going out in July that we will no longer
25 allow professional certification on underpinnings

2 because Gus and the team did a really good job of
3 doing audits and we were not happy with what we've
4 seen so I don't want anyone in the Council to think
5 that we're just going to blindly do professional
6 certification. I was so concerned about that that I
7 went back and I found quotes from me as a Council
8 Member from 2007 selling widespread professional
9 certification. But we think we can narrowly, in a
10 narrowly tailored way, add that back on, create some
11 bandwidth.

12 The other issue to the staffing
13 challenge, and I want Commissioner Sanabria to spend
14 a few minutes if we can, is that we have a retention
15 issue. And writ large, globally, it's probably a good
16 thing because DOB is a pipeline. We get folks in, the
17 team does a hell of a job training them up, and when
18 the private sector is doing well, the private sector
19 takes these folks. But also our sister agencies,
20 Deputy Commissioner Sanabria can give you names of
21 sister agencies that love to kind of take our
22 staffers. We can give you rationale, we can give you
23 sort of experience levels when they're leaving, and
24 we will always have this continuous turnover. We have
25 to bring people in, train them, they go about into

2 the bigger ecosystem. Again, it's a good thing for
3 New York City, it's a challenge for us. So even
4 though we've had the additional lines that we've
5 alluded to, our headcount is sort of flat because as
6 we bring them in and we train them, we're losing them
7 out the side door. Mark, you want to get into some of
8 the numbers?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SANABRIA: So, we did
10 a very deep dive into attrition at the agency, both
11 on the technical level, meaning people that perform
12 architectural engineering type work, and both the
13 inspection side, and one of our findings was in
14 January of '25, we had a 16 percent attrition rate in
15 our inspectorial workforce. And when we looked into
16 that dive, we noticed that folks were leaving either
17 into the private sector or to other City agencies,
18 and we try to find out why they're leaving, and for
19 the most part, it's because of salary. In some cases,
20 when they're going to the other agencies, they're
21 actually going back into the trade. The Council
22 Member raised elevators, and some of our folks are
23 going back to NYCHA to actually do elevator repairs.
24 Some cases, they're going to PD to do plumbing
25 repairs and DCAS and some of the other agencies, and

2 we looked at the ages of how long they were with the
3 agency. On average, with the agency, five years. And
4 so when we bring in new inspectors, they go in
5 through a very robust training academy. It's 14
6 weeks, nine weeks in the office, five weeks out in
7 the field learning with their superiors, so we put a
8 lot of time and effort into training up our guys.
9 They are the best inspectors in the city, without a
10 doubt, which is why other agencies are coming to get
11 them. But we have challenges with salary. We have
12 challenges with the industry. When the industry's
13 doing well, they come back to us to take our guys
14 because they know the rules, they know the codes. And
15 just at a very high level this year, we had 113
16 people attrit out of the agency and we're onboarding
17 up 175, so the net gain is really only 62 new people,
18 which makes the struggle that HR is having in terms
19 of the recruiting effort, somewhat like quicksand,
20 right? I'm working, my team is working super hard to
21 get them in the door and we're trying to keep them in
22 the door, and that's a challenge that the
23 Commissioner and I discussed the other day, and we
24 have some ideas about trying to attack this from
25 different fronts.

2 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Madam Chair, if I
3 could just add three quick things. One is a shoutout
4 to DCAS Commissioner Lou Molina, because one of the
5 challenges that we have is that our assistant plan
6 examiners, assistant engineers, assistant architects,
7 the non-licensed folks, our work does not qualify as
8 design experience, which the State Ed says they need
9 to get licensed so we will train them up, then they
10 will leave us to go to an agency whose work does
11 provide that. They want to progress in their career.
12 So what Commissioner Molina is going to do on a small
13 sample pilot is take some of our folks at DOB, loan
14 them to DCAS, let them do work at DCAS that qualifies
15 as design experience, get that for their
16 qualification so that they can get licensed to come
17 back. Deputy Commissioner Sanabria will tell you a
18 bunch of the people who left, 10 or 13 or 15 came
19 back because it's a pretty good place to work, but
20 they can't progress in their career so hopefully this
21 is a start of a good program.

22 The second thing I just wanted to mention
23 is on the plan exam front and the inspectorial
24 routing, we think there's technology out there that
25

2 could help us and, hopefully, that expands sort of
3 our staffing capabilities.

4 And this is the last thing is hopefully
5 in May when we come back, we're working on an idea on
6 the front end of this, the pipeline to draw more
7 people in. Hopefully our idea will be a little bit
8 more baked and we can present it with you where we
9 think we can draw in more folks to DOB.

10 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Sorry. Mommy duties
11 at the same time. Thank you. That's helpful context.

12 I want to touch on, we talked a little
13 bit about basement legalization staffing. Can you
14 tell us what the 36 new positions are for? What will
15 they be doing and do you think that they will be
16 adequate? You answered some of this already, but.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER UGARTE: Okay. So, of
18 the 45 positions, we received 22 inspectors, two
19 assistant chief inspectors, a chief inspector, five
20 supervising inspectors, three plan examiners, an
21 administrative staffer, administrative staff
22 supervisor, analysts, senior analysts, attorneys,
23 senior clericals and code and zoning specialists. And
24 a lot of those administrative positions, if I might
25 add, were advocacy on our part as Deputy Commissioner

2 Sanabria and Commissioner said, we do receive a lot
3 of inspectorial and technical positions, but it does
4 cause an adverse effect on administrative positions
5 that aren't typically restored so we did receive some
6 of those lines and those administrative lines are
7 reflected here, and that would total the 45. And of
8 the inspectorial positions, I can break down the.. for
9 basement legalization of the 30 inspector positions,
10 11 of them were for development and 19 were for
11 enforcement.

12 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Okay, and
13 the Commissioner also said TBD. There's a long
14 flowchart. Understood, it's a developing program.

15 Question that I've received from
16 Colleagues in other parts of the city regarding
17 basements. There are plenty, of course, of illegal
18 conversions that exist today throughout the city.
19 What is going to be the policy for folks that come to
20 the Administration wanting to legalize their
21 basements? Is there going to be any sort of amnesty
22 or how are you going to encourage folks that are not
23 in compliance today who are afraid of penalties to
24 enter the pilot?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SIRAKIS: Thanks. So,
3 the pilot program itself is, well, it's limited to
4 certain geographic areas. It does have provision in
5 the legislation, I believe both from the State level
6 and down to the legislation that was passed along
7 with the City of Yes component that merely applying
8 for a temporary authorization for residency, that in
9 itself is an amnesty request to not have a basement
10 apartment that is fully compliant with what you will
11 need at the 10-year mark and it gives the property
12 owner 10 years to get into full compliance. There are
13 a number of milestones along the way that the
14 property owner would need to meet and some minimum
15 criteria, obviously immediate life safety issues need
16 to be accounted for before we can authorize this, but
17 the idea is that this is actually giving you as a
18 property owner the ability to stretch out the
19 timeframe for when you can get into full compliance
20 for 10 years. The legislation itself sets out
21 specific milestones. We're currently working with our
22 partner agencies on both the enforcement process for
23 what to do when you find an apartment that's outside
24 of compliance right now that has not yet been
25 authorized for any temporary residency or permanent

2 residency but they might be eligible as well as the
3 program itself as well as any of the full safety
4 measures that would need to be in place to authorize
5 one of these units along the way.

6 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Is there forgiveness
7 for existing penalties if you come to the agency and
8 you're in one of these geographies?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SIRAKIS: I don't
10 believe there's anything specific for forgiveness,
11 but there is deferral of penalties that's permissible
12 and this is important necessarily to, in some
13 instances, to be able to get a certificate of
14 occupancy issued because of the fact that you might
15 have penalties that would otherwise be required to be
16 paid. The program, I believe, does authorize the
17 deferral of those penalties so we're not letting and
18 we're obviously not closing out the violation if the
19 condition hasn't been corrected but if the penalties
20 are deferred until after the building exits the
21 program.

22 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay. Thank you for
23 that, and I'd love to talk about that further. I've
24 just gotten some incoming from Assembly Member
25 Natalia Fernandez, for instance, with constituents

2 who are in the catchment area but they owe these
3 exorbitant amounts for having these basements over
4 time that (CROSS-TALK)

5 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Madam Chair, can I
6 just say one thing about just referencing the
7 flowchart because I could just imagine someone at
8 home or someone somewhere saying, yeah, well this is
9 what's wrong with government that all of these steps
10 on this flowchart. This is designed so that folks in
11 basements are safe and just a couple of months ago,
12 while this was being voted on, there was a fire in my
13 home borough in a basement where, thanks to the
14 heroic action of two firefighters, they crashed the
15 windows and I think handed out a small child through
16 a window, so this is designed that every step along
17 the way for us to get eyes on and make sure things
18 are safe. So, it's not bureaucracy and it's not us
19 being obstructionists but grand announcements or not,
20 my responsibility is... your responsibility is that
21 child, my responsibility is safety and that's what
22 we're going to carry out.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yes. Commissioner,
24 if you would grant me just a five-minute recess so I

2 can calm down this little critter, and I will be
3 right back.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Can everybody settle
5 down? We're getting ready to continue. Can everybody
6 settle down? We are getting ready to continue.

7 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I just want to take
8 a moment to shout her out. It's been five hours.
9 She's been at hearings for five hours. No, thank you.

10 Okay. Did I already ask my DOB NOW a
11 question? I didn't, right? All right, that's where I
12 was. Okay, so I'm just going to boil this down to the
13 essentials. The Preliminary Plan delays the contract
14 on DOB NOW, so what does this mean for some of the
15 higher-level goals that we all had, right? The
16 sidewalk bills passing tomorrow. What are these
17 contract delays going to be?

18 COMMISSIONER ODDO: We'll let Deputy
19 Commissioner Ugarte talk about the contract
20 specifically then I'll just talk about DOB now more
21 generally after.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER UGARTE: So we're
23 currently in the process of entering into a renewal
24 contract with Spruce for the remainder of the funded
25 scope, so what that means in terms of timeline is

2 delay, right? If a contract is registered later on
3 than originally intended and that's the reasons for
4 the roles that you saw in the Preliminary Plan.

5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: So, do you have a
6 sense of when it will be fully registered and up and
7 running?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER UGARTE: We're
9 continuing to work with the Comptroller and MOCS to
10 get this completed, and I don't have a specific
11 timeline now, but we certainly are working as quickly
12 as possible to get this completed.

13 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER ODDO: So, Chair, if I can
15 just sort of frame out the DOB now. So, as I said
16 earlier, everything goes through DOB now. Every local
17 law, every City Hall priority, every DOB priority,
18 every rule change, and that created a tremendous
19 amount of work, and when everything's a priority,
20 nothing's a priority. So, we've gone through this
21 internal process. We actually got some really good
22 help from our friends at OMB to realize you can't do
23 50 priorities at once. So, we have our first mission
24 is to retire BIS and the Accela program to migrate it
25 to DOB now. And then we have to pick priorities

2 amongst priorities of local laws and various
3 initiatives. And so now the team has transparency on
4 their individual priority, where it is in the queue.
5 And there is, at least right now, an order to this
6 process. And I think there's much more transparency
7 internally within the agency, and we just work every
8 day to complete the original mission, which was to
9 retire BIS, retire Accela, and then we will get to
10 the pile now of other priorities that we have to
11 build out.

12 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: And those
13 conversations are going well with OMB?

14 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Well, the OMB process
15 was, and I think rightfully so from their
16 perspective, it was like, you have a lot of work to
17 do, what's the plan? So we met, we huddled, we spoke
18 with an outside entity, and we created a new game
19 plan. I give a lot of credit internally to our Chief-
20 of-Staff, who kind of ran point for us. And again, I
21 bristled initially at OMB's intervention, but it was
22 a net plus, and we continue to do the work. But I
23 think the frustrating thing for me initially was for
24 the whole world, Council, City Hall, everyone to
25 realize there is no finishing DOB NOW, because DOB

2 NOW gets built and updated as we operationalize your
3 priorities and our priorities. And I will add, and I
4 think this predates you, this institution, the
5 Council from 2018 to 2021, was particularly robust in
6 its legislative activities pertaining to the agency.
7 So you have all of this coming in. How do we put it
8 in an order? What is the priority amongst priorities?
9 And let's show our colleagues at OMB, like, this is
10 the plan, so I think we're on the right path now. I
11 think we today benefit from hindsight. And I think
12 going back to the Bloomberg Administration and the de
13 Blasio Administration, choices made, decisions made
14 then, they probably would not make the same decisions
15 today knowing what we know and knowing how things
16 turned out, but we're committed to getting it built
17 out. There are pluses to DOB NOW, and it gives us and
18 it gives our customers things that BIS and the paper
19 system, the convenience to be able to do. It is a net
20 plus, but it's a tremendous amount of work, and now
21 we have a game plan and an order to do that work,
22 some of the folks behind me aren't happy because they
23 know where they are now in that order, and they're
24 not at the front of the line.

2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yeah. Thank you. I
3 just have two more questions, and my Colleagues have
4 gone, so that's it. Just two more questions or sets
5 of questions. Appreciating that.

6 So, on Local Law 97, hello, Laura. We are
7 approaching, of course, a major milestone for
8 buildings that need to comply with Local Law 97, the
9 local law, which imposes strict emission limits for
10 buildings over 25,000 gross square feet and fines for
11 those who are out of compliance. On May 1st, just
12 over a month away, the first annual emissions report
13 is due for these buildings. You talked a little bit
14 about it in your opening remarks, but can you expound
15 upon how DOB is ensuring it's prepared for this major
16 milestone? How are you working with low- and middle-
17 income co-ops and condos in particular, many of which
18 are in older buildings that require significant
19 rehabilitation work but face financial constraints?
20 And specifically, is the Department of Buildings
21 doing specific or special outreach about the passage
22 of the J-51 abatement last December?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: Good afternoon,
24 Council Member. So yes, we have been working on the
25 rollout for Local Law 97 since, well, for several

2 years, and we are completely ready. Our reporting
3 portal opened almost three weeks ago, and so we
4 worked with an entity that was funded by DOE, the
5 federal DOE, to create the portal, and we are
6 receiving reports. You were right that the deadline
7 is May 1st, but there's a built-in 60-day grace
8 period so that takes us through June 30th. And on top
9 of that, building owners can apply for an extension,
10 which takes them through August 29th. And actually,
11 it's important that there is a several-month period
12 to submit the reports because everything's new for
13 everyone, and we've been working with service
14 providers to educate them about how to submit
15 reports. Today, we did our eighth training with
16 service providers, and those webinars are online, and
17 we have two more to go, and each training, you know,
18 it has some familiar items, and then it's specific
19 for a particular topic. So today, we talked about how
20 to apply for an adjustment if you have external or
21 financial constraints, and our next topic is complex
22 reports. So, we have a lot of people who come to
23 those, and we have a team of staff who answer
24 questions in real time while they're happening so
25 we're definitely working to educate on that. We

2 staffed up, we have 112 positions in the Bureau,
3 which is just very exciting, and 69 of those are
4 really fully focused on Local 197. The rest of the
5 team works on the energy code. And then we have three
6 additional positions that are funded by NYSERDA to
7 help with that. So that's a total of 72 staff that
8 are really primarily focused on 97 and other laws
9 that support that, like benchmarking, and audits, and
10 retro-commissioning, and the energy grades. So of
11 course, we onboarded all those staff with the
12 incredible assistance of our HR and budget teams, and
13 we're ready to, you know, review the reports,
14 basically.

15 On the outreach, so we have an outreach
16 team. It's a small but mighty outreach team. And
17 they, along with really a ton of the other Local 197
18 staff, do these webinars, work with Accelerator,
19 right, and we know that that's the program funded by
20 the City to help building owners. They provide free
21 assistance for building owners. We send out notices,
22 we send out email blasts, we go to events, we have
23 in-your-district events. We're constantly, you know,
24 hosting webinars and just trying to do outreach to
25 these groups. The primary way that there is outreach

2 done for things like J-51 and for LMI housing is
3 through Accelerator, and, you know, we've called
4 building owners to get them a case manager focused on
5 buildings that are, you know, we're concerned are
6 over their limits. We work very closely with HPD.
7 They have the 321 GO program. They work with
8 Accelerator. And the whole goal is to make sure that
9 affordable housing owners and LMI co-op and condos
10 can comply with 97. And as I mentioned to Council
11 Member Brewer earlier, we will work with any building
12 that works with us so we have our mediated
13 resolutions. And if there's a building owner, you
14 know, as you know, the 321 buildings are one and
15 done, right? They either follow the 2030 compliance
16 path now or they do their prescriptive energy
17 conservation measures and so, if they need a little
18 bit more time, but they've put in the work already,
19 we will work with them to get them more time. And,
20 you know, we're not interested in being punitive for
21 people who are working with us. So, I hope that
22 answered all of your question.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: It did. Thank you.
24 Just two quick clarifying questions. When you say
25

2 service providers, what kind of entities are you
3 referring to?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: Right, so the
5 entities that the building owners hire to do the
6 work, the RDPs and to file the reports, they may be,
7 you know, there are several different people who work
8 together in that. The reports need to be signed off
9 by an RDP, at least the 320 reports do, a registered
10 design professional. The 321 reports can be a retro-
11 commissioning agent or an RDP. And then the service
12 providers that we've been working with have thousands
13 of clients in the city so we are comfortable that
14 we're working with the people who have the most
15 clients and getting them comfortable with how to file
16 the report, educating them on that. Also, we beta
17 tested the reporting portal with them so we could get
18 feedback and make it better, and we continue to do
19 that. So recently there had been a requirement that
20 in order to get an extension, you had to have hired
21 someone by a certain date. And we saw that that
22 wasn't working because some building owners hadn't
23 hired someone by that date, but we still wanted them
24 to get the extension if they needed it so we issued a
25 service notice that changed that because of all the

2 feedback we were receiving from both the service
3 providers and the building owners so we're trying to
4 be nimble.

5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Excellent. And I
6 said I had two, oh, the second clarifying question
7 was 112 positions. So those are all filled?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: No. We have 15
9 vacancies, but three of those are for the energy code
10 so 12 vacancies related to Local 197 work, almost all
11 of them.

12 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I have to say, I'm
13 very impressed. I felt like when we talked about this
14 last year, I felt a little hopeless because it was
15 such a long way to go so great.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: I think I said
17 27 positions. It might've been 29, but that's how
18 many we had last year.

19 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Wow.

20 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Yeah. Just for
21 clarification, there were 112 positions, 78 of them
22 are filled and active.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Great. And then you
24 have a lot of folks in the pipeline?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POPA: Yeah. So, we
3 have eight in progress in the pipeline.

4 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay. Great. Thank
5 you. Sorry, note-taking with one hand.

6 Last but not least, a question on
7 construction safety. You mentioned that the numbers
8 have improved, but just hearkening back to 2022, the
9 New York State Comptroller issued an audit that found
10 that the Department of Building's oversight of
11 building construction sites and enforcement activity
12 needed improvement, noting specifically that DOB
13 inspections were performed reactively rather than
14 proactively, even though it's prior enforcement
15 actions and contractor safety history are datasets
16 that could be, I have a feeling that our bill does
17 something, but I want to hear it from you, contractor
18 safety history are datasets that could be used to
19 help identify high-risk construction sites as well.
20 Department of Building's had inadequate procedures to
21 identify incidents and report injuries and fatalities
22 at building construction sites, and that while DOB
23 followed up and issued summonses at sites that were
24 found to have safety issues, it did not effectively
25 prioritize which sites were inspected. So, can you

2 just bring us up to date on what steps have been
3 taken since that audit to address the concerns
4 outlined by the State Comptroller? Are there any
5 measures that would require legislative action to
6 facilitate?

7 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Deputy Commissioner
8 Shamash will talk specifically about the audit, and
9 then if we have time and the need, I can talk to you
10 about some more in-depth on the numbers, because it's
11 a good story to tell.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: I was going
13 to start with the numbers.

14 COMMISSIONER ODDO: I'm fatigued. You're
15 younger than me, so by all means have at it.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: So I know
17 the numbers in the MMR are for Fiscal Year, but we
18 track these a little bit more in-depth in terms of
19 Calendar Year. So, I just wanted to relay some
20 numbers in terms of number of incidents and injuries
21 year over year, calendar year over year, from 2023 to
22 2024. Number of incidents in Calendar Year 2023 was
23 649. In 2024, it was 466, or a 28 percent reduction.
24 In terms of injuries, that number went from 692 down
25 to 482, or a 30 percent reduction. That is 2023 over

2 2024 Calendar Year. If we look at the first two
3 months of 2025 over 2024, we have, again, 2024 was
4 almost a record low in terms of incidents and
5 injuries. This year, we are 40 percent reduction over
6 that. Our construction safety team has, it's a two-
7 prong effort. The compliance unit strictly does
8 proactive inspections of all construction sites. That
9 is their one mission, and our construction safety
10 enforcement team responds to incidents and complaints
11 with regards to 3-1-1 and public complaints. Our
12 Assistant Commissioner, the infamous Juan Arias,
13 leads that group. We have done numerous outreach to
14 industry associations, large general contractors,
15 large construction management permit holders to get
16 the message out that construction safety is not just
17 about a checklist where you go around checking boxes,
18 but it's really a culture. And changing that culture
19 is what we have done over the last five-plus years,
20 starting with our SST training, going through and
21 doing audits on all the providers of that SST
22 training, and we've rolled out the Worker Wallet,
23 which is a compilation of all the construction
24 certifications that the industry acquires from us. So
25 between the SST card and the Worker Wallet, folks can

2 carry two cards now that'll identify all the training
3 that they have, all the requirements that are there.

4 And just to go through some of the stats
5 associated with that group. We have done training for
6 SST. Amazingly, 381,000 folks have gone through the
7 program and have been trained as workers. Over 60,000
8 have been trained as supervisors. When we started the
9 program, OSHA thought we would have about 150, maybe
10 200,000. We are at, combine those together, you're
11 almost at 470,000 workers and supervisors that have
12 been trained. The Worker Wallet, which is not
13 required till July 1st to have on site, almost 26,000
14 folks have gotten the Worker Wallet card, and between
15 those two cards, almost 28 million taps.

16 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Madam Chair, we issued
17 our safety report. We will get you and the team a
18 copy if you don't have it. We just issued it a couple
19 of weeks ago, but as I said, it tells a really
20 impressive story. So, the statistics that the Deputy
21 Commissioner alluded to, a 25 percent year-over-year
22 decrease in incidents, a 30 percent decrease in
23 injuries, all while construction activities in terms
24 of initial permits and new construction square feet
25 were at a five-year high.

2 And I just want to underscore the last
3 part of the Deputy Commissioner's response about the
4 training. The New York City Build Connect, Rey
5 Cabrera, Assistant Commissioner, fantastic job in 27
6 million taps. That means workers with those cards, 27
7 million times, went onto a worksite. People who were
8 trained went onto a worksite. So it's our North Star.
9 It continues to be a focus, and the numbers are going
10 in the right direction.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: And let me
12 just add, in terms of change of culture, it's not
13 just our inspections. It's the trainers, it's the
14 providers, it's the permit holders, it's everyone
15 working together to make sure folks go home and go
16 home safely. It's not just DOB, but really, in terms
17 of construction safety, it takes a village.

18 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much
19 for that response. And just to make sure I
20 understand, so when you say 381,000 trained, 60,000
21 supervisors, 470,000 all together, these are half a
22 million unique individuals in the City of New York
23 trained.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHAMASH: Correct.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I was a young
3 staffer when this bill was, this was a bill that was
4 being negotiated, and that was a dream, right, to
5 have people really trained up, and, I think you aged
6 the bill, right, Guillermo? It was Nick Smith and
7 Guillermo who were on the phone and were on the phone
8 aging this legislation, and I just, it's really good
9 to hear. This is, I think, one of the examples of why
10 we do this work. We can really save people's lives,
11 quite literally, so I commend you all and really hope
12 that we can continue on this way. One death is too
13 many, one injury is too many, so there's more work to
14 do, but this is really impressive in terms of the
15 direction, so congratulations.

16 I am very happy to end on such a positive
17 note. Thank you for that. Thank you to the
18 Commissioner. I think you weren't here yet, but I was
19 saying that I'm playing nursing bingo because I've
20 now nursed a fundraiser while door-knocking, and now
21 here on the floor, so we're all in this together.
22 Thank you for letting me be a good mama to Yaya, and
23 thank you for your participation and honest answers
24 at this hearing. Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER ODDO: Thank you, Chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: All right. Hi,
3 everybody. We're back. We never left. Okay, so I am
4 now going to be opening the hearing for public
5 testimony.

6 I remind members of the public that this
7 is a formal government proceeding and that decorum
8 shall be observed at all times. As such, members of
9 the public shall remain silent at all times.

10 The witness table is reserved for people
11 who wish to testify. No video recordings or
12 photography is allowed from the witness table.
13 Further, members of the public may not present audio
14 or video recordings as testimony, but may submit
15 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant-at-
16 Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

17 If you wish to speak at today's hearing,
18 please fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant-
19 at-Arms and wait to be recognized. When recognized,
20 you will have two minutes to speak on today's hearing
21 topic of the Preliminary Budget for the Department of
22 Housing Preservation and Development and the
23 Department of Buildings. And just to put a finer
24 point on that, we have 30 registrants to testify, so
25 we're going to have to, I usually am like, yay, keep

2 going, but I'm not going to be able to do that today.
3 I'm sorry, so we're going to have to enforce a two-
4 minute time limit.

5 If you have a written statement or
6 additional written testimony you wish to submit for
7 the record, please provide a copy of that testimony
8 to the Sergeant-at-Arms, and I look forward to seeing
9 that. You may also email written testimony to
10 testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72 hours of this
11 hearing. Audio and video recordings will not be
12 accepted, and thank you all for still being here.
13 Thank you for your patience. Yaya, thank you for your
14 patience, too.

15 Okay, the first panel is going to consist
16 of Kenny Alvarez from SHNNY, Doreen Burton, Victor
17 Walker, the three from SHNNY, Joelle Balam-Schwan,
18 Judith Goldner from Legal Aid, Damon Gilbert, and
19 Michelle de la Uz from Fifth Avenue Committee. Come
20 on up.

21 Okay, you may begin when ready.

22 KENNY MARGARITO ALVAREZ: Thank you. Good
23 afternoon, Chair Sanchez and Members of the
24 Committee. My name is Kenny Margarito Alvarez. I'm a
25 United States Marine Corps veteran, and I served

2 during the global war on terrorism from 2003 to 2008.

3 I'm also a supportive housing advocate in partnership
4 with the Supportive Housing Network of New York.

5 We're asking New York City to keep its commitment to

6 building 15,000 units in 15 years. I entered

7 supportive housing in 2013 after moving back to New

8 York and finding myself in crisis after crisis,

9 entering the HASA program and acquiring emergency

10 housing assistance. I was chronically homeless for 16

11 months in New York City and longer in the months

12 prior in other states, faced with steep odds and

13 unimaginable challenges like abusive relationships,

14 chronic health conditions, and a lifestyle involving

15 heavy self-medication. Along the way, a better place

16 run by the Doe Fund quite literally became available

17 to me. It was the first step in anything resembling

18 recovery. Yolanda Jones was a program director there.

19 At the financially strapped facility, she and the

20 ever-changing team became the linchpin of my survival

21 during my time in supportive housing. Before that, my

22 experience in the series of New York City single-room

23 occupancy hotels was a horrifying mix of squalor,

24 merciless staff, and drug-related murder. Supportive

25 housing saved my life and slowly showed me that there

2 was a life worth saving in the first place. Thanks to
3 the amazing social workers at ACQC, at Jamaica YMCA,
4 it was the last place I stayed before entering the
5 supportive housing system. Once in, I went back to
6 school, completed my master's, and the level of
7 spiritual encouragement and clarity I needed to get
8 out of that abusive relationship toward salvation
9 can't be overstated. Supportive housing got me the
10 redemption that many others seek. Now supportive
11 housing (TIMER CHIME) needs people to make it work.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Time's
13 expired.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you.

15 JUDITH GOLDINER: Hi. Judith Goldiner from
16 the Legal Aid Society, and I wanted to thank Chair
17 Sanchez for her leadership on the housing issues.
18 It's always a pleasure to work with her.

19 I wanted to first start talking about
20 CityFHEPS, and the broader conversation is really
21 that HPD did not talk about preservation hardly at
22 all, and the real need to preserve the units we have
23 now, in fact, is way more important than building new
24 units. We have no issue with building units, but we
25 really need to keep people in the housing that they

2 have now and make sure that it's safe for them. So
3 the Council negotiated as part of City of Yes 215
4 million over two years to expand CityFHEPS to people
5 in the community. Unfortunately, that commitment has
6 not been achieved, and it's really critically
7 important that as part of this budget process, we
8 make sure that that money is allocated to families at
9 risk of eviction in housing court right now. We are
10 also concerned that we are seeing such a large
11 increase in code violations, you know, 25 percent
12 more of B and C violations, which are the most
13 serious violations, and what our clients experience
14 is that those just linger on and are not addressed,
15 and part of that is the lack of enough attorneys in
16 HPD's litigation bureau. I know there was testimony
17 that there are, you know, 30-plus attorneys in that
18 bureau, but that is simply not enough for New York
19 City and for the kind of problems in the housing
20 conditions that we're seeing across the city. We also
21 are seeing a big problem with heat and hot water
22 complaints. This is a new issue that we are seeing
23 people complain about heat and hot water, and that
24 those complaints get administratively closed with no
25 inspection. (TIMER CHIME)

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Your time
3 has expired.

4 JUDITH GOLDINER: So we hope that the
5 Council will address these issues through this budget
6 process, and we appreciate the opportunity to testify
7 today.

8 DAMON GILBERT: Good afternoon. Thank you,
9 Chair Sanchez, Committee Members, and Yaya for the
10 chance to testify. My name is Damon Gilbert. I'm an
11 Equal Justice Fellow with New York Lawyers for the
12 Public Interest. I'm here to testify today about some
13 of our programs in the environmental justice and
14 disability justice programs that we have.

15 First, one major area of concern for our
16 community clients is the issue of sewer backups and
17 flooding suffered by many low-income homeowners in
18 Queens. My colleagues spoke about this at the DEP
19 budget hearing last week and asked that you can
20 potentially affirm and amplify our call for
21 additional funding to DEP to ensure that it addresses
22 the intolerable flooding caused by increasing extreme
23 weather issues, and that DEP prioritize communities
24 like South Jamaica that have been unjustly left out
25 of the City investments.

2 Furthermore, we've been working to ensure
3 the implementation of the landmark Local Law 97, and
4 we think it's especially important that frontline
5 communities can make sure that City funding goes
6 towards agencies that are actually enforcing the law
7 and specifically ask that three to five staff
8 positions at the Department of Housing Preservation
9 and Development be allocated to increase capacity
10 dedicated to affordable housings, Local Law 97
11 compliance.

12 And finally, our work in the disability
13 justice sphere has, despite the Federal Fair Housing
14 Act and our longstanding City and State human rights
15 laws, still allowed a number of communities to face
16 discrimination when it comes to their housing needs.
17 New York City is one that prides itself on the
18 diversity of its people, and we support all efforts
19 to ensure that housing is accessible and otherwise
20 free of discrimination so we hope that enforcement of
21 building code accessibility requirements should be
22 prioritized for the City funding. Funding to support
23 an aggressive enforcement mandate by the Department
24 of Buildings and the Department of Housing and
25 Preservation and Development will ensure accessible

2 spaces for New York City's senior citizens and
3 residents with disabilities to continue to be a part
4 of their communities and live independently. Thank
5 you.

6 VICTOR LEE WALKER: Thank you. Good
7 afternoon to the Chair and the Members of the
8 Committee. Thank you for this opportunity, and Yaya,
9 thank you for this opportunity to speak on an issue
10 that frankly saved my life, supportive housing.

11 I'm Victor Lee Walker, and I'm a resident
12 of Jericho Project since 2017. I was born in Detroit
13 where I lived for 40 years. As a 10-year-old child, I
14 had dreams of moving to New York and performing on
15 Broadway. I'm proud to say the film Muppets Take
16 Manhattan was my introduction to this great city.
17 However, I don't have to tell you how tough living in
18 New York is. Everything is expensive, food,
19 transportation, housing. Were it not for the lifeline
20 of supportive housing, I would not be able to thrive
21 the way I have. Supportive housing provided me with
22 more than a stable place to live. It gave me the
23 confidence and the freedom to change the trajectory
24 of my life. I struggle with multiple disabilities.
25 Without having to worry about my living situation, I

2 was able to focus on my mental health and physical
3 health. I was diagnosed bipolar 2 disorder two years
4 ago, I'm a stroke survivor, and I have end-stage
5 kidney disease for which I am currently in dialysis.
6 Stable housing has allowed me to keep up with all of
7 my doctor appointments and improve my quality of
8 life. Supportive housing literally saved my life
9 every day. But don't pity me. With all the health
10 challenges that I have, there are amazing things that
11 are happening in my life despite the issues. I'm
12 happy to say that my mental health is stable, and I
13 am also a student at Lehman College. I'm here today
14 to make a path for thousands of New Yorkers who want
15 the opportunity to improve their lives by encouraging
16 you to protect and expand funding for supportive
17 housing. Reallocating and fully funding NYC15/15
18 Supportive Housing Initiative would allow for more
19 mental health services, employment services, and case
20 managers who are directly responsible (TIMER CHIME)

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Time's
22 expired.

23 VICTOR LEE WALKER: Thank you.

24 DOREEN BURTON: Good afternoon, Committee
25 and Councilwoman. My name is Doreen Burton, and I am

2 happy to speak about supportive housing. I was
3 homeless, and in 2015, I was in a shelter, became
4 acquainted with supportive housing. They helped me to
5 get into a studio apartment. 'Till this day right
6 now, they are still helping me. I'm here advocating
7 because I believe in supportive housing. It has truly
8 helped me in my life. I was out there on the streets.
9 I was doing bad. Wasn't very much with family
10 members, but once I became supportive housing, that
11 has changed my life completely. I am now involved
12 with family members. I am now living a free life. I'm
13 no longer scared to be walking anywhere. Supportive
14 housing has helped me tremendously. Thank you.

15 JOELLE BALLAM-SCHWAN: Good afternoon,
16 Chair. Thank you so much for the opportunity to
17 testify today. My name is Joelle Balam-Schwan. I'm
18 with the Supportive Housing Network of New York, and
19 just want to thank our incredible tenant advocates
20 who really underscored the critical nature of our
21 funding asks, so thank you.

22 We want to thank the council for support
23 of our NYC15/15 reallocation proposal, and we ask
24 that you work with us to codify and fund it in FY26
25 and beyond. The City has exceeded its 7,500-unit

2 target for congregate housing, but Scattered Site has
3 fewer than 1,500 units unawarded, leaving over 6,000
4 units left untapped. So, our proposal calls for
5 reallocating a majority of these units to develop and
6 preserve congregate supportive housing, and we are
7 seeking 307 million in capital to develop and
8 preserve congregate units, and 72.6 million for the
9 service and operating for both new and existing
10 units.

11 We also ask the Council to hold the
12 Administration accountable for late contract
13 payments, especially as federal funding remains
14 uncertain and paused for many providers. The urgency
15 cannot be overstated right now. Five of our largest
16 supportive housing providers are owed over 318
17 million in late payments. The funding gap puts
18 providers at risk of closure, jeopardizing housing
19 stability for folks who formerly experienced
20 homelessness.

21 Additionally, the network joins housing
22 advocates in voicing our concern about a significant
23 decrease in housing capital funding post-2026
24 proposed in the Preliminary Budget and recommend a
25

2 continuing baseline funding level of four billion in
3 housing capital.

4 And finally, we ask the Council to
5 continue supporting 4.8 million in additional funding
6 for the Justice Involved Supportive Housing Program,
7 JISH, 4.5 million in baseline funding for peer
8 responders on B-HEARD teams to ensure compassionate
9 community-driven support for individuals in crisis,
10 and 22 million for intensive mobile treatment, IMT,
11 teams to provide care for the waitlist of people
12 seeking vital mental health support. Thank you so
13 much.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Wow, y'all really
15 set the record. Really good example for everyone
16 else.

17 Kenny, you made me cry. Thank you for
18 sharing your beautiful story.

19 KENNY MARGARITO ALVAREZ: Thank you so
20 much.

21 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: No, thank you, thank
22 you.

23 And Victor and Doreen, it's really
24 powerful. Of course, it's really powerful for you to
25 be here in person, for you to share for yourself what

2 supportive housing has meant to you. You have a
3 champion in me. I hope that you know that. And many,
4 many of us are going to continue this fight so we
5 hear you, we see you. You didn't say it, but you're a
6 great student. You're an excellent student at Lehman
7 College. That's amazing. Thank you for sharing with
8 us so I could read along even though you didn't get
9 to say it. I'm proud of you, too. It says he's proud
10 of himself in the testimony. I'm also proud of you.

11 So, thank you all for your advocacy and,
12 yeah, let's just make sure to keep the conversation
13 going. Prelim is first, and then we have the
14 Executive Budget hearings. So, before we get to Exec,
15 the Mayor is going to release the followup after
16 everybody's feedback so we have to make sure that at
17 that stage, we're getting these investments, these
18 commitments that were already made, some of them, and
19 we need to make sure they're there, like CityFHEPS
20 and these additional investments so thank you so
21 much.

22 I will now call the next panel. So, we
23 have, and excuse me if I say your name incorrectly,
24 please correct me when you come to the dais, Tonya
25 Ores, Angella Cummings, Gladstone Johnson, Anthony

2 Feliciano (phonetic), Christie Peale, Barika
3 (phonetic) Williams, and Emily Goldstein.

4 Y'all are troopers spending the day with
5 us. Thank you so much. I really appreciate it.
6 Excellent, you may begin when ready.

7 GLADSTON JOHNSON: Good afternoon,
8 esteemed Council Sanchez and other Council Members.
9 My name is Gladstone Johnson. I'm the Executive
10 Director of the Bronx Neighborhood Housing Services.
11 For over 30 years, we've been dedicated to serving
12 the housing needs of low- to moderate-income
13 residents in the Bronx, helping them to achieve their
14 dream of first-time homeownership. We also focus on
15 preservation because the bulk of the houses in the
16 Bronx were built between 1924 and 1945. Many of these
17 homes require urgent repairs. We currently have a
18 waiting list of over 200, mostly seniors, who need
19 emergency repairs. We're asking you to support our
20 efforts to offer a 20,000-dollar grant to at least 50
21 seniors on our waiting list. Currently, the funding
22 we get, we can only serve eight annually. I'm here
23 with my colleagues from NHS of New York City and NHS
24 of Brooklyn, and I wholeheartedly support funding
25 from the City Council in the amount of 3 million

2 dollars to launch the NHS of New York City Home
3 Repair Gap Program. NHS of New York City is a
4 longstanding partner of Bronx NHS, and we work
5 together to make sure all our resources are delivered
6 to high-need homeowners in the communities. Thank
7 you.

8 ANGELLA CUMMINGS: Thank you, Members of
9 the Committee and Mrs. Sanchez. My name is Angella
10 Cummings, and I'm the Executive Director of
11 Neighborhood Housing Services of Brooklyn CDC. NHS
12 Brooklyn is a HUD-certified, non-profit housing
13 counseling agency. For over 40 years, we have helped
14 residents obtain and maintain affordable housing and
15 assisted in building healthy, safe, sustainable
16 communities across Brooklyn.

17 The service we'd like to focus on today
18 is our Home Repair Program, which helps keep our most
19 vulnerable residents safe and in their homes. For
20 many years, NHS Brooklyn has worked on behalf of
21 homeowners on fixed incomes, struggling to live in
22 and maintain their homes. As time has passed,
23 however, the need has increased because Brooklyn's
24 housing stock is aging. Of the borough's 300,000-plus
25 one- to four-family buildings, almost two-thirds were

2 built more than 50 years ago. These older homes are
3 deteriorating due to low maintenance and are
4 inefficient by 21st century standards. At this time,
5 many are owned by older residents who must age in
6 place because they cannot relocate and they cannot
7 afford the renovations necessary to allow frail
8 adults to remain in the home. We have tried to
9 address this need of this vulnerable population
10 through our Home Repair Program, which has received
11 government funding. This funding has been critical in
12 helping our seniors, homeowners each year to make
13 emergency home repairs. I should say (INAUDIBLE)
14 seniors. Recently, for example, we were able to
15 assist a visually disabled senior who needed to
16 insulate his home and renovate his bedroom, but who
17 had been unable to do so due to his low income. We
18 provided a 20,000-dollar grant for the repairs, and
19 now he lives in a comfortable, healthy home. I
20 respectfully request funding for the City Council in
21 the amount (TIMER CHIME) of 3 million dollars.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Time's
23 expired.

24 TONYA ORES: Good afternoon. My name is
25 Tonya Ores. I'm the new CEO for Neighborhood Housing

2 Services of New York City. I'm here on behalf of NHS
3 of New York City, which is a non-profit citywide
4 organization, but we're also here on behalf of all of
5 the NHSes, NHS Brooklyn, NHS Queens, NHS in the
6 Bronx, and we're serving the Staten Island area. NHS
7 New York City has 43 years of experience promoting
8 and preserving affordable homeownership and financial
9 stability to low- and moderate-income New Yorkers. We
10 reach more than 50,000 clients each year across the
11 five boroughs. We provide homeownership education,
12 foreclosure prevention, affordable financing, and
13 repair loans and grants.

14 I would like to take the opportunity to
15 highlight the need for an additional 3 million
16 dollars from the City Council to launch NHS NYC Home
17 Repair Gap Program. The existing home repair program
18 don't fully meet the need of low- and moderate-income
19 homeowners. When we have had repair funding in the
20 past from the City Council, we have been lucky if
21 we're able to help one of 10 homeowners who are on
22 our waiting list. We need flexible, supportive
23 resources that fill gaps that other repair programs
24 don't meet. Certain homeowners need or don't have
25 sufficient funding. This new program will provide

2 forgivable loans up to 30,000 dollars for homeowners
3 who earn up to 120 percent of area median income. NHS
4 NYC will deliver this program in collaboration with
5 its non-profit partners at NHS Brooklyn, NHS Queens,
6 NHS The Bronx, and NHS Jamaica, all of which have
7 long-standing experience helping homeowners with
8 their needs alongside other complementary housing and
9 community service. We thank you for your support and
10 hopefully we'll be able to receive this funding.
11 Thank you.

12 CHRISTIE PEALE: Good afternoon, Chair
13 Sanchez. Thank you so much for the opportunity to
14 testify today. My name is Christie Peale, and I serve
15 as the CEO and Executive Director of the Center for
16 New York City Neighborhoods. Our mission is to
17 promote and protect affordable homeownership so that
18 New York families and neighborhoods thrive. We're
19 focusing on the Fiscal Year '26 budget proposals that
20 impact affordable homeownership, but I wanted to
21 compliment the Chair and the Housing Committee for a
22 holistic approach, not just to everything, but also
23 to the housing crisis. We know that we need rental
24 vouchers, we need supportive housing, we need open-
25 door investments. We need it all because we're one

2 city, and it's a big crisis. So, we are urging the
3 Council today to codify the over 110 million dollars
4 in commitments to supporting affordable homeownership
5 that was negotiated as part of the City for All, City
6 of Yes negotiation. The Council should establish an
7 Oversight Committee inspired by the Gowanus rezoning
8 to ensure that these historic once-in-a-lifetime,
9 hopefully not once-in-a-lifetime, but these historic
10 commitments are realized over the next
11 administrations. This is perhaps the City's largest
12 investment in affordable homeownership perhaps since
13 maybe the Mitchell-Lama program, certainly in
14 decades, and we must ensure that homeowners and
15 communities have the resources to navigate a more
16 daunting and aggressive competitive market that
17 consists of foreclosures, 22,000 homeowners on the
18 tax lien sale, tens of thousands of families facing
19 mortgage foreclosure, and many families targeted by
20 scams. And as we've understood through our community-
21 based research as you've heard from my colleagues,
22 over 60 percent of homeowners identify that home
23 repairs are their biggest challenge so we need many
24 resources. We appreciate the partnership and support
25 of the Council, and we're advocating for 7.5 million

2 dollars in resources to support new and existing
3 homeowners, 2.8 million of which represent existing
4 City for All commitments. (TIMER CHIME) Thank you.

5 EMILY GOLDSTEIN: Good afternoon. Thank
6 you, Chair Sanchez, for all of the work you do to
7 help support affordable housing in New York City. My
8 name's Emily Goldstein. I'm the Director of
9 Organizing and Advocacy at the Association for
10 Neighborhood and Housing Development, or ANHD. And on
11 a few points, I'll submit a much longer testimony.

12 First, I'd like to ask for the Council's
13 support for the Community Housing Preservation
14 Strategies Initiative. This initiative provides over
15 45 community-based organizations with funding for
16 their tireless work to protect low-income homeowners
17 and tenants from displacement. We urge the Council to
18 take action by addressing contracting backlog crisis
19 in this, as in so many other places, and to increase
20 funding to 4.95 million for the coming Fiscal Year.
21 The funding for this program has been static since
22 2016, and significantly, you know, increases needed
23 to maintain staff and maintain programming.

24 Second, we ask your support to maintain
25 ANHD's own work, particularly for the Displacement

2 Alert Project and our capacity-building training and
3 technical assistance related to the previous program.
4 These are tools we provide for the broader affordable
5 housing community to help to ensure that data and
6 resources are accessible.

7 Third, quickly want to emphasize, as
8 others have mentioned, the importance of focusing
9 resources on preservation. Our non-profit affordable
10 housing providers are in crisis with escalating
11 operation costs and mounting rent arrears. We need to
12 be putting more of our capital dollars into
13 preserving our existing affordable housing.

14 Fourth, also want to really encourage
15 that the Council work with the City to increase the
16 percentage of capital housing dollars going to the
17 ELI, extremely low-income, level. In 2024, only 16
18 percent of housing completions and 21 percent of
19 housing starts were at this level, even though 35
20 percent of renter households (TIMER CHIME) and 58
21 percent of rent-burdened households are at that
22 level.

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Time's
24 expired.

25 EMILY GOLDSTEIN: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Whoa, aggressive,
3 okay. Did I break it? I think I broke it. Oh, no, I
4 didn't break it, okay.

5 Thank you for that. I wanted to share
6 with the NHS family. My husband and I did homeowner
7 education at NHS Bronx 2015, 2016, so thank you. I
8 know the great work that you do, so I appreciate your
9 very specific advocacy today. We'll see what we can
10 do.

11 Emily, I have a clarifying question for
12 you. So earlier today, when HPD was testifying, they
13 said that the biggest area or the term sheet that
14 they do the most work on is the ELI, yeah, the ELI
15 band or the ELLA term sheet. So is that not true or
16 not, what's the discrepancy there?

17 EMILY GOLDSTEIN: So, I mean, far be it
18 for me to say that's not true and I don't have that
19 term sheet in front of me, but ELLA does not solely
20 target the ELI band, it's a VLI and ELI. And so, the
21 numbers that I am drawing from are from the Council's
22 report on last year's starts so I think it would be
23 worth a conversation with HPD about was there
24 something particular for last year, but also
25 understanding they're using the best deep

2 affordability term sheet they have, but if that term
3 sheet is still not really getting at the ELI level,
4 there's a population being missed.

5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yeah, I think that's
6 exactly right. I was thinking completing ELLA term
7 sheet with the ELI income band, so thank you. It's
8 something that, yeah, we have to continue to push
9 them on and we've got all this capital through City
10 for All, so let's try to make those investments come
11 through.

12 Okay. Well, thank you so much for
13 sticking around and for sharing your testimony today.

14 I will now call the next panel. Jackie
15 Del Valle , Gladys Cruz, Euralio Mares, Pilar de
16 Jesus, Paula Segal, Alison Wilkey, and James Coger.
17 I'm like, am I speaking Spanish, am I speaking
18 English? I'm not sure. Thank you so much, and you can
19 begin when ready.

20 ALISON WILKEY: Hi. My name is Alison
21 Wilkey. I'm the Director of Government Affairs and
22 Strategic Campaigns with Coalition for the Homeless.
23 Thank you, Chair Sanchez, for doing two full-time
24 jobs simultaneously today and doing it ably.

2 So, we have a homelessness crisis that is
3 just beyond all thinking. We have 350,000 homeless
4 households. That includes 120,000 people living in
5 shelter at this moment, thousands who are
6 unsheltered, and over 200,000 households who are
7 doubled and tripled up in homes. In 2024 alone, the
8 number of longer-term New Yorkers, so not counting
9 asylum seekers, in shelter increased by 12 percent.
10 So we're seeing a significant increase, and it's
11 directly because of the lack of affordable housing.
12 There are 820,000 ELI households in New York City,
13 but there's a serious mismatch of the available
14 housing. So for an ELI household, a family of three,
15 you would need rent that's about 1,050 to not be
16 rent-burdened, but only 7 percent of vacant units
17 rent for less than 1,100 dollars a month, while 65
18 percent of rent-burdened New Yorkers need housing at
19 that price. So we have to focus on building housing
20 for homeless and ELI households, and we're really
21 urging the council to stand firm on the commitment in
22 the City for All and City of Yes plan. There's 2
23 billion dollars allocated there. We're asking for
24 1.25 billion to go specifically towards homeless and

2 ELI families in improving that ELLA term sheet, so
3 we're really reaching the deepest affordability.

4 In addition to that, we are also asking
5 that the Council fulfill the commitment in City for
6 Yes for the 215 million dollars for expansion of
7 CityFHEPS in the community, and we do have a citywide
8 rent arrears program that's substantially funded by
9 the Council, but we turn people away, at least 25
10 percent of people who come to us because they can't
11 afford the rent moving forward. Having a CityFHEPS in
12 the community program (TIMER CHIME) would allow us to
13 keep those folks in their homes.

14 PILAR DE JESUS: Council Member, these are
15 our clients. They're going to testify in Spanish. Is
16 that okay? We have someone to translate for them if
17 need, but I know you also got a lot going on today,
18 so.

19 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: No worries. Do we
20 have simultaneous translation on the livestream
21 today? We do not. Okay. So, then the way that we'll
22 do it is two minutes for them to speak and then two
23 minutes for the translation. Is that going to be
24 okay?

25 PILAR DE JESUS: Yeah. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: (SPEAKING SPANISH)

3 EURALIO MARES: (SPEAKING SPANISH)

4 INTERPRETER: Thank you. Good afternoon,
5 Council Member Sanchez and appreciate your listening.
6 My name is Euralio Mares. I am part of a habitation
7 of tenants in East Harlem. During more than 20 years,
8 we have been going through many injustices by the
9 part of the landlord. We were being ignored about
10 repairs in our homes in areas common in the building.
11 And now that we have representation of this
12 organization, TakeRoot Justice, they have commenced
13 the repairing in our apartments. TakeRoot Justice is
14 the organization that we need more of the residents
15 to have and to take recourse. The organization
16 TakeRoot Justice has supported us legal, total, free.
17 And we are asking our Council Members to support
18 economically for TakeRoot Justice to keep on
19 supporting the community in the boroughs. I'm sorry.
20 Thank you for this organization, TakeRoot Justice.
21 Thank you for our Council Members for your support as
22 well. Thank you.

23 GLADYS CRUZ: (SPEAKING SPANISH)

24 INTERPRETER: Good afternoon and good
25 afternoon. Council Member, good day. My name is

2 Gladys Cruz. I would like to share how my lawyer
3 helped me with the grave problems in my apartment. I
4 live in a building where the housing had not
5 responded to various problems. We have had
6 significant issues outside the building, also inside
7 the apartment, and the leaks in the roofs and the
8 most things that preoccupied us and concerned us was
9 that there was no heat during the months of much cold
10 weather and made our lives barely impossible. On top
11 of that, the plumbing in all the building was
12 terrible. Also, we have had problems continuously
13 with rats and garbage in front of the building and
14 not being maintained accurately. My lawyer intervened
15 when everything looked dark and we needed remedies.
16 They have helped me to get our rights as a tenant and
17 they showed us what to do and the process of
18 representation that we needed by being complaining.
19 With your support, we ask that this company will help
20 us have more attorneys. We thank our lawyers, and now
21 we need more security about our habitability. Really,
22 we appreciate your help to defend our rights as
23 tenants. Thank you.

24 PILAR DE JESUS: Thank you and thank you
25 to my guys. Muchas gracias.

2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yeah. Can I just say
3 that's really impressive translating?

4 PILAR DE JESUS: It's my mom. Anyway, so
5 there's a lot of mother/daughters here and shout out
6 to Yaya and just want to say muchas gracias. Thank
7 you to the clients. Thank you, Council, and everyone
8 here being patient. My name is Pilar de Jesus. I'm a
9 Senior Advocacy Coordinator in the Housing Unit at
10 TakeRoot Justice. These are longtime clients of ours.

11 I'm here today to urge you to continue
12 funding the programs that make our work possible like
13 A... I hate this acronym, AHTPRTC, Stabilizing NYC, and
14 CHPI. My colleague, Paula Segal, is going to be
15 speaking. Paula is going to be speaking about
16 community land trust initiative, which is a key to
17 making sure our neighborhoods stay affordable and
18 aren't taken over by spectators. And I'm going to be
19 submitting a more specific testimony, but I'm going
20 to use my time now to talk about this East Harlem
21 building that the tenants here are representing. So,
22 we've been working with the tenants since 2021. This
23 is a 30-unit building with more than 200 code
24 violations, HPD has spent more than 33,000 in
25 emergency repairs to make up for the landlord's

1 neglect. The building is home to families who have
2 lived for decades, families who have helped sustain
3 the city. Our involvement began when our community
4 partners reached out alerting us that the tenants in
5 this building were dealing with severe neglect from
6 their landlord who had failed to maintain the
7 property for over 20 years. These tenants endured
8 inadequate heat, no hot water, rat and roach
9 infestations, lead, mold, and crumbling façade, and
10 even landlord violence. At the time we were
11 contacted, some of the tenants had suffered from
12 carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty boiler. After
13 the Department of Building shut down the boiler and
14 ordered repairs, the landlord simply turned its back
15 on, releasing more carbon monoxide and sickening the
16 tenants a second time. The tenants sought to
17 understand their rights and with our support they
18 fought back. Through organizing, legal action, and
19 unwavering determination, they held their landlord
20 accountable and (TIMER CHIME) now after four years of
21 struggle, they are on the verge of securing legal,
22 enforceable agreement with their landlord. And again,
23 I can go on and on, but just to really encourage the
24

2 real need for legal service providers to really
3 support what's happening to tenants.

4 JACKIE DEL VALLE: Hi. Good afternoon. My
5 name is Jackie Del Valle, and I'm Coordinator of
6 Stabilizing NYC at TakeRoot Justice. I work with
7 Pilar and Paula and thank you, Council, for your
8 leadership and it's really great to meet the baby.

9 So, we are requesting 5 million dollars
10 for Stabilizing NYC, 3 million dollars for the
11 Community Land Trust, and 4.95 million dollars for
12 the Community Housing Preservation Initiative. I
13 think Pilar illustrated really well about how to
14 TakeRoot uses the money, and we're going to hear from
15 Paula soon, so let me just tell you a little bit
16 about Stabilizing NYC. We're 20 organizations that
17 combine tenant organizing with legal representation
18 to combat tenant harassment and preserve affordable
19 housing. We work across landlord portfolios whose
20 landlords have often made highly speculative
21 investments with the plan to push out tenants and
22 flip the units out of rent stabilization. Through our
23 coalitions, we have run rent strikes, prevented
24 eviction, corrected hazardous conditions, passed
25 legislation with the Council, and empowered hundreds

2 of tenants to lead the rent fight in Albany for the
3 past 11 years. Yet despite all these tremendous
4 impacts, tenants' homes are more under threat than
5 ever. We have a federal government hostile to non-
6 profits and tenants. You opened this panel with the
7 call to have this be the most pro-tenant budget ever,
8 and I think funding, organizing, and these programs
9 is very critical to that, and also, it's been talked
10 about before, but the need for the contract
11 registration and the backlog. We are going on almost
12 two years of no money, and it's actually, despite all
13 the progress, we are in worse shape than ever. I
14 submitted and gave you a copy of my testimony to
15 contracts last year, and I work with Ben in your
16 office, and everyone is trying, but without, we need
17 the money advanced. Going forward, it's magical
18 thinking to think that suddenly procurement is going
19 to get better.

20 PAULA SEGAL: Thank you so much, Council
21 Member. Thank you to my Colleagues and our clients,
22 and everybody else for being so organized. I have
23 maybe a little bit more of a kitchen sink approach
24 here today. Sorry. I've just got a couple of
25 different things.

2 First of all, thank you so much for this
3 Council's partnership on shrinking the City's lien
4 sale on bringing back a foreclosure program that'll
5 protect tenants and buildings in distress. I hope
6 that we will all work to keep our eyes on what
7 happens to the outreach money that's supposed to be
8 distributed in next year's budget. I can't tell if
9 it's in there or not. I think it is. So, thank you
10 for that.

11 We heard a lot this morning about HPD
12 staffing, and I want to underline a couple of things
13 that were discussed this morning, but they have huge
14 impacts on my Community Land Trust clients who are
15 mid-transaction, who are mid-renovations, who are
16 trying to hire and keep their staff, and it's very
17 hard to do that where there are such huge delays. We
18 heard a little bit about how OMB delays are going to
19 be addressed. Those are really important priorities
20 because even where funding has been allocated
21 theoretically without explicit OMB approval, no money
22 is going to the contractors that are fixing the
23 buildings. We need to close that gap. It would be a
24 really powerful tool for Community Land Trust and a
25 really powerful way of really underlining support is

2 to have an earmarked capital fund that's just for
3 Community Land Trust, both for preservation and for
4 development. We don't have that right now, although
5 there is an HPD CLT team. That team is great, but
6 they're only half the puzzle. We are missing
7 dedicated lawyers for that program. So, we have
8 projects that are waiting for nothing. They're
9 waiting for an attorney to be assigned. There's
10 nothing actually happening (TIMER CHIME) on the
11 project. Can I ask your indulgence? I know, it's
12 long. We heard a little bit this morning that HPD is
13 filling some gaps with M/WBE legal contractors. If we
14 could have some of those folks just earmarked for the
15 HPD projects, just one person would make a huge
16 difference. Streamlining compliance, same issue. It's
17 an HPD staffing issue.

18 Jackie promised I would mention the CLT
19 initiative, so here it goes. We're asking for three
20 million. We were actually promised (TIMER CHIME)
21 three million last year.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Time's
23 expired.

24 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: (INAUDIBLE)

2 PAULA SEGAL: Okay. Great, and then my
3 final thing is about a really hidden secret that has
4 made converting storefronts to offices and offices to
5 storefronts really expensive for the agency and for
6 my clients, and I would love a question about that.

7 JAMES COGER: Good afternoon, Chair
8 Sanchez, Yaya, and the Members of the Committee. My
9 name is James Coger, Manager of Community Justice
10 Connect of the Center for Justice Innovation. Our
11 mission is to build community safety by addressing
12 root causes of crime, and central to that is housing
13 stability. Safe, affordable housing underpins health,
14 employment, education, and family stability, yet far
15 too many New Yorkers, especially those in Black and
16 Brown neighborhoods, face unsafe conditions,
17 evictions, and displacement. These harms fall hardest
18 to women of color and their children. At the Center,
19 we work in both courts and community to help tenants
20 stay housed and resolve housing issues before they
21 escalate. In Harlem and Red Hook, our housing
22 resource centers provided over 2,600 residents with
23 court navigation, repair support, and legal
24 connections last year. Our virtual court access
25 networks help tenants respond to court notices and

2 fight for repairs, while our housing navigators now
3 support NYCHA residents citywide in tackling arrears,
4 eviction risk, and habitability issues. Through
5 Community Justice Connect, our local volunteers
6 provide free legal information at neighborhood
7 storefronts, empowering over 1,300 residents last
8 year with housing being the top concern. Our Pro Se
9 Support Project helps self-represented litigants in
10 civil court access services to address deeper issues
11 beyond the court cases. Finally, our Neighborhood
12 Safety Initiatives engaged over 50,000 NYCHA
13 residents last year, investing in youth, transforming
14 public spaces, and strengthening safety through
15 community-led action. We ask that the Council
16 continue support to expand this vital work and break
17 the cycle of housing instability and system
18 involvement. (TIMER CHIME) Together, we can advance
19 housing justice and safety for all. Thank you for
20 listening.

21 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much.

22 So a couple of followups.

23 Pilar, on your point about 33,000 dollars
24 spent in emergency repairs for this building, it is
25 infuriating. These landlords that use the City as a

2 piggybank and have the taxpayer conduct their
3 repairs, that funding, when the City does it, it's so
4 much more expensive than when an owner does it, and
5 so that's why I'm so thankful for your partnership.
6 Paula, thank you for your partnership. Thank you for
7 your participation. We have to get Intro. 1063
8 through the finish line. That is the revamp or the
9 reform of the third-party transfer so that we can
10 talk about taking these buildings away from those bad
11 actors and giving opportunities for tenant ownership
12 and non-profit mission-driven ownership so just
13 reacting to that. Thank you.

14 PILAR DE JESUS: And also, it's also like
15 this building, and I shared it with the Department of
16 Buildings, we're really concerned that it might be
17 like a Bronx number two and a half. Like, it's really
18 bad, and so, yeah.

19 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank
20 you. Thank you for your work on that and keep coming.
21 (SPEAKING SPANISH) Said that in Spanish, but directly
22 to them.

23 I think it was you, Jackie. Your
24 thoughts, I don't know if you heard HPD when they
25 were responding to my questions around the

2 contracting delays. What's your perspective on how
3 they answered that question?

4 JACKIE DEL VALLE: I think they said we've
5 made great progress and they're working on it is
6 what, okay. No, I mean, there have not been a single
7 multi-year registered from HPD. Not one. I know that
8 they also manage, people spoke here that had shelters
9 and scattered sites, so that's not necessarily,
10 that's a little different funding. But in terms of
11 the money for the CLT program, the stabilizing
12 program, the CHPSE, not a single contract has been
13 registered. And I meet with them, the staff is
14 working really hard and I'm not sure what is still
15 the bottlenecks, but they're there, and they're not
16 registering. I see it to be months, if not years, to
17 actually be caught up still.

18 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. That's
19 helpful to hear your perspective on it too.

20 And then a question for James, or not
21 really a question, but an invitation. I have co-
22 founded a group called the West Bronx Community
23 Safety Partnership and just want to invite the Center
24 for Justice Innovation to join us, help us advocate
25 for, like you said, everything from housing, economic

2 opportunities to keep people out of the, hi, she just
3 woke up, to keep people out of the justice system.
4 Would really appreciate your participation.

5 JAMES COGER: I would love to be a part of
6 that. I'm actually one of your constituents and a
7 Bronx Community Board Five member.

8 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Should've led with
9 that.

10 JAMES COGER: Yeah. But I would love to be
11 a part of that as an active community member and
12 engaged and passionate about helping folks. I would
13 love to partake.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Awesome, thank you.
15 Great.

16 Paula, just an opportunity to wrap your
17 thoughts.

18 PAULA SEGAL: All right, so this might
19 feel a little bit out of left field, but DOB was
20 here, and I want to just put this on the record and
21 draw your attention. This is super technical, but
22 it's having very real world impact. As part of City
23 of Yes, this Council approved a change that
24 renumbered everything in the zoning resolution, and I
25 want everybody to feel the chill in that. Because it

2 seemed like, oh, we're going to make the numbers all
3 nice. Nobody checked the building code to see what
4 impacts that was going to have. Yeah, good job,
5 somebody. So, the building code explicitly says that
6 if you want to make a conversion of a space that was
7 formerly retail or mercantile into an office or an
8 office into a retail store so imagine all those
9 dentist offices in your neighborhood, the one where I
10 go to clean my teeth. Imagine all of our storefront,
11 constituent services provision offices, maybe your
12 office. That's what we're talking about. Building
13 code says, the code shall not be interpreted to
14 require an issuance of a new or amended certificate
15 of occupancy for a change from a mercantile
16 establishment to a business establishment or from a
17 business establishment to a mercantile establishment,
18 provided that the change is within the same zoning
19 use group. From 1961 to 2024, the Zoning Resolution
20 called Retail Uses 6A and Office Uses 6B. Same zoning
21 use group. City of Yes says, oh, retail is Roman
22 numeral VI and office is Roman numeral VII. And a
23 client of mine has been denied a letter of no
24 objection from DOB because they went and read the
25 zoning resolution and they were like, sorry guys,

2 it's not the same use group, and I am sure my client
3 is not alone. And forcing your office, the dentist,
4 my client and their constituent services office to go
5 get an amended certificate of incorporation so they
6 can use a little store as their office. That's going
7 to be expensive for the agency. That's going to be
8 expensive for all of us. Please make them stop.

9 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Got it. Thank you.
10 Sorry. I didn't get a chance to ask them that
11 question earlier, but it was on my list of 60 million
12 questions so we will follow up with them just to make
13 sure we get a response to that, but thank you. Thank
14 you to this panel. (SPEAKING SPANISH) And yeah, we'll
15 be following up. Thank you.

16 PILAR DE JESUS: And shoutout to all the
17 women and moms. It's a rough job. Childcare is
18 expensive.

19 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Great. The next
20 panel is Cameron Molyneaux, sorry if I said that
21 wrong, Oksana Mironova, Gabriela Sandoval Requena,
22 Sharon Brown.

23 Sorry. She's like staring up at me. I'm
24 like, don't cry, please. But you may begin when
25 ready.

2 GABRIELA SANDOVAL REQUENA: Thank you.

3 Good afternoon, Chair Sanchez, Yaya, and Council
4 Central Staff. Thank you for holding this important
5 budget hearing and for the opportunity to testify on
6 behalf of New Destiny Housing. My name is Gabriela
7 Sandoval Requena, and I'm the Director of Policy and
8 Communications at New Destiny. New Destiny is the
9 only organization in New York City that is focused
10 100 percent on housing domestic violence survivors.
11 We do permanent housing, not shelters. We are the
12 largest provider of supportive housing in New York
13 State, including three buildings in Council District
14 14. We do this work because domestic violence is the
15 number one cause of family homelessness in our city.
16 In fact, domestic violence pushes more families into
17 shelter than evictions, and supportive housing is one
18 of the safest and most cost-effective housing
19 solutions for those who've endured domestic and
20 gender-based violence. It provides them with a home
21 they can afford and the support they need to heal and
22 thrive. As the federal government continues to
23 threaten vital housing programs for survivors, this
24 year more than ever we need our City to step up and
25 protect New Yorkers impacted by domestic violence. We

2 are submitting extended written testimony, so I'll
3 just underscore two priorities here. First, we ask
4 the City to invest in the NYC15/15 reallocation as
5 the Supportive Housing Network of New York proposes.
6 By reallocating scattered units into the congregate
7 side, many organizations like New Destiny will be
8 able to build more affordable, supportive housing.

9 And second, we are deeply concerned by
10 the federal government's decision to stop funding the
11 Emergency Housing Vouchers, or EHV's, as of the end of
12 this year. More than 7,000 New Yorkers depend on this
13 vital housing resource, including hundreds of
14 domestic violence survivors. We are pushing Congress
15 to allocate funding to sustain the EHV program, but
16 we really need HPD and NYCHA to start planning for
17 contingencies. Thank you, and I'm happy to answer
18 your questions.

19 OKSANA MIRONOVA: Thank you so much. Thank
20 you, Chair, for sticking around until the bitter end,
21 and I will be quick because I'm sure you want to be
22 done with this.

23 My name is Oksana Mironova, and I am a
24 Housing Policy Analyst with the Community Service
25 Society of New York, and thank you for the

2 opportunity to testify today. We commend the City
3 Council for securing a 5-billion-dollar commitment in
4 funding for housing during the City of Yes
5 negotiations, but I have to say that we're
6 disappointed that the full Right to Counsel ask did
7 not make it into the final package. We just published
8 a new eviction analysis that found that Right to
9 Counsel, in tandem with stronger rent laws, have
10 helped reduce eviction filings by 49 percent. Even
11 though the program's impact is really clear, gaps in
12 implementation are growing. We are seeing more and
13 more qualified tenants not being offered legal
14 counsel in housing court and are seeing a troubling
15 rise in evictions among moderate income tenants as
16 well so we're calling on the City to honor its
17 commitment to full implementation of Right to
18 Council. Thank you so much. I've been watching the
19 testimony the whole day today, and your commitment to
20 Neighborhood Pillars, Open Door, and capacity
21 building within HPD and DOB are a huge deal, and
22 thank you for that.

23 I want to echo what the previous panel
24 has discussed in regards to the Community Land Trust
25 Initiative. We would love to see its budget doubled

2 to 3 million dollars, and we're also happy to see the
3 focus in HPD and with the City Council on our legacy
4 social housing so that's public housing, Mitchell-
5 Lama, HDFCs. I know that they have been mentioned
6 multiple times throughout the day today. And just to
7 add that they house over 275,000 families, so a huge
8 portion of our housing stock. The one thing that we
9 want to contribute to this conversation is that
10 during the (TIMER CHIME) stabilization efforts, we'd
11 love to see permanent and deep affordability as well.

12 CAMERON MOLYNEAUX: Thank you all for the
13 opportunity to speak. My name is Cameron Molyneaux,
14 and I'm the elected President/Chapter Chair of A
15 Better NYLAG, a chapter of the Association of Legal
16 Advocates and Attorneys, which is UAW Local 2325. In
17 my position, I sit on the executive board of Local
18 2325. 2325 represents over 3,400 active and retired
19 legal service workers at over 30 non-profit
20 organizations in the New York City area, including
21 the majority of providers participating in the RTC
22 program. 2325 members are attorneys, paralegals,
23 social workers, investigators, interpreters, and
24 more. We are the workers who keep people in their
25 homes, fight for tenants' rights to safe and

2 habitable housing, and keep landlords accountable to
3 the law. Our members are an essential labor force,
4 but like with HPD and DOB, underfunding has led to
5 untenable conditions. We are facing an attrition and
6 workload crisis. We're facing a student debt crisis.
7 Our salaries and retirement benefits have failed to
8 keep pace with our counterparts in city and state
9 governments. When our wages stagnate, the services
10 poor and working-class New Yorkers receive are
11 degraded. It takes years as a practitioner to fully
12 understand the power of the law, like the rent
13 regulation system in New York City, and how to use
14 DOB and HPD to assist our clients in fighting for
15 their rights. Our members use these systems and
16 agencies as tools to keep people in their homes, and
17 to make sure those homes are safe and habitable. It
18 takes a depth of knowledge with rent regulations,
19 like HPD Section 8, HPD Mitchell-Lama, rent
20 stabilization, to navigate the world of landlord-
21 tenant law. It takes experience to know how to best
22 advocate with these City agencies about making sure
23 our clients' homes are free of maintenance issues.
24 We've tried to fill senior positions in our
25 organizations, but that has failed because senior

2 attorneys and paralegals are leaving our
3 organizations every day. Our salaries are too low,
4 and the cost of living is too high. This year, Local
5 2325 has aligned the contracts of over 2,100 of our
6 union members across 12 chapters to expire on June
7 30th for a potential sector-wide strike in July that
8 could shut down the courts across the city. We are
9 committed to bargaining in good faith with our
10 employers, and we don't want (TIMER CHIME) a strike,
11 but we are prepared to withhold our labor to win a
12 future..

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Time's
14 expired.

15 SHARON BROWN: Hello. My name is Sharon
16 Brown, Rose of Sharon Enterprises. Before I begin,
17 remember the hostages, release the hostages, let
18 Yahweh's people go. Defend Israel.

19 Okay. The Department of Buildings was
20 here. I believe that funding for the Department of
21 Buildings, NYCHA, Section 8, and all of these
22 different things should come with them having to
23 submit periodical reports of when they are making the
24 repairs and doing the things that the tenants are
25 complaining about so there needs to be some

2 accountability. So, the list of things that the
3 tenants have been complaining about, they should have
4 to submit a report to the City Council, and the
5 things that are not getting done by their own
6 submissions and the tenants saying that they did it
7 or they did not do it, they can correspond as well,
8 the tenants. If they do not do the repairs, their
9 funding should be withheld, held up, or there should
10 be some kind of punishment, or it should be pulled,
11 maybe people should be replaced. There should be
12 something within their funding that if they are not
13 getting the job done, these people will be replaced
14 periodically. You should look into what they're
15 doing. It would be accountable for them to have to
16 submit something and, if they are not coming up to
17 standard, as they have not been for many years, that
18 they would be replaced immediately, or the tenants
19 could get the monies and contract someone out instead
20 of having to pay rent. The tenants can pull the
21 monies instead of owing them and actually get some of
22 the repairs done themselves if need be, or some kind
23 of organization can help them get the funding because
24 (TIMER CHIME) fire escapes are dangerous...

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Time's
3 expired.

4 SHARON BROWN: Balconies, etc. These
5 things need to be taken care of. Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Sorry, she just
7 bumped her head.

8 I just wanted to state for the record and
9 publicly, I am with you. Whatever I can do as an
10 individual member and bringing other Council Members
11 to support the union's efforts.

12 CAMERON MOLYNEAUX: Yeah. And I didn't get
13 to finish. Our main asks are that the City Council
14 fully funds Right to Counsel and also to support our
15 union and our fight for fair contracts because if we
16 get better benefits, it benefits all tenants across
17 New York City because if we are experienced and have
18 good pay and we can stay in these jobs that we care
19 about, then that benefits tenants. And then also, we
20 would ask the Council to fully fund and staff DOB and
21 HPD because these agencies are crucial to holding
22 landlords accountable for harassment, safety of
23 buildings, and health and well-being of tenants.
24 Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, thank you
3 so much, Cameron.

4 Oksana, you mentioned 275,000 families
5 served by which program? I just missed that.

6 OKSANA MIRONOVA: So that's all of the
7 legacy social housing programs. So that's public
8 housing, Mitchell-Lama co-ops, and HDFC co-ops.

9 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yeah. And to your
10 point about, or maybe it was the earlier panel's
11 point about accountability, there were funds that
12 were committed through the City for All negotiations
13 for Mitchell-Lama, supporting Mitchell-Lamas,
14 existing Mitchell-Lamas so just welcome partnership
15 in ensuring that those funds make it into the actual
16 budget.

17 Okay. Thank you, thank you so much for
18 sticking around. Thank you for your testimony this
19 afternoon.

20 I believe we're moving to our final
21 panel.

22 Okay. We will now turn to remote
23 testimony. Once your name is called, a member of our
24 staff will unmute you, and the Sergeant-at-Arms will
25 give you the go-ahead to begin. Please wait for the

2 Sergeant to announce that you may begin before
3 delivering your testimony.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay. So, first I'm
6 going to call Pamela Herrera from the Western Queens
7 CLT.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

9 PAMELA HERRERA: Good afternoon, Committee
10 Chair Sanchez, Yaya, and Members of the Housing
11 Committee, and thank you for the opportunity to
12 testify. My name is Pamela Herrera, and I am the Land
13 Justice Coordinator at the Western Queens Community
14 Land Trust. The Western Queens CLT is a non-profit
15 organization made up of activists, small business
16 owners, professors, artists, students, and community
17 members who fight for democratic and equitable land
18 use in Western Queens. We ask the City Council to
19 ensure enhanced funding of three million for the CLT
20 initiative in this year's FY26 expense budget, as
21 Speaker Adams committed last year. This urgently
22 needed funding will support the growth of our CLT
23 among many others in the other boroughs. We are so
24 thankful for the funding we have received in prior
25 years. With this funding, we have been able to hire a

2 full-time staffer, host town halls, workshops, and
3 events for the community. We hope to be able to add
4 to our staff and continue the growth of our
5 organization to promote deep affordability and
6 preservation of public land. The CLTs funded are
7 organizing across the city to address our worsening
8 affordability crisis. The city is facing a housing
9 crisis that has engulfed thousands of people in
10 unstable conditions in their survival. Our CLT has
11 expended our work and is addressing this concern in
12 Elmhurst by potentially providing over 50 units of
13 deep affordability. Thanks to the City Council's
14 funding, we have been able to pave the way to find
15 properties, partners, and community members that
16 believe in the CLT as a measure to address the
17 housing crisis. In short, funding is not just about
18 buying land. It's about investing in the health,
19 well-being, and future of our entire neighborhoods.
20 It's an investment in the more equitable, just, and
21 resilient way of living that puts people before
22 profit, ensuring that the benefits of land ownership
23 are shared by the community rather than concentrated
24 in the hands of a few. By bringing land and housing
25 into community ownership, CLTs serve the neighborhood

2 and protect it against real estate speculation and
3 displacement. Since 1994, the Cooper Square CLT on
4 Manhattan's Lower East Side has preserved more than
5 320 deeply affordable apartments and two dozen
6 affordable storefronts in 21 buildings and is (TIMER
7 CHIME) now expanding to...

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Time's
9 expired.

10 PAMELA HERRERA: Okay. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you. I'd next
12 like to call Helen Taylor from SHNNY.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Helen Taylor,
15 please.

16 HELEN TAYLOR: Good afternoon, everyone.
17 I'm so grateful to be here. I'm here in my wonderful
18 supportive housing apartment and want to share why
19 this apartment is so very important to me. Having my
20 apartment, the very first apartment I have ever had
21 in my life, has made a difference in my life today
22 because it is a step closer to fulfilling my mission
23 to live a better life. It's not just a place to live.
24 I have tremendous amount of support in my existence.
25 My humanity is acknowledged. I am part of a

2 community. There are people that check on me. My
3 birthdays are celebrated. When I had COVID, people
4 went out and bought me groceries, plus so much more.
5 Getting my apartment and working with such wonderful
6 people at Fortune Society allowed me to go from
7 hanging out and sleeping in the park to performing
8 Shakespeare in the park. Yes, that's right. The
9 creative art department at Fortune Society connected
10 me with the wonderful people of the public theater.
11 And the next thing I know, I'm acting on stage at the
12 Delacorte Theater in Central Park with thousands of
13 people watching me every night. Well, not too long
14 before that, I had to sleep (INAUDIBLE) in a public
15 park. My apartment allows me now to only be in the
16 park when I want to be, to perform, to practice, and
17 to sit on the bench and listen to the birds. I'm very
18 grateful for this apartment and the people at Fortune
19 Society. You really saved my life, and I'm grateful
20 that I'm able to reach out and give back to those who
21 are in the situation (TIMER CHIME) that I was in.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Time's
23 expired.

24 HELEN TAYLOR: By activating for more
25 resources for the supportive housing. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, thank
3 you, Helen.

4 I'd now like to call on Jonathan Cohen.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

6 JONATHAN COHEN: Good afternoon, Committee
7 Chair Sanchez, Yaya, and the Members of the Housing
8 Committee, and thank you for the opportunity to
9 testify. My name is Jonathan Cohen. I'm the Housing
10 Managing Attorney at Catholic Migration Services. I
11 want to talk about critical funding for programs
12 stabilizing New York City and Community Housing
13 Preservation Strategies Initiative, which supports
14 low-income tenants and the preservation of affordable
15 housing in New York City. Our lawyers provide
16 representation for housing for tenants in housing
17 eviction cases, and we also file affirmative cases
18 against landlords when there are unsafe conditions.
19 Our tenant organizers help tenants form tenants
20 associations, build community leadership, provide
21 education on tenants' rights, and organize rallies
22 and actions in support of tenants fighting evictions.
23 Catholic Migration Services and Chhaya have organized
24 tenants associations and buildings owned by some of
25 the most notorious landlords throughout Queens.

2 Stabilizing New York City has enabled us to form
3 tenants associations and buildings and to fight
4 landlords and lead grassroots efforts through
5 tenants' education, leadership development, and legal
6 defense and support. Over the past 11 years, our
7 organizations throughout Stabilizing have had many,
8 many successes and, again, against some of the really
9 worst bad actors. As Jackie Del Valle mentioned, we
10 are asking for an increase of 1.3 million dollars in
11 Stabilizing or 65,000 per organization and 4.95
12 million for CHPI. This funding has not changed since
13 2016, and this is critical work. And what's important
14 also is we're not only preserving housing, but we're
15 preserving it. Once the housing's lost, it's gone,
16 and it's gone permanently. And what we're trying to
17 do is to preserve affordable housing in the long term
18 and to empower tenants to be able to stand up (TIMER
19 CHIME) and fight.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time's expired.

21 JONATHAN COHEN: Okay. There'll be more
22 detailed testimony as well, and thanks very much
23 again.

24 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much.

25 I'd now like to call on Todd Baker.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

3 TODD BAKER: Hi, good afternoon. Can you
4 hear me?

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Yep.

6 TODD BAKER: Excellent. Well, thank you to
7 Chair Member Sanchez and to the rest of the Council
8 as well. My name is Todd Baker. I'm a Project Manager
9 at the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy
10 Coalition. We have a 50-year history of organizing
11 tenants in the Bronx to demand accountability from
12 their landlords, from City agencies, but in the last
13 five to 10 years, we're increasingly focused on our
14 Community Land Trust work and promoting ownership
15 among residents. So today I'm here, we actually
16 incorporated the Bronx Community Land Trust five
17 years ago and are now, along with Community Land
18 Trusts across the city, modeling a version of
19 homeownership and of resident-controlled housing that
20 can be deeply and permanently affordable and
21 sustainable. So today we're asking the City Council
22 to ensure the enhanced level of funding that was
23 committed to of 3 million dollars for the City's
24 Community Land Trust Initiative in the FY26 budget.
25 I'm also here to just speak about the need for

2 preservation projects that create homeownership
3 opportunities, like the project that we're working on
4 right now with the Council Member at Davidson Avenue.
5 These projects demonstrate that HPD needs to be
6 funding, not just the rehabilitation and
7 preservation, but the organizing work and the other
8 work that's necessary to convert to cooperative
9 ownership and to create real and lasting
10 homeownership opportunities available for residents
11 at extremely low and very low-income levels, like
12 those here in our neighborhoods in the Northwest
13 Bronx.

14 We're also engaged in new construction.
15 So, we understand the importance of demonstrating an
16 updated term sheet for programs like Open Door that
17 are able to commit a level of capital that's actually
18 necessary to deliver, again, housing to folks at the
19 extremely low and very low-income levels we find in
20 our district. Those are some of our biggest
21 priorities for the day. We thank you so much for
22 giving us the time to speak.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much,
24 Todd, and thank you for your partnership. I'm really

2 excited about what we're going to accomplish at 2201-
3 05 Davidson.

4 And I believe last but not least,
5 Christopher Leon Johnson. Thank you, thank you,
6 Christopher.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

8 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah, hello.
9 Hello, Chair Sanchez. My name is Christopher Leon
10 Johnson. I'm in the car right now. Just came from a
11 event in the Bronx. I think it was your neighborhood
12 at 950 Union Avenue for a woman's empowerment event.
13 I just left.

14 Yeah, so I'm calling on the investigation
15 for East New York Community Land Trust. I am calling
16 on the investigation to Albert Scott. I'm calling on
17 the investigation to Council Member Sandy Nurse. I'm
18 calling to ask Sandy Nurse and Mr. Albert Scott on
19 why that they sold out their own people with 248
20 Arlington Avenue, telling that it was a great deal
21 with 248 Arlington Avenue, and it wasn't. They got
22 completely screwed over. Yeah, the last owner of 248
23 Arlington was a bad landlord, but 248 Arlington, the
24 people that are running right now, East New York
25 Community Land Trust, is a way worse landlord. I'm

2 calling on the investigation to Hailie Kim. Shout out
3 to Julie Won for beating her in 2023 in the City
4 Council race. So, I'm calling on the investigation
5 into Hailie Kim of the Cypress Hills organization
6 because she's part of that deal with 248 Arlington.
7 This is a warning to anybody out there that has a bad
8 landlord in their impoverished communities. The
9 people of 248 Arlington and East New York, which is
10 Sandy Nurse's District and (INAUDIBLE) district, they
11 going through a lot of stuff, prostitution, vagrants,
12 homeless people, people that they'll (INAUDIBLE) on
13 the last worst landlord, but this landlord they have
14 right now, the East New York Community Land Trust is
15 way worse, so this Community Land Trust stuff need to
16 stop. The City Council need to end all Community Land
17 Trust contracts, need to stop having them as main
18 advocates for housing because with this 248 Arlington
19 situation, we just found that this does not work. I'm
20 supporting the people of 248 Arlington. I hope they
21 get out of the Community Land Trust situation. This
22 need to be sold to a private developer or give it to
23 a public developer (TIMER CHIME)

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time's expired.

2 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Give it to HUD.
3 So thank you, Sanchez. Investigate Nurse, investigate
4 Hailie Kim and investigate Albert Scott. Shout out to
5 248 Arlington, all the tenants and the people that
6 trying to get back their property back away from East
7 New York Community Land Trust. So, thank you and
8 enjoy your day, Sanchez.

9 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, thank
10 you, Christopher. I just have one question. Who is
11 that cutie behind you?

12 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah, I'm here.

13 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Who's that cutie
14 behind you?

15 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Oh, that's
16 Angela (INAUDIBLE) son. His name is _____.

17 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Oh, hello. Be
18 civically active, okay? Be like Christopher. Go to
19 hearings and speak your mind, all right? Thank you.
20 Thank you, Christopher. Appreciate you.

21 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah. Thank
22 you, thank you, thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Take care.

24 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Thank you.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay. I'm going to
3 call a few names. I think these folks may have hopped
4 off, but William Spisak, New Economy, Alex Stein,
5 Gwendolyn Primus (phonetic), Hannah Anousheh
6 (phonetic).

7 Okay. With that, if we have inadvertently
8 missed anyone that has registered to testify today
9 and has yet to be called, please use the Zoom raise
10 hand function if you are testifying remotely and you
11 will be called in the order that your hand has been
12 raised. If you are testifying in person, please come
13 to the dais.

14 Seeing none, I will now close the
15 hearing. Thank you to members of the Administration,
16 to the members of the public, to Yaya, and to our
17 Staff who have joined us today. This hearing is now
18 adjourned. She's going to do it.

19 Oh, Will is here. Oh, yeah, saved by
20 Yaya. Go ahead, Will.

21 You are on mute. He's on mute. I think
22 someone has to unmute him.

23 WILL SPISAK: Great, can you hear me now?

24 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Yes, okay.

2 WILL SPISAK: All right. That's wonderful.
3 I can't let the final testimony say bad things about
4 Community Land Trusts when they're doing amazing
5 works. I need to highlight the amazing works the OTs
6 are actually doing in New York City. So thank you,
7 Chair Sanchez and Members of the Housing Committee.
8 My name is Will Spisak. I'm a Senior Policy
9 Strategist for New Economy Project. We're a 30-year-
10 old organization that's been fighting for a new
11 economy, a just economy based on principles of
12 cooperation, racial and ecological justice, and we
13 are the coordinators of the Citywide Community Land
14 Trust Initiative or the CLT Initiative, and we are
15 the coordinators of the New York City Community Land
16 Initiative or NYCCLI, a coalition of 20 community
17 land trusts around the five boroughs. The CLTs are
18 doing tremendous work to bring community control to
19 land and housing around New York City in a way that
20 hasn't been done broadly in a very long time, and
21 we're really excited to see the growth of CLTs expand
22 across the city and bring true community control,
23 true tenant power directly to New York City
24 neighborhoods. We're asking the City Council to
25 ensure enhanced funding of 3 million dollars for the

2 CLT Initiative in the Fiscal Year '26 expense budget
3 as Speaker Adams has committed to in last year's City
4 for All package. This urgently needed funding will
5 support the growth of 17 CLTs and three citywide
6 technical assistance organizations working to expand
7 the CLT model and bring more land and housing under
8 community control. We also urge the City Council to
9 address the City agency's chronic harmful delays in
10 registering discretionary funding contracts. It's
11 been painfully slow and it's really putting a lot of
12 CLTs and organizations like ours at risk by delaying
13 payment for the work that we're doing. And lastly..

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time's expired.

15 WILL SPISAK: All right. Thank you so
16 much. Please fund Neighborhood Pillars and get that
17 term sheet out. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Excellent. Thank you
19 so much.

20 Just a special highlight to this baby. I
21 call her the professional baby because she kind of
22 lets me do my work. This is my first time back at
23 City Hall for a hearing, but we've been running the
24 District office together since she was basically a
25 couple weeks old so thank you, little baby.

2 And with that, this hearing is
3 officially, hold on, you're going to do it,
4 adjourned. [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 April 22, 2025