

COMMITTEE ON RESILIENCY AND WATERFRONTS JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION 1
CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON RESILIENCY AND
WATERFRONTS JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE
ON PARKS AND RECREATION

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October 3, 2022
Start: 1:11 p.m.
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HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Ari Kagan, Chairperson - Resiliency

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Shekar Krishnan, Chair - Parks
Joann Ariola
James F. Gennaro
Christopher Marte
Sandy Nurse
Vickie Paladino
David M. Carr
Eric Dinowitz
Robert F. Holden
Julie Menin
Francisco P. Moya
Sandra Ung
Marjorie Velázquez

COMMITTEE ON RESILIENCY AND WATERFRONTS JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION 2

A P P E A R A N C E S

Sue Donaghue, Commissioner at New York City
Department of Parks and Recreation
Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, First Deputy Commissioner
at New York City Department of Parks and
Recreation

Jennifer Greenfeld, Deputy Commissioner for
Environment and Planning at Department of Parks
and Recreation

Rebecca Fischman, Senior Policy Advisor at
Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental
Justice

Debra Greif

Christopher Greif

Paul Gallay

Aya Morris

Sherrise Palomino

Michael Dulong

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone check on October 3, 2022, for the Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts and the Committee on Parks and Recreation recorded by Nazaly Patuvy (phonetic) in the Committee Room.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS PATUVY: Good afternoon and welcome to today's hearing for the Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts and Parks and Recreation.

At this time, please silence all electronic devices.

If you wish to submit testimony, you may at testimony@council.nyc.gov.

Thank you. Chairs, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: [GAVEL] Good afternoon and welcome to today's hearing on resiliency of the City's beaches and waterfronts. My name is Ari Kagan, and I have the privilege of Chairing the Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts. I want to thank my co-Chair, Council Member Krishnan, for holding this hearing.

The City's boardwalks, beaches, and waterfronts provide New Yorkers recreational opportunities and also help to protect the city from coastal storms and flooding. In recent years, the

1 city has seen an increase in tropical storm activity
2 and severe flooding events. Boardwalks and beaches
3 help protect residents and upland property against
4 the effects of such storms and floodings. However,
5 when our boardwalks and beaches fall into disrepair,
6 then not only does this create hazardous conditions
7 for people using them but also it's important line of
8 defense is removed. The Coney Island Riegelmann
9 Boardwalk is a landmark destination that attracts
10 millions of visitors from all over the world every
11 year. Even when I lived in Belarus, I heard about
12 legendary Coney Island Boardwalk. However, each year
13 visitors and residents are harmed by (INAUDIBLE)
14 hazards, planks with holes, exposed nails, and damage
15 to the Boardwalk caused by heavy maintenance vehicles
16 travelling on it and, of course, Mother Nature. It
17 lacks basic services and concessions that beaches and
18 boardwalks across the country and around the world
19 provide to their visitors. Concessions and services
20 create jobs, enhance the experience, and make for a
21 safer environment. We must work together to ensure
22 that there is enough funding for immediate repairs
23 and maintenance. The prior administration allocated
24 114.5 million dollars to reconstruct the Boardwalk,
25

1 but we're still waiting to hear which areas will be
2 reconstructed and how. Will this money be used only
3 for maintenance activities. Will the proposed
4 reconstruction enhance the resiliency of the
5 Boardwalk and the surrounding neighborhood. I look
6 forward to hearing from the administration about this
7 during today's hearing. The Infrastructure Investment
8 and Jobs Act which was signed into law late last year
9 and the Inflation Reduction Act which President Biden
10 signed into law in August will provide federal
11 funding for mitigation projects and for projects to
12 restore and protect coastal ecosystems. Just last
13 week, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced its
14 tentatively selected plan for New York, New Jersey
15 Harbor and Tributaries Coastal Storm Risk Management
16 Feasibility Study. The city's waterfronts are the
17 first line of defense against coastal storms. Federal
18 funded projects would help shore up our defenses, and
19 we would like to hear about the administration's
20 plans, how to apply for this funding, when to apply
21 for this funding, and the types of waterfront
22 resiliency projects that would be funded. I look
23 forward to hearing from the Department of Parks and
24 Recreation and the Mayor's Office of Climate and
25

2 Environmental Justice today and discussions how the
3 City is preparing our beaches and waterfront areas
4 for and protecting New Yorkers for more severe storms
5 and weather-related events. I also would like to know
6 about Parks Department plans to create more
7 hospitable beaches and boardwalks comparing to what
8 we have today. In fact, today in the morning, we
9 visited Coney Island Boardwalk together with my
10 Colleague, Chair Krishnan, and we witnessed firsthand
11 the deplorable conditions of the Coney Island
12 Boardwalk.

13 Before we begin, I would like to thank my
14 Committee staff, Senior Committee Counsel Jessica
15 Steinberg Albin, Senior Policy Analyst Patrick
16 Mulvihill, Finance Analyst Andrew Lane-Lawless, my
17 Chief of Staff Jeannine Cherichetti, my Legislative
18 Director Alex Tymkiv as well as the staff for the
19 Parks and Recreation Committee for all their hard
20 work putting this hearing together.

21 Now, I would like to turn to my great co-
22 Chair, Council Member Shekar Krishnan.

23 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Thank you so much,
24 Chair Kagan. Good afternoon. My name is Shekar
25 Krishnan. I'm the Chair of the Committee on Parks and

1 Recreation, and I'd like to thank my co-Chair,
2 Council Member Ari Kagan, the Chair of the Committee
3 on Resiliency and Waterfronts, for agreeing to hold
4 this joint hearing. It was also a pleasure to join
5 Chair Kagan for a tour of the Coney Island Boardwalk
6 today as well. I would've hoped for better weather to
7 visit a beach, but, alas, we'll have to make do with
8 what we got, but I do appreciate the visit and for
9 the opportunity to see the Boardwalk and the beaches
10 myself.
11

12 At this joint hearing, we will be
13 examining the resiliency work being done to protect
14 the City's beaches, waterfront areas, and the
15 maintenance efforts made to preserve our city's
16 boardwalks for the short and long-term.

17 At today's hearing, I'd also like to
18 focus on the broader resilience efforts that Parks is
19 overseeing throughout our Parks system. The climate
20 crisis is here, and its effect threaten the well-
21 being of all New Yorkers. One of the more immediate
22 effects which has been particular damaging to the
23 city recently is flooding. Such flooding events, most
24 recently the remnants of Hurricane Ida in 2021, laid
25 bare the inadequacy of the City's infrastructure to

1
2 handle massive rain events and storms. Areas of the
3 city that had never seen significant flooding before
4 were shockingly underwater, leading to the loss of
5 life and property. That also happened in Queens, in
6 my borough, from across the borough through the
7 waterfronts to my own District of Jackson Heights and
8 Elmhurst where, a topic for another day, the lack of
9 protections for basement apartments meant that so
10 many immigrant families who live in basement housing
11 lost their lives or were under threat. The severity
12 of these threats cannot be overstated. We are clearly
13 not prepared as a city for what the future will bring
14 us when it comes to flooding events.

15 The Parks Department maintains
16 approximately 14 miles of free public beaches that
17 all right typically open from Memorial Day weekend
18 through the week after Labor Day. City beaches,
19 including Brighton Beach, Cedar Grove Beach, Coney
20 Island and Coney Island Boardwalk, Manhattan Beach,
21 Midland Beach and the Franklin D. Roosevelt
22 Boardwalk, Orchard Beach and Promenade, Rockaway
23 Beach and Boardwalk, South Beach, and Wolfe's Pond
24 Beach.

1 Millions of people visit the city's
2 beaches every year and use the boardwalks constantly.
3 I echo the comments made by Chair Kagan regarding the
4 state of our boardwalks and the need to properly
5 maintain them. The fact that Riegelmann Boardwalk
6 users still complain of tripping hazards posed by
7 loose boards, planks with holes in them, and exposed
8 nails which I also saw myself in many areas of the
9 Boardwalk is not acceptable. Damage resulting from
10 heavy maintenance vehicle use is also still occurring
11 despite the Council having passed Local Law 141 in
12 2021 which limited heavy vehicle use to lower weight
13 maintenance vehicles, and I'd like to hear more about
14 this issue at today's hearing as well.

15
16 Returning to the issue of the urgent
17 climate crisis we face and the role that the Parks
18 Department can play in protecting our waterfronts to
19 the extent possible and under its jurisdiction, there
20 is still time to prepare and adapt our city
21 infrastructure to be handle what will continue to
22 come our way in the future, particularly by
23 increasing the use of green infrastructure and making
24 our parks more resilient. The city's green space can
25 be adapted to expand the resiliency features, such as

1 through the use of expanding the Green Streets
2 program, building more rain gardens in areas that are
3 starved of green space, broadening the reach of
4 parks' features to their surrounding neighborhoods,
5 building more playgrounds with green features,
6 converting unused or abandoned land into green space,
7 and, of course, maintaining and expanding the city's
8 tree canopy. Parks has been heavily invested in this
9 process as from November 2017 they developed
10 resiliency guidelines entitled "Design and Planning
11 for Flood Resiliency: Guidelines for NYC Parks." The
12 intent is to provide guidance for developing and
13 renovating coastally resilient waterfronts parks. The
14 guidelines serve as a manual for planners, designers,
15 and communities to reference while planning and
16 developing coastally resilient parks and waterfronts
17 spaces. In particular, the guidelines discuss certain
18 beach and boardwalk best practices including
19 development of a plan for necessary beach nourishment
20 to ensure the best possible performance during and
21 after a storm event. Elevating of boardwalks to be
22 higher than the 100-year flood plain and the usage of
23 concrete planks set on top of concrete and steel
24

2 (INAUDIBLE) to create stronger, more resilient
3 boardwalks.

4 I'm curious to see how this has informed
5 the process by which the Parks Department has
6 developed and renovated its various properties to
7 become more resilient and whether recent storms have
8 altered how the Department thinks about its
9 resiliency planning and what we can do and what the
10 Parks Department can do in its role to help fortify
11 our city and our coastlines for the worsening climate
12 crisis. I look forward to discussing these issues at
13 today's hearing and thank all of you who have come to
14 participate.

15 I'd also like to thank for today's
16 hearing the great work (INAUDIBLE) our staff of our
17 Committee on Parks and Recreation, Kristoffer
18 Sartori, Patrick Mulvihill, Chima Obichere, Rose
19 Martinez, and Nicholas Montalbano.

20 I'd also like to thank the staff of my
21 office as well, my Chief of Staff Chuck Park and my
22 Legislative Coordinator Greg Clerk, for their work
23 for today's hearing.

24 Now, I turn it over to our Counsel, Kris,
25 to begin the next (INAUDIBLE)

CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: I also would like to acknowledge my great Colleagues who joined our hearings from both Committees, Waterfronts and Resiliency and Parks, Council Member Marte, Council Member Gennaro, Council Member Nurse, Ariola, Paladino, Menin, Dinowitz, Ung, Carr, Moya. I also would like to give a chance (INAUDIBLE) to our Senior Committee Counsel, Jessica Steinberg Albin.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL JESSICA ALBIN: Thank you, Chair Kagan. We will now call on the administration to testify. Can you please raise your right hands?

Do you affirm to tell the truth in your testimony before the Committees today and to answer honestly to Council Member questions?

ADMINISTRATION: (INAUDIBLE)

COMMITTEE COUNSEL JESSICA ALBIN: You may begin when ready. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Yes. You can begin your testimony.

COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Okay. Thank you very much. Good afternoon, Chair Krishnan, Chair Kagan, Members of the Parks Committee and Resiliency and Waterfronts Committee, and other

1
2 Members of the City Council. I'm Sue Donoghue,
3 Commissioner for New York City Parks, and I am
4 pleased to be joined today by Iris Rodriguez-Rosa,
5 our First Deputy Commissioner, along with Jennifer
6 Greenfeld, our Deputy Commissioner for Environment
7 and Planning, and other members of our senior
8 staff as well as our great colleagues from the
9 Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental
10 Justice, Rebecca Fischman is sitting here with us
11 this afternoon.

12 I want to start by noting our
13 appreciation for the Council's continued advocacy
14 for our city parks, for the resources and support
15 it has provided for our park system, and for
16 convening a hearing on this very important and
17 timely topic.

18 New York City, as we know, is a coastal
19 metropolis. Our waterfront, as you stated, is an
20 incredible asset, providing recreational,
21 ecological, aesthetic, cultural, and economic
22 value throughout the five boroughs. However, as
23 we've all learned all too well over the last
24 decade, New York City's coastal location, which
25 defines our city and brings us so much joy and

2 pride, also presents significant risks and
3 challenges in the face of the growing threat of
4 climate change. As the entire world continues to
5 learn and understand, and as we right now are
6 seeing in the tragic impacts of Hurricane Ian on
7 the Caribbean and states along the southeastern
8 U.S. coastline, climate change is real and is
9 contributing to estimated sea level rise,
10 heightened probability of increased frequency and
11 intensity of coastal storms, and other related
12 hazards that particularly impact land and
13 resources near the waterfront as well as the
14 population that lives, works, and recreates along
15 our city's shoreline.

16 As we have learned time and again in
17 recent years, especially during the darkest days
18 of the COVID epidemic, our city parkland is vital
19 infrastructure, providing open space and
20 recreational opportunities that improve our
21 physical, mental, and emotional health and provide
22 a wide array of countless benefits. To make sure
23 that our park system remains the best that it can
24 be, we are actively planning for the long-term
25 resiliency of all of our parks and open spaces. In

2 addition to approaching capital projects for
3 individual parks with a goal of increasing
4 resiliency, the agency oversees a number of
5 ongoing initiatives to support citywide resiliency
6 measures.

7 Our focus on resiliency continues to
8 adapt and evolve, but it has taken on various modes
9 and forms in recent years, some of which I'd like
10 to outline today.

11 Before we talk about the importance of
12 long-term resiliency planning for our parks, we
13 should first recognize that the City has been
14 forced to undertake massive recovery and repair
15 efforts following major storms, most notably the
16 horrific impacts of Superstorm Sandy, which hit
17 New York City on October 29, 2012, nearly 10 years
18 ago. Though those were tremendously difficult
19 times as the storm inflicted unprecedented
20 devastation and loss, our city rose to the
21 occasion and came back stronger than ever, and the
22 repair of our parks and waterfront amenities was
23 central to that effort. Following Sandy, the City
24 with support from the federal government has
25 allocated over 1 billion dollars to repair and

2 recovery for New York City Parks properties,
3 representing over 150 City- and FEMA-funded
4 projects, including a full reconstruction of the
5 Rockaway Boardwalk, substantial repairs to the
6 Coney Island Boardwalk, and the replanting of over
7 10,000 trees that were lost in the storm. Though
8 it was necessary to focus on recovery in the
9 immediate aftermath of Sandy, it also completely
10 changed the way we view our park system. In this
11 new reality, improving the resiliency of new and
12 existing parks, playgrounds, and open spaces has
13 become a central priority for the agency. Park
14 resiliency is an essential part of New York City
15 Parks sustainability agenda as we need our city
16 parks and open spaces to not only withstand but
17 recover from disruptive events, such as coastal
18 storms and catastrophic flooding while also
19 withstanding more gradual systemic threats, such
20 as sea-level-rise associated with global climate
21 change.

22 New York City has over 520 miles of
23 coastline, and New York City Parks is proud to
24 manage over 160 miles of that expanse, a
25 significant responsibility. Our city's coastline

1 is often the first line of defense against climate
2 change impacts, so those who design and build
3 public projects on our city's shorelines have a
4 special responsibility to develop vibrant parks
5 and open spaces and ensure they are safe so they
6 can continue providing ecological and social
7 benefits well into the future. To this end, New
8 York City Parks is proud to develop specific
9 design and planning guidelines, which Chair
10 Krishnan already mentioned, for the flood
11 resiliency of our city parks, to provide guidance
12 for developing and renovating coastally resilient
13 waterfront parks. These guidelines draw from our
14 decades of experience with waterfront park
15 planning and design, taking into consideration
16 valuable lessons learned after Hurricane Sandy.

18 Because every Parks site is unique with
19 varying risk factors, site-specific conditions,
20 surrounding upland context, recreational,
21 ecological, and community needs, we use a
22 contextual, site-by-site approach to planning and
23 design for each new or renovated waterfront
24 project. Resilient waterfront park design needs to
25 account for the norm, not just the storm. In other

1 words, waterfront parks should facilitate everyday
2 public use during typical weather conditions while
3 still including elements meant to manage and
4 mitigate risk, an approach that maximizes parkland
5 utility and public investment. This can include
6 the mitigation of flood and storm risk along with
7 consideration of erosion impacts and the
8 importance of park tree canopy and other greening
9 for biodiversity. Of course, this Parks-specific
10 approach is above and beyond the helpful guidance
11 provided to all city agencies led by the Mayor's
12 Office of Climate and Environmental Justice in the
13 form of newly updated Climate Resiliency Design
14 Guidelines to ensure that new public
15 infrastructure can withstand the more extreme
16 flooding and other weather events that we can
17 expect to experience in the future.

18
19 Beyond the importance of protecting our
20 parks and open spaces themselves from the impacts
21 of climate change so they can remain places of
22 rest and respite for all New Yorkers, we also know
23 that parks can serve as resiliency infrastructure
24 that helps protect local homes and businesses and
25 the neighborhoods that surround them. Though the

2 approaches can vary depending on location, site
3 conditions, and surrounding context, we always
4 seek to maximize those resiliency benefits when
5 we're planning new parks or improving existing
6 parks. This could range in scale from massive
7 reconstruction projects to site-specific efforts
8 to capture increased stormwater through the use of
9 more permeable surfaces, rain gardens, and other
10 retention measures. In partnership with New York
11 City Department of Environmental Protection, we
12 have implemented over 130 million dollars in
13 stormwater green infrastructure in parks
14 throughout the city, and we are working alongside
15 DEP to advance additional projects such as the
16 daylighting of Tibbett's Brook in the Bronx. The
17 East Coast Resiliency project currently underway
18 will protect East River Park from damage due to
19 sea level rise and other climate impacts, while
20 also protecting thousands of local residents
21 living in neighboring areas that were severely
22 impacted by flooding during Superstorm Sandy. As
23 part of their regional coastal protection and
24 resiliency work, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
25 is partnering with New York City Parks on their

2 Rockaways Reformulation project to rebuild and
3 fortify the Rockaway Atlantic shoreline via stone
4 groins along the beachside, a new armored dune,
5 sand replenishment across the full beach, as well
6 as flood protection and mitigation measures along
7 the Jamaica Bay shoreline of the peninsula. In
8 Staten Island, the Army Corps continues to advance
9 design on a five-mile-long stretch of protective
10 seawall, floodwall, and earthen levee, and a
11 series of inland interior drainage areas on Staten
12 Island's East Shore from Fort Wadsworth to Great
13 Kills Park.

14 Lastly, it is important to note the
15 ways in which our natural areas and ecosystems
16 located throughout our park system also serve as
17 vital resiliency infrastructure. Our agency
18 portfolio includes 10,000 acres of natural areas,
19 and our agency is advancing numerous projects
20 around the city to help restore and bolster the
21 resiliency benefits provided by nature. Since
22 Sandy, we have implemented numerous ecological
23 projects and programs, including salt marsh
24 restoration, construction of living shorelines,
25 coastal forest and grassland restoration, marine

2 debris removal, and ecological assessment, an
3 investment over 25 million dollars. We are
4 advancing multiple coastal wetland restoration
5 projects that are critical to ensuring New York
6 City's wetlands continue to provide critical
7 functions such as the absorption of floodwaters
8 for future generations. For example, in recent
9 years, we completed wetland restoration projects
10 at Pugsley Creek Park and Ferry Point Park in the
11 Bronx, which recreated salt marsh that had been
12 lost over the last century, and our dedicated
13 staff are advancing related restoration projects
14 in all five boroughs. Last year, to help guide
15 these efforts, we published the Wetlands
16 Management Framework in collaboration with the
17 Natural Areas Conservancy. This document is the
18 culmination of 10 years of research into the
19 conditions of and threats facing our wetlands and
20 reflects our decades of wetland restoration
21 experience in New Yorkers. The Framework provides a
22 30-year roadmap for the ongoing preservation,
23 restoration, and management of the wetlands and
24 streams of New York City with particular focus on
25 those under the care of New York City Parks.

1
2 Of course, any discussion of the
3 positive resiliency benefits of our natural
4 infrastructure needs to include our urban tree
5 canopy, which is one of the most vital resources
6 the city has in ensuring our neighborhoods are
7 healthy and thriving and that they stay cool as
8 temperatures heat up. Protecting and growing our
9 urban forest leads to an incredible array of
10 environmental, social, and economic benefits for
11 our city, such as stormwater capture, cleaning and
12 cooling the air, protecting city pavement from
13 rain and sun, noise mitigation, and increasing
14 property values.

15 This wide range of ongoing work reflects
16 tremendous thought and hard work from our
17 dedicated agency staff. Since Superstorm Sandy,
18 our staff has provided their expertise to numerous
19 strategic plans and studies undertaken by the
20 City, identifying and prioritizing resiliency and
21 restoration opportunities in all five boroughs,
22 many of which are located in predominantly
23 environmental justice and under-invested
24 communities.

2 As you've heard today, resiliency and
3 climate concerns are central to our strategy as an
4 agency, and this approach will continue to evolve
5 and grow alongside our scientific understanding of
6 the challenges we face. New York City has always
7 been defined by ingenuity and innovation, and, for
8 that reason, it will remain home to the world's
9 greatest and strongest parks, natural areas,
10 beaches, and boardwalks even as we all work
11 collectively to manage serious impacts from a
12 changing climate. We look forward to working
13 together with the City Council and other
14 stakeholders to continue to build and maintain a
15 resilient park system for the City of New York and
16 all of its residents.

17 I thank you for the opportunity to
18 testify here today, and we look forward to
19 answering your questions. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. I also
21 would like to recognize we are joined by Council
22 Member Velazquez. Thank you.

23 I believe it's time to ask questions.
24 First of all, thank you for your testimony. I will
25 start with a question that was often raised by the

2 community in Coney Island and beyond, and today we
3 witnessed Coney Island Boardwalk, very heavy
4 vehicles used by Department of Parks, not just
5 Parks by the way. We saw a Breaking Ground car,
6 and sometimes we see very large cars by the police
7 department, and I know that there is a Local Law
8 61 passed in 2021 prohibiting all non-city-owned
9 and non-authorized vehicles from being used on
10 city-owned boardwalks, but, even when we're
11 talking about city employees, this law also
12 requires authorized employees or contractors to
13 use small utility vehicle under 2,400 pounds for
14 activities on wooden boardwalks unless larger
15 vehicles are really, really necessary for
16 emergencies or public safety needs. My first
17 question is obvious. How Department of Parks is
18 planning to implement this because we're getting
19 constant complaints. We see pictures on social
20 media of large, sometimes several large vans from
21 Department of Parks without any kind of emergency,
22 and no matter how the boardwalk will be repaired,
23 it's still going to be a huge issue so how are you
24 planning to implement this? That's my first
25 question.

2 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Thank you, Council
3 Member Kagan, and we're very aware of the Local Law
4 and have worked hard to implement it and to make sure
5 that we are doing our part to keep personal, non-
6 authorized vehicles off the boardwalk. You know there
7 are bollards in place out there to restrict vehicle
8 access to the boardwalk. There are, though, instances
9 where our staff does need to be out there maintaining
10 the boardwalk, and that's a very important priority
11 of ours, and that does, at times, require that we use
12 large-sized vehicles in order to carry out that
13 important work, which I know you want us to be out
14 there and doing, caring for the boardwalk. We have
15 transitioned, you know that we make active use of
16 ATVs, (INAUDIBLE) carts, smaller equipment when and
17 where we can, but in order to be able to efficiently
18 maintain the boardwalk to our standards and to keep
19 it the iconic space it is for New Yorkers, it does
20 sometimes require larger vehicles on the part of the
21 Parks Department.

22 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: The question is like
23 do you know about any violations of this Law that
24 have occurred in the past year or any kind of

2 episodes, even if one fine that has been levied to
3 anybody who broke this law, even one fine?

4 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: We have issued
5 summons to vehicles, specifically cars on the
6 boardwalk. However, the number is, I can report, very
7 low. We've also addressed motorized scooters on our
8 property and issued summons for that as well, but the
9 number is low, but we do issue summons when we see it
10 and our PEP is active in doing so.

11 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Again, we understand
12 the need for maintenance. We want every boardwalk to
13 be maintained and in good shape, no question, and we
14 understand sometimes it's construction materials,
15 etc., etc., but very often, again, we see absolutely
16 needlessly large Parks cars on the boardwalk without
17 doing anything, just like driving around or standing
18 there. Pictures on social media on a regular basis,
19 sometimes three cars at the same time, not even one
20 (INAUDIBLE) like so, and there is no need for this
21 whatsoever, non-emergency, no need for maintenance,
22 and could be different kind of vehicles used.

23 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: We do use mobile
24 crews to effect maintenance on our boardwalk and in
25 our Parks location. That is a van, and it is groups

2 of individuals that travel together. They're for
3 litter removal and cleanup and for ongoing
4 maintenance so, yeah, sometimes you will see those
5 vehicles, but I can attest that it's a very hard-
6 working staff out there. They're not out there
7 without good reason. They are there to clean and make
8 sure the boardwalk is well-maintained.

9 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: I just would like to
10 emphasize this is a very serious, important issue. It
11 will affect any boardwalk, including Coney Island
12 Boardwalk, in any way, shape, or form it will affect
13 anyway regardless of how much money would be
14 allocated to restore the boardwalk, to repair the
15 boardwalk, if it will be heavy vehicles all the time,
16 no matter how much money we will put into it, it will
17 be broken anyway, and we witnessed today. Sometimes,
18 again, it's not necessary to use all the time very
19 heavy vehicles.

20 Second topic is also very important about
21 regular maintenance. How much money, how much
22 maintenance funding has been allocated for each of
23 the Department of Parks-owned boardwalks for Fiscal
24 Year 2023? We wanted to know roughly how much money
25 we're talking about a year.

2 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Thank you, Council
3 Member, for the question. The budget is allocated not
4 typically by amenity or asset like that. It's
5 budgeted by borough. It's budgeted to include head
6 count deployment, titles of staff, so I couldn't give
7 you a breakdown of how our budget is allocated by
8 property type like that, but we do allocate resources
9 based on the care and maintenance of the boardwalk.
10 We'd be happy to talk through with you how we
11 allocate money by borough and by District, but we
12 don't break it down by amenity, such as by boardwalk.

13 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: I would like to see
14 these numbers, how much money allocated for this
15 Fiscal Year, I would say for each boardwalk,
16 including Coney Island Boardwalk but for each
17 boardwalk. This way people in communities would be
18 knowing how much we're talking about, if it's not
19 enough, of course it's never enough, but at least we
20 would know how much money we're talking about because
21 talking about maintenance sometimes even pure, simple
22 maintenance will make a huge difference, and they're
23 talking about litter, and they're talking about piles
24 of sand, or growing reefs, or just even simple
25 maintenance would be very helpful. Of course, I know

1 right now is going on, at least in Coney Island
2 Boardwalk, planks replacement is also like regular
3 maintenance because we see a lot of holes and nails
4 so how much money we're talking about will be very,
5 very useful.
6

7 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: We'd be happy to
8 sit down and talk with about that.

9 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Okay. The next
10 question will be specifically about Coney Island and,
11 again, on boardwalk I will use this chance as the
12 Chair of the Committee, so any updates to the
13 proposed plan to what specific areas will be
14 reconstructed? Can you more specifically describe the
15 resiliency measures that will be part of this
16 boardwalk reconstruction? What is the status of
17 reconstruction between West 24th Street and West 27th
18 Street of the boardwalk, for which 11.5 million
19 dollars funding was already allocated but it has been
20 delayed due to COVID? Finally, what are the reasons
21 for the very, very high cost of the Coney Island
22 Boardwalk reconstruction progress? I was told by
23 Brooklyn Parks Commissioner that we are talking in
24 the ballpark between 6 and a 100 million dollars just
25

2 to restore everything so people are always asking why
3 so much.

4 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely. For
5 the first part of your questions, in terms of the
6 reconstruction of the entire boardwalk, Parks in 2021
7 was pleased to receive 114 million in city funding to
8 reconstruct the boardwalk. As a first step, we are
9 going to undertake, and we are in the process, we
10 have a consultant on board, we are undertaking a
11 technical study of the boardwalk to really dig into
12 the exact extent and scope of the work for Phase 1.
13 The study will include conducting surveys, conditions
14 inspection as well as performing flood modelling to
15 help us determine exactly what should be done. This
16 is a massive project on an iconic amenity for New
17 Yorkers so it is not something that we undertake
18 lightly. It is going to take a lot of work. We want
19 to make sure that this boardwalk is going to be
20 resilient and functional for the next 150 years or
21 for generations to come so it's a massive project and
22 so our first step is that technical study. It kicked
23 off in September, and this will help us determine
24 Phase 1 design and construction, and we'll know more
25 after that study is complete.

1
2 In terms of the construction specifically
3 between 24th Street and 27th Street. As you said,
4 11.5 million has been allocated in that. That is for
5 specifically replacing sections of the boardwalk that
6 are definitely, we realize in need of repair. That
7 was somewhat delayed due to COVID and then also this
8 project is going to involve placing ADA ramps so
9 we've been working with DEP and DOT on that, but we
10 are on target there. The design will be complete for
11 that section in Spring of 2023.

12 In terms of why is the number so
13 significant, just like all projects across the city,
14 supply chain issues, inflation is driving up costs,
15 and this is a huge and really significant
16 reconstruction and resiliency project. We don't like
17 to see really high numbers either, but it's a massive
18 undertaking. We want to make sure it's done right,
19 and we want to make sure it lasts, as I said, for
20 generations to come. It's an expensive undertaking
21 for sure.

22 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. I would
23 like to clarify. You mentioned a few things I would
24 like to clarify. You're saying the reconstruction
25

1 between West 24 and 27 will be finished in the Fiscal
2 Year 2023?

3
4 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: The design for
5 that project will be done in Spring of 2023, and that
6 will determine how we're going to move forward with
7 that reconstruction.

8 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Design will be decided
9 in 2023?

10 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Exactly.

11 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: But the actual work
12 will be done...

13 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: It will start
14 probably a year after that.

15 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: The year after that?

16 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Yeah. We have to
17 go through procurement, bid it out to a contractor,
18 yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: So as (INAUDIBLE) even
20 when money was allocated, it still takes a very, very
21 long time?

22 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: And 114.5 million
24 dollars that was allocated with the huge help of my
25 predecessor, Council Member Mark Treyger, under the

1
2 previous administration but money actually as I know
3 went to Department of Parks in July 2022, but any
4 kind of work started in October 2022? Anything
5 started with this money?

6 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: With the 11.5
7 million that was...

8 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: 114.5 million dollars.
9 That's not small change.

10 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: No, not at all.
11 Yes, that work has kicked off. That's the study that
12 we're undertaking.

13 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: So the work's started?

14 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: The study has
15 started. Yes, we've hired a consultant, we've started
16 meetings. Yes, for the study.

17 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Hiring consultants?
18 Because, again, it's not just I'm asking, the
19 community is asking all the time when they see a
20 number, 114.5 million dollars, it's not 114 dollars,
21 114.5 million dollars already went to the Department
22 of Parks on July 1st and then in October I have to
23 come back to community and say okay, City is planning
24 to hire consultants in October, like many, many
25

1 months later so what should I say? You're hiring
2 consultants right now, this 114 million dollars?
3

4 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: We're hiring
5 consultants, we're conducting a very thorough study
6 and survey to make sure that this reconstruction is
7 done right, that it's resilient, that it's
8 sustainable, and that there will be a sustainable
9 boardwalk in place for years to come. We are, as you
10 know, doing work consistently. We did work all summer
11 on the issues with the boardwalk on where there are
12 pieces that are raised, on the raised nails, we had
13 Wood Wednesdays all summer where we had our city
14 carpenters and three crews out there addressing
15 problematic issues so there's ongoing work that's
16 happening, Council Member, on a regular basis. It
17 happened all through the summer, and I know you were
18 out and saw that with our Borough Commissioner in
19 person, that work that was happening. The larger
20 project is massive. We understand it's a huge amount
21 of money. We want to make sure that money is spent in
22 a way that is responsible and that gets the best
23 outcome for the people of Coney Island and the
24 thousands of city residents who use that boardwalk.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: I just want to
3 emphasize it's not just Coney Island and it's not
4 just Brighton Beach and it's not even just Southern
5 Brooklyn. We're talking approximately, if boardwalk
6 is finally fixed, we're talking about millions and
7 millions of people every year. I'm talking about
8 economic development. I'm talking about tourism. I'm
9 talking about many, many families enjoying. It could
10 be an economic engine instead of just an
11 embarrassment.

12 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely. That's
13 why we want to do it right. Absolutely.

14 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: One more topic. I
15 believe I looked at your testimony. Did you even
16 mention the term accessibility because we have a lot
17 of advocates today for people with disabilities and
18 I'm checking, checking, are you even considering this
19 topic, accessible boardwalk, accessible ramps,
20 accessible for people with disabilities, for seniors?
21 That's another complaint I'm constantly hearing.
22 Today when I visited the boardwalk with my Colleague,
23 he asked the question why (INAUDIBLE) why it's not
24 accessible too for people with disabilities.

2 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely. That's
3 where the project that's between West 24th and West
4 27th, we're coordinating with both DEP and DOT on ADA
5 ramp access for that project. Absolutely, it's
6 something that we're thinking of, not only for this
7 but that larger project for the boardwalk, that's one
8 of the important considerations is accessibility,
9 absolutely.

10 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Because according to
11 Brooklyn Parks Commissioner Marty Maher, he told me
12 that the larger plan you're talking about will
13 include, if it's correct, you can correct me, only
14 seven accessible ramps for boardwalk. Is that true?

15 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: I think that's
16 what the study is to determine, Council Member. I
17 don't know that we have an exact number, but it is a
18 testament to the fact that we want to make it as
19 accessible as possible, and, yes, it will include
20 accessible (INAUDIBLE)

21 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: I just wanted to make
22 sure. This is a very, very important topic because,
23 again, people with disabilities, seniors constantly
24 complaining about inaccessible boardwalk and not even
25 talking about (INAUDIBLE) on top of the holes and

2 nails and everything else and we will probably talk
3 today also about safety, not just from nails and
4 holes but also in terms of public safety... (INAUDIBLE)

5 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely. ADA
6 accessibility is a very important priority for the
7 Parks Department. In every single project that we do,
8 we take into account ADA access. We have to by law
9 for any reconstruction we do, but it's also an
10 important priority for me and for my administration.

11 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Please take it into
12 consideration. It's very, very important.

13 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely.

14 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Last question. I mean
15 not last question today but last question on my time.
16 As you probably know, people are getting hurt on the
17 boardwalk, and some of them are filing claims against
18 the City of New York, and today we met one gentleman,
19 he got hurt three times, his wife broke her arm, and
20 she didn't file any claim. She did call 9-1-1 for
21 help but didn't file a claim against the City of New
22 York. Are you tracking this? I requested from City
23 Comptroller this information. It took me a while, but
24 I got this information, and I know that they're
25 talking at the very least about millions and millions

2 and millions of dollars paid by the City of New York
3 to victims of the boardwalk. We're not getting
4 millions from the boardwalk because it's great, but
5 we are paying to victims of the boardwalk millions
6 and millions of dollars, and this number I would
7 multiply by five because like many immigrants do not
8 even know what it is to file a claim against the
9 City, etc. Are you tracking this? Do you have this
10 information?

11 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Parks is not aware
12 if the City tracks this information, money paid out
13 in lawsuits. That would be a question for Corporate
14 Counsel or for the Comptroller's Office.

15 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Comptroller. Are you
16 aware at least that the City is paying every year
17 millions of dollars to victims who got hurt on the
18 boardwalk? Are you aware of it at least?

19 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: I'm not aware of
20 specific lawsuits, no, but, as always, that's not
21 something that we like to have happen obviously. Our
22 parks are there for people's enjoyment and
23 recreation. It's something that we take seriously. We
24 never want people to get hurt, and we look to avoid
25 that as best as we can.

CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: I personally know many victims of the boardwalk, some who filed claims and some who didn't file claims, and I'm sick and tired of getting pictures of people's parts of the body who got hurt on a regular basis. When we visited together with Council Member Selvena Brooks-Powers, in front of us one lady fell down and we barely held her. Otherwise, it would be another victim of the boardwalk.

I would like to now give a chance to speak to my great Colleague, Chair Krishnan.

CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Thank you so much, Chair Kagan. Thank you, Commissioner Donoghue and everyone from the Parks Department and the Mayor's Office who've joined us today.

I'd like to ask a few questions more broadly about the preparations by the Parks Department for making sure our waterfronts and our inland parks are also more resilient. Could you describe in a bit more detail the works that DPR has been doing to protect the waterfronts parks from the effects of severe weather and climate change and what about resiliency measures taken by the Department

2 along the waterfronts and beaches in the Parks
3 Department's jurisdiction?

4 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Yes, absolutely.

5 Thank you, Council Member, for the question. We have

6 over many years done an enormous amount of work to

7 protect our city's beaches and coastlines. We've

8 partnered with, as you heard in my testimony, the

9 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on resiliency projects.

10 We've worked closely with the Mayor's Office of

11 Climate and Environmental Justice on everything from

12 sand replacement, dune reconstruction, fortifying our

13 dunes, and large projects like the East Coast

14 Resiliency Project, which is DDC led, and in

15 partnership constructing seawalls so we are looking

16 at always to partner and fortify our coastlines.

17 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Are there any

18 specific waterfronts that the Parks Department is

19 worried about in particular that are especially

20 vulnerable?

21 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: I think that all

22 of our waterfronts, what we've seen over the last few

23 years and with the increase in storms and the

24 intensity of storms, all of our waterfronts are

25 vulnerable unfortunately. We've seen extensive

2 damage, starting from Sandy and beyond, in the
3 Rockaways, and that's an area that's been a
4 significant amount of concentration and public
5 investment by the federal government and by the Parks
6 Department, and we're thankful for that partnership,
7 whether it be all of the sand replenishment, dune
8 replenishment. We've worked really hard on planting
9 beach grass, and you heard in my testimony our work
10 with shoring up our wetlands. We know that by
11 fortifying our lands is a way that we can make sure
12 that we have places where water can be absorbed so we
13 are concerned about all parts of our coastline.

14 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: I would assume that
15 the Parks Department also is deploying an
16 environmental justice framework in thinking about the
17 waterfronts. We know, of course, that there are poor
18 communities of color across the city that are
19 especially vulnerable to the effects of climate
20 change and that's equally true on our waterfronts as
21 well. Has the Parks Department taken that perspective
22 into account in determining the measures that it will
23 take to address these issues?

24 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely.
25 Everything that we do in our capital reconstructions

2 projects, in our tree planting, across the board in
3 all of our reconstruction efforts we're taking into
4 account and working closely with the Mayor's Office
5 of Climate and Environmental Justice. A lot of our
6 work is focused on the TRIE neighborhoods, the
7 neighborhoods that were identified by the taskforce
8 on racial equality and so that is how we target, as
9 we said, tree planting. A lot of our restoration
10 efforts are based on making sure that investments are
11 focused on areas of highest need.

12 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Just a few more
13 questions from my end. Another issue as I mentioned
14 before is about the work that the Parks Department is
15 doing not just on our waterfronts but also our inland
16 parks as well that are particularly prone to
17 flooding, the spillover effects of coastal flooding,
18 or because of other similar severe events like we saw
19 during Ida in 2021, and so what work, and I also see
20 our Deputy Commissioner who oversees our trees, you
21 did a fine job talking about our trees at a Tree
22 Canopy hearing, is here too, what is the work that
23 Parks is doing for our inland parks, for our tree
24 canopy to ensure that we're protecting it from the
25 oncoming impacts of climate change.

2 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Thank you for that
3 question, and I'm really proud of the work that the
4 Parks Department has done. We learned a great deal
5 from Sandy, and that's why, and you even referenced
6 in 2017, we came out with our own design principles,
7 our guidelines for resiliency, how do we build most
8 resilient parks. In ever single capital project that
9 we take on now, we are looking for how do we increase
10 permeable surfaces, how are we adding more green for
11 absorption, looking at tree planting not only in
12 newly constructed parks but along the perimeters of
13 parks and our street trees. We have worked hand-in-
14 hand with the Department of Environmental Protection
15 incorporating green infrastructure into our
16 reconstruction processes with our Community Parks
17 Initiative where we're renovating parks across the
18 city in high-need neighborhoods. Over half of those
19 projects have included green infrastructure. We are,
20 as I said, looking at it across the board in
21 everything we do. Over many years, I'm really proud
22 of our expertise in helping to enhance our urban tree
23 canopy, recognize Jennifer, our Deputy Commissioner
24 for Environment and Planning. We have nationwide
25 expertise in this area, and it's because of the work

1 that we've done and the recognition of how important
2 our urban tree canopy is in terms of addressing
3 issues of climate change so capturing stormwater,
4 reducing the effects of urban heat island. That's why
5 we have prioritized tree planting. That's why this
6 administration has been very generous in terms of
7 providing record funding for tree planting in this
8 most recent budget, and it is a huge source of how
9 we're making sure that we are building the resiliency
10 of our city is through enhancing our urban tree
11 canopy.
12

13 Jennifer, is there anything that you want
14 to add there?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREENFELD: No, I
16 think you covered it.

17 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Okay.

18 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: I know that at the
19 last hearing we spoke extensively about the tree
20 canopy and the work there with the Parks Department.
21 I do want to say I do appreciate the efforts of Parks
22 in renovating our parks and playgrounds, thinking
23 about environmental measures. I think the Community
24 Parks Initiative, I know we'll be working together on
25 that as well, is a really important initiative both

2 to address parks equity and also in doing so address
3 climate issues as well so I do appreciate the
4 Department's focus on that through the CPI program,
5 which I think is a great program and should be
6 further expanded too in my opinion.

7 A few more questions. As Chair Kagan
8 mentioned, I did go out to the boardwalk and take a
9 look at it myself, the issues that are being raised,
10 the need for maintenance work and what that reveals
11 about both the Coney Island boardwalk as well as more
12 boardwalks more broadly. One thing I did notice, in
13 addition to the points that Chair Kagan, which stood
14 out to me was the presence of vehicles on the
15 boardwalk, and this is an issue that also is
16 personally important to me because in Flushing
17 Meadows Corona Park, which is our park in Queens as
18 well, during the U.S. there are a number of vehicles,
19 and I recognize that's also the U.S. Open's
20 responsibility and fault that will park on the grass,
21 damaging the grass for weeks at a time, but it's
22 something that's a strong concern to us in Queens and
23 seeing the cars on the boardwalk and knowing the
24 damage that will do, I do know that former Council
25 Member Treyger had passed the legislation and so I do

2 want to just emphasize that point that, especially as
3 we talk about climate change and we're moving towards
4 a more resilient city, we need to make sure we're
5 getting those cars off of our boardwalks, off of our
6 grass in our parks or on our boardwalks.

7 Just another question about our beaches
8 and boardwalks, can you talk a little bit about how
9 their cleaned, what methods the Parks Department
10 uses, how you figure out where to deploy maintenance
11 workers and implement maintenance procedures.

12 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely. Yes.
13 Cleaning of our beaches and boardwalks is an
14 important priority for us at the Parks Department,
15 and we deploy maintenance workers as needed based on
16 miles of coverage that we have, how many different
17 areas that we need to cover. Our cleaning of beaches
18 generally involves raking the beaches. Really proud
19 to report, I don't know that many people know this,
20 we have a 24-hour operation in Coney Island. We
21 actually clean that beach all night over night in
22 order to have it clear on weekday and weekend
23 mornings for people. It's an extensive operation and
24 one that we dedicate a whole lot of staff to, but
25 generally the way we clean beaches is by raking them.

2 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Finally, returning
3 to the topic of environment sustainability, on
4 September 24th, as I'm sure you saw this, the U.S.
5 Army Corps of Engineers released its draft
6 Feasibility Report and Tier One Environmental Impact
7 Statement for the New York/New Jersey Harbor and
8 Tributary Study. The report details the Corps' 52
9 billion dollar, 14-year construction plan to install
10 12 storm gates across the City's waterways and erect
11 coastal barriers across over 41 miles of the city's
12 shorelines from Southern Brooklyn to East Harlem,
13 Lower Manhattan, and the entire Rockaway Peninsula,
14 and I know there's been much discussion about it
15 already. I've read some stuff too on all sides of the
16 issue, and so I just want to know a little bit more
17 about has the administration reviewed the proposed
18 plan, what are your initial thoughts and reactions to
19 it?

20 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: The Parks
21 Department welcomes the Army Corps' progress on this
22 important project, and we look forward to reviewing
23 their report. It was just recently released, as you
24 know, in late September. We will absolutely be
25 working collaboratively with them as well as our

2 partners at New York State, New Jersey, elected
3 officials, and the public to make sure that the final
4 recommendation reflects the needs of all New Yorkers.
5 We would absolutely encourage Council Members to
6 engage with their constituents to get their feedback.
7 This is going to be a collaborative process. This is
8 going to be about government and community working
9 together to determine the best way to move forward so
10 it's a really important study. We're anxious to move
11 forward with them, but right now we're just at the
12 point of reviewing this recently released report.

13 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Thank you. I look
14 forward to more conversations and discussions about
15 it as well. No further questions for me. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you so much,
17 Chair Krishnan. I would like to ask one more question
18 related to beaches, not boardwalks, but it's all
19 interrelated. About safety. I noticed during the past
20 season that, first of all, it's not enough, Parks
21 Enforcement Officers including on the boardwalk,
22 including on beaches, and sometimes when they're even
23 there, sometimes I know there's a lot of work to do,
24 I'm talking sometimes millions of people, so how many
25 Parks Enforcement Officers do we have in New York

1 City in total? I would prefer to know even borough by
2 borough, or, because I saw some of them and they told
3 me they're not even from Brooklyn, they came from
4 other boroughs because it's a big shortage.
5

6 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely. Thank
7 you, Council Member, for recognizing the importance
8 of our PEP Officers. They are stretched thin. As I
9 said, it's 168 miles of coastline. We have 300 PEP
10 Officers. We do have seasonal staffing that is added
11 so from May to September 57 PEP Officers get step-ups
12 to supervise the 250 seasonal employees we hire. Of
13 this number, 14 sergeants and 78 CSAs are baselined
14 to be assigned to beaches. In addition, Rockaway
15 Beach and Coney Island both had step-up captain
16 assigned. We also implemented, you may have seen out
17 there, our post-Labor Day Beach Plan starting
18 September 13th through October 15th, and during this
19 time beaches are patrolled and patrons swimming are
20 advised that beaches are closed to swimming.

21 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. 300. In my
22 opinion, clearly not enough for the city and so many
23 beaches and boardwalks, but at least now we have a
24 number, 300. How do they cooperate with police
25 because we did have several unfortunate past summer

2 on the boardwalk and I don't want to finger-point who
3 is responsible, NYPD or Parks Enforcement Officers.

4 How do they cooperate?

5 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: I didn't hear part
6 of your question.

7 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: How do they cooperate,
8 Parks Enforcement Officers and NYPD?

9 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: When there's an issue
11 of the safety on the boardwalk.

12 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Yes, absolutely.
13 Parks Enforcement Officers are there to enforce park
14 rules. We really rely on a very strong partnership
15 with PD, and that partnership is by borough, really
16 by district, and we are thankful for a really strong
17 partnership with PD. In the Rockaways this summer, PD
18 was out there helping us on the beaches and keeping
19 people out of the water. We have a close partnership
20 in Coney Island as well. It is an active coordination
21 effort, whether it be around illegal vending, whether
22 it be around keeping people out of the water, it is
23 very much a close partnership between PD and our PEP
24 Officers. I just want to note it's 300 PEP Officers
25 full-time. We do have seasonal staff that is added to

our PEP staff in the summer, and we can get you those exact numbers.

CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: One more issue that was raised this season, but it's a chronic problem for many, many, many years. A huge chunk of beaches at least in Southern Brooklyn was basically closed to swimmers due to the shortage of lifeguards. I definitely would like to have at least one question and your answer, what's going on in New York City for many, many years, that was even before COVID, during COVID, and even now this year, at least 50 percent of Coney Island Brighton Beach beaches were closed for swimmers due to the shortage of lifeguards? I know the Mayor raised salary of lifeguards. What else could be done to prevent this next year because it's a problem as I understand citywide.

COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Thank you for the question, Council Member, and, as you know, this is not a problem that's unique to New York. There's a national lifeguard shortage, and we were actually really proud in New York City that we were able to open all nine of our beaches and 52 public pools this summer. We were unique in that. There were many municipalities across the city (sic) that did not

2 open their beaches or their pools due to a national
3 lifeguard shortage. While we have experienced that
4 during COVID, prior to that we had a pretty
5 significant corps of lifeguard. COVID did interrupt
6 that for sure. People weren't swimming, places
7 weren't available for swimming so the lifeguard corps
8 definitely diminished. Our First Deputy sitting with
9 me, Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, is working hard on lifeguard
10 recruitment, working with every single school, swim
11 teams, we're working with DOE, we're reaching out
12 across the board to make sure that we can recruit and
13 bring in more lifeguards this season. You mentioned
14 Coney Island and only part of the beach was open.
15 You're right. Because of not having enough
16 lifeguards, we couldn't fully open the entire beach,
17 but we were pleased that, given the significant
18 conditions and the challenges we were facing, we were
19 able to open every single beach this summer.

20 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: First of all, I would
21 like you to start preparing for the next season now.

22 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: I can assure you
23 we are.

24 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Not in May, but now
25 because, again, people are calling the Council office

2 all the time, we cannot use the beach, what's the
3 point of the beach if we cannot use it...

4 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: (INAUDIBLE) we'd
5 love the help from the City Council recruiting
6 lifeguards. If you know any teenagers, kids, sons,
7 daughters, get out the word. We'd love the help
8 recruiting.

9 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: We published all of
10 these recruitment ads all the time on our social
11 media, but probably more should be done.

12 Also, what about maintenance workers? We
13 have a shortage of maintenance workers because today
14 on Coney Island Brighton Beach, it's almost three
15 miles of the boardwalk, only two bathrooms are open
16 due to, as I understand, shortage of maintenance
17 workers and preparations for the wintertime, and
18 there was the same situation all September when
19 weather was fantastic, only two bathrooms were open
20 for three miles of the boardwalk, so maintenance
21 workers, do we have enough maintenance workers for
22 the Parks Department?

23 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: While we could
24 always use more maintenance workers and more
25 resources for the Parks Department, it's 30,000 acres

1 and a lot of area to cover, we don't have a shortage
2 of maintenance workers. We have 30 comfort stations
3 along the City's boardwalk and 27 of them are open
4 and functioning and available to the public. In
5 Brooklyn and Coney Island, we have eight comfort
6 stations. For Coney Island and Brighton Beach, we do
7 start a process at this time of year where we
8 winterize and close some of those comfort stations.
9 They're out, they're exposed to the elements, there's
10 not as many people on the beaches, we do close them
11 to winterize.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Right after Labor Day,
14 it started closing...

15 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: No, not right
16 after Labor Day, but it is a process because there
17 are, as I said, 30 of them across the city. It takes
18 a while so there is a process, but that doesn't start
19 right after Labor Day. No, it's after that.

20 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: I just want you to
21 know if it's September and beautiful weather and
22 bathrooms are closed, you know what people are going
23 to do, yes, and that will affect everybody. It's also
24 just a point that in September, if it's great
25 weather, and we have two bathrooms, at least two

1 weeks ago it was good weather and there were only two
2 bathrooms open, and (INAUDIBLE) people found
3 different ways to relieve themselves. It's just
4 absolutely not good for anybody. Again, sorry for
5 being (INAUDIBLE) discuss it, if not, when, where.
6

7 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely.

8 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Now, I want to ask
9 questions to Mayor's Office of Climate and
10 Environmental Justice. First of all, I'm very, very
11 happy that such office even exists because it's so
12 good, so right, such a right thing to do I cannot
13 even start. (INAUDIBLE) so I'm very glad that this
14 office even exists to begin with so that's great.

15 My question to Rebecca Fischman. You know
16 that federal funding exists for many, many projects
17 we are talking about today and other resiliency
18 projects all over the city. How great if I would say
19 Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice
20 is trying to apply for all of this federal funding
21 from different (INAUDIBLE) Inflation Reduction Act,
22 Infrastructure money, etc. We're talking about
23 billions of dollars the city cannot find in their own
24 money. We do not want to raise any kind of taxes. We
25 want to use money that is available, not to go to

2 Texas but to go to New York for example, for climate
3 and environmental justice.

4 SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR FISCHMAN: Thank you
5 very much for your question, Council Member. We have
6 consistently advocated for a proactive federal
7 funding stream for resiliency projects, and we
8 continue to do so.

9 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Do you mind just
10 moving the mic a little bit closer to you.

11 SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR FISCHMAN: I'll just
12 speak up really loudly. We've consistently advocated
13 for a proactive funding stream for resiliency
14 projects, and we will continue to do so. We are
15 currently collaborating with the Parks Department and
16 other New York City agencies, our FLA, and our Office
17 of Management and Budget to understand eligibility
18 requirements for certain funding streams like the
19 IIJA and IRA and identifying resiliency projects and
20 programs that will most serve vulnerable communities,
21 adapt our most essential infrastructure, and make the
22 city a more livable home for New Yorkers. We also
23 seeking opportunities at the State level, and this
24 year we're excited to see that the Environmental Bond
25 Act will be on the ballot this November. We believe

2 these funds could help us jumpstart new programs in
3 the short term. All in all, we are just really
4 looking forward to taking advantage of the funds
5 available for our federal partners and making sure
6 that our resiliency portfolio is complete and can be
7 as accelerated as possible.

8 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Do you need help for
9 City Council? We can write a letter to State and
10 Federal Government saying we need this money badly.
11 Look what's going on, in the last few days, after
12 heavy rain and storm (INAUDIBLE) parts of the city
13 definitely need help. Do you need letters from City
14 Council to help you?

15 SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR FISCHMAN: Yes. We
16 would always look for your support in these projects.
17 In fact, I know some Council Members were really
18 instrumental in us winning a few of those FEMA
19 Building Resilience in Communities Grants, or BRIC
20 Grants, so we just won 50 million dollars for the
21 Seaport Coastal Resiliency Project, and we won
22 additional stormwater funding throughout New York
23 City so thank you all to the City Council who helped
24 us write letters in support of those projects and we
25 hope to continue to work together on that.

CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Okay. Thank you. Now, I wanted to give a chance to my Colleagues to ask questions. First question, Council Member Gennaro had to leave as I understand, he sent us this question. Local Law 42 of 2012 mandated the creation of New York City Taskforce on Climate Change Adaptation. Was the Taskforce ever created?

COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: In 2012, did you say?

CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Yeah, Local Law 42 of 2012. It was passed in 2012. Was it created?

SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR FISCHMAN: Is that the Taskforce that created the Special Initiative on Recovery and Resiliency or the SIRR report?

CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: The New York City Panel on Climate Change.

SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR FISCHMAN: The New York City Panel on Climate Change? Yes, so we have definitely convened the New York City Panel on Climate Change. Thank you for your question. Since Sandy, they just released a report in 2019 with new projections for stormwater, for coastal storms, and for sea level rise, and heat, and they continue to

work and refine the science and will release a report
as they do so in the next year or two probably.

CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: I would like to give a
chance to ask questions to Council Member Carr.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you, Chair
Kagan and Chair Krishnan, for convening this hearing
on such a critical issue. Commissioner, always good
to see you.

My question is about the ongoing seawall
project. You referenced that five-mile workforce,
which is completely in my District, very proud of our
boardwalk and Midland Beach Promenade, but I think
the fact that this project hasn't started yet with
our federal partners is really making it difficult
for us to envision let alone enact something along
the workforce and it's creating maintenance issues
because I think you as an agency have to decide is it
really worth it for us to make this fix when maybe
the boardwalk won't be there in its current form, but
we do have bent pieces of wood, plans that need to be
replaced, lighting that needs to be maintained. Could
you a little bit about how you're balancing the
oncoming project with our current maintenance needs?

2 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Thank you, Council
3 Member Carr, and appreciate the question. You're
4 right that it is delayed, it's taking a long time,
5 that project. We are not stopping with ongoing
6 maintenance and care for the boardwalk. We recognize
7 that whatever that project is is going to be a ways
8 out and that we are completely committed to making
9 sure that we have good ongoing maintenance and care
10 so, while we have our eyes on that and the members of
11 my planning team here who are very involved in that
12 process with our federal government partners, we are
13 continuing to move forward with taking care of the
14 day-to-day maintenance for sure. If you're not
15 finding that, then we want to know about it.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Okay. Understood. I
17 appreciate that. So far, so good. I also wanted to
18 ask not so much a resiliency question but a boardwalk
19 issue. My understanding is that Parks did issue an
20 RFP for this summer for mobile food vendors and
21 whatnot and associated businesses and that no replies
22 were received. I'd like to work with you and your
23 team on maybe what the RFP for next year might look
24 like so we may get some additional solicitations from
25 the public.

2 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Thank you. We'd so
3 appreciate that. Absolutely. Sometimes that happens.
4 We don't get responses, but we do work closely with
5 the community, with our elected officials, we'd love
6 the help for an RFP for next summer. Absolutely.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: I appreciate that.
8 On the resiliency end, and I think we had exchanged
9 correspondence about Willowbrook Pond Park and the
10 role of some of our ponds, which are waterfronts in
11 their own way, can play in terms of maintaining area
12 drainage in communities and what dredging projects
13 might be on scale for the future. Can you talk a
14 little bit about your thoughts on that and how we can
15 work together to make some of these dredging projects
16 maybe happen in the near future?

17 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely. As I
18 said in my testimony and in response to some of my
19 questions here, we're looking at all manner of
20 different interventions and things that will help us
21 deal with what we know are significant impacts of
22 flooding stormwater management, and so I'd be happy
23 to talk with you further specifically about dredging
24 in Willowbrook at that pond. I don't have
25 specifically our plans, how we want to address it

1 today, but happy to speak further with you on it, for
2 sure.
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Okay. Appreciate
5 that. My last question dovetailing from what Chair
6 Kagan was talking about earlier with respect to PEP
7 so 300 plus citywide, I understood that about six are
8 assigned to Staten Island. Is that an accurate count
9 at this stage?

10 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Let me see,
11 Council Member Carr. I know I have some numbers that
12 break it out by borough. If I don't have them here in
13 front of me, I can absolutely follow up with you and
14 get you that number.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Sure. My
16 understanding is that it's been single digits for a
17 long time, and normally I bow to the population
18 demands of our sister boroughs but I think we're one-
19 third parkland in Staten Island, very proud of that,
20 but that's a lot of acreage, a lot of real estate to
21 protect, and I think that, much like Chair Kagan may
22 be experiencing on the boardwalk in his District,
23 where there are all kinds of issues, illegal dumping
24 that takes place in some of our passive parkland,
25 you're about to become custodians of Fresh Kills

1 which is a massive security undertaking, not to
2 mention the boardwalk and all of our active
3 recreation area so would love to see what we can do
4 to beef that up because the demands are only getting
5 worse, and, while there may not be as much volume of
6 people, you have a lot of places where people can get
7 lost and get to mischief.

9 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely. We
10 appreciate that. We do try to bolster our numbers
11 seasonally so we'll add more at the busiest times of
12 the year so we do that in Staten Island, but
13 absolutely we can talk further about ways that we can
14 increase that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you,
16 Commissioner. Thank you, Chairs.

17 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. I would
18 like to give a chance to ask questions to Council
19 Member Nurse.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you, Chairs.
21 Nice to meet you, Commissioner. I just had a couple
22 of followup questions, but one was to the Army Corps
23 Study. Just a question for the Mayor's Office of
24 Climate and Environmental Justice. Can you share a
25

2 little bit more about how you worked with that Study
3 or the input you provided?

4 SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR FISCHMAN: Sorry.
5 Can you just repeat the last part of that question?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Yeah. Sorry if you
7 can't hear me. Can you talk a little bit about how
8 you worked with that Study, how you interacted with
9 it, and kind of what input you provided?

10 SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR FISCHMAN: Thank you
11 for your question. I really appreciate it. I will say
12 first and foremost that that study is a group effort
13 and that we worked really closely with our partners
14 in New York State and the State of New Jersey to
15 provide the inputs that the Army Corps suggested, and
16 the study really does lay the groundwork for future
17 potential infrastructure projects and it's vitally
18 important. We are in regular communication with the
19 Corps about the study milestones, both at a staff and
20 leadership level, and we will continue to be engaged
21 throughout the study process. Both New York State and
22 New Jersey are the non-federal sponsors, and they
23 contribute to the cost share of the study.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Just specifically
25 what inputs were you all, just so I can get through

2 the time, what inputs did you all provide? Were there
3 like categories?

4 SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR FISCHMAN: I am not
5 personally involved in the project so I can get back
6 to you with more information on that.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Yeah. I can request
8 followup with the Chair. Do you all have a sense of
9 how you're going to engage with the public rollout
10 and sharing and educating folks about this and
11 seeking input? I know it's been asked a couple of
12 time and we were still waiting, but now that we have
13 this do you think there's a timeline that you could
14 share?

15 SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR FISCHMAN: The Army
16 Corps is going to be rolling out a public process
17 pretty soon we hope. They are guiding this process so
18 we defer to them. There will be public meetings, and
19 there will also be opportunities to interact online
20 so if you go on their website right now they have
21 interactive maps and storyboards that you can follow
22 and see what's going on in your District or in
23 Districts around New York City. There will be an open
24 public comment period until I believe January 2023 so
25 we ask that all of your constituents join. What we

2 would love to do is work with you all to invite the
3 Army Corps to do presentations in your District so
4 please feel free to reach out and we're happy to help
5 facilitate that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: That's great. I had
7 one question that's a little bit off topic, but since
8 we did bring up trees I couldn't not ask. Sorry I
9 didn't get to the tree canopy hearing. I just had a
10 question for heat vulnerable communities, and I'm
11 sorry I didn't go through the transcript of that
12 hearing, but could you share if you all have done any
13 work or any updates on the use of trees for cool
14 corridors in heat vulnerable communities? I'm in
15 Bushwick so it's one of those areas. Just curious if
16 you have any information?

17 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely. I have
18 my Deputy Commissioner here who can talk more about
19 it, but I can tell you that that is very much what
20 dictates where we plant is the heat vulnerability
21 index, and we know so strongly how important our
22 trees are to cooling. We actually just launched a
23 study in partnership with the Natural Areas
24 Conservancy that looks at monitoring really how much
25 the temperature decreases because of the impact of

1 trees, but the heat vulnerability index is very much
2 an indicator of how and where we plant.
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: In terms of that as
5 an indicator, yes, but in kind of a guiding factor
6 but...

7 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Yes.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Can you give a
9 little update on where you've started or how far
10 along you are in that.

11 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely.
12 Jennifer, can I ask you to do that?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREENFELD: Thank you
14 so much for that question. To answer the first thing
15 that you are asking about is that we're funded to
16 fully plant out every possible location under our
17 jurisdiction so along the public right of way, in
18 parkland for the vulnerable communities, for HVI 4
19 and 5, which you sound like you're familiar, but
20 DOHMH really sets those criteria so we're not going
21 to choose one corridor over another. We're doing
22 everything we can possibly do in 4 and 5. We're
23 possibly through 5. We should finish that in the next
24 I think year or so and then we're moving on to 4
25 after that.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you so much.
3 Thank you, Chairs.

4 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you very much. I
5 would like to give a chance to ask questions to
6 Council Member Ariola.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you, Chairs.
8 Thank you so much for being here today, Commissioner.
9 I just for a moment want to talk about maintenance
10 because a lot of times along the boardwalk we'll have
11 like little mini-showers and such and they break and
12 then there are gallons of water that are just flowing
13 out, and we'll call for a little bit of time and it
14 seems to take a long time, the team is responsive but
15 says the plumbers have another priority, they're on
16 another job, so are you doing this type of
17 maintenance or is it something that's contracted out?

18 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: We do that type of
19 maintenance in-house, Council Member Ariola, and
20 thank you for the question and for raising it. This
21 is an important aspect, and the Council was
22 instrumental in helping us with the budget that was
23 passed in July. We actually were able to bring on a
24 significant number of new workers, maintenance
25 workers and also tradespeople because that's

1 something that we've so desperately needed so
2 plumbers, carpenters, and so those new people have
3 almost all been hired and so that work is done by our
4 plumbers in-house and we will have more of them so I
5 hope we can be more responsive and more quickly
6 responsive in situations like that.
7

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you. I
9 appreciate it. Just to touch on lifeguards. We
10 worked, you, Deputy Commissioner, and myself worked
11 so hard together regarding lifeguards, Chair Krishnan
12 and Chair Kagan, and I agree with him. We need to
13 work now, and I know you are because we've had
14 conversations, Deputy Commissioner, and I know that
15 you're working on it. Last year, this past summer
16 season, we worked on kind of immediate fixes like
17 paying the lifeguards more money. Will that continue
18 into the next season or was that a one-shot infusion
19 for more money for the lifeguards.

20 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Yes, thank you for
21 the question, and it was a one-shot infusion, yes,
22 from OMB.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: The reason was all
24 about incentivizing, and that is what we have to
25 continue to do, is incentive people to become

1 lifeguards and not go. The other is will we be
2 continuing to have our first responders and/or
3 teachers or people who are not working during the
4 summer or have shift work during the summer who are
5 certified continue to be eligible to become
6 lifeguards? I know that there wasn't a tremendous
7 response from it...

9 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: There wasn't,
10 right.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: But I think it's
12 because it was a very short period of time and we
13 were kind of throwing things together just to get
14 things done so I think if we start to put that out,
15 if it's still available, to put it out there earlier.

16 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Also, I'll work
18 hard with you and with the City Council to see if we
19 can't get our lifeguards an income that is
20 competitive with other counties like Westchester or
21 even Nassau and Suffolk Counties because, especially
22 Nassau and Suffolk are so close to Queens and the
23 other boroughs, and the federal parks who pay more,
24 and hopefully we can do something regarding the,
25 there were some who came back on, that were a

1 fraction of a point that did not pass maybe the swim
2 test or whatever and then they were brought back on,
3 so will there be different levels of evaluation, when
4 the tests are given now moving forward?
5

6 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: I don't think
7 different levels of evaluation, but the First Deputy
8 here has worked really hard to understand those
9 people who didn't pass, didn't come back. She sent
10 out a survey to all those people so we are working
11 really hard at all different ends, the recruitment,
12 the returnees, really understanding better where
13 they're coming from and what the issues are and doing
14 direct outreach that started before the summer ended,
15 that started in August so the First Deputy is working
16 hard to get as much detail as possible and really
17 bring in as many as we can and encourage as many as
18 we can.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: I want to say also
20 that I appreciate that at the time when we didn't
21 have enough lifeguards on the beach you were not just
22 on the phone calling, both of you, you were there
23 physically on the beach making sure that people were
24 safe, and I appreciate that because me and my staff
25 were out there, and we were doing that. The other

1 thing I want to thank you for is the collaboration
2 that you had with the NYPD and our office when the
3 boardwalk was being terrorized by ATVs and motorized
4 bikes and we effectively put an end to it so that was
5 terrific. There are still issues with just random
6 people on motorized bikes along the boardwalk, but
7 your officers are very attentive to that and they do
8 have a wonderful collaborating relationship with the
9 NYPD. That's it. Thank you so much.

11 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you very much. I
13 would like to add that even today on the boardwalk I
14 met a gentleman who said that all of the signs, no
15 motorized vehicles, no e-bikes at certain times, etc.
16 Though we put like 50,000 of these signs every meter
17 but nothing changes because everybody feels like
18 nobody's getting tickets so the more tickets could be
19 written, I would definitely encourage this because
20 the word will spread out rapidly that if you're
21 violating the law, you're getting fined. Otherwise,
22 it will be like... people complaining to me about this
23 lawlessness on the boardwalk all the time. This is
24 why I ask about collaboration with NYPD and also how
25 does it work with Parks Enforcement Officers.

2 One more question before I move to the
3 next topic. We didn't even talk today about services
4 to beachgoers. I believe every time I go to another
5 city in the United States of America, I'm not even
6 talking about abroad, but if you go to (INAUDIBLE)
7 Miami Beach, Fort Myers Beach, Virginia Beach, to New
8 Jersey, anywhere you can easily rent a chair, easily
9 rent an umbrella, easily get some simple services. In
10 New York City, you need to bring everything with you
11 to the beach, everything. I'm not talking about food.
12 We need to preserve our great restaurants and cafes
13 and everything else, but I'm talking about even basic
14 services, something to rent, something to buy. I'm
15 talking about beachfront activities and it will
16 create a lot of jobs, a lot of money to New York
17 City, to Parks Department, it will make our beaches
18 more hospitable, more friendly, more safe because
19 every private business would be responsible for a
20 certain sector of his beach, will do everything
21 possible to make it safe and clean, better than Parks
22 Department, so why do we never entertain this program
23 or anything like this?

24 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Thank you for the
25 question, Council Member, and we do work really hard

1
2 actually to have amenities and concessions for people
3 in our parks and on our beaches and on our
4 boardwalks. The Rockaways has been very successful in
5 great concessions. We have put an RFP for concessions
6 in Coney Island. It was actually awarded to the Coney
7 Island Alliance. They had trouble finding people to
8 actually provide the service, but it's something that
9 we're also looking to do, is to add more amenities to
10 the beach, and we will reach out to the community,
11 we've reached out to elected officials. We're happy
12 to put out another solicitation and another RFP to
13 try and build support for more amenities on the
14 beach. We're always looking to do that.

15 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: I was told that the
16 reason why these services are not provided is because
17 there is a state agency that prohibits these rentals
18 and everything else. Is that true?

19 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: There's a state
20 agency that what?

21 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: There is a New York
22 State agency or a Department of Environmental
23 Conservation that is prohibiting rental activities on
24 the beach. Is that true?

COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: No. Not that we're aware of.

CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Okay. Thank you. Now, I recognize my good friend, Council Member Dinowitz.

COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Hello. Good afternoon. Thank you so much for being here, Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Miss Fischman, I don't know if you have a title, I apologize, well Miss Fischman is just fine then. I've heard a lot of talking about lifeguards. Obviously, there's the shortage. We have many schools in my District. One of them is Clinton High School, and the pool has been broken for a long time and the pool's not working, not functional, students aren't swimming let alone learning how to be lifeguards, and it's an incredible opportunity. I've heard of other schools throughout the Bronx that had once-beautiful swimming pools that are no longer functional. What work, if at all, is Parks doing with the Department of Education or is the administration doing to have Parks and DOE work together so that our students can learn to swim, learn to be lifeguards, and perhaps help fill that job shortage?

2 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Yes, thank you,
3 Council Member. It's a great question. That already
4 happens. Parks works quite closely with DOE on our
5 Learn to Swim program so we actually use DOE pools
6 and we have a great partnership whereby our aquatics
7 team goes to DOE schools and trains kids through
8 Learn to Swim and our Swim for Life program. We have
9 actually been in several conversations over the last
10 few months with DOE to expand that program and
11 identify target schools, because our Swim for Life
12 and our swimming lessons are generally for younger
13 kids, but absolutely we want to work on a partnership
14 for our high school students and for older kids to be
15 able to have the opportunity for them to become
16 lifeguards.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: As part of the
18 program would be ideally training them, creating a...

19 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: A pipeline.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: I was going to
21 say a pool but then I was like, it's not, feel like
22 I'm trying too hard, but are part of those
23 conversations recognizing that the facilities used to
24 exist in some schools, again I'm talking about
25 Clinton High School but this exists in other places

2 as well, but it's not just the programming, it's the
3 infrastructure. Is that part of the conversation,
4 and, if not, can that start being part of the
5 conversation because I imagine you're not going to
6 have a really good swim program on land.

7 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Absolutely, it's
8 part of the conversation, identifying which schools
9 and what has availability and where there are
10 opportunities to use pools for training..

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: (INAUDIBLE)

12 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: That
13 infrastructure is not our responsibility so that's a
14 question for DOE really, but, absolutely, we need the
15 pools. We have the instructors, we have people who
16 could go out and help with this training so we are
17 looking for sites, absolutely.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: I have one other
19 question. As you're collaborating, I would request
20 that although it is not your responsibility, building
21 the pools, that that would be part of the
22 conversation and that you would impress upon the
23 administration, the Department of Education, that
24 without swimming pools you are unable to train
25 lifeguards so I would ask that that be part of your

1 conversations as you train those older students.

2
3 Secondly, I do thank you for highlighting and
4 mentioning the daylighting of Tibbetts Brook in your
5 opening. You know I love it. It's such an important
6 project for a variety of reasons, including some of
7 the environmental justice reasons we've been talking
8 about. First, if you could just update the Committee
9 on the status of that project including the greenway
10 portion of that project and any conversations with
11 non-city entities, like state agencies like the MTA
12 or private building owners, which need to be part of
13 the conversation so that's the first part. Secondly,
14 part of this project, the importance of it is to
15 prevent flooding and the overflow of our sewer system
16 and we think very much of the flooding of the Major
17 Deegan last year, which made national headlines, and
18 I'm wondering what efforts are being made to plant
19 more trees, back to tree canopy, more trees along the
20 highway to help mitigate those storms and not just
21 that highway, but we have Henry Hudson Parkway and
22 the Bronx River Parkway, what efforts are being made
23 to plant other green infrastructure like trees along
24 those highways, and, if it's not, what we can do as a
25 Council to push forward some of those, in addition

1 again to the daylighting of Tibbetts Brook, the
2 planting of more trees to help with the flooding and
3 the erosion that we're seeing, both onto the highway
4 and onto the service roads of our highways?
5

6 COMMISSIONER DONOGHUE: Thank you, Council
7 Member. Appreciate the question. We are also really
8 excited about the daylighting of Tibbetts Brook. It's
9 an amazing project. I'm going to toss it over to
10 Jennifer, our Deputy Commissioner for Environment and
11 Planning to answer and update (INAUDIBLE)

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREENFELD: Good
13 afternoon. Thanks so much for the question. First of
14 all, the Tibbetts Brook project is being managed and
15 built by the DEP as you probably know and it's in
16 design, and we're working with them very closely on
17 the design with the consultant, both the phases that
18 are taking place inside Van Cortlandt Park as well as
19 the tail that it's going to continue outside of it
20 because the daylighting is happening, as you know,
21 both inside and outside which is really exciting, and
22 we're also looking at access. There's a question,
23 we're working with different potential property
24 owners to see if we can get better access along the
25 pieces that are outside of Van Cortlandt Park so that

2 equity and accessibility is definitely important to
3 us. Your second piece was about just adding canopy
4 generally, right?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Yeah, along the
6 highways, yes.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREENFELD: Again,
8 it's not all of Parks' jurisdiction. A lot of it is
9 state highway so we work with partners wherever we
10 can, and DEP's approach, and I don't want to speak
11 for our sister agency, is very much a collaborative
12 approach when they're looking at their cloudburst
13 studies, they're looking at all property types and
14 thinking about how to increase permeability and
15 canopy.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Recognizing that
17 it's maybe not your property, I guess that's kind of
18 the, but it's in line with my first question which
19 you are the tree people, I don't imagine the DOT is
20 very good at trees, I'm not sure they're good at
21 anything, but you are the experts and the work that
22 you're doing in Parks really does impact everything
23 else and the work that DOT does and the work that DEP
24 does, really it's all intertwined, and that's really
25 what I'm asking about is if those conversations

2 happen, if they approach you or you approach them
3 about planting more trees, and, if not, how we can
4 help facilitate those conversations because that's
5 really what's going to help a lot when it comes to
6 some of the more moderate storms, is increasing the
7 trees and the capacity to absorb water and the
8 canopy.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREENFELD: I'm not
10 familiar with specific requests for specific
11 transportation corridors. I do have to say that our
12 partnership with the (INAUDIBLE) For All NYC
13 Coalition, with those dozens of groups, really
14 they're the folks who are taking this broad look and
15 have identified potential canopy protection and
16 expansion everywhere, including those places. We're
17 definitely at the table. We love sharing our
18 expertise and so if somebody has approached us and
19 you've heard we haven't responded well, please let me
20 know and I'm happy to participate.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you. We'll
22 certainly follow up with that. Thank you so much.
23 Thank you, Chairs.

24 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. I would
25 like to recognize Council Member Paladino.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Thank you. I
3 have to say this is a very enjoyable meeting. I
4 really mean it. This is such great stuff to talk
5 about. In my District, 19, we're surrounded by the
6 Sound which fortunately doesn't give us any problems
7 whatsoever and that's a good thing. To address the
8 tree issue, we have something going on. Donovan
9 Richards introduced into Queens 100,000 trees for
10 Queens so we are actively, I can't wait to get
11 involved in that, because we have so many dead trees
12 and I know, unfortunately, it doesn't fall into Parks
13 as much as it falls into DOT because our tree-lined
14 streets is not so much you, it's DOT, so that's a
15 little tough.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GREENFELD: No, it's
17 us.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: It's you? Well,
19 then I hit the jackpot. Oh my God, this is so great.
20 Oh my goodness. Okay. Actually, this is great because
21 we have countless calls, countless, and I mean
22 hundreds of calls that have come, even maybe close to
23 1,000, in my 10 months so far, and it's all about
24 dead trees, trees that have fallen, limbs that have
25 fallen into people's properties due to storms, but

1 we'll talk about that in a private session, I'll give
2 you a buzz. Also, we have a lot of wetlands in
3 College Point, and there's something very specific
4 I'd like to talk to you about concerning there
5 because that's preservation, and I'd like to see a
6 lot of that kept that way. I will address this
7 privately, but I do want to thank you so very much.
8 We also have a very big probably with our Clearview
9 Expressway, our Cross Island Parkway. Again, that's
10 State. I don't believe that includes, and you cannot
11 possibly plant any more greenery along the side of
12 either highway so thank you again. This has been
13 great. You ladies are wonderful.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you, Council
16 Member Paladino. Now, I believe we need to move to
17 the very exciting part called public testimony. I
18 would like to give a chance to speak to one of the
19 community leaders in Southern Brooklyn.

20 Could you stay for a minute, please?

21 I would like to give a chance to speak to
22 the great community leader from Southern Brooklyn and
23 advocate for people with disabilities, Debra Greif,
24 and also to invite at the same Christopher Greif.
25 He's not just the son of Debra Greif, but he's also a

2 big advocate for people with disabilities at MTA and
3 everywhere else so they have a lot to say. Debra and
4 Chris, it's your floor.

5 DEBRA GREIF: I'm Debra Greif, and this is
6 my son, Christopher Greif. I want to thank you for
7 having this hearing. I'm glad every City Council, I'm
8 glad the Parks Department is here. As you can see, I
9 was raised by a parent with disabilities. I'm 64, not
10 ashamed, very proud of it. I remember the Coney
11 Island Boardwalk the way it used to be and the same
12 for Rockaway because I used to go to Rockaway
13 Playland with my parents to see my great grandmother.
14 I don't remember problems with the boardwalks at that
15 time. Now, I'm frustrated. I, in 2019, broke my foot
16 for the sixth time and had a concussion so now for
17 six months to a year I was using a wheelchair.
18 Thankfully, this is the gentleman who pushed me.

19 CHRISTOPHER GREIF: Yes.

20 DEBRA GREIF: And what happened is we used
21 to go to the boardwalk regularly because also my
22 younger brother had to be in a nursing home on the
23 boardwalk for a while, and I didn't want to go any
24 more and I'll tell you why. It was the most painful
25 ride ever. I had a special chair that was cushioned,

2 and I could not handle the pain. My back was hurting
3 to the point where that when I purposefully went back
4 to the doctors, and I begged them, and I asked for a
5 cortisone shot. I couldn't take it, and this was just
6 from going on the boardwalk because the shape of the
7 boards and the breaking of it is terrible. The other
8 issue is even with a walker I won't do it because the
9 pain vibrates through my arms and goes to my back
10 again. I want it restored, and I know that certain
11 other advocates may not be happy. I don't care what
12 material you use. Fix it. I want it to be truly
13 accessible. I want to be able to go back and forth on
14 the boardwalk. I miss going there. I want to be able
15 to sit on a bench or sit on my walker and be able to
16 look at the ocean, but I don't want to be in so much
17 pain that I have to beg for a pain shot. That is not
18 right for me or anybody. People with wheelchairs
19 won't say anything because they want to be out, but
20 the truth is we need our boardwalks to be truly
21 accessible but also the ramps to get up and down. I'd
22 also like to see more mats on the beach so persons
23 who want to go to the water but need to use a
24 wheelchair can get on because it is frustrating when
25 you would like to go in water but you can't because

2 how are you going to go. The other issue I'd like to
3 bring up very quickly is, yeah, I would love trees to
4 be built, I live on Ocean Parkway. Do you know that
5 all the trees they used to build have took the
6 sidewalks and brought them up. They have broken the
7 sidewalks to the point that you have to go up and
8 down, it's like mountain climbing. It's not right. I
9 do understand the need for those trees. I do
10 understand for the plants but do plants that the
11 roots don't go and destroy your sidewalks or the
12 pathways. That's what makes it very hard for people
13 with disabilities to be able to go into the park and
14 seniors, people visual, every type of disability, we
15 cannot use our own parks, our own beaches, boardwalks
16 because they're not truly accessible. It is
17 frustrating. Now, my son has...

18 CHRISTOPHER GREIF: Good afternoon. I'm
19 Christopher D. Greif. As an advocate for people with
20 disabilities (INAUDIBLE) years, and I want to be very
21 clear as my mother said the same thing I'm going to
22 say. Boardwalks are cracking. Council Members, you
23 were there (INAUDIBLE) much worse. I've seen people
24 flying in the air and yet (INAUDIBLE) I'll say it
25 again, but I'll even speak louder. Thank you. The

2 main concern is accessibility for a senior or a
3 person with a disability, they cannot get onto the
4 boardwalk because there's holes, there are cracks,
5 and let me tell you we've seen people flying in the
6 air, and I can tell you when I was at Brighton Beach
7 during the Parade of Trains I saw someone actually
8 did fall from the platform and I was like eee,
9 somebody flew, and I mean I seen it with a perfect
10 angle. It's not safe. They say we're going to fix it.
11 When? I'm right now 39. When? Another 30 years? I'll
12 be a senior by then, and by then we'll be different
13 Councilmen, different mayors. It needs to be worked
14 now. The safety of us, we need to fix these
15 boardwalks. We ask that curb cut, everything needs to
16 be fixed. Anything that's parkland should be truly
17 ADA accessible. In your testimony, you mention
18 everything, but accessibility is the key that we need
19 to make clear. If you can make a park accessible in
20 Queens, why can't the other boroughs and counties can
21 do that? We have to see people go out of New York
22 just to go to a decent beach? I'm sorry. The only
23 thing that will go down to Coney Island is go and see
24 the Cyclones, go to Nathan's, or not disabled people.
25 It's gotta be both ways, and we have to work on that

2 as well as trees need to be a little more safely
3 because we need access for Access-A-Ride, bus stops,
4 need to be made clear for them as well. Parks, trees
5 are very important, but a customer who needs to get
6 on and off needs to be safe. Thank you.

7 DEBRA GREIF: And we do agree to volunteer
8 to test the (INAUDIBLE) if it's truly accessible so
9 that you do have proof someone with disabilities
10 tested it.

11 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you so much for
12 your testimony and for advocacy on behalf of people
13 with districts. Thank you so much.

14 I would like to give a chance to speak to
15 Paul Gallay.

16 PAUL GALLAY: I want to thank the
17 Committee Chairs, Council Members, and staff members,
18 members of the administration here today who are
19 doing the essential work under discussion. We'll
20 discuss this testimony in written form later in the
21 week. It's a pleasure to be back with the City
22 Council. I've previously been before the Council as a
23 member of the staff of the Department of Conservation
24 of the State of New York, Hudson River Keeper. Here
25 with me is Aya Morris, a visiting Fulbright student

1 researcher who is working with the Columbia Climate
2 School Resilient Coastal Communities Project. RCCP,
3 Resilient Coastal Communities Project, is a
4 partnership between Columbia University and the New
5 York City Environmental Justice Alliance. We're very
6 proud of this partnership. We try to manage it as an
7 equal, even-handed partnership and take our cues from
8 where the true knowledge really lies, which is the
9 community. We seek to foster actionable, equitable
10 solutions to flood risks along with complimentary
11 benefits like habitat restoration, job creation, and
12 more empowered communities. It's part of Columbia
13 University's new commitment to what they call the
14 Fourth Purpose, which in simple terms is researchers
15 and practitioners working together side-by-side in
16 real-time to solve critical problems like the ones
17 we're talking about today. Our Harbor and Tributaries
18 Study, HATS, Tentatively Selected Plan, TSP, is
19 almost certainly the largest such study the Army
20 Corps of Engineers has ever taken on. It's also our
21 last realistic chance to properly protect coastal
22 communities from the growing climate change-driven
23 threats we face from flooding. These are really
24 existential threats when it comes down to it. It's
25

2 challenges. It needs to deal with three distinct
3 problems, storm surge like we saw from Hurricane
4 Sandy 10 years ago, heavy downpours like the
5 unprecedented storms of Ida and Henri last year, and
6 seas that are rising at least a foot over the first
7 half of this century according to the New York City
8 Panel on Climate Change most recent report and has to
9 balance five very important goals, public safety,
10 ecological protection, access to the waterfront,
11 protecting community character, and achieving
12 restorative justice and social cohesion because there
13 are a lot of communities that we interviewed at the
14 RCCP said to us, don't talk to us about resilience,
15 we've had it be resilient for decades, for
16 generations, we want restorative justice, we want
17 social cohesion in addition to flood protection. The
18 Army Corps' study has over 40 different types of
19 flood protection measures that they discuss in this
20 Tentatively Selected Plan, and the key is picking the
21 right combination of those solutions across each
22 community over a 900-mile stretch of coastline,
23 working with those communities, not for them. If it's
24 okay, I'll take another couple of minutes because I
25 think it's important for you to know what the Army

Corps is promising by way of community engagement,
but I'll pause to make sure that is okay.

CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Sure. That's okay
with me if that's okay with you, Chair Kagan.

CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: It's okay with me, but
he said he will submit it in written form anyway.

PAUL GALLAY: Okay. I will be brief,
Chairs. The Army Corps of Engineers has a new
mandate, and it's part of the Justice 40 Program
which is to center communities in the planning for
their own futures. To advance this goal, to their
credit the Army Corps' initial draft communications
plan which was shared with Columbia and other
advocates last Friday provides for an environment and
climate justice working group. The first of its kind.
We at Columbia and NYC-EJA have been asking for this
since first discussions with the Corps in May. The
Army Corps is promising that public participation and
meaningful incorporation of their input from the
public is key to this study's success. They're
promising effective two-way communication with
stakeholders to find and build consensus on the most
feasible, environmentally acceptable, innovative, and
effective solutions possible. If this is going to

2 work, as my Colleague Aya Morris is about to tell
3 you, we need a fundamental shift in one aspect of
4 this planned timetable because when you think about
5 all the times the Army Corps has promised to do,
6 first you have to give the communities the capacity
7 to participate and then you have to give them the
8 time. If I may, the summary is from Aya.

9 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: You're not registered
10 to testify. You never registered to testify.

11 PAUL GALLAY: I thought I had registered.

12 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: You did, but she never
13 did it. What is your name again?

14 AYA MORRIS: My name is Aya Morris. I'm a
15 Fulbright student. I'll just keep this brief.
16 Apologies for not having formally registered. What we
17 just wanted to advocate for is a longer timeframe for
18 community consultation on the HATS draft report. At
19 present, the consultation is open only until January
20 6th, and a longer timeframe will allow for more
21 comprehensive community comments on an extremely
22 complex project which involves many communities.

23 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you so much.

24 PAUL GALLAY: We can't center communities
25 in three months. It's as simple as that. We

2 appreciate the opportunity to testify and apologize
3 if we've overstayed our welcome.

4 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: It's okay. Send us in
5 written form. That will be helpful. Thank you.

6 I would like to give a chance to speak to
7 Sherrise Palomino, New Yorkers for Parks.

8 SHERRISE PALOMINO: Good afternoon. My
9 name is Sherrise Palomino, and I am the Director of
10 Advocacy and Programs at New Yorkers for Parks. We
11 are a founding member of the Play Fair Coalition,
12 which includes over 400 organizations across the five
13 boroughs. Thank you to the Committee on Resiliency
14 and Waterfronts and the Parks Committee for the
15 opportunity to speak about the resiliency of our
16 city's beaches and waterfronts. I also want to thank
17 Chairs Krishnan and Kagan for their leadership on
18 this important issue.

19 This climate crisis has highlighted the
20 critical needs of our parks system including adequate
21 funding for park staffing to do resiliency work and
22 to address inequities in access, infrastructure, and
23 general maintenance. The city's decades long
24 disinvestment in parks continues to exacerbate these
25 tragic inequities in our parks system. The City

2 Council and Mayor can fix it by making a 1 percent
3 investment of the city budget into parks.

4 Beaches like Coney Island and the
5 Rockaways need urgent investments in maintenance and
6 upkeep. With a well-funded Parks Department, our
7 beaches and waterfronts can be properly maintained.
8 Basic maintenance issues on the Coney Island
9 boardwalk can reduce issues for beachgoers from
10 damaged planks of wood and exposed nails. Many parks
11 advocates and community leaders invest their time
12 volunteering to do jobs that NYC Parks Department has
13 not been able to adequately fund like cleaning up
14 beaches and supporting wetlands that are much needed
15 at our beaches and waterfronts. New York is the
16 greatest city in the world with a parks system that
17 does not reflect modernity nor have the proper
18 infrastructure to support the climate crisis we are
19 living in.

20 We are overdue for a transformative
21 investment in our parks system. One percent of the
22 city budget for parks could improve maintenance for
23 the 160 miles of waterfront that New York City Parks
24 manages and ensures that our beaches and waterfronts
25 are well-maintained and equitably serving New Yorkers

1 of all communities and backgrounds. The New York City
2 Parks Department does a valiant job maintaining these
3 aging resources but needs more funding to do so. It
4 is time to allocate 1 percent of the city's budget to
5 Parks.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you very much for
8 your testimony. Thank you.

9 Now, I would like to give a chance to
10 testify to Michael Dulong, Riverkeeper.

11 MICHAEL DULONG: Thank you. Good afternoon.
12 Thanks, Chairpersons Kagan and Krishnan and Members
13 of your Committees, for the opportunity to testify to
14 your attention to waterfronts. It's good to see my
15 friend, Paul Gallay, and my former captain of the
16 Riverkeeper Ship in attendance.

17 I'm Mike Dulong. I'm a Senior Attorney
18 with Hudson Riverkeeper. I'm also on the SWIM
19 Steering Committee, that's the Stormwater
20 Infrastructure Matters Coalition Steering Committee,
21 and I would like to take this opportunity to just
22 point you to three ongoing city, state, and federal
23 processes that are going to have an enormous impact
24 on our waterfronts in the near future.
25

2 I'll start with the city. On Friday, the
3 City blew a deadline for the Adapt NYC Plan. This was
4 a plan that's required by Local Law 122. It was a
5 product of the Waterfronts and Resiliency Committee,
6 and something that my group and a lot of other groups
7 pushed very hard for. It's supposed to have a
8 comprehensive study for all 520 miles of coastline as
9 well as prepare the city for climate change with a
10 focus on environmental justice. We met with the
11 Mayor's Office numerous times. We've sent letters.
12 We've worked with 14 other organizations to submit
13 green infrastructure program recommendations, and I'm
14 not sure what happened between this summer and now,
15 but the plan is not out. We don't know what's going
16 on with it so we urge your offices to take action to
17 ensure that that plan comes out soon. It is critical
18 that it come out to start informing other plans that
19 the City is undertaking right now, like Renewable
20 Rikers, Power Up New York City, and others.

21 The second thing that I want to talk about
22 is just to follow on what Paul had said about the
23 Army Corps' Tentatively Selected Plan. First, that
24 plan, if completed, is going to have an enormous on
25 New Yorkers and their waters of course. Storm surge

2 barriers which are slated for Jamaica Bay, Gowanus
3 Canal, Midtown Creek, and Flushing Creek, all have,
4 even if left open, most of the time they have a
5 tremendous impact on aquatic ecosystems. They can
6 prevent fish migration, they can hamper sediment
7 transport, they can prevent the flushing of combined
8 sewer overflows so these types of impacts need to be
9 looked at before that plan is finalized. We agree and
10 we hope you'll support the Rise 2 Resiliency
11 Coalition in seeking additional public processes from
12 the Army Corps including an environmental justice and
13 climate justice citizen oversight committee to work
14 with the Army Corps to help that public process along
15 and get voices heard.

16 The third thing I want to point you to is
17 the State is currently soliciting information about
18 water quality and recreational water uses in an
19 attempt to reset, to either relax or strengthen water
20 quality designated uses for the waters in and around
21 New York City.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time is expired.

23 MICHAEL DULONG: I just have less than a
24 minute left if that's okay.

25 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Okay.

2 MICHAEL DULONG: These uses are going to
3 set the criteria for protections for those water
4 qualities and so whether you can swim in a waterway
5 or not will be determined by this process so it is
6 important that all city agencies be directed to give
7 information to the state in setting these so Parks
8 and Department of Environmental Protection especially
9 have information on that and that New Yorkers engage
10 and that the City Council engage in how these
11 waterways are used because a lot of them are
12 recreational waterways or should be. We do have a
13 website where we are sending people to at
14 Riverkeeper, this is in our written testimony where
15 we are collecting information on that so we'd
16 appreciate your support in getting that information,
17 making sure that the State sets the right uses so
18 that we can use our waterways. Thank you very much.

19 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. Thanks a
20 lot.

21 I would like to give a chance for closing
22 remarks to my Colleague, Chair Krishnan.

23 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: I want to close
24 today's hearing by first thanking Chair Kagan for
25 hosting this hearing jointly, for inviting me to come

1 out to see the Coney Island Boardwalk earlier today
2 too, and for raising important issues about both
3 boardwalk maintenance and how that ties to the larger
4 issues of workforce maintenance and care for our
5 city.
6

7 As we heard in today's hearing, there are
8 a number of issues that we as a City need to address
9 if we are to be a sustainable city, which we need to
10 be, and, if we are, to make sure that we're prepared
11 for the worsening climate crisis ahead. That spans
12 work from our waterfronts, from our Coney Island
13 Boardwalk, from everyday maintenance at the boardwalk
14 to larger issues of care that are needed as well, and
15 it spans issues to take care of our inland parks and,
16 of course, our tree canopy and how central of a role
17 it plays in making sure that we are prepared for the
18 climate crisis that we face and will continue to
19 face.

20 Thank you all for coming today. Thank you
21 to our Parks Department and our Commissioner
22 Donoghue. Thank you to our Parks Committee staff as
23 well as my office staff as well and the staff of the
24 Waterfront Committee too for doing a great job in
25

2 hosting and putting together today's hearing. Thank
3 you all.

4 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you so much,
5 Chair Krishnan, and thank you for your leadership and
6 for visiting Coney Island Boardwalk today and
7 witnessing the deplorable conditions on Coney Island
8 Boardwalk and helping to bring this issue forward.

9 Today, we heard a lot of questions and a
10 lot of concerns from so many and also about
11 conditions of our boardwalks, I would say all
12 boardwalks but specifically Coney Island Boardwalk,
13 also about conditions of our beaches, questions about
14 shortage of lifeguards, and about public safety on
15 boardwalks, and then in general what Department of
16 Parks and in general the city administration is doing
17 to turn things around to make sure that people are
18 enjoying parks, enjoying boardwalks, enjoying
19 beaches. We live in New York City. This is the
20 capitol of the world, and we need to make sure that
21 all New Yorkers and all tourists are enjoying our
22 waterfronts. That's why we decided to host this joint
23 Committee hearing in the first place.

24 I also would like to praise my office
25 staff and, of course, the Waterfront Committee staff,

1 especially our great Counsel, Jessica Steinberg
2 Albin, and all public testimonies. Thank you so much.
3 It helps to understand various angles of our public
4 policy. I believe we have a lot of work to do. If you
5 listened carefully today, we have a lot of work to
6 do. We're going to continue this work on behalf of
7 our constituents and on behalf of all New Yorkers.
8 Thank you very much. I am closing this hearing.

9 [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date October 16, 2022