COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, March 26, 2024
9:58 a.m.

PRESENT:
COUNCIL PRESIDENT KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMEMBER NINA AHMAD
COUNCILMEMBER CINDY BASS
COUNCILMEMBER KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILMEMBER MICHAEL DRISCOLL
COUNCILMEMBER JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILMEMBER KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMEMBER JIM HARRITY
COUNCILMEMBER CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMEMBER RUE LANDAU
COUNCILMEMBER QUETCY LOZADA
COUNCILMEMBER BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILMEMBER NICOLAS O'ROURKE
COUNCILMEMBER ANTHONY PHILLIPS
COUNCILMEMBER MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILMEMBER ISAIAH THOMAS
COUNCILMEMBER JEFFERY YOUNG, JR.

BILLS 240179 240180, 240181, and 240182
RESOLUTION 240193

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Good morning, everyone.

(Good morning.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: This is the public hearing and public meeting of the Committee of the Whole regarding Bills Nos. 240179, 240180, 240181, 240182, and Resolution No. 240193.

Ms. Loughead, will you please take the roll for all members who are in attendance.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Squilla.

(No response.)

THE CLERK: Councilmember Gauthier.

(No response.)

THE CLERK: Councilmember Jones.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Present.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Young.

(No response.)

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THE CLERK: Councilmember Driscoll.

COUNCILMEMBER DRISCOLL: Here.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Lozada.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Present.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Bass.

(No response.)

THE CLERK: Councilmember Phillips.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: Present.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Gilmore Richardson.

(No response.)

THE CLERK: Councilmember Thomas.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Present.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Harrity.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Present.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Ahmad.

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(No response.)

THE CLERK: Councilmember Landau.

COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Present.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Brooks.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Present.

THE CLERK: Councilmember O'Rourke.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Present.

THE CLERK: Council President Johnson.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Present.

Thank you. A quorum of the Committee is present and this hearing is now called to order.

Ms. Loughead, will you please read the title of the resolutions.

THE CLERK: Bill No. 240179, an ordinance to adopt the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2025.

Bill No. 240180, an ordinance

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amending Chapter 19-1800 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "School Tax Authorization," to provide for an increase in the tax that the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia is authorized to impose on real estate; and amending Chapter 19-1300, entitled "Real Estate Taxes," to establish an equivalent reduction in the tax rate for the City real estate tax; and making technical changes; all under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 240181, an ordinance to adopt a Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Budget.

Bill No. 240182, an ordinance to adopt a Capital Program for the six Years 2025-2030 inclusive.

Resolution No. 240193, providing for the approval by the Council of the City of Philadelphia of a Revised Five Year Financial Plan for the City of Philadelphia covering Fiscal Years 2025 through 2029, and incorporating revisions

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with respect to Fiscal Year 2024, which is to be submitted by the Mayor to the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority pursuant to an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement by and between the City and the Authority.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Also present is Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier, Councilmember Brian O'Neill, and Councilmember Nina Ahmad, also Councilmember Cindy Bass.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Here. Present.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Today we begin the public hearing of the Committee of the Whole to consider the bills read by the Clerk that constitute proposed operating and capital spending measures for Fiscal Year 2025, a Capital Program, and a forward-looking Capital Plan for Fiscal Year 2025 through Fiscal Year 2030.

Today we will hear testimony

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from the Administration on the Five Year Plan.

Ms. Loughead, will you please call the first witness to testify from the Administration.

THE CLERK: The first person to testify from the Administration is Tiffany Thurman, Chief of Staff to Mayor Parker.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Good morning. Could you just please state your name and title for the record and then you can proceed with your testimony. Good morning.

MS. THURMAN: Good morning, Council President Johnson. My name is Tiffany Thurman and I am the Chief of Staff to Mayor Parker. I'm joined by my colleagues, Chief Deputy Mayors Sincere Harris and Aren Platt. With us today are Finance Director Rob Dubow, cabinet members and department heads from across

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the Administration. We are grateful for the opportunity to testify on Resolution 240193 in support of the City's Five Year Plan for Fiscal Years 2025 to 2029.

The Mayor has a bold vision for the City's future - to make Philadelphia the safest, cleanest, and greenest big city in America, with economic opportunity for all, and her One Philly Budget features significant investments and new ways of doing business to achieve it.

The Mayor's Proposed Five Year Plan includes $850 million in new operating investments and nearly $1.2 billion in new capital investments, for a total of $2 billion in new targeted investments.

As the Mayor puts it, the budget comes from the ground up and reflects the voices of Philadelphians, the countless community members, small business owners, and faith leaders she's talked with over the campaign trail, the

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hundreds of volunteers who advised her transition and the front-line City employees she has seen up close in action since taking office.

The budget also responds to the City's fiscal conditions, including a shifting revenue picture and legacy challenges. It maintains positive fund balances and sets aside funds in the Budget Stabilization Reserve Fund, while navigating through the end of the American Rescue Plan Act funding and a legacy pension obligation bond balloon payment due in the final year of the Plan.

We're going to speak to a few of the key investments and new approaches through which Mayor Parker's first budget advances her bold vision for the City and makes good on her call for One Philly, A United City.

Public safety: Public safety is the Mayor's top priority. The FY25 budget includes over $33 million in new

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operating investments, with over $150 million over the Five Year Plan for public safety. This is on top of significant baseline funding along with major capital investments.

Police Commissioner Kevin Bethel, Managing Director Adam Thiel, and Chief Public Safety Director Adam Geer are developing a comprehensive strategy with new ways of approaching longstanding challenges. Key levers of the strategies supported by the budget include increasing the number and frequency of new Police Department recruiting classes; assigning new recruits to foot beats in neighborhoods and commercial corridors across the City and investing in community policing; further reducing violent crime by deploying personnel more strategically with more officers in the field; addressing 9-1-1 staffing issues and making technology upgrades for more effective investigations; new resources and attention to persistent

quality-of-life issues, including illegal use of all-terrain vehicles, car meetups, retail theft, and nuisance businesses; addressing open-air drug markets, starting in Kensington, through a multi-phase initiative, including resident engagement, enforcement, and restoration, with the overarching goal of increasing public safety and community health for people who live and work in Kensington; creating new triage and wellness facilities as part of the Administration's effort to provide quality treatment, care, and housing for the City's most vulnerable, including those suffering with addiction, homelessness, and mental health challenges.

I'll turn it over now to my colleague, Chief Deputy Mayor Sincere Harris, to discuss the budget's investments in clean and green and education.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: Thank

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you, Tiffany.

Good morning, Council President Johnson, members of City Council. My name is Sincere Harris and I serve as the Chief Deputy Mayor for Sustainability, Intergovernmental Affairs, and Engagement.

Let's talk clean and green. In keeping with the Mayor's pledge to make Philadelphia the cleanest and greenest big city in America, this represents the single largest area of new investments, with more than 36 million in new operating investments for FY25 and over 246 million over the course of the Five Year Plan.

The Mayor is prioritizing how City government addresses persistent quality-of-life issues, from litter and blight to illegal dumping and abandoned cars, not to mention tackling the historic disparity in how those issues are addressed through a new approach that responds first to hardest hit

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neighborhoods.

Those investments and new approaches include appointing Carlton Williams to a new cabinet-level position, the Director of Clean and Green Initiatives, and charging him with leading an all-hands effort to clean and green the City; a new citywide residential cleaning program with dedicated cleaning crews for every single councilmanic district and one point of contact for members to call for a response to quality-of-life concerns; expanding PHL TCB, PHL Taking Care of Business program, to additional commercial corridors and into residential areas next to those targeted corridors, while pairing this with expanded cleaning support from Sanitation.

We're piloting twice-weekly trash collection by Sanitation in areas facing the most challenging trash and litter conditions.

We're increasing the number of

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illegal dumping crews in order to shorten response time, adding a special collection crew for bulk pickup and expanding the City's network of surveillance cameras in illegal dumping hotspots, and using data to provide where to deliver services and to improve how those services are delivered.

Now, turning from cleaning to greening, a topic near and dear to my heart, this One Philly Budget includes a focus on environmental justice for underserved and underresourced communities, backed up by cleaner neighborhoods, more green spaces, planting over 15,000 trees, and meeting the City's carbon neutrality goal, all of which will result in fewer urban heat islands and healthier, more resilient communities; continued investment in restoring and improving our community parks, libraries, and rec centers through Rebuild, which is now under Capital Programs Office; and increasing funding

to SEPTA by over $117 million, recognizing the essential role that public transit plays in building resilient and sustainable communities.

Moving to education, to accelerate progress towards the Mayor's goals of providing all students a world-class education, the FY25 budget includes over 24 million in new operating investments for education, with nearly 140 million in new investments over the Five Year Plan. Now, of that, 129 million is for the School District, funded through a combination of shifting the District's share of the real estate tax from 55 percent to 56 percent and increasing the City's local contribution directly to the School District.

In addition to the new funding, the budget introduces new approaches to address longstanding challenges. It supports the Mayor's Office of Education to plan and provide oversight for a multi-year rollout of the Mayor's

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full-day, year-round school initiative. This will enable students to receive the educational enrichment they need throughout the school year, with a schedule that works for working families.

Taking on another sizable challenge, the Mayor's Office of Education will convene leaders across sectors to devise an actionable plan for school building modernization. This is a big one, and this complex undertaking will require close coordination across all levels of government.

Now, with that, I turn to my colleague, Aren Platt, to discuss economic opportunities and housing.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Thank you, Sincere.

Good morning, Council President Johnson and Councilmembers. My name is Aren Platt, Chief Deputy Mayor of Planning and Strategic Initiatives.

The promise the Mayor made to the City of Philadelphia is that our city

will be one that delivers economic opportunity for all. Practically speaking, that means that government should be a booster, not a barrier, to economic growth and job creation across every demographic and socioeconomic group. Her budget includes nearly $20 million in new operating investments for economic opportunity in FY25 and over $130 million during the Five Year Plan.

I'm going to share some examples of how the budget helps expand access to economic opportunity through workforce development, cross-sector collaboration, and capital investments.

The budget includes $10 million for workforce development and apprenticeship programs. We'll train working-class Philadelphians for careers in industries that are thriving today and those that are projected to grow, like the building trades, logistics, life sciences and biotech.

The funding will be available

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only for programs that offer guaranteed employment to graduates. The Mayor wants to make sure that Philadelphia leads the nation in life sciences and biotech, and this funding will help get us there.

The budget supports new models of cross-sector collaboration, business, faith-based, and intergovernmental mayoral roundtables. The Business Roundtable, for example, will include working groups focused on areas with high potential for aligning strategy, expanding equitable access to opportunity, and attracting additional public, private, and philanthropic investments.

We have launched the new Office of Minority Business Success, whose Director is in the Mayor's cabinet. She reports directly to the Mayor. The Office's mission is to bolster minority business enterprises, MBEs, and others in Philadelphia by creating a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, aligning

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businesses with available opportunities and identifying sources of patient capital.

But Mayor Parker knows that we can't have a thriving city unless we address the City's critical housing needs. That's why the Mayor has set a goal of producing 30,000 more homes for households that need them, new homes for homeowners, rehabbing and building buildings for renters, and revitalizing and repairing homes to enable long-time occupants to stay where they are living. The FY25-'29 plan makes a series of strategic investments and changes how we work to move toward this goal.

The budget supports continuation of successful housing production programs such as Turn the Key. It also provides needed staffing capacity to ensure that all City-supported new housing is affordable luxury, with the kind of high-quality fixtures and finishes everyone wants for their homes

in affordable housing.

The Administration is committed to tackling barriers and cost delays to housing development, including at the Land Bank. And the budget supports continuing investment in City-funded home repair programs and will make it much easier to access these programs through a single home improvement application to let folks apply for multiple programs at a single time.

But to accomplish the Mayor's ambitious goals requires a shared commitment to delivering visible results for residents, a willingness to build on what is working and change what does not, and a dedicated, talented City workforce equipped with the training, resources, and back-office support to do their best work. Accordingly, the Mayor's proposed FY25 budget includes $14 million in new operating investments for needed core support, with close to $131 million -- $151 million during the Five Year Plan.

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And now I'd like to turn it back to Tiffany Thurman.

MS. THURMAN: Thank you, Aren.

We look forward to partnering with City Council in finalizing a Fiscal Year 2025 budget that helps to ensure Philadelphia's best days are ahead of it.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony. We have also submitted testimony for the Mayor's Office and for the Department of Labor.

Mr. President, I'd like to ask Martine Decamp to present testimony on the Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Budget and Fiscal Year 2025 to Fiscal Year 2030 Capital Program, after which we and our colleagues here today are available to answer any questions that you may have.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

(Witness approached witness table.)

MS. DECAMP: Good morning.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

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Good morning.

MS. DECAMP: Good morning, Council President Johnson and members of the City Council. I'm Martine Decamp, Acting Executive Director of the City Planning Commission. Along with my City colleagues, we are here to present for your review and consideration the Recommended FY2025 to 2030 Capital Program and FY2025 Capital Budget. These were approved by the City Planning Commission on March 12th, 2024.

The Parker Administration's inaugural Recommended Capital Program and Budget strive to make Philadelphia the safest, cleanest, and greenest big city in America, with economic opportunity for all. The Recommended Program is a six-year plan for investing in the City's physical and technology infrastructure, neighborhood and community facilities, City-owned buildings, and specialized vehicles. The Recommended Budget reflects the spending appropriations for

the first year of the six-year program.

As both the Program and Budget are key instruments of planned physical development, the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter directs that their initial preparation and submission to the Mayor be a function of the City Planning Commission.

Beginning in early fall of last year, the staff of the City Planning Commission and the Budget Office received and evaluated requests from 20 departments. We then worked with department heads and managers to produce a Capital Program and Budget that addresses our capital needs, aligns with administrative priorities, and reflects our financial resources and spending capacity.

The Recommended Six-Year Capital Program calls for over $1.4 billion of new City, tax-supported general obligation bond funding to support public improvements throughout

Philadelphia. When possible, City funds are used to leverage additional resources provided by our greatly appreciated regional, state, federal, and private partners. We are also taking steps to strategically leverage our limited City appropriations to capital with federal and state grants, such as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation. Considering all sources of funding, including self-sustaining Aviation and Water funds and carry-forward appropriations from previous years, the Recommended Capital Program proposes $16.2 billion of additional improvements.

For FY2025, the Recommended Capital Budget calls for $295.7 million of new general obligation bond funding, which is slightly higher than recent budget years. The Recommended Budget makes critical infrastructure investments while reflecting the City's financial constraints and ability to support new debt service.

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The FY25 to '30 Recommended Capital Program and Budget include $146.1 million in FY25 and $471 million over the full program for public safety. Investments in health and wellness triage facilities, recreational facilities, police and fire facilities, fire vehicles, prison infrastructure, local bridge reconstruction, and street lighting and traffic improvements are recommended to increase public safety and build mutual trust in our neighborhoods;

$44 million in FY25 and $212.9 million over the full program for clean and green. Funding for City parks, playgrounds, and pools, trail improvements, electric vehicle infrastructure, and other energy efficiency improvements are recommended to improve the quality of life in Philadelphia and make all neighborhoods clean, green, and vibrant;

$37.6 million in FY25 and $169.7 million over the full program for

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economic opportunity. Funding for neighborhood commercial corridors, shelter facilities, public transit, I-95 roadway improvements, and industrial and waterfront land redevelopment are requested to invest in economic opportunity for all;

$16.8 million in FY25 and $126.3 million over the full program for education. Funding for City-owned Free Library, Zoo, and Art Museum facilities are requested to invest in education for Philadelphians of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds;

$51.1 million in FY25 and $430.3 million over the full program for core support. Support for IT infrastructure, street repaving, ADA ramp reconstruction, and improvements to municipal buildings are recommended to invest in more efficient and effective municipal services.

We're pleased to propose these investments, but we know they do not

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include all the projects the departments requested. And while the amount of recommended new general obligation bond funded spending in this year's Capital Program and Budget exceeds previous years, there remains a lot of documented need.

New general obligation bond funding spending in future years remains limited. Increasing City borrowing will mean increasing debt service and fixed costs, reducing the City's budgetary flexibility.

Overall, given our financial constraints, the Administration feels the Recommended Capital Program and Budget invests in the City's infrastructure to the greatest extent possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We'd be happy to address any questions you may have. Please note that the leaders of the City departments are present to assist in answering questions.

Thank you.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much, and thank all of you for your testimony.

For the record, I want to acknowledge Councilman Mark Squilla who is present as well as Councilmember Katherine Gilmore Richardson.

Before we start our round of questioning for this particular process, I have a couple questions, starting with the Five Year Plan and its fiscal health.

Just for the record, the Five Year Plan cites that the budget proposal is in response to the City's fiscal conditions, which include the following challenges: A 300 million reduction in wage and real estate transfer tax compared to the prior Five Year Plan, the end of the American Rescue Plan funding in FY25, and a legacy pension obligation bond in the following year of the Plan.

While this Plan does continue payments to the Budget Stabilization Reserve, they are 20 million lower than

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the prior Plan, and the fund balance of 14 million in FY29 is less than one percent of revenues.

With these challenges to our city's fiscal health, the FY25 through '29 Five Year Plan shows spending outpacing revenues in every year of the Plan. What is the Administration's plan to become structurally balanced during the course of this Plan?

MR. DUBOW: Good morning. Rob Dubow, Finance Director.

Any plan is a trade-off between a whole bunch of things that you're trying to balance, fiscal stability versus essential investments, and we really thought that the investments laid out in this Plan are crucial for the future of the City. It will put us on a track where it will help stimulate our economy and people want to come here, so that in the long run, we would see healthier balances than what this Plan shows and we would see structural balance

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going forward. I think that's probably particularly true as we head past FY29 and we see things like our debt service fall precipitously in FY30.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: What's our overall plan to drive economic growth as well during the Five Year Plan as well?

MR. DUBOW: So our plan is -- a big part of our plan is to make Philadelphia a more attractive place, and that is laid out with a lot of the investments that we show; for example, investments in public safety, investments in clean and green. We also have substantial investments in workforce development to prepare people for working in the City. We have investments in education, which helps the long-term economic development of the City.

So really a whole number of things kind of put together to help make the City grow.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: In

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terms of the development of this process regarding the Five Year Plan, what strategy was used to make sure that this process is equitable from a budgetary standpoint to make sure that all Philadelphians have an opportunity to participate but, most importantly, feel the investments in this particular Five Year Plan as relates to the budget?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: You're welcome.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: When the Mayor spoke about economic opportunity for all, she knew what she was talking about. She sat in this Chamber. She's worked on legislation, whether we're talking about housing equity, whether we're talking about business equity, whether we're talking about programs that she supported as a member of Council, like the Walter P. Lomax Transparency in Business bill.

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We are following at the lead of our Mayor, who truly, truly believes in this, and baked into every aspect that we are presenting here today is economic opportunity, so that we're not creating an environment that allows only a few to bear in the good fortunes of our city's next step, but one that truly lifts everybody, that has an eye toward the fact that this city is one of the poorest, if not the poorest big city in the nation, and ways to truly reverse this, whether it's the Office of Minority Business Success, the work that's being done in Commerce, the work that's being done around housing, the work that's being done around workforce development, education. I could go on. But I can assure you, Council President, baked into everything is economic.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Absolutely.

In terms of actual budget process, were departments engaged in

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coming up with an equitable rubric per each department to show that we're addressing issues of economic disparity based upon each individual department?

MS. THURMAN: Yes. I'll start and then, Rob, you can jump in.

So, yes, every department was engaged. They submitted first their initial request, and then our Finance Department with our budget team and of course our team here sat down to ensure that there was alignment around our economic opportunity goals and also goals around racial equity and inclusion, ensuring that -- one of the things that we say is that we're not looking at a half a loaf, but that we extend the whole pie, right, so that we are looking at -- we're taking a comprehensive approach across all departments and ensuring that we are serving people that have traditionally not been served and not been taken into consideration during the budget process.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: When we talk about education and the investment of the 24 million and 100-plus million over five years, could you talk about the support for pre-K, making sure that every young person in the City of Philadelphia receives a high-quality early childhood education and talk about the investment in this budget in terms of dollars and cents.

MS. THURMAN: Yes. I'd like to actually call up our Chief Deputy Managing Director, Vanessa Garrett-Harley, to take that question.

(Witness approached witness table.)

DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT-HARLEY: Good morning.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Good morning, Vanessa. How are you?

DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT-HARLEY: I'm great. This is Vanessa Garrett-Harley, Chief Deputy Mayor for the Office of Children and Families.

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And I'm sorry, Council President, could you repeat that question?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: So when you talk about the support for public education, I noticed that there wasn't a significant investment for FY25 for pre-K, right? That's an initiative that a lot of members inside this body supported in the last Administration based upon the importance of all young people getting a quality pre-K education, and just wanted to get an idea of the investment wasn't listed as an increase for FY25. I just want to kind of get an idea where we're at on that particular issue.

DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT-HARLEY: Understood. So the investment in pre-K is basically remaining stable for FY25. We currently have 5,250 pre-K seats, and we're happy that we have a fill rate of over 93 percent.

At this point, we have about

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223 locations that are over the 43 zip codes. We are very intentional about making sure that we are putting them in priority neighborhoods, as we call it. There's a whole formula that we utilize that considers my rate of factors, including everything from teen mothers to low maternal education, insufficient prenatal care, even the gun violence in the community, in order to determine where the need is greater and we try to prioritize those areas.

The decision around holding where we are is because we are doing so well with pre-K where we are and filling our pre-K seats, we're moving forward now with trying to enhance the universal early childhood education system for the City, and that universal system means that we are also working with the School District as well as the state and the fed. You know, there is Pre-K Counts and then there's also Head Start seats in the City. We're trying to maximize those

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seats all across the board, and we're actually coming up with one universal application to make things easier for families as they are trying to apply.

Right now if you apply for pre-K, you do one application for us, you got to do something different for Head Start, something different for Pre-K Counts, and a family shouldn't have to go through those kind of changes.

We are excited that this will launch early spring. So really hopefully by the end of April, beginning of May we will actually be launched at one universal application, and then we can put them wherever they are. It will also allow our partners to help maximize seats that they have not filled. Our fill rate is higher than most of our other partners.

So that's where we are, and that's why we're holding, because we're building that whole universal system so that across the ecosystem for pre-K for

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the City, we'll be prepared to move forward.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I think that's awesome, definitely streamlining the process.

Just elaborate on how we're differentiating between the high-quality seats versus those seats aren't high quality. Because I remember when we started the pre-K initiative, one of the key issues was making sure that young people and families had an opportunity to go to the highest quality early childhood learning centers in the City of Philadelphia. That's what made the program special and a little bit different than what the District offers as well as the Pre-K Counts initiative offered on the state level.

So could you just elaborate on that part just to make sure as we go down that path, individual families still know that even though it's streamlined, they still have an opportunity to still go to

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a high-quality pre-K program.

DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT-HARLEY: Absolutely. So proud to say that now about 96 percent of our pre-K seats are what is called high quality using the state Keystone STARS system. And when -- so we now have even been exploring bringing in providers who may not be high quality, but we provide technical assistance to help them raise to the high quality level. So this means that across the system, the lion's share of the seats are high quality. And even where we have pre-K seats, many of them are in facilities that also have the Head Start and the Pre-K Counts seats anyway, so you're getting that same level of quality in the seats, but the quality assurance measures that we have in place will definitely be there. In fact, they'll become more robust as we're building technical assistance and we help those providers if they need help to build to a higher level.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you.

I have to open this up to my members, and I'll have an opportunity to address a lot of other questions I may have as relates to the different departments. But I did have one question regarding the triage centers. Just give us an idea -- I know the Kensington Caucus is very, very aggressive and compassionate and supportive of making sure we improve the quality of life in the Kensington community, and I think they're having some great headway in terms of addressing the issue. So can you just give an idea of what triage centers will look like, the amount of investment that's going into triage centers, and give us an overview of what that looks like in terms of how we move forward in terms of addressing the opioid crisis and addiction crisis here in the City of Philadelphia.

MS. THURMAN: Absolutely,

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Council President. I'd like to call up our Managing Director, Adam Thiel, who can answer that question for you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

(Witness approached witness table.)

MR. THIEL: Good morning, Council President, Councilmembers. I'm Adam Thiel, the Managing Director now for the City of Philadelphia.

Council President, the vision for these triage and wellness centers is really bold and obviously backed by an unprecedented proposed investment.

So we are looking at ensuring that we have facilities where we can triage folks who need City services who are currently experiencing a lot of different types of ills, whether that's temporarily experiencing homelessness, whether it's substance use disorder, and ensuring that we are able to wrap around those folks and get them the help they

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need, not just in the short term. We know that City workers and our partners are out there 24/7/365 saving lives, and we are absolutely going to continue that work.

At the same time, we know, and I know from experience wearing my former hat here in the City of Philadelphia, that we need to build out the rest of that system to ensure that folks once we save their lives and once we have them stable, that we can continue that through short, medium, and ultimately in the long term, so making sure that folks get the long-term care, treatment, and housing they need.

The specifics of this very bold plan are still under development. We are doing due diligence in a number of different possibilities and also talking with a number of different providers about how we're going to partner to staff these facilities and of course ensure that all of this is done in full

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synchronization with our law enforcement, health and mental health providers, that entire ecosystem.

The last thing I'll say, Council President, is Mayor Parker during her first hundred days, just to show her commitment to this, convened apparently for the first time all of our health systems, payers, providers in the same room right here in the Conversation Hall. We had healthcare system CEOs, we had providers from all types of organizations sitting together to talk about, start this dialogue about how we can collectively build out this entire system to take care of folks.

A very positive meeting. We are continuing that. We're having additional convenings with payers, additional convenings with health systems, providers, so we make sure that we can get these additional capabilities, these triage and wellness centers set up as quickly as possible, again subject to

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your support, so we can take care of folks, again, 24/7/365 for as long as they need, get them jobs, make sure they have that economic opportunity, and help them move forward.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: That comprehensive approach, I think that's awesome.

How many triage centers will be proposed?

MR. THIEL: Well, Council President, some of that depends on the level of funding that's provided by City Council. The Mayor has really proposed -- I mean, this is a bold investment. We still see this as seed money. We think that this is going to be a very attractive opportunity as folks see the success for our philanthropic partners, potentially other levels of government. You've heard the Mayor talking about intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration. So we certainly want to talk with our state and

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federal colleagues about helping us with this successful program.

So we think ultimately the answer to that question is going to depend on the level of investment. We want to get started. We have the resources in this proposal to get started. So we hope that you will help support this.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: When you say "seed money," what's the proposed level of investment for the triage centers as it stands right now?

MR. THIEL: Well, the proposed capital investment is on the order of $100 million. And, again, we think this is going to be -- this is really a bold plan. We think this is what is needed. There are a lot of other cities that are sort of, I think, as we look at this, doing a lot of things around the margins and kind of taking an incremental approach. We're not sure that's going to work at this point.

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So this is a very aggressive strategy, and we're hoping to grow that hundred million dollar initial investment into something greater, as well as of course there's an operating investment that goes along with that to provide all the types of supports that we need to operate these facilities, to work with our providers, to staff those facilities and give folks high-quality care, treatment, and housing with dignity for as long as they need it to get on their feet, get jobs and move forward.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

At this time, I'm going to allow members to begin speaking.

Councilmember Isaiah Thomas.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Good morning, Council President. I'm going to say from the beginning that this is just going to be my first round. I'll come back for a second round, because I don't think I'm going to get it all in.

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I want to start by acknowledging all of the young people who are here today. If you don't know, a lot of our schools are on spring break. There's a lot of high school students who came down today to listen to their government in action. They're all over the room. So I want to start by acknowledging them, and thank all the Councilmembers who allowed young people to intern with them throughout the course of this week so that they can complete their requirements to be able to graduate from high school.

Young people, welcome to your government in action.

I started with young people because that is really my passion. And I understand that this Administration is really focused on public safety, and when you think about the crime in the City of Philadelphia, a large amount of the crime is being committed by young people between the ages of 14 and 24.

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I do think that the admin has made some excellent pledges as it relates to things that the admin wants to commit to to provide young people with quality opportunities, but I do have some concerns.

In your budget testimony today, the first thing that jumped off the paper to me was this idea of capital investment in schools. Last year my team, as the Chair of the Education Committee, put out a proposal where we recommended that a third authority be responsible for building new buildings. We know that the School District don't have the capacity.

Josh Shapiro tweeted, I believe, last week that Harrisburg has an $11 billion surplus right now if they fund every proposal that was submitted to the Governor.

If we do not act right now as it relates to addressing the crisis dealing with our schools, how can we assure that there will be money there in

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the future?

Let me give you some things that's going on in the schools that you might not know.

Several times a month young people are asked to leave their building because of the issue with their school. Some of the things that have been communicated to us, power outages, issues related to heat and air, and of course what we all know about, asbestos.

The Governor proposed about between 100 and 200 million in new capital dollars for the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and when you break those numbers down, that's not even enough to address the issues at Frankford High School for the City of Philadelphia. Frankford alone has about a $40 million bill as it relates to capital needs to address that specific school.

So I'm wondering what is the plan to be able to put us in a position

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to receive capital dollars to really put a dent in the facilities crisis here in the City of Philadelphia?

MS. THURMAN: So I'll start and then I'd like to call up Dr. Deb Carrera, our new Chief Education Officer, who can add additional information.

So we are definitely supporting a school building modernization plan that we do in coordination with the School District and other parties. And so we're working with Dr. Watlington and Oz Hill and other leaders at the School District to ensure that we take into consideration previous recommendations that have been put forth around schools and the disinvestment that's happened with school buildings.

And so in addition to that, Dr. Carrera can talk about the additional work and steps that will be taking place over the weeks to come.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: And while doctor is coming up, I want to be

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clear. I've spoke with Dr. Watlington, Board President Streater, and a lot of different parties about this, and we've been talking about this for months. And we understand that the District is focused right now on academic achievement, but we have to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time.

We're very concerned that the District doesn't have the capacity to build new school buildings, and we understand that this bill right now is well over $6 billion. So I think that it's going to require -- and I know that Dr. Watlington and the School Board and their team will be coming before us at some point, but I won't be asking them these questions because this is above their pay grade, right? Like they don't have the ability to decide what the process will consist of to build new schools. All they can do is let us know that they don't have the capacity to do it themselves.

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(Witness approached witness table.)

MS. THURMAN: Dr. Carrera.

DR. CARRERA: Yes. Sorry. Good morning, Council President, and thank you, Council Thomas.

I think to address your last piece, in complete agreement with you. So I think that that's really important for us to say. And there is a lot of interest about this issue on behalf of the Mayor. We want to make sure that there is a strong presence of Council, the business community, and other stakeholders in developing and supporting this sustainable modernization process.

The Mayor would like to take a "fund it first" approach where we're focusing on securing necessary funds and a long-term investment in reimagining and renovating our schools.

We know the Governor has proposed a $1.5 billion initiative over five years to support construction. We

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know that's not enough, but it's a start. So while our needs are much greater than what we want to work -- we want to work to find every funding source possible to support the District's facilities and modernization plan.

Additionally, in the Governor's budget, there was a $100 million grant opportunity for schools as well. And, you know, I started March 1st, but I definitely want to be able to -- I look forward to talking to you more and to Council more and your staff and learn more about your question about the school construction authority.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: I think the concern that we have is that no one is going to give us money until we give them a plan, and the District doesn't have a facilities plan. I meet with them once a month. We've been pushing this.

When Dr. Watlington first got in, the first thing I told him was that we need to focus on facilities. He said

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his focus was going to be on academic achievement, and I respect that, because based on his experiences, that's what he knew he could move the needle on, and if you want to look at the numbers, you have to commend Dr. Watlington and his team for the work that's been done post-pandemic as it relates to academic achievement.

But with that being said, while we have seen some traction as it relates to academic achievement, we have been taking steps backwards as it relates to facilities. My concern is that the "fund it first" model will not work, because no one is going to give us a blank check. The Governor has made it clear we're not going to get money for new facilities until we tell them what the plan is to build the new facilities.

So that part really concerns me, first and foremost. And, again, the School District themselves don't have a facility plan, right? And I'm not

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knocking them for that, but they were in limbo themselves because they're waiting for a new administration to transition, they're waiting for a new School Board to transition. So any plan they might have created could have easily been ripped up to shreds if the administration didn't agree with the direction that they wanted to go in.

So I want to be clear, Council President and those listening, I'm not knocking the School District of Philadelphia for not having a plan. What I'm doing right now is I'm sounding the alarm. I believe if we do not have a plan for school buildings in this year's budget right now, we will lose an opportunity to be able to gather hundreds of millions of dollars from Harrisburg that could put us in a position to change the school crisis forever.

I think if we wait and we address this next year in next year's budget, Harrisburg won't have an

$11 billion surplus. All right?

So I have to transition, because I hear something that's telling me that my time is running low.

Last thing I want to say about schools and then I'll move on to economic growth when I come back for my second round, the School District of Philadelphia cannot do anything about the safety issues that exist when young people are traveling to and from school. That's not their responsibility. We have some things in place that we've done around safe corridors and things of that capacity, but we cannot say that that's all on them.

I'm wondering what is the vision and what specifically is a part of the plan to make sure that young people are safe when they travel to and from schools?

One of the things that we talked about was the charter buses for schools, and the School District said

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that they don't have the authority nor the capacity to assure specifically with high schools there's a charter bus outside that school that takes those young people to the nearest major bus transportation center.

So I think about Councilmember Bass's district and what happened at Imhotep. Had there been a charter bus at that school to take all of those young people to Broad and Olney after school every day, only the creator knows what might have or have not happened to students.

So as I close out my first round of questioning, I'm wondering out of all the things that I read, I don't see anything that specifically talks about the safety of children traveling to and from school. What's the plan?

MS. THURMAN: So thank you. I actually -- Councilmember Thomas, thank you. I'm heartened by your passion, by your call to action. I would like to

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call up our Police Commissioner, Kevin Bethel, to answer that question.

As he's coming up, I do want to note that we had an opportunity, our Administration, to go to Imhotep to sit and speak with the students to hear their hearts, to hear their cries. We agree with you wholeheartedly. We agree with you wholeheartedly.

Commissioner Bethel, myself, of course Dr. Carrera, our Mayor, Cherelle Parker, as well as our new Chief Public Safety Officer, Adam Geer, we sat, we heard the cries of the students, we heard the cries of the family of the young man whose life was senselessly lost.

We know that there is -- we're beyond crisis level. We're beyond a place where there's a sense of urgency. We do know that we must act now. That's why we're really fortunate to have a leader in Kevin Bethel, our Commissioner, who has both served in the police force for many years but also with the School

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District. So I'll turn it over to him now.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COMMISSIONER BETHEL: So thank you for that, and thank you for your question.

I mean, I think, Councilman, you know the challenges we're facing even starting in 2019 when I was a Chief of School Safety and never thought that I would be dealing with young people being shot in or around a school or let alone being killed in front of a school.

Through that process, during my time as Chief of School Safety, you know we started to really work hard to build out these safe paths around schools. I believe there's about 23 schools now that have safe paths that through the data we identified may have the greatest level of challenges, Wagner and other schools around the City to do that.

Working with the Police

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Department, we started to build these safety zones around key schools based on the data that told us this would be occurring. Never did we imagine now that we were dealing with the bus corridors. I mean, Rising Sun and Cottman would have never been a location we would have ever thought that eight children would be shot in the manner that they were, let alone Ogontz Avenue.

As a result, you'll see as part of our hundred day plan, and we'll be executing even before that plan, is now we're trying now to see how we could put more men and women in those corridors where our kids are moving through.

Now, I know we talk about and I know you raise issue about the charter buses. A lot of our kids don't want to get on the charter bus for school, whatever reason it is. They walk right past the charter bus, because they like moving through the neighborhood. That's just the cadence of who they are.

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So we are working on a strategy now to try to see where we could flood some of the core corridors that we see a lot of our kids are forming to be able to have an additional presence. But as you know, this is 194 square miles, I believe, the City. It's a lot of area to cover, working with our SEPTA partners, focusing on our hubs as part of this strategy, but it is going to take an all-hands-on-deck approach now for us until we can get it settled down with this kind of let-out or these activities that the kids are engaged in.

They do not have any boundaries anymore, which now creates a significant challenge as we try to deploy effectively to make sure we don't have what happened -- the week of March 4th should be something that we all should be looking at and saying, how do we ever get to this place where we would have 11 children shot, one killed, within three days of each other in or around the bus

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stops. But we are putting forth an effort to work in that direction.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner.

Thank you, Council President.

I do want to just say, Commissioner, you have been an excellent choice, and I know I've said this in other spaces, but you are doing an amazing job. Thank you for your response to that answer, and I look forward to working with you to be able to address that issue.

And as I close out, I just really want to put an exclamation point on the facilities crisis. I believe in my heart that if we do not address this in this year's budget, it will put us in a position where as though we will have nowhere near the capital that we have right now to be able to fix this problem in the near future.

So that's my exclamation point, and I'm looking forward to working

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together to address this crisis.

Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes also present Councilmember Jeffery J. Young.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Anthony Phillips.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: Thank you, Council President Johnson.

Before I begin with questioning, I just want to say that the Mayor's budget represents the purest expression of our city's aspirations, of our city's goals and things that our neighbors have been asking for a long time. So I want to start by thanking Mayor Parker for rendering on her promises that she made when she made the decision to run for Mayor.

Yet there are questions that I have that will hopefully help this budget process become a lot more stronger, this budget proposal a lot more stronger but,

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most importantly, help the City of Philadelphia understand that we mean business when it comes to the quality of life that they all too desire.

So the first question is, former Council President Darrell Clarke, my man, implemented legislation supporting community policing through the introduction of public safety enforcement officers. These officers would have been tasked with addressing quality-of-life issues, thereby allowing the Police Department to focus on other priorities.

What is the Administration's strategy for recruiting public safety enforcement officers to tackle additional quality-of-life concerns? Because currently they've only been rolled out in Center City. Are they going to be rolled out in the district? Is there a plan for the public safety officers?

MS. THURMAN: I'd like to call back Police Commissioner Kevin Bethel as well as our Deputy Managing Director,

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Mike Carroll.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

MR. CARROLL: Good morning. I'm Mike Carroll. I'm the Deputy Managing Director for the Infrastructure -- Transportation and Infrastructure cluster in the Managing Director's Office.

So our approach to public safety enforcement officers is going to rely heavily on our Future Track program, which the Streets Department and now the Sanitation Department are drawing on, in order to help create a pipeline of employees for a variety of roles in the City. That includes folks who are going on professional tracks in Highway Maintenance. You know, electrical technicians, folks who are doing seasonal work feed into that, but we're hopeful that we also get people who are interested in taking on this role of enforcement officers supporting the

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Police Department in the work that they do and being that constant presence that you're speaking of in the communities.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: Thank you. Just a -- you don't have to follow up now, but maybe through e-mail, if I can get the line item for this as well as what is the rollout plan to get them across all of the districts, and maybe we can help you with the recruitment process and what that will look like.

MR. CARROLL: Okay. Thank you. We'll follow up.

COMMISSIONER BETHEL: Councilman Phillips, we were told -- my team just told me -- as I come on board, I'm not really vested in what the work they're doing. I am told that they're working for our abandoned auto, and our Neighborhood Services are supporters in that work.

Clearly, there's an opportunity to use them in a much more expanded role. I'll follow up with you to see exactly

what the forecast is for them in that space beyond just working with Neighborhood Services. I'll be able to follow up with you with some of the reporting on that.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: Thank you.

I just have two more questions, Council President.

What role -- moving on to another question, we're learning about this Mayor liaison that will serve in every Council district. How are you planning to collaborate with City Council to cultivate a piloted relationship so we can all work together to do the work of the Lord? Because District Councilmembers are charged by neighbors to really push and advocate for needs, and now is there going to be a conflation in terms of relationships with now a liaison? So the idea of there's going to be a level of confusion who to go to.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you

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for that question, Councilman. So the Parker promise is to deliver on government that Philadelphians can see, touch, and feel. And our Administration is also committed to the ensuring that access to critical City resources is accessible to everyone, regardless of zip code.

So with both of those in mind, the neighborhood action centers and the teams that support them just builds upon the critical engagement work that CEO is already doing, so whether it's educating residents on utility resources, addressing food scarcity, providing resources for substance abuse, and rental assistance.

However, currently all of that critical work being done by CEO is heavily grant dependent, both in the scope and what they can focus on and the geographic location. So all the neighborhood action centers do is make sure that all of those engagement teams

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are provided for citizens across Philadelphia in every district.

I would like to bring up my colleague, Orlando Rendon, who is the new Director of CEO, to talk further on this effort and address any other questions in detail.

(Witness approached witness table.)

MR. RENDON: Good morning. Orlando Rendon, CEO, Executive Director.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Good morning.

MR. RENDON: So the question, Councilman Phillips, is a good question. It's an expansion in terms of what's already going on with the City. We're trying to bring local government to the people's door, and in doing that, it's not something in a silo. It's working in conjunction with existing programs within CEO. It would be working in collaboration with Council constituent services. It's a one-stop shop where we

are tasked to try to coordinate everything within a particular district, within a particular neighborhood to make sure that it functions and works efficient so that everyone gets every resource possible that's available, whether it's city, state or federal.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: Yeah. I just want to quickly add that I think it's a noble idea. I also think that there should be a way when the rollout plan comes out in every single district how District Councilmembers can work collaboratively with that particular office to ensure not only the success but to also help people understand that this is a supportive measure that City Council supported with the Mayor to make this happen so that we can have more resources on the streets.

So I have some ideas around that, so I would like to set up some time but, most importantly, I just want the District Councilmembers to know that this

is -- it's not a conflation of resources. It's going to be us working together with this particular office. I think that's --

MR. RENDON: Absolutely. And it happens with all engagement, wherever it comes from.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: Okay. Good.

Two more.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: One more.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: All right. One more question.

As the Chair -- and I will save for the second round.

As the Chair of Children and Youth, I've been trying to figure out how I want to phrase this question. I've been highly disappointed with the Philadelphia Youth Commission over the years, and I'm thankful that we have a new director. I say that because the Youth Commission was a commission that as

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a young person, I was part of the steering committee to help start.

And what the Youth Commission does and just in terms of this particular question in general, just so everyone knows, by Home Rule Charter, there's supposed to be 21 members between the ages of 12 to 23, consist of individuals who understand the needs of young people in the City. The members should represent racial, gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity in the City, and they should be recommended by City Councilmembers.

The structure of the Philadelphia Youth Commission was supposed to have provided recommendations of policies, initiatives that they will send off to the City Councilmembers based off of what they've learned in the streets from youth, from community organizations, schools, rec centers, wherever the young people are.

Thus far over the past some odd

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years, even with the potential things that I've heard -- well, some of the things that I have heard that some of the Youth Commission directors have said, oh, the members haven't sent this person, you know, as a representative. We haven't -- there's a lack of advocacy and push and structure and oversight over this Youth Commission to make sure that they're very, very strong.

And so I think it's very important that if we're going to have this commission, what are the strategies that we're going to assure the success of the Commission that we're going to employ and does the Administration have a plan for its new director to hold the new director accountable and assure that there's successful report-outs.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you for that question again. You're preaching to the choir when it comes to engagement, and that's why we tabbed a dynamic young sister named Shania Bennett

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to lead our youth engagement.

I will say that unfortunately previously the Youth Commission hadn't had a full complement of the commissioners, but she has already hit the ground running. We are -- we have 19 out of the 21. We're just waiting for two more recommendations and we will be at the full complement.

But to your point about the Youth Commission advising on policy and taking that back to the Administration, that is absolutely the goal and the focus for this Commission, and we will empower and plan to empower Shania to be able to take those Youth Commissioners' recommendations back to the Administration.

We plan on having a qualitative and quantitative approach to all of our engagement, whether it's Latino, youth, Black male engagement, so that we are taking government to the people, both in the community engagement and in the

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constituency engagement, and we absolutely intend to listen to our young people and bring -- have that constant feedback loop so that our policies are informed by what we hear from them.

So your comments are taken and 100 percent in agreement.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: Thank you, Deputy Mayor.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Katherine Gilmore Richardson.

And just for the record, I just want to note, can everyone speak into the microphone, because a lot of individuals who are here can't hear you. So please speak into the microphone.

Councilmember Katherine Gilmore Richardson.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you all very much for your testimony.

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Council President, you already reviewed one of my questions regarding the overall financial outlook for the City, but I wanted to get a few things on the record based on the proposed budget that we have to sort of help us in understanding as we undertake this process, particularly also as a member and Vice Chair of the Appropriations Committee.

You talked about in your testimony about the financial challenges that we know the City is facing, including the end of the ARPA funds, also the lower than anticipated revenue for both wage and real estate transfer taxes, sort of the high legacy and fixed costs. You know, that balloon payment is also forthcoming, but also some of the significant service demands that we have relative to the type of population demographics that we have here in the City.

And so I wanted to just more

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fully understand how the Administration is thinking more holistically about the fund balance, about the Budget Stabilization Reserve, about the recession reserve and some of the other savings to ensure that we have the resources necessary in case of an economic downturn.

I say that, Rob, and I know we'll have the City Treasurer's Office coming soon, but I think right now we have sort of an inversion of the Treasury yield curve right now relative to short-term savings. But if you could just for me quickly review -- and I did some scratch math, but I just want to confirm -- fund balance for FY25, FY26, FY27, FY28, and then FY29.

MR. DUBOW: It will just take me one second to get there.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Excellent.

MR. DUBOW: I kind of thought this question was coming.

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COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Yes, of course.

MR. DUBOW: So for FY25, we are budgeted at the fund balance of 486 million.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Okay.

MR. DUBOW: For FY26 -- and FY25 is the last year of the American Rescue Plan money.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Right.

MR. DUBOW: So as we always thought, that fund balance will go down after that went away, and it does. In FY26, it goes down to 247 million.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Okay.

MR. DUBOW: In FY27, it's 55 million.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Okay.

MR. DUBOW: In FY28, it's 24 million. And then in FY29, it's

14.6 million.

Do you want me to go through the Budget Stabilization Reserve Fund next?

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Excellent. And I think really for the record, if we could just go over what the BSR contributions would have been based on the FY24 budget that we just passed, and then if you could then detail for the record the projections for the BSR contributions for the current proposed FY25, because I'm really just trying to understand the difference.

MR. DUBOW: Yeah. So I don't have the year-by-year in front of me, but I know that over the five years, the amount in the fund is about 22 million lower than the contributions from last year's plan.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Okay. And then do you think it's any difference in making a contribution to the inflation reserve versus the BSR?

Does it matter?

MR. DUBOW: Yes, because the BSRF has a different standard for taking money out.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Right.

MR. DUBOW: So that money is set aside more firmly for a rainy day. It's really a rainy day fund.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Right. So IR you would say has more flexibility relative to our ability to draw down from the IR versus the BSR, because it would have to be certain financial outlook in order for us to go into BSR, correct?

MR. DUBOW: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Okay. And I also -- just give me one moment.

Thank you for that, Rob. I wanted to also talk about diversity in contracting, because I know that's something that Mayor Parker has really

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put a strong emphasis on around growing MBE, WBE, and DBE businesses. And so I just wanted to understand what the Administration's overall strategy is to sort of increase the amount of contracting dollars we're spending on minority firms.

And as an aside, I just wanted to add, I'm holding the balance of my questions relative to additional savings that we could achieve for the Treasurer's Office later on in the week, because I know that we have some refunding and other things that may be on the horizon that could help us achieve additional savings.

MR. DUBOW: And they'll be here tomorrow.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Right. Right.

MS. THURMAN: Thank you so much, Councilmember. So I'd like to actually call up our new Commerce Director, Alba Martinez, that can answer

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the questions around our priorities with regards to MBEs.

(Witness approached witness table.)

MS. MARTINEZ: Good morning, everyone.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Good morning.

MS. MARTINEZ: Councilwoman, I believe that we shouldn't be satisfied with where we are. I'll start there.

Second of all, when we compare City government contracting diversity to private sector, we're ahead of the game. So there's something to be learned about how we're doing things, and there's more that we need to do.

So with that in mind, we have a registry that has over 2,000 diverse companies on it. We need to grow that registry, and we're going to use the power of street outreach, marketing, communication, you know, aim our partnerships and our relationships in

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this space to truly look for that outcome. And we are set up for success to do that if we all pull the cart in one direction.

In addition to that, there is this opportunity that we have working with the Office of Minority Business Success and my colleague, Rachel Branson, I call her cousin Rachel, because the reality is that Commerce and Director Branson are going to work hand in hand to take where we are to the next level, because if we don't do it now, when are we going to do it?

So what you have from us is a commitment to use the tools we have and take them to the next level. And I do believe that connecting with people to apply, make it easy for them to apply for this certification and others, right, private sector certification as well, and for us to guide them through the process is essential.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON:

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Excellent. And so if you could speak specifically to Black-owned businesses here in the City of Philadelphia, because historically that's been one of the lower percentage groups relative to both City contracting and other contract opportunities. If you could talk about how you all plan to expand outreach to particularly Black-owned businesses and also a system with certification and technical assistance, again particularly because we know that there is some anticipated borrowing that will take place relative to some capital needs for projects. I'll give an example, for Water as an example. I think they have anticipated 500 million I was just reading in some of the documents.

And so if you could talk about specifically how we're teeing businesses up to be able to compete for those opportunities, because most often we hear that they may not have said requirements or they're missing two or three things to

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be able to apply for the contract because the work may be so specialized.

So how are we working from a technical assistance perspective to help individuals to be ready for those forthcoming opportunities? Because outside of Rebuild, as an example, we have some larger City contracting opportunities that are coming up or quasi City-related agencies.

MS. MARTINEZ: So I can't go to the detail of talking about numbers, but I can talk about strategy and sort of what I see as the opportunity, and happy to follow up with any further detail.

But I will talk about it in terms of tuning and scaling, right? So I have found, and I'm very proud of this, that the Philadelphia Commerce Department has the components in place to achieve success. I really truly believe that. But they're not always at scale where they need to be and they're not always necessarily fine-tuned to get to what we

want.

So, number one, the Mayor -- and I really should defer to Rachel to speak to this, but the Mayor has a vision, which I share, which is about a minority business accelerator, like to create some sort of concentrated program. I'm not sure that it's an incubator, but that level of intensity.

But in addition to that, even without that, we already have a number of pieces in place. We have relationships with tremendous community development organizations in the neighborhoods that where predominantly our Black residents live and, therefore, our Black businesses are, and we need to do more targeted outreach through those organizations and to those communities in a way that tells them we want you to belong to this journey. So that's one piece of it, the outreach.

And the other is that we need to tune the technical assistance to where

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the problems are. For example, a lot of businesses, Black, brown, you know, just minority, economically disadvantaged, struggle with back-end processes. You know, they may fall down on their accounting because they're too busy cleaning the floor. And so we need to think about how we can scale that kind of support for businesses, either do it for them or pay somebody to create a back-end office, a new business like that, or to get them to a level where they are self-sufficient.

There are multiple strategies, but more work really needs to be done to be able to scale that in Philadelphia, and that's just the honest truth. But the pieces are there and the intention is there, and that's really important.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Right. And as you were speaking, I was thinking of the program that I know the Mayor supported when she was here in Council, the Goldman Sachs program at

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CCP. So I was thinking specifically about programs of that nature.

Quickly while I still have a little time in this round, I wanted to talk about also workforce development under the Commerce Department. That was an issue that was exceedingly important to me. I don't know that you're aware of relative from an institutional knowledge perspective, because you weren't here, that under the Kenney Administration during COVID, initially that department was slated to be eliminated as a part of government, and we fought through this Council body to have a workforce development unit in Commerce, and then obviously the legislation that former Council President Clarke did around having a workforce development reporting structure with your department.

And so I for one appreciate working with the workforce development team -- and I hear the bell -- in the Commerce Department. I do love the work

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that they do. We work together very closely. I just wanted you all to talk about what you look forward to and think about as far as their role from a workforce development perspective directly in Commerce and while also working with Philadelphia Works.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: You're welcome.

MS. MARTINEZ: So workforce is the other side of the coin of business success, right? A business is not going to succeed without workforce. So Commerce cannot disconnect itself or not be integrated in the thinking about how do we address our talent pipeline challenges if we want to grow the economy through the growth of businesses of all kinds.

So I believe that an important part of what we need to do with our workforce unit is to be strategic about where we create value. Like there's no

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reason for us to be competing with other programs. So when we're going to invest programs like the Mayor is proposing in her budget, we should be doing innovative things. For example, she talks about job training programs that have guaranteed job outcomes. Not every training program that we're funding is doing that.

The other thing is that programs that we fund --

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Pardon the interruption. I apologize, because I heard the bell, but --

MS. MARTINEZ: Oh, I apologize.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: -- are you talking about Class 200 investments from your department, meaning you would be funding another program, or would it be coordination from in the department?

MS. MARTINEZ: Okay. To clarify, and I'll be very brief, the team leads the strategy, right? So what I'm really referring to is that our team

needs to add value in terms of where we innovate, where we can show more efficient paths to close the talent gaps, and that could include but doesn't always have to include spending money on innovative programs. It could also include coordination. And an initiative we have underway, which I'd love to talk about in the future, is what we call the workforce efficient market strategy, which would allow us to close gaps by understanding supply and demand in a way that we have never understood before.

And with that, I'll yield.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Ms. Martinez, and I know there is a significant investment around a variety of different areas in terms of improving services to the City of Philadelphia, rather it's public safety, rather it's clean and green, and there's a request for significant investment, but just

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following up on what Councilmember Gilmore Richardson has worked on in terms of workforce development, we have a significant amount of vacancies, right? So what is that strategy, right, to hire up? Because this is a significant ask, right, but will we have the manpower to actually accomplish the things that we want to accomplish based upon the level of vacancies that we have right now? So we're going to scale up, but it seems like also we don't have the manpower.

And then the last part, you talked about this new office around minority Black businesses, which is great, but also -- working in partnership with the Commerce Department, but you didn't talk about the Office of Equal Opportunity that specifically focuses on making sure we're strategizing to make sure Black and brown and other minority businesses have a seat at the table and we're reaching their goals.

MS. MARTINEZ: Yeah. And I

should have mentioned, the registry and the outreach is right -- is the Office of Economic Opportunity. So I apologize for not mentioning that. That's definitely a department in the City that takes the lead around our registry and our outreach. And when I talk about expanding that registry, that's who I'm talking about, in addition to, you know, doing the contract compliance and monitoring.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: But do y'all meet like regularly, like part of your brain trust, because --

MS. MARTINEZ: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Because from DI, like there's really no DI without that particular department.

MS. MARTINEZ: Yeah, a hundred percent. Yes. It is integrated and it has to be a highly integrated strategy.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: And just want to put a pin in one last note. A lot of times we hear the narrative that

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businesses need their back office support, but I meet a lot of businesses that say we don't need a program, we need an opportunity, right, to go from being subs to primes, right? Because in the City of Philadelphia, the same old businesses day in and day out still get the contract and then they'll come get the minorities to be the people that come meet with us to get the sign-on. And so we're trying to change that narrative to focus more on Black and brown businesses being more prime as opposed to the subs to kind of diversify. And I'm quite sure and I know our Mayor has an agenda of not doing business as usual under this Administration. So this is something to take into consideration in terms of our agenda. Hence, we have the Special Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to examine what we're doing on the City as well as on the private side, because we all know DI is right now being attacked across the country, which is

basically an attack on primarily Black and brown folks and women-owned businesses as well.

MS. MARTINEZ: Thank you. A hundred percent agree.

MS. THURMAN: So the big focus for our Minority Business Success office is to ensure that not only are we focusing on the back end, to your point, Council President, but to ensure that it's a one front door model.

To the question around workforce development, we understand and have kind of tracked the Office of Workforce Development over the last few years. Where it sits now of course in the Commerce Department, there is definitely an external focus but also an internal focus.

Through our new Chief Administrative Officer, Camille Duchaussee, who is working very closely with Mike Zaccagni in our Office of Human Resources, we're looking at our workforce

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new skills initiative to ensure that we take a comprehensive approach, not just around decreasing the vacancy rate but to ensuring that the people that we put in those roles, they have a pathway to progression in those roles, not just entry-level but throughout the course of their career.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Good. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Kendra Brooks.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Oh, okay. Thank you.

I want to thank the members of the Administration for your overview of the Five Year Plan, and I appreciate the presentation we received, and I'm optimistic to see many shared priorities in this budget.

However, I want to focus my questions this morning around one of the biggest proposed new investments and to some of the questions that Council

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President asked about the wellness and triage centers.

There has been a lot of discussion about Philadelphia's addiction crisis, harm reduction, and what the purpose of these proposed centers are over the last few weeks. And I know people throughout my community are concerned about some of the rhetoric surrounding these centers, and I share their concerns. Because of that, I'm hoping to understand the Administration's vision around these centers.

Over the last four years, my office had led efforts to make sure that Philadelphia is leading in the response to this public health crisis against addiction, and that's with empathy and the best recommended public health responses in tackling this national problem.

This work includes leading the delegation of my colleagues into overdose prevention sites in New York City last

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year, and what we saw at the overdose prevention site was a wide spectrum of harm reduction tactics, including education efforts, healthcare support, and resources for those struggling with substance use disorders. And we should understand that safe consumption practices are not the only thing that these overdose prevention sites provide to those struggling with addiction.

And there has been little discussion about what services will be offered at this wellness and triage centers, and I was just wondering, can you describe a little bit more? I know in Council President's question, he talked about your planning to build out the system, and the triage centers is depending on funding and seed money. And I was very -- I'm just trying to figure out, funding, seed money, where, every Council district, focusing in Kensington. I would like a clearer picture of what that looks like, and it's coming from the

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point I have nine members in my -- nine senior members in my neighborhood have overdosed in the last month, nine. And even coming in this morning, I'm getting phone calls from neighbors concerned about retaliation in my community over overdose of their loved ones.

I just need to know and understand what this wellness and triage looks like in every community in the City, not just where I live but other communities that are not the primary focus of the Kensington Plan.

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, Adam Thiel again, Managing Director.

I really appreciate your question and your comments. Certainly the challenges that we have with addiction and substance use disorder exists not just in Kensington, all around the City. As we see the data, we see that scourge continuing to creep around the City. We know that Kensington has been particularly hard hit, and there's a

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lot of investment there. There are a lot of folks doing great work there. And we expect everybody who is doing that life-saving work, including multiple City agencies with multiple programs, to continue doing that important work.

What we are doing as an Administration with Mayor Parker's really bold vision is prioritizing and reprioritizing our limited dollars to ensure that we are building out the rest of the continuum of care, from a lot of focus on short-term life-saving and harm reduction, both of which are absolutely important and we expect that work to continue. We want to ensure that we are -- because it looks like this is an area where the City really needs to take the lead, and Mayor Parker has stepped up with this bold vision for the City to lead and convene and develop the rest of this continuum of care, which starts with triage and bringing people in, making sure they have the services that they

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need, and then moving them through to medium-term help, care, treatment and long-term housing and economic opportunity.

What exactly does that look like? That is under development. We are looking at where we can do this. We are looking at how we can do this. We actually had a meeting. Our wonderful Deputy Managing Director for Health and Human Services, Crystal Yates-Gale, who absolutely has helped build and operate programs in the City to help address these challenges, we met with a number of the great harm reduction providers that are out there today doing this work and invited them to be part of the process of designing exactly how this is going to work.

We want to make sure that we have the perspective and the lens of folks with lived experience for how they're going to move through this system. It won't be effective otherwise.

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So we really want to make sure that we're going to do this right. We met with them. We invited them. We're going to meet with them again. And we also want to make sure that the needs of our communities are centered in this work. So we also want to make sure that we're meeting with the communities and talking with them about how we can ensure that these capabilities, this capacity is built out in a way that is respectful of the community and the people who live in those communities and recognizing that our challenges with this kind of work exists all across the City.

We think the solutions probably also are going to need to be distributed. The specifics of that are under development, and certainly the amount of capacity that we have is going to depend on the dollars that we're able to bring to this part of the mission and building this out.

So we want to make sure that

we're including folks in that work, which is one reason why I don't want to sit here and tell you what I would do, because we want to make sure that the folks are community, folks who live in these communities, live, work, and play in our communities and the folks who are closest to this life-saving work are part of that build-out.

COUNCILMEMBERS BROOKS: So I thank you for that, and I just want to kind of emphasize that in my zip code, 19140, has the second largest area of overdoses in the City, and this process is very important in how we're going to find, secure a site for these proposed locations.

And to Councilmember Isaiah's plan about education, how can we fund something if there's no plan around it? I understand it takes time to meet up with the numerous groups around this issue, and I do applaud the work around it, and I also want to applaud the work

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of the City agencies that were able to step out and do emergency rapid response in my neighborhood around the first seven overdoses that happened in my immediate area.

My Part 2 question is about just the reality that the public health science is clear and we realize that forced treatment doesn't work. And I believe that our city's policies should reflect that, and that's why I'm a strong supporter of harm reduction policies.

The public health science is clear on this. People forced into treatment have higher rates of relapses and overdose, and I wonder like will these triage centers take into consideration public health science, and what is the plan for those who do not successfully complete treatment in their first attempt.

And I want to say like of these nine people that I'm speaking of, these are people that I know firsthand,

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community members, long-time addiction. I'm not talking about -- like the folks that many of us know that cut your grass, the folks that you can pay to clean up your block, some of the folks that are part of the Same Day Pay program. These are the folks that I'm talking about. We're not just talking about just pure homeless folks. We're talking about community members that just so happened to have addictions. And I just want to make sure that we're very intentional about not singling out or making this crisis compartmentalized and the reality that we all know folks that are struggling with addictions in every neighborhood and every community that are functional members of our community. And I just want to make sure that we're considering the public health science in relation to this as we set up these treatment centers. And some of these folks have been in and out of recovery their entire lives.

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So I just -- I'm just trying to get clarity like what does happen if complete treatment on your first attempt does not work? Are you just passed out of the system forever or are there opportunities for people to engage in different levels?

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, I think you really exactly articulated the need for this -- for achieving this vision and making sure that folks have access to the types of care that they need that is absolutely informed by the science.

So we are meeting at the same time that we are meeting with folks who have lived experience to help them with the design, we are meeting with members of the community, and we'll be doing more of that and outreach to ensure that we are meeting the community's needs. We are also meeting with the folks who are the experts. You heard me talk before about Mayor Parker's convening with

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providers and healthcare systems and insurers. There are -- as you know, this is a very complicated, I would say even complex -- I'm not even sure I would use the word "system," because we do have too many silos. There are too many folks who as they progress, they can't get their particular needs met.

I'm an emergency medical technician, a paramedic by trade and by training. So I know that when in doubt, listen to the patient. And we know that people have -- for all of us who have been patients ever in our lives, we know that people have different needs, they need different types of treatment. And what we think is needed is exactly what you're talking about, is a big vision and a series of investments that are going to allow us to do exactly what you're suggesting, which is to make sure that we are getting the right treatment for the right folks at the right time for the amount of time that they need to be able

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to move forward, take access -- take advantage of the access to economic opportunity and really have what they need.

So we agree that there are a lot of gaps, and that is the point of this very bold vision of Mayor Parker's, is to ensure that we have a way to address everybody and give them what they need for the amount of time that they need it.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: And another follow-up. The highest rate of overdose in Philadelphia is Black men aged 45 to 65, the people who are most negatively also impacted by the war on drugs. And we can't afford to return to these failed policies. So I have a question about what role does law enforcement play in these proposed triage centers as we move forward?

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, I guess I would ask Commissioner Bethel to start with that and maybe my other

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colleague, our Chief Public Safety Director, Adam Geer, to contribute to that. Rest assured, we are all working in sync.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

COMMISSIONER BETHEL: So, Councilwoman, thank you for your -- how are you?

We see it as a significant opportunity for us. For far too long -- I mean, we understand the enforcement. We understand where the arrest plays in this process, but also often we've not had a place where we've taken someone, so we oftentimes make an arrest. They go through withdrawals and we take them to the hospital, and that's how it ends, right?

And so what the Managing Director describes and what the Mayor has put forth is an opportunity for us now to treat the whole person and be able to -- so our part will be even in that work as

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we go into Kensington and other areas is always offer treatment as part of that work and giving opportunities for us in our police-aided diversion now. We divert a number of people without taking them into custody. Many of those individuals we will turn over and hope that they go to services but oftentimes not be able to complete that loop.

So I think for us as a law enforcement agency, it gives us an opportunity now to really have something to be able to say if I have an individual here today who wants to go to treatment, I don't have to parse around. I can be able to take this person to a place where they can get all the needs to service them. And so we see it as a great addition to our work and really build upon the work that we want to do as an organization.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: You know, so I hear that. So we realize also that study after study has shown that

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stabilizing people in housing is a way, a key way, to decrease drug use. So we know the sweeps have been tried many times in Philadelphia and around the country, and they do not address the root causes of the issue. What is being done in this budget to create stable and accessible housing to all Philadelphians and those who are suffering with addiction?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT:

Councilmember, thank you. Part of the process for the triage centers, and we've heard our Managing Director say this a number of times, includes housing, but we're also focused on creating new housing, stabilizing housing, and that may be apartments, that may be homeownership. When we're talking about low-income people, we are working with PHA. We are working with CDCs. We are working to ensure that they all have the resources that they need so that housing for people who need it is available, and

that's across every socioeconomic strata.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: I hear you, but I understand the system at the same time, and housing is not readily available. If we pick somebody up right here on Dilworth Plaza, we can't put them in housing right away, depending on your family size and your addictions.

So I just have a strong concern. If we cannot stabilize housing while people are going through outpatient treatment or whatever, what system is in place within this budget to secure this? And you're saying new housing. Are we doing rapid rehousing for folks going through addiction? Are we setting up new places to offer two years employment for someone that's going through that with workforce development attached to it? And if that doesn't work, what happens?

So I hear, I see the big vision. The devil is in the details, and I just -- you know, I've been studying this since I've been in Council. So I

know I'm going down the rabbit hole, but I've been down the rabbit hole, whether it was in an encampment on the Parkway, the one on Ridge Avenue, folks that come to our office every day, and my questions are centered in the real stories that my constituent services staff impact -- I mean, reach every day.

So I just -- just help me understand, because part of funding this big vision is understanding the plan. And I'm a visionary. I get it. But before we sign off the dollars, there has to be a plan, and I have to realize that these services that I know that are gaps in, siloed, that you guys said are in place and will work as we move forward.

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, what you're saying, these supports, this system doesn't exist, we agree, which is exactly why we are going to try to address all of the things that you're talking about. And that's the work that's happening now as we're convening

and meeting. I would certainly love to meet and talk with you more about it.

We agree that -- just in meeting with some of these folks who are out there every day, they're talking about if we can just get folks to a phone, sometimes that might be enough, let them get a call, let them get a shower, let them use a toilet. That's a first step.

You know, we hear from our providers who are out there that sometimes -- you know, every day, day in and day out, we have folks who are out there and they're saving lives and they see the same people coming back and coming back and coming back, and then one day, every now and then, someone will come up and knock on a window and say, I'm ready, I'm ready. And we need to make sure that we can get them not just to an initial facility that has the skills to take care of them on that day, but to help them move from that day, that

short-term care, into medium and longer term treatment, housing, and economic opportunity. And we agree 100 percent that does not exist right now in a connected and joined up way, which is why we are -- that's what we're building, and we think -- as much as $100 million sounds like it's a lot, and it is, this is a bold investment, it is -- I think you just said -- it's a drop in the bucket for what we need. It's a start. It's a big start. It's letting us have conversations that we could not have had before, and we certainly hope that you will sign onto this vision and help us execute with Mayor Parker's leadership -- I mean, this is not small ball. This is a big deal. Nobody is doing this. We think this is an opportunity for our city, one city, united city, to address this and build out something that nobody has ever seen before, and we look forward to continuing to work with you in that work.

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COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: All right. I have another round of questioning, but I'll --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: In your next round.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: All right? We want to make sure we get to all the members so we can get down to the next round.

But, Mr. Thiel, just real brief, because the young lady pointed out some key points. What's the timeframe for this plan? Because, I mean, you want money up front. What's the timeframe that we can expect a return on the investment?

MR. THIEL: Council President, you don't need me to tell you that time is money, time is life. So the more investment that we're able to have and the more we're able to know, the faster this will go.

We are looking to be able to

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have our first triage center available in a matter of weeks. That is an extremely aggressive --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Where?

MR. THIEL: -- target and timeline.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Do you know where at the moment?

MR. THIEL: Council President, the honest answer to that question is no, because we are doing due diligence on a number of potential sites, working with a number of different partners we're still talking with, because it is so important to make sure that the clinical part of this is aligned with the science and aligned with the providers.

So, I mean, I honestly can't answer that question, because it depends on a variety of factors and it certainly depends on us being able to know -- and we appreciate all the different priorities that Council has -- that

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Council is aligned with our Mayor for this very bold vision that we're looking to execute and implement in a way in partnership that nobody has ever seen.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay. I don't think it's that we aren't. I think folks just have questions, and the devil is always in the details and so --

MR. THIEL: Yes, sir. Understood.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: -- I think we're on the same page.

Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Thank you, Council President.

And good morning, everybody. My questions are about planning and development and housing.

So compared to FY24, the proposed FY25 budget cuts 60 percent of the Department of Planning and Development's budget. This is the agency that houses the majority of the City's

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planning and affordable housing resources. This cut includes a $17 million reduction in services.

Can you elaborate on why you're cutting DPD's budget so substantially, and which programs will be impacted by this proposed cut?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Councilmember, first, thank you for your question, and you and I have sat down. I know that you're a true leader on this issue.

I'm going to ask Martine to come up and represent the Department of Planning and Development on the answer to this, but know that the Mayor, and we've discussed this, is truly committed to housing. It is one of the key tenets of her plan, 30,000 homes for homeowners in her first term. So know that we're working diligently on that. But the specific budget cuts, I'm going to look to Martine to answer.

(Witness approached witness

table.)

MS. DECAMP: Hi. So this isn't my full area of expertise, but I'll do my best.

We do struggle with reduced funding from the federal government on a regular basis, so we are trying to be as creative as we possibly can, and we have a dedicated staff of housing professionals who look for every single opportunity possible. We try to be as creative as possible through zoning code bonuses for affordable housing. We try to reduce the barriers as much as possible, while finding as many possible venues for funding as we possibly can.

So I think we need everyone's support in this, and we will continue to work with City Council offices on figuring out how we can make this happen.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: What do the cuts represent and which programs would be impacted?

MS. DECAMP: Oh, I'm sorry.

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Okay. So specifically the cut was -- I might need to ask Rob and Tavari for help, but I believe that the cut was in the rental assistance program. So that was a temporary allocation to housing that has run out.

Is that correct, Rob?

Oh, it is right? Yeah.

MR. DUBOW: Yes. During the tail end of the pandemic, we did a two-year allocation at 15 million a year to rental assistance in the General Fund to supplement the 15 million a year that's in the Housing Trust Fund. So those two years are up, so the 15 million is not in the '25 budget. It was never anticipated to continue. But the 15 million is still in the Housing Trust Fund. So there's still money for rental assistance. It just doesn't show in the General Fund.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Okay. I just want to make sure that I understand. The cut to DPD was for

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rental assistance?

MR. DUBOW: So there was two years -- we had committed to do two years of rental assistance in the General Fund to supplement what's in the Housing Trust Fund. Those two years were '23 and '24. So we had the money in '23 and '24, and then as had always been planned, it was not continued into '25.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: So can you sort of make a comparison as to how much rental assistance we were providing in past years with this budget amount as compared to how much we would be proposing this year?

MR. DUBOW: We can get you that, yes. We will get back to you with that.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Does this represent a cut, to your knowledge?

MR. DUBOW: Yes. It's -- well, it's not really a cut because this is kind of -- it was a two-year program and that two-year program is up. So this is

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what was always anticipated.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Okay. Were we providing more than 15 million in rental assistance in past years given the DPD budget allocation and the amount in the Housing Trust Fund?

MR. DUBOW: Yes. There was the Housing Trust Fund amount and the General Fund amount.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: About how much were we providing in past years?

MR. DUBOW: It was 15 million each.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: So we were providing about 30 million?

MR. DUBOW: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Okay. By my account, about half of renters in my district, over half, 54 percent, are cost burdened. That translates to a gap of 75 million in terms of the housing costs that people can't afford on a monthly basis citywide. Do we think that there's less of a need for rental

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assistance now?

MR. DUBOW: So I'll just go back to this was a two-year program and that's what it was funded for.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: But, I mean, this is a bold budget. I agree with you, the vision is very bold. So we are taking steps to propose pretty dramatic increases in things that we believe in, that I believe in, like clean and green. Do we also share a bold vision around helping renters to stay in their homes?

MR. DUBOW: Yeah, and there are, as Aren said, there are lots of programs in this budget that help with homeownership and with renters.

I don't know whether any of you want to talk through.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Yeah.

Councilmember, part of NPI touches on shallow rental assistance. We have -- we're looking at housing subsidies for renters building new --

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using tools like the Land Bank to help lower the cost for renters. For lower income renters that qualify for vouchers, using federal programs through HUD.

So there is a patchwork here to get there, even though there is not going to be the continuation of the direct rental assistance program at the same level.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Okay. Do we know -- are you aware that when we were providing -- when we were kind of plush with rental assistance money, we were able to offset evictions by 90 percent. The Eviction Diversion Program, which has been nationally acclaimed, took Philadelphia from the fourth highest evicting city in the country to being able to offset evictions and keep thousands of people in their homes. That program works best with rental assistance. When we had the rental assistance, we were able to push away 90 percent of those evictions and

keep people in their homes.

I think that's a worthwhile investment and a great return on investment. What do you think about the success of that program and the critical need for rental assistance? And do you think that this budget meets the need within our neighborhoods?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Thank you, Councilmember. It does it a little differently, that's for sure. We're continuing to look at, we're continuing to analyze one of the things that you've heard both of my colleagues talk about is really truly a data-based approach.

We're doing what we can with the finite resources that we have available, and we're going to continue to look at this, see how the programs play out. And if there's need to reassess, we have the analytics in place to take a look at it.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: I would encourage that. We are -- some of

these programs approach our wildest dreams. A trash crew in each district is like, you know, pretty amazing, right? You're asking for a big number as it relates to the triage center, even though Council is asking for more detail on that. We can think big about successful programs, right? These aren't programs that are unproven. These are programs that we have a lot of data on, and we also have a lot of data on the actual need.

So I would strongly push back against cutting down such a critical resource. Even the 30 million doesn't reach the amount of the rental gap that we have in the City in one month, right?

I wanted to ask about Eviction Diversion specifically. This has been a wildly successful program. It's protected thousands of tenants and kept them in their homes and helped us a city, because it helps us not to have people on the street and homeless.

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Can you talk about the specific amount that this budget includes for Eviction Diversion?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: I'll defer to Rob on the specific amount, but there is an increase in the Five Year Plan for each year between '24 and '29 for both scaling and funding -- for both scaling funding and reduction of NPI funding.

This is also the -- I'm sorry; the reduction in NPI, so the Eviction Diversion needing to draw down NPI funds to Community Development Block Grant's CV window winds down.

So the Philadelphia Eviction Program, the Right to Counsel is going to be increased incrementally over the five years, and I'll look to Rob if you have those available now.

MR. DUBOW: I think the amount in '25 is 9 million.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Okay. For Eviction Diversion and Right to Counsel?

MR. DUBOW: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Would you be able to provide -- we were having a little bit of trouble identifying that detail. Can you provide detail to Council with a breakdown of all of the proposed costs for rental programs, including Diversion, PEPP, and Right to Counsel and anything else that you all are including in the budget?

MR. DUBOW: Will do.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Thank you.

I also just wanted to get clarity on whether there's any expansion of the PHLHousing Plus program. This is a guaranteed income pilot that we've been doing to help people on the Section 8 Voucher waiting list. It's been incredibly successful in terms of helping tenants in the City.

What are the plans around keeping this program going, especially knowing that we're still in a situation

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where people are ten years away from getting housing vouchers that they really need to supplement their income and to get affordable housing.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Councilmember, I know that there's a number of programs that are being talked about. I'd have to look into that specifically and get back to you.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Thank you so much.

Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

Just provide -- make sure you provide the information regarding rental aversion to all members of Council, including the Chair of Housing. Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Curtis Jones.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Thank you, Mr. President.

And welcome to some and welcome

back to others. Some of you are gluttons for punishment, but we're glad to have you.

MR. DUBOW: I don't know what you're talking about.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Bolder vision. I first want to start with if I understand the numbers correctly, we're at 6.3 billion, with a B?

MS. THURMAN: Correct. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES: And if I compare that to the Kenney Administration, they were 6.4, which is -- and I didn't go to Girls' High, but that's a two percent reduction for this bold vision; am I right?

MR. DUBOW: So let me give you some context. I understand the question.

So one of the things that we're proposing to do in '24 is move forward some of the investments that are crucial to achieving our goals. So, for example, clean and green, there's a need for materials, supplies, equipment. So we've

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asked for over 35 million of money that would typically be spent in 35 -- in '25 or later to be moved up to '24 so we can start these programs right away.

Same thing with paving. There's about 50 million of paving. Normally we would be waiting. We're trying to move that forward.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES: And for District Councilpeople, that represents like double the amount of paving we're able to do?

MR. DUBOW: That's the goal, yes.

And another example is the Forensic Lab. That was in '25. We're trying to move that forward too.

So the reason you're seeing it dip from '24 to '25 is those programs that we're proposing to move forward.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES: So with an inflationary rate annually of 3.14, I think it is, that ain't bad.

MR. DUBOW: Yeah. Inflation

is -- it's not that area.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES: So I want to shift my questions to cleaner, greener, safer, with economic opportunity for all. I got excited at the budget address on the cleaner side when we start talking about conversion of lots from dangerous places to safe spaces. I'd like to know about that.

On the greener -- no, cleaner, let's go with that, two pickups a week of trash and how we're going to roll that out, because I like that. And if I could end up with 400 police officers on the street, that's safer for me.

With economic opportunity for all, let's go with your Municipal High School. I need to know about those things. I'm excited about them, and as I look at what you're proposing as a budget, how you're squeezing all of this into that.

So feel free to take on cleaner, greener, safer, with economic

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opportunity for all.

(Witness approached witness table.)

MS. THURMAN: Sure. So I'll start with cleaner. I'd like to call up our new cabinet Director of Clean and Green, Carlton Williams, who is no stranger to you all and -- thank you for coming so quickly. I was going to say -- I thought I had a few minutes or a few seconds at least, but I was going to say thank you so much for your remarks, and our new Director is going to talk about how we're going to shift the narrative away from Filthadelphia to a clean and green city.

MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning. Thank you.

And good morning, Councilmembers, Council President, and honorable members of City Council. My name is Carlton Williams and I'm the Director of Clean and Green Initiatives for the City of Philadelphia.

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We are very excited, as you stated, about being bold about addressing the issues of litter and illegal dumping, but we're looking at a holistic strategy, not just -- we talked about silos and working in different parts of the departments. Our plan addresses multiple issues in a community all at one time, because it doesn't make sense for us to clean the streets and leave the lots, as you stated, unaddressed. It doesn't make sense to leave abandoned autos in areas where we've cleaned around with mechanical street sweeping.

So we're working across departmental lines. Our new approach is to work holistically and proactively, not waiting for things to happen but going out to find things, and how we're doing this in a number of ways. A, we're establishing a Community Appearance Index. We've used the Litter Index before to measure how effective things are in a community or a neighborhood.

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We're now taking that strategy and applying it across multiple quality-of-life issues. Not only are we looking at litter and illegal dumping, we're looking at abandoned autos, graffiti. We're looking at vacant lots and nuisance businesses, because these are the things that tear away at the fabric of our communities.

We're also looking at how we manage our trash collection. You talked about twice a week. Most of the illegal dumping or a good percentage of it is not just C&D materials, which is construction and demolition. It's residential household trash.

Many people don't have the capacity, especially in densely populated communities, to store trash. Unfortunately, they take matters into their own hands at times and dumping on lots and dumping next to trash cans and any other place they can find it other than their homes, because they can't find

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a place to store it.

You think about a family of two, three, four or even five that's living in a household and how much trash they can generate in a given week. If they don't have a place to store it, unfortunately some people dump it.

So we're trying to address those issues by giving them a direct service right in their communities and neighborhoods to ensure that they have adequate trash collection. Not only will this serve the residents that live in these situations, it will cut down on the amount of litter and illegal dumping that you just explained in our lots and our communities.

So we're working with CLIP, we're working with License and Inspections, we're working with the Water Department, and PPR and all of the departments across to address these strategies holistically.

Mayor Parker made it very clear

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in her address that this was a top priority in her administration, and we're already taking action to address those issues with the Community Appearance Index. In our hundred day action plan, we're establishing a Clean and Green Cabinet that will also provide the best recommendations and best practices on how we should clean and green our communities.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Thank you.

MS. THURMAN: And now I'd like to call up our Police Commissioner, Kevin Bethel, to answer your questions around our public safety plan.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES: I just want to say for the record, Mr. President, Member O'Neill and Member Driscoll are no strangers to the training academy, and one of the issues was how do we ramp up to get to that 400 number based on current configurations of training.

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COMMISSIONER BETHEL: So thank you for that question, Councilman. So first and foremost, when I came in the door, I couldn't be more proud of the men and women and what they have done working with OHR and working with our internal folks in Human Resources. We're now on a cadence of bringing in anywhere from -- we're pushing for 50 men and women every six weeks. On average, we're talking about 35 to 40 now.

We will have roughly 218 officers coming out this year, and that does not include the officers that continue to come in and moving in to next year. And so we're really, really excited about where we're going in that direction. We will get to our numbers.

One of the things I can share with you, most of the officers that we are losing are in our special units, not in our front-line patrol. Many of them are younger. And so we believe over the next couple years, we will be able to

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bolster our districts back up to their staffing numbers and we'll lower -- it will come down in our special units. Those particular units that need much more resources, our Special Victims, Homicide, we will keep them at their higher levels, but we will start to retreat in our support areas as we build out our patrol assets again.

But I could not be more proud of how they've been able to do the cadence. We believe -- and that does not even include the work that many folks have done already around our standards. We are seeing some differences now, particularly with the physical fitness. I know Adam is working with Director -- I mean, Chief of Safety, Adam Geer, is working on the tests. Once we get that test in place, we think we'll also get a lot more candidates, but we are definitely in a better position than we probably have ever been as it relates in getting the men and women and getting

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them processed quickly.

We've gone to a paperless system now, so we're able to move very efficiently now, where we didn't have those efficiencies before. And we're in a very good place, and we're definitely going to hit the Mayor's objective of getting to 400 and plus as we go into not this year but going into 2025 as well.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Good stuff.

COMMISSIONER BETHEL: Thank you, sir.

MS. THURMAN: And as Dr. Carrera comes up, to your question regarding the nation's first Municipal College, we're really excited about the partnership with the School District of Philadelphia, the Community College of Philadelphia, as well as organizations like Philadelphia Works in partnership with our dynamic Office of Human Resources under the leadership of Mike Zaccagni and of course Camille

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Duchaussee, who is our new Chief Administrative Officer.

We've had a number of programs, very successful programs, like Future Track and the CAT program in Parks and Recreation. Also Aviation does a lot of work around workforce development as well, but we've seen these programs work in silos with the School District of Philadelphia and with the Community College of Philadelphia. What we want to do is to break down those silos. We have a framework already in place. We've already identified programs of study that we can stand up this fall where we can create a pipeline to employment, guaranteeing employment to the people that successfully -- young men and women that successfully complete this program.

Dr. Carrera can provide more information regarding what's happening currently with the City's first Municipal College, and then questions around those areas of study, I'd like to call up

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Camille Duchaussee, our new CAO.

DR. CARRERA: Good morning, Councilman Jones. So as a former high school principal, this is exciting for me, and as a high school principal in North Philadelphia, this is extremely -- I wish I had it back then.

So as our Chief just said, the Mayor does see CCP as a critical partner in achieving her vision for economic opportunities. The Five Year Plan does provide a combined $255 million in CCP support for over five years, 51 million per year, which is the total of 255. So roughly $40 million for operating and then the $11 million for the Catto Scholarship. $10 million this year, 7 million of those funds would go to the Municipal College.

And so CCP, the City, and the School District are going to partner, as you've heard, the first in the nation college for municipal employment, and the City College will enroll high school

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students. It's also going to be enrolling people who are looking for a change in career and then also for current municipal workers who would like to advance in their careers. And so anyone that is interested in working in City government. And so the Mayor's Office of Education is going to work directly with the Chief Administrative Officer to stand up this college and ensure that it's aligned with our current projected workforce needs.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES:

Mr. President, I just want to point out that that's how we fill those vacancies. When we start to show, I think it was -- I forget which one behind me said the way you fill it is show them how much they can make and what the opportunities are. I don't recall us ever laying anybody off. And so these pipelines from school to paycheck as opposed to school to prison are what we want to do.

And then, finally,

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Mr. President, I want to give you your kudos, because not once has anybody said point of personal information under your watch.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Jones.

The Chair now recognizes Councilmember Cindy Bass.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Thank you, Mr. President. Point of personal -- no. I'm just kidding.

Just a couple of questions. Good morning.

(Good morning.)

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: It's still morning? Good morning.

A couple of things I just really wanted to say, and the first is, I wanted to thank the Philadelphia Police Department. I heard Ms. Thurman, as she said, that public safety is the Mayor's number one priority, and it's important. It's very important. It's important not

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just in my district, it's important across the entire City of Philadelphia. And as we work to attract business, to attract residents, to keep people here in the City, it's very, very important that they have a feeling of safety and security.

And so I want to start by thanking our Police Commissioner, but also I want to thank locally on the local level our Northwest Inspector Nick Smith and our 39th Captain, District Captain Busa, 35th Captain Burks, who is new and we welcome him, as well as the 14th Captain McCoullum, who is also new, and we welcome him as well.

We just lost, as I call her mighty, Mighty Shar Massey (ph) from the Philadelphia Police Department, who was promoted. So kudos to her as well. Did an excellent, excellent job and will be missed, but we look forward to seeing her on the citywide level doing significant work.

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I wanted to ask a little bit about this priority, because I know that we just had the loss of a young man, Dayemen Taylor, who was 17 years old at Imhotep leaving school. That was this year, 2024. In 2023, it was Devin Weedon who was on his way to school at Gratz, who was gunned down going to school, who was 15 years old. And the year before that it was Jeremiah Wilcox, who was playing with friends on a day off from school, who was 13 years old. And like these aren't just cases that happened. Families are attached, whole neighborhoods are attached.

And so I wanted to see how the Mayor's number one priority, which also connected to the neighborhood and community engagement budget, which I think really should go hand in hand, and when I saw the funding request for that particular office, I have to say I was a little bit surprised. I thought it was under-budgeted based on the amount of

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need in the neighborhoods and working directly with the Police Department. So I was wondering if you could speak to that, if anyone could speak to that.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: So all of the engagement activity, whether it's the community engagement, the constituency engagement, we plan to work across City government. So that we'll lean on our Police Commissioner and the Police Department, but also working with Public Safety Director Adam Geer so that we have a holistic, comprehensive approach.

And with that, I'm going to call up Adam Geer to the table.

(Witness approached witness table.)

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: Who can talk a little bit more about his front office and some of the engagement roles and how they'll be engaging the community around public safety issues.

MR. GEER: Good morning, Council President. Good morning,

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Councilmembers. Good to see you all.

Thank you for that question, Councilmember. We in my Office of Public Safety really are going to be committed to bringing the community in in a very meaningful way. One of the positions that we will be creating internally is a new Director of Community Violence Interruption. That position, which is a directorship position, will be dedicated to bring in these organizations, to bring in the community to be a part of the solution.

They're doing excellent, excellent, excellent work. One of the things that Philadelphia has is a robust group of criminal violence interruption community groups and organizations. So we absolutely mean to bring them in. We will also have a Director of Community Partnerships who will be coming in. That role, again, will be working with Mr. Hassan Freeman, who is under the Mayor's Office in the same role.

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COUNCILMEMBER BASS: When do you think that will fully be online? Because, you know, the weather is getting warmer. Summer is coming. We're all getting very nervous. So when do you think that will be online that we'll actually be able to see some fruits from this tree?

MR. GEER: So we absolutely understand that, and we have the same sense of urgency, Councilmember. We frankly just found that we would be able to internally fund these positions, so that's no longer, by the way, a part of our budget request, but once we went through this process, discovered that we could internally fund that.

We have the job postings being written and they're going to go out the door. We also have some leads on some of those positions, so we are going to be filling them and moving forward quickly.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: What's your target date?

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MR. GEER: To fill those positions?

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Yes, and to be up and running.

MR. GEER: As soon as possible. As soon as possible.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: So what day is that?

MR. GEER: Once I can get a few more interviews -- and I really mean that. I'm here with my First Deputy, Evangelia Manos, and these are the conversations we're having in terms of filling these positions immediately so that we can get -- because there's some wonderful candidates out there and we want to get them working.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: And I would just add that the engagement team in the meantime is already making sure that they work hand in hand with Adam. When we went to Imhotep, you saw Black Male Engagement, you saw our Director of Engagement, our Deputy Director, Will

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Mega, all there supporting the public safety spectrum across government, and they will continue to do that. And once Adam's full staff is on board, they will work hand in glove in partnership.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: And I just want to be clear that we want to support you. We want to support the work that you're doing. I think that we all -- like I said, we're very concerned about the upcoming summer months, what we've seen thus far, and we want to make sure that we can get in front of this.

A couple of years ago a group of us went to Trenton, New Jersey and we did a public safety tour, and they had an entire summer without one homicide. And Philadelphia, although much larger, does have a lot of similarities to Trenton, and if they could do it there, then I think that it's something that we can work towards here in a significant way.

So we want to be supportive. I want to say that.

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MR. GEER: Thank you, Councilwoman.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Absolutely.

So I'm looking forward to hearing more information about that, like next week. Just kidding.

Another question for you. I wanted to go to talk about the triage and wellness facilities, because that's another area that -- I think when I took a look at the budget, one of the things I was looking at is making sure everything was right-sized, at least in my mind. So I had some questions on things that I thought didn't seem like enough funding. And as I listened to the earlier questioning -- in the beginning, I thought $100 million does not seem like an adequate amount of funding for this initiative, but then as I heard more questions and sort of rethought it, I thought, well, maybe it actually is.

And so one of the first

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questions I have is, as I was thinking through some of the questioning, is there a contact with the counties, the surrounding counties? Because one of the things that in the previous Administration, you know, it was always kind of, oh, these are all Philadelphians. And we know that there's a large number of folks who are drawn to Philadelphia because the quality of the drug is -- of the drugs are pure, better, more desirable than in other places. So people come from all other places to Philadelphia and particularly to Kensington to be able to get high.

And so knowing that, what kind of outreach have we done? I know that in the Nutter Administration, there used to be sort of like a collective roundtable of the counties and the City working together on various issues. Are we doing that? Is that something that's on the table? Can you talk about that a little bit?

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MR. THIEL: Councilmember, again, Adam Thiel, the Managing Director.

I think the short answer to your question about the amount of money and the proposed amount of funding is, it is a great start and we are absolutely looking to partner with all of our intergovernmental partners, county, state, and federal level, and I'll turn it over to our Chief Deputy Mayor for more on that.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you.

And with regards to that communication, as you know, Mayor Parker believes strongly in intergovernmental approach. That's not just local, state, and federal. That's regional.

So we've already been in contact with all of our collar county partners. You might have seen that they signed on to a recent letter supporting our push for the increase in minimum wage.

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So we are going to every last collar county to have a myriad of discussions around all of the issues that we share, whether that be the borders of Bucks County and Philadelphia, Upper Darby when you're talking about Delaware County, and Montgomery County. We know that some of the public safety issues spill out from the City to the suburbs, but also we see those issues come from the suburbs and into the City.

So those are discussions, ongoing discussions, that we are having at the executive level and meeting with all of our partners in the surrounding four collar counties in Southeast Pennsylvania and actually across the Commonwealth, to be honest.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Thank you.

I thought Councilman O'Neill was saying that he was signing up for a wellness site in the Tenth District bordering Bucks County, but he was mentioning New Jersey also as a draw when

we think about regional. So I'm looking forward to getting more information on that.

But I did want to go back to the question that Council President had. I think everybody sort of like came to life when it was said that we would be able to open up a wellness center within two weeks or so. And so, you know, you just can't drop that and leave us there. So we really do need as much information that you have. If you think you can open something in two weeks, then you're further along than we might have thought otherwise.

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, I think I said weeks. So not two weeks.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Three weeks?

MR. THIEL: Weeks. And obviously something at the scale -- and we are looking to build a system, and something at that scale is going to take much longer than weeks. We know that we

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need to get started, so we're looking at phasing. So I think what we're talking about is, our first triage facility we are aiming to open -- maybe I should have said as soon as possible like my colleague -- certainly weeks.

And please rest assured, though, if we -- as we get close to a location, we're not going to say, you know, hi, we're doing a ribbon-cutting on Monday, and it's Friday. So I think we can commit to you that. We will make sure that we talk with the District Councilmembers and talk with Council and make sure that you all know where that's going to happen. And as we explore opportunities further, again, we're still in due diligence looking at a lot of different possibilities, and of course we are open. We would love if you all have potential ideas or locations that we could activate and support of this shared mission, we'd love to hear about those too. But we won't do this at the last

minute and let you know about it.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: I can tell you as a district member I really do appreciate that, because the word was on the street that there was a particular location in my district that was coming, and I can't tell you the number of phone calls that I got, what's going on, what's happening, is this real, you know, is this going to be, you know, like coming to a neighborhood near us sometime soon.

And so I did speak with -- I know, Aren, we met the other day and talked about it, and Aren assured me that like there would be weigh-in from the District Councilmember basically following the lead of their constituents and making sure that any changes to the plan that would affect those community residents was thoroughly discussed and approved really by the community and by the District Councilperson.

MS. THURMAN: I don't know if you noticed, but all three of us just

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like grabbed the mic in the last few seconds, and I know that we're all about to say the same thing. Mayor Parker was a District Councilmember long before she became Mayor.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Yes.

MS. THURMAN: So we understand the importance of coordinating and collaborating with the District Councilmember. So there will be no surprises.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Excellent. That's exactly what I wanted to hear, no surprises. Thank you very much.

The other question that I had was just around Rebuild and if you could talk about the new configuration of Rebuild in your Administration and the investment.

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, appreciate that. I'm going to ask our new Director of our Capital Programs Office, Aparna Palantino, to approach the mic.

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And let me just say as she's approaching, I didn't know Aparna before she was appointed to this position, and CPO is in the Managing Director's Office, and she is an absolute rock star. We're so happy to have her, not just to continually work on Rebuild but to do all these other things that we're talking about.

(Witness approached witness table.)

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(Applause.)

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: We know this, Adam.

MS. PALANTINO: Good afternoon, Council President, members of City Council, and thank you for that. Very appreciative of your faith in me. And thank you for the question.

Aparna Palantino, currently Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, soon to be head of the newly

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formed Capital Projects Office, which will incorporate capital divisions and capital staff from a variety of different departments, Rebuild being one of those.

So as you know, in the last few years, we've both at DPP and PPR, we've come up with new and innovative ways to accelerate projects, not only for efficiency and time but also to improve our efficiency in cost. And one of the challenges we found in Rebuild over the last eight years roughly is that they are taking a lot longer than expected.

I know the goal of Rebuild was to accelerate projects compared to the standard capital process, but after eight years of sort of observing that, we found that that to not be the case. So the goal is to bring Rebuild under the fold of this Capital Projects Office and continue to implement projects in the way that we have been doing capital projects citywide.

One of the other aspects is,

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many Councilmembers know we've worked closely with each of your offices to prioritize investments in your districts. The goal is Rebuild will come into the same conversations. They will -- side by side with other priorities in your district, we will make sure that those get implemented in the same fashion and be able to keep you more aware of those investments in your districts as well.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Does Rebuild still have the same financial commitment from the funders? When it started out, it was a $500 million program. It was 300 million in City funds through bonds. It was 100 million through William Penn Foundation, I think, and another hundred, I think, in miscellaneous state and federal and outside grants. Is it still that? Because I know that the numbers -- like the goalpost kept moving under the previous Administration. First it was 500, then it was 400, then it was 300,

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then it was 450. You know, like it was all over the place.

MS. PALANTINO: Right. So what we have found over the last few years is the project costs have continued to increase for a variety of reasons. After COVID, materials escalation went up, with some materials up to 50 percent. So the initial estimates for projects of course have increased drastically. So that is a moving target.

To speak to your question about the commitments of funding, those were what that program was anticipated to begin with, but we have since been seeking additional federal and state opportunities for adding funds to that. And, again, some of those conversations with your office is to prioritize where those investments should happen in what order are key to doing that, because we'll also need your support to solicit those other sources of funding, along with the Administration.

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COUNCILMEMBER BASS: So did we receive those funds in? Did we ever receive those funds in from the William Penn Foundation?

MS. PALANTINO: We have been continuing to receive funding from William Penn.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay. And from the other entities that were originally listed as being funders, they have made those contributions?

MS. PALANTINO: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: So do we know what the size of the budget is now for Rebuild?

MS. PALANTINO: As it stands at this minute?

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Yes.

MS. PALANTINO: And it can, of course, change and it is very dependent on what we get in private and federal and state sources. It is somewhere between 400 and 550 million.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: And the

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reason I'm asking is because it's my opinion as the former Chair of Parks and Recreation that we needed every cent of that $500 million and we need more. And so that didn't even do the job. And as we know, after COVID and supply chain shortages and everything else that was happening, we just didn't have enough, that we had whole projects -- I had a project in my district and they were like, all right, well, when it comes to the indoor basketball gym, we're just going to build it, but we're not going to put in a floor or walls. And it's like, that's not building it, you know. Like that's not really doing what the community needs and what their expectations were from the very beginning.

So I just wanted to make sure that we're able to come through with these projects and also meet the funding needs and challenges based on the inflation and the cost of materials that

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have gone up significantly.

MS. PALANTINO: Absolutely. And every site is critical. In my former role as Parks and Recreation, I know the condition of these facilities, and when they were evaluated, they have only degraded since that point. So those investments -- those original estimates were certainly low, and as a result of deferred maintenance, they continue to increase.

So I think there are Rebuild sites, but ultimately they are Parks and Recreation sites that have to be improved for our communities and our constituents. So we will continue to advocate for funding, whether it's under the umbrella of Rebuild or just City facilities for our communities.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay. And my last question was the Office of Minority Business Success. That's another office that when I looked at the budget, the office budget looked very

small compared to the work that I think it is required to undertake. Can that be something that you all are -- is this just initial funding? Do you plan on coming back later and asking for more or is this what it is? Is this what you think it should be? Because I don't have the number right in front of me, but I remember it was, I think, a million or a million and a half dollars.

MS. THURMAN: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Compared to some other offices which were funded at a much higher rate.

MS. THURMAN: Yes. Yes, ma'am. So we are focusing both on capital and equity investments with the Office of Minority Business Success. So under Director Rachel Branson, she'll be working in close coordination across our departments, including our Commerce Department.

So while the funding is not in her direct budget, there is funding to

support the work that Rachel and her team will be doing over the next fiscal year.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay. All right. So more to come. We'll stay tuned.

MS. THURMAN: That's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

And congratulations, Aparna, on your promotion.

MS. PALANTINO: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

Councilwoman Nina Ahmad.

COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Thank you, Council President.

And thank you, everyone, for this amazing testimony. This is my maiden voyage, and I'm really excited to see how much promise we have in this budget.

I do have a couple of

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questions. One is concerned about the projected fund balance. I think we all are. I wondered if we are optimizing our revenue stream. That's one. And, two, are we anticipating growth and is that reflected in this projections that you have?

And, finally, to that point, are we looking at public-private partnerships, including payment in lieu of taxes? Have we visited those options in terms of improving the scenario?

MR. DUBOW: And I will talk about the assumptions, the growth assumptions in the Plan, and then turn it over to other people to talk about public-private partnership, because we do have an office that is dedicated to that.

So we work with an outside econometric firm to come up with our projections. They give us draft projections. We take those down to a meeting at the Fed that's hosted by our oversight authority, PICA.

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When our outside firm came to us this year, they were projecting much lower growth in revenues than we had seen last year, for a couple reasons. One, they are seeing inflation come down. So with inflation coming down, then wages come down.

Two, sales tax numbers will come down. Also growth in sales tax will be slower.

So because of that and then their view that job growth will also slow, we were looking at $300 million less in revenue over the Plan. So there is some growth assumed, but much lower than we had anticipated last year. So that was something that we had to build into this Five Year Plan, and that's why part of the reason you're seeing the low fund balances at the back end.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: So, Councilmember, one of the other big new programs that we're really excited about is the Office of Strategic Partnerships.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Use the microphone, please.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: One of the offices that we're really excited about is the Office of Strategic Partnerships. Through that office and the leadership of Kafi Lindsay and Darnell Thomas, who is her Deputy, they're going to be exploring partnerships with the philanthropic community, with the business community, with community groups to figure out ways to both maximize opportunities for capital investment in the City as well as direct partnership to expand the bandwidth of what we are able to do as a city by including all of our civic partners who have skin in the game, who want to have skin in the game.

This is actually born from the Mayor's experience as she was going around and talking to people in every pocket of every community, whether it's philanthropies with hundreds of millions of dollars to spend to small neighborhood

groups who were saying, we just want to be more involved. And we developed this under the leadership of Mayor Parker as a way for all of them to have a conduit into City government, to be able to give whatever they have to be involved, and for us to help them realize how they can be strategically aligned with each other and with the goals of the City.

So was that all of your question? I'm sorry.

COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yeah. So that's prospective, correct? So you don't have a sense of what that could look like in terms of how we can anticipate building out programs and delivering services with this added public-private partnership or do you have a number in mind? Is there somewhere you're going with this that you can say we are anticipating X, Y or Z?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Yeah. So we're right now in the process of figuring that out, of developing those

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relationships, of seeing where there's alignment between the strategic goals of a lot of these partners and the goals of the City government to start to put some of this on.

In some ways, there will be a dollar return on investment. In some ways there will be a human resource return on investment. In some ways there will just be a collaborative expansion of the ability to do things return on that investment.

We're not quite ready to put the numbers to it yet, but we're getting there. We're having all of the pieces in place.

COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So we expect to see a matrix of who, what, where, when?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: And how much.

COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yes. Thank you.

I want to switch quickly to

another topic which we have heard a lot about, is the triage centers. The hundred million is a capital budget category, if I understand it correctly. What is the operating budget for these triage centers and which departments will be tasked to connect to those operational issues around triage centers?

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, Adam Thiel again, Managing Director.

That's correct. The hundred million dollars is the proposed initial capital investment, and the operating investment right now or the operating fund wraparounds we expect to come from existing City agencies and their budgets and their staffing, and we -- as we start to align with potential partners to operate this, we'll get a better sense.

Obviously the short answer to that is, it depends. How much operating we need depends on how many facilities of what type, what type of care are we going to be operating. So that is all still

very much under development too.

We worked very closely with our partners from the Budget Office to make sure as we start to understand what that is where funding that's not currently in the City's budget is needed for operations, that we're able to find that, tap into that. And I think to your earlier point, we are definitely looking at partners who can bring that through some of these partnerships and strategic partnerships.

So I can assure you we're having meetings with folks. It's not just about the services. It's about looking for folks who are willing to partner with us and bring their own resources to this shared mission.

COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Where does the opioid settlement money feature in this and where is it and what is the amount and what is going to change when there's more settlements? We have no sense of where does it reside.

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MR. THIEL: Councilmember, that's a really complicated question. We probably want to walk you through that during a future -- one of the agency-level briefings on that or the MDO briefing. We can tell you what the settlement fund was before and then as we're working on the future plan.

I think it is important to mention, that is done in concert with the community. So going forward, that's part of it. So I think that will take a lot of time to walk through that, and we'd like to come back to you with discussion about that.

COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: And the final question I have on this is location of these triage centers. I heard something, and maybe I could be wrong, that the Hahnemann space was considered for something. Is that a fact and is there a possibility of having that as our rehab efficient center so it doesn't impact any residential neighborhoods in

any way?

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, again, to reiterate the prior commitment, if we are getting close to operating triage or wellness facilities in any of your Council districts, we will be sure to let you know well in advance of that.

There is a little bit of confusion, I think, about Hahnemann, and I'll put that in quotes. There are a lot of properties that folks typically think of as being part of the Hahnemann complex. There is a property that folks think of as part of that complex that we recently were able to do a deal -- this is a longstanding negotiation -- for some Office of Emergency Management space as well as some space to relocate an existing family shelter operation. It is not -- that is an arrangement that we've been working on for a long time. That is not one of the triage or wellness sites. So I think there's been some confusion about that.

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We are looking at a lot of different possibilities and locations, and, again, I think we've heard from a lot of you the need for this, and we have to put these facilities in our city to take care of folks who are in our city. So we do hope that if you have locations that you think might be suitable, you'll let us know. We will let you know as we get through this due diligence where we're thinking to start achieving this bold vision.

COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Thank you, and I look forward to a more detailed explanation on the issues that were just mentioned. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

At this time, we're going to take a brief recess and then come back. Members have to finish up their first round and then we'll go into our second round and then also questions for the Mayor's Office of Budget as well as the

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Department of Labor.

We will be coming back at 1:15. Meet us back here promptly and we'll get started and finish out the rest of our day.

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(Recess from 12:35 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.)

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: At this moment, the Chair recognizes -- can we quiet it down, please.

At this moment, the Chair recognizes Councilman Nicholas "Nick" O'Rourke.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Nick, can you speak into your microphone, please.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Thank you, Council President.

Thank you to Mayor Parker's team and members of the Administration

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for joining us today as we do the second half of the first round. Thank you for sharing your vision for Philadelphia.

I'm hopeful there is a lot for us to do together to make this city better for working people, but this morning I want to talk about Mayor Parker's public safety approach, which makes significant shifts to expand police presence in communities with more officers, increased foot patrols, and mobile surge unit deployments, particularly in Kensington.

As someone who cut my teeth in organizing against mass incarceration specifically, I want to remind us of where we've heard the tough on crime rhetoric before. It's the same kind of language and approach deployed during President Johnson's war on crime and President Reagan's and Nixon's war on drugs, and that is something that is always at the top of mind as we begin to shift the conversation around public

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safety.

In Pennsylvania, this rhetoric brought us punitive laws in the '70s and '80s around mandatory minimum sentences and new mechanisms allowing prosecutors to try juveniles as adults.

Under this law and order mantra, PA's prison population grew from 7,000 in 1970 to more than 50,000 at our 2012 peak. We're evoking an era where kids were sentenced to life in prison, robbing them of their childhood, until the Supreme Court overturned that practice. Instead of being at home, nurtured by their mothers and kin, kids were removed from their community and isolated behind bars, their lives forever disrupted and their futures fractured as a result of that.

To be clear, this has always disproportionately impacted Black folk. In Philadelphia jails, Black people are detained at a rate nine times higher than white residents.

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So with this historical context in mind, can members of the Administration explain what investments, if any, are being made to maintain that larger mission to decarcerate Philadelphia?

MS. THURMAN: So I'd like to call up Adam Geer, our Public Safety Officer, to talk about that. As he's coming up, you mentioned the war on crime, the war on drugs. As we face persistent issues here in our city, we've been looking at this as also a war on chaos. And so through the organizational realignment that we have across our departments, we're looking to really kind of address that, both under the leadership of Commissioner Kevin Bethel and also our new Chief Public Safety Officer, Adam Geer.

It looks like we have both coming up, so I will get up.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

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COMMISSIONER BETHEL: So, Councilman, I appreciate your question.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Good morning, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER BETHEL: And as I tell people, though, I've been in the Police Department but in public safety and in my 38th year now. So I've seen the ebbs and flows of all of that, tough on crime, soft on crime, hug, don't hug, super predator, lock up every child out there because they're coming to get you. And so -- but we have evolved now from the person who came in 38 years ago into policing. I think we're much more better prepared and understand the consequences and the collateral consequences of many of the arrests we work.

Is there a place for arrests? Absolutely. Are there folks out here who do things in our community that should be arrested? Absolutely.

But I'll give you an example. In 2014, we started the School Diversion

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Program, where we will lock up 1,600 kids in a school year, and most of those kids were kids of color. Today, last year was 145 kids arrested in the School District of Philadelphia, and there's been almost a 90-plus percent reduction in that.

Today, we're more inclined to, with our Police Aided Diversion, to divert folks for low-level offenses. And so we have much more of a balanced approach.

We have greater relationships than we ever had before. My relationship with the Department of Human Services -- I was just talking to Commissioner Ali around the work we're getting ready to do with our juvenile committee that we're creating to start to figure out how we can do front-line diversions for our men and women in the field for our juveniles.

And so I think the system is different than where it was before. It's not perfect, but I don't think in the Department today we're going back to zero

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tolerance, wherever that was or is today. I think we're having a much more balanced approach around what our deployments are, really focusing on those folks who really need to be arrested, but also understanding that there's individuals who do need a second chance. And you will find that many of my men and women will embrace that.

I'll take you back to my diversion work. I remember bringing men and women into the room and asking them why they're locking up kids and I never gave them another tool to do anything different. When I gave them a tool to be able to do a diversion, working with the Department of Human Services, they ate it up all day long and they divert all day long, and to this day, they do that.

And so I think we're looking at a myriad of ways, but I will say in a balanced approach, I do not have time, nor should we have, for those who do harm in our communities to the level that they

need to be removed to bring safety to the community that we serve. But I think we now look at it, I look at it from a balanced lens in that approach, and I think if we continue down that, it's an effective strategy for us. It's never going to be perfect, but I think we're better than we were before.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: It's encouraging to hear that, because like I said, as folks begin to shift their attention towards addressing public safety, addressing some of the specific issues that folks have grieved about, it seems as if oftentimes we get amnesia about the wider project over the last decade and even more where folks became aware of the systems and how it disproportionately impacted Black folks going into jail and the work that many have done, books that have been written. I've heard a million sermons preached about making sure that when we talk about justice, we're talking about liberty and

freedom for folks and not just constantly focusing on that arrest. So I appreciate to hear that balance.

Further, we know that when we implement more law and order tactics, and I appreciate the change in term, the war on chaos as well, but when we implement more law and order tactics, more people are arrested in jail. Can you speak to the City's jails and their capacity to receive an influx of incarcerated folks at this time and going forward?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: I'm actually going to call up Managing Director Thiel.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Thank you, Commissioner.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: I think we had all seen our Prison Commissioner yesterday submitted her resignation. There are challenges in our prison system.

Sorry. Our Prison Commissioner had announced her resignation yesterday.

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There are challenges within our prison system. Managing Director Thiel has been working on that, because right now the status quo is untenable.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Encouraging to hear. Thank you.

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, Council President, Adam Thiel, Managing Director again, and I do want to acknowledge we have soon-to-be-retired Commissioner Carney with us and appreciate her service and her staff.

Councilmember, there is no question that the Philadelphia Department of Prisons is going to require some work, and that's to basically ensure that we are taking care of properly the current population as well as any changes in that population that might occur in the future.

A lot of this -- the need for this is well documented, and I think I want to certainly say that the dedicated women and men who are working in the

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Philadelphia Department of Prisons as correctional officers, as healthcare providers, all of the other jobs that those folks are doing, it is incredibly difficult work, as you can imagine, and I think those folks -- I'm sure that those folks, and of course we recently lost a member of our -- one of our professional officers last week. They're doing their best with the resources that have been applied.

So you'll see in Mayor Parker's proposed budget there are additional resources, capital investment for the prisons complex, because the challenges are capital related as well as operating related.

We are currently doing, with Commissioner Carney moving on, we are doing a national search for a new prisons commissioner. We hope to have news about that soon. We are continuing to work with some outside consulting firms that are very skilled in this area to make

sure that we are addressing all aspects of the work that needs to be done. We are looking at providing additional telecommunication services, addressing some of the quality of life factors that have been noted in multiple reports and other documents that need to be addressed to ensure that we are taking care of, as best we can, that population.

And we also, as you heard colleagues talking about, we need to address the entire continuum, not just on the front end. We know that there's more work to do. A continued theme of Mayor Parker's Administration, the intergovernmental work. So we know that part of the aspect of this, the Department of Prisons is really kind of in the middle of this, and we need to be talking with a lot of different partners, as we are, about reentry, partners here and also with our state partners about length of stay in the Philadelphia Department of Prisons and our

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institutions versus other institutions.

So rest assured, we are looking at all of this. Certainly there's a court's piece to it, and we're looking at all facets of this. It is going to take some time to get this entire system where it needs to be. We acknowledge it is not there now, and there's investment in this budget to start to address a lot of those factors.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Thank you.

Specifically on that, the well-documented capacity issues at the Juvenile Justice Services Center specifically, what is the Administration's plans for handling higher numbers of detained young people if it comes to that?

MR. THIEL: Well, that's another area where there certainly is a lot of intergovernmental discussion with the Commonwealth about how that system works. And so we certainly -- there's a

lot of -- we acknowledge there's work to be done there too. So we're looking at all of this, not just the Philadelphia Department of Prisons, to your point, but also the entire juvenile justice system.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Okay. Thank you.

Several of the PPD strategic priorities for FY25 are focused on staff, increasing staff levels, increasing diversity in sworn and unsworn positions, ensuring safety and wellness of officers. My understanding was that the first DEI officer for PPD was integral for those strategies. Can you speak on how PPD is shaping up its DEI strategy after the removal of Leslie Marant?

COMMISSIONER BETHEL: I will speak to the personnel moving in this setting and appreciate the question, but we still have now an Acting DEI, someone in that role, continue the efforts that were put forth before I arrived.

I do have a different vision

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around the work. It's around creating a culture of DEI within the department. So we're leading in some different directions as we build out our strategy around that work. We are actually doing -- we will also be doing a search very shortly to have that position replaced, and once we have that position in place, we'll start to move forward in the work that that person will be doing in the Department.

Right now I have -- we have our non-sworn professional staff who also are struggling in that work. And so we're starting to lean in completely across the entire Department, but that is very much a prominent part of the work that we'll be doing and looking at diversity and inclusion and equity across the entire Philadelphia Police Department.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: How is DEI being integrated into recruitment, retention and staff well-being, if you can give more like specifics about it.

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COMMISSIONER BETHEL: So part of that process before I arrived was a review of individuals coming in, the recruitment staff, to make sure that we are hitting our marks as it relates to diversity.

If you saw the last class that came in, probably was one of the most diverse classes we've seen across the spectrum coming into the class of the 48 recruits we just received and just put into the field.

We're very much seeped into making sure that we have diversity in our recruitment. Some of it we don't control, because where the person places on the test, as you already know, but we are very conscious of where diversity plays out in the Police Department with the DEI. But one person doesn't create diversity. It's a team, right? It's got to be all of us doing diversity and equity and inclusion across the entire Department. And so part of my work is to

how do we infuse that into who we are as an entity, which means we have to do a lot of training and education of the executive leadership and across -- as to understanding what your role and responsibility when you're bringing people into the field.

So I'm looking for it to be a much more broader approach and a more inclusive approach around what DEI means to us as an organization. I mean, we've been at it for a long time, and so we definitely have to be very patient and also manage expectations of what that role does and can do in our organization.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: It's time.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: That's time?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Yes.

Commissioner Bethel, and just a

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small follow-up with Member O'Rourke's line of questioning regarding a comprehensive approach. You just received 100 million -- I'll focus on the issue of trauma -- which your officers will teach and support young people who you encounter who are impacted by trauma. We know when it comes to gun violence, right, hurt people hurt people, right? And so just elaborate on what that grant and how the grant is going to be utilized and so forth.

COMMISSIONER BETHEL: Thank you for the question, Council President. So $1 million DOJ grant, I was -- going back in 2017, became very much interested in a program called Handle with Care. It was started in West Virginia 2013 in which the Police Department came up with a concept of when they went into and encountered a child or a young person who has been exposed to some type of trauma, that they would then alert the school district to allow them to know what's

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going on with that child. They won't give them the particulars. They're not able to share that, but they will say, Kevin Bethel may have been involved in a significant domestic incident at their home, that something happened at the house, that when your child walks into school, that teacher, the counselor, the school will be able to receive that child and they do a check-in with him or her to see if they have any needs.

As a result of -- fast forward to eight years later, we are doing -- my time as Chief of School Safety, an opportunity came forward to be able to apply for the grant, and we won that grant. As a result, we said where will we most focus our efforts? We looked at 22nd District because of not just its high level of violence, as I shared back 2021, we had 70 homicides and almost 300 shootings in a 4.3 square mile area. So we already knew we had children being exposed to high levels of violence, and

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then you add on the other layers of violence, whether it be domestic, all of that, and we had 15 schools that we thought we could have a very directed approach. So as a result, we were able to work with the School District, the 22nd District Captain, and the Philadelphia Police Department, and what that will do is provide help and assistance to those young people.

We're really, really excited about the program. It's something I always had a passion to be able to do in my work with young people. To your point, we talked about that in 2008 and '09 when I was a captain in a district and you were working in Peace, Not Guns around the trauma in the community and what we can do with it. And we're going to pilot that, with the hope that we can take it citywide shortly thereafter.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you for that feedback. I think the trauma component is a very, very

significant component at getting to the root causes of how young people respond when they're seeing their friends and family members being murdered in the streets of Philadelphia. So when I saw that grant, I said, okay, this is obviously taking a different approach when it comes to getting to the root causes of the retaliations that we're seeing.

COMMISSIONER BETHEL: I think it goes back to what our conversations a decade ago, right? We know that a child -- I shared this story yesterday. Somebody very close to me was in a domestic and their mother was being brutally beaten and have to go to school and sit in a classroom, worried whether your mom is going to be harmed or not and what that does to that person trying to be educated in that moment.

But our young children are exposed to a lot and if we don't get upstream and start to deal with it, then

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we wonder why we're in some of these situations.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Quetcy Lozada.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you, Council President.

First, let me say thank you to the Administration for being here this morning or now this afternoon. And I want to just put on the record my appreciation for your willingness to do something different, right? Triage centers, wellness centers are not something that folks do, and I know that there's a lot of questions about it, but I appreciate your willingness to do something, something different than what has been done in the past.

I also have questions about how it will be operationalized, who is going to manage it. And I know that there's limited information, but if you could

share with us just some parts of it, right, and how does the opioid settlement money that we have, how do we use that to support that type of work?

MS. THURMAN: So our Managing Director is coming up, and thank you very much, Councilmember Lozada, for that. To your point, it's something new, it's something different, it's something necessary. We understand and feel and sense the urgency of it. We see the urgency of it every day. We live in those same neighborhoods. Our families are impacted by what's happening. And so that's what's really informing our approach.

So in terms of the meat and more details, I'll turn it over now to our Managing Director Thiel.

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, Council President, Adam Thiel again, the Managing Director.

Councilmember, I appreciate that. We really -- we simply don't have

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that level of detail right now because we are getting started on the planning for this even as we try to, as soon as possible, have a first triage facility that offers some of those kinds of services available. So we just don't have that kind of detail.

As far as the funding, we want to make sure that this system that we're talking about building is not dependent on any one particular funding stream. So that's why you see the first part of what we hope will be a capital stack from multiple sources is this hundred million dollar investment.

The operating piece of that, the wraparound is, we're continuing to talk with potential providers, because again we want the experts, the healthcare experts, to be involved with this. That is still somewhat flexible. And to the extent that those, I'll say, community-guided discussions about the settlement dollars -- there are rules

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around those -- that that plugs in when and where it can and, again, as part of that conversation with multiple groups that are involved in guiding where those monies go.

So we really want to make sure that this doesn't become -- this needs to be -- we think to build out this type of comprehensive system that we've been talking about, we can't be reliant on grant funding or one-time funding or funding that runs out at any particular point, right? We've all kind of been there, been there, done that, which is why you see Mayor Parker investing City dollars, City capital dollars, City General Fund dollars in building this out, because she believes, and we of course emphatically agree, that is what's needed to do something different and truly address this crisis in a long-term, sustainable way.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I appreciate that, and I don't believe that

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100 million is enough, right, which is why I'm saying have we considered using that opioid settlement money the best way possible, right? It was identified for us to address the crisis that we have on the ground. Let us take advantage of that funding and add it to whatever it is the Administration believes it needs in order to make sure that we are truly having an impact in the way we address the situation on the ground.

And then I also wanted to ask, do you believe that you will have one wellness center, five wellness centers, ten wellness centers? And if you're considering more than one, how long do you think it will take you before you get to your goal?

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, we want to be able to build this system, which is not just about physical facilities for triage or wellness or anything else. We want to make sure that we build this system so it can scale and

so it can scale to meet the demand.

We know that right now this system we're talking about doesn't even exist in the form that we're talking about. Pieces of it do. So job number one is connecting the pieces that do exist, prioritizing among them, and starting to build out the parts that don't and build out this additional capacity.

Look, I think we all hope that we will build this, people will come, it will grow to the point that it works and it works for as long as it needs to work, and then I think we all hope that it can start to scale back down as folks are taking advantage of this opportunity for long-term care, treatment, housing, and economic opportunity and then we don't need to be involved in the same way.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: And, Councilwoman Lozada, I just want to add that in the effort to get these up and running, we are leaving no stone unturned

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in terms of resources. We're talking to our state and federal partners, whether it be involving Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security insurance. So we're looking at every avenue for resources to bring these to bear.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I mean, I agree that we're going to need everybody, right, in order to address what is happening there. I just was curious about if we're having one or more than one, right? Because we talk a lot about this being a citywide issue. Yes, the epicenter is in the Kensington community and I appreciate the Administration's willingness to prioritize the Kensington community, but as you've heard from my colleagues, that they're experiencing this in their neighborhoods too. And so as we're talking about it, I was just interested to know if you all were considering doing this in more than just one neighborhood.

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, I

want to make sure we absolutely answer your question. We are considering this in more than one location because we think that is the need right now. It is too early to say exactly where because we are still doing due diligence. You heard we're looking for resources everywhere. We're looking for possibilities everywhere.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

Appreciate that. Thank you.

As we work towards restoring the quality of life in Kensington, Councilmember O'Rourke mentioned that there are people who will be caught up in the system as part of us restoring quality of life. Are we working with our prison systems? Are we talking to those who are currently involved in the underground economy on our streets right now and engaging them in, hey, this is coming, right? This is no longer going to be tolerated. Here are workforce options. Here is another alternative to

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this lifestyle. Are we looking to engage them prior to anything happening on the ground?

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, we are certainly always doing that work within the Philadelphia Department of Prisons, and the outreach -- the other outreach, I want to ask Adam Geer to...

MR. GEER: Good afternoon again, Councilmember.

Yes is the short answer, Councilmember. We have been convening many meetings amongst the City agency leaders and also amongst some of the, frankly, boots on the ground within their agencies who are going to be conducting this work. We are having open dialogues about what the expectation will be, and we are -- and that includes Prisons, that includes DBHIDS, that includes Office of Homeless Services. So we have been preparing for this.

We are going to, in a very compassionate and thoughtful and

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intentional way, proceed. As you say, we are going to do something. I think the Mayor has laid out this vision, that we're just not going to allow people to die slowly in front of us in the streets. So we are going to do something, and we are organizing to do that. We have been for, you know, many weeks going to the past. We will continue to ramp that up as we move towards that.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Again, I want to make sure that as we do something, that just like we're giving those who are suffering from addiction an option and an opportunity, just like we're restoring the quality of life for the residents and the children of Kensington, that we also recognize that there is an entire economy that is happening in that community, and those men and women have to put food on their table too, right? And while I don't know -- I don't support how they are conducting business or how they're

putting food on the table, I also want to make sure that we are responding to what some of their needs are as well, whether it be work, whether it be education, whether it be housing, whether it be mental health support. All of those things I'd like to make sure that we're considering, and if you are doing that, then I'd like to know how and I'd also like to know how we can support you from an office standpoint to engage them as well. Whatever we can do, I want to make sure we're a part of that so that folks don't say, we didn't know that something was happening or that it was coming.

MR. GEER: Councilmember, I think that's a great point. We will look to coordinate with you on that further. I'll say that in that first meeting we had where we brought together City agency leaders, Commerce was there, I shouted that out in particular because of the great work that Alb Martinez is doing. And I've had several conversations with

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her about how important it is for her to make a connection to my office, right, the Office of Public Safety, and to understand the synergy there and meaningful opportunities for our people. And I get what you're saying, and I want to raise that up, and we will be having those conversations, but we have been as well.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Rue Landau.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Councilmember, I wasn't finished.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I'm sorry.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Quetcy Lozada again.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I just want to ask a question about Rebuild. I know that we've partnered with some of

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our CDCs, our smaller CDCs. Many of them have expressed concern about how some of the policies or the practices of Rebuild have caused them to lose funding.

As we look to reform or restructure Rebuild, have we considered working with some of these project users to make them whole? What are some of the changes that are going to be made to ensure that they can continue to be partners on the ground with us without compromising their financial stability?

MS. THURMAN: So I'd like to call Aparna Palantino up, our new Director for CPO. As she's coming up, I do want to say that we recognize what the gaps are, the constraints, the challenges with Rebuild, especially around the project user model. That's one of the reasons why we saw that and we knew that there was a need to create a different structure so that there were no further delays in the process but also so that we could answer and address issues around

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project users and ensure that they have the necessary supports to be successful. But Aparna will provide more detail there.

MS. PALANTINO: Good afternoon. Aparna Palantino, Capital Projects Director.

Could you please repeat the question? Sorry.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Sure. We've partnered with CDCs, small CDCs in the community around Rebuild projects. Many of them have expressed concerns as it relates to policies or practices within the Rebuild process and it has caused them to lose money. What are we doing to make them whole as we move forward and as you guys consider reforming or restructuring the Rebuild process in order to keep them being or wanting to be a part of the process?

MS. PALANTINO: Thank you for your question, and I have spoken with some of those project users very recently

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and understand the challenges that they're facing as a result of the structure. So we are working with them to see how better to support them in typical construction practices that are required for municipal projects. A lot of them come from very different backgrounds, affordable housing, et cetera. So there are a lot of additional challenges when it comes to a project that has to be done in this structure.

Where we can, we are actually assisting them, giving them opportunities. Under the new office, we'll have more staff that's familiar with all different types of facilities so we can offer those supports in how better to manage their consultants, their contractors, where we see pitfalls that they may encounter based on our experience on projects.

So as it stands now, it's really to offer some additional support in the process to be able to bring the

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projects to fruition.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: But some of the money that they lost was as a result of our current policies and processes, right? So how do we make them whole before we reform and move forward? Because we are going to depend on them in the future, right? There's not a whole lot of them. We're going to depend on them in the future. So how do we make them whole and keep them wanting to be our partners?

MS. PALANTINO: We are in conversations with a couple of them to determine how best to be able to relieve their burden with this, whether it's the City takes on some of that responsibility to prevent them from losing additional funding. So we haven't quite come to a resolution. We're still in negotiations with them, but we have begun those conversations.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you.

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I have one more question. The Mayor has mentioned wanting to or having the goal of building 300 new housing opportunities. How do you ensure in districts like mine as you try to meet or work to meet that goal, how do you work towards ensuring that gentrification and displacement doesn't happen?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT:

Councilmember, thank you for that, and when you and I sat down, one of the things that you had said that was really important for Land Bank dispensation was ensuring that we have -- that we maintain the Councilmembers', the District Councilmembers', ability to have some say there, to be involved there.

My colleague had said earlier that our Mayor was a District Councilmember, still very much carries with her the mindset of a District Councilmember. So because of that, when you and I had sat down, you had set an AMI that you wanted to hit for homes that

include City subsidy, and that factors into it, and it's going to be different in different Council districts. It's finding ways to work with the CDCs, and you have an awful lot in your district that we've been talking to and we're continuing to talk to, to figure out ways to keep not just affordable homes that are built that then may be sold at a higher price, but ones that will be rentals that are ensured to be income restricted so that we can create places that are not as easily subjected to gentrification.

And then, most importantly, and this is what Mayor Parker has been pushing since she was in City Council, is the ability to repair, to restore, renew, things like Basic System Home Repair, so that homes that already exist can be rehabbed and continue to be livable, because the most affordable home is one that already exists, and if a home is livable for somebody in a community, then

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they have no reason to move, and that texture of the community, the people who live there are able to stay and you don't have inlets for things like gentrification.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: One more. You all mentioned --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Member, we're like way, way, way past that time.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I can wait until the next round.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: All right. I got you.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Rue Landau.

COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Thank you, Council President.

I'll stay in three subject areas for the moment. The first is the budget, the second is triage centers, and the third is housing.

So the first question is, we're about to see the end of our ARPA money,

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our American Rescue Plan money. We purportedly have $419 million still. Where are we spending that money? And my understanding is we have to spend it by the end of this year.

MR. DUBOW: We have to spend it by the end of this calendar year, that's correct.

So we received a total of $1.4 billion in ARPA money, but when we looked at the impact on our revenue of the pandemic, we lost 1.5 billion. So we used the category called revenue replacement, which basically means you use it to make sure that your budget stays balanced. So it was used for a variety of things within our budget to keep us in balance. And it was to kind of bridge that gap until our revenues could get back to where they had been, which is kind of where they are now.

COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: And so are you saying that we're going to spend -- how are we spending the

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remaining 419 million?

MR. DUBOW: So it is kind of -- it's throughout our budget. It's basically just another revenue source for us since we used it as revenue replacement, and it will all be spent by the end of December.

COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Okay. Thanks.

I'll go housing first to be efficient. So I am concerned, like Councilmember Gauthier, who is the Chair of the Housing Committee, I'm the Vice Chair, about the fact that we won't be funding rental assistance within two years. I also see this as a high priority for the City of Philadelphia. It's a program that's been working hand in hand with Eviction Diversion, and it doesn't go without cost, right?

We, back in 2019, had 24,000 evictions in Municipal Court, which we've reduced significantly, and these programs, including rental assistance,

have been highly successful.

What is the plan for offsetting the effects of not having rental assistance? I saw that you're keeping homelessness, shelter services, it seems like you're keeping that just stable funding, and we all know that if we had a magic wand, we would have all waved it by now to make sure that there is great, safe, decent, affordable housing for everybody in the City of Philadelphia, but there's not.

If people don't stay in their current rental homes, many of them will be homeless and there will be a higher demand on our shelter system. So what's the plan in there if rental assistance is not funded?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Councilmember, thank you for that, and you and I have talked about this and similar things a lot, and I recognize your leadership going back to your time before being on City Council about this.

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You know, while one program is going to be sunsetting, it was a two-year program, it does not mean that there won't be any rental assistance. And in my exchange with Councilmember Gauthier, I pointed out PEPP, Right to Counsel, and we're continuing to fund opportunities for low-income apartment rentals, and that's part of the 30,000 units of housing program.

So it is not something that we're ignoring. We're shifting resources a little bit, and as I had said earlier, we're going to continue to analyze and see and make sure that things are working as they should.

COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: I love PEPP, I love Right to Counsel, but as somebody who did this work for years, it means you have a lawyer in your eviction case that is filed against you. It does not mean that if you went through a hardship or something tragic happened in your life, that you're suddenly going to

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have the money that you need to stay in your housing.

So I would strongly recommend -- I would love to keep up this conversation so we can make sure that this extremely important emergency fund receives some funding.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Thank you, Councilmember. I look forward to keeping it in the conversation.

COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Thank you.

And love to talk about triage centers too. I, along with my colleagues, look forward to getting some more information about both the triage centers and the opioid settlement money and how this can all go hand in hand.

Commissioner Bethel -- I forgot to start by thanking all of you. I am excited for the new day. I know we're running late on time, which is why I was being efficient, but thank you all so much. I do love this new day that we

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have, everybody looking towards making Philadelphia better for all of us.

Commissioner Bethel said in a news article that there would be the beginning of communication and enforcement in Kensington starting not long after the Mayor's hundredth day, which is April 10th, and I'm curious if any bit of a triage center would be up and running by that time.

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, Adam Thiel again, Managing Director.

When you've heard me talking about the short term trying to phase in and make sure that we have something available I guess that we're all sort of calling a triage center right now as soon as possible, we know that that is linked to the broader strategies, because we're talking all the time with Commissioner Bethel and our Chief Public Safety Director, Adam Geer, about that. And I think the fact that those are linked is an absolute testament to Mayor Parker's

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vision and our clear direction that what we are doing in the future continues to be compassionate, dignified, and safe for the folks who are involved as well as the communities around them.

So those are definitely linked in our broader strategy, and that's why we're -- on the one hand, we're moving fast to kind of get the first piece in place, while we talk with all these different groups that we've been mentioning about how to build out a broader system for the medium and long term.

COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: We look forward to working with you on this.

Last thing, just a comment, because I've talked to people in the Administration about it, is there are groups of people who are working to get Hahnemann Hospital to be not only housing but also a treatment facility so that you can keep graduating up to other floors after you got your medical treatment, go

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through withdrawal and get towards transitional housing. So love to put everything on the table as we all work to make Philadelphia the best place we can be.

MR. THIEL: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Jeffery J. Young.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

I have a few questions on a variety of topics. First, it's noted that we have a lower than expected growth in the City. So I noticed over the Five Year Plan there is a reduction of $300 million from Fiscal Year '25 through '29 Five Year Plan versus Fiscal Year '24 to '28 Five Year Plan, right? And given that reduction, we are slated to have essentially a one percent fund balance at the end of Fiscal Year '29. And I know our city continually has a goal of having

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a six to eight percent fund balance. However, the national standard is 17 percent.

So with the national standard being 17 percent, our goal is typically six to eight, but in reality based on these numbers, in Fiscal Year '29 it will only be one percent. Could you explain to us why is this good fiscal prudence?

MR. DUBOW: Yeah. And as I said earlier, part of this is really -- there's a trade-off here, and this goes to part of why we use six to eight percent instead of 17 percent, because we are a city with a relatively weak tax base and needs beyond those of most of our peers. So for us, our fund balance is going to probably be lower than our peers.

We're facing a particularly challenging time over this Five Year Plan in that, as you said, we have $300 million less in revenues than we expected in last year's Plan. We have

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our ARP money going away and we have a balloon pension payment in the last year of our Plan.

We also know that there are really essential investments that we have to make and that those investments are key to having the City thrive in the long run. So we're making those investments with the anticipation that we will see growth in the future, that that fund balance we're seeing late in this Plan will start to grow.

We know, for example, that our debt service goes down by over $200 million in FY30. We also know that we build up our Rainy Day Fund through the course of this Plan, that it will be -- we're showing that at $265 million, so that the combination of that Rainy Day Fund and our fund balance is more like 280, still lower than we want to be, but not as low as the 14 million.

So there are kind of a number of factors that go into why we think that

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what we're proposing makes sense.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you.

And how does this deviation from the standard and this projected lower fund balance affect our bond rating and future borrowing abilities?

MR. DUBOW: So we've had conversations with the rating agencies. We already kind of walked them through what we're doing, explaining why we think it's prudent, explaining why we think this will help us grow in the future and why we think it means that in the long run our fund balances will look healthier than they look like in this Plan.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: So you've explained it to them, but what was their answer, right? What did they say?

MR. DUBOW: They listened. They think that over time we have built up credibility, because we've done what we said we're going to do. So they listened to it and thought that kind of

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what we were proposing made sense.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: And I ask those line of questioning because the Administration is asking us essentially right now to write them a hundred million dollar blank check regarding the triage centers, right? Because there are no details essentially associated with this particular program. And along those same lines with this hundred million dollars, you know, as Councilwoman Rue Landau pointed out, this Five Year Capital Budget allocates more money to the Zoo and to the Art Museum than it does to homeless services as far as capital dollars, right?

And so how many more beds would this hundred million dollars create if granted?

MR. DUBOW: Our investment in the Office of Homeless Services is really on the operating side, so all those facilities that we don't own. So you'll see that in FY25 we're asking for

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$16 million in additional funding in OHS, which is more than what's in capital funding over our whole Five Year Plan.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: But that's for operating dollars, correct?

MR. DUBOW: That's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Not capital. So, again, I'm talking about capital dollars where we're actually having facilities to place people in.

MR. DUBOW: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Not just creating jobs for people to have to implement programs, but we need actual beds, actual facilities so folks can lay their head at night.

MR. DUBOW: Most of our beds are actually not in facilities we own. That's why you see the investment on the operating side rather than the capital side. We can't make capital investments in the facilities we don't own.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: But, again, we can purchase facilities. We

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can purchase buildings. We can do these things to acquire more real estate for those types of programs. And so, again, for me, if we are allotting $14 and a half million over the next five years to the Zoo and the Art Museum, respectively, right, then I believe that we should be at least allocating that same amount to the Office of Homeless Services to purchase real estate in the City.

MR. DUBOW: I'm going to hand it over to Managing Director, but I just want to make the point again we're investing much, much more in the Office of Homeless Services in this Plan that we are in either the Zoo or the Art Museum.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: And I understand the investment, but I'm talking about actual facilities that folks can go into and have a place to stay.

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, Adam Thiel, Managing Director again. And amen. That is exactly the goal of that

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hundred million dollar initial investment in long-term care, treatment, and housing through triage, wellness, short, medium, and long term.

So we expect -- I mean, again, I don't know how many more ways to agree. Absolutely we know that we need additional capacity. The question about how much that hundred million dollars buys, how many beds, that is an open question, because, again, as we see that hundred million dollars, as bold as it is, as big as it is for the City of Philadelphia, we know that we're going to need more, and you've heard all the efforts here that colleagues as we look intergovernmentally, we look at the philanthropic communities, we certainly look to Council to help us with that initial investment, we emphatically agree that we need more.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: So just -- I mean, just from your own budget briefing, over 80 percent of the people

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served by the Office of Homeless Services were people of color, right? And it says here the causes of homelessness are diverse and related to systemic and structural racism, right?

So I'm trying to figure out if this is a priority of the Administration, again, why is it -- and understanding that what Councilmember Rue Landau said when it comes to evictions and things like that, we note that the overall -- the majority, overwhelming majority of the demographic that's affected by evictions are Black women, right? So we know that. We know these things, but it doesn't seem like we are putting our dollars to the areas that would affect the systemic and structural racism that's in the housing.

And, again, I'm just trying to get a little bit more detail before I can agree to sign off on a hundred million dollar blank check for triage and wellness where we have no idea at the

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moment what that looks like, where it goes to, what it gets us. And so I'm just a little hesitant on that number, on that figure at the moment.

So do you plan on or does the Administration plan on having the details worked out before the conclusion of this budget process?

MR. THIEL: Councilmember, the short answer to what that hundred million dollars buys is beds. So that is how we're going to get more capacity into this entire system for triage, wellness, long-term care, housing, and treatment, not just for folks who are experiencing substance use disorder but for all the folks who need those supports who are in the City of Philadelphia. So how many beds again depends on the amount of funding, and the timeline for these obviously, as you understand and everybody here has talked about, these can be extremely complicated projects and programs. We have a lot of people, as

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you've heard, who are working on it. So how much detail we have available depends on kind of the trajectory of all these different possibilities and ultimately, ultimately depends on the amount of funding that we can count on in terms of initial seed funding, which is what this hundred million dollars is proposed to do, plus what we're able to assemble from other sources.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you.

And one more question, Mr. President.

This is along the lines of the $10 million for new investment in workforce development. Councilwoman Gauthier had a hearing yesterday with the life sciences, and they essentially told us that our schools aren't producing enough candidates to fill those jobs, right? Basically they said our kids don't know math, our kids can't read and communicate essentially.

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So in this proposal, Ms. Harris mentioned that some of the jobs -- this money will only go to organizations that are or companies that are committed to hiring folks, right? And so knowing that our schools aren't producing the quality of candidates that some of these companies are looking for and then how do we plan to implement this $10 million if those companies don't even want to hire our residents and our students in the first place? Is there other ways of looking to make that same $10 million investment, maybe providing grants to organizations to hire the folks, to train the folks, something, right? Because if we're only giving it to organizations that can guarantee a job at the end but ultimately if you go through this training program and you still might not have the skills and abilities to get that job, then I think that's just throwing bad money after bad money.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT:

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Councilmember, thank you for that, and forgive me, I did not see the hearing yesterday, so I can't speak to the specifics there. But this in no way is giving or throwing away money. What we're talking about doing is working with already existing programs that have partnerships, whether it's an organization like Wistar or maybe something directly from an existing life sciences company, where they come in and they do the training to get people up to the point where if they need a certification, they're able to get that certification and they are able to walk into that job.

So I'm going to ask Dr. Carrera to come up and speak a little bit about some of the job skill training that we're going to be doing in the School District, but I want to be very clear that this is not -- we're not asking companies to come here and just say choose from the talent pool that exists, but instead we're

saying, we're going to work together to grow and train that talent pool so that they're ready not for ambiguous jobs, they are ready to slot into an existing job that already exists that needs somebody. Oftentimes when we're talking about biotech and life sciences, a job that's a union job, with a pension and healthcare and many times equity in the company that they're working for for people who are cleaning the clean rooms and doing low-to-moderate skill jobs that can be trained in a number of months, as well as people who are earning while they learn while they're there.

So this will be funding an entire pipeline, but there's another part to your question and, that is, how do our schools prepare our students to be able to enter this workforce, to be able to enter the job training programs, and that's why I asked Dr. Carrera to come up and answer that piece.

DR. CARRERA: Thank you, and

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that's a great question, Councilman. I think you heard me say I was a high school principal in Kensington where two-thirds of my students were reading below grade level. And so this is --

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: In Strawberry Mansion it's probably about 80 percent, so probably a little bit higher.

DR. CARRERA: But I understand completely what it is when you have a ninth grader that comes in reading at a third grade level and the importance to accelerate that student and get that student to where they need to be so that they can go into the workforce.

What this Municipal College is going to do is, we are going to work strategically with the School District to really look at what are the gaps, what are the skills that the students are lacking in that they need, and what can we do to accelerate. So we have to work with the School District. We have to

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work with the business field. We have to look at our CTE workforce.

We're looking at in our office bringing on someone to do the career and technical education to look at that, to look at that landscape, to look at that workforce, because that's a whole other pathway that is very critical, because while these programs, barbering and culinary, are great, we need to have kids exposed to solar energy, green jobs. And if our community doesn't know that these jobs exist, if our students don't know that these jobs exist, then that's not going to work.

I cannot speak for the School District, and I know they'll be here, but I was at the state for three years and we know there are some science standards that are coming down, the STEELS Standards, that are very rigorous that districts are going to be expected to implement and support students to ensure that exactly what you're saying, that

kids have access, right?

When we talk about equity, it's about access. If our kids are not exposed to it, then they're not going to get it. And then important as well is preparing our educators to teach these concepts so that our students can go into these jobs. I agree with you.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you. I think you're preaching to the choir talking about access, things like that. I think that we always talk about strategize and strategic and we use these words, but essentially the employers themselves told us what they need. So they need our students to be better at math and to be better at communicating. So by knowing that, we should place those dollars directly into the place where the employers are telling us we need that investment to be made.

I just think that having all these other work skill programs is just another way -- I mean, honestly, I'm just

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going to say how I feel. I think it's just another white collar patronage positions that's going to fund -- that this money is going to go to, right, and not going to the students that need that money.

So I think we have to really, really reevaluate how we direct resources to get the outcome that we're expecting.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Councilmember, if I could just jump in really quickly. I hear you. The Administration hears you, and I think the Mayor really agrees with a lot of the points that you're making in that oftentimes what government does is we jump in and we say to the private sector, to the business community, to workforce development, here is a solution we're going to give you, whether you want it or not. And that's why under Mayor Parker's leadership we will be convening business roundtables, a business roundtable to hear directly from employers and the

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business community and have them brought into this phase where we're legislating, where we're talking about policy so that they can be part of the process and say and address exactly what you're saying, well, we do all this training, we do all these skills initiatives and at the end of the day, there's no job at the end of it. The kids don't have anything to do, and it's just this hamster wheel of train and train and train, from high school to post-high school into adulthood into parenthood, and we're here to break that cycle, because we're going to have the employers, the employers who are hungry for people to come and work.

The life sciences industry, when we talked to them, they say we're growing and the only inhibiting factor is not the Ph.D.s, because the Ph.D.s will come from anywhere in the world if the jobs are here, but it's that low to low-mid level that we really need to fill. So having life sciences and

biotech at the table, having industries at the table, having the labor unions at the table who will be representing a lot of these workers, that's the vision of the Mayor's Business Roundtable. That's what we're trying to do to go into these training programs.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: I understand that. I've been around for a long time in City government and I've seen so many roundtables, so many policy groups and task force and all that put together. The data is there. I think we're overcomplicating something I think is very simple right? It's literally math and reading comprehension.

To get into the unions, the building trades union, you need to know math and reading comprehension, right? So I really think if we focus in on that, then I think everything else will just fall in place and we'll be able to have the workforce that those industries need, that they can then train themselves to be

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specific for their industry, for their job, but we need to cover the basics of math and reading comprehension and communication skills.

MS. THURMAN: Thank you, Councilman.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

So now we will officially go into the second round.

You got to press your button, sir. It's not up there.

Councilman Jim Harrity. It is red?

COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Yeah.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: It's red. It's not on the screen. I defer to the gentleman from Kensington. Go ahead, my brother.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: My brother, I'm going to be short anyway. I only really have one question, but I do

have a statement first.

I heard one of my colleagues earlier speak that forced treatment does not work. I would love to see where those numbers are coming from. Because from my learned lived life experience, most of us in recovery were forced there one way or another, whether it was through our families, through a doctor or through the court system.

We have a lot of sayings in recovery, one of which is a power greater than ourselves is what helped us get recovery. Because the first step is admitting that you are powerless over that drug and alcohol. Okay? So sometimes we need somebody to start that process for us, and that higher power, as I said before, can be a judge, and a lot of times is a judge.

If you talk to people that got recovery during the crack epidemic, they'll tell you, I don't get sober if the judge doesn't send me to jail. I got

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sober because of the programs that they had in that facility.

And, again, you know, some of us don't know that we are at that final stage. In other words, we don't know that we're ready until we have that moment of clarity, and we will not have that moment of clarity until our head becomes a little clearer, and that takes time. That takes a lot of time for the people that are facing this stuff out there, because the mental capacity that they have is not there. They are, as I've said before, a threat to themselves and to others.

So we have a moral responsibility to do whatever we can to try to save those people's lives, and reality is that some of us don't go willingly.

And that being said, my question is actually about the Parks and Rec system. Being an at-large Councilperson, we travel around the City

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fairly regularly and I'm at a lot of the different rec centers in the City, and I know we're in the middle of Rebuild and a lot of these are getting rebuilt, but you can kind of see the disparity of centers, you know, from area to area.

I've been to some in some of the lower income areas such as mine that doesn't have half the programming that other areas have. I've been to some beautiful facilities in West Philadelphia and stuff like that where they actually have eGames and computer labs in their facilities. And my question really is because the Mayor's thing of equal opportunities for all, how do we plan on rectifying those services in all areas of the City so that every kid gets the same chances that every kid in every other neighborhood is getting?

I mean, it doesn't sound like much, eGames. Oh, they're playing video games, but the fact of the matter is that these kids are now getting Division 1

scholarships for eGames. They can actually make money at this, and I feel -- I always give an example. I got a 300-and-something-pound 14-year-old at home. I would love him to play football, but he wants nothing to do with it. But you give him a computer and he can do whatever the hell you want.

We need to start getting to these kids in what they want to be, not what we want to be. And I believe that is through diverse programming, maybe thinking outside the box. Maybe building them two stories where we have a rec center on one floor and a computer lab, recording studios. Let them learn how to get it out in words, and eGames. I mean, this is all stuff that they're into. And the thing is, if you want to get a kid, you got to give them what they're into in order to get them.

So I'd be curious to see how you're going to try to rectify some of the disparities in some of these rec

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centers.

MS. THURMAN: Thank you, Councilmember. As I open, I'd like to call up our Commissioner Susan Slawson to provide more detail.

We completely agree with you. I should not be able to go to one zip code and have a certain level of quality of programming that's different or lesser than other areas of the City. And so whether it's eGaming or eSports, we believe that we have a social responsibility to all of the students, to all of the youth that we serve throughout our system.

It looks like we have our Chief Managing Director, Vanessa Garrett-Harley, who will take the rest of the answer to that question, and as you are aware, Parks and Recreation sits within her portfolio.

DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT-HARLEY: Good afternoon. I'm sorry. Our Commissioner Sue Slawson had an emergency

today and is not here.

Councilman Harrity, that is an excellent point that you've made. We do need to take to children what they want. That's the challenge that we're facing right now, because we can't continue to do those things the way we used to do them. I say to folks that children are different, having done this work a long time, are different now. What their interests are, how we appeal to them does have to be different, so we're going to be working really hard to figure that out.

I can tell you that Commissioner Slawson is very, very focused on the individual neighborhoods. Neighborhoods in Philadelphia we all know are different. What works in one neighborhood doesn't always work in another. Certain rec centers have some programming that others don't have. We'd love to get to the point where we can make sure that all of those programs have

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that.

The eGaming is relatively new, I would say within the last few years. We did it -- I'm looking at my friend, Councilman Thomas, who we have talked a lot about eGaming, and in fact I think we partnered with you a little bit last year.

He gave what I call a symposium -- I'm not sure what he called it -- on eGaming where we brought in kids from all over.

So that is something that we're very focused on and trying to partner with. We did have some sponsorship for the few places that we have it in the City. We don't have it in many rec centers, but are certainly looking to put it in more rec centers. But as you said, we're trying to get to the point where there are equitable services all over the place. We do recognize, though, that certain neighborhoods -- and if you talk to -- we have community councils at all

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of the rec centers, and those community councils kind of help guide us with what that community wants. There's some that have ice rinks. There's some that have more basketball courts. It depends on what the community and that council have led us to know what they want, but we will definitely be looking at doing different programming so that we can continue to entice our kids to come into safe spaces.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Anything else, Mr. Harrity? Anything else, sir?

COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: I'm good.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: I'll wait for the rest of my questions for the next round.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Yes, sir, my friend.

Now we're in our second round.

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And also just in addition to this round, if members have questions regarding the other two items for the afternoon, which is the office of the Mayor's Office as well as the Department of Labor, you can intertwine and ask those questions during this round as we finish up this half of our session.

I just had a couple brief questions before I turn it over back to the members.

In terms of housing production, I know I'm excited about the goal of focusing on 30,000 units here in the City of Philadelphia. So, one, I want to start off by saying good job with creating the Philadelphia Home Appraisal Bias Task Force, right? I held a hearing regarding redlining here in the City of Philadelphia, and we know that redlining played a major role in why some of our neighborhoods are in the conditions that they're in today, right?

So we're talking about

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addressing historical and institutional structural racism. So I do thank the Administration for coming up with this task force. And also soon we will have an appraisal that's going to be -- assessments, I'm sorry, of properties for 2025 as well.

So can you give me an idea of the timeline of operations for when the task force will start their work?

Two, we talked about housing preservation in Tiffany's testimony, and I want to know the level of investment for FY25 for Basic Systems Repair, the Restore Repair Renew, and Built to Last. Built to Last is under the Philadelphia Energy Authority. So for FY25 our level of investment and making sure we're repairing individuals' homes so they don't become homeless in the first place, seniors don't have to make a decision do they get their prescription drug or keep a roof over top of their head.

And so that's my question

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regarding housing production as well. And also does PHA play a role in the strategy toward accomplishing the 30,000 units?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Council President, thank you for that question. I'm going to ask Rob Dubow to come up and to answer the specific funding questions. I'm going to kind of try to separate these.

First, PHA is absolutely involved. We have a planning and development advisory board that includes Kelvin Jeremiah. We also talked to --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Excuse me. What kind of board? Say again.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: A planning and development advisory -- not board. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have used the word "board," but a planning and advisory group that includes Kelvin Jeremiah. And we've also talked with him to some of the -- I'm blanking on the name for it,

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but the resident advocates from some of the different areas.

And I want to be clear that the Home Appraisal Task Force -- and I just want to make sure that I'm understanding your question correctly -- is to look at independent home appraisal when people are selling their homes. That's not OPA. So I just want to make sure that I'm understanding the question correctly.

So that right now is coming together. It will be part of the major announcement that the Mayor makes at the end of her hundred days on April 11th. So that's coming together. We have a whole lot of recommendations. There is staffing positions within this budget to help ensure that that goes well, and this is, as you may know, a process that was started back when Mayor Parker was Councilmember Parker, including the Reinvestment Fund, TRF. The work has included -- has kept on going, and a lot of the other folks in the advocacy space

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there, including CLS, have been involved with that.

If I've answered that question, I'll turn it over to Rob Dubow on the other question.

MR. DUBOW: And we will get back to you in writing with the funding levels for those programs.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: For those three.

MR. DUBOW: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: That's Built to Last, Basic Systems Repair, and Repair Restore Renew.

MR. DUBOW: Yep.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay. All right.

I want to talk about the investment in workforce development. One, what is the FY25 investment for summer jobs for our young people? I'm just a firm advocate that as many young people as possible as a strategy to address gun violence is a way to get

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young people involved in something positive by every young person in the City of Philadelphia is to have a summer job if they're seeking one.

MS. THURMAN: I'm a living witness and a testament to your work, and I commend you on everything that you've done thus far with that.

As our Chief Managing Director comes back up, Vanessa Garrett-Harley, to talk about the details of our summer work program, I want to say that we recently made an announcement about Career Connected Learning. And so with regards to summer employment, changes and enhancements that we're making to that program, and so our Chief Deputy Mayor -- Chief Deputy Managing Director to provide more information on that.

DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT-HARLEY: Hello, Council President.

Our summer employment, previously known as WorkReady, we have now changed that model. I believe

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enhanced it so that it will be much better. We're calling it Career Connected Learning, or C2L. You will see C2L-PHL for Philadelphia is what we are calling it.

This summer the investment from the City is a little over $12 million, but we are working very collaboratively with Philadelphia Works, and they have invested a pretty significant number of millions into the program as well. We are also partnering with the School District to make sure that it works well.

What we're looking at is 8,000 jobs over the course of the summer. We have 8,000 slots that we will do everything we can robustly to make sure that young people are able to fill those slots. And I'm happy to say for the first time we have 2,000 slots that will go year round into the school year, so that young people who are getting internships or anything else can get paid.

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We're doing the payment thing a little bit different this year. Typically last year I think we did hourly wages. Some were around $11 an hour. This year we're doing a stipend, although the young people will get that stipend every two weeks so that it looks like a paycheck to them. The reason that it's different, it allows us to streamline some of the administrative and paperwork processes that we would have to do. It also allows us to employ some young people where it was more difficult to get the documentation that they needed. You don't need the same level of documentation if it's not done as a regular employment status under the IRS. So we're doing it as stipends in that way, and they actually walk away with a little bit more money in their pocket at the end of the six-week period because the taxes that you pay on it are different.

Now, while you will get issued

a 1099, most of them will not meet requirements to even have to file on it after the fact.

So we're excited about this year's opportunities. We continue to have a robust number of providers. We have a new intermediary. The intermediary this year after a competitive posting process was selected, and that's JEVS, who will be working with the young people, but particularly the three partners I named for you - School District, Philadelphia Works, and the City - are working very, very closely around this to make sure that we fill it, and we'll be asking for your help. I'll be contacting your office.

April 27th, I'll just say, we have a resource fair at the Convention Center. Any and everybody can come out. We'll be asking you to send your networks, send your young people. We'll have all kinds of vendors there to talk about all the summer opportunities in the

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City, but in particular we will have municipal ID there. For young people that have no form of ID, they can get the City ID there. And also we'll have the summer employment. They can actually sign up for jobs just in case anyone is having a problem navigating the computer or database system to apply.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: What was the FY24 commitment under the last Administration for youth summer jobs? Do we have that number? Just want to see, an increase or a --

DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT-HARLEY: It did increase a little bit. It was a little less than the 12 million. Off the top of my head, I'm going to say it was around 10. I could be wrong. I'll get you the exact numbers.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Is Rob still around just for the actual number for the record?

MR. DUBOW: We will get back to you.

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MS. THURMAN: We will definitely get back to you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Just want to have that just for the record.

And I do want to give credit where credit is due. Obviously this is an issue that Councilmember Thomas I know was going to host a hearing regarding young people getting paid, right? So I'm glad y'all changed providers, and hopefully young people -- well, with the new provider, they aren't facing the same obstacles around -- I mean, they wanted to riot. I was going to call Commissioner Bethel, because I come outside, they were like, y'all going to give these kids their money, but -- we're looking for security, sir, some police support.

But in all seriousness, I'm glad that we right-sized a new organization. Young people work hard during the summertime, and then when it's

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time to get paid, it's like there was a reason why they wasn't getting paid.

So I do thank you for going back to the mat, kind of restructuring and changing things under the leadership of Councilmember Thomas staying on top of that issue. So just want to thank you for your hard work and your dedication.

My last one before I turn it over to the members. There's a $10 million investment to support workforce development apprenticeship programs led by our partners, building trades, other unions. I've been here before, since Paul Levy was around, the building trades and the School District, then recently former Council President Darrell Clarke. The unions made an announcement that they're partnering with the School District.

Has that partnership been evaluated to kind of see where we're at in terms of making sure that we're getting young people into the pipeline

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into the trades? And then also in terms of the $10 million investment, like what does that look like? We currently have schools such as YouthBuild and Orleans Technical Institute in the City of Philadelphia right now, and I'm inspired that our Mayor is saying, okay, I'm going to make this investment, but also pay attention to -- we already have two schools right now that don't even have a pipeline into the trades.

So I know under this Mayor and using the bully pulpit and the relationships to get everybody around the table that even schools such as YouthBuild and Orleans Institute -- we're not even talking about the School District. We're just talking about the two very premier trade schools in the City of Philadelphia having an opportunity to participate in high-quality job opportunities that the trades have to offer.

But with this 10 million

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investment, what does that look like? I know about the Sam Staten Sr. Apprenticeship Program. Is that getting the whole 10 million? What does this look like overall in terms of making sure our young people really have a real opportunity to participate in this process?

And then I also want to add the caveat, with the project labor agreements that we do as a city to make sure that we're doing union jobs, prevailing wage, right, how does that play a role as well in the pipeline to make sure young people and people in general have an opportunity to participate through this $10 million investment in apprenticeship programs?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Yeah. Council President, thank you for that. The short answer is, this is very much a work in progress. I also want to call out the Carpenters CARP program as well as others.

One of the things that you've

heard Mayor Parker talk about, though, and we haven't really had a chance to talk about this, although it touches on what Councilmember Thomas was saying earlier, is that one of the things that we're going to start talking about doing as we start talking about in partnership with the School District building new buildings, repairing and remediating buildings that are there is, there's going to be in capital projects, in PLAs an awful lot of expansion and need for apprentices as well as other skilled trades.

So when you're talking specifically about the building trades, working to find the need that's specific and factoring that in there. What Mayor Parker says, especially around the School District, is that we are having one generation build the institutions for the next, and that is something that's incredibly important. The specifics we don't have together yet, but we will get

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that to you as it comes a little bit closer into focus. But that's how we're thinking about that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I just want to ask the question, timeline for like flushing it out, the 10 million up front before the plan is actually flushed out. So that will be helpful. And we're supportive of the concept and the spirit of it, but that's just something we would like to see as we go through this process so we can answer the questions even when our constituents call us and say, hey, we heard about this great announcement, you're going to get the young people involved in the trades. And then so -- you know, we get the phone calls saying, hey, I want to be involved, how can I participate. And we want to be able to say, hey, here's what it looks like and here's how we're going to be able to be supportive of your efforts.

But I also want to echo the sentiments of my colleague Councilmember

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Jeffery J. Young, and from doing this work for a while, to take into consideration on the preparation a pre-apprenticeship program, not the apprenticeship program, but investing in a program that makes sure our young people have -- are up to par when it comes to the reading and the math, so then when they get to the apprenticeship program, there's no excuses why they can't actually participate.

I know State Representative Jake Wheatley from Allegheny County, he has a program that kind of models how we can shut down that whole conversation that either they can't pass the urine or they can't pass the test, right, as a way why we can't have a seat at the table.

Been doing this for a little bit, and so it's a new day. We want to do some things differently, even with our friends, right? At the end of the day, it's about making sure that if we want to address poverty here in this city,

everybody has to have an opportunity to have a seat at the table irregardless of their race and/or background.

And so that's the position that I'm taking, and want to be supportive of these efforts. Devil is always in the detail, but if you can take that in consideration in terms of some ways on how we can support our young people to be highly prepared when it's time to get that opportunity to get into the trades.

MS. THURMAN: Absolutely. And you actually took the words right out of my mouth, Council President. It's a -- we hear Councilmember Young loud and clear. For us, it's not an either/or. It's a both "and" simultaneously, because of course we absolutely have to address the mathematics and the reading comprehension issue. We are not ignoring that. We're certainly also not asking for a blank check. What we're saying is we have a framework in place. We've worked internally, right, with OHR, with

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CAO to identify existing programs, existing pipelines, but the challenge is, as you explained, as you were explaining the different programs, right, one of the things that I saw and that we see is it's siloed. So what we're looking to do is to break down the silos and bring them all together so that, again, as -- and Mayor Parker always says this -- so that we're ensuring that our babies, they don't just have a piece of the pie but they have access to the full loaf, whether they want to go into trades, aviation, community engagement, that we're giving them an array of opportunities.

I didn't learn about programs like human resources or AI until I got to college. I was already behind. And so what we want to do is we want to start in the high schools. That's why we want to bring the School District in, so that when the students come into the program, they already understand what the options

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are and we're giving them -- while we are addressing mathematics and reading comprehension, we're also accountable to students as well and ensuring that they have -- they're fully read into what the other opportunities that exist.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: That's what's up.

MS. THURMAN: So it's a both "and," not an either/or.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Absolutely.

And just one last part. Just in terms of the approach, just making sure that we're supporting our public charter schools as well --

MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: -- as a part of the conversation to make sure that those young people have a seat at the table, because they're all our children.

And so the 10 million is just not the building trades. It's the

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building trades plus?

MS. THURMAN: Correct.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Other industries that will be a part of recruiting young people separate from the building trades; is that correct?

MS. THURMAN: That's correct.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Could I just add one other thing, Council President. It's not just children out of high school. It's adults who are looking to upskill.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay. So like reentry, people coming home from prison who want to get their lives together?

MS. THURMAN: That's correct.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Maybe somebody who has been working a close to minimum wage job who doesn't have a career, who doesn't have a pension, who doesn't have healthcare, who wants an opportunity to have more of a career-minded focus and the revenue and

all the other ancillary benefits that come with it.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I like that.

MS. THURMAN: So 3 million of that will go to ensure that we're not increasing the tuition cost for students. The 7 million will be to stand up the framework that we are -- we have in place and that we're growing as the days go.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: That's what's up. Thank you. Great response too. That's what's up. I like that. I like that.

At this time, the Chair recognizes Councilmember Isaiah Thomas.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: I like it too, Council President.

Good afternoon, everybody. I want to take a moment first to -- and I didn't plan this, but brainstorming during lunch and listening to some of the comments and questions. I'm only in my second term on City Council, and I

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remember my first budget, and I just want to take a moment to commend the new Councilmembers, Council President - Councilmember Young, Councilmember Nina Ahmad, Councilmember Rue Landau behind me, Council Pastor Nick. You guys asked phenomenal questions that really -- and I'm looking at Councilmember Jones, who was like actively listening with me. You guys have asked some amazing questions, and it's an honor and a pleasure to work with you.

Back to business. Number one, I listened to Councilmember Young specifically talk a little bit about numbers. He talked about the national average being around 17 percent of what's recommended in your fund balance. Ours currently is around eight. And your Five Year Plan has it at one.

I sat in a different seat on a Zoom call when we did this before, and you all told us that in order to put us in a position to see some type of

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economic growth, that it was ideal for us to cut taxes so we can see and so businesses could plan what it would look like over five years.

If my memory serves me correctly, we just had somebody in these very same seats a couple weeks ago, a gentleman by the name of Paul Levy, who came and testified to us earlier this month about concerns -- asking us for our vote, first and foremost, and then communicated specific concerns based on questions that we had around revenue projections in the City of Philadelphia.

Now, as I'm sitting and listening to the responses to the question, while simultaneously reading your budget proposal, I think I'm getting a conflicting message. So on the one hand, last year you told us that in order for revenue growth to continue and for businesses to be able to plan what their bottom dollar would look like over the next five years, it was important that we

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cut taxes.

You also put somebody in front of us last week that told us that the revenue projections for Center City buildings will be dropping so significantly that we could see a huge loss in real estate taxes if we do not do something to bring businesses back to the City of Philadelphia, specifically to fill our Center City businesses.

With all due respect, without talking about anything clean, green or public safety, how are we bringing businesses back to the City of Philadelphia over the next couple years if we do not plan to cut any taxes?

MR. DUBOW: So there are multiple ways to invest in bringing businesses back. One of the things that the Mayor heard when she was on the campaign trail is people aren't coming back because they don't feel safe. So if we don't invest in public safety, it doesn't really matter what else we do if

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people don't feel safe coming into the City. That's why that's priority one in this budget.

They also are more likely to come back if they look around and the City is clean. That's something that can take -- yeah, people complain when they walk around and the City looks like trash, right?

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: I'm an at-large Councilmember. I think a lot of people in the City of Philadelphia voted for me. I'm 100 percent sure that keeping the City clean and safe will play a role in bringing businesses back to the City. So what I'm specifically asking for -- because I think everybody in here agrees Philadelphia is dirty and needs to be cleaner. I think everybody in here agrees that we need to do something about public safety. So that's where we all agree. Where we don't agree is around taxes.

So I'm asking, what is the plan

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to bring businesses back to the City of Philadelphia without anything about cleaner, greener, and public safety?

MR. DUBOW: But that is a key element to bringing businesses back.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: So if it is a key element, then why are your projections in a way whereas though you're telling me that growth is going to be slow? You can't tell me on the one hand that public safety and cleaner and greener is going to bring people back to the City, but then you have projections that are so conservative that we can't move the needle on a lot of the things that we want to do. So you kind of got to pick which road you want.

MR. DUBOW: So our projections are based both on what will happen here but what happens nationally. So, for example, if inflation comes down, that means that people's wage increases are slower and that means that wage tax revenue is slower.

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COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: You said that earlier in your testimony.

MR. DUBOW: That's right.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: And I definitely understand that, but I still don't think you really answered my questions like on the projection of the City and the direction that we're going in.

MR. DUBOW: One of the big basis of the projection is what -- there are two parts to a projection of the wage tax - how many jobs and what people get paid. So if inflation is going down, that portion, what people get paid, that growth is going to be slower.

So inflation projections are slower than they were a year ago. So that means that our wage tax projections are going to be slower than they were a year ago.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: I agree with you on that.

MR. DUBOW: So I don't

understand what you don't agree with.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: What I don't agree with is the fact that you told us last year that cutting taxes over a five-year period will put businesses in a position where they can project what their bottom line would be, and now you're coming to us today saying we shouldn't cut taxes and that's not going to impact our projections over the next five years, and I'm saying you can't have both bites at the apple. You can't have it both ways.

MR. DUBOW: So the proposal -- the Administration proposal last year just had one year of tax reductions. There weren't five year reductions last year.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: And what I'm saying is is when you came to us last year, you told us that that was the way to produce growth. You also had somebody come before us a couple weeks ago testify about the importance of businesses being

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able to plan over the next five years.

What I'm saying is this: The message that you gave us a couple weeks ago was different than the message that you're giving us right now. So what we're trying to figure out, if we're looking at the growth of the City, we know for a fact that as we reappraise buildings, we're going to lose a lot of money in real estate taxes because these buildings are not filled. This is what your people told us. We're going to lose hundreds of millions of dollars over the next couple years if we do not bring businesses back to the City of Philadelphia.

So I'm trying to figure out on the one hand, how are you encouraging us to bring businesses back to the Center City, into the City of Philadelphia, but on the other hand, in the midst of your budget proposal, the bottom dollar, the bottom dollar for the businesses suggest that they will generate much more revenue

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if their business is outside of the City compared to the --

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Councilmember, would you mind if I jump in?

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Sure, please.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: If you don't mind, and with all due respect.

The priorities of this Administration are different from the priorities of the last Administration. Paul Levy, while I have a great deal of respect for him, does not work for us. I don't know who brought him here, but it was not on behalf of our Administration.

But we talk with an awful lot of people in the business community, and maybe some of the same people that you do, and there is an incongruent ask. And I understand that you're trying to divorce these two issues, but what they're asking for time and time again is more services, more policing, cleaner

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streets, more pothole repair, all of these things. They want more, but to pay less for it. And there's a very basic economic principle here that if we're here to deliver more, to get the City up to the standard that we all want to see it so it can achieve its highest potential, that's going to take a little bit of revenue. And if we can get there, if we can have the ability to get there with the revenue that we have right now without raising taxes, then we can do an awful lot of good and we can deliver more services and keep the revenue at the level that it is so that we're not asking anybody to pay more, but we're not quite at the period of paying less.

And Mayor Parker and on City Council and as a candidate has voted for tax reduction, the BIRT and income. She has said as a candidate that she would like to see it reduced. Because it's not FY25 doesn't mean it's not never. But we do have an awful lot that we need to do

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this year.

MS. THURMAN: I was just in a meeting last week with who we call Maverick, Commissioner Bethel, and business owners -- that's the Maverick. Business owners, top business owners from around the City were in that room, and one business owner in particular -- and this is anecdotally shared -- I had the opportunity to move my business outside of the City and, Mayor Parker, I didn't because you're cleaning stuff up. Now, he didn't say "stuff," but I respect this house.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: I think my time is up, Council President. I heard the horn. I'm going to submit my questions in writing. I don't think it got answered. I don't think that we're all on the same page as it relates to past projections compared to what's being proposed right now. I'm not quite sure what we're going to do in the next two years when we run out of American Cares

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dollars and other national funds if our buildings aren't filled.

Mr. Levy was definitely sent as a confirmation vote. So I'm not saying he was here on behalf of the Administration, right, or behalf of Mayor Parker, but I'm saying that there was something that City Council was asked to approve based on his expertise.

Council President, I do have a lot more questions and I got stuck on just this one question this round because I think that we have a difference in opinion on how we see this particular issue. So if it's okay -- thank you. I would like to just do one more question.

So before I close out and prepare for the next round, one of the things that you're talking significantly about as it relates to what you want money for is hiring, hiring of staff, City services, things like that.

Myself and Councilmember Gilmore Richardson, one of the things we

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asked the last Administration for was a better job of marketing. And this was something that our former Council President was adamant about, especially when it came to jobs within the Police Department, being police officers and trying to get Philly residents to take City jobs.

I understand that you have the Municipal University, and I think that's a phenomenal idea for City jobs, but listening to some of what other Councilmembers are talking about, especially Councilmember Gauthier, who talks a lot about the goal of biotech field, we know that CHOP Hospital recently adopted Mastery Charter School to be able to create a pipeline so when young people graduate from a Mastery school, they can go directly to CHOP into the workforce.

So I want us to look at the issues that we have around hiring and hiring staff. What are we doing

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specifically in the HR department to market the jobs to Black and brown Philadelphians, these City jobs? How do we see the Municipal University being a part of Black and brown young people getting those jobs? And what is the future, similar to what Councilmember Ahmad asked earlier, around public-private partnerships specifically looking at the growing biotech industry and their appetite to adopt more high schools? We see it with one model with the charter school, but is there appetite to see a similar public-private partnership with our comprehensive neighborhood schools, specifically looking at the Office of Strategic Partnerships?

MS. THURMAN: Would you mind repeating your question? Respectfully. Respectfully. Now, you know -- respectfully. I will call up our CAO. You just dropped bars, as they say. So, respectfully, would you mind --

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COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: It's all good. So my staff have a rule. They say if you can't repeat your question, you shouldn't ask your question.

So I'm looking at issues that we've had in the past around HR.

MS. THURMAN: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: You are asking for a lot of money to be able to hire more staff, and in the past -- and I haven't been here that long -- what we tend to see is we give money to departments and departments give us money back because they can't hire the personnel that they ask for money to be allocated for.

I respect what you're looking to do around the Municipal University, and I think that's a phenomenal idea, but I'm wondering how much money will go to HR specifically to encourage Black and brown people to take the City jobs that's needed? I'm wondering what focus will the Municipal University have compared to

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public-private partnerships?

I used the example that we've seen when we seen CHOP adopt Mastery Charter, and I also wanted to know would there be an appetite for public-private partnerships for our traditional neighborhood schools with the growing biotech industry that we have here in the City of Philadelphia, specifically looking at what's going on in the Third District and I named CHOP and Mastery, that collaboration as an example.

So I know it was a loaded question, but unfortunately that's how it goes when you only have about seven minutes.

MS. THURMAN: I respect that. I respect that, Councilmember, and we'll start with Mike Zaccagni, who leads our Office of Human Resources, and then I believe we'll kick it over regarding marketing to our Chief Administrative Officer, Camille Duchaussee.

MR. ZACCAGNI: Good afternoon.

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Mike Zaccagni, HR Director for the City of Philadelphia.

Councilman, thank you. I remember our discussions last year. So one of the things that we did -- I don't want to steal Camille's thunder here, but we have about three-quarters of a million dollars to a million dollars that we're investing this year in doing a broad marketing campaign. We just brought a vendor on to help us with that, because we understood that we really don't have sort of the capacity and sometimes don't have the expertise in the area that we need.

So we started doing a teaser campaign over the last couple weeks. Probably be able to share some feedback with you at our meeting next week as to how that's working, leveraging social media, getting on -- what it looks like right now is our engagement and our engagement sessions seem to be doing very well, and as I understand the engagement

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sessions, any time someone looks at one of our -- as for more than ten seconds.

So we're getting a lot of play there. We've done something specifically for Prisons and we've done something for various job families that are difficult to recruit for, healthcare, trades, a number of them.

We're currently building out a broader promotional campaign with the vendor so that we can really hit the ground running. So this was something as soon as they came on board, we said we wanted to do something. We wanted to get stuff out there.

We won't see the results of that for a little while, but we're out there finally.

The other thing that we've been doing is pounding the pavements. This doesn't have a huge ROI, but we want to make sure that we're visible in the neighborhoods. So for the last year and a half, Janine LaBletta and her Hiring

Services team have been partnering with community organizations, with local libraries, going out, pounding the pavement, being there, being very visible.

Something that I said quite some time ago, and it's finally coming to fruition -- I guess we got tied up with a lot of the supply chain problems -- was we're bringing on -- it's not a huge thing, but a mobile lab that right now is waiting to be wrapped. Mural Arts is going to wrap for us. That's also going to be part of our, no pun intended, boots on the street so that we're out in the community, so that we're being seen in the community.

This year it looks like -- this past calendar year, Fiscal '23, looks like it's the first year in the last three that we've actually hired more people than we lost. So I'm hoping -- it's not a ton more, but I'm hoping we've turned the corner a little bit on that.

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You heard Commissioner Bethel. We've been working with POR for the Police Department on their POR hiring. They really take the lead with that. We try to support them. Hearing great numbers out of that piece of it. Well, at least greater numbers that we've had over the last several years.

So we're trying to do as much there. For example, one thing that we've been doing is on a weekly basis when we have a job opening, we're pushing candidates to them as opposed to waiting for the eligible list to be established, which technically we're supposed to do, but we worked with Law to be able to generate correspondence to the candidates so they don't think this is a job offer.

So there's a lot of different moving pieces that we're doing. We have a small recruitment unit within OHR for the first time. We staffed that up pretty much last year. So that's giving us some capacity to be able to do some

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things that we just haven't been able to do.

I agree with you, we need to have a brand. We need to be out in the community. We need to be out in the public eye so that people think of the City as an employer that I want to work with, and that's part of what we're trying to really push.

Some of the things that you said last year, took to heart about from the standpoint of where are we as opposed to where we need to be. So we're hoping that a lot of this bears fruit. We have some money for next fiscal year to be able to continue that promotional activity that we're working on, so we're excited about that.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS:

Mr. President, I'll just come back for a third round, and if we don't have time for a third round, I'll put it in writing.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

Sure.

Sincere.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: Councilman, we just want to say we agree with you that the City Municipal College is a phenomenal idea, to quote you, which is why we want to get up and running so we can help fill these critical vacancies. We can't emphasize that enough.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: I'll come back.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Kendra Brooks.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Thank you, Council President.

I have some follow-up questions from my earlier round of questions. And one thing I want to add to Councilmember Harrity, I was the one who said that overdose -- let me get my quote correct. I said people forced into treatment have

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higher rates of relapse and overdose. It wasn't a Kendra Brooks thing. It's a public health science thing, and I'll --

COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: All I asked for is numbers.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: And I said, let me finish, I will have my staff send you over that data, because I did not make it up.

And to that point, you know, we also know that a majority of the overdoses here in Philadelphia are occurring inside residences, and oftentimes people are dying alone, and it seems like much of this discussion about overdose crisis does not reflect that reality.

So what does the Administration see as a role of the mobile crisis units and its approach to the triage centers? Mobile crisis units is something I've been working on since I've been in office, and I just want to know how does that play into the situation?

MS. THURMAN: Absolutely. So we have our Deputy Managing Director Crystal Yates-Gale that will answer that question.

MS. YATES-GALE: Good afternoon. I'm sorry. I'm a little short.

The Department of Behavioral Health has mobile crisis units. The Opioid Response Unit has mobile crisis units. The Department of Public Health also has mobile crisis units, and some of our external partners have them, and we will engage with all of them to do canvassing, knocking on doors, which they currently do, to make sure that people are aware of the dangers of using drugs alone and also distributing fentanyl test strips so they can test their supply.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Are you talking about the program through Philly Counts?

MS. YATES-GALE: I'm talking about a multitude of programs. Philly

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Counts is one of them.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Is one of them, okay. Thank you so much.

MS. YATES-GALE: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: My next group of questions is around a historic correlation that came together in 2020 to advocating for the formation of the Department of Labor and our City government. Our City has been leading efforts to ensure labor rights are human rights through laws like paid sick leave, fair workweek, and our wage theft laws. I've been proud to be a part of these efforts, including fighting for increased funding in last year's budget. That's why it was encouraging to see the success of the department touted in the Administration's Five Year Plan, including an increase in labor law complaints of nearly 200 percent, more outreach to workers, small businesses to help with compliance and education and recovering nearly one million in wages

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for working families here in Philadelphia. That is an impressive record, and I want to acknowledge the department for their efforts.

And that's all the more reason why I was surprised to see substantial cuts in that department. So my question is why was the Department of Labor proposed budget cut by $400,000? With the success of that department, wouldn't we want to continue funding at a higher level?

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: So I'm going to bring up Rob, but Perry just stepped out, the Director of Labor. He will be back in a minute.

Rob, if you can speak to how -- we did not cut any full-time employees. That was sort of a payment issue. If you could speak to that.

But to your point, Councilwoman, yes, the Department of Labor does critical work in making sure that both on the private and the public

work side that we are meeting our responsibilities with prevailing wage and all of the labor standards, and Rob has a breakdown of how that looks like a cut, but in actuality it has to do with benefits payout.

MR. DUBOW: Yeah. So that's correct. In FY24, there was a -- there were large terminal leave payouts. So they had employees who had been with the department a long time and were retiring. So they got separation payments. So that was a one-time payment that was not repeated. That was the single biggest thing.

And then there were some one-time things around labor arbitrations that also went away. So it was a couple of one-time things that make it look like there was a cut but there really wasn't.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: So it's more like a flat funding and no increases?

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: The

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funding is like standing -- it's held harmless. But, again, to the point, Perry DiVirgilio can speak to this a little better, because he comes from that side of the house, but that's why we promoted someone who comes from the Labor Standards side, because they understand how critical it is to make sure that our employees are not being paid under the table, that they are meeting the prevailing wage standards. But the Labor Department was not actually cut, but we held that funding to the same levels. And they are currently -- we've had some vacancies since last fall, but you'll notice that most of those core positions have been filled in the Department of Labor. So there are probably only a handful of vacancies that still remain that we are working to fill diligently, but we have our leadership in place and we're making improved strides, and that also did contribute to some of the casework being -- sorry. It looks like

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Perry is back.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: While we wait, can I just add a caveat onto the question.

So last year's coalition of union and non-union workers came together to demand 1.2 million in increases in the funding of Office of Worker Protections to better enforce the City's labor laws, including seven additional staff and $200,000 for the Community Outreach and Education Fund, and we won 800,000, and of that, in the last year's budget, where was that money spent and how much went into the Office of Labor Protections?

That was Part 2.

MR. DiVIRGILIO: Good afternoon, Council President, members of City Council.

I would say -- and I don't have the exact numbers, but I can get them for you. I would say at least 600,000 of them.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: So,

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Councilmember, we'll get that information for you.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: So do you want me to follow up with the question in writing --

MR. DiVIRGILIO: Follow up.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: -- and then you'll be able to send it back over?

Okay. Thank you so much.

MR. DiVIRGILIO: Okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Member Brooks, are you good?

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Can I just ask this on record and I'll still follow up in writing?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Absolutely. Absolutely.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Thank you.

And in Fiscal Year 2024, more than half of all complaints took more than three months to address despite the best efforts of the department, and we know low-income workers are forced to

wait many months to have their complaints of wage theft, fair workweek or paid sick leave addressed.

With these proposed budget cuts, will workers have to wait even longer, and what services will your department stop providing to these Philadelphia workers? And I think I can wrap that up as my final question.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: So, again, we are not making any cuts. We are making sure that all of the Department of Labor still has the same number of FTEs, full-time employees, so that they can do that critical work in protecting against wage theft. And so we did have vacancies, like I said. We had a handful of vacancies in each side of the house for the Department of Labor, both Labor Standards and Worker Protection. Most of them have been filled, and we're working to fill the remaining so that we can make sure we're protecting the City workers and employees

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across Philadelphia.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Thank you. That's it.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

The Chair now recognizes Councilmember Jamie Gauthier.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Thank you, Council President.

I wanted to start by appreciating Councilmember Young's line of questioning is always very astute, and I support fully funding housing in the City, but I also want to just show some love to the Zoo. We love the Zoo. They are a gem of the Third District, and we will need the Zoo to be in tip-top shape as we're on the international stage in 2026. But we can do both.

I wanted to go back to Councilmember Lozada and the Council President's question around the 30,000 housing units that the Mayor would like to develop. As we continue to weather

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the housing crisis as a city, one of the tasks before us will be making sure that families have access to homes that they can actually afford. However, our city's reliance on area median income as a barometer of affordability leaves many low-income families out in the cold.

The region's AMI does not represent Philadelphia. It is over $114,000 annually, but the average Philadelphia household earns about half of that. Forty percent of the households that I represent in the Third District earn less than $30,000 annually, including many seniors and people with disabilities. And so when we are building housing for residents at 80 percent or 100 percent or even 120 percent of AMI, we are leaving behind hundreds of thousands of families, because a family would need to earn more than double the average income in the area that I represent and in many other areas to move into an affordable, quote,

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"affordable" home at this level of AMI.

To make matters worse, over the past two decades we have lost thousands of low cost rental units that were renting for $800 a month or less, and that would be affordable to this significant population in our city.

So can you talk more about the 30,000 units that are the Administration's goal? Is there a breakdown of AMI that is corresponding to those units, and how does that correspond to the need within our neighborhoods?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Yeah. Councilmember, thank you for that question.

When I sat down with you, and I think I had mentioned this when Councilmember Lozada had raised a similar issue, one of the things that I always emphasize is that our Mayor is a District Councilperson and she understands the prerogative of District Councilmembers, especially if we're using City dollars or

things of value, like land in the Land Bank.

You and I had a discussion about the AMI, and the AMI is -- it's a barometer, right? So if we're talking about 100 percent AMI for the entire area, we know that's not right for Philadelphia, but we can adjust percentages based on that.

We have fulfilled the whole plan, but we will be looking at it banded and paying close attention to what District Councilmembers are saying and thinking for their district.

And also I will be remiss if I didn't say this as well: Anything that we're going to be building will be affordable luxury, high end fixtures, high end hardware, but still affordable, because as the Mayor said, just because you don't have the same level of resources doesn't mean that you should have to deal with less.

So it's very much a work in

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progress, but taking very close account into District Members' knowledge and understanding of their own districts.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: I appreciate that. We all employ a prerogative, but I think I'm asking more about data and data on the City's housing needs. How are you incorporating that data on need into the City's strategy to deliver 30,000 units and how are you apportioning subsidy and resources from the City according to that need?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Those decisions have not been made yet and that's continuing to be a work in progress, and it's -- my colleague had said it before. It's not an either/or. It's we can do a lot of it at the same time, including mixed-income development.

So it is a continuing developing policy. It's not done yet, and it's going to be regionalized as well.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Okay.

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My next question is about our support to community development corporations. As we know, CDCs do the hard work of facilitating eviction diversion and housing counseling and getting residents connected to all kinds of critical programs as well as the development of affordable housing. They are trusted, incredible resources in our neighborhoods, and we rely on CDCs as a city to serve as first responders to address a range of needs at the neighborhood level.

And so with that in mind, I wanted to hear you talk about our support for the critical work of community development corporations in this budget, and in particular, can you talk about our support for housing counseling and are we -- is that remaining flat? Are we increasing it? How are we thinking about that investment?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: I don't have the housing counseling numbers in

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front of me, but I can get those to you.

One of the things that PHDC is developing currently, and we're hoping to unveil this rather soon, is the way that we do minority developer support is to also do CDC developer support, so that we can provide that type of support infrastructure, connections to capital if appropriate, and a variety of other things, understanding the critical role that they play.

We sat down with PACDC last week and really truly heard from them as they were saying that, especially when you're talking about gentrifying communities, and I know you know a lot about this from your district, that the communities that are there are stable because of the CDCs. And we hear that and we understand that, and we're looking to find ways to continue to support them and give them the resources that we can.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Thank you. I appreciate -- and this is my last

statement, not a question. I appreciate the support for development for CDCs, especially in gentrifying communities, because they need that in order to continue to develop affordable housing in those communities.

I would push us to also prioritize operating support. We have steadily and admirably grown the level of housing assistance, rental assistance, eviction protection. CDCs are often connecting people to those programs on our behalf, and they need adequate support to do that, particularly housing counseling funds.

Thank you.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Thank you, Councilmember.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

Mr. Platt, when you also say mixed income, that means the 30,000 isn't just focused on affordable, correct? That would be a combination of a variety

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of different things?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: That's absolutely correct. It's mixed income focusing on affordable without City subsidy but not standing as obstacle to market-rate housing in established neighborhoods to increase inventory to help curb the flow of gentrification, something I know that you also know a lot about in your district, but mixed income in the same areas.

Mayor Parker always or frequently talks about the Westrum Development in East Falls where one block is PHA housing, the next block is what you would call workforce housing, and all the way up until you have million dollar-plus homes with elevators. But it's all a community. It's all built with the same building materials, and if you were driving through, you wouldn't really notice any difference between the income bands. And in those communities, you have people of all socioeconomic

stripes who have pride in their community and they're living and working together.

And as a city -- you mentioned redlining earlier. This is something that we have done incredibly poorly, is bringing people who are different together, but through some more modern housing ideas, I think that we will be able to do that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: And I just want to also add to take into consideration in terms of the strategy, we have a senior population out there where we can convert some of the -- I have like several schools that will be great for low-income housing for seniors, because we meet a lot of seniors who want to, when they go into a living facility, stay inside their neighborhood, not go across the City to another neighborhood, because they want to be closer to their family. So something to maybe take in consideration.

I know we have an

intergovernmental approach where we can leverage our federal funding and our state funding to produce more senior housing as a part of that 30,000 strategy as well.

And also I don't want to be remiss about saying individuals who are disabled. That's a population that have a different level of advocacy. That's not always as robust as other developers or interest groups that come before us, and so they're all looking for additional advocacy. And so -- and I have personal family members with me being an elected official kind of had to go jump through hoops just for support to get a house that's equipped to handle the individual who was actually disabled, but even navigating that process and discuss the lack of housing for individuals who are disabled, if y'all can take into consideration as you strategize overall for the 30,000 units.

With that being said, I want to

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say Councilmember Anthony Phillips is next.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: Thank you, Council President Johnson.

Just some quick, rapid-fire observations. Number one, quality of life officers are incredibly important, and so being able to recruit that in addition to the neighborhood cleanup team is going to be really different, because the reason why we have so many speed cushion requests around the City of Philadelphia is because speeding as at an all-time high. These public safety officers can support the Police Department with check-in on things like that as well as other traffic issues that a lot of residents have complained about and other quality-of-life issues as well.

Number two, just a quick observation, the Department of Streets -- I said it. I want to be on record. We get a lot of speed cushion requests throughout the City of Philadelphia.

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There needs to be a level of transparency that will go to residents in the City of Philadelphia that would ultimately be able to tell people when their study request came in, when their request is going to -- when they're going to receive their study, when they're going to probably receive the speed cushions. It needs to be online somewhere so our office numbers are not constantly getting called as District Councilmembers.

And then also just wanted to note from the communication standpoint, and I'm going to have two rapid-fire questions after that, communication standpoint. Listening to the testimony of the communications director or marketing, HR, I'm not thrilled. I feel like it's a level of excuses that we've heard from last year, now we're hearing again. No action plan for this year that's really rigorous and exciting, and I wanted y'all to figure out how we could hold that department more accountable,

because we get it all the time where we're not marketing things to our neighbors about programs and events. This department needs to be held more accountable for doing a terrible job with being in neighborhoods. We have community events they can be hosting, they can be part of, about all the jobs and opportunities that are here in the City of Philadelphia. In addition to that, there should be maybe a central place online where jobs are posted on social media that people can go to.

So the marketing needs to be more streets oriented and also maybe increase your mailers to go out about City jobs.

The libraries need to become -- Kelly Richards is a fantastic director. He needs more autonomy to provide innovative space, provide thoughts on how we can make the libraries more innovate, where it can be more learning opportunities, extracurricular

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opportunities, as well as just not just about books and studying. It can be a space for growth, fun, and meetups for our city. So I just want to be on record on that.

Quick question I want to ask. When you put the locations for the neighborhood -- the Mayor's Neighborhood Service Centers with the Mayor liaisons, will those locations be thought of in conjunction with the City Council District Councilmember?

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: Absolutely. And to your point about libraries, to reserve City resources, the primary locations we'll be looking at are libraries and rec centers. So we look forward to partnering with Council on our neighborhood action centers and those engagement teams and the work that will be done out of them.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: Okay. Thank you.

Next question, in the City of

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Philadelphia, we have a large number of violence prevention organizations that are continually funded. We do need to have violence prevention organizations to support our young people.

This upcoming year we have a $5 billion grant from the Department of Justice focused on addressing violence. How are we going to do it? How are we planning to do a better job with delivering an evaluation to make sure that these violence prevention organizations are working with the young people who are one or two steps away from the incarceration system? How are we going to do a better job with making sure that we can show our neighbors and our residents that the violence prevention programs that we are funding are actually working and they're targeting the groups that we have?

Now, listen, there's some kids that need to be in youth programs. All kids need to be in youth programs, but

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this specific funding needs to be for certain students that are going to be in a certain trouble potentially if we won't get them in there.

MR. GEER: Good afternoon. Thank you for that question, Councilmember. Couldn't agree with you more. Some of that work is already being done. We have brought on some grants teams people who are looking at the performance of some of these groups that, again, I want to say are doing incredible work here in the City of Philadelphia and we're going to continue to reach out and partner with them in very meaningful and, again, intentional way.

We also are creating one of the positions that I said we're going to be funding internally, so it's not part of the budget request, is a Director of Performance Management whose sole job in the directorship position will be, again, to basically track, monitor, help, assist but, most importantly, get the

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information as to what is working, right, what programs are, what aren't, which organizations are, what's not. Support them, right, and pivot when we need to. So we're also creating a specific directorship position to address that very concern.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: Just one last thing, Council President.

If we could just get on record for us requesting a detailed list -- thank you for that response -- a list of all the internal/external recipients of grant money that received money from the City this year and how they've been evaluated, that will be helpful for understanding just how to qualify the funding.

And then the last thing, and it's a quick one, for Parks and Rec we've seen there's a transition from Rebuild, which is fine, right? I have no problem. Capital is capital. $152 million is going to the parks and rec centers. Can

we get a better understanding of where the Mayor's Office is thinking about where those $152 million worth of capital will be going to across the City so that we can have a sense or is there going to be more say around City Councilmembers around how that's funded?

MS. THURMAN: So I'd like to call up Aparna Palantino, who leads CPO, but of course everything is like driven with equity, right? So we want to make sure that our investments go to where the need is the greatest, and you'll see that in the realignment that's happening with the CPO Office, Capital Programs, which includes the Rebuild program. And so Aparna can provide specifics around that.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: Thank you.

MS. PALANTINO: Good afternoon. Aparna Palantino, Director of Capital Projects.

Councilmember Phillips, thank you for your question. With regards to

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the capital funding for Parks and Recreation, there's two components. There's the capital funding that's used for infrastructure improvements throughout the system, but there's also a significant portion of that which is City Council ITEF funding that's already buried in that number, which we work closely with your offices, the ten District Councilmembers, to allocate to different projects. So we're happy to share planned projects for both types of funding with your office as they go, but the ITEF, as you know, is very closely regulated by Councilmembers.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: Yeah. I mean, yes. Thank you. And I still would like to get a stronger list, because I got a sense that you already have where you want to go, and I just want to -- with those capital funds. I want to make sure we're able to --

MS. PALANTINO: Certainly.

COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: Thank

you. Appreciate you.

Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

Thank you very much.

Aparna, just while you're there, I just saw a Parks and Recreation decrease by 1.7 million, right, 1.658. And so I'm just trying to get an understanding. We're talking about keeping young people safe, right, as a way to -- want to keep the City safe as a way to attract businesses here to the City of Philadelphia, right, make it a vibrant place. And my Nana taught me as a kid an idle mind is the devil's workshop, meaning there's nothing else to do, you're going to get involved in something that's negative.

So why are we going -- why are we decreasing support for our playground and our recreation facilities as opposed to growing it? Because I know this body did a robust job during the pandemic to make sure recreation centers was open

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over the weekend 24 hours a day. So maybe I might have missed something, but give me clarity based upon the numbers that I'm looking at in terms of the funding for Parks and Rec.

MS. PALANTINO: Council President, is that in the operating budget or the capital side?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Operating, on the operating side.

MS. THURMAN: So I'll call back up our Chief Deputy Managing Director, Vanessa Garrett-Harley, to answer that question in Commissioner Slawson's absence, but certainly we stand with you and we agree. Parks and Recreation is vitally important. It plays an important role in every neighborhood of our city. And so to that end...

MS. GARRETT-HARLEY Council President, I'm not exactly sure. I'm going to get you an answer back. Now, it could have been some one-time funding that we had before that's not reflected

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this year, because as far as I can remember, our budget is flat, pretty stable across the board when you're talking about the operating budget. A large share of the operating budget is salaries. The largest share is salaries. We do have some vacancies that we have to fill, but we primarily are keeping those numbers on the books.

Now, the only other thing could be, there was some additional funding given to Parks and Rec, if I remember correctly, in FY24 to increase staffing in certain areas. Despite their best efforts, we did increase some staffing, but was not able to increase it to the fullest extent, and that may be where the difference is being reflected at in the funding that you're talking. But in terms of like Class 200 contracts and all that should be flat funding, the same as it was last year.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay. I have 83 million down to 77

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million for FY25.

DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT-HARLEY: I'll definitely get you the breakout and see whether it's what I'm talking about, some of it being in staffing but shouldn't. It might be one-time funding that I'm thinking.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay. Just wanted to get clarity on that.

At this time, the Chair recognizes Councilmember Katherine Gilmore Richardson.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Thank you, Council President.

I wanted to again thank everybody for your testimony, and I was here diligently taking notes.

Councilmember Jones, I did not do a point of clarification, so I was trying to take notes on all the things that I had questions about.

But quickly just to the Council President's point regarding keeping young

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people safe, I want to put this on the record on behalf of my District Councilmember, Councilmember Jones, and I, on behalf of Wynnefield regarding John C. Anderson Culture Center currently closed indefinitely, and you know that we do not have a recreation center at all in Wynnefield. And so we don't have the Cultural Center and of course there's no rec center, and so we'll certainly need additional help and support from Parks and Rec regarding that area, particularly for the young people, but also the Culture Center is also a voting location in that community as well. So I just wanted to put that on the record.

Really quickly, I had a question regarding the rate of growth, sort of the assumptions around the residential real estate tax rates for the Five Year Plan.

Thanks, Rob. And so I think that we're anticipating eight percent rate of growth for residential real

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estate over the life of this proposed Five Year Plan; is that correct?

MR. DUBOW: Actually, in FY25.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Pardon me?

MR. DUBOW: In FY25.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: In FY25 it's eight percent. And then could you just review for each of the years in the Plan the anticipated rate of growth by percentage, and if you could let us know what the -- if you don't have it year over year, the overall assumption for the real estate tax collection amount, recognizing that we're going to go through a reassessment rather soon.

MR. DUBOW: Yeah. I can give you that. So for the real estate tax, we are assuming in '25 $876 million, in '26 907 --

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: I'm sorry, Rob. May you repeat those numbers again? I can't hear you very well.

MR. DUBOW: Yes. In FY25 -- is

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that better? I wasn't talking into the mic.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Yes.

MR. DUBOW: In FY25, 877 million.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Okay.

MR. DUBOW: In FY26, 908 million. In FY27, 944 million. In FY28, 982 million. And in FY29, a billion 21. And those growth rates after the first year are between three and a half and four percent.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: So three and a half to four percent growth rate each year in the life of this proposed --

MR. DUBOW: The first year, FY25, it's actually about four and a half percent, because there's no assumed growth on the commercial side.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Right. Right. And so I was going to ask the same thing relative to commercial.

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MR. DUBOW: This was the combined.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: This is the combined?

MR. DUBOW: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Okay. And then so if I could just ask for a breakdown for just the residential side. I really just want to understand the numbers as it relates to sort of what you all are projecting relative to the work that we know OPA has to undertake over the next couple years. And what I'm seeking to understand is are we putting certain growth assumptions in the FY25 revenue projections based off of leaving the numbers flat and/or recognizing that once the reassessment is done, we anticipate that it will go to this amount.

MR. DUBOW: Yeah. So we're assuming in '25 some growth on the residential side, none on the commercial, and then after that, just kind of

inflationary growth going forward on both sides.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: And then for the record then, which years in this Five Year Plan are you planning -- I would say is OPA planning to do a reassessment?

MR. DUBOW: So what we hope is that we get to the point where we're doing them every year. So that's the underlying assumption. There was a lot of factors that go into that, like the level of --

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: CAMA.

MR. DUBOW: -- appeal. Yes, right. But that's the hope.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Okay. So if you could just get back to us and just break it down so we can see the residential numbers specifically and then the assumptions around the rate of growth by percentage per year and also amounts so that we understand what we're

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looking at.

MR. DUBOW: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: And then also I wanted to go back to two quick things that I had questions on that my colleagues mentioned. One was relative to Councilmember Young's questioning regarding the triage centers.

For the record, from a dollar amount, can you talk about where the $100 million will be coming from? Is that coming from operating and then you all would -- if so, if you could just break it down by class. And is it that you are, I guess, RFPing out for space, right, so that even though it's space, even though it's like a capital need, it's really on the operating because you're RFPing it out?

MR. DUBOW: The hundred million is showing on the capital side.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Pardon me?

MR. DUBOW: The hundred million

is showing on the capital side.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Is all showing on the capital side?

MR. DUBOW: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: And nothing on the operating side?

MR. DUBOW: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: For the triage centers. And so --

MR. DUBOW: And as the Managing Director said, some of those costs on the operating side will be from the existing budget, so it's not like there are no resources on the operating side.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Got it. And so would it be -- on the operating side, it would be underspend; is that correct?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Councilmember, if you don't mind, one of the big pieces to this, and this is why the Managing Director convened all of the healthcare industry people, including the insurance companies, was to have the

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insurance companies at the table, especially when we're talking about Medicaid, especially when we're talking about private health insurance that may be insuring somebody up to age 26 who is looking for treatment in a potential future facility. So we're going to have the insurance companies at the table to help devise the ways to do this so that we are looking to pay for this long-term treatment.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Okay. And I'm literally just seeking clarity to see which side it's coming from and sort of how we're looking at the spend on that, because I was kind of confused and I'm just looking for clarity.

I heard the bell and I will respect the clock, but very quickly, I wanted to mention what Council President talked about regarding the $10 million workforce investment. If you could just for clarify for me, because last year I

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carried the request regarding the Samuel Staten Jr. Pre-apprenticeship program, YO-ACAP, and also the Carpenters Apprenticeship Ready program. And you all know that I deeply care about that work. I created the first apprenticeship guidebook that we've ever had in this city. We do the Labor Friday programs. We partner with the labor unions. We hear the concerns that they have relative to ensuring that young people are ready and prepared to go into the trades.

So my direct question is, what type of ongoing support will be a part of this proposed budget specifically for those three programs, YO-ACAP, Samuel Staten Pre-apprenticeship program, and CARP, the Carpenters Apprenticeship Ready program?

And I'll come back on the third round regarding my question around PhillyStat 360 and the Nuisance Business Task Force.

Thank you, Council President.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: You're welcome.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Councilmember, if I could just respond very quickly, the continued support for those programs would be part of this $10 million allocation as defined.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: I apologize, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: The Chair recognizes Councilmember Katherine Gilmore Richardson.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Thank you, Council President. I'm just responding to the response.

If you could just detail the amounts per year. And I'm only seeking clarity because we did -- this was an allocation that was through a different process outside of the proposed process and I just want to know the exact amounts for those three programs, because those are the programs that are pre-apprenticeship programs. They're

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readiness programs. The other programs you have to be ready when you walk through the door. These programs are readiness programs that we know have a track record of working. Okay?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Yes, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

Just want to start a question here for the Mayor's Office. Included in your budget materials is a list of the 14 offices within the Mayor's Office. Some are new and some are renamed offices within this Plan. Can you please detail how it was determined which offices will sit within the Mayor's Office and how the oversight structure works?

MS. THURMAN: So the oversight structure is such that it's actually outlined and illustrated in our organizational chart. So in our proposed

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budget, we have 113 positions. Under our Chief Deputy Mayor for Intergovernmental Affairs, Legislation and Labor, Sincere Harris, we have the Office of Legislative Affairs, Neighborhood Engagement, and then the Office of City Representative/Office of Special Events, which is a new combined office.

Under our Chief Deputy Mayor Aren Platt, we have our Communications and Digital Program, Business Roundtable, Office of Strategic Partnerships. There are also other departments that are under both Chief Deputy Mayors that are not listed in our Five Year Plan -- I'm sorry; in our Mayor 05 budget.

We have the Minority Business Success Department that's also within this budget as well as PhillyStat 360, staff within our executive office, our Policy, Planning and Delivery, which is a new policy expanded office, and then of course our DEI Office and then the Integrity Office.

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So under that structure, we have about 113 positions. We know that that has increased from last year. I think last year FY24 there were 45 budgeted positions for the Mayor's Office.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: And I'm going to slide a question here for the Office of Labor. There's over 430 million contributed to labor reserve for FY25 to FY29. Just give me an idea of the status of our labor contract negotiations and does this accommodate for any pay scale changes for non-represented employees.

DEPUTY MAYOR SINCERE: I'm going to call up our Labor Director, Perry DiVirgilio.

But, Council President Johnson, would you mind repeating both parts of that question, please?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Absolutely. So there's a total of $430 million contributed to our labor

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reserve for FY25 to FY29. So it's $430 million that's already put to the side. So give me the status of our current labor contract negotiations but, most importantly, does this reserve accommodate just the labor contract negotiations or does it also accommodate for pay scale changes for non-represented employees?

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: So currently with regards at least to Part 2(a) of the question regarding the contract negotiations, we have currently signed a one-year agreement extension with both Police and Fire, and we can get you the details of what that breakdown includes. Typically when you do a one-year extension, it's not the full agreement, as you all know. It's just focused on key salary and in this case sign-on bonuses.

And then we also signed a one-year extension with the Sheriff deputies and we -- well, we won't talk

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about ongoing negotiations. We are very hopeful that we can sign maybe one or two more one-year extensions with our municipal workforce.

And then with regard to the first question, Perry, I don't know if we need to get him the breakdown of that answer.

MR. DiVIRGILIO: Let me try this again. Good afternoon, Council President Johnson --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Good afternoon.

MR. DiVIRGILIO: -- and members of City Council. My name is Perry DiVirgilio, Director of Labor for the City of Philadelphia.

Before I answer that question, first of all, I'd like to apologize to Councilwoman Brooks. I kind of walked in halfway when your question was over and I was a little bit unprepared, so I apologize for that.

I don't really have the

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information that you requested, those numbers, but I can definitely put them numbers together and get them to you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: All right. Thank you very much.

What's the total other unions that you are in current negotiations with beside DC33? So is that AFSCME which includes --

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: 33, 47, 159B, which is Prisons, which is part of 33 but typically negotiated separately.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay. All right.

MS. THURMAN: Council President, just for your awareness, we do have the budget numbers, and so if we're permitted, we can go through that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: You can just provide them to the Chair.

MR. DUBOW: I think your question was does the labor reserve include funding for non-union --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Pay

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scale changes --

MR. DUBOW: It does.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: -- and non.

MR. DUBOW: Yes, it includes that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: You can just get them to me. That's all.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Rue Landau.

COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Thank you.

I just wanted to follow up on Councilmember Gauthier's question earlier today about the decrease in the budget for Planning and Development. It looks like it's in Class 200 and Class 500. Can you tell me what those decreases are?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: We can get back to you on that. We need to just take a look at it.

COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Okay. And by looking at the Mayor's Office budget, I see that the Mayor -- the

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Administration is proposing an increase of full-time staff by 74 employees at a price of about $6 million. Can you clarify whether this will be -- these are new roles to the municipality or is it some sort of restructuring and reorganization from other departments?

MS. THURMAN: So it's a combination of both. We are making historic investments in City services, and what we're doing is ensuring that we're also providing new programs anchored in the Mayor's Office that will implement the vision for a safer, cleaner, greener city, with access to economic opportunity for all. And so with that budget, we have the Chief Legal Counsel, Kristin Bray, and under her we have PhillyStat, which is a big undertaking. PhillyStat 360 will create synergies between the Police Department's crime-fighting efforts, community, operating departments, including L&I and clean and green and problem-solving. So

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we have -- that's $1.84 million, 15 positions for PhillyStat 360.

We talked about public-private partnerships and its importance. We have this new Office of Strategic Partnerships led by Kafi Lindsay, who is here today. That office will lead the strategic collaboration and active engagement of corporate, non-profit, and philanthropic sectors to support the Mayor's vision. In that office we have five new positions that did not exist to the tune of about $650,000 in our Class 100.

We've also talked extensively today about the new Office of Minority Business Success. We've looked at models like past Mayor Maynard Jackson in Atlanta, and we still see many, many years later the impacts and effects of the work that he's done around minority business success. We want to see that in Philadelphia, but we want the businesses and those business owners to remain in our city. And so under the leadership of

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Rachel Branson, we believe that we'll be very successful in doing that.

In that department we have four positions, and that General Fund is about $536,000 in Class 100. And then of course we talked about the Business Roundtables and then the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood and Community Engagement, with a combined 13 new positions.

COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Okay. Just a quick follow-up to that. What's the difference between the Business Roundtables and the Commerce Department? Why is that not under Commerce?

MS. THURMAN: Excellent question, and I'll kick that to my colleague.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: So the Business Roundtables are a convening. It's part of three roundtables that we have. Sincere can speak about the Faith-Based as well as Intergovernmental Roundtable.

The Business Roundtable is born

out of a lot of communication we had with the business community, specifically the Mayor, as she was on City Council and then as a candidate that they -- we wanted to make sure we had a clear line of communication, of collaboration, and the opportunity for the business community to suggest policies and legislative ideas that work for them rather than having government kind of impose on them what government thinks is best for their own growth and their own movement.

Commerce Department is truly a City agency that helps them grow, but it's not quite the same seat at the table type of back and forth.

COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Okay. Thank you.

And I noticed that the Chief Public Safety Director's position was not in the Mayor's Office, but I thought it would be listed there.

MS. THURMAN: So they have

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their own budget code, but our Chief Public Safety Director reports directly to the Mayor. So Adam Geer is a cabinet-level member of the Administration, not within Mayor 05 budget.

COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Okay. And one last comment. I'm almost done.

I love that I saw an increase of $500,000 to the Office of DEI, and I in particular love especially lifting up Black and brown communities and marginalized communities in the City, but saw that you specifically highlighted the Office of LGBT Affairs and Office of Disabilities as doing a project with them throughout the year, and I just wanted to leave with the comment of intersectionality, that there's lots of folks who do fall underneath the umbrella of DEI, and I'm super excited to see those two sub-offices lifted up.

Thank you.

MS. THURMAN: Thank you very

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much, Councilmember.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

Quick question, what's the difference between the Office of DEI and Office of OEO?

MS. THURMAN: So DEI really focuses on policy, ensuring that in every department we have a racial equity framework that's baked into the DNA of how they do their work.

OEO is very different in that it's in the Commerce Department, and I'll kick that answer over to my colleague Aren to talk about OEO.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: OEO has enforcement power, so that's really --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: That's all I needed to hear. So the enforcement versus policy. Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Quetcy Lozada.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank

you, Council President.

I just want to follow up on a question that I was going to ask in the first round, and it's around Land Bank. I was under the impression that Land Bank when it was first formed, it was supposed to provide easier access for residents who had historically been taking care of land to be able to gain acquisition because of all of the work that they did in making sure that their communities weren't blighted.

As you work towards restructuring how Land Bank will operate, are we taking that into consideration, and if so, how?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: I'm sorry, Councilmember. Would you mind repeating? It was a little hard to hear.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: As you work towards revamping Land Bank, what are you doing to ensure that residents who have historically taken care of land have access to be able to acquire it?

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Because we have seen that although that was the purpose originally, they are not getting that. I have people in my district who have applied for land since 2008 and are still waiting for parcels to be acquired, and we see that there is easier access for private developers to gain access more quickly for that land. So what are you doing to ensure as you restructure that community residents have more access?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Yeah. So, Councilmember, we are considering that as we do Land Bank restructuring. We're also making sure that we are in close communication with the District Councilmember, who will really know, I mean, is this a -- from a map you can't tell. Is it a blighted piece of land or is it truly a side yard that's been cared for for years or decades. And that's where we need that type of observational input from the ground, and that's one of the things where District Councilmembers

will be so, so helpful as we do that Land Bank, as we take a look at the Land Bank.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: And then as you develop some of this land, private developers have had the option to be able to pay into the Housing Trust Fund in order to prevent them from having to meet their affordability requirements, but although they do that, we never see the Housing Trust Fund, that 20 percent, come back into districts. What are you all doing to ensure that that actually starts to happen?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: So I know she's not there now, but Councilmember Gauthier has a series of bills specifically around that that we're keeping an eye on and watching as it goes through the process.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: What was that?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: So Councilmember Gauthier has some bills on the Housing Trust Fund to ensure that it

can only be spent in a certain radius.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: But are you guys supporting that?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Not yet, but we're keeping an eye on it to --

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: What are your thoughts on that?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: We don't have thoughts on it yet that we're going to put out there, but it's something that we're certainly keeping an eye on.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Okay. I'd be interested to hear what you think about that. So if we need to meet as a sidebar, let's do that, because in the Seventh Council District, most private developers pay into that fund, and then that money goes into a general fund and I never see it, which is part of why I'm experiencing the housing crisis that I'm experiencing in the Seventh. So I'm interested to hear your thoughts and how we can work together to fix that.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT:

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Absolutely, Councilmember. And you know that I know your district, and making sure that whatever we can do to ensure affordable housing in your district is being taken care of is absolutely a priority of this Administration. So I will get back to you on that.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you.

And then my last question is, I read in the Five Year Plan that we are replacing 600 new LEDs or that we replaced 600 new LEDs as of February of 2024. Another 120,000 are expected to be changed over the next three years. Can someone tell me how those are being prioritized, what neighborhoods are being prioritized, what is it going to cost us, and how long is that going to take?

MS. THURMAN: So I'd like to call up Mike Carroll, our -- so we can get back to you on that. We will provide a response in writing. We're happy to do that.

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COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Ms. Harris.

COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: You're welcome.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you, Council President. I was remiss in answering your question earlier when you asked about what other municipal unions we have. I was remiss in not including the Steelworkers, who are also a part of our union workforce in addition to DC33, 47, and 159B and A.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you. But while we're at it, just in terms of Department of Labor, the gentleman who was here from the Labor Department, just a quick question for him.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: Mr. DiVirgilio.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: It will be real quick and give it back to my members.

I just want to get an idea of last year we passed a significant bill to -- over the past two years we passed two significant bills, one for healthcare for workers at the Philadelphia International Airport and also $15 an hour, right? So what is our Labor Department doing in making sure that businesses are in compliance, and when they're not in compliance, what is the recourse to make sure that they are following the law in terms of healthcare that they're required to provide as well as the wage of $15 an hour? Just a question I wanted to ask that was asked of my office as recently as yesterday.

MR. DiVIRGILIO: Sure, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Talk in the mic, please.

MR. DiVIRGILIO: Sure, Council

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President. First of all, you know, that ordinance was tied into the Service Contract Act. So that wage is now 17.20, because the Department of Labor updated those wages. And the health and welfare component is 4.57. There was an Executive Order that was passed in regards to sick leave that made that health and welfare component $4.57.

The Office of Labor is in the process of hiring a wage compliance officer that's going to be full time at the airport, so we'll be able to oversee -- you know, interview the employees to make sure what they're making. And I actually have a complaint right now, so we'll be going out to the airport to do an audit to make sure that -- find out if that subcontractor is in compliance. If not, then we'll take the means necessary to make sure they get in compliance.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: And then as a city also, how are we

addressing the issue of wage theft, right? Because obviously you have businesses that operate under the radar, and that revenue could be used, right, to obviously help fuel and support the other services that we offer here in the City of Philadelphia. So do we have any strategy to work around this particular issue of wage theft?

MR. DiVIRGILIO: Yes. I'd like to call up Candace Chewning, who runs the Office of Wage Theft, Worker Projection, to answer that question.

(Witness approached witness table.)

MS. CHEWNING: Hi, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: How you doing today?

MS. CHEWNING: Good.

So the Office of Worker Protections within the Philadelphia Department of Labor processes wage theft complaints. We also run an outreach

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program across the City. We work with several community groups across the City to ensure that not just workers but employers are aware of not just wage theft but all of the labor laws within the City that our office enforces, which is about eight labor laws.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Would diversity and inclusion and minority participation fall within that line? Because a lot of times as District Councilmembers we pass legislation for development which triggers an EOP, and those EOPs mean nothing if we aren't actually monitoring and enforcing the law so we can reach those goals.

MS. CHEWNING: So the diversity, equity, and inclusion piece is the Labor Standards Office, which is not my unit, but we do have a diversity, equity, and inclusive approach to our outreach program and engagement, not just that outreach program but also our Community Outreach and Education Fund

where we work with a group of stakeholders, front-line City employees, workers, business owners, and community members.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: All right. Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Nicholas "Nick" O'Rourke.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Thank you, Council President. I have more questions than I got time.

So this one has somewhat already been asked, but I kind of wanted to ask it a different way.

Given the reminder about the City's limited or scarce resources, I'm compelled to ask. The Mayor's proposed budget, as has already been stated, nearly doubles the Mayor's Office budget, adding about $7 million. I understand the Mayor's Office is adding new positions in the Mayor's purview, as has already been articulated. It was also notable to me, though, that the average

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salary for the Mayor's Office employees increased from 99K to 134K under the current Administration, 35 percent bump in average salary. Fabulous, wonderful. Can we expect that to happen across other front-line worker offices as well, to see that sort of significant salary increase?

MS. THURMAN: So I'd like to call up our Chief Administrative Office, Camille Duchaussee. As she's coming up, I can tell you that we worked very closely with our CAO and OHR to ensure that salary bands -- that we adhered to salary bands.

I'm sorry. You can go ahead.

(Witness approached witness table.)

MS. DUCHAUSSEE: Good afternoon, Council President, Councilmembers. My name is Camille Duchaussee. I am the City's Chief Administrative Officer.

Councilmember O'Rourke, in response to your question, we're

absolutely committed to making sure that there is continuous assessment of our salaries, that we are paying a wage that is livable, that contributes to our ability to recruit and retain talent.

We have contracted with a firm to complete a somewhat limited assessment across several offices, several departments, several agencies to ensure that we have a better understanding of what the industry standard is for our compensation decisions.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: I don't know if this is -- are there any concerns that the return to office policy will have a countereffect on recruitment? My wife works in corporate America and immediately jumped at that news, considering what they're doing within their own. Any thoughts on that?

MS. DUCHAUSSEE: Yes. You know, it is a difficult subject to navigate. There is no question that being able to work from home is an

opportunity and a benefit that a lot of our employees and in general the workforce appreciates, improves work-life balance. It is -- there's data to suggest that it absolutely helps with recruitment, right? And certain industries absolutely do lend themselves to it.

The Mayor has created a bold strategy here, and in that strategy, it transforms -- it's asking us to transform the way we provide service to our citizenry. That includes returning to office. It includes creating spaces where we are more visible, where we are engaging in more collaboration and collaborative conversations, and where we are using those collaborative conversations to improve efficiencies where we can.

So we absolutely appreciate the concerns and the position that, hey, this is something that may have a negative impact on our ability to recruit. And I

think the information is a little early in terms of retention. We don't have data on whether it impacts retention or not, but at the end of the day, we're going to take a very measured, a very thoughtful approach to how we implement our return to office and take large and long -- have large and long conversations around our employees' concerns from both represented employee perspective and our non-represented employee perspective.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: I appreciate the sobriety in that response, just because I've heard so much about folks and I also have felt pretty strongly that we learned quite a bit through the pandemic about how to operate and to do the work and to be effective at it in light of all these things, and I feel like -- perhaps we'll see with time, but that could be an issue on terms of retention.

Were you going to say something?

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MS. THURMAN: Just to clarify, 80 percent of our workforce are already in person. We've also -- you see around this room, this is our leadership. Our leadership is working in person. We're able to focus on workplace culture, collaboration, synergy, and we find that we cannot do that behind a computer.

And so, yes, there's an equity -- a framework and position that we absolutely -- we're driving with, but we're also -- what's really important is that we take a human-centric approach. And so I think that's what our CAO just outlined, and appreciate the question, but what we're really talking about is bringing back about 4,700 people of our very vast growing workforce.

MS. DUCHAUSSEE: And not to belabor the point, but I also think it's important to point out that the super majority of the vacancies and the areas where we are experiencing considerable vacancy and retention concerns are in

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spaces where they cannot work from home, right?

So it is a balancing act, and we are very mindful of the impact that this might have on our culture, but there are other pieces that we are considering to ensure that we are creating a culture that will help us retain employees and make the work experience exactly what the Administration intends it to be.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Thank you very much.

I do want to build off of Leader Brooks' line of questioning around the Department to Labor earlier. The Office of Worker Protections' budget saw a nearly 45 percent increase in complaints year over year. Does it make sense to hold homeless this department's budget given that significant need?

MR. DUBOW: So the Labor's budget was basically -- there were two big things that made it look like a decrease. One was people leaving who had

big payouts when they left because they had been in -- worked for us for a while. So that was a one-time thing, not recurred. And then there were some one-time costs related to arbitrations. So it kind of skews the way the budget looks.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Okay. I heard the buzzer go off. Like I said, I have more questions than time.

Can I circle back around in the second round?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Sure.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: The Chair recognizes Councilman Curtis Jones.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Thank you, Mr. President.

I do not want an answer to this question. I just want to alert you that I will want an answer in the near future.

I want to talk about force

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integration for public safety and technology integration for public safety. What do I mean by that? I saw the other day that SEPTA gave up on identification of using technology to determine if someone that got on our system had a weapon because the analog cameras weren't compatible with the use of that type of technology.

On a positive note, the City's police force apprehended the murderer of the security guard at Macy's, but they did it in an integrated way where the person committed a crime, they got on the subway, they got off at Kensington, they caught him. That's force integration.

In a bad scene from Grand Theft Auto, it's not inconceivable for someone to be doing doughnuts in Squilla's district, get chased by the police, they jump off the car -- off the bike, hijack a car, crash, get on the subway, come up in -- I won't say the Fifth District, but somewhere near Temple, run across

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Temple's campus, knock a kid off his bike, and then ride into public housing. That literally is a bad scene from Grand Theft Auto, but could very well happen on our streets.

What I want to hear coming up is a plan on how SEPTA, PHA, University Police, and our Philadelphia Police integrate a process to safeguard the public. And what my concern is, I've heard in different rooms where they say, well, you know, only one percent of the crime happens on our property of SEPTA. It happens a block away from the station. Well, that's no consolation to the person getting mugged.

So what I want to see, and it's in our recommendations on a Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia, is how thought can be given to integrate the workforce that keeps us safe but the technology.

We should have license plate readers that work. It was recently brought to our attention -- and, again,

you're sitting here, but you're a continuation of a prior Administration, for the record. During that time, there were only four license plate readers citywide that worked. If we start talking about equitable driving laws, that can solve a lot of that to lessen the number of stops, unnecessary stops.

So what I'm looking for is an integrated plan that takes into PHA, SEPTA, City of Philadelphia, and campus police working together to keep us all safe.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: You're welcome.

This is our last round. The Chair recognizes Jeffery J. Young.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

I don't want to beat up on the Administration too bad. I do want to commend you on the idea of having the One Front Door program. I think that's going

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to do tremendous work for my constituents in the Fifth District to allow them to streamline and have one application for housing repair programs. So thank you for that, because that is very needed in the district.

But along those housing lines, I know the Mayor's goal is to create 30,000 new units of housing. Looking into your strategic initiatives for the Department of Housing and Community Development, it just says the DHCD will support 300 new and preserve 100 existing houses. So for me that seems to be a lot lower than the goal that the Mayor has for 30,000 within the next four years, particularly when it comes to this affordable luxury.

So how much subsidy will this Administration be providing to developers, the end users in order to achieve that goal of having these affordable luxury units? And I say that to say yesterday I went to a project in

the Blumberg area where developers were developing these affordable luxury houses, right, three stories, bells and whistles. They are nice, but they're selling for $300,000. And so for most folks in the community, that's still out of reach unless they are able to get that $75,000 Turn the Key subsidy, that $10,000 first-time homebuyer subsidy, things like that. So that only becomes affordable when we are providing those types of subsidies.

So can you tell us how much, if there is a dollar amount, that will be allocated to providing these types of subsidies to develop this affordable luxury?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT:

Councilmember, thank you for that question. This is a project that we're still working on. Hard numbers I don't have for you today. But I would say that subsidy takes a lot of different paths to getting to affordable housing, if we're

talking about Turn the Key for subsidy or Philly First Home for subsidy. If we're talking about the value of land that goes into developing a parcel that's in the Land Bank, that's subsidy. If you're talking about direct City programs, right, if we're talking about Repair Restore Renew or Basic System Home Repair, that's subsidy.

So there's an awful lot of subsidy here, and what you've heard the Mayor talk about is, whether we're talking about new or rental or repair, it's all going to go to some degree of affordability, and then the rest of that project is very much currently a work in progress.

I don't know if I answered all of your questions.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: No, but it's okay. Given the numbers, if it's going to cost the developer $300,000 to build this property even when they're given the land, right, so it's going to

cost -- they have to sell it at 300 to make some type of profit and they have to do, I don't know, scores of these at one time, I'm just trying to figure out how much money it would take from us to invest in that type of affordable luxury if that's the goal of our city, is to provide those opportunities for people that can actually afford to live in that. Because, again, in certain parts of my community where I live in North Philadelphia, $300,000 is still unaffordable, right, but in other parts, right, it's dirt cheap.

So we have to really just looking at the numbers and see how much it really takes for us to invest. If the goal is to provide that number of housing units, and I'm just going to say, hey, maybe let's say half of those housing units are going to be affordable, affordable housing, then how much more do we need as a body to invest to make sure that the people who are going to benefit

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from those programs actually have access to those programs?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: I understand that question, and it's hard for me to talk about that specific instance without knowing a lot more. But that's a question that we're asking internally as well, is what is the right number of subsidy so that we can help ensure that we are building affordable, that we are making housing a place that stabilizes a community, whether we're talking about homeownership or rental. Again, I don't know enough about that specific housing that you're talking about. I've seen other housing that's Turn the Key --

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: The Mayor had the first buyer of that program at the budget address. So she mentioned her at the budget address.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: She was Water Department, if I remember right.

Yeah. So if it was $300,000, I

have to think about this probably not right here, but there was probably some degree of subsidy on that to get the mortgage rate down.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Additional subsidy. So I'm just trying to figure out how much more do we need in order to get the number that the Mayor is looking for to provide that type of housing.

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: And that's something that we're working on now, and as we continue to develop it, Councilmember, I'll be sure to keep you in the loop. And I think we're working toward the same goal, but just trying to figure out the ways to get all the numbers to pencil.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you.

One more question along the housing lines. I have a niche group in our district, a lot of retirees who don't qualify for the senior tax freeze because

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they make too much because they're retired teachers, they're retired City workers, so their pensions are more than what the City senior tax freeze program allows them to qualify for. So they're coming to me asking for specific retired teacher housing, retired something housing that is -- where they can remain in their communities but also not -- but it's not something that's like a low income, right, low-income senior.

So is there any, I guess, investments being made towards seniors who are not necessarily low income but still would like to downsize and remain in certain communities that they have been the backbone for for a long time? And I'm particularly speaking about areas of Northern Liberties where we have a lot of retired teachers live in Northern Liberties in certain parts, and they are really being priced out, because they've been retired for 20 years. Their pensions haven't gone up at all.

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So how can we keep those people in that community and let them live out their best days?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Yeah. I can't speak specifically about that, but certainly if there's legislation, it's something the Administration would absolutely consider.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you.

And two questions for Mr. DiVirgilio regarding the Department of Labor.

MR. DiVIRGILIO: Good afternoon.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Good afternoon. So first question I have is regarding -- could you tell us the number of full-time positions in your department that are civil service versus exempt? And if you have the numbers, what's the difference in pay between the exempt employees and those that are civil service?

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MR. DiVIRGILIO: I'm going to let Manny Citron, Chief of Staff, answer that question.

(Witness approached witness table.)

MR. CITRON: Good afternoon, Councilman. Manny Citron, Chief of Staff in the Philadelphia Department of Labor.

So we have 57 positions budgeted for the current fiscal year. Fourteen of those at the moment are listed as exempt.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: So 14 are exempt?

MR. CITRON: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you.

And can you provide us with the difference in, I guess, the median salaries between exempt employees versus those that are civil service?

MR. CITRON: So I don't have it broken down to that level in front of me. I do know that the -- I can share that

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the average full-time salary for all of our positions is 79,552 and the median is 63,328. That's for the department as a whole.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: And, Councilman, we'll get you an answer to your question.

MR. CITRON: Yeah, of course.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you.

One more question for the Department of Labor, Office of Labor. So your Office of Worker Protections investigate claims that are presented by the most marginalized in our city. Given the current staffing levels, I think our staffing levels for that particular office is among the lowest in the country. And so how do you intend to essentially cut down on the complaint time, which I believe is currently 120 days essentially?

MR. CITRON: So about 46 percent of the complaints that come in

are resolved within 90 days. Ninety-three percent last year were resolved within the course of the year. So of course we would like to see that number trend downward. We think that given the staffing level we're at right now, that is a decent place that needs more attention and more work.

I will say right -- I know part of the conversation is on additional staff. We do have vacancies in that unit, and we have been working diligently to fill those vacancies. I know the Director just yesterday signed off on offer letters for four additional staff specific to the Office of Worker Protections. So we think that will alleviate -- once those people say yes to their offer letter and start with us, we think that will also drive down wait times for the service.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: I couldn't hear the percentage you say. It's 46 percent within 90 days?

MR. CITRON: Yes. That's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: So I guess the other 54 is -- what's the --

MR. CITRON: Longer than 90 days. Ninety-three percent are completed within the calendar year.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Okay. Thank you. Appreciate it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Katherine Gilmore Richardson.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Thank you so much, Mr. President.

Thank you all again. I just wanted to go back to some of the information I heard really quickly before I move to PhillyStat 360.

The CAO talked about the limited assessment across some departments regarding compensation

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decisions. I'm asking because I know that when the Home Rule Charter was first instituted in the City, the City kind of undertook an overarching process to have a compensation analysis relative to making public sector pay more on par with private sector pay, to make public sector positions more attractive to individuals. And so I ask -- I think I heard you say that limited assessment happened across some departments. Could you detail which departments? And then also from a numbers perspective, if you could talk about, or maybe OHR has this, the total amount of City employees whether the position is vacant and currently not filled and/or filled. So the total number of City employees, the total number of vacancies across government as a whole.

MS. DUCHAUSSEE: Again, good afternoon. Camille Duchaussee.

The total number of vacancies across the City as a whole is 5,900 and I

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believe 63. So I probably shouldn't guess on that, but we're in the 5,900 range, right? And I would have to get back to you on the complete complement of filled positions. I can get that number to you very quickly.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Okay.

MS. DUCHAUSSEE: In terms of the original question, I do not know every department that was part of the compensation assessment. We'd be happy to have a conversation with you and share the findings of that to include what departments were included in that assessment.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Okay. That would be great. I would definitely be interested in having that information.

You said also you were talking about bringing back 4,700 people, right? Is that correct?

MS. DUCHAUSSEE: Approximately.

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COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: And those positions are the type of positions that you cannot work from home; is that correct?

MS. DUCHAUSSEE: No. I'm sorry. I may have confused the number. There are 76 percent of the vacancies that we have. So of the 5,900 vacancies, 76 percent of them are in positions that cannot work from home.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Okay. Thank you. And I'll wait the additional information.

MS. DUCHAUSSEE: Absolutely.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Excellent.

Also, I wanted to ask a quick question about PhillyStat 360, and excited to see Kristin Bray, because we worked together really closely on the Nuisance Business Task Force, and I'm thankful for the work that she undertook in the Law Department. It was really, really helpful to us, and we added a

million dollars in Class 100 last budget cycle for additional attorneys strictly around this Nuisance Business Task Force. So I do want to talk about that, but I also want to talk about this new PhillyStat 360. I guess it's helping us better understand the quality-of-life issues that individuals are encountering across the City of Philadelphia.

And so if you could just provide us with additional information about the plans for PhillyStat, what is the timeline, how will the data be shared, how can members of Council engage in the development and the deployment of PhillyStat 360 and just the employee complement there. And I ask because of course now I've been here long enough to have been a part of the team of constituent service representatives who worked with the then-Managing Director on trying to assist them with understanding how they can set up 311. That's a conversation for another day, but I just

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want to understand how we could interface with that system so that we understand the type of data that's coming across and particularly for the District Councilmembers, because that information is helpful to them.

(Witness approached witness table.)

MS. BRAY: Thank you, Councilmember. Kristin Bray, Chief Counsel to the Mayor and Director of PhillyStat 360.

So PhillyStat 360 is a new initiative of the Parker Administration and we are building out, and we have a bold agenda that we are going to be looking at how we problem-solve for our communities at a very high level. And as we're building out our problem-solving model, we are going to be looking at how different departments are delivering services to community, are they delivering them timely, are they delivering them successfully, what are

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the barriers to delivering those services, are they delivering the services appropriately within the communities and with equity, and are we distributing resources appropriately.

We will be using data and we will be using evidence-based practices to make sure that we are delivering those services appropriately, and we are eventually hoping to create a computer dashboard where the community can see how their services are being delivered.

I think to the extent that the Councilmembers are getting information from the community as to the problems that they are facing, and we know that every district has its own challenges to its own community, that information can inform the work of how the Parker Administration is going to deliver services to the community.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Right. I appreciate that, and I just add there, how will PhillyStat 360 work with

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Philly 311? Because I will tell you that -- and we've talked about this over the previous Administration as well, so this is not like a new issue. But the concern around Philly 311 is that you get a message back saying that the issue has been received. It does not mean that the issue has been resolved. It's just been received by that particular department that's tasked with handling said issue and/or concern.

So how will PhillyStat 360 work with and talk to Philly 311? Because we also find -- and you know my office, we do a ton of constituent service cases. I have one of just the best just constituent services directors in Beth Strain Berry, but we find it's very difficult for 311 to go through multiple departments for a case.

As an example, if a case touches -- I'm just using this as an example -- Streets, L&I, and Water, it's very difficult for 311 to traverse

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through all three of the departments. So how will PhillyStat 360 work with 311? Because it's all constituent service quality-of-life issue related.

And I heard the bell. I'll come back.

MS. BRAY: I hear you, Councilmember, and 311 is one part of the data that we would be bringing into PhillyStat. The other departments also have their data. So we would be building upon a model and grabbing the data from the different departments to see if the issue is actually resolved.

311 is a separate department than PhillyStat, but we would be looking at as part of our model of giving feedback to 311 or giving feedback to the other operational departments about how they're reporting into these systems and making sure that they actually are delivering services, because I hear the frustration as someone who lives in the City that you call 311 and something is

marked closed and in fact the issue has not been redressed.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Right.

MS. BRAY: And that's very important that we are showing the people who reside in this city that they have a government that is responsive to them and responsive to their concerns. And if we cannot be responsive to their concerns, we need to figure out why and problem-solve for that and come up with a solution.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: No. I appreciate that.

I heard the bell and I'm going to respect the clock, and I'll ask Council President that I'm able to come back on the next round, if we have one, but I just so appreciate the work that you have done with us on Nuisance Business Task Force and I'm excited that you will lead this effort, because I have faith in the work that you do. I know of

the good work that you do, and I'm looking forward to continuing to work with you in particular.

MS. BRAY: Thank you so very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Just a quick one regarding PhillyStat 360. It's about 15 positions budgeted for this particular initiative. So are all of the staff dedicated to PhillyStat 360? And then there's also, in terms of the expense, transportation. So explain to me the transportation component as well as are the 15 staff positions dedicated to like just computer software?

MS. BRAY: So with regard to the positions, the 14 positions, with the exception of myself, are dedicated to PhillyStat 360. I wear a dual hat within the Mayor's Office.

With regard to transportation expenses, they would be related to ensuring that -- as part of our model is ensuring that we are following up with

the departments and going out to sites. So, for example, if a department says it has resolved an issue, there has to be some accountability that somebody within the PhillyStat office has eyes on it and they will be going to sites to follow up to see those complaints have been redressed on it. And we'll be doing that on a statistical basis and trying to pull out different sites to make sure that things are followed up.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: So is the transportation, what, vehicles, TransPasses?

MS. BRAY: Yes, vehicles.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Vehicles, okay. So we already have a Fleet Department. So this is -- explain that part to me, because we already have Fleet Services cars on loan. So this is on top of that. Just want to get an idea.

MS. THURMAN: Council President, we'll look into that request

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and get back to you in writing ASAP.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay. And specifically if it's transportation on top of us already having a Fleet Department that already provide cars for staff in various departments, how did this one particular department get a whole set of transportation vehicles dedicated just to them? That's all.

MS. THURMAN: Absolutely, and we will definitely get back to you on that. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: All right.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Jim Harrity.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Thank you, Council President.

This is just more for my clarification, because I've been meeting with some people and there's like kind of different things out there and I think kind of misperceptions.

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The Turn the Key program for the City employees, I love that, but I was with District Council 47 talking to them and just was curious and I asked them how their members felt about it, and their response to me was, well, it doesn't really help us because our employees make more money than, I guess, the qualifications for the program, which they told me was $45,000 a year salary. That was the minimum, which I then found out was not the case. It's actually more like 80,000 is the income level.

What are we doing to kind of get the information right out there for our employees? Because I believe this is a great program that could help a lot of people that work for the City be able to afford the City. Because we all know that there's been a study that says that if you're a single parent with one child, in order to be able to afford to live in the City of Philadelphia, you have to make $37 an hour. A lot of times our

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City jobs do not pay $37 an hour. So the Turn the Key program is something that I believe can help us get more of our employees into neighborhoods, which will then also help the neighborhoods. Because, you know, somebody from the City moves in on a block, things start to get done.

So I'm excited about getting more employees of the City into some of these housing, but we need to do a better job of explaining the actual criteria to do it, because there's a lot of misconceptions. If you ask a couple different people, they're going to tell you different numbers. And I think that the program is a great program and I'd like to see more of our City employees get in there.

So in a general sense, how are we going to advertise these programs and stuff like that? Because we don't really do a good job with that. It's the same thing with the programs we have. I was

complaining about us not having a lot of programs in my neighborhood and then actually did the research and found out we have a lot of programs in the neighborhood. The fact is, nobody knows about them.

So my question is, how is the City going to go to try to explain some of these good programs that we have and how can we get more of this information out there?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Councilman, thank you for flagging that. That is something that the Mayor has talked about and is something that we're going to be working on.

Right now there is a marketing campaign around Repair Restore Renew, billboards, other ways of getting to people.

Turn the Key absolutely needs to have some more research. The Mayor was talking about ways to get that out to the municipal unions. Councilmember

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Young when I sat with him also said, you know, 1199C should be knowing about this, PFT should be knowing about this.

So absolutely we need to be doing a better job, especially through the unions when there is a preference for City employees. And, yeah, it is up to 100 percent AMI. So there's an awful lot of City employees who are covered by that, and we need to be doing better.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: That was the other thing, AMI --

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Yeah. Oh, no. But it fluctuates and it only goes up. So that's one of the things that's important, but this is one of the things that we're talking about as we talk about getting these programs into more hands as it's going to be unveiled at the hundred day on April 11th. So these are things that we're talking about. These are things that are in the works, and we absolutely, absolutely need to be doing a better job at it. So thank you for

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flagging that, Councilman.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: And then the only other question I would have is for Perry, if he's still here, DiVirgilio. It's not very -- the Department of Labor, not many people understand what they do, and what I would like to know is what Perry thinks the department's accomplishments have been in the last few years, and after that, what he thinks should be a goal for that department going forward.

MR. DiVIRGILIO: Good afternoon, Council President, members of the Council.

Councilman Harrity, first of all, thank you for the question. I've been blessed to inherit this amazing Department of Labor.

For those that don't know, there's actually two programs. The first one is Labor and Employee Relations and the second one is Labor Policy and Compliance.

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Some of the accomplishments that were accomplished for Labor and Relations, the Office of Employee and Labor Relations conducted 146 standard and customized training sessions and trained 8,758 City employees. Additionally, training was also provided to 100 Philadelphia Parking Authority employees.

As the City well knows, employees are the foundation and the strength of any organization. Training employees properly is a primary responsibility for the ERU. If managers, supervisors, and front-line employees are not well trained or work unproductively, the City is in a deficit. It's essential to train employees regularly with relevant and accurate information to ensure they are performing their best work.

In assessing and addressing operational needs, the ERU implemented three new citywide training programs -

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civility for all employees, FMLA, and ADA training for managers and supervisors. The response has been robust, resulting in an increase in interest, registrations, and attendance. Thus far in FY24, 421 employees have been trained compared to 382 trained in FY23.

The LRU already has successfully negotiated the following contract extensions: The Fraternal Order of Police, Sheriff's Office, and Register of Wills and International Association of Firefighters Local 22.

On the program too side, Labor Policy and Compliance. Program description is, this program contains two units, Labor Standards and Worker Protections. The Office of Labor Standards enforces standards of compliance on City contracts consistent with the federal Davis-Bacon Act and Chapter 17-107 of The Philadelphia Code, as well as monitoring workforce diversity on all City projects.

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OLS enforces labor laws, including Chapter 17-107, Contracts: Labor-Management Relationships, and 17-1600, Economic Opportunity Plans.

The Office of Worker Protection enforces and advances certain labor laws, including Chapter 9-4100, Promoting Healthy Families and Workplaces, and all pandemic amendments; Chapter 9-4300, Wage Theft Complaints; Chapter 9-4500, Protections for Domestic Workers; Chapter 9-4600; Fair Workweek Employment Standards; Chapter 9-4700, Wrongful Discharge from Parking Employment; Chapter 9-5000, Employee Protections in Connection with COVID-19 Emergency Health Order; Chapter 9-5600, Workforce and Career Pathways Information Sheet; and Chapter 9-3303, Use of Tower Cranes.

That's it for our accomplishments for the year, but as stated earlier, first of all, Councilwoman Brooks, thank you for that additional funding that allowed us to be

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able to fill a lot of the vacancies that we had, and additionally it's going to allow us to be able to fill the last six vacancies that we have left.

In filling those vacancies, I look forward to continuing the progress that was made in the previous year, expanding our workforce internally and being able to even more make sure we enforce these laws the right way.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: If you had -- I'm sorry. If you had one wish, let's say, what would it be for to help your department in order to become maybe more efficient or something along those lines? Is there anything that you think the department is in need of?

MR. DiVIRGILIO: Yes. Once we fill those six vacancies, additional funding to be able to expand.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Of course, additional funding, right. All right. Thank you. Appreciate that.

MR. DiVIRGILIO: Thank you.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

Councilmember Brooks, good job. Young man giving you your props. Give him some more money, you know. That's why it's called Working Families Party. Thank you. Taking care of business, championing an issue.

We're about to wrap this thing up. The Chair recognizes Councilmember Nina Ahmad.

COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Thank you, President.

I just came back from a flag-raising ceremony for the Independence Day of Bangladesh. I'm a Bangladeshi-American. The place was full of South Asian faces, and when I looked at the staffing levels here, I see in the addition of new hires zero Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

So I wanted to know first what is the current percentage of AAPI in the Mayor's Office and is there a reason why

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there were zero people added who come from the AAPI background.

And just as a point of reflection, when I was the Deputy Mayor, I was the first person in Jim Kenney's Administration to be a part of the cabinet ever, ever, an Asian American, when we are eight percent of the population in this city and 11 percent represented in the small business arena. So we bring a lot of value.

So I want to know, since I left I don't believe there were any other cabinet-level appointees either by Jim or in this current Administration. I don't know for this current. I could be wrong, but I would love to see what your plans are, what is your current representation level now, and what will you be doing going forward?

MS. THURMAN: Thank you, Councilmember. So we can and we will do better, and you can hold us accountable to that, as we are working with our

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Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as well as our CAO and OHR, looking at our hiring practices, our recruiting efforts.

We'll be the first to tell you that we saw the numbers as well. It stood out to us as well. It stings. We can and we will do better.

COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: And what is the path forward to better? What are you doing? Do you have pipelines into communities? I haven't -- nobody has come to me to ask are there people you could recommend, nothing. In fact, you know when this transition team was being put together, I had to ask why there was no AAPI representation. I had to personally ask and put the word in.

So I'm just saying, this is -- constantly overlooking this community is not good thing if we are going to be an inclusive city, where we bring value to the economic arena here, and for us to have to do this every time, it is -- you

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know, all people of color know how it is to be overlooked and made invisible.

So I'm watching, and I need a plan from you to tell me what it is you're doing, which the AAPI community is very diverse. Do you know what the breakdown is, what connections do you have, what CDCs have you worked with? There's lots of them, and yet I see no reflection of that.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: You're welcome.

The Chair now recognizes Councilmember Nicholas O'Rourke.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Thank you, Council President.

I'm happy and share Mayor Parker's commitment to a clean and green city. It was probably one of the things I clapped the hardest and loudest for during the budget address.

I hear and resonate with the focus on clean Philly, as we all should,

but I don't hear as much or not as much as I'd like around the green piece. I think someone else said that a little bit earlier as well.

Can you speak to some of the key capital investments that help Philadelphia be prepared for climate disasters in the world? It's just something I was thinking about throughout the course of my own campaign and even in our own office, is the ways that we're developing and building out the City to be able to mitigate the mounting effects of the climate crisis on our infrastructure. Can you speak to some of that?

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: Thank you for that question, Councilman O'Rourke. I'm going to invite Liz Lankenau from the Office of Sustainability to come join us, but I appreciate you talking about environmental issues.

You know, we know that Philly faces continued weather instability.

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Every year it gets hotter, wetter, severe -- the storms get more severe and intense. The floodplains continue to erode.

So, you know, the Office of Sustainability is doing the hard, tough work, not so sexy, every day, working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to help mitigate flooding.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: In Eastwick.

DEPUTY MAYOR HARRIS: Yes. Long term and short term, actually immediate term when it comes to Eastwick. Addressing urban heat islands with their tree canopy plan and making sure that we stay on track for the City to reach its carbon neutrality goals.

I'll stop talking and hand it over to Liz, but this is an important effort that we need to keep our eye on.

(Witness approached witness table.)

MS. LANKENAU: Hello. Thank

you for the question. Yeah. So first I just want to touch on the challenges of climate change. It really touches people, planet, and prosperity for all.

We are in a situation now, we already see it, a hotter and wetter future. We are on target to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius, which in Fahrenheit is about 35 degrees, by the end of the century. So that creates a whole host of issues related to health and safety, environmental degradation, poor air quality. Biodiversity is at risk. In terms of prosperity, there is workforce issues. People who work outside can't work as frequently outside. And then the repetitive losses to residents. So there's a whole host of issues.

In terms of key capital investments that would help Philadelphia be prepared, we do have an efficiency fund that really focuses on our municipal efforts to make improvements to buildings, energy efficiency

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improvements, resilience improvements, looking at building automation systems so that buildings run more efficiently. And then we have EV charger and solar upgrades that are part of that fund as well, LED lighting in City facilities.

So a lot of our work is leading by example in terms of both our efficiency fund and our climate resilience fund.

Members of our resilience team do sit in on the capital budget process to listen to what is planned by other departments so that we can advise. We do have an Environmental Justice and Climate Resilience Working Group that is new, and that is a cross-departmental effort to really listen to what departments are worried about in terms of climate change.

As Ms. Harris mentioned, with Eastwick we are seeking to install an interim flood barrier to sort of do a proof of concept to understand how a temporary levee-like structure would

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alleviate flooding. It's a little different than a permanent --

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: A temporary what structure?

MS. LANKENAU: It's called a HESCO barrier. That's the proprietary name, but basically these are soil-filled components that would form a lower wall than a typical levee, but, yeah. So we are looking to get funding for that through grant funding as well as capital ask.

And then through the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Fund, with that we look to our partners in OEM who are leading the hazard mitigation plan. There's an update that's on the horizon. OEM convenes City departments to really look at various measures that are needed to plan for a hotter and wetter future. And so with that, they are focusing on resilient infrastructure, resilient households, mitigation planning, and match funding

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for hazard mitigation grants with the CDBG funds.

PWD is making a whole series of improvements with their infrastructure to help urban flooding. In terms of working with L&I and Planning, we're all making sure that we are complying with local and federal flood elevation standards so that you're building above base flood elevation.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: I have still two more questions. I'm going to keep it tight.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: We're in the third round. It's a lightning round. That's your best question, and we can call her back, because she got to come back anyway in front of us. That's where we're at right now, Mr. Member. So I'm going to move on to the next person, sir.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Isaiah Thomas. Lightning round, because we're getting ready to

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wrap up for the day.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: I'll lead by example, Council President.

While I'm waiting for Rob to come back up so we can do our dance again, let me get a couple things on the record real quick of things that I'll be looking for throughout the course of our budget conversation, all rhetorical questions, things that we can discuss in the future.

I'm curious to know why was Mural Arts' budget cut by a million dollars in your proposal, especially considering the focus on cleaner and greener Philadelphia and the great work that they do to beautify our City.

Looking at the 10 million that we promised AAMP last year, the African American Museum, wondering if that capital dollars are going to get disbursed.

Huge fan of the sports fund. I sent a memo over to the Mayor. The

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sports fund is a phenomenal idea. We started something like that last year in last year's budget. Hoping to continue that work.

I wanted to ask you a little bit about preparation for 2026 and revenue that we plan on spending and plans that we have for that, especially considering the lack of information around arts and culture. So we would love to see the marriage between arts and culture community and the plans for 2026.

Vanessa, I'm a little concerned about the youth stipend situation. I'm thinking about the fact that some kids we know quit after some time. So what does that look like. So I look forward to that conversation, and of course information around what myself and Councilmember Landau discussed with carbon neutrality by 2050.

My question to be answered, so the Five Year Plan, your Five Year Plan looks at an eight percent increase in

revenue from property tax reassessment, right? Two concerns there. Number one, I don't necessarily know if that's accurate because of the information that we know about our Center City buildings. So when we look at our reassessment process, the first thing is, will the numbers be accurate considering that all of these Center City buildings are going to lose their value because we're not doing anything to attract new businesses? And, again, please don't mention cleaner and greener and anything around crime. So that's the first thing.

The other part of that question is, as we look at this reassessment process -- and I actually commend former -- well, current Council President Johnson and other District Councilmembers. One of the things that we seen was Black and brown neighborhoods suffered more than anybody, number one, looking at how their properties reassessed and how much they jumped in

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value, but also -- and I was a part of the effort to do the best that we possibly could around public service announcements to inform people about LOOP and Homestead, but again for some reason, Black and brown communities did not take advantage of LOOP and Homestead like other communities did.

So I'm wondering, right, how can you assure that there's going to be an eight percent increase in revenue from property when we know we're going to lose a bunch of money based on the value of Center City buildings? And I'm also wondering what equitable lens will you use and what marketing strategies will you use this time around as it relates to the reassessment of homes and the negative impact that that has had on Black and brown communities?

Council President, if I can get a credible answer, this is my only question for this round that I want an answer to.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Going to be your only one. I got to keep it fair, like I got the brother over there.

MR. DUBOW: So on the first part of the question on property tax, so our property tax projection, that eight percent is just on the residential side. On the commercial side, we assume zero percent increase and we also assume a billion dollar loss in value from appeals. So we build in what you're talking about, which is that decline in building that on the non-residential side.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: So your assessment, you've planned on the fact that most of our commercial buildings in Center City are going to lose their value, and in your Five Year Budget, you anticipated that and you reduced your real estate tax numbers based on the fact that we're going to lose revenue?

MR. DUBOW: That we're going to

lose, yes, from appeals. That's right.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: But at the same time, you anticipate business growth.

Okay. I'm sorry, Council President. Go ahead.

MR. DUBOW: Well, I'm not going --

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Yeah. We agree to disagree.

MR. DUBOW: So we also have extensive relief programs, and it may be in -- to preserve time, Revenue is going to be here tomorrow. They can talk through all those --

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: This is more of an assessment question. You're talking about the assessment of properties and making sure that they don't negatively impact Black and brown communities.

MR. DUBOW: Sorry. I thought you were asking about relief programs.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: No. I'm

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a big fan of LOOP and Homestead. We have better protections than any other major city in the entire country. What we don't do a good job of is making sure Black and brown communities who need them the most are able to opt in. What's the plan there?

MR. DUBOW: So that's outreach -- on the relief side, that's outreach, which we'll talk about tomorrow. On the property assessment side, we will get you much more on that during the course of this process and before OPA comes to testify on the 16th.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Thank you.

Thank you, Council President. We'll make sure we communicate our continued concern around revenue, because we definitely do not disagree. We think that there's some contradicting information as it relates to the conservative projections compared to the lack of action. So thank you.

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Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Jeffery J. Young.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you, Council President.

Just one question. Can you tell us what's the difference between the Chief Legal Counsel and the City Solicitor and what the difference in their roles are?

MS. THURMAN: Yes. So our Chief Legal Counsel differs from our City Solicitor and Law. So the Law Department provides advice to all City agencies. Our Chief Legal Counsel is dedicated exclusively to the Mayor's Office to coordinate with the efforts of Law as the Mayor implements her new policies.

COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Okay. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: You're welcome.

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The Chair now recognizes Councilmember Jamie Gauthier.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Thank you.

I have a few questions about capital projects. First, four years ago when I discovered that the affordable housing development that stood at the intersection of 40th and Market for over 40 years was going to be razed and sold to the highest bidder, my office and I took action. We instituted a zoning overlay to protect this site as well as other low-income housing developments in University City.

The property owner then sued me and the City, and after thousands of hours and months of hard work under the leadership of now Solicitor Garcia, we won a historic settlement securing a $3.35 million tenant fund and a promise from the City to build 70-plus units of low-income housing at the site.

The existing buildings were

demolished last week, and so now we must look to the future and make sure that the City's promise to the courts and to the community to build these 70 new units of housing in this area of opportunity is fulfilled.

So the question is, is the funding needed to build permanently affordable housing on the University City Townhomes site included in this budget, and if so, how much?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: Thank you for the question, Councilmember. It is not included in this budget, but I think we look forward to, as part of the budget process, taking a hard look at that.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Can you talk about whether this is a priority for the Administration, and if so, how are you approaching this conversation?

DEPUTY MAYOR PLATT: At this point, I'm not really prepared to talk about what type of priority it is for this Administration, but building housing

is certainly a priority of this Administration.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Okay. Moving on to the Zoo, our favorite topic. As America's first zoo, the Philadelphia Zoo has over 160 years of experience in conserving wildlife, caring for animals, and educating our communities. Recently appointing its first ever Black woman President and CEO, one of two in the nation, and sustaining a packed plate of year-round attractions, the Zoo is now gearing up for its accreditation evaluation in the coming year.

The Zoo needs additional funding to update its exhibits and infrastructure to pass inspection, retain its accreditation and be ready to entertain what could be more guests than ever in 2026.

In light of the immense value this institution holds for our city, will the Administration commit to giving the Zoo the full funding that it needs to

maintain its ability to serve as a key tourist attraction in Philadelphia?

MR. DUBOW: So the Capital Program includes, I think, depending on the year, it's two or two and a half million dollars a year to help the Zoo reach those goals.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Okay. Are you aware of how the proposed allocation relates to what the Zoo needs to retain its accreditation?

MR. DUBOW: I understand that they have requested more than that. I also understand that they also have other sources of funding, and I understand this will probably be a discussion that we have throughout this process.

COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Thank you very much. I look forward to continuing the conversation.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: So I'm going to go back to a real quick one. I would defer to Councilmember O'Rourke real quick, a quick one.

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It should be noted that members want like five rounds. So we're here to do our business before we wrap up.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Thank you for your graciousness, Council President.

In brief, why are we cutting the Office of Sustainability budget by 28 percent? That's really kind of the crux of the question.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Office of? I didn't hear.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: I'm sorry. Why are we cutting the Office of Sustainability budget by 28?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I thought that would be Clean and Green. It's the same, right?

MR. DUBOW: I think that's another case where there were one-time funds put in in '24 that went away. I can get you more details on that.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Are

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you good?

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Well, I can ask one more.

Does the admin intend to make free transit pilot programs permanent for City employees and low-income residents?

MR. DUBOW: I think we're still evaluating that. It's a two-year pilot. '25 is the second year. So we will evaluate that during the course of the year.

COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Okay. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay. With that being said, listen, because I know all of you in the capacity of just separate from our professional lives, but we've all known one another in some capacity, rather it's working, rather it's just in the capacity of us just moving the City of Philadelphia forward, and I just want to thank you and your team, the Administration, for coming obviously to Council and being on the hot

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seat all throughout the day talking about how we can make this a safer, cleaner, greener city, with economic opportunity for everyone, right? And we share that sentiment. We share the spirit of that sentiment, and this process is about us just doing our due diligence and making sure we're fiscally responsible as the independent body when we come together and work towards approving a budget that's equitable for all the stakeholders here in the City of Philadelphia.

But we do want to thank you. We want to thank the whole entire Administration team who has come out here today. We look forward to continuing robust conversation and dialogue as we work with other departments from this day forward.

And so with that being said, the Chair recognizes Councilmember Isaiah Thomas for a motion that the public hearing and meeting on the bills and resolutions before the Committee today

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stand in recess until Wednesday -- oh, you're here? I was looking. I was looking.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Multi-tasking. My apologies for the delay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Before we do the motion, I'm going to back up, because you were our last individual to say a few words.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Gilmore Richardson.

COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON: Yes. Thank you, Council President. In the interest of time and out of respect for all of our colleagues, I will submit the balance of my questions for written response.

With that, I move that the Committee of the Whole stand adjourned -- or stand in recess until our hearings tomorrow, Wednesday, March 27th, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

(Duly seconded.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: All those in favor will signify by saying aye.

(Aye.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Those opposed?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: The ayes have it, and the motion carries.

- - -

(Committee of the Whole adjourned at 5:05 p.m.)

- - -

CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings, evidence and objections are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me upon the foregoing matter, and that this is a true and correct transcript of same.

Michele L. Murphy

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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