

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEES ON FINANCE, AGING, PARKS AND RECREATION,
AND SUBCOMMITTEE ON SENIOR CENTERS

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May 16, 2012
Start: 10:16 a.m.
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HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:

DOMENIC M. RECCHIA, JR.
DAVID G. GREENFIELD
MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO
JESSICA S. LAPPIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Council Member Gale A. Brewer
Council Member Fernando
Council Member Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Council Member Elizabeth S. Crowley
Council Member Daniel Dromm
Council Member Julissa Ferreras
Council Member Lewis A. Fidler
Council Member Helen D. Foster
Council Member Vincent J. Gentile
Council Member David G. Greenfield
Council Member Vincent M. Ignizio

A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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Council Member Peter A. Koo
Council Member G. Oliver Koppell
Council Member Karen Koslowitz
Council Member Stephen T. Levin
Council Member Darlene Mealy
Council Member James S. Oddo
Council Member Diana Reyna
Council Member Deborah L. Rose
Council Member James Vacca
Council Member James G. Van Bramer
Council Member Albert Vann

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

Lilliam Barrios-Paoli
Commissioner
Department for the Aging

Joy Wang
Assistant Commissioner for Planning and Fiscal
Operations
Department for the Aging

Bill Chong
Deputy Commissioner for Program Operations
Department for the Aging

Adrian Benepe
Commissioner
Department of Parks and Recreation

David Stark
Chief Financial Officer, Assistant Commissioner
Department of Parks and Recreation

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

Therese Braddick

Department of Parks and Recreation
Deputy Commissioner for Capital Projects

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2 [background noise, rules of
3 conduct]

4 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you
5 very much, to our Sergeant-at-Arms. [pause]
6 Okay. Good morning and welcome to the second day
7 of the City Council hearings on the Mayor's
8 Executive Budget, for Fiscal Year 2013. My name
9 is Domenic M. Recchia, Jr., and I'm the Chair of
10 the Finance Committee. Before we get started, I'd
11 like to introduce all of my colleagues who have
12 joined us here today: to my left, we have Peter
13 Koo, Member Margaret Chin, Council Member Helen
14 Diane Foster; Council Member David Greenfield; to
15 my right, we have Council Member Jessica Lappin.
16 Today, the Finance Committee will be joined by the
17 Committee on Aging, chaired by my colleague,
18 Council Member Jessica Lappin, and the
19 Subcommittee on Senior Centers, chaired by my
20 colleague, David Greenfield, to hear from the
21 Department for the Aging, Commissioner Lilliam
22 Barrios-Paoli. Then in the afternoon, the Finance
23 Committee will be joined by the Committee on Parks
24 and Recreation, chaired by my colleague, Melissa
25 Mark-Viverito, to hear from the Commissioner for

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2 the Parks Department, Adrian Benepe. As reminder,
3 the public will be allowed to testify on all
4 agencies on June 6th, which will be the last day
5 of budget hearings, and the public testimony will
6 begin at approximately 4:00 o'clock. For members
7 of the public who wish to testify on Monday, but
8 cannot make the hearing, you can fax your
9 testimony to my Counsel, sitting to my right,
10 Tanisha Edwards, and she will make it part of the
11 official record. Her fax number is (212) 788-
12 7061. Before I turn the mic over to my co-chair,
13 Council Member Jessica Lappin, and then to the
14 Aging, and then to Council Member David
15 Greenfield, then we'll hear from the Commissioner,
16 I want to just say a few quick words about the
17 Executive Budget proposal for DFTA. The proposed
18 budget for DFTA in Fiscal 2013, is approximately
19 \$23 million less than Fiscal '12 adopted budget.
20 This can be attributed to the fact that a large
21 portion of City funds for DFTA are from the City
22 Council. Since Council funding is renegotiated
23 annually and allocated on a onetime basis, it is
24 not included in the executive budget. Through
25 negotiation with the City Council, the

1 Administration has agreed to baseline \$14 million
2 this year for DFTA Senior Centers in Fiscal 2013
3 and the out years, which has historically been
4 funded by the Council. This is good news. On
5 April 3rd, DFTA announced that the City's first
6 eight innovative senior centers, which offers
7 wellness and arts program, access to technology,
8 healthcare services, and volunteer opportunities.
9 Also, earlier this year, DFTA announced its
10 neighborhood senior center solicitation. The
11 solicitation is funded at \$99.3 million and seeks
12 to update the contracts of all DFTA senior
13 centers. So, all in all, the budget for DFTA is
14 not as bad as last year, but still there are many
15 issues and many programs that we must try to
16 restore and work with the administration to fund
17 properly. I am eager to hear from the
18 Commissioner about the agency's new programs and
19 how they will continue to meet the needs of our
20 seniors. We have a long day today, so at this
21 time I recognize Council Member Jessica Lappin.
22 And then we will hear from Council Member David
23 Greenfield. Council Member?

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25 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Thank you, and

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2 I wanted to note we've also been joined by
3 Councilwoman Debbie Rose. It's wonderful to see
4 so many seniors here today. We appreciate you
5 coming very much. And even though you won't be
6 testifying today, your presence in the chambers
7 says a great deal. Right, a picture's worth a
8 thousand words. So, thank you very much for being
9 here today. As Chair Recchia mentioned, this
10 year, because of our negotiations with the
11 Administration last year, there was \$14 million
12 that was baselined in FY 2013 for senior centers.
13 And that was a big victory for all of us who are
14 here in this room today. Unfortunately, there are
15 still funds that we need to restore, and that I
16 hope we will discuss today. It'll be also
17 interesting to hear about the innovative senior
18 centers, the RFP for senior centers that was just
19 recently, or is about to be--no, that the DFTA
20 senior center RFP has gone out probably?

21 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Yeah.

22 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Yes, yes. And
23 to discuss the funding for that, in addition, we'd
24 like to discuss today case management, and of the
25 \$6.6 million that was cut from FY 2012, how that

1 will impact the case management agencies, and
2 their caseloads, and the layoffs that those
3 providers have had to take out. We also want to
4 discuss today the homebound seniors and their need
5 for services and benefits, as well as monitoring
6 and support. Because of the rising caseloads in
7 case management and the provider layoffs, it's
8 reasonable to assume that this cut also caused an
9 increase in the number of preventable emergency
10 situations, emergency room visits,
11 hospitalizations, elder abuse, and nursing home
12 placements. We also appreciate the Commissioner's
13 efforts to meet with the Committee and members of
14 the Council to discuss the outlook for the
15 upcoming fiscal year. I want to thank you for
16 always being available and her staff as well. In
17 addition to our Committee staff for all of their
18 work throughout the year: Pakhi Sengupta, our
19 Finance Analyst; Robert Cornegi [phonetic] our
20 Policy Analyst; and Matt Hickey, the Council to
21 the Committee. And now I'll turn it over to
22 Council Member David Greenfield.
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24 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Good
25 morning. My name is David Greenfield, I'm the

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2 Chair of the Subcommittee on Senior Centers. I
3 want to thank Chair Lappin and Chair Recchia for
4 the leadership and collaboration on all senior
5 issues. I want to thank all of you seniors who've
6 come out here today, it's inspiring for us and we
7 know that you have our back and we have yours.
8 Obviously, we're definitely pleased about the
9 situation that, in relative terms, things are
10 better this year, especially including the \$14
11 million in baseline funding. Of course we do
12 still have some concerns about the typical items
13 that are on the chopping block. We also look
14 forward to hearing from the Commissioner regarding
15 what can be done regarding the phase out of the
16 central insurance program, which is something that
17 is of serious concern to many senior centers,
18 senior center employees and obviously as it stands
19 right now, appears to be a budget buster for many
20 senior centers. And we very much look forward to
21 hearing about case management, as well. We were
22 only able to restore half the money last year for
23 case management, and we know that the
24 restorations, we really could use the rest of the
25 money, and so I'm looking forward to hearing about

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2 that. But we all know that DFTA's mission is
3 really to enhance the independence and quality of
4 life of the City's senior population; but the core
5 of the DFTA portfolio maintenance network of 256
6 senior centers, it's a critical resource for many
7 seniors. They serve approximately nine-and-a-half
8 million meals a year, provide opportunities for
9 seniors to socialize, to stay connected to their
10 communities, and much needed help and wellness
11 service programs. And so we hope to hear details
12 on the progress of DFTA's recent neighborhood
13 senior center solicitation, updates on the old
14 innovative senior centers, the new innovative
15 senior centers, and definitely also want to echo
16 the testimony of the Chair that we are very
17 grateful for the Commissioner's leadership, and we
18 know that anything bad that comes out of DFTA
19 really comes from Linda Gibbs and not from
20 Commissioner Paoli. So, thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay, before
22 we get started, Commissioner, I'd like to
23 recognize those other, more members that have
24 joined us this morning: Vincent Ignizio, Council
25 Member Jimmy Oddo, Council Member Diana Reyna,

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2 Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito, Council
3 Member Al Vann and Council Member Jimmy Vacca.
4 Okay? And Commissioner?

5 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Good
6 morning, Chairs Lappin and Recchia, and Members of
7 the Aging and Finance Committee. My name is
8 Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, I'm the Commissioner of the
9 New York City Department for the Aging. Here with
10 me today is Joy Wang, Assistant Commissioner for
11 Budget and Fiscal Operations. Thank you for the
12 opportunity to testify before you today on the
13 Department of Aging's Fiscal Year 2013 Executive
14 Budget. The Fiscal Year 2013 Executive Budget is
15 projected at \$235 million in baseline funding and
16 includes allocations of \$106 million to support
17 senior centers, \$31 million for home delivered
18 meals, \$16 million for case management services,
19 \$16 million to support homecare for homebound
20 seniors who are not Medicaid eligible, and \$4
21 million for caregiver support services. DFTA is
22 fortunate that we do not have required budget
23 reductions for Fiscal '13. I think it is
24 important to recognize that even in the face of
25 the fiscal constraint of recent years, New York

1 City has led the nation in commitment to aging
2 services. The primary source of funding for aging
3 services throughout the country, the Older
4 Americans Act, has remained largely flat funded
5 for over ten years, and New York City government
6 has stepped in to fill the gaps. This could not
7 be accomplished without the contributions of the
8 City Council, our partners in providing vital
9 services to older New Yorkers. I would especially
10 like to recognize the Council for working with the
11 Administration to baseline the \$14 million in
12 discretionary funding for Fiscal Year '13.
13 Baselining this funding is crucial because it
14 creates a more stable environment for our
15 nonprofit providers, while also allowing DFTA the
16 ability to better plan services and priorities
17 over the long term. In order to further stabilize
18 our programs, DFTA relies heavily on the
19 discretionary funding allocated towards space and
20 transportation costs at senior centers, as well as
21 the borough president funding. This funding has
22 become an integral part of the operating budgets
23 of DFTA senior centers and other programs. This
24 funding, integral to stabilizing the senior center
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1 network, is DFTA's first priority in terms of
2 restorations. I would like to ask the Council to
3 take this into account when negotiating the final
4 budget. DFTA is also grateful to the Council for
5 the restoration of \$3 million in case management
6 funding as part of the Fiscal Year '12 adopted
7 budget. DFTA certainly welcomes additional
8 funding for case management through restorations;
9 however, we must be cognizant of the difficulty
10 providers face in carrying out, carrying out
11 ongoing programming while drawing down
12 discretionary dollars on an annual basis when
13 these dollars make up a larger portion of their
14 case management budgets. Case management is a
15 service largely driven by staff costs. That is
16 the salaries of the social workers who work in the
17 case management--with the case management clients.
18 A significant lack to programs in receiving
19 discretionary funding and the uncertainty
20 associated with annual discretionary allocations
21 can make it difficult for case management agencies
22 to operate this staff intensive service. DFTA is
23 also in the midst of a pilot program with home
24 delivered meal providers, which could have an
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1 impact on the caseloads of our case management
2 agencies in the long term. In October, DFTA began
3 the pilot with the goal of increasing
4 participation in the home delivered meals program
5 for six contracts that were experiencing
6 underutilization. While DFTA funded case
7 management providers continue to assess and
8 authorize clients for home delivered meals, this
9 pilot opens up an additional entry point to home
10 delivered meal programs by allowing these
11 providers to identify, assess and authorize
12 clients for the service. Early information
13 suggests that the pilot is having a very positive
14 impact on increasing home delivered meals clients
15 with 528 more client enrolled for meals on a daily
16 basis as of April 2012. Enrollment has been
17 growing each month so the pilot goes through its
18 startup period. DFTA is currently assessing the
19 pilot which will run at least through June, and
20 based on this assessment, DFTA will consider
21 whether to expand the program into the next fiscal
22 year. Going forward, we expect case management
23 providers to continue their role in assessing and
24 authorizing for meals as well as for other
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2 services. However, by opening an additional point
3 of entry for clients that may not need high
4 intensity services beyond meals, we may be able to
5 achieve reduced caseloads for case management
6 agencies which are admittedly high in many
7 agencies. Since we last met, the Department has
8 made significant progress meeting several
9 important programmatic milestones. On March 27th,
10 proposals were due for DFTA's neighborhood center
11 solicitations. We received 274 proposals to
12 operate neighborhood senior centers, including
13 proposals from providers who had not previously
14 been funded by DFTA. Proposals are being reviewed
15 and we expect to have selections made in June with
16 contracts commencing in the fall. Existing
17 provider contracts are being, are being renewed
18 for Fiscal '13, to ensure that there are no gaps
19 in services. We are grateful to the aging
20 services provider community for their continued
21 focus on providing high quality consumer oriented
22 services at our neighborhood centers. Our
23 innovative senior centers continue to impress us
24 with their creative programming and success in
25 generating interest among the population of older

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2 New Yorkers, including those who have never before
3 attended a senior center. The innovative senior
4 center on Staten Island, operated by the Jewish
5 Community Council opened its doors to 1,500
6 applicants for membership. This is certainly a
7 phenomenal response from the community and we
8 commend them for their outreach efforts. The
9 innovative senior center serving special
10 populations of the visually impaired, Visions, has
11 just begun a meal voucher program that can be
12 redeemed at a nearby Olive Garden Restaurant, at
13 times when Visions is not serving a meal, such as
14 during weekends. Visions also trained Olive
15 Garden staff on how to assist visually impaired
16 seniors and our nutritionist reviewed the meals to
17 ensure compliance with dietary requirements. The
18 vouchers have been a big hit; in fact, one
19 participants reported to program that the program
20 allowed her to have her first ever experience in a
21 restaurant. Snap, our southeastern Queen
22 [phonetic], has a robust health and wellness
23 program, headed by a fulltime coordinator. A
24 nurse by training, she's not only organizing
25 extensive programming, she sees participants for

1 individual counseling. One diabetic client that
2 she has been working with has reduced her visits
3 to the clinic from every other week to once a
4 month, due to the improved care coordination. We
5 have long known anecdotally that our senior center
6 programs serve as an important function of helping
7 participants maintain their health and wellness.
8 To the innovative senior center initiative, we are
9 hopeful about producing data that demonstrate that
10 we, what we have long known, that senior centers
11 are a vital tool in the continuum of care for
12 older New Yorkers. As part of the innovative
13 senior center initiative, DFTA is currently
14 reviewing proposals for Brooklyn. We look forward
15 to adding innovative Brooklyn providers to our
16 portfolio and expect to announce selections by
17 June 30th. As always, I appreciate the support
18 and partnership of the City Council in these
19 efforts and I'm happy to take any questions that
20 you may have.
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22 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you,
23 Commissioner. Many of my colleagues have
24 questions. I'm going to let them all go first,
25 but I just want to start off by recognizing Karen

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2 Koslowitz from Queens, joined us. In this year,
3 in the budget, we noticed that you were no longer
4 paying for staff at senior centers for their
5 health insurance. Basically, you put it into
6 their budgets and you told them they have to go
7 purchase their, their own insurance. Is that
8 correct?

9 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: That is
10 correct.

11 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: And with that
12 money, okay, before you did this, you would ...
13 pay for their insurance.

14 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Not
15 completely. Let me backtrack a little bit. About
16 a year ago, I informed the providers that the City
17 would no longer be offering health as part of the
18 ins--the City would no longer be offering health
19 insurance for providers. But 50 percent of the
20 DFTA portfolio of providers used that insurance;
21 the other 50 percent procured their own insurance.
22 Essentially, they were contributing 28 percent of
23 their personal budget to the insurance, and DFTA
24 subsidized some part of it. So for the last year,
25 we've been working with CSCS and the providers,

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2 trying to figure out how the, they would procure
3 their self, their insurance. The moneys that I
4 used to use to subsidize some part of that
5 insurance were put into the pool of the
6 neighborhood RFP, so that money didn't go anywhere
7 other than to, as part of the proposal. And we
8 said to the providers that when they submitted
9 their budget for the neighborhood centers, they
10 could ask for up to ten percent additional funding
11 from whatever they had been receiving before. We,
12 CSCS, was a spectacular partner in this, they
13 tried very, very hard to get quotes for insurance
14 companies. Unfortunately, the, it's very
15 difficult to navigate the insurance world, and the
16 rates that they obtained were not, were higher
17 than the community, the community rates. So, that
18 did not work very well. We've been working, the
19 Administration has been working with Accenture,
20 with whom the City had a contract for bulk
21 purchasing, and Accenture has come out with an
22 insurance product and I am hoping that by tomorrow
23 I will be able to make it public to all the
24 providers. Accenture essentially has about 14
25 different insurance products that can be bought,

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2 and the cost is lower than the quotes that we had
3 been getting in the past. So, we're really
4 hopeful that they can avail themselves of this. I
5 will have much more detail, and we're just in the
6 process of getting the detail. I will have much
7 more detail possibly by tomorrow, I will gladly
8 share it with you as soon as I get it. But my
9 hope is that we can work with those quotes and
10 whatever we can do through the budget, so that
11 they could have, you know, they can have health
12 coverage.

13 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay.

14 Should've made this hearing this week. [laughter]
15 What, you said that DFTA subsidized, okay, this
16 insurance payment, okay. How much did they
17 subsidize? What was the total number?

18 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: It was
19 about \$5 million, on top of whatever was there.
20 Let me say--

21 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: \$5 million?

22 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. Let
23 me, let me just explain one thing. The insurance
24 product that, that the agencies had was a, was an
25 anomaly in the healthcare world, that we had, it

1 was much better than the insurance that most, that
2 City workers get, it was better than the insurance
3 that most people get. There were no
4 contributions, there were no copayments. It was,
5 it was, it was at the Cadillac of the insurance.
6 So, part of what, that we had, why we had to
7 subsidize it, was because of that. I think that
8 we, you know, absolutely underscores the need for
9 universal healthcare for everybody, because it's,
10 it's really problematic. We also happen to have a
11 population that is older than the general
12 population. The average age of the, in the
13 network, is about 51 years old. So our products
14 tend to be more expensive. So, you know, we're
15 struggling with that piece. The, the City decided
16 to not continue to provide health insurance
17 because we were not doing it very well, quite
18 honestly. You know, the rates that we were
19 negotiating were not that competitive. And it
20 just did not make any sense. And because only 50
21 percent of providers participated anyway, and the
22 only two agencies that participated were
23 childcare, NACS and DFTA. So it was just, you
24 know, most every other provider in the City was

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getting their own rates.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. As you know, we've been getting bombarded with, by these workers--

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I understand, I understand.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: --coming to us saying that they have no health insurance.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: They don't know where to go, they can't get it, but--

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah, I understand, and it's a very, it's a very scary proposition not to have health insurance.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Right.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: We will work with them in trying to figure out some resolution to it.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. And so, so tomorrow you hope to come out with an announcement with this company with different products.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. Okay.

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Turn it over to my colleague, Jessica Lappin.

CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask about the senior center RFP, since we, since you mentioned that in regards to the insurance. And ask sort of the 9--there's \$99.3 million allocated for that, is that correct? Okay. And so that's an increase, as you just said, from what had previously been funded for the centers.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: It is increased by exactly the \$5 million that we used to put into the central insurance.

CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Okay. And are you confident that that \$99.3 million is enough to fully fund all of the senior centers that are currently operating?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. We, we certainly have, what we did in, in the process, is that we allocated the same amount of money that is presently being spent in every community district, back, back to that community district. So, there were, there is, there was, in fact there's a, and there's a little bit left over so we can increase some of those budgets that are,

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2 that, that should be increased. So, they're, and
3 my expectation is that mo--90 percent of the
4 system will probably remain the way it is, with
5 the same providers in the same place. I, we had
6 some competition in some community districts with
7 providers that had never applied before, but had
8 been running senior centers, so there may be some
9 change in the sponsor of the center, in the
10 centers that were not City owned or NYCHA owned,
11 we may have a change in location within the same
12 community district, because the new provider has a
13 new, new space. I think that's minimal, that kind
14 of thing would be minimal. But we don't
15 anticipate the number of centers being smaller
16 than what it is, we don't anticipate fewer
17 centers, that's the point.

18 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Okay. I did
19 notice that you said there were new people who had
20 applied.

21 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes, yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: And when do
23 you anticipate you'll be announcing who is
24 receiving the contracts?

25 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: We're in

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2 the process of reviewing the proposals now. So
3 we're, we're planning to announce sometime in
4 June, certainly before June 30th. And just to, to
5 explain the proposal, there's a number of
6 providers that have been in the, in providing
7 senior services, particularly among new
8 populations that have the experience but have
9 never, because we haven't had an RFP for 13 years.
10 They've never been able to apply for the funding.
11 So, that will, and the neighborhoods have
12 continued to change. So, I believe that in some
13 neighborhoods, we may see that change of
14 sponsorships.

15 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Okay. You
16 mentioned the pilot program for home delivered
17 meals, so I don't have too many questions others
18 than to say it sounds like it's going very well.

19 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: It is. I
20 mean, what we have found is we were having as much
21 as 20 percent underutilization in some, in some
22 organizations, for home delivered meals.
23 Something that is problematic, because we know
24 that there's a lot of seniors who need the
25 services. But also because the, the economy for

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2 the agency did not work. They're beginning to
3 create deficits for themselves and that was really
4 worrisome. For those organizations, since we
5 opened the, their ability to authorize meals and
6 form relationships with, you know, hospitals and
7 other social services agencies, their utilization
8 is markedly gone up.

9 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: That's great.

10 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: And so
11 we're really pleased with that.

12 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: So, the, the
13 other questions I had just revolve around case
14 management. And you know, it's sort of
15 unfathomable, the \$6.6 million cut, you know, if
16 we did adopt what the Mayor suggested, which we're
17 not going to, we can't. But I did want to ask,
18 you know, even with the \$3 million that we
19 restored last year, the agencies took a hit, you
20 know, I think around 16 percent. You know, what
21 the impact has been, where, where the caseloads
22 are, how many seniors are on waitlists, how many
23 layoffs happened as a result of that.

24 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, so,
25 here's what we know. We know that the case

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2 management agencies lost net, net, 62 [clears
3 throat] I'm sorry, 62 case managers and nine
4 supervisors, with a 30 percent cut they would've
5 lost 100 case managers and 18 supervisors. But
6 with the restoration from the City Council that
7 was ameliorated. The problem is that the
8 restoration, because it's, it, the money goes to
9 hire staff, many agencies that don't have the cash
10 flow were not able to hire people right away, they
11 had to wait until the money began flowing. So,
12 you know, it took a while to sort of gear up
13 again. The caseloads are, you know, it's
14 different for different agencies, but averaging I
15 would say somewhere between 76 cases and 90 cases,
16 in some agencies it may be a little higher than
17 that, even. The composition of the case, the
18 caseload of each, of each case manager is also
19 different, but we know that right now they have a
20 very large proportion of home, of home delivered
21 meals only. Which means that whether the client
22 didn't need anything else other than home
23 delivered meals, or the client didn't want
24 anything else other than home delivered meals, you
25 know, older people sometimes need a service but

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2 don't want it. We, we know that they have a very
3 large proportion of those cases. Now, our hope is
4 that when we open that second door for home
5 delivered, for home delivered meal providers to be
6 able to authorize and keep cases that are meals
7 only, their proportion of those cases will
8 diminish and the case management agencies will
9 have the time and ability to serve their really
10 needy clients whose whom they should be really
11 serving.

12 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Right. But
13 wouldn't--I mean, 90 sounds pretty high.

14 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: It is. No
15 question.

16 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: And you said
17 there's some that are more.

18 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: So, you know,
20 at what point is it, you know, we're not really
21 providing the service that we need to be
22 providing.

23 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: You know,
24 it, it's a difficult question, because it, it--we,
25 I don't, every agency will tell you, the

1 proportion of--I don't want to say "high need"
2 because when you're a certain age, everybody has a
3 high need. But, but high intensity cases. I
4 mean, it's, you may have a high need, but if you
5 have a large support network around you, it's a
6 very different picture than if you live by
7 yourself and there's nobody to help. But the main
8 activity is linking the clients to services that
9 they need and helping the family cope with
10 whatever the person needs. When the person is by
11 themselves and doesn't have any kind of support
12 services, that's where it becomes really, really
13 high intensity, because a case manager becomes the
14 de fact family for this person, or at least their
15 lifeline. So, if you have a preponderance of
16 those cases, you can't have a high caseload. I
17 mean, it's impossible to manage. And I think that
18 that's what we need to sort of understand, once we
19 sort of segregate the meals only clients that are
20 not high intensity, and figure out how many of the
21 high intensity clients should they be handling?

23 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Right, no, I,
24 I just, I'm very, I'm very concerned about the
25 numbers, I'm very concerned about the caseload

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2 levels, and you know, there were a lot of people
3 who lost their jobs. And that's a very tough
4 thing--

5 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: --to, for us
7 to hear and to think about, particularly in this
8 economy, you know, we want to avoid layoffs, but
9 we want to make sure that we're also providing a
10 meaningful service for our seniors. Thank you,
11 Mr. Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you.

13 Before we call on David Greenfield, I want to
14 recognize we've been joined by Council Member
15 Leroy Comrie, Council Member Koppell, and Council
16 Member Brewer. If any Council Member wants to ask
17 a question, please give your name to Tanisha
18 Edwards. And we'll now turn the microphone over
19 to Council Member David Greenfield.

20 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Thank you,
21 Mr. Chairman. I actually just, because we just
22 were talking about it, I do want to follow up on
23 the, on the case management. It's not completely
24 my understanding, when you say the home meals, my
25 understanding is that the case managers are

1
2 trained social workers and that even when they
3 deliver a home meal, that provides an opportunity
4 to actually interact with the individual, and sort
5 of see what their physical, mental and
6 nutritional, financial, other sort of situation,
7 is and at least the impression that we get on this
8 side of the table, so I just want to clarify, is
9 that, it's more than simply just, you know, a car
10 service delivery system, where on those cases
11 they're delivering the food. Can you sort of
12 expound on that?

13 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah, the
14 case management essentially goes to the client's
15 home, evaluates the clients, both socially,
16 nutritionally, mentally, everything, and then
17 decides to put a service in place. If the service
18 is meals only, they put that service in place and
19 continue to call the client every, you know, some
20 cases every two months, every three months, to
21 figure out if the client continues to be stable.
22 What the home delivered meal agencies are doing is
23 very similar. They have trained staff and if we
24 expand the pilot we will make sure that they have
25 at least one MSW on staff, to go out and evaluate

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2 the client, use the same protocol, pretty much the
3 same kind of thing, and ascertain if the client
4 needs a meal only. If it's only a meal, they'll
5 keep the case and do the same thing the other
6 agency does. If the client has other needs,
7 they're immediately referred to case management.
8 So, I don't anticipate the initial assessment to
9 be all that different, because we will make sure
10 that the staff is trained and adequately
11 supervised.

12 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Okay,
13 Commissioner, but, but to be fair, though, your
14 description before wasn't exactly accurate, right,
15 because when, when there are cases managers, even
16 if they are only delivering food, they still,
17 they, as you point out, they're still responsible
18 for physical and mental financial, other, other
19 issues, and right, the, the age range of these, of
20 these case management client is like, I guess like
21 80 to 100, right, so their needs could change on
22 an, on an ongoing basis.

23 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah, they
24 case manager--

25 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: My only

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2 point is that, I don't want to just discount it to
3 the extent that we're sort of just pushing it to
4 the side and saying, "Well, you know, all they're
5 really doing in many cases is just sort of
6 delivering food."

7 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: The case
8 managers do not deliver the food. The food is
9 delivered by trained drivers and assistants, and
10 the case manager only goes to visit a client to
11 authorize the services, and to reauthorize the
12 services. So, the daily contact is done by the
13 meal delivery person, which has always been an
14 employee of the home delivered meals. And they
15 have a product code to follow, and if the client
16 doesn't answer, they have to call immediately the
17 case management agency, or the emergency contact.
18 You know, so the case manager visits a client only
19 for the assessment purposes and reassessment
20 purposes. It's, the contact is the same that
21 they've always had with the trained driver staff.

22 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Okay. But
23 they're, they're still responsible, ultimately the
24 case manager is still responsible for the welfare
25 of the client--

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LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: --

regardless of whether or not they're serving--and I just wanted to clarify that point. I thought it just was an important point. Getting back to the, to the, to the SIP issue, the insurance program. Have you considered, and I understand that there's the \$5 million question, but have you considered maybe allowing, allowing agency employees to continue to contract through the SIP program, perhaps in an unsubsidized rate? I mean, it might actually be cheaper than the quotes that are getting out there, at least right now.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: The, the City's no longer providing that service, so I don't have the ability to do that. But the quotes that SIP had was not cheaper than what is being quoted.

CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: But the SIP quotes you're saying, if they're unsubsidized, it would not be cheaper than the--

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: No.

CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: --CSCS

quotes?

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2 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: No, in fact
3 it was higher.

4 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Got it.
5 So, can you tell us, I know it's just a little bit
6 bizarre, because it's coming out tomorrow, but
7 what more can you tell us about this, the
8 information coming later this week? Only because
9 I think it's something like 1,700 employees who
10 are relying, or currently rely on the SIP program.
11 So can you give us any more information? I mean,
12 is it going to be more competitive, these rates?
13 I mean, what exactly--I'm sure you've been working
14 on it for a while? What exactly are you
15 anticipating?

16 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Let me say
17 this, I personally have--Me and my, my staff and I
18 have not been working on this, it has been done
19 out of a group called Shared Services. So, I
20 don't really have all the details. What I know at
21 this point in time, is that there's going to be 14
22 different products that are being offered, at
23 different prices, and the price I think will vary
24 in terms of whether, you know, what the level of
25 contribution by the employee or the agency is.

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2 And whether you're covering a family or a single
3 person, or you know, all of those variations, and
4 whether you have a savings account or--or not.

5 But there will be enough variety in the products
6 and the rates I believe are competitive enough
7 that people will be able to pick and choose what
8 works for them. We will certainly help them as
9 much as we can, we will try to work with them in
10 terms of making good, wise choices. We will do
11 technical assistance, we'll have informative
12 sessions, as much as we can. I really don't have
13 a lot more information.

14 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Okay, but
15 do you anticipate the health coverage being the
16 same? I mean, it sounds like quite a shock. I
17 mean, from what our understanding is, that you've
18 had senior center employees who've been working
19 for dozens of years and now you're saying you're
20 coming up with I guess a basket of new health
21 insurance products. And as you describe it, the
22 health insurance that these employees had, many of
23 them quite frankly aren't paid very well and don't
24 have pensions, or other benefits that we have, in
25 the City, you're right, by the way, a little bit

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2 surprising that my health insurance is not that
3 great, my deductibles are high, but I do have a
4 pension and I have a pretty, a pretty good salary,
5 as a Council Member. Many of these employees,
6 they're not paid a lot, they definitely don't have
7 pensions, and the health insurance is kind of sort
8 of the saving grace, right, you know, that they
9 had quality healthcare. It sounds like that the
10 health insurance product is going to be inferior.
11 Is that correct?

12 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I don't
13 think so, I mean, I think that there's going to be
14 choices that that people have to have, you know,
15 had to be made. I don't--

16 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Really?
17 I'm going to hold you to it, I think that's great.
18 If you're saying that they're going to be able to
19 have the same health insurance for the same costs--
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22 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: - -

23 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: --and that
24 the providers, that the agencies are going to be
25 able to come in and actually provide the same

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2 quality, I think that's terrific news. And we'll
3 follow up on that.

4 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I will
5 gladly sit down with you when I look at the
6 product and tell you what I'm really--I mean, I'm
7 saying that they will have health coverage. I
8 cannot tell you that it's exactly the same health
9 coverage, or that they pay exactly the same thing.
10 I really don't know that.

11 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Yeah, I
12 just, the reason I'm redoing [phonetic] the
13 concern is because as you pointed out, the age
14 population of those folks who work at senior
15 centers tend to actually skew older, for a variety
16 of reasons, because these are people who care
17 about seniors, and so they're willing to take less
18 money, but that also means that they have
19 increased health insurance costs, especially when
20 it comes to things like prescriptions and co-pays
21 and doctors and things like that. And so, if
22 there is a new insurance product that comes up,
23 and that charges, I don't know, \$25 per
24 prescription and \$30 for every time to go visit a
25 doctor, you could easily see a situation where

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2 these employees are now paying thousands of
3 dollars every year out of pocket. And that's
4 something, honestly, when we're talking about
5 1,700 employees, that concerns me. So I did want
6 to flag that and just, you know, I want to make
7 sure we're doing an apples to apples comparison
8 when we're talking about the, the health
9 insurance.

10 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Is that
12 fair?

13 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Okay.

15 Moving on to the senior center solicitations, so,
16 just to be clear, you're saying there are now
17 senior centers that will close? If anything,
18 there are centers that may be under new
19 management, I guess, but you don't anticipate any
20 closure of senior centers.

21 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: That's
22 correct.

23 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Okay. We,
24 some of myself and some of my colleagues sent you
25 a letter, including Council Member Fidler,

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2 regarding our concern that there, that especially
3 in Brooklyn, that there are not enough Asian
4 sponsored senior centers. Is that something that
5 you think will be rectified through the current
6 senior center solicitation, is their ability to
7 maybe, to maybe do something about that, perhaps
8 outside of the, the solicitation. What, I'm sure
9 you've received the letter, I'm just wondering
10 what, what progress we've had on that front.

11 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.
12 Several organizations that represent Asian, Asian
13 constituencies have applied to the RFP. And we
14 anticipate that some of them will do well. And so
15 I think it will be rectified through this RFP.

16 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Got it.
17 Next, next question. When we look at some of
18 these funds over here, some of these funds include
19 things like transportation and, and rent funds.
20 And these are items that are currently being cut,
21 and that we're being asked, I guess implicitly,
22 right, by the Administration, to restore. I think
23 by my calculation, it's around \$16 million,
24 including money for things like transportation and
25 space costs. I mean, does it really make sense, I

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2 mean, can these centers function without these
3 additional funds? I mean, maybe we should be
4 baselining some of these, some of these core
5 funding issues.

6 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah, I
7 concur with you. Most of the \$16 million have
8 become an integral part of the operating budget of
9 the centers. And so, you know, particularly for
10 rent, and but also for transportation, it is a
11 difficult situation for the agencies that receive
12 these funds, because they don't come until later
13 in the year, so they have to really be very
14 careful as they spend their money along. And
15 that, that's always posed a problem. But, but
16 it's better to get it than not to get it, clearly,
17 because it's an integral part of their budget.

18 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Okay. I
19 mean, one of the reasons why I'm a fan of yours is
20 because of your candor. So, I just want to, I
21 just want to reflect again that it just, it's so
22 absurd that the, the Mayor's side, right, OMB,
23 cuts critical pieces of what is considered to be
24 the operating costs of the budget, right, and
25 employs some sort of cynical game and says, "Well,

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2 you know, "We're going to leave this on the
3 obligation of the Council to restore the funding,"
4 when all of us know that if the funding doesn't
5 get restored, these centers can't operate. And
6 so, just want the record to reflect that, that
7 it's just, it's, it's unfair and it's really, what
8 bothers me more than anything else is because, you
9 know, we know the dance, and we, we're pretty good
10 at this budget dance now, but the seniors who sit
11 here and the seniors who sit in the senior
12 centers, have to worry every single year, you
13 know, "Am I going to have money for
14 transportation? Are we going to have money for
15 rent?" I mean, I don't think it's fair, honestly.
16 And I think that, I think that if we were
17 intellectually honest, we would come back and say,
18 "Hey, you know, the reality is that these things
19 are absolutely necessary, and let's store the
20 Mayor's--the Mayor's Office should restore the
21 funds, and then we can have conversations about,
22 about important programs like restoring the
23 funding for case management, instead of talking
24 about rent and, and transportation. I'm also just
25 quickly wondering, what do you think in terms of

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2 the, the DFTA working with senior centers to try
3 to collaborate with managed long term care
4 companies?

5 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, we, you
6 know, we were, we were concerned about the fact
7 that there were a lot of long term companies, long
8 term care companies, approaching both senior
9 centers and case management agencies, and trying
10 to develop some service continuum with them. So,
11 we've been having meetings with a lot our
12 constituents, trying to figure out, trying to help
13 them figure out what the relationship should look
14 like and what rates should be, if there are to be
15 rates, what the services should entail.
16 Yesterday, there was a very good, successful
17 meeting around that. We're looking at doing a
18 couple of pilots, just to model what they, what is
19 should be like. DFTA doesn't want to get in the
20 middle of the relationships, but we do want to
21 know that the relationships are fair to everybody,
22 that there is no double dipping of money. You
23 know, if I'm funding 100 lunches, you know,
24 somebody shouldn't be paying for the--until you
25 get to the 101st lunch, unless it's a different

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2 program that is being developed. We're concerned
3 about people sending clients that are not
4 appropriate for the level of services that centers
5 need. Some centers are wonderful, are having
6 social adult day care equivalents and they know
7 how to work with clients that have Alzheimer's and
8 dementia. Other centers are not equipped to do
9 that. And so we don't want clients that cannot be
10 served well being sent there. So, all of those
11 questions are being, you know, considered, and we
12 will work with the senior center providers and the
13 case management providers, to figure out what is
14 in the best interests of both seniors and the
15 system.

16 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Great.

17 And that's good to hear, and I applaud you for
18 taking an active role, I think it is important.
19 And my final question, then, relates to innovative
20 senior centers. Of course, we're all big fans and
21 we're excited, but those of us in Brooklyn are on
22 pins and needles wondering where we're at and with
23 the process, when those decisions will be made,
24 and maybe you can sort of give us an update on our
25 Brooklyn innovative senior centers.

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2 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So we're
3 reviewing the proposals now. We received ... so
4 we received six, six providers applied and, for a
5 total of seven proposals, and they're, we're
6 looking to fund as many as two in Brooklyn. We're
7 in the process of reviewing it. We're as excited
8 and hopeful as you are, that we can get Brooklyn
9 going like everybody else. You know, we have been
10 really happy and excited and gratified about how
11 things are going. I was at the Y at, in
12 Washington Heights, and the yoga stretch class was
13 being taught by a 100 year old woman. [laughs]
14 Which was amazing. Amazing. And but you know,
15 the amount of energy and vitality and, and things
16 that are going on are just fascinating. And in
17 all of the eight centers. So we're really, really
18 happy what's happening. And in some of them we're
19 getting a whole, they're doing not only lunches
20 but they're doing dinners in some and brunches,
21 and we're getting a whole new crop of seniors that
22 have never participated before. So it's really
23 exciting.

24 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Great. So
25 to be clear, last time you weren't happy with the,

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2 with the applications that you received. This
3 time, you're happy with the quality of the
4 applications and you think among them you'll find
5 two that are up to you standards.

6 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes, we
7 hope so, yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON GREENFIELD: Okay,
9 great, thank you very much, Commissioner.

10 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: All right,
11 thank you, Council Member David Greenfield. At
12 this time, we're going to start calling on all
13 Council Members to ask questions. You're going to
14 be given five minutes to ask your questions. That
15 includes response time and everything, you got
16 five minutes. Okay, first we'll go with Debbie
17 Rose first.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Good morning,
19 Commissioner.

20 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Good
21 morning.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And thank
23 you, Chair. In terms of the neighborhood senior
24 center solicitations, you said selections will be
25 made in June with the contracts commencing in the

1
2 fall. Does DFTA anticipate any senior centers
3 closing as a result of this solicitation?

4 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: No, I,
5 actually, we had said to the providers that if
6 they had wanted to merge senior centers because of
7 their utilization picture, they could do that. We
8 received very few proposals that included mergers.
9 So, I, we don't anticipate any, any fewer centers
10 than we currently have.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So is it safe
12 to say that all of the current providers will be
13 awarded a contract?

14 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: You know,
15 I--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Because you
17 did say that you had additional--

18 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: We do, we
19 do. So--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: --people
21 apply.

22 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, we
23 have, the majority of providers that we have, have
24 more than one center. So, in centers of mu--that
25 are mult--providers of multiple centers, we'll

1 probably indeed have, still have multiple
2 contracts. There are some centers that are a
3 single center with a single contract. If they are
4 facing competition, there may be a change in
5 sponsors, I'm sorry, and if that was their only
6 contract, they may not be part of the portfolio.
7 I think that would be maybe one or two, three
8 cases at most. But that could happen, I mean, I,
9 the one thing that the, the procurement process
10 does, is that they keep me totally out of it, so
11 [laughs] you know, I, I get bits and pieces but
12 until I have the final picture, I don't know. I
13 do know that most community districts did not have
14 a lot of competition, people applied for the
15 center they have. And unless there's some bad
16 deficiency there, they should be fine. In some
17 communities, 'cause we did have competition, and
18 that's where I think we may have a shift of
19 sponsors.
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21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So, in the
22 selection process, is geography taken into
23 consideration?

24 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. Every
25 community district receive the same allocation

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they had.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay, and--

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: And they will continue to--the money will stay there--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And if for some reasons a provider, a center isn't awarded the contract, what will happen to the seniors that are displaced?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, so, in a community district, if there were three centers we will continue to have three centers. It may just be a different sponsor of that, one of those centers. If for whatever reason, you know, we had three centers and only two get awarded and there's still money left over, we have considered doing sort of what we're calling at this point for lack of a better term, a cleanup RFP, to re-RFP centers that were not awarded, if that's the case. I, we're hoping that that doesn't happen, but just in case it does, we've sort of prepared to do that.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Did the number of meals that were served play into the new contract formula?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And because
3 in my district, I have a center that's closing
4 because two years ago, they needed to serve at
5 least 35 meals, and that number's now been up to
6 about 75?

7 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: No, it's 60
8 meals and 75 clients receiving other kinds of
9 services. But it's an average, they don't have to
10 do it every day, they can have up down during the
11 week. And you know, a lot of it just the economy
12 of scales. They've served many fewer meals, just
13 the funding doesn't work. And the worry that we
14 have is that many of these places have been
15 creating a deficit for themselves. And it becomes
16 a very precarious situation.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So, could you
18 tell me like what, what will happen to that
19 particular, you know, my seniors that attend that
20 center, that will no longer be funded because they
21 don't meet that--

22 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So we need-

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24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: --apparently
25 they're under enrolled?

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2 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So we need
3 to work with you because I, what we've done
4 whenever there was supposed to be closure, we've
5 gone to the center and planned for the seniors,
6 through transportation, and other ways, to make
7 sure that they receive the service. I know in
8 Staten Island it's problematic, because it's--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Yeah.

10 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: --the
11 transportation piece, and so I'd love to work with
12 you and try to figure out if we've done what we
13 should in terms of making sure they receive
14 services.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you so
16 much. And I just wanted to ask you a question
17 about the, the direct impact of, that the loss of
18 the \$2 million for social adult daycare services,
19 will have, since we restored it in 2010, but we
20 did not in '11 and '12, and so there will be no
21 new money. What is that, what's the impact of
22 that going to be? And how are you going to
23 accommodate that loss?

24 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, so, we
25 haven't really had social adult daycare as part of

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2 our, part portfolio for almost two years. And
3 there are a couple of closures, but many of them
4 have continued to survive by, you know, private
5 pay and fundraising and all kinds of things. And
6 we've worked with them trying to sort of figure it
7 out. We stay in close touch with that community,
8 we try to be as supportive as possible. Concern I
9 have is that social adult daycare will play a big
10 role in the long term managed care world. And
11 right now, we have, you know, our relationship is
12 an emotional relationship but nothing more.

13 There's a number of unrelated centers that are
14 cropping up in certain neighborhoods, and we don't
15 know what services are provided, we don't know
16 whether they're good, bad or indifferent. And
17 that is of concern, because seniors will be sent
18 there, they may have contracts with managed care
19 companies. So it's, it's a tricky, tricky thing.
20 I mean, just because you put aside that says
21 "adult daycare," doesn't make it a good place to
22 send anyone. And right now, nobody's regulating
23 them. So, we have a level of discomfort and we're
24 trying to work with the social adult daycare
25 community to figure out how do we deal with this.

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CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I realize my time is up. I just want to ask, so the \$2 million, would, if it had been restored, would allow you to have adult daycare services that are regulated through DFTA.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: That's correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So, we are putting our seniors at great risk by not having this \$2 million.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Well, at least with the, the ones that are not, that are not regulated and not part of the, the system as it used to be, it's problematic, 'cause nobody knows what they're doing.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you so much, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you, Council Member Debbie Rose. Before we hear from Vincent Ignizio, who will be next, I want to recognize we've been joined by Council Member Jackson, Council Member Julissa Ferreras, Steve Levin and Council Member Lewis Fidler.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Thank you
3 very much, Mr. Chairman. Madam Commissioner, if I
4 could set the stage somewhat for you. It's very
5 difficult for me, in this Council, to speak with
6 my colleagues on an even playing field because I
7 have different needs. When we talk about the
8 budget, we talk about mostly restoring what was
9 lost. But what that does is put districts like
10 mine behind the eight ball. I have a developing
11 district, I have a district that is continues to,
12 to develop throughout the years with population,
13 it has the highest growth of population in the
14 State for the last ten years going, and when we
15 sit, and it's probably one-and-a-half times the
16 size of Manhattan, my district alone. So when we
17 sit and we talk about restorations of senior
18 centers, never do we ever get to the discussion of
19 what new needs in developing districts may occur;
20 or, they go so far to the end at the bottom of the
21 list, that when it comes down to budget
22 negotiating time it's, we have to save what we
23 have, and we never provide real needed services to
24 developing communities. And by developing, I mean
25 ones that are having considerable growth. Is

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2 there any assessment/action plan review of senior
3 services and where they are in the City, and where
4 they need to be because of developing communities,
5 such as that in my district. I can know for a
6 fact we've opened up several senior housing
7 projects in the southwestern portion of my
8 district, southwestern Staten Island, that have no
9 senior services at all. And several years ago
10 when we tried to expand the Mt. Loretto Senior
11 Center, to, to make it larger, that kind of fell
12 by the wayside, as well, due to budgetary
13 constraints. So, is that assessment, is there
14 anybody in your shop that kind of looks and sees
15 where we may need to have that conversation? And
16 who do I follow up with to start that dialogue. I
17 recognize it's a long term plan, but while we're
18 building major projects, like the, not that you
19 would know it, but the target center in my
20 district where they want to have, the Borough
21 President wants to have some senior housing that,
22 I need to harness that opportunity to get some
23 senior services there on the drawing board and
24 not, you know, wait for it to be built and then to
25 address those needs. Sorry, I know it was a

1
2 longwinded question, but I want, I needed to set
3 the stage somewhat.

4 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. So,
5 the answer to, to whether we've been looking at
6 that, the answer's yes. We created something
7 called the persons in need--what was it?--it was a
8 formula that we looked at the number of seniors,
9 the number of seniors over a certain age, seniors
10 who were poor, seniors who had handicaps, and we
11 created sort of a formula that looked at the
12 investment in that community district versus the
13 number, you know, the number of seniors. So, we
14 do know where new services should be going to,
15 who's underserved, who's not underserved. Problem
16 is that we haven't had any additional moneys and I
17 would have to close a center to open a center, and
18 that always is very, very problematic, because
19 unlike, you know, poverty among families and
20 children that tend to be concentrated in certain
21 neighborhoods in the City, there's poor seniors
22 and needy seniors all over the place. Just
23 because they aged in place, and so son. So,
24 that's been the tricky thing. But indeed we do
25 know where the services should be, so we'd be

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happy to plan with you--

COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yeah, I'd like to work with you--

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: --or a member of your staff, and just want to, you know, sometimes when we have these discussions, I want to let my colleagues know that there's more than just, "We have to save the senior center," and I get anybody fighting to save their senior center. But when you say, "Well, we can't build new ones," what that's saying is that, well, basically, the heck with your seniors, we got to make sure mine are okay. And if we're looking for a citywide plan, it ought be just that, it ought be a citywide plan and if I need to find you know, capital dollars are work with the Administration to do so, I'm happy to do so, and, and the Chair of Aging, as well. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you, Council Member Vince Ignizio, it's a great point. We should definitely think about, figure out a way how we could get funding in parts of New York City that are undeveloped with senior programs. All

1
2 right, Council Member Chin. But before that we
3 want to recognize we've joined by Council Member
4 Darlene Mealy. Council Member Chin.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you,
6 Chair. First I wanted to welcome the seniors from
7 my district. [Mandarin, applause] So,
8 Commissioner, I just wanted to, I remember last
9 year or the year before, I mean, this is my third
10 budget. Senior centers, is it true, it only
11 provides services for maybe five percent of the
12 senior population?

13 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.
14 That's, that is totally true.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So all the
16 fight that we say restoring seniors, we're only
17 serving five percent of the senior population.

18 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And
20 meanwhile, these center are struggling, I mean,
21 most of them, they have to raise their own funds,
22 but we see that they are very effective. Because
23 all of the seniors who are here and the seniors
24 that we visit, I'm sure all my colleagues could
25 say the same thing, when you go to those senior

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2 centers, they're very active. I mean, they are so
3 active, like they're young than us in some ways.
4 I know one of them, Project Open Door, we were
5 teasing them that it's a children [applause] it's
6 a children's playgrounds, because they, they are
7 so energetic in dancing and singing. So, in some
8 way, we really need to look at this model, that
9 senior centers are effective, and the
10 Administration needs to expand on this. If only
11 five percent of our seniors are going to the
12 center and getting healthy and stronger, we need
13 to expand that. And then on the other hand, we
14 also need these so-called no-core service. I
15 mean, we have groups that have been, they came to
16 see us, visiting neighbor, where they visit
17 seniors who might not go to senior center
18 regularly, or don't have Medicare, I mean,
19 Medicaid, so they don't have home care attendants.
20 But the friendly visit that they get every week,
21 it means so much, but they're not in the budget,
22 they got totally eliminated, the visiting program.

23 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So, I guess
25 my question to you is that programs like visiting

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2 neighbors and NORC program that are happening all
3 over the City, those are really cost effective,
4 good program, good support program. Are you
5 thinking about, in terms of really fighting for
6 those services, and really getting the Mayor to
7 really put some money to baseline not, you know,
8 increasing our center, but also the so-called non-
9 core services.

10 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: You know, I
11 try to fight for every last bit of money that I
12 can. And I certainly am very supportive of NORCs.
13 And, you know, a lot of the ancillary services,
14 unfortunately were cut because of budget issues.
15 My biggest fight has been to not have any more
16 cuts. So, I, honestly, the only new money that we
17 received was for the innovative centers. I think
18 the struggle is that we have to find other ways of
19 supporting the seniors, you know, that works with
20 the senior centers, as well, not just senior
21 centers. But it's been, you know, the economic
22 situation has been so tough, that just keeping
23 what we have has been the main struggle.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I think it's
25 more than just the economic situation. I think

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2 all of us know it's a question of priorities. I
3 mean, this Administration, if 20 percent of your
4 Department's budget comes from City Council
5 discretionary funding or funding, that's, that is
6 one fifth, I mean that is, doesn't make sense.
7 This is a responsibility for the whole City, which
8 is the Administration, the Mayor's responsibility,
9 to take care of our seniors, to make sure the
10 fundings are there. So the priorities are same
11 thing with childcare. I mean, that is one thing
12 that, you know, that we all have to, to fight
13 against. But meanwhile, following on Council
14 Member Debbie Rose question about adult daycare
15 centers, we see those adult daycares and they're
16 opening in our community. They're making money,
17 they're making money off seniors with Medicaid.
18 So if they're a way to do that, I think we should
19 really look at this. How do, how can we access
20 some of that resources, to support--

21 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: --the adult,
23 you know, daycare program that we have in our
24 centers, to make sure that the seniors are getting
25 these good program. 'Cause somebody's making

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2 money out there.

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LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah,

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that's the pilot, so we're trying, that we're

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beginning to work with, with the community, to

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run. 'Cause we do want to, we want to present our

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services as part of the healthcare continuum, so

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that we can get other kinds of money flowing in.

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So, and so that providers can have a more

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diversified kind of income. And that's why we

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want to work with them and make sure that, that

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when they proceed, they know all of the problems

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that could emerge and don't get, you know, killed

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in the process. But we have some providers that

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are very sophisticated and have been doing this

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for years. So we're working with them in this

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pilot so that we can figure out the lay of the

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land. But I agree with you, I think there's no

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reason why healthcare Medicaid money shouldn't be

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coming into the centers, because they're providing

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the services.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, I

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really urge you to really look at that, because

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there's so many private places opening up and they

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are approaching the providers themselves. But

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2 their motive is profit. So we want to make sure
3 that--and the Medicaid dollars are our taxpayers
4 dollar. So I just want to make sure that we use
5 that money wisely, so if they're tapping into it
6 to make profit, we should tap into it to really
7 provide the services in our neighborhood.

8 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And I urge
10 you to really expand that, you know, the pilot
11 program. Let's, let's make a big push on it,
12 because somebody else out there is making the
13 money. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Right. Thank
15 you--

16 [applause]

17 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Let's keep--
18 can we keep the applause down? Shh. No applause,
19 please. Okay? Council Member Koo, then to be
20 followed by Council Member Jackson.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you, Mr.
22 Chair. Commissioner, thank you for coming. My
23 question to you is on the home deliver meals
24 program, you know in the Asian community, mainly
25 in Queens, like Flushing, Jackson Heights, Corona,

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2 I notice there's a tremendous underutilization of
3 home deliver meals. So, my question just is, how
4 can we increase participation? And that means
5 we're--I think the first question is how can we
6 increase the case management workers? Especially
7 the Asian case management workers. Because
8 without them, they cannot get home deliver meals,
9 right?

10 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Well,
11 that's why I'm trying to do, that's why we're
12 working on this pilot so that the home delivered
13 meals can begin authorizing their own meals, so
14 that we can get, you know, the system to full
15 utilization, and then, then we'll figure out what
16 happens. But part of it is that I think that
17 because the case management agencies have had very
18 high caseloads, they have not been able to sort of
19 move the, the home delivered meals as quickly as
20 they could be, even though we've had presumptive
21 authorization for the last year-and-a-half. So,
22 we're working with that, I mean, hopefully we will
23 be able to--I mean, right now, the utilization has
24 really gone up for the first time in several
25 years. And hopefully that trend will continue,

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'cause we're opening that second door.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: And on this, home, home care, case management workers, do they have to be bilingual in order to take care of Asian elderly patient, I mean, population?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Well, yes, I mean, we insist that people have language and culturally appropriate staff, so that they can really give, you know, friendly services to the population. It's very difficult to make a social assessment if you don't speak the language of the person.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So, can you tell me like how many case management workers they are Asian and they can speak the, a second language, like Chinese or Korean?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I would have to get back to you on that. I really don't have that here with me. But I'll happily send it to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: And among the people who receive home delivered meals, can you give me an estimate, like what's the percentage of Asian senior people receive home delivered meals?

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Especially, I mean, in Queens, you know.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah, I, I would have to get back to you on that. I'll happily send you whatever information I have. I don't have it with me.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: The reason I ask those questions, because I have a lot of complaints from seniors that they want the program, but somehow they cannot get it, you know.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I, I would love to sit down with you and your staff and look into that. Because I mean, if the system is underutilized, and, and there are people who want the service and are not getting it, we really definitely should know what's going on.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: And also, especially the Korean community center, they have a hard time to increase participation because they don't have case management workers.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Okay, so I will, I will make sure somebody in my staff contacts your office, and we'll, we'll find out what's going on.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you, I

1
2 mean, I want to applaud for your wonderful work
3 for seniors, senior and elder people. Thank you.

4 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you,
6 Council Member. Council Member Jackson, followed
7 by Council Member Brewer.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Well,
9 thank you, Mr. Chair, and the--Jessica Lappin, the
10 Chair of Aging, and David Greenfield--I appreciate
11 the opportunity to be here, and it's good to see
12 so many seniors out fighting for DFTA's budget.
13 Commissioner, good morning to you and your staff.
14 And I was looking at our briefing document. And
15 it seems as though that ever year, that the
16 funding for DFTA is like this, it's getting
17 smaller and smaller and smaller and smaller. And
18 I guess my question to you is, can you provide--
19 you, and I say you, the City of New York, because
20 you represent the agency as far as the City of
21 New--can you provide the services to ensure that
22 seniors are being serviced as far as senior
23 centers, case management, home based meals and all
24 the other things that they need, with shrinking
25 dollars? Can you do that?

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2 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Well, we're
3 trying our best, certainly, to do that. And I
4 think we're blessed in that we have really good
5 community partners. I think, you know, the issue
6 for us has been that as the federal government,
7 you know, continues to flat fund, you know,
8 basically the, what the federal government gives
9 us has continued to be flat, the State is
10 certainly flattened down. So, the City has had to
11 increase their participation and the City hasn't
12 been able to do that, necessarily. So, you know,
13 we're trying to do the best we can with what we
14 have. However, let me just say also, that some of
15 our services had been underutilized and part of it
16 is to figure out why and how can we change the
17 nature of the services to make sure that they're
18 fully used? That's why we created the innovative
19 centers, that's why we're doing a pilot for home
20 delivered meals, because the reality is that
21 whatever we had was not being fully used.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Well,
23 Commissioner, I'm glad that you responded, "We're
24 doing the best we can," rather than the answer is
25 yes. Because if, if you answered yes, then you

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2 have blinders on. So, I'm glad your response was,
3 "We're doing the best that we can, under the
4 circumstances." And that's an appropriate answer.
5 But let me ask about the innovative centers. I
6 think you mentioned about one Washington Heights
7 and Inwood, and I was looking at our briefing
8 document, and the, the YMYWHA of Washington
9 Heights is one of the, I guess, recipients in
10 order to institute for that particular area. And
11 you list that, or we, somebody list that as Ydanis
12 Rodriguez being the Council Member. So my
13 question is, is it only servicing the 10th
14 councilmatic district--

15 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: No.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: --or is it
17 serving all of northern Manhattan?

18 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: It serves
19 all of--it serves all of northern Manhattan and
20 anybody else that wants to go there.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Okay.

22 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: We do know
23 that there are people coming from even outside of
24 Manhattan, actually.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Okay, and

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2 do you list it under, and when I say "you,"
3 meaning DFTA, because you know, I represent
4 northern Manhattan.

5 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah, I
6 don't know--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: And Inez
8 Dickens represents northern Manhattan, and, and if
9 in fact that center covers all of northern
10 Manhattan, and even Melissa Mark-Viverito,
11 depending on where, then we should be listed also.
12 Don't you agree?

13 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes. I
14 think we gave a very narrow definition as to
15 whether physically the place was, but I, I agree
16 with you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Yeah, and
18 I'm, so, I don't think that you meant to be
19 narrow, but you know, if in, if in fact people see
20 that, they will say, "Oh, let me only go to Ydanis
21 Rodriguez." I think that seniors and people need
22 to know that that center services not only one
23 councilmatic district but three or four, and it
24 needs to list, in my opinion. But can you tell
25 me, then, approximately how many seniors will be

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covered by that particular center?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, most of the innovative centers are averaging at least 300 seniors a day. Some of them are doing much more than that. I know that the one in Staten Island is doing way over that. So, I, you know, if you look at it, the utilization has really, in those centers, is more than double or triple. And we're very pleased about that.

COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Well, let me, Commissioner, let me say this to you, that constituents of mine have come up to me and I went to a, to a senior center at 99 Fort Washington, and they had a Mother's Day celebration, in which they were serving a beautiful lunch, and they had a rose for each mom that was there, and the band. And it was jammed pack, and I was so happy and I said to the new director, I was so pleased there were a lot of men there. Because normally when you go to senior centers, you see like 95 percent women. But there were a lot of men there. And so I was so pleased. But I want to say to you that, that we must continue to fund and, and I'm glad that you take a proactive approach. But the

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2 pressure needs to be put on, in my opinion, the
3 executive branch, to allocate more money for the
4 seniors that exist. They've worked for decades
5 for our City, and they deserve the best in their
6 golden years. Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you.

8 [applause] Can we keep the applause down, please,
9 keep the applause down. All right, Council Member
10 Brewer, Council--then will be followed by Council
11 Melissa Mark-Viverito.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [off mic]

13 Thank you, Chairman Recchia. Thank you very much.

14 [pause, background noise/technical] [on mic]

15 It's on. Two things, first of all I want to thank
16 the Department of the Aging 'cause on the west
17 side as you know, we've been working with Grow NYC
18 and with your staff, and the senior centers. And
19 between City Meals on Wheels and all of our senior
20 centers, we're going to have fresh food from Green
21 NYC, the green markets. And we're very excited
22 about that. And I also want to say that we
23 learned at a recent breakfast that in the United
24 States somebody turns 65 years old, I don't know
25 if it's every eight seconds or eight minutes. So

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2 that was certainly an indication of why we need
3 more funding for more people who are older. My
4 question is specifically on the issue of elder
5 abuse, it could be financial, it could be personal
6 and criminal, and I just wanted to know what
7 funding is available. It is an, unfortunately an
8 ongoing increasing problem. And I just want to
9 know what you are considering in terms of funding
10 to try to address that issue.

11 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So it's
12 definitely on the list of restoration, for the
13 City Council, that funding was in, was terminated
14 about two years ago, and the Council has been
15 restoring it. It is a growing issue, as you
16 pointed out, it is a very important issue. We
17 had, we were part of a prevalent study about a
18 year ago, that was done with Cornell and some
19 people upstate, and we were part of it. And what
20 we learned is that it is a very underreported
21 problem. A lot of people are abused by people
22 they know, sometimes their own children. And so
23 they're embarrassed profoundly and they don't
24 report it. But we do know that it's, it's
25 growing, and we do know it's very serious. So

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2 it's, to me it's one of my big, big priorities.
3 I, you know, I've said before, that New York, New
4 York State does not mandate reporting for elder
5 abuse, it's one of the few states that doesn't.
6 And, and so, even providers, when they see
7 incidents of, you know, possibility of abuse,
8 don't necessarily always report it. And that is
9 not just doctors when they see somebody bruised,
10 but you know, bank tellers that may see a check
11 being cashed by somebody who's not the person that
12 should be cashing the check, or you know, there
13 are many telltale, you know, doormen that see
14 certain things happening. You know, and we should
15 be, we should be very conscious of those things
16 and be aware of the fact that people are, you
17 know, are going through really difficult and
18 horrible things in, later in life.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, so,
20 again, it's back to what Council Member Chin
21 indicated, which is that, also the Administration,
22 I'm not saying you, but there should be more
23 funding on both sides.

24 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Second

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2 question is the technology, something of course
3 that I'm very interested in. And I wanted to
4 know, I know OATS has been working with you, as a
5 nonprofit. I wanted to know in how many centers
6 of those that you fund do you have technology and
7 both for the persons who are wonderfully part as
8 participants, and also for staff. Staff have, do
9 they have adequate? Is the server okay? Is the
10 pipe okay? Is the speed okay? So, both levels.
11 What do we have for the people who are
12 participants and also computers that are adequate;
13 in fact, good enough for staff?

14 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So about
15 half of our centers really have adequate both
16 equipment and internet access and all of that.
17 The other half we're working with. OATS has been
18 an incredible partner, we have a federal grant
19 and, and the ac--the internet access piece is an
20 integral part of it. The innovative centers are
21 using technology probably much more effective and
22 efficiently. The Benjamin Rosenthal Center in
23 Queens is, its theme is technology, they are the
24 ones that have the virtual senior center, and
25 they're hooking up virtually with other senior

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2 centers as well as homebound seniors. So that's
3 their theme. But, that being said, every other
4 innovative center has, has put a lot of emphasis
5 on technology, as well. We would, I mean, the
6 ideal thing would be for everybody to have a lot,
7 a very robust program because we have found that
8 seniors become less depressed, they, less anxious,
9 and, and much more vital when they feel they're
10 connected to their families that sometimes don't
11 live around, but to other seniors, and to what's
12 going on.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right.

14 Because I hear even from the centers that have
15 technology, it's a broken monitor, cable,
16 keyboard, etc. So, are there some plans to figure
17 out how to upgrade and then to also deal with the
18 half of the centers that don't have it, leaving
19 the innovation aside?

20 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: [pause]

21 Yes. So, we're working with those and trying to
22 expand BTOP and get funding to have the computer
23 center that is the big dream of OATS. We, you
24 know, it's, it's difficult because we don't have a
25 capital budget and so we do our best in trying to

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2 do the equipment replacement. But you know, we
3 certainly have to, to continue to do that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, so
5 more to be discussed. The issue of, came up on
6 homebound and case managers. I guess my question
7 is, and this is what I don't know the answer, and
8 perhaps I should. For those seniors who just need
9 a little bit of help; in other words, you're not
10 homebound, but you do need cleaning, you do need
11 assistance. How does homecare assist in this new
12 world of Medicaid managed care? Because it is a
13 challenge for those seniors who are contacting us,
14 who had maybe more services than they do in the
15 past. At the same time, APS doesn't really meet
16 their needs, that's for a different person,
17 usually. So, I'm just wondering, how do we work
18 with APS, are they relevant, and how do we deal
19 with the senior. We're all trying really hard
20 between the NORCs, the age friendly, which I am
21 participating in, with Academy of Medicine, with
22 every other possibility, the innovative, finding a
23 way for people to stay in their homes and be part
24 of the community. And most times you can't do
25 that unless you have some assistance.

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2 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, so we
3 still provide homecare for people who are not
4 Medicaid eligible, but cannot afford their own
5 private pay. And we still, you know, we do that.
6 The problem with Medicaid, it's still very
7 undefined. I mean, I, we keep very much in touch
8 with HRA and with the, you know, the homecare
9 people there, but it's still very undefined. And
10 we don't know exactly what the cuts are going to
11 be and how the hours are going to be diminished or
12 not. So that is going to be very problematic,
13 because I think that that's where we feel that
14 many seniors that had, you know, twelve hours of
15 care, may now be sent to a social adult daycare or
16 a senior center the bulk of the day, and then the
17 care will be provided at either end of the day.
18 And I think that that's where I think our system
19 would really play an increasing role.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, so
21 you think that that system will work, but you
22 don't know how the Medicaid--

23 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yeah.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --is going
25 to play the role.

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LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: We don't.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: When, when
will we know that, that's--

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: You know,
I've been talking to HRA and they hope to have
further clarity later in the summer, but even then
I, you know, they're not sure themselves.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. My
other question is, I know that you are not
responsible for SCRIE. Do you have some sense,
because people are or are not calling the
Department for the Aging that SCRIE is working
better, particularly with the five day service, at
Department of Finance?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, what
it, what the Department of Finance is planning to
do and actually it's become effective, it's,
they've opened a brand new center that only serves
SCRIE. DFTA has provided two experienced staff to
compliment that they had put there, and we have
trained all of them together. To, so that
they're, they understand, you know, the senior
point of view, the customer service, how to deal
with them and so on. We're really hopeful that

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2 that will go a long way towards helping everybody.
3 And it's, you know, you know, we're monitoring it
4 closely, I've made a commitment to continue the
5 training and it le--and to have the staff in place
6 to help them. And we'll see what happens. But I
7 think that that will go a long way, because now we
8 can refer the seniors to a specialized place that
9 really, you know, understands what they need.
10 Hopefully, we can take that model and put one in
11 every borough, so that, that seniors don't have to
12 travel from outside of, of, you know, from outside
13 of their borough to get that service.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you,
15 so hope we can follow up on the home healthcare,
16 the technology, and of course the issue of elder
17 abuse. Thank you.

18 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: All right,
20 thank you, Council Member. And just to follow up
21 on the SCRIE, we are in negotiations with the
22 Administration on working out a whole plan about
23 SCRIE, where we are and how we're going to get
24 there. We're talking to the Administration, and
25 we hope to come to an agreement on a whole,

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2 overall on the whole system, on how it all works,
3 and DFTA will play a role in that, and look
4 forward to working with you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you,
6 Gale. [laughter]

7 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Why don't you
8 give me a chance? [laughter] Thank you, Gale,
9 for bringing this to the forefront. [laughter]
10 Okay. Council Member Melissa Mark, followed by
11 Council Member Levin.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:
13 Don't forget the Viverito, but okay. So.
14 [laughter] Good morning--

15 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Good
16 morning.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: --
18 Commissioner. I just want to kind of back clean
19 up here on a couple of questions that had already
20 been raised and just get a little bit more
21 clarity. Just, you know, speaking on the case
22 management, I just want to just add my voice to
23 the vital importance of that. I think you've
24 heard it enough, but just that we not lose sight
25 that when we look back at several budgets, where

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2 we were at where, versus where we are now, you
3 know, back in 2--fiscal year 2011, we were at \$21
4 million, with that. And so, we're way below that
5 now. So my question is, considering that in prior
6 years, in the last year, you know, we always put
7 in some money to enhance it, and obviously what we
8 put in is not enough to meet the need, do you,
9 when you're planning your budget, are you always
10 kind of counting and assuming that that money is
11 coming from the Council and you just leave that
12 portion out? I mean, I'm just trying to figure
13 out how, how you all as Commissioner go about, in
14 your planning of these budgets.

15 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, when I,
16 when we plan the budget, essentially we look at
17 the moneys that are baselined, and we plan around
18 those moneys, and traditionally we have not
19 increased. And do I hope, pray and cross my
20 fingers that the Council will put the money back?
21 Yes.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: So,
23 what would say if, and I was speaking to the Chair
24 earlier, looking historically again, \$21 million,
25 Fiscal Year 2011, where we are now, where we were

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2 last year, what would say is needed in terms of
3 really adequately funding that line?

4 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Well, I
5 would say at least the \$3 million, or \$3.2 that
6 was restored last year. We, the cut was a total
7 of \$6 million, and that I believe is what ideally
8 they want restored. My concern, my real concern
9 is that the larger the discretionary portion, the
10 more difficult it is for providers. Because they
11 have to, if they're going to hire staff, they have
12 to float the entire salary for probably six months
13 before the discretionary funds--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

15 Kicks in.

16 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: --come in.
17 And so it becomes a real problem for them. So,
18 baselining should be a part of that discussion,
19 because it, it is very difficult, if you don't
20 have an endowment, or a huge line of credit, for
21 organizations to flow that much money, to pay
22 staff and fringe benefits.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: No,
24 and understood, that that is a real challenge, and
25 it is our, you know, hope and expectation that

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2 this Administration would prioritize it baseline
3 it. You know, that's always the battle that we
4 have, that when it comes to key vital services, I
5 don't think this Administration quite gets it.
6 It's not an indictment on you, it's more an
7 indictment on our Mayor, who just really continues
8 to shock me, I'll say, with regards to the things
9 he say publicly, that are very dismissive, and you
10 know, and where we are with budget when it comes
11 to vital services. So, I just wanted to add my
12 voice and clearly that is a priority for us, and
13 we will continue to fight to provide those
14 services to seniors and make sure that we do our
15 share, as well. But I wanted to also touch on
16 the, the centers, right, the neighborhood, the RFP
17 that is out right now. You indicated that there
18 is no closing of senior centers. And I kind of
19 would beg to differ, because I know that in the
20 language of the RFP, it was clear that if you did
21 not meet a certain threshold, that that center was
22 not eligible to apply. So you have some centers
23 that don't serve more than 60 a day, they may
24 serve 30, that are in existence now. But I
25 understand you talked about mergers. But I think

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2 that when you are, you know, you're setting that
3 threshold, and if a center doesn't meet it, then
4 in fact we are closing centers.

5 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, what we
6 proposed to some of the providers that had two
7 small centers, was that they take the budget and
8 merge the budget, and provide the bulk of the
9 services in one place, and continue to work at
10 the--if they wanted to keep that other center
11 open, they could either deliver meals there for
12 the seniors, but have the bulk of the programming
13 on one of the centers, so that the budget would be
14 more robust.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

16 Would that allow them, in terms of what you're
17 presenting, would that allow them to allocate a
18 portion of that budget to pay for rent for that
19 satellite site?

20 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, we're
21 going to work with, you know, when--after the
22 proposals are read, we're going to work with the
23 providers in terms of their budget and what their
24 plan, their proposed plan is, and we have to look
25 at what their proposed plan is. We were

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2 discouraging satellites because usually what ends
3 up happening is that they don't have, you know,
4 they don't, there's not a, especially in
5 neighborhoods where they're not far away, there's
6 no really good rationale as to why the satellite
7 should stay open. They can bring the seniors
8 through transportation to the other side and
9 provide better programming in the one place.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

11 Right.

12 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: And we were
13 trying to discourage, you know, little places that
14 had 30 centers, seniors, and then they couldn't
15 afford the programming--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

17 There's a lot of efficiencies of scale.

18 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Right.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

20 Yeah, I understand that, I mean--

21 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: But,
23 but still, I guess my last question would be, that
24 taking into account the way the RFP was structured
25 and the language and expectation, in terms of

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numbers served by communities, do you see that there would be a shift in less served, more served?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: We're hoping for more served.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:
Equal?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: We're hoping for more people being served. We did not receive that many proposals for mergers, we were expecting more, quite honestly. And I'm, again, I have to like wait till the final review, and I'll gladly share all of that with you. But my, our expectation is that we would serve more seniors because there would be better and more robust kind of programming. And we were hoping that there was extra money would go to transportation to bring seniors to the centers. The only way we were encouraging satellites is if you had a specialized population, that either couldn't move or was culturally different from the one you served in your main center, and you know that wouldn't come, then you, we said, you know, "That's okay to keep a satellite." But if it's the same population,

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2 you know, we should encourage to have better
3 programming in one place.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

5 Okay, I appreciate it. Thank you, Commissioner.

6 [pause, background noise]

7 CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: I don't think
8 Council Member Levin's here. Council Member
9 Reyna?

10 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Thank you,
11 Madam Chair, I just wanted to take a moment to ask
12 regarding the eight innovative centers, that had
13 been chosen, as far as the funding is concerned
14 that the City Council provides, for supplemental
15 matters, to make centers whole, would one be
16 correct in saying that these eight centers will
17 not be in need of any of this funding?

18 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

19 That's correct.

20 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: So--

21 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: All of the
22 supplemental funding goes for the neighborhood
23 centers.

24 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Okay. And does
25 that free up more funding that at one point or

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another, the eight innovative centers used to absorb?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: The discretionary money, yes, was backed away and put back into the neighborhood centers, not the regular baseline money.

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Okay. And I know that you had just explained to Council Member Mark-Viverito regarding the issues of discretionary versus baselining and understanding the hardship it imposes on senior centers to deal with cash flow. Has there been any further discussions with the Department of--the Mayor's Office of Contracts, to allow for addressing what would be the cash flow problems, so that I know I've been getting calls from senior centers that have not signed contracts of as of last month, late last month, worried that they ran out of money and their staff is working with no pay.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Right.
[pause, background comments] Joy Wang.

JOY WANG: Oh, hi, hi, Councilwoman. We recently sent--about a few weeks ago we sent a memo out to all providers with

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2 pending discretionary amendments, that if they
3 need additional loans, to basically reach out to
4 us, and we'll assist them with any loans to the
5 fund. As well as if they currently have a
6 baseline in the contract, and they, we're--
7 starting April we do advanced recruitments, that
8 we'll work with them on a delayed plan in terms of
9 recouping advances. So that went out to
10 providers. And we've gotten a few calls and we're
11 working with them.

12 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: And I
13 appreciate that collaboration. In the meantime,
14 what type of coordination with the Mayor's Office
15 of Contracts has come to fruition in order to deal
16 with the once and for all? Because this is year
17 after year, and unless the Mayor's Office is going
18 to baseline, we're going to continue to see this
19 as a problem. And it doesn't stabilize anyone,
20 neither services or senior centers, and the
21 discussions here just get murkier as we further
22 move along. I don't understand why the Mayor's
23 Office of contracts wouldn't be able to deal with
24 what would be amendments to existing contracts, to
25 just attach it to their existing contracts, so

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2 that it decreases the flow, the problems that
3 centers are experiencing as far as cash flow.

4 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So we're
5 looking, we're working with them, and I, what
6 we're trying to look ourselves internally as to
7 how quickly do we move things through our own
8 process, to make sure we're expediting it. And
9 you know, there's, we, not all discretionary money
10 is the same. You know, there's, there's some that
11 are appendages to the, to the bigger contracts.
12 There's some that are standalone, there's some
13 that our two organizations we don't know, or some
14 organizations we do know. You know, so, we're
15 trying to sort of create a triage system to see
16 how we can handle it in a faster way, and we're
17 going to sit down with MOCS and see how we can
18 expedite with them as well. I agree, it's, it's
19 something we know it's coming, we do it every
20 year, and we don't seem to get fast enough at it.

21 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: And is the Law
22 Department helping or part of these discussions?

23 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: I don't
24 think Law is--right? [background comments] Okay,
25 so, so what Bill Chong, my Deputy for Operations--

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CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Come on up,
Bill.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: [laughs]

BILL CHONG: Generally, the Law
Department only gets involved when the contract
exceeds \$100,000. So, it's usually handled at the
agency level and of course with MOCS.

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: And they're, as
far as the Law Department is concerned, they play
no role?

BILL CHONG: Only if it's \$100,000
or more is the contract reviewed.

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: So they don't
see the, let's say for instance, space costs, \$1.5
million, as a necessary--

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Well,
because it doesn't, you know, it goes allocated as
smaller amounts to each.

BILL CHONG: Yes, they--

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: But that's the
problem, why not reverse it so that we're turning
it the other way around where we're dealing with a
\$1.5 million contract as opposed to smaller, you
know, 51 separate contracts?

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2 JOY WANG: I think part of it is
3 that the allocation bundle is \$1.5, but it goes to
4 different providers.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: No, I
6 understand that.

7 JOY WANG: So, yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Right.

9 JOY WANG: So, it's hard to have
10 one contract to, for all the money, when it's
11 going out to multiple providers. It's usually the
12 contract, a different, different amounts.
13 Usually, it's a contract with a certain amount,
14 between the City and a particular provider for
15 that amount.

16 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: And there's no
17 other exploring possibility to subcontract--

18 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, so see
19 the ideal thing would be to sort of come, find a
20 way of dealing it differently, with things that
21 are under \$25,000 dollars, or things that are
22 under \$50,000, that would have to undergo a less
23 strenuous kind of vetting, since it's, you know,
24 the amount of money is smaller. But we, we treat
25 at this point in time, the \$5,000 contract the

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same way we treat the \$90,000 contract.

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Right.

JOY WANG: Yeah.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: It's a problem.

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: And just to understand the innovative centers, you mentioned Visions and what their level of service will be, as far as a customized center because it's an innovative center. Can you just go through what would be--Lennox Hill, for instance, what would their specialty be?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, so the, oh, so, so Visions deals with the visually impaired--

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Correct.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: The center that is run by Sage deals with the LGBT community and each one of them chose some sort of a theme.

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Right.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Staten Island, their big theme is empowerment so the seniors have literally taken over the programming and they, they make all the decisions and decide

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what to do and when to do it, and--

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Which is the most active.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: It is, yes, it is amazing what's going on there.

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Self help?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Self help is doing technology, they have the virtual senior center, and a lot of technological stuff, and they have, they have homebound seniors hooked into the senior center, and they participate via--

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Virtual, right.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: --Skype, and you know, it's very, it's really nice, nicely done. Lennox Hill--

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Snap?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: --has a, they're doing culinary arts, and they essentially have visiting chefs and they have a hydroponic garden in the roof. They also have a pool and they're--but their main theme is around food and nutrition. Snap is doing a lot around healthcare. Linda is here someplace. [laughs] They're doing a lot around healthcare and health improvement,

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2 and they have a nurse on staff. - - The
3 Washington Heights Center is again doing a lot
4 around health and wellness, they have a cardio
5 fitness program with a special instructor, and
6 they have all kinds of exercise classes. What am
7 I mi--[background comments] Oh, Browns--what is
8 Brownsville doing? Yeah, I think Brownsville's
9 just also doing health and fitness, so we have
10 found out is that we have such a high incidence of
11 diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis. You
12 know, so health and wellness has become a really
13 important thing for all of the centers.

14 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Right.

15 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: And you
16 know, as it evolves, I think they'll find other
17 areas of specialty, depending on the population
18 they have. But we're emphasizing a lot of good
19 relationships with neighborhood clinics,
20 neighborhood providers, I just did yesterday a big
21 kickoff on diabetes, you know, so there's a lot of
22 emphasis on health and wellness.

23 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: And
24 Commissioner, as far as the innovative center that
25 will be providing services in Brooklyn, there were

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certain requirements that became impediments I--

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: --I would call.

And are those same requirements applicable in this RFP?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: No, we opened it up for the entire borough. And, but you had to be prequalified. So there were some providers that did not prequalify because there were issues. And so--

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: How many of those?

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: In, in Brooklyn I think there were two main providers that were not prequalified. That are, you know, provide senior services, but for various reasons they did not prequalify.

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Okay. And the total number, I apologize, Chair, six--

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: We received seven proposals from six providers.

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: And that does not include the two that did not prequalify.

LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: That's

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right, because we couldn't accept those.

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON LAPPIN: Thank you. And I just wanted to echo, you know, we need to baseline this funding, because it's not a sustainable or wise way for us to proceed. And the case management money is critical, and we need to make sure that it's getting to the agencies in a way that they can plan and hire the way they need to. Thanks. The last question, nope, no second round, Parks is eager to get in here, is Council Member Lew Fidler.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Thank you, Chairwoman Lappin. Commissioner, I don't, I don't often preface my question to a Bloomberg Administration official during budget negotiation with a compliment, but I'm going to do that. I think that your agency does a terrific job with, with pennies. And I know that you're an advocate for, I know that every cut hurts you, your team has been very extraordinarily responsive to my office, it only got better when you stole Bill Chong from DYCD. So, I just want to start with

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2 that. And I know, and I think everybody here
3 should understand, that these cuts aren't your
4 doing, and if you had more money you'd spend it,
5 and I'm sure you'd spend it wisely. And I think
6 that should be said, and I think it should be part
7 of the record. The [applause]

8 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Let's keep
9 the applause down, please.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: The, the
11 question I really wanted to follow up on, was one
12 that Council Member Ignizio asked some time ago,
13 but we didn't get down to the nuts and bolts of
14 it. A number of Brooklyn Council Members also
15 sent you a letter to which we just got a response,
16 discussing the paucity, or the lack of a center
17 for the Asian, growing Asian community, in
18 southern Brooklyn. I mean, clearly, a demographic
19 need that, that has developed, you know, over the
20 years, and none of wants to close a center to open
21 another one; yet, there's that need. So the
22 question then becomes, "How much is the cost of
23 opening a single new center?" an approximate cost.
24 I know there's going to an ballpark and then there
25 are variables, but if we were going to take

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2 Council Member Ignizio's thought and say, "Well,
3 you know, maybe we need to find a place to put
4 three or five or ten new senior centers in the
5 City of New York, to meet those needs, what's the
6 price tag?"

7 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, I would
8 say it would be somewhere between \$300,000 and
9 \$500,000 a year. When we decided to open the
10 innovative centers, we, we pegged it at \$500,000
11 to have a more robust budget so they could serve
12 between 150 and 300 seniors a day.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: So, now,
14 has your agency done any analysis of circumstances
15 like the one that I just brought to your
16 attention, the Asian Center? There must be other
17 examples of that. Can you give me a, some notion
18 of how many centers--and I'm not talking about in
19 an ideal world, 'cause we know in an ideal world,
20 and we're not living in that--you could, you
21 would, open, based upon that analysis?

22 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, so I
23 think that part of what our concern was, as I know
24 was your concern, is that there are emergent
25 populations in the City that have begun to age,

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2 and we don't have centers that cater to that
3 particular population. So, the Asian population
4 has exploded. It, it is the fastest growing
5 population in all of our centers. It's not just
6 in particular neighborhoods, they are going to
7 every center in the City. It's that is, there's a
8 huge Asian presence in all of our centers. So, we
9 do know that we do need an increasing number of
10 services for the Asian population. But not every
11 Asian population is the same. So we need services
12 that are appropriate for the Chinese elders, for
13 the Korean elders, for the Vietnamese elders, we
14 need for the, you know, Bangladeshis are
15 increasing, Pakistanis, Indian--so, we have that
16 big population growth. We do know that there's a
17 diversity of Latinos now and it's not just, you
18 know, in certain neighborhoods, or they're now in
19 neighborhoods that they didn't used to be before.
20 So that's a different thing. We're getting an
21 increase in African descent, not African-
22 Americans, African descent elders in The Bronx.
23 So, we do know that there's, you know, there's a
24 growth, Haitian, you know, so, and there are
25 people with, - - the Muslim community has come to

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2 us with needs, and the need their own, their own,
3 they wander and need their own center. There's a
4 huge outgrowth in the orthodox Jewish population.
5 So, you know, and culturally, although, you know,
6 we all would love for everybody to come to the
7 same place and together, you know, the nature of
8 our neighborhoods is such that, you know, they're
9 enclaves. So, ideally, you know, we would love to
10 be able to open centers for the, the new
11 immigrants and the new emerging populations or
12 populations that are beginning to be very
13 representative in all over the place. And help
14 them develop those services and that capacity.
15 So, you know, just sheer numbers, I don't know, at
16 least, you know, four or five, to see if what we
17 would do with them, and who would come, and what
18 the services would look like.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: That sounds
20 like a lot more than four or five.

21 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: [laughs]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I mean, you
23 just ticked off, you know, seven or eight
24 different ethnic groups that are all burgeoning.
25 I mean, you know, it just, it just strikes me that

1
2 if the ballpark number for a center is \$300,000 to
3 \$500,000, I heard that correctly.

4 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: You know,
6 ten, in a budget of \$70 billion, that we can maybe
7 find, you know, \$5 million to meet the needs of,
8 of an obviously changing City, you know, strikes
9 me as something that, that this Administration
10 should be doing. And, and I trust that you
11 probably are advocating for that, and I know that
12 the bean counters are counting beans and not
13 people. And that's something that we have to, to
14 talk about. But I think, you know, this Council,
15 and the Administration, have to do some
16 responsible budgeting here and planning for the
17 future. And I think this is a year, and I know
18 that money is tight, and, you know, and all that,
19 but money's not so tight that we can't find a few
20 million dollars to meet needs of people who are
21 being utterly and completely neglected, as we move
22 into the future. And I, trust I could be a
23 partner on working on that. [applause] Thank
24 you.

25 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. Keep

1
2 the applause down, please. Commissioner, I just
3 have one or two questions. On the contract
4 amendments that do with DFTA, which include
5 funding, you know, for Council Member moneys,
6 often the money does not make it through the
7 process until very late in the year. Many of
8 these senior programs that have problems and they
9 cannot, they don't have the money for the cash
10 flow, and many times they almost close. What are
11 you doing about this and where are we in working
12 with MOCS in improving this?

13 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So, we're,
14 we're, you know, yes, I'm very conscious of that,
15 and it's absolutely right, that we're putting the
16 agencies through a very difficult situation.
17 We're trying to work with them in terms of, you
18 know, giving them money, moneys, based on their
19 baseline contracts, we're working with them on
20 getting them loans, we're trying to streamline our
21 own process, we're working with MOCS to streamline
22 their process. The reality is that we've created
23 a system that is, that every discretionary
24 contract is touched by so many different groups,
25 or hands, I mean, ours, yours, everybody else's,

1
2 that the process is very elongated. And I think
3 that that's what we have to address, is that, you
4 know, I understand the need for scrutiny, but a
5 \$5,000 allocation is not the same as a \$100,000
6 allocation, and we have to--

7 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: We agree.

8 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: --figure
9 out a way of doing it in a way that is much more
10 user friendly for the agencies.

11 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: So where are
12 you with MOCS in doing this?

13 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: So we're
14 talking to them and figuring out how we can do
15 this. You know--

16 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: All right.

17 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: --some of
18 it is within their purview, some of it is really
19 not even within their purview. So--

20 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay, because
21 this is getting, you know, we hear from these
22 providers and you know, every year it's the same
23 thing. And I hope next year when you come before
24 this Committee to testify, I hope you can say that
25 we've resolved that problem, and the streamline is

1
2 much quicker. Especially the programs who every
3 year they get the same amount of money. There
4 should be no, you know, like you said, it
5 shouldn't be a long process. The next thing I
6 want to just bring up to you, is that there is
7 need out there for new seniors programs. Okay?
8 Especially in areas in Staten Island that are
9 newly developed, like Council Member Vincent
10 Ignizio, and I know the innovative centers are a
11 great idea and everything. But I think before you
12 open up any more innovative centers, after you
13 completed this one, I really think you should take
14 a look at different parts of New York City, where
15 people are underserved with senior programs, such
16 as Councilman Ignizio's district. Because if it's
17 only going to cost \$300,000-\$400,000, to start a
18 program out there, I think, you know, I'd rather
19 see that happen first before any more of these
20 innovative centers are opened, because I think,
21 you know, serving as many seniors is, should be a
22 priority. And because when you talk about the JCC
23 of Staten Island, the numbers are through the
24 roof. Okay, there's a reason for that, 'cause
25 there's no other place for them to go. You know,

1
2 and that's really a call for more senior programs
3 in Staten Island. Okay. Council Member Lappin
4 would just like to say a few words to close it
5 out. [background comment] You said it? Council
6 Member Greenfield, do you have anything else to
7 say? Good? Okay. That will conclude today's
8 hearing. Want to thank you for coming out today.
9 Look forward to working with you. We will take a
10 three minute recess, and we'll start with Parks
11 and Recreation.

12 [pause, background noise, long
13 pause]

14 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay.

15 [pause] We have lots of good things to talk about
16 today, to hear from the Commissioner. Let me just
17 say a few words, then I'll turn it over to Melissa
18 Mark-Viverito, the wonderful Chair of this
19 Committee. We will now resume the City Council
20 Hearing on the Mayor's Executive Budget for Fiscal
21 Year 2013. The Finance Committee has been joined
22 by the Committee on Parks and Recreation, chaired
23 by my colleague and Council Member, Melissa Mark-
24 Viverito, to hear from the Parks Commissioner
25 Adrian Benepe. Before we hear from the

1
2 Commissioner, I'd like to turn the microphone over
3 to Melissa Mark-Viverito.

4 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
5 you, Mr. Chair. So good afternoon, everybody, my
6 name is Melissa Mark-Viverito, I'm Chair of the
7 Parks and Recreation Committee. I want to welcome
8 everyone that is present to this joint hearing of
9 the Finance and Parks and Recreation Committees,
10 regarding the Fiscal Year 2013 Executive Budget
11 for this agency. Today we're going to hear
12 testimony from Department of Parks and Recreation
13 about its expense and capital budgets, and general
14 agency operations. Before we begin, I want to
15 state clearly that I'm concerned that the
16 Department's proposed executive budget still
17 includes plans to reduce headcount by more than
18 800 positions, close four pools and reduce the
19 pool season, and further reduce seasonal jobs. I
20 just want to also highlight that looking back
21 historically at our budgets, from 2009 when we had
22 a headcount of 7,700, we are now looking at a
23 Fiscal Year 2013 budget that has a headcount of
24 5,524. So, obviously, very, very concerned about
25 the maintenance and overall operations of our

1 parks and how that will be compromised to some
2 extent based on the severe downturn in numbers.
3 To save money, the Department plans to replace JTP
4 positions that are City paid positions with WEP
5 workers that are nonpaid City paid positions. On
6 the surface, this actually may seem like a fair
7 exchange, but as we all know, it's not. Unlike
8 JTPs, WEP workers are not paid an hourly wage,
9 they do not have union status, and they cannot
10 accrue paid sick leave. They also do not receive
11 the same level of training and workforce
12 development that WEP workers do. The Parks
13 Opportunity Program or POP, is a renowned model
14 that does a much better job preparing people to
15 seek quality jobs, and get back into the
16 mainstream workforce. Just as important, the
17 increasing use of WEP workers will further
18 undermine Parks maintenance and cleanliness, since
19 WEP workers receive less training in the day-to-
20 day maintenance functions of parks. JTPs play a
21 vital role in keeping our parks clean and well
22 maintained, as such ought to be restored. Another
23 concern is the elimination of funding for
24 playground associates. This includes the
25

1
2 elimination of the additional \$1 million that this
3 Council provided in the Fiscal Year 2012 adopted
4 budget. The fact that this reduction is being
5 made at a time when every indication clearly shows
6 that supervised recreational activities are
7 crucial in fighting obesity and keeping our kids
8 healthy, and safe, it's difficult to understand
9 this cut. The Committee look--the Committees look
10 forward to hearing from the Parks Commissioner on
11 these issues, as well as on other Fiscal 2013
12 Executive Budget actions, and their impact on the
13 agency's ability to carry out its various
14 missions, including parks maintenance, forestry
15 and recreation activities. We will also review
16 the agency's four year capital plan, and my
17 understanding is that there has been some
18 relatively good news on that front, which we hope
19 to hear from the Commissioner. The Department's
20 proposed Fiscal Year 2013 Expense Budget is \$304.9
21 million, \$8.3 million less than the Fiscal Year
22 2012 adopted budget, and \$88.8 million less
23 compared to Fiscal 2011 actual spending by the
24 Department. The year-to-date changes include \$9.9
25 million added to cover cost increases, \$17.6

1 million in budget cuts and funding shifts,
2 including Council restorations, and a net of \$1.4
3 million added for other adjustments. In terms of
4 the proposed capital budget for Fiscal Years 2012
5 through 2016, it totals \$1.64 billion, an increase
6 of \$36.9 million, or 2.3 percent since the
7 preliminary plan. We will examine some of the key
8 projects and other changes in this plan. Lastly,
9 the proposed expense budget for Fiscal 2013 is
10 alarming considering the level of funding
11 reduction and proposed headcount reduction for the
12 Department. If this stands, park maintenance and
13 recreation programs will really suffer. I hope
14 that the Administration will take steps to ensure
15 that our public parks and parks programs are
16 adequately funded in Fiscal 2013 and beyond. And
17 with that, I want to welcome Commissioner Adrian
18 Benepe, and all the staff that are here with him.
19 And I guess we can ask for them to begin.

21 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Yeah, I just
22 want to recognize everybody that's here with us.
23 We have Fernando Cabrera, Council Member
24 Greenfield, Council Member Cabrera, Council Member
25 Vincent Ignizio, Council Member Jimmy Oddo,

1 Council Member Gale Brewer, Council Member Vincent
2 Gentile, and Council Member, of course, Melissa
3 Mark-Viverito. If any Council Member would like
4 to ask a question, please give your name to
5 Tanisha Edwards, our attorney right here, and
6 Diana Reyna, and Council Member Jackson. Okay, so
7 we have Jackson centerfield. Okay, Commissioner,
8 you're up.

10 ADRIAN BENEPE: I thought I heard a
11 bird sing.

12 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: We have
13 enough birds on the Upper West Side.

14 ADRIAN BENEPE: Okay. Good
15 morning--

16 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: I didn't say--
17 -[laughs]

18 ADRIAN BENEPE: Good afternoon. Is
19 that a reference to your district? Okay.

20 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Yes, only in
21 Gale's district, when you go to a town hall
22 meeting, first question, "What are you doing about
23 the birds crashing into the high rises?"
24 Unbelievable. [laughs] Only on the Upper West
25 Side. [laughter, background comments] Right,

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Gale?

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Council Member from Brooklyn could not believe the West Side.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.

ADRIAN BENEPE: All right.

[laughter] I think both Brooklyn and the West Side are terrific. Well, good afternoon, Chairs Recchia, Mark-Viverito and Members of the Finance and Parks Committees, and thank you for the opportunity to hear before you today, to discuss the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2013. Let me just briefly introduce the Parks team, or part of the Parks team is here with us today. Our First Deputy Commissioner, if you'd stand up or wave, our First Deputy Commissioner, Liam Kavanaugh; Deputy Commissioner--actually stand up, so the people in back can see--Deputy Commissioner Therese Braddick, in charge of Capital Projects; Deputy Commissioner for Budget Administration, Bob Garafola, who also oversees the POP program; Deputy Commissioner Larry Scott Blackmon, in charge of Government and Community Relations and Outreach, and the Green Thumb program and many

1
2 other things; Assistant Commissioner David Stark,
3 for Fiscal Management; Assistant Commissioner
4 Joshua Laird, in charge of Planning; Assistant
5 Commissioner Betty Smith, in charge of Revenue;
6 Assistant Commissioner Annika Holder, in charge of
7 Public Programs; Assistant Commissioner Mike
8 Dockett, in charge of the Urban Park Service,
9 including the PEP force; and our terrific Borough
10 Commissioners, Queens Borough Commissioner Dottie
11 Lewandowski, Brooklyn Borough Commissioner Kevin
12 Jeffrey, Manhattan Borough Commissioner William
13 Castro, Staten Island Borough Commissioner Adena
14 Long, Bronx Borough Commissioner Hector Aponte;
15 Assistant Commissioner Sue Donoghue, who I'm sorry
16 I missed in the first round, in charge of
17 Sustainability and Strategic Communications; and
18 we also have the Chief of Natural Resources and
19 Forestry, Bram Gunther; and also with me is recent
20 émigré from the City Council, Karen Becker,
21 Director of our Government Relations. [applause]
22 One round of applause for Karen, she's done a - -
23 Anyway, we met two months ago to discuss a
24 preliminary budget. Not much has significantly
25 changed. We continue working, however, trying to

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2 provide great opportunities for play, such as our
3 recent street games festival, and to provide for
4 the future of the environment of New York City
5 through our spring planting days. Our core
6 mission, which we work to fulfill, is to keep
7 parks clean in spite of the challenging budget
8 climate. And I want to give full credit to the
9 tireless staff of the Parks Department, who are
10 represented here today by some of our senior
11 staff, but in particular the men and women of the
12 Parks Department who are out there every day
13 cleaning despite the weather, whether it's cold,
14 hot, rainy, snowy, or buggy. And also, we have a
15 very robust army of volunteers who work with us
16 day in and day out. I will, I was pleased to
17 report during my preliminary budget testimony, all
18 that we have accomplished over the year and the
19 projects we are looking forward to in the upcoming
20 year, and in my testimony I will share a few new
21 exciting projects that have moved forward since I
22 was here last, and express the challenges we
23 continue to face in Fiscal Year 2013. The Parks
24 Fiscal 2013 Executive Budget is \$304.9 million, a
25 reduction of approximately 2.6 percent from the

1 Fiscal Year 2012 adopted budget. The biggest
2 reduction to our budget, or the biggest impact of
3 the budget reduction, will be to our personnel.
4 Our total agency fulltime equivalent headcount,
5 which includes season staff and job training
6 participants, will be 4,596 in Fiscal Year 2013,
7 which represents a drop of 13.5 percent from
8 Fiscal Year 2012. Now, thanks to the leadership
9 of the City Council, working with the
10 Administration, funds were restored in Fiscal Year
11 2012 to keep all the pools open for the entirety
12 of the pool swimming season. Unfortunately,
13 unless the City Council works once again to
14 restore the \$1.5 million needed to operate the
15 pools, we will be once again forced to close four
16 pools and to shorten the pool season across the
17 City by two weeks. The pools that would be closed
18 would be Wagner Pool in Manhattan, Howard Pool in
19 Brooklyn, Fort Totten Pool in Queens, and Faber
20 Pool in Staten Island. And our decision was based
21 on our judgment of several factors, including
22 relative attendance figures, proximity to other
23 pools, access to public transit, and the location
24 of the pools relative to residential communities.
25

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2 The combination of a persistent hiring freeze now
3 well into its third year, and attrition programs,
4 severely reduce staffing at all levels throughout
5 the agency. Since 2008, Parks has experienced a
6 25 percent decline in fulltime staff and a 60
7 percent decrease in job training participants in
8 the Parks Opportunity Program. Last year, because
9 of the efforts of the City Council and your
10 restorations of \$2.9 million for the job training
11 program, \$2.5 million for season workers and \$1
12 million for playground associates, we were able to
13 stave off cuts to our staffing in those areas and
14 I appreciate the work you did there.

15 Unfortunately, if we do not have the same kinds of
16 restorations this year, we will have to reduce our
17 staff again. This year, thanks to Council's
18 Fiscal Year 2012 restoration, we were able to have
19 1,556 job training participants maintain our
20 parks; however, beginning in July, if the Council
21 doesn't provide at a minimum that same level of
22 funding, our JTP number will drop to 887, which
23 represents a decrease of approximately 670 JTPs or
24 43 percent. This would undoubtedly have an impact
25 upon the level of service that New Yorkers have

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2 come to expect from the Parks Department. Our
3 operations are directly tied, as you might
4 imagine, to the operating budget. Our reduced
5 staffing, particularly in the titles that make up
6 the core of the Parks Department workforce, will
7 present a challenge as we enter the height of our
8 busy season this summer. Where they reduced the
9 number of staff imminent, maintenance and cleaning
10 frequency will have to be reduced. We have been
11 able, on the whole, to maintain our high rate, our
12 high ratings. I want to give a special thanks to
13 the Borough Commissioners and our First Deputy
14 Commissioner for all of their works there, and
15 also to our POP program. So they've worked really
16 hard, they're working harder than ever; however,
17 one area that we see our acceptability numbers
18 continually decreasing is in our litter ratings.
19 And they have decreased about two percent from
20 last year and 11.3 percent overall since 2006.
21 This is one area also where everyday New Yorkers
22 can help us, and really have an impact. If park
23 users take responsibility for the waste they
24 generate and remove their litter or simply walk
25 with it to a litter basket, there will be big

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2 improvements in the quality and a lot less work
3 for us to do. We would also see a dramatic
4 increase in the cleanliness of our parks. So we
5 have a very simple request to all New Yorkers,
6 which is if you've got some litter, walk with it
7 to a litter basket, and that will help us keep our
8 parks clean, and our beaches clean, and will keep
9 litter out of the water, and won't be washing up
10 on other beaches. So it's just a very simple
11 civic gesture the average New Yorker can make. In
12 an effort to reduce the impact of the shrinking
13 budget on the public, and on the quality of life
14 in the parks, we are working smarter and harder
15 and we have increased efficiencies by introducing
16 new technologies. During the preliminary budget
17 hearing, I spoke of our Asset Management Park
18 System, otherwise known as AMPS, which manages and
19 tracks our assets and work orders, allowing our
20 staff to become increasingly more efficient. Our
21 operations have also become greener, as they say,
22 by implementing the plans and goals in our
23 sustainable parks plan, as we continue to strive
24 to provide leadership in the area of
25 sustainability. This sustainable Parks plan laid

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2 out twelve goals, 41 milestones and 36 indicators
3 to measure and prove and communicate sustainable
4 practices. Already, we have increased recycling,
5 leaf composting, communications between capital
6 and operations for more efficient operations, and
7 expanded training. This year we will focus on
8 further integrating environmentally friendly
9 practices into our operations, while helping the
10 agency meet the resource conservation goals laid
11 out in PlaNYC. You know, there are a lot of
12 complicated ways that you can be sustainable, such
13 as restoring a natural wetland, but it can be very
14 simple, too, it can be turning off your ignition
15 when you make a brief stop, or promising to reuse
16 a water bottle, or take the stairs instead of the
17 elevator. Today's warming up a little bit, it's
18 starting to feel like summer. We hired over 1,400
19 lifeguards last summer, which was a record
20 breaking number for the, in the history of the
21 City of New York, and a longstanding goal of the
22 Parks Department. This allowed us to fully staff
23 City beaches and pools and open more beaches than
24 ever in recent times, certainly since the State
25 Health Department changed the Health Code to

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2 require many more lifeguards than they had in the
3 past. We're happy to be a little bit more than
4 one week away from ushering in the 2012 beach
5 season, hard to believe it's upon us again. And
6 we hope that all of you will join us, along with
7 millions of New Yorkers who enjoy the 14 miles of
8 City beach. The beaches open officially on
9 Saturday, May 26th. We will celebrate the
10 official beach opening season for a full week.
11 The opening ceremony, the symbolic opening
12 ceremony for Staten Island, is scheduled for
13 Wednesday, May 23rd; Coney Island on Thursday, May
14 24th; and Rockaway and Orchard Beach on Friday the
15 25th. So we invite you to join us at any or all
16 of these events. For a little bit of fun, we did
17 Street Games and brought out thousands of kids to
18 learn or to relive some of their classic street
19 games. I hope when each of you asks a question,
20 you'll tell me about street games you used to play
21 as kids. And I will share with you what mine
22 were. I can tell you it wasn't stickball. So,
23 some of these classic street games from the '60s
24 and '70s were reintroduced to kids with a modern
25 twist, they had over 6,000 people attend street

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2 games which were held in Thomas Jefferson Park in
3 East Harlem. The standard favorites including
4 double Dutch, stickball, pogo, hula hoops, and
5 then some more recent activities like soccer and
6 street hockey, and of course the classic handball.

7 I want to give you a brief update on Million
8 Trees. On April 28th, we join our partners at the
9 New York Restoration Project, NYC Service and our
10 sister agencies and more than 400 volunteers at
11 Conference House Park, on the southernmost tip of
12 Staten Island, which is also the southernmost tip
13 of New York State. We planted 7,500 trees there
14 and 2,250 shrubs, as part of our Million Trees
15 spring planting day, and other parks hosting
16 planting events were Clear View Park, Cross Run
17 [phonetic] Park and Palace Cove in Queens; Wolfs
18 Plant [phonetic] Park in Staten Island; and Pelham
19 Bay Park and Van Cortland Park in The Bronx. And
20 once again, over the course of one day, 20,000
21 trees were planted across the City. I'm happy to
22 report that we've exceeded our planting goal by 17
23 percent; as of last week we have planted 585,207
24 trees. The New York Restoration Project, our
25 partner, has also launched a homeowner tree

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2 giveaway program, which is aimed to inspire more
3 homeowners to increase our City's tree canopy by
4 planting trees in their front yards or backyards.
5 There are 30 tree giveaway events scheduled for
6 this spring, with a goal of providing 5,000 trees
7 to private property owners. This is the largest
8 number of trees ever given away during the Million
9 Trees seasonal giveaway events. And New York
10 restoration projects and other nonprofit
11 organizations have leveraged individual and
12 corporate donations to purchase and plant trees on
13 other public lands, including school yards, public
14 housing canvases, libraries, community health
15 centers and senior centers. To help ensure these
16 trees are properly watered and cared for, the
17 Parks Department and NYRP have partnered with
18 community groups and block associations to oversee
19 the care and stewardship of the young trees.
20 Three years ago, we launched the Stewardship
21 Corps, which works with the City's Botanical
22 Gardens and other nonprofit partners to engage a
23 broad cross section of New Yorkers, in citizen
24 tree care. Since it's pilot year, the so-called
25 Stew Corps, has offered over 700 free tree care

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2 workshops and trained over 7,000 New Yorkers,
3 which is very impressive. In April '12, in April
4 2012, we launched applications for a new Stew
5 Corps mini grant program to provide funding to
6 committed community groups dedicated toward
7 organizing and strengthening street stewardship
8 efforts in their neighborhoods. I also wanted to
9 thank Trees New York, another volunteer group
10 who's worked closely with us, and the funding from
11 the Mayor's Fund, which has supported these
12 efforts for the last three years. And basically
13 what that's doing is training citizen volunteers
14 who get certified in how to care for new trees and
15 provide water, and the initial pruning that those
16 trees need. Another group of volunteers functions
17 under the very large program known as Partnerships
18 for Parks, it's one of the programs that
19 Commissioner Larry Scott Blackmon oversees. And
20 Partnerships for Parks is itself a partnership
21 with the City Parks Foundation and then hundreds
22 and hundreds of neighborhood groups. So "It's My
23 Park Day" which is one of the, it's a big holidays
24 for Partnerships, is just around the corner, this
25 coming Saturday, May 19th. The Parks Department,

1
2 with the City Parks Foundation, will be supporting
3 156 community led volunteer projects and events at
4 more than 145 parks and open spaces. And it's at,
5 "It's My Park Day," thousands of New Yorkers come
6 together to volunteer, to celebrate their
7 neighborhood parks and public spaces throughout
8 the five boroughs, and people should come out and
9 join us. You're not required to preregister, you
10 just find a local park that's hosting an "It's My
11 Park" activity and show up that day, it's that
12 simple. Now this is a great opportunity to meet
13 local park groups that need year round help from
14 caring neighbors, and it's become a signature
15 event for the Partnerships for Parks organization
16 and grows every year. Our stewardship groups are
17 really the backbone of the Park system. Last
18 fall, the "It's My Park" day had 178 groups with
19 almost 6,000 participants volunteering, for 154
20 events in 138 parks. So, please stop by, there'll
21 be something in ever district, roll up your
22 sleeves, meet the constituents, help with the
23 volunteer efforts and you'll feel good and then
24 they'll feel even better that you're there. So,
25 it's a very simple formula. The parks that fare

1 best and look the bet are often those where
2 citizens are involved with the life of the park.
3 And it doesn't mean writing a big check, it means
4 coming out, being the eyes and the ears, if you
5 have the energy and the ability of volunteering in
6 planting or pruning or painting, picking up
7 litter, becoming a watchdog for the park. Almost
8 half of our parks have one or more volunteer
9 groups associated with them, and in just in the
10 last calendar year, prior calendar year, we added
11 182 new organizations to our database of volunteer
12 groups, which now number in the thousands. And
13 these groups range from schools to small
14 nonprofits, CBOs, City agencies, friends of Parks
15 groups, and civic organizations, you know, just
16 about anyone who's worked together to support
17 neighborhood parks and their volunteers organize
18 658 cleanups, which is a five percent increase
19 over the number of events from last year. And
20 I'll put it very simply: if we had all the money
21 in the world, which we don't, we would still want
22 to have these volunteer groups. The, the
23 participation of citizens in the life of the parks
24 is absolutely key to a good park system. We don't
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2 believe that there should be a strict government
3 monopoly on what happens in parks; that the
4 citizens who live in the neighborhoods should have
5 a voice and a say and take part in the life of the
6 parks, and the parks, all the parks, get better as
7 a result of that. Let's talk about recreation,
8 let's talk about fitness, this is a very fit group
9 sitting in front of me. I know this because I
10 talk about the ways you stay fit in our parks and
11 gyms and things like that. One of the things I'd
12 like to talk about, I haven't talked about before,
13 is fitness equipment at the New York City Parks
14 recreation centers. It's something that's been a
15 interest of mine 'cause I got to the centers and
16 work out there. We used to have a historically a
17 high out of service rate. By "high," I mean
18 between six and ten percent. Under Commissioner
19 Annika Holder, she and her staff took this issue
20 head on and over the last fiscal year, they made a
21 series of strategic adjustment, dramatically
22 improving the way we maintain fitness equipment.
23 For example, the division reduced a three to five
24 month turnaround in broken equipment to three to
25 four weeks, by establishing new maintenance

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2 contracts and tracking the life of the equipment
3 and work orders on our AMPS system, so that's
4 another way to use AMPS. In July 2011, six
5 percent of the fitness equipment in our recreation
6 centers was out of service; today, the total is
7 less two percent. Additionally, the Department of
8 Citywide Administrative Services has registered
9 light fitness and pre-core equipment under
10 requirements contracts, which means we'll have
11 faster delivery and improve the ability to replace
12 equipment. So, between January and June of last
13 year, they purchased 73 pieces of cardio equipment
14 and 21 pieces of strength equipment. In FY'12 an
15 additional 125 cardio pieces and 32 strength
16 pieces have been added. Overall, we've added 250
17 pieces of new strength and cardio equipment in the
18 last 16 months, which is roughly 25 percent of all
19 of the equipment there. These are great bargains.
20 A City, a yearlong membership for adults, if you
21 want to use centers and pools, is just \$150, and
22 it's free for anybody up to the age of 18, and I
23 think \$25 for seniors. Is that right? So it's a
24 bargain however you look at it. But if you, if
25 you can't afford even that reduced rate, Walk NYC

1 is one of our many, many, many free programs, it's
2 a citywide initiative, encouraging New Yorkers to
3 get fit, stay fit and engage in healthy activity
4 while enjoying the great outdoors. And we, I have
5 to thank Empire Blue Cross/Blue Shield who made a
6 very generous corporate donation, and they fund
7 this program which provides qualified walking
8 instructors to lead programs focused on
9 stretching, form and core muscle strength. So
10 when I tell somebody to get out and take a walk, I
11 mean it in the best possible way. They have
12 designated warm-ups and cool-downs. In 2011, we
13 had almost 17,000 visits from New Yorkers and
14 1,400 walks offered at 25 sites across the City.
15 And they used the local communities and parks,
16 which provides a great natural environment for
17 fitness walks, and the walkers have told us that
18 their health is getting better, they've got better
19 balance, improved endurance, and significant
20 weight loss. Some walkers trim down an entire
21 clothing size, while others lost over 100 pounds.
22 And that's impressive. We're going to continue to
23 offer programming for all New Yorkers through
24 adaptive recreation programming. In February
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1
2 2012, we introduced an adaptive sports program for
3 people with disabilities at nine recreation
4 centers across the City. The program offers
5 aquatic exercise therapy to improve range of
6 motion, mobility, muscle tone, coordination,
7 strength and also offers swim instruction and
8 focuses on basic swimming and safety skills, to
9 date more than 100 people with disabilities have
10 participated. And those disabilities include
11 things like multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy,
12 spinal cord injuries, and many other mobility
13 limitations. And this winter we implemented a
14 Saturday adaptive sports program for children in
15 the physical disabilities at our Al Oerter
16 Recreation Center in Queens, where children learn
17 the basics of wheelchair basketball, track and
18 field. And you get to participate in regional
19 competition. For the past five years, we've
20 partnered with the United States Paralympics,
21 which is part of the United States Olympic
22 Committee, to offer adaptive sports programs for
23 children and adults with physical disabilities.
24 We'll host our third annual adaptive sports track
25 and field open at Icon State on Randall's Island.

1
2 We're expected to serve more 100 students with
3 disabilities. So we are serious about helping New
4 Yorkers to have fun. We are also serious about
5 protecting and restoring our natural environment,
6 which we find fund at parks. Sustainability
7 drivers the work of our Natural Resources Group,
8 with some positive developments in our own wild
9 kingdom. The hard work of the Natural Resources
10 Group over the last 25 or so years has paid off as
11 our environment is the cleanest it's been in
12 decades. For over 25 years, the Natural Resources
13 Group has pursued science based restoration of our
14 10,000 acres of natural areas over the past year.
15 We have made significant strides in restoring
16 forests and wetlands and studying our process,
17 effectiveness and impact. We have made several
18 advances that have gotten some notable attention.
19 I'm happy to share some of the Natural Resources
20 Group's recent groundbreaking work. We're
21 monitoring the changing environment in several
22 ways. First, they establish dragon flies as
23 bioindicators [phonetic] for the, to talk, to tell
24 us about the health of wetlands; and salamanders
25 as indicators for the health of forests and forest

1 restoration. We have installed monitor devices to
2 monitor salt marsh subsidence and water level
3 rise, to help us plan for climate change and sea
4 level rise in and around Jamaica Bay. We
5 completed second year invasive plant management
6 along The Bronx River, and monitored newly created
7 oyster roofs at the mouth of The Bronx River.
8 Great things are happening in The Bronx River.
9 It's not just that the two beavers have returned
10 for the first time in more than a century, we are
11 also building fish ladders so the live herring can
12 return and spawn in the river. And we have
13 continued plant conservation programs collecting
14 seeds from uncommon plant species across New York
15 City, and expanding native seed production and
16 germinating difficult but valuable species. These
17 all contribute to the restoration work,
18 particularly in places like Staten Island, our
19 borough parks, with the most parks of any borough.
20 So, thank you to our friends and partners in the
21 New York City Council. I work with you on a daily
22 basis, our borough commissioners do, our other
23 commissioners. We consider you allies. We
24 understand that you need to hold our feet to the
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1
2 fire, we don't take umbrage. We realize in this
3 tough economy you have to make the same hard
4 decisions that we do. But we all have the same
5 goals, to provide clean and safe open spaces to
6 your constituents, who are the residents and
7 visitors and taxpayers. And we're proud of our
8 world class parks, there will be a big conference
9 here this summer, organized by the City Parks
10 Alliance, where people will come from all over the
11 world to see what goes on in New York City Parks.
12 And we hope that you'll join us at some of those
13 events and speak proudly of the parks that you've
14 done so much to make among the best in the world.
15 So, thank you for this opportunity. I'm sorry
16 I've gone on for so long. Happy to answer
17 questions.

18 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you
19 very much, I just want to recognize Council Member
20 Vacca, Dromm, and Jimmy Van Bramer. And, and
21 Oliver Koppell. Okay? Before I turn it over to
22 Melissa Mark for questioning, I just want to say
23 one thing. It's that I'm a little bit
24 disappointed in your remarks, a little, just a
25 little bit too long.

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ADRIAN BENEPE: I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: But we have lots of questions and we're going to start off with Melissa Mark--

ADRIAN BENEPE: Karen, I told you they were too long.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Yeah, way too long. Now, a lot of colleagues have questions, so I'm going to turn it over to Melissa Mark-Viverito, and then we'll start off with Vincent Ignizio. Melissa?

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, I want to just jump right in and, thank you for your testimony. I know that I also want to thank you for the letter you wrote to me, indicating that based on our positive experience last year with the pool hours for seniors, that was done in partnership with you as a result of the aging improvement district we're doing, you are going to be expanding that in other neighborhoods as well. But I appreciate that consideration, I think it's a great example of little things that we can do to make the life of our seniors much better in neighborhoods across

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2 the City. So, I just want to go back, 'cause I
3 made a misstatement in my opening, 'cause it's
4 actually worse than I had projected. But so we're
5 saying, going back just to confirm then, Fiscal
6 Year, several years ago we were at 7,700 staff,
7 and, headcount, and now you're saying that in, for
8 this budget we're looking at 4,596, correct/

9 ADRIAN BENEPE: [off mic] I think
10 that's correct. [on mic] FTEs. And the actual--

11 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:
12 Understand.

13 ADRIAN BENEPE: --number of people
14 will be closer to probably 7,000 or 8,000, but
15 when you factor, you know, that's the limited
16 hours of the job training participants, and the
17 more limited hours of the WEP participants and the
18 seasonals, so in terms of FTEs, it's a slightly
19 under ,5000.

20 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Right,
21 so then, but going back to the number that I was
22 saying, 7,700, that would be FTEs, as well, right?

23 ADRIAN BENEPE: Yes, yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay,
25 so we're talking about quite a drastic drop. And-

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ADRIAN BENEPE: It's a big, again
it's around 25 percent.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Right,
and in particular, I just want to, there's just
two kind of areas of questions and I know we have
a lot of colleagues, I want to try to get to it.
So, the, I just want to just keep reiterating the
JTPs and the real importance of that line. You're
talking about having seen a reduction across time
of close to 60 percent. So, the historic high was
what on the JTP front?

ADRIAN BENEPE: We, we had, and
David or Bob, Bob why don't you come up here, so
you can correct me when I make a mistake.
Historically, say by 2008, we had as many as 3,500
at the peak of the season. So this, the job
training participants have generally served on a
six month assignment, and we ramp up when it's
busiest. So, at the height of the season we had
as many as 3,500, and then it would go down to
around 2,000 in the winter. So, now our, our high
head count for the season would be around 2,000 or
so. So, you could see that kind of a decline. So

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2 we got from about 3,500 at the height of the
3 season to about 2,000. And then corresponding
4 declines in the wintertime.

5 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Right,
6 and you're saying that without our restoration,
7 which we did last year, you're going down to 850
8 or so.

9 ADRIAN BENEPE: It could be as
10 drastic as that.

11 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: That's,
12 and so--

13 ADRIAN BENEPE: And we're currently
14 close to 2,000 right now.

15 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: And
16 what is the primary responsibility of the JTP
17 workers? Would you say it's park maintenance?

18 ADRIAN BENEPE: It's park
19 maintenance. The base, they provide the sort of
20 core park maintenance, cleaning the parks, making
21 sure they're safe, making sure there's no broken
22 glass, you know, in the playgrounds. What's that?
23 They, they serve on mobile crews, so they'll go in
24 and clean, paint, remove graffiti. In some cases
25 they're in fixed post positions, but increasingly

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2 they're in mobile crews, because we have to do it
3 in the most efficient way possible. But they are,
4 they are terrific workers and they provide some of
5 our core maintenance services.

6 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Right,
7 and one of the reason that I feel very strongly
8 about this position is also really giving people
9 substantial training that can be, and help them
10 get back into the workforce. Right? In terms of
11 WEP, we've talked about that, you know, forcing
12 people to have to work for benefits, and then
13 there is no real commitment, unfortunately, to
14 them, to train them, and to give them the skills
15 necessary to successfully integrate into the
16 workforce. I think there's a real difference in
17 the quality of commitment, and so I think that
18 that's an issue that we definitely have to look
19 at. It's just these drops in these numbers are
20 very, of grave concern to me. Which also I wanted
21 maybe just slightly lead into the issue of do you,
22 are the JTP staff, or is it the, the ones that
23 would have to, you know, I wanted to reference a
24 little bit the articles that have come out in the
25 last couple of days. About tree maintenance,

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2 pruning, obviously the, the number of cases of
3 people getting hurt, and the liability and the
4 cases against the City. And obviously, it speaks
5 to the fact that we have been whittling away at
6 that aspect of the training, of the budget, but
7 also it talks about, I think it alludes to the
8 quality of training of people and being able to
9 identify when a tree needs to be pruned or the
10 level of, of maintenance that it, it warrants.
11 So, you talk about checklists and people having,
12 as the workers are out in the parks, different
13 levels of checklists that they're expected to
14 engage in, to determine whether or not a tree is
15 safe. Would JTP workers fall in that category, of
16 having that responsibility.

17 ADRIAN BENEPE: Generally,
18 generally not, that would be a responsibility that
19 would be that of a park supervisor. So, the park
20 supervisors, as part of their habitual inspections
21 of parks and playgrounds, which they're required
22 to do as part of their job, they are supposed to
23 be looking at the trees as, along with all the
24 other factors that, you know, the conditions of
25 the paving, the conditions of the fencing, the

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2 conditions of the benches, looking for any kinds
3 of hazards, and among those are trees. And then
4 if they see something they think is a problem,
5 then they call in a forester, and one of our
6 foresters will provide a more thorough assessment,
7 get up in a bucket truck and see what, what needs
8 to be--so, they, they're looking for the obvious
9 things, like a dead branch or a hanging branch, or
10 maybe--and then, or some kind of a fault in the
11 tree trunk, and then they'll call in a forester to
12 make a more thorough assessment.

13 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Right,
14 'cause I think, I think what, what I was gathering
15 from the article, and you can, you know, say
16 whether you think it was accurate or not, is that
17 based on the drop in numbers that we see overall,
18 in number of workers in the parks, or people
19 dedicated to the parks and maintaining, seems like
20 there's multiple, people are being stretched thin.
21 Being asked to engage in multiple responsibilities
22 and that as, as a result, you have a little,
23 somewhat oversight, over being thorough in some
24 cases. Would you say that that's the case?
25 Talked about having to deal with the cleanliness

1
2 of the park, having to make sure that the trees
3 are okay, making sure that--I mean, if you had
4 more workers then you would be able to distribute
5 those responsibilities--

6 ADRIAN BENEPE: Yeah, I--I don't
7 want to mix the two. They're two separate issues.
8 The, the decline in the JTP numbers would not have
9 any impact on our ability to--

10 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Well,
11 we're not just talking about JTP, you're seeing a
12 drop also in general workers in the parks, right?

13 ADRIAN BENEPE: The, a tree, the
14 way trees grow and the tree maintenance and care
15 is a very complex thing, and I'd first like to say
16 that any, any accident happens to park where
17 there's a tree falling or branch falling and
18 injures somebody is a terrible thing. And you do
19 everything you can to avoid that. And a lot of
20 what we do, in the Parks Department, is based on
21 trying to make the parks as safe as possible,
22 whether it's the beach or the pool or park or
23 playground, putting in safety surface, doing
24 inspections, having those inspections scrutinized
25 [phonetic] and made very methodical and having a

1
2 separate inspections unit to go out and look those
3 things. So, first and foremost, public safety is
4 important to, and any accident is one too many.
5 That said, I think we have a pretty good system,
6 we spend about \$25 million a year on tree care,
7 including--you know, so that the decline in the
8 street tree pruning budget does not tell the whole
9 story, because we spend a great deal more on our
10 in-house forces, on our climbers and pruners, or
11 foresters, and we have a, a relatively robust tree
12 care program, particularly compared to other
13 municipalities. Should we be doing more and
14 spending more, absolutely. Would I like to be
15 doing more and spending more, we'd love to. You
16 know, we think, you know, the more resources we
17 have, the better job we can do. But I wouldn't
18 want to confuse the, a job training participant
19 would not be trained to identify tree problems, it
20 requires more training than that. And we do offer
21 training for our park supervisors, for the
22 foresters, for the gardeners, for the assistant
23 gardeners, for the people who work in the
24 horticultural realm. Both in-house, and we get
25 specialized training at places like the New York

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2 Botanical Garden and from, from trainers. So, it's
3 a big and complex operation, but the, the most
4 important thing is that we are always on the
5 lookout to see, "Can we make it even safer?"

6 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Right,
7 understood, Commissioner, but at the same time, I
8 think with the reports, two pretty lengthy reports
9 and exhaustive reports in the New York Times, I
10 think what it's getting at is the fact that, you
11 know, we're getting to a breaking point, also. I
12 mean, your, your budget has been severely
13 impacted, year after year. And I can say that,
14 and I understand that you have to be in a position
15 where you might have to be a bit more diplomatic,
16 but it's getting to the point where now it's
17 impacting the quality of life, and potentially
18 people's lives. I mean, here we have for instance
19 that in the executive plan, we have \$46 million
20 for the planting of new trees and construction of
21 green streets citywide. It only includes \$270,000
22 for tree stump removal. How much is allocated for
23 pruning, in this budget?

24 ADRIAN BENEPE: I think we have
25 \$1.4 million for pruning contracts, which does not

1
2 also include the pruning that's done by our in-
3 house climbers and pruners, 'cause we have a, a
4 separate group that does pruning, yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Right,
6 but considering where your budget is these days,
7 I'm sure that you're not dedicating as much to
8 that as probably we should. So, I'm just making
9 that comparison that we're talking about \$46
10 million that is being set aside for planting of
11 new trees, which I'm all for, but we also have to
12 make sure that we're taking care of having money
13 in the budget for the other things that are
14 needed. So, \$270,000 for tree stump removal, \$1.4
15 million for outside contracts for pruning. I
16 mean, that's, it's just a base--

17 ADRIAN BENEPE: It's part of it,
18 and I would agree with you that, you know, we
19 could do more.

20 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay,
21 so, and the last thing, and then I'm going to just
22 jump over to my colleagues, on the, on the
23 attrition program, the attrition incentive
24 program, in the Fiscal Year 2013 Budget, there was
25 a restoration of \$29 million for failed layoff

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2 PEGs. So, there's obviously an attrition program
3 in place this year, so the concern is what was
4 originally the PEG for last year, and then that
5 you didn't meet? Because you're talking about a
6 restoration of \$29 million for failed PEGs. So,
7 if you could describe a little more detail about
8 what was the original plan, or expectation, how--
9 you know, how did we fall short of that, and what
10 are you projecting for this year. Because, again,
11 that could be an example of where we might fall
12 short again.

13 ADRIAN BENEPE: Okay, if you don't
14 mind, Council Member, I'd like to ask David Stark,
15 or Chief Fiscal Officer and Assistant Commissioner
16 to handle that.

17 DAVID STARK: Well, first good
18 afternoon. The, it was definitely not a failed
19 PEG, I think it was a success of replacing--

20 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Just state
21 your name for the record, so when they transcribe
22 it, they know who's talking.

23 DAVID STARK: David Stark.

24 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay.

25 DAVID STARK: Okay. Definitely not

1
2 a failed PEG, but we succeeded in replacing the
3 layoff of 465 park workers with an attrition
4 program that we negotiated until the last minute
5 with the unions.

6 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Hold the mic
7 closer to you.

8 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Yeah.

9 DAVID STARK: Okay. Did you get
10 that?

11 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Is it on?

12 DAVID STARK: It's on. It's on - -
13 the mic is--

14 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Got to get
15 closer to the mic.

16 DAVID STARK: Okay. So, well, it
17 was not a failed PEG--

18 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Right,
19 I'm sorry--

20 DAVID STARK: Yeah.

21 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: We can,
22 we can parse words, you know--

23 DAVID STARK: Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: What
25 was the original expectation and where did you end

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up?

DAVID STARK: Okay. We started with an attrition program where we would try to incentivize 660 people to leave the agency and take seasonal jobs. When the union wasn't able to come to terms with that, we replaced it with a layoff program. Then we finally came to terms with the union and replaced the layoff program with the attrition program for 330 people to leave the agency, and a reduction in the POP workforce, combined. So, \$29 million came out in the combined program, \$29 million came back in to replace the layoffs. So they were swapped out.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay. All right, so then this year, what are you looking at?

DAVID STARK: Well, the program is over.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: It's over. So, you're not projecting anything.

DAVID STARK: No, it's not, it's not in next year's budget. The, but it includes the reduction of the POP workforce.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Right.

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2 DAVID STARK: As a continuing part
3 of that program.

4 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.
5 Right, I'm going to, I'll look at this a little
6 bit more as I move on to my colleague.

7 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay.

8 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: - -
9 'cause I have a different understanding. But I
10 think we have a long list of, of colleagues.

11 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: I just want
12 to just follow up on that. So, if we were to
13 restore \$27 million, the JTPs and the seasonal
14 workers and the POP attrition, they would all be
15 back to be continued.

16 ADRIAN BENEPE: Yeah, we would be
17 able to bring back, raise the levels of employment
18 in the job training program, and the seasonals,
19 back to those sort of higher levels that we had a
20 few years ago.

21 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: And is, is,
22 what is the actual number? Is it \$27 million or
23 could you do it with less?

24 ADRIAN BENEPE: It's, it's a--we
25 could, \$27 million would be the ideal, to get us

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2 back to the 2011 numbers, but a portion of that
3 would enable us to get to a higher number. So,
4 whatever the, would be a reasonable thing to
5 negotiate, that could increase the headcount in
6 those areas, would be terrific.

7 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: That's very
8 important to increase headcount, and bring jobs.
9 Okay. Vincent Ignizio.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chairman, and thank you Commissioner. Let me
12 start off by saying--

13 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Oh, everybody
14 has five minutes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Oh, I
16 better talk fast. Start off by saying what a
17 great working relationship I have with the borough
18 commissioner in trying to get things done. I
19 believe she shares our desire to get things done
20 as quickly as possible. And as efficiently as
21 possible, and it really is a breath of fresh air,
22 at least from my office's perspective. Many of my
23 colleagues share frustration with the length of
24 time capital projects take from allocation to
25 shovel in the ground. Is there any way you all

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2 can be helpful in working with this Council? And
3 I think it has to be done, quite frankly, on a
4 Deputy Mayor level, with the Council, to shrink
5 that down. But we need your expertise, quite
6 frankly, in saying, "Here's where we think
7 improvements can be made." Do you have any, any
8 road map, if you will, or some ways in which we
9 can find out--my colleagues, we allocate funding
10 for projects, and we don't see it for, you know,
11 five years.

12 ADRIAN BENEPE: Let me say,
13 Councilman Ignizio, that I share your frustration.
14 There's two, two basic issues here. One is that
15 procurement for public constr--for publicly funded
16 construction, is a, is a complicated process, with
17 a lot of built-in checks and balances to ensure
18 against or to try to ensure against corruption, to
19 make sure there's a level playing field for
20 consultants, for contractors, that there's all
21 kinds of review required by the OMB to make sure
22 it's the projects are bondable, by the controller,
23 by the Law Department, to make sure the contracts
24 are in place. There is a great deal of sort of
25 bureaucratic steps that have to be taken. So, for

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2 example, to design a project requires many steps,
3 you have to start with a survey, you have to do a
4 schematic design, you got through internal review,
5 it has to be reviewed by the Public Design
6 Commission, it has to go through Engineering, and
7 then final design and transmittal for bids. If it
8 sometimes it includes review by the Landmarks
9 Preservation Commission, we work with the
10 community board and often will go back to the
11 community board, we worked with the elected
12 official who funded. The procurement process
13 requires document review in the Parks Department,
14 by the Law Department, you have prescribed amounts
15 of time for advertising and bidding. Warrant and
16 registration require, as I mentioned, review, by
17 Office of--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO:

19 Commissioner, I got to cut you off, I only have
20 five minutes. So--

21 ADRIAN BENEPE: Sorry.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: So, I get-

23 -

24 ADRIAN BENEPE: But you get where
25 I'm doing, so--

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: --do you
3 have ways in which we can work together to reform
4 it?

5 ADRIAN BENEPE: Yes, I think we
6 can, I think we can get together a working group,
7 and I think you're right that--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yeah, I
9 would like that.

10 ADRIAN BENEPE: --we need to reform
11 the process, the checks and balances and the
12 programmatic elements have become so onerous as to
13 make this a really protracted process. We,
14 believe me, we've been working behind the scenes,
15 we've worked with the consultants, and we have
16 actually reduced some of the time it takes. The
17 other thing, the other track, and this is, we're
18 in some ways the victims of our own success and
19 your largesse, which is to say, so many projects
20 have been funded that it's hard to move them all
21 at once. So we're forced to do a little bit of,
22 you know, tier one and tier two, let's do the
23 things we can do fastest and put off those that we
24 can do so fast. The good news, and this is the
25 good news I think that was alluded to, by the two

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2 Chairs, is that we have received approval from OMB
3 to hire an additional 45 people in our capital
4 unit. So we're able to use, to--

5 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thanks to the
6 City Council putting on the pressure on OMB.

7 ADRIAN BENEPE: Thanks to the City
8 Council. We appreciate your, your work on our
9 behalf, and that should enable us to speed up the
10 process. And to take--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Okay, I
12 got to keep moving. But I would like to be--

13 ADRIAN BENEPE: But you're right.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: --just be-

15 -

16 ADRIAN BENEPE: It takes too long.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: --involved
18 in some working group, it's, as bizarre as it
19 sounds, it's, it's a passion of mine to get these
20 things going. I started working with Al Hal
21 [phonetic] and I know there's DEC issues and
22 whatever, but in, in 1998, and finally we'll be
23 dedicating it this September, but you know, I
24 just, for future generations that come after us,
25 we want to make sure that people allocate funds

1 and they actually, actually see them come to fore.
2
3 I got to move on, though. I have a very huge
4 concern as a person who represents Fresh Kills and
5 Brookfield Landfills. It's like these are
6 landfills that are being remediated with hundreds
7 and hundreds of millions of dollars, which is
8 great. But for me, it's almost the gift that we
9 have a problem, in the end. Because how are we
10 going to maintain and fund and do programming and
11 everything associated with, at 2,200 acres at
12 Fresh Kills and over 300 acres at Brookfield.
13 It's, it, to me, as a, somebody who's trying to
14 plan for my community's future, I fear what the
15 end result is going to be, with regards to being
16 able to maintain and program these massive parks.
17 Is there any discussion on how we could even being
18 to maintain and fund these programming here?

19 ADRIAN BENEPE: I think that what I
20 would say is we will commit to maintain whatever
21 it is that we built. But we're only going to
22 build small portions of Fresh Kills in this
23 current Administration. The, taking care of the,
24 the building the complete build out of that park
25 will take several decades. The other thing that

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2 we've done is we have a Fresh Kills Park Alliance,
3 where we're trying to bring private funds to the
4 park. It will not be easy, there are a number of-
5 -but it, along the models of something like the
6 Central Park Conservancy, the Prospect Park
7 Alliance, we're trying to involve prominent New
8 Yorkers and people who are charitable, in bringing
9 private funding from corporations, from
10 foundations, individuals, to maintain the parks.
11 So we're, we're not going to--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Again, I
13 just don't know that, and you know this, and I--
14 that you know, Central Park is Central Park, in
15 the middle of Manhattan, and god bless them,
16 you're going to get a lot more interest than you
17 are in the south shore of Staten Island, to fund
18 Fresh Kills Park. And when we don't meet those
19 goals, what happens then? You just, you can
20 appreciate from my perspective of I don't want to
21 end up with a massive park that ultimately
22 deteriorates because of lack of maintenance and
23 lack of funding, because we haven't thought what
24 will happen in ten, 15, five, 30 years from now.

25 ADRIAN BENEPE: We share your

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2 concerns. One of the things we're doing is try to
3 build a, design a park that is less maintenance
4 intensive. So it's going to have lots of open
5 spaces, that will be meadows and hills and with
6 recreational trails going through them. It's a
7 vast park, three times the size of Central Park,
8 so there'll be a lot of things, ultimately a lot
9 of things to do there. But it's a legitimate
10 concern, we, we will keep our nose to the
11 grindstone trying to get the funding for the
12 staffing we'll need when those portions open. And
13 I'm a little bit more optimistic, I think people
14 are very excited across the country about what's
15 happening in Fresh Kills. I think we'll be able
16 to track funding even if it's from, you know,
17 larger corporations or foundations, for the kinds
18 of stuff going on in Fresh Kills.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Okay,
20 thanks.

21 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Just so my
22 all colleagues know, the OMB just gave Parks
23 permission to hire 45 more people to move all
24 these projects. There is approximately \$339
25 million in Parks for different projects. So, we

1
2 hope to get this moving forward. All right,
3 Council Member Greenfield?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank
5 you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Commissioner, I
6 want to thank you, out in Brooklyn we're big fans
7 of Commissioner Jeffreys, who's very responsive to
8 our needs. And I just had a couple of specific
9 questions. When we talk about the million trees,
10 we're all very excited about the trees. We've
11 been having a particular situation, and I credit
12 Ms. Becker 'cause she's been working with us to
13 help us, but just seems to happen again and again.
14 I'm wondering if we can sort of resolve it. And
15 one of the issues is that in many of the religious
16 institutions in the community, specifically the
17 synagogues and the churches, basically without
18 notice, they're coming in, they're ripping up the,
19 the sidewalk and they're installing trees. The
20 reason that's a problem is because as you may
21 know, in many, in many of those cases, those
22 institutions are used for gatherings such as
23 funerals, for example, which is why if you've ever
24 passed a synagogue or a church, you'll see they
25 have a "No Standing" sign on the front, which is

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2 meant for, you know, a hearses or some other
3 official occasion. And when you install those
4 trees directly in front of those institutions, it
5 actually makes it difficult for them to conduct in
6 many cases those services, including the funerals.
7 And so, once again, I'm very grateful to Ms.
8 Becker for working with us on the case by case
9 basis, but it seems like there's been a very
10 aggressive push to, to install these trees around
11 these religious institutions. Is there a way we
12 could, we could, you know, I know we have, we
13 passed a law a couple years ago that said you have
14 to give notice to schools or hospitals. Of
15 course, we could pass a law for religious
16 institutions, but I don't think it should need a
17 law. I mean, is there a way where we can
18 communicate with these institutions in advance and
19 find out, you know, whether it's suitable to place
20 these trees there? And I love trees, and you
21 know, the more trees the merrier, but I think in
22 some cases, it becomes a little bit problematic.

23 ADRIAN BENEPE: I think it's a
24 reasonable question, I will ask our First Deputy
25 Commissioner, Liam Kavanaugh, to look into what

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2 level of notification we can provide. You know,
3 I, I'm certainly sympathetic to the need to keep
4 some space clear for the important life ceremonies
5 that take place in religious institutions.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay,
7 I, I very much appreciate that. Thank you very
8 much. The other question I was wondering about,
9 has to do with not the time timeline, of course,
10 which frustrates us, and I know it frustrates you,
11 and that's why I think Council Member's suggestion
12 was we should work together to try work it out.
13 But it's also the costs. It seems like things
14 are, I'm not exaggerating, ten times more
15 expensive in the Parks Department. I'll give you
16 an example: we were joking before about this, but
17 you know, to renovate a bathroom, the expenses are
18 very significant. Can you sort of give us the
19 sense, a breakdown of why it's, it's so expensive
20 to make these, to make these repairs and
21 renovations?

22 ADRIAN BENEPE: How long do you
23 have? [laughter]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I have
25 only five minutes, but I'll take a minute.

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2 ADRIAN BENEPE: Okay. You know,
3 it's--again, it, much of it has to do with the
4 requirements that are put in public construction.
5 We are required to, to pay prevailing wage. And
6 the prevailing wage is determined by the
7 Comptroller, and the decisions as to how much each
8 trade gets paid is determined by the Comptroller.
9 On some buildings, we are also guided by something
10 called the Wicks Law, which requires hiring four
11 separate contractor, including a general
12 contractor, and heating and air conditioning and
13 ventilation, plumbing electrical, who all sort of
14 work around each other. It's not the most
15 convenient way to work. And then all of the steps
16 required to go through the process, you know,
17 required to have, go through all those procurement
18 processes. And some of them are, are helpful, and
19 some of them perhaps not so helpful. But we'd
20 like to try to reform this and we look forward to
21 working with you on this in a--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay,
23 also--

24 ADRIAN BENEPE: --we share your
25 frustration. It's, people keep saying to us, "You

1
2 should be more like the private sector," well the
3 private sector doesn't have to work with all these
4 rules.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: No, I
6 don't think that's a fair comparison. I do think,
7 though, comparing it to other City agencies,
8 which, which you know, School Construction
9 Authority, for example, which seems to get things
10 done quicker, and cheaper, I think that's a fair
11 comparison, and I understand that you're hands may
12 be tied. So, I think to share in the offer, we
13 would like to work with you, to see if we can
14 actually both expedite the process and try to
15 lower costs. 'Cause for some of my colleagues,
16 when we get these quotes, they say, well, you
17 know, "I can never make a dent," and so, it's,
18 it's a significant amount in terms of the ability.
19 And I guess the final question I would have is do
20 you have your own capital budget or are you
21 completely reliant on the largesse of individual
22 elected officials?

23 ADRIAN BENEPE: The, the primary
24 source of funding for capital projects is, on a
25 project by project basis, and it comes from three

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2 basic sources: it comes from the Executive
3 Budget, that is from the Mayor; it comes from the
4 borough presidents; and it comes from the City
5 Council. And then in some pla--some cases we get
6 money from state grants or federal grants, but
7 that's relatively minor.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: But for
9 example, in this year's budget, how much of,
10 what's the percentage that you project is coming
11 from the Executive Budget versus what will be
12 coming from the borough presidents versus what
13 will be coming from the Council Members?

14 ADRIAN BENEPE: Do we have that
15 readily? You know, I'd say roughly, out of our
16 commitment plan, of \$400 million or \$500 million,
17 probably a good half of that is coming from the
18 Executive Budget. And then maybe a third from the
19 City Council and a third from the borough
20 presidents.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: So that
22 leaves me my final question, I'm a little
23 perplexed then, then why is it that when it comes
24 to these capital projects in our districts, we are
25 left to fund them essentially completely on their

1
2 own? I have yet to have had a conversation with
3 Parks where they've said, "Oh, you put in half and
4 we'll put in half." So, what am I missing, what
5 am I missing over here?

6 ADRIAN BENEPE: 'Cause the, again,
7 it's funded on a project-by-project basis, so what
8 happens is the Executive Budget tends to take care
9 of the really big projects and the big
10 infrastructure. So, when you redo the McCarran
11 Pool and it's \$59 that's coming from the Executive
12 Budget, not from the local elected officials. So
13 what we've historically done is both, what has
14 been known as Reso A money, we've looked for the
15 smaller projects, the neighborhood playgrounds,
16 the neighborhood public restrooms, to be funded
17 locally and rely, and then go to the Mayor to get
18 the really big pieces of money for the major
19 infrastructure. The one place where we have some
20 flexibility is we do have what we call
21 requirements contracts, where we can come in and
22 do quick fixes, where you need to replace in kind.
23 So, say there's a playground or sitting area where
24 it just, it needs new paving, new benches, we
25 don't have to redesign or do anything fancy.

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2 That's something we can do with Executive Budget
3 funding. But generally speaking, this goes back
4 20 or 30 years now, the formula has been on the
5 smaller million, \$2 million projects, they get
6 funded locally; on the big infrastructure
7 projects, they get--and we've been very fortunate,
8 we've had, we've had allocated and spent \$3
9 billion in the first ten years of this
10 Administration to build parks and expand parks.
11 We've got another \$1.5 billion in the budget
12 that's a historic investment in the City's park
13 infrastructure, unparalleled in the history of the
14 City. That doesn't mean we're doing everything.
15 It means you're still saying, "Well, what about
16 Graves End Playground, what about this playground-

17 -

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yeah,
19 I'm not sure if that formula is fair necessarily
20 to the smaller parks, and those of us especially
21 who live in the outer boroughs, I don't know if
22 that's necessarily a fair formula.

23 ADRIAN BENEPE: Right, it's being
24 spent, believe me, in the outer boroughs, \$700
25 million in The Bronx for example. And I can point

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2 to you project after project in the so-called
3 outer borough. In fact, I like to joke with you,
4 with the Borough President Marty Markowitz,
5 Brooklyn is middle of the City and everything else
6 is the outer borough, 'cause in fact it is. Or
7 Brooklyn, the Brooklyn/Queens border, that's
8 really the center of the City. But if you look at
9 it on the--

10 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay, we have
11 to move on.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I'm
13 going to quote you, Commissioner, and print bumper
14 stickers.

15 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Just so
16 people know--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank
18 you very much.

19 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: --we
20 negotiate the budget, we negotiate the capital
21 budget, and we work with the Administration on
22 funding all of these projects, and we try to work
23 together and work out an agreement that is
24 acceptable to both sides. Okay, we're going to
25 have Robert Jackson, then Vincent Gentile, and

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2 then the, my co-Chair, Melissa Mark.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Well, let
4 me thank let me thank both you, the Chair of
5 Finance and the Chair of Parks and Recreation,
6 Melissa Mark-Viverito, for chairing this, this
7 hearing. And Commissioner, I've worked with you
8 and your staff and let me express to you that, you
9 know, I am a huge advocate for Parks and
10 Recreation; in fact, I think part of the Mayor's
11 plan is that people of New York City will have no
12 more than a certain amount of blocks or minutes in
13 order to get to either a playground or parks. In
14 Northern Manhattan, as you know, there are a lot
15 of parks, you have Bennett Park, you have Inwood
16 Park, you have St. Nicholas Park, and many other
17 parks. And what I'm concerned about in this
18 budget, especially with the budget reduction is,
19 I'm concerned about the safety and security in our
20 parks. And obviously, as you know, Inwood Hill
21 Park is the last natural forest in Manhattan. But
22 overall, I'm concerned that safety and security
23 may be jeopardized. And I wanted to hear what you
24 have to say about that, especially knowing that I
25 Chair the Education Committee. And Education is

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2 not the top priority for me, but the safety and
3 security of the people that I represent. And so
4 I'm curious as to the safety and security aspects
5 as far as park enforcement officers in Northern
6 Manhattan, and things like that. Can you just
7 discuss that? As far as projected for Fiscal '13?

8 ADRIAN BENEPE: Well, first, in
9 terms of good news in your district, we're about
10 to start construction this year, perhaps this
11 summer, on one of the eight regional parks
12 projects, which will be in Fort Washington Park.
13 There'll be a major investment, I think along the
14 lines of \$20 million or so, in improving Fort
15 Washington Park north of 158th Street. What we
16 find, generally speaking, is we, I want to be
17 very, very clear about one thing, the Parks
18 Department provides quality of life enforcement,
19 to the extent we have park enforcement patrol
20 available to do that. Safety and security in
21 parks is, was, is and always will be, the primary
22 focus of the Police Department. You know, we
23 don't have armed officers, we have a small number
24 of enforcement officers, who are terrific. They
25 are deputized by the State of New York as peace

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2 officers, but their primary job is to do quality
3 of life issues, to do the park rules and
4 regulations, to get dogs off the leash, noise
5 complaints, people selling things who shouldn't be
6 selling things. The safety and security in parks,
7 you know, has to be the province of the Police
8 Department, and on that score, our borough
9 commissioner, our other commissioner, our local
10 managers, all work hand-in-hand with the local
11 precinct. They have what we call Parks Operations
12 Meetings, where they sit down with the precinct,
13 the community board representatives, other civic
14 groups, and sometimes on a monthly basis, and go
15 over all the issues, including safety and
16 security. So, we will do our best to provide
17 safety and security to the extent that we can.
18 But we have a limited number of PEP officers, we
19 have probably fewer PEP officers citywide to cover
20 our parks than you would find police officers in a
21 single precinct. And that's the cover 30,000
22 acres of parkland. So it's our ability to
23 guarantee safety and security really must spring
24 from the Police Department, which has many, many,
25 many times more officers than we have.

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COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON:

Commissioner, with the limited time that I have, I wanted to express to you as far as, I need for you to keep your eye on the prize, as far as MWBE contracts. I don't know if you're aware, but I co-chair the New York City Council's Black, Latino and Asian Caucus. And overall, MWBE concerns, as far as capital projects, as far as staff that you may hire, that is a huge concern of the caucus. I wanted to express that to you, and maybe you can give some insight or give some statistics as far as MWBE in the final minutes that I have.

ADRIAN BENEPE: Okay. What's, how the expression go, "I'm glad you asked that question," Council Member. So, because this is news, and breaking news, in Fiscal 2011, we have just received notification, we, the Parks Department, is the MWBE Agency of the Year. Applause? [laughter] [applause]

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Let's give him a round of applause, we don't allow--

COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: That's good--

ADRIAN BENEPE: I don't get to say

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that very often.

COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: That's great, that's really, that's good news, because--

ADRIAN BENEPE: And this is the second time, two out of three years, we've won this award, as Agency of the Year. And how do we get that? I don't--

COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: That's something to be proud of.

ADRIAN BENEPE: I think so, I think so. And there are people sitting here in the front row--

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Diana Reyna, did you know that?

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Well, what's the percentage [crosstalk]

ADRIAN BENEPE: Okay, so let me go through the percent.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Yeah, go through the numbers.

ADRIAN BENEPE: Okay, let me go through the numbers. So we, we, so the award recognizing, recognizes, you know, the ongoing efforts to strengthen the program in our multiple

1 purchase categories. So, we ranked among the top
2 ten agencies based upon the value of the awards,
3 we increased the utilization of formal contracts
4 with \$60 or \$52 million in prime contracts,
5 awarded to MWBEs. And we demonstrated high
6 performance in micro-purchases, with 22 percent
7 utilization, which is up from 19 percent in FY'10.
8 In FY'10, we awarded \$76.5 million to MWBE
9 contractors, which was 15 percent of the total
10 contract awards, 522. In FY'11, we awarded \$75.2
11 million, which was 19 percent of our total
12 contract award. So, our total amount to give out
13 went down to \$396, but our percentage given to
14 MWBE contractors went up. So that was a four
15 percent increase year over year. And then, our
16 agency contract awards decreased, but our total
17 MWBE awards only dropped a short amount, so we had
18 less money to give out, but we ended up giving
19 more to MWBE contractors. And so, our award, we
20 awarded a total of \$15.5 million to MWBEs for
21 contracts subject to Local Law 129, which was 42
22 percent of the utilization goal of \$37 million.
23 And then FY'11, a total of \$10.3, which was also
24 42 percent of the utilization goal. And that in
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2 FY'11, our MWBE utilization percentage increased
3 by three percent from 11 percent to 14 percent for
4 formal contracts, by three percent for micro-
5 purchases, and by five percent for small purchase.
6 And in the, in the, what's that, yeah, right, so
7 in the Comptroller's calendar year 2010 MWBE
8 report card, Parks was ranked second citywide, in
9 total dollars spent on MWBEs at \$47.2 million, and
10 fifth citywide for a percentage of dollar spent
11 MWBEs. And that's important, 'cause we're a
12 relatively small agency, dollar wise. So if we
13 were rated second in total dollars, that's pretty
14 good for a small agency. So, for Fiscal Year
15 2012, we have awarded a total of 1,290 contracts
16 with a total value of \$126.9 million. \$15.7, or
17 12 percent of total contract awards, went to WM--
18 MWBEs as prime contractors. So, this doesn't
19 include subcontracting data, which is not
20 finalized yet. And the majority of our
21 contracting historically occurs in the second half
22 of the year, and okay, so we're still not
23 satisfied, we've taken significant actions to not
24 just but exceed requirements targets, so this year
25 we hired a MWBE program manager, Alicia Williams,

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2 to monitor activities and assist with outreach
3 efforts, and to encourage prime and subcontractor
4 participation; and one of three agencies to
5 participate in the mentorship program. So,
6 there's a lot. And I want to thank, among others,
7 Charlotte Havajanian [phonetic], from our capital
8 division for her - -

9 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

10 [interposing] Commissioner, if you could have, if
11 you could have your staff, we really would like
12 that information forwarded to us, in terms of the
13 Committee staff, I think I'd be good to have. And
14 congratulations. I know that when we had heard
15 some of the figures, when the Comptroller was
16 looking at this matter, your agency did come up as
17 one of the best. So, we hope others, other
18 agencies will use that as a model. Are you good,
19 Robert? Okay. Thank you.

20 ADRIAN BENEPE: You know, I think
21 we can do better.

22 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: I would
23 agree.

24 ADRIAN BENEPE: So.

25 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: One can

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2 always do better, but also it's, you're setting a
3 path, hopefully other agencies can take you as an
4 example, because there's, agencies need a lot of
5 work, in improving their numbers, based on what
6 we've seen and hearings we've had. So, with that,
7 I did want to have a question but I know that
8 Council Member Gentile is running short on time,
9 so he has a question.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you,
11 Madam Chair, thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Sorry,
13 I have to recognize that we've been joined by
14 Council Member Leroy Comrie.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:
16 Commissioner, I see Commissioner Jeffrey in the
17 audience, and I must say of all the borough
18 commissioners I speak to, Commissioner Jeffrey
19 more than any other borough commissioner, is so,
20 it's been a, a working pleasure. We don't always
21 get everything we need, or want, but I think we're
22 working toward a real working relationship and
23 he's even working on something for me this
24 afternoon. So, I really appreciate all his
25 efforts and the open communication that he, that

1 provides. So, I thank you for that. I just
2 wanted to follow upon the PEP officer issue again.
3 And do you have a breakdown of how many officers
4 by borough?
5

6 ADRIAN BENEPE: Yes, we do, and
7 I'll provide it to you in just a second.
8 Okeydoke. So, in Fiscal Year '12, we have 13 in
9 The Bronx, nine in Brooklyn, 32 in Manhattan, 12
10 in Queens, 13 in Staten Island, and then we have
11 citywide eight; and then we have a number of
12 contracts. These are, so the first numbers I gave
13 you are the tax levy funded officers, then we have
14 a number of contracts where we provide the
15 enforcement staff for public/public partnerships,
16 like at Hudson River Park, at Brooklyn Bridge
17 Park, and Battery Park City, where there's a
18 State/City sort of joint organization running the
19 park, but it's not using City funds to pay for the
20 maintenance or for the operations service or
21 security. So, effectively, we are sort of
22 providing a contracted out service, with our
23 officers for areas that could hire State Park
24 Police, or they could hire private security, but
25 instead they choose to use our officers, which I

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2 think is a credit to the terrific officers who
3 work for the Parks Department.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: But
5 clearly the number doesn't, it's impossible to
6 spread those officers out into the parks,
7 particularly Brooklyn, for example, you said you
8 had nine in Brooklyn.

9 ADRIAN BENEPE: It's tough. And we
10 try to augment it, we add seasonal officers, job
11 training participants, and other city seasonal
12 aides, who provide a lot of the basic security at
13 the entrances to pools and recreation centers, so
14 that they--what happens is the regular officers
15 get promoted to do seasonal beach and pool
16 assignments, so it makes it even thinner. No,
17 it's definitely tough. As you know, I and a
18 number of our senior leadership team at the Parks
19 Department started either in the Park Rangers or
20 the Park Enforcement Patrol. Commissioner
21 Landowski, Commissioner Jeffrey and I were all
22 part of the original Park Ranger Program. So I
23 have a deep and abiding respect for and sympathy
24 for both the Park Rangers and the Park Enforcement
25 Patrol, if there were more money, I would

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2 certainly hire more officers. We would like to
3 have more, they do a great job on quality of life
4 issues, they provide a uniform presence and we'd
5 like to have more of them.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: In the
7 absence of more officers, I want to go back to
8 what you were saying about the Police Department,
9 because in addition to quality of life issues, as
10 we try to, as we try to encourage more people to
11 come back into parks, there's a growing problem,
12 at least in my area, of people using undesignated
13 areas for barbecuing, on, particularly on
14 weekends, and creating a great numb--a lot of
15 debris and dangerous in terms of fire and all
16 that. And obviously, volunteers in the park are
17 not going to be the ones to tell those people that
18 they can't barbecue in the park, and it's been my
19 experience, at least I've been told this, a lot of
20 the NYPD don't want to be in that position, also.
21 I mean, have you had that discussion with, with
22 police officers? If you don't have the PEP
23 officers to enforce the no barbecuing?

24 ADRIAN BENEPE: The borough
25 commissioner each year before the busy summer

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2 season sit down with their peers in the Police
3 Department that is usually at the borough command
4 level--Brooklyn North, Brooklyn South, and so on.
5 And also at the district level, the park managers
6 sit down with the local precinct commanders, and
7 they go over precisely these issues. For example,
8 at their swimming pools, virtually all the
9 swimming pools have police officer assigned to
10 them as summer details. There are summer details
11 of police officers assigned to certain parks where
12 there's a lot of activity, like Flushing Meadows
13 Park or Prospect Park. So, yes, the answer is at
14 just about every level, at the macro-level and the
15 micro-level, we sit down with the Police
16 Department and work with them on getting their
17 help in enforcing quality of life issues. I think
18 the good news is that serious crime has been
19 driven down, which allows the Police Department to
20 focus on more of the quality of life issues. And
21 those are things that they take up in Comstat and
22 the other things that they do. So we've gotten a
23 very high level of responses from the Police
24 Department. Does that mean that we've fixed every
25 problem? Probably not. And you should work,

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2 continue to work with Commissioner Jeffrey, and by
3 the way, I'm going to tell you that I appreciate
4 and he appreciates that you didn't add an S to his
5 name.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Oh, yes, I
7 did. Yes.

8 ADRIAN BENEPE: [laughs] You
9 didn't, you called him Jeffrey, which is what it
10 is.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Jeffrey,
12 that's right.

13 ADRIAN BENEPE: Yeah, everybody
14 wants to call him Jeffreys.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Jeffreys.
16 No, it's Jeffrey. [laughs]

17 ADRIAN BENEPE: So, so, I
18 appreciate what you--and Mr. Jeffrey, as a former
19 Park Enforcement Officer, who was a mounted Park
20 Enforcement Officer, and he was a supervisor of
21 PEP, has a keen interest in security and a ken
22 area of, and a great area of expertise and it--and
23 I can assure you that if you tell him the areas
24 where you're having problems with the illegal
25 barbecuing, he'll figure out a way to deal with

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it.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: So, it's your, it's your experience that the Police Department has been cooperative in that regard?

ADRIAN BENEPE: It's, it varies from situation to situation. I won't, I can't guarantee that they've been helpful in this particular area, but I can tell you that the first thing we'll do is sit down and work with him. If it turns out that, for whatever reason they're unable to help, then we'll try to come up with an alternative plan.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Okay, thank you, Commissioner, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you, Council Member. I just want to do a quick, a couple of quick follow ups, because I know that the issue of the PEP officers has come up a lot, and we had a whole hearing on it, and the safety of our parks is critical. But considering that you do have a hiring freeze, and we talked about this offline at one point, and you know, there, what, how has that impacted the number of PEP officers we have?

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2 ADRIAN BENEPE: We've, as I've
3 said, PEP officers are terrific, they happen to be
4 a smart group, and what happens is that they are
5 mobile, in a, from a career point of view, and
6 they take tests for correction officer and for
7 police officer, and they move on. So we have had
8 about a four--probably higher than a 42 percent
9 reduction in PEP numbers, if you go back to 2008
10 that was probably the current high. And it was at
11 least, they do in large measure to your work with
12 the Administration to add PEP officers. We added
13 a whole bunch of PEP officers that year. And
14 effectively we've lost that addition, through
15 people moving on and not being able to replace
16 them.

17 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So
18 you're say--okay, so, 42 percent drop since 2008?

19 ADRIAN BENEPE: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So
21 you're projecting, so the numbers that you read
22 off to Council Member Gentile are the current
23 numbers.

24 ADRIAN BENEPE: The current
25 numbers.

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2 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: What
3 are you seeing in terms of a drop off, year from
4 year--like from last year to now, what have you
5 seen as the drop off?

6 ADRIAN BENEPE: Mike, any sense of
7 that? [background comment] Six percent since
8 last year. But over, cumulatively, over these,
9 since 2008, 42 percent.

10 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So then
11 you project obviously there's going to be a drop
12 off, so that obviously means less officers being--
13 I mean, don't you, you don't think that puts a
14 greater strain on them?

15 ADRIAN BENEPE: I do. I'm deeply
16 sympathetic to their work. I think they're
17 terrific, we get a lot of bang for the buck.
18 They're mobile, they're effective communicators,
19 they're highly trained, they know when to step in,
20 when to call in reinforcements from the Police
21 Department, we work very closely with their, their
22 local and a local president [phonetic], so it's,
23 it's a good group. I'd like to see more of them.
24 And in an idea world we'd have a better budget,
25 we'd hire more PEP officers, because I think we

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get a lot of bang for the buck with them.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So we all, I mean, does there, considering that there is this hiring freeze, I mean, I'm trying to, I'm trying to figure out how exactly to ask the question. So if it gets to a point, I mean, I would think there's a point of concern now, but let's say we get to a worse point, is there, would there be any thought given to maybe being given a little bit of flexibility to maybe replace some of those numbers and maybe lower than somewhere else. I mean, not that I'm proposing that, I'm just trying to figure out what--

ADRIAN BENEPE: Yeah, we, we--in addition to speaking with you, we speak to people in City Hall and to OMB, and we always have our asks at the ready, as to how we could build back up some headcount. And when we talk about crucial areas where we'd like to add some stuff back in, PEP is one of those.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay, then just quickly, on going back to the issue of the forestry, and horticultural, 'cause you did, you talked about the contracts out and the work

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2 that you do internally, but my understanding is,
3 is that there's been about a \$700,000 reduction in
4 your internal budget for horticulture, and
5 forestry, is that correct?

6 ADRIAN BENEPE: I don't think so.
7 I mean, again, as with everything else in the
8 agency, we may have lost some personnel to
9 attrition, unable to rehire--

10 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Replace
11 them.

12 ADRIAN BENEPE: --if they leave,
13 like climber and pruners. But I don't think it's
14 been anything like that.

15 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Well,
16 what's the, what's the total amount internally for
17 that line item. Not taking into account the
18 outside contracts, but what are you allocating
19 internally in your budget for--

20 ADRIAN BENEPE: Okay, so, we have,
21 when you add up the, the personnel services and
22 the OTPS, sort of, so taking out about \$3 million
23 for the ALB program and pruning contracts, and
24 emergency contracts, we spend roughly \$13 million
25 a year in-house on personnel and equipment and

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2 vehicles and taking care of vehicle maintenance,
3 and so on. That does not include the capital
4 purchase of vehicles which is very expensive,
5 those log loaders and tree trimmer vehicles are
6 enormously expensive, over \$100,000 each.

7 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So
8 that's \$13 million, including OTPS--

9 ADRIAN BENEPE: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: --
11 allocated in-house for horticulture forestry.

12 ADRIAN BENEPE: That's just for
13 forestry, horticulture with gardeners, gardens is
14 a separate number. It's just for taking care of
15 trees.

16 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Right,
17 so we're looking at the issue of the trees first.

18 ADRIAN BENEPE: Trees, yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Just
20 that would be the \$13 million.

21 ADRIAN BENEPE: It's for tree care.
22 That doesn't include, by the way, and I, I'll have
23 to get to you, get back to with a separate number,
24 the tree care in Central Park is primarily
25 privately funded.

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CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Right.

ADRIAN BENEPE: We get a lot of private funding in Prospect Park. At - -

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: [interposing] So, but, but that's handled by the conservancies.

ADRIAN BENEPE: Yeah, so those, that money is not in that \$13 million to \$15 million, that's separate outside money.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So this is you--

ADRIAN BENEPE: This is just City funding, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Outside of the conservancies, okay.

ADRIAN BENEPE: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So, I'll leave it there for now, I know we have Koppell, Brewer and Diana Reyna. So, Council Member Koppell.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: [off mic] Thank you. Is this on? [pause] Okay. [on mic] Is it on now? Okay. [laughs] Commissioner, thank you. First of all, let me echo what my

1
2 colleagues have said about our borough
3 commissioner. I mean they were talking about
4 their borough commissioner, Commissioner Aponte is
5 very responsive and we talk frequently and he
6 tries to do what he can, so I want to thank you
7 for his service. In fact, the question I'm going
8 to ask, he's very well aware of the issue that I'm
9 raising, because he serves with me on the Croton
10 Filtration Plant Monitoring Committee, and as part
11 of the agreement that was reached with the City
12 Council when the Croton Filtration Plant was
13 authorized to go into central, into Van Cortland
14 Park. There was a Memorandum of Understanding
15 that was entered into between the Council and the
16 then Administration, and it included consideration
17 of putting a new bridge, well, putting a bridge,
18 across the Major Deegan, because when they build
19 the Major Deegan, they separated out the east part
20 of Van Cortland Park from the west part. And
21 there was a requirement to do a study and the DEP
22 and I guess with the Parks Department did a study,
23 but only did it recently, it was supposed to have
24 been done about ten years ago, and it was only
25 done recently, and the study indicated that

1 building such a bridge is feasible. But the cost
2 would be about \$15 million. That's a large
3 project. I can't allocate that money from my
4 discretionary funds, and quite honestly, the
5 Administration, either the DEP or your Department,
6 has not indicated any interest in this project,
7 even though there was an agreement reached with
8 the City Council, that this project should go
9 ahead. I admit that it does say depending on
10 feasibility both fiscally and project wise. The
11 project feasibility is there, the fiscal
12 feasibility depends obviously on willingness on
13 the part of the City, the Administration and your
14 Departments. Have you, have you looked at this
15 issue at all?

17 ADRIAN BENEPE: I'm familiar--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: The bridge
19 across the Deegan?

20 ADRIAN BENEPE: --I'm familiar with
21 the issue, Council Member. We'd love to do it,
22 we're, as you mentioned, it's probably at least
23 \$50 million, the feasi--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: No, \$15
25 million.

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ADRIAN BENEPE: \$15, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Yes, not \$50.

ADRIAN BENEPE: \$15. So, we'd like to do it, we just don't have the \$15 million if, you know, we're, we are always looking to add capital money where we can for important projects, we, each year come up with a new needs, sort of wish list. In the current economic climate, it's unlikely we'll get most of those new needs funded. We were able to get one which was sort of a life safety issue for, to prevent flooding in a community in Staten Island. But that's the only one we've got so far. So, it's on our list, we'd like to do it, it's high on the priority for Margo Perrin [phonetic], the Park Administrator, and for the borough commissioner. But it may be something that, you know, will have to wait another year to see if we can get the funding for.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Well, I'm delighted to hear that it's on the list. Let me just say that we have a meeting of the filtration monitoring committee tomorrow night, and we'll be discussing the fact that the DEP has indicated it

1
2 in testimony by Commissioner Strickland only a
3 couple days ago, that they added \$68 million for
4 change orders with respect to the filtration
5 plant. So, [laughs] there's a lot of money
6 around, I mean, a lot of capital money around.
7 I'm not saying that the \$68 million dollars is not
8 needed, I don't know what those change orders are,
9 but I think that, and I, in some ways I don't put
10 this on your back as much as I do on the back of
11 the DEP. This was a deal with, on a \$3 billion
12 project. And \$15 million, if you look at \$3
13 billion, is not that much.

14 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Council
15 Member, does it say that Parks has to pay the \$15
16 million?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: No, I
18 doesn't say who pays. It just says it was--

19 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: If you could
20 get me a copy of that agreement--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Yes, it
22 was a, it was a deal with, between the Council and
23 the then Administration.

24 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: All right, if
25 --when we get a copy we'll set up the meeting.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: - - we've
3 already, we have given it to, to Preston, but we
4 will give you another copy.

5 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. And I
6 will--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: And--

8 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: --see what we
9 can do about it.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: So, you
11 know, I don't expect it to happen tomorrow, but--
12 and I'm glad to hear that you at least are
13 thinking about it. 'Cause it was sort of
14 dismissed out of hand by the DEP, which I think
15 was inappropriate. But two other things. First
16 of all, I'm delight--I'm very pleased that the
17 lifeguard situation, because as you know that was
18 a great concern of mine a couple of years ago.
19 Are we on track to do the same this summer?

20 ADRIAN BENEPE: Yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: With the
22 1,400.

23 ADRIAN BENEPE: Yes, the silver
24 lining of the challenging economy is that good
25 swimmers who ordinarily take lifeguard jobs, who

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2 might go someplace else, someplace else isn't
3 there, so the lifeguard jobs are good jobs.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: I'm glad
5 to hear that. And lastly, you probably know that
6 I was going to say this if I got a chance to
7 speak. The, we've given a very large concession
8 in Van Cortland Park, for the stables, and I've
9 asked now for a number of years that the operator
10 of the stables make some sort of arrangement for a
11 regular pony ride. I know there've been
12 occasional pony rides, but I can't imagine that
13 you couldn't get a contractor to come in, because
14 I'm not suggesting that it not charge, they could
15 charge a reasonable fee, but it would, it's
16 something that was there for many, many years,
17 when I was much younger, and it ought to be there
18 now.

19 ADRIAN BENEPE: As--believe me, no
20 one more than I would like to see this happen. If
21 I could make you happy by getting these pony rides
22 going--and I've talked to the operator about this
23 before. So, let me see if we can do this before
24 you and I leave office.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: I would, I

1
2 would like that. I mean, there's a big stable
3 there with horses and all the facilities.

4 ADRIAN BENEPE: There is.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: It's not
6 like it would be so difficult.

7 ADRIAN BENEPE: I, I agree with
8 you, I don't understand why we haven't done it
9 yet. We'll see if we can do it.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: All right,
12 you have 590 days to get that pony ride going,
13 Commissioner. [laughter]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Thank you,
15 Mr. Chairman.

16 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
17 you, Council Member Koppell. Council Member
18 Brewer, followed by Council Member Diana Reyna.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you,
20 I want to echo a great Commissioner, Castro and
21 Simon. And then also John Harold is wonderful at
22 Riverside Park, and Kim does a great job at the
23 museum park. I have a small question to start
24 with. You had mentioned that it's good for people
25 to use baskets for litter, and I agree;

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2 unfortunately, some of the sanitation baskets keep
3 getting stolen. So, is that a problem in your
4 parks? And also, are you looking at things like
5 solar baskets or solar lights or even putting, in
6 order to try to save some money with some of your
7 vehicles, solar panels on roofs nearby parks?

8 ADRIAN BENEPE: Okay, in quick
9 order, I, we do have problems in some places with
10 people stealing litter baskets. I mean, can you
11 imagine they're also stealing a sewer covers and
12 tree grates.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Oh, yeah,
14 they're stealing the sanitation ones.

15 ADRIAN BENEPE: It's unbelievable,
16 it's just scrap iron, it's, what is it--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know.

18 ADRIAN BENEPE: --30 cents a pound?
19 So--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: It's a
21 problem for the dog poop.

22 ADRIAN BENEPE: We do have a
23 problem with that, sometimes, also in Riverside
24 Park, in your district, they--they hurl the litter
25 baskets into the river.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right.

ADRIAN BENEPE: And they get stuck in the mud and they're hard to take out. So, it's not a huge problem, but it's a problem. But that should not stop people from walking to the litter basket. The idea of solar lights is a good one, particularly at a place like Cherry Walk, where we don't have any infrastructure for putting in lights. So we're, that's being explored. And we are through our sustainability taskforce looking at more and more things where we can bring in solar, green roofs, all of the other things we'd like to do, but--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, can you give us an update at some point on some of those efforts?

ADRIAN BENEPE: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Street trees, I know that at 95th and Columbus recently, the stump went away, it was fabulous, and a tree came in. But I'm just wondering, there are so many stumps, it looks like \$270,000 for removal, and many millions for planting. How many, do you have some sense of how far that

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2 \$270,000 goes, how many stumps are going to be
3 removed? I mean, some of these stumps are huge,
4 and it does seem to us that you have lots of
5 trees, but they can't go in 'cause we have so many
6 stumps.

7 ADRIAN BENEPE: I think if, you
8 know, given the current budget situation, we're
9 focusing the limited amount that we have on the,
10 the more pressing issue, which is pruning trees.
11 And the stump removal, so if a stump sits in the
12 ground, it's generally not going to provide a
13 hazard. And, you know, \$270,000 is not, frankly
14 is not going to remove a love of stumps by itself.
15 Our primary way to remove stumps these days, other
16 than, you know, through special calls by our
17 forestry division, would be through the planting
18 of trees. The good news is we've have lots of
19 trees to plant, lots of street trees, we're
20 planting about 20,000 street trees a year. Every
21 time we plan a tree in a pit with a stump, we have
22 to remove the stump, so that's going to--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right.

24 ADRIAN BENEPE: --remove the stump,
25 but we can't, we just, we can't do all the stump

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removal we'd like to do, because of the budget limitations.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Can private people remove a stump, obviously paying for it? Is that something legally allowed?

ADRIAN BENEPE: Yes, I think we--I think we could, our forestry division could get a permit to do that, and we'd probably try to expedite that.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

ADRIAN BENEPE: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: We would like to do that, in some cases.

ADRIAN BENEPE: Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The other issue is when you talk about lack of maintenance it came up a lot, I mean, how, like when a park, Riverside Park being an example, when they do the best they can with as little as they can, but how many maintenance workers would be lost to a specific park during the summer? And what are the repercussions? It does seem to me the grass, the bugs, there's so many repercussions, and I'm just wondering what happens in that situation? Is that

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ADRIAN BENEPE: I think--yeah, the, the primary effect that you would see, and we've been monitoring this very closely. We have a pretty good inspection program, inspection unit. The, depending on the severity or the lack of restoration of our budget, of the decline in the maintenance force, the primary thing you would see would be things like increased litter, and uncut grass, and untrimmed weeds. And maybe an increase in graffiti. We've been able, so far, to hold our own, our inspections ratings are roughly comparable to last year at this at this time, maybe we did a little bit better. And this I completely attribute to the men and women who work in the Parks Department, who I think are working harder and working smarter, as I'd mentioned we're, we've moved to servicing parks and playgrounds with mobile crews as opposed to fixed post. You know, for many reasons, we like a fixed post configuration, but it's just more efficient to use mobile crews when you have reduced staffing.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right.

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2 ADRIAN BENEPE: So far we have not
3 seen the declines that you might imagine.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

5 ADRIAN BENEPE: But the, the summer
6 remains. And--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: 79th Street
8 Rotunda is a very big capital project. Do you
9 have any update on that? That would be a
10 federally capitalized project, I assume?

11 ADRIAN BENEPE: I don't think--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I think DOT
13 has their portion, but you don't?

14 ADRIAN BENEPE: I don't think we've
15 heard of any federal money for that.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, there's
17 isn't any, but what are we doing before it falls
18 down.

19 ADRIAN BENEPE: Until we have some
20 significant funding put in that, we, there's
21 nothing we can do, unfortunately.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, but
23 are you doing anything to try to get the federal
24 funding, or work with DOT on that?

25 ADRIAN BENEPE: We, again, it's one

1
2 of our sort of consistent requests for capital new
3 needs, it's a big ticket item.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, it
5 needs more attention.

6 ADRIAN BENEPE: It needs more
7 attention, you're right.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, from
9 you.

10 ADRIAN BENEPE: It's built in 1934.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, last
12 question. Damage Park [phonetic] comes up on the
13 community board seventh side, and they have a
14 written agreement with Lincoln Center. Leaving
15 aside all the challenges, is that something that
16 agreement can be public, so people know how much
17 Lincoln Center gets, how much the City get and how
18 often Damage Park is allowed to be used by
19 private sources?

20 ADRIAN BENEPE: I believe so.
21 Yeah.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

23 ADRIAN BENEPE: As you know, I
24 think--and our attorney isn't here--I think
25 there's some litigation ongoing in this matter, so

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I may not, there may be a limit to what we can--

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah, we just want to see a copy of the contract.

ADRIAN BENEPE: I think that's a reasonable request.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you, Council Member, Council Member Diana Reyna.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to start off with congratulating the Commissioner on job well done and the continued work and you're an example to the rest of your sister agencies, regarding the MWBE goals that you have continued to exceed and we hope that it remains that way, and I hope that it will encourage other agencies to compete for your position, as far as the award is concerned. The--I wanted to just take a moment to thank the great work of Commissioner Jeffrey and his Chief of Staff Marty Moore [phonetic] and Open Space Alliance Stephanie Thayer for the work that they did with the barbecues and the area for picnicking in the Cooper Park park facility, because we do

1
2 have a housing development by the name of Cooper
3 Park, and it always gets interchanged when we're
4 referring to it. But this is a community that has
5 made great bounds to improve what would be this
6 park, and continues to do so, and I know that was
7 a lot of controversy and we could not have done it
8 with the steadfast support of Commissioner
9 Jeffrey, his team, and working hand in hand with
10 the community. Despite the opposition, there were
11 a lot of people that turned the other cheek and
12 was able to see beyond the trees beyond the
13 forest, as they say, and participate in a day of
14 service, volunteering to improve the park.

15 Unfortunately, the next day there was sand in the
16 actual barbecue pits. Which we've already worked
17 with the Police Department to keep closer
18 attention to the park. But we hope that we will
19 continue to work together as far as residents in
20 that area. I wanted to ask, the Sustainable Parks
21 Taskforce and the new system that you have
22 implemented, is this system taking into
23 consideration work orders for let's say an example
24 such as tree preening, pruning, requests. And
25 the, the opportunity to streamline that process so

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2 that we understand what's outstanding and what has
3 been pruned, or the tree stumps, which is another
4 issue that I know I deal with, as far as the top
5 two issues regarding requests. Just the other day
6 I went to DYCD and one of my constituents who
7 works at the agency told me, "Gates Avenue,
8 Council Member, is out of control. Tree pruning
9 is necessary.

10 ADRIAN BENEPE: So the Sustainable
11 Parks Taskforce has more to do with sort of in-
12 house sustainability efforts to reduce energy
13 usage and, you know, increase recycling and so on.
14 I think what the, the more relevant aspect of what
15 you're looking for, which is a more transparent
16 process in terms of communication of information,
17 you know, how are we doing with, with 311 requests
18 and such, would be handled by other administrative
19 units that may fall into our AMPS process. We try
20 to set, look at key indicators for we're our
21 meeting, our targets, in the Mayor's management
22 reports, and the various other sort of desktop
23 features for managing productivity. So, tree
24 pruning, tree removal, these are definitely
25 indicators that we study. As far as the number of

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2 requests and how they're acted on, it's something
3 I'll have to look at and tell you exactly how we
4 measure that. But--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I would love
6 to--

7 ADRIAN BENEPE: --we are able to do
8 much more in an automated way now than we used to
9 be. And in terms of specific work orders, like
10 forestry work orders, that we can track and we're,
11 we're moving now to a handheld system where during
12 a hurricane, for example, or a big storm--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Right.

14 ADRIAN BENEPE: And inspector could
15 go out with a handheld unit, enter in a work order
16 which is sent, you know, remotely through NYSPIN
17 [phonetic], or NYSWIN [phonetic], sorry, NYSWIN,
18 and so we are taking full advantage of the
19 technology that your colleague, Council Member
20 Brewer, has embraced, to use that technology to
21 dramatically improve our productivity in those
22 realms.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I'm happy to
24 hear that. And I would like to just understand
25 further, you know, what backlogs there are.

ADRIAN BENEPE: We can, we can give all of that to you, - -

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:
[interposing] That would be fantastic. And the, the budget, as far as the Executive is concerned, included a \$54.7 million allocation for 2013 to 2016. For the acquisition and development of open space, regarding the Green Point Williamsburg rezoning aspects for development of new open space. Can you just give us the status as to where we are regarding the breakdown of that money, and whether or not we're any closer? Clearly, with the 500--how many days, Domenic, are left?

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: [off mic] 590 days

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: 590 days left, to spend \$54.7 million, is not going to happen, and I want to understand where are we spending currently, and within the next 590 days.

ADRIAN BENEPE: Okay, so as you, as you pointed out, there is almost \$55 million spent over four fiscal years, 2013 to 2016--

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And

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2 Commissioner, that's not including the pool,
3 correct?

4 ADRIAN BENEPE: No, that's not
5 including the pool, that's just for acquisition in
6 Green Point Williamsburg on the waterfront. So,
7 the, the largest piece of that, of those, of that
8 acquisition is for the base of the, the Bayside
9 site, the Bayside fuel oil site, within the
10 confines of what would be Bushwick Inlet Park
11 [phonetic] and it's a little bit more than \$49
12 million for the 6.6 acres. And what we're doing
13 is making annual payments toward the acquisition
14 which we expect to be completed by 2015. So we're
15 in the process of making annual payments.
16 Included also in that money is the expansion of
17 new Newtown Barge Park, we're adding 1.5 acres
18 there. The amount for that is 4.5 million. We
19 expect the land to be transferred to the Parks
20 Department, after the expiration of a DCAS lease
21 sometime in 2014. And then we'll start
22 construction thereafter. And lastly, there's a
23 million dollars budget for the MTA relocation and
24 park development of 65 Commercial Street. As you
25 know, we're looking to move--there's a complicated

1 series of moves that required to replace the
2 facilities for the MTA, perhaps in the
3 Williamsburg is complicated by what, what
4 chemicals can you or can you not store under a
5 bridge. So we're trying to work all that out.

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7 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And my
8 concern is that the south end of the district, or
9 the community district, which is the community I
10 represent, at the sacrifice of parkland, the MTA
11 facility will be moved into until alienate
12 parkland. Where the south end didn't get the
13 acreage of open space, as did the northern end of
14 the district, of the community board. And I hope
15 that a lot of this is being mapped out, to be able
16 to receive parity. We've come to you as a
17 department proposing the decking of the BQE.
18 There's federal funding right now, a cycle that I
19 hope you've engaged with DOT. You will be
20 aggressive in--

21 ADRIAN BENEPE: That would be a
22 great project.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: --pursuing.
24 Absolutely.

25 ADRIAN BENEPE: That's, that's a,

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2 that is a visionary project that you've gotten
3 behind, and I hope we can, we, Kevin, Commissioner
4 Jeffrey has worked very hard with DOT, and of
5 course your influence has been the most important
6 of them all. We are completely behind that
7 project.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And the
9 cycle for that funding, for proposing funding
10 requests to the federal government is coming.

11 ADRIAN BENEPE: It's coming up. So
12 we--our planning division, Commissioner Laird,
13 will work closely with DOT and try to get a big
14 federal grant for that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I appreciate
16 that, thank you very much.

17 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
18 you, Council Member.

19 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Before you
20 go, Madam Co-Chair, I just want to recognize we've
21 been joined by Liz Crowley.

22 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay,
23 thank you. I wanted to just talk, touch a little
24 bit on a couple of things that haven't been
25 mentioned. One is, is the green thumb program.

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2 What is the status of that, considering that all
3 the money's, right, if I'm not mistaken, 100
4 percent of those moneys, right now, come from the
5 federal government? So where are we at with that?

6 ADRIAN BENEPE: That's, you're
7 correct, the funding has been coming from
8 community development block grants. I think we're
9 intact this year, is that right, Commissioner?

10 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Same
11 amount of money, no cut?

12 ADRIAN BENEPE: There was a ten
13 percent cut.

14 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So
15 what's the amount now?

16 ADRIAN BENEPE: Here, why don't we
17 ask Commissioner Blackmon, to elucidate us.

18 LARRY SCOTT BLACKMON: Good
19 afternoon, Larry Scott Blackmon. There's been a
20 ten percent cut in CDBG funds for this upcoming
21 year, and we also received roughly 100--roughly
22 \$50,000 from NYC Service, to support our school
23 gardens coordination, as--to support our school
24 gardens coordinator position.

25 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: What's

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the total amount in that, in that line for--

LARRY SCOTT BLACKMON: I'll have to get back to you with the exact dollar.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: But there was a ten percent cut. And you're saying that then you're also getting this NYC Service amount.

LARRY SCOTT BLACKMON: That was, those were funds that were in last year's budget, we're hoping that those funds are restored.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Where are you at with the Tavern on the Green?

ADRIAN BENEPE: We are in the process now, we--we've received a number of proposals, we're in the process of evaluating the proposals and we'll narrow those down and come up with a, we hope, a satisfactory proposer to take to the, the Franchising Concessions Review Board.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: What level of engagement have you had with the community there?

ADRIAN BENEPE: We've had a great deal of engagement with the community, not just Community Board 7, but all the community boards

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2 that surround the park and went to them early and
3 often, on this scale and scope of the restaurant,
4 what type of restaurant it should be. And we
5 have, we issued an RFP, the responses came in from
6 the RFP, the responders know that they have to
7 work with the union and we're hopeful that we'll
8 get a, a good proposal from it.

9 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: But
10 what, what's the timeline? What are you
11 expecting?

12 ADRIAN BENEPE: The end of this
13 month.

14 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: End of
15 this month. Now we've talk--I know in terms of
16 the capital, you've talked about this additional
17 45 people, and really trying to move those
18 contracts, right, so I know that from year to year
19 it's been rolling over and there's a large amount
20 of money there. So, are you expecting to make a
21 lot of headway? I mean, in some years it was 55
22 percent of the moneys allocated were put to
23 contract--

24 ADRIAN BENEPE: Yeah, I think when
25 last, when--Commissioner Braddick, why don't you

1
2 come join us--when she last presented at one of
3 our senior staff meetings, we were, I think we
4 were looking at about a \$400 million commitment
5 plan for their current fiscal year, or maybe--if
6 everything goes well, little bit less than that.
7 But Commissioner Braddick is always conservative,
8 because she doesn't like to disappoint. But why
9 don't you tell us, you know, what you think we'll
10 do this year or next year?

11 THERESE BRADDICK: We think by the
12 end--sorry--

13 ADRIAN BENEPE: Introduce yourself.

14 THERESE BRADDICK: It's Therese
15 Braddick. We think we'll end up around about \$325
16 million--\$350 million at the end of the fiscal
17 year. And the reason why that number is a little
18 bit lower than prior fiscal years is because a lot
19 of the large scale PlaNYC regional projects have
20 already been registered against the budget. So we
21 have our, more of our kind of typical parks
22 projects, which are smaller in, in dollar value,
23 moving through the system.

24 ADRIAN BENEPE: But we will, I
25 think, again, hit a record of about 168 projects.

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THERESE BRADDICK: Projects.

ADRIAN BENEPE: In one year.

THERESE BRADDICK: Total number of projects.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Now have, are you able to tell like how far behind certain projects are. I mean, we're, I know that there's money that we put in and things don't move as quickly as we would like, so that creates delays. So, is part of the plan of getting some of that money moving, to get some of these delayed projects--

ADRIAN BENEPE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.

ADRIAN BENEPE: If, with the additional hires and also a renewed focus, as I mentioned, there was a, we had Accenture come in and help us really take apart both our design and our construction processes. And we think that we're moving projects faster now. Once we have somebody working on a project, we think we can move the project faster. It's a matter of having had a limited amount of staff, and a limited number of consultants. We can do a better job of

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2 assigning work to consultant landscape architects
3 and with more staff on, architects, construction
4 supervisors, people doing specs and estimating,
5 and all those things, we can move the projects
6 faster through the pipeline. It's simply been,
7 we've been victims of the success and the fact
8 that Mayor Bloomberg has provided historic levels
9 of investment in parks, never before seen in the
10 City's history, that the City Council and borough
11 presidents continue to allocate tremendous amounts
12 of money for parks. There's just a fairly narrow
13 funnel through which these projects must flow, and
14 it's determined by the - - staff we have who can
15 either manage projects, manage consultants, do
16 design work, do procurement, do construction
17 management, so we've had to put some on hold while
18 we wait for the resources to actually spend the
19 money. And I think we're going to see next year
20 be a year where we are able to do a great many
21 more projects.

22 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
23 you for that. Just two quick questions.
24 Highline, on the thing here, we have the Highline
25 Bridge Inspection, Department will receive an

1
2 additional \$200,000. Fiscal Year 2013 and the out
3 years for OTPS costs associated with the
4 inspections of the Highline Bridge. Is this work
5 that you are performing for the conservancy?

6 ADRIAN BENEPE: So, in the deal
7 with the friends of the Highline, the City agreed
8 to provide sort of a minimum baseline of
9 operational support. And one of those things was
10 to do the bridge inspections. Technically, the
11 Highline is a bridge. Other than that, and then
12 we also provide security. Other than that, all of
13 the other operating dollars are provided through
14 privately raised funds. And all of the
15 programming dollars, the City spends virtually no
16 money on the maintenance of the Highline other
17 than in doing the annual inspections of the
18 facility, and then some security but even there
19 we've been forced by circumstances to reduce our
20 security commitment.

21 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay,
22 so that's the first time I hear that. So, how
23 much security is it that you're providing? This
24 is coming out of your budget.

25 ADRIAN BENEPE: It's coming out of

1
2 our budget, but it's part of the deal, that the
3 deal was--

4 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

5 Understood, but what is that amount?

6 ADRIAN BENEPE: I think it ends up
7 being about five or six officers. So it's roughly
8 a couple a hundred thousand dollars. And the
9 Friends of the Highline raised and spent \$4
10 million or \$5 million.

11 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Why was
12 that specific arrangement made? I'm cur--

13 ADRIAN BENEPE: It was an
14 incentive, the thing about entering into
15 public/private partnerships is you can't force
16 people to volunteer to raise private dollars for a
17 public park. You have to--we've been very
18 fortunate that we live in a city where people of
19 their own volition decide that they will volunteer
20 as private citizens to raise private dollars for
21 public parks, it ends up being--

22 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: But the
23 request came from who, Commissioner? You're
24 saying that the conservancy said that as part of
25 the deal, that they want security provided. Or is

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that something that was offered by the City?

ADRIAN BENEPE: It was offered by the City, because we couldn't provide maintenance.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: And then just the workforce there's a piece here says "Workforce Development Executive Budget contains an additional \$200,000 in Fiscal 2012, and \$800,000 Fiscal 2013 for Workforce assessment and evaluation." What exact--

ADRIAN BENEPE: All right, so, we did a, did some major studies over the past sort of year-and-a-half with a Accenture, to try to, you know, we are in some ways a 19th Century organization trying to enter into the 21st Century with, you know, automated procedures and doing a better job with the resources we have. We want to do a much more focused effort now at workforce modeling. You know, what's the most efficient way to maintain Parks? Historically, we've had five or ten different ways to maintain the same type of park. Mobile crew, fixed bus crew? Certain configuration of a mobile crew? Is it in a van or a truck? Is it two people, is it three people? Do they have, what kind of equipment do they bring

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2 with them? Does the equipment stay in? So, it
3 was being done in somewhat of a, you know,
4 creative way, but different ways in each borough.
5 And so, what we're looking to do is say, "In a
6 world of limited resources, what's the most
7 efficient way to deploy those resources?" And
8 bringing in a consultant to help us do that. And-
9 -

10 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: You're
11 basically saying that \$800,000 in this fiscal year
12 is for a contract with Accenture.

13 ADRIAN BENEPE: No, it's for a
14 contract--

15 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: No?

16 ADRIAN BENEPE: --it's for a
17 contract with a consultant to be determined, we
18 have an RFP out. We don't, I don't know that it
19 would be Accenture, could be one of several
20 consultants.

21 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: But in
22 two fiscal years, we've spent a million dollars on
23 that, on that--setting aside money for a
24 consultant.

25 ADRIAN BENEPE: Yeah, if they can,

1
2 in a \$300 million budget, to spend a third of one
3 percent to try to do it more efficiently, it's
4 probably a wise investment.

5 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Well,
6 this is an issue that we've under--you know, you
7 say the size of your budget, but I mean these are
8 new things that we're hearing about, so I'm
9 considering that we really are, we don't want to
10 lay off people, you'd think that money could be
11 better allocated. All right, those, in terms of
12 that, and just going back one last question, and
13 then I think I'll be done, Mr. Chair. Going back
14 to the issue of the question that I had, said you
15 said \$13 million, in-house, for horticulture--not
16 horticulture for I guess the pruning.

17 ADRIAN BENEPE: For forestry work.

18 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: And--
19 right, so, and I had asked about whether or not
20 there was a \$700,000--but, from last year to this
21 year, what was the, what was last year's amount?
22 Just to compare.

23 ADRIAN BENEPE: It would've been
24 roughly similar. There's been, there's been no
25 cut that I'm aware of to--

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CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.

ADRIAN BENEPE: --forestry, I mean,
we--

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So
you've maintained that line item the same.

ADRIAN BENEPE: Yeah, we've, we've
reduced the, the pruning contracts. But there's
been no cut to forestry operations.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Well,
obviously, I appreciate your staff, obviously I
wanted to also, since everybody's been giving
thanks, I don't have a very good working
relationship with all the Parks staff, I thank
them for their help; the Commissioners for both
Manhattan and The Bronx, which I represent as
well, I appreciate their assistance. And as I
mentioned, we had a lot of conversations and a lot
of work that went into the whole participatory
budgeting, but I think it was a process that we're
going to do again, and I look forward to the
continued help from your staff. But obviously
you're budget is of concern to me, the JTP
conversion to WEP, is of concern and the
possibility of the impact on the maintenance of

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2 Parks is very real. And that also leads to
3 safety, I think. And for the reasons cited. So,
4 I know we're starting this budget process and
5 there's a lot of conversation, but we'll be
6 putting pressure where we feel we need to put
7 pressure. And so with that, I thank you, and Mr.
8 Chair.

9 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you
10 very much, Melissa Mark, who does a great job with
11 the Parks all year. Commissioner, I have to just
12 give a shout out to our Brooklyn Borough Park
13 Commissioner, Kevin Jeffreys, and his right hand
14 Monty Mark, they do a great job. And we had our
15 paint the barrels last weekend, in Coney Island
16 two weekends ago.

17 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: In the rain.

18 ADRIAN BENEPE: In the rain. We
19 had 100 kids come out in the rain, unbelievable.
20 And I hope next year you'll be able to join us. I
21 want to thank you for coming. This concludes our
22 hearing for today. Our next round of budget
23 hearings will begin tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. in this
24 room. We'll be joined by the Public Safety
25 Committee, chaired by colleague Peter Vallone, to

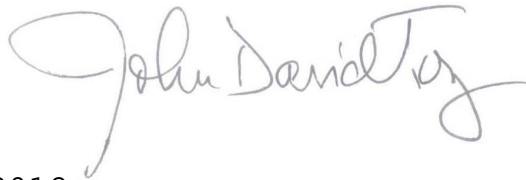
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hear from the Police Department, District
Attorneys and special prosecutors, and the
Civilian Complaint Review Board. Please try to be
on time. This hearing is now adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, JOHN DAVID TONG certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John David Tong". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the printed word "Signature".

Date: June 4, 2012