

Joint Committee on Finance & Commerce and Economic Development
August 4, 2020

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
JOINT COMMITTEES ON FINANCE & COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Tuesday, August 4, 2020
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN DEREK S. GREEN, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILWOMAN CHERELLE L. PARKER
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS

RESOLUTION: 200336

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2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Good
3 morning. I want to welcome everyone this
4 morning to the Joint Committees on
5 Finance & Commerce and Economic
6 Development. I, Councilman Derek Green,
7 am the Chair of the Finance Committee and
8 Councilmember Mark Squilla as Chair of
9 the Commerce and Economic Development
10 Committee.

11 I understand that state law
12 currently requires that the following
13 announcement be made at the beginning of
14 every remote public hearing as follows:
15 Due to the public health emergency, City
16 Council hearings are currently meeting
17 remotely. We're using Microsoft Teams to
18 make these remote hearings possible.
19 Instruction for how the public may view
20 and offer public testimony at public
21 hearings of Council Committees are
22 included in the public hearing notices
23 that are published in the Daily News,
24 Inquirer and Legal Intelligencer prior to
25 the hearing, and can also be found on

1 phlcouncil.com.

2 With that, I note that the hour
3 has come. Mr. Iannuzzi, will you please
4 call the roll to take attendance?

5 Members that are in attendance
6 will please indicate that you are present
7 while your name is called. Also, please
8 say a few brief words when responding so
9 that your image will be displayed on
10 screen when you speak.

11 THE CLERK: Councilmember Bass.
12 Councilmember Brooks.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Good
14 morning, Councilmembers. I'm present.

15 THE CLERK: I don't know
16 whether I'm having audio issues or if
17 that's everyone but I'm going to
18 continue.

19 Councilmember Domb.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good morning,
21 everyone.

22 THE CLERK: Councilmember
23 Gauthier.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good
25 morning. I'm present.

1 THE CLERK: Councilmember

2 Gilmore Richardson.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

4 RICHARDSON: Yes. Good morning, Frank.

5 Thank you so much (inaudible.). I'm
6 looking forward to the hearing today.

7 THE CLERK: If you are not
8 speaking, can you please put your audio
9 on mute, please.

10 Councilmember Gym.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
12 morning, colleagues. Good morning,
13 staff. I'm looking forward.

14 THE CLERK: Councilmember
15 Henon.

16 COUNCILMAN HENON: Good
17 morning, colleagues, and good morning
18 everybody who's joining us for this
19 hearing this morning.

20 THE CLERK: Councilmember Oh.

21 COUNCILMAN OH: Sorry about
22 that. Good morning. I am here.

23 THE CLERK: Councilmember
24 Parker.

25 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Present,

1 Frank, and thank you for that about the
2 audio because we can hear somebody's
3 television in the background. So thank
4 you, Frank.

5 THE CLERK: Councilmember
6 Quinones-Sanchez.

7 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:
8 Good morning. Good morning.

9 THE CLERK: Councilmember
10 Thomas.

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Can you
12 hear me well?

13 THE CLERK: Yes. Good morning.

14 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank you,
15 Chair. Sorry I missed the sound check.

16 THE CLERK: Co-Chairs Green.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Present.

18 THE CLERK: And Squilla.

19 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Present.

20 THE CLERK: And I just want to
21 make sure at the top I got the right --
22 we still have Councilmember Brooks on the
23 screen, but I could not hear her. Can
24 she try again?

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Frank,

1 can you hear me now?

2 THE CLERK: A little bit
3 better.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: I turned
5 my mic up. Is that better?

6 THE CLERK: Better all the
7 time, Councilmember. Good morning to all
8 of you. Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
10 morning, Frank. This is Councilwoman
11 Bass checking in as well.

12 THE CLERK: Thank you,
13 Councilmember.

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
15 Mr. Iannuzzi. A quorum of the Committees
16 is present, and this hearing is now
17 called to order. This is the public
18 hearing on the Joint Committees on
19 Finance & Commerce and Economic
20 Development regarding Bill No. 200 --
21 excuse me, Resolution No. 200336.

22 Mr. Iannuzzi, will you read the
23 title of the resolution?

24 THE CLERK: Resolution No.
25 200336, resolution authorizing the

1 Committees on Finance and on Commerce and
2 Economic Development to hold joint
3 hearings regarding Philadelphia's safe,
4 equitable and robust economic recovery
5 from the coronavirus pandemic.

6 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
7 Mr. Iannuzzi. Before we begin to hear
8 testimony from the witnesses, we have
9 here for today everyone who has been
10 invited to the meeting to testify should
11 be aware that this public hearing is
12 being recorded. Because the hearing is
13 public, participants and viewers have no
14 reasonable expectation of privacy. By
15 continuing to be in the meeting, you are
16 consenting to being recorded.

17 Additionally, prior to
18 recognizing my Co-Chair for comments or
19 comments that he may have, I will note
20 for the record at this time that we will
21 use the chat feature available in
22 Microsoft Teams to allow Members to
23 signify that they wish to be recognized.
24 In order to comply with the Sunshine Act,
25 the chat feature must only be used for

1 this purpose.

2 Before we call the first panel,
3 I'd like to recognize the Chair of the
4 Commerce and Economic Development
5 Committee. Councilmember Mark Squilla,
6 if you would like to make any openings
7 comments.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
9 Mr. Chair. I also noticed that
10 Councilmember Jones was present. I don't
11 know if he did a mic check so that we're
12 all there.

13 Can you hear me, Councilmember
14 Jones?

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes, I can.
16 Can you hear me? Good morning.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right.
18 You sound good. Thank you so much.
19 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. As we
20 participate in this hearing, how
21 important it is to look at a smart safe
22 restart of our economy, how we as the
23 City partner with our local businesses
24 and residents to understand not only the
25 challenges of this pandemic and what it

1 has done to our communities and
2 businesses, but how we as a City can help
3 these businesses and the residents to
4 come back to some type of a normality.

5 We know that it would never be
6 the same as it was previously, but I
7 think it's important to work together to
8 understand the challenges of each
9 individual operation and business that's
10 out there and how we can partner with
11 them to make sure the safely and smartly
12 restarting of our economy is done in a
13 way that get people back to work, but
14 understand that safety is of utmost
15 importance and that we take all into
16 consideration as we move forward. So I
17 think this hearing is very important.

18 I know it's a challenge but I
19 know as a City of first class of
20 Philadelphia we are prepared to move
21 forward, looking forward to working
22 together with our business partners and
23 our community members to getting back to
24 business. And I think this is a
25 challenge, but I think we're up for it

1 and looking forward to a great hearing.

2 Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
4 Councilmember Squilla. Also, this being
5 the first hearing since the tragic news
6 that we've learned, and I'm looking at
7 Councilmember Jones because I know he has
8 been deeply involved in this issue like
9 many others throughout the City, the loss
10 of life of a 7-year-old, Zumar Jones. I
11 know he has been deeply active, engaged
12 with the community as well as other
13 members of Council.

14 And I want to thank my
15 colleague Councilmember Jones and also
16 Councilmember Johnson for convening the
17 Special Committee on Gun Violence next
18 week on August 11th and 12th and 9:30 to
19 really try to do some more and address
20 this issue of gun violence, which is a
21 crisis in our City.

22 And you may say, well, how does
23 that connect with today's conversation.
24 Poverty is also a crisis in our City.
25 And when people don't have the

1 opportunity to earn a living to do better
2 for the family and others, the issues of
3 gun violence and crime and poverty are
4 intertwined. And we have to do all that
5 we can to address all of these issues.
6 And COVID-19 has also been a crisis.
7 It's a pandemic, but it's also been an
8 economic calamity in our City.

9 And so, although it's a crisis,
10 it's also an opportunity. And I look
11 forward to hearing from representatives
12 from the Executive branch, the Greater
13 Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce who has
14 a taskforce on the charge and recovery
15 and all the other witnesses talking about
16 what they're trying to do to address this
17 crisis.

18 And I'm going to spotlight one
19 individual who's going to testify today.
20 He is an entrepreneur who has really from
21 my observation flourished in this
22 unfortunate situation. I'm thinking
23 about David Simms who has relocated to
24 the 9th Councilmanic District, the 9th
25 District on Wadsworth Avenue. I give a

1 little shout out to my colleague
2 Councilmember Parker.

3 But I remember David when he
4 first started his business when my wife
5 and I had our lady shoe store in Mount
6 Airy, and he was one of the first people
7 that we worked with when we were having
8 the shoe affairs in the store. And
9 seeing how he has been able to grow his
10 business from Ridge Avenue to Wadsworth
11 Avenue and in spite of COVID-19, he has
12 been able to re-engineer his business and
13 continue to flourish in outstanding ways.

14 And I think that's what gives
15 me some hope about how we can come out of
16 this crisis in a better way, in a way
17 that we provide more economic
18 opportunities, more opportunities for
19 entrepreneurs to flourish like David
20 Simms and also create a better life for
21 people in our City so we can celebrate
22 the success of a David Simms and not have
23 to mourn the death of Zumar Jones.

24 So with that, members of
25 Council, we will start the hearing.

1 Mr. Iannuzzi, can you introduce the first
2 panel?

3 THE CLERK: Sylvie Gallier
4 Howard, Acting Director of the Department
5 of Commerce, City of Philadelphia, Anne
6 Bovaird Nevins, President of Philadelphia
7 Industrial Development Corporation.

8 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Ms. Gallier
9 Howard, if you can start your testimony.

10 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: Sure.

11 COUNCILMAN GREEN: If anyone
12 that is here on Microsoft Teams, please
13 put your microphone on mute until you're
14 called to testify. Thank you.

15 MS. GALLIER HOWARD:
16 (Inaudible).

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Ms. Gallier
18 Howard, you are on mute so we don't hear
19 you.

20 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: My
21 apologies. All right. Good morning,
22 Chairperson Squilla, Chairperson Green
23 and members of the Committees on Finance
24 and Commerce and Economic Development.
25 My name is Sylvie Gallier Howard and I am

1 the Acting Director of Commerce. Thank
2 you for having me here today to provide
3 testimony on Resolution No. 200336
4 regarding Philadelphia's safe, equitable
5 and robust economic recovery from the
6 COVID-19 pandemic.

7 The COVID-19 pandemic is a
8 public health crisis which has
9 precipitated an economic crisis that is
10 unlike anything we've seen in our
11 lifetime. Experts say we are on track
12 for the worst GDP year in history. One
13 of five Americans are collecting
14 unemployment right now and small business
15 owners and workers in vulnerable
16 industries have borne the brunt of this
17 crisis. And as we all know, this crisis
18 has also had a devastating impact on the
19 City's ability to serve its residents,
20 creating an unprecedented \$749 million
21 hold in the City's FY21 operating budget.

22 The response from the federal
23 government to support small business
24 owners and workers will be critical to
25 every city's recovery. But here in

1 Philadelphia, we must take additional
2 measures to ensure that we emerge with an
3 economy that is more resilient, more
4 inclusive and more equitable than ever
5 before. If we focus our collective
6 energy and effort into capitalizing on
7 our City's national assets and strengths,
8 this crisis presents us with an
9 opportunity to re-imagine Philadelphia's
10 economic future and ensure long-term
11 prosperity for all.

12 The Commerce Department and our
13 partnered economic development agencies
14 PIDC and Philadelphia Works have been
15 approaching our economy recovery work
16 within a 4.4 phase framework, as we work
17 to inspire our communities and
18 stakeholders to truly reimagine
19 Philadelphia's future economy. We call
20 this framework the four Rs; respond,
21 restart, recharge and reimagine.

22 Examples of our response work
23 include deploying 13.3 million to shore
24 up local small neighborhood businesses
25 and retain jobs through the COVID-19

1 Small Business Relief Fund. To give you
2 a sense of the types of businesses we
3 were able to support, 66 percent were
4 minority-owned and 83 percent had less
5 than half a million dollars in annual
6 revenue.

7 To restart our economy, the
8 Commerce Department is working closely
9 with public health leaders to get updated
10 and accurate information and guidance out
11 to businesses and to support them to
12 reopen with care when it is safe to do
13 so, and we are working with City Council
14 to distribute personal protective
15 equipment, PPE starter kits, to give
16 small businesses some supplies that
17 they'll need to reopen safely.

18 To recharge local businesses
19 with new opportunities, we are working
20 with a larger group of stakeholders,
21 which includes community development
22 finance institutions, business chambers
23 and associations and leaders throughout
24 the community. Examples of our
25 partnership around recovery planning and

1 actions include the Chamber's Regional
2 Recharge and Recovery Taskforce, the
3 Equitable Entrepreneurship Assessment and
4 Strategy led by the United way of
5 Southern New Jersey and the Workforce
6 Respond and Return Plan with Philadelphia
7 Works.

8 It is incumbent upon all of us
9 to reimagine our economic future in bold
10 new ways to ensure that Philadelphia is
11 positioned for long-term growth, and that
12 this growth is shared equitably by our
13 residents. While we work at the local
14 level to deliver important supports to
15 small businesses, we're also working to
16 connect these businesses to support at
17 the state and federal level.

18 Recently, Governor Wolf
19 announced a 225 million statewide grant
20 program and we are working hand in hand
21 with local CDFI to help businesses learn
22 about this program and apply. We're also
23 working to get information on the streets
24 about federal programs such as the
25 Payroll Protection Program, the Main

1 Street Lending Program and the Economic
2 Injury Disaster Loan.

3 While support for small
4 businesses is important, the other
5 critical piece is support for our most
6 vulnerable workers. Once again, we know
7 we need wide-scale actions from the
8 federal level to ensure that people can
9 meet their basic needs and support their
10 families during this crisis. But we also
11 must take action locally to ensure that
12 we invest in our residents and rebuild
13 our workforce to be stronger and more
14 resilient than ever before.

15 Since the onset of this crisis,
16 more than 197,000 Philadelphians have
17 filed initial unemployment claims. 69
18 percent of these claims were filed by
19 people without a high school or
20 equivalent diploma. And there has been a
21 continuous 30 percent point disparity
22 between Black and White claimants.

23 In addition to launching the
24 Career Connected Learning Initiative in
25 partnership with the School District and

1 local employers as well as continuing to
2 improve the Fair Chance Hiring Initiative
3 for returning citizens, we're launching a
4 \$1 million call for ideas to scale up
5 successful programs and to identify new
6 and innovative ways to connect
7 opportunity seekers to meaningful work
8 experiences. Like so many other places
9 around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic
10 has had a devastating economic impact on
11 Philadelphia.

12 We've seen some businesses
13 close. Our once vibrant commercial
14 corridors are struggling. And we've seen
15 too many families, especially Black and
16 Brown families, lose their employment and
17 livelihoods. Yet we all know that
18 Philadelphia and Philadelphians are
19 resilient by nature. Working together,
20 Philadelphia can emerge into a post
21 COVID-19 world with a more inclusive,
22 robust economy that will help ensure
23 long-term prosperity for all. I'm happy
24 to answer any questions you may have for
25 me. Thank you.

1 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you
2 for your testimony.

3 Let's have -- Mr. Iannuzzi,
4 wasn't there another speaker along with
5 Ms. Gallier Howard for this first panel
6 before we get into Councilmembers'
7 questions?

8 THE CLERK: Anne Nevins is also
9 supposed to be on this panel.

10 MS. BOVAIRD NEVINS: Good
11 morning. Good morning, Chairperson Green
12 and Chairperson Squilla as well as to all
13 the members of City Council in attendance
14 today. My name is Anne Bovaird Nevins
15 and I thank you very much for inviting me
16 to testify on behalf of PIDC. I know
17 that we are limited in time this morning
18 so I'll provide a summarized version of
19 my written testimony and also be happy to
20 answer any questions.

21 Over the past two months,
22 millions of people have raised a massive,
23 collective response to the ongoing issues
24 of unequal justice and racism in our
25 society. PIDC stands in solidarity

1 against racism, bigotry and violence in
2 any form and we are committed to doing
3 all that is in our power to drive an
4 equitable, economic recovery in
5 Philadelphia for all people, businesses
6 and communities.

7 In this context, PIDC's
8 COVID-19 recovery strategies strive to
9 put our communities' health and safety at
10 the forefront, ensure that we understand
11 the needs and act quickly to address
12 market gaps and prioritize diversity,
13 equity and inclusive. As my colleague
14 Sylvie Gallier Howard noted in her
15 testimony, we have been working in close
16 partnership with the City of Philadelphia
17 Department of Commerce and Philadelphia
18 Works to focus on four phases of where to
19 drive an equitable, economic recovery in
20 Philadelphia.

21 Those four phases are respond,
22 restart, recharge and reimagine. And my
23 written testimony includes how we are
24 defining those terms. PIDC's RESTART
25 Action Plan is focused on how we are

1 adapting our three existing core
2 strategies to meet Philadelphia's needs
3 at this critical time. Those three core
4 strategies are, number one, support,
5 growth and resilience of businesses.

6 PIDC finances growing
7 businesses of all sizes across all
8 industry sectors and delivers business
9 support services to increase the capacity
10 and resilience of diverse entrepreneurs
11 throughout Philadelphia. As noted by
12 Mr. Simms of Eatible Delights prior to
13 the start of the testimony, these are the
14 types of resources that can help generate
15 wealth, build equity and ownership,
16 create and sustain jobs and stabilize
17 neighborhoods.

18 Number two, we invest in high
19 impact community revitalization. PIDC
20 invests in real estate projects that
21 create good jobs, provide essential goods
22 and services and stimulate additional
23 investment in our neighborhoods. These
24 projects increase economic activity,
25 improve the quality of life and

1 strengthen communities throughout
2 Philadelphia.

3 And number three, we catalyze
4 opportunities for inclusive growth. PIDC
5 repositions underutilized land and
6 buildings into productive uses and
7 capitalize on new market opportunities
8 that will foster a growing, diversified
9 and inclusive economy in Philadelphia.
10 These investments attract and retain
11 businesses and talent, create opportunity
12 for innovation, leverage public assets
13 and encourage future investments.

14 In an effort to continue to
15 increase transparency and accountability,
16 particularly in light of the pandemic and
17 the major economic disruption that we're
18 experiencing --

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Hold on for
20 one second. Someone, please put your
21 computer on mute, audio on mute, so we
22 can hear Ms. Nevins' testimony. Thank
23 you. Sorry for the interruption. Please
24 continue.

25 MS. BOVAIRD NEVINS: Thank you,

1 sir. Our RESTART Action Plan is
2 published online at the address provided
3 in my written testimony and we also plan
4 to report out on the specific action
5 steps taken against this plan via our
6 PIDC monthly newsletter, social media
7 channels and our blog. Three specific
8 examples of the action items in our
9 RESTART Plan include, number one, PIDC's
10 participation in the Pennsylvania CDFI
11 network and the statewide program for
12 small businesses, and for which it will
13 be announced today that the second and
14 final round of applications will be
15 opening up on August 10th.

16 Number two is the launch of our
17 own \$3 million Restart Philadelphia Loan
18 Fund where we are specifically
19 prioritizing businesses located in
20 communities that have high poverty rates
21 and have committed that at least 50
22 percent of the funds will go to
23 historically disadvantaged businesses,
24 meaning those businesses that are 51
25 percent or more owned by Black, Hispanic,

1 Asian or Asian-American, Native American
2 or Pacific Islander individuals.

3 And third, the announcement of
4 the partnership last week between
5 Ensemble Real Estate Investments and the
6 minority business enterprise Mosaic
7 Development Partners to move forward with
8 next phases of development at the Navy
9 Yard with a strong focus on diversity,
10 equity and inclusion across all aspects,
11 including the ownership, construction,
12 professional services, operations,
13 tenancy and workforce.

14 To that end, we have already
15 committed to launching a new workforce
16 development in partnership with the West
17 Philadelphia Skills Initiative that will
18 expand employment opportunity at the Navy
19 Yard to un and underemployed residents of
20 South Philadelphia. This RESTART Action
21 Plan is intended to be a flexible road
22 map to adapt in realtime to changing
23 needs or new understanding of the needs
24 in our community.

25 We welcome new ideas and

1 opportunity for partnership with members
2 of City Council and I will be happy to
3 take any questions. Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you
5 for your testimony this morning.

6 I see we have a couple of
7 members that would like to ask questions.
8 And they'll go in this order,
9 Councilmember Jones, Majority Leader
10 Parker, Councilmember Maria Quinones-
11 Sanchez and Councilmember Jamie Gauthier.

12 I just have a quick question
13 before my colleagues ask their questions.
14 Both of you are somewhat new in your
15 position, although you're not new to your
16 organizations, and with all of the unrest
17 that has occurred due to the tragic
18 killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor,
19 among all the various (inaudible) only
20 exposed the issues that have been
21 historically in our nation and I would
22 say in our City based on systemic racism.

23 What new ideas on policies are
24 you envisioning as new members in these
25 leadership roles, especially dealing with

1 a pandemic that we've never seen? I
2 asked that question because from my
3 perspective we have not provided the
4 resources historically in Commerce,
5 especially in how we grow jobs in our
6 City. And considering that you are both
7 somewhat new in your positions, you have
8 new ideas, new thoughts, new perspectives
9 but you've also worked in both those
10 organizations so you understand some of
11 the challenges of Commerce and PIDC had.
12 So I know you both used the response,
13 recharge, restart (inaudible) perspective
14 during COVID-19, but I wanted to get some
15 perspective on some things that are based
16 on what I just said.

17 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: Sure.
18 Anne, I'll go first if that's okay. This
19 is definitely a completely unprecedented
20 moment in time and I think one of the
21 things in sort of doing their own
22 reckoning in terms of what Commerce has
23 been doing and what we can do better, we
24 have looked at -- the way we've normally
25 done business attraction and retention,

1 which has often been more about competing
2 with other cities and providing some type
3 of incentive and sometimes that has to be
4 the case, but instead of looking at in
5 terms of these transactional ways, we're
6 starting to look at it more as building a
7 foundation that will create long-term
8 prosperity and attractiveness for
9 companies.

10 So, for example, we're looking
11 at using some of the dollars that would
12 have been for maybe a forgivable loan or
13 incentive to invest in -- we have a goal
14 making Philadelphia the most diverse tech
15 city. And so, we're looking at how do we
16 actually invest in that and how do we
17 build direct pipelines, both through
18 retaining Black and Brown students that
19 come here to study in colleges and
20 universities, supporting our incumbent
21 town pipeline, our future town pipeline
22 in the schools, looking at how we support
23 Black and Brown or underrepresented
24 start-ups with grants and through an
25 accelerator that's targeting those

1 communities. So we're looking at those
2 types of things so that when a company
3 comes and they say, why should I come to
4 Philadelphia, what can you do for me? We
5 say, we're investing in a community where
6 your employees are going to live, where
7 their kids are going to go to school and
8 we're investing in your future town
9 pipeline. So that's one of the ways
10 we're looking at things a little bit
11 differently.

12 The other piece is with the
13 Workforce division now consolidated under
14 the Commerce Department, jobs are
15 directly linked to employers and Commerce
16 works with employers every single day, so
17 we're making a lot more connectivity.
18 When one of our members of our team is
19 working with a business and then say,
20 we're growing or we want to come and
21 bring as many jobs, we immediately
22 connect to the Workforce division and
23 look at how we can make sure that those
24 jobs are linked to opportunities to some
25 of our partners that do workforce

1 development. And before that, that
2 linkage wasn't so direct. I'll stop
3 there. And I'm sure Anne has some great
4 ideas as well.

5 MS. BOVAIRD NEVINS: Thanks,
6 Sylvie, and thanks, Councilman, for the
7 question. It is definitely something
8 that we have been thinking a lot about at
9 PIDC. And I think you said something,
10 Councilman, earlier in terms of how do
11 we -- I don't know if we want to say the
12 word opportunity in terms of things
13 coming out of the pandemic and the
14 terrible situation that so many
15 Philadelphians find themselves facing,
16 but I do think that if there is an
17 opportunity, it's for us to relook at
18 what we do and how we do it.

19 We had a session with all of
20 our staff last month as part of a monthly
21 town hall that we do where we watched a
22 documentary film called a Dream Deferred
23 that actually features a couple members
24 of Council, and talked about the impact
25 of redlining and some of the historic

1 decisions about how development happens
2 in Philadelphia and what do we need to be
3 doing and thinking about differently
4 moving forward.

5 One of my colleagues, I think,
6 put it really well when she said I've
7 been thinking a lot about the ways in
8 which we've been able to sort of toss out
9 the rule book, so to speak, in light of
10 the COVID-19 pandemic. Why haven't we
11 been able to do that in the same way in
12 light of the pandemic of systemic racism,
13 and I thought that that was a really good
14 way to frame it and I think that that's
15 driving a lot of how we are looking at
16 what we can and should be doing going
17 forward.

18 So one of the specific things
19 that we are doing differently now is not
20 just sort of letting the chips fall where
21 they may with respect to our lending
22 activities or our development activities
23 and then trying to track and report out
24 after the fact. I think that's
25 important. You need to track the

1 outcomes and you need to track and we're
2 going to need to continue to track what
3 we're actually doing when it comes to
4 lending to minority-owned businesses or
5 investing in low-income communities.
6 However, now I think we are being much
7 more intentional about putting that at
8 the front end.

9 So as I mentioned in my
10 testimony with our Restart Philadelphia
11 Loan Fund, we have said from the outset
12 that not only are we prioritizing, making
13 loans to businesses that are located in
14 high-poverty communities but that within
15 that, we are specifically committing that
16 at least 50 percent of the funds, and I
17 think it will be significantly higher,
18 but we've committed at least 50 percent
19 of those funds in that loan program will
20 go to historically disadvantaged
21 businesses with the definition that I
22 gave before. And that at least to my
23 knowledge of being at PIDC is not
24 something that we've ever explicitly done
25 in the past. So I'll stop there.

1 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And one
2 other thing for my colleagues in Council,
3 one other witness that was scheduled to
4 testify on this panel, Anne Fadullon, so
5 we'll let her testify and then we'll get
6 into the questions.

7 Ms. Fadullon, if you can
8 provide your testimony.

9 MS. FADULLON: Sure. Good
10 morning, everybody. Good morning,
11 Chairperson Squilla and Chairperson Green
12 and members of the Committees on Finance
13 and Commerce and Economic Development.
14 My name is Anne Fadullon and I am the
15 Director of Planning and Development for
16 the City of Philadelphia. I am pleased
17 to be here today to present testimony on
18 Resolution No. 200336 among our efforts
19 to promote a safe, equitable and robust
20 recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

21 As you know, the Department of
22 Planning and Development has a broad
23 mandate of plan to prepare and develop
24 successful neighborhoods for all
25 Philadelphians. We provide support to

1 developers looking to navigate the
2 development process. We review plans
3 developed by businesses and residents.
4 We help residents address their housing
5 needs and we support neighborhood
6 improvement initiatives. All of those
7 tasks have become more challenging
8 because of COVID-19.

9 Beginning in March, our Boards
10 and Commissions could no longer meet in
11 person. Staff could not meet with
12 applicants to review plans. Contractors
13 could not go into homes to make repairs.
14 We can no longer meet with clients
15 needing housing support. I am pleased to
16 report that most planning and development
17 functions are back up and running. Those
18 that are not yet operational will be so
19 soon.

20 When the closures first began,
21 our development services unit was a
22 critical link as developers attempted to
23 navigate the partially opened government.
24 It provided information to the
25 development community on what was working

1 and what wasn't, and delivered feedback
2 from that community to relevant City
3 agencies. Development services help keep
4 affordable housing, commercial and market
5 rate residential developments moving
6 forward and even helped the Hospital of
7 the University of Pennsylvania get
8 approval for its temporary COVID beds.

9 The Board of Commissions that
10 review projects are all meeting remotely.
11 If you have a project that must go before
12 the Zoning Board of Adjustments, City
13 Planning Commission, Civic Design Review,
14 the Historical Commission or the Art
15 Commission, your project will get a
16 hearing. We are also meeting more
17 frequently so that applicants waiting for
18 our decisions won't have to wait as long.

19 ZBA is holding 8 to 10 meetings
20 a month instead of the usual four. And
21 CDR is holding two meetings a month
22 instead of one. We know developers and
23 their construction workers are anxious to
24 get to work and we are working hard to
25 help them. Community members are

1 critical to these processes. We have set
2 up an RCO help desk, where staff will
3 answer both technical and process
4 questions RCOs may have about hosting
5 virtual meetings.

6 Staff at the Art, Historical
7 and Planning Commissions are reviewing
8 applicant plans remotely and we are
9 developing protocols that will enable us
10 to review paper plans safely. Staff is
11 responding to applicant inquiry. If you
12 email us a question or send us a plan,
13 you will get an answer. The economic
14 effects of COVID-19 have placed
15 unprecedented pressure on homeowners and
16 renters and we are supporting them.

17 We have offered two phases of
18 rental assistance that will benefit both
19 tenant and landlord. To date, we have
20 made more than \$2.3 million in rent
21 payments. We expect to help more than
22 10,000 tenants remain in their homes. I
23 want to thank the housing council
24 agencies, the legal assistance
25 organizations and our City partners at

1 311 who helped to ensure that residents
2 could apply for assistance regardless of
3 their access to technology.

4 For homeowners, the Save Your
5 Home Philly Hotline continues to operate,
6 connecting homeowners facing foreclosure
7 to resources to prevent it. The Restore,
8 Repair, Renew Program remained open so
9 that homeowners could get low interest
10 home improvement loans and contractors
11 could get home improvement work. We
12 continue to process Philly First Home
13 applications so that low and moderate
14 income first-time homebuyers can purchase
15 their first home.

16 When construction was shut
17 down, PHDC provided documentation so that
18 work on more than 1200 affordable homes
19 and nearly 30 projects could continue.
20 PHDC has issued RFPs to create new
21 affordable housing on vacant land in
22 Kensington and staff continues to move
23 projects totaling more than 2100
24 affordable homes through the development
25 pipeline. PHDC has reworked its hotline

1 and client intake systems so that its
2 home improvement programs can serve
3 clients. Contractors began making home
4 repairs some time ago and we expect to
5 resume taking via (inaudible) and
6 adaptive modifications application next
7 week.

8 We continue to support
9 neighborhood improvement. When it met
10 remotely last month, the Redevelopment
11 Authority Board improved the construction
12 contract to improve a playground and to
13 selected redevelopers for affordable
14 housing and a community garden. It has
15 been a challenge to transition to a
16 completely new way of operating. But I
17 am pleased that we are supporting
18 programs and projects that improve
19 neighborhoods, create jobs and serve and
20 protect the most vulnerable of our
21 residents. I want to publicly thank the
22 staff at the Department of Planning and
23 Development and the Philadelphia Housing
24 Development Corporation for their work to
25 help Philadelphians and its residents

1 persevere through this pandemic. I am
2 happy to answer any questions you may
3 have for me at this time. Thank you for
4 allowing me to testify.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
6 Ms. Fadullon for your testimony.

7 In this order, we will have
8 Councilmember Jones, Majority Leader
9 Parker and Councilmember Maria Quinones-
10 Sanchez.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
12 Mr. Chairman, and particularly thank you
13 for your comments about the tragedy on
14 North Simpson Street and the senseless
15 loss of life. Other members have texted
16 me in that regard, and those comments are
17 heartfelt by me and members of my
18 community. And having the foresight to
19 see how this hearing is connected to that
20 tragedy is visionary. Thank you.

21 I guess I'm glad and also
22 thankful to the Chamber of Commerce,
23 Commerce Department, PIDC for not being
24 my grandfather's Chamber of Commerce,
25 PIDC. These kinds of conversations we're

1 having today, as much as I love retired
2 (inaudible) who first hired me, that
3 wasn't the top of the agenda back then
4 and I can see how we've evolved, so I'm
5 thankful for that.

6 Saturday you were out
7 (inaudible) putting together PPE packages
8 for over 100 commercial corridors in the
9 City of Philadelphia. I am truly
10 thankful for that. With my questions
11 come this: First, there are over 100
12 commercial corridors in the City of
13 Philadelphia. Restaurants, barbershops,
14 beauty salons have been the most hard-hit
15 sectors of small business, A, how are we
16 doing on the township of media-style
17 street closures, which will allow open
18 air dining not in weather like today, but
19 in non-inclement weather? Where are we
20 on those kinds of street closures going
21 forward?

22 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: So,
23 Councilman, thank you for the question.
24 We have been working on that for months,
25 and I think it's been really a true

1 partnership between Streets and L&I and
2 Commerce, and I think it's going pretty
3 well honestly. So we have -- there's
4 sort of three formats in terms of
5 utilization of the sidewalks or the
6 streets. And I know that there have
7 been -- I don't have the numbers offhand,
8 but I can get them to you, but at least a
9 couple hundred applications for new
10 permits for use of the streets and
11 there's even been some state closures of
12 streets. We're now looking at the fall
13 and the possibility of heat lamps and
14 that type of thing, so this has just
15 been -- honestly, I have colleagues and
16 they invite me to this everyday 8:30 a.m.
17 meeting, so I get all the chats of the
18 teams even though I'm not actually in the
19 meetings and I see they're working
20 diligently on all of the issues. They're
21 tracking any enforcement issues. But I
22 would say overall it's going pretty
23 smoothly.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I'm
25 appreciative of that. But the specifics

1 of how one applies, what is the criteria?
2 I would like you to provide to the Chair
3 who could then give to members so that
4 when we're asked by those respective
5 Wadsworth Avenues and Passyunk Avenues
6 and others how do I get in line for this,
7 we can answer them clearly.

8 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: Yeah, I
9 would be happy to do that, sure. I don't
10 believe there's -- there's not a line,
11 but there's definitely an application
12 process so I will definitely get you that
13 information. I'll be happy to.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: So,
15 specifically barbershops, beauty salons
16 and day cares have begun organizing
17 because of the impacts of the pandemic.
18 How are you specifically working with
19 those small businesses that occupy our
20 commercial corridors and
21 disproportionately our impacted
22 neighborhoods and our Black and Brown
23 business owners?

24 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: So there
25 are a number of ways. We have regular

1 phone calls with the BIDS and the CDC, so
2 you know that we support through the
3 corridor managers as well as other types
4 of support. So through those partners,
5 we are reaching out to those businesses
6 as well and getting information about the
7 needs there and getting information about
8 our programs out to those businesses.

9 We also are working through our
10 Office of Business Services, that I have
11 had people that have been in the office
12 on the floor since the very beginning
13 answering calls, supporting those
14 businesses. We have had conversations
15 about the businesses that couldn't open
16 until the green, and of course we're not
17 in the full green mode yet, being the
18 hardest impacted because even though the
19 personal services that you speak of, nail
20 salons, barbershops and also restaurants,
21 they can't open fully even when they're
22 open, so we know it's very hard for them
23 to stay alive. So we are looking at
24 potentially if the resources permit a
25 grant program for those businesses, but

1 we're looking at other things like how we
2 support them with the PPE, potentially
3 with fit-outs, that type of thing.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: So the
5 sooner we know those regulations, the
6 better small businesses can make the
7 business decision to make capital
8 improvements that comply with our
9 regulations. So if I know I need
10 plexiglass and I need distancing, I can
11 make those conscious decisions. The
12 earlier the better with the clock not
13 working in their favor because rent or
14 the mortgage is still due, so that's
15 important.

16 Finally, I read an article
17 yesterday about even with the pandemic,
18 there are certain streets and corridors
19 in Philadelphia that are hot like fish
20 grease. They are on fire in development,
21 more permits. I think the Director of
22 Planning talked about opening back up and
23 zoning opportunities. And that is good
24 news in some respects, but it is bad news
25 impact-wise for others.

1 Is there a corresponding
2 traffic study being done that not only
3 deals with the actual box of Center City,
4 but tributaries like Ridge Avenue in my
5 District, Main Street in my District,
6 Germantown Avenue in both the 9th and 8th
7 that are saying how do we get more people
8 quicker to places without having the
9 traffic and parking impact? The Planning
10 folks might be the appropriate
11 responders.

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Hearing
14 none --

15 MS. FADULLON: No, I'm here.
16 Give me a second to click. My reflexes
17 aren't what they used to be. So I think
18 those are all the concerns that folks are
19 talking about and I don't think we have
20 anybody from the Office of Transportation
21 and Infrastructure and Sustainability
22 that are on the call, but I think those
23 are things that are being looked at.

24 But I do think one of the
25 things that we are doing, particularly in

1 the Planning Department and Planning
2 Commission is we are getting ready to
3 take a look at how we approach our next
4 comprehensive plan, right, you have
5 Philly 2035 Plan, but we're 10 years into
6 that now. And so, we're starting to
7 really think about what the next plan
8 looks like, both long-term and also some
9 of the immediate things, and I think part
10 of that is what does the City look like
11 coming out of this.

12 This has been obviously a
13 tragedy of unprecedented proportions on
14 so many fronts and I think there's some
15 kind of standard planning principles that
16 would in the past have been applied to
17 not in a situation like this because we
18 haven't been through it, but just sort of
19 things that we would have done
20 immediately like, oh, this allows us to
21 cut down traffic where we can close
22 streets because cars aren't running and
23 in bike lanes, but I think we are
24 realizing that some of that sort of
25 traditional planning practice is not

1 based in equity.

2 So rather than sort of quickly
3 saying let's just go to kind of planning
4 101, we are taking a little bit of time
5 and thinking through that and trying to
6 address exactly some of the things that
7 you raised, Councilman Jones, which is
8 when you're shutting down a street to
9 allow businesses to reopen, that's
10 advantageous to some, but disadvantageous
11 to others, right, because others are
12 dependent on buses. They don't have
13 another means to get to where they need
14 to get to, to go to work, or we've seen
15 even before the pandemic how difficult it
16 was for someone who may have a little bit
17 more difficulty getting around from a
18 physical aspect than others when
19 sidewalks are covered with tables and
20 things like that.

21 So I think how we look at that
22 equitably unfortunately doesn't mean we
23 have a quick answer, but we want to make
24 sure that we have the best answer that
25 works as best as possible for all, and I

1 think that's the conversation that's
2 happening right now.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: So that's
4 the micro. I want the macro which is I
5 have in my District, and I want to
6 applaud PIDC's work on both the Navy
7 Yard, and Commerce on the Navy Yard and
8 the old refinery. That process is
9 big-picture thinking. I want more of
10 that. But we are being out and
11 evaluating opportunities and selecting
12 developers, you only get to choose one.
13 But there was No. 2 and there was No. 3
14 that didn't get it. In my District, not
15 in South Philly, Vice-Chair Squilla, but
16 in the 4th District, there are 31 acres
17 on the Papermill. It is also a
18 waterfront property that I want the No. 2
19 person or No. 3 Applicant to take a ride
20 up there. Because when we start talking
21 about recovery, the micro is important in
22 how to do street closures and restaurants
23 and barbershops and beauty salons. But
24 when you start talking about thousands of
25 job opportunities, the next Mayor,

1 whoever that should be, he or she has to
2 have your imprint on that idea so that
3 they can implement now.

4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 MS. FADULLON: Councilman
6 Green, you're muted.

7 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Derek,
8 you're muted.

9 (Brief recess.)

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: We had a
11 little minor technical difficulty.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: That was
13 just --

14 MS. FADULLON: That was
15 Councilman Jones dropping the mic after
16 he made his comment.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And,
18 Councilmember Jones, I'm familiar with
19 the Papermill location. I did have a
20 chance to tour it. It is a phenomenal
21 opportunity for development. And so, as
22 we're doing these things as you were
23 saying, as I eat up time as we're letting
24 people come back into Microsoft Teams, we
25 do have to look at the entire City, every

1 area of the City, not just the sexy big
2 ticket items which may be the Navy Yard,
3 but also the gems that are in the 4th
4 Council District like the Papermill or
5 the 6th Council District or the 10th or
6 the 7th or all of the Council Districts
7 that have specific assets in their
8 district that can be used for additional
9 economic development and provide jobs not
10 just for the residents of that Council
11 District, but also provide more jobs
12 across the City when we have a multiplier
13 effect.

14 So now that I have done that
15 segue to allow everybody to come back
16 into Microsoft Teams, I will now ask
17 Majority Leader Cherelle Parker to ask
18 her question.

19 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
20 you, Chairman Green, thank you, Chairman
21 Squilla, for the very important hearing.
22 I also want to thank both of you,
23 Chairman Green and Councilman Jones, for
24 the context in which you connected
25 violence and poverty and access to

1 opportunity to Philadelphia's ability to
2 respond, restart, recharge and reimagine
3 but ensure that it's being done in a way
4 that includes everybody.

5 And listen, Councilman Chairman
6 Green, when I hear people use the term
7 inclusiveness, inclusive growth, I don't
8 want inclusive anything that's not done
9 equitably. So if you get 90 and I only
10 get access to 10, that's not inclusive
11 enough for me. With that being said, let
12 me also just start by saying to Sylvie,
13 to Anne -- and, Anne, one, a special
14 thanks to each of you for the work that
15 you've done during this time.

16 Sylvie, Councilman Green noted
17 that both you and Anne are fairly new in
18 your roles, but the manner and the
19 swiftness with which your team was able
20 to put together a response relative to
21 the 13.3 million that first went out to
22 help our small businesses along with what
23 we just did Saturday, Councilman Jones
24 and Councilmember Gauthier and I had the
25 opportunity to join with Council

1 President in that distribution of PPE to
2 ensure that those kits will get
3 distributed to neighborhoods across the
4 City, right, so no one feels that I am
5 less or my region is less important than
6 those areas that you talked about,
7 Councilman Jones, that Navy Yard, that
8 Sunoco, but small businesses and
9 neighborhoods are able to benefit.

10 It's with that being said,
11 Sylvie, that you in particular, because
12 as we get through this health pandemic,
13 right, via COVID and we think about civil
14 unrest and we think about Black Lives
15 Matter, I've been talking to a lot of
16 people in my community who are saying,
17 Cherelle, it's been nice to hear partners
18 put up their fists and march and talk
19 about making adjustments and addressing
20 police brutality and restorative justice,
21 those things are critically important.
22 But we want to see how much Black Lives
23 Matter when we talk about access to
24 opportunity, economic opportunity.

25 So, Sylvie, when you talk about

1 those fit-outs that need to be done in
2 neighborhoods where these small
3 businesses really don't have access to
4 dollars, they have to reconstruct not
5 just their storefronts but even inside,
6 they have to develop lines outside now,
7 just a new innovative and creative manner
8 to try to provide their service. So tell
9 me, if you will, are you thinking about
10 now, and you don't have to go into too
11 many details, how can we work with the
12 Commerce Department similar to the
13 partnership that we did working with our
14 tech staff, kudos to Council President
15 Clark, John Christmas, for working with
16 Commerce under the guise of our new
17 normal budget request that Council made
18 in our action, but are we thinking about
19 that, because when we people start
20 thinking about Black lives mattering, if
21 they look and see work being done in
22 their neighborhood and the people who are
23 benefiting from the opportunity to do the
24 work are not a part of that
25 reconstruction, there's going to be a

1 problem because now I can't believe what
2 you say about Black lives mattering
3 because I see what you do.

4 What's your thinking about
5 that, Sylvie, that you can talk to us
6 about does Commerce have a focus on that
7 right now as you're thinking about the
8 supports that these small businesses
9 need?

10 MS. GALLIER HOWARD:

11 Absolutely. So when we did the grant
12 program, the Restore and Reopen Program,
13 for the businesses that were impacted,
14 just like the other grant program, we
15 tried to get it up and launched very,
16 very quickly so we can get the dollars to
17 these businesses because that period
18 overlapped with the reopening, going into
19 the green, so a lot of those businesses
20 were ready to reopen and then they were
21 damaged and they couldn't.

22 And so, what we did as an
23 initial starting point was provide a list
24 of businesses from the OEO registry and
25 from PHDC, the businesses that work and

1 the Basic Repair Program, so there's a
2 lot of minority and small local
3 businesses. But we know that we have a
4 great model in the Taking Care of
5 Business Program where we're going to be
6 putting out \$7 million this year on
7 cleaning commercial corridors. And I
8 call it a win-win-win because it's
9 cleaning the corridors and improving
10 environment for the corridors which helps
11 businesses that are on those corridors.

12 It's providing jobs to people
13 in the community and it's also in some
14 cases supporting local minority-owned
15 businesses that provide those types of
16 services. So we're looking at how can we
17 go beyond because the dollars that we put
18 out, just like the last time, it's a
19 pebble in the ocean. They were
20 larger-sized grants than -- they were
21 about \$10,000 grant. So for businesses,
22 that gets them some of the way there.
23 But some of them had no insurance. Some
24 of them had tens of thousands of dollars
25 of damage so they're going to need more

1 help, and I'm not going to go into a
2 tremendous amount of detail, but we're
3 looking at how we can do something like
4 the Taking Care of Business Program where
5 we can get local folks opportunities to
6 jobs and that construction as those
7 rehabs happen.

8 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Well,
9 Sylvie, listen, I want to say a special
10 thank you. I look forward to working
11 with you. I know that Council President
12 Clarke has been laser-focused on creating
13 access to opportunity immediately. So
14 we're talking about projects we usually
15 say we want to support with shovel-ready.
16 We want opportunity that give people
17 access and remove barriers to entry
18 immediately.

19 Finally, I want to say this:
20 The intergovernmental cooperation and
21 planning that Council engaged in with our
22 local, state and federal partners
23 together in the midst of this all, I
24 think that too has been unprecedented.
25 So we can't not acknowledge the work that

1 State Senator, our Appropriations Chair,
2 Vincent Hughes, when we talk about that
3 \$225 million statewide program that's
4 specifically geared to those barber shops
5 and salons that Councilman Jones talked
6 about, that doesn't happen without an
7 intentional on-the-ground advocacy from
8 our Senate and House delegation.

9 In addition to that let me say
10 this and I'm going to close with this,
11 Commerce and Planning are essential to
12 ensuring that neighborhoods across the
13 City get access to the opportunity to
14 thrive as we reimagine and restart,
15 Councilman Jones, how we are working on
16 development, and every neighborhood needs
17 to see that it is valued enough. So that
18 means as we wait anxiously for the
19 response from the federal government, and
20 Council's waiting anxiously, right,
21 because we closed that \$740 million hole,
22 but at the same time we can't expect
23 departments like Commerce to do what we
24 need to do when we haven't shored you up
25 to have the appropriate staff.

1 So I want to put that -- and,
2 Councilman Green, I want to say to you
3 because I know this has been something
4 that you've also been very interested in,
5 we need to pay attention to this because
6 we can't expect a department to do the
7 work when we have not been able to make
8 some new hard adds to dollars to get the
9 staff that we need to do the work on the
10 ground, so I'll be watching that very,
11 very carefully. Thank you all so much
12 for your time.

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.
14 Our next Councilmember to speak is and
15 Councilmember Maria Quinones-Sanchez
16 followed by Councilmember Jamie Gauthier
17 and Councilmember Allan Domb.

18 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:
19 Thank you. Let me just echo some of the
20 sentiments of my colleagues around the
21 type of work and the recommitment that we
22 all have in being more focused and
23 intentional about building a more
24 equitable Philadelphia. And for that,
25 it's really important that we acknowledge

1 some of the institutional challenges that
2 have been there and that we're going to
3 call ourselves on it and really check
4 ourselves on it.

5 With that said, last week I
6 released a Call to Action to businesses
7 where I outlined some very specific
8 steps. And to the three of you who are
9 in a position to make decisions around
10 investing in businesses or in some of the
11 work that's being done, how many of those
12 businesses would qualify or would be
13 successful in the pledge and the call-out
14 that I did, from Board of Directors, to
15 Officers, to how they purchase and their
16 commitment to providing family-sustaining
17 jobs? How are those values being
18 reflected in your decision, because
19 you're saying 50 percent of the money
20 will go to historically marginalized
21 business, but how are we holding the
22 mainstream businesses that benefit from
23 all our tax incentives, all of our
24 infrastructure to a standard?

25 How many of the business that

1 we work with could take that pledge? And
2 are you an organization willing to take
3 that pledge and say we're going to hold
4 the majority businesses accountable to
5 some values and to some of the focus that
6 we're all pledging today? Thank you.

7 MS. BOVAIRD NEVINS: Thank you,
8 Councilmember, for that question. We
9 absolutely are -- I will read the details
10 and make sure that I fully understand the
11 pledge. But I think based on the
12 question, I believe the answer is
13 certainly yes for our organization in
14 terms of holding ourselves accountable
15 and looking at our own Board and staff as
16 we focus on diversity, equity and
17 inclusion, not just internally but
18 externally as well.

19 I think with respect to the
20 question about the funding, I do
21 anticipate that the vast majority of the
22 loans that will be made through this
23 Restart Philadelphia Loan Fund are going
24 to small businesses that may not have
25 Boards of Directors, but we're certainly

1 very happy to look at that with them as
2 well. In terms of the -- we received
3 about 300 inquiries for the Restart
4 Philadelphia Loan Fund during the
5 two-week period that we had the inquiry
6 phase open. We're now working through a
7 first pool of applications for a Round 1,
8 and that again is based on the stated
9 priorities for businesses that are
10 located in high poverty areas and then
11 businesses that are historically
12 disadvantaged. So we've invited about 50
13 of the businesses that submitted an
14 inquiry to move forward with a full
15 application.

16 And of the businesses that we
17 have invited to apply in Round 1, 55
18 percent of the businesses are Black-
19 owned, 15 percent are Hispanic-owned, and
20 15 percent are Asian or
21 Asian-American-owned. And we will
22 continue to prioritize both the business
23 location in a high-poverty community as
24 well as the focus on historically
25 disadvantaged businesses with those

1 funds.

2 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: And I
3 would add to that, Councilwoman, when
4 we're engaging, we've done some of this
5 through different mechanisms. Certainly,
6 we were working on Equality Jobs Grant
7 Program before the pandemic hit which was
8 going to really focus on incentivizing
9 companies to provide quality-type jobs.
10 We have also through Workforce identified
11 a number of employers that basically were
12 able to -- they took sort of a quiz of
13 sorts and were able to attest to the fact
14 that they needed certain standards in
15 terms of workforce opportunity and their
16 practices when it comes to workforce.
17 But I would say I certainly feel that
18 there's -- I think that when you talk
19 about a pledge, that's the first step to
20 action, right; and action speaks louder
21 than words.

22 And so in working, and I'm sure
23 you'll hear from the Chamber, in working
24 with the Chamber on the recharge and
25 recovery process, a pledge came up a lot

1 in different conversations and I sat on a
2 lot of the different calls of the
3 different committees, and I heard a lot
4 of businesses speaking to a real
5 commitment or a desire to make a better
6 commitment. And I would say that we have
7 to as government when we're working with
8 companies, when we're tracking companies,
9 when we're helping companies go,
10 especially our larger companies, we have
11 to elevate the issue and we will elevate
12 the issue. We do pledge to do that.

13 When we see that there is a
14 lack of diversity, either at the CEO
15 level, at the staff level, at the Board
16 level, we will elevate that and we have
17 done that. And we have said, tell us
18 about your diversity. And when we see
19 it's poor we say, you've got to do better
20 than this, we can't invest in you if this
21 is what the faces look like, it's clear
22 you're not trying hard enough, so we've
23 had those conversations.

24 I think that what we'll see,
25 because I think there will be pledges out

1 there, is that some companies will be at
2 the beginning of that life cycle and they
3 will need to learn how do I actually do
4 supply diversity, how do I even measure
5 my participation rate. There will be
6 other companies that already have a
7 person and they're sophisticated and know
8 how to goal to double it or increase it,
9 and I think we'll be there to support.

10 And I know that Iola -- we've
11 had this conversation -- Iola from OEO is
12 ready to be out there not just in
13 government in terms of participation, but
14 out in the private sector supporting.

15 MS. FADULLON: So let me just
16 say really quickly we are really looking
17 at how do we expand the capacity of our
18 minority contractors that already
19 participate through our Basic System
20 Repair Program, also how we sort of have
21 them cooperatively work together with
22 some of our small minority developers
23 that we're seeing come through, through
24 some of our Land Bank and redevelopment
25 authority developments and we're hosting

1 round tables amongst the developers and
2 contractors to have that conversation and
3 to inform us about what products they
4 would need from us in order to grow their
5 capacity.

6 I know we've also been talking
7 closely with the BIA who's actually going
8 through the OEO list to ensure that the
9 contractors that are on there are what
10 they say they are, and then to promote
11 those contractors amongst their
12 developers as well. And then I would
13 just say one of the things we're looking
14 at across the board is how do we ensure
15 that any of our programs, policies,
16 whatever it is, that we're offering, we
17 put out social impact I want to say about
18 three or four years as a piece of
19 everything we're doing and we're looking
20 at trying to shift that to ensuring that
21 whatever we are involved in is actually
22 returning wealth to communities, and
23 we're talking through that trying to
24 figure out what that means. We'll be
25 doing outreach around that. I think we

1 want to shift -- it's not just are you
2 doing social impact, but how are you
3 actually returning wealth back into the
4 communities that you're doing work in or
5 proposing a project for.

6 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

7 Thank you. And again the pledges to me
8 are real simple. And to Sylvie's point,
9 words make you feel good, actions say a
10 lot more about where your values are.
11 When you see Pepsi nationally say I'm
12 going to put \$500 million and we're going
13 to do self-reflection or you see a
14 Netflix saying our numbers are shitty and
15 we're going to have to own it, but making
16 pledges that -- we should not be
17 investing, lending, supporting mainstream
18 businesses who don't make pledges to help
19 us grow some of those businesses, where
20 they buy, how they shop, whether it's
21 locally.

22 Even as we look at the
23 restaurant industry, quaint restaurants
24 downtown may be a thing of the past. But
25 we should be aggressively pursuing those

1 businesses to move to neighborhoods and
2 other places. And that's not going to
3 happen by itself. And I'm really
4 concerned that once this wave is over,
5 people do not commit or will not do the
6 things that we all know need to be done.
7 And I expect government -- we need to
8 hold ourselves accountable, but we
9 absolutely need to do it as we're
10 reimagining. Reimagining means
11 redistributing, recognizing the
12 historical shifts and disparities that
13 have existed. So I look forward to the
14 conversation again.

15 I think that people need to
16 pledge. People just need to say, I don't
17 want any business in my District to come
18 to me and ask me for any incentive until
19 they tell me where they fall in those
20 categories, because I think that's where
21 we have to go. Thank you very much.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank
23 you to everyone.

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.
25 Councilmember Gauthier, Councilmember

1 Domb and Councilmember Bass.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.

3 Good morning, everyone.

4 My first question is for
5 Commerce and PIDC. I've been touring the
6 commercial corridors in my District, and
7 I also just held a virtual town hall on
8 small business recovery resources last
9 week. PIDC and Commerce were two of the
10 local agencies who first came out with
11 assistance programs when the pandemic
12 started. I'm interesting in knowing what
13 you've learned through these few months
14 in terms of what our small businesses
15 need most, in terms of recovery and how
16 well Commerce and PIDC work to meet those
17 needs?

18 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: Anne, do
19 you want to start since you've been doing
20 the more recent program as well?

21 MS. BOVAIRD NEVINS:
22 Absolutely. And thank you,
23 Councilmember, for the question. It is
24 definitely one that we have been very
25 focused on and taking what are the things

1 that we learned from starting very early
2 on with the initial Small Business Relief
3 Fund in partnership with the Commerce
4 Department and how can we take what
5 worked well and also what we learned that
6 didn't work well or that didn't have the
7 outcomes that we wanted to kind of shift
8 that and change that for next phases of
9 what we do.

10 So I would say that some of the
11 key learnings that we've now been able to
12 help apply as part of the Pennsylvania
13 CDFI network that is working for the
14 distribution of that \$200 million from
15 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as well
16 as in our Restart Philadelphia Loan Fund
17 was again kind of almost flipping the
18 process where I think at the beginning of
19 the Small Business Relief Fund, we set
20 out quite a number of criteria that we
21 wanted to focus on.

22 It was a lot of focus on the
23 businesses in industries that were the
24 hardest hit as well as businesses maybe
25 that employed a good number of people

1 with the aim of trying to keep as many
2 people connected to their jobs. And so,
3 I think some of the things that we've
4 learned and now applied coming out of
5 that in the next phase is the need to be
6 really intentional and have a specific
7 commitment about reaching Black- and
8 Brown-owned businesses in particular. So
9 I think again you see it in both the
10 state program as well as in PIDC's
11 Restart Loan Program where there's a
12 specific minimum commitment in terms of
13 the dollars that are going to
14 historically disadvantaged businesses.

15 And then I would say also
16 location-wise, that is also something
17 that I think we have focused on, at least
18 from the PIDC side, much more so in the
19 outset of the Restart Philadelphia Loan
20 Program and focusing specifically on
21 businesses located in high-poverty
22 communities, and that is sort of combined
23 with less of an emphasis on jobs.

24 If we know already from looking
25 at the data about Philadelphia's business

1 community that our Black- and Brown-owned
2 businesses are less likely either to be
3 employer businesses or to have larger
4 numbers of employees if we're
5 prioritizing the businesses where the job
6 creation or the job retention impact is
7 the highest, that's going to
8 automatically kind of skew in a different
9 way than I think we would be intending in
10 terms of focusing on Black- and
11 Brown-owned businesses or specifically
12 historically disadvantaged-owned
13 businesses. So those are some of the
14 lessons that we've learned of kind of how
15 we tried to apply those, and we will keep
16 learning. We won't get it exactly right
17 this time either, but I think that we are
18 committed to recognizing what are things
19 that we've done that have not worked like
20 we've intended and fixing those as best
21 as we can for next rounds of relief
22 efforts.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: Should I

1 add anything? I know you have more
2 questions.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes.

4 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: Just a
5 couple of additional things that I think
6 we've learned. Well, certainly the first
7 program that PIDC and Commerce partnered
8 on was very administratively burdensome.
9 It was very challenging, so we've learned
10 a lot and come a long way. I think even
11 with our Restore and Reopen, we got to a
12 much more streamlined place. But I think
13 some of the things we definitely have
14 seen is access to information is just
15 continuously a challenge and we tried to
16 work with all of our partners, CDFI, CDC,
17 community organizations to make sure that
18 businesses are aware that the opportunity
19 exists.

20 And then also the process,
21 we've gotten better even simplifying
22 applications more than even the first
23 time around. Tax compliance continues to
24 be a challenge. And I think also we
25 learned that certain communities

1 definitely have better access than
2 others. Even though the first program of
3 PIDC we've made the application available
4 in Spanish, in Chinese and in English, we
5 did not get very many applications in
6 Spanish. We had a really hard time
7 getting Latinx business applicants to
8 apply, so that's something that we're
9 looking at more deeply to see what
10 obstacles exist there and how we really
11 meet those needs. But I think what Anne
12 spoke to in terms of criteria, focusing
13 on high poverty areas, low-income census
14 tracts, it gets you a lot of the way
15 there.

16 MS. BOVAIRD NEVINS: And if I
17 might add just one more thing,
18 Councilwoman. One lesson that we're
19 learning now from the first round of the
20 statewide grant program is that one of
21 the key barriers when Sylvie talked about
22 access is physical access to a computer
23 and the interpersonal assistance of
24 helping people be able to convert
25 documents to PDFs and upload them, so

1 that is absolutely a barrier that we're
2 trying to figure out now how can we
3 address that in the second round for the
4 grant program that's going to open up on
5 August 10th. And so, if there's any
6 opportunity to partner with Council
7 offices, I'd love to do so.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Sure.
9 Absolutely, we would love to partner on
10 that. As a follow-up, I'm very concerned
11 about speculators using this crisis to
12 accumulate properties on commercial
13 corridors that are home to large amounts
14 of Black and Brown businesses. What
15 tools can the Commerce and the PIDC
16 deploy to make sure that our commercial
17 corridors are owned by our local business
18 owners and by community center
19 organizations?

20 MS. BOVAIRD NEVINS: We
21 actually do have a commercial mortgage
22 product that is attractive financing that
23 can be senior financing and does not
24 require specific numbers of job creation
25 for business owners to be able to

1 purchase property. So that is
2 specifically also targeted to minority
3 women and immigrant business owners.

4 And I think we might actually
5 hear from one of our clients later on
6 today, but we are very focused on that as
7 a product in addition to some of the more
8 COVID-related working capital needs for
9 businesses. We are open for business on
10 that front as well and want to work with
11 folks both in terms of the capital that
12 they need, but also the technical
13 assistance to support people
14 transitioning from being a renter into
15 being an owner. There's a lot of other
16 things that need to be considered. And
17 so, I think that combination of the
18 capital but also the technical assistance
19 is really important.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
21 you. Sylvie, do you have anything to add
22 from Commerce's standpoint?

23 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: Yes. I
24 know there's other panels. We also are
25 in that space. We had a product that we

1 put out last year that is basically for
2 CDCs to acquire properties in order to
3 ensure that they can then resell them to
4 businesses and also for businesses to
5 acquire property, so really for wealth
6 creation in communities and to avoid
7 displacement.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
9 you. My last question is for Anne
10 Fadullon. Anne, you talked earlier about
11 the \$2.3 million in rental assistance
12 that has been paid out. I wanted to know
13 is that 2.3 million related to the first
14 round of rental assistance. And if so,
15 how long will it take to get the
16 remainder of the first round of rental
17 assistance out?

18 MS. FADULLON: So that is
19 actually combined with both the first
20 round and second round. I think we have
21 Greg Heller, if he has something that he
22 can add in advance. We are currently
23 working through applications as quickly
24 as possible. But I just see Greg came
25 on, so I'm going to turn it over to him

1 because he's probably got more detailed
2 information than I do.

3 MR. HELLER: Sure. Thanks,
4 Anne. Can you hear me?

5 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes.

6 MR. HELLER: Okay. Great. So
7 that 2.3 million is actually just Phase
8 1. For Phase 2, we just got our money
9 from PHFA late last week so we can
10 finally start processing applications for
11 Phase 2. We have 1,668 that are ready to
12 be processed representing just over \$6
13 million. But again, we just got our
14 contract and our funding from PHFA late
15 last week so we're just starting the
16 Phase 2 processing now. So that 2.3
17 million is all Phase 1.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: From a
19 timing perspective, how long will it take
20 to get the remainder of those funds onto
21 the street?

22 MR. KELLAR: For Phase 1, our
23 goal is end of September. For Phase 2,
24 the funding has to be all spent by the
25 end of November according to the state

1 statute.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
3 you. No more questions.

4 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank
6 you.

7 Next up Councilmember Domb,
8 Councilmember Bass, Councilmember Squilla
9 and Councilmember Gym.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
11 Chairman Green and Chairman Squilla, and
12 thank you to everyone who's just
13 testified. And my colleagues, I agree
14 with many of the sentiments.

15 And I just have a few quick
16 questions. How many businesses currently
17 have closed are we aware of and how many
18 do you anticipate closing?

19 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: I don't
20 think we know the number at this point to
21 be honest. I just don't think anybody
22 actually has that number. What we've
23 heard is that on commercial corridors it
24 can be up to a third that could close. I
25 think nationally I've heard 20 percent

1 have closed. And of African-American
2 firms or companies, 40 percent have
3 closed. But I don't think we have the
4 numbers for Philadelphia at this point.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: In that vain,
6 do we have any idea what kind of job
7 losses for the City we might anticipate?

8 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: Well, so
9 it looks like I think we've had -- I
10 think in my testimony I said 170,000
11 unemployment claims -- 197,000
12 unemployment claims. So of course not
13 all of those will be permanent losses,
14 but we anticipate that a lot of jobs will
15 not be coming back or will be very slow
16 to come back or will become automated.
17 So your guess is as good as mine in terms
18 of that, but it's going to be a high
19 number.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I think from
21 my experience it's always been harder to
22 start a new business than to keep an
23 existing business alive that was
24 successful before the pandemic. So in
25 that light, is there an overall plan from

1 the Administration on how we can revive,
2 smartly restart our economy and specific
3 industries like hospitality and others?

4 And also, how do we grow our
5 economy in this environment equitably
6 across the board in the City? Is there a
7 written plan, tactics and strategies that
8 tell us how we can go back to doing this?

9 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: There is
10 not one written plan. I think that we
11 are all working on that together and we
12 have a number of sort of shorter
13 documents with initiatives that we have
14 either started or that we plan to do.
15 But we have not created a big document or
16 anything of that sort, but plans are
17 certainly under way and some of the
18 strategies that I mentioned in my
19 testimony like the Equitable
20 Entrepreneurship Plan that we're working
21 on, that will be ready by about the end
22 of the year and we have a workforce
23 respond, recharge planning process that's
24 happening. And that too, there will be a
25 shorter term response, sort of it won't

1 be a final draft but it will be a part of
2 that plan, and then there will be a
3 longer term strategy, so those are all
4 things that are under way.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: My experience
6 is we do a lot of projects, but we need
7 to set down that vision and then work
8 from the vision to get the strategies and
9 tactics to complete different projects
10 every year. We should have a plan now,
11 how is hospitality going to survive,
12 what's going to happen September 1st, how
13 does a restaurant survive, how does a
14 hotel survive, what is the plan for us to
15 get this economy back on track, because
16 we need to do this. Everything's
17 connected. And I think Chairman Green
18 said, violence, economy, it all connects
19 and this is really crucial.

20 And I'll end on a happy note.
21 I gave a call to I think -- maybe,
22 Sylvie, you were involved with this,
23 Oatly that's relocating into the
24 Kensington area, you got to love that
25 company, a new company hiring a bunch of

1 people coming into Philadelphia at this
2 time, hiring I don't know how many people
3 but they're going to have a huge
4 expansion there. And I asked them, why
5 did you pick Philadelphia? And they
6 said, close to all the major cities, much
7 less expensive, cheaper rents and so
8 forth.

9 And so, in that light, how do
10 we support them? We should be all over
11 them saying, how do we help you grow to
12 every one of the businesses that are
13 coming here and that are here. How do we
14 put those supports in place? And I know
15 Majority Leader Parker had a very good
16 point. We've slashed your budgets, we
17 need to look at that because the budget
18 of Commerce and PIDC and others, we need
19 to support those more now than we did
20 before. You guys need more help now
21 because you're such an important part of
22 getting over this pandemic and getting
23 this economy back on track. So whatever
24 we can do to do that, I'll be a
25 supporter.

1 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: Thank you.

2 I do want to say when you hear from the
3 Chamber, those eight subcommittees were
4 working it, that was a planning process
5 around those different sectors that
6 hopefully you'll get a chance to hear
7 about.

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Well,
9 thank you very much.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.
12 Councilmember Bass, Squilla and Gym.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
14 afternoon, everyone.

15 MS. FADULLON: Good afternoon.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I have just
17 a couple of statements and questions.
18 Some of my questions were answered
19 earlier. But just to follow up on
20 Councilmember Domb's statement, I just
21 really can't emphasize enough that there
22 is no overall plan for how we're going to
23 attack or ensure that businesses are
24 coming back to Philadelphia, and
25 particularly for African-American

1 businesses which we know is something
2 like 2 or 3 percent of the overall
3 economy here in the City of Philadelphia.
4 To not have a plan, what's the old
5 saying, when you fail to plan, you plan
6 to fail. And so, if we don't have a plan
7 of action in terms of how this is going
8 to happen, then it's going to be the same
9 old same old. And I'm very much
10 concerned about that. I think all of my
11 colleagues were very much saying we don't
12 want to go back to what we had, we don't
13 want to go back to the same old same old.
14 So I just really want to encourage that
15 all of these folks, whether it's Commerce
16 or PIDC or Anne Fadullon's group,
17 everyone's working together I know, but
18 let's work together on a plan to move
19 this City forward in a significant way,
20 especially for people who have been
21 traditionally underserved and not
22 included in the allocation of resources,
23 so that's one thing I just wanted to say.
24 The other is that as I canvass
25 my commercial corridors, I'm greatly

1 concerned about the fact that we've had
2 the riots, we've had all of these things
3 that have happened, the pandemic which
4 was brutal to the economy by itself,
5 we've had a lot of destruction on
6 commercial corridors, we have a lot of
7 trash now on our commercial corridors
8 because we know the Streets Department
9 has been hit hard by the pandemic and
10 their effects on that as well.

11 So I guess what I'm asking is
12 when can the people of Philadelphia,
13 particularly those who shop along our
14 commercial corridors, when can we expect
15 to see some of the work that has been
16 done through Planning, through Commerce,
17 through PIDC? I know we've talked about
18 it and we had a great call with some of
19 my merchants from my District and
20 throughout the City of Philadelphia and I
21 thank Anne and Sylvie for being a part of
22 that call, but the fact remains that a
23 lot of people still feel upset, when is
24 it happening, when is it going to come.

25 Even just yesterday, one of my

1 constituent services folks was out
2 canvassing and encouraged a small
3 business owner who felt abandoned by the
4 City, and this is a District where we
5 have retail managers, commercial managers
6 that are funded through Commerce but they
7 haven't seen anything. They haven't
8 heard anything. So I just want to
9 express the sense of urgency I think we
10 all feel around this issue. Thank you.

11 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: Thank you,
12 Councilwoman. If I could just clarify, I
13 would say that between PIDC and
14 Philadelphia Works and the work that
15 we've been doing in the Chamber, I think
16 that we really do have a plan we're
17 working within this framework and I think
18 that we each have our own 6-to-12-month
19 plan.

20 What we don't have is a
21 document. We don't have a big published
22 beautiful document, honestly because
23 we've been focused on the work. And I
24 think that there will be some document
25 published out there, but right now we do

1 have a plan. I will say that we do
2 definitely have a plan. I think in
3 terms --

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm sorry.
5 Not to cut you off, but I think as an
6 elected representative having access to
7 that plan is critical because people -- I
8 don't know how many people are asking
9 you, but they're asking me like crazy,
10 I'm constantly hearing from my business
11 owners that they want to know. And
12 because there's a plan but I don't have
13 access to a plan, it doesn't work.

14 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: Yes. And
15 I think it's fair that a lot of
16 businesses despite everything we've tried
17 to do with the grants, with the PPE kits,
18 our programs that we already had that are
19 ongoing, the need out there is so
20 tremendously vast and our resources are
21 so limited that I'm not surprised a lot
22 of people do feel abandoned. I think
23 we're doing everything that we can, but
24 the need is just tremendous.

25 MS. BOVAIRD NEVINS: And,

1 Councilmember, if I might also add, one
2 of the -- you mentioned in terms of that
3 disconnect of reaching people, one of the
4 things that came up in the discussion
5 with that call that you had organized was
6 the idea of trying to reach people
7 through text messaging instead of relying
8 solely on emails or social media, so we
9 do have a follow-up meeting this week
10 with the U.S. Digital Response team to
11 talk about moving forward with a text
12 message-based platform that could perhaps
13 try to help bridge that communications
14 gap. So thank you again for that outcome
15 from that call.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
17 Well, thank you very much for staying on
18 top of these issues. And, listen, I know
19 you're working, we're all working, we're
20 working very, very hard. But you know
21 what, people want to see the results.
22 People want to see some action. And so,
23 folks have been patient I believe. But
24 the sooner we can show them what we've
25 been up to, I think the better.

1 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
2 Councilmember Bass.

3 Councilmember Squilla.

4 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
5 Mr. Chairman.

6 And I know we're short on time
7 here so I want to be direct. We heard
8 everybody talk about what the concerns
9 are. But I think what we're missing
10 here, part of our conversation includes
11 the Health Department and I know they're
12 not here today, but a lot of the ideas on
13 how we open up and the way we open up
14 goes through the Health Department to
15 review the openings.

16 And I think part of the
17 concerns from the business owners and
18 even some of the residents, it seems like
19 we're going in one direction and then we
20 stop. We're going in another direction
21 and then we stop. So we need to have to
22 be clearer on where we're going and how
23 we're getting there and a safe way to
24 doing that. The starts and fits and
25 whether it's indoor dining or catering

1 and other businesses that still haven't
2 been able to generate a way to open up
3 safely, I think is driving the idea of
4 the anxiety that's going on.

5 And what we're missing here is
6 part of not doing things hurts with
7 mental health, it hurts with your
8 physical health and it hurts with anxiety
9 levels and all these things add to when
10 we talk about crime and other things that
11 are associated with this. So we hear all
12 of that, but we need to have the Health
13 Department involved in these
14 conversations with Commerce and PIDC to
15 make sure we understand not only the
16 health ramifications, but a way to find
17 it and do it safely now that we're sort
18 of flattening the curve and keeping that
19 curve flattened, do it safely so if it
20 does spike up and go, we know that we can
21 continue to doing it safely and be able
22 to adjust accordingly, and that's what I
23 don't see.

24 And so, I think we need to
25 include health more in these

1 conversations to be able to say, all
2 right, I understand your concerns, but
3 how do we do it safely and how do we
4 continue to operate our economy and move
5 it forward in a safe, smart way. And if
6 we can continue that with Commerce and
7 with PIDC and with our Chamber and
8 everybody else and with each individual
9 businesses who actually know their
10 businesses more than we do, I think then
11 we'll be able to move forward and people
12 will start to feeling a little more
13 comfortable.

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank
15 you, Councilmember Squilla. Was there
16 follow-up or that was just a general
17 statement?

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: No, it was
19 just a comment. I think we need to have
20 them involved in this and that's all.
21 Moving forward, hopefully we will.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you so
23 much.

24 Councilmember Gym and then
25 Councilmember Brooks, and then we're

1 going to start our next panel because
2 we're running very short on time.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
4 very much, Mr. Chairman.

5 So I think many of my
6 colleagues have spoken about the urgency
7 of really focusing on small and local
8 business and the importance of really
9 establishing a strategy around that. But
10 both Commerce and PIDC have also been
11 involved with large-scale efforts to
12 attract large businesses. The City of
13 Philadelphia is struggling around tax
14 revenue. I don't think there's any
15 question that this is a very serious
16 issue. And in particular, the shifting
17 of revenue from employees who formerly
18 worked in the City of Philadelphia out to
19 our surrounding counties has had a
20 dramatic impact on our income.

21 The two questions I have are,
22 how is PIDC evaluating tax breaks and the
23 types of tax breaks that they are
24 offering or potentially offering given
25 the fact that tax revenue is so precious

1 to us? And how can we ensure that these
2 tax breaks to large scale developments,
3 not necessarily small businesses, are
4 well spent, don't waste taxpayer money,
5 especially when it's needed the most?

6 MS. BOVAIRD NEVINS: Sure. So
7 we from the PIDC perspective don't have
8 any direct engagement in any tax products
9 that provide tax breaks at a local level.
10 The primary product that we offer that
11 relates to a tax credit is through the
12 federal New Markets Tax Credit program,
13 and that program does specifically focus
14 on projects that are located in
15 low-income communities, so that is a
16 primary criteria of eligibility for the
17 program.

18 And then in addition to that,
19 it has to not only be located in a
20 low-income community, but provide direct
21 benefit across a range of things in terms
22 of quality jobs and/or goods and services
23 for the residents of that community.
24 Examples might be a federally-qualified
25 health center, might be a grocery-

1 anchored neighborhood shopping center,
2 those are the types of projects that we
3 focus on and with that resource.

4 Unfortunately, PIDC was not
5 selected for this year to be an
6 allocatee. There's actually no
7 organizations that just serve
8 Philadelphia or Pennsylvania that were
9 selected for that so we are focused on
10 working with the national allocatee of
11 those credits to try to bring that
12 investment to Philadelphia from the
13 national organizations that have access
14 to that resource this year.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And that
16 doesn't include hotels or things like
17 that? Those are not included in the New
18 Market Tax Credits?

19 MS. BOVAIRD NEVINS: I would
20 say typically not, at least certainly not
21 in recent years. I'm not aware in the
22 last maybe five years or so of hotel
23 projects either here or generally in the
24 country being a recipient of New Market
25 Tax Credits. I think there's always the

1 question in terms of the hospitality
2 industry, because it does create a lot of
3 jobs, that could be seen to have the type
4 of benefit that the program is intended
5 to support, but I think that there's been
6 some controversy around that nationally
7 going back a number of years. And so, I
8 don't think you see it recently either
9 here or elsewhere.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And maybe I
11 could be more specific by saying that
12 sometimes PIDC does help industries file
13 for RACP grants at the state level.

14 MS. BOVAIRD NEVINS: Yes. So
15 our role in the Redevelopment Assistance
16 Capital Program is primarily focused on
17 supporting the projects that after
18 they're awarded by the Commonwealth, the
19 funding essentially kind of comes through
20 us where we play a supporting role almost
21 like an intermediary between the
22 Commonwealth and the grant recipient for
23 those grant recipients that are located
24 in Philadelphia.

25 There is a round that is open

1 now so we are trying to publish and
2 promote that through our networks and in
3 partnership with the City and Planning
4 and Development as well to try to make
5 folks available -- I'm sorry, make folks
6 aware of that opportunity at the state
7 level that is available.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And could
9 you just talk a little bit more about how
10 you are thinking about tax breaks for
11 larger scale developments given the
12 City's need for tax revenue?

13 MS. BOVAIRD NEVINS: So I'm not
14 sure that I would be the best to speak
15 with that if it's related to something
16 like the 10-year abatement or K0Z. I
17 feel like Sylvie or Anne might be better
18 positioned to answer. I think that
19 certainly from the PIDC perspective if
20 there's any sort of specialized financing
21 that we would be looking at putting into
22 a project, we would absolutely be looking
23 at criteria in terms of what are the jobs
24 it's creating, what are the impacts that
25 a project is going to be having on its

1 surrounding community, positive or
2 negative and we would absolutely be
3 considering those factors in terms of any
4 lending or resources that we might be
5 putting in.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I know
7 there's been some questions about some of
8 the projects that have been under
9 consideration in the past. I just would
10 urge PIDC to stay in close touch with
11 Council, because I do think it's
12 important for us to really be focusing as
13 many efforts, and any dollars that PIDC
14 can draw down, whether it's through
15 federal money, through HUD, that it goes
16 towards actual smaller businesses in
17 neighborhoods and communities, and we try
18 to avoid situations like the W Hotel for
19 example, downtown being part of HUD
20 money. And as we go forward, I think we
21 want to have a closer, more understanding
22 relationship about how PIDC can just
23 utilize City revenues or potential or
24 future City revenues as well as access to
25 grant money that is in your control, but

1 we don't have a lot of say as much over.

2 Sylvie, thank you so much for
3 your work. I also want to acknowledge
4 the work that you did, particularly
5 around getting information out to our
6 small businesses and to really being a
7 good steward of making sure that there
8 was a large diversity of businesses that
9 were represented across the spectrum, so
10 thanks for all of that work.

11 You and I spoke briefly about
12 some thoughts about the Keystone
13 Opportunity Zone, how Commerce may be
14 looking at it. I think there's been some
15 recent stories in the news that
16 re-emphasize that the Keystone
17 Opportunity Zone really does need a
18 refresh. It's not something that we can
19 do. Obviously, it's a state grant and a
20 state program. You and I have worked
21 together to try and just basically
22 ascertain whether we can gather up in
23 self-reporting jobs as a result and we've
24 struggled to get strong information even
25 from there. But I thought it might be

1 helpful just to talk a little bit on the
2 record about some of the conversation
3 that we had about the Keystone
4 Opportunity Zone and how Commerce might
5 be thinking about it in the future.

6 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: Sure, yes.

7 So I think that we know that there are
8 some flaws to the program when it comes
9 to there's just certain areas where we
10 would like to see some changes that would
11 require legislative changes at the state
12 level in terms of -- so we all heard
13 about the situation with KOZ hopping as
14 it's called. I think we would like to
15 look more closely as to what's allowable
16 there as well as not having wage tax be
17 allowed as an exception.

18 And also, I think there's
19 certain ways that partners can have their
20 wages exempted from it or receive that
21 abatement. So I think there's things
22 like that, that can tighten up the
23 program if we didn't have those things
24 and we would like to look at that. It
25 even came out in the incentive study

1 results that there were areas of
2 improvement, and I think this is the time
3 to have that conversation frankly.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: That's
5 great. As I said, and I'm not going to
6 belabor this point, I think that it is
7 important right now for us to urge the
8 State to create a new program. KOZ has
9 been around for over two decades. I
10 think we've been stuck within some of its
11 limitations, including the fact that a
12 contracted-out cleaner may have to pay
13 wage taxes, but a high level partner that
14 may be at the law firm there would not,
15 for example, have to pay wage taxes. But
16 it's a complicated area and I think it's
17 important for us to think about it.

18 I want to re-emphasize that the
19 reason why I'm bringing these things up
20 is that we have to recognize that some of
21 the larger scale development incentives
22 have flaws. We want to be thoughtful
23 about our intention to them and my real
24 interest is to redirect PIDC, and we
25 already work with Commerce but also small

1 business development and a real small
2 business effort and strategy in a way
3 that I think that is desperately needed
4 right now. So thank you.

5 MS. GALLIER HOWARD: Thank you.

6 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
7 Councilmember Gym.

8 Councilmember Brooks.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: I want to
10 lean towards my colleague Mark Squilla
11 had mentioned about --

12 COUNCILMAN GREEN: We can
13 barely hear you, Councilmember Brooks.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Can you
15 hear me now?

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Barely. We
17 need you to speak a lot louder because
18 people are saying they cannot hear you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Okay.
20 I'm kind of leaning to my colleague's
21 comment Mark Squilla in terms of the
22 connection between the Public Health
23 Department and the economy. I'm really
24 concerned whether any connection or
25 collaboration is happening around

1 housing. The reason I bring up housing
2 is because if we're going to see economic
3 growth and we're talking about sustaining
4 small businesses and bringing businesses
5 into the City, we need to make sure that
6 housing is affordable for not just
7 high-level workers, but low-wage workers
8 that run the hotels and run the
9 restaurants and all of these things. And
10 in order for them to be able to come back
11 after this, we need to make sure that we
12 have affordable housing available for
13 workers in the City.

14 And I was wondering is that
15 part of the conversation or are housing
16 people involved and is there any kind of
17 way because we realize historically after
18 the economic crash that this country has
19 had, housing had to be a part of the
20 conversation. And I think we need that
21 currently here in Philadelphia in order
22 to move forward. Is that happening?

23 MS. FADULLON: Yes. So there
24 are conversations and I would say
25 honestly they're ongoing conversations

1 that we were having these conversations
2 before all of this anyway, because I
3 think it's being brought out that there's
4 a very close nexus between health and
5 housing. Unfortunately, that was one of
6 the things during the pandemic that fell
7 a little bit to the side to be honest
8 with you. We were just about to gear up
9 a full push on our health and housing
10 work when the pandemic hit.

11 We are trying to gear that up
12 again, even though we know that the
13 health industry may be focused elsewhere.
14 We agree with you, Councilwoman Brooks,
15 that the pandemic has just underscored
16 what we already knew about the nexus
17 between health and housing. I think
18 that's one of the reasons why you saw us
19 jump on the rental assistance piece as
20 quickly as we did.

21 We wish we had a more robust
22 program. We wish we could assist all the
23 households that need that assistance,
24 because particularly what we saw in the
25 last recession, and this is much worse,

1 is that if we're not providing that
2 assistance both to keep tenants in their
3 homes but also to support our small
4 landlords is those units can get lost to
5 foreclosure.

6 And what happened in the last
7 recession was when those go into
8 foreclosure, banks do not want to be in
9 the property-owning, property management
10 business and they tend to sell them off
11 in large chunks to major investors who
12 are not that interested in making sure
13 that they're taking care of local
14 residents as much as they are in
15 maximizing their profits. So that's a
16 real risk which is why we really jumped
17 on rental assistance, and then also we
18 are making sure that when the forbearance
19 on mortgage period expires, that we are
20 ready to go and we've been continuing our
21 mortgage diversion program, but we're
22 also ready to go to provide some
23 additional capacity there.

24 I think the challenge continues
25 to be producing of housing that is truly

1 affordable for a couple of reasons. One,
2 it just costs too much, and so I think
3 that's something that we're trying to
4 look at different models. I will tell
5 you that we're frustrated by all the
6 requirements that are put on us by the
7 federal government for not just the
8 dollars that come to us, home dollars and
9 Community Development Block Grant
10 dollars, but also that come to our sister
11 agencies' endless work, the Housing
12 Authority and the Office of Support of
13 Housing.

14 We continue to look at
15 innovative models and then when we go to
16 figure out how we can fund them, we kind
17 of get crushed because there's some
18 obscure rule that doesn't allow us to use
19 dollars that way. With that being said,
20 we are still trying to come at it from
21 any way we can. And I think really this
22 is also very much an income issue that we
23 need to address.

24 So, for example, we know that
25 the median income in our SMSA is 53,000

1 but in the City, it's 43,000. So when we
2 produce housing at 80 percent of median
3 in our City, that is really at over 100
4 percent. That's affordable to somebody
5 at over 100 percent of our local median
6 income. And for example, if there's a
7 studio unit that's rented at 80 percent
8 of median, that is a rent that's a little
9 over \$1,000 a month. In order to afford
10 that and not be housing cost-burden,
11 which means not paying more than 30
12 percent of your income in rent, you need
13 to be making \$19.52 an hour. That's
14 almost 2.7 times our minimum wage.

15 And so, we really need to come
16 at this from both sides. We need to
17 produce more affordable housing and make
18 sure it's safe and quality, but we also
19 need to work to get peoples' incomes up.
20 And frankly, that minimum wage is
21 insulting and nobody can exist on that
22 minimum wage and we really have to come
23 at it from that side as well, but we are
24 definitely going to be coming at it from
25 the health and housing piece.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you
2 so much, Anne, because I'm really
3 concerned. I think that with the
4 expectation of thousands of evictions
5 coming and at the same time we're talking
6 about building a workforce, if you're
7 homeless and mentally-burdened because of
8 being homeless, it's really hard to take
9 advantage of job opportunities that are
10 popping up, so it's very important that
11 we are focusing on long-term effects on
12 housing in the City. Thank you.

13 MS. FADULLON: Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.
15 Mr. Iannuzzi, can you call the next
16 panel?

17 THE CLERK: I'm sorry,
18 Mr. Chair. Did you ask me to call the
19 second panel?

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yes.

21 THE CLERK: Susan Jacobson, Rob
22 Wonderling, Atif Bostic, Ashley Putnam
23 and David Simms.

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you
25 all for your patience. This is a very

1 important topic with a lot of different
2 facets to this issue, so thank you four
3 your patience and please proceed.

4 MR. WONDERLING: First, I want
5 to thank both Chairs Derek Green and
6 Councilman Squilla and the other members
7 of City Council that have joined today.
8 We are having a bit of a technical
9 difficulty. Our Chair-elect Susan
10 Jacobson was to lead off this testimony.
11 I'm sure many of you have been receiving
12 alerts on your phones throughout this
13 morning around tornado and sheltering-
14 in-place orders.

15 About three minutes ago, we
16 received a text from Susan that she has
17 lost power at her location, so I'm going
18 to kick off our testimony. I'm not sure
19 if she'll be able to join us momentarily.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Rob, she's
21 coming back in.

22 MR. WONDERLING: Very good.
23 Thank you, Chairman Green.

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: okay.

25 MS. JACOBSON: Hello, all. I'm

1 actually on.

2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I see. Yes,
3 sorry for the power.

4 MS. JACOBSON: Along with the
5 light outs, but we will continue.

6 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.

7 MS. JACOBSON: So good morning,
8 Council Chairman Green, Council Chairman
9 Squilla, members of the Joints Committees
10 of Finance and Economic Development and
11 other Councilmembers. I'm Sue Jacobson,
12 President of Jacobson Strategic
13 Communications. Thank you for hosting
14 what we believe is a really important
15 hearing today and for working with us in
16 partnership as we look to take actionable
17 steps to recharge Philadelphia's economy.

18 Today's hearing allows us to
19 really take the opportunity to provide an
20 update on the Philadelphia region
21 Recharge and Recovery Taskforce work that
22 Sylvie talked about earlier. So what we
23 did in this effort is we undertook a
24 rigorous process with over 145 community
25 and civic leaders to develop

1 recommendations to restart our economy
2 and grow in an equitable and inclusive
3 way, and really this is unprecedented
4 anywhere to have this kind of involvement
5 from this many leaders. This is a true
6 differentiator for our City.

7 And our goal for this hearing
8 is to review that work that was completed
9 but most important, how do we take action
10 immediately. And I've been listening to
11 Councilmembers speak and this obviously
12 as -- we get it, we're with you. This is
13 important, crucially important to us too.
14 So what I'd like to do is highlight our
15 guiding principles because I think
16 they're very important, and these
17 principles have informed that
18 recommendation.

19 And I just again want to spend
20 a minute to read this. The first of our
21 values is to address the needs of greater
22 social justice, in using the lens of
23 diversity, equity and inclusion, as
24 Councilwoman Parker said, equity and
25 inclusion to ensure that recommendations

1 benefit all citizens, particularly
2 focusing on people of color and our
3 low-income communities that have been
4 marginalized and eradicate systematic
5 racism that exists within our businesses
6 and institutions and consistent with the
7 Chamber of Commerce's equity pledge.

8 Our second value is to help the
9 economy recover amid the COVID-19
10 pandemic, and the third is really to work
11 with you. And again, thank you,
12 Councilman, for putting this together
13 because we have to have a true public,
14 private partnership to get done what
15 we're all talking about. We all have
16 those same goals and sense of urgency.
17 And then I just again want to spend a
18 moment on our guiding principles, again
19 partnering with you, right, county
20 governments, the state, but particularly
21 with all of you in the private sector to
22 fund and build capacity to ensure
23 success, and also to defend our regional
24 market share and attain greater market
25 share.

1 And I'd like to call this, you
2 know, yes, we got to play defense, but
3 let's play offense. And let's get
4 greater market share. Let's bring it
5 here to Philadelphia. Let's really move
6 forward on that. And then let's look for
7 connections across sectors to accelerate
8 recovery, and I'm going to talk about
9 those sectors in a moment and growth,
10 what differentiates us in Philadelphia
11 and what makes us great among all of
12 those sectors and how do we use those
13 differentiators to really push us
14 forward.

15 And then finally, this
16 particular group, our idea was let's do
17 this quickly. Let's find short- and
18 medium-term actions that will have clear
19 measurements of success, like what can we
20 do right now. Let's -- yes, there are
21 many things that we're all working on,
22 that you're all working on that have
23 long-term implications, but what can we
24 do to really drive change and again play
25 offense right now.

1 On the next slide, you'll see
2 that the work that's been completed, we
3 included extensive work within the
4 subcommittees and outreach. As I
5 mentioned earlier, 145 leaders were
6 officially engaged in this. Actually,
7 38.6 percent were women; 43.3 percent of
8 the leaders were people of color. It was
9 just a very exciting group of people
10 coming together.

11 I have to say you know how a
12 lot of leaders and surrogates, there were
13 no surrogates on any of these calls.
14 People were truly engaged. The sectors
15 were and where we think the
16 differentiators are, and I'm just going
17 to read them because they're important.
18 Life sciences, so there was a committee
19 there, you'll see the chairs, financial
20 services, higher education, tech media
21 and telecom, small- and medium-sized
22 businesses, tourism, hospitality, arts
23 and culture, health care and talent and
24 workforce. So those were the committees,
25 those are the chairs. And with each of

1 those chairs, as I mentioned were the
2 other leaders in those spaces who came up
3 with these short-term solutions that we
4 can implement right away.

5 The next slide, and just for a
6 second here just to give you a sense of
7 the extensive nature of this, eight
8 subcommittee meetings, this was all done
9 obviously in a short time frame. You
10 could just see the slide. There was a
11 huge impressive all-around everybody
12 wants to be a part of this, everybody
13 wants to partner with the City, with you.
14 Councilmembers who are on this phone,
15 this is something we all want to do
16 together.

17 And what I'm going to do now is
18 transition over to Rob Wonderling. As
19 you know, he's the CEO and President of
20 the Chamber of Commerce. And he's going
21 to talk about -- I mentioned that we
22 really wanted to start about six key
23 initiatives to prioritize right away,
24 what's that low -- what can we do right
25 now to jump start this. Because I want

1 to say one other thing, the last time we
2 had an economic problem, basically we
3 didn't move fast enough and we were left
4 behind and this time we can't do that.

5 We've got to move forward. We've got to
6 find those opportunities. We've got to
7 find those differentiators and we've got
8 to move forward. So thank you,

9 Mr. Chairman, and I'm now going to turn
10 it over to Rob.

11 MR. WONDERLING: Thank you
12 again, Chairman Green and Chairman
13 Squilla and other members of the Council.
14 I do just want to amplify a couple of the
15 points and the values before I move on to
16 the next slide. And that is, we fully
17 subscribe to the fact that this recovery,
18 the recharge and recovery has to be all
19 inclusive and through the lens of social
20 justice, diversity, equity and inclusion.
21 That's why it's the number one value.

22 It also needs to be a true
23 partnership, and that's why we were
24 heartened at the very outset of this work
25 a couple of weeks ago to have the support

1 of Governor Wolf, the County
2 Commissioners in Bucks, Chester,
3 Montgomery and Delaware Counties because
4 the City is the center of gravity for our
5 economy, but it's also a regional
6 economy, the Mayor of Philadelphia Jim
7 Kenney, Council President Clarke. And
8 particularly the Council President, I
9 want to thank him for his leadership. He
10 offered many of you and many of you
11 participated or your staff participated
12 in an interim draft read-out of this work
13 several weeks ago, a status and an
14 update. And of course, the work will
15 continue which I'll touch on, the
16 advocacy agenda at the conclusion of my
17 brief remarks.

18 Next slide, please. So I am
19 not going to spend time on the process of
20 recommendations that came from those
21 eight subcommittees, but only to suggest
22 before I talk about aspirations is our
23 work was informed with a partnership we
24 have with McKinsey & Company, and they
25 took those eight subcommittees that

1 really are the eight economic verticals
2 that drive the economy of the City and
3 the region, and they built for us a
4 forecast through the lens of the
5 pandemic, the uncertainty of the
6 insidious virus, job losses that had
7 already be raised and questioned this
8 morning and those vulnerable occupations
9 to Sylvie's comment to a question earlier
10 this morning, and so, that forecast used
11 to inform the work in how we can recharge
12 and recover as quickly as possible.

13 Those eight subcommittees,
14 140-plus individuals were awesome. They
15 came out initially with 60
16 recommendations, of our vantage point
17 that would have taken 60 years to
18 implement. We whittled it down to 40,
19 still way too much for a short amount of
20 time. And we're now operationalizing
21 around 22 short- and medium-term
22 recommendations and six in particular
23 that have urgency that I think has been
24 the spirit and tone of the questions and
25 comments being offered by our members of

1 Council this morning.

2 We define short-term as between
3 now and the second quarter of next
4 calendar year 2021, a medium term through
5 the year 2023. So even the definitions
6 of short and medium, I think, are through
7 the lens of urgency. Those
8 recommendations though across the
9 subcommittees clearly drove aspirational
10 themes, rallying cries, if you will, that
11 we know and very optimistically that we
12 can become by working together.

13 We can become a top global cell
14 and gene therapy to create inclusive jobs
15 for all of Philadelphians and its
16 residents well into the next century. We
17 can become a new national model to learn,
18 apprentice and work in the jobs of the
19 future. We absolutely will be known as a
20 place investing in and growing small
21 Black- and Brown-owned businesses. We
22 will be a digital community with
23 increased digital literacy, technology
24 and use. And this is of paramount
25 requirement, the healthiest most livable

1 community in the North Eastern United
2 States.

3 Next slide, please. So as I
4 mentioned, we took from 60, even to 40 to
5 the 22 operating recommendations that we
6 won't go through today, but those 22
7 short- and mid-term recommendations roll
8 into those eight verticals. They're
9 about playing offense and defense,
10 whether it's for a hospitality sector, a
11 life science sector, a higher ed. sector.
12 Those 22 recommendations are embodied and
13 we welcome the opportunity as we continue
14 to move this process to share those with
15 this Committee and Council as a whole at
16 the appropriate and future date. But we
17 got to get to work and we've already
18 begun work quite generally and very
19 quickly.

20 So these six represent table
21 stakes. These six very short-term
22 actionable items that require public,
23 private partnership must be acted upon
24 now if we have any hope of recharging our
25 lost economy over the last several

1 months. It doesn't matter whether you're
2 a small business at a commercial corridor
3 or a major hotel or a large not-for-
4 profit higher institution. These are the
5 six that require all of us to work on
6 together.

7 The first three in particular,
8 and I think Councilman Squilla touched on
9 this with his question, that we need to
10 deploy and educate our -- we need to
11 deploy the infrastructure and educate our
12 citizens, employers and employees on the
13 way to ongoing test and contact trace the
14 virus. It's insidious. It's
15 asymptomatic. It still exists and will
16 be for some point in time.

17 Our view is this is critical
18 infrastructure, no different than
19 transit. Employers rely on a safe,
20 healthy ride from SEPTA. We think
21 building out in the City, working in
22 cooperation with Dr. Farley and the
23 County Health departments through the
24 County Commissioners the infrastructure
25 necessary to conduct realtime tests and

1 results have the capacity and to do
2 contact tracing and to provide the
3 communication tools all around that is
4 absolutely number one priority. If not,
5 then we will have herky-jerky recovery.

6 We'll continue to move from
7 green to yellow and God forbid back to
8 red phases, which is no way to run a city
9 or an economy and will not provide the
10 confidence that our citizens need to get
11 back to some type of normal life and what
12 the private sectors need to be able to
13 provide those economic opportunities and
14 jobs for all of Philadelphia citizens.

15 Integrated in that healthy and
16 safety pledge are brothers and sisters in
17 the hospitality industry are out first on
18 this and we're looking at that as well as
19 other pledges in the manufacturing sector
20 that everybody agrees to for their place
21 of business, City Council chambers, does
22 not matter as to agree to what we will do
23 to create safe and healthy places for
24 all.

25 So again, that's critical table

1 stakes infrastructure. But to the
2 question I think it was Councilman Domb
3 that asked Sylvie or our Commerce
4 Director, we have a high number of
5 unemployed and a high number of
6 individuals that are in vulnerable
7 occupations as we speak. On a regional
8 basis, that number is about 735,000
9 individuals that have been recently laid
10 off due to the pandemic and related
11 economic shocks or according to McKinsey
12 & Company are in extremely vulnerable
13 occupations that could be eliminated due
14 to the advance of technology or recurring
15 outbreaks of the virus that cannot be
16 contained. So we got to get to work
17 immediately to begin to reskill those
18 individuals to move towards a process of
19 skill-based hiring.

20 The good news here is that
21 there are already opportunities. It's
22 projected right now that we have north of
23 140,000 vacant positions in the City and
24 the region alone. That number will
25 continue to grow to over 200,000 high-

1 demand occupations well above living wage
2 occupations that will be provided. So we
3 are going to need to work together to get
4 everybody organized, get the training
5 they need and get redeployed. The
6 private sector is committed to doing
7 this. There are a host of intermediaries
8 from Philly Works to grassroots
9 organizations committing to do this.
10 It's how we scale and scale quickly.

11 And then finally, this is one
12 that we're very excited about because all
13 it takes is commitment by an individual
14 business, whether a small commercial
15 corridor shop located in a neighborhood
16 in our City or a very large anchor or
17 employer and, that is, to double down, to
18 increase by a minimum the doubling of
19 local procurement, particularly for Black
20 and Brown enterprises, a shared
21 commitment, an individual commitment to
22 procure locally and to do so for Black
23 and Brown and Latinx enterprises can be
24 accomplished in a short amount of time.

25 We already know that a number

1 of major employers and small enterprises
2 are working to determine the best way for
3 them to honor that commitment. It will
4 be more to announce that as we turn the
5 corner on Labor Day. And as Sylvie
6 Gallier Howard suggested, that each
7 enterprise is at a different place in
8 learning how to do this. And once again,
9 we are blessed with a host of
10 intermediaries that can assist and
11 provide those points of connection for
12 Black and Brown enterprises.

13 Next slide, please. I'm going
14 to skip this next slide. That's just a
15 summary of where we are in process. I
16 think it was Councilwoman Sanchez who
17 mentioned metrics and a couple other
18 Councilmembers did. We have metrics
19 under design that will measure our
20 progress on a quarterly basis. They
21 involve everything from measuring
22 household income and growth thereof of
23 the next couple of years to the
24 redeployment of individuals that have
25 been displaced to greater investment in

1 our life science community. We're
2 building that dashboard, as I've
3 mentioned, as we speak. However, I think
4 this graph tells it all.

5 It's absolutely stunning to all
6 of us that we lost over 8 percent of our
7 gross domestic product in one full swoop
8 with the outbreak of COVID-19. And if
9 you look at the bottom line, if we do
10 nothing, we will have a very slow
11 recovery, and by the way, probably won't
12 be that inclusive to the theme and our
13 values. And in fact, that line is
14 optimistic, the blue lining, and that it
15 might actually recover due to
16 macroeconomic conditions, but does not
17 factor in continued social unrest,
18 another virally and strain of COVID, dare
19 I say 20 versus 19, and all the
20 uncertainties that come with a global
21 pandemic.

22 However, if we execute against
23 the 22 recommendations and the six
24 short-term action items I've outlined
25 this morning, then we can accelerate

1 growth in the economy. We can provide
2 jobs, inclusive jobs and we can recharge
3 and recovery. No, this is not a plan.
4 This is an initiative. A lot of planning
5 as Sylvie led into organizing this
6 initiative, but it's just the beginning.
7 There's a lot of hard work required going
8 forward. And I know I speak for many in
9 our organization that we look forward in
10 this strong and continued partnership
11 with all of you, our members of City
12 Council.

13 So with that, Chairman Green,
14 let me turn this discussion now to Atif
15 Bostic. Atif was very active in our
16 group and he will be carrying our
17 presentation forward.

18 MR. BOSTIC: Thank you, Rob.
19 Good afternoon, Councilman Green,
20 Councilman Squilla and members of the
21 Joint Committees of Finance and Commerce
22 and Economic Development.

23 For those that don't know me,
24 I'm Atif Bostic. I'm the CEO of
25 Leadership and Business Consultancy and

1 the Executive Director of UpLift
2 Solutions, a nonprofit focused on
3 workforce development. Thank you for
4 allowing me the opportunity to testify on
5 Resolution 200336. Understanding the
6 time that we have, I will keep my
7 comments fairly brief.

8 Over the last few months, I've
9 been working very closely with the
10 Recharge and Recovery Taskforce,
11 identified recommendations to aid
12 economic recovery. In order for
13 Philadelphia's economy to fully recover
14 from the devastating impacts of COVID-19,
15 both the public and private sector must
16 work together to build an economy that
17 fosters inclusive and equitable growth.

18 The goal throughout this
19 process was to create actionable and
20 practical recommendations that could
21 happen in the short and medium term to
22 accelerate inclusive and equitable
23 growth, growth intentioned and designed
24 to lift residents out of poverty. As you
25 know, small businesses make up 99.7

1 percent of the U.S. employer firms; 64
2 percent of net new private sector jobs;
3 49.2 percent of private sector employment
4 and 42.9 percent of private sector
5 payroll. It is clear stabilizing small
6 businesses will be vital to our recovery.

7 With many small businesses
8 devastated by the pandemic, we should be
9 hyperfocused on helping them get back on
10 their feet and ultimately succeeding. To
11 achieve this goal, moving forward we
12 should find ways to provide affordable
13 technical assistance to small- and
14 mid-size businesses to help them gain
15 access to the necessary capital, identify
16 market opportunities and effectively
17 shift their businesses to the changing
18 environment.

19 In my consulting practice, I
20 found while some businesses are aware of
21 funding opportunities, they are not
22 prepared or understand how to access
23 them. Equally, they don't have the
24 support to evaluate the environment and
25 make the necessary operational changes.

1 This is especially true of Black and
2 Brown businesses. We also have to ensure
3 equitable access to capital for small-
4 and mid-sized businesses to both public
5 and private sources. This would include
6 the funding discussed by Anne Nevins with
7 PIDC this morning.

8 While we made great strides in
9 making capital available, we need to
10 ensure we create awareness to those
11 capital opportunities along with the
12 resources to access them. We also have
13 to ensure that businesses have access to
14 capable workforce through the expansion
15 of workforce development, training
16 programs focusing on those high demand
17 jobs in in-demand roles that Rob
18 Wonderling just spoke about. And
19 further, incentivize the hiring of our
20 most vulnerable populations to include
21 the formerly incarcerated individuals.
22 While this is nowhere an exhaustive list
23 of everything we should do, I believe it
24 begins to move us in the right direction
25 of a successful recovery. Thank you for

1 hearing me this afternoon and your
2 consideration toward my suggestions.

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

4 I think we have Ms. Putnam and Mr. Simms
5 to testify.

6 MS. PUTNAM: Good morning.

7 I'll go ahead and jump in here. So thank
8 you everyone. I hope everyone's Internet
9 is holding up okay in the storm. I just
10 want to begin. My name is Ashley Putnam.
11 I direct Strategic Initiative at the
12 Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia
13 that's focused on economic growth and
14 mobility. Before I start, I do want to
15 note that my views expressed here today
16 are mine alone. I do not represent the
17 Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia or
18 the Federal Reserve system.

19 Really I am pleased today to be
20 testifying to you about the role we were
21 able to play and the work that's being
22 done on the Recharge and Recovery
23 Taskforce. My work is focused on
24 economic mobility which is important in
25 times of growth, but this need for

1 resilient communities is never more
2 important than this moment we are in and
3 in times of crisis.

4 As of today, we know that 1.9
5 million individuals have claimed
6 unemployment in the state of
7 Pennsylvania. Even in the Philly, Camden
8 and metropolitan area, we have at this
9 point in time at least a 14 percent
10 unemployment rate. People behind these
11 numbers are our neighbors, they are our
12 family members and they are local
13 business owners. They are also
14 consumers, entrepreneurs, job creators
15 and really a vital part of our regional
16 economy, and that's why these collective
17 efforts are so important.

18 Even before the pandemic, we
19 know that our economy was not working for
20 everyone. We did some research called
21 the Survey of Household Economic
22 Decision-making that found that Black and
23 Latino households experience more
24 economic insecurity and are less likely
25 to be able to pay their monthly bills

1 than other racial groups. These
2 disparities in economic growth persist
3 even in times of growth.

4 And in Philadelphia, our
5 regional economy was growing. Even in
6 2018, we saw some huge disparities in
7 unemployment rates between Black workers,
8 nearly 14 percent, compared with
9 non-White Hispanic workers at 4 percent.
10 So we have to acknowledge if we're going
11 to build for a better recovery, COVID-19
12 and the disruptions we're experiencing do
13 not affect everyone equally.

14 Our research that we've done at
15 the Fed from previous recessions shows
16 that minority workers are likely to
17 experience greater employment losses at
18 the onset of a financial downturn and may
19 be slower to regain employment and
20 rebuild assets during that recovery.
21 This led us to conduct some research on
22 the workers, small businesses and
23 neighborhoods who are going to be
24 especially impacted by shutdown. And we
25 found back in April, which was very early

1 into the pandemic, we were already seeing
2 some exacerbations of those disparities,
3 particularly that those who are going to
4 be most affected were those who were
5 already most at risk. Those are our
6 workers of color, individuals without a
7 four-year degree, younger workers and
8 those who are economically insecure.

9 And this research for us really
10 emphasizes why this is an essential time
11 to take an equity approach to recovery
12 and why these kinds of collaborative
13 efforts are really essential. We were
14 really pleased to play a part in the
15 Recharge and Recovery Taskforce and I got
16 to serve a role on the Workforce and
17 Talent Development Committee. We think
18 this is really critical to putting equity
19 into action to ensure workers, businesses
20 and places that are most impacted are
21 prioritized.

22 For us, an equitable recovery
23 means going back beyond that back to
24 normal. A lot of the conversations we
25 had on the taskforce were about

1 addressing underlying disparities that
2 have perpetuated the economic inequality
3 being amplified right now. For workers,
4 that means addressing systemic barriers,
5 including things like broadband access
6 and child care that can prevent people
7 from returning to work, but it also means
8 recognizing the skills workers have
9 beyond a four-year college degree. This
10 is something that we've been talking
11 about before the pandemic and something
12 we think is really critical as employers
13 start to think about what role they can
14 play after the pandemic.

15 Finally, an equitable recovery
16 requires thinking critically about
17 recovery and spending to make sure that
18 the jobs we're creating provide economic
19 stability. And as others have testified
20 today, this also means thinking about
21 minority-owned small businesses. We
22 conduct a survey every year called the
23 Small Business Credit Survey, and we know
24 from that survey that minority-owned
25 small businesses are most at risk in this

1 moment, but also extremely important
2 engines of job creation and economic
3 opportunity. So that connection between
4 economic development, small business and
5 job seekers is really critical to more
6 equitable recovery.

7 We were grateful to play a role
8 on the Recharge and Recovery Taskforce
9 and look forward to continuing our work
10 with our colleagues of the City of
11 Philadelphia and the Chamber of Commerce
12 for Greater Philadelphia to ensure equity
13 in our recovery efforts. Thank you for
14 your time.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
16 Ms. Putnam.

17 Mr. Simms.

18 MR. SIMMS: Good morning,
19 everyone. My name is David Simms. I'm
20 the artist and proprietor of Eatible
21 Delights Catering and I wanted to be here
22 today to support the Economic Recovery
23 Recharge Initiative. I'm really here to
24 learn more about how it is I can be an
25 asset to the City of Philadelphia. Just

1 want to say that I have been one that has
2 benefited from some of the initiatives.
3 I've worked with the Commerce Department.
4 I've worked with City Council, all of the
5 City Councilmembers. I'm a very active
6 member in the Wadsworth Business
7 Community Association.

8 I am one that has benefited
9 from the Instore grant. I've worked with
10 the Commerce Department. I've worked
11 with Saleem Wilson and he's been very
12 helpful and all of the people in City
13 Council has been very helpful. I also
14 think that it's important during these
15 COVID times for people to find their
16 niche in finding out how they can
17 partner.

18 I worked with Atif Bostic to
19 utilize some of the classmates to offer
20 them employment. I worked with Andrea
21 Custis at the Urban League to hire some
22 of the formerly incarcerated people that
23 have come through her program, and I just
24 think that this time more than any time
25 is for us to get together small

1 businesses formally and to find out how
2 it is that we can do better together.

3 I'm very happy to say that down
4 the street there is another restaurant --
5 it escapes me, the name real quick. But
6 I worked with other business owners so
7 that we can get the information out, so
8 that I can tell people about the
9 different initiatives and what the City
10 of Philadelphia has. I just actually
11 gave an application to another business
12 owner, Robert from the Breakfast
13 Boutique, so that he can capitalize on
14 some of the things that the City has to
15 offer, and just doing my part to be here,
16 to support Council, to support the
17 Chamber of Commerce, the African-American
18 as well as the Philadelphia Chamber of
19 Commerce of which I'm members of both and
20 do whatever it is that I can to make
21 Philadelphia a stronger city.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
23 Mr. Simms, for being here and testifying
24 as well as all the panelists for the
25 critical work that you're doing from you,

1 Dan, as an entrepreneur, Ashley for the
2 work at the Federal Reserve and then also
3 both for Sue, Rob and Atif, the work you
4 put together in this plan for recharge
5 and recovery.

6 My first question for the
7 representatives from the Chamber, my
8 understanding is that this work will go
9 into a report, some type of document that
10 will be released. Do you have a general
11 sense of when that will occur? I believe
12 just what was presented today and what
13 will come out later can be a hearing in
14 and itself.

15 We are up against a hard stop
16 at 12:30 with the Mayor's press
17 conference. And so, hopefully there will
18 be an opportunity to maybe come back at a
19 later time once that document is done and
20 we can focus just on the work that you're
21 doing and what additional information
22 you've learned in compiling all the work
23 and all the advocates you've brought
24 together to do this initial work.

25 MR. WONDERLING: I'll answer

1 that, Chairman Green. Absolutely, we
2 will welcome that opportunity to return
3 not only to talk about its implementation
4 and progress to date, but the other 22
5 recommendations. We are now scheduling
6 for the morning of September 8th a public
7 event where we'll be releasing progress
8 to date on the initiative, which includes
9 a document that is organic that has the
10 dashboard, the metrics and progress to
11 date.

12 We chose not to just have a
13 static conclusion of this first phase
14 because there's so much work being done
15 in realtime. For example, over the
16 weekend we were lobbying the Pennsylvania
17 General Assembly as they were marking up
18 language for the \$1.2 billion of federal
19 CARES Act funds that have yet to be
20 disbursed to the City of Philadelphia and
21 we came in with requests related to
22 testing, contact tracing, small business,
23 minority small business and hospitality
24 and destination tourism relief.

25 So our plan is to use our time

1 wisely between now and September 18th, so
2 that when we have that next public
3 gathering, if you will, we'll not just
4 talk about the final results of the
5 report, but we will also be able to
6 demonstrate progress because of the need
7 to move so quickly.

8 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.
9 Due to the time because it is 12:24, I
10 look forward to having an ongoing
11 conversation. So after we conclude with
12 this hearing, we hope to reconvene an
13 additional hearing to have a more
14 detailed conversation regarding the work
15 that you're doing, preferably in that
16 September time frame.

17 I know that Councilmember Jones
18 has a question. But due to --
19 Councilmember Jones, it is a very quick
20 question? And as you're --

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes. I just
22 want to end on what I started. Thank you
23 that the Chamber of Commerce is not our
24 grandfathers' Chamber of Commerce and I
25 look forward to the date to be shared so

1 that we can make better decisions in
2 Council, particularly about the
3 unintended consequences of growth,
4 particularly in regional traffic
5 assessments.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
8 Councilmember Jones. I want to thank all
9 of the witnesses that have already
10 testified this morning. Those who have
11 yet to testify, I want to thank you for
12 your patience. What we're going to do,
13 because of the technical difficulties we
14 had at the beginning of this year and the
15 fact that we do have a hard stop at 12:30
16 with the Mayor's press conference, I'm
17 going to move from a public hearing into
18 a public meeting and ask for a motion.

19 And I ask our Chair of the
20 Commerce and Economic Development
21 Committee, Mark Squilla to make that
22 motion to allow us to reconvene at 2:15.
23 I hope that all of the people who are
24 still scheduled to testify who have not
25 been able to testify will be able to come

1 back at 2:15 so we can hear their
2 information. I appreciate your patience.
3 This is a very important issue, very
4 multi-faceted issue, because COVID-19 has
5 impacted every aspect of our lives and
6 you can tell by the diversity of
7 questions that we have had this morning
8 into this afternoon.

9 So with that, we are going to
10 reconvene the hearing at 2:15 after the
11 Mayor's press conference. And I'm going
12 to now move into a public meeting and ask
13 my colleague Councilmember Mark Squilla
14 to make a motion to allow us to reconvene
15 at 2:15.

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
17 Mr. Chairman.

18 I make a motion to reconvene on
19 the Committees of Finance and Commerce
20 and Economic Development on Resolution
21 200336 at 2:15 today. Thank you.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Second.

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: The motion
24 was properly moved and seconded. All
25 those in favor say aye.

1 (Aye.)

2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: The motion
3 carries. Thank you. We'll now come out
4 of the public meeting and go back into
5 the public hearing.

6 I want to thank all of you for
7 your patience and hopefully, we'll be
8 able to reconvene with all of you at 2:15
9 to continue this important conversation.
10 Thank you and take care.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.
12 See you all then. Bye.

13 (Afternoon recess.)

14 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.
15 I see Councilmember Green is present. If
16 you want to get started and we can go
17 from there. Councilmember Green?

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
19 Councilmember Squilla. Can you hear me?

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I hear
21 you.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
23 Councilman Squilla, Chair of the Commerce
24 and Economic Development Committee,
25 myself as Chair of the Finance Committee.

1 I want to thank all of the witnesses who
2 testified earlier. Thank you
3 (inaudible), Mr. Iannuzzi.

4 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Frank,
5 please read the list of the next people
6 to testify.

7 THE CLERK: I believe the
8 available people include Jennifer
9 Rodriguez, Zach Wilcha, Beth McConnell,
10 Jeff Gauracino and Kindra Mohr.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Welcome
12 all. We can start in that order. Just
13 state your name for the record and begin
14 with your testimony.

15 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Was it Jennifer
16 Rodriguez?

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes, Jen,
18 there you go.

19 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Oh, there we
20 go. Thank you so much, Councilman Green
21 and Councilman Squilla. I'll be brief.
22 So good afternoon and thank you for
23 hosting today's hearing. I am Jennifer
24 Rodriguez, President and CEO of the
25 Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of

1 Commerce.

2 For the past three decades,
3 GPHCC has been the leading voice,
4 developing, promoting and advocating for
5 Hispanic businesses in the Greater
6 Philadelphia region, while encouraging
7 the advancement and economy growth of the
8 Hispanic community. Currently as we all
9 know, we are experiencing an
10 unprecedented economic and health crisis,
11 which is disproportionately affecting
12 communities of color.

13 As a result of the effects of
14 COVID-19 in our economy and in particular
15 our minority-owned businesses, we at the
16 Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber
17 have developed a response strategy titled
18 Recalibrate, Retool, Restart or R+. We
19 recognize that operating in the new
20 normal will take more than simply turning
21 on the lights.

22 In fact, the small scale of
23 Latino-owned businesses and their
24 tendency to have low-cost reserves
25 combined with the customer facing nature

1 of their operations means that they are
2 being disproportionately impacted by
3 social distancing rules. Latino-owned
4 businesses are mostly comprised of
5 restaurants, bodegas, beauty salons,
6 construction firms, auto repair shops and
7 other services in which working from home
8 is just not feasible.

9 In fact, according to Stanford
10 University, a survey that Stanford
11 University Latino-owned businesses
12 conducted early in the crisis, they
13 indicated that up to 66 percent would be
14 out of business in six months if
15 restrictions were to continue. We
16 unfortunately are just a few weeks away
17 from that six-month mark. In response to
18 these challenges, GPHCC has realigned its
19 programs and created new ones.

20 Our R+ campaign has several
21 components. One is the bilingual
22 coronavirus research page where
23 entrepreneurs can find updated
24 information in Spanish, breaking the
25 language barrier and ensuring that we are

1 all informed. Two, we have created Play,
2 a video library with relevant business
3 topics which informs our members and the
4 community at large of available resources
5 like PPP loans and how to apply.

6 We have also developed Resolve
7 in it 30, a biweekly technical assistance
8 coaching session where experts talk about
9 best practices and solutions to everyday
10 business challenges. We have developed
11 Dine Latino Takeout Weekend, a social
12 media campaign that promotes our regions
13 and our City's Latino-owned restaurants
14 and we have also created a Latinx Small
15 Business Relief Fund, a grant program for
16 which we are currently fundraising.

17 At GPHCC, we are committed to
18 helping Latino-owned businesses recover
19 from the impact of the coronavirus,
20 positioning them for the successful
21 reintegration into the economy under the
22 new normal. But this requires a shared
23 voice and collective action. As business
24 leaders, as community leaders and as
25 residents of the City, we must do our due

1 diligence in not just stopping the spread
2 of the virus, but also to prepare for a
3 safe, equitable and robust, economic
4 recovery. Thank you so much for holding
5 today's hearing about this crucial topic
6 and the leaders, staff and members of
7 GPHCC are ready to work with you to build
8 a stronger and safer Philadelphia for
9 all. Thank you.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you
11 for your testimony. I think we'll wait
12 until everybody testifies and see how
13 many questions by Councilmembers.

14 Frank, do you want to read the
15 next testimony, please.

16 THE CLERK: I'm sorry,
17 Mr. Chair. Do you want me to call on the
18 next witness or do you want me to
19 actually read the testimony?

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: No, no.
21 I'm sorry. Call on the next witness to
22 testify.

23 THE CLERK: Zach Wilcha.

24 MR. WILCHA: Hi. Good
25 afternoon. Can you hear me okay?

1 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Zach, you
2 sound good. Just state your name for the
3 record and proceed with your testimony.

4 MS. ROBINSON: Good afternoon.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes.
6 You're on the hearing. Please mute
7 yourself while we're hearing testimony.

8 MS. ROBINSON: Yes.

9 THE CLERK: Is that Ms. Judith
10 Robinson?

11 MS. ROBINSON: Yes, it is.

12 THE CLERK: Okay. Can you just
13 state your name for the record and then
14 mute yourself until it's your time to
15 speak, please.

16 MS. ROBINSON: Queen Judith
17 Robinson. I'll mute myself.

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.
19 Sorry about that, Zach. Do you want to
20 start over, state your name and continue
21 your testimony.

22 MR. WILCHA: No problem at all.
23 Good afternoon, Co-Chairs Green and
24 Squilla, Councilmembers and the
25 Committees of Finance, Commerce and

1 Economic Development. I am Zach Wilcha,
2 Executive Director of the Independence
3 Business Alliance and I thank you for
4 having me here today to testify on behalf
5 of the IBA, which is Greater
6 Philadelphia's LGBTQ+ Chamber of
7 Commerce.

8 We are a membership-based
9 organization dedicated to making the
10 Philadelphia region an influential and
11 diverse LGBTQ+ business community with an
12 impact on economic development, business
13 equality and policy issues. The IBA
14 serves more than 900 professionals across
15 325 member businesses and there are more
16 than 60 certified LGBT business
17 enterprises of IBA's footprint, which
18 collectively employs more than 500
19 individuals and generate nearly half a
20 billion dollars in revenue each year.

21 I echo much of what people have
22 said before me today, especially Jennifer
23 Rodriguez. Before I tell the ongoing
24 story of our community and our businesses
25 during this economic downturn and health

1 pandemic, I want to thank the City of
2 Philadelphia and the Commerce Department
3 and PIDC, especially for so quickly
4 responding to the unprecedented crisis at
5 hand with a program of loans and grants
6 that benefited many of our small
7 enterprises.

8 The fast-acting City officials
9 provided economic leadership that was not
10 coming from the federal level, but I'm
11 grateful for their efforts. When you
12 talk to my other Chamber peers across the
13 country and other cities, many of them
14 look to Philadelphia as a model of rapid
15 response. And though the program could
16 not possibly meet the great demand of our
17 business community, its effect surely
18 mitigated what could have been the
19 genesis of a larger disaster. I also
20 want to stipulate that LGBTQ+ folks are a
21 vertical that run through ever other
22 community and apply to anything that I
23 talk about today. Queer people who
24 intersect with other minority communities
25 have had a harder time through this

1 crisis than their counterparts because of
2 intersectional systematic oppression with
3 classism, racism, ableism, misogyny and
4 sexism. The LGBTQ+ community has endured
5 this crisis but of course, LGBTQ+ folks
6 in BITLC and trans communities have been
7 adversely affected in worst ways, both
8 quantitatively and qualitatively.

9 We stand in solidarity with all
10 of those doing anti-racist work in the
11 City and all of those championing and
12 centering trans voices as well.

13 Generally, minority-owned business in
14 Greater Philadelphia have struggled to
15 apply or receive funds from the Small
16 Administrations Paycheck Protection
17 Program. People of color in Philadelphia
18 are disproportionately underbanked and
19 underfunded as are minority-owned and
20 disadvantaged businesses from the LGBTQ+
21 space.

22 The COVID-19 crisis and the
23 roll-out of PPE both highlighted and
24 exacerbated this problem, as minority
25 businesses have had difficulty navigating

1 the federal loan program and competing
2 with better network companies. It makes
3 sense for banks to lend customers for
4 whom they have existing relationships of
5 course, but that system has left
6 innumerable amounts of small businesses.

7 Under normal circumstances,
8 those practices would be more
9 understandable. But as you know, these
10 are far from normal times. The small
11 businesses defined by the federal
12 government for PPP eligibility are not
13 what local leaders understood to mean by
14 small. Companies with under 500
15 employees are not the same as solo
16 photography businesses. Those large
17 companies have a significant leg-up on
18 their smaller counterparts when it comes
19 to getting financed. And of course, we
20 have seen on the news so many large
21 businesses and religious institutions
22 receiving money that we were told would
23 be distributed to small businesses.

24 Members of the IBA when
25 possible have been trying to pivot their

1 businesses to the reality of remote work
2 and help each other by offering
3 discounted services. We've created a
4 system of distributing information about
5 COVID resources as well. We continue
6 holding network events online that are
7 well-attended and have been able to drum
8 up business and make connections. But we
9 also hear horror stories about what our
10 members have gone through.

11 Some who had a faulty tax issue
12 which was not their fault prevented from
13 receiving City funds. Predatory
14 landlords who retaliated against tenants,
15 those who didn't have the wherewithal or
16 connections to apply for funding on time
17 or correctly. I worry that when
18 minority-owned businesses shut down, many
19 other organizations, some of them
20 corporate and City-based will lose their
21 suppliers.

22 Companies in the IBA often
23 supply local arts organizations of
24 nonprofits and the ripple effects from
25 their closures could be tremendous. Our

1 folks are trying to be optimistic, but
2 also realistic about what lies ahead. We
3 need continued concentrated support for
4 minority-owned and disadvantaged-owned
5 businesses, and it would be incredible to
6 see more support aligned with helping
7 folks pay rent and mortgages as the
8 moratorium on them come abruptly to an
9 end. And innovated solutions like the
10 street closures to create safe spaces for
11 outdoor commerce, and clarity around safe
12 and healthy long-term planning to the
13 extent that it's possible.

14 Specifically, so many LGBTQ+
15 owned businesses are in the hospitality
16 and event space. And in our own
17 gayborhood, many folks rely on gatherings
18 to make a living. In the world of COVID-
19 19 however, large gatherings have been
20 strictly and sensibly prohibited, as it
21 usually, animated restaurants and bars
22 for more than four months as Philadelphia
23 digs its way out of pandemic shutdown.
24 The restaurant concepts now lean on
25 creative strategies like to-go cocktails

1 and modified outdoor dining to generate
2 revenue with strict social distancing
3 guidelines and capacity reductions in
4 place.

5 LGBT businesses are often small
6 community-based and privately owned. The
7 ability to host events and gather people
8 is a hallmark of queer business and this
9 is important both economically and
10 psychologically. Historically, LGTBQ
11 safe spaces have served as safe spaces
12 for often marginalized queer community.
13 Our folks, many of whom may be estranged
14 from their biological families, gather in
15 business establishments with friends and
16 chosen family who accept and understand
17 them.

18 As such, many of the
19 gayborhoods' hospitality business leaders
20 say that the concepts in Philadelphia's
21 LGBTQ residents are encountering a unique
22 challenge as essential community spots
23 navigate the new normal. Some businesses
24 might not make it. While others will
25 learn to make surviving with 50 percent

1 occupancy more viable each day. People
2 strive to gather socially in good and bad
3 times, and the places to provide space to
4 come together over food and drink will
5 always exist, and many grapple with the
6 fact that we've already lost virtually a
7 generation of gay men in the '80s and
8 '90s due to a deadly virus.

9 Even with medication or a
10 vaccine, we anticipate that this pandemic
11 could change the way that our community
12 and so many other communities socialized
13 for quite some time in the future. If
14 Philadelphia's LGBT establishments and
15 businesses and vendors have a difficult
16 time reopening in the long run, it will
17 be because of fears of COVID-19 leaves
18 behind.

19 Queer folks have endured
20 previous health crises before and are
21 familiar with the importance of keeping
22 themselves and loved ones safe, while
23 also being eager to return to socializing
24 and doing business. For some folks,
25 they're the only places where people can

1 authentically be where they are. So the
2 fact that our queer spaces can't open for
3 gatherings has had real and significant
4 psychological impact on our community.

5 In any case, I want to make
6 very clear that the IBA is committed to
7 working with the City of Philadelphia and
8 the Commerce Department on solutions that
9 will steady Philadelphia on the road to
10 recovery, and we are happy to partner in
11 any way to aid your work in helping our
12 businesses survive.

13 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
14 Zach, and thank you for your testimony.

15 Frank, is there anybody else to
16 testify from Panel 3? Is Tiffany or Nick
17 here?

18 THE CLERK: I don't believe
19 that Tiffany Gilbert or Nick Shenoy are
20 on the line.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I know
22 there was a question for that panel.
23 Councilmember Domb had a quick question
24 and then we can go on to the next panel.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,

1 Chairman Squilla and Chairman Green.

2 I just had a quick question for
3 Jennifer and Zach. Do you know if your
4 members have been able to spend the PPP
5 dollars in a way that qualifies them for
6 loan forgiveness or where they end up
7 having to take on long-term debt?

8 MS. RODRIGUEZ: So from what we
9 understand, the members have been able to
10 utilize the funding appropriately. We
11 have not heard too many problems in the
12 utilization of the funds. We did hear
13 very early on about a lot of concerns
14 related to particularly restaurants being
15 able to use it, but we find that those
16 have not materialized so far.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. So in
18 general, people are using it and not
19 going to have long-term debt. Because
20 coming out of this is bad enough, but
21 coming out of this with more debt will be
22 really bad, so that's good news. Thank
23 you both. Thanks for what you're doing.

24 And thank you both, Chairman
25 Squilla and Chairman Green. Thank you.

1 THE CLERK: You're muted,
2 Councilmember Squilla.

3 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Sorry
4 about that. Thank you, Frank. I see
5 Mr. Guaracino is up there to testify. Is
6 that who's next?

7 THE CLERK: Yes, Mr. Chair.
8 He'll be joined by Beth McConnell and
9 Kindra Mohr.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right.
11 Jeff, thank you for being here. Just
12 state your name for the record and then
13 proceed with your testimony. And then
14 after you three are done, we will have
15 questions from Councilmembers. Thanks.

16 MR. GUARACINO: Good afternoon.
17 Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Green,
18 Chairman Squilla, Councilmembers and
19 members of the Committee. My name is
20 Jeff Guaracino. I'm President and CEO of
21 Visit Philadelphia, the official regional
22 marketing organization of the five-county
23 region. For 25 years we've told the
24 positive news of Philadelphia and have
25 built the regional tourism economy here.

1 And I want to say that I'm
2 grateful for this opportunity to
3 represent this industry on behalf of my
4 colleagues from the Philadelphia
5 Convention of Visitors Bureau, the
6 Convention Center, PHL Airport, the
7 Greater Philadelphia Hotel Association
8 and then so many others who are grateful
9 for this opportunity to talk to you about
10 what's happened to our industry.

11 Personally as a resident of
12 Philadelphia and someone that was born
13 here, I want to thank you and all of
14 Council for your leadership in this time
15 of crisis. And I will say to you that
16 our industry is here to work with
17 Council. We are partners. We believe
18 that we can come out of this crisis to an
19 even greater city and an even greater
20 region. And if our recovery is done
21 correctly, if it's immediate, if it's
22 urgent, we actually believe we can grow
23 our market share and we can grow our
24 industry over time, and we can put more
25 people back to work.

1 And so, today with the
2 opportunity to provide this, I'll be
3 brief. We want three points to make to
4 this Committee that are short-term
5 return-on-investments that are immediate.
6 The first is jobs. We need to get our
7 friends and our family and our neighbors
8 back to work. The second, we need to
9 generate tax revenue for the City of
10 Philadelphia via tourism to fund the
11 priority programs that are so important
12 to all of us who live here. Remember,
13 tourists pay the tax. And 45 million
14 people came to the Greater Philadelphia
15 region to have fun.

16 And the third point is equity
17 in the recovery, especially for small
18 businesses in our neighborhood corridors.
19 Our priority as an industry is to rebuild
20 quickly. It's critical to our economy to
21 bring back the leisure visitors who come
22 just for fun, our meetings and the
23 conventions, the events, business travel
24 and we must continue to support our very
25 successful airport and we agree as an

1 industry that one of the first things
2 that we need to do is marketing to get
3 the word out about our City, what's
4 happening in our City, the hotels, the
5 restaurants, the shops, the attractions,
6 why you want to have your wedding here
7 and the many, many reasons to visit.
8 Through marketing we know that we can
9 support demand. We know that we can get
10 people to come here and to support our
11 attractions and to most importantly,
12 support the jobs that we need to get
13 people back to work.

14 Speaking of jobs, my first
15 major point, I want to make sure that all
16 of Council knows that 69,000 people who
17 support themselves and in their
18 households who live in Philadelphia
19 County work in our industry. I am very
20 sorry to tell you that 44,000 people and
21 growing are currently out of work. These
22 are 6,000 residents per City Council
23 District who may live in North
24 Philadelphia but may work in South
25 Philadelphia, who may live in West

1 Philadelphia but may work in Old City at
2 these hotels and attractions and shops.
3 They are out of work. This is a job
4 crisis immediately in every single
5 neighborhood.

6 And in our region, 58 percent
7 of hospitality workers are out of work.
8 That's 110,000 jobs lost in our region
9 just since March. In the hospitality
10 industry in this country, more than 50
11 percent of our colleagues are out of
12 work, and that will grow. That is five
13 times more than the Great Recession. We
14 know that these jobs provide equitable
15 access to family-sustaining careers. And
16 we know that tourism will rebound
17 quickly. We do see the data and the
18 research that because of Philadelphia's
19 location, because we're popular with
20 leisure tourists, because people can
21 drive here, because we have a great
22 reputation, because we have festivals and
23 events, because of our neighborhoods and
24 because that we're a great dining city,
25 people will come and we will rebound.

1 I am very also proud of our
2 industry, of our commitment and track
3 record for diversity and inclusion at
4 every single level within our industry.

5 And for Visit Philadelphia, I'm very
6 proud the 44 percent of our employees
7 here are diverse and our management team
8 reflects the diversity of Philadelphia.

9 Because of COVID, our industry is
10 disproportionately hurting vulnerable and
11 diverse Philadelphians in every single
12 neighborhood.

13 So one of the first things that
14 we could do was launch visitphilly/jobs,
15 which is all the available jobs open in
16 the hospitality industry and the
17 attractions and the restaurants and in
18 our hotels that are open now. That's the
19 first way to give a one-stop shop to our
20 friends and neighbors who need to get
21 back to work. The second point that I
22 want to make for this testimony is that
23 the hospitality industry generates tax
24 revenue for the City's General Fund. We
25 are self-supporting as an industry

1 through the hotel tax. The hotel tax is
2 decimated. It would create millions and
3 millions of dollars for the City, for the
4 state, for the debt service and the
5 Pennsylvania Convention Center and the
6 fund the Tourism Marketing Promotion.

7 Last year \$342 million to the
8 City's General Fund came from tax revenue
9 paid by tourists and that funds our
10 priority programs and it funds the School
11 District. That's \$244 million to the
12 General Fund and \$24 million to the
13 School District. Visitors spend money at
14 our attractions, in our shops, in hotels
15 and by the drink tax and they support all
16 of us who work to support their visit.

17 The third thing I wanted to
18 mention, and I'll close with this, is
19 that we can rebuild at this time with
20 equity and inclusion as our priority. We
21 can do it through our hiring and our
22 contracting. We can do it by driving
23 business to our neighborhood corridors
24 and shining a spotlight on the
25 restaurants and the shops, and the people

1 who give Philadelphia its character and
2 its distinctiveness.

3 So our first priority is to
4 work with you at Council for your ideas,
5 for you to help inform how we can recover
6 immediately through marketing and to ask
7 for your ongoing vocal support for our
8 friends and neighbors who need to get
9 back to work to support their families
10 and with the small business owners who
11 depend not only on us as locals, to be a
12 tourist in our hometown and to discover
13 this great city in this region, but also
14 for the visitors who will jump in their
15 Uber and their Lyft and go to Frankford
16 Avenue and go to North Philadelphia, the
17 Met and go and explore and help get our
18 economy recovered for all. Thank you for
19 the opportunity to testify.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
21 Jeff.

22 MR. GUARACINO: Thank you,
23 Councilman.

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Frank, is
25 there someone else to testify? I think

1 it was Beth maybe next and then -- Beth,
2 if you're there, if you want to state
3 your name for the record and then proceed
4 with your testimony and we'll ask
5 questions of you three when you're done.

6 MS. McCONNELL: Great. Thank
7 you. Good afternoon, Chairperson Green
8 and Squilla. Thank you for the
9 opportunity to testify. My name is Beth
10 McConnell. I'm the Policy Director at
11 the Philadelphia Association of CDC,
12 PACDC. I'll shorten my testimony. I
13 submitted longer written testimony, but I
14 do want to say I convened PACDC's
15 commercial corridor working group and
16 have for the last several years, which is
17 a gathering of staff, CDCs and BIDS,
18 business improvement districts, that
19 manage between 20 to 30 of our
20 neighborhood corridors. And we also
21 partner very closely with the Commerce
22 Department and Philadelphia LISC in
23 supporting corridor management.

24 And I want to just say the last
25 five months have really underscored how

1 absolutely vital our corridor managers
2 are in helping small businesses manage
3 and recover from crises. They have been
4 the direct conduit to small businesses to
5 ensure that they're informed about COVID-
6 related limits on business activity and
7 procedures to limit the virus spread.
8 They made sure business owners knew about
9 grant and loan programs, helped them
10 complete applications, served as
11 translators and really helped guide
12 overwhelmed business owners who were
13 seeing their whole lives slip away hand
14 by hand through this process.

15 So we have worked with them,
16 our corridor working group, to draft a
17 series of policy recommendations for
18 getting through the immediate emergency
19 of COVID. You can see our full policy
20 agenda at pacdc.org, but I'm just going
21 to highlight four recommendations today,
22 each of which we are actively working
23 with the Commerce Department and LISC and
24 other partners to find the resources and
25 tools to implement and would love the

1 support of Council.

2 First, we really need some
3 support for an enhanced program to help
4 small businesses avoid eviction,
5 foreclosure or other legal action over
6 debt. Beginning this month, small
7 businesses in Philadelphia that have
8 COVID-related debt can file with the
9 Commerce Court in the First Judicial
10 District to initiate a process that would
11 allow for a negotiation with many types
12 of creditors. It's similar to the
13 residential mortgage foreclosure
14 diversion that we have here in
15 Philadelphia, but with some important
16 differences. But to make the most of
17 that court's new process, we also need
18 the wraparound services that we have with
19 foreclosure diversion. We need outreach
20 to business owners to get them to
21 participate, much like the NACs do with
22 homeowners. We need expanded technical
23 assistance to help businesses find
24 resources to address debt and strengthen
25 their business, much like we do with

1 housing counselors.

2 We need a system to match
3 attorneys, whether they're volunteer or
4 for hire to business owners that can't
5 afford to find an attorney on their own,
6 and we need translation and
7 interpretation supports throughout this
8 entire process. Second, we really need
9 to set up a city-wide data system about
10 our small businesses. We really learned
11 from this COVID crisis that we lack
12 really critical data. That includes
13 contact info so we can reach them when
14 they're closed, what category of business
15 they operate, whether it's retail or
16 restaurant or some other form, what
17 languages they speak, whether they use
18 e-commerce, do they rent or own their
19 building and so on. A more comprehensive
20 system of data would allow us to better
21 target our outreach for assistance
22 programs, evaluate the impact of these
23 programs and also serve on met needs and
24 know what they are.

25 We are making some progress

1 with this thanks to the support of
2 Commerce and JP Morgan Chase for a data
3 management pilot program that was
4 launched on four corridors pre-COVID. We
5 need more resources and also an
6 assessment of what public data is out
7 there that we can rely on, what new data
8 needs to be collected through our various
9 public agencies and how to make that
10 publicly available in useful formats.

11 Third, we really need to boost
12 property ownership on corridors. Earlier
13 in the hearing, I believe Commerce
14 Director Gallier Howard and PIDC Director
15 Anne Nevins discussed this, but
16 significantly boosting the resources that
17 are available to purchase buildings and
18 properties on our commercial corridors by
19 small businesses as well as CDCs.

20 We also really need to see the
21 Land Bank play a larger role in
22 acquisition and disposition of property
23 on corridors. They really do not have
24 the resources to pay attention to
25 commercial acquisition and disposition as

1 much as we need them to. And this is a
2 moment where we really need to have
3 property owner corridors that is owned by
4 the people and institutions that have the
5 greatest investment in its success and
6 build local wealth equitably.

7 And finally, programs like
8 Storefront Improvement and Instore have
9 been very successful, but new times call
10 for new approaches. So we need programs
11 that will help business owners make
12 critical health and safety repairs and/or
13 reconfigurations inside their stores to
14 address deferred maintenance that poses
15 health and safety risk and make changes
16 that will allow for social distancing.

17 In closing, PACDC is so
18 grateful that Council and the Kenney
19 Administration have continued support for
20 corridor management programs despite
21 budget deficits that have led to very
22 painful cuts across the City. We hope
23 that commitment will continue as we work
24 to get our small businesses back to full
25 capacity as soon as safe, and expand that

1 work even further to cover more corridors
2 to spur an equitable economic recovery.

3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

4 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
5 Beth. I appreciate your testimony.

6 And I believe that Kindra was
7 next to testify. Hi, Kindra. We see
8 you. Just state your name for the record
9 and then proceed with your testimony.

10 MS. MOHR: Great. Thank you.

11 Thank you very much. Good afternoon,
12 Councilmembers Squilla and Green in
13 particular, and other Committee members.
14 Thank you for the opportunity to talk
15 about Resolution 200336. My name is
16 Kindra Mohr. I'm the Government
17 Relations Manager for the Sustainable
18 Business Network of Greater Philadelphia.

19 As my colleagues have said
20 today and as you all know, COVID-19 is
21 destroying our local economy and
22 reinforcing racial disparity and
23 marginalization. At the same time, we
24 are also facing a climate crisis and
25 these challenges are demonstrating to us

1 how important our local businesses are to
2 our recovery as well as to our
3 communities. As Philadelphia looks to
4 stabilize and recover in the coming
5 months and years, this is really an
6 unprecedented time and an opportunity for
7 us to rebuild it better based on our
8 small businesses as well as climate
9 resilience and equitable growth.

10 At SBN, we're actually doubling
11 down on these by turning inward, but also
12 engaging our members in supporting their
13 efforts to contribute to strong growth
14 equitability as well as climate
15 resilience. For example, we're
16 transitioning to a new sliding scale dues
17 membership model, which will allow us to
18 provide benefits more equitably to our
19 members regardless of our financial
20 circumstances.

21 And as others have mentioned,
22 we've seen the City take action which we
23 appreciate as well. For instance, PIDC
24 and the City garnered resources quite
25 quickly to provide emergency micro loans

1 to disadvantaged businesses, particularly
2 those from historically marginalized
3 backgrounds. And we also supported
4 efforts to prompt financial institutions
5 to offer debt relief and efforts to
6 protect businesses from evictions.

7 In addition, United Way, PIDC
8 and Commerce are convening diverse voices
9 through their small business ecosystem
10 project, which will ensure that a
11 recovery is based on best practice as
12 well as equitable and inclusive growth.

13 In moving forward, the City should
14 continue to build on these efforts to
15 advance equity and climate resilience.
16 First, primarily we see that investing
17 and prioritizing local business
18 development is key to this success;
19 second, creating opportunities for and
20 investing in historically marginalized
21 communities and those business owners;
22 and third, sparking innovation and long-
23 term growth in green infrastructure as
24 well as our local food systems.

25 My written testimony provides

1 more detail on each of these, which I
2 hope to cover with you in the coming
3 days, weeks and months. I do appreciate
4 the opportunity to share these brief
5 thoughts with you today and look forward
6 to working with you, SBN members look
7 forward to working with you and partners
8 to build a just green and thriving
9 Philadelphia. Thank you.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
11 Kindra. Thank you for your testimony.

12 Before we ask for any other
13 questions, Frank, is there -- I believe
14 Judith was on the line to testify. Is
15 anybody else on the line to testify?

16 THE CLERK: I believe
17 Ms. Robinson is the last person waiting
18 to testify, Mr. Chair.

19 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay.
20 Judith, if you're available if you would
21 unmute yourself and state your name for
22 the record and proceed with your
23 testimony, and then we'll have questions
24 for any members of the Committee.

25 MS. ROBINSON: Yes. Good

1 afternoon. Good day. Can you all hear
2 me?

3 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: We hear
4 you fine.

5 MS. ROBINSON: Thank you.
6 Queen Judith Robinson here testifying on
7 Resolution 200336. I want to say that no
8 one of us is smarter than all of us.
9 Taxes are paid by the poor too, that
10 street by the tax, liquor by the tax, the
11 soda tax, sales tax, so leave no one
12 behind. I am here again advocating for
13 the unfortunate situation that we find
14 Black women in this town, okay, of every
15 ilk.

16 It's a disgrace what has been
17 going on in our community as it relates
18 to so-called minorities. It was hell
19 before COVID and we're catching hell
20 after it. We are the worst in every
21 area, health, this, that and the other.
22 So I want to make sure that you all pay
23 attention. As you talk about the new
24 normal, who's included and all of that.
25 We were supposed to be included for eons

1 and everything, but it didn't happen.
2 And you all are talking to some of the
3 same people, to yourselves, who couldn't
4 get it done before COVID.

5 But I saw something very
6 interesting I want to focus on a couple
7 of times. With the Black Doctors, you
8 all went gangster for them. Do it for
9 the roofer. Do it for the nurses. Do it
10 for everyone else. They were supposed to
11 get part of a contract, didn't get this,
12 didn't get that. And then I saw the
13 hustle and bustle around that. Every
14 business stands on their own initially.
15 We know that all is true, but we're in a
16 pandemic. So coming out of it, let's
17 think differently.

18 Let's think of how we really
19 can be inclusive, and we want the same
20 gangster treatment that you all gave for
21 those doctors, for the roofer and
22 everybody else, okay. Do that. Make
23 that the new normal. Let me see how you
24 were working with that. Then I want you
25 all to include apprenticeship,

1 internship, everything you can to get
2 people working. I heard a gentleman with
3 the tourism say, yes, jobs. I'm part of
4 the tourism industry. I'm a tour guide
5 up in North Philly. Wouldn't think of it
6 up there, but we want to bring equity so
7 our youth can be tour ambassadors to the
8 world. Yeah, bring it on back, but make
9 sure you include us uptown.

10 We got more history. We can
11 write two or three history books, okay,
12 in the name of tourism, uptown, all of
13 that, and we even have new businesses in
14 this crisis. So I just want to make sure
15 I encourage you all to use your power and
16 show us what you're working with as you
17 include everybody in this new normal.

18 I'm going to say this because I
19 just want to hit these Boards and
20 Commissions. Every Board and Commission,
21 especially where there's money, I saw
22 earlier you all had the heads of all
23 development, all of that, every agency,
24 every Board and Commission, pull them in
25 and make that money flow. Make it flow

1 all around, okay. Access to capital is
2 the major problem, access to capital.
3 PRA was at the table. I was there last
4 August, and I know I'm going have to do a
5 right-to-know to get this information.
6 But there was a pilot program created
7 where they were giving out money and you
8 didn't have to start paying for 30 years.

9 My background is in real estate
10 financing, you all. You know my ears
11 perked right up. Find out about that.
12 But upon inquiry, just a cursory inquiry,
13 I was told, oh, that's a pilot program.
14 Well, if I wasn't at that Board meeting
15 in August, last August, I wouldn't have
16 known anything about it. It came and
17 gone. Somebody got some of that money.
18 Find out how many Black people got money.
19 How many Black businesses got money? How
20 money loans are given to Black people out
21 of PRA, a bunch of money in there? PHCC,
22 same thing.

23 Any company that's working for
24 PHCC, make it grow. If you've been
25 having them as part of PHCC for all these

1 years, let me see you double up on them
2 and then tell them to go in the
3 neighborhood and get some of these boys
4 on the corner and include them, who want
5 to work in their expanding business. You
6 claim we only have 2 percent. Let's
7 double it to 10 percent by just being
8 inclusive. Let's use our heads. Let's
9 include our (inaudible) who are here.
10 Let's not waste this opportunity.

11 I just want to close by saying
12 leave no one behind. African-American
13 women are definitely going to be under
14 the gun. If they were already 70 percent
15 of yearly evictions, my God, what's going
16 to happen next. We're going to have to
17 wrap our arms around them with the women
18 and children. I live up here near the
19 Woodstock shelter. Get them women out of
20 those shelters into PHA housing where
21 they're supposed to be, income-based
22 housing. We can do it, you all.

23 Invite other people in the room
24 who maybe don't agree with or who are not
25 spouting the same thing over and over and

1 over again, who have expertise, okay.
2 And invite us all in the room because we
3 can't figure it out. We done tore down
4 the whole country. If you had listened
5 long before, I've been down there
6 testifying about this mess for the past
7 25 years. You could have saved the
8 country, okay.

9 Now, you wait until they tear
10 up the whole country and now we got to
11 figure it out. Okay, that's enough.
12 Have a good day and thank you very much
13 for the opportunity to attend this
14 hearing. Queen Judith signing off.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you to
16 all of the speakers who testified today.

17 Councilman Domb, do you have a
18 question because I note we're getting
19 close to the end of time.

20 THE CLERK: Mr. Chair, it's
21 very hard to hear you.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN:
23 Councilmember Domb, did you have a
24 question? Can you hear me?

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hello?

1 COUNCILMAN GREEN:

2 Councilmember Domb? Councilmember Domb?
3 Are there any additional questions from
4 members of the Committee? Are there
5 additional questions from members of
6 the --

7 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

8 Councilmember Green, this is
9 Councilmember Squilla. I have one
10 question before we exit. And I guess it
11 was for Mr. Guaracino if he's still
12 available.

13 I know it's a challenge for the
14 travel industry, the hotel industry and
15 Philadelphia really relied on lot of
16 income based on that. Have you guys put
17 together a plan or a plan to the City of
18 Philadelphia and the Health Department of
19 how we can come back safely, smartly by
20 having this industry back up and running
21 and maybe differently than it was before,
22 but in a way that's safe so we can
23 coordinate together with the Health
24 Department and the City of Philadelphia
25 to show the world that the City of

1 Philadelphia is now getting to a place
2 where we could start accepting visitors
3 back to the City of Philadelphia?

4 MR. GUARACINO: Thank you for
5 the question, Councilman. I'm proud to
6 report that the tourism and hospitality
7 industry in this City and in this region
8 from the airport to the Convention Center
9 to the Visitors Center to Visit
10 Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Business
11 Bureau, we are united. We meet weekly
12 every Thursday at 9 o'clock to talk about
13 our challenges, our recovery and how to
14 get people back to work and restart the
15 economy.

16 We have been looking at and
17 have been deploying first and foremost
18 how do we communicate out what the City
19 of Philadelphia has been doing and our
20 businesses to accommodate visitors safely
21 and to accommodate their workers and to
22 ensure that when people come here that
23 they will have a good, safe experience.
24 I could tell you that we are leading the
25 country in terms of the investments at

1 the airport, the Convention Center, all
2 of us have been making. And so, that is
3 a story we need to continue to tell.

4 People are very concerned about
5 travel. Three-quarters of the traveling
6 public are not traveling right now and
7 that is a major issue. We are working
8 through the Administration in terms of
9 working with the Health Department.
10 Public health is first and foremost. We
11 are concerned about the challenges of the
12 outdoor dining going into September,
13 October, November and the wintertime.

14 As you saw today, nothing could
15 be open because of the storm. We'll have
16 more than 35 days of rain in a typical
17 fall. Most days after October will be
18 under 50 degrees so we're very concerned
19 about how do we support our restaurants
20 and our hotels that don't have outdoor
21 dining to accommodate the visitors who
22 are coming. We're about 30 to 40 percent
23 occupancy, and the City is doing better
24 than our competitive set, New York, D.C.
25 and Boston.

1 And so, we don't want to lose
2 that momentum, understanding that this
3 pandemic is unpredictable, uncertain and
4 we're watching how other cities have got
5 it wrong, so we're really proud of our
6 Health Commissioner and the State's
7 Health Commissioner. There needs to be
8 more to be done. This is a long-term
9 problem that's going to take us many,
10 many, many months and us working together
11 to really accommodate how do we
12 successfully get through this part of the
13 pandemic and then also to eventual
14 God-willing inoculation, so that way we
15 can get back to inclusive growth.

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
17 Jeff.

18 MR. GUARACINO: Thank you,
19 Councilman.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
21 Councilmember Squilla and Jeff and all of
22 the witnesses that have testified. We
23 appreciate your time and your patience.
24 We look forward to continuing this
25 conversation. This hearing is called to

1 the Chair. Thank you all so very much.

2 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.

3 Have a good afternoon.

4 (Joint Committees on Finance
5 and Commerce and Economic Development
6 concluded at 3:10 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, hereby certify that the
proceedings and evidence noted are contained
fully and accurately in the stenographic
notes taken by me in the foregoing matter,
and this is a correct transcript of the
same.

Court Reporter - Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of
this transcript does not apply to any
reproduction of the same by any means,
unless under the direct control and/or
supervision of the certifying reporter.)

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