

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON PARKS & RECREATION

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November 12, 2008

Start: 10:17am

Recess: 12:01pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
HELEN D. FOSTER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.
Letitia James
Helen Sears

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

Rohit Aggarwala
Director
Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and
Sustainability

Liam Kavanagh
First Deputy Parks Commissioner
City of New York Parks and Recreation Department

Fiona Watt
Assistant Commissioner for Forestry and Horticulture
City of New York Parks and Recreation Department

Drew Becher
Executive Director, Co-Chair
New York Restoration Project, Million Trees NYC

Erika Svendsen
Research Scientist
United States Forest Service

Robin Simmen
Director
Greenbridge

Susan Goberman
Executive Director
Trees New York

Sheela Feinberg
Director of Government and External Relations
New Yorkers for Parks

Dawn Henning
Environmental Planner
Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice

Kate Zidar
Director
Habana Works

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

Rob Crauderueff
Policy Director
Sustainable South Bronx

Paul Mankiewicz
Doctorate in Plant Biology and Biophysics CUNY

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CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Good morning.

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I'm Council Member Helen Diane Foster, Chair of

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the Parks Committee. We are joined by Letitia

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James from Brooklyn and State Senator-Elect Joe

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Addabbo from Queens. A point of personal

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privilege, their gain is our loss. I'm going to

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miss you Addabbo. We are conducting today's

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hearing on the status of the Million Trees New

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York. We're joined by obviously Liam Kavanagh

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good morning, Fiona Watt good morning, Drew Becher

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good morning and Rohit. Why don't we just get

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right into it? I believe you guys have the set

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up.

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LIAM KAVANAGH: We have the set up,

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yes.

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CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: We'll get

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going.

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MR. KAVANAGH: Rohit is going to

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lead off.

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CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Okay.

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MR. KAVANAGH: Good morning Chair

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Foster and other members of the Parks Committee.

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My name is Rohit Aggarwala, I'm the Director of

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the Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and

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2 Sustainability. On behalf of Mayor Bloomberg I'd
3 like to thank you for this opportunity to discuss
4 the Million Trees NYC program.

5 Over a year and a half ago Mayor
6 Bloomberg presented a long term plan for a
7 greener, greater New York. PlaNYC laid out 127
8 initiatives designed to address the challenges of
9 a city whose population will grow by over a
10 million people by 2030. Today we are here to talk
11 about the progress of the Million Trees initiative
12 which to date has resulted in the planting of over
13 113,000, unofficially--many, many trees.

14 These trees have sprung up across
15 the five boroughs in city parks, along once barren
16 streets, on public and private land of all types.
17 And we're proud to report that we are, we believe,
18 on track to complete this initiative by 2017 as
19 planned. In many ways a Million Trees is the
20 quintessential PlaNYC initiative and that's why I
21 wanted to give you our perspective from a PlaNYC
22 perspective on why this is such an important
23 initiative before having the First Deputy
24 Commissioner and Drew Becher talk about how the
25 program is actually being operated.

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2 The program touches on virtually
3 all of the PlaNYC objectives form improving
4 property values, cleaning our air and water to
5 reducing energy consumption and shrinking the
6 city's carbon footprint. The City Council has
7 recognizes this program's importance as well.
8 Last April we worked with the Council and the
9 Council passed a zoning resolution mandating
10 street trees for all new development. This law
11 will result in an estimated 22,500 additional new
12 trees by 2017, helping us to deliver these many
13 benefits to New Yorkers.

14 By planting trees on streets and
15 parking lots across the city, Million Trees is
16 helping to reduce storm water runoff, which
17 strains the capacity of the city's water treatment
18 system and causes direct sewage discharges into
19 our rivers and streams. Parks and DEP are working
20 together to pilot a new tree design, which if
21 successful may further increase the storm water
22 retention capacity of future street trees.

23 Million Trees is also helping to
24 curb energy consumption, a key part of the city's
25 strategy to reduce our dependence on coal, oil and

1
2 other fossil fuels. The expanded canopy provided
3 by new trees shades buildings from sun in the
4 summer, reducing the need for air conditioning
5 during peak load times. Trees also help block
6 buildings from cold winds during the winter and
7 therefore have some improvement to heating demand.

8 Million Trees is likely to have its
9 greatest impact on the city's air quality. The
10 new trees that have been planted are absorbing
11 pollutants including nitrogen dioxide, sulfur
12 dioxide and carbon monoxide and intercepting
13 airborne particulate matter like soot from diesel
14 exhaust. Along with the city's other air quality
15 initiatives, Million Trees is helping to decrease
16 therefore the impact of air pollution on the
17 public's health. The shade that these new trees
18 provide in summer is also helping to clean our
19 air. By cooling asphalt surfaces like parking
20 lots and streets, trees slow the formation of
21 ground level ozone, which is one of the most
22 dangerous of our criteria air pollutants.

23 And not least of all, Million Trees
24 is helping to improve the livability of New York
25 City by making streets, parks and public spaces

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2 more inviting, more attractive and more green.
3 Million Trees works hand in glove with Green
4 Streets, our regional parks initiatives and the
5 school yards to playgrounds initiative to make
6 more of our city attractive and available for
7 recreational enjoyment.

8 We also know that the economy
9 benefits as well. Not only from the cost savings
10 in energy consumption and health care, not only
11 from the green collar jobs created by the program
12 but also from the fact that property values
13 increase when street trees are planted in
14 recognition of all of these many benefits. We all
15 know that these are tough fiscal times and PlaNYC
16 initiatives have borne their fair share of budget
17 impacts. Million Trees however is so cost
18 effective and valuable that we remain committed to
19 fully funding it and meeting our commitment of
20 completing the program by 2017. Thank you.

21 MR. KAVANAGH: Good morning. Thank
22 you Rohit. I'm Liam Kavanagh, First Deputy Parks
23 Commissioner and on behalf of First Deputy Mayor
24 Patty Harris and Parks Commissioner Adrian Benope
25 I thank you for the opportunity to discuss the

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2 Million Trees NYC with the Parks Committee of the
3 New York City Council today. Joining me is Fiona
4 Watt, Assistant Commissioner for Forestry and
5 Horticulture, Parks Department and Drew Becher,
6 Executive Director of the New York Restoration
7 Project, our chief partner and co-leader of the
8 Million Trees initiative.

9 On October 9, 2007 - and we do have
10 a Power Point to illustrate some of our comments -
11 Mayor Bloomberg and New York Restoration Project
12 Founder Bette Midler launched Million Trees NYC at
13 the corner of 165th Street and Tuller Avenue in
14 the Bronx. A Million Trees NYC has a deceptively
15 simple goal to plant one million trees on public
16 and private property throughout the city over a
17 ten year period. That alone is a major
18 undertaking but Million Trees NYC is much more.

19 As a core element of Mayor
20 Bloomberg's PlaNYC, Million Trees is part of a
21 determined effort to make New York a cleaner,
22 greener and more sustainable city befitting its
23 place as a dynamic and progressive world capital.
24 It is an environmental initiative that seeks to
25 train, educate New Yorkers about the value and

1
2 importance of trees and nature to the urban
3 environment.

4 Million Trees is in the vanguard of
5 the budding green jobs movement, providing
6 opportunities to individuals and businesses that
7 benefit economically from the drive towards
8 sustainability. And Million Trees is a
9 public/private partnership led by Parks and the
10 New York Restoration Project with an advisory
11 board composed of more than 60 corporation,
12 Community based organizations, professional
13 associations, public agencies, non-profits and all
14 of New York's great public gardens. Some of these
15 members include East Brooklyn Churches, the New
16 York City Housing Authority, New York Cares, Con
17 Edison, Trees New York and the Horticulture
18 Society to name just a few.

19 As Mayor Bloomberg said at the
20 anniversary event last month, Million Trees NYC is
21 at the centerpiece of PlaNYC and we are proud to
22 be at the forefront of the effort to make New York
23 cleaner, greener and healthier for all New
24 Yorkers. Trees are the workhorse of the
25 environment and Rohit summed up pretty succinctly

1
2 the economic and environmental benefits that trees
3 bring to everybody but especially people who live
4 in cities. Those benefits are substantial,
5 they're tangible, they can be quantified. I think
6 in the future as we go forward we will see more
7 and more value placed on eco systems services
8 which trees are a main component.

9 In addition to the environmental
10 benefits, trees are increasingly recognized for
11 their contributions to human health and well
12 being. The link between trees, clean air and
13 respiratory ailments is at the heart of our Trees
14 for Public Health program of which you will hear
15 more later. But a recent study in the Lancet,
16 United Kingdom medical journal, found that small
17 parks can protect people from strokes and heart
18 disease by simply cutting stress and promoting
19 exercise.

20 The presence of green spaces
21 encourages people to be more active, helps reduce
22 blood pressure and stress levels and even promotes
23 faster healing after surgery. Similarly, a study
24 in Japanese seniors in 2004 found that access to
25 trees and green spaces contributed to healthier

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2 lifestyles and longevity. Other studies have
3 documented speedier recoveries for hospital
4 patients with access to greenery and enhancement
5 of health benefits when exercise is combined with
6 nature. Beyond just the environmental and
7 economic benefits, trees play a substantial role
8 in encouraging healthier lifestyles for everybody.

9 But Million Trees NYC will touch
10 every corner of the city. The Parks Department
11 was responsible for approximately 60% of the
12 million trees, which will be planted on streets,
13 in parks and other publicly owned open spaces.
14 The city has committed almost \$400 million over
15 the next 10 years to accomplish that goal. The
16 balance of the Million Trees will be planted by
17 homeowners, commercial property owners, non-profit
18 institutions and on non-park public property
19 including schools and NYCHA developments.

20 New York Restoration Project in
21 partnership with the Mayor's Fund to Advance the
22 City of New York, a non-profit organization
23 dedicated to promoting public/private partnerships
24 that benefit the city are leading the effort to
25 raise private funds to support different

1
2 components of the project. The New York
3 Restoration Project has pledged to plant 100,000
4 of the remaining 400,000 trees, while coordinating
5 efforts to plant and register the 300,000 trees
6 needed to meet the million tree goal.

7 To celebrate the first anniversary
8 of Million Trees NYC on October 29, the Mayor and
9 Bette Midler planted tree number 111,111. We
10 didn't do it on the 111th Street but we did do it
11 on 117th Street and Pleasant Avenue in East
12 Harlem. That puts us about 70% ahead of the pace
13 needed to reach a million trees by 2017. Our
14 first year goal was to plant 93,397 trees, which
15 we were able to succeed by planting 109,006 trees
16 in total. 72% of the trees were planted by Parks,
17 14% were on private and institutional properties
18 planted by NYRP and partners in the private sector
19 and 14% were planted by other public agencies.

20 We are now at 113,997 trees planted
21 with more going into the ground every day. Just
22 last Friday and Saturday over a thousand
23 volunteers rolled up their sleeves at parks in all
24 five boroughs and planted over 15,000 trees. This
25 was the third large scale volunteer effort led by

1
2 Million Trees NYC in a little more than a year.
3 Events like this underscore the importance of the
4 stewardship and outreach sub-committee of the
5 advisory board.

6 This committee is co-chair by
7 Parks, New York Restoration Project and the
8 Brooklyn Botanical Gardens. It includes some of
9 the most effective community based environmental
10 organizations in the city such as Trees New York
11 and Partnerships for Parks. Its goal is to
12 develop and implement stewardship training and
13 programs for the people of New York.

14 To reach the goal, the sub-
15 committee has developed a Million Trees ambassador
16 kit to inspire New York City residents to adopt
17 and care for trees. Most recently it hosted a
18 stewardship round table in September which brought
19 together organizations and networks of New Yorkers
20 committed to preserve our urban forest. The
21 participants analyzed ways in which Million Trees
22 can expand the scope of existing stewardship
23 programs and develop a cohesive stewardship core,
24 which will be rolled out in 2009.

25 Public awareness and education is

1
2 also critical to the success of Million Trees. We
3 recognize that instilling an appreciation for
4 trees and nature in children will ensure that we
5 have active tree stewards for generations to come.
6 The education and program sub-committee, composed
7 of leaders of environmental education, is
8 developing a city wide youth education program.
9 Working with partner organizations such as
10 Children for Children, the Council of the
11 Environment and the City Parks Foundation, the
12 education and program sub-committee will work to
13 integrate Million Trees programming into existing
14 environmental education curricula at public,
15 private and parochial schools.

16 Critical to the work of the cu-
17 committee and the success of the initiative as a
18 whole is our web site, www.milliontreesnyc.org,
19 which you can see up on the screen here. It keeps
20 us all connected and up to date with this fast
21 moving and growing movement. To date, more 2,500
22 people have registered online with Million Trees
23 NYC. If you want to request a tree or report a
24 tree planting, sign up for a volunteer event or
25 learn more about Million Trees NYC simply log on

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2 and get involved.

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Million Trees NYC has also been a small but steady incubator of green jobs. At Parks we have hired 81 new staff for Million Trees related jobs like climbers and pruners, foresters, analysts, construction project managers, landscape, architects and gardeners. If you add in the jobs created to assist with our expanded tree planting and block pruning programs, PlaNYC and Million Trees have created many new jobs for New Yorkers.

We have also started the Million Trees NYC training program that will bring more New Yorkers into the fold of green collar jobs for the 21st century. Supported by the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York, the Center for Economic Opportunity and the Altman Foundation, 32 trainees began a nine month intensive program in tree care, natural area restoration and landscape design. The participants are young men and women between the ages of 18 and 24 who are eager to explore career opportunities in what we expect will become a vibrant green economy. And we hope that the new administration in Washington will help fund some

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of the green job possibilities going forward.

I would now like to ask Fiona Watt, our Assistant Commissioner for Forestry and Horticulture to discuss some of the specific ways we plan to reach that million tree goal. Fiona.

FIONA WATT: Thank you, Commissioner. With a budget of \$32 million annually, Parks is planting thousands more street trees a year through block planting in focused neighborhoods, while continuing to plant in every community board in response to individual requests for new trees.

In the first year of the Million Trees NYC campaign we received over 17,000 requests for new trees and have planted over 21,000 new street trees, the highest number for one year on record with our agency. And 5,000 of those were in our Trees for Public Health focused neighborhoods. Our strategy is to plant a street tree in every possible space in order to reach full stocking of street trees by the year 2017. To achieve this, we will continue the transformational block by block greening program as well as responding to individual requests and

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2 automatically replacing dead trees with new ones.
3 It's easier than ever before to request a tree.
4 In fact, it's as easy as 3-1-1.

5 In order to maintain a growing tree
6 population, Mayor Bloomberg has increased out tree
7 maintenance budget to \$5.6 million in fiscal year
8 2008. This will allow us to prune more trees each
9 year and reduce the block pruning cycle from ten
10 years to seven years. As an example, in fiscal
11 year 2007 we pruned 35,000 street trees through
12 our block pruning program. And with the
13 additional \$2.85 million for block pruning in
14 fiscal year 2008 we were able to increase that
15 number to 81,000 trees pruned. We also hired more
16 than 30 new climbers and pruners to continue to
17 remove dead trees within 30 days of request and to
18 respond to storm emergencies when the inevitable
19 weather events occur.

20 Since we removed stumps at the time
21 of planting, we will also dramatically reduce the
22 backlog of tree stumps that require removal in
23 just a few years of our new planting program.
24 Finally our enormously popular program to repair
25 sidewalks disturbed by tree growth has fixed over

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2 4,000 sites to date, with a new round of contracts
3 in preparation now to begin next spring.

4 Our Borough of Forestry teams have
5 increased capacity to more swiftly respond to tree
6 issues and emergencies as they arrive. These
7 enhancements and increased funding are allowing us
8 to help these trees grow and stay healthy with
9 minimal impact on infrastructure so that New
10 York's development will be in harmony with its
11 sustainability. And we are thankful for the
12 assistance the district offices of the council
13 members all across the city give us in identifying
14 areas that need to be addressed when it comes to
15 planting, pruning, stump removal and sidewalk
16 repair.

17 Our Trees for Public Health program
18 addresses the connection between the outdoor
19 environment and human health. The goal of the
20 program is to increase tree canopy cover in
21 neighborhoods with fewer than average street trees
22 and higher than average public health burdens.
23 Positive outcomes will include improved air
24 quality, community empowerment and of course
25 neighborhood beautification. The program works

1
2 with community residents to develop a vision of a
3 greener, healthier neighborhood.

4 In 2005 Parks selected a
5 neighborhood in each borough as initial targets
6 for Trees for Public Health. Neighborhoods were
7 chosen based on two very simple variables: street
8 tree stocking level and asthma hospitalization
9 rates for children under the age of 14. Areas
10 with fewer than average street trees and higher
11 than average asthma rates, were given top
12 priority. Asthma was selected as a health
13 indicator because it is a significant health
14 concern throughout New York City and because poor
15 air quality worsens asthma symptoms.

16 The resulting Trees for Public
17 Health management plans relied heavily on feedback
18 of community residents in developing a vision for
19 their neighborhood and proposed strategies for
20 realizing that vision. Million Trees NYC has
21 allowed us to begin what we never imagined we
22 would, which was full implementation of the
23 community forestry management plans in these
24 neighborhoods; Hunts Point Moresanea in the Bronx,
25 East New York in Brooklyn, East Harlem in

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2 Manhattan, Far Rockaway in Queens and Stapleton in
3 Staten Island.

4 Including this fall we would have
5 planted 5,000 trees in these neighborhoods under
6 this program. In some of those neighborhoods we
7 will complete full stocking within the next year
8 because they're smaller. In the larger
9 neighborhoods it may take two or three years.

10 In early 2008 the Council worked
11 with City Planning and Parks to amend the zoning
12 text to require street tree planting as part of
13 new construction and significant renovations. The
14 new requirements ensure that trees do not get left
15 out of new building projects. And in cases where
16 there is no space to plant new trees, the required
17 trees must still be planted but off site.

18 When the Council approved this
19 amendment, your efforts enhanced and improved our
20 street tree planting capacity by an estimated
21 2,250 trees a year, which adds a total of 22,500
22 trees by the end of our ten year timeline. This
23 ensures that every community in New York City will
24 enjoy the environmental benefit from Million Trees
25 NYC. We thank you for your endorsement of this

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2 zoning text change this year and know you'll
3 continue to be an active partner with us in this
4 effort.

5 We will not plant one million trees
6 in New York City with right of way greening alone,
7 however. The reforestation initiative is the
8 other core component of Parks Million Trees NYC
9 program. With the goal of creating 2,000 new
10 acres of forests on city park land and other
11 public open space, reforestation will transform
12 degraded landscapes by cleaning out invasive
13 plants, remediating the soil and planting tree
14 saplings. This first year we planted over 45,000
15 trees as part of our reforestation effort.

16 These activities mimic national
17 forest succession, where many trees sprout in
18 woodland openings, gradually thinning out as they
19 grow larger and compete with each other for the
20 available space. Growing close together, the new
21 trees quickly fill the woodland opening in the
22 process repeats itself elsewhere in the forest.
23 In urban areas, however, this natural progression
24 of new forest growth needs a little bit of human
25 intervention.

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2 What we do is we first remedy
3 degraded soils, we re-introduce native trees into
4 areas that have been isolated from natural seed
5 dispersal and then we keep invasive plants from
6 overwhelming the new plantings until they are
7 large enough to establish. Reforestation also
8 includes planting larger caliper trees in
9 landscaped areas and parks. In many cases, parks
10 were designed to have trees in the landscape but
11 over the years the trees have died and there has
12 not been funding to replant them.

13 In order to increase tree canopy
14 and restore our park land citywide, it is critical
15 that we are able to plant these areas where canopy
16 has been lost over the years. Over the last year,
17 Parks has engaged with environmental and forestry
18 consultants, scientists and restoration
19 practitioners from institutions and other agencies
20 including the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S.
21 National Resource Conservation Service, to
22 establish our approach, our scientific approach to
23 reforestation. This technical review assessment
24 of existing models has led to the development of
25 the site selection preparation and planting

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2 strategy that builds on Parks 20 years of
3 experience in natural areas management and
4 restoration.

5 In fact, our very own Natural
6 Resources Group has been working with outside
7 organizations and agencies to conduct an analysis
8 of public open space across the city to determine
9 the optimal locations for reforestation. This
10 analysis has included evaluating natural areas as
11 well as active and passive recreation areas using
12 remote sensing data as well as numerous interviews
13 with land managers who maintain and manage the
14 parks.

15 This analysis of public lands is
16 focused on reviewing our inventory of city park
17 land but has also included reaching out to other
18 city agencies as well as state and federal land
19 managers. Through this process we have identified
20 2,328 acres with potential for reforestation.
21 Ideal sites within parks are undeveloped areas
22 over run by invasive weeds and vines and simply
23 unused lawn areas that will expand on existing
24 forested areas.

25 Public outreach and stewardship

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2 efforts are also well under way and have already
3 brought out over 3,000 citizen volunteers to help
4 plant trees and nurture new wood lands at various
5 sites across all five boroughs. Some of which,
6 like Prawls Island on State Island, the public had
7 never been able to visit before. Over the last
8 three seasons volunteers have planted more than
9 45,000 trees and starting this year we plan to
10 plant over 35,000 trees through new reforestation
11 contracts. So the efforts are not just done by
12 volunteers alone.

13 Last spring we began contractor
14 planting along Conduit Boulevard in Brooklyn.
15 This fall we will be planting over 15,000 trees at
16 sites that include Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx,
17 Little Bay Park, Ally Pond Park and John Golden
18 Park in Queens and Willough Park on Staten Island.

19 Essential to the success of Million
20 Trees NYC is the effort to obtain quality trees
21 comprising a wide diversity of species. In order
22 to achieve these important goals we are
23 contracting directly with nurseries for the first
24 time ever to produce the quantity, type and
25 quality of trees that we need over the next nine

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2 years of the campaign. These tree procurement
3 contracts are, as I said, the first of their kind
4 in New York City and they far surpass in scope and
5 scale any other similar efforts in any other city
6 in this country and perhaps even in the world.
7 With three contracts already awarded and four more
8 in the bid cycle for street trees as we speak, we
9 are building a comprehensive program to provide
10 New York City with over 200,000 trees by 2017.

11 By specifying over 70 different
12 species and tracking their progress from small
13 seedlings to larger trees ready to transplant to
14 the streets of our city, we are ensuring a steady
15 stream of high quality plant material to get our
16 plantings off to the best start possible. This
17 fall we have received the first of our procured
18 trees and we'll be planting over 2,000 in
19 neighborhoods across the city with almost 12,000
20 tree plantings planned for the spring of 2009 for
21 a total of 23,289 for fiscal year 2009.

22 In addition, procurement contracts
23 have also been developed for reforestation, which
24 will be going out to bid in the next two months.
25 In this way we will build capacity with the

1 regional nurseries to provide native plants of
2 local genotype for natural forest restoration
3 plantings. These contracts will obtain over
4 400,000 sapling trees for New York City by 2017.

5
6 After our trees are planted they
7 are tended for the first tow years by our planting
8 contracts, who water them over the summer months
9 and replace those that do not survive. This two
10 year guarantee period for new trees exceeds the
11 one year time frame that is standard in the trade.

12 The research and evaluation in tree
13 planting sub-committees of the Million Tree
14 advisory board focus on the scientific and
15 technical aspects of the Million Trees initiative.
16 The research and evaluation committees supports
17 and promotes urban forestry research and data
18 collection to advance the programs goals and to
19 monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the
20 initiative.

21 Co-led by Parks and NYRP and the
22 U.S Forest Service, we have developed Stu map
23 software which helps identify stewardship
24 organizations throughout the five boroughs. And
25 the sub-committee is completing a case study on

1
2 the survivability rate of young street trees, the
3 first of its kind. Recently we have also forged a
4 collaboration with the University of Vermont to
5 develop criteria for selecting new target
6 neighborhoods and we are in the process of
7 establishing collaborations with other research
8 and academic institutions such as Cornell
9 University, Columbia University and community
10 based organizations.

11 Tree planting sub-committee is co-
12 chaired by representatives from the New York
13 Botanical Gardens, Parks and NYRP. The group is
14 providing technical guidance on a number of
15 challenging aspects of the Million Trees program
16 including the development of recommended species
17 lists, tree stop quality and availability as well
18 as proper planting standards and site selection.
19 Now I'd like to turn it back to Commissioner
20 Kavanagh.

21 MR. KAVANAGH: And I would like to
22 turn it over Drew Becher, the Executive Director
23 of the New York Restoration Project and co-chair
24 of the Million Trees NYC Campaign.

25 DREW BECHER: Thank you all. My

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2 name is Drew Becher, Executive Director of New
3 York Restoration Project. On behalf of Bette
4 Midler, she actually called last night and said
5 how we're doing on this thing. I said we have
6 this great oversight meeting today and we got all
7 ready so I was rattling off some facts and figures
8 to her last night. Council Member Foster she said
9 next she's going to try to be here but her show
10 opened back up in Vegas yesterday.

11 I'm going to not read through my
12 testimony but I want to give you some talking
13 points that I came up with. I think one of the
14 reasons why it's so successful is our
15 public/private partnership that we have formed.
16 When I worked for Chicago for Mayor Daley we
17 started a large planting campaign in the 90s and
18 it was really government driven. It is so far
19 planted about 600,000 trees throughout the city of
20 Chicago. Then I went to District of Columbia and
21 worked for the government there, we created a
22 program with the Casey Trees Foundation, which was
23 mostly a privately funded organization that
24 planted trees.

25 When you look back, both are

1
2 successful but I don't think either are as
3 successful as the public/private partnership
4 between the Parks Department, the Mayor's office,
5 the City Council and ourselves and our partners
6 here in New York and what we've made. To plant
7 over 100,000 trees in one year in wrapping up is
8 just quite amazing. And Council Member Foster
9 you're going to like this one, Mayor Daley
10 directed his Chief Environmental Officer to give
11 me a call last week. They are launching Tree-cago
12 which is based on Million Trees NYC. So the city
13 that everyone holds up by planting trees is now
14 looking at us as a model and I thin that's
15 something to be said about our particular program.

16 Million Trees NYC is more than just
17 a tree planting exercise, though. It's planting
18 stewardship, community outreach, adult/youth
19 education, public awareness, public policy and
20 fundraising. So far NYRP has planted over 7,000
21 trees citywide. A lot of this has been on the New
22 York City Housing Authority property; we planted
23 over 5,000 in 31 NYCHA developments by volunteers
24 and contractors. We have enlisted NYCHA residents
25 to serve on the Million Trees guardians and

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stewards.

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We're providing scholarships to NYCHA residents to obtain certificates in horticulture at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. We are also moving forward with strategic partnerships with the Department of Education, the MTA and the Port Authority and the DCA. We also are working with college and university campuses, hospital and health care institutions, cultural institutions and libraries, public cemeteries and private residential developments.

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Civic engagement is critical to the success of our Million Trees NYC program. We really believe that involving New Yorkers in planting these trees will significantly get them more interested and vested in long term care of trees. In our first year of NYRP in this program, we've hosted 13 community and corporate volunteer planting days which translates into 1,600 volunteers and over 26,000 volunteer hours of planting trees throughout the city.

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It should be noted that this coordination however is not cheap and we do require our corporate partners to actually pay for

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2 this. In 2009 American Express will be
3 underwriting this particular program. Education
4 is another large component of what we're doing.
5 We've created a number of interesting programs
6 that we're working with the Department of
7 Education and our other partners on. One is the
8 RSPEC Tree Program. It's a six month integrated
9 partnership. We're going to pilot it in 10 fifth
10 grade classrooms in locations in Trees for Public
11 Health Neighborhoods.

12 Then we have Talking Trees, which
13 is a school wide assembly and materials that we
14 give out to schools to promote tree planting in
15 their neighborhoods. We have an every day is an
16 Arbor Day guide and that's in partnership with the
17 State Department of Conservation. We created this
18 great guide that gets handed out to schools. Then
19 we have 15 for Trees, which is a series of
20 downloadable classroom activities focused on arbor
21 education and urban forestry.

22 Public awareness has been a big
23 component of the Million Trees NYC campaign. This
24 lollipop tree, this green tree things has become
25 so popular that people are asking for it to put on

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2 their particular presentations they give
3 throughout the city, all of our partners and stuff
4 like that. Tree-cago actually wanted to know if
5 we had it trademarked and I was tempted to say yes
6 so we can charge them for it. But I think we'll
7 say that flattery is copying.

8 But the PSA has been in community
9 newspapers, bus shelters, subway stations. And in
10 next spring our public education campaign will be
11 very action orientated, inviting all New Yorkers
12 to plant, register their trees and then water the
13 trees. To further highlight the initiative Mayor
14 Bloomberg declared April 2008 Million Trees month.
15 We basically recreated Arbor Day and we were out
16 in Macuren Park in Brooklyn. That was sponsored
17 by BNP Paraba. We did a huge celebration out in
18 that part of the city, which was quite
19 spectacular.

20 Another component that we really
21 want to focus on is public policy. What do I mean
22 by public policy? Even though we have a new
23 zoning ordinance that does a lot for trees, we can
24 go further. We need to explore opportunities,
25 bring additional state and federal resources to

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2 the program. We also have been examining tree
3 protection ordinances that other cities have.
4 Atlanta, Washington, D.C. and Chicago offer some
5 best practices for these ordinances that might be
6 introduced here.

7 Then we're also looking at more
8 goals and PlaNYC and how we can sort of
9 interconnect Million Trees with the
10 administration's goal and also with City Council
11 goals. Another bright spot, I will have to say
12 specifically in the economic climate that we're
13 working in is our amazing partnership with the
14 Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and our
15 private fundraising goals. This is where the
16 public/private partnership really, really works.
17 This is where in a lot of public/private
18 partnerships things fall apart. I think we've
19 really have a spectacular model on how to make it
20 happen.

21 We had a goal of raising \$35
22 million to support non Parks tree planting
23 throughout the city. And so far today we have
24 raised over \$18 million in foundation, corporate
25 and individual funds for this particular project.

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2 Our major donors are Bloomberg philanthropies,
3 David Rockefeller, Toyota, The Home Depot
4 Foundation. And I will have to note The Home
5 Depot Foundation is part of that particular grant.
6 It's a \$1.5 million three year grant. We have
7 five \$20,000 grants that we'll be giving out to
8 community groups to promote tree planting. Then
9 we have over \$100,000 to give out to numerous
10 smaller groups for tree planting opportunities.

11 We also have BNP Paraba who I said
12 earlier is doing the Million Tree month and
13 American Express who is doing our tree giveaways.
14 Basically we're giving away over 1,200 trees free
15 in conjunction with the green markets to residents
16 of New York City. All they have to do is a sign a
17 little adoption form and then register the trees
18 once they plant them. Timberland is also a big
19 sponsor and Jet Blue, which is New York City's
20 home town airline.

21 Another big bright spot is
22 individual giving, which this comes into the web
23 site. We have our galas and we sell trees. We've
24 raised over \$1 million and basically people just
25 saying I want to buy a tree to commemorate

1
2 someone, something or when Bette shakes them down
3 at our Hoolaween event or something like that. So
4 we've raised over \$1 million toward that
5 particular program.

6 In closing I'd just like to say
7 that it's been a highlight of my career working
8 with the folks at the Parks Department and the
9 Mayor's office here. I think City Council and
10 everyone should be really proud of this particular
11 program. It's one that, around the world, is
12 being looked at. Yes, there are a lot of other
13 tree planting programs but the private and sort of
14 the heart felt pouring of money from just
15 individuals, corporations and foundations towards
16 this particular program is really not happened
17 before. I think it's because we put together a
18 great program. People see that it's making a
19 different. With the Parks Department, the amount
20 of trees that they've been able to get in the
21 ground. People actually see stuff happening and I
22 think they're more willing to support it.

23 I think it all started with PlaNYC
24 which I can't give Rohit big enough kudos on; on
25 how important that particular plan was in moving

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2 New York City forward. So I really appreciate you
3 allowing me to speak in front of you today and
4 thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Thank you.

6 We've been joined by Council Member Helen Sears
7 from Queens. Thank you. That was very in-depth.
8 Who knew we could find that much out about trees.

9 MR. AGGARWALA: And we only
10 scratched the surface.

11 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Well thank you
12 for just scratching. I just have a few questions
13 in no particular order; just as I wrote notes so
14 whomever can jump in. What type of outreach is
15 done in particular to the residents or the
16 community in which trees are planted in terms of
17 how to preserve them? And what I'm thinking in
18 particular is that when we have spoken in the pas
19 about trees, about not letting dogs go to the
20 bathroom on the tree itself, kids not rocking it.
21 What type of education are we doing for the
22 residents to get them to buy into these new trees?

23 MR. AGGARWALA: First and foremost,
24 every new tree has a tree tag on it that says one
25 in a million, which is one of the slogans of the

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2 campaign. On that tree tag are some of the basic
3 tree care practices that we hope every homeowner,
4 building owner or apartment dweller will adopt and
5 employ on that particular tree.

6 As I mentioned in the testimony, we
7 are focusing on tree stewardship. It is one of
8 the keys to the long term success of the project.
9 We have had training programs for block
10 associations for other groups that have expressed
11 interest in it. And we're hoping to formalize
12 that so that we have training available at the
13 public gardens and we have field training that is
14 out in the field for individuals and block
15 associations to get them enrolled and involved in
16 caring for these trees. Because truthfully they
17 need some tender loving care by local people in
18 order to really survive.

19 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: What role, if
20 any, are we building into the stewardship and the
21 education to involve youth and young people in
22 this?

23 MR. AGGARWALA: That again is one
24 of the focuses of the initiative. Drew mentioned
25 some of the programs that the New York Restoration

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2 Project has put together. We in the Parks
3 Department also have our natural classrooms
4 curricula that the urban park rangers delivered.
5 They have added a Million Trees component to that
6 which they deliver to about 5,000 school kids each
7 year. Our Green Apple Core is also working in
8 schools within the Trees for Public Health
9 neighborhoods to deliver environmental education.

10 Other partners like the City Parks
11 Foundation, Children for Children are also
12 involved in developing what we think is going to
13 be a very comprehensive, innovative and broad
14 reaching. And Trees New York as well. I'm sorry
15 I forgot to mention them, also involved in the
16 education campaign. So it's something that is
17 growing. We're not quite where we want to be yet
18 but we think that within a couple of years many
19 New York City school kids are going to be enrolled
20 in the Million Trees Campaign. Drew do you want
21 to add anything to that?

22 MR. BECHER: Yes. I would just
23 like to say that the New York City Housing
24 Authority, before we plant there we actually meet
25 with residents association, the resident councils

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2 and talk to them on what we're going to do. They
3 actually play an active role in it. And then
4 where we've really, really planted a lot like in
5 east Harlem, we started the Tree Guardian Program.
6 Basically it's interested residents and a lot of
7 them come from the community gardeners that they
8 have. They are working to help guard those trees.

9 One thing that's really worked ins
10 New York City Housing Authority has actually fixed
11 all of their outdoor spigots at every place where
12 we plant trees. Therefore we give them free hoses
13 from The Home Depot and stuff like that and
14 they're able to plant trees. They've been out
15 with our corporate partners helping planting trees
16 that day. It's become a great public/private
17 partnership on the New York City Housing Authority
18 side.

19 I'd like to say it's amazing.
20 We've had very little tree vandalism in any of the
21 New York City Housing Authority properties. We
22 were actually out in Sheepshead Bay. There was a
23 rap video put on line thanking New York City and
24 Bette Midler for planting trees in Sheepshead Bay,
25 which is quite amazing that someone would take the

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2 time out in order to do something like that.

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CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Great. How are locations for trees found? For example, if I'm a homeowner and I am not interested in a tree in front of my home, do I have a say in that or is it just we're going to tell you where the trees go.

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MS. WATT: I think it's important to keep in mind one of the core elements of PlaNYC and Mayor Bloomberg's vision for New York is that trees are really a right and not just a luxury, not an environmental luxury. We've adopted that really whole heartedly because the benefits accrue to everybody not just the homeowners. So when we go to a neighborhood and we look at a block, we figure out every single place a tree could go. Because the benefits that we're going to bring go beyond what we're doing on that block and certainly beyond the front door of the homeowner.

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So we go and we green all the right of way and not just where people want them skipping or they don't want them again. That's because it's a collective benefit for all. And that's our principle for selecting right of way

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2 greening opportunities as I mentioned, we're
3 looking at areas first that have the lowest tree
4 canopy and some of the highest health burdens.
5 But our plan is over the ten years, by 2017, to
6 apply that approach to every neighborhood. In the
7 outer years we'll be going to neighborhoods that
8 are already significantly green. Right now we're
9 focusing on areas that really do not have as much
10 resource as other places in the city.

11 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: And in that
12 process, I'm sorry, is communication or education
13 done with the homeowner as well as in--just one
14 example that comes to my mind as well as the local
15 Council Members. Who then become inundated with
16 phone calls and letters that I'm getting a tree
17 that I don't want or feeling like they're being
18 put upon.

19 MS. WATT: We've certainly had a
20 lot more dialogue with elected officials and their
21 staff as well as homeowners. We have letters that
22 go out that communicate the benefits of trees to
23 everybody. And we're just beginning to develop
24 those into multiple languages so that we can have
25 something on file to be able to communicate to

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2 people for whom English is not their first
3 language.

4 But it is an increased dialogue
5 which in a way we view as beneficial because the
6 more people that we get to help educate about the
7 benefits of trees, the better we can do our job.

8 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: What are the
9 realistic expectations in terms of the Million
10 Tree and going forward given the current economic
11 status of the city? Everybody looks...

12 MR. AGGARWALA: The fact is as we
13 all know, we are facing a very serious budget
14 situation. We have, in fact over the last year
15 and a half, across the administration have taken
16 that into consideration in several sets of cuts as
17 you are all as well aware as I am. In the most
18 recent set, particularly in the capital stretch
19 out, PlaNYC initiatives were effected. But we
20 jointly made the decision that it would be better
21 to take longer stretch outs in some programs in
22 order to keep this one whole.

23 My personal goal, you never know
24 exactly what the future of this economy will hold
25 or whatever, but I think we are in fact committed

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2 to getting this program done on time because it is
3 such an important program. The fact is as Fiona
4 points out, we do not believe that trees are a
5 luxury. We believe that they are a highly cost
6 effective, critical piece of infrastructure, of
7 green infrastructure for our city. So it doesn't
8 make sense to say it's just a frill so we'll
9 postpone that when we don't actually believe it's
10 a frill. We believe they're really important so
11 that's why this is a truly a priority among all
12 the PlaNYC initiatives.

13 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: I think that's
14 obvious but the reality is we're looking to close
15 senior centers in NYCHA facilities, we're looking
16 to cut down in Parks Department itself. So there
17 are things that because of the economy, that are
18 going to have to suffer that are equally as
19 important. In no way to do we think it's a frill
20 but I think we have to be realistic in terms of
21 where we actually want to be versus where we can
22 be due to the economic restraints that we're under
23 right now.

24 MR. AGGARWALA: Certainly we have
25 to be responsible. We have to keep things in

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2 proportion. It is one of the reasons that PlaNYC
3 has been bearing its full burden in terms of
4 budgetary changes. But as I say, among all of the
5 PlaNYC initiatives, among all of the Parks
6 components PlaNYC, among other Parks initiatives,
7 I think we can say we see this as being one of the
8 most important to defend as long as possible.

9 I do just want to point out, of
10 course the bulk of the investment in the Million
11 Trees program is on the capital side rather than
12 on the operating side. So some of the examples
13 that I think often as put up as being the...

14 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Exactly.

15 MR. AGGARWALA: Trade offs are not
16 necessarily true one for one trade offs because we
17 definitely can't fund a senior center's operating
18 cost with planting fewer trees. In any case, I
19 think it is reasonable to think certainly that we
20 will complete on time by 2017 and at least at the
21 moment we are committed too being on schedule in
22 the interim years as well.

23 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: How many jobs
24 have been generated by the Million Trees?

25 MR. KAVANAGH: In preparation for

1
2 this hearing we started trying to calculate that.
3 We have not come up with a definitive number yet.
4 We do know we hired at least 80 people in the
5 Parks Department, specifically for Million Tree
6 related functions. We started the Million Trees
7 training program which is 32 young people who have
8 joined us just last week to get started on a track
9 towards green collar jobs.

10 We know that there are more
11 contractors and more people working for
12 contractors on Million Trees related program but
13 we haven't calculated that impact yet.

14 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Okay. When
15 you get it just give us the breakdown. That will
16 be helpful.

17 MR. KAVANAGH: I just wanted to add
18 to what Rohit said. Of course we have to be
19 balanced and responsible in managing whatever cuts
20 fall to the city as a result of the economic
21 crisis. And on the capital side we have done it
22 in a way that we are still going to meet the goal.
23 On the expense side, we have submitted plans that
24 have been accepted that meets our targets, as
25 every other city agency. But we have spared the

1
2 tree maintenance budget from any cuts at this
3 time. Because we recognize that maintenance was
4 one of the questions that was raised when Million
5 Trees was announced. If we don't maintain them
6 going forward we're going to lose a lot of the
7 support that we've gained so far in communities
8 all over New York.

9 MR. BECHER: I'd also like to point
10 out that a lot of the operating side is actually
11 picked up by the private sector, which is the
12 money that the Mayor's Fund and the New York
13 Restoration Project has actually raised to go for
14 the education programs, all the community
15 outreach, that type of stuff. That is funded by
16 those corporations and foundations that I listed
17 as well. They feel this program is so important
18 that their multi-year commitments will remain
19 intact.

20 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Great. Thank
21 you. Before I turn it over to Council Member
22 James who has questions, I would emphasize again
23 the importance of keeping in contact with the
24 local elected officials. Especially those of us
25 that have a big green following who would be

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2 likely candidates to kind of watch over trees, do
3 the educational aspect of it especially as we look
4 into these neighborhoods that as you said have the
5 lower canopy and the higher asthma rates. It's a
6 natural relationship that we can be very helpful
7 with. Thank you. Council Member James.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.
9 Rohit, I know you've been working with some civic
10 groups in my district. To that extent this
11 hearing is very timely. In fact there is a
12 meeting tonight of the Fort Green Association and
13 the Clinton Hill Association regarding a greening
14 initiative the my district has taken on. Are you
15 aware of that meeting tonight at 7:30?

16 MR. AGGARWALA: I am not.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: I guess I'll
18 talk to you off record with regards to I'll be
19 making a presentation on your behalf this evening.

20 MR. AGGARWALA: Thanks very much.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Following up
22 on the Chair's questions with respect to our
23 economy, the 81 new staff members for jobs related
24 to climbing, pruners, foresters and analysts and
25 construction project manager, landscape architects

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2 and gardeners. Those positions are still in the
3 budget? They're okay going forward?

4 MR. AGGARWALA: Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: The \$5.6
6 million in fiscal year 2008, is that still in the
7 budget?

8 MR. AGGARWALA: Yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Going
10 forward is the pruning program still in the
11 budget?

12 MR. AGGARWALA: Yes, it is. It's
13 part of the \$5.6 million.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: That's a
15 very positive program in my district. And the
16 \$400 million over the next ten years, at this
17 point is that still safe?

18 MR. AGGARWALA: Yes. We have
19 rearranged specific funding from year to year over
20 the ten year period. But we will make all of our
21 tree planting goals and we will make the
22 reforestation goals at well.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: To the
24 extent that there is a modification at some point
25 in time, the private sector will step in and

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2 supplant the budget or how will that?

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MR. BECHER: We have a strategic plan that goes along with this. Actually we revisit it about every quarter. I'm sure that that will be on the agenda and we will make those corrections as needed. If something happens, I think that we would be willing to go out and expand our fundraising in order to try to cover this cost. We believe that much in this program.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Is there a district specific map or progress report for each Council Member with regards to the trees in their districts?

MR. AGGARWALA: We can provide that, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Mr. Becher can we go to that map that was in your presentation? Because I noticed that my district was not represented. Can we just go to that map? All politics are local. Brooklyn I represent right near Manhattan, so I guess all of the different colors--what do the different colors represent?

MR. BECHER: They are different

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2 types of sites that are planting on New York City
3 Housing Authority. They are different types of
4 sites. We've really focused ourselves in basi--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Manhattan.

6 MR. BECHER: It's actually in our
7 Trees for Public Health neighborhood, which that
8 is mostly East Harlem and East New York.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: East New
10 York and further out but there's nothing downtown
11 where I'm located.

12 MR. BECHER: Right. What we've
13 done is we've been focused on the Trees for Public
14 Health neighborhoods and we're working with the
15 Parks Department to figure out basically the next
16 round of targeted planting opportunities.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: In that
18 downtown Brooklyn we have a high rate of asthma.
19 I'm along the asthma belt, the BQE. Right near
20 the asthma belt is a significant number of public
21 housing. All of the children suffer from asthma;
22 I shouldn't say all. At least 70% to 80% of the
23 children suffer from asthma and its because of its
24 close proximity to the BQE I believe and
25 industrial sites, I believe. So it's critically

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important that we focus on downtown Brooklyn.

I know you have a model. I believe the model was called Stratum. Did that model, sophisticated computer program called Stratum did it indicate that in fact downtown Brooklyn was under what's the word that I'm looking for?

MR. KAVANAGH: Under canopy?

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Under treed, is that a word?

MR. AGGARWALA: It can be.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Under deforested [phonetic]. Is that a word, I just made it up.

MR. KAVANAGH: Under canopied.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Under canopied, that's a good word, I like that.

MR. AGGARWALA: Under canopied, yes. Yes, the street tree census from 2005 and 2006 documented the number of trees on the streets in every community board in the city. We know which community boards have high stocking levels, which have the lower stocking levels. Our strategy is to tackle the lowest first, in particularly those with low canopy and high

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2 respiratory disease burdens. That's the whole
3 premise of the Trees for Public Health
4 neighborhoods. We had to start somewhere and that
5 seemed to be the best place to start.

6 We will be fully stocking streets
7 in every community board, that's the goal of
8 Million Trees NYC. So if we're not there in force
9 yet, we will be soon.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: I believe
11 most of my community boards, we did our own
12 inventory. They submitted requests to the Parks
13 Department and Mike is shaking his head. We
14 actually have identified sites, particularly in
15 Community Board 2 and if I'm not mistaken in
16 Community Board 9 in Crown Heights and in downtown
17 Brooklyn and we provided them to your office. So
18 we've already done the work. We have a team of
19 volunteers that have already identified where
20 trees can be located. So I would urge you to work
21 with the community boards as well as the civic
22 associations.

23 My last question is--and I forgot
24 my question. It was a good question but I forgot
25 it. Thank you for all that you're doing.

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2 MR. BECHER: We are actually
3 meeting with the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership in
4 Friday.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Yes, Joe
6 Chan.

7 MR. BECHER: To go through this
8 stuff, yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Yes. So Joe
10 works with us as well but Council Member Letitia
11 James works better than anyone. So Joe is good
12 but I'm sort of on the ground, Joe is up on those
13 high towers in downtown Brooklyn. I'm down on the
14 ground so I would urge you to contact my office
15 because we have all of the data and have
16 identified all of the locations in downtown
17 Brooklyn. I'm particularly focused on the
18 residents of public housing, Engers Soll, Whitman,
19 Farragut, Atlantic Terminal and Lafayette Gardens.

20 MR. BECHER: We actually surveyed a
21 lot of those particular properties with New York
22 City Housing Authority and they're on our list.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you
24 very much.

25 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Thank you.

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2 Council Member Sears.

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COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: Thank you very much. Thank you Madam Chair. Sorry I was late but I was at another hearing across the street so we kind of play musical chairs. I thank you much for being here and your testimony on the trees is very good. I have one or two questions.

We're losing many trees in Queens that are removed and we're left with the stumps, which means those trees can not be replanted. So my concern is that for as many trees as you're planting and it's very important, how can we combine that so that we also are able to replace the trees that are so critical. Perhaps some private funding could be placed with the stump removal. In other words the stump removal, which is about three to five years behind, if someone that could be linked to the planting of these trees, you probably would be able to have more than what you're planning on. Because if the trees are not replaced and the amount that you're doing is really suffering through attrition and that's not a good thing.

MS. WATT: Right. Actually with

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2 PlaNYC we are removing the stumps now. Two years
3 ago what you say would have reflected better, the
4 funding situation. But we are removing stumps
5 when we plant trees with PlaNYC funding. So
6 stumps up to 24 inches in diameter get removed
7 automatically when we replant a new tree. And we
8 have an additional \$2 million for stump removal
9 for larger stumps, in addition. So with the new
10 tree planting program, as I mentioned in my
11 testimony, that enables us to get rid of the back
12 log of stumps and replacement of trees is vital
13 for the plan to achieve full stock.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: So in your
15 site location for planting of these trees, do you
16 also look at the replacement of trees? Is that
17 part of it?

18 MS. WATT: We view a stump to be no
19 different than a empty sidewalk pit or an area
20 where there simply is no tree; it's a planting
21 opportunity.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: Fine.
23 Secondly would be able to have a map for our
24 districts to see where you are locating the trees?
25 I think that would be very helpful because the

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2 chair has point out I think that the council
3 members are such a resource for you. I always
4 have people coming in reporting tons of things so
5 constituents are the best reporters to help with
6 what you do.

7 MR. AGGARWALA: Yes, we will
8 provide those maps.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: Thank you, I
10 appreciate that. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Thank you very
12 much. Thank you for that in depth assessment on
13 trees. Mike the breakdown by Council District
14 would be great. Thank you very much.

15 MR. AGGARWALA: You're welcome.

16 MR. KAVANAGH: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Our next panel
18 is Erika Simenon. Did I say that correctly? She
19 said right ballpark. Robin Simmen, did I do that?
20 Sheela Fienberg, I can do that one and Susan
21 Goberman. As soon as you get settled you can get
22 started.

23 ERIKA SVENDSEN: Thank you
24 Councilwoman Foster and your committee for the
25 opportunity to speak this morning. My name is

1
2 Erika Svendsen. I'm a research scientist with the
3 United States Forest Service. The Forest Service
4 has research scientists active partners in cities
5 throughout the country but here in New York City
6 we do things a little differently. We have a
7 direct partnership with the New York City
8 Department of Parks and Recreation through a MOU
9 established in 2006, which led to the creation of
10 a New York City Urban Fields Station. As such, we
11 are currently working with the Department and key
12 citywide non-profits, most especially the New York
13 Restoration Project, to respond to a variety of
14 Million Trees NYC and PlaNYC related research
15 requests.

16 Since the launch of the Million
17 Trees initiative, the Forest Service scientists as
18 well as its research partners have been focused
19 primarily on engaged through the Million Trees
20 advisory board and co-chair along with
21 representatives from the Parks Department and NYRP
22 on the research and evaluation sub-committee. The
23 goals of the committee are really to support an
24 open network of researchers and practitioners to
25 expand our knowledge of urban forestry, to advise

1
2 in the monitoring and evaluation of the
3 effectiveness of the initiative and to ensure that
4 findings are shared widely and developed into
5 program applications.

6 Our committee is comprised of some
7 of the leading academics and local government and
8 non-profit researchers in our city. To date, our
9 group has already established an online research
10 bibliography on urban forestry, identified core
11 research goals and objectives. We've prepared
12 data sets for public use and conducted research.
13 We raised resources for research projects and
14 interns and we expect to support a citywide
15 research symposium next year.

16 We've also established some new
17 relationships with universities in this city and
18 beyond. I just wanted to highlight a few of our
19 key research projects that I thought might be of
20 interest to your committee. In order to track the
21 changes made by planting trees, we are going to
22 continue a New York City Urban Tree Canopy
23 analysis which was conducted for PlaNYC with the
24 Parks Department and the Natural Resources Group.
25 That's going to help us look at the long term

1
2 change in canopy cover across our city and to look
3 at that across property jurisdictions. Because if
4 you're planting on obviously both public and
5 private land.

6 In an effort to establish tree
7 planting priorities that incorporate issues such
8 as your committee might have in terms of
9 environmental justice, public health, stewardship
10 the Parks Department and the New York Restoration
11 Project have partnered with us and the University
12 of Vermont to develop a model that can help take
13 in the information that you all were just talking
14 about. About where you know your constituents
15 want trees, where you know there are tree planting
16 opportunities. But now we can develop a model to
17 collect that data and you can basically plug in
18 any sort of variable you want based on what the
19 needs are per neighborhood.

20 In order to harness the capacity of
21 New York City residents to care for trees, we will
22 continue our Stu Map project which is a project
23 that assess the capacity, emission and networks of
24 civic environmental groups throughout the City of
25 New York. So far we've collected data on 680

1
2 groups citywide and that's been made available
3 online through maps and report back through our
4 partners. We will continue to measure that
5 information and gather more information about the
6 thousands of civic organizations that are out
7 there, not just planting trees but caring for the
8 land in New York.

9 In an attempt to decrease street
10 tree mortality, a young street mortality study has
11 already been completed on a sample of over 10,000
12 street trees located in neighborhoods throughout
13 the city. In order to evaluate the impact of
14 outdoor urban experience on ecological literacy,
15 we conducted a pilot study in the Bronx this
16 summer with youth on a paid summer urban forestry
17 internship to look at changes in environmental
18 awareness, attitudes and stewardship behaviors.
19 This we think could be a model to help seed some
20 of the discussions about green collar job
21 opportunities.

22 And the last two, in an effort to
23 calculate both the contribution of existing trees
24 to our overall carbon footprint as well as
25 reductions that can be expected by this

1
2 initiative, a carbon plus calculator is being
3 developed specifically for New York City. We're
4 doing that with the Parks Department and in
5 consultation with the Mayor's Office of Long Term
6 Sustainability and Planning.

7 Finally to better understand the
8 contribution of the street tree canopies on
9 capturing storm water, someone mentioned the
10 Stratum model. Stratum is one of the many models
11 that the Forest Service has tried to develop over
12 the years for cities to try and measure ecosystem
13 benefits. We used this one recently to look at
14 how the proposed plantings would actually help us
15 capture storm water benefits. What we found and
16 this was driven by the Parks Department
17 researchers, what they found basically was that
18 the Million Trees planting could intercept an
19 additional 110 million gallons of rainfall per
20 year. That's significant.

21 Before I just close, I just want to
22 tell you what's in the works. I hope that you add
23 to what's in the works in terms of research ideas
24 and questions. Our committee has been exploring
25 the notion of creating a project that looks at

1
2 real estate values and urban trees, participating
3 with the Department of Public Health, community
4 air survey to take a really close look at that
5 connection between air quality and trees, to look
6 more at the water quality impacts of tree
7 planting. Also looking at the connection between
8 well being and urban canopy and exploring the
9 impact that we might have with creating economic
10 development models to support green jobs in our
11 neighborhoods.

12 I just want to say one thing.
13 We're involved with a number of different projects
14 like this in many cities throughout the country.
15 I will say without question that this particular
16 initiative is the one that we see that is the
17 shining star in terms of partnerships, passion,
18 commitment and the expertise. This is all about
19 leveraging so it's not just about that tree; it's
20 about the branches that have been stemming out
21 from the trees. It's astounding. We really are
22 honored to be a part of it and to learn from it
23 and to take it back to other cities.

24 In the future we hope that this
25 initiative as well as the research that it has

1
2 inspired--because it really has attracted a number
3 of different researchers from different parts of
4 the country wanting to get involved, they want
5 data. We hope that this project will continue to
6 receive full support of local decision makers and
7 policy makers.

8 It's important to note that not
9 only does the Million Trees campaign support the
10 quality of life for New Yorkers but it also serves
11 as an unprecedented, we really see this as an
12 unprecedented research and educational
13 opportunity. Scientists and policy makers have
14 much to learn from the research, monitoring and
15 evaluation associated with what we consider a very
16 unique urban experience, again because it far out
17 passes anything that we've ever seen. Again,
18 we're excited to be a small part of it. Thank
19 you.

20 ROBIN SIMMEN: Good morning Chair
21 Forster and members of the Parks Committee. I'm
22 Robin Simmen. I'm Director of Greenbridge, which
23 is the community environmental horticulture
24 program of Brooklyn Botanic Garden. On behalf of
25 Scot Medbury, the president of Brooklyn Botanic

1
2 Garden and the leadership of Commissioner Adrian
3 Benope, we'd like to thank you for the opportunity
4 to discuss Million Trees New York City.

5 Brooklyn Botanic Garden has long
6 been an advocate of planting trees in New York
7 City and educating people about their proper care
8 and their many, many benefits, which we've already
9 heard about today. Working with Trees New York
10 and the Parks Department, we taught hundreds of
11 people how to become certified citizen tree
12 pruners. We also continually offer workshops on
13 street tree bed gardening. We think that this is
14 a unique opportunity that street trees offer the
15 citizens of New York to actually have a piece on
16 the street that they can claim, that they can
17 engage in horticultural activity with and they can
18 reap the benefits of that gardening experience.

19 So these workshops focus on correct
20 watering techniques, how to really put the health
21 of the tree first and to not raise the level of
22 the soil in the tree bed, which is one of the
23 biggest problems that we encounter by well meaning
24 folks out there. We prefer the term tree bed to
25 tree pits because gardening and beds encourages

1
2 New Yorkers to take a more caring attitude towards
3 our trees. We found this to be very successful,
4 to think about that as a garden bed rather than a
5 pit that you throw your garbage into.

6 Brooklyn Botanic Garden has been a
7 strong support of Million Trees New York City
8 since its inception and has for several years
9 advised the Parks Department and New York
10 Restoration Project to develop a citywide
11 stewardship program for ensuring the long term
12 survival of the trees planted. Currently I'm a
13 co-chair of the Million Trees New York City
14 community outreach and stewardship advisory sub-
15 committee, which includes representatives from
16 Trees New York USDA Forest Service, Partnership
17 for Parks, NYCHA and the Arbor Day Project among
18 others. We recently completed a strategic plan
19 for helping parks and NYRP develop a citywide
20 Million Trees New York City stewardship program
21 with the goal of empowering New York City
22 residents to adopt and care for the trees that are
23 planted.

24 Judging the Greenest Block in
25 Brooklyn contest for 14 years, Brooklyn Botanic

1
2 Garden knows how important trees are for community
3 health, both physical and psychological. Last
4 year in addition to awards for the best
5 residential and the best commercial blocks. We
6 initiated a new award for best street tree beds
7 and it has been really exciting to see how eagerly
8 people have gotten competitively engaged to win
9 this award.

10 Over the years we've seen blocks
11 and neighborhoods completely transformed by people
12 planting and caring for street trees. For
13 example, visit Macon Street in Bedford Stuyvesant
14 where you can now see jewel like gardens
15 surrounding trees on blocks that were once naked
16 and baking in the summer sun. Street trees bring
17 people out of their individual yards and into a
18 collective effort to care for something that
19 improves everyone's lives. Every neighborhood
20 deserves a chance to bring clean air, listen to
21 the birds sing and enjoy the shade on a hot summer
22 day.

23 On behalf of Brooklyn Botanic
24 Garden we applaud the launch of Million Trees New
25 York City. We will work very hard to ensure its

1
2 success in making New York City a greener,
3 healthier place to live.

4 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Thank you and
5 I'm going to adopt the term tree beds. I like
6 that. Thank you.

7 SUSAN GOOBERMAN: Good morning. My
8 name is Susan Goberman. I'm the Executive
9 Director of Trees New York. In the mid 1970s the
10 New York City Street Tree Consortium was
11 established as a volunteer response to the city's
12 cut backs in tree related community services. The
13 founding individuals represented over 20 public
14 and private groups including the Botanical
15 Gardens, Council on the Environment, the Citizens
16 Committee, the Association for a Better New York
17 and the New York City Planning Commission.

18 In 1992 we changed our name to
19 Trees New York in an effort to publicly convey our
20 mission in its entirety. To plant, preserve and
21 protect New York City's urban forest through
22 education, active citizen participation and
23 advocacy. For many years Trees New York was the
24 only city organization dedicated exclusively to
25 urban forestry. In recent years growing concern

1
2 for the environment has inspired many governmental
3 and community based environmental initiatives such
4 as the Million Trees Campaign. We now have the
5 opportunity to partner with groups that share our
6 vision and we're able to provide guidance to the
7 new organizations.

8 Trees New York comprehensive
9 stewardship program, the Citizen Pruner Tree Care
10 course was one of the first urban forestry programs
11 in the country. So far, in our 35 year history
12 Trees New York has trained over 11,000 New York
13 City residents to care for their own city trees on
14 their streets, in front of their houses and in
15 their neighborhoods. This course is important
16 because the people actually pay their own money to
17 participate. They are interested and they take
18 their new found knowledge seriously.

19 The success of the Citizen Tree
20 Care course has reached beyond our city's borders
21 and has served as a model for other volunteer care
22 training programs in cities across the nation.
23 Our young citizen pruner course, which was founded
24 in 1994, also serves as a model for youth
25 environmental literacy programs across the United

1
2 States. This summer, as Erika mentioned, we
3 trained 19 youngsters in the Bronx and hopefully
4 their stewardship activities will encourage others
5 in their neighborhood.

6 Our arduous job training program
7 established over 11 years ago was one of the first
8 green job training programs in the country. The
9 intensive seven-week tree climbing course is
10 designed to provide participants with work
11 readiness skills while learning professional tree
12 climbing techniques. This program has a high job
13 placement rate. Our graduates have worked with
14 the city, in the private sector and as small
15 business owners.

16 We've partnered with many groups
17 including the sustainability Bronx Best program
18 and the Parks Department Green Apple Core. In
19 2008 the New York City Parks and Recreation
20 Department, Parks Opportunity program recognized
21 Trees New York as their best new partnership.

22 Since 2005 we planted over 2,500
23 trees on New York City Housing Authority
24 properties, for the New York State Energy Research
25 and Development Authority, for the related

1
2 companies, Bronx Gateway Project. Over 400 trees
3 to replace trees lost to the Asian longhorn
4 beetle, which is an invasive pest which has caused
5 the destruction of thousands of trees within the
6 city. And we've planted trees on school
7 properties for our Schools and Trees program. And
8 we have also planted trees in the public health
9 neighborhoods under Trees New York's Health
10 Communities program.

11 For 35 years Trees New York has
12 worked to advocate for New York City's urban
13 forest. In April 2007, Mayor Michael Bloomberg
14 announced the sustainable PlaNYC 20/30. Trees New
15 York is a member of the Million Trees advisory
16 committee and many sub-committees. We are very
17 pleased to be part of the New York City Million
18 Trees effort. Thank you.

19 SHEELA FEINBERG: Hi, good morning
20 and thank you for holding this hearing. My name
21 is Sheela Feinberg. I'm the Director of
22 Government and External Relations at New Yorkers
23 for Parks. The only independent watch dog for all
24 the city's parks, beaches and playgrounds. For a
25 hundred years we've worked to ensure greener,

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safer, cleaner parks for all New Yorkers.

As a member of the initiative's advisory board, New Yorkers for Parks continues to support Million Trees NYC, a critical component of the Mayor's PlaNYC campaign to make the city more environmentally sustainable. With the goal of attaining a 30% urban tree canopy by 2030 this program recognizes the important role of trees in improving air quality, public health and the overall quality of life in New York City.

Tree leaves literally filter pollution and help to reduce the city's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, studies have shown that tree plantings are an effective mitigation strategy in combating the urban heat island effect. Their ability to cool the air will help to reduce residents' reliance on air conditioning and ultimately less on energy demand.

We commend the Mayor and the Parks Department and NYRP for their commitment to this initiative. With more than 100,000 trees planted in the first year of the project, we congratulate the administration on its early progress.

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2 The wide ranging benefits of a
3 million new trees can only be ensured through
4 adequate maintenance funding. We're New Yorkers
5 for Parks we always have to waive the maintenance
6 flag. Given the challenges posed by the current
7 economic crisis and the fact that the Mayor has
8 already begun budget cuts, we echo your concerns
9 that you already expressed earlier. It is
10 essential that maintenance funding for forestry
11 remain a strong commitment of the City Council and
12 the Parks Department. Staff to prune, weed and
13 water the trees is critical to their long term
14 survival and indeed to this ground breaking
15 initiative.

16 Understanding the environmental
17 health and economic benefits of a vibrant urban
18 forest, New Yorkers for Parks renews its support
19 of Million Trees NYC.

20 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Thank you.
21 Thank you very much. Our last panel is Dawn
22 Henning, Kate Zidar, Rob Crauderueff and Paul
23 Mankiewicz. Thank you. You can get started.

24 DAWN HENNING: Hi, everyone. My
25 name is Dawn Henning and I work at Youth

1
2 Ministries for Peace and Justice as an
3 Environmental Planner. I want to thank you for
4 this opportunity. I just want to first start with
5 the idea that Million Trees is ahead of target,
6 which is a great thing. But at the same time I
7 think we're losing some opportunities that won't
8 be able to be gained after the trees are planted.

9 One of these would be related to
10 storm water capture. We talk about tree
11 interception and the larger tree pits as being
12 able to capture storm water. There's an
13 opportunity to even capture more storm water from
14 the streets and sidewalks. The reason that this
15 would be very beneficial is that combined sewer
16 overflows that occur all over New York City within
17 the New York City waters is an opportunity for us
18 to prevent this problem by capturing storm water
19 from the streets and sidewalks.

20 At Youth Ministries we're part of a
21 block planting project. We're looking at
22 redesigning tree pits to capture more storm water
23 through simple curb cuts that allow the water from
24 the streets to get into the tree pits. We want to
25 use this as an opportunity.

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2 Another thing I feel is missing is
3 also the outreach. I agree with you, Ms. Foster,
4 about the fact that residents are not properly
5 informed about block planting projects within
6 their neighborhood. They feel a little disengaged
7 from the process. I feel that they would more
8 likely provide more maintenance and stewardship of
9 these trees if they were informed and involved in
10 the--I'm sorry. I get really nervous so I think
11 I'm just going to pass it on. I'll just get this
12 around another way. Thank you. Sorry.

13 KATE ZIDAR: Hi, I'm Kate Zidar and
14 I'm the Director of an organization in Fort Green
15 Brooklyn called Habana Works. We're involved in
16 green building, environmental education and
17 creative gardening, production gardening as well.
18 I will pick up on the storm water management theme
19 here.

20 The ability of street trees to
21 intercept storm water through their canopy is only
22 a fraction of what their potential is. Street
23 trees in particular that are in the public right
24 of way at the curb's edge are mere inches away
25 from storm water that runs along the curb. It's a

1
2 real missed opportunity in terms of inter agency
3 cooperation and potential efficiencies in this
4 time of financial crisis.

5 While Million Trees is going on,
6 another arm of PlaNYC, the sustainable storm water
7 management plan is also in the drafting process.
8 Ideally these two ground breaking and the legacies
9 of PlaNYC will be more deeply integrated. I would
10 urge the Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and
11 Sustainability--I resist the urge to say PlaNYC
12 people, as well as the Council who have the
13 ability to reach across agency boundaries and
14 encourage the agencies to work together. The DEP
15 has this mandate to reduce storm water flows and
16 the Million Trees campaign which has this need for
17 long term maintenance of these street trees.

18 It's not just the long term
19 maintenance issue, it's also if street trees are
20 in drought conditions they're not providing the
21 multiple benefits that we espouse them to. They
22 are not cooling the air, they're not cleaning the
23 air. They're barely surviving and they're not
24 doing what we say they're doing. So I would
25 encourage the Council to keep on this storm water

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point. It's a money issue and it's also an
excellence issue. Are we doing what we say we're
doing?

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The other maintenance issue that I
feel is another missed opportunity is this
campaign and the Department of Sanitation.
Recently the Department of Sanitation has reduced
its budget in its compost project. Ms. Watt
highlighted earlier that one of the first things
involved in planning the street trees is preparing
the soil. We know trees need nutrition and trees
need water. We have storm water in abundance. We
also have compost in abundance. If we do not lop
off all of our leaf litter composting which is a
potential source of cheap and easy compost from
within the city itself.

Along these lines I think if the
PlaNYC in the big view has done many things. But
one of the very unique opportunities it has is to
provide this platform for interagency cooperation
and potential efficiencies in this age. So that's
all for me.

ROB CRAUDERUEFF: My name is Rob
Crauderueff. I'm Policy Director at Sustainable

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2 South Bronx. Thank you to Council Member Foster
3 and to the Parks and Recreation Committee, for the
4 opportunity to speak today with respect to the
5 Million Trees initiative. Sustainable South Bronx
6 is an environmental justice organization working
7 in the south Bronx that promotes innovative
8 economically sustainable projects that are
9 informed by community needs.

10 As an organization that has had a
11 role in the design, construction and maintenance
12 of the South Bronx Greenway, the planting of
13 hundreds of trees in Hunts Point and that runs a
14 job training program that has trained over 100 New
15 Yorkers in ecological restoration and landscaping.
16 We're supportive of the planting of a million
17 trees in New York City.

18 Without a question, it's already
19 been said that Million Trees offers many different
20 types of environmental benefits. What's important
21 to recognize also is that its potentially cost
22 effective and that's one of the key arguments for
23 the Million Trees initiative because of the
24 environmental services that trees provide. But
25 it's also important to recognize that these

1
2 environmental services are only adequately
3 provided when those trees are mature.

4 For example, the New York City
5 Department of Parks and Recreation notes that a
6 U.S. Forest Service study concluded that a large
7 healthy tree removes almost 70 times more air
8 pollution each year than a small, newly planted
9 tree. So this reinforces the importance of
10 continuing to significantly invest in maintenance.
11 It's good that the city is planning to continue to
12 provide the maintenance that they have been
13 providing.

14 It's also important that there are
15 really community based maintenance plans, that
16 it's not just a citywide maintenance plan. But to
17 assess the needs on a community by community
18 specific level. Actually the model of Trees for
19 Public Health is a good one in the sense that it
20 prioritizes areas with particular needs and
21 prioritizes the use of resources. And similarly
22 maintenance will also be provided and maintenance
23 programming could be prioritized for these areas.

24 Also there are questions about how
25 adequate is the maintenance that exists right now.

1
2 There are stories that trees are dying in the
3 summer time because there's not adequate water.
4 There could be potential design improvements for
5 the tree pits. But also to adequately and
6 comprehensively--you ask what are the maintenance
7 needs both now and as climate change comes along
8 where it gets hotter and hotter with longer and
9 longer heat waves. How will our maintenance plans
10 be prepared for our change in climate?

11 Particularly important to our
12 organization is the creation of jobs. Planting
13 and maintaining trees does create many jobs. For
14 this reason, again, it's good to hear that the
15 current budget for planning and maintaining trees
16 will be kept. In fact we have worked with Trees
17 New York for many people with significant barriers
18 to employment to get training for tree climbing
19 and tree pruning who will be place to work for the
20 Parks Department and earn a good wage. So that's
21 worth highlighting.

22 The Million Trees program
23 initiative also has a job training program that's
24 eight months long that they spoke about. We
25 encourage that if the pilot project is deemed

1
2 successful that it be able to continue. However I
3 do want to point out a couple of opportunities to
4 go further in terms of local job creation with the
5 Million Trees initiative.

6 Presently, the city typically hires
7 large contractors from outside of New York City
8 that frequently exploit an untrained immigrant
9 workforce through unfair working conditions and
10 wages that are well below prevailing wage. This
11 is a lost opportunity to use the over \$20 million
12 of annual investment in tree planting to create
13 good jobs for a local workforce. This is kind of
14 the complicated reality of how prevailing wage is
15 frequently implemented throughout the city.

16 We encourage the city and the
17 Million Trees initiative to work with agencies and
18 organizations that have the capacity to work with
19 smaller contractors to see that tree planting
20 contractors are awarded to local firms and to
21 encourage local entrepreneurship and the encourage
22 that a trained local workforce is hired to plant
23 these trees.

24 As in the Million Trees imitative
25 training program, the workforce should target

1
2 populations with barriers for employment for
3 extreme hard work. And encourage that clear
4 pathways can be created for the development of
5 these jobs. Similarly, while Green Apple Core
6 does create some local jobs, to the AmeriCorps
7 [phonetic] program they could really work
8 specifically with that program to make this a
9 feeder into training career pathways in this
10 field.

11 So in conclusion the Million Trees
12 initiative currently does bring many benefits to
13 New Yorkers but we believe the benefits both short
14 and long term could potentially be improved.

15 Thank you.

16 PAUL MANKIEWICZ: Good morning. My
17 name is Paul Mankiewicz. I have a doctorate in
18 plant biology and biophysics from the City
19 University in New York Botanical Gardens program
20 in planned sciences. I've been working with the
21 Parks Department since about the late 80s, the
22 National Resources group as well as other agencies
23 in this city to both study ecology and to re-
24 engineer some of the natural system to do work in
25 this city.

1
2 I know it's no news to you but a
3 million trees is a great number. If you take it
4 each tree having a diameter of about 35 feet, it
5 would literally be 10% of the total coverage of
6 the city itself. That would evaporate in about 3%
7 of the precipitation probably more, basically
8 going right back into the air. So it's in some
9 ways a small investment given that every 50
10 gallons a large tree would evaporate in a day is
11 the equivalent to something like ten tons of air
12 conditioning so literally enough to cool a street
13 side.

14 Every one degree drop in
15 temperature increases the efficiency of air
16 conditioners by 1%. In Europe and Asia and Japan,
17 they are literally planting trees and making park
18 lands to cool downtowns. In this case ecology is
19 probably like justice, you have to distribute
20 these trees to get the effects around to all over
21 the community boards and the Council districts you
22 had mentioned before. That's really the only way
23 to literally have the services, literally the life
24 connection that trees provide with the water cycle
25 and local environmental quality everywhere in the

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2 city.

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Again if you take a million trees and distribute them throughout the city, they're going to be about 100 feet away from each other. Obviously that's not including buildings so the density could be quite substantial and especially if you look at the areas like East New York and Brownsville, areas now that have no trees. It could greatly increase both the density and again the environmental quality altogether.

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Again, it's a good number and in very good company here with all three of these folks. Kate and Dawn are right now working on the enhanced tree [off mic]. I'll refer to my colleague from Brooklyn, from here on I'll use that term. If you catch something like a thousand gallons per tree, that's a billion gallons of water that would literally change the whole combined sewer problem.

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I have to say that Fiona Watt group at the Parks Department is doing maybe the most comprehensive look at water catchment capacity and other aspects of tree beds altogether so they will know how these things are working. There will be

1
2 more data from the Jamaica Bay work that he's
3 doing with us on basically the effects of salt and
4 the rest; it's an issue that you'd addressed
5 before.

6 It has to be incorporated, like Rob
7 and Dawn and Kate here were saying, in the forest
8 maintenance is maintained by the leaves falling
9 and the mulch actually creating the plant food for
10 the next year. We have to do that with plant beds
11 ourselves here so that's a huge issue.

12 The problem mentioned before with
13 the intensity of use including dogs on tree beds,
14 literally an inch of wood chips and mulch would
15 nullify. The dog shouldn't be there but it would
16 nullify the negative impact of the nitrogen
17 because you have carbon to absorb it. We have
18 about 2,500 tons of organic waste each day. As
19 long as Sanitation doesn't start throwing that
20 stuff away for \$100 a ton in Pennsylvania we will
21 have that as a resource to literally increase the
22 capacity of all the neighborhoods.

23 It's the right number. I think
24 it's the right development framework altogether.
25 And it could be done but we need to take what we

1
2 now consider waste materials, some of the organic
3 waste as well as the storm water and probably
4 rebuild our neighborhoods from the ground up
5 including the people living there.

6 CHAIRPERSON FOSTER: Thank you. I
7 want to see the notes Dawn and Kate because I want
8 to laugh, too. But seriously if you can just
9 update the committee on whatever you find in terms
10 of the storm water holding capacity. Thank you
11 very much. There being no one left to testify,
12 this meeting is adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Amber Gibson, 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 Amber Gibson

Date February 10, 2009 _____