COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Wednesday, May 11, 2022
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CHERELLE L. PARKER, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN DEREK S. GREEN
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS

BILLS: 220240, 220284, 220285, 220286, 220287, 220288
RESOLUTION: 220300

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COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good morning, everyone. We are here for our budget hearing on Streets, Fire and Prisons.

Before we begin the public hearing, I would like to make the following announcement: Due to the continuing public health from COVID-19, City Council Committees are currently meeting remotely. We are using Microsoft Teams to make these remote hearings possible.

Instructions for how the public may view and offer public testimony at the public hearings of Council Committees are included in the public hearing notices that are published in the Daily News, Inquirer and Legal Intelligencer prior to the hearings and can also be found on PHLCouncil.com. I now note that the hour has come.

Mr. McDermott, will you please call the roll to take attendance. And Members that are in attendance,

please indicate that you are present when your name is called. And also, say a few words when responding so that your image will be displayed when you speak. Mr. McDermott.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Bass.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good morning. This is Councilwoman Bass. I am present. Thank you.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Brooks.

(No response.)

THE CLERK: Councilmember Domb.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good morning, Mr. Chair and colleagues and attendees. I am present. Thank you.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Gauthier.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good morning, Mr. Chair, colleagues and Philadelphia. Present.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Gilmore Richardson.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Good morning, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, colleagues. I am present.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Good morning, colleagues. I am present.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Gym.

(No response.)

THE CLERK: Councilmember Johnson.

(No response.)

THE CLERK: Councilmember Jones.

(No response.)

THE CLERK: Councilmember O'Neill.

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Good morning, everyone.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Oh.

(No response.)

THE CLERK: Councilmember Parker.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Good morning, Chairman Squilla, colleagues and to the viewing public.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Quinones-Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Good morning, colleagues. I'm present.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Thomas.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning to the listening public. I'm present.

THE CLERK: And, Councilmember Squilla.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good morning and welcome. Thank you. A quorum of the Committee is present and the hearing is now called to order. This is the continued public hearing on the Committee of the Whole regarding Bill Nos. 220284, 220285, 220286, 220287, 220288, 220240 and Resolution 220300.

Mr. McDermott, can you please read the titles of the bills and resolutions.

THE CLERK: Bill No. 220284, an ordinance to adopt the Capital Program for the six Fiscal Years 2023 to 2028 inclusive.

Bill No. 220285, an ordinance to adopt a Fiscal 2023 Capital Budget.

Bill No. 220286, an ordinance adopting the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2023.

Bill No. 220287, an ordinance amending Section 10-1001 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Fees of Commissioner of Records," to increase certain fees for the recording of deeds and mortgages and related documents, under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 220288, an ordinance amending Section 19-1403 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Imposition of Tax," by creating a Philadelphia County Demolition Fund to increase and encourage economic development by demolishing blighted properties within the City, imposing a related fee for recorded documents and related items; and making

technical changes; all under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 220240, an ordinance substantially increasing the budget and number of areas and neighborhoods around the City served by the Community Life Improvement Program, CLIP, to improve the health, safety and cleanliness of every neighborhood and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

And Resolution No. 220300, resolution providing for the approval by the Council of the City of Philadelphia, a Revised Five Year Financial Plan for the City of Philadelphia covering Fiscal Years 2023 through 2027 and incorporating revised changes with respect to Fiscal Year 2022, which is to be submitted by the Mayor to the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority, pursuant to the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement, authorized by an ordinance of this Council approved by the Mayor on January 3, 1992 by and between the City and the Authority.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.

Today we'll continue 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 2023, a Capital Program and a Forward-looking Capital Program through Fiscal Year 2023 through Fiscal Year 2028.

Before we begin to hear testimony from the witnesses we have for today, everyone who has been invited to the meeting to testify should be aware that the public hearing is being recorded. Because the hearing is public, participants and viewers have no reason to the expectation of privacy. By continuing to be in the meeting, you are consenting to being recorded.

Additionally, prior to recognizes Members for the questions or comments they have for witnesses, I will note for the record at this time that we will use the chat feature available in Microsoft Teams to allow Members to

signify that they wish to be recognized. In order to comply with the Sunshine Act, the chat feature must only be used for this purpose.

This morning we will hear testimony from Streets Department and the Fire Department. This afternoon we will hear the testimony from Department of Prisons.

Mr. McDermott, could you please read the first person to testify.

THE CLERK: The first witness this morning is Streets Commissioner Carlton Williams.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Commissioner. You just want to just state your name again for the record and proceed with your testimony.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Good morning, Chairman Squilla and all of the members of City Council. My name is Carlton Williams and I'm the Streets Commissioner for the City of Philadelphia. Joining me today are Keith Warren, Deputy Commissioner for

Sanitation; Richard Montanez, Deputy Commissioner for Transportation; and Christopher Newman; Deputy Commissioner for Administration along with many of my staff who perform great service for the citizens of Philadelphia.

I am pleased to provide testimony on the Streets Department's Fiscal Year 2023 operating budget. The FY2023 operating budget General Fund budget request for the Streets Department is $212.5 million as reflected in the General Fund ordinance for our Department, representing a $37.2 million increase to incur estimated obligations for the fiscal year.

This is quite a substantial increase, which is due to the infusion of significant funds for various new and comprehensive programs as well as expansions. This includes infrastructure and improvement staff and resources to manage a massive investment in new federally-supported infrastructure law for transportation,

public works projects, transitioning the City's entire school crossing guard program from the Police Department to the Streets Department, continued expansion of the Department's Mechanical Streets Cleaning program, the addition of two new illegal dumping crews, implementation of a new inhouse ADA ramp construction crew and additional support for managing and regulating new outdoor dining establishments.

As Council is aware, Streets continues to pursue highly ambitious goals regarding litter reduction and waste diversion, effective and efficient roadway maintenance and the continued actualization of multi-modal traffic calming and safety. Our objective metrics-based approach using tools such as the litter index, roadway quality index, high injury corridor data and various other operational data ensures that we focus these efforts to those areas that need it the most, often and predominantly minority and disadvantaged

areas where older, smaller and more condensed housing and geographic street can exasperate litter conditions and transportation infrastructure quality as well as in high crime areas where certain improvements such as better street lighting may deter crime.

The Department is committed to continually improving our objective planning measures as we ensure racial equity in addressing services for City residents. While the impact of the COVID-19 proves to be a challenge over recent fiscal years, the Department has been able to successfully overcome this issue and make remarkable strides towards our core mission and strategic goals.

Streets anticipates, however, that the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will involve structural changes to overall City businesses and continue work-from-home arrangements going forward, creating higher levels of trash tonnage in future

fiscal years. Streets has successfully implemented various solutions to address this projected reality long term, the most important of which included adding a new comprehensive section collections operation shift. These actions have already drastically improved collection operations as well as significantly reduce overtime.

The Department now feels poised and excited to continue our progress going forward and to embark on many various new initiatives and plans the Administration has established for us in Fiscal 2023. For example, further expansion to our city-wide curb-to-curb Mechanical Cleaning program and the addition of two new illegal dump crews who significantly extend cleaning activities to more areas most in need based upon actual objective litter conditions.

Streets plan to establish a new pilot inhouse construction and restoration crew responsible for

completing the noncomplex curb ramp restorations through the City. Currently, ADA ramp construction and restoration is inclusively performed by contractors at an average per rent cost of $15,000. Implementing a City staff ADA ramp construction and restoration operation will mitigate cost for noncomplex rent work and potentially provide for the repurposing of available resources for additional roadwork resurfacing work.

The City's school crossing guard program will also be transitioning from the Police Department to Streets, adding an entirely new and large city-wide program to the Department. Streets is embracing this transition and intends to leverage resources, strengths pertaining to traffic and intersections analysis, mass hiring of large new employee groups, gain training and development capacity to improve crossing guard operations going forward. The Department greatly appreciates the

cooperation and support of the Philadelphia Police Department and the Managing Director's Office as we gradually transition to the program's various components throughout FY23.

In addition, the Department in collaboration with the City's Office of Sustainability and the Philadelphia Energy Authority will implement an ambitious plan to modernize and convert the entire city-wide street lighting system to a more energy-efficient and effective LED light within a few years through a highly anticipated innovative performance contract with an energy service company which is known as ESCO. Reduced costs from energy savings shared between ESCO and the City are expected to be significant as light and maintenance contracts activities will be drastically reduced. Over 100,000 street lights are expected to be converted to LED lighting in less than a three-year time arising as a result of this initiative.

Finally, one of the biggest initiatives we are most expected about is the recent federal infrastructure bipartisan infrastructure law, which is expected to infuse potentially up to $570 million in transportation-related public works projects funds to the Streets Department over five years for much-needed roadway, bridge and traffic infrastructure reconstruction and upgrades. The scope and level of such funding represents a tremendous opportunity to stabilize and extend the life of the transportation infrastructure assets across the City for years to come.

The Streets Department and its employees look forward to providing yet another year of exemplary service as we fulfill our mission of clean, green and safe streets. Our biggest request today not only allows us to continue to pursue this object, but also to significantly expand our capacity to do so within the addition of a variety of new initiatives

and resources. We therefore request your favorable consideration of this budget request, and we thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. The Deputies and staff and I are happy to answer any questions that you may have at this time.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you for your testimony. I'm just going to start on one question and then I'll let my colleagues ask. As you can imagine, there's a lot of questions.

Real quick I'm just going to talk about the street cleaning. I know they've being piloted in certain areas right now. What is the projection of the street cleaning and are we looking to expand in this current year or as we move forward?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So thank you, Councilman, for your question. Yes, we are expanding to additional areas this year. Last year we had six areas that we were piloting.

We actually expanded to 14 areas through this fiscal year, so we have expanded throughout the City of Philadelphia in different areas of the City.

The overall plan is to have a city-wide program somewhere in the near future. Our goal is three phases, number one, to expand the existing boundaries of the areas that we already targeted, add additional areas and locations that currently do not have street sweeping and then to develop a plan for different intervals based on litter conditions in neighborhoods driven by the litter index.

So for example, most areas right now we see weekly, but in some areas that are lightly littered or not littered at all don't need weekly street cleaning. That's a waste of resources and efficiency. They may receive it every other month or monthly. So we are now planning that out based on the litter index and based on the geographic areas of the City, so that everyone

across the City will originally -- additionally have mechanical street sweeping city-wide.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And the determination for those locations right now are done based I guess on the litter index. So did you try to pilot the areas that seem to have the most street litter and then gradually move out to other areas?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: That's absolutely correct. So we used the areas that had the highest litter ratings, which is most areas having illegal dumping, littered around curblines and so forth, those are the areas we targeted first, and then we'll build out from those locations.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay. Well, I'm going to stop asking questions. I'll come back with more. I see people have jumped on already.

And so, first I'll go to Majority Leader Parker.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank you

so very much, Chairman Squilla.

Special good morning to you, Commissioner Carlton Williams. I need to start with saying my thank yous to both you, Deputy Keith Warren, Rich Montanez, Mary Stitt, Crystal Jacobs, Lord knows, Noelle, Kyle Lewis who recently helped us with the legislation regarding the illegal dumping.

And my hope, Commissioner, if this bill passes through Council that it will help you and the Streets Department with the enforcement of illegal dumping by making the fine amounts so high that any of these companies that have been treating our neighborhoods as if they were trash dumps, that they will be deterred from this activity.

I know it feels like you have a very thankless job. I along with my colleagues call you and your team all times of the day and night with the sense of urgency because our people expect us to fix things. You're never arrogant. You're never aloof. Whenever

it's an emergency, you always say we'll get somebody on it. And I want you to know that we appreciate you for that. Thank you, sir.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: You're welcome. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: With that being said, let me start with January preCOVID. I had a meeting with Charles Carrington and Omar Salaam and talked to District Council 33 President Ernie Garrett about the impact of the environmental safety of our sanitation workers long before there were any news articles talking about how their lives were in jeopardy and the risks that they take on a daily basis. We held that hearing in 2020 in October. And before and after the hearing, there was a whole lot of attention in the press around that strain.

And then, Mr. Commissioner, I was told that we had a challenge with PPE, with the gloves, with the boots. I know Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson,

she was actively engaged. We were talking with Rich Lazer and many others. I just want to make sure that from that perspective that the gloves and the boots that our sanitation workers need while they're on the front line, have those issues been addressed? How is the Sanitation Department staffed? Are all of the positions filled? And if not, how many more are you seeking to hire?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank you, Councilmember. Yes, first of all, we want to thank you for your support in those areas. Councilmember Gilmore Richardson, thank you so much for bringing attention to the desperately needed health and safety of our workers. We've always been committed to our sanitation workers. So anything that they needed, whether we had it in existing inventory or we had to go get it, our department worked extremely hard to ensure that our workers were protected.

The pandemic certainly impacted

us just like every other department in the City of Philadelphia. Our workers actually contracted it at much higher rates than many other areas just by the simple size of our department, and we had to take extra precaution due to social distancing and so forth.

But I want to say that our department is committed to making sure that all of our workers had all of the necessary health and safety initiatives, such as masks, goggles, gloves. All of those things that are accessible then are accessible now. We know we're not out of this. This could easily return during the peaks and valleys of the season, so we want to make sure that we're always practicing those --

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Are all of the positions in sanitation filled?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Well, our department because our Sanitation is so large and evolving, people retire, they move on to government, but the majority of our department, yes, we're

over 90 to 95 percent staffed in Sanitation. With new hires --

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: How many workers does that mean, 90 to 95 percent staffed?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Out of Sanitation or the entire Department?

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Sanitation.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sanitation is roughly 1400 employees. So over 1300 of them are actually working today. And then we have vacancies and positions that we constantly fill.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay. Let me get to the street lights right now, Commissioner. I was told, and I think this was a news account, and we have about 147,000 or 148,000 street lights or street lamps in the City of Philadelphia. You know the light outage complaints in 311 in 2021, they went through the roof. In the Philadelphia Neighborhood Safety and Community

Policing Plan that I stood with our President and other colleagues to introduce, on Page 8, quality-of-life issues are a major focus of that. Tell us how we're doing with those light outage complaints.

Due to contracting issues, we know we developed that backlog. By 2021 I was told we had about 12,700 open service requests and that was the most in the City's history. How many open requests do we have now on today, May 11th? And I think you told me in our communication or maybe another staff member that we can fix about 2,000 lights per month with an active contractor. I think we have it. You'll answer that, and give us a timeline about when and how we can expect to see that backlog addressed and then how are we going to do with future light outages? And I want to get one more in, so please be succinct.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure. That backlog has been addressed. As of

today, we have 300 open backlog work orders and that was down from 12,000 so we worked very hard with our contractor to add more staff and work overtime hours to make sure that those backlog areas were addressed, so I'm pleased to report that.

Going forward, we just mentioned in my testimony what the plan is for the future of the City of Philadelphia which is bright, which is ESCO which is to convert them to LED which requires less maintenance and less contractors to resolve those issues.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: All right. Final question and I want to get in this round -- and, Mr. Chairman, I want to sign up for the next one -- it's this issue with these cameras. Again, Neighborhood Safety and Community Policing Plan, quality-of-life cameras. So I will tell you I was a little perturb doing the exchange we had with OIT relative to the street lights because we were talking about those that

were connected into the City's system, so we were talking about the police cameras, the Commerce Department cameras and then the Streets camera.

I want you to tell us, if you will, does OIT do all of the installation of the cameras for streets? How many do we have sort of waiting to be installed? How many need to be fixed from a maintenance perspective? And let's talk about the monitoring of those cameras because I loved hearing in your testimony we want cleaner and greener streets but in order to be safer, they have to be monitored, particularly these dumping sites. So tell us where we are with these cameras.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes. Thank you. We work very closely with the installation of those cameras. The monitoring of those cameras lies within the Streets Department, and we also utilize the Police Department cameras as well, which also overlap with illegal dumping areas and crime areas. So all

total, we have 291 cameras.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: 291.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: 191 have been installed. 85 are remaining to be installed. That's with Streets Department personnel only. That's our resources only. Who monitors them? Our staff, our Sweep Unit, our Sanitation administration monitors those areas for illegal dumping to report to the Police Department and through our new system that we're working through the Law Department.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Well, finally let me say this, Commissioner. I want to give a special shout-out to the Sweep team, right, the folks who are out there looking through those bags. If Sanitation has a difficult job so do those Sweep officers trying to find an address, a telephone number, anything that they can to connect whoever is responsible for this trash being dumped illegally in our City. They have to do that work.

When we passed this legislation increasing these fines, now there's a maximum allowable by state law. 2,000 for illegal dumping not with a car. 5,000 currently with a car. However, we will be able to charge $5,000 per large piece of debris. So think of tires now, Philadelphia. If you dump a tire, the maximum penalty we can charge is $5,000. But if you dump 20, if this legislation is passed, we'll be able to penalize these companies at $100,000. $5,000 per piece of debris, so Sweep stay strong. We're sending help.

And, Commissioner, in closing special thank you to you for coming to the PHL TCB rally. I opened up saying I felt like Biggie on that day, it was all a dream. But we made it happen. The program is up and running, over 200 cleaning ambassadors in neighborhoods across the City, and you came out to support those men and women who are helping the Streets Department. It's not instead of. It's in partnership.

When Sanitation crews go out to pick up the trash, they're picking up the trash collected by our ambassadors.

And I want you to close, sir, with your comments and thoughts about PHL TCB's partnership with Sanitation.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: It's a tremendous initiative. Without programs like PHL TCB, we would not be able to keep our commercial corridors clean. Ultimately, loose litter is probably the biggest detraction among our business districts. Unfortunately, we don't have the staff to service all business districts in the City of Philadelphia, so this program is actually critical to ensuring that we maintain those areas on a daily basis. So we are certainly appreciative of the TCB program in the City of Philadelphia.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank you, Commissioner. And to Councilmembers Isaiah Thomas and Jamie Gauthier, thank you so very much for also coming into the 5th District,

Council President Clarke's District, to support those men and women. Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: You're welcome.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Councilmember Parker.

Councilmember Gauthier.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, Commissioner Williams.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Good morning.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I want to start by thanking you and Deputy Commissioner Warren and your whole team for all that you do on a daily basis.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I appreciate your support always. Yup.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Absolutely. My questions are about street lights. How does Streets determine priority for repairing street lights? And in particular, is there

ever a data-driven consideration of gun violence when prioritizing and scheduling light repairs?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Good question. First of all, most of our street lights come in through like every other request through our 311 system and they're actually serviced in accordance to the time that it came into the system. However, we do work with the Managing Director's Office on programs like Operation Pinpoint who identifies high crime locations that is in desperate need of street lighting and repairs.

I think there was an allocation of an additional $150,000 to identify locations that have the highest areas and indices of crime and gun violence in those areas to make sure that we address those first. When there's programs and resources like that, then we prioritize high crime areas. But most of them come in through our 311 system.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I can

appreciate that, and I'm glad that you're doing that coordination with Pinpoint. But I would push for Streets to more broadly consider prioritizing street light repair in areas that are experiencing high levels of gun violence just because of where we are right now with that crisis.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Understood. That's something we will definitely take in serious consideration, yes.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you. Can you talk to us about alley light repairs? Are homeowners technically responsible and was there ever a time when this was not the case?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Well, they're still in the responsibility of the Streets Department. I think the challenge is twofold. Number one, accessibility, most of those are trash-filled areas that many of our technicians can't get to and then we require teams of people to actually

clean out those alleys before we can actually repair the light. So that's one of the challenges.

The second challenge is we are limited in the number of people that we have to be able to service those lights. We're hoping with our escrow agreement that we'll be able to free up resources to make alley lights a high priority like regular street lights are. We're trying to address that, but that has also always been the Streets Department's responsibility.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I would push for us to see how we can better address that in the FY23 budget. We have so many requests for alley light repairs and I think people are often confused about whether Streets is going to help with that or not. Additionally, I think there needs to be better coordination with CLIP because we need to clean the alleys to get to the lights, then we just need to do that, right. So I would push for there to be

a greater consideration of that and for you to get back to Council about what more you can do in that area in the FY23 budget.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure. Councilwoman, real quickly, a couple of years ago, and I think this is something that we're looking at again, is that we had the Future Track program where we hired young people. One of their biggest priorities was to address the alley conditions, and we coordinated with our street lighting crews to make sure that when we cleaned them up, the alley light was repaired. That is something that we are strongly going to look at to see if we can expand that program and to bring that back.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Can we do that in FY23?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: We are looking at it with our Future Track budget, yes. So that's something we are looking at, yes.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank

you. I had some questions about traffic calming. I know that they talked about the need for increased traffic calming resources before and I know we all agree that we're seeing street safety issues at worrisome levels since the pandemic.

Can you call out the sections in this budget that show the staffing amounts and equipment amounts that will be going towards traffic calming efforts in FY23?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure. I will ask Deputy Commissioner Richard Montanez from Sanitation to address this question. Rich, can you please come on.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Sure. Good morning, Councilmember.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good morning.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Hello. My name is Richard Montanez, Deputy Commissioner of Streets. I apologize. I'm actually out of town so I'm doing this on my phone so please forgive me. Yeah, the Streets

Department does use -- basically, we use some of our budget dedicated to traffic calming such as speed cushions, the trailers that we move around the City.

Now, we're working with PennDOT on speed slots such as we did in your District, Councilmember, on Cobbs Creek. And areas like that, we're also doing delineators, road diet, pavement markings. We've partnered with communities to now start doing painted bump-outs such as the one that SOSNA was gracefully -- they volunteered, they did it. The community rallied up. They purchased, and it was a mural that was approved by Mural Arts that is painted on the curb. So we do have dedicated funding for that. And every one of our capital projects does have traffic calming involved in it.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you. Would you be able to get back to Council with specific callbacks about what sections of your proposed budget are going towards traffic calming

efforts in FY23?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you. I know we've talked before about how we get dozens of inquiries for traffic calming every year, particularly stop signs and speed cushions. Response times from Streets can vary widely from a couple of weeks to over one year and 90 percent of the time our constituents' requests are rejected. We want to be able with this budget to get you the resources you need to change the dynamic.

We know that not every request is going to be granted, but the criteria that 85 percent of speeds on residential streets have to be 35 miles per hour or higher in order to get speed cushions seems intentionally designed to limit success and offer a no to constituents who are crying out for some level of intervention.

Knowing that our communities

really want these investments, how much would it cost for Streets to keep up with a policy change that was flexible, gave more deference to what people are experiencing on the ground and therefore brought more traffic calming to our residential neighborhoods?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I'll start and then I'll turn it back over to Deputy Commissioner Montanez. I think one of the options that we can consider that doesn't require intense traffic studies is the temporary speed cushions that we use that are made up reusable rubber. I think those have been effective in some neighborhoods and we do have the flexibility that we don't have to go through an arduous process to be able to get those in those neighborhoods. The permanent ones we do require traffic studies and we have the running delays.

But, Rich, did you real quickly want to add? We can get her the cost, get the Councilmember the cost of what

that would be to expand to other neighborhoods in the City.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yeah. I would want to know that -- and even if you have to get back to us, I would want to know what needs to happen for us to have a policy change as well that offered a little more flexibility in the way that we analyze these requests.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: So we are working with DVRPC, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, to look at our roads as a way for us to look how we classify them and also traffic calming. This would allow some more flexibility on our policy and therefore I think it would give you -- once I finish that study with them, I'm more than happy to have a discussion with you.

We're also looking at what other big cities are doing as part of the NACTO side of this, and we're looking at their policies and comparing it to Philadelphia.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much. And if you can get back with that detail on how much we're allocating towards speed cushions and stop signs in FY23, that would be very helpful. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you very much for your questions.

Councilmember Domb.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

And good morning, Commissioner Williams.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Good morning, Councilmember.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: I also want to join my colleagues in thanking you, your department, your team for responsiveness in everything you guys do to help us answer the questions of constituents and to make the streets safer across the board.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: My pleasure. Thank you, sir.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: And I will say this, and I know Majority Leader spoke about this, we do reach out to you all hours of the day and night and you guys are responsive, so I appreciate it. I have two or three items that I wanted to talk to you about today. And one has to do with streeteries, and I know that last year as the temporary pandemic allowances for streeteries are about to expire, we passed legislation in Council to formally legalize streeteries and start the process of putting additional rules and regulations in place. Because we want streeteries to be a really positive feature in the City, it's important that they're safe, attractive, flexible, especially when the streets need paving or utilities need access, we understand that.

So first on that topic, I know we came out with some -- the Administration came out with regulations that had a lot of pushback from the businesses that these regulations would

affect, and I know that you listened in a meeting to the concerns of the operators and I know we were supposed to get back to them with what the new regulations will be, and I'm trying to see when you think that time frame might be because right now, of course today's a gorgeous day outside and I'm sure people want to take advantage of outdoor eating and I'm sure the restaurants want to plan for what they're going to do this summer. So any idea when you think you'll be able to publish that revised streetery regulations with the adjustments that hopefully will be made?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure. It's currently under review with our Division of Transportation. Rich Montanez has been working personally on it, and I certainly want to thank all of those guys for the hard work in helping our businesses through the pandemic.

So, Rich, could you please address the Councilmember's question regarding the information that he sent

to us regarding timing of the regulation amendments?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Yes. Good morning, Councilmember. My name's Richard Montanez, Deputy Commissioner of Streets. We are reviewing all the comments that came to us. As you're aware, we did have a hearing on March 16th. We're still discussing it with the Law Department about what can be or what the regulations will be finalized and we still have not posted it. I do apologize. We are way behind schedule on this. But as you said to us, we want to get this right when we do put this out.

We will be discussing with you the regulations before we publish them so we're still in discussions with the Law Department gathering everything. And hopefully, I can discuss it with you some time soon.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. That sounds good. Thank you. And I just

want to mention also, Commissioner, Councilman Squilla and I were on a community meeting I think a few weeks ago, and we asked Deputy Commissioner Montanez to be on the meeting, and thank God we did, because he did a great job in answering all the questions and make us look good. Otherwise we would have be massacred in that meeting. But Rich did a great job. So really appreciate it, Rich. Thank you.

Second question I have, Commissioner, is on the illegal dumping. I know it's a huge problem. I've heard about it through all these hearings. I've been hearing about it for years all over the City. As soon as we clean something up, the next day people are dumping in areas they shouldn't be dumping in.

And I know my colleagues have mentioned this in hearings with OIT, in almost anywhere there isn't a constant presence people just are dropping truckloads of trash all over, really sad

that people think they can get away with this.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: A lot of it is construction trash, I understand. So my understanding is that it's illegal right now for contractors to use the City's sanitation facilities for construction trash and recycling. It's also illegal for them to dump trash in alleys I guess and empty lots and sidewalks. But unless there's a camera that records a license plate, there isn't really any consequence that we can enforce here.

So in earlier hearings I know the Administration has basically said that full camera coverage isn't feasible across the City. Would it make sense for us to accept contractor waste and debris at City sites even charging fee for it? It just seems like many people dumping construction debris in a City site would be a better way than letting them dump it all over the neighborhoods.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So there's a couple of things, Councilmember. Thank you for your comments. And, yes, this is a challenge that we have tried to address for years, especially after the pandemic. You and I have had several discussions on this as well. We've looked at and we have changed our policies to allow trucks in that have small loads of contractor debris.

There are state strict regulations that we cannot accept certain materials. Certain materials by law has to be recycled. So those are the things that we have to look at. We are very open to trying to see what our drop-off centers can handle in terms of daily tonnage requirements for contractors to be allowed in, small contractors.

But by law, most of them are required to have a waste disposal system and recycle certain materials such as drywall. All of those things should be

recycled actually and not disposed of as trash. What we're having problems with is the smaller contractors, and I think that's what you're asking us to consider, who may not or cannot afford to do it and just dump it at a location. That's something that we will ultimately take a look at to see if it's feasible and do we have the capacity to accept it at the six drop-off centers.

We only have six and they stay routinely full, so we may have to look at other options as well to open it up. But many of them, fortunately contractors, hopefully this will help and hopefully other contractors will comply. But some of them just will dump it anywhere they can like you said earlier, but those are the ones that we want to enforce.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: And you always have the bad actors. But if we can make availability to the smaller contractors, it might solve some of this problem. It won't solve it all, but it

might solve some of it.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: We will certainly look at it, yes.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: The next question I have for you is on what are the basic things we hear from constituents, we want public safety, we want our streets to be paved and cleaned and other things other than that. But in the area of paving, I noticed that in your testimony it looks like almost $570 million is coming to the City over the next four or five years I believe for infrastructure. And it looks like you have an infusion of $100 million for roadway resurfacing hopefully for this coming year.

My question is in 2020 any idea of how many miles of streets we repaved and in 2021 and what we're planning on in 2022?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure. I'm going to ask Deputy Commissioner Montanez to give you the number of paving miles that we've also actually

performed. We want to thank the Administration for the infusion of dollars, especially in regards to helping us increase the number of miles with the ADA stipulations.

But, Deputy Commissioner Montanez, we know we slowed down during the pandemic and then we picked up with the infusion of money. Please give the Councilmember with the details. Thanks.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Commissioner, I'm going to punt that one. I apologize because I'm not in the office. Could Nancy Sen if she's on, could she please provide those numbers.

MS. SEN: Sure. In '20, we did about 30 miles. In '21, we dropped down to about -- I'm sorry. In '21, we dropped down to 18 miles. The $100 million that has came in the '22 capital program, we're splitting that between this season and next season. This season we have 68 miles programmed, and next season we're looking to get about 60 miles programmed.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: One last question. What was our goal in '20 and '21? Understanding there was a pandemic, but what was the goal for miles to be resurfaced basically?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: For --

MS. SEN: The --

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Go ahead, Nancy. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

MS. SEN: What we paved is all -- we used all the money we got, also taking into account that same pot of money is used to do the ADA ramp, so the remainder of all the money that we got was used on constructing ramps along those corridors that we paved.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you, Commissioner and your team.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Councilmember.

Councilmember Bass, if you're available.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I am available. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good morning, Commissioner. How are you?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Good morning, Councilmember. How are you doing today?

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm doing very well. Thank you so much for asking. First, I want to start out with a big thank you. Whenever we call, you're right there. You always follow up. The work of the Streets Department, you and your team regardless of the issue, whether we have a dumping situation or street lights, all of these things that you do, you do very well and I just wanted to publicly say that. And I know that it's hard.

During the early days of the pandemic in the summer of 2020, there was a lot of criticism around the Streets Department and not recognizing

that your workers get COVID too. The people that work in your department they get sick too. And so, I hope that it certainly brought a new level of support to all of those under your command and members of District Council 33 as well.

I just had a couple of questions for you. And the first was you mentioned second collection. And so, I was wondering if you could detail what that looks like and what it will do for the City of Philadelphia. When I think of second collection, I guess what I'm wondering is will there be a twice-a-week collection or more often than is currently scheduled, which is once per week. So can you talk about second collection a little bit?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure. What we learned from the pandemic is we didn't have enough staff to keep up with the daily on-time collections as you mentioned, and thank you for acknowledging that as well. So we added a second shift to ensure that any trash

that was left over by 3 o'clock, which is what we are required to try to get according to our service levels agreement that will be collected by a second shift and would not be collected on overtime. It would be more collected by a routine to make sure it doesn't carry over to the next day. Because with trash if you allow it to accumulate one day, it snowballs for the rest of the week and then you're behind and ultimately it rolls into the next week, as what we experienced during the pandemic.

So this crew ensures that trash is most likely picked up within the day on its daily scheduled collection day. And so, that's one thing that we wanted to ensure the public, that they wouldn't have to worry about trash being left out overnight, especially during the summer months where it's at its worse.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Right. So that's not what I had envisioned, which was that there will be another day so if

I got my trash picked up on Monday, maybe again on Thursday there will be an additional run-through by the Streets Department to pick up additional trash, because in some areas it seems to be that maybe more than one day of collection should be considered.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah. We would probably need much more resources than that to do a separate collection across the City. This was a stopgap solution to ensure we won't have the delays that they experienced during the pandemic.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Is it possible for us to look at how much that would cost and try to do a pilot program around that?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure, we can take a look at what the costs are. Ultimately, we would have a discussion with our Budget Office or Administration and see if we can do a pilot. It would require additional resources.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Do you think -- just in your personal opinion, do you think that this would be helpful?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So I think we've tried it --

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I don't want to suggest it if you're not going to buy in.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: No, no. I appreciate it. I'm going to ask Deputy Commissioner Warren to jump on because I think he was here when we ultimately had twice a week in certain neighborhoods of the City.

Keith, are you there? Can you weigh in? I know you directly worked with this along with crews back in the early 2,000s, I want to say.

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Are you there?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I don't know if he's logged on. He might have fallen off.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I saw him, yeah.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I see his picture.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Are you there, Keith?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WARREN: Yes --

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Oh, yeah, I hear you. There you go.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WARREN: Yeah, we had second collection in a part of the City and it's -- well, first of all, it's resource-intensive. It created a lot of confusion when we had separate collection days and separate collection days for recycling. I mean, we can definitely do a cost study and pilot it.

I think what happens in situations like that sometimes it adds to the complaints because people aren't -- they get confused about when their trash days are or if we get delayed on one day and then the next

day, so it's a little challenging. But again, we can certainly look at it and cost it out.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: My only concern, Councilmember, is that we need to get people to follow the rules right now for what they set out because if we had another day, the way they set out trash today contributes a lot to our litter conditions. I'm afraid that adding another day, some neighborhoods will comply, most of our citizens do a great job. But unfortunately, there are some that put out trash any other way and having trash only that many times per week exacerbates a litter problem. That's the only concern that I would have with adding a second collection operationally. There will be a fiscal cost to the City and we can get that for you as well.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, I do want to offer up the 8th District. If you're interested in having a pilot program, I think that it's something

that I -- listen, I understand your concerns and your fears and your worries around it, but I do think it's something that could be helpful. We hear some very common themes from our constituents around the problems of Philadelphia, trash, crime, school. There's just some things that are really set in stone in terms of what people want to see action on.

And so, if you are able to do a pilot problem, we would love to be able to point you in a direction that we think can help you model that program so that we can get -- and also, get some streets cleaned up. So we would love to do that with you.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Absolutely. I would be more than happy to have that conversation with you and the Administration on it.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Excellent. Another question for you: We have been speaking with Jane Golden around putting together a pilot program to address

litter and issues that seem to happen not just in my District but throughout the City of Philadelphia. Conditions where it seems that dumping and all sorts of negative behaviors happen, underpasses in our neighborhoods.

And so, what we'll notice is that there will be dumping under an underpass. There's no lighting. It's sort of like a thing to do and we've been working with Jane to beautify those areas, but of course we would need cleaning and also lighting to go with them. Is that something that we think we can put together with your office?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah. Jane does a great job, number one I need to say that, from Mural Arts program. Actually, when we see murals that pop up, that actually deters people from dumping because it's well-maintained usually in those areas that we do have murals and they do have great greening like through PHS program, so we are all supportive of murals as a way to

enlighten the community and improve the quality of life. And, yes, that's something that we would support, yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Excellent. Excellent. Okay. I have more questions, but I'm going to have to come back in the second round. Thank you very much.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Just in time.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Just in time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Councilmember.

Councilmember Oh.

COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very much, Chairman.

All right. Good morning, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Good morning, Councilmember. How are you, sir?

COUNCILMAN OH: Doing great. Thank you. Going back to the discussion of illegal dumping and illegal parking

of large commercial vehicles like trailers that carry vehicles, tractor trailers, that type of thing. So at least from kind of considering and looking into these issues, and I'll preface this by saying that I live in Southwest Philadelphia on a block that has constant problems with illegal dumping.

As long as I can remember in recent times going back 10 or 15 years, it is a continuous problem but it's never been a problem like it is these days. The amount of construction debris, material, all sorts of things in large green trash bags just constantly being dumped, car pieces, refrigerators, that type of thing, so it's kind of a never-ending problem.

And nowadays I would say through Southwest Philadelphia and parts of West Philadelphia, just the amount of trailers that haul vehicles which don't have any identification, license plate, there's no cab to it, there's no tractor

to the trailer type of thing, the problem appears at least in part to be that this stuff happens when people are sleep and there isn't an ability to have like live enforcement of the law. This occurs very quickly when people are sleep and people wake up to find this stuff in their neighborhood.

The enforcement of it is challenging because to my understanding, part of it is under the Police Department, the Streets Department puts up the cameras, but then the camera video or recording is to my knowledge sent to the police who don't have time to review the video. And so, we go through this whole process. It just seems the third part of the problem is the confrontation.

When citizens actually confront those people dumping, that turns out to be very dangerous these days and something that citizens are advised not to do. I know several cases where people try to confront people dumping

illegally in broad daylight and guns were pulled on them and that type of thing.

So there is currently I believe in the law the forfeiture of vehicles that are engaged in dumping and, one, it doesn't seem to have deterred anyone, number one. They don't pay the fines. And quite frankly, I'm not aware of situations where that's being enforced.

What I've heard, and I don't know, is that when illegal dumpers are caught, that when they go to court, their case is negotiated to a summary offense and therefore Streets Department witnesses and Police witnesses do not go to court because at this point in time when you do catch someone illegally dumping and they have a criminal trial, their case is negotiated to a summary offense. By the way, does that sound accurate to you so far about the summary offense?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: To my knowledge, yes. I think some of the

things, the lack of evidence has been a challenge in regards to the stipulations of what's required once you catch someone on a video camera as well. So I think that's one of the things that the Police Department represent. They do review all of the cases. But some of the things like evidence fall short of what can be prosecuted, so that's one of the challenges.

COUNCILMAN OH: Let me ask you this, and I will have to ask the District Attorney: Is the high standard of evidence required by the District Attorney's Office or by the legislation, which I doubt it's the legislation, so it would be the District Attorney's Office or would it be some other entity that is requiring that much evidence?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So I think it's between what the Police provides the District Attorney's Office that can be prosecutable.

COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. So I did introduce a bill and I did meet with the

police unit that is engaged in this, and they're extremely shorthanded. I think they had two active police officers for the entire City when it came to illegal tractor trailers and large commercial vehicles, and there's only to my knowledge one detective for illegal dumping in the entire City.

So what I do believe is a solution is through the cameras, yes, but also by identifying the vehicle's license plate, make and model and issuing fines. But when they don't pay it, to then boot the vehicles. I'm a believer in booting these vehicles. There's no confrontation and they have an opportunity to pay the fines and things like that. The same thing for illegal tractor trailers, locking wheels more at an industrial level. What are your thoughts on that?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I think all enforcement is definitely something that will help this problem, so if we can expand the ways in which we can

enforce the law to put a bite in it. I think what was talked about earlier is most people will say, I'll pay the fine to commit the crime, which is not good. I think that came up yesterday with the Managing Director's Office when asked that question. He said, most people just said I'll just pay the fine. So we may have to make the fines on the penalties much tougher. So what you're talking about does make sense. Legally if we can do that, yes, we should be doing more harsher penalties.

I think what Councilmember Parker talked about earlier gives us the opportunity to charge more than what they're willing to pay, which is restitution and the cost per individual incident that's there. All of those things I think are very helpful. Booting cars, I'm all for it. If they are caught doing a crime, I'm all for all of those things because ultimately, it tears the quality of life of our City down. So, yes, I am for any type of

enforcement that addresses this type of behavior, especially as egregious as it has been.

COUNCILMAN OH: All right. Thank you very much for that. I will add I just think there is overall a sense that the laws are not enforced. And if you are caught, they won't be enforced anyway, not to any extent that makes any difference to anybody. And I think that perception -- more than anything that perception is creating a lot of these problems.

My last real question is how much money is being spent not on repaving, but in kind of other things that have to do with our streets? For example, from my perspective -- and I'll probably run out of time -- we have a lot of streets that have potholes, we have a lot of streets that have structural problems, but it seems as though there are some major projects that cost a lot of money that have to do with restructuring the road as opposed

to paving roads.

And I would like to know at some point in time how much money is going to restructuring roads? For example, I live in West Philly and there has been a repaving of Cobbs Creek Parkway. It's a busy road, but a lot of it seems to be putting the rumble strips in and putting the barriers in between the medians so that cars or vehicles don't ride through the middle of the medians, all that type of thing. But the road was never in that bad shape compared to a lot of other roads that had potholes along the length of the entire road.

It's hard to see the distribution of funds in the sense that people primarily want a smooth, drivable, bikable road as opposed to defects through roads that are just major roads that people use to get from one part of the City to the next. Is there a report that kind of lays out the cost of special projects versus just

simple repaving?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure, we can get you that number. I can just tell you in general the cost of repaving is significantly cheaper than the cost of reconstruction. We're talking like about $20 per square foot versus $200 square foot for a reconstructed road. So we can get you the cost for projects and how much it cost to invest in those areas. But repaving is always a viable solution to maintain the life expectancy of a roadway.

COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you so much, Commissioner. If you can get that to the Chair, the Chair will distribute to all the members of Council. And I certainly will be looking for that. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: You're welcome.

COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you, Chairman.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Councilmember.

Councilmember Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Good morning, Commissioner. How are you?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Good morning, Councilmember. How are you doing today?

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Good, good, good. Let me just put an explanation point on some of the points some of my colleagues brought up earlier as it relates to alley lighting, the LED lighting, all of these nonpolice public safety issues. And I look forward to as we close out this budget really looking at ways that we can ensure the Streets Department has the resources it needs for the complaints we know that come in.

I know you do the best job you can with what you have, but I think we've gotten to a point where now we need to say if we have so many requests for alley lights, do you have enough money and capacity to do that and I look forward to that conversation.

I wanted to talk a little bit around the workforce. I appreciate your whole team and their response in communities like Kensington, the Police and the Streets Department along with CLIP are the saving grace, and Councilmember Squilla will agree with me. Without you, we would be getting cursed out much more often, but the residents are incredibly grateful for your response.

But one of the things that I learned with COVID, particularly as it related to the workforce, essential workforce for the City, was the Streets Department. And I started talking to some colleagues across the country. Has anyone ever done a study to compare our salary and compensation packet in comparison to other cities?

And I want to use as an important example, we're asking people to come out and do this work and lose taste and smell over years. I don't think people recognize what happens to a

sanitation worker over time, right. I mean, we're asking people to give up some of this. But in New York, the starting salary is twice what it is in the City of Philadelphia. Have we ever done a study that looks at equity and looks at what other departments pay in comparison to Philadelphia?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I'm going to ask Deputy Commissioner Chris Newman to weigh in, as he usually looks at these type of issues in terms of salary comparison and HR-related matters. Chris.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: Sure. Commissioner, we've never done a study comparing our rates to other governments in the country. We do believe that laborers, because I think that's what you're talking about specifically, sanitation workers, we support sanitation workers getting more, but it's a question of how we actually go about doing that.

We have worked with the Office

of Human Resources several years ago in terms of making sure that we can maintain a regulation, it's a civil service regulation, which allows our sanitation laborers to get an increase in pay and it's marginal, it's a marginal increase in pay. It's about $1,000 to $2,000 a year if they work on heavy duty trucks. So if they are specifically doing their primary assignment on heavy-duty trucks, they get an increase in pay.

We are looking and we have looked for ways to increase pay beyond that. We've talked to the Finance Department in the past and the Office of Human Resources as well as the Managing Director's Office. Those things would actually require labor relations involvement and collective bargaining negotiations, so that's stuff we would be looking into going forward. But in terms of your initial question as to what we're paying in terms of other government agencies, no, we've never

done that.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Well, let me strongly encourage that we go through that process. I think one of the things we learned with COVID and the social unrest is the inequities that exist in some of the departments and what we're asking them for deliverables do not compare. And I think that again we want to move away from your department planning for what it has, but planning for what it needs given the expectations for the residents of the City of Philadelphia. So let me encourage folks to look at that.

I think my colleagues would be surprised at the disparity that exists, and it would help us to create the political will and the space to treat these workers more appropriately as some of the other cities do. So let's continue that conversation as part of this budget because I think it's critical.

I want to congratulate you,

Commissioner, for bringing in an inhouse team to do the paving. I am a big proponent, right, that we can do things cheaper. I learned that when we worked on the lighting along the El, that when that work was brought inhouse not only did we have the skill set, and we had the capacity and we did it cheaper. Speak to me as to what we're doing and how we are going to be able to create better pipelines from your Fast Track program for instance and even the Taking Care of Business. What can we do to better pipeline those folks into your department, your training them? How do we secure that and make that seamless?

I know that your system right now is a lottery system, but we're having people who are supporting the department. Again, we train them. They have certain skill sets. What can we do to better pipeline those folks internally to the department?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank you, Councilmember. Yes, Future Track

was a great model for doing that. We actually were able to hire people both on the sanitation side and the transportation side by training mostly young people. While we didn't have a strict age requirement, the type of people we were getting was between the ages of 18 and 24 years old. However, they were very good and we hired them into the department and we were able through a track that was created through HR to be able to do that type of work and give them full-time civil service jobs.

I want tout that program the most because it was helpful. It was helpful in cleaning out alleys for lights. We helped them become traffic personnel. Those are the type of people that I think was helpful. It gives us a chance to open up jobs and expand the horizon of the number of people that can come in, and especially young people who are looking for a way, it gives them a great opportunity in City government

that we didn't have before. So that Future Track program was tremendous. So I want to continue to support as best we can. That was one avenue that was successful.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Yeah, we're looking for as was mentioned earlier, we need to go back to that alleyway cleaning and some of that work that was done. And so, again before this budget process is over we really want to look for ways to increase those resources so that we can say to folks, right, once a year we're cleaning every alleyway in the City. This is what it's going to take us to do. We can do it through this program so that it becomes the norm as opposed to just when there are challenges.

We understand that and you better can explain it than anyone else. Trash and crime are interrelated. And these access to alleyways are all a public safety challenge. And so, we would be more aggressive. Again, how do

we get you to plan for what we need because we know what we need versus you telling us a plan for what you have. But we don't know what we need if we're not saying there's 19,000 potholes and we have enough money for 19,000 potholes and we have the capacity to fill 19,000 potholes.

How do we get this department there, because I think along with public safety this is the most critical basic service that people are screaming for and want to see, right. And we know the pandemic created all of your challenges as it relates to trash pickup.

Lastly, because I heard the bell, has there been any thought about, you know, what we saw during the pandemic was an incredible amount of delivery services and boxes for people, this convenience. How are we absorbing that and is there any thought about how can we capture all the money we have spent because of Amazon and everybody else with these deliveries and the

increased trash that you saw related to convenience and the people responding to the pandemic? Any thought on that? Any discussions happening internally?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So we seen an increased amount of material that has been generated through these type of companies and staying-at-home deliveries. I think that's probably a conversation between Commerce and our department with Transportation that we should have with you to determine what, if any, fees or charges that can be assessed based on the increased amount of tonnage and things that are generated. So I think that's a conversation that we need to have with both Commerce and Transportation.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Thank you. Than you, Mr. Chair. I'll be back for the second round. Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: You're welcome. Thank you, Councilmember.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,

Councilmember.

Councilmember Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: You're welcome.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Commissioner Williams, I want to join the chorus of thank yous going back even before the pandemic, but particularly during the pandemic when your workforce was one of the signs when they came to collect trash and the City was still open for business, still functional, still operational. I literally remember running to the curb waving at them. That's how tentative and scary the beginning parts of the pandemic were.

So Keith Warren and Deputy Commissioner Montanez are my Batman and Robin. I like you, but I love them. So you just need to know the pecking order.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I understand.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I also want

to cite when I have these community meetings, we stood at 60th and Columbia, and the big issue wasn't just the death of a 19-year-old boy shot 13 times, but was the fact that it was dark in our driveways, dark on our streets, dark in that perception of safety was lost in an otherwise pristine neighborhood. They weren't used to gunfights and battles.

So your crew came out and addressed those issues in record time. And for that, I am grateful. Now having said that, I want to say more. I believe that the citizens, even though in those alleys are private driveways and alleys, deserve public safety and there should be a light or two in every alley in the City of Philadelphia. So to that degree, we've put in a request to find how out what the cost of that will be.

So I know you already have a program to fix and repair existing poles which we appreciate, but I want to extend that to alleys, driveways that do

not have lights where unsavory actors pull up, do their business, sell weed, dope, whatever, commit other crimes at the cloak of darkness. And we need to look at our alleys, look at our driveways and come up with what I mentioned to the MDO yesterday was a wish list to partner with our funders at the state level to say, how can we tap into that $8 billion surplus to help out on our public safety issues such as alleys. So pulling together those numbers is critical.

I got numbers from your department that suggest for new lighting, a bulb costs $16. And for the older less efficient bulbs, $12. But I need to know how much would it cost to put a pole in an alley where a pole does not exist so we can get that price tag to our partners up at the state level and challenge them to help us.

Also, whether it's in the 8th, the 9th District, 4th District, a lot of our Districts have a lot of driveways

and they've fallen into disrepair. There was some preliminary research to how much it would cost in a driveway to reconcrete it or to put asphalt over it. We need to modernize those numbers and maybe because of the same thing, public safety. If a first responder has to move down those driveways, they should be safe. If a fire truck, rescue wagon is going down those driveways, they shouldn't fall into a pothole big enough to swallow a Volkswagon.

And I know the owner of those properties have some responsibility, but we also have some responsibility for public safety. So pulling together those numbers, trying to seek out those state and federal matches of funds is something I'd like us to not just talk about during budget, but to explore so that we can, you know, the bad news is we prepare our budget before the state, before they finish and finalize theirs. But the good news is we prepare our budget before the state so we can add

the request to their budget line items.

So Senator Hughes, Senator Williams challenged me to say, well, you can't expect us to give you something if you've not asked for it. I am not letting them challenge us like that. You're a football guy. You know how when the monarchs come after your crew, you rise up. So I'd like to follow suit. I'd like to work with the Administration to pull together those numbers, to pull together those partnerships and actually take them to task on helping Philadelphia.

I did an interview, and I'll close on this, that we don't get a lot of help from I'm not going to say the Philadelphia Delegation, but other parts of the Delegation. When we ask for sensible gun laws, they tell us no. When we ask for flavored tobacco restrictions, they tell us no. But yet we send them a dollar, they send us back $0.73 worth of services. We need to ask for more. We need to coordinate better.

We need to work with our Philadelphia Delegation in the House and in the Senate to say, here's 10 things, bridges, roads, alleys, driveways, gun violence that you can fund that can take some of the financial burden off of the taxpayers in Philly. So I look forward to working with you. I think you're a rock star.

I remember one short dumping incident on Marion Avenue which is notorious. The individuals dropped maybe 500 tires. Do you remember that, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

COUNCILMAN JONES: And then had the nerve to come out and tell you, well, fine me then, I don't care about a fine.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I mean, arrogantly said that. But when you put that $50 per tire on him, it made his

knees buckle. And what I hear from my colleagues we need to make the squeeze worth the juice.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: That's it, yes. Thank you, Councilmember. We look forward to having that conversation with all of those issues and we will certainly work with our department to get the information you need to ask that question about getting funding for the City of Philadelphia.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Commissioner.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: You're welcome.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Councilmember.

Councilmember Thomas.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good morning, everybody.

Good morning, Commissioner. Good morning to your entire team. How are you doing, sir?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Good

morning, sir. How are you doing today?

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I'm good. I'm good. I just want to start by thanking you and your team. I'm probably the office that calls you the most and tweets you the most and text you the most about illegal dumping and other issues that I know you face on a consistent basis. So I just want to start by thanking you and your team and appreciate you responding to me even while you are on vacation. I heard somebody's out of town today. That's pretty normal for your office to still responsive and communicating with us even when you're not around, so thank you for that.

My first question deals with the issue with crossing guards. I heard you talk about it a little bit briefly. I didn't hear my colleagues ask too many questions. I've been in and out so I apologize if I'm being a little repetitive. But talk to us a little bit about what's going on with that

transition and what are you doing to make sure that those folks are going to be comfortable in your department.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure. Thanks, Councilmember. We briefly talked about it in our testimony. We have been meeting quite frequently with the Administration, their union and the crossing guards to talk about our plans for a smooth transition and how operations would move forward. Deputy Commissioner Chris Newman has been working very closely on a day-to-day basis with the program.

We are in a process of actually recruiting to hire a director for the program. But I think that we are headed in the right direction. We want to make sure that we do this right. We understand that they're very nervous in reference to a big move like this, but we also know the importance of their jobs and the responsibilities in protecting our children every day. So we are committed 100 percent, 110

percent to ensure that we make a smooth transition.

Chris, I'm going to let you give an update on some of the things that we're doing in terms of training, recruitment and ultimately the operations on how we will support our program.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: Sure. Thank you, Commissioner. Good morning, Councilmember.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good morning.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: So for our crossing guard program in terms of the transition plan, the most important thing to sort of point out with this is it's a phased approach. We are not going to take over the full program ultimately as like we're flipping a switch on July 1st. It's going to be phased in. The first part of the phased approach is hiring. And right now we're targeting taking over hiring of crossing guards right around

June.

The second piece will likely be training. And what we want to do is we want to put together a comprehensive training program that will be about two weeks long. We've been looking at best practices in other governmental jurisdictions, particularly in Washington, D.C. They have a two-week program we want to sort of replicate here in the City of Philadelphia. After that, we're hoping to take over payroll. Now, the payroll piece is a little complicated because the Police Department has their own specific payroll system that they use, so there's some complications to that, but we're hoping that will be the next part of this --

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Chris, can we get this plan in writing, how you're talking about phases?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: Sure.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I mean,

this sounds like you have a comprehensive idea of what this transition is going to look like and feel like.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: Sure.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Have there been conversations with the union and the workers so that they feel comfortable with the transition and the process?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: We're literally meeting with the union every month to give them an update and answer their questions, and those meetings have been going very well in terms of the relationship with them. I know they have some concerns and some questions. The biggest thing from their perspective is they're concerned about their locations being changed in terms of their assignments and their safety in terms of the partnership with the Police Department. And both of those things are being covered.

On the one end, we're not moving people. We're keeping them where they are. So if they have an assignment, we're not moving them to another location. And on the other end, we're working on literally developing a memorandum of agreement with the Police Department so that the phased approach can work and even beyond the phased approach, having a very strong partnership with them to make sure that from a safety perspective the crossing guards are covered.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: That sounds great, Chris. Thank you. My time is limited so I have to transition to another area. But please can you provide us that phased plan in writing and continue to have that dialogue with the workers because you know how it is when there's a certain level of uncertainty.

As the Chair of the Streets and Services Committee, I'm actually excited that they're coming under the Streets

Department because of the close relationship that my office has with Carlton and the rest of the entire team over there. So for us we're hoping that this is going to be a good thing. And it sounds like you're doing the same as well. So thank you for that.

Commissioner, a couple of other things. One of the biggest issues that I've been advocating for is looking at the 12 percent of roads that produce 80 percent of car accidents. I know that you're not necessarily involved in infrastructure-based issues. But if you can just take 30 seconds to talk to us about what your office and your department has been doing to address a lot of the hit-and-run issues that we've been seeing in the City of Philadelphia, we definitely appreciate you putting that on the record.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes. We've been working very closely with oTIS and the Vision Zero Network. Kelley Yemen is our Director of that

program. Our department works hand-in-hand with her in reference to identifying ways to reduce traffic fatalities along the High Injury Network. And you're right, there's only about 12 or 13 percent of the roadways that produce the highest amount of fatalities in the City of Philadelphia.

That's one of the priorities when we do things like traffic calming initiatives, speed cushions, those are the things that we look at first to ensure that we are dedicating our resources to those areas. I don't know if Kelley is on right now to give you kind of a 10-, 30-second snapshot. But our department is dedicating funding. We're dedicating staff and resources and ultimately maintenance of those areas to ensure that we try to reduce those fatalities down to zero, so that's a big initiative.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Yeah. We're getting stuff in writing from Mike Carroll and his entire team over there.

So we just wanted you to put on the record your role in that and making sure that we have that continued effort and coordination to be able to address that issue. Because I know it takes some time, but there are a lot of families who spend a lot of time advocating to my office and I'm sure to you and other members of the executive team to push for not just the technology that we need to address, but the investment and infrastructure. So thank you for that one. Last question --

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I just want to add one quick thing. The Red Light Camera program is also something that's huge, and that's a part of the High Injury Network along Roosevelt Boulevard, so those are the type of things that we're going to continue to support and push throughout the City of Philadelphia.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: And we can put on the record that has had some success and we want to --

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Absolutely.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: -- so we grill you with the bad stuff, which I know we do a great job of on City Council. But we also like to try to compliment you when we see some levels of success, and I think that that's an example of that. We still have more work to do, but again we want to compliment you on levels of success.

My last question, Commissioner, and if you don't know the answer to this right now, it's okay because I don't think I've ever asked you anything like this and I want to see if I can get you on the record with this one. I'm working with the Managing Director's Office as well as the Police Department, and we're trying to put together a coalition around traffic enforcement-related issues.

We're looking at the idea of using and relying on technology to be the main mechanisms to enforce motor

vehicle code violations that are not a public safety hazard. What are your thoughts on that and what impact do you think that that will have on the Streets Department and that work that you're doing?

I know you're trying to (inaudible) with illegal dumping and things like that. I heard Majority Leader talk about some of those issues earlier. Just what are your thoughts on that? And at that point my time is up.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: We're very supportive of using technology. We know we don't have the manpower, neither Streets or Police, to be everywhere at all times. But anywhere we can place cameras at locations, anywhere we can use technology to, you know, like the traffic calming, the timers on red lights to notify pedestrians when to cross the street because a police officer can't be there, I think all of those are extremely helpful in public safety when it comes down to

transportation-related issues. So, yes, we're very supportive of using technology. Our engineers are working very closely with staff to do that. So we're looking forward to having those conversations with you as well.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Awesome. Thank you, Commissioner.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. My time is up. I appreciate you.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Councilmember.

Councilmember Richardson. Are you available?

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Yes, I am here, Mr. Chair. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

And thank you so much, Commissioner Williams and to your entire team, particularly to Deputy Commissioner Warren who I think I email, call or reach out to every day for an issue. I even did so this morning I will say. And to Crystal Jacobs Shipman and Noelle and everybody on your team,

we are so appreciative to you of the partnership and the work that you do together with us to serve our constituents. Know that it does not go unnoticed.

I can even recall one day I was driving coming south back towards Downtown. I was way up, but I'm not going to name the street, but every corner, every middle of the block it was something that needed to be picked up and it was not trash day. And so, after a while I just stopped calling because I was calling every other second and I just made note of every single address on my way all the way back down to City Hall area and sent it over to your department and you all have been responsive. So I just want to say thank you for that work and the work that we will continue to do on behalf of our constituents together.

Now, obviously I'm Chair of City Council's Committee on the Environment. And so, I wanted to ask a

question that's climate-related but also related to environmental justice, particularly as we think about our workforce. And I'm so grateful to our workforce and all of our sanitation workers for the work they've done over the last several years and always the work they've always done.

And I heard you state earlier in speaking with our Madam Majority Leader about the work we've done together around ensuring that our sanitation workers have enough boots after I went out with the crew down in Kensington. And I simply said, I want to go on a tour. But you all sent me down to Kensington, and I am so thankful and grateful for that experience to be with them. It is very hard work. It's not easy at all.

And so, I wanted to talk about something that I heard Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh talk about. He mentioned it when he came to Philadelphia recently, but it's

something that the Biden Administration recognized relative to significant risk that extreme heat poses to workers, and they called on OSHA to launch that rule-making process to develop a workplace heat standard and to create an enforcement initiative on heat-related hazards particularly for workers.

And so, I just wanted to know how you all from a Streets Department perspective were looking at that particular rule around heat exposure for workers and how you all are evaluating those new policies and procedures and how you're working with D.C. 33 and the leadership at D.C. 33 to ensure that we're protecting workers from heat-related illnesses?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes, that's great. I'm going to ask Deputy Commissioner Chris Newman to also weigh in because he oversees health and safety issues related to our workers. I will say as a general comment that the toughest part of the job for our

sanitation workers if you ask them is to work out in the heat, and Philadelphia has a high indices of heat that exacerbates sometimes over 100 degrees.

You can imagine the difficulty in terms of the work that they have to do as you experience directly first-hand. Thank you for that. The type of equipment they wear, ultimately the time of day they collect trash, all of those things that we look at when it comes down to heat-related emergencies. We definitely monitor when temperatures are in the red level. I think they have different zones in which they classify in which the City declares. And when it's out there, we make sure our employees are well-hydrated.

Ultimately, we try to get the trash up as early as possible so that in the dog days of the summer in the climax of the heat of the day, they're not exposed to it. But those are the things that we're trying to do to keep them safe. And Chris can ultimately weigh in

as well.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay. And I say that too because that's when I went out, it was the heat of the summer. I think it was July or something. So I wanted to know about how you all are looking at the new rule from the Biden Administration.

Good morning, Chris.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: Good morning, Councilmember. How are you doing?

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Good. How are you?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: Good. I'm actually not familiar with the Biden Administration rule that you're talking about so I'll have to look into it. But just echoing what the Commissioner just said in terms of what we're doing every summer for our laborers because they probably have the hardest job in the world, especially in the summer but just in general, is that we do make sure that the hydration of

them takes place and that's pretty much the most important thing during the hot weather days. And if there are indications that an employee is having some problems related to heat, we try to take care of that right away and get them out of their assignment and do something for them.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay --

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: But I will take a look at that.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Sure. And just to circle back, it's something new. Like I said, I heard Secretary Walsh talk about it when he came to Philadelphia the last time. And I just want to ensure from a City perspective that we have all of our ducks in a row relative to that new policy and just how we're thinking about our sanitation workers and workers in general in extreme heat environments.

The other piece I wanted to quickly talk about is the Bipartisan

Infrastructure package, and I've talked about this with a number of departments. We know that there are a number of grant opportunities available. I'm on the Local Government Advisory Committee for the U.S. EPA. In fact, I'll be in D.C. next month to talk about more of these issues.

The EPA has a program that's included in the Infrastructure package that will be around 75 million for reduction, reuse, recycle, education and outreach grants. It's just education and outreach. And local governments are eligible to apply for this opportunity. This particular grant is meant to improve material recycling, recovery management and reduction, so from that whole circular economy piece in Philadelphia reducing the amount of waste that is going into our waste stream. And also, just the overall effectiveness of a residential and community recycling program through education and through outreach.

And so, I wanted to talk about that grant opportunity. Are you all aware of that opportunity? Will you be applying for that opportunity and how are you thinking about recycling, reducing waste going into our waste stream in general?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: And thank you. Yes. And so, thanks for bringing that to our attention. First of all, Councilmember, we always appreciate your support and these issues are very critical to our department and the City when it comes down to managing our waste.

Number one, the grant opportunity I think Kyle our -- Kyle can probably discuss whether or not she has been aware of it. I know we're very interested in using those funds. She's definitely been the one that directs our 902 and 904 grants. So I'm going to ask Kyle to jump on in a moment to talk about it as well.

In general we did establish a

goal with our zero waste and litter goals to be zero waste by 2035. And we have an ambitious plan that we work with our Director Kyle and Scott McGrath to be able to address. Full waste and organic is a big component that we want to attack and address so that we can reduce and get closer to that goal of zero waste.

But real quickly, Kyle Lewis, if you can come on and address that grant that's available through the Councilmember's office that she mentioned.

MS. LEWIS: Good morning, everybody. My name is Kyle Lewis. I'm the Recycling Program Director with the Streets Department and I thank you all for this hearing today. And that is not a grant opportunity that we were aware of. We've been pursuing grants, continued grants through the recycling partnership for our recycling program.

But as you were speaking, Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson, I

certainly took note. And so, we'll look into that and see if that's an opportunity that we will pursue. So thank you for bringing that to our attention.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: And I heard the bell and I will honor the clock, but I will certainly send you over information, Kyle, directly relative to that opportunity. We get them in the weekly digest from the EPA, so I just wanted to make sure that you have that information and that we're going for that opportunity because it's all around education and information and sort of helping folks to help us with recycling because we recognize how expensive it is at this point. And I know we've worked with you and talked about this issue over time. And so, I just want to ensure that we have all those opportunities.

I'll come back on the second round with my last question. But thank

you again to the Sanitation Department, to your leadership, to all of your workers, the sanitation workers, D.C. 33, all of you. We thank you so much. We could never do the work that we do without you. So thank you very, very much.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank you, Councilmember.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Councilmember. I thought you were going to reclaim your time and just keep going on.

But one quick question before we go to second round. We had talked about this a year or so ago too about sidewalks and how we deal with the sidewalk issues and problems. And I know there was talk about maybe a sidewalk coordinator. Is that something that Streets Department is looking to do in the future, to try to come in and see how we deal with the issues of sidewalks that aren't safe to walk on and the challenges we have with enforcement

and/or compliance on that issue?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So I am aware that we have had some discussions on trying to identify someone. How far that discussion has gone, I'm not sure. I'll have to follow up with that, Councilmember. That is a big issue. Sidewalks currently right now are the responsibility of the property owners.

I understand that many people are challenged with trying to address this as a whole, so I think this is an issue that we probably need to have further discussion on and to see what we can do as a City collectively to try to help and assist in this area.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay. I think to start is to have some type of formation of a coordinator, somebody to start that process now to get that up and running so that we could see what it is that we maybe as Council can help with and what resources are necessary to deal with that challenge.

All right. I'm going to go on

to the second round. Councilmember Parker.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just when we thought no one was watching our exciting budget hearings, I got text messages from the Mount Airy Community Council and the Lawncrest Civic Association telling me I missed some thank yous during my first round.

I think I did hit Rich Montanez, but Faruq Scott, Smitty and Ray, Kisha Duckett, Patrice Nuble, Kristin Del Rossi, Chris Fountain, Nick Sensaruk, Mark Washington, Michelle Simmons, Scott McGrath and Waysa Che and David D., thank you all so much. I listen to my constituents, Commissioner. I don't play any games with those people.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I see, and thank you and those people for recognizing them. I'm sure my employees are very thankful and grateful.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Sure. I

want to go back to two issues. One, you heard me talking about those companies, businesses that dispose of their trash illegally, hence, building on our large problem with illegal dumping. But I also want to put the other side on the record, Commissioner. You remember when I first got to Council, one of the first pieces of legislation we worked on was requiring businesses who had dumpsters to have those dumpsters enclosed and locked.

And listen, for the sake of many of them who do it the right way and they close them in and lock them, we've seen folks literally get the big lock cutter and break the chain on the dumpster area and then they begin to compound the dumping that these private companies, many doing business on our neighborhood commercial corridors that they had already have to pay for, and they're not dumping on our sites. They pay for private trash collection.

So I also want members of the

viewing public to note that many of the businesses, and I've been unapologetic about advocacy for neighborhood-based small businesses and particularly on our neighborhood commercial corridors, they're doing the right thing, paying their fair share, but they're being impacted by this as well. So I want to you to comment on that, but I also want you to comment on something that you and I, we had a little tiff or two about a couple of years ago, and this was the issue of trash cans.

Now, depending on which commercial corridor you go in the 9th Councilmanic District, they're either telling you to remove the wire baskets or the Bigbellies or they're saying we want the wire baskets or the Bigbellies. Tell us where we are. Does it just differ based on the region that we're in, in the City of Philadelphia?

We are always going to advocate for both of them because they've worked in different areas in our District. And

is there any modern technology relative to waste baskets, the Bigbellies strongly compacting more that we don't know about? So if you could comment on those two things, that would be great.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure. Thank you, Councilmember. The trash cans are a double-edged sword as you've mentioned before. Their intentions are to do good and keep litter off the streets of Philadelphia. Sometimes they become eyesores for the community, because unfortunately, people believe that they're used for dumping locations and they become overrun with household trash, which is not the intent of a waste basket. It is supposed to be used for someone to place litter and trash that they've accumulated along the way into.

So we've worked with community residents, and I think you hit it right on the nose. When we have a strong community advocacy program that's willing to partner with us to maintain

those, they work extremely well. So we have in many neighborhood CDCs that said, hey, we're going to make sure that people don't dump on them, we're going to make sure that they don't become an eyesore. Then they're certainly effective and we're definitely supportive of placing them. There's a cost and we're looking at things like the Infrastructure fund to try to get additional ones in our neighborhoods and through the City.

We're also looking at grant programs to try to get ones on commercial corridors because we do think they do play a huge difference. Bigbellies is our choice of equipment. Because of the technology, we can monitor them via a website to see when they're full. Ultimately, we can make sure that they don't overflow with trash. So I think it's very important that we continue to invest in that, yes.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: The small business owners, Commissioner, who are

doing it the right way but people end up dumping there, any comment for those people who are doing it right, but are being victimized as well?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah, that's tough. Especially during the pandemic, they were kind of targets for people to bring their trash to when we were challenged with for excess trash. The best way I can continue to encourage them is to try to secure that location. Notify us. Our Sweep Unit goes out when that occurs so they won't get a citation for them actually not having a clean dumpster when they can show us that they keep it clean and others dump on there, and we can probably try to identify who the violators are, because usually they come from around the community or business in that area. And if we can identify them, we can cite them and not the property owner and try to address it.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank you so much, Commissioner. And Michelle

Brisbon, our Encroachment Supervisor, I forgot you. Charge it to my head and not my heart. Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Awesome. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Councilmember.

Councilmember Gauthier.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Hello again, Commissioner. I want to ask some questions about dumping. I want to follow up on Councilmember Domb's question to you about allowing smaller contractors to use our sanitation centers. I support that idea, and I also am wondering about if we could also have more flexible rules for the drop-off of bulk trash for residents which might also help with some of our dumping issue. What do you think about that?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure. That's something that I think we were asked to take a look at to see if the

small business contractors we can look at a fee. I think all of those are viable options so I'm very open to that. Because if it eliminates us having to go pick up on taxpayers' dime and we can charge a small fee, I think that makes a lot of sense.

Ultimately, we have to be careful of what we collect at drop-off centers because we can't take certain hazardous materials. Certain items are required by state to be recycled from contractors. Those are the things we have to pay attention and have to put protocols, but I don't think they're insurmountable that that's something that we can't at least consider.

If it gets too big, we probably will have to look at additional locations and that's sometimes tough in a development city like the City of Philadelphia where people don't want -- they'll say, not in my backyard. But ultimately, if they become too full, we would have to probably look at

additional locations where that can take place and happen, but we're certainly open to that conversation.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: What would be the timing of those kinds of policy changes?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So I think some of the things we have already tried to be very flexible with. So we used to didn't allow trucks into the drop-off center that were full. And many of them came with things that we do collect on households. I think we need to re-educate the public on what we do collect. We do take small amounts of material at the curbline that's packaged right. But I think when it gets beyond a household small project that they would do, then we need to consider that option as well.

I think we can do that fairly quickly. I don't want to overcommit and not have the infrastructure in place to be able to accept it and it becomes such a big program that we can't keep up

with. But I think we can do this pretty quickly if we start having the discussion and look at the policies of it.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. What is the process to collect and dispose of legally dumped tires and how much does this currently cost the City to handle?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Last year we collected about 200,000 tires. It's about $1 per tire so it cost us about $200,000 every year to collect illegally dumped material in the City of Philadelphia, tires that's dumped. We do have a processing contract. I'll let Keith, Deputy Commissioner Warren, come on and explain to you where we take them once we collect them. We have dedicated trucks. We can't throw them in the landfill. Again, that's one of the things we don't collect at landfills. We have to have a designated truck to take it to a processing facility.

Deputy Commissioner Warren, can

you talk briefly to the Councilmember about where they're located and how the process goes.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WARREN: Good afternoon. This is Deputy Commissioner Keith Warren.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good afternoon.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WARREN: The tire processing is located in Chester. And so, we take all the tires there.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. Do you have an idea of how much it would cost to clear the current backlog of illegal tire dumping inquiries and is there a plan for this?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I think the short dump crew that we're adding does include additional staff to be able to address tires as well. The two additional crews will ultimately give us twice as many resources to be able to get them much faster. I think we are challenged with keeping up with our

current service level agreement when it comes down to dumping and tires that are constantly dumped around the City. So I think those crews that the Administration is supporting in this budget will help us tremendously in making sure that we get those up as quickly as possible.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: But the fact remains we have many, many sites, many in my District where there's just piles of tires, right. And we've seen last year that they're highly combustible, they can catch on fire which also creates a huge public safety hazard. What is the City's plan to get up these tires? Do we have a sense of what it would take to really do this and to clear these sites?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: We can get you the number of crews that we need in terms of addressing them and cleaning them up. I think one of the things where it was initiated through City Council originally by the Zero Waste

cabinet was the tire legislation program where there were calls to dealers to be registered so that we can start tracking them and preventing them. I think that's the long-term goal and plan for the City to be able to stop these dumpers from happening in the first place.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. And I have to ask you since I have you here -- this will be my last question -- what is the status of installation for the cameras for the 3rd District dumping sites that my office allocated our ITEF funds for and we've been waiting for over a year? Can you answer that?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Good news on that front. Half on them -- I think we purchased 17 for your area. Half of them are currently up right now. And the other remaining will be up by the end of the month. We knew that question was coming and I told Rich to make sure that we had the timeline and table for those cameras to be installed,

because you're right, we apologize for the delays. We worked out the issues with OIT in terms of licensing, so they will be up and running by the end of the month.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: So they're up. Are they on?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So 10 of them are on and 7 of them have to be installed.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So 10 of them are working right now. Half of them are up and on.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: But we'll be in good shape by the end of the month?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes, you'll be fully up and running by the end of the month.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much, and thank you to Deputy Commissioner Montanez.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,

Councilmember.

Councilmember Sanchez, are you available?

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Yes, sir. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Commissioner. I want to talk a little bit about some of the policy again around planning for what we need versus what we have. Has there been any discussions about -- and I know there was a successful pilot that was done at Temple. We definitely want to work on some issues in Kensington given the challenges in Kensington. Has there been any thought of if we gave people trash cans as is done in many of suburban communities, what cost and what potential impact that would have on our litter index?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah. Actually a few years ago, and I'm sure that this cost may be inflated higher because of inflation now, when we looked at similar to what programs do out in the suburbs which is provide trash cans

and then limit the amount of debris to that can, which greatly reduces litter, overflowing cans, baskets, ripped-open trash cans. It cost about $8 million to do an entire area at the time in an entire city like Philadelphia. And then it was a maintenance contract program with River Pacific. I think that was the name of the company that we looked at to try to do this type of program. Scott McGrath can verify that as well.

We tried it. We tried a pilot program in Temple, as you know. In some neighborhoods it worked great. In some areas around the transient population it didn't because they abused it. They threw trash all around it. Ultimately, that doesn't work because they left trash out during the week. But the residents that was just north of that did great with it. They kept their trash can in a neat and orderly fashion.

I saw this program when we went to Baltimore up in certain areas of the City. They didn't have a place to store

trash. I think that's the biggest reason why we see residents illegally dumping because they don't want to keep it in their house, they don't have a yard where we collect from, it's very difficult to travel from. So giving them their option to have it stored on the sidewalk in a neat and orderly fashion does work, but you got to have the cooperation from communities and neighborhoods.

If they abuse it, it then has the reversal effect where it becomes sloppy litter-dumping neighborhoods. So we had to take those cans away from that block, but most of the other areas did very well with it. So I think it's a viable program that we can look at.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Yeah. I think we want to change the culture around Philthadelphia. I think we're going to have to be really bold. You heard from the hearing that you participated in last week. Again, outside of public safety this trash

situation is one of the complaints we hear the most, and I really do think we need to figure out not only piloting this, but what it would take for the City in its entirety to do this.

My understanding again from counties and other folks that do it, then you can properly buy trucks and other materials that better will add efficiency, right, to the trash pickup if we had a standardized way of doing this. Again, I'm interested and want to work with you and pilot something again in some of our more increased litter index areas.

I want to talk a little bit -- I know there's been a lot of discussion around LED lighting, again all of the nonpublic safety police-related issues. Can Commissioner Montanez speak to how long will it take us to be a fully LED city? And particularly, how do we prioritize those neighborhoods where we have a public safety challenge? Where are we in that?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ:
Good morning or good afternoon. I apologize. I'm not in Philadelphia. So as Commissioner Carlton Williams mentioned, we are doing a project with the ESCO. The current timetable for the ESCO is a proposed 30 to 36 months project to convert the entire City street light system to LEDs.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:
And are those prioritized based on public safety zones?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ:
So they will be prioritized based on that audit that ESCO is going to be doing. And also, we're going to overlay the High Injury Network and the high crime districts at the same time on top of them.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:
Okay. So you will be forwarding that to Councilmembers so we know what's coming up in our areas?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ:
Yes. We actually have a hearing about

the ESCO the 18th. So we will be in front of you guys to bring up the options that we're proposing. And at the same time, we will come in front of you once the ESCO is fully on board with the plan of how we roll out through the City.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Okay. Thank you. I know I heard the bell. So, Commissioner, as it relates to -- I asked this question earlier and I just want to clarify because I want to make sure that you guys submit this -- can you demonstrate to us in your budget how your budget will meet the expected calls that we have in the City?

So I talked about potholes. I guess this was supposed to be a zero-based budgeting that never happened in the City, but excuse me for asking this, but I think in this Department in particular this is one of the few years where we're making a significant increase and I want to advocate for more. Can you give us a chart that says

this is the complaints that we've gotten from 311 in the City and this is what we're budgeting for and if those things are correlated or where the gaps may exist as it relates to that? I think that will be helpful to us as we move forward with this budget. Again, thank you very much, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Absolutely. Thank you, Councilmember.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Councilmember.

I think our last Councilmember for questions unless we see another one is Councilmember Gilmore Richardson.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. I wanted to just ask a couple of questions and the remaining questions I have I'll submit for the record.

The first is if we could get a quick update on the city-wide zero waste goal that was set and sort of where we are with that and also, the organics

diversion feasibility study?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes. Scot McGrath is our Environmental Planning Director. He's on the line right now, and we can certainly give you an update and provide that data for you.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay.

MR. McGRATH: Yes. Good morning or almost good afternoon -- I guess good afternoon, Councilmember.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Hi, Scott.

MR. McGRATH: Scott McGrath, Environmental Planning Director of the Streets Department. Yes, as the Commissioner said, we have been working with the Sustainability Office over the last six months and kind of reconfiguring how we approach zero waste goals and we've been working closely with Christine Knapp and her team and working toward a goal to kind of redeveloping some very specific goals targeting different materials and items

that can be done in a practical manner on kind of a three- or five-year time frame.

We continue to work with Waste Management on trying to develop a process with them, which is part of our existing contract, to test the feasibility of extracting organics from mixed waste. They've worked with Temple and the Water Department has also been involved in this. They've done some benchmark testing with this process, and some of the results have been promising.

So we're continuing our discussions with the Water Department and Waste Management to look at ways that we can potentially implement something like this on a larger scale. We'll probably have to start it small, but it is starting to show some promise from a technical standpoint. So we're hoping in the next few years we can develop this at a larger scale.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay. That will be great.

We look forward to continuing to work with you, Scott and with the entire department. And just keep us updated on the progress. I only ask because we seek to support the Office of Sustainability in ensuring that they have the necessary resources to adequately be able to work with you all on all of these initiatives. Because you know typically what will happen is all of these lofty goals are set, but you all don't have the resources to get it done both from a Streets Department perspective but also from a Sustainability Office perspective where they have to coordinate with everybody, not just the Streets Department. So we just want to be in the loop so we can advocate for the necessary funding for all of you to be able to coordinate in a way that makes sense for these goals that have been set.

I have additional questions that I will submit for the record. I have to say I'm Chair of Council's

Committee on the Environment. And so, I get a number of the questions and concerns and the posts and people tag me on the posts and I'm inundated when I go out in the streets.

But I married into a family from the City of Chester in Pennsylvania. Actually, one of the largest families in the City of Chester. And so, they're all obviously very concerned about the waste management contract and just wanted to be up in the loop on any decisions that are made there, particularly if there's any success or any opportunities in the contract renewal process to look at how we can do things differently from the perspective of the City of Philadelphia as it has great environmental impacts on the very small city of Chester and the Commonwealth.

So thank you very, very much for your work. I look forward to continuing to work with all of you. I just have to say thank you, thank you,

thank you because we really could not do this work without you. We could not respond to our constituents that reach out to us constantly without the help of your team. And when we call, it's not that you all just say okay, we got it. You got it and you get it done and we appreciate that, okay. So I just wanted to say thank you, thank you, thank you to the team and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you. Thank you, Councilmember.

Any other questions, if we can just send them to Council President's Office, we can forward them over to Streets. We would like to start with the next panel.

Mr. McDermott, can you please call the next person to testify for Fire. Thank you, Commissioner Williams. Thank you for your testimony.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank you and thank all the Councilmembers.

We appreciate you guys. Thank you.

THE CLERK: The next witness to testify is Fire Commissioner Adam Thiel.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good afternoon, Mr. Thiel. Just state your name for the record and you can proceed with your testimony. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Adam Thiel. I'm the Fire Commissioner for the City of Philadelphia. Good morning, Chair Squilla and members of City Council. Joining me today are First Deputy Fire Commissioner Craig Murphy and our Chief of Staff Tara Mohr. I'm pleased to provide testimony on the Fire Department's Fiscal Year 2023 operating budget.

The mission of the Philadelphia Fire Department is to serve the public by providing comprehensive hazard prevention and risk reduction and emergency response and to ensure the health and safety of the PFD's members. Our plans for Fiscal Year 2023 include executing a FEMA smoke alarm grant to

install 20,000 additional and 192 adaptive smoke alarms, collaborate with external City partners to create a multi-disciplinary EMS unit, AR3 for responding to emergency behavioral health calls, develop and deliver critical building construction training funded through a FEMA grant, work with Fleet to continue replacing aged frontline apparatus and DPP stations, working with partner offices such as the Office of Human Resources and the Budget Office to continue to hiring new firefighter and paramedic cadet classes and creating a uniformed 911 center with police dispatch by relocating the Fire Communication Center to 400 North Broad Street. And with that, Chair, we will stand by for your questions.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Mr. Chair, we can hear you now.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay. All right. Thank you. Thank you for your

testimony. We do have some questions. I just have one quick question. I received an email from the Marine Unit about a dock that was being donated and installed. It seemed that there was some hold-up or something. Is that something that is obviously supported by the Fire Department in order to have a new dock located there? And do you know what the hold-up is of why that donation or installation has not happened?

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Councilmember, we certainly need a facility there, need a dock there. There's never been a dock. Right now there's sort of a tree log that acts as a bumper between the sea wall and the Marine Unit. I'd have to defer any questions about the specifics of the donation to DPP and/or the Law Department.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay. All right. But we do need that dock there. So hopefully, we can figure out whatever the challenges are in amenable time and

get that dock installed.

There's several questions by Councilmembers so I'm going to defer to them and then I'll come up at the end. It looks like in order we have Councilmembers Gilmore Richardson, Parker and Sanchez and then we'll go from there.

So, Councilmember Richardson.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. And thank you so much, Commissioner Thiel and to your team, to all of the Deputy Commissioners and to Derek Bomer and your entire staff. We certainly appreciate each and every one of you.

And I wanted to start by talking specifically about one of the darkest days we have ever had as a City with the Fairmount fire. And I have to put on the record that we appreciate not only the response, we recognize how difficult that scene was. But the way you all showed up to the services and

represented on behalf of the City I know was difficult how you interfaced with the family throughout the process.

I'm going to say as someone who is tangentially related to them, thank you on behalf of the family. What you all did was incredible. It was phenomenal service, and you treated the family as if they were your family. So I wanted to say thank you from the bottom of our hearts, from my heart and theirs to yours.

Secondly, I wanted to quickly talk about the firefighter preference, the three-point preference that Firefighter 1 position receives for all qualified applicants that complete the School District of Philadelphia's Fire and EMS Career and Technical Education Program. Do you know offhand how many applicants have used this preference and how can we continue to work together with all of you to engage young people in the program and encourage them to apply to the Department?

COMMISSIONER THIEL:

Councilmember, we don't have that number. We'd have to get that from the Department of Human Resources which we'll certainly do and make sure you get that. We're doing everything we can from a recruiting perspective. We actually exceeded our -- despite COVID, we exceeded our recruitment target for actually getting out there.

Thanks to Councilmember Parker and a lot of other partners, we have the 7800 Ogontz facility, very active right now filled with Explorers. We're having great experiences with the Randolph program. And look, I think we actually are being affected by the tight labor market right now so we're not seeing the numbers that we've seen in the past.

We're still good as far as numbers for firefighter EMTs. Paramedics is another story, but that's a national shortage as well. But we're really doing everything that we can to recruit, hire and train folks here for

the Fire Department. So we do hope that people will look at that program, all of these programs, whether it's the Explorers, Randolph. We have a lot of great programs, a lot of great folks who are working to make that happen. But as far as the actual specifics of the points and the civil service issues, those are questions for DHR.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Sure. And so, relative to vacancies and the work that you all have to do, I've heard you talk often about just how busy you are and the sheer volume of work in comparison to other large U.S. cities. What would you say is the most challenging position in your department to fill right now?

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Councilmember, that's a great question. I'm not sure I could pick just one. I would say that the two that are most challenging certainly paramedics and again, that's a national issue, and dispatchers which is also a national

issue. Our Fire Communications Center folks work incredibly hard. They're just amazing. The first of our first responders 24/7, 365 and that's a really difficult position to recruit, hire, train and retain folks.

And then paramedics, that's a challenge for every fire department that I know of, every department that delivers EMS. And we're continuing to look at options for hiring single role EMTs and making sure that we have a pathway for them to become what we call advanced life support providers and then continuing to skill up paramedics, supervisor ranks, et cetera. So we're hoping to get through some things with OHR and the Civil Service Commission so we can take advantage of some programs that we've created, and also go out there and continue to do the community EMT programs.

We had a couple of really successful pilots right before and at the very beginning of the COVID

pandemic. I'm hoping that we'll be able to have some of those funding partners line up again to help us do those community EMT programs because we really -- I think that's a great way for us to be able to get folks on board as either firefighter EMTs, EMTs, EMT advanced or EMT paramedics.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay. Great. That's helpful. And the last question I had was around smoke detectors. And so, after you have pretty large fire events, you usually get a significant uptick in calls for individuals who are looking for smoke alarms and smoke detectors. And so, if you could just give us an update on sort of where we are with that?

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Yeah, Councilmember, that's exactly what happened after the tragedy in Fairmount. We had already installed -- in December of '21 we installed more than 1,000 smoke alarms around the City. When that

tragedy occurred, we saw a spike in requests with 311 and then we had a another tragic incident in Kensington a week or so ago and we also saw a spike after that.

So we had a backlog from COVID of smoke alarm installations that was around 5,000. We have completely cleared that backlog because of these high profile events. And keep in mind, we had fire deaths. We had five fire deaths between the Fairmount and the Kensington fire tragically all around the City, none of these were multiple events.

Currently, we have a pending queue of around 3,000, 3500 installation requests. All of those really have come since January 5th and rest assured in between answering roughly 1,000 on average emergency incidents every day. Our firefighters are out there. Our Community Action Teams are there. Our Fire Prevention Division is out there installing smoke alarms as fast as we

can.

And also, with our partners like the Red Cross, we just did the Sound the Alarm event with them last Friday. So it's really all hands on deck to get those smoke alarms out there. And again, we would encourage folks to call 311. We can't guarantee when they'll be there to install it. There are a lot of variables that go into that. These are the same folks that are going to those fires and answering those emergency medical calls, but we will get there just as we've done and make sure that we keep up with that and get smoke alarms out there.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay. Great. Well, thank you for that update, Commissioner. And again, thank you for your work and to all the Deputy Commissioners and your team not only for your support of our community members and their darkest hours, but also for the work that you all do.

You were at a conference recently. You all have just shown up and have really been there. And we really appreciate the work that you do. So thank you very, very much.

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you. Thank you very much, Councilmember.

Councilmember Parker.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank you so much, Chairman Squilla and Commissioner Thiel.

Let me lend my voice to the choir. Councilmember Gilmore Richardson was Johnny-on-the-spot. You know, the public and we as laypeople, we run from fire and run from that danger, call you when we need you to help us during our most challenging hours, and you and members of your team and our firefighters, EMTs, paramedics, they show up on the spot. And I know you don't get thank you a lot, Commissioner,

but I want to say thank you.

I want to go back to Councilmember Gilmore Richardson's line of questioning relative to the smoke alarms and just wanted to say, one, thank you so much for ramping up the installation. I do want to recommend though that the Philly Counts group that helped during the Census, Commish, who they were going door-to-door in neighborhoods that we were having a real challenge with getting people to complete the Census and they were really helpful. So if you haven't, that is a vehicle if, in fact, possible that I would include in that process to help you.

Also, a special thanks to my team and one of my newest members Dillon Mahoney. He's formerly in Councilmember Johnson's office. He as a new member of my team paid attention to detail and they know that I am adamant about acknowledging publicly the work of my engines. And since I've been here, he

said I know I'm going to hear her Engine Nos. So 63, 64, 70, 71 and 73 which is where I live and the neighborhood that I've been in all my life, special shout-out to each of you. We appreciate the work that you do, and we'll try to get some donuts or something around to you whenever we can.

Commissioner, walk back through for me, if you will, you mentioned it, talk to us about what's happening at 78th and Ogontz Avenue. When we started there, we were thinking about workforce development. We were thinking about the pipeline. All of a sudden we're in the midst of COVID. We are advocating for neighborhood-based locations that people can trust, encouraging folks who were really, really questioning whether or not they should get vaccinated. And you and your department stood up that center. And not just that it was a center in the neighborhood, but it was in pristine condition. It was clean, the structure, the organization. How

did you do it and tell the people in the City of Philadelphia what's happening with the Fire Department at 78th and Ogontz Avenue?

COMMISSIONER THIEL:

Councilmember, appreciate that. Really a team effort that sort of I guess arose from a very brief conversation that we had about our need. Our Fire Academy is very constrained. There's a master plan that kind of reflects we need $80 million to $90 million of capital funding to get our Fire Academy up in the Northeast in the condition it needs to be for us to get throughput of training firefighters, paramedics, EMTs that we need to really catch up and build the Department to the level that we need to offset overtime and also deal with service demand.

So we really had a requirement for another facility, another place that we could get out, and we also had -- our Recruitment Office used to be in a high-rise building, on the 7th or 8th floor

of a high-rise building where nobody could find it. And those folks were out there on the streets every day driving around.

There's a reason that the military recruits -- if you go up North Broad, you'll see military recruiters at street level where they need to be for walking traffic. So the real genesis of this was to put our Recruitment Unit out where they needed to be, in the community, in the neighborhood where folks could access them. We also moved our EMS Regional Office out there, that office actually, on behalf of the state. The Commonwealth regulates the private ambulance providers that do innercity transports.

And we also, and this was heartbreaking for me, we had to turn away candidates for our Explorers program the first year that I got here, and that was just heartbreaking. So I didn't want to ever have to do that again. And it took us a couple of years

to get this facility put together. Again, Mount Airy Church of God in Christ has been great to us as our landlords. The Health Department is a principal partner there. You and your office, our former Deputy Commissioner Shonique McCall, so many people threw into this effort.

It was so appropriate that we kicked that off with a vaccination event, and we continue to do that. I mean, we're still there. We've been doing vaccinations off and on. But now it really has transitioned a lot to a training facility to support our Explorers, and we're excited to start community EMT programs there as well, potentially also using that as a location to train single role EMTs that were going to move through to become advanced EMTs to help address our shortage of advanced life support providers.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Well, thank so very much, Commissioner, just

for getting that on the record for the benefit of the people of Philadelphia, so that high-rise building that you referenced where that training was occurring and no one could get there is now easily accessible. We have the Cheltenham and Ogontz bus transportation system right there. The 6 bus, the C bus, the 22 bus, so it's very easily accessible. So thank you for that.

I also have a question and this one is really off the cuff. When you mentioned an $80 million capital needed to get the Fire Academy at the level and in the condition that you would need it to be, I'm thinking to myself heavy number, but we need to get there. And I'm thinking about it because this past week I traveled with Ryan Boyer who's head of the Philadelphia Building Trades. We were at the carpenter's training site.

And I went through, they had all of these different students, apprentices there competing in a program

relative to everything that carpenters do. But there was a company there that allowed us to sort of put on goggles and it gave you a real-life simultaneously just real experience. We were literally walking high on beams trying to weld things together. And when they were explaining the technology that they use, they said, also think about a firefighter. And I was like, wow, I never thought about it. They said that kind of technology is also used at different centers across the country to train when you are preparing to get through the academy.

So I said, well, I want to ask the Commish. They're coming up next week. Do we use that kind of technology when we're going through training at our academy?

COMMISSIONER THIEL: We use some simulation, computerized simulation training for driving, emergency vehicle driving. Candidly, the VR -- I've experienced some of that virtual reality

training. For the firefighting that we do -- and this is the interesting thing about it, in a fire you can't actually see anything. So you're just as well to put on a blindfold and there's your VR experience because you can't necessarily see or hear anything.

For us the real essence of that experience in our burn building where you can feel the heat, the smoke is around you. Again, very difficult job. So certainly we look at all of these technologies that come through, and we're hopeful that as we're able to start getting through that master plan -- and DDP's been a great partner in that. We all understand the constraints on capital funding, so our burn building is back in service. We're gradually and slowly moving through that plan so we can upgrade. And then maybe as those technologies advance, we can take advantage of some of that too.

COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Well, thank you so very much, Commissioner,

for your response. And I just want to put on the record that I want to advocate strongly for us to have the capital dollars needed to ensure that all of our trainees have the ability to have the best training as possible to do one of the most dangerous jobs here in the City of Philadelphia.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Madam Leader.

Councilmember Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Good afternoon, Commissioner. Thank you very much.

Let me not waste this opportunity to shout out the first Latino Captain, CeCe Ortiz who runs that Explorer program up there. Thank you so very much to the Councilmember for the --

COMMISSIONER THIEL: And does a lot of other things for us too.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: A lot of -- they have great swag. We help them fundraise every year, and I'm always just super impressed at the quality of the young people and how serious they take it, so congratulations.

I want you, if you can, to submit this for the record. Since you've come on board, you came from outside and you brought in a very fresh perspective and you've been incredibly open to our conversations around diversity and inclusion. If you could submit this, in your budget presentation you have numbers around new hires and others. But if you can submit what is, in fact, kind of the diversity plan that you have and how is it informing not only your hiring and your recruits, but promotions and employment strategy. I want to briefly talk about it, but I want to make sure that people are seeing progress and feeling the diversity progress in your department. If you

briefly want to talk about that.

COMMISSIONER THIEL: I appreciate that, Councilmember. Obviously, it's been a priority for me now for six years literally since day 1. And we have moved the needle. If you look at those numbers, we were around 30 percent minority in the organization when I got here. We're around 40 percent now. We still have a long ways to go. We have a lot of work to do.

In terms of women in the Department, we know the national average is around 3 percent. We're at 12 percent. Again, a long way to go. So I mentioned what we've done with recruiting, with the Explorers. For us a lot of the opportunities are in other departments. The way that our hiring and promotional processes work, that's done by the Office of Human Resources. We have very little direct involvement in that. I should say though they're incredible partners and we work very closely. We have worked together to

change the way that we do initial testing, and I think that has been part of our success.

We've really doubled down, tripled down on recruitment and making sure that we're out there where we need to be talking to folks and maybe in particular I think, giving folks a perspective on the Fire Department as a set of different career opportunities where that might not have ever been on anyone's mind before. So the community EMT classes, everything kind of falls into this. We are making progress. There's a long way to go.

We're also working internally. We have our team work leadership and communications program. We're rolling out the second phase of that, and that really is about making sure that we have an inclusive work environment. That's really critical. Everybody has a feeling of belonging here and part of the organization.

And, look, this is a big

organization so I can't guarantee that everybody feels the way we want them to feel at work. I promise you that's the goal and we're going to commit resources to that as we continue to answer an average of 1,000 emergency incidents every 24 hours.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: So I know that a lot of the promotion is based around testing and so forth, and we've had the conversation. And again, this is not a reflection of the HR Department, but we're subscribing to these testing modules and you and I had the conversation about EMTs. I don't want us to be in a situation where we're hiring people, paying people to administer stuff and then it goes badly and then we say, well, it was out of our control.

We got a lot of complaints in the last testing. What review did you do with the last testing and what improvements should we expect in the one and what do we need to do to help with

that, right? I got calls the day of the testing that people couldn't finish their test. So what improvements are we going to do for the next round because this is so important?

COMMISSIONER THIEL: So, Councilmember, I really can't answer the question about the test. That's OHR and their testing vendor. We do have input to that -- and look, I think the biggest input that we had, the testing vendor last time, and again, this was a challenge for everybody. We didn't want to fall behind anymore on our staffing level so we really needed to go ahead and have a test even though we were in I think at that time the Omicron peak of COVID-19.

That testing vendor initially came in and their idea was to do all of that completely online in online testing. And folks would have to go find a computer, and we just didn't think that was appropriate at all. So we really pushed them, our former Deputy

Commissioner Crystal Yates and our whole team here and OHR working with the vendor as well, pushed them to make sure that we had physical locations where folks could go to take that test. And 7800 Ogontz and Recruitment Unit was one of those locations. We turned that into a physical testing site.

Look, I don't think that's the ideal way to do this. I'm hopeful that we will be out of a pandemic the next time we will have to do a test. We had better results than we expected in terms of the diversity profile of that test. The points have a lot to do with that. The pionts application. And again, Councilmember Gilmore Richardson mentioned that. That's a civil service thing. So there's a lot that goes into this.

The piece that you and I have talked about that I also want to mention is the way our promotional testing processes work. And I think there's a lot of opportunity there to look at more

holistic approaches, and that's just a bandwidth issue that OHR has and that we have. And hopefully, as resources become less constrained -- look, we're a big department so we're testing sometimes hundreds of people for first-line supervisor. You can imagine how expensive that is if you're really doing a hands-on testing model. So we've had a lot of conversations about that. Mike Z. and his team has been amazing. We want to keep -- we're going to keep working on it. We have a ways to go.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: No, I appreciate that. And I will absolutely continue to push, you know, we pay these vendors, these testing modules cannot become obstacles for accessibility for these communities who have been historically marginalized, right. The diversity of the Department, particularly for safety purposes, right, when you talk about language minority communities. This is about the safety

for residents, but it's also about the safety for firefighters and that is reflective on there.

And I don't want to be beholden to tests and testing vendors that we're paying and saying that is a problem. So I just want to make sure that we recognize that and I will absolutely put on the record for OHR, I want folks to have these vendors to do the job we need them to do, not what is easiest for them. We're having the challenge as we move away from COVID in terms of not everybody is connected. A lot of us we're very privileged that we're connected, but not everybody is connected and we want to make sure that is accessible.

And then finally, I want to talk to you because again after the fire in Kensington, we talked briefly about the smoke detectors and so forth. Engine 25 in Kensington is one of the busiest, right, engines. We have a special team out there because of our

opioid challenge and so forth.

How do we make sure with those backlogs for those communities who don't have the time because they just don't have the time, right, how do we make sure that we're going to be able to get to respond to those communities from -- and moving away from just the traditional, I want to make sure people and again, I don't want to point the finger or whatever, but the reality is that all the EMTs and all the firefighters in Kensington are super busy, right. That's why we have the extra resources over there. How do we make sure that we can equitably serve those around fire alarms?

COMMISSIONER THIEL:

Councilmember, I appreciate it. I really want to reiterate the responsibility of ensuring that there are working smoking alarms in homes is the responsibility by ordinance of the homeowner and if you're a landlord, by the landlord. So this is a value add

service that the Fire Department provides because we are the ones who have to deal with the tragic consequences when there are not working smoke alarms.

We provided that for years, great tribute to my predecessors. We have literally installed millions of dollars in smoke alarms. We've installed almost 50,000 smoke alarms all across the City in the past five years, 50,000. It is extremely frustrating as I'm sure everybody has seen that we're still going to homes that don't have working smoke alarms.

So we're doing this as a service, as part of our mission. We're happy to do it. If you can afford smoke alarms, please go buy them and install them yourself. If you can't afford smoke alarms, please call 311 and we will come out as soon as we can.

Engine 25 is the busiest engine in Philadelphia Fire Department. There are no not-busy engines in the

Philadelphia Fire Department compared to our peer jurisdictions. The busiest ambulance in the entire United States is here in Philadelphia, not that city to the north, not the cities to the west. So it's the same workforce that is doing this.

So you can imagine we can't schedule a smoke alarm -- well, we can try to schedule smoke alarm installations. But if we're scheduled at 3 o'clock and a fire goes out at 2:58, we're going to the fire. Our members are going to the fire. As you saw, incredible response to that fire in Kensington, two minutes. Same thing with the fire in Fairmount.

That's what you expect us to do. That's what our residents, businesses and visitors expect us to do. That's our priority. That's always going to be our priority. Smoke alarms are critically important. We also want to remind people to close their doors at night. Close before you doze. We have

our Community Action Teams that I created five years ago that are doing survivor support most of all. We've had almost 400 families displaced from their homes this year so far. It was 2,000 families last year.

We started by piloting one Community Action Team. It was so busy we created three. They're doing the survivor support in between the fire and the Red Cross. And the Red Cross House, they're not being able to install -- they're so busy. We had hoped they could install more smoke alarms than they've been able to also because they're so busy taking care of folks.

So we're going to continue to do this with all of our partners. Again, one of the busiest fire departments, top three fire departments busy in the nation. And that's just about resources. And we're very thankful for the reinvestment that we've gotten over the past six years, to Mayor Kenney, to Council for doing that. Our

service demand has continued to increase. And again, in terms of fire duty and fire deaths, tragically we're a national leader and we're a place we don't want to be a national leader. So we'll keep doing everything we can do 24/7, 365 to address Philadelphia's fire problem.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Thank you, Commissioner, so very much. And like I said, we tapped, you know, Neymar Brown and every -- you guys are on our roadshow when we're out in the neighborhoods and we greatly appreciate it, and we know that this is not an issue of not wanting to do it. It's an issue of resources and time. And so, we appreciate all your service.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you. I see Councilmember Clarke -- Council President Clarke is back, so he'll be taking over. I think Councilmember Bass is next, but I'm sure the Team has sent

you the list. So thank you, Councilmember President Clarke. Welcome back.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir. And thank you so much for filling in. Really appreciate it.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Happy to help out.

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Good afternoon, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: How are you doing, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Doing well. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Chair recognizes Councilwoman Bass.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You're welcome.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good afternoon, everyone.

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Good afternoon.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good

afternoon, Commissioner. How are you?

COMMISSIONER THIEL: I'm well. How are you?

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm good. I just had a couple of questions. Most of my questions were really answered. I did want to talk about smoke detectors because obviously the backlog is troubling, and I know that you guys do -- let me just say I think you guys do a great job. There's only certain people that will run into a building when everyone else is running out of it. And so, we have to recognize the hard work that you guys do and thank you for it.

But going back to the smoke detectors, some of my questions were already answered. I guess the only thing that's remaining is, is it possible for you to provide us with a list by District of what the outstanding list of smoke detectors installations are just so we can have some sort of a sense of is it heavier in my District,

is it only a few, just to have a sense of exactly what you guys are up against and if there are any opportunities to help you remedy that, we would like to do that?

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Councilwoman, I appreciate it. Again, to be really clear, we don't have a backlog. We had a backlog coming out of COVID. That backlog has been cleared. All of the installations that we have pending are since January of this year.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

COMMISSIONER THIEL: And again, all of that has to be done -- so that list is changing I hope -- I know there are many people who are watching this broadcast right now, and I hope many of them are calling 311. So those will go into our queue. Again, it's not a backlog, they're calling today. So that number is constantly changing. And frankly, we don't have the bandwidth to do that kind of analysis.

All of our resources are out

towards going to these incidents and getting smoke alarms out there. We just don't have the bandwidth to do that kind of analysis. I think the short answer is we have smoke alarm requests in every Councilmanic District and we are going to be out there as much as we can, as fast as we can to make sure that our pending queue does not become a backlog.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. All right. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Councilwoman, thank you.

Chair recognizes Councilman Domb.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you, Council President.

And good afternoon, Commissioner Thiel.

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Good afternoon.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: And thank you to you and your department really for

the excellent response times and great work you've been doing. I have two or three quick questions for you. One is around the fact that we know you have an extremely busy EMS unit, one of the busiest I understand in the country. So I know we're very happy to see that we're investing in new dispatch technology and patient care software that will hopefully make this work easier on our firefighters and EMS units.

I also saw we're building out alternative response EMS teams to respond specifically to behavioral health and opioid abuse calls. How is our new technology going to help prioritize our EMS response times? And I know with medical response prioritization not all response times are created equal. Hopefully, our dispatching technology helps us to respond faster to heart attacks, for example, than responding to paper cuts as an example.

So is it possible for you to send us reporting that breaks down response times by whatever categories the Department uses to prioritize dispatching like 2018 through '22, if that's possible to send to us?

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Councilmember, that would be very difficult with the technology we have available. Also, all of that would have to be sanitized and run past the HIPAA attorneys because it has geolocations in it, so that would be a real challenge. So let me extend a couple of your points. Every response unit in the Philadelphia Fire Department, all of them, are EMS response units.

Every fire engine, every ladder truck has at least one EMT, emergency medical technician, on board. And that's why a frequently asked question, I called 911 for an ambulance, you sent a fire engine. We send the closest available unit to every incident to make sure that somebody is there who can help

start providing patient care. Our ambulances, our medic units are very busy. Again, that's why we have the busiest in the nation.

And also frankly, we're not able -- honestly, we're not able to prioritize incidents. The ambulance that you get, the medic unit you get is the closest available medic unit. We are doing much better. We've added -- again, thanks to the Mayor and thanks to you all, we've added 10 peak time medic units in the past six years. We probably could have added 20 if we could find the paramedics to do that work, because really you're just getting the next available medic unit that is probably racing to clear a patient, do their patient care report and get back out on the street to take that next incident. So the notion of prioritization and triage, that's not the reality given our resource constraints right now.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay --

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Those data would be meaningless even if we could produce them.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: All right. The other question I have, I saw that Dominick Mireles was appointed as the new OEM Director last month --

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Yes, happily. He's a great person.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: So that's great news. I also want to thank you. You filled that role through several hurricanes, snowstorms and refinery explosions. And thank you for your service in filling that role, and good luck and congratulations to the new Director. And I know there were some emergency management best practices developed after 911 that said OEM Management should be separate from both the Fire and Police Department to allow for better organization during the hazard and emergency events.

Is that what we did with the appointment of Director Mireles or is

OEM technically housed in the Managing Director's Office or Fire Department?

COMMISSIONER THIEL:

Councilmember, OEM is housed in the Managing Director's Office now, so that was a temporary -- and again, keep in mind my first job title is Deputy Managing Director, so arguably not much changed except now which is really important the OEM Director reports directly to the Managing Director, which I think that is the sort of -- that's the real underlying idea behind those regulations.

I'm not sure -- again, from my experience around the country doing a lot of different things, I'm not sure that really is a best practice necessarily. I think if you were to talk to some of the emergency management trade groups, they would say that's a best practice. In my experience, the answer to that is it depends. The best way to organize a particular city or county's public safety functions depends

on that particular city or county. If you've seen one, you've seen one.

I do think for us I am ecstatic that Dominick is the new OEM Director. He did an incredible job. Carolyn Caton, his Deputy now, amazing job. We had amazing support from our Managing Director and his team and from the Mayor. But we all think for now this is the right way to be organized to have that separate OEM Director in the Managing Director's Office reporting directly to the Managing Director.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Last question, Commissioner: You're clearly our leading expert on fire safety and we've seen some unfortunately tragic fires recently. So what kind of safety codes, laws or policies do you think would be most effective in preventing the tragic fires we've seen?

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Councilmember, you're very kind to say that. I'm not sure I would call myself an expert in anything. However, while I

might be the City's leading expert, there are so many factors that go into fire safety and we in the Fire Department control precisely zero of those factors.

The real keys to having a fire-safe city are ensuring that folks in their homes are being careful with cooking, heating, smoking, open flames and electricity in the City of Philadelphia. We deliver that prevention, that outreach. Please check out our website, phila.gov/fire to get those prevention tips. Our Fire Prevention teams are out there 24/7 putting information out there.

As we're fond of saying fire is everyone's fight. We really need our residents, businesses and visitors embracing this, being careful with fire, closing their door at night, having smoke alarms. We really need building owners and landlords to help us create safe buildings. Also, our partners at L&I, L&I of course has the Charter-

mandated responsibility here to do fire and building code enforcement promulgation here in the County of Philadelphia. That's not the Fire Department's responsibility. We provide some expertise to L&I. I know L&I as we would, would love to do more and would love to see a different profile for our fire losses, deaths, injuries and displacements.

So, look, honestly the short answer to your question is we really need everyone to embrace this fire. It's everyone's fight. It's not just a tagline. So please -- fires are burning hotter and faster than ever before. Our firefighters as everybody will risk their lives and sometimes pay the ultimate sacrifice to get in there and do everything they can to make a rescue.

The simple reality and you're seeing this with the outcome of these tragic fires, the fuel packages in today's homes are so much more dense, there's so much more heat production

from those, and that's a simplification, but a lot of that research is happening right next door, so we are truly in a front row seat for that research. And unfortunately, we're seeing the tragic results of that here.

So as great as our firefighters and medics and dispatchers and fire marshals are and as fast as we are, it's just all too often it's too late. So please be careful to be fire safe in your homes, businesses, for building owners and others who are responsible for safety in those buildings. Look, we know that sometimes it's expensive. And for us, every life really matters. I know it's the same. This is the City of Brotherly and Sisterly Love, so we really need folks to express that more when it comes to fire safety.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. And thank you, Commissioner. And thank you to your department for all your excellent work on our behalf.

Thank you. Thank you, Council

President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

Thank you, Councilman.

I do not believe that there is anyone else queued up for Round 1. So with that being the case, we're going to take a break until 1:50. So we're going to recess until 1:50 and we'll come back for the Department of Corrections testimony.

So, Commissioner, thank you so much. Thank you and your team for your work. We appreciate you being here today to testify.

COMMISSIONER THIEL: Thank you, Council President. Thank you all.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: And thank you, Councilman Squilla.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you and see you this afternoon.

(Afternoon recess.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

Thank you very much and good afternoon to all. We will now reconvene this morning's hearing. This morning we had

the Department of Streets and the Fire Department, and we will now have the Department of Corrections.

And on behalf of the Department of Corrections, Mr. McDermott, who do we have to testify?

THE CLERK: Our next witness is Blanche Carney, Commissioner.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good afternoon, Commissioner. How are you?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: I'm well. Good afternoon, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good. Good. State your name for the record and please proceed with your testimony and we can get started.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank you, Council President. My name is Blanche Carney, Commissioner of the Philadelphia Department of Prisons. And joining me today is Deputy Commissioner Xavier Beauford. And I'm pleased to provide testimony on the Department of Prisons' Fiscal Year 2023 operating budget.

Our mission of the Philadelphia Department of Prisons is to provide a secure correctional environment to detain accused persons convicted or alleged of illegal acts and to prepare them for re-entry into society in a clean, lawful, humane and safe environment. The PDP offers training, educational services, parenting classes, substance use services, medical services, behavioral health therapy and counseling, individual and group therapy.

To ensure successful re-entry and to elevate the City and the PDP's focus on re-entry, we continue our partnership with the Office of Re-entry Partnerships which was created by the Managing Director's Office as the umbrella agency to coordinate, maintain and expand public-private partnerships across the City to ensure linkages to community services post-release and replacing the former RISE office.

PDP working with ORP will

ensure that there is a continuum of re-entry services for people incarcerated after PDP. This partnership will play a critical role in the City's efforts to reduce recidivism as criminal justice reform in Philadelphia evolves to focus on community reinvestment and re-entry. Plans for Fiscal Year 2023, the Department will continue to support the Administration's goal of criminal justice reform and reinvestment in the community by working with the Office of Re-entry Partnerships for pre-release engagement and post-release services to support successful re-entry.

The Office of Re-entry Partnerships serves again as the lead for the City. Our re-entry efforts were expanded and most fines and fees, example, commissary processing fee, check processing and notary fees were eliminated. These fees and fines greatly impacted marginalized incarcerated people and their community

which often provide financial support during incarceration.

PDP increases provision of additional free phone time for calls and virtual visits in support of reducing cost for incarcerated individuals and their families and friends. These financial changes align with the Administration's efforts to reduce poverty and increase equity for services. PDP experienced an increase in the incarcerated population over the past two years of the pandemic.

In partnership with the criminal justice partners First Judicial District, District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office and the Sheriff's Department, we continued our efforts to safely reduce the prison population by consistently modifying our applicable policies to align with CDC guidelines, which allow for incarcerated individuals to be transported to court.

As a result, we have recently had a higher number of incarcerated

individuals being transported to court. These efforts have been coupled with PDP's continually providing information for targeted populations, such as incarcerated individuals who have served their minimum sentence, medically fragile, 60-plus years of age who are charged or sentenced for nonviolent offenses for release consideration.

PDP continues to work with the First Judicial District to make incarcerated individuals available for inperson and virtual hearings. We can expect the combined efforts of the criminal justice system will continue to safely reduce the population through case disposition for county and state sentences and releases as determined by the court. Thus, we have begun to see a slow reduction of the population, a decrease in the pretrial population and an increase in the sentence population as determined by the court.

The PDP is a 24-hour a day carceral operation, which requires

continuous staffing and routine upgrades to modernize infrastructure to its facilities and equipment, and the PDP is experiencing staffing challenges similar to nationwide trends and corrections. PDP will continue to address efforts to fill vacancies and increase retention accordingly.

PDP was not exempt from the supply chain issues which delayed the lock replacement by several months and beyond its control. PDP is pleased to report new locks were received in November 2021 and January 2022, and we commenced both projects. And we are pleased to report that for Riverside Correctional Facility 384 locks have been replaced and installed. That is the entire facility, completed ahead of the June 30, 2022 schedule. Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Facility, we completed 576 new locks of the 600 locks and we have 24 locks to go, well ahead of schedule.

Our spending largely stems from

policies, professional standards and operational priorities established by our contracted medical, behavioral health, food maintenance contracts and associated staffing costs for the respective collective bargaining agreements.

Our budget supports required services for the incarcerated population and aligns with our operational goals of providing services such as food, medical, behavioral health and ensuring the maintenance of our facilities while pursuing the resumption of full operation. Our plan for Fiscal Year '23 and beyond are broad-based, considered most areas throughout the Prison Department and support our primary goal, which include house on average 5,000 incarcerated individuals throughout Fiscal Year '23, ensuring meals, education, programming, medical services as completed.

Continued onsite COVID-19 testing and vaccination for staffing and

incarcerated population, continue to provide medication-assisted treatment to all opioid-addicted incarcerated individuals, continue to effectively link all medication-assisted treatment patients to community and EMT providers upon release, continue to provide Hepatitis C treatment linkage program, improve continuity of care by enrolling all eligible incarcerated individuals and medical assistants, continue our efforts to complete implementation of the federal lowest possible cost 340(b) pharmacy arrangement, continue making post-release appointments for chronically ill-sentenced individuals with community providers, continued utilization of Class 100s to fill vacancies and reduce overtime costs, continue phase reopenings to full operations by expansion of inperson civilian visits and programs and to continue to provide correctional staff with professional development and continuing educational opportunities.

This will allow the PDP to maintain the highest level of professionalism among its correctional staff, supporting current theories and practices while interacting with incarcerated individuals and their personal safety.

The proposed funding requests for Fiscal Year '23 general funding totals $246,068,033. A decrease of $5,334,707 over Fiscal Year '22 estimated obligation levels. This decrease is primarily due to the reduction of the additional support we received for COVID-related care for incarcerated persons inclusive of testing and medical services, PPE and contraband detection scanners.

The reduction was due -- we anticipated based on the infection rate of the COVID-19 pandemic that we would require the 14 million. However, we continue to mitigate the spread inside of our facilities and that money has been returned back to the General Fund. The proposed budget includes

$135,495,470 in Class 100. And that is a 1.6 increase over Fiscal Year '22. This funding was added to support wage increases in addition to provide funding for additional correctional officers.

$104,697,211 in Class 200. A 6.1 decrease from Fiscal Year '22. This was for the funding for the COVID response treatment and we explained that we thought we projected we would need that much funding, but we continue to mitigate COVID-19 inside of our facilities. 4,674,595 in Classes 3 and 4, that's an $824,000 decrease from Fiscal Year '22. The funding had previously been allocated for the purchase of contraband detection scanners and COVID PPE. The justification was submitted for additional funding to expand the contraband detection scanner investment. And $1,201,757 in Class 500, level with Fiscal Year '22. This funding is provided for inmate work pay compensation. And I am happy to take

questions, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner. And thank you for the work you do. We know you've had a challenging last couple of years. In your line of business, it's been a challenge for a while just generally given what you do. So we want to thank you so much for you and your team and all the COs and all the other support staff for the work they do.

You referenced your Class 100, and I see in your budget you said you get 1.6 million additional for wage increases and additional correctional officers. Can you break that down? How many additional correctional officers can you get as a result of this? Because it doesn't seem like, 1.6 -- it's a lot in the overall scheme of things, but it's not a like lot.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank you, Council President. That will get us 180 additional correctional officers

added to the complement.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

Really?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

Okay. Cool. So with respect to that issue, the staffing challenges that we have all had, some more than others, you more than most, if we're adding additional dollars for additional staffing, have we solved the problem with staffing up under the existing budget and to fund the current level of positions? I think we have for security and operations, we have like 1900. I guess my question is if we need more money, that's fine, but why are we adding additional dollars if we can't staff up based on our current budget?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: That's a fair question. So the 180 positions were part of the lawsuit that was added above our current complement. We still must continue to do all that we can to onboard and attract folks back to

Corrections. In Philadelphia and nationwide the attrition rate in Corrections has skyrocketed over the course of the pandemic.

Our classes are much smaller than we had prepandemic. When folks were interested in Corrections, it was a viable -- it still is a viable career, but we have to attract folks back. We are working tirelessly to really sell the benefits of being in Corrections as a correctional officer, the employment opportunities, the benefit opportunities and most importantly, the pension opportunity. But what we're up against and we'll continue to do our due diligence is we have to counteract a lot of the negative coverage that we've received.

Corrections is part of the law enforcement community that has been impacted and those folks have assessed and done self-evaluations and moved on, but we still have to engage and onboard. What we changed in our strategy was we

partnered with PhilaWorks and PA CareerLink, and we're doing print ads, we're doing radio ads. We're partnering with our colleges, universities, faith-based communities to get the information out to individuals to attract them back, but it is an uphill challenge, but we're doing all that we can.

We currently have 47 cadets in the academy. Our classes are much smaller. Prepandemic we average 50 per class, but our response to the position has also seen a decrease. So we're doing all that we can to work with the Office of Human Resources. We have an upcoming job announcement May 16th through the 27th, and we partnered with them to get us the QR code so folks can just click. We're on social media getting those announcements out.

These two small classes, 27 are expected to finish in June; 20 in July. We also have two upcoming job fairs: Saturday, May 14th, 9:30 to 3:00, and that is the Diversity Law Enforcement

Career Fair that's sponsored by Commissioner Outlaw. The Police Department will join with other law officials. Also, we have Friday, June 17th 9:30 to 1:00. That's the 15th Annual Neighborhood Job Fair and Resource Village. And both events -- I'm going to take the opportunity to get this in -- 1816 North 15th Street, but we will continue to do all that we can to increase our staffing numbers.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. All right. I'm going to -- I'm still not clear why you need the additional 1.6 if you can't staff up with the existing budget.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: The 1.6 is to cover the positions that were in agreement under the litigation. So it's --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So it's more than that. So in spite of the -- so you basically don't have a choice. You still have to fund the positions even though you can't actually

put people in those positions?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: That is correct.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. I'm just saying that's not your fault. The court said do it so you got to fund it, although we have challenges filling positions. Okay. I got it clear.

With respect -- what's going on with the House of Corrections facility?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: The House of Corrections is decommissioned. We use what we call the administrative portion of the building, which is the front. But no population is there, but we are maintaining it.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. I know last year I think I asked you the same question and I know you were using it for administrative functions. But it's still a cost associated with maintaining the facility and the entire grounds. Is there a plan to ultimately dispose of the property?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: The --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Or do we really need it for administrative purposes?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: We need it for administrative purposes, but if I could demolish the entire building and erect a new facility and that would encompass a co-location space. If we were able to do that and receive the approval, it would be to use that footprint that sits in the middle of the campus for a new training academy facility, some co-located housing for youth offenders who are committed under court order here, and we could also use that for some civilian services and programs for the population.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. Is that something that's being discussed or is that --

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: It's not currently being discussed. We talked about it. Certainly, we can go back into discussions, but that would be used

for that footprint because we're maintaining just so it doesn't fall or create any hazards on the campus, but the location would be prime for us to use it for those purposes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. So even though we don't have much use at this point, we don't want to get rid of the real estate because there's likely an opportunity for the possibility that we could need that campus at some time in the near future?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes. I see us repurposing that footprint, yes, I do.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All right. Well, thank you. Okay. Thanks, Commissioner.

All right. Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Mr. President.

And thank you, Commissioner, for your service. You under any stretch of the definition have a difficult job.

Public safety in that facility means public safety for the inmates and public safety for the correctional officers that are there. I want to thank members of the Public Safety Committee for being in close communications with your department and in particular Member Gym and Member Brooks for on several occasions taking the tour of walking the walk up on State Road to look at the conditions up close and personal.

And before we go into the questions, I will recognize that yesterday I referenced Spartacus which is one of the series that I admired. And I said that you in your position and Danielle Outlaw in her position were Spartacus. And one of the responsibilities as a municipality is to make sure you have the equipment that you need, the resources you need, money, and the personnel you need to perform your functions.

You did a very good job during COVID protecting, keeping safe both the

inmates and the staff up at the facilities better than some of the nursing homes that we had to deal with out in the community. You put a plan in place and it worked. So how close -- so let me get to it. How close are we, and this is not -- this is above your pay grade, above your pay grade. Are we making progress on the labor contract between the City of Philadelphia and the correctional officers?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank you for that question, Councilman Jones. We are amidst interest arbitration where active labor and negotiations are under way. It is very interactive and I believe that we will come to a resolution soon. But labor negotiations are under way, and we presented both proposals and we'll see and I'm hoping for a fair contract.

COUNCILMAN JONES: That is important because the stressful conditions that some of your employees are under, and what amazed me was that

those pods were 60 to 80 men in them and they would be housed by two corrections officers. And on a lot of occasions, it was one female at a desk with some plexiglass. And so, the way they are able to work to keep control and force, sometimes to work without backup, is pretty heroine. But we don't want to put that out there too much to kind of tip the conditions of what's going on.

So you had a series since the young man, I think his name was Harold what's it, Hargrove --

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Mr. Hargrove.

COUNCILMAN JONES: -- that was killed up in the parking lot of the prison, was released early in the morning, and some efficiencies and equipment were recognized. Talk to me about corrective actions taken since then.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank you, Councilperson Jones. So first, I want to commend the dedicated men and

women and staff who report for duty. I have to commend them. They are standing security posts in these facilities that are running 24 hours a day, you're absolutely right. There were women, 51 percent. They're coming to work. They're doing what we've asked them to do, what we've hired them to do.

In the case of Mr. Hargrove, we had installed -- because of the events that took place we currently installed readers, license plate readers. We installed additional lighting in those areas. We also changed our release procedures where we still were allowing folks, we cannot contain people under law longer than they are supposed to be after they've been posted bail, but what we've also ramped up an increase is funding for our post-release transportation services that transports individuals off-site at undisclosed locations that are not shared publicly.

We've asked the individuals who are being released not to share or post

information regarding their release. And we also offer transpasses and SEPTA transfers for those individuals once they are taken to that specific location. The --

COUNCILMAN JONES: There was an Uber style or van style release point taking them to a transit mode away from the actual facility.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: That is correct. That is available to them also. Individuals who insist on utilizing SEPTA, we still support them and allow them to do that. We also coordinate if they contact a family member and the family member sends Uber, we allow that Uber. We instruct them where to park so they can pick up the individual and take them off the campus after release.

COUNCILMAN JONES: So let me segue. So those cameras, license plate readers added to the safety and release. The vans to take them to the transit modes was a corrective action step

post Mr. Hargrove's death. There have been other deaths that have been at the facility. We had a meeting with the health providers that are contracted with the prison.

And is there -- could you separate in the following categories, how many of those deaths were due to some traumatic detox kind of related illness and/or death, how many were suicides and how many were homicides of those deaths?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So in 2020 the total number was 11, which we had one suicide, two homicides and one COVID-related. In 2021, we had a total of 18 deaths; 3 suicides and 2 ruled a homicide. In 2022, we had 4 total deaths. What I can share with you because any case that is still pending the autopsy results or in litigation, I won't be able to disclose any additional information, but what we can say is any death is awful. And even though we report out and we're sharing

information, we're restricted by how much we can share.

But at the same time, we offer counseling in any situation to the medical staff, security staff, other staff and incarcerated people who are involved with the decedent or if they were there, and it's a painful shock to the prisons. It doesn't get any easy.

The medical examiner report shows that three incarcerated citizens have died at PDP from COVID. One in each, 2020, 2021 and '22. The count includes people with very serious life-threatening, pre-existing chronic care conditions. And during this time, over 40,000 people were in and out at some point at the PDP. And our medical consultants which we are contracted with, of those three deaths reported that none of the three deaths were avoidable because it was something underlying.

Regarding withdrawal deaths, we worry that the risk will increase with

the use of Xylazine which is the tran dope, an animal sedative continues to increase, and we're seeing that in the City. Unfortunately, Xylazine does not respond to Narcan. And the number of withdrawal cases which medical sends to the ER directly from intake is definitely increasing so we're seeing those folks coming in.

We place all incarcerated persons who report use of opioid on the clinical opioid withdrawal scale protocol which assesses where they are in that withdrawal process, and we include our palliative meds in three evaluations by our nursing team. And --

COUNCILMAN JONES: So my time is up. I want to end with that lock issue which led to some unrest in the facility. Could you repeat real quick how many locks have been replaced? How many locks still need to be replaced?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So at RCF, all 384 new locks have been installed. At the Philadelphia

Industrial Correctional Center, 576 of 600 have been installed. We have 24 remaining locks to be installed at PICC, and that is because some additional work is required to that area where the locking mechanism is.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Mr. President. I'll relinquish the mic until Round 2.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

Chair recognizes Councilman Thomas.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good afternoon, Council President.

And thank you to our Commissioner as well as our Chair of our Public Safety Team, Councilmember Jones, who keeps us informed on these issues. I have a couple of questions. I think just to continue Councilmember Jones' line of questions around the deaths in the prisons, I'm assuming, Commissioner, you basically don't have any information for us on those deaths?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: I can confirm, but I cannot release specifics if they are under litigation or determined to be to --

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: All four of them? All four of them are still under litigation?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: The four are still under investigation, and then there's a two-year period whereby someone can file a notice or an intent. So I can't share much information beyond that.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Yeah, that's disappointing, especially considering the conversations that we've been a part of as well as some of the issues that the public has around safety and transparency and things of that nature. I think that if all four deaths happened at the same time, that would make sense. But if a death took place in January compared to a death that might have taken place in April, the amount of time that has passed since

January, one would think that we would have some level of information, but I guess that's not the case.

So with that being said, one of the things that this Council body did to help law enforcement with issues around hiring is that we lifted the residential requirement for a brief stint of time. I'm a big fan of the residential requirement not just for economic reasons, but for cultural purposes as well too. So by no means am I recommending that we need to get rid of that stipulation because I think it's one that's very important.

I'm wondering if we did something similar for correctional officers is what we did with police where we temporarily lifted the residential restrictions. Do you think that would have an impact on some of the hiring issues that you're facing right now?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank you, Councilman Thomas, for the

residency waiver. We were approved for that at the same time the Police Department was. So we anticipate that we'll receive a greater response hopefully to applicants. In the last round where we had 700-plus individuals there was a significant number of folks that we just were not able to engage because of residency requirement.

And --

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I'm sorry. So from a numbers perspective, how much do you anticipate being able to address the hiring issue? What percentage do you think of those open vacant positions that we can fill with that being in place now?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: I can't give you a definitive response. But if I had to give you an estimation, we're hoping that we can get to at least 30 percent.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay. So that would get you -- based on that timeline, how long would it take you to

be fully staffed to where you need to be so that you have all the tools that you need?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Now that we are approved for continuous hiring, if we continue to see an increase in onboarding of classes, we are looking at, and this is conservative, you're looking at September.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Of this calendar year?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Of this calendar year if we see an increase of the number of eligible candidates being onboarded and then us having the ability -- we have changed how we onboard. We used to have four cadet classes per year. We're doing continuous hiring. And so, we have multiple classes in the training academy.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So what are we doing around retention bonuses and things like that for officers?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: We are

currently in arbitration and discussion talks and we'll wait to see what that award will give the workforce for first of all to attract and retain current workforce, so I'm looking forward to seeing what the award will give us.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I am as well. What about the independent monitor that was brought on board? Was that something that was extremely costly to your budget because I like Council President hear that you're asking for a budget increase, which logically I don't understand it. Why would we give more money if you haven't been able to spend the money that we gave you already.

So I'm looking at the staffing issues and asking about a budget increase but also money that's been spent, specifically looking at the independent monitor, what does that contract look like and how have we benefited from that hiring?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Well, the litigation from the federal court told

us you will hire 180 additional correctional officers and there will be a monitor appointed, so that was not something that I could justify yes or no. We accepted that direction and that's what we will do to remain compliant. Are you speaking about Mr. John Wetzel?

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Muted again, I apologize. I'm not speaking about a person specifically. I know that this was something that was mandated, and that's why I wanted to ask how was it going and the impact that it's having on some of the issues that we're trying to address.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So I believe that even though we didn't ask for those positions I think it is imperative that we take advantage of that order to hire as many individuals as we can. We know that there are individuals in the drop. We know that there are individuals who will transfer -- that we anticipate may

transfer or separate. So it is in our best interest to fill as many positions as we possibly can.

I'd like to thank Councilman Jones who has been a staunch supporter in that any time that we are announcing the job and it being open, he's posting that information, he's sharing that with his constituents to increase that. And I would hope and welcome all of City Council doing that because I think your voice is important. You're in touch with your constituents and this is a good job.

I think we have to balance it against the negative coverage, right. And if they're hearing it from you we're doing all we can, but if they're hearing it from the Councilmembers at-large, I think that'll get us in a much better position.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I have a social media page that's dedicated to posting jobs and resources and opportunities and things of that

capacity. So once the information is sent to my office, we always share. We have no problem with that. So once the Chair of Public Safety or the Council President or even you directly send that over to us, we will be more than willing to share.

But I do want to state as my time wraps up that we can share about the jobs, we can do everything in our power, residential stuff to encourage people to apply for those jobs, but I think there's always going to be a lack of uncertainty when we have issues like the four deaths that took place this year and there's no communication with anybody as it relates to how those folks died, what's going on with those investigations.

It creates -- when I was a teacher and I'll stop at this. When I was a teacher, one of the things I would tell the kids all the time is you're not supposed to be talking in class of course, but when you whisper, it makes

me want to listen even more. Us not talking about what's going on and us not telling people what's going on, it only makes everybody more suspicious. The narratives begin to grow. The rumors and the false information begin to spread and they take on a life of its own. So I think when we're really trying to address some of these issues, a part of this solution is transparency.

Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

Thank you, Councilman --

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Council President, if I may, and I sent this information to as Councilman Jones stated members of Public Safety. We can't release all the information. But as I'm hearing, Councilmember Thomas' comments, what I can say is that that incarcerated person 34-year-old White female, January 23, 2022 was a new admission, pending investigation. Incarcerated person 64-year-old Hispanic male, January 26, 2012, he was

hospitalized for underlying medical complications since January 12, 2022 under investigation, so he had underlying health conditions.

Incarcerated person 38-year-old Black male, February 8, 2022, had been in custody since January 31, 2022 was found unresponsive in his cell, there was no evidence of violence, under investigation. Incarcerated person 55-year-old, March 8, 2022, he was admitted March 7, 2022, and he was in the receiving room. And that's the extent I could share. We can give you that much information, but we won't able to expound upon.

And one of the things that you raised and we talked about were the number of people that are dying at the time of intake. And one of the things is that these are the same people who are suffering and dealing with substance use that are coming into our custody that are taking whatever quantities they have prior to setting foot in our door.

And then by the time coupled with these underlying health conditions, we're doing all we can to do that assessment at the point of intake and properly assess and get as much information as we can from these individuals to make sure we're assessing and treating and getting them where they need to be so there is no loss of life. But it is concerning for us, but we have that short window trying to glean as much information, but these are the same people in their community that are actively using. And that's why we're concerned about the Xylazine and trying to engage folks in the time where they don't want to answer any questions, but we're trying to garner as much information.

COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Council President, I just want to say thank you to the Commissioner. I think that that type of transparency is extremely important, the information that she just gave us. I think it's not just vital to

us doing our job, but vital to the public as well as those that we are trying to court into the position.

So, Commissioner, thank you for that information that you just provided. I think it softens the blow a little bit. Clearly, there's still more information to be found. But I think that that makes me feel way better than what I did prior to the start of this hearing.

Thank you, Council President. And thank you, Commissioner. And to our Public Safety Chair who's been on these issues from the very beginning, thank you, Councilmember Jones.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. Thank you, Councilman.

Before I call on Councilman Domb, I just have one quick question, Commissioner. You've referenced 700 applicants and you weren't able to access all of these people because of residency issues. Do you know the breakdown, the percentage of

nonresidents versus residents?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: We can go back to the list and get that information. So the lion share either signed up just didn't report for orientation or eligible, and then there was a small population about --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I'm just asking about residency versus nonresidents.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yeah. I'd say about 7 percent.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So majority of the 700 were residents?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All right. I just got to clarify that. And I know people are saying why does Darrell keep on harping about this residency issue. And the bottom line is that this Council and the City said we were going to deal with poverty in the City of Philadelphia, right, very aggressively.

And the bottom line is the

City's biggest asset of getting people out of poverty is to give them a good City job. So that's one of the reasons why I focus on this issue around residency and giving that person that lives in the City of Philadelphia as you said a good job. But I just want to -- when you said, I couldn't access a lot of people because of the residency issue, and it kind of came off to me and maybe I'm a little sensitive to that, as, well, if I was able to access it, then it would be much easier. But 7 percent is not a lot of people.

So okay. I'm cool. I'm sorry to butt in like that, but this whole residency thing really irks me because the narrative is just not accurate. Sorry about that. Sorry for jumping in for that. Thank you, Commissioner.

Chair recognizes Councilman Domb.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you, Council President.

Good afternoon, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Good afternoon.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you for you and your team for everything you're doing. I know this is not easy what you do. It's one of the more challenging jobs in our City. I have a couple of quick questions. Are we aware right now, can you just share with me the recidivism rate right now over the last year or two or three for the prisons on State Road?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes. If you can give me a couple of minutes, I do have that.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. By the way, Councilmember Jones, thank you for all you're doing in this area. Really appreciate it. Doing a great job. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: D.C. Bagby, do you have that at your fingertips?

COUNCILMAN DOMB: You can come back to me with that answer.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Okay.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: The reason I'm asking the question is because I also want to ask you at the present time what are the courses we're offering returning citizens in order to get them equipped to enter our economy in the City? And I know before the pandemic I had sponsored a few financial literacy courses and I had sponsored a coding course. And with your permission, I'd like to start doing that again because I think it's a real plus for people coming back into the City from State Road. So what are the courses that we've been offering over the last 6 to 12 months there?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So we've been offering and we had to pivot to virtual, so we just had our first graduation of Reclaim U. That is a PA certified program where we did this program, the first pilot, with the female population where they become certified home health aides. So they

take the certification, they pass. Once they leave out, they link up with this organization Reclaim U and they're placed in jobs, so we're giving them certification and that's where we're moving towards, not just a certificate, we're looking for certification that will get people into sustainable wages, so it's not just a three-month program, you get a stipend and then after that, we wish you well and you're right back into survival mode.

The longstanding program we have and it continues to date is the New Leash on Life program. That is an intensive K-9 training program where we have individuals that are paired up and again, they are certified in K-9 training, and then they go into real-life job opportunities that are sustainable, long-term. Some of our graduates have graduated to supervisors and they are doing very well. If they go through the program and that opportunity isn't working out, then they

place them into another job opportunity.

Then with our Inside-Out, we have Arcadia University and Gwynedd Mercy. We were doing virtual programs with them and we're still involved with the Temple Inside-Out program. We really pushed and we established and came to an agreement where the incarcerated students, they can earn up to four credits. Those four credits, they can transition and test in, so that's where we're going right now. We're not at full operation, but I'm looking for more opportunities, Councilman Domb, that you funded before for us to be able to do that.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: And let me say this, Commissioner. I'm happy to fund them again. And I did speak with the Library when they were in our budget hearings and they were prepared to come back. So if we can coordinate going back to teaching financial literacy, I think that it was for the people coming out in a certain time frame.

And I will share this one story with you because it stayed with me. In 2018 when we were in session, after session a gentleman leans over in City Hall and says to me, Councilman Domb. I said, yes. He goes, I just came down to City Hall to thank you. I took the financial literacy course and it was a very big plus for me. And that was amazing to me that he would take the time to come and say that. But it also showed me that I think it's so important. So whatever I can do to be of help in that area, I'm available to help you. Just let me know what we need to do. Okay.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank you. I'll reach out to you.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Sure. And one last question. And I'm not clear on this so maybe you can explain it to me. The people up on State Road right now, when they want to make a phone call, is every phone call charged or is there a certain amount of calls that are free

and after a certain level, they're charged? How does that work?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So we increased during the pandemic, Councilman Domb, 15 minutes, free minutes, 15 free minutes for phone analog calls. And then --

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Per day or --

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: That's per day, 15 free minutes per day. For the virtual tablet virtual visits, they get 10 minutes per day free. And then anything above that, if the family members decide they want to purchase above that, they're able to do so. But we're proud of offering that additional free minutes for analog and the virtual. Where it didn't exist, we stood it up and we're offering 10 minutes per day.

Also, I want to acknowledge what you did prepandemic when you gave us that generous donation which allowed us to give and split that funding across and to ensure additional free minutes for all incarcerated persons for that

given time period.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Last question, Commissioner, and I'm no expert here so I'm asking your opinion. It seems to me, God forbid if I was there, I would want to speak to my family more than 15 minutes a day. I would want to speak to my spouse and my children or my parents more than 15 minutes a day. And it also might help me rehabilitate because I would have more motivation to get back to my family. Is there any way we can increase that to give them more opportunity, more time with their loved ones?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: We're looking at doing that now. We're in the process of expanding and adding tablets for that purpose, but we're looking at the cost to see how we can increase, and we'll reassess that and get back to you on that. But that's some of the work that we've been doing to try to reduce the burden on family and friends who

have to purchase and increase the free phone time, but I will get back to you.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: I think it helps to rehabilitate people to reconnect with their families and hopefully prevents them from coming back.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yeah.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: You don't have that recidivism rate yet, do you?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY:

D.C. Bagby. I'm not sure if he's --

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BAGBY:

Yes. Good afternoon --

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Good afternoon --

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BAGBY:

Terrell Bagby, Deputy Commissioner. I'm looking at the performance measurements for 2021. The first year rate was 29 percent recidivism rate and at the fifth year -- I'm sorry, at the third year it was 52 percent. And also, Commissioner, I would say that we did a tax preparation initiative with a Campaign

for Working Families, where we had 444 incarcerated individuals file their taxes. And the average tax return was $1800, and we have close to 200 that we just have to do additional follow-ups on.

Our work with Campaign for Working Families is being recognized at the Code for America Summit, and we have a panel called Scaling Up Tax Preparation for incarcerated individuals next week.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: That's great. Let me just make sure I understand what you've mentioned. After three years, the return rate to the prisons is 53 percent?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BAGBY: Yes. According to our performance measurements, yes, sir.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: What is the recidivism rate on the New Leash on Life program with the dogs, which I think -- I've been there. I've seen it. It's a

great program.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: What I can tell you is that they have historically been far less than the PDP's general population. They're about 6 percent or less.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: So I guess the challenge here is how do we really dramatically lower that rate?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: I think how we're going to dramatically lower that rate is that we are now pivoting to more certification programs, that when people get out that they're connected with a support system and sustainable jobs and ensuring and supporting that they comply with whatever release orders, but I think that is the way to go.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank you. I know my time's up. Thank you very much, Commissioner. Thank you to your staff. Appreciate all you're doing. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank

you, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

So the question that the Councilman asked, so it was 29 percent and now it's 53 percent?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So we capture recidivism by the first year, third year and fifth year.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. Do we have a sense of what's going on with that number?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: When we talk about recidivism, it's not one answer. It's the totality of that person's engagement and interaction, whether it be financial, housing, health, sustainability. I mean, people are coming back if they don't have jobs, which we're in a very good position, and if we can remove any barriers from people to get into these jobs, so we're open to partnering with employers who

can establish that relationship pre-release. We work with folks, they go out. It's sustainability really.

We operated for a long time on these three-, nine-, six-month opportunities. The individual gets used to having that level of income, but it's simply not sustainable. And once it's over, people go back in the survival mode. They have to provide for themselves, their families, pay rent, get housing, the same thing we do. And so, that's where we have to do more of this sustainable placement and job opportunities.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All right. Okay. I'll come back and ask you because I want to ask you about your connection with the organizations. I know a lot of those individuals travel to the correctional facilities all the time. I want to see if there's some way of formalizing that relationship since their charge is to basically be the liaison between the City and the

individuals that have challenges, to kind of get people focused because we got to bring that number down. Okay. Sorry.

Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brooks.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You're welcome.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Hi, Commissioner. My question is kind of a follow-up from Councilmember Jones and Councilmember Thomas' question. And the question is what type of investigation was conducted in response to each jail death since the start of the pandemic and what changes have been implemented in response to the findings of these investigations?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So what we do with all investigations, we assess and take a look to see what are the circumstances, were policies and procedures followed. We also cooperate

and work with law enforcement to share any additional information. We do -- it's a lot of intensive investigative work. We're not able to give all of that information in this platform, but that's what we look for. And we review were the policies and procedures followed as part of our investigation, and we cite and address if any are not followed and take the appropriate action.

It is a process. We have an Office of Professional Compliance who works with our criminal justice partners, and they follow the case start to finish. And so, if it comes up that we determined in instances where staff did not adhere to policies and procedures in the performance of their duties, we take the appropriate action with those individuals. And in this form, I wouldn't be able to list all of the steps that we take. We act on tips, intel, surveillance and then interviews.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Okay.

All right. That's helpful. My next question is about the Remick lawsuit and multiple PA Prison Society reports have indicated that a vast majority of people haven't been getting out of their cells. The time -- they haven't been able to get out of their cells in the time they have the right to. What changes have been made to ensure that each person is receiving their out-of-cell time? And can you confirm that they have been getting out-of-cell time?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes, I can confirm. We have been doing -- over these last six months, we've increased out-of-cell time. As part of the litigation, we do report to the federal courts. That information is reported to the federal courts. And if we are not in compliance, we would be receiving a response. So they are getting out-of-cell time above three hours.

In segregation or special management is one hour. In those incidents where if we're short of staff

and not able to do it safely, we provide that response to the court, so we are being monitored by the court. So even though individuals are reporting to PA Prison Society, we also provide a weekly report through our counsel that goes to the judge overseeing this matter.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Does it also go to the Prison Society as well or does it just go to the judges?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: It just goes to the judge. That is the governing body. Certainly, we've allowed the PA Prison Society to come in, have unfettered access and interaction with the population. They can share that information with her, but we report directly to the federal judge.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Okay. There's been lots of talk about staffing and acknowledgment of staff shortages, but we've also seen that the Prison Department says multiple times that reports of understaffed and unsafe units aren't true. Do you dispute the Prison

Society's report about unstaffed units as well as the many reports that there are no COs available in some parts of the jail for emergencies? And what is your opinion on how the staffing shortage is impacting the safety of people being held in jails?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Well, the staffing shortage, what we've been trying to do is encourage all of our workforce who is still employed with the City of Philadelphia to report. It is important that everyone who is employed reports so they can support the staff who are physically in the institutions. In the cases where there are just no staff or a small number were impacted, we have staff touring both units, and that is nationwide. This is not unique to Philadelphia.

And I always when I'm interacting with the Prison Society and was sharing information, keeping it in the context, we're not isolated. We're not that special case. We're faring

better or not so good when we're compared to other jurisdictions, but we do have individuals who can routinely tour that area if we are short, but it's not that one -- just no one there. Someone will go on and tour the area, yes, that is correct. But to the levels that we're hearing from PA Prison Society, I disagree.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: So you're not disputing that there are times that there aren't people on units. You're saying that they can be just overseeing or touring other parts of the prison at the time. But there --

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: It's not -- I'm sorry. Go ahead. It's not the touring other -- it's in the immediate area. It's dependent upon the design of the facility, so you're not having someone at the lobby go and tour an area. They are staffed in those immediate areas. And it's not multiple units where you're saying, okay, no one's there.

So we've asked information from PA Prison Society to provide specifics to us so we can have a robust investigation, take a look at it, and we can check that against the information that we have.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Just for my own clarity since Councilmember Jones has taken me to several prisons, at least I have an idea, I just want to make sure my visual is okay. Are you saying some of the facilities that we have visited, they have a station and then they have various pods. Are you saying there could be someone in the station and there just isn't someone on the pods?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: No, that's not what I'm saying. There's someone on the station, someone in the pods. So if there's one unit where there is no person assigned, we will have someone go around and tour. So it's not just that one individual sitting in the pod watching four units,

which is not the case.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Okay. Thank you. Thank you for that clarity. And thank you, Councilmember Jones. That was very helpful for me to kind of break down the visual.

My next question is, given the chronic mental illness issues and drug addiction and other issues that the community faces, how much money has been spent over the last two years on programming based on cutting edge research for rehabilitative programs for the many people that are suffering from mental health issues in jail? And what recent data-driven models have the jails been looking at around the country to introduce in Philadelphia?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So the information and the programs that we have prepandemic, we plan to restand those up. We had a contract or behavioral health contractor who had an excellent model, but they are no longer with us so therefore we are no longer

able to utilize the proprietary behavioral health program.

We still provide behavioral health counseling and services to the population. Our MAT, which is our Medication-Assisted Treatment program, is still under way throughout the COVID process, but we're in the process of with our new vendor looking at a behavioral health program that is utilizing other jurisdictions under their contract and bringing it here to Philadelphia.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Do you have the name of that program?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: That I will get you the name. I can get back to you on that.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you so much, Comm --

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Dr. Herd -- thank you. Dr. Herdman, did you have the name of the program by chance? It escapes my memory.

DR. HERDMAN: This is Bruce

Herdman, Chief of Medical Operations. I don't have the name at the moment. We're still listed in the SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Guide, substance abuse treatment is one of the six best practices in the country. We're spending probably about $3 million on medication-assisted treatment. That's one specific part.

There's about $15 million of behavioral health staff that provides services across all of the facilities, and those are all services that are endorsed by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care, which is the accrediting body that's equivalent to the Joint Commission for Acute Care Hospitals.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Are all of those services fully staffed?

DR. HERDMAN: We have a vacancy on the medical side which was 22 percent at the highest, the worst part of the pandemic. It's now around 11 percent,

so we do have a backlog in some areas which we're working to catch up on.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: And I would like to add, if I can, the prison was also infected, infected -- affected the same way that hospitals in recruiting and retaining behavioral health and medical staff. And so, we're in that same boat where we're pulling from agency staff to come in and fill those vacancies.

As Dr. Herdman stated, we have a backlog. We constantly chisel away at that, but there is staff here. And with hospitals, universities, clinics, they too were pulling from the same pool of folks, but we're doing all that we can to fill those vacancies.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you so much.

Council President, that ends my questions.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. Thank you, Council Lady.

Councilwoman Gauthier is back.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you, Council President.

Good afternoon, Commissioner Carney.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Good afternoon.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Before I start with my questions, I wanted to make a few brief comments. First, I want to acknowledge the very hard job that you have, which I don't envy at all. But I also think that as a City we have to acknowledge at this point there is a crisis going on in the prisons. I don't believe that enough has been done to either acknowledge that or to address it.

Since the start of the pandemic, it's been reported that 29 people have died in our prisons. And though I understand that some of these conditions are being experienced in many parts of the country, it was also reported that in 2021 our death rate in Philadelphia prisons was 77 percent

higher than the national average, and many of these deaths are a result of the dangerous conditions created by staff shortages that have been acknowledged throughout this hearing.

And I greatly appreciate the efforts of Councilmember Jones and Gym and Brooks in pushing on this issue. They've by far been Council's champions on this, but I also think that we haven't quite gotten there yet in engaging in more honest conversations with the Administration to determine how our City is going to resolve these issues and how we're going to do it quickly.

And so, with that being said, I'm interested in talking about oversight and in particular, the role of the Prison Advisory Board and their ability to provide any policy guidance or oversight on how to address these ongoing safety concerns. Is there anyone here from the Prison Advisory Board today?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hello? Can you hear me?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Commissioner --

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: I can hear you. I don't believe anyone from the Advisory Board -- they wouldn't be able to make a presentation during our presentation as part of the protocol. What I can say --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: -- is at the City, it's been very challenging operating the Department of Prisons. We're part of the City. We're one of the major departments, right. But there has been just public comment by elected officials about all things bad. And so, words matter. Words have power. So if elected officials are saying these things, I think there's a way and a path that you can do it. But it's kind of where the disconnect is of the departments.

The homicides -- the five deaths that occurred over the seven-month period at the height of the COVID pandemic, and I'm happy to say that none are occurring over this year. We're almost midway. So --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I have a question --

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: I wanted -- I just wanted to respond. Also, regarding completed suicides and deaths, following of course the advice of our forensics psychiatric consultants, we compare the three-year average to national data. Our three-year average remains well below the national data, and we also review every case, serious attempts, and have that evaluated by our consultants.

One of the things that we are meeting and have met over these six years with our Advisory Board is we share this information. We encourage them to come in, come to tour. And I asked them also and encourage them,

don't take what I say, look at what's happening nationally, and let us come from that framework. I think there's a way we can all work together.

But I think as a City our messaging will go far more and be impactful if we're saying, hey, listen, there's an issue, we've been transparent, we're sharing information. When we share that information, however it's not translating to the public. We're sharing this information. I mean, correct me if I'm wrong, we're sharing this. But when it comes out it's just this is what's happening, this is what's happening. We know this is happening around the country. But I think as a City, one of the major departments, we need to work together to get better messaging out together.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you. I can appreciate again how hard the job must be, how hard it must be to be in this public space, right, with all of the things that have gone on. But I

still feel like we have to have a crisis plan to meet a crisis. And I feel like we have to be honest about what's happening. And so, my questions are about the Advisory Board.

I would like to know what the role of the Board is and whether they've conducted any investigations on the conditions of our prisons including, but not limited to our facilities and our staffing policies?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So the Board is advisory in nature. They can provide advice regarding policies and procedures. I encourage them to reach out to nationally known and recognized resources such as MacArthur, such as the Vera Institute. I know I encourage them to do that routinely throughout this process. They have reached out, so I believe they will be providing you some information. In regards to touring the facilities, it is open and available for them to do so. And I believe they had two tours during the pandemic.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Has the Advisory Board offered any recommendations around facilities and staffing and other things that have been occurring in the prisons during the pandemic?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: We reported out there weren't that many significant recommendations. We're sharing information. I did inform them that we're in negotiations with our labor contracts and I informed them of that, but we haven't received a large litany of recommendations, but they can provide information to advise.

What I've been encouraging them to do is to look at our length of stay, see how we can reduce the population to further decrease those, that pretrial population. Right now we're at 93 percent pretrial and the remaining being sentenced. It should be reversed, because County Corrections is designed for short-term stays. And so, those are the things that we were pressing upon to

see if they can come up with any of those recommendations.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. Does the Board have the ability to audit any investigations conducted by the City of Philadelphia on the prisons?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: No, they do not.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. Thank you, Councilwoman.

Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so very much again, Mr. President.

I guess what I would want to pursue at this point is some of the contraband. You mentioned a contraband detector. One of the things that I noticed on my visit up there was the distinct smell of burning K2 and other products that can be put in cigarettes and stuff like that. And literally, I

got to tell you I was -- I don't know about my other colleagues. I was getting a contact. I don't know what K2 feels like, but it felt like something, and your members of the Corrections professionals are exposed to that. How are we addressing that?

They shared with me that sometimes it comes through on paper in a letter that they scrape off. They talked about other ways that it got in. How do we get a control over that because it's got to be hampering any true rehabilitation effort?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank you. Fair question. So during the pandemic, we had suspended visits for majority of the time just to mitigate the spread inside our facilities. And for quantities that come in through the mail, we too -- again, this is a small niche that you don't have a large number of vendors to choose from.

And so, we submitted for a mail detection contraband scanner. I'm

pleased to say we finally are very close to receiving that and I expect to receive that in June. We will begin processing our mail through that new mail scanning technology. We haven't set the needle on contracting out the mail processing just yet because I'm following with my hand on the pulse, there's litigation arising out of that regarding the quality. So I'm reserving it. It's not off the table, but I'm watching. So we anticipate having the mail scanner come in. But we --

COUNCILMAN JONES: Just as a point of information, there might be litigation if you prevent people's mail from coming through; is that what you mean, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes, so that's the other side of this now. We know other jurisdictions have done full throttle. There's some issue about the quality. And so, I'm monitoring that. What we had from the very beginning, any time there's an odor in the air, there's

an air exchange process. The impacted employee should notify the supervisor immediately and we activate that system to clear the air and circulate fresh air in, dirty air out. We believe this will give us the capability to detect what's coming in the mail.

Now, those larger quantities, which there's no way they could come in through the mail, but they are being introduced inside our facilities. We just received the approval to utilize our body scanner. That body scanner -- and we're in the process of finalizing our implementation schedule. This will give us the ability similar to when you go to the airport for a flight, you go in, we'll be able to see contraband, whether hard or soft concealed in the body cavity, under the breast area, genitalia and buttocks or inside the cavity. We'll be able to see that, bring that individual out, put them in the appropriate location so they're not able to introduce that information in.

We have seen an increase in contraband, and this is going to be coupled -- this new technology, mail body scanner with our K-9 and our diligent searches of our correctional staff. They have been on point. Again, we act on information, anonymous tips and intel. We search the areas and we do all we can to retrieve that. But (inaudible) other population who's not participating to be safe.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Got it. My last point, I heard the bell, to what degree do we still utilize the trailers for weekend sentencing due to like DUIs and other -- what is the category and how big is that population in the trailers?

COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank you for that, Councilman Jones. We discontinued that at the start of the pandemic. The reason being we're a large carceral setting. We're the largest hospital in Philadelphia keeping on average 45 individuals in these

facilities. We had to mitigate our spread and our community spread. We have remained lower than the community spread as far as COVID, right.

So when we talk about DUIs, when we talk about the other programs that we used to utilize those trailers for, the risk outweighed the benefit. Because if you had one individual, and just it takes one day, and one positive person, now you infect a multitude of folks. So we haven't resumed that just yet. We still are encouraging our population to take advantage of the vaccine, and we will reassess that.

But as the community spread is going up to 41 percent, even though hospitalizations and deaths are not going up, I can't afford to have -- now, the work that we're doing, that will bring me back to the strictest lockdown people aren't able to go to virtual visits, programs that we activated. So that's case-by-case and I'm assessing it to see -- once I see that community

spread at 41 percent and we're below 5 percent, it's not worth the risk. But it's on my radar.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you. I was wondering the alternative. Some people need treatment, and that DUI piece allowed weekend service of sentence to not disrupt jobs and things like that. But thank you for that, Commissioner.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. Thank you, Councilman.

There does not appear to be any other members in queue. Any other questions by our members of this Committee for this witness?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: There being none, I want to thank you all very much. Commissioner, thank you and your team for doing a very difficult job in very difficult times. We really appreciate all the work you've done and your forward-thinking approach to reform

and also ensuring that the citizens of the City of Philadelphia feel good about what you're doing. We appreciate it.

Thank you all. There being no additional questions, this Committee will stand in recess until Tuesday, May 24th at 10:00 a.m., at which time we will reconvene on Microsoft Teams. For the record, there will be a number of callbacks by further request of Councilmembers. So we will send you out a list of all of the callbacks so you can be prepared. And hopefully -- tell them to actually be prepared to respond to any questions that happen during the course of the traditional budget hearings. Thank you all very much. Appreciate you. Be safe.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Pres.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You're welcome.

(Committee of the Whole concluded at 3:25 p.m.)

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

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

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Court Reporter - Notary Public

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