



The City of New York Department of Sanitation



John J. Doherty, Commissioner

**Hearing on the FY 2014 Executive Budget
Before the New York City Council Committees on
Finance and Sanitation & Solid Waste Management**

Thursday, May 30, 2013

2:30 P.M.

City Hall – Council Chambers

Good afternoon Chair Recchia, Chair James, and members of the City Council Committees on Finance and Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. I am John Doherty, Commissioner for the New York City Department of Sanitation. With me today are Bernard Sullivan, First Deputy Commissioner for Operations, Larry Cipollina, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Financial Management, and Ron Gonen, Deputy Commissioner for Recycling and Sustainability. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on the Department's expense and capital portions of the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2014 Executive Budget.

The FY 2014 Executive Budget allocates \$1.425 billion in operating funds that will allow the Department to continue its delivery of high level core services to residents and the public without any service changes, and necessary staffing. The Department's capital portion of the FY 2014 Executive Budget is approximately \$537 million, of which \$412 million is for construction, \$87.7 million is for replacement equipment, and \$37.3 million is for technology. In addition to our ongoing capital projects that were funded in prior years, funding for new large scale Department projects in FY 2014 will include:

- Construction of the new 6/6A/8 Garage at East 25th Street;
- Demolition of the Gansevoort Street MTS; and
- Refurbishment of the West 59th Street MTS.

Long Term Planning and Sustainability

Managing the nation's largest waste stream requires innovation, excellence in performance and continuous improvement in everything we do. It's why over the next seven months we are putting forth an aggressive recycling and sustainability agenda to significantly update the Department's curbside recycling collection program which, as you know, serves more households and more high-rise, multi-family buildings than any other program in the nation. And while this is exciting for us and for the public, it also creates some challenges that will require ongoing discussions and collaboration with the Council in order to accomplish these initiatives, some of which you are already familiar. By committing to advancing our sustainable development initiatives over the next seven months, together we will transform New York City into a global model for sustainability and recycling, and create a proud legacy for the next generation of New Yorkers to build upon.

Going forward in FY 2014, we will continue our ambitious recycling and sustainability agenda that will include:

- ▶ Expanding recycling pick-ups to now include rigid plastics as per Mayor Bloomberg's announcement last month;
- ▶ Expanding organics and food scrap drop-off points at greenmarkets;
- ▶ Improving recycling diversion rates in low income areas;
- ▶ Launching this summer a new program called "e-cycleNYC" that will become the most expansive e-waste collection service provided by any city in North America at no cost to taxpayers;
- ▶ Adding more public space recycling bins in all five boroughs;
- ▶ Increasing the number of textile and used clothing drop-off sites in buildings and public spaces;
- ▶ Holding at least one SAFE Disposal event for household hazardous waste in each borough; and
- ▶ Seeking legislation to restrict the use of expanded polystyrene foam, promote separate organics collection from food establishments, and create extended producer responsibility and stewardship programs.

As you know, this month we began a voluntary pilot residential organics collection program in a portion of Staten Island District 1 where over 3,200 households were furnished special collection bins by the Department at no cost to them. We will continue this important pilot in FY 2014 and plan to expand the voluntary program to other boroughs. Studying the amount of tonnage collected and household participation rates, together with any

impediments to this program, will demonstrate to us whether we can successfully implement an organics source separation program citywide in a cost-effective way.

We'll also expand a similar pilot organics collection program that we are presently conducting in 68 public schools in Brooklyn and Manhattan, and 25 schools on Staten Island. So far the diversion percentage in the participating schools has more than doubled, with diversion rates in the Manhattan schools increasing to 34%, and in the Brooklyn schools to 38%. We're also collecting organics voluntarily at two Homeless Services locations in Brooklyn and the Helena high-rise residential apartment building in Manhattan, and will soon add the Morning Side Garden housing complex on 124th Street in Morningside Heights to the program. We will continue to add additional schools in FY 2014, and as the demand from other high-rise apartment buildings for organics collection service continues to grow, we will capitalize on this momentum and opportunity to further expand the program.

I'm also pleased to report that this August the new South Brooklyn Marine Terminal Recyclables Processing Facility, operated by Sims Municipal Recycling of New York, will begin processing MGP and mixed paper delivered by the Department pursuant to a long-term contract. Most of the material delivered to this new facility, and the processed material that leaves it, will be transported by barge.

The Department's long term and interim export operations remain ongoing. During the first seven months of FY 2013, the Department collected and exported 1.925 million tons of Department-managed waste at a cost of \$177.9 million. The FY 2014 budget allocates \$336.5 million in export tipping fees for the Department to continue its current export operations.

Advancing the long-term export infrastructure of the SWMP continues. We anticipate construction of both the Hamilton Avenue MTS in Brooklyn and North Shore MTS in Queens will be completed in the first half of FY 2014.

Construction of the East 91st Street MTS in Manhattan has commenced and we expect construction of this facility to be completed in 2016. DDC has also issued a competitive bid solicitation for construction of the Southwest Brooklyn MTS, and we expect an award to be made in the near future.

A demolition contract for the existing facilities on the site of the new Gansevoort Street MTS and Environmental Center is expected to be awarded in FY 2014, which will take approximately 24 months to complete.

DSNY Green Fleet

As you know, the Department's fleet is among the greenest in the United States. In FY 2013 the Department purchased and is awaiting delivery of 18 new pure-electric Nissan Leafs and 23 new CNG-powered Mack collection trucks that will be in service in early FY 2014. We've also put into service 15 new diesel-powered, production-based hybrid-hydraulic collection trucks, with 32 additional trucks on order. In FY 2014, the Department will install 18 additional "Level II" (220 Volt/30 Amp) Electric Vehicle chargers at its district facilities for

a total of 49 Level II fleet chargers that will be available at Department facilities citywide. We will also continue to phase in the use of B20 citywide on a seasonal basis in all of our district facilities from April to November, and from November through March during our winter operations we'll be using B5.

Core Department Functions

The FY 2014 Executive Budget ensures funding for the Department to continue maintaining the City's highest levels of street cleanliness since the City began tracking it 38 years ago. Through April of this current fiscal year, the scorecard rating for the City averaged 94.6% , exclusive of the November Rating in the hurricane-impacted areas which were not rated in the month of November. Also during this time, no district had a rating that averaged less than 80% of their streets being acceptably clean.

During Hurricane Sandy clean-up operations, the Department removed approximately 434,740 tons of debris from the impacted areas of the City, in addition to approximately 27,720 tons of tree debris. We're continuing to seek reimbursement from FEMA for all eligible costs, and to date have submitted to them \$129.4 million in claims. Currently, the Department has already received \$82.8 million from FEMA.

The FY 2014 Executive Budget also allocates \$57.3 million for snow operations. During the 2012-2013 winter snow season, we had 24 inches of snow, and overall the Department spent \$38 million for snow plowing, road de-icing operations, and overtime to handle this season's ten snowstorms.

Closing Message

In closing, I would like to thank you for this opportunity today to discuss our current programs and our proposed initiatives to advance this Administration's commitment to promoting and ensuring a sustainable New York City long into this 21st century. We also appreciate that the Sanitation and Solid Waste Committee, and particularly Chair James, has always acknowledged and recognized the important and vital role which the dedicated men and women of the Department perform daily to keep our communities across the City clean, healthy and safe. With your assistance and support in the coming months, we can also implement meaningful and groundbreaking changes to our recycling and sustainability program that will usher in a new era of environmental stewardship and advance New York City as a global sustainability leader for years to come.

My staff and I will now be happy to answer your questions.



**Hearing before the New York City Council
Committee on Finance jointly with the Committee on Parks &
Recreation
Oversight: Fiscal Year 2014 Executive Budget
May 30, 2013**

Testimony By: Veronica M. White, Commissioner

Good afternoon, Chairs Recchia, Mark-Viverito and members of the Finance and Parks Committees. I am Veronica White, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. I am joined here today by a number of our senior staff. On the panel with me are First Deputy Commissioner, Liam Kavanagh and Director of Government Relations, Karen Becker. Additionally, we have with us our Deputy Commissioner for Management & Budget, Robert Garafola, Deputy Commissioner for Community Outreach, Larry Scott Blackmon, Deputy Commissioner for Capital Projects, Therese Braddick, and Assistant Commissioner for Fiscal Management, David Stark. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to discuss the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2014.

The FY 2014 Executive Budget provides for operating expenses of \$351.9 million. This represents an increase of \$14.3 million over the FY 2013 Adopted budget of \$337.6 million. The Executive Budget includes 414 new hires that were added in the Mayor's 2014 Preliminary Budget. These new hires include 207 City Park Workers, 30 climbers and pruners, 96 maintenance and trades workers, technicians and analysts, and 81 Parks Enforcement Patrol officers.

The Parks Department is in the process of hiring 81 new, full-time PEP officers. Doubling the number of City-funded officers on patrol, these new officers will report to a centralized borough command center and be deployed to all five boroughs to provide targeted patrols in parks. In addition to borough patrols, PEP officers will also be assigned to a fixed point site in all five boroughs: Central Park, Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Van Cortlandt Park, Prospect Park, and Clove Lakes Park. The 81 new hires, combined with our current level of staffing, will allow for a maximum of 9 patrol units per day in the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island, and 11 patrol units per day in Brooklyn and Queens.

Many of the new PEP officers have already begun their training and will begin patrolling parks this summer. The first academy began on April 15 and ends the third week of June. The second academy will commence the first week of July. The third academy will begin the third week of September. The full contingent of new PEP officers will be on patrol by the fall. The newly-hired officers who have not yet begun academy training will be given a



three-day seasonal security staff training course and deployed to provide security at our city's mini-pools this season.

In addition to the PEP positions, City Park Workers, climbers and pruners, trades workers and technician positions are currently being hired and we expect to have all of these new employees in place by the middle of June.

While we are happy to be hiring 414 new Parks staff, there is one program that without the Council's continued support would experience a drastic reduction- the Parks Opportunity Program. The Council's \$16.8 million restoration in Fiscal Year 2013 represents roughly half of the budget for the Parks Opportunity Program and allows us to support approximately 1,747 Job Training Participants through full six month lines. Since the beginning of FY13, POP has helped 915 New Yorkers transition from public assistance into employment at an average hourly wage of \$11.24, 55% higher than New York State's minimum wage. Since its inception in 1994, POP has placed 13,683 JTPs in employment. Currently, POP's total placements year to date are 60% ahead of this time last year. The Council has always been supportive of POP, and we turn to you again this year because without you, we will lose workers who not only receive important career development skills, but also provide critical operational support to our parks.

Our seasonal workforce is another key component to the maintenance and operations of our parks, particularly during the warmer months. Last year the Council was successful in negotiating a \$7.4 million Mayoral restoration to our seasonal budget. This year we are asking you to help us fully restore prior years' PEGs to our seasonal program totaling \$11 million which will help us to keep the parks clean when they are used the most.

In addition to the funding allocated to Parks by the Council and the Mayor to support our personnel infrastructure, critical funding was allocated in FY 13, to improve our city's tree maintenance. Thanks to the Council's support, last year the Parks Department received \$2 million to increase the number of street trees pruned and expand the program to include trees in parks throughout the five boroughs. This funding was baselined in the Mayor's Executive Budget and will increase the agency's goal to prune 60,000 trees both on the streets and within parks using these contracts.

However, pruning isn't the only tree need we have. Due to previous budget cuts and severe weather events, we face a backlog of tree stumps across the city. We recognize this issue is impacting your constituents, and we are asking for the Council's assistance to fund a \$2 million budget request to help us reduce this backlog.

As you know, the Council has always been supportive of Playground Associates who are the individuals that facilitate the Kids in Motion program in parks and playgrounds during the summer months. This important



program is designed with our youth in mind and provides recreational opportunities when school is not in session. Your \$1 million allocation funds 30 of these sites across the city, and we request that you continue to restore the funding in this year's budget to keep programming at these locations.

Thanks to the leadership of the City Council, funds were restored in Fiscal Year 2013 to keep all of our pools open for the entirety of the outdoor pool season. Unfortunately, unless the City Council restores the \$1.5 million needed to operate the pools, we will be forced to close four pools and shorten the season for all pools by two weeks. The pools that will be closed are Wagner Pool in Manhattan, Howard Pool in Brooklyn, Fort Totten Pool in Queens, and Faber Pool in Staten Island. Our decision was based on several factors, including attendance figures, proximity to other pools, access to public transit and the location of the pools relative to residential communities.

If the cuts to our pools were to occur, it could potentially impact the popular programming we are able to offer at these sites such as our Learn to Swim program. Our Recreation Division has made significant strides to bring water safety education to New Yorkers with a significant increase in our summer Learn to Swim participants. A record number of children participated in the Citywide Summer Learn to Swim program in our outdoor pools during 2012 and 24,532 children are safer at NYC pools and beaches as a result. This record number represents a 22% increase in participation as compared to the previous summer. In addition, last summer marked the inaugural adult citywide Learn To Swim program at Parks outdoor pools which were offered in six outdoor pools across the five boroughs. We believe that it is important to teach life saving swimming instruction to adults as well as children and we have a real demand for these services. 420 adults participated citywide in this program last year and we look forward to serving over 400 adults again this year.

Recreation continues to make strides to improve our patrons' experience in our 35 recreation centers. As you know, NYC Parks will extend the \$25.00 membership category to include individuals ages 18-24. We are proud to be able to offer this program and look forward to promoting this category with you in your districts when it becomes available on July 1.

NYC Parks' recreation centers remain one of the best values available to New Yorkers for addressing their recreational and fitness needs, however, we recognize that any fee-based membership can present a hardship for some. In addition to the young adult category, Parks will be providing seniors who were recreation center members at the time of the fee increase, the opportunity to be grandfathered into the senior category.

This past Friday, we were happy to stand with council members, community leaders and residents as we ushered in what will surely be a spectacular and



memorable beach season. It has been seven months since Hurricane Sandy hit our City and we haven't stopped working to recover from its devastating effects. Recognizing their importance as not just summer recreational destinations, but as vital economic engines in both city and local economies, the Mayor committed to opening our cities beaches on time for Memorial Day weekend, and I am glad to say that we achieved our goal thanks to a herculean effort by so many across the city. Parks, the Department of Design and Construction and many of our sister agencies worked tirelessly to make sure that our beaches are open and safe for visitors. An additional \$386 million has been allocated from the City's budget to allow restoration work to continue throughout the summer and in coming years, including a full restoration of the nearly 5 miles of damaged boardwalk citywide; installation of shoreline protection; and continued repairs to beaches, shorefront parks and playgrounds.

In addition to the more than \$270 million that has gone into the capital work needed to make sure our beaches are ready for the season, our beaches will be staffed with the full complement of lifeguards, approximately 1,400, similar to prior years' totals, which includes both returning lifeguards and new recruits.

We continue to make progress on many of our neighborhood park and playground capital projects since we testified at our Preliminary Budget Hearing. We are looking forward to cutting a ribbon next week on the newly renovated Owen Dolan Park thanks to funding and support from Council Member Vacca. This heavily used community park will include a new and expanded public plaza, new drainage and water systems, new lighting and electrical service for outdoor events. We also broke ground on the Ocean Parkway Malls reconstruction which will repave the heavily used bike and walking paths thanks to funding from Chairman Recchia.

And at long last, thanks to hard work by Parks and all of our partners in government, we recently broke ground on the long awaited reconstruction of the Queensbridge Seawall. We are particularly grateful to Council Member Van Bramer and Speaker Quinn for securing the necessary funding to move the project forward. This project will secure the seawall and, when the project is completed in 2014, allow residents of the nearby Queensbridge Houses direct access to the waterfront once again.

We also continue to fulfill the Mayor's PlaNYC commitments by making significant progress on regional park renovations. Phase I of Highland Park's renovation includes reconstructing the reservoir's perimeter walkways, installing lighting and fencing as well as providing ADA access to the park. This project is nearing its completion and a ribbon cutting is anticipated later this summer. In addition, there are now four separate projects underway in Fort Washington Park that will upgrade and supplement the already active recreation at the park, improve scenic and landscape quality, improve



pedestrian and greenway connections, provide ADA access and stabilize the shoreline. We recognize that Hurricane Sandy may have delayed some of our capital projects but we are working to move them through the process as quickly as possible.

Sandy may have damaged our parks, playgrounds and beaches, but it hasn't damaged the spirit and commitment the Parks Department has as stewards of 14% of New York City's property including 152 miles of coastline. We want all New Yorkers to feel the way we do about parks which is why this summer we are launching "Go Park". Go Park is an awareness campaign that highlights the diversity of NYC Parks resources, encourages exploration, and builds pride for New York City parks. The goal is to encourage New Yorkers to use, care for, and support their parks.

I am extremely proud of our agency and all that the women and men who work at the Parks Department do day in and day out. We continue to move ahead in the face of many obstacles, but are unwavering in our mission to offer New Yorkers world class parks and exciting recreation programming, and to invest in our parks and natural resources for the future. None of our work would be possible without the partnership of the New York City Council and we are grateful for your support.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: COMMISSIONER JOHN DOHERTY

Address: DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Karen Becker

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks Department

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: LIAM KAVANAGH, Deputy Commissioner

Address: The Arsenal, Central Park

I represent: NYC Parks Department

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: LARRY SCOTT BLACKMON, Dep. Councilman

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks Department

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: VERONICA WHITE, Commissioner

Address: THE ARCADE, Central Park

I represent: NYC PARKS

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms