

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, April 3, 2023
10:22 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILMAN MICHAEL DRISCOLL
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN JIM HARRITY
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILWOMAN QUETCY LOZADA
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS
COUNCILWOMAN SHARON VAUGHN

BILLS 230144, 230145, 230146, 230147, 230148,
and 230149
RESOLUTION 230162

- - -

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Thank you. Good morning to everyone.

4 Before we begin the public hearing, I
5 would like to make the following
6 announcement:

7 Due to the continuing threat to
8 the public health from COVID-19, City
9 Council committees are currently meeting
10 remotely. We are using Microsoft Teams
11 to make these remote hearings possible.

12 Instructions for how the public
13 may view and offer public testimony at
14 public hearings of Council committees are
15 included in the public hearing notices
16 that are published in the Daily News, the
17 Inquirer, and Legal Intelligencer prior
18 to the hearing and can also be found on
19 PHLcouncil.com.

20 I now note that the hour has
21 come.

22 Mr. McDermott, will you please
23 call the roll to take attendance, and
24 members that are in attendance, just
25 indicate that you are present.

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 Mr. McDermott.
3 THE CLERK: Councilmember Bass.
4 (No response.)
5 THE CLERK: Councilmember
6 Brooks.
7 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Aye.
8 Hello. I'm present. I'm sorry.
9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Same
10 thing.
11 THE CLERK: Councilmember
12 Driscoll.
13 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Good
14 morning. Present.
15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
16 morning.
17 THE CLERK: Councilmember
18 Gauthier.
19 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good
20 morning, Council President, colleagues,
21 and everybody watching. Present.
22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
23 morning.
24 THE CLERK: Councilmember
25 Gilmore Richardson.

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Good
3 morning, Council President.

4 Good morning, colleagues. I am
5 present.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
7 morning.

8 THE CLERK: Councilmember
9 Harrity.

10 (No response.)

11 THE CLERK: Councilmember
12 Johnson.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
14 morning, Council President.

15 Good morning, colleagues.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
17 morning.

18 THE CLERK: Councilmember
19 Jones.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good
21 morning, President, colleagues,
22 Philadelphia. I am present.

23 THE CLERK: Councilmember
24 Lozada.

25 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Good

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2 morning, everyone. I am present.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good

4 morning.

5 THE CLERK: Councilmember

6 O'Neill.

7 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Good

8 morning, everyone.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good

10 morning.

11 THE CLERK: Councilmember

12 Phillips.

13 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Good

14 morning, colleagues. Good morning,

15 Philadelphia.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good

17 morning.

18 THE CLERK: Councilmember

19 Squilla.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good

21 morning, Council President and

22 colleagues. Present.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good

24 morning.

25 THE CLERK: Councilmember

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 Thomas.

3 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
4 morning, Council President.

5 Good morning, colleagues.

6 Good morning, Philadelphia, and
7 good morning to the Administration.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
9 morning.

10 THE CLERK: And Councilmember
11 Vaughn.

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
14 Okay. We are good. We have established
15 our quorum, and this hearing is now
16 called to order. This is the continued
17 public hearing of the Committee of the
18 Whole regarding Bills No. 230144, 230145,
19 230146, 130147, 230148, 230149, and
20 Resolution No. 130162.

21 Mr. McDermott, please read the
22 titles of the bills and resolutions that
23 we have before us today.

24 THE CLERK: Bill No. 230144, an
25 ordinance to adopt a Capital Program for

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 the six Fiscal Years 2024 to 2029
3 inclusive.

4 Bill No. 230145, an ordinance
5 to adopt a Fiscal 2024 Capital Budget.

6 Bill No. 230146, an ordinance
7 adopting the Operating Budget for Fiscal
8 Year 2024.

9 Bill No. 230147, an ordinance
10 amending Chapter 19-1500 of The
11 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Wage and Net
12 Profits Tax," by revising certain tax
13 rates, under certain terms and
14 conditions.

15 Bill No. 230148, an ordinance
16 amending Chapter 19-2800 of The
17 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Pennsylvania
18 Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority
19 on Wages and Net Profits," to provide for
20 the continuation of the tax and to make
21 other conforming changes, all under
22 certain terms and conditions.

23 Bill No. 230149, an ordinance
24 amending Chapter 19-2600 of The
25 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Business

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 Income and Receipts Taxes," by revising
3 certain tax rates, under certain terms
4 and conditions.

5 And Resolution No. 230162,
6 providing for the approval by the Council
7 of the City of Philadelphia of a Revised
8 Five Year Financial Plan for the City of
9 Philadelphia covering Fiscal Years 2024
10 through 2028, and incorporating Revised
11 changes with respect to Fiscal Year 2023,
12 which is to be submitted by the Mayor to
13 the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental
14 Cooperation Authority pursuant to the
15 Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement,
16 authorized by an ordinance of this
17 Council approved by the Mayor on
18 January 3rd, 1992, by and between the
19 City and the Authority.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
21 Thank you, Mr. McDermott.

22 Today we continue the public
23 hearing of the Committee of the Whole to
24 consider the bills read by the Clerk that
25 constitute proposed operating and capital

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 spending measures for Fiscal 2024, a
3 Capital Program, and a forward-looking
4 Capital Plan for Fiscal Year 2024 through
5 Fiscal 2019.

6 This morning we will hear
7 testimony from the Department of Public
8 Property, Streets, License and
9 Inspections. This afternoon we will hear
10 from the Department of Prisons and Fleet
11 Management.

12 Mr. McDermott, the first person
13 to testify from the Administration is?

14 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Council
15 President, I am present too. I think I
16 wasn't here for the roll call.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Let
18 the record reflect that Councilman
19 Harrity is present.

20 Thank you, Councilman.

21 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Thank you,
22 sir.

23 COUNCILWOMAN VAUGHN: Sharon
24 Vaughn also.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Let

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 the record reflect that Councilwoman
3 Vaughn is present.

4 THE CLERK: And the first
5 person from the Administration to testify
6 is Bridget Collins-Greenwald,
7 Commissioner of the Department of Public
8 Property.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
10 Mr. President, my apologies. This is
11 Councilwoman Bass. I am present.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Let
13 the record also reflect Councilwoman Bass
14 is present.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
17 morning, Commissioner.

18 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
19 Good morning, CP. How are you?

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I
21 have no complaints whatsoever.

22 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
23 Excellent. I will get started then.

24 Good morning, Council President
25 Clarke and members of City Council. I am

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 Bridget Collins-Greenwald, Commissioner
3 of the Department of Public Property. It
4 is a pleasure to appear before City
5 Council today in support of Public
6 Property's Fiscal Year '24 budget
7 request.

8 As you have our written
9 testimony, which highlights the many
10 accomplishments and plans of the
11 Department, I would only like to add one
12 thing that is not in the written
13 testimony about our team. It is nothing
14 the veterans of this body have not heard
15 me say before. The Department of Public
16 Property has many outstanding employees
17 that tend to fly under the radar, and I
18 would like to acknowledge them publicly
19 for their commitment to their public
20 service.

21 I said it before, I will
22 continue to say, I am very proud to work
23 in a place where employees show such
24 genuine sense of care and commitment to
25 their profession with the absolute

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 mindset of getting things done.

3 We follow our core mission of
4 responsibly serving the City's workforce
5 and communities by providing quality
6 facilities and workplaces for which we
7 are proud. DPP staff are the unsung
8 heroes of the City, in my mind.

9 I also briefly wanted to thank
10 you personally, Council President. You
11 took over the reins of Council President
12 right around the time I got to Public
13 Property, and in that time, we worked on
14 a lot together and have accomplished a
15 lot of good things, and I always have
16 appreciated the respect and
17 professionalism you've shown to me and my
18 department, and I will sincerely miss
19 working with you. It's been a real
20 pleasure on my part, and I wish you
21 nothing but success in your next journey.

22 I can't imagine you're retiring
23 officially. You know, I'm sure you'll be
24 on to other things, but I wish you a lot
25 of success and it's been a pleasure, my

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2 pleasure, and our department's as well.
3 So thank you --

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
5 Commissioner, you're making me tear up.
6 Stop. Stop. Stop.

7 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
8 Well, I mean, we've been through a lot.
9 I mean, I'm not going to name it all
10 here, but we have. And a lot of good, a
11 lot of good. So I wanted to go on the
12 record and acknowledge that, because, you
13 know, the end of an era in my mind and,
14 you know, we'll go on.

15 So that's the end of my
16 testimony, and I'm open for questions.
17 Thank you.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
19 Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner. And
20 thank you. It's been a pleasure working
21 with you and the Department. You've done
22 an awesome job, and I really appreciate
23 your willingness to work with us,
24 particularly around office space. We've
25 been in the position to expand our

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2 resources dramatically, and it gives us a
3 much better position to service the
4 citizens of the City of Philadelphia and
5 I appreciate it.

6 Let me ask you a question about
7 something that comes up in the private
8 sector significantly, the use of office
9 space. You know, we talk about office
10 space downtown, and I guess the occupancy
11 rate is moving up slightly.

12 How have we found on the City's
13 inventory and this whole question about
14 whether or not people actually ultimately
15 come back to work, when you hear on the
16 private side once people went remote and
17 then they determined that, you know what,
18 maybe some of the workforce should
19 continue to work remote because there's
20 no longer the need to be in a building?

21 Do you have a perspective on
22 that? Can you give us a snapshot of
23 where we are with our buildings?

24 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
25 Sure. I do. We are inching up, as you

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2 said. We're about -- we were at a low --
3 obviously it was, God, below 10 percent
4 beginning of COVID, it seems, in our
5 buildings. Now, you know, we topped off
6 at about 35 percent when people started
7 coming back. Now we're seeing around
8 50 percent.

9 So hybrid is still here. I
10 anticipate, just my perspective, is that
11 it will stay. I don't know what that
12 will look like, you know, whether it's
13 people come in one day a week, do they
14 come in four days a week. You know what
15 I mean? That's still being worked out by
16 each individual department, but I can say
17 we on the City, we're working -- there's
18 a group of us, we have a little committee
19 that's formed that's working on, okay,
20 what does this look like for our space,
21 how do we make certain spaces dedicated
22 where people can just come in, you know,
23 and maybe reserve some space, if you just
24 need some touchdown space for the day and
25 whatnot.

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2 So we've been working really
3 hard on that, trying to modernize our
4 space. But I agree with you, it's
5 inching up, but it's inching up a little
6 bit slower than I anticipated it would.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
8 right. So with respect to space needs, I
9 know a lot of decisions in terms of
10 leasing external space outside of the
11 buildings we own are made a year or two
12 or three in advance.

13 Have we looked at the
14 possibility of revising our space needs
15 as a result of what we're seeing with the
16 hybrid or potentially virtual nature of
17 our workforce? Will we look at out years
18 as potentially revising those contractual
19 needs and possibly saving money like
20 other people do?

21 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
22 Yeah. Yes. We actually are looking at
23 that. So if you recall, during the
24 height of the pandemic, we renegotiated
25 some of our leases to get some early

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2 savings. So those leases, when they all
3 come up, then we're going to look at
4 absolutely how will we consolidate, where
5 are we going to be in the workforce debt,
6 right?

7 We also have some existing
8 leases that are about to come to their
9 end, and we're working really hard with
10 our architects and engineers and our
11 client departments to say, okay, what do
12 we actually need, do we need this space,
13 do we need as much space.

14 You know, the one -- where we
15 used to do before, okay, you have
16 5,000 square feet, you got 5,000 square
17 feet. It's pretty much, you know, evened
18 out. That's not the way now.

19 So we've been working really
20 hard with our client departments to see
21 what we actually need for the leases that
22 are upcoming. That's totally on the
23 radar.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: A
25 few years ago this was an issue with

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2 respect to -- I hate to hit you with this
3 one -- the triplex, the quadplex or
4 whatever it's called, and there were some
5 concerns about the expiration of a
6 particular contract. A minority-owned
7 company has, I think, probably the
8 largest contract with services in the
9 City of Philadelphia maybe in its
10 history, and it was a lot of controversy
11 over the changing of the guard, so to
12 speak, in terms of who was going to
13 ultimately, but at the end of the
14 conversation, there was a commitment that
15 the levels of participation on the
16 MBE/WBE would remain the same or be more
17 significant.

18 Where are we at? Are we
19 still -- and I understand that the time
20 has moved, things have changed somewhat,
21 but are we still maintaining that level
22 of participation? Because I think that,
23 correct me if I'm wrong, I think there
24 was a lot of subcontracts let to
25 accommodate the companies that was a part

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2 of the earlier team that was minority
3 owned.

4 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
5 So yes. So we're currently at a
6 64 percent OEO participation rate. So
7 it's comparable.

8 I should let you know that that
9 RFP just went out this year. So we are
10 in the process of reviewing proposals and
11 awarding that contract this year. So it
12 should be rewarded -- it will be awarded
13 July 1.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
15 We're in the process of looking at
16 solicitations --

17 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
18 Yes.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: --
20 for the triplex?

21 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
22 For the triplex.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Is
24 it quad or the tri?

25 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:

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2 It's the triplex. We call it the quad
3 when we include City Hall, but City Hall
4 is maintained by our team, the DPP team.
5 So the triplex is the one that's
6 contracted out.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So
8 that solicitation is out now?

9 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
10 Yep.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The
12 RFP? Okay. That's good to know. I
13 didn't know that.

14 All right, Commissioner. Thank
15 you. I'll come back a little later. I
16 got some specific questions to ask you.

17 The Chair recognizes Councilman
18 Jones.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
20 Mr. President.

21 And thank you, Commissioner,
22 for your longstanding commitment to the
23 City of Philadelphia, and I think the
24 world of you and your staff.

25 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:

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2 Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: So it's a
4 good feeling to be -- I was probably the
5 shortest tenured Chair of the Public
6 Property Committee ever. President moved
7 along once we got new members, but I
8 enjoyed my brief tenure.

9 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
10 Our ten minutes. Our ten minutes
11 together were lovely.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: And thank
13 you for being forward thinking on the use
14 of office space. I know we're looking at
15 hybrid kind of usage, and particularly
16 the MSB building comes to mind, but I
17 don't want to talk about that. I'll let
18 that go to the second round.

19 I'd like to know since the
20 pandemic, we've picked up on public
21 appearances again, stages, sound, and
22 lighting. Can you give me and my members
23 a sense of where we are with that, what
24 we can look forward to going forward in
25 the summertime?

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2 So when you think about our
3 festivals, whether it's in West Philly,
4 South Philly, North Philly, Germantown,
5 we rely on you and your staff for the
6 stages, the sound equipment. How are you
7 positioned going forward to make sure
8 that you continue to make us look good?

9 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:

10 Well, really well, actually. So last
11 year in our budget, it was voted on that
12 we would get a special events team, which
13 we never had before. So before, if you
14 remember in the past, we would use DPP
15 employees, but we would be pulling them
16 off of other jobs and doing the special
17 events. So now you have a dedicated
18 team. So we're hiring them up.

19 So we have the authorization to
20 hire 20. I think we're at about 12 right
21 now, which is good. So they've been
22 doing -- so you probably saw them
23 stringing barricades for some of the
24 parades that we've had. They have all
25 been trained in how to put the stages

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2 together. They're all working under the
3 supervision of Ray Conwell and James
4 West, who a lot of you know personally,
5 who have been around for a while.

6 So they are -- they have their
7 teams trained up and we're just -- you
8 know, once we get the special events
9 requests from the MDO, they'll be out
10 there setting up the stages and the
11 barricades and whatever else it is we
12 need.

13 So we think we're in good
14 shape.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Well, we're
16 glad that the City of Philadelphia is
17 back open to events in neighborhoods.
18 For some people who can't get to Center
19 City to a concert, this is their concert.
20 This is their community festival. So we
21 appreciate that.

22 What I'd like to also ask you
23 about is how do we fare on public spaces
24 when it comes to -- like we own the SEPTA
25 platforms. How are you working with

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2 SEPTA and others as we start to look at
3 some of the spillover from the streets to
4 the subway platforms and to the elevated
5 platforms that we kind of technically own
6 and lease to them? Is there any
7 coordination, to your knowledge, about
8 that?

9 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
10 No, I can't say that there is. When we
11 did that lease/leaseback back in the last
12 Administration, even though the City owns
13 a lot of those stations and platforms and
14 whatnot, we turned over full
15 responsibility of everything to SEPTA.

16 So we don't really have any
17 involvement in anything that goes on in
18 the platforms or anything like that
19 anymore.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. Well,
21 we need to kind of take a look at that,
22 if nothing more than making sure that
23 those platforms have adequate lighting,
24 that they get the proper ongoing
25 maintenance, because those things are

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2 factors, as you can see, on 52nd Street
3 on subways, that we have a standard
4 offered by the City of Philadelphia that
5 SEPTA must maintain.

6 So we'll take a look at that as
7 we start to get down the budget train to
8 SEPTA, but we may want to kind of revisit
9 what the lease agreements call for.

10 Thank you, Mr. President.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

12 Thank you, Councilman.

13 The Chair recognizes
14 Councilwoman Gauthier.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
16 you, Council President.

17 Good morning, Commissioner
18 Greenwald.

19 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
20 Good morning.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Nice to
22 see you. First, I want to commend you
23 and your team for all of the hard work
24 that you do. Because of your help, the
25 Third District has, I think, its first

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2 ever district office at 606 South 52nd
3 Street, and we're just incredibly excited
4 to be in the community and we're really
5 thankful for your help on that,
6 especially Patrick Livingston. So I
7 wanted to be sure to say that.

8 I do have some concerns that I
9 wanted to talk through. I wanted to talk
10 about Public Property's surplus vacant
11 land and I wanted to ask you how much
12 would it cost, you know, for the City to
13 properly maintain these sites and to
14 invest in safety improvements, such as
15 lighting and cameras and in some cases
16 Jersey barriers.

17 And I'm not asking this to be
18 disparaging. You have a very difficult
19 job, but it's also clear to me that the
20 Department doesn't have the capital and
21 maintenance budget it needs to secure all
22 of these properties. And, you know, I've
23 been in situations where it's the City's
24 vacant land that is the eyesore, right,
25 the City's vacant land that is attracting

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2 illegal dumping, abandoned autos, and
3 sometimes crime. And so the
4 neighborhood, for instance, of West Mill
5 Creek comes to mind where we kept a lot
6 of the -- we're not able to build on a
7 lot of the land because of the creek that
8 used to sit beneath the neighborhood,
9 but, you know, we actually own quite a
10 large amount of recreational assets in
11 the neighborhood, and many of them are
12 places that are attracting a lot of
13 negative activity and leading to helping
14 to add to some of the uses and activities
15 in the neighborhood that residents want
16 to get rid of.

17 And so I wanted to ask you what
18 do you think Public Property needs to
19 remediate these spaces and to more
20 intensely care for the vacant land? And
21 in my view, I see this as a crime
22 prevention strategy, and so I think it's
23 really important that the City is able to
24 do more on this.

25 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:

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2 So I'd have to get back to you with a
3 number just based on the fact that, you
4 know, there's a mixed bag of who owns
5 some of the public land, right? Some is
6 DPP, some is Land Bank, some is PHA, some
7 is PRA, some is -- so it runs the gamut.

8 I would have to get back to you
9 on an answer for that, like what we think
10 it would take with everything that you
11 have listed and what we think is a good
12 strategy to making some of the vacant
13 land safe. We used to have one years
14 ago, but that's very outdated at this
15 point.

16 So let me get back to you on
17 that and I'll send the information to the
18 Council President and we can get a number
19 together for you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
21 you. I would appreciate having that
22 information from you and, you know, our
23 other management partners as well. I
24 know that what you described is true,
25 where we have many City agencies that are

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2 responsible or that own pieces of vacant
3 land, but how that's playing out in the
4 neighborhoods is not great for quality of
5 life.

6 And so I just want to encourage
7 us, one, to come together in how we're
8 thinking about the stewardship of that
9 land and also because we know that if we
10 clean and green, you know, vacant spaces,
11 if we secure them properly, we can reduce
12 crime. And, you know, just the City
13 can't be the one that's actually driving
14 negative activities within neighborhoods.
15 We have to be the solution.

16 And so I would appreciate
17 having that information for Council and,
18 again, I thank you very much for your
19 work every day maintaining quite a large
20 amount of public properties and for the
21 assistance that you give our office on a
22 daily basis. Thank you so much.

23 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
24 Absolutely. Thank you.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

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2 Thank you, Councilwoman.

3 The Chair recognizes Councilman
4 Johnson.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
6 Council President.

7 How you doing, Bridget? How
8 are you this morning?

9 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
10 I'm good, Councilman. How are you?

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm doing
12 pretty good. Can't complain.

13 I just wanted to follow up on
14 some of the questioning that Councilman
15 Curtis Jones talked about regarding how
16 do we expand the support for stages for
17 our festivals during the summer, and I
18 know it may seem like a minute issue to
19 some people, but at the end of the day,
20 pre-COVID we pretty much depended on
21 Public Property to provide the stages for
22 the various events that we were hosting,
23 not only for us but also our constituents
24 who are trying to do things to keep the
25 quality of life inside our neighborhoods

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2 very active and vibrant.

3 And so can you just give me an
4 idea of what staffing looked like
5 pre-COVID, what it looks like now
6 post-COVID, and then will we get back to
7 the time where rather we're requesting to
8 host events or community groups are
9 requesting to host events.

10 I know we use the Show Mobile
11 now, but, you know, the Show Mobile
12 doesn't fit every event that we're
13 hosting compared to your crew coming out
14 and setting up. And then when we're
15 being told we have to call a private
16 independent contractor, a lot of us don't
17 have those type of resources to actually
18 do that.

19 So can you just give me an
20 update on what that's going to look like
21 in the future?

22 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
23 Sure. So pre-COVID, as you know, we had
24 a bunch of events, right, and we were
25 running, especially in the summer, right,

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2 we were always running, running, running,
3 running from one side of the City to the
4 next.

5 We had, as I said earlier -- I
6 want to correct what I said earlier. We
7 had a staff of about three that were
8 completely dedicated to special events.
9 That was it. And what we did was, we
10 used the rest of our trades workers would
11 supplement. So we would pull like, you
12 know, some plumbers, carpenters,
13 electricians, whatever it was, and that's
14 how we would get all the events done.

15 During COVID, there were no
16 events, as you know, and we took -- our
17 department took a hit with some layoffs,
18 and that group unfortunately was one of
19 the groups that was on the layoff list.

20 So post-COVID now, we got the
21 funding to hire the staff of 20, which is
22 way more than we ever had before. So
23 that's a dedicated staff.

24 So I think, my opinion is,
25 we're going to be able to be rocking and

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 rolling way better than we were before
3 because now it's dedicated. We don't
4 have to say, okay, let me pull a plumber
5 off of this job he's doing and have him,
6 you know, making a stage. So I think
7 we're going to be in good shape.

8 So we're going to follow the
9 same process, you know, through the MDO,
10 Special Events through Jaz's group and,
11 you know, putting in the applications and
12 whatnot, and then, you know, that group
13 will disseminate the information to us
14 and we'll be out there laying barricades,
15 doing stages, whatever it is, probably
16 all summer long. So we're in good shape,
17 I think.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: So we can
19 look forward to some of it being pretty
20 okay when it comes to hosting the events
21 when neighborhood groups go through the
22 particular process, that they should feel
23 comfortable that we'll be back to the old
24 days where an actual -- I see Council
25 President over there -- I see an actual

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2 stage will be set up. Because I know we
3 do a lot of great events like Made in
4 America and (unintelligible) and other
5 events, but some people say, oh, these
6 politicians, they're doing these
7 community, you know, celebrations and so
8 forth, but what I try to explain to
9 people, it means so much, from Strawberry
10 Mansion to Point Breeze, from Packer Park
11 to Eastwick, when we have these types of
12 events during the summer, because
13 everybody don't have the luxury of going
14 down to the shore. Everybody don't have
15 the luxury of going to the Wells Fargo
16 Center to a show. And so when we bring
17 the entertainment to the actual
18 neighborhood, it's just a big
19 celebration. And also, most importantly,
20 it brings people together all in the
21 effort of them enjoying themselves.

22 So we just want to thank you
23 for your hard work and your dedication on
24 this particular issue in general for all
25 your responsibilities and just thank you

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2 very much.

3 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:

4 Sure. Absolutely.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

6 Thank you, Councilman. Councilman, you
7 are so right. Given the cost of tickets
8 nowadays, if it weren't for some of these
9 community events, people would never see
10 live entertainment, because I could not
11 believe how much they are charging.

12 That's why Ticketmaster is in court as we
13 speak, right, because what they've done
14 as it relates to these ticket prices.

15 Commissioner, I have one quick
16 question. I see in your testimony you
17 talked about the 20 staff positions.
18 Now, I understand that's for the special
19 events; i.e., the stages and things of
20 that nature?

21 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:

22 Yep. Totally dedicated.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

24 Okay. In terms of your hiring capacity,
25 because I know we're having challenges in

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 all our departments, is it likely that
3 we're going to be in a position to hire
4 these folks or do we have a strategy for
5 getting those 20 people?

6 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:

7 Yeah. So we're more than halfway there,
8 right? So we're at about 12 now. So
9 we're using the civil service list for
10 semi-skilled laborer. So that's the list
11 that's out there. It has a decent amount
12 of people on the list. So you can, you
13 know, kind of canvas the list and
14 schedule a bunch of interviews at one
15 time. So that's what we've been doing.

16 So I think we're in decent
17 shape. I think it's going to be in flux
18 for a little bit, you know, in the
19 beginning, but having 12 is -- like I
20 said, it's a lot better than we had
21 before. So I think we're going to be
22 okay.

23 And I know I called out Ray and
24 James again, because they've been doing
25 this forever, and I know you all know

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 them and you see them out there. They
3 have the team, you know, trained up and
4 ready to go.

5 So I think we're going to be in
6 good shape. I really do.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

8 Okay. And your conversation with the
9 School District with graduates, are we
10 having that also?

11 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:

12 Yes. Yeah. That's to get our students
13 in the -- students from the School
14 District into our trades positions. So
15 the strategy this year, which I think is
16 going to be a great one, is we have two
17 of our younger gentlemen that work for us
18 in the City, came in through the School
19 District through that apprenticeship
20 program, and they've agreed to be like
21 the spokespeople. So they've been going
22 to the schools and they're going to be
23 kind of like the mentors. So it's good.
24 Young, you know what I mean, young, just
25 came from the School District, young in

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 their career, but to show, hey, I came
3 from here and now I'm here. Like you
4 know what I mean? They're in trades,
5 HVAC trades. So it's great, and
6 obviously it helps the City and it helps
7 them. It establishes a career. So it's
8 awesome.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

10 Good. Good. Thank you. Thank you,
11 Commissioner.

12 I do not see any other members
13 queued up for questions. So with that,
14 Commissioner, I want to thank you very
15 much for your testimony. As always,
16 please be prepared for any potential
17 callbacks as we go through this budget
18 process, and I know you're always
19 available at any point in time for us.

20 I want to thank you so much.
21 Thank you for the work you do, and thank
22 you for your --

23 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:
24 Absolutely. Thank you. Have a great
25 day.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD:

5 Bye.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Next
7 up I think we have our good friends
8 from -- do we have License and Inspection
9 or Streets, Bob? Who do we have next?

10 THE CLERK: Next person to
11 testify is Carlton Williams, Streets
12 Commissioner.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
14 Streets Commissioner, our good friend.
15 Commissioner, are you good?

16 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I'm
17 good. Good morning, sir.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
19 morning. How's your teams doing this
20 year?

21 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: We're
22 struggling a little bit, but the best
23 news is that we're out there.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: It's
25 all good. You have young people engaged

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 in positive activity.

3 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:
4 Absolutely. Absolutely. Win or lose,
5 we're winning on the field. We're
6 keeping them off the streets. So that's
7 our goal.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
9 Loving it. Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yep.
11 I'm ready when you are, sir.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
13 Thank you, Commissioner. We're ready for
14 you, sir.

15 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: All
16 right. Good morning, President Clarke
17 and members of City Council. I am
18 Carlton Williams, Streets Commissioner.
19 Joining me today are Keith Warren, Deputy
20 Commissioner for Sanitation; Richard
21 Montanez, Deputy Commissioner for
22 Transportation; and Christopher Newman,
23 Deputy Commissioner for Administration.
24 I am pleased to provide testimony on
25 Streets' Fiscal Year 2024 Operating

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2 Budget.

3 The FY24 total budget request
4 for the Streets Department is
5 \$354 million as reflected in the Mayor's
6 budget recommendation submission for our
7 department. This includes 154 million in
8 General Fund monies and 74 million in
9 newly created transportation funds, with
10 the balance of our operating budget
11 funded through state fuel tax allocations
12 and grants.

13 The establishments of our new
14 transportation funding is significant, as
15 it provides dedicated sources of funding
16 for the Transportation Division services
17 and operations while at the same time
18 providing certain financial advantages
19 and opportunities for the City overall.

20 Comparing the combined FY24
21 general and transportation fund to this
22 year's fiscal estimated General Fund
23 operating obligations, Streets'
24 recommended budget includes \$10.9 million
25 more in the City funding for FY24.

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2 The significant increase is
3 primarily due to the infusion of funds
4 for both new and expanded programs and
5 fully fund multiple positions added and
6 authorized in last year's budget.

7 Specifically, this includes continued
8 expansion of the Department's mechanical
9 street cleaning program, the
10 establishment of a new public safety --
11 traffic safety enforcement program, and
12 full funding for the positions authorized
13 in FY23 for infrastructure improvement
14 staff required to manage a massive
15 investment in new federally supported
16 transportation public works projects via
17 the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

18 As Council is aware, Streets
19 continues to pursue highly ambitious
20 goals regarding litter reduction and
21 waste diversion, effective and efficient
22 roadway maintenance, and the continued
23 acquisition of multi-modal traffic
24 calming and safety.

25 Our objective metrics-based

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 approach using tools such as the Litter
3 Index, Roadway Quality Index, High Injury
4 Corridor data, and various other
5 operational data ensures we focus these
6 efforts to those areas most in need,
7 often in predominantly minority and
8 disadvantaged communities where older,
9 smaller, and more condense housing and
10 geographic street layouts can exasperate
11 litter conditions and transportation
12 infrastructure quality as well as high
13 crime areas where certain improvements,
14 such as better street lighting, may
15 deter.

16 This department has continued
17 to continually improve in our objective
18 planning measures as we ensure racial
19 equity in addressing services for City
20 residents. We're very proud of the
21 remarkable strides we've made this fiscal
22 year towards our goals, and we are poised
23 and excited to embark on strategic plans
24 moving forward into FY24.

25 Our Sanitation Division, under

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 the direction of Deputy Commissioner
3 Keith Warren, continues to address litter
4 conditions throughout the City by
5 significantly increasing illegal dumping
6 enforcement and cleaning efforts, while
7 at the same time maintaining a highly
8 effective and efficient trash and
9 recycling collections operation, with all
10 trash and recycling picked up
11 consistently on a daily basis throughout
12 the City and the best on-time trash
13 collection rates in over nine years.

14 We have also throughout the
15 City -- we have also very successfully
16 continued to significantly expand
17 mechanical street cleaning from 6 to 14
18 neighborhoods this fiscal year, and plan
19 to expand on 20 neighborhoods next fiscal
20 year.

21 In addition, after being one of
22 the few cities to maintain a fully
23 functioning recycling program throughout
24 the COVID pandemic, the Department is now
25 focused on significantly increasing

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2 recycling participation citywide using
3 targeted neighborhood-based campaigns to
4 encourage proper recycling.

5 The Department's Transportation
6 Division, under the leadership of Deputy
7 Commissioner Richard Montanez, remains
8 committed to the City's Vision Zero
9 initiative and the strategic approach to
10 the City's overall safe and complete
11 transportation network, as well as
12 management of the massive new federal
13 infrastructure Bipartisan Infrastructure
14 Law, funded public works projects for
15 much-needed roadway, bridge, traffic
16 infrastructure reconstruction and
17 upgrades.

18 The scope and level of this
19 work represents a tremendous opportunity
20 to stabilize and extend the life of
21 transportation infrastructure assets
22 across the City for years to come.

23 We are now already actively
24 managing 30 BIL-funded projects, with an
25 estimated total cost of 39.1 million this

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2 fiscal year alone.

3 Streets also continues to
4 capitalize on roadway resurfacing
5 operations in order to maximize paving
6 through the City using both City forces
7 and federally funded contracts. Our
8 plans for FY24 will allow us to continue
9 to expand initiatives targeted to improve
10 infrastructure and provide multi-modal
11 traffic safety solutions throughout the
12 City.

13 A brand new public traffic
14 safety enforcement program has recently
15 been established promising to enhance the
16 City's ability to regulate traffic and
17 promote driver, pedestrian, and bicycle
18 safety in Philadelphia and enforcement of
19 abandoned vehicle removal in the City,
20 making significant quality of life
21 improvements for residents and
22 businesses.

23 And effective July 1st, Streets
24 will complete the transition of the
25 City's school crossing guard program from

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2 the Police Department to Streets,
3 formally adding this citywide program to
4 the Department.

5 The Streets Department and its
6 employees continue to vigorously pursue
7 our mission to clean, green, and safe
8 streets. We're excited to present a
9 proposed budget today that we believe
10 will allow us to make tremendous progress
11 and address many of the Department's
12 strategic priorities. We, therefore,
13 request your favorable consideration of
14 this budget request, and we thank you for
15 the opportunity to testify before you
16 today.

17 The deputies and staff and I
18 are happy to answer any questions that
19 you may have.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
21 Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner, and
22 thank you for the work you do. We really
23 appreciate having you as a member of the
24 team in your various capacities over the
25 years. It feels like we all grew up

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2 together in government. It's good stuff.

3 Commish, I got a couple of
4 quick questions. On the public safety
5 officers -- and thank you and great
6 graduation, really exciting. A part of
7 the responsibilities and role is the
8 abandoned vehicle removal. Can you tell
9 me when that will start? I think you're
10 going to be working with the Parking
11 Authority also?

12 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.
13 So we've been in the process of the
14 training period to ensure that they
15 adequately provide information and
16 identify those vehicles that are illegal
17 on the streets and eligible to be removed
18 and considered abandoned.

19 Deputy Commissioner Keith
20 Newman -- Chris Newman, I'm sorry, has
21 been working very closely and has the
22 details on specific time dates. So I'm
23 going to ask Chris to step in and answer
24 the specific dates on the deadlines that
25 we expect to start that part of the

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 program.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
4 Thank you.

5 Good morning, Deputy.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
7 Good morning, Council President. I'm
8 Christopher Newman, Deputy Commissioner
9 for Administration.

10 In terms of abandoned vehicles,
11 I know that they were recently trained in
12 doing certain work for the Police
13 Department, and I believe they are out
14 now actually identifying vehicles to
15 verify if the abandoned vehicles are out
16 there so that the Police Department can
17 take action and do the disposition needed
18 to get the abandoned vehicles off the
19 streets.

20 I'm going to defer to Crystal
21 Jacobs Shipman, if that information is
22 more specific that she can give with
23 regard to that. She's the Executive
24 Director of the program.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good

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2 morning.

3 MS. JACOBS SHIPMAN: Good
4 morning, Council President,
5 Councilmembers. Crystal Jacobs Shipman,
6 Executive Director of Public Safety
7 Programs for the Philadelphia Department
8 of Streets, Transportation Division.

9 And Deputy Commissioner Newman
10 is correct. We have gone through
11 training with the Neighborhood Services
12 Unit of the Police Department and we are
13 actually identifying those vehicles for
14 removal and reporting that back to
15 Streets so that they can come tow and get
16 those vehicles off the street.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
18 Okay. Let me understand. So we
19 graduated 20, I think, public safety
20 officers. So in terms of the citywide
21 nature of the vehicle removal, big city,
22 a lot of cars out there, and the traffic
23 designation, is that even remotely enough
24 people to do that work? I'm just not
25 seeing the numbers. How do we do that

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2 with only 20 people?

3 MS. JACOBS SHIPMAN: Chris, did
4 you want me to continue?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:

6 Yeah. I mean, I would say, Council
7 President, that we would probably need
8 more people, because the other thing to
9 keep in mind is that these traffic safety
10 officers are not only doing abandoned
11 vehicle disposition in support of that,
12 but they're also going to be doing
13 traffic management, priority
14 intersections in Center City Philadelphia
15 and in High Injury Network corridors
16 throughout the City.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So
18 is there a request for an increase in the
19 budget? You knew that was coming, right?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: We
21 did request in FY24 to get some things
22 with regard to our traffic safety
23 officers supported, specifically in Class
24 300 and Class 200. So we did ask for a
25 marginal increase, but we didn't ask for

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 a significant number of new positions
3 just yet.

4 Our focus this year is really
5 just kind of standing up the program. As
6 you know, we stood up the program within
7 about three months, which in my
8 experience with the City is incredibly
9 quick. Now we want to make sure that it
10 works. I would anticipate next fiscal
11 year we'd be asking for more positions.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
13 Okay. And I understand that's the answer
14 you have to give today, but let's be
15 real. We have set extremely high
16 expectations of this program, and we've
17 been standing here taking pictures, it
18 was great, you know, the whole nine
19 yards, everybody is excited after four,
20 five years, and now we're going to go out
21 there and the term "half stepping"?

22 I mean, if we're going to do
23 this, we're going to do this. We can use
24 20 and that's not going to be enough to
25 deal with the volume as it relates to

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 traffic issues just in Center City and
3 University City alone just dealing with
4 that.

5 So the expectation that we're
6 going to be able to do what we need to do
7 with this abandoned vehicle removal,
8 which is pretty high on the list, even
9 have people running for Mayor making
10 commercials about it, right, why don't we
11 just do what we need to do?

12 I mean, I don't understand why
13 we -- and I understand you have to give
14 certain answers. You need to be teeing
15 these people up now for the next class,
16 because initially we were supposed to be
17 doing 40 and we pared it back to 20
18 because of the COVID and, you know, the
19 delay in the implementation and the FOP.

20 And I don't expect you all to
21 answer that today, but I'm just putting
22 it out there, that if we're going to do
23 this, let's do this. I don't want to
24 have people thinking that -- I don't know
25 about my colleagues. I've been out there

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 telling people, the abandoned car removal
3 crew is coming, and I don't want us
4 standing there looking stupid, right,
5 when they don't get moved.

6 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:
7 Understood, Council President. We
8 certainly will work with your office and
9 Council and Budget, and if we can get
10 more positions, absolutely we will
11 definitely use them and we will
12 definitely put them to work to start
13 increasing the number of cars we can get
14 off the streets.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
16 Ms. Waxman, are you still on the call?

17 MS. WAXMAN: Yes, sir.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So
19 you hear that, right?

20 MS. WAXMAN: Yes, definitely.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: As
22 the deputy chief bean counter, you can
23 tell Rob, the chief bean counter, that
24 you need to come correct. I mean, if
25 we're going to do this, let's do this,

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2 right? Because I understand that this is
3 a one-year initiative as approved by the
4 arbitration, right? Am I wrong?

5 MS. WAXMAN: I believe so. I'd
6 defer. I don't know if Chris knows that,
7 but obviously we'll look at that and
8 understand what a multi -- begin to
9 explore what a multiple-year program
10 might look like.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Chris?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
14 Are you asking, Council President, if
15 this is just a one-year process?

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: My
17 understanding by the arbitration of the
18 FOP is that we were given the
19 authorization for a one-year initiative
20 by the public safety officers working
21 with the Philadelphia Parking Authority
22 and sweeping the City of Philadelphia.
23 Am I incorrect? Did we do --

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: My
25 understanding is that there wasn't a time

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 limit associated with it, that this was
3 our responsibility and that we were going
4 to be working with the Police Department
5 going forward in perpetuity as long as
6 this program was in existence. That's
7 how I understood it.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

9 Okay. Well, hopefully the way you
10 understood it is the appropriate --

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: I
12 hope so too.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

14 Yeah. I mean, I was a little
15 disappointed what I heard.

16 All right. So either way, and
17 I don't have to belabor the point, but,
18 Ms. Waxman, you're one of the money
19 people. Can we please like resource this
20 thing appropriately so we could be
21 successful?

22 MS. WAXMAN: Yes. Obviously,
23 as you know, the budget process is a
24 process, and we're always happy to work
25 with you as we move through it.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Yeah. Well, I mean, it's not our thing.
4 This is like our thing. I mean, this is
5 something -- we need to get these people
6 trained and out on the street.

7 Let me ask you -- I know that's
8 a long question. There was a question I
9 had about the issue with respect to --
10 can you explain on the transportation
11 fund, the infrastructure component of
12 that, Commish?

13 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Can
15 you explain exactly what that is, the
16 infrastructure? I understand --

17 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: For
18 clarification, are you referencing the
19 Bipartisan Infrastructure funding that we
20 get monies from the federal government?

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So
22 you were just talking about the funding
23 from the Bipartisan Infrastructure
24 program and how it was implemented in the
25 City of Philadelphia. So with that

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 infrastructure that was designated
3 authorizations for that type of funding,
4 how is that going to be implemented in
5 the City?

6 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Well,
7 it comes in through -- obviously we're
8 working with the Administration in terms
9 of getting funding for our capital
10 programs, bridges, roadways, several
11 projects that support Vision Zero. So
12 we're working with OTIS, the Office of
13 Transportation, Infrastructure and
14 Sustainability. So we have several key
15 projects. Great Streets is one of them.

16 We have raised funding to
17 address issues -- we just received a
18 \$30 million grant for that to improve our
19 roadway conditions around High Injury
20 Network. These are much-needed
21 improvements that we can not only change
22 or reconstruct but modernize our city to
23 address these issues.

24 Last year we had over 121
25 deaths related to vehicle crashes, and so

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 this money is desperately needed to
3 reinvest in our neighborhood for
4 traffic-calming measures.

5 We put in monies for the budget
6 to be able to staff up to ensure that we
7 have enough engineers and administrators
8 when that money is available and it's in
9 our possession, which it is now, that
10 these projects are ready to go.

11 So that's been the problem of
12 our issues of the past. When we receive
13 grant money, it takes so long in order
14 for us to be able to complete projects,
15 and I know that's been a frustration to
16 you and many other City Councilmembers,
17 but we're now in the position where we
18 are staffing up.

19 I believe, and Chris can
20 correct me, that we're about 70 percent
21 staffed up in terms of the positions,
22 which is a pretty good rate to replace
23 and hire engineers in this market and
24 this economy. We want to make sure that
25 we have those positions in place when the

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 funding is available, that projects can
3 be administered, bid out, and ready to
4 go.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
6 Okay. And that's -- okay. All these
7 will be eligible activities. Cool. I
8 just wanted to get clarity on that.

9 All right. I'll come back on
10 my next round, on the next round, and
11 move to my colleagues.

12 The Chair recognizes Councilman
13 Johnson.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
15 Council President.

16 Just a couple brief questions.
17 First, I just want to give a shout-out to
18 Carlton Williams, Mr. Keith Warren,
19 Steven Lorenz, Rich Montanez, Christie
20 Del Rossi, Kevin O'Connell just for y'all
21 hard work and y'all dedication and just
22 being responsive when my office calls,
23 rather it's addressing a pothole, rather
24 it's addressing the issue of illegal
25 dumping or cameras, but at various street

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2 renamings that we do and I may have to
3 call at the last minute trying to get a
4 sign moved from one side of the street to
5 another side of the street and y'all
6 being patient with me.

7 And so I just wanted to thank
8 your whole team, because I know sometimes
9 it gets a little sensitive as relates to
10 me going back and forth and trying to get
11 things done, but I do thank you and your
12 team for just being patient and working
13 with us.

14 And so in the spirit of the
15 JustServe initiative advocated by my
16 colleague Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier, I
17 have a variety of different quality of
18 life questions I want to ask you.

19 First and foremost, regarding
20 street repaving. My colleague Councilman
21 Jones had a pothole patrol initiative a
22 couple years ago, right? And so in this
23 upcoming budget process, I see that we
24 have about for the paving of roads, you
25 and your team -- just give me an idea of

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2 the amount of roads that's supposed to be
3 paved. I think it's 75 miles, but you
4 have a report that says in order to
5 maintain our streets -- to maintain our
6 streets in a good way, about 131 miles a
7 year should be paved.

8 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: So can you
10 give us an update on why we aren't doing
11 more as opposed to less as it relates to
12 street repaving and addressing the issue
13 of potholes?

14 And then I'm going to sign on
15 this next question as relates to -- I
16 know there's been different organizations
17 that try to partner with the City of
18 Philadelphia regarding street cleaning,
19 right? And obviously the unions don't
20 want us privatizing outside vendors to do
21 the street cleaning. So can we expand,
22 right, the street cleaning crew that we
23 used to have?

24 I know on Point Breeze Avenue
25 we used to have a crew that would come

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2 down every day and clean up the corridor,
3 but we want to see how do we have a
4 robust team to actually go into the
5 neighborhoods if we're really being
6 serious about the issue of litter and
7 trash inside our neighborhoods.

8 So if we can't go private,
9 which I don't support, right, how do we
10 expand the work that we're doing on the
11 citywide basis with City support from the
12 Streets Department with a citywide
13 residential cleaning program?

14 Those two questions, street
15 repaving, the mileage of paving that
16 we're going to be doing, and also street
17 cleaning crew.

18 And special shout-out to -- I
19 don't really consider him part of the
20 Streets Department, but I do see Michael
21 Carroll on here, who is a part of OTIS.
22 Y'all all kind of a team, right, but I
23 know Carlton on the commissioner side of
24 things, you kind of are the boss when it
25 comes to all things Streets and all of

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2 those agencies, all of those departments
3 I mentioned under you, but I am going to
4 give a shout-out to your partner as well,
5 Michael Carroll. I know y'all put your
6 heads together on a variety of issues,
7 and thank you, Mike, for always being
8 patient with me as well and work with me
9 around a variety of different issues.

10 So let me wrap up on that. Go
11 ahead, Commissioner Carlton Williams.

12 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes,
13 sir. First of all, thank you for the
14 acknowledgement of the employees. I
15 really appreciate and enjoy working with
16 you and all of Councilmembers' office.
17 Whatever the issue is, we try to get a
18 result that's very positive and favorable
19 for the citizens of Philadelphia.

20 Regarding street paving, it's
21 been a challenge. So, yes, our goal was
22 to pave 131 miles each year to keep our
23 streets in a state of good repair. We've
24 made significant investments, the
25 Administration, last year over

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2 \$100 million and this year an additional
3 \$60 million to be able to address some of
4 our most dangerous roadways in the City
5 of Philadelphia to get them back in a
6 state of good repair.

7 We do have some challenges that
8 we've had to overcome, and Mike Carroll
9 will be able to address the one issue
10 with regards to ensuring that not only do
11 we pave our streets but we repair our
12 ramps as well, and that is a significant
13 amount of resources of that \$60 million
14 that will ensure that not only the
15 streets are being repaved but our ramps
16 are being done as well, and that's the
17 ADA, Americans with Disability ramps.

18 So we're working very closely
19 to try to get to that goal. Those ramps
20 cost money. Last year we invested in a
21 crew in reference to getting them trained
22 up so that we can reduce the cost, but on
23 average, they can cost anywhere from
24 \$10,000 to \$12,000 per ramp at an
25 intersection for us to be able to pave a

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2 street, where it takes us approximately a
3 couple of thousand dollars to pave an
4 entire street. When you add the ramps,
5 that drives up the cost up significantly.

6 So we're working through that,
7 which is the challenge of getting that
8 much amount of money to help us reach
9 that 131 mile goal. Do I think we are
10 able to get there? Not with this current
11 funding level and the current funding
12 matrix, and Mike can probably talk a
13 little bit more about that.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: How much
15 will it cost?

16 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: In
17 order for us to get to 131 miles, it will
18 cost us about 120 or 130 more million
19 dollars in order for us to get there.
20 And that's an annual expenditure. That's
21 not one time. So many people hear that
22 amount of money and think that the
23 problem is solved. No. That would be an
24 annual expenditure for us to do 131 miles
25 of roadway every year.

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2 Mike, I didn't know if you
3 wanted to add to it.

4 MR. CARROLL: I'll just add a
5 couple comments. This is Mike Carroll.
6 I'm the Deputy Managing Director for the
7 Office of Transportation, Infrastructure
8 and Sustainability.

9 First, Councilmember Johnson, I
10 want to thank you as well for all the
11 acknowledgments and acknowledging the
12 teamwork that takes place between the
13 Streets Department and the Office of
14 Transportation, Infrastructure and
15 Sustainability, because that's how we get
16 things done, right, through the teamwork.

17 So I also want to call out the
18 Law Department and their fantastic work
19 in defending the City. We were involved
20 in litigation, folks should probably be
21 aware, and we are very close to
22 settlement. The settlement has been
23 agreed to by both the plaintiffs and the
24 City in the role of defendant and it just
25 requires us to get through some extra

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2 process here before it is certified, and
3 we expect that to take place this summer.
4 So that sort of sets the rules for how
5 we're going to do paving in combination
6 with the curb ramps moving forward.

7 And you've got some of the
8 figures from Commissioner Williams, but
9 just to put another set of numbers to it,
10 the cost of paving a mile of street is
11 going to be about, you know, 25 percent
12 paving, asphalt, maybe up to 30 percent
13 paving, and then it's going to be about
14 60 to 75 percent curb ramps. And that's
15 a ratio which makes it very hard for us
16 to scale up, but what we're trying to do
17 is to organize it so that we're able to
18 do that as efficiently as possible, and
19 we're making sure that everybody is doing
20 their fair share.

21 So what that means is when you
22 have other folks who are working in the
23 right-of-way, whether they're utilities,
24 they're developers, you know, maybe the
25 state that's doing work on state routes

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2 or crossing local routes on state routes,
3 that they are all triggering curb ramps.

4 And so we need to make sure
5 that the folks that are treating the curb
6 ramps are fixing the curb ramps before
7 the City comes along. And so we're
8 working on trying to get some more tools
9 in our toolbox to make sure that
10 everybody is doing their fair share, that
11 it's an organized process, that we only
12 build a ramp once to make it compliant
13 and we're not coming through tearing up
14 new ramps when we do other work.

15 So that coordination is going
16 to help quite a bit, but as the
17 Commissioner said, there is a significant
18 increase in investment that's going to be
19 required in order to address the whole
20 package of needs, so the paving itself,
21 addressing the potholes, preventing the
22 potholes by doing the paving but also
23 getting those ramps done and making sure
24 our ramps are compliant and folks with
25 accessibility needs don't have major

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2 issues.

3 I just want to add those
4 comments.

5 Thank you, Commissioner.

6 Thank you, Councilmember.

7 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: And do
8 we have time for me to answer the second
9 part of your question about cleaning and
10 litter? I just want to make sure.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Yeah. The bell is for the questions.

13 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So in
14 regards to cleaning and illegal dumping
15 and litter, Councilmember, as you know,
16 this is one of our top priorities. It is
17 our biggest priority in terms of illegal
18 dumping and cleaning in the City of
19 Philadelphia.

20 We work with community groups
21 all the time. We work with many of them
22 in your district and throughout. And
23 most notably, you know, we have SOSNA,
24 University City district, we have
25 neighborhood block captains. We work

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2 with any group that's voluntarily willing
3 to help us improve the cleanliness and
4 condition of the City.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Carlton, I
6 want to do a deeper dive and just zero in
7 on a particular initiative. So you have
8 non-profit groups and for-profit groups,
9 right --

10 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- that
12 want to partner to actually do
13 residential block-by-block street
14 cleaning.

15 There's agreements from
16 District Council 33, the sanitation
17 folks, right, against the City because
18 they feel like we're privatizing outside
19 contractors to do what would essentially
20 be their work.

21 And so I know there's a crew
22 that they are saying that normally would
23 do this work that's underfunded, but if
24 they were funded, it would be no need to
25 bring in an outside private contractor to

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2 do this work. And so I'm just trying to
3 figure out if that is the case, right,
4 how do we go about investing and
5 expanding that particular clean-up crew
6 that's specifically not doing commercial
7 corridors but going block by block
8 actually doing the neighborhood
9 clean-ups.

10 Is that something that we can
11 explore? Is that something that exists
12 that we can expand?

13 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah.
14 I think we already started that process
15 with mechanical street sweeping, and
16 we're going block by block.

17 Last year the number of blocks
18 that we cleaned and the amount of tonnage
19 that we picked up and the number of
20 people that we've invested in and this
21 Council has invested in, along with the
22 Administration, is accomplishing that
23 goal.

24 Yes. The more people we have,
25 the better. Obviously this can't be just

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2 a government-alone project, that we need
3 the support of the community and
4 community residents, but the core of our
5 cleaning program is the investments that
6 we made in mechanical street sweeping
7 that is paying off.

8 Ninety-six percent of all
9 residents, when we surveyed, said they
10 want to see this program expanding, and
11 that's the direction that we're going in,
12 and we're going in those neighborhoods
13 that need it the most, which are the most
14 litter-challenged neighborhoods and
15 normally in areas where our citizens are
16 most vulnerable.

17 So we are making those
18 investments. We're moving forward, and
19 we'll continue to work with non-profit
20 organizations and people who want to help
21 keep our city clean.

22 Regarding privatization, you
23 know that is a very sticky issue when it
24 comes down to the union. We have to
25 tread carefully, and we work to cooperate

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2 with them as best we can, and there is a
3 hearing scheduled to determine the
4 outcome of that particular issue.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

7 Thank you.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: That's all
9 I have, Council President.

10 Thank you, Mr. Commissioner.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

12 Thank you, Councilman.

13 The Chair recognizes
14 Councilwoman Gauthier.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
16 you, Council President.

17 Good morning, Commissioner.

18 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Good
19 morning, Councilmember.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I
21 wanted to start by thanking you and
22 Deputy Commissioner Warren and Deputy
23 Commissioner Montanez, and just the
24 entire team for the work you do on behalf
25 of our neighborhoods every day.

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2 And thanks to Councilmember
3 Johnson for the shout-out to
4 JustServicesPHL and those great
5 questions. And I also wanted to say that
6 I completely support the Council
7 President's push to get more public
8 safety officers trained and on the
9 street. That position is crucial to our
10 ability to really deal with a lot of
11 quality of life concerns that we hear
12 about from residents all the time.

13 My first questions are about
14 illegal dumping. During last year's
15 budget cycle, the Streets Department
16 requested an additional 1.5 illegal
17 dumping crews to keep up with demand, and
18 this year the Administration is proposing
19 to add one more crew, for a total of
20 four, I believe.

21 I look forward to learning more
22 about the plans to hire and deploy this
23 crew, but I'm curious to why we're
24 stopping at just one, especially
25 considering that the City received some

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2 24,114 illegal dumping complaints in the
3 last year alone.

4 So I wanted to ask you, when
5 can it be estimated that the crew will be
6 hired and deployed? Why are we just
7 stopping at one crew? I'd also like to
8 hear about what the additional crew from
9 the last budget cycle allowed us to do in
10 terms of dumping and what will one
11 additional crew get us in terms of
12 addressing the significant need.

13 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Great.
14 Thank you for your question,
15 Councilmember. Illegal dumping is a high
16 priority for you and everyone else,
17 including our department. It's probably
18 the highest priority in our department
19 next to paving.

20 It continues to be rampantly
21 happening in the City of Philadelphia,
22 and we're trying to address those issues
23 immediately. And illegal dumping crews,
24 while it doesn't sound like a lot in
25 terms of one, it is a significant number.

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2 It's a 33-person crew that consists of
3 multiple forms of equipment and resources
4 and people, compactors, front-end
5 loaders, you know, stationary personnel
6 that's on the streets doing hand
7 cleaning. So one crew may not seem like
8 a lot, but it is significant to be able
9 to address these issues on time.

10 Last year alone, they cleaned
11 up over 13,000 tons off the streets of
12 Philadelphia in certain areas. Having
13 four crews would allow us to improve and
14 increase response times to dumping areas.
15 Because, as you know and as my friend Tom
16 Conway can tell you, the theory of
17 graffiti is that the longer you leave it
18 up, the more it happens. So having a
19 quicker response time to be able to clean
20 up sites along with the use of cameras,
21 which I know we'll be talking about as
22 well, will give us the resources
23 necessary to reduce it and eventually
24 eliminate it when we can not only pair it
25 with catching and preventing it from

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2 happening in the first place.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
4 you so much. I can appreciate that this
5 is a big job, because we have a lot of
6 dumping going on, particularly in certain
7 neighborhoods, right?

8 I think my question is less
9 about -- I think my question is about how
10 many crews we need to get the problem
11 addressed fully, to have full capacity to
12 address this significant problem. And so
13 while I can appreciate that one crew is
14 big, it's 33 people, it gives us a lot of
15 capacity, what I'm asking about is what
16 we need to get the job entirely done.
17 What's your assessment of that?

18 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Right
19 now we would like to have one dumping
20 crew per district. And so that would go
21 from four crews to ten crews. Actually,
22 the amount that's happening in areas that
23 we've had big challenges -- and I know
24 it's all over the City, but I'm going to
25 just use Kensington for example. We

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2 sometimes need one and two crews to work
3 in those areas given the amount of
4 illegal dumping that occurs. Some areas
5 don't require as much because they have
6 different forms of litter.

7 But we would like to have one
8 per district and be able to strategically
9 place them in locations that have the
10 greatest need, again, based on the amount
11 and the data that we get from 311, based
12 on the number of complaints that we
13 routinely clean. And we often go out to
14 locations where we constantly clean up
15 one day and then the next week it's
16 dumped on again. Those are the areas
17 where we focus our resources the most.

18 So one per district, but,
19 again, in some areas, we move those crews
20 around where there's the greatest need.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: And
22 getting one more for this budget cycle,
23 that would get us to four; am I correct?

24 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: That
25 would get us to four, yes.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: So
3 that's a small amount of where you think
4 we need to be, right? That's a small
5 amount related to the capacity that you
6 really think we need to have?

7 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: It's
8 about 50 percent, close to 50 percent of
9 what we currently are going to be
10 budgeted for, yes.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.
12 So, again, I would press, why just one,
13 right, given the need that we have?

14 And then I wanted to ask you
15 another question. What schools are you
16 using to measure success on the issue of
17 illegal dumping? And also can you just
18 clarify whether we've hired all of the
19 staff, you know, that we were budgeted
20 for last year with regards to this issue
21 specifically?

22 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.
23 So we do have the other dumping crew that
24 has started, and we're in the process
25 with this budget year, we'll be hiring

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2 the next two to ensure that we meet up to
3 four.

4 Deputy Commissioner Newman can
5 confirm the number of people that we
6 have.

7 Deputy Commissioner.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:

9 Yes, Commissioner.

10 Hello, Councilmember.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hello.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: We
13 have hired the individuals for the two
14 crews for this fiscal year. They are on
15 board.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.
17 And when did we do that, how long ago?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: So
19 there was two additional positions that
20 we had to hire. They were our last ones,
21 and I believe we got them on board this
22 past month.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.

24 Okay.

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:

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2 They were drivers.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.

4 Thank you so much.

5 I have some additional
6 questions, if I have time for additional
7 questions.

8 Obviously you know that street
9 safety and traffic calming is a very
10 important issue for my district, and
11 we've met about it various times over the
12 last couple of years, so I have a few
13 questions on that issue.

14 My opinion is that Streets'
15 strict adherence to PennDOT's criteria
16 for speed cushions is very outdated. It
17 needs to be changed if we're going to
18 respond to our neighborhoods with all of
19 the requests that they have for street
20 calming.

21 I know that Streets has been
22 looking at making changes to the
23 policies, so I'm wondering when you
24 expect those changes to be made and does
25 your FY24 budget proposed funding

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2 increases for speed cushion installation
3 that would align to those changes? And
4 just by our rough calculations in my
5 office, we saw that most of the time,
6 about 85 percent of the time, our
7 neighbors are getting rejected when
8 they're asking for traffic-calming
9 interventions. So that's where these
10 questions are coming from.

11 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.
12 Thank you for that. Yes, we agree with
13 you 100 percent, Councilmember Gauthier.
14 The process for getting speed cushions
15 installed is very problematic in terms of
16 the length of time and the response that
17 we receive, especially when it comes down
18 to areas like schools, recreation
19 centers, and areas in our High Injury
20 Network.

21 So one of the things that I've
22 proposed and worked with City Council to
23 try to address is to give us the
24 flexibility to install these without
25 having to go through that long process.

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2 And so we're actually now putting
3 together a plan to work with City
4 Council. We'll be meeting with you and
5 briefing with your staff members in the
6 next couple of weeks to identify and
7 prioritize those locations that need it
8 the most and to begin the installation.

9 We've also worked with OTIS,
10 who did a study to also show based on
11 crash data these traffic-calming
12 mechanisms are necessary. We're going to
13 cross-reference the requests with that
14 data and then come up with a priority
15 list to share with your office and begin
16 installation immediately.

17 We have a \$2 million allocation
18 that we're using from BIL money to begin
19 this spring, and we'll start in those
20 problematic areas ASAP. So that's one of
21 the things that we're working on as well.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Just a
23 quick clarification. Does the work that
24 you're doing and the plan that you're
25 making include moving away from this very

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2 strict set of PennDOT criteria that does
3 not work for neighborhood streets?

4 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes, it
5 does. And so we want to have criteria
6 stated at the front end to show you which
7 streets aren't eligible and why, so you
8 don't have to wait until a study is done
9 to tell you, well, this street was a
10 state highway, so it's not eligible,
11 after only waiting 12 weeks. That
12 information will be put out in front so
13 people can see where the rejections are
14 up front, so they won't waste their time
15 going through a study. And if necessary,
16 we will go to PennDOT and say, you know,
17 we request that, because we can always
18 request that PennDOT gives us permission
19 to do that as opposed to waiting for a
20 study to be told no.

21 So we understand your
22 frustration. We're certainly going to
23 work closely with your office to move
24 this process forward much faster when it
25 comes down to speed cushions.

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2 In addition, Deputy
3 Commissioner Rich Montanez can tell you
4 we're also looking at lowering some of
5 the standards in terms of what it would
6 take. If cars aren't going 40 miles an
7 hour, well, maybe we reduce it to
8 25 miles an hour, because we know that
9 one crash that kills somebody is too
10 many. And so we want to work very
11 closely to try to ensure that all of
12 these meet the criteria and try to
13 address it.

14 So, Rich, very briefly -- I
15 know the time has run up -- do you want
16 to address that as well?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ:
18 Good morning, Councilmember. Richard
19 Montanez, Deputy Commissioner of Streets.

20 Yeah. We have reduced -- we've
21 actually talked to other cities in the
22 Commonwealth. We have reduced our
23 criteria to further -- and we will be
24 coming out to you and discussing.

25 So now we've actually instead

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2 of the plus ten, it's actually a plus
3 five miles per hour. And we're also
4 looking to see if the right speeds are
5 out there as in the posted speed limits.
6 We're looking to lower some of those.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
8 you so much. That's really important
9 work, and we're grateful.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
11 Thank you. Thank you, Councilwoman.
12 The Chair recognizes Councilman
13 Jones.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
15 Mr. President.

16 And Carlton, Commissioner
17 Williams, you, Montanez, Keith Warren,
18 rock stars, in my view. I remember
19 during the height of the pandemic
20 literally coming out in front of my house
21 and clapping for the trash men coming up
22 picking up just routine trash pick-up,
23 and I remember feeling that the City was
24 still open and you were still operating
25 because of their efforts.

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2 I know what you went through
3 with COVID. I know what you lost by way
4 of your workers. So I want to thank you
5 publicly on the record for soldiering
6 through that.

7 I want to cite a couple of
8 questions. We put a million dollars into
9 street lighting, alleyway lighting, and
10 into restore the lighting fixtures in
11 alleys. We wanted to repair the ones
12 that were broke. We wanted to install
13 ones where needed.

14 Where are we with that program?
15 I had to -- while you bring somebody up
16 to answer that, one of my staffers had --
17 when we first brought him on board, we
18 literally had to walk through alleys so
19 they understood what an alley was, why it
20 needed to be cleaned, why it needed to be
21 well lit. So after that, they had a
22 deeper appreciation for alleys.

23 So with that, where are we with
24 the alley lighting program?

25 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank

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2 you, sir. Thank you, Councilmember. I'm
3 going to let Deputy Commissioner Montanez
4 give you an update.

5 Ones that can be immediately
6 repaired, we work with our maintenance
7 contractor to address ASAP. The ones
8 that are new, require installation, which
9 majority of that million dollars will be
10 used for, requires an investment in terms
11 of a contractor installation.

12 Deputy Commissioner Montanez
13 can give you an update on the ones that
14 you requested, and we'll give you a
15 status report on the ones that are easily
16 repaired through our maintenance
17 contractor.

18 So Deputy Commissioner
19 Montanez.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ:
21 Good morning, Councilmember. Richard
22 Montanez, Deputy Commissioner, Streets.

23 Yeah. So we are in the process
24 of putting out the million dollars to
25 bid. It's roughly a little -- I believe

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2 it was 533. I can verify that
3 information for you, Councilmember. But
4 it's about 533 new installs is what we're
5 going to use the money for.

6 As far as the repairs, we are
7 trying to address them with our, one,
8 with Sanitation, Keith Warren, as
9 cleaning the alleys so that the crews can
10 get in there to fix them and, two, is
11 through the ESCO program, we're also
12 going in there and to try to repair all
13 of these alleys that are -- currently
14 lights that are broken. We're going to
15 try to repair them through the ESCO.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: So for me
17 and members like Gauthier and definitely
18 Kenyatta Johnson, those are public safety
19 issues. Without them, our first
20 responders can't navigate through those
21 alleys to respond to fires, to respond to
22 instances where they're chasing bad guys.
23 It's an important part of -- so thank you
24 for that.

25 The second question I would

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2 have is that some people, how do they
3 say, weaponize trash pick-up. There was
4 a report done that showed the disparity
5 between on-time pick-ups in some parts of
6 the City versus delays in others, and
7 that was at the height of the pandemic,
8 which is clearly understood.

9 Where are we at today with
10 those kinds of on-time pick-ups
11 throughout the City of Philadelphia?

12 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:
13 Councilmember, first, I would like to
14 acknowledge Deputy Commissioner Keith
15 Warren and his team, as you have done,
16 during the pandemic. We received
17 30 percent more trash than we had in a
18 normal collection cycle. And for people
19 who don't know what that volume is,
20 that's like adding an extra day and a
21 half of trash to a collection week. So
22 kudos to Deputy Commissioner Warren.

23 When we have people that was
24 out with the pandemic, even half the
25 staff, even him and his team, we were all

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2 out there throwing trash. So we
3 understand, and we appreciate the
4 acknowledgment.

5 We are pleased to announce that
6 our on-time collection rate, which is
7 trash that is being collected by 3:00
8 p.m., is 97 percent. That is higher than
9 we have been any other time in the last
10 10 to 15 years even before the pandemic,
11 and that is thanks to innovative
12 leadership from Deputy Commissioner
13 Warren and team, who put in a second
14 collections crew that allows us to
15 prioritize trash collection first.

16 We understood the complaints
17 and we heard the residents and we
18 certainly heard from your offices and the
19 frustrations that you experienced, and we
20 were able to address it and the
21 Administration added additional crews
22 that allowed us to utilize trucks twice a
23 day with a second shift and additional
24 people. And recycling is even increasing
25 as well.

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2 So we are pleased that ever
3 since that initiative took place, the
4 City will boast a 97 percent on-time
5 collection rate, trash picked up in every
6 neighborhood of the City by 3:00 p.m.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Love it.
8 Thank you for that update. I think it's
9 important to cite problems, but it's also
10 important to put on the record
11 corrections. And so I'm glad that that
12 happened.

13 My final question is,
14 everybody -- I can't go to a community
15 meeting without somebody requesting speed
16 bumps. I am frustrated because as soon
17 as we get them installed, I get another
18 call from the same block or residents
19 that hate the speed bumps. And so what
20 is our current policy, and are you
21 getting that same feedback, watch what
22 you wish for? And so what has been your
23 response, reaction, experience with the
24 installation of speed bumps?

25 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So the

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2 majority of our constituents want them
3 because of the dangers that the speeding
4 poses. I mean, people seem to have
5 unfortunately lost their minds the way
6 they drive up and down residential
7 streets and along corridors. So this is
8 something that we've seen as a necessary
9 part of controlling that and assisting as
10 well as with our Police with enforcement.

11 Time to time you are absolutely
12 correct, Councilmember. Some people get
13 them in and then trucks start vibrating
14 in their neighborhoods and then they say,
15 oh, no, we don't want them there. And so
16 we've tried to mitigate that by, number
17 one, getting a petition of residents who
18 will come through your office and say,
19 yes, we want them there, and the
20 majority, the vast majority, has to say
21 yes before we install them, and that's
22 what starts the process. If we get
23 community buy-in and support, then
24 ultimately we will go move forward with
25 the process.

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2 We've utilized and toyed with
3 rubber speed cushions, and those were the
4 temporary ones. They're high
5 maintenance, though. Once they get hit
6 by trucks or snowplows, we have to have a
7 team to be able to put them back in
8 place. So we prefer to use asphalt. The
9 problem with asphalt is that they're
10 permanent, and so we would have to
11 jackhammer them out.

12 So you have to always teeter
13 the residents' needs and what they ask
14 for when we put them there versus the
15 problems that's associated when they get
16 there having to try to remove them.

17 Deputy Commissioner Montanez
18 can confirm anything else that I might
19 have missed out.

20 Deputy Commissioner Montanez.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ:

22 Thank you.

23 Good morning, Councilmember.

24 Richard Montanez, Deputy Commissioner of
25 Streets.

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2 You're absolutely right, we do
3 get people who, once we put them in, call
4 the office complaining that they would
5 like them removed, they don't want them,
6 or they don't want them placed in front
7 of their house. They don't mind as long
8 as they're not in front of my house. And
9 then it becomes very difficult for the
10 Streets Department to place these,
11 because the neighbors want them, we just
12 don't want them in front of my house.

13 So we have to find a location,
14 and at times we are putting them where
15 people do not want them just because
16 we're trying to traffic calm and make the
17 road safe.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
19 much.

20 I just want to for the record
21 say thank you to you. When we had a
22 shooting at 61st and Columbia, we had the
23 whole neighborhood out there. One of the
24 issues was a dark driveway where people
25 felt comfortable committing crimes. You

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2 were there. You stepped up to the plate
3 and you addressed the issue for the
4 neighbors.

5 Keith Warren winds up -- I'm
6 doing a neighborhood tour in Carroll Park
7 and we're walking around, we're looking
8 at issues, short dumping in the
9 neighborhood, and who walks up on a
10 Saturday right next to me to take the
11 complaints himself but Keith Warren.

12 So, Commissioner Williams, you
13 have a hands-on team, and I'm so very
14 thankful for their responsiveness.

15 Thank you, Mr. Pres.

16 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank
17 you, Councilmember.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
19 Thank you, Councilman.

20 The Chair recognizes
21 Councilwoman Lozada.

22 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank
23 you, Council President.

24 Good morning, everybody.
25 Commissioner, I want to

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2 reiterate what everyone has said and,
3 that is, that you and your team have
4 always been amazing. Even prior to me
5 coming here as a Councilperson and
6 working on the ground in the community,
7 they've always been extremely responsive,
8 Rich, Keith, Varuk (ph), all of them.
9 You guys are the real true heroes of our
10 city, because you kept us moving, and
11 although sometimes we express
12 frustration, you guys always receive that
13 with a whole lot of grace and you
14 continue to show up and service. So I am
15 extremely grateful. Thank you so much
16 for all you all do.

17 My question is around -- well,
18 I have a few questions, and my
19 frustration is the same as everybody
20 else's, right, the street calming, the
21 alleyways and all of that. I want to
22 start off with the alleyways.

23 I know that we're going to
24 light them up and we're going to clean
25 them up, but is there a plan to work with

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2 community residents to ensure that once
3 we've cleaned them up to be able to
4 install this lighting to make them safe
5 to pass through, are we working with
6 community residents to keep them clean?
7 Is there buy-in from community residents
8 to ensure that we're not coming back two
9 months from now and it's not passable?

10 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I think
11 you hit the key, Councilmember, and thank
12 you for your comments and
13 acknowledgments, is that we have to work
14 with residents to keep them clean, and
15 that's one of the initiatives that we're
16 launching, our Keep It Clean Philly
17 program, to acknowledge and work with
18 partnerships with community organizations
19 to address issues of illegal dumping and
20 litter, especially in our alleys. And
21 they're challenges, because those are
22 areas that's been dumped on for years.
23 And so we have to have crews to actually
24 go in and try to physically remove any
25 type of debris. Encroachments sometimes

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2 occur. Sometimes they lock them.

3 These are big challenges in the
4 Department, but they're major safety
5 issues that I know affect your district.
6 Councilmember Johnson is constantly
7 calling, Councilmember Gauthier's office.
8 Those are some big challenges that we
9 have to address.

10 The "keep it clean" part of it
11 is such a crucial part, because we just
12 don't have the resources to continue to
13 monitor alleyways. They're actually
14 private easements that people have to
15 maintain as part of their property. Many
16 times that doesn't occur, and we
17 understand that we have to go in with
18 City forces to do it.

19 We've used Future Track, which
20 is a program that I hope to grow and
21 expand and to allow them to focus on
22 alleyways, along with our street lighting
23 program. The investments we're making
24 with our street lighting improvement
25 project, otherwise known as ESCO, will

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2 also help improve lighting in those
3 areas. But we can't continuously go back
4 over alleys without the support of
5 residents.

6 So what we're going to do is
7 continue to work with block captains.
8 We're going to continue to work with
9 concerned community residents, CDCs, and
10 business improvement districts to focus
11 on alleys.

12 I'll just give you an example.
13 Ms. Bonita Cummings out in the Strawberry
14 Mansion area, she's been doing a
15 wonderful job working with CLIP and
16 working with our department and everyone
17 else and the residents getting them fired
18 up about keeping alleyways clean. That
19 should be a model and replica of what we
20 do for the rest of the City.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Council
22 President, point of information, please.

23 Council President, I have a
24 point of information.

25 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Okay.

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm
3 waiting for the Council President.

4 Well, let me take a little
5 liberty then. Is it okay, Councilwoman
6 Lozada, just for clarity?

7 Is it okay, Council President,
8 point of information?

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Are
10 you trying to get a point of something?

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

12 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Yes, he
13 can. He can.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: It's
15 kind of difficult to do this on the Teams
16 as opposed to in the Council Chambers,
17 but --

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: That's
19 okay, Council President. I'm just
20 following protocol. Is it okay? May I
21 have the right to just do a point of
22 personal privilege, Council President,
23 point of information?

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
25 Okay, Council President -- Councilman,

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2 sorry.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.

4 Commissioner, just for clarity,
5 and this is -- when you say working in
6 partnership with the neighborhoods to
7 clean the alleyways and once they're
8 cleaned, you know, obviously it will be
9 tough to maintain them and want the
10 community involved, is there partnership
11 with L&I to go after developers who are
12 building and leaving all -- and
13 contractors leaving all this debris
14 inside the alleyways, right, and then
15 leaving that burden and hardship on the
16 residents, right? And I see this
17 consistently definitely in Point Breeze
18 and Grays Ferry, and it's up to the
19 neighbors to kind of fend for themselves
20 and kind of prove that they weren't
21 responsible for the debris that comes
22 from contractors.

23 But clearly if somebody is
24 building a brand new property in the
25 neighborhood and the alleyway and you see

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2 remnants of an old property and
3 contractors' debris, it's not the
4 neighbors who've been living there all
5 their lives, right? And it may be hard
6 for them to prove, but yet they're
7 carrying the burden of addressing the
8 issue.

9 How does that play into what
10 Councilwoman Lozada is actually talking
11 about in terms of these alleyways?

12 Thank you, Council President.

13 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank
14 you, Councilmember, for bringing that up.
15 Yeah. When we have contractors that are
16 actually building in the community and
17 the neighborhood, we need -- we have to
18 encourage our residents, if they see this
19 type of behavior, to report it so that we
20 can work with L&I to get it addressed.

21 I work very closely with
22 Commissioner DiPietro. Commissioner
23 DiPietro is very responsive in terms of
24 those issues of having L&I issue
25 violations and stop work orders for

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2 people who constantly violate the law in
3 terms of dumping and not proper disposal
4 of construction debris and material. And
5 if they encroach upon the alleyway as
6 well, that's the route that we need to
7 continue to work with.

8 But thank you for bringing that
9 up, and we certainly will work with our
10 partners at L&I to be able to address it.

11 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: And
12 speaking about contractors, you know in
13 my district in the south end of the
14 district, we have a whole lot of
15 development, and often times there are
16 multiple development projects happening
17 at the same time, causing community
18 residents a whole lot of burdens, not
19 only because there is a consideration
20 taken when they're trying to walk safely
21 to and from or through the development
22 project but also because a lot of their
23 streets are ruined. And so you have
24 these \$400,000 and \$500,000 homes, but
25 their streets have all types of potholes

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2 from beginning to end.

3 And so what are we doing to
4 ensure that as development happens
5 throughout the City, contractors or -- is
6 it the contractor or is it the Streets
7 Department that's responsible for
8 ensuring that the streets are paved and
9 nice and passable?

10 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank
11 you, Councilmember. Yeah. There was --
12 it's both, first of all. It's the
13 contractor's responsibility to restore
14 the street back into a passable, safe
15 condition that's appropriate for the
16 residents, and it's up to the Streets
17 Department to enforce it to ensure that
18 that occurs, which is why we passed the
19 moratorium on contractors who request
20 utility cuts and new water services and
21 utility services, that they place the
22 street back in the original condition or
23 a passable condition or a safe condition
24 than they originally had when they
25 started their project.

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2 Deputy Commissioner Montanez
3 can talk about the moratorium and our
4 goals in terms of enforcement to be able
5 to address it. And if there are specific
6 areas like in the lower end that we need
7 to focus and target, I know it's over
8 citywide, because development is large,
9 we need to focus on that to ensure that
10 moratorium is being done accurately.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ:
12 Commissioner, I wasn't sure, because
13 Deputy Managing Director Mike Carroll
14 came on, who you wanted to answer it
15 first.

16 MR. CARROLL: I'll just say
17 we've been working on making sure that
18 the message is out there about our
19 moratorium. Our moratorium is modeled on
20 PennDOT's moratorium to make sure that
21 like, as much as possible, we say you
22 only dig once. And so it involves
23 coordination, and we are improving that
24 coordination. We've made some technology
25 investments in what we call the

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2 Guaranteed Pavement Information System.
3 There's a little bit more work we need to
4 do.

5 I certainly want to thank
6 Council President for working with us to
7 update some of the regulations and the
8 work on part of the Code 11-700.

9 So essentially folks are paying
10 into the fee program that helps us pay
11 for these systems to make sure we got the
12 staff on board and that, you know, that
13 connection between what's going on in the
14 street if you're a utility, if you're a
15 telecommunications firm or you're a
16 developer, sort of like we talked about
17 with ADA, it's all coordinated with
18 everything else that's going on before we
19 pave the street. And we do a good job
20 with a handful of the utilities. Of
21 course, Water Department as a City-run
22 entity works pretty well with us, also
23 PGW. We're focused on making sure we get
24 the best information back and forth. We
25 do good coordination, but some of the

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2 private utilities are a little bit harder
3 to wrangle, but I think we've seen some
4 good progress, and we will stick with
5 that moving forward.

6 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: I'd just
7 like to put on the record that in the
8 Seventh Council District we have a huge
9 issue with that not happening. So if I
10 can work with someone or if someone can
11 please make it a point to visit these
12 development projects once they are
13 considered complete, that they come out
14 and they look.

15 They do pave. They pave in
16 front of their project, their piece of
17 the project, right? And so I think that
18 it's unfair to residents to have to put
19 up with it and to the people who are
20 purchasing the new property, right? I
21 don't think that it's fair to them
22 either. So I'd just like to put that on
23 the record.

24 MR. CARROLL: Appreciate that.
25 Thank you.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: And then,
5 Commissioner, I know that you guys are
6 doing an amazing job in trash collection,
7 but in Kensington, like you mentioned
8 earlier, there is 24-hour activity,
9 right? And so there is accumulation of
10 trash. There's creation of trash. Your
11 people clean, and within the hour or two,
12 it looks like you didn't even come by.

13 And so, you know, I sent a list
14 to my Council colleagues. I think I've
15 also shared it with you about the
16 possibilities of 24-hour collection in
17 that footprint until we as government
18 figure out, right, what we're going to do
19 in that neighborhood.

20 How do we do that? How do we
21 continuously clean in the neighborhood
22 that we've allowed where people to hang
23 out in for 24 hours? Does that mean --
24 can we look at something like that as a
25 pilot? Or is there a way to increase the

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2 amount of trash collection that is
3 happening within that footprint?

4 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah.

5 Thank you, Councilmember. We understand
6 the challenges that we've had, and we've
7 worked together and talked on numerous
8 occasions, even before you came,
9 Councilmember, about the challenges that
10 we have to deal with, that once we clean
11 it up, how do we keep it clean.

12 One of the things that -- we're
13 working very closely with the Office of
14 Emergency Management and the Managing
15 Director's Office, who have dedicated
16 crews, along with CLIP, to focus on
17 increased services in those areas that
18 need it the most.

19 We have to try to change
20 behavior through enforcement. Illegal
21 dumping is rampant in our community
22 across the City, especially in
23 Kensington. We put more cameras. We'll
24 continue to place more cameras. I've
25 made an investment of another million

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2 dollars for 150 more cameras. They will
3 be placed in those areas that need it the
4 most to try to prevent it from happening
5 in the first place.

6 I have a block captain that I
7 would like to acknowledge from D and
8 Westmoreland at McVeigh. She calls me
9 through Facebook on personal calls to
10 say, look, I just cleaned it up and the
11 guy is out there cleaning it again and
12 here he is, and she's sending me
13 pictures.

14 So we do have to reconnect with
15 our residents in that area, because there
16 are concerned members who need our
17 support. We will work with them and give
18 them the tools necessary.

19 It's without question that any
20 additional resources that the City can
21 provide throughout the City for illegal
22 dumping and cleanliness to keep it clean,
23 but it's a behavioral change, that we
24 have to get people in the mindset that
25 they can't treat our city like a trash

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2 can. We come clean it up, and two hours
3 later, like you said, people dump it
4 again.

5 If we need more receptacles,
6 that's something that we can work with
7 your office on as well, as well as any
8 Councilmembers. We just need the
9 community support so they won't get
10 abused, and we need the people to report,
11 hey, they're putting residential trash,
12 here's where they're coming from. Those
13 are the type of relationships that's
14 going to make a long-term difference when
15 we talk about sustainability.

16 It's easy for us to clean it up
17 once. It's keeping it clean that makes
18 it a challenge for us, and we all got to
19 do our part to work together to make sure
20 that's done.

21 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: And I
22 appreciate that, but the community that
23 I'm talking about are the outdoor
24 neighbors, right, the folks that are
25 living in addiction that are living on

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2 the street. They're the ones that are
3 creating the trash out there. They're
4 the ones that are throwing it on the
5 ground. They're the ones that are not
6 being responsible or being held
7 responsible.

8 And so, you know, kudos to all
9 of those block captains and all of those
10 community residents who consistently
11 clean out in front of their homes, even
12 though they are not the ones who are
13 creating the trash, right? But the folks
14 who we need to focus on are the people
15 that we've allowed to take over those
16 streets and create and accumulate the
17 trash that's out there.

18 So that's the community I want
19 to focus on and I want to figure out
20 together, right, how do we do that. Do
21 we need to consistently clean? Because
22 we're allowing them to be and live out
23 there all day long and we're allowing the
24 activity that's continuing to happen out
25 there all day long.

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2 And so when I talk about
3 24-hour trash collection or attention,
4 I'm talking about that specific area that
5 we've allowed people to live in without
6 being able to address a lot of the other
7 needs that are going on there.

8 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: We're
9 looking forward to working with your
10 office on that, Councilmember.
11 Absolutely.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
13 Thank you, Councilwoman.

14 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank
15 you.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
17 Thank you.

18 The Chair recognizes Councilman
19 Phillips.

20 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
21 you, Council President.

22 And good morning. We are two
23 minutes to the afternoon for our viewing
24 public. I'm City Councilmember Anthony
25 Phillips and I represent the Ninth

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2 District, who covers Northwest Philly, a
3 little bit of North, and also parts of
4 Northeast.

5 I am happy to be part of this
6 conversation with Commissioner Carlton
7 Williams, because, as you know,
8 Commissioner, your role means a lot to
9 the City of Philadelphia, and we have to
10 do as much as possible to really clean up
11 our streets.

12 So let me get to my first
13 question, and I love a lot of order, I
14 love structure. So when it comes with
15 this funding that we will be presenting
16 to you, giving to you, that you're
17 proposing that we support you with this
18 year, one of the structure items that I'm
19 hoping that we can get from this is
20 having data readily available for our
21 neighbors.

22 So, for example, when a
23 neighbor requests -- makes a request for
24 a speed cushion, an entire block, maybe
25 there could be an online portal that they

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2 can go to so they can keep track of, you
3 know, the process that they're in, are
4 they in Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3,
5 something that can also help our
6 constituent service staff, I call our
7 neighbor service staff, with really
8 understanding where they are with the
9 speed cushion process, and that way, we
10 can also understand where they are in the
11 queue as opposed to us having to call,
12 you know, Mr. Montanez and you all the
13 time and say, hey, where we at, where we
14 at, where we at, that type of process, if
15 that could be a little bit more not only
16 public but -- not only for us but public
17 as well.

18 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.
19 Thank you, Councilmember. I appreciate
20 your comment and question. Chris
21 Puchalsky works for OTIS and we work very
22 closely with his office. We actually
23 hired, in the process with the plan that
24 I talked about earlier, a consultant to
25 be able to review our process to show

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2 exactly what you're explaining, that what
3 is the process for requesting a speed
4 cushion and what is the criteria. I
5 think that's what you're looking for as
6 well. And then once it's approved, how
7 fast that it gets actually done. Those
8 are the three things I think would
9 address the issue that you're bringing
10 up.

11 And so I'm going to ask Chris
12 to talk about the consultant that we work
13 with to identify that process for not
14 only speed cushions but most of the
15 traffic-calming requests. So we get
16 other requests such as rumble strips or
17 we get requests such as bump-outs and
18 what's the difference between a long-term
19 project like a slow zone versus just a
20 request for speed cushions.

21 So I'm going to let
22 Mr. Puchalsky from OTIS come in and talk
23 a little bit about the relationship we
24 have, what you can expect.

25 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: And just

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2 might I add, just for ten seconds, also
3 Mr. Puchalsky, can you speak on the idea
4 of being able to -- I know we talked
5 about more being transparent with
6 neighbors around the process. How we
7 also have as part of this funding letters
8 that can come out from you all saying
9 that, you know, we understand you got
10 requests, here's where you are. It can
11 go to all of the neighbors on that block
12 and then also periodic updates through
13 letters as well, letter communication so
14 that we can keep communication
15 streamlined. So, again, this is about
16 systems and organization around
17 communication.

18 MR. PUCHALSKY: Good afternoon.
19 Thank you, Commissioner.

20 Good afternoon, Councilmember.
21 I'm Chris Puchalsky. I'm the Director of
22 Policy and Strategic Initiatives at OTIS.

23 Like the Commissioner said, we
24 have been studying the traffic-calming
25 request system, and this study started

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2 with listening, and I think we started
3 before your time in office, but we did
4 have interviews with a number of
5 different Council offices and residents
6 to see what was working for them and what
7 was not working for them in the process.
8 And I think you hit on what we heard a
9 lot of other places. Part of it is they
10 just want the thing, but then the part of
11 it is they were dissatisfied about the
12 communication. They didn't understand
13 where it was, it was a lot of work.
14 Councilmembers and their staff, it was a
15 lot of work.

16 So this is an idea of -- what
17 we've been talking about is having a
18 system where not only you can see on a
19 map if you're eligible from the very
20 beginning but having a prioritization
21 system where we could tell people,
22 listen, this is where you are in the
23 queue, you know, you're number 150th or
24 50th or whatever it is, and if we can
25 install that many cushions, we'll get you

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2 this year. If not, we'll put you on the
3 list for next year.

4 That kind of transparent
5 communication where the decision-making
6 is transparent and the communication is
7 open has worked very well for our
8 neighborhood slow zones. That's also
9 another program where people apply, and
10 I've heard from a lot of residents say,
11 oh, I put in an application. You know,
12 we didn't get it. I don't like that we
13 didn't get it, but we understand why we
14 didn't get it and that there's this
15 neighborhood that has higher needs.

16 So I think that's definitely a
17 part of it, having a system where you can
18 go and look up where you are without
19 having to call somebody.

20 Haven't considered letters yet,
21 but maybe that is something as we are
22 working with Streets' IT to implement
23 some of these ideas and with 311 that we
24 can look into.

25 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank

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2 you.

3 The next question I have,
4 Commissioner, I want to say thank you.
5 We're super excited about the legislation
6 that I introduced and now it's passed
7 around speed-calming measures around all
8 of our schools in the City of
9 Philadelphia, and I wanted to learn more
10 about what is it going to take to roll
11 that out in terms of funding and also
12 enforcement.

13 About how many schools do you
14 suspect that we can do in the City of
15 Philadelphia? And district -- of course,
16 every District Councilperson would love
17 to have all of their schools with the
18 cushions, but has there been any thought
19 around a timeline and framework in terms
20 of implementation from staff yet?

21 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah.
22 Well, this year immediately we identified
23 \$2 million dedicated to speed cushions
24 for this initiative. In reference to the
25 amount that covers, that is a contracted

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2 cost that we're expecting to come in, but
3 we estimate somewhere around 500 speed
4 cushions will be installed with that
5 \$2 million initially.

6 As we get more resources, the
7 Bipartisan Infrastructure dollars, we
8 want to invest in great streets, which
9 means that once we pave a location, we
10 just don't want a piecemeal paving. We
11 need to look at not only reconstructing
12 but modernizing our streets on a whole
13 scale basis holistically. So when we go
14 through streets, if we're planning on
15 putting speed cushions in while we're
16 paving, it makes sense to do all of it
17 simultaneously rather than having to come
18 back.

19 So that's the initiatives that
20 we're working on with OTIS when we get
21 this funding. We have one shot to get it
22 right, and we should be doing
23 neighborhoods at a time and communities
24 at a time as opposed to piecemealing
25 streets at a time where we're having to

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2 come back and try to do it over again,
3 because I don't think we're ever going to
4 have this opportunity again where we have
5 these resources.

6 So initially the \$2 million
7 will cover 500 speed cushions. We're
8 going to prioritize them based on the
9 information that you currently gave us
10 versus the plan that Chris Puchalsky just
11 talked about, identifying the most
12 vulnerable areas first.

13 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.
14 And I know my time is out. I just want
15 to quickly ask, of those 500 speed
16 cushions that we have, how can we work
17 closely to see that we get them around
18 our rec centers and our schools and there
19 would be a certain allotment? Because is
20 there a way that we can support you with
21 more funding so we can get pretty much
22 more speed cushions?

23 I don't want it to be -- I
24 don't want us to have a constraint, you
25 know, on the speed cushions, but we just

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2 want to be able to make sure at least all
3 of our schools and rec centers and even
4 libraries at this point -- well, at least
5 schools and rec centers are covered.

6 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.
7 We certainly will work with Council on
8 that. I plan on, if it hasn't already
9 been scheduled, setting up a briefing
10 with your offices to show the number of
11 requests that you currently have versus
12 what we have through that plan that we've
13 worked on with, Chris just talked about,
14 with the consultant that shows our most
15 vulnerable populations and which areas
16 and community.

17 Our goal is to cross-reference
18 those areas around schools, rec centers,
19 and places along the High Injury Network
20 and to begin the installations from
21 there. As additional funding goes in,
22 we'll complete those lists adequately.

23 So as we meet and discuss those
24 plans with you, we'll have a better idea
25 of what it will take, and then I will get

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 you that information.

3 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: CP, do I
4 have time for one quick question?

5 Well, let me just mention
6 something. I would love to learn more
7 about -- in our district we have
8 driveways issues. I know the City has
9 traditionally not taken care of the
10 driveways. It's been a residents issue,
11 but I would love to learn to see if
12 there's any particular plans on the books
13 that we've been thinking through to fix
14 driveways and have the City cover and
15 support not just the alley part of the
16 driveway but the entire driveway,
17 especially ones that are utilized often
18 and damaged by the sanitation truck
19 workers, unfortunately.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I'll
21 actually answer that question for the
22 Commissioner. Yeah, Councilman. There's
23 actually a conversation with -- it's a
24 part of the neighborhood preservation
25 initiative funding. We're trying to

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2 talk -- have conversations with driveways
3 and retaining walls, and it's been
4 somewhat of a challenge to determine,
5 one, not necessarily just the cost but
6 the whole process.

7 So you can check with from our
8 team Jenaye Munford, because we are
9 looking at some potential pilot programs
10 to do some of those driveways but the
11 issue with respect to the neighbors and
12 all the other aspects of it.

13 So, yeah. Check with Jenaye
14 Munford. She's the one that's working
15 with the Administration on that from our
16 side.

17 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
18 you, CP. Appreciate you.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
20 You're welcome.

21 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thanks,
22 Commissioner. Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: You're
24 welcome.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Oh,

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2 real quick, Commissioner, since you're
3 referencing -- Councilman Phillips is
4 referencing schools, there's a school,
5 actually a community school, Gideon, and
6 I want to thank you all for putting out
7 speed bumps and signage and stop signs,
8 but we do not have the flashing lights
9 when school lets out. It's an elementary
10 school. I know Councilwoman Gilmore
11 Richardson is very familiar with it.
12 That's right in her family's
13 neighborhood.

14 That's the Streets Department
15 that does that or is it the Police
16 Department?

17 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.
18 We work with the School District to have
19 them installed. It's a capital cost.

20 How much does it cost, Kasim?
21 I see you on there. Or Rich?

22 Kasim Ali from our
23 Transportation Engineering Division,
24 Chief Engineer.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I

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2 know Kasim well.

3 MR. ALI: Hi. This is Kasim
4 Ali. I'm the Chief Traffic Engineer with
5 the City.

6 Yes. It is the responsibility
7 of the Streets Department in conjunction
8 with the School District, and it costs
9 anywhere from 12,000 to 20,000, depending
10 on how many we have to put around the
11 perimeter. But we'd certainly be happy
12 to look into it, and the Commissioner can
13 respond back with the timeline.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
15 Yeah. Can you look at that for us,
16 please?

17 MR. ALI: Absolutely.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
19 Gideon on Glenwood Avenue between 29th
20 and 28th Street.

21 MR. ALI: I got it. Thank you.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
23 Thank you.

24 Speaking of the Council Lady,
25 the Chair recognizes Councilwoman Gilmore

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 Richardson.

3 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Thank
4 you, Council President, and I too have to
5 say thank you, CP. You know you and I
6 had the partnership over at Gideon during
7 the pandemic, so we encountered that
8 quite frequently. So I just wanted to
9 say thank you as well.

10 But also to you, Commissioner
11 Williams and Deputy Commissioner Warren,
12 who I call all the time, probably too
13 much, Rich Montanez, Crystal Jacobs
14 Shipman, Kasim Ali, Benjamin Baron,
15 Stephen Lorenz, and I have to also
16 mention CLIP, because a lot of times Tom
17 Conway has to coordinate with you all,
18 and I appreciate the work that he does as
19 well. So I just have to give him a
20 shout-out, because we go way back in City
21 government, and he has just always been
22 the same and always very responsive,
23 along with everyone in your entire
24 department. So I thank you for your
25 work.

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2 I want to quickly go through my
3 questions so I can get them on the record
4 and then hope to -- whatever we don't get
5 to, I will submit.

6 So last year I asked you all
7 about how you're looking at standard heat
8 exposure for our workers. So I just
9 wanted to know, has there been any
10 progress made on that issue? How are you
11 all looking at heat exposure, recognizing
12 that our weather events have been more
13 extreme.

14 And so, for instance, this
15 winter, you know, we really didn't get a
16 lot of snow, so we don't know what this
17 summer will bring. So I just wanted to
18 ask about your standard and/or policy
19 around heat exposure for the workers.

20 In addition to that, from a
21 workforce development standpoint, if you
22 all could speak to how many positions you
23 all have that are what we call
24 entry-point positions in the City and how
25 you are working with the School District

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2 to recruit young people into City
3 service. But also what pathways do you
4 have as far as any jobs that have either
5 changed specification that now young
6 people can move directly into upon
7 graduation.

8 I'll start there, and then I
9 have just a couple more questions, so if
10 we can do just brief answers. Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure.
12 Thank you, Councilmember, for always
13 supporting the Department. We really
14 appreciate it and the acknowledgments
15 that you just listed for all of our
16 employees that work with your office.

17 We work very closely with the
18 unions to try to get our staff members
19 the resources that they need as far as
20 their uniform apparel to make sure that
21 they're properly equipped. So we've
22 invested in different types of shirts and
23 reflective vests that are lighter, so
24 they're not as cumbersome when they're
25 out. We listen to the employees and the

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2 union representatives to pick out which
3 type of uniform apparel that would help
4 them do their jobs better.

5 So I think what's the most
6 important acknowledgment is that we've
7 heard what our employees have said and
8 we've delivered on those type of
9 services. And our numbers are down in
10 terms of those type of emergencies and
11 exposures as a result. So we don't have
12 as many people who are calling out with
13 heat emergencies any longer, because
14 we're having different type of uniform
15 gear.

16 Our policies around heat
17 emergencies and when there is a Code Red
18 or a Code Orange is try to get our people
19 in and out as quickly as possible. The
20 union has requested that sometimes we
21 start earlier in the day so that we don't
22 hit the high points of heat, and we allow
23 them to do that, when possible. They get
24 out. They get in and out of the weather
25 as quickly as possible.

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2 When we do have issues, we make
3 sure all of our trucks are equipped with
4 water and so they can respond quickly and
5 fast if someone is having an emergency,
6 and we keep our communications open.

7 One point of note that I would
8 like to say that is extremely important
9 that we work closely with the union on in
10 terms of safety, we had the tragic death
11 of one of our employees last year in
12 November, Ikeem Johnson. As a result of
13 that, we worked with the Police
14 Department. We worked with the union to
15 come up with a policy for priority
16 response and assistance, and I want to
17 thank the Police Department on record for
18 delivering that, and a communications
19 plan that when these incidents happen,
20 that everyone is notified so that we can
21 either pull them off of the streets or
22 put them in a safe place.

23 So those are the areas that
24 we're working on in terms of safety, not
25 only when it comes to environmental

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2 conditions but all of the conditions that
3 happen in our city that we're trying to
4 keep our employees safe.

5 Chris, you have the numbers in
6 terms of entry level and hiring.

7 I do want to highlight our
8 Future Track program, which is kind of a
9 base program that allows people to get
10 familiar with the Department, whether
11 it's Transportation or Sanitation if they
12 want entry-level work within the Streets
13 Department, that helps them get gainful
14 employment through the City of
15 Philadelphia. It has been very
16 successful in getting young people
17 involved, especially at the age of
18 18 years old and starting, but we do have
19 older participants who may be 27, 28, 29
20 that still participate in the program if
21 they got a late start in life or are
22 looking for a new opportunity.

23 So these are the type of
24 programs that's been helpful.

25 Chris specifically has the

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2 numbers in terms of new entries and hires
3 and how many vacancies that we might have
4 in the Department and what we're trying
5 to do to fill them with the type of
6 people that you just described.

7 Chris.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:

9 Sure. Thank you, Commissioner.

10 Good afternoon, Councilmember.
11 How are you today?

12 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Good.
13 How are you?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:

15 Good. I'm Christopher Newman, Deputy
16 Commissioner for Administration for
17 Streets.

18 Actually, the biggest
19 entry-level program we have is our
20 sanitation collections. We hire about
21 over 100 laborers every single year. We
22 have about over 800 laborers, and that is
23 probably on balance by far the biggest
24 entry-level job title that we have.

25 But in addition to that, we

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2 have two other types of programs that we
3 have. One is the Future Track program,
4 which is what the Commissioner was just
5 talking about. We have an authorized
6 position budget of 40 Future Trackers
7 that we can bring in. I think we've
8 hired 30 throughout the course of the
9 year.

10 There is a drop-off for Future
11 Trackers, so we lose about 50 percent of
12 them either through separation or that
13 they just decide the job isn't for them.
14 But the good thing about Future Track is
15 we use it for about four different
16 occupational tracks if they pass that
17 workforce development program, and it's
18 essentially a work-ready program where we
19 try to bring in people from disadvantaged
20 communities.

21 If they pass that work-ready
22 program, there's four different job
23 titles that they can move into. One is
24 public works trainee, which we use for
25 roadway maintenance. One is engineering

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2 A trainee, which we use for surveying,
3 entry-level surveying as well as
4 entry-level construction inspection
5 support. And we also have a SWEEPs
6 officer entry level, where we bring them
7 in as field investigators and they move
8 up into clean block officers where
9 they're sanitation enforcement officers.
10 So we have those four paths.

11 One of the things that we're
12 exploring now is to move and expand that
13 program into skilled trades areas as
14 well, working with the School District on
15 their CTE programs to bring people in
16 from the School District so we can bring
17 them in in skilled trades titles at the
18 entry level and move them up from there.

19 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON:

20 Right. And I just wanted -- let me just
21 ask a quick question, because I need to
22 ask a few more questions with the time
23 that I have allotted in this round.

24 And there's the bell.

25 I will circle back with you on

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2 that point around workforce development,
3 because I also -- you mentioned CTE,
4 which you know I'm very passionate about,
5 and I want to make sure that young people
6 who have more than 1,080 hours of
7 service, credit hours, are able to
8 utilize that experience in order to
9 qualify for some of the promotional
10 examinations when we do sort of
11 inter-department promotion opportunities.

12 But really quickly, I just want
13 to get these on the record for this round
14 and I'll circle back. You mentioned,
15 Commissioner, the City's Zero Waste goal
16 in your testimony. Can you just speak to
17 the initiatives you all have that are
18 prioritizing waste reduction. And we
19 know that we're continuing to see an
20 increase in tonnage, so we get it,
21 particularly since the pandemic, but if
22 you could talk about what you all are
23 continuing to do to develop your Zero
24 Waste strategy to sort of meet our City
25 goals by 2030, because that will be a

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2 bulk of this budget for these next five
3 fiscal years.

4 And then also Delco, they hired
5 and put out an RFP to hire a zero waste
6 consultant to sort of conduct the next
7 revision of their state-mandated waste
8 management plan. If you can talk about
9 what type of Zero Waste master planning
10 we're doing and who is responsible for it
11 in the Streets Department, that would be
12 helpful.

13 And then, lastly, our waste
14 management contract should be coming up
15 for a yearly renewal after the initial
16 four years of the contract. How are you
17 all measuring success or challenges of
18 that contract and how are you making
19 decisions around the renewal, recognizing
20 that there is so many environmental
21 justice concerns that we have received
22 from the different members of our
23 Civilian Advisory Environmental Committee
24 and particularly around sort of the use
25 of the Covanta incinerator in Chester as

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2 well. We get a lot of feedback from the
3 communities there also.

4 So I just wanted to get that on
5 the record. If you could just submit a
6 response for us, that would be helpful,
7 but we really want to know the thinking
8 around how you are looking at that waste
9 management contract moving forward.

10 And, lastly, recycling,
11 following up on where we are with
12 recycling overall.

13 And the additional questions I
14 have I will submit for the record,
15 because I did hear the bell.

16 Thank you. Go ahead.

17 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure.
18 I'll let -- also Mike Carroll is working
19 with our -- this is a collective effort
20 that we work with the Office of
21 Transportation and Environmental --
22 Transportation and Sustainability --
23 Infrastructure and Sustainability. But
24 for the most part, I can tell you,
25 Councilmember, that our biggest focus

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2 right now has been to address the issues
3 of illegal dumping, our Zero Waste plan,
4 and also to come up with a long-point
5 plan to try to address the waste stream
6 in terms of organics.

7 So I'll talk briefly about it,
8 because I know we're limited on time.

9 Kyle Lewis is our Recycling
10 Director. She also is the Chairperson of
11 our Clean and Open Spaces Enforcement
12 Committee.

13 We've had multiple promising
14 results in terms of a process change that
15 we've addressed in terms of illegal
16 dumping working with the Police
17 Department and the Law Department where
18 we issue actually notices of violations
19 to people who come in and dump in our
20 city and force them to pay civil
21 restitution as opposed to being
22 criminally locked up, and it has been
23 effective.

24 Over 23 people have been
25 prosecuted on the criminal side, but 46

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2 NOVs have been issued, and we hit a high
3 point of a \$10,000 fine, one person who
4 was illegally dumping in North
5 Philadelphia advertising a clean-out
6 business.

7 We continue to focus on the
8 short-term immediate needs of what zero
9 waste is all about, which is about
10 cleaning up our city and addressing the
11 illegal dumping. Long term is to look at
12 our waste stream to determine what things
13 can be reused, reduced, and recycled and
14 used as energy. So organic is the next
15 big piece.

16 And so we've been working with
17 office of OTIS and PGW as well as the
18 Water Department to come up with ways to
19 try to pull those things out of the waste
20 stream and put them back into productive
21 uses such as renewable energy, and
22 organics is one of the things that we're
23 focusing on. We think we can get another
24 30 percent out of the waste stream if we
25 continue to focus on that.

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2 Scott McGrath is our Planning
3 Director. He is the one that works
4 directly on these issues in terms of our
5 Zero Waste goals and planning, so we will
6 work with him in terms of future goal and
7 for long-term planning if we need to have
8 those discussions.

9 I know, Mike, you jumped on as
10 well. Did you want to add to anything
11 that I said?

12 MR. CARROLL: I think you
13 covered most of it. I would just say
14 that the folks from Sustainability are
15 working to synthesize the work they've
16 been involved in, including with the C40
17 Cities along these lines.

18 We did a workshop over, I guess
19 it was, about a year ago. We kind of
20 wrapped that work up and we're trying to
21 figure out how to move that forward, and
22 a big part, like Carlton is saying, is
23 trying to figure out how we can
24 incorporate organics into these renewable
25 energy conversations, but another piece

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2 of this is figuring out the roles,
3 because it's not all going to be
4 municipal run. If we're going to talk
5 about zero waste, we really need to work
6 with a lot of partners to think about
7 their own waste streams throughout the
8 City, and so kind of refreshing our
9 approach to what roles different actors
10 play and the big thing we're hoping to
11 tee up in some documentation. So we'll
12 try and address that in written answers
13 to your questions.

14 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Okay.
15 And I'll submit everything else I have to
16 you.

17 Thank you, Council President.

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

20 The Chair recognizes
21 Councilwoman Vaughn.

22 COUNCILWOMAN VAUGHN: Good
23 afternoon, everyone.

24 Council President, I promise I
25 won't make you grab your head today by

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 saying something out of the way, but I
3 wanted to ask this team, who actually
4 watches the cameras? Because I have been
5 in situations where I have seen someone
6 dump trash. The camera is right over
7 their head, and there's no action taking
8 place.

9 Is there a team watching these
10 cameras? Because if it's not someone to
11 catch them in realtime, what is the hype
12 all about having them?

13 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Right.
14 So we do have a dedicated team.

15 I'm sorry. Good afternoon,
16 Councilmember.

17 We do have a dedicated team of
18 staff members who watch the cameras on an
19 eight-hour interval. They're not on
20 24 hours a day. They work normal hours
21 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. normally is
22 the average time.

23 Any dumping that we see that
24 occurs after those hours, which usually
25 dumpers are likely to do that during the

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2 evening or early morning hours, the
3 cameras are recordable, which means we
4 can go back the day before or several
5 days before if it occurred on a weekend
6 and be able to get that data to turn it
7 over to the Police Department and use
8 that as evidence to prosecute those type
9 of cases. Deputy Commissioner Keith
10 Warren oversees that unit.

11 Deputy Commissioner, did you
12 want to add anything in terms of the
13 specifics of who the SWEEP officers and
14 the dedicated team of quality control
15 analysis that we have at that location to
16 be able to report that data and
17 information?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WARREN:
19 Good afternoon. I'm Keith Warren, Deputy
20 Commissioner of Streets and Sanitation.

21 I think you covered it pretty
22 well, Commissioner. The cameras are
23 monitored on an eight-hour shift. I'm
24 going to compare it to like a swing
25 shift. Most of the dumping occurs over

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2 night or off hours. So what we do is
3 review the footage on the next day and
4 pass that information on to Police.

5 There have been some daytime
6 dumpings, some brazen daytime dumping
7 where we have caught some of those 46
8 individuals that we talked about that we
9 presented NOVs to. However, again, most
10 of it is off hours.

11 We have about eight people
12 dedicated, SWEEP officers, dedicated to
13 watching the cameras and investigating
14 short dumps that we find on the cameras,
15 and we have plans to expand that in the
16 near future.

17 COUNCILWOMAN VAUGHN: Are you
18 expanding it to make it on the hours that
19 the actual crimes are happening?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WARREN: So
21 the important thing to understand about
22 short dumping and the rest of the stuff,
23 the Streets Department, we don't arrest
24 anybody. So even if we catch people
25 realtime, we depend on police support,

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2 which has been very good, but the City
3 has a lot of public safety challenges and
4 short dumping isn't always a priority
5 call. But we do report them and everyone
6 gets -- every incident gets investigated,
7 but realtime response to it will have to
8 go in the order of priority that it's
9 received in the hours that we do find
10 them.

11 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: To
12 follow up and add to that, Councilmember,
13 yes, we do plan to expand, but we won't
14 have someone on 24 hours, and that's -- I
15 think that's what your concern is, is
16 that you need people on when these things
17 are happening as opposed to after the
18 fact and trying to report and go back.

19 I think a big part of it is,
20 yes, while we do want to expand the level
21 of coverage, and we do have also
22 managers, the application that they use
23 through our GenTech system is the same
24 application that the Police Department
25 uses. So they have -- it's called the

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 DVIC. It's down in South Philadelphia
3 where they have a central control over
4 all cameras, and those cameras are all
5 wired and they're connected together.

6 So we do have multiple eyes
7 watching these issues. The challenge is
8 is that the evidence necessary, when
9 those cameras do catch people, we have to
10 have a strict evidential procedure where
11 they actually catch the license plate and
12 people in action.

13 As these cameras begin, these
14 dumpers sometimes get smarter and try to
15 go in areas where the cameras may not be
16 in a visible location to catch things
17 like their license plate, then in the act
18 of actually dumping. And those are the
19 things that we need as evidence going
20 through a criminal procedure, which is
21 why we switched to a civil where the
22 rules of evidence is a little bit less
23 stringent than it is in a criminal
24 procedure.

25 But to answer your question, we

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2 do have multiple eyes on it. I don't
3 think we have 24/7 coverage on it as
4 you're requesting.

5 COUNCILWOMAN VAUGHN: No. I
6 wasn't requesting a 24/7. Just wondering
7 if you have the knowledge that it's
8 happening at night, why have your entire
9 crew there during the day?

10 But we can move on from that.
11 The other thing is, Ms. Jacobs says that
12 the abandoned vehicle program is about to
13 start up. I've had an abandoned vehicle
14 on my block for a year and a half and
15 it's from New Jersey. We have reported
16 it. We have asked the Police to just
17 give us the information of who the
18 possible owner is so we can call them and
19 say come get your car, but now the car is
20 slowly being stripped and it's still, you
21 know, parked on the street.

22 How soon will you be getting to
23 these abandoned vehicles and in what
24 order will you be removing them from the
25 street or at least reporting them to the

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2 owners that may come and get these
3 vehicles?

4 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:
5 Director Shipman, are you on the line
6 still?

7 MS. JACOBS SHIPMAN: Yes. I'm
8 here.

9 Good afternoon, Councilmember.

10 COUNCILWOMAN VAUGHN: Hey,
11 Crystal.

12 MS. JACOBS SHIPMAN: Hey.

13 So essentially we are working
14 with Police and SU to clear that backlog
15 of 311 requests, and how we do that is,
16 we go out and we're given a list at the
17 start of the day, and we identify
18 vehicles that are actually on that list
19 as abandoned autos.

20 So, you know, it could be --
21 you know, we would need to see where that
22 particular vehicle is on the 311 list.
23 One of the things that we are doing
24 differently than has been past practice
25 is as opposed to going with items that

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2 are on the list the longest, we're
3 actually working from the list from more
4 recent items and working our way
5 backwards to try to clear, because what
6 we found was that a lot of times vehicles
7 that were on those older lists, when we
8 go out to investigate, they're no longer
9 there. So that's part of the process.

10 But if you get us that 311
11 number, we can look into it and see
12 what's going on.

13 COUNCILWOMAN VAUGHN: Okay.
14 We'll gladly do.

15 I sent both of you also a text
16 message a little while ago. Did you see
17 how that street is warping or
18 transitioning? Is that because of water,
19 heat? What's going on with something
20 like that? And I'm getting a lot of
21 calls about how it's causing damage to
22 people's cars in that community.

23 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I'm
24 just looking at them now, as you
25 mentioned it. Yes. A lot of it has to

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2 do with heat. As the temperatures rise,
3 the asphalt softens and it begins to
4 shift.

5 Deputy Commissioner Montanez,
6 you're not on it, but it has the asphalt
7 actually over lanes and striping on this
8 location, and it seems like bus traffic
9 might have shifted the asphalt.

10 COUNCILWOMAN VAUGHN: Yes. The
11 59 rides down the street.

12 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So
13 that's what I'm looking at right now.

14 Deputy Commissioner Montanez,
15 do you want to address that?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ:
17 Yeah. Crystal did send me the picture.
18 It looks to be running from the bus
19 traffic and during hot days and the tires
20 being hot and heavy vehicles, they tend
21 to rot, you do see, and that's why a lot
22 of times what you see is us installing
23 concrete pads at bus stops just to
24 minimize that, and that's why you see
25 that.

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2 But we will take a look at this
3 and see how we can correct it, but it is
4 due to the bus traffic.

5 COUNCILWOMAN VAUGHN: Okay. My
6 last question, because I did hear my
7 bell, is often times, Commissioner, you
8 know I'm calling you about the trash and
9 situation on Roosevelt Boulevard. I do
10 understand that the highway or the state
11 has the actual highway, but I think
12 because of the renters from, say, 7th
13 Street -- no, not that far. Say from
14 Front Street to Rising Sun, like 2nd
15 Street and Mascher Street, there's a lot
16 of vacant land and a lot of dumping gets
17 done on Mascher Street and 2nd Street,
18 and I'm calling about it constantly. And
19 you do come out and get the bulk stuff,
20 but for the trash that might need a broom
21 or something to be picked up, it's always
22 left, and I don't know if that encourages
23 people to continue to dump there, but it
24 never ever looks clean. And 2nd Street
25 from, say, Hunting Park coming back to

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2 Rising Sun, you know how that street
3 picks up at Rising Sun and goes down 2nd
4 Street to, say, Erie Avenue? But it is
5 always dirty.

6 There's a cemetery there, and
7 it's not per se commercial because
8 there's a couple businesses there, but
9 they're not businesses that people will
10 go in and shop. It's more so trucks
11 parking back there and things like that.
12 There's always a lot of dumping back
13 there.

14 So how do we address that? I
15 mean, there's no signs there. There's no
16 cameras there. How can I try to help you
17 make that situation better?

18 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank
19 you, Councilmember. One of the things
20 that we are working on is to expand our
21 mechanical street sweeping program this
22 year to a citywide cleaning program where
23 we address primary and secondary
24 corridors, similar to areas that you just
25 described. So they won't get weekly, but

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2 they will get periodic mechanical street
3 sweeping on a routine basis based on the
4 need in the area. So they may get
5 monthly or every other month.

6 But if we get complaints, we'll
7 come in and at least it doesn't
8 accumulate as you're stating earlier. So
9 when we get the trash and the amount of
10 heavy debris and equipment, if there's
11 still that loose litter effect that's
12 still there where they're all along curb
13 lines and tree lines, we'll send crews in
14 and they'll periodically be able to
15 mechanically clean in those areas.

16 So we know that's a challenge,
17 and that's one of the initiatives that
18 we're starting this year under Keep It
19 Clean Philly so that we can touch at
20 least every neighborhood in the City of
21 Philadelphia. That is a big part of one
22 of the challenges that we face.

23 So we'll make sure we focus on
24 2nd Street and Mascher, Rising Sun, and
25 Hunting Park to be able to roll that part

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2 of the program out as well.

3 COUNCILWOMAN VAUGHN: Thank
4 you.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
6 Thank you, Councilwoman.

7 The Chair recognizes Councilman
8 Harrity.

9 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Thank you,
10 Council President.

11 Commissioner, good morning,
12 good afternoon. Listen, I'd like to echo
13 my colleagues and first start by thanking
14 you and your staff. I actually live in
15 the Kensington area. I live at G and
16 Allegheny, so I see firsthand the hard
17 work of your employees and how they're
18 fighting a losing battle there. You
19 know, I've seen you and CLIP come out and
20 clean up the little street right off of
21 next to Esperanza in the morning and I
22 come out on my way home at night and the
23 thing is trashed again already. As
24 Councilwoman Lozada said, it's mostly
25 done by our homeless, addicted population

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2 we have out there. That's another issue.

3 I only have really two
4 questions for you, fairly simple. One
5 is, what's the total number of staff for
6 the Streets Department and what is the
7 total number that you are actually short?

8 And the second question would
9 be, when was the last time your
10 department had a cost of living increase
11 for our employees? Not the one, two
12 percent that they give every one or two
13 years. I'm talking a real cost of living
14 increase.

15 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank
16 you, Councilmember. Chris Newman, Deputy
17 Commissioner, can give you our number of
18 employees versus the number of vacancies
19 that we currently have. He has that
20 number ready for you right now.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
22 Good afternoon, Councilmember.

23 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Good
24 afternoon.

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: So

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2 we have 2,378 authorized positions. 271
3 of them are currently vacant. We have
4 just over 2,100 positions filled right
5 now.

6 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Okay. So
7 that's not too bad numbers. About 10
8 percent or so, 15 percent you're down.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
10 We're at 85 percent, roughly speaking.

11 Now, on our sanitation side,
12 we're about 92 percent staffed. It's the
13 transportation side that we're really
14 struggling. We're about 75 percent
15 staffed there. Most of that is because
16 we -- most of the positions that we got
17 authorized this year are on the
18 transportation side, but we are faced
19 with some attrition on that side as well.
20 So that's the side where we're struggling
21 the most at this point.

22 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: And the
24 second question regarding the cost of
25 living increases, as you know, most of

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2 our employees are union represented and
3 those are coming through a contract.
4 That's negotiated through those type of
5 contracts. So we really don't have
6 authorization and control over what's
7 negotiated through that contract.

8 But, Chris, if you want to
9 comment on that as well, feel free to.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:

11 Yeah. I mean, everything you just said,
12 Commissioner, is correct. We're sort of
13 stuck with whatever the collective
14 bargaining agreement says in terms of
15 wage increases. So year to year,
16 recently they've gotten a 3.25 percent
17 and they've gotten that each year over
18 the last several years. That's really
19 all I can say there.

20 You know, you can argue that
21 some of our positions are probably not
22 paid enough. I think you can definitely
23 argue that. Like, for example, our
24 laborers, our sanitation collections
25 folks, I think that they do a lot of work

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2 and they probably should get paid more,
3 but in terms of year to year --

4 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: What's the
5 average salary for one of those laborers?
6 I'm sorry.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
8 They come in at the entry-level rate is
9 37,000, and I think it goes up to about
10 40,000. We have a lot of new laborers,
11 so if you take a look at our data, it's
12 about the average that they make is
13 38,000 base salary and then they get some
14 overtime on top of that, but base salary
15 it's about 38,000 that they're making
16 right now, most of them.

17 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Yeah.
18 That's ridiculous. I'm actually a union
19 laborer, you know, and compared to us,
20 that's peanuts. I just think it's -- and
21 I guess we'll address that when their new
22 contract comes up, but for me that's just
23 unbelievable that we mandate that they
24 live in the City and we don't pay them
25 enough to actually live here.

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2 That's the only questions I
3 had. Thank you again, and thank you for
4 everything you're doing. Like I said, my
5 neighborhood, I see it every day, you
6 guys out there trying to hustle to keep
7 up with it. And just to let you know, in
8 that area now, you have three
9 Councilpeople. So we are here. We are
10 all concerned about that, me, Quetcy, and
11 Sharon Vaughn. We are working together.
12 So, please, if you have any ideas of how
13 we can get a handle on this, please feel
14 free to let us know. We're very
15 interested.

16 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank
17 you, Councilmember. Appreciate it, sir.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
19 Thank you, Councilman.

20 The Chair recognizes Councilman
21 Thomas.

22 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
23 afternoon, Council President.

24 Good afternoon, colleagues.
25 First and foremost, as the

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2 Chair of the Streets and Services
3 Department, I have to join the rest of my
4 colleagues in just thanking the
5 Commissioner and his entire team for all
6 the work that you do. I'm not going to
7 start naming names because I'm going to
8 get in trouble, because I'm definitely
9 going to miss somebody, but the list is
10 long, and we appreciate partnering with
11 you on a number of different initiatives
12 as it relates to the work that's done.

13 I do have a couple clarifying
14 questions. I've been listening to the
15 testimony today and there was a couple
16 things I just want to make sure that I'm
17 understanding, because I'm talking to
18 constituents all the time and there's
19 always a lot of questions and I'd like to
20 communicate facts.

21 So first and foremost, we talk
22 a lot about the illegal dumping and how
23 many tons we actually pick up as a city.
24 Do we have an estimate on how many tons
25 of illegal -- just how many tons are out

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2 there as it relates to illegal dumping?
3 Because we're not picking everything up
4 clearly, right? So do we have an
5 estimate of how much dumping takes place
6 annually in the City of Philadelphia or
7 is that not something we know right now?

8 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah.
9 That's something that varies. It's hard
10 to calculate. It's based on the requests
11 that we get, and we then calculate the
12 tonnage that we collect from each site.
13 We can give you an average of what we
14 collect each year, and I can get that
15 number for you.

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: You said it
17 earlier. I don't have it written down in
18 front of me. I don't want to act like --
19 it's just a question. You just said,
20 well, we know how much we pick up. I
21 wonder how much actually we're not
22 picking up. No. You're fine.

23 Again, just sticking with some
24 of the things I heard earlier, you talked
25 about 97 percent on-time trash pick-up

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2 rate. I think for when we looked at the
3 past, it's been around 80 to 85 percent;
4 is that correct?

5 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So does
7 that mean it's gone up from around 80,
8 85 percent up to 97 percent? Is that
9 accurate, based on what you said?

10 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

11 Absolutely correct, yes. And that was --
12 85 percent was before the pandemic.
13 During the pandemic, we was about 30 or
14 40 percent, so --

15 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Where is
16 the commercial? Where's the press
17 conference, right? And I'm joking, but
18 it's somewhat serious.

19 I think at the end of the day,
20 a part of what we struggle with as a city
21 is narrative and optics. That's a big
22 problem. And misinformation and
23 misconceptions are a real thing. And
24 there has to be a victory lap for that.
25 Not just for you, right, not just for the

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2 Mayor or for Council, but for the people
3 who are actually doing the work, because
4 at the end of the day, just like we get
5 these complaints, they do too. They see
6 the signs. Council President said people
7 running TV ads. They watch TV. They
8 have digital. They're seeing these
9 things, and it's little things like this
10 that continue to boost the morale and the
11 spirit as it relates to City workers.

12 So I'm somewhat joking, but I
13 do think we should have somewhat of a
14 Streets team conversation about what we
15 can do to kind of praise folks, because
16 those numbers are significant and they
17 really matter. So thank you for that
18 information.

19 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank
20 you, sir.

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I got a
22 couple -- a little bit about illegal
23 dumping. You know I introduced this
24 Citizens Watchdog bill, and a big part of
25 the premise behind that bill was the fact

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2 that we have close to what? How many
3 cameras do we have across the City of
4 Philadelphia that's monitoring illegal
5 dumping? You said the number earlier.

6 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah.
7 Right now our department has over 212
8 installed. We're buying another 150, but
9 we also -- that does not include the
10 hundreds of cameras that we use with the
11 Police Department that overlap illegal
12 dumping sites. So a lot of the criminal
13 activity that occurs also is where
14 illegal dumping occurs as well, and we
15 use them.

16 So in total, we have over 500
17 cameras dedicated to illegal dumping.
18 That's both through the Police Department
19 and our department, with another 150
20 coming.

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: You know,
22 I'll say two things today. I mean, the
23 first thing is that's a good start, but
24 at the end of the day, it's not working,
25 right? So I introduced the Citizens

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2 Watchdog bill. It's legislation to try
3 to activate constituents to use their
4 phones to be a part of that monitoring
5 process and give 10 percent of what we
6 actually collect on illegal dumping to
7 the actual constituent.

8 So you catch somebody illegal
9 dumping, record it on your phone, report
10 it to the City of Philadelphia, that
11 person gets a \$5,000 fine, \$500 of that
12 \$5,000 fine goes to the constituent that
13 actually communicates it. There's a
14 model like that already in New York that
15 I actually didn't know about until after
16 I introduced the legislation. So we've
17 been talking to legislators up there to
18 see what does it look like to replicate
19 it, because at the end of the day, we
20 went over to Camden and when we went over
21 there, one of the things that we found
22 was while Camden might be the size of
23 maybe one councilmanic district as it
24 relates to the City of Philadelphia, the
25 amount of cameras that they have and the

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2 coordinated effort that they have is
3 actually more than what we have in
4 Philadelphia. At any time, 80 percent of
5 their city is under surveillance.

6 So I think for us, what I'm
7 trying to do is work with you and the
8 Administration to put us in a position to
9 be able to be a little more innovative,
10 because I don't know if we have the
11 ability to put 80 percent of the City of
12 Philadelphia under surveillance. That
13 would cost a pretty penny, and we might
14 run into other issues as well too. But
15 what we can do is, we can activate
16 constituents to be a little more diligent
17 as it relates to what's going on in their
18 neighborhoods.

19 Not saying it's constituents'
20 responsibility, but I don't think there's
21 anything wrong with incentivizing
22 constituents to be a part of this process
23 as it relates to catching illegal
24 dumpers.

25 I'm wondering what's your

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2 thoughts as it relates to that
3 legislation and what I just talked about,
4 and do you think that this is a path that
5 we could possibly navigate moving
6 forward?

7 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: We are
8 definitely open to whatever we could do
9 to try to address it, and getting
10 citizens engaged in that process, whether
11 through incentives or anything else that
12 we can do, that's certainly helpful to
13 our department and certainly something
14 that we would support.

15 And if we can monetarily -- I
16 think the challenge is that when that
17 money -- we have to make sure that when
18 that money is collected, if it's
19 collected, that it gets into the hands of
20 the people that helped us address it.
21 And so we need a process, a strong
22 process in place.

23 I think Deputy Managing
24 Director Mike Carroll and I was talking
25 about this type of incentive that you

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2 introduced. We certainly do support it
3 100 percent. We just need to make sure
4 that we got a strong process to be able
5 to collect those revenues and to be able
6 to redistribute them to the citizen that
7 did the work. Otherwise it affects the
8 credibility of the program and the
9 citizens won't participate. If they say,
10 I reported it and really nothing
11 happened, they didn't do what they said
12 they were going to do. So I want to make
13 sure those systems are in place.

14 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

15 Mr. Carroll, thank you and your team. I
16 really appreciate the work that you do.
17 It's been a pleasure working with you as
18 well too.

19 I would love to hear your
20 perspective of what was just discussed as
21 well as someone help me understand --
22 this will be my last question for this
23 round after listening to Mr. Carroll.
24 Somebody can help me understand how many
25 illegal dumpers did we actually catch

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2 last year so we can have some context as
3 to, you know, how we're doing currently
4 and maybe what we anticipate the
5 legislation may be able to do if
6 implemented.

7 So thank you for your time,
8 Council President, and thank you,
9 Mr. Carroll.

10 MR. CARROLL: I'll just say I
11 think that's a great idea. That's
12 certainly something we want to reach out
13 to you and work with your office around.
14 That structure is really important and
15 making sure we have something that we can
16 scale up. And you may be familiar, folks
17 all may be familiar that in certain
18 instances, we can offer rewards for
19 helping to solve crimes. That is a
20 model. But I think what you're talking
21 about might be more effective because
22 it's a little bit more built into the
23 structure.

24 So really interested to see
25 what we've learned and figure out what we

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2 can incorporate into our own work.

3 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank you.

4 And, Council President, I just
5 wanted to know just if you can as it
6 relates to the legislation we're trying
7 to move forward, how many illegal dumpers
8 did we catch last year since we've
9 implemented cameras and done some things
10 different? How many folks have we
11 actually caught, and what percentage of
12 the folks that we caught have been
13 because of a camera?

14 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I
15 believe that Kyle, our Recycling Director
16 who sits on and chairs the Open Spacing
17 Enforcement Committee, works closely with
18 the Police Department and she has those
19 numbers.

20 Kyle, real quickly, can you
21 jump on for the Councilmember and give
22 the number of cases that we actually
23 prosecuted last year.

24 (No response.)

25 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Is Kyle

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2 on?

3 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

4 Commissioner --

5 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I'll
6 give you -- it was 23 cases last year and
7 46 NOVs that we actually implemented, so
8 notices of violation through that new
9 process. I didn't see Kyle pop on, but
10 I'll get you those numbers. 23, yes.

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: We got to
12 do something.

13 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah,
14 23.

15 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Hey,
16 Council President, I'm not going to come
17 back for another round, but,
18 Commissioner, please figure out a way we
19 can do a victory lap about the work
20 that's being done around trash.
21 Something has to be done.

22 At the end of the day, I
23 listened to you talk about the vacancies
24 in your department as well too, and
25 throughout the course of these budget

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2 hearings, we're constantly hearing that
3 one in five jobs in the City of
4 Philadelphia is currently vacant. So
5 when people are doing good, we can't
6 always offer up financial incentive, but
7 we can do other things to just make sure
8 people know that we appreciate them. We
9 beat them up when they do wrong. We
10 should praise them when they do good.

11 Thank you, Council President.

12 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank
13 you, Councilmember. I appreciate that.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

15 Thank you, Councilman. I concur 1,000
16 percent, and we should be able to figure
17 something out to give our people some
18 props for the good work that they do in
19 spite of some of the challenges that they
20 have.

21 If we can do Councilwoman Bass
22 and Johnson I think for the second round,
23 then take a break, I think the
24 stenographer is going to need a break.

25 So the Chair recognizes

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2 Councilwoman Bass and then I think,
3 Councilman Johnson, you're the only one
4 on the second round. We'll take a break
5 after that.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Great.
7 Thank you so much, Mr. President. Thank
8 you.

9 And good afternoon,
10 Commissioner. How are you?

11 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I'm
12 fine. Good afternoon.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good.
14 Good. Commissioner, we talk every day,
15 it seems like every day, and I want to
16 join the chorus of my colleagues in
17 saying thank you so much for all that you
18 do, you and your entire department. I
19 don't want to start naming names because
20 I'm going to forget people, but, you
21 know, y'all are just phenomenal. You
22 know, much respect for the work that you
23 do. And although, you know, listen,
24 there's a lot to be done in the City,
25 particularly around trash and quality of

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 life and those kinds of things, I know
3 that when we call, you show up. And you
4 don't just show up just because we call.
5 You are proactive, but you can't be
6 everywhere all at once, and I just wanted
7 to say thank you so much for all that you
8 are doing for our city.

9 I did just have a couple of
10 questions. Many of my questions have
11 already been answered, and that's what
12 happens when you're like towards the end,
13 but just a couple of questions I wanted
14 to ask you about.

15 What was the recycling program
16 with the City of Philadelphia? At one
17 time we had a very robust -- well, it's
18 still a robust program, but at one time
19 we had, you know, like incentives that we
20 did and all kinds of things that
21 encouraged people to recycle.

22 Can you talk about what is the
23 recycle rate? Has that slipped since the
24 pandemic? Are we on point? I also
25 remember the cost of recycling change,

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2 which dramatically changed the
3 incentivization, if that's a word, to
4 recycle.

5 So can you talk about that
6 whole thing for me, please?

7 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure.
8 At one point in time we were making
9 \$6 million a year for recycling, and now
10 we're paying close to \$8 million a year.
11 So I just give you the economics of it.
12 And that's because of the changes not
13 only what's being accepted in our
14 overseas markets but the lack of
15 available markets here in the City of
16 Philadelphia and across the United States
17 to accept that type of material.

18 In many cases, it's easier --
19 cheaper for companies and the industries
20 to build new as opposed to recycle
21 products and, therefore, you have a cost,
22 because you're no longer making money off
23 of selling the materials. You're now
24 having to warehouse it and actually
25 figure out what you're going to do with

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2 it in processing. So that's where you're
3 seeing the major shift.

4 Here in the City of
5 Philadelphia, the Streets Department is
6 1,000 percent committed to continuing
7 recycling. We've undergone some
8 significant challenges over the years,
9 especially during the pandemic, where we
10 had many cases we had to mix recycling
11 just to get it off the streets for health
12 and safety reasons, but we are no longer
13 mixing that into the trash. We're
14 processing it. And we're always
15 constantly looking at ways on how we can
16 improve the system.

17 We drastically fell, even
18 before the pandemic. The recycling
19 tonnage was beginning to change, the
20 recycling stream. Many people aren't
21 using as many paper because of the
22 electronic and digital world anymore.
23 The cardboard market is still strong.
24 However, plastics, people are relying
25 less on single-use plastics and other

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2 forms of plastic, which is a good thing,
3 but it's also affecting the rate and the
4 amount of material that we have in the
5 stream. They're using lighter packaging,
6 for example. They're not using heavier
7 plastics. They're using different types
8 of materials.

9 So our recycling stream is
10 evolving constantly, and so we may not
11 get to 20 percent. We may be at
12 15 percent of what's actually out there.

13 But we can do better, and one
14 of the things that we can do is
15 definitely try to increase participation,
16 let people know its value and its
17 importance, and still dedicate to giving
18 resources such as recycling bins and
19 information out so that people understand
20 what to recycle and how to recycle.

21 Contamination is the biggest
22 factor affecting the waste stream today.
23 So we're paying a premium when material
24 comes in at a contaminated rate. That
25 means that food waste is still in jars.

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2 That means just basically things that we
3 don't accept, like -- you know, we used
4 to find things like bowling balls or toys
5 in the recycling stream. Those things
6 that we don't process in recyclable
7 material, we have to do something and
8 discard it. Then we have to pay a
9 premium for that.

10 So those are some of the
11 challenges that we're now facing with
12 recycling, and in the industry as a
13 whole, it's evolving, it's changing, and
14 we need to keep up with the times.

15 How do we get back to it? We
16 need to create domestic markets here in
17 the United States so that we don't rely
18 on overseas markets. We need to continue
19 to figure ways on how to reduce and reuse
20 and recycle, and ultimately talk about
21 organics and try to use it as renewable
22 energy.

23 So I think that's the direction
24 that we need to go to in terms of
25 supporting our environment.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So let me
3 ask you a question. Do you think -- at
4 one point, we were having a lot of
5 conversations in the City around
6 composting, and I know that there's been
7 a compost. There's other, I'm sure,
8 composting sites. Does that help you to
9 remove items from the trash or am I
10 better just sticking a lot of that stuff
11 down my garbage disposal? Like what kind
12 of things can we do now that will help
13 you?

14 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: In
15 terms of basic citizen response, some
16 easy-to-do things:

17 You talked about garbage
18 disposal. Our waste stream is about
19 30 percent organics, and a lot of that is
20 food waste. So any time that we can take
21 that out of the waste stream, that helps
22 us get towards a goal of zero waste in
23 the City of Philadelphia.

24 You talked about other ways and
25 things renewable or reusable items,

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2 renewable energy, things that is in the
3 waste stream that we now can create like
4 gas or electricity off of, those are the
5 things that we need to set up systems for
6 in the City of Philadelphia, and Deputy
7 Managing Director Mike Carroll and myself
8 have been working with a conglomerate of
9 people within City government to figure
10 out if the City has a waste stream for
11 that and where can we put it, where can
12 we build a place where we have a digester
13 to take those things out of the waste
14 stream and turn it back into the energy.

15 Those are the conversations
16 that we need to have in terms of a
17 long-term plan for where zero waste
18 evolves, and I see Mike popped on, so he
19 might want to add to it as well.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Hey, Mike.

21 MR. CARROLL: Hi, how are you,
22 Councilmember?

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good. How
24 are you? Good to see you.

25 MR. CARROLL: Thank you.

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2 Deputy Manager Director for Office of
3 Transportation, Infrastructure and
4 Sustainability.

5 Yeah, Commissioner Williams is
6 right. I think the long-term picture is
7 pretty promising. I have to take my hat
8 off to PGW and some of their leadership
9 around this.

10 Folks who may be aware that the
11 City of Philadelphia also, while we're
12 talking long term, is competing to be one
13 of the, I think, eight to ten hydrogen
14 hubs around the City, and there may be
15 some good crossover in the long term
16 between us figuring out how to manage our
17 organic waste stream and some of the
18 investments in infrastructure that may be
19 involved in that as well, interestingly.
20 Because if we do manage to do some of
21 this diversion of organic material, you
22 know, into the energy creation market,
23 those investments I think tie over well
24 with how we will also be at the same time
25 looking to kind of decarbonize, to some

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 extent, our waste -- I'm sorry; energy
3 processing at the same time.

4 So renewable natural gas seems
5 like a good bridge to these greener forms
6 of hydrogen that the City of
7 Philadelphia, this region, is
8 particularly well suited for, and so that
9 strategy can help us identify investment,
10 grants, and things like that to promote
11 those activities over the long term.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
13 Thank you. Thank you.

14 You know, and I just want to go
15 back to the recycling, because, listen, I
16 recycle. I put out -- and I don't know
17 if this is normal, Mr. Commissioner, but
18 I put out more recycling than I put out
19 trash and, you know, I sort it and, you
20 know, but it just amazes me that the
21 number of people who still, for example,
22 will put a plastic bag in a recycle bin
23 and not -- just really not sure what to
24 do. So I don't know what kind of things
25 you have to address that.

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2 The only other thing I just
3 wanted to do is really encourage you to
4 continue to find a way to deal with
5 recycling here in the City of
6 Philadelphia. And I know you said we
7 went from making money to basically
8 spending, making nice money to spending a
9 lot of money. And so how we're going to
10 deal with recycling is critically
11 important, and I would really hope that
12 anybody listening will think about this
13 past weekend when we had tornados in the
14 region and when we had hail and rain at
15 the same time. You know, like this is
16 not just happening just because. This is
17 global warming. You know, it's
18 happening, and we have to -- we all have
19 to dramatically change what we do and how
20 we do it.

21 So even when I go -- I like to
22 go to a particular place in Maryland, you
23 know, once in a while for a quick
24 getaway, and when I do, I always -- they
25 don't recycle there, and it drives me

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2 nuts. So I end up carrying my recycling
3 back home every single time so that I can
4 recycle materials.

5 Like these are the kind of
6 things that we really have to do to go
7 about it to make sure that we recycle and
8 that we take it very seriously, because
9 we only have one planet.

10 But I just want to encourage
11 you, Mr. Commissioner, to try to find a
12 way to deal with this.

13 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank
14 you, Councilmember. And real quickly, we
15 do have a campaign called Recycle Right
16 that's going on that targets in specific
17 neighborhoods where we have low
18 participation rates to educate people on
19 the things that you just mentioned at its
20 basic core so that people can understand
21 what to recycle, how to recycle, and how
22 often and when to recycle and where to
23 get resources.

24 So we'll continue to work with,
25 you know, communities. We'll have

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2 community meetings. We'll actually go
3 out door to door and hand out information
4 through our SWEEP Unit, and we'll speak
5 to people about the importance of
6 continuing to focus on recycling as a
7 part of our climate control message for
8 the City of Philadelphia.

9 We all need to do our part, and
10 people can just -- if they just recycle,
11 that's a part of it. So while we pay a
12 premium, it's still important for our
13 environment for the future.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Absolutely.

15 MR. CARROLL: If I may, I just
16 want to mention for everybody, just
17 remember 215. Those are the plastics you
18 can recycle in Philadelphia. So that
19 should be easy for folks.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: 215, got
21 it. Easy. Easy breezy. Thank you.

22 Thank you, Mr. President.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

24 Thank you.

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WARREN:

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 There's also a television ad with that
3 Recycle Right program, a television
4 campaign.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Say that
6 again.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WARREN:
8 Deputy Commissioner Keith Warren.

9 There's a television ad on
10 cable stations with that Recycle Right
11 program. You should be seeing it on a
12 lot of cable stations.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Very good.
14 Thank you, Deputy Commissioner.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
16 Thank you, Councilwoman.

17 The Chair recognizes Councilman
18 Johnson for Round 2.

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yeah.
20 Thank you, Council President, and I'll be
21 brief. I know we'll be wrapping up soon.

22 I want to also give a shout-out
23 to Tom Conway and the CLIP team, as well
24 as I was told Varuk Scott and also Lisa
25 Banks, different individuals who are

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2 interacting with my staff on a day-to-day
3 basis trying to address the issue of
4 sanitation and a cleanly environment in
5 the City of Philadelphia. So thank you,
6 Carlton, for your leadership and leading
7 those individuals.

8 I have a question around -- I
9 want to go back to Future Track. How
10 many young people are you budgeting for
11 for this upcoming cycle? I'm advocating
12 for an increase in this particular
13 budget, because I see Future Track and
14 I've always seen Future Track as a part
15 of our violence prevention strategies
16 here in the City of Philadelphia.

17 I think about in the spirit of
18 FDR, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and how
19 under his new deal he used government to
20 marshal individuals -- marshal resources
21 to address a particular type of issue,
22 and I've always seen Future Track as a
23 key to us getting young people involved
24 in things that are positive as opposed to
25 things that are negative.

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2 And so how many young people
3 are you budgeting in this budget cycle,
4 the cost? I'm going to be advocating
5 under my Save Our Youth initiative to
6 increase this number, and hopefully we
7 can use it as a part of our violence
8 prevention strategy.

9 But also, Christopher, you
10 talked about some something critically
11 important, that the individuals who do
12 apply, not all of them finish. Some
13 people leave for a variety of different
14 reasons, and maybe you can touch on that.
15 And are we doing data analysis to kind of
16 figure out how we hopefully keep people
17 encouraged to continue moving forward?
18 And can we move beyond \$15 an hour for
19 this program to maybe something like \$18
20 to \$20 an hour for this program? And
21 I'll wrap up on that.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
23 Yeah. Sure. Thank you, Councilmember,
24 for the questions. So we have 40
25 positions that are authorized that we're

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2 requesting for our FY24 budget right now
3 for Future Track. That's a carryover
4 from this fiscal year. We had 40
5 positions also authorized this fiscal
6 year.

7 I think if you look at the
8 information that we're getting in terms
9 of why people are leaving, it's partly
10 due that we're paying them \$15 an hour
11 and they can make more doing something
12 else, and when something else pops up
13 that is a little bit more in
14 compensation, they're leaving us. And we
15 have about a 50 percent rate of people
16 leaving the program.

17 Now, the good thing is, the
18 ones that stay, then they have really
19 good job prospects in terms of different
20 occupational tracks that they go into,
21 but, you know, at least for this year,
22 we've... (connection issues).

23 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: We lost
24 the last part of your conversation,
25 Chris.

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:

3 I'm sorry. Can you guys hear me now?

4 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Now we
6 can, yes.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
8 Where did I leave off?

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I think I
10 caught you saying the number that you
11 budgeted for this coming budget cycle,
12 FY24, correct?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
14 Yeah. FY24 is 40 positions, yes.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And I
16 wanted to know in terms of this
17 process -- and who will be responsible
18 for raising that rate on the City's side?
19 Who will be responsible from going from
20 15 to 18, 18 to 20? Who will be
21 responsible for doing that budget-wise?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
23 Well, see, these are not civil service
24 positions, so I think we can just request
25 it from OHR and I think that they would

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2 approve it. The only question would be
3 could we afford that from a budgetary
4 perspective.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: So I want
6 to put this request out here from a
7 budgetary perspective, Christopher and
8 Carlton. Can you look at a scenario
9 between \$18 and \$20 an hour, right, for
10 100 individuals, just the number that we
11 would like to review -- I would like to
12 review?

13 You know, I know this
14 Administration is serious about
15 addressing the issue of violence here in
16 the City of Philadelphia. I know our
17 Mayor has -- this issue is very near and
18 dear to our Mayor, and we have close to
19 maybe a \$5 billion budget just in
20 general.

21 And so I think it's something
22 worthy that we should take a hard look
23 at, because, one, we're the number one
24 big city when it comes poverty, and we're
25 making some strides, but obviously we

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2 have a longer way to go. But when it
3 comes to the issue of crime and violence,
4 the best way to keep our young people
5 occupied is by giving them a job, right?
6 And I know for a fact, I've met other
7 young men who participated in this
8 program, right, and got City jobs that
9 are doing very well for themselves right
10 now.

11 And so this can be a pathway
12 out of a life of poverty for a lot of our
13 young men and young ladies who would like
14 to participate. But I always thought
15 this program was special.

16 And so I want to push and see
17 how do we advocate for increasing how
18 much these young people get paid beyond
19 \$15 an hour and increasing the number of
20 individuals from 40 to 100 as part of our
21 overall City of Philadelphia violence
22 prevention strategy to save our youth.

23 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah.
24 That's absolutely something that we can
25 work with you and the Administration with

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 to see if we can address that from --

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I know Rob
4 Dubow is somewhere like, what are you
5 talking about?

6 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: We
7 certainly can look at it, Councilmember.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I was
9 telling CP, no different than Council
10 President doing the PHS program to save
11 our young people, you know, giving them
12 same-day pay. It's very effective. It
13 gives young people an opportunity to get
14 involved in something that's positive.
15 And what I would say, when you go to
16 these graduations, right, and you hear
17 these young people's stories about how
18 they were totally going in the wrong path
19 but now they have an opportunity to put a
20 few dollars in their pocket, it's a
21 mentoring-ship while they're actually
22 doing something positive, right? It
23 actually saves their lives.

24 And so there's no other
25 pressing issue that I believe in the City

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2 of Philadelphia that we have to address
3 than to keep our young people safe. And
4 so I will be following up with you and
5 your team and obviously conferring with
6 the Council President to see how we can
7 make bold investments in our young people
8 and making sure the things that we're
9 doing are transformative when it comes to
10 saving the lives of our young people.

11 Thank you very much, Council
12 President.

13 Thank you, Commissioner, for
14 your hard work and dedication as well as
15 Chris.

16 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Thank
17 you, sir. Appreciate it.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
19 Thank you, Councilman.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
21 Thank you.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
23 Folks, what we'd like to do is take a
24 break and we will come back, because I
25 know License and Inspection will be long.

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 I anticipate a significant number of
3 questions. So we'll just take a break
4 until 2:00 and we'll come back with
5 License and Inspection, Prisons, and
6 Fleet Management for the afternoon
7 session.

8 Commissioner and your team,
9 thank you all so much for your testimony.
10 As always, please be prepared to respond
11 to callbacks. We may have some things
12 we'd like to ask you all.

13 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:
14 Absolutely. Thank you, Council
15 President. We appreciate it.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
17 Thank you for your work. We appreciate
18 it.

19 Council will stand in recess
20 until 2 o'clock this afternoon.

21 - - -
22 (Short recess.)

23 - - -
24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
25 Thank you. Thank you very much. Good

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 afternoon. We are now reconvening the
3 hearing from this morning's budget
4 testimony on our FY24 budget.

5 This afternoon we will start
6 off with the Department of License and
7 Inspection and then have the Prisons
8 Commission and then Fleet Management.

9 We'll now recognize L&I
10 Commissioner Ralph DiPietro.

11 Good afternoon, Commissioner.

12 COMMISSIONER DIPIETRO: Good
13 afternoon, Council President Clarke.
14 Good afternoon, members of City Council.
15 I'm Ralph DiPietro, Commissioner of
16 Licenses and Inspection, and joining me
17 today are several members of my executive
18 team. I'm pleased to provide testimony
19 on the Department of Licenses and
20 Inspections Fiscal Year 2024 Operating
21 Budget.

22 The Department continues to
23 drive innovation and process improvements
24 through several key technology
25 initiatives. In FY24, we'll continue to

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2 enhance the eCLIPSE system to improve the
3 customer experiences and streamline
4 license renewals to provide a greater
5 ease in the process.

6 Another key initiative for FY24
7 is implementation of a new virtual
8 inspection program. Virtual inspections
9 will increase efficiency of inspection
10 staff by saving the time required to
11 drive from site to site for permit
12 inspections. Through this new program,
13 specific types of inspections can be
14 completed via video without any decrease
15 in code compliance. In addition to that
16 increased efficiency, the permit holders
17 will benefit from a narrower inspection
18 window.

19 In FY24, the Department will
20 also compile historic permit records and
21 building safety requirements over time
22 and publish them to the L&I website.
23 This is necessary to equip building
24 owners with the information to ensure
25 code compliance and establish

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2 expectations for building residents. In
3 addition to that, the Department will
4 implement several improvements to its
5 maintenance certification enforcement in
6 '24. These improvements include the
7 publication of certification status to
8 the City's Atlas system and a requirement
9 that all alarm inspections and
10 suppression contractors and similar
11 upload the annual certifications through
12 the eCLIPSE system.

13 L&I will also remain focused on
14 its core public safety mission through
15 the careful management of both the
16 City-funded and private demolitions.
17 This proposed budget will allow L&I to
18 continue our aggressive public demolition
19 program with approximately 11.4 million
20 in recurrent general funding and an
21 estimated 1 million in recurrent funding
22 from the Philadelphia County Demolition
23 fee.

24 In FY24, L&I will equip the
25 remainder of its inspection workforce

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 with City-provided electric vehicles, and
3 this investment is already proving
4 inspection efficiency, transparency, and
5 safety.

6 During FY24, L&I will continue
7 its partnership with Community College to
8 incorporate technical code enforcement
9 coursework into CCP's existing
10 associate's degree in construction
11 management. And in addition, the
12 Department will continue the critical
13 work performed by the L&I Racial Equity
14 Team, which includes racial equity
15 assessments, training, and implementation
16 of a formal Racial Equity Action Plan.
17 The Racial Equity Team will be reviewing
18 career ladders to identify and remove any
19 unnecessary barriers to promotion.

20 And before I close, I'd like to
21 take the opportunity to thank the many
22 employees of the Department for their
23 commitment to public safety, and thank
24 you for the opportunity to present our
25 proposed Fiscal Year '24 budget, and I'm

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 available to answer questions at this
3 time.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
5 Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner.

6 First, I would like to say I
7 appreciate your willingness to come out
8 to community meetings. We've had across
9 the City of Philadelphia many challenging
10 issues relating to building, building
11 codes, and all the various issues at some
12 of these sometimes very, very testy
13 community meetings, and invariably the
14 issue comes up that requires that an L&I
15 person be there to speak about those
16 issues, and you've always been willing
17 and actually on time at every meeting
18 we've ever invited you to.

19 I remember the last one you
20 were there actually, Commissioner.
21 Councilman Harrity was actually there at
22 the meeting with me. We were over in
23 Fishtown talking about the St. Laurentius
24 Church and the demolition of that
25 particular building. It was quite

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 interesting, and I want to thank you.

3 I got a question to ask you.

4 This is somewhat of a follow-up from the
5 conversation we had the other day about
6 some of the development in the City of
7 Philadelphia and particularly one of the
8 Council-sponsored programs called Turn
9 the Key, a program where it was part of a
10 \$400 million neighborhood preservation
11 initiative, and this one was when we
12 essentially conveyed publicly owned lots
13 to developers at nominal cost in exchange
14 for them building affordable homes to
15 sell to residents of the City of
16 Philadelphia.

17 And as we moved through this
18 process, we have recently found out based
19 on conversations from the team that there
20 are challenges relating to the permitting
21 process and be able to expedite the
22 development. And you hear this all the
23 time, the permitting process. I know the
24 eCLIPSE system was supposed to enhance
25 the user experience, particularly around

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 developers and contractors, and I'm
3 hearing a lot of concerns about that.

4 Can you tell me what it is that
5 we can do -- and I don't know if it's
6 perception or reality, but if a person
7 feels that the reality is that it's a
8 cumbersome, burdensome process to get
9 through L&I. Can you tell me what can we
10 do to deal with that particular issue, be
11 it perception or be it reality? I got to
12 think it's a lot of reality based on the
13 wide range of complaints we get.

14 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So when
15 it comes specifically to sort of Turn the
16 Key and those other processes, I think
17 we've already started the process of
18 gathering information from Planning.
19 They're going to be sending a list over
20 of addresses so that we can look at and
21 find out what exactly their issues are.

22 I know there's a few that we've
23 identified. There's some issues with
24 property ownership and who is the
25 applicant. There's some issues around

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2 the depth of excavation and the new rules
3 we have around adjacent owners and
4 notification. Some of their projects may
5 not necessarily comply with that or not
6 need to comply based on the type of
7 construction.

8 So I think the first thing is
9 we need to -- we're going to get a list
10 of those and go through and see if
11 there's any issues there that just we're
12 not aware of or some place where they're
13 getting caught up in the process that's
14 leaving them sort of going around in
15 circles.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
17 Excuse me. Is that list coming from the
18 Land Bank?

19 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: It's
20 actually coming from the Planning
21 Commission, I think, and Director
22 Fadullon.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Okay.

25 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: The

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2 other thing too I think might be
3 helpful -- and we do this a lot. We've
4 been doing a lot of this lately -- is
5 having online training sessions and
6 seminars that we can tell ones
7 specifically to this group so that it's
8 both a good opportunity to see what we're
9 looking for, what the process is, and
10 gather some of their feedback. And it
11 will be wholly for this particular group,
12 so just folks that are doing this. So
13 the information is really germane to what
14 they are doing and not sort of general
15 like it is with a lot of the other things
16 we're doing for permit applicants.

17 Really the goal here is to help
18 maybe train the Land Bank folks or their
19 developers in how to use the system. And
20 I think what we do with some of the other
21 developers, you know, we have a lot of
22 report card sessions. We take a lot of
23 feedback through our permitting and
24 licensing process. That's how we
25 generally find out feedback about, hey,

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2 these things are problematic or we don't
3 understand what this particular thing or
4 we're getting caught in this like loop.

5 So I think maybe something
6 specific to the Land Bank developers,
7 like I mentioned, in a training scenario,
8 I think that might be a good way to go.
9 First, again, though, starting with those
10 list of addresses to find out exactly
11 what's happening to those applications.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
13 right. So one of the conversations we
14 had with Ms. Fadullon when she was on the
15 call the other day -- actually, in
16 person, we were talking about -- and it
17 sounds like you may to some degree be
18 recommending that -- that as the
19 solicitation and then the selection
20 process happens, that in a concurrent
21 way, the activities that you require to
22 be a recipient of a property, it happens
23 concurrently. Basically while we're
24 going through the process of acquiring
25 this land, simultaneously we're learning

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2 about the requirements from License and
3 Inspection as it relates to permitting.
4 So you don't have this sequential. You
5 have this in realtime happening at the
6 same time. So you eliminate the
7 back-to-back scenario.

8 Is that something what you're
9 kind of suggesting to have as a part of
10 the Land Bank's review process, have what
11 you're requiring a part of that process
12 so it can happen at the same time?

13 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: The
14 earlier, the better, but of course it's
15 helpful to have that training, that
16 exchange of information where we can say,
17 here's what we do, this is what it looks
18 like, this is the kind of information
19 we're expecting, here's how you find it,
20 and then also getting the feedback from
21 them about like, you know, whatever their
22 issues may be. So, yeah, I think earlier
23 in the process.

24 You know, some years ago -- we
25 have already a reduced timeframe for

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2 these reviews. Some years ago we did a
3 very similar project with RDA. The
4 problems RDA was taking too long to get
5 permits for a lot of properties that were
6 in desperate need of repair, and so we
7 created this much more streamlined
8 process where they filled out a special
9 application, so we knew what was already
10 in the properties.

11 Now, these were in the days
12 when everything was paper. It's a little
13 bit more tricky when it's virtual,
14 because, you know, we're getting these
15 online. There's no real indicator.

16 So I think the first step is,
17 we need to probably meet with their
18 developers to sort of train them on what
19 we're doing, where we're at, and I think
20 that will probably solve a lot of the
21 problems that we're seeing. Because,
22 again, we know the ones where there's
23 been new code requirements implemented,
24 we know those are challenging because
25 they're new. So sometimes sitting down

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2 with a group of developers and saying, be
3 prepared for this, here's the types of
4 things you'll need, that goes a long way
5 to reducing that burden that they think
6 sometimes it will be.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
8 right. So if we can connect you with the
9 developer groups, I know like they have
10 the Developers Workshop. They have these
11 various groups, you know, BIA and all
12 these folks. I'm assuming they think
13 they don't need training, but, you know,
14 who knows.

15 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: We'll
16 coordinate --

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
18 These people that are responding are not
19 necessarily novices. I mean, a lot of
20 them are building some pretty significant
21 buildings. They actually participate in
22 this program because we asked them to
23 build some smaller scale property.

24 I just don't want to add
25 another layer of bureaucracy to the

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2 process, because we're already having the
3 challenge of having people have to go to
4 training to, you know, building 20-story
5 buildings. Sometimes it may be bordering
6 on insulting.

7 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Well,
8 you know, it's not our intention to
9 insult them. It's simply to -- you know,
10 there is a very big difference between
11 building residential and building -- as I
12 mentioned during the Five Year, the
13 residential code has tripled in size over
14 the time. The requirements got much more
15 complicated, and you couple that with the
16 fact that these are Land Bank properties,
17 so they're technically not the owner, so
18 there's this weird sort of we don't
19 recognize them as the owner in the
20 system.

21 Our intention was the trainings
22 is not so much attention as it is an
23 opportunity to get them to know the
24 examination staff, the planning review
25 staff. That helps them when they need to

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2 reach out if they have a question rather
3 than going through the process -- our
4 standard process, which we do with other
5 applicants.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So
7 you just said something that I can
8 suggest might be a part of the problem
9 when you said because they're not
10 technically the owners of the property,
11 you suggested that the review process
12 might be different. Did I hear you
13 correctly?

14 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Well,
15 we don't -- so, for example, when they
16 want to make changes or things like that,
17 there could be problems associated with
18 that because they're not technically the
19 owners of the property. So our system is
20 geared to recognize ownership, so it
21 doesn't always recognize these folks. So
22 that's one of the challenges. Again,
23 it's not finding things insurmountable.
24 Getting them in conversations with the
25 folks that do this work and that manage

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2 those things I think will go a long way
3 to helping them get behind their steps or
4 knowing what to do when that question
5 comes up.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
7 right. I don't want to belabor the
8 point, but you just said something that
9 sounds very problematic.

10 Why don't we just recognize
11 them as owners of the property if we know
12 that they're a part of this program?
13 We're talking 1,000 units. I mean,
14 instead of -- I mean, why can't we just
15 change that to recognize this particular
16 batch of properties and fix that issue?
17 That sounds like a computer issue.

18 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Well,
19 it's a little bit deeper than that. Just
20 don't forget, some of these things are
21 with respect to getting variances, so
22 they're sort of legal questions.

23 What I'll do, if I can, let me
24 bring in Elizabeth Baldwin, she's our
25 Chief Code Official, to sort of

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2 explain -- this is just one part of it.
3 Again, we already talked about the sort
4 of --

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
6 right. But it sounds like a very big
7 part. If you're not recognizing them as
8 owners, therefore you're not availing to
9 them the process that would normally go
10 to that person, it sounds like --

11 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Right.
12 It's more questions --

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Can
14 you get your person?

15 Ms. Baldwin.

16 MS. BALDWIN: Good afternoon,
17 Council President and members of Council.
18 My name is Elizabeth Baldwin. I think
19 I'm still fading in. I'm Chief Code
20 Official with the Department of Licenses
21 and Inspections.

22 So with Land Bank properties,
23 they can't actually file until the
24 ownership changes hands or at least it's
25 approved by PHDC. So once that happens,

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2 they can proceed with filing. And this
3 is actually a legal constraint.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I
5 don't mean to interrupt you. Why can't
6 they file?

7 MS. BALDWIN: I think we'd have
8 to discuss with PHDC. And, again, I
9 think it is a legal question. PHDC -- I
10 think it has to go through the process
11 before they're finally approved, and once
12 they're approved and the property will
13 change hands, they can begin to file the
14 permit applications. But in the
15 meantime, it can still meet with the
16 cohort and explain the requirements to
17 them, get them set up with the project so
18 we can streamline the process.

19 So this isn't a technical
20 issue. It's not an L&I constraint. It's
21 a function of how the Land Bank
22 properties are transferred.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Okay. All right. I know what to do.
25 Okay. Thank you. I've been on this for

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2 a minute.

3 One last issue, and I'm sorry,
4 colleagues. I'm going to leave this
5 alone. The eCLIPSE system, do you
6 believe that that's working well?
7 Because I hear from contractors all the
8 time. Currently we don't have -- they
9 used to go into MSB. I hear it all the
10 time, particularly small contractors, I'm
11 used to going to the basement of MSB.
12 That's now not available; am I correct?

13 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Well, I
14 mean, we encourage -- we want folks to
15 apply online to start the process, but
16 they certainly can make an appointment if
17 they want to come down to MSB. We have
18 it through an appointment system that
19 they can do that. This way, the goal
20 here is to get -- if you're coming to
21 MSB, it's our intention that those are
22 for folks that have real significant
23 problems that are far too complicated to
24 solve through computers. So it's been --
25 it's intended for folks to come if

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2 they've got various issues with various
3 City departments and agencies.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
5 Okay. All right. I'm going to leave it
6 alone. I don't want to monopolize and
7 take advantage of the gavel, the virtual
8 gavel.

9 The Chair recognizes Councilman
10 Johnson.

11 Councilman Jones, did you -- I
12 see your hand up. Was that to queue up
13 for questions or was that for something
14 else?

15 I'm sorry. Councilman Jones.
16 I'm sorry. Councilman Jones, you had a
17 question or you were cuing up? I see
18 your hand up on the screen.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yeah. I had
20 a question, but that was for Commissioner
21 Carney, so I can yield my --

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I
23 got you. Okay. Thank you, Councilman.

24 The Chair recognizes Councilman
25 Johnson.

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yeah.

3 Thank you very much, Council President.

4 And first and foremost, I want
5 to thank Commissioner Ralph DiPietro
6 always for your hard work, always for
7 being very responsive to my text
8 messages. Sometimes they come on
9 Sundays. Sometimes they're late at
10 night. But I thank you and your team for
11 being very, very responsive when we do
12 reach out, and thank you personally for
13 being patient with me when I reach out to
14 you myself irregardless of what time it
15 is or what day of the week.

16 Just a couple of questions
17 around the topic of virtual inspections,
18 right? I want to get an idea of what the
19 rollout is going to look like, if people
20 have concerns regarding virtual versus
21 in-person inspections.

22 And then also I know that we
23 are proposing an increase of code
24 enforcements to 58, and right now we have
25 42 that are filled, right? And what are

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2 we going to be doing to reach those
3 numbers?

4 And then last, but not least,
5 and this is something I'm working on with
6 my colleague in the near future,
7 Councilman Driscoll, who is the Chair of
8 L&I, your strategy around the issue of
9 public safety when it comes to
10 development here in the City of
11 Philadelphia, specifically in your
12 wheelhouse in License and Inspections,
13 inspectors and the work that they're
14 doing to make sure our structures are
15 safe as we move forward. And so very
16 critically important question, and we've
17 had different incidents that have taken
18 place in the Second Councilmanic District
19 where people's homes are damaged or we
20 may get a call regarding a house falling
21 down based upon it not being secured.

22 And so I just want to get an
23 idea from a public safety standpoint.
24 And I think Chairman Jones sometime when
25 I first arrived in Council also did a

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2 hearing around this type of topic. And
3 so could you just elaborate on where
4 we're at on those three areas, please.

5 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Yes,
6 sir. Thank you, Councilmember. So first
7 let me start with the question about
8 virtual inspection. So virtual
9 inspections are a pilot program. It will
10 go live a little later in April, and very
11 quickly, the purpose of this is to sort
12 of capitalize on like what we're doing
13 right now, sort of a Teams meeting. It's
14 to allow certain types of inspections to
15 take place without having to physically
16 send an inspector from site to site.

17 You can imagine there's some
18 field efficiencies, because inspectors
19 aren't driving through the neighborhoods
20 looking for parking, doing all the things
21 that they do. And also it's much more
22 predictable. You know, you get a time
23 for this inspection. The inspection will
24 begin at that time.

25 Now, I have to be honest, at

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2 this point it's not there. Part of the
3 reason for the pilot is to see what type
4 of inspections are best served by this.
5 It's not for every inspection site.
6 Sometimes you just have to be on site.
7 It will be mostly construction
8 inspection-related virtual inspections,
9 although we will work some code
10 enforcement stuff out there as time goes
11 on.

12 So April 24th is the "go live"
13 date for that. It will be a fairly
14 controlled one so we can sort of roll it
15 out and see what kind of real life
16 problems we're having in terms of the
17 inspection and documentation.

18 Now, also very quickly, this is
19 something that's happening all across the
20 country, so we're certainly not unique in
21 doing it, but it definitely seems to be
22 something the way the industry is
23 trending, and we certainly want to take
24 advantage of it, especially since coming
25 off of the pandemic.

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2 The hiring process, very
3 quickly, yeah, so we are intending to be
4 bringing on 40 inspectors hopefully in
5 June. We just went through the hiring
6 process, and I should say we had a very,
7 very successful recruitment period, and I
8 should specially thank Councilmember
9 Curtis Jones. Several people called and
10 said, you know, we heard Councilman Jones
11 on WDAS recruiting inspectors. And so
12 that was very welcome, and I know many of
13 you have done similar.

14 We had a really good successful
15 recruiting session. I think that it's
16 going to produce a lot of candidates,
17 which is something we've not seen in the
18 last couple times where we've put the job
19 applications out. And so we're expecting
20 to hire 40 inspectors. I think it's
21 about 20 code enforcement and 20
22 construction inspectors.

23 Right now we have -- right now
24 as of the submission of the budget
25 document, we're about 34 inspector

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2 vacancies. It's crept up a little higher
3 since then with folks being promoted who
4 are moving on to different careers. So
5 we're expecting 20 and 20.

6 I think we'll be successful in
7 doing that. That's the -- part of that
8 limitation is that's about the max that
9 we can move through our training program
10 with any kind of efficiency and certainty
11 that they're going to get certified.
12 There's always some level of attrition in
13 that. We have people that routinely will
14 leave the training program, the job isn't
15 for them. That happens. So, again,
16 we're hoping to see that in June.

17 At about the same time, we're
18 also running a separate program to bring
19 in a number of plans engineers. That
20 seems to be -- we're having a real
21 challenge hiring civil engineers, grad
22 civil engineers, for our plan review
23 process.

24 I can tell you -- and one of
25 the biggest issues there has been

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2 residency. Amazingly, our residency has
3 come up very, very consistently. As we
4 typically go after a much younger group
5 here, they tend to be very recently
6 graduating from college. They have very
7 high student debt, and honestly the vast
8 majority need to live with their parents
9 while they work. And so once we get to
10 the point of our residency, we tend to
11 lose the leads, but that's going on at
12 the same time.

13 And, lastly, with respect to
14 public safety, there's a couple different
15 ways we're doing this. There's a couple
16 different things we're trying. One of
17 the things I think we have to try -- we
18 have to work more at is getting rid of
19 bad actor contractors, the ones who
20 habitually just go out and cause damage
21 and move on. That's largely been the job
22 of our Audits and Investigations Unit.
23 They've done dozens and dozens of license
24 revocations, license suspensions, issued
25 up \$600,000 in fines just this past year.

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2 So they've done a lot to work in that
3 regard, but we need to put some
4 additional staff there. And in fact, our
5 plan is to double the inspection staff in
6 AIU.

7 So that's to deal with the
8 contractors who cause damage, and
9 frankly, they either need to change their
10 business practices or they need to move
11 on in losing their licenses.

12 The second part of that is when
13 we get these buildings, we've seen over
14 the last year and a half of really a very
15 big change. Very typically when we would
16 go in, we have ID buildings. These were
17 typically buildings where no one owned
18 them, no one had any interest in them.
19 We would inspect them. They would --
20 given time, we might have 300 ID
21 buildings. We've been as low as 80 ID
22 buildings. And we would go in, do the
23 inspections, and demolish.

24 What we're seeing now is a very
25 big change in that, in that now property

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2 owners are actually coming in and trying
3 to save these buildings at a much higher
4 rate. We've had more TROs I think in the
5 last year and a half than we've seen
6 probably in most of my time with the
7 Department.

8 So I think what we had always
9 hoped would happen is, we get through the
10 bulk of these really vacant, derelict
11 buildings and now we're getting to the
12 ones where there's an ownership, there's
13 someone that's responsible for them. We
14 far prefer people to renovate and reuse
15 these buildings rather than demolish
16 them. That doesn't serve anybody. It's
17 a good stop gap.

18 So we're trying to approach
19 this from a couple of different ways, but
20 it really does have to start with
21 contractors. Very often they're the ones
22 causing the damage.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And just
24 in wrapping up, one part you talked
25 about, the bad actors, the bad

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2 contractors. I know we passed a bill in
3 Council, Bill No. 220008, that basically
4 expands the notice of rights of neighbors
5 when contractors are working next door to
6 them.

7 How are we working to go about
8 getting the word out to neighbors about
9 this bill, about their rights when
10 developers are building homes next to
11 them? We've had stories where their
12 foundations have shaken, cracks down the
13 wall, and then I get the call like,
14 Councilman, you know, how do we address
15 this issue.

16 So this bill for my colleague
17 was introduced to really protect the
18 rights of homeowners from unscrupulous
19 developers and contractors.

20 So how are we getting the word
21 out so they know that they have this
22 right? And what's their recourse when
23 they do find out that -- when they do
24 feel that their home has been damaged as
25 a result of an individual building a home

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2 next to them?

3 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So this
4 was actually -- this sort of piece of
5 legislation passed and it's important,
6 but I don't think it really got the
7 credit it deserves to really take the
8 first of what's necessary of likely two
9 steps.

10 The first is letting -- you
11 know, in most parts of the world, if
12 somebody is building a home, no one
13 cares. It's not attached to your own.
14 It's set off from the street. It's not
15 that big an impact. It's not like that
16 in Philadelphia, as you know, for most of
17 the buildings we have. They're row
18 homes. So when someone is building next
19 to you, it absolutely impacts yours, and
20 what the bill says, it really provides
21 that other homeowner with a view into
22 actually what's happening.

23 That never really happened
24 before. They weren't given copies of the
25 plans. I mean, if the contractor was

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2 particularly magnanimous and wanted to
3 share, that happens, but that was a
4 rarity.

5 So this actually sort of
6 requires them to share the plans, let
7 them see what's being developed, and
8 specifically the things that relate that
9 could potentially impact their existing
10 building.

11 I say it's part of one of two
12 steps because I think that next step gets
13 to your point about what can they do.
14 The goal up front is so that they can see
15 and say, hmm, maybe I should bring
16 somebody in to look at this with
17 knowledge, contractor, designer,
18 architect, engineer, whatever. Now,
19 that's fine if you have resources. If
20 you don't have the resources, that's a
21 little tricky. That's sort of that next
22 step, was finding a way to sort of
23 subsidize, and we looked at this in a
24 bunch of different ways, you may
25 remember, figuring out how to provide

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2 assistance for people who don't have
3 money to spend on an architect or
4 engineer or even an attorney, just to
5 look, make sure their rights are
6 preserved.

7 So that's the second part that
8 we've not really done yet, but sort of
9 thinking about how do we get to that.

10 Now, when you do that, now
11 you're really fully realizing the benefit
12 of that ordinance, because they can
13 actually have somebody that's qualified
14 look at it and say, wait a minute, I have
15 a concern about this, and then they can
16 work with the developer to make sure
17 their concerns are addressed.

18 So it's a really good start.
19 It's a huge change from what we've done
20 in the past, long overdue, but I do think
21 it needs to inform some other things that
22 we are looking at down the road.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: That's all
24 I have. Thank you very much,
25 Commissioner.

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2 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: You're
3 welcome, sir.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
5 Thank you, Councilman.

6 Colleagues, I see you all have
7 your hands raised. I don't know if it's
8 for purposes of getting in the queue. If
9 you're doing it for purposes of getting
10 in the queue, please put it in the Chat.
11 Okay. Unless you have a point of order.
12 That would be the time to do your raise
13 your hand.

14 And I see -- Councilman
15 Driscoll, did you have a point of order
16 or did you want to just get in the queue?

17 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Council
18 President, I wanted to get in the queue.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
20 Okay. Put it in the Chat, not raise your
21 hand.

22 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: For some
23 reason, I'm having some difficulty
24 because I'm working on the phone.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

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2 Okay. All right. Will the technicians
3 treat the hand raising as a request to be
4 in the queue. We'll solve that. We can
5 do technology over here too. All right.

6 The Chair recognizes Councilman
7 Harrity.

8 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Thank you,
9 Council President and colleagues.

10 Hello, Commissioner DiPietro.
11 How are you?

12 COMMISSIONER DIPIETRO: I'm
13 well, sir. Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Just a
15 couple of short questions. I think you
16 answered some of them, but I want to ask
17 them again anyway.

18 How many employees total do you
19 have on staff and how many total are you
20 short in the whole department?

21 How many building inspectors do
22 you have for the City and how many are
23 you short?

24 And where do you advertise for
25 hiring?

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2 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So
3 right presently the Department has about
4 343 employees. We have approximately 87
5 vacancies. This number changes, as I
6 mentioned, as folks move in and out, but
7 we have about 87 vacancies.

8 We're looking, as I mentioned
9 earlier, we're looking to hire 20
10 building and 20 code enforcement
11 inspectors. The vacancy rate there is
12 about 35 inspectors, but as I said, we're
13 constantly promoting and folks are moving
14 into different jobs.

15 In terms of where we hire, so
16 we do a couple of different things. This
17 time we did a bit of a different
18 recruitment effort. We did -- obviously
19 we did some -- many of the Councilmembers
20 helped us out with that. We did a
21 recruitment drive. We actually had an
22 open house here at MSB. That was really
23 very successful. We actually have some
24 really great support from some
25 associations too. Black Contractors

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2 Coalition was very helpful. Orleans
3 Technical Institute. In fact, a lot of
4 their students came to our open house.
5 We're particularly pleased about that,
6 because one of the things that we're
7 trying to do is attract sort of younger
8 people to the job.

9 Very traditionally our
10 construction inspection job, construction
11 inspectors tend to be older. The average
12 age is about 52. So they tend to be a
13 little bit older -- even older than our
14 other inspectors, who tend to average out
15 in the high 40's and early 50's.

16 So we're trying to convince
17 them younger folks that have either a
18 background in the trades or technical
19 school, like in the case of Orleans, to
20 maybe consider code enforcement as a
21 career. The hope is that we'll get to
22 keep them for several years. You know,
23 we spend a lot of money, a lot of time
24 training them, and we'd hate to sort of
25 lose them after, you know, a couple years

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 as they move on to different fields or
3 different jobs.

4 So we did a lot of that. There
5 was a lot of discussions both -- the City
6 has sort of their own sort of
7 standardized process. They put the job
8 announcements up on the City website. We
9 sent it out in our newsletters, and that
10 newsletter is really very, very good. I
11 mean, I don't want to blow our own horn,
12 but it's a really very, very good
13 document. It contains a ton of
14 information. It goes out to a good bit
15 of people.

16 So we make sure we kept putting
17 it in there that we're hiring inspectors,
18 that we're considering this. So we did a
19 lot, and I think the response was pretty
20 impressive.

21 We're looking at about 300
22 applicants each, construction, code
23 enforcement. That's really, really good.
24 I mean, by comparison the last time we
25 did the construction inspector job we got

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2 15 or 19 applicants. Now, that's
3 ridiculously low, but it's been trending
4 in that direction for some years.

5 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: How many
6 of the 300 applicants that you have do
7 you believe will actually be qualified or
8 accept the job?

9 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Great
10 question. So there's two issues with
11 that. First, OHR, the City central
12 personnel will do that qualification
13 process, and we'll get the list. We're
14 actually hoping we'll get the list in the
15 next week. But OHR really determines if
16 they meet the job qualification.

17 Now, to your second part of
18 that question, one thing that we see very
19 routinely, if it takes too long to get
20 through a list, folks will take other job
21 opportunities. You know, they're just --
22 so, I mean, that's an issue that I think
23 the City is fully aware of, and I know
24 you folks have mentioned this at the Five
25 Year hearing that we had just the other

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 day about sort of streamlining that
3 process.

4 So I think that -- what we tend
5 to see like -- we get some folks coming
6 in. They tend to stick around at least a
7 month or two, but then it starts to get
8 really difficult, especially for
9 construction inspectors, because there's
10 multiple certifications that they've got
11 to have before they can do their first
12 inspection.

13 One thing that's true about the
14 L&I inspector position, it's really a
15 very, very difficult job to do well. I
16 say this not only as the Commissioner but
17 as a former inspector. It's really a
18 very difficult job to do well. It
19 requires tremendous reading
20 comprehension. The code is written in
21 language much -- you know, Councilmember,
22 you certainly know what that's like in
23 terms of the way ordinances are
24 constructed, and the code is very similar
25 to that, very, very complicated.

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2 So it's hard to get, you know,
3 high-quality candidates that can both
4 understand that, interpret those codes,
5 pass the certification exams, and then do
6 all the things that they need to do in
7 the field to be a good inspector, part
8 social worker, part police officer and
9 all of that. So very, very tough job.

10 Also inspectors --

11 COUNCILMAN HARRITY:

12 Inspectors -- I'm sorry. Inspectors, I
13 get it, and, you know, being young would
14 be a plus, but being as short as we are,
15 you said you went to the building -- the
16 trades to talk to them, because I'd be
17 curious about maybe getting some of our
18 retirees involved. You know, while being
19 young is something that would be okay,
20 but if we had a seasoned building guy
21 that was looking for a gig because
22 they're getting ready to retire, some of
23 our guys are still on the 25 and out
24 pension, so they would be still kind of
25 young. You know, maybe that's an avenue

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2 we should look at and, you know, a lot of
3 us are certified in all kinds of
4 different things that might cut down on
5 some of that certification process.

6 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: We get
7 a good bit of the former trades, like
8 folks that retired from the trades but
9 are still young enough, we do get a good
10 bit of those on our construction side.
11 The issue is there, they don't typically
12 stay too long, but we do get at least
13 five years on average from them.

14 We got some diversity issues on
15 that construction inspection side, so
16 it's really kind of hard, but ideally the
17 best solution would be able to get both,
18 you know, folks that have some of that
19 background that learned but still bring
20 in the seasoned folks, because you're
21 right, there's a much shorter curve to
22 get them up and running than there is
23 somebody that's brand new to the field,
24 especially since it's an enforcement
25 field, so there's a certain level of

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2 confidence you have to have to
3 effectively enforce.

4 Also, I missed, but you
5 mentioned how many positions we had.
6 Construction, we have 87 budgeted and
7 about 66 or so filled. That's
8 construction inspections.

9 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: That's not
10 actually bad.

11 All right. Oh, the only other
12 question I had is, your civil engineers,
13 which you're having a hard time hiring,
14 is that -- besides the residency thing,
15 is that also because the pay,
16 competitive? Is it competitive? How --

17 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Well,
18 for forever that was the issue, right?
19 But I've seen it has changed. So we have
20 two building plans engineer supervisors
21 who've done an absolutely phenomenal job
22 of recruiting. They're all over the
23 place. They're visiting colleges.
24 They're doing virtual fairs.

25 So a lot of this information

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2 came from their firsthand experience.

3 Pay was mentioned, but it's not quite --

4 it doesn't seem to be the driving factor

5 of these much younger sort of folks that

6 are moving into the grad civils, partly

7 because I think our pay has gotten much

8 better in terms of plans engineers based

9 on their salary and the overtime

10 available, but I think it's really the

11 student loans are just absolutely

12 crushing them. They can't afford to move

13 into the City and pay their student

14 loans. I think that's the big driver,

15 and that's a pretty significant change

16 from what we've seen, at least most of my

17 time.

18 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Maybe we

19 need to try to help them with their

20 student loans, but, yeah. I appreciate

21 you, Commissioner. Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Thank

23 you.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

25 Thank you, Councilman.

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2 The Chair recognizes Councilman
3 Driscoll.

4 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Thank
5 you, Mr. President.

6 And thank you, Commissioner
7 DiPietro and all your staff at L&I. You
8 know, you have very hardworking
9 inspectors, and they're the ones that are
10 keeping us safe, and what you did during
11 COVID is to be commended. And, you know,
12 since I've been short term -- as my short
13 term tenure here as Chair of L&I from the
14 Council, I think we've built a strong
15 working relationship, Commissioner, and I
16 appreciate that. You know, we've been
17 frank with one another, and I think
18 that's been a key to where we're headed,
19 and I do believe we're headed to good
20 places.

21 Councilman Harrity did -- you
22 know, he got into a little bit of the
23 recruiting. We were grateful as a
24 Council to help you recruit, because we
25 recognize that everywhere we can do this

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2 outreach, we need to be doing it.

3 Is there anything that we can
4 do to increase the completion rate and
5 longer inspector retention? Is there
6 something in this budget process or
7 somewhere in the Administration that we
8 can be helpful in that regard?

9 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Thank
10 you for the question. I'm sure -- there
11 seems to be a couple reasons that leads
12 to folks either not completing the
13 training program. Again, it's very, very
14 intensive in terms of reading
15 comprehension, and that's a very high
16 priority skill. It's also gotten very
17 technical in terms of the input that --
18 you know, they're using computers and
19 various applications to upload their
20 photos and their inspection results. So
21 there's a high degree of technicality.

22 I don't think -- I think, you
23 know, pay increases are always good. I
24 do think getting -- opening up to a
25 broader category of candidates. Very

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2 traditionally we only -- like, for
3 example, construction inspections only
4 focused on tradespeople, which was good.
5 Many of our tradespeople, many of the
6 inspectors who are working in the
7 Department are absolute craftsmen of the
8 highest order, right? But it's unlikely
9 that they might be both a craftsman and
10 very technically sound and have all these
11 other things, so they're learning this
12 stuff as they come in. So broadening the
13 field from which we pull candidates from
14 I think is helpful.

15 We're looking at different ways
16 to do that. You still want to have --
17 like a trade background is ideal, but
18 there might be some other things that we
19 could do, like perhaps from the
20 professional -- from folks that are
21 degreed in different fields, like
22 construction management degrees or
23 perhaps some architectural engineering
24 degrees. I think that would help too.

25 We can teach them to become

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2 inspectors, but what's very difficult is
3 to find folks that have the personality
4 traits to succeed in the role. So I
5 think if there's ongoing discussions
6 about like what kinds of backgrounds
7 would lead to be successful candidates,
8 perhaps we'd be happy to have those.

9 We've tried to sort of over
10 time, without diminishing the
11 candidate -- that's the balance, right?
12 We don't want to diminish the quality of
13 the candidates, but we need to offer --
14 we need to broaden it to get a better
15 pool so that we have a greater success of
16 having folks come in and succeeding
17 through the training program.

18 At some points, we actually
19 almost have -- we've gotten close to near
20 50 percent rate, meaning 50 percent of
21 the trainees drop out of the program.
22 They don't complete it, either they can't
23 pass the certification exams or
24 voluntarily decide not to do it. That's
25 very high obviously.

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2 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Yeah.

3 That's a problem. I mean, if it's a very
4 technical position, to the extent that we
5 could contract out. I mean, I'm for not
6 contracting out in a general sense, but
7 if there's some contracting out that
8 would help get the very highly technical
9 aspect of what you need to run your
10 department, I think that we should put
11 that on the table, but thank you for that
12 response.

13 In one of our conversations you
14 talked about reinstituting that Rapid
15 Response Unit or bolstering it perhaps.
16 Can you tell us what that will look like
17 and, you know, what are the kind of
18 primary pieces that you would target, and
19 if this requires additional staffing, you
20 know, is that in your budget?

21 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So
22 there's two ways where we're doing this.
23 The first is through construction
24 complaints. So they typically -- we get
25 a complaint that someone is doing work

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2 without a permit or they're exceeding a
3 permit or something along those lines.
4 So the work without permits are
5 particularly disturbing.

6 If they already have a permit,
7 we have a sense of who is there. So it
8 could still be dangerous, but at least we
9 have some sense. When they're doing work
10 without a permit, we don't know who that
11 may be. They may be licensed; may be not
12 licensed at all.

13 So we created in the
14 construction inspection side a complaint
15 unit, and that's partly their sole
16 responsibility every day, to check for
17 complaints of work without permits and to
18 get out there as quickly as possible.
19 And we've definitely seen an improvement.

20 Now, the unit is small, so we
21 do intend to, as we bring in this new
22 group of inspectors, we have a current
23 class of construction inspectors
24 completing up the training program now,
25 and as we bring in this new group of 20,

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2 we definitely will assign some to the
3 complaint unit to do them.

4 Now, I mentioned there's really
5 two. Our Audits and Investigation has a
6 complaint component, but the inspectors
7 right now, there's just not enough of
8 them to really -- even though they get
9 out to these jobs very quickly, we'd like
10 to be able to do like sort of same day.
11 So if somebody puts in a complaint and
12 that complaint mentions unlicensed, no
13 OSHA, that sort of stuff, things that are
14 really about the contractor, not about
15 the work, we'd like to be able to get
16 them out the same day or the following
17 day to investigate, and one of the
18 reasons that's important is it's very,
19 very necessary for us to sort of catch
20 them in the act. Very difficult to
21 prosecute when we didn't firsthand
22 witness who is on site, what they were
23 doing. It becomes a much more
24 complicated and time-consuming
25 investigation. So the shorter we can

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2 shut down that -- close down that
3 timeframe between the time the public
4 complains until we get out there, the
5 better for everyone concerned.

6 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: And,
7 listen, I'm thrilled that in your budget
8 that you're expanding the live chat from
9 three hours to five hours. You talked
10 about that a little earlier. I think
11 it's really important to communicate with
12 these folks.

13 You know, once people get to
14 learn the eCLIPSE and get to learn the
15 help center and these sort of things, I
16 think the demand is going to go down, but
17 the fact that you're increasing that
18 right now. Anything that can make it
19 more intuitive, you know, I think you're
20 spot on. So from my perspective, looking
21 forward to working with you in this new
22 budget year.

23 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Thank
24 you, sir. If I can take an opportunity
25 to brag. So we have a thing called the

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2 net promoter score. It's been around for
3 very many years in City government and
4 outside, and the ratings that they're
5 getting downstairs in their net promoter
6 score are unheard of, ratings we could
7 never imagine. I mean, they're somewhere
8 around 69-ish. I know that may not mean
9 anything. I'm happy to provide the sort
10 of background on what the net promoter
11 score is, but the reason I say that is
12 because the chat unit in particular seems
13 to get at the very top of that response,
14 which shows you the people do appreciate
15 it. It is a help to the public. And I
16 think, yeah, we're happy to sort of
17 expand that as folks come online.

18 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: And then,
19 lastly, I'll end with this, Mr. President
20 and Commissioner. To the extent that --
21 again, hybrid works, but not always. To
22 the extent that we can get people back to
23 work, I guess the pandemic will be
24 officially over in May. Just would
25 encourage, as best we can, keeping

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 everyone safe, and I'll yield back to
3 Council President.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
5 Thank you. Thank you, sir.

6 I don't think we have anyone
7 else queued up for the L&I Commissioner.
8 Am I correct?

9 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: CP?

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I'm
11 sorry. My fault, Councilwoman. I'm a
12 little behind the time.

13 The Chair recognizes
14 Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson. I was
15 looking at an old list. Sorry,
16 Councilwoman.

17 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Thank
18 you, Council President. It's no problem
19 at all. Thank you very, very much, and
20 thank you to Commissioner DiPietro for
21 all of your work and for your help and
22 assistance, not only of you but of your
23 department and all the folks that we
24 closely work with, including Renee
25 Rinehardt and so many others who have

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2 helped us.

3 And I also want to give you
4 kudos as well for again going out with us
5 for the inspections around these drug
6 paraphernalia locations. I know we've
7 been to quite a few all over the City of
8 Philadelphia, some very interesting
9 situations that we've encountered. So I
10 wanted to say thank you for personally
11 going out with us, particularly, you
12 know, when the sun is down, to ensure
13 that we can provide public safety in a
14 different aspect in our city.

15 But I wanted to go back to
16 obviously the nuisance businesses, and
17 you talked about in your testimony, your
18 Five Year Plan, and some of the metrics
19 state that you all intend to inspect
20 80 percent of the nuisance properties
21 within two weeks. Again, you know the
22 experience we've had thus far and you
23 know why, because some of these
24 properties require the coordination of
25 some of our other City departments, and

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2 last week when we first talked about
3 this, you noted that you all are changing
4 how you staff the Code Enforcement Unit.

5 Can you just provide additional
6 specific detail about this change, how
7 will it help you all to improve
8 efficiency and the ways that you all
9 think about outcomes around the drug
10 paraphernalia stores.

11 I heard some of my other
12 colleagues talk about, you know, the
13 inspectors and needing to have
14 high-quality trained inspectors who have
15 a certain level of experience doing this
16 work, but if you can just speak to how
17 you all are going to work to make that
18 change for more enforcement officers, not
19 just for nuisance businesses but also on
20 the contracting side as well.

21 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Thank
22 you, Councilmember, for the kind words.

23 So what the plan is as we bring
24 this additional staff, they tend to come
25 in and they move into their sort of more

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2 basic inspection realm, especially on the
3 code enforcement side, and that allows us
4 to get the more seasoned inspectors and
5 move them up to more high-priority stuff.

6 Now, the strangest thing about
7 nuisances is, it's really a difficult
8 metric to sort of look at, because what
9 often happens with nuisances, as you
10 mentioned, is the one avenue where we
11 have to coordinate with the Strike Force,
12 for example, from the Police Department
13 around the nuisance paraphernalia places
14 or maybe liquor control enforcement. So
15 there's a lot of that that goes on, but
16 there's also a lot of research and
17 there's a lot of timing.

18 Very often with a lot of the
19 nuisance properties, not necessarily
20 paraphernalia, by like speakeasies or
21 sort of places that convert in the middle
22 of the night to like nightclubs and
23 hookah bars that convert, very often
24 it's -- we have to find the right
25 opportunity to go out there. So it's

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2 tough to sort of measure that, because we
3 can't always -- like in anything else, we
4 can respond. We show up. We can inspect
5 the building. We can see what's there.
6 These are very difficult, so we have to
7 catch them in the middle of the night.

8 So I think part of the idea of
9 bringing in new inspectors, additional
10 staff is to help them to sort of take
11 on -- right now we have about ten teams.
12 So at any given weekend, we have a team
13 that's out. You know, we can send out
14 multiple teams or we can have a single
15 team, right? It all sort of depends.
16 But there's only so many inspectors that
17 are willing to participate. This is
18 overtime work. It's a little bit
19 dangerous. It's very exhausting because
20 you're out there all night and --

21 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON:

22 Commissioner, I apologize for the
23 interruption, but to your point relative
24 to this being overtime work, I think
25 that's where some of my concern lies, and

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2 I know we have to use experienced
3 inspectors, but I think it would be
4 exceedingly helpful not only to your
5 department but to the City overall from a
6 budget perspective just to have
7 individuals who work on this issue,
8 whether they work day shift or evening
9 shift or night shift, so that it's also
10 not arduous on your budget from a Class
11 100 perspective. Because I know last
12 week for last budget, I asked about how
13 we could adequately resource you all to
14 ensure that you have staffing capacity
15 but also all the other coordinating
16 departments who work with the Nuisance
17 Business Task Force, like Law, like PPD
18 and others.

19 And so that's what my real
20 question is, how do we get to a point
21 where we're not relying on people signing
22 up for overtime to adequately do this
23 work.

24 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So as I
25 mentioned earlier, that's the sort of

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2 misnomer about the nuisance sort of
3 businesses. Some of those businesses can
4 only be done at night, and to your point,
5 perhaps it would be better if we had a
6 second shift or a third shift or whatever
7 it may be.

8 Many of these nuisances,
9 though, can be done during the day, but
10 paraphernalia places really can, because
11 it's very much about what's physically
12 there. Very often they're quite brazen
13 about it, as you know. They'll
14 advertise. They'll put stuff right in
15 their window.

16 So this sort of covers a lot of
17 different things, and I think what we've
18 seen is, we need to -- and what we
19 started is to sort of look at
20 paraphernalia in particular as its own
21 separate program rather than simply part
22 of a nuisance thing. That would still
23 require the coordination and stuff, but
24 looking at it as an ongoing program where
25 we can track what's going on. We can do

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2 day inspections. We can increase the
3 number of people we have, because it's
4 not that sort of overtime.

5 It does require, as I
6 mentioned, the coordination with the
7 Strike Force folks, but I think that's
8 sort of a separate thing. The true
9 nuisance stuff that would necessitate
10 having inspectors out there at night,
11 that's a little bit difficult, because
12 that requires -- there's a very
13 complicated sort of process by which we
14 would have to change people's work
15 schedules to then work a nighttime shift,
16 work an after-hours shift. It does get
17 to be a little tricky.

18 We tried that some years ago.
19 Didn't really have the support that we
20 needed, but it's sort of the way we did
21 it. It's definitely something we want to
22 do. It's definitely something we want to
23 look at and how best to do it, but, you
24 know, the key to it is, we have to be
25 able to do it and we have to be able to

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2 scale it. So like if we're getting a lot
3 of stuff at night, we have to be able to
4 add people to that, because you don't
5 want to be in the same position where we
6 have two, three, or four inspectors
7 working the night shift and too much work
8 for them to get out that has to be done
9 at night.

10 So definitely I hear you. It's
11 definitely something that's in front of
12 us and something that we're looking at to
13 sort of expand our capability across the
14 board. It's not just inspectors, though,
15 of course. It's supervisors too. But we
16 need to be able to identify the staff and
17 create these secondary shifts.

18 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: No.
19 I agree. And I want to underscore this
20 point on this issue, and you know how
21 strongly I feel about these locations,
22 because so much of some of the criminal
23 activity incidents that have occurred on
24 a number of these commercial corridors
25 are a direct result of what's happening

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 around these locations. And so we have
3 this issue all across the City. Every
4 community meeting I'm in, every group of
5 individuals I meet with, no matter where
6 I am, this issue has come up, and it's
7 really ballooned since COVID. It's
8 something that we really have to get a
9 handle on.

10 A lot of what they sell -- I
11 mean, this is like synthetic weed. It's
12 a bunch of other things, and it's a
13 detriment to our community.

14 And so I do think that if we
15 are -- I'm looking at this budget process
16 correctly, that we need to utilize this
17 as an opportunity to work with you all to
18 say create day shift, evening shift,
19 night shift, because, you know, we also
20 receive lots of complaints about people
21 working on properties that are probably
22 nine times out of ten no signs,
23 unlicensed, or don't have the proper
24 approval from your department working on
25 these residential properties at nighttime

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2 and we can't get anyone out. And so at
3 the point when someone can come out, the
4 activity is over and it's just an
5 unfortunate cycle.

6 And so what I think I really,
7 really need to know from your department,
8 recognizing that this is like a big
9 priority for us, how can we work with you
10 all to adequately resource you from a
11 Class 100 perspective to deal with the
12 issues we know that we have? Like I
13 don't think it's fair for us to get
14 through this cycle and process and then
15 come back again and say, well, we got to
16 hire people for the evening shift or, you
17 know, we need more money for overtime.
18 Like we know what we need to do. How do
19 we get there? What is it that you need
20 from us in this process to make this a
21 reality?

22 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So I
23 think part of that discussion is exactly
24 what would that look like, what does --
25 we had -- so, for example, we had an

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2 emergency response group that's 24/7.
3 They typically handle building-related
4 emergencies. So if a building is
5 partially collapsed or collapses, we
6 cover that.

7 What you're suggesting is sort
8 of a step back from that whereas they're
9 still going to be responsive, but they're
10 looking at things like work without
11 permits. So it's a pretty broad group of
12 inspectors. We're going to need code
13 enforcement and construction inspectors.

14 I really think what we need is
15 probably have a discussion around what
16 does that look like in terms of our
17 unionized workforce about changing their
18 shifts from traditional day shifts to
19 after-hour shifts. Those are
20 conversations I think that might be
21 helpful to have.

22 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: And I
23 just want to be clear, and I apologize
24 for the interruption, but I want to be
25 clear that I'm not suggesting that we

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2 change any current employees' schedules.
3 What I am suggesting is that we add
4 evening shift and also night shift as an
5 opportunity around hiring. So I just
6 want to be clear for the record there,
7 that, you know, I was not at all
8 suggesting that people's current
9 schedules should change, but that when we
10 are looking to do hiring, that we should
11 include evening shift and night shift as
12 a part of the work team that we're
13 looking for.

14 And then I heard the bell, so I
15 just quickly want to state the work
16 around the CCP program, which I think is
17 exceedingly important to giving people
18 the opportunity to either re-skill or
19 up-skill into a career with Licenses and
20 Inspections, but I also believe that we
21 should be looking at the School District
22 of Philadelphia and the career and
23 technical education programs as an
24 opportunity to be sort of a feed-in to
25 some of the entry-level jobs that you all

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2 have at Licenses and Inspections.

3 And so if we could get a list
4 of all the entry-level positions that if
5 a young person comes through a CTE style
6 program and they have certain
7 certifications -- I'm just naming a few,
8 like OSHA 10 or whatever certifications
9 necessary -- and if it fits into the job
10 specifications for some of the jobs that
11 you have in L&I, how are you all working
12 with the School District of Philadelphia
13 to make a pathway directly to those
14 opportunities so that we can help with
15 filling some of these positions that we
16 know are vacant?

17 I mean, I would imagine, and
18 you can tell me, that we know right now I
19 think it's 18 percent or one in every
20 five City jobs are vacant. What is that
21 vacancy rate for your department, and
22 what are ways that we can further deepen
23 the interface with the School District as
24 well as the CCP initiative to ensure that
25 we can get our young people who are here

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2 in the City of Philadelphia into those
3 positions?

4 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So very
5 quickly, vacancy rate is at 21 percent
6 with the Department, but that's going to
7 take a pretty substantial hit as we bring
8 in the 40. But, yeah. So we'd love to
9 be able to get to a point -- we don't --
10 right now we don't have a lot of very
11 entry-level positions. We need to hire
12 inspectors or plans examination
13 engineers. They tend to be much higher.
14 There isn't really this area where we can
15 bring in entry level, but something that
16 we've talked about, perhaps creating
17 like -- I don't want to say junior, but
18 for lack of a better term, sort of like a
19 junior inspector position where they can
20 come in and sort of work alongside folks,
21 because that's exactly what you want.

22 Folks that go through CTE
23 programs, they can have a choice. They
24 can go a couple different ways. And
25 we're trying to make it that maybe this

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2 is an opportunity to do something a
3 little bit different. Many will want to
4 go into the trades. That's awesome.
5 It's a great career. I'm a big fan of
6 the trades as a tradesperson myself, but
7 we're trying to sort of find a way to
8 convince them to maybe come into the
9 department, and in that way, maybe we can
10 keep them for several years and they can
11 move into various positions.

12 But right now we simply don't
13 have that entry level. It just doesn't
14 exist. And maybe -- you know, one thing
15 about trades, they have apprentice
16 positions. It's very common to have
17 apprenticeships and to serve one, three,
18 four years, whatever the apprenticeship
19 is. Some are longer. We don't have
20 anything like that. So that might be
21 something worth taking a look at.

22 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: I
23 heard the bell, so I'll come back on the
24 second round for L&I.

25 Thank you, Council President.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Thank you, Councilwoman.

4 The Chair recognizes Councilman
5 Thomas.

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
7 afternoon, Council President.

8 Good afternoon, colleagues.

9 A couple of questions for L&I.
10 I'm not going to be too long. The first
11 question is, last year around this time,
12 one of the things we talked about was
13 using technology. In last year's budget
14 we talked about using technology to help
15 offset some of the concerns that we had.

16 My first question is, from last
17 year this time to this year, what new
18 technology have we seen in L&I to address
19 some of the problems that some of my
20 colleagues have communicated today?

21 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So a
22 couple things. Much of this is going to
23 be built out of the existing eCLIPSE
24 system. So we have this ongoing process
25 improving where we add functionality

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2 based on the real-world experiences. We
3 have, so for example, folks that
4 continually come back, maybe it's
5 addressing issues, which makes it
6 somewhat similar to what's going on with
7 Turn the Key. We have addressing issues.
8 So the way we handle most of this is
9 through improvements in eCLIPSE. ECLIPSE
10 has a tremendous amount of capacity, but
11 it is limited by how quickly we can sort
12 of develop this either internally or with
13 our vendor.

14 So, for example, the online
15 certification process, that's a big one.
16 Actually without getting into the whole
17 specifics of it, the ability to sort of
18 collect these things online directly
19 uploading to the system is huge. We
20 never had that technology. So we're
21 building that out in very different ways.

22 I can tell you what was huge
23 was getting electric vehicles. Now, that
24 doesn't seem like technology, but it
25 absolutely is, because the ability to

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2 sort of know where our folks are at and
3 what their capacity is and how they were
4 out there days and how they spend time on
5 various inspections, that's really
6 helpful in forming how we staff different
7 units. You know, before, it was very
8 much driven by numbers, permit numbers,
9 inspections numbers, complaint numbers.
10 All good information, but this is much
11 more relevant and useful because it
12 actually allows us to collect almost
13 realtime data to see like, okay, we need
14 to increase some staffing in this
15 particular area or to do this particular
16 thing, or maybe there's a thing that
17 we're spending too much time on and we
18 can then shift that over.

19 The other thing I would also
20 say is, one of the things that we did,
21 there's been some -- our mobile app, for
22 example, that's one of the things where
23 we put a lot of effort in to get realtime
24 results. So as soon as inspectors hit a
25 property and upload the results, we see

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2 them right then and there. Now, the next
3 phase to that is to get that posted to
4 the City's Atlas.

5 We've got a bunch of different
6 things. And the reason that's important
7 is because very often we hear from
8 people, people who live in their
9 apartment buildings, they don't know
10 what's going on. Is their building
11 certified? Was an inspection done? Did
12 we respond to a complaint? Getting that
13 information uploaded in realtime actually
14 allows them to see what we're actually
15 doing, so they can tell if we did our job
16 or if we didn't.

17 So all of that, like all of
18 that is part of the -- I don't want to
19 give the impression that that's done.
20 That's on an ongoing basis as we move
21 through and take advantage of all the
22 various technological advancements that
23 eCLIPSE absolutely offers.

24 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I think
25 that -- I mean, I'm not -- first of all,

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2 I commend you on that. I think that
3 those are some good first steps, but I
4 think -- I just remember our conversation
5 last year and it didn't really talk about
6 that type of technology. We spent more
7 time talking about cameras and drones and
8 things that would address some of the
9 economic problems that we're facing as it
10 relates to issues that we're seeing,
11 safety problems, things like that.

12 So I just want to keep pushing
13 that. I thought that we would see some
14 progress from last year to this year as
15 it relates to cameras and drones and new
16 technology and things to that capacity,
17 but I see that that's not happening yet.

18 Let me -- I have a couple other
19 questions. I don't know if I'll get to
20 all of them, but if I don't, I'll put
21 them in writing.

22 When projects that are applying
23 for RCAP dollars, whether it's city,
24 state, or federal funding that they are
25 looking for, there should be something

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2 that L&I is required to do as it relates
3 to what stipulations people should have
4 in order to get these dollars. And,
5 again, I'll put some of this stuff in
6 writing as well, but I'm looking at
7 issues related to a resolution that I
8 introduced already that we're going to
9 want to do a deeper dive with the
10 Department, and we're looking at the
11 economic impact.

12 You know, for us as
13 Councilmembers, in the next couple years,
14 we're anticipating running out of federal
15 dollars to help with the general
16 operating fund and what does it look like
17 to generate more revenue for the City
18 without increasing taxes for people or
19 for businesses, and I think tightening up
20 some of the issues that we have with L&I
21 can put us in a position to generate some
22 revenue.

23 So I'm wondering, looking at
24 dollars that we give organizations,
25 looking at some of the issues that we

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2 have with the underground economy, of
3 course we want to do a deeper dive into
4 the -- when we have the hearing, but I'm
5 wondering from your estimation, how much
6 money do you think we're losing annually
7 because we're not properly inspecting
8 buildings and spaces that often put us in
9 a position where people aren't paying the
10 proper taxes as it relates to these
11 projects?

12 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Well,
13 if I understand your question correctly,
14 this is sort of about worker
15 misclassification, those sorts of things.
16 You know, when it comes to pure revenue,
17 right now we've seen -- certainly permit
18 numbers are dropping, right? It's no
19 secret that this sort of industry is
20 slowing down. Part of this is because we
21 had that very huge sort of influx at the
22 end of the tax abatement and part of this
23 is just the economy.

24 So definitely we've seen a
25 slowdown of permits, but because we had

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2 done a fee increase just around the same
3 time -- we haven't done a fee increase in
4 several years. We'd done one in January
5 that went live. That's actually sort of
6 making up the loss in terms of dollars.
7 So there wasn't as much of a dollar loss
8 even though permits went down.

9 Now, property searches are
10 going down too, but that's a different
11 concern, and that may be an indicator of
12 more about actually what the economy is
13 doing.

14 When it comes to the
15 underground economy and sort of worker
16 misclassification, it's really very
17 difficult to estimate that. We don't
18 know because we don't know what the tax
19 collection on that looks like. It's
20 probably something worth having a
21 conversation with some of our partners in
22 the agency, Revenue and Law, because we
23 really don't know -- and I should also
24 have included the various part of the
25 labor. Because we really don't know the

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2 full impact, but I've heard numbers that,
3 you know, go from very little to, you
4 know, hundred million dollars. I just
5 don't have experience to be able to say
6 how accurate any of that is.

7 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay.
8 Well, we're going to do a deeper dive
9 into that. I think that it's important
10 that we at least be able to come up with
11 a soft estimate, and I'm looking forward
12 to working with you and your team as it
13 relates to the resolution that I
14 introduced so we can try to put some
15 actual numbers to some of these things,
16 because, again, in the next couple years,
17 you know, we're going to face some huge
18 deficits, so as government, we want to
19 make sure -- we're going to have to make
20 sure our belts are pretty tight and we're
21 doing our best to provide quality
22 services as it relates to our taxpayers
23 in the City of Philadelphia and making
24 sure that we're generating revenue
25 without increasing taxes, and I think

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2 this is a way and this is a means that we
3 can look at.

4 I heard the buzzer. Thank you,
5 Council President. Thank you,
6 colleagues, and thank you, Commissioner,
7 to you and your team for all you do. We
8 appreciate you, and looking forward to
9 continuing to work with you.

10 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Thanks.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

12 Thank you, Councilman.

13 The Chair recognizes
14 Councilwoman Gauthier.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
16 you, Council President.

17 Hi, Commissioner.

18 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Good
19 afternoon, Councilmember.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Just a
21 few months ago on 47th and Chester, I
22 know you're aware we had a resident die
23 as a result of an undetected carbon
24 monoxide leak, and the rest of the
25 building's residents were displaced while

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2 the issue was remediated. And I know
3 that we've had other tragedies in
4 Fairmount and in Kensington and in
5 largely Black and brown neighborhoods
6 across the City.

7 I know that you and your team
8 are working very hard. You've been very
9 responsive to my office, and I'm very
10 appreciative of you. Still, I can't help
11 but to feel that it's becoming
12 increasingly important for our city to
13 move towards proactively inspecting
14 properties for habitability concerns
15 before these type of crises happen.

16 Is it true right now that L&I
17 only inspects 8 percent of our rental
18 units annually?

19 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So the
20 number that comes from that -- I believe
21 that comes from a Pew study. I don't
22 know how true it is. I can tell you that
23 as a program, we don't inspect rentals
24 unless they are in a high-rise or there's
25 some other defect, like we get a

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2 complaint or they fail to upload like an
3 RM certification or they fail an alarm
4 certification.

5 So we don't have a program for
6 sort of doing this on a regular basis,
7 proactive sort of residential or rental
8 inspections.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Right.
10 And, I mean, I would imagine that most of
11 the City's rental properties are going to
12 be in much smaller, you know,
13 developments than a high-rise. So that
14 would mean if we're not doing proactive
15 inspections, that by and large the
16 majority of our housing units aren't
17 getting -- the majority of our rental
18 units aren't getting proactively
19 inspected. Would that be true?

20 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Yes.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.
22 So I wanted you to describe, in terms of
23 budget and staffing resources, what do
24 you think that it would take to enact
25 annual inspections for all of the rental

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2 properties in Philadelphia?

3 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So it
4 sort of depends on what we're talking
5 about. There's a very wide scheme across
6 the country of inspections, started at
7 one end where owners have to bring in a
8 private company, a third-party inspection
9 agency, complete a form and upload it to
10 the Department and then the Department
11 audits. That's on one end. And on the
12 other end, having Department inspectors
13 actually go out.

14 I can tell you we looked at
15 this some years ago and it was somewhere
16 along the lines of 60 additional
17 inspectors and several million dollars,
18 only because it's not just the
19 inspection. Doing one inspection is one
20 thing. It's all the downstream stuff of
21 having to go back and do reinspections,
22 having to take places to court and all
23 that other stuff.

24 So there is a really wide sort
25 of arrangement of inspection schemes that

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2 might work. It just really depends on
3 what we're comfortable as at least
4 starting with or at least entertaining
5 initially, whether that means we do
6 something more going on. It depends on
7 the success of the individual inspection
8 program, but it's pretty wide.

9 The earlier one that I suspect,
10 just if I may just a word about the very
11 low end of that.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Sure
13 thing.

14 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: That
15 would take very little in terms of
16 investment. You know, the system is, as
17 I mentioned, designed. We need to do
18 some work around making sure the
19 properties have the rental licenses, and
20 we're actually doing that program now,
21 but that work would be wholly on the
22 operating -- on the owner of the
23 property. So they would be absorbing the
24 majority of the cost, having an inspector
25 come out, complete the form and upload it

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2 to the Department. So on that end, it's
3 mostly on the development -- on the
4 homeowner side, landlord side. On the
5 other end, it's wholly on us.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: What
7 level of inspection were you -- what
8 level of program were you looking at a
9 few years ago and why did we decide not
10 to do that?

11 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: The one
12 we were looking at a few years ago was
13 actually conducting rental inspections
14 using City resources, using City
15 inspectors. I don't remember what
16 precipitated it. It might have been a
17 Pew study. But in fairness, this has
18 been a conversation that's gone on for
19 many years.

20 I think the problem is at that
21 time we only really had the option of
22 doing it with City resources. Now, as I
23 mentioned, with eCLIPSE and the
24 functionality available, we could
25 theoretically have a third party do it,

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2 upload that, and then would be audited by
3 our inspectors, whether that's in an
4 office or actually in the field, to make
5 sure they're actually doing the
6 inspections.

7 That wasn't available some
8 years ago. This is fairly new to us.
9 And in fact, we looked at Baltimore as a
10 similar sort of -- not that -- it's much
11 smaller. It's a much smaller city, but
12 they have a similar sort of third-party
13 inspection program that's been in place
14 for some years, and we looked at that as
15 an option.

16 Again, we could theoretically
17 do that. There's some work behind it, of
18 course, getting landlords on board and
19 making them aware of that and figuring
20 out the program. But that wasn't even a
21 consideration a few years ago when we did
22 the initial estimate.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I mean,
24 I just think with some of the things that
25 we've been seeing lately, we do have to

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2 as a city take on some level of
3 proactively ensuring that people's
4 housing units are safe.

5 Would you be able to outline
6 for City Council the different levels of
7 intensity at which we could have, you
8 know, a program and what that would cost?
9 And you can -- as a follow-up, would you
10 be able to do that?

11 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Yeah.
12 We can certainly go and start it from the
13 least to the most, yeah. We can outline
14 it.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.
16 During last week's hearing, you explained
17 that some habitability issues may just
18 affect one unit or property, but there
19 are situations where an owner has
20 systemic issues across several
21 properties. How does L&I determine when
22 all of the properties owned or operated
23 by a particular party should be inspected
24 due to the potential for issues that
25 we're seeing in one?

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2 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So one
3 of the ways -- obviously we will look at
4 a particular unit, but we'll certainly do
5 an assessment of the entire building. If
6 you're seeing problems with the entire
7 building, usually that means we'll look
8 at other buildings that that property
9 owner may or may not have, right?

10 Now, a good couple ways you can
11 do this. You can look -- we can query
12 our system for complaints. If we get a
13 lot of complaints across their buildings
14 that they own, then there's something to
15 that. Very often that may not be the
16 sole indicator.

17 But it's really driven by how
18 bad the particular property is and the
19 response. So if the landlord is
20 non-responsive, the property is in bad
21 shape, that's almost a certain indicator
22 that we need to look at their other
23 properties, and that will drive the
24 inspections into that, because, you know,
25 chances are that's not a coincidence.

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2 That's more the business practice rather
3 than, you know -- like if a tenant
4 destroyed an apartment, you can pretty
5 much tell what that looks like, because
6 the rest of the building won't be that
7 way.

8 So it's a couple different ways
9 that we'll do this. And there is --
10 quite frankly, there's also the other one
11 where inspectors have been working in
12 particular neighborhoods for a long time.
13 They know landlords. They know, I
14 recognize this, I've been here before.
15 Very often our partners in the Law
16 Department say, we've had this person in
17 court before, we've had this entity in
18 court before.

19 So there are a lot of different
20 ways they can come up to that. Sometimes
21 it's based on the condition of the
22 building. Sometimes it's based on what
23 we know about their past practices.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
25 you so much and, again, thank you for the

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2 work that you do. My team really
3 appreciates you.

4 I may come back with additional
5 questions on the second round. Thanks.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
7 Thank you. Thank you, Councilwoman.

8 Councilwoman Gilmore
9 Richardson, you needed to come back for
10 another round?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
13 Councilwoman?

14 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Yes,
15 CP, I would like to come back for a
16 second round.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Yes.
18 I think you're up next.

19 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Okay.
20 Thank you.

21 So I just wanted to follow up
22 and ask one additional question. I heard
23 my colleague Councilmember Thomas bring
24 it up relative to the misclassification
25 of workers and the underground economy,

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2 and what I wanted to ask was, has there
3 ever been a comprehensive study done by
4 the City of Philadelphia to really study
5 this issue?

6 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Well, I
7 don't know that -- I mean, certainly
8 we've not done one necessarily that looks
9 at it. I can't speak for some of the
10 other City agencies.

11 I've seen sort of
12 independent -- I don't know how
13 independent the studies are from third
14 parties. I'm not aware of one the City
15 specifically looks at this, although I
16 have seen lots of sort of allegations
17 that the money being missed here is
18 significant. But I don't know that there
19 has been an actual study that has been
20 advanced by one of the City agencies.
21 I'm just not familiar with it.

22 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Okay.
23 I just wanted to put that on the record,
24 one, and, two, say that I think we should
25 have a comprehensive study on how that

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2 impacts our revenue from the perspective
3 of the City of Philadelphia and
4 particularly recognizing that not every
5 year will be like the upcoming years.

6 And then one other thing I
7 wanted to mention is around climate
8 change, and I submitted some questions
9 previously. And you all in your
10 department, do you host the City's
11 floodplain manager, the person that
12 oversees sort of building inspections as
13 well, the floodplain manager?

14 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So the
15 City definitely does. The Department has
16 some level of that, although the real
17 expertise is really done outside of L&I's
18 assisting ability. They tend to do that.
19 Our responsibility is from the permitting
20 perspective. That's most often where we
21 see interaction with the flood maps, the
22 firms and things like that.

23 Now, there was a time when the
24 floodplain manager was in the Department,
25 but -- and there was good reason for that

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2 at the time, because we were sort of
3 getting our plans examination engineers
4 familiar with the various FEMA
5 requirements. We've gotten to the point
6 where I think they're pretty comfortable
7 with that, so that position has been
8 shifted over.

9 A lot of what we do, a lot of
10 what you see there, we interact with that
11 in two ways. One, the permitting and
12 plan review process and then
13 unfortunately after some incident happens
14 and, you know, properties are damaged,
15 like you might remember happened on River
16 Road a couple years back now.

17 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: So I
18 bring it up because I'm thinking about
19 the flooding that has happened in those
20 sort of adjacent communities. You know,
21 we have a ton of apartment buildings in
22 some of those areas, and I think there
23 was some work or study done to state that
24 I guess the flood maps were sort of
25 outdated, not from the City but from our

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2 federal partners.

3 And so I just wanted to
4 understand who is currently serving in
5 the floodplain manager role and sort of
6 where that is situated in your department
7 and/or how they interface with you all,
8 and if you have any members of your
9 senior staff that have any background,
10 expertise, or experience in energy
11 efficiency, in net zero building and
12 construction, in sort of floodplain
13 management, climate resiliency, climate
14 adaptation, climate mitigation and/or
15 environmental justice, but also how L&I
16 defines environmental justice
17 communities.

18 And I ask because since I've
19 been serving on the Local Government
20 Advisory Committee for the EPA, this is
21 something that has come up multiple times
22 around how cities define environmental
23 justice communities relative to how we're
24 able to get additional resources into the
25 City of Philadelphia and particularly for

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2 the work that not only your department
3 would do but maybe, you know, like the
4 Office of Sustainability and others.

5 So I wanted to get that on the
6 record to say how are we thinking about
7 all of that and how does it impact how
8 you all give out permits and who is sort
9 of overseeing that work and then who on
10 your senior staff has background in that
11 area.

12 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Sure.
13 So very quickly, Elizabeth Baldwin is the
14 Department's Chief Code Official.

15 So, Elizabeth, can you hop on
16 and just very quickly speak to our
17 response with respect to floodplain and
18 flood task force.

19 MS. BALDWIN: Sure. So we
20 actually enforce the City's existing
21 floodplain ordinance. So we review for
22 compliance with the floodplain
23 regulations when it comes to permitting,
24 building permits, zoning, and as the
25 Commissioner mentioned, we assess for

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2 substantial damage.

3 Now, when it comes to changes
4 to the code, we actually have a citywide
5 floodplain task force, and we shifted
6 that policy position to Office of
7 Sustainability because it was creating
8 somewhat of a conflict within L&I. You
9 know, after time, after we all became
10 familiar and current with FEMA
11 regulations and how they are incorporated
12 into our Philadelphia building code and
13 how we enforce, the idea of L&I being the
14 policy-maker in addition did present
15 somewhat of a conflict.

16 But there is a flood task force
17 that meets on a regular basis. So if
18 there's any specific suggestions or
19 ideas, then I think we could have a
20 conversation offline and also bring it to
21 the task force.

22 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Oh,
23 okay. That will be exceedingly helpful.
24 So I will follow up with you all and also
25 submit the remainder of my questions for

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2 Licenses and Inspections regarding that
3 matter, because I know that with the
4 increase in development across the City,
5 that is something that we have to be
6 cognizant of. And so we'll be sure to
7 follow up with the task force and then
8 submit any additional questions that we
9 have for your department's written
10 response.

11 Thank you very much, Council
12 President, and thank you again,
13 Commissioner DiPietro, and to your team,
14 and I look forward to continued work that
15 we have to do in this process, not only
16 around adequate staffing in Class 100,
17 looking at the misclassification of
18 workers and the underground economy but
19 also how you all are looking at
20 environmental justice and climate
21 adaptation in your work.

22 Thank you very much.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

24 Thank you, Councilwoman.

25 The Chair recognizes Councilman

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2 Squilla.

3 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
4 Council President.

5 And thank you, Ralph. I
6 appreciate all your help and efforts.
7 Obviously we contact L&I very frequently,
8 and your staff has been amazing, and I
9 know you guys have challenges with
10 inspectors. I'm glad to hear we're
11 getting a whole bunch of new ones on and
12 we're going to hopefully partner with
13 others to even get more.

14 Enforcement is the key to
15 having people follow the laws, and they
16 know if we don't enforce it, they're
17 going to continue doing what they do.

18 We've partnered with you on the
19 adjoining neighbor legislation, and this
20 just started in January, so, you know, we
21 may need to tweak it as we move forward.
22 But seeing that and then seeing some of
23 the challenges we're having, do you
24 foresee L&I be able to have like a
25 customer service-friendly person who

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2 deals with these issues and can work with
3 residents who call and have them be able
4 to really deal with the issues one on
5 one? Because the challenges we have,
6 people come to us and they're at their
7 wit's end by the time they get to us,
8 right, and then we reach out to you guys.

9 Is that something that may be
10 considered by L&I? I know you used to
11 have a communications person, but just
12 somebody like in customer service that
13 could really walk people through the
14 challenges and, you know, even
15 sometimes -- eCLIPSE I know is new and
16 there's challenges with that. Is that
17 something that we could do?

18 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO:
19 Certainly. I mean, there's a couple
20 different ways we try to do this. We
21 mentioned earlier that we have sort of
22 the chat and the sort of functionality.
23 It really depends on what the person --
24 where they're coming from. So typically
25 if this is relative to a permit

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2 application, obviously we want them to
3 talk to their plans examiner to set up
4 virtual appointments to do that sort of
5 stuff.

6 If this is coming from like an
7 industry perspective, it's super helpful,
8 we found, to do the trainings. There's a
9 ton of trainings that we provide on our
10 website that are there all the time. We
11 have -- so we offer that there, but if
12 there's also something that we can do
13 more tailored, there's that.

14 And what we've done new just
15 the past several months is we have -- so
16 you all know Lisa Adams. Lisa Adams
17 handles the very many Council inquiries
18 that come in, and we wanted to make sure
19 there was somebody in there that could
20 actually coordinate that to make sure
21 we're getting responses, and if there's
22 something we're seeing consistently, make
23 recommendations for changes.

24 In addition to that, we have
25 someone that does our -- provide a form

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2 for neighbors where they can put in that
3 information so that we can collect it.
4 It's separately from, hey, I'm the
5 applicant and I don't know what the
6 requirement is around this. That's
7 something that you have to do with your
8 plans examiner, right?

9 So it all depends on how
10 they're coming into the Department and
11 what their specific need. There's that
12 industry training. We're happy to do
13 that, happy to expand that. There's the
14 permit applicant, the individual license
15 applicant. The first step of course is
16 virtual, but as I mentioned earlier, if
17 they're having real problems, they come
18 downstairs and create an in-person
19 appointment so they could speak to an
20 inspector or supervisor.

21 So if there's some third thing
22 that you're interested in, absolutely,
23 we're happy to hear it and discuss it.

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And I
25 think the third thing is -- and Lisa

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2 Adams is great, by the way. She is
3 amazing response-wise and so helpful.
4 But I'm talking about the general public.
5 You know, they just want to talk to
6 somebody on what they can and can't do,
7 what's a violation, what's not a
8 violation. I know you have to go out
9 there and inspect, and three on one is a
10 basic part of that, but there's more to
11 it than just putting a complaint in and
12 then seeing it close and not realizing
13 what happened and that type of thing.

14 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Yeah.
15 What we basically want to do is sort of
16 be the gateway, but there does seem to be
17 a need for that next step, which is to go
18 to 311, they sort of exhaust their
19 knowledge base, now where does it go.
20 And, again, we already know what to do if
21 it's a complaint and we know what happens
22 there, if, as I mentioned, you're a
23 permit applicant, what happens there.

24 So I think if maybe we build
25 some additional capacity in Lisa's unit

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2 to sort of take on that. If it's going
3 through 311 and they can't get an answer
4 or if it's just -- because what happens
5 is, very often what they're asking for
6 the Department to do is sort of be like
7 an advisor, something that they might get
8 from an engineer or an architect, an
9 attorney, and that's really -- that gets
10 to --

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yeah.

12 Ralph, I'm not talking about the permit
13 side and development side. I'm talking
14 about a neighbor concern, like, you know,
15 somebody who called and, hey, L&I went
16 out there, but you know what, you got to
17 wait 20 days for an inspection or you got
18 to -- after inspection, they got to go
19 back out another 30 days. You know, they
20 go through this, understanding -- and I
21 know you have certain things listed, but
22 it's just nice to talk to somebody
23 sometimes to get that answer.

24 Our office tries to do that the
25 best we can, and we work with your staff,

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2 and your staff has been great giving us
3 answers, but I'm just looking at the
4 engagement with the public. And maybe
5 that's not something you guys want to do.
6 I'm not sure. But it would just be very
7 helpful to us as our constituent services
8 to be able to say, hey, all right, call
9 this number, they'll be able to guide you
10 through. If you can't get an answer from
11 there, then, hey, maybe we could then
12 help you along further, you know. That's
13 what I'm looking at, and hopefully we can
14 work together on something like that.

15 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Happy
16 to do it. Absolutely.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right.
18 Thank you so much. I appreciate that.

19 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: You're
20 welcome, sir.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
22 Member Squilla.

23 I think this is the last round
24 of questioning for the L&I Commissioner.
25 Seeing none, thank you for your

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2 testimony.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Wait,
4 wait, wait.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Jamie has
6 a question.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm sorry,
8 Member Gauthier.

9 The Chair recognizes Member
10 Gauthier.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
12 you, Mr. Chair.

13 I wanted to follow up on this
14 line of questioning around enforcement,
15 around fines specifically, but I wanted
16 to start by also commending Lisa Adams.
17 She's really great to work with and very
18 responsive to our office.

19 But one thing that we have
20 noticed is that regarding the payment of
21 fines, we'll see folks get fined again
22 and again and again and essentially just
23 ignore the fines, right? And meanwhile
24 the residents have to live with whatever
25 condition is going on in the

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2 neighborhood, and I think there's a
3 perception that we do not have the
4 ability to enforce, so negligent
5 businesses and property owners can just
6 ignore it, right?

7 And so what do you think we can
8 do to better enforce the payment of fines
9 so that we don't have to get to the point
10 where we're pushing things forward for
11 prosecution and really at this point not
12 even having the capacity to prosecute all
13 of these cases?

14 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So with
15 respect to fines, what we're doing --
16 this started on the trade license end.
17 So we have a policy where if you're a
18 contractor and you've gotten -- that's an
19 area where we can actually directly fine.
20 The Department issues the fine.

21 If you're a contractor and
22 you've gotten three fines, for example,
23 then we begin the license revocation
24 process, as I said. Now, of course,
25 there's appeals, there's all kinds of

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2 things, but just broadly.

3 If you've been fined
4 repeatedly, especially if it's the same
5 thing, now that's an indicator of a
6 business practice, not a mistake or, you
7 know, something that was just, you know,
8 a misunderstanding. So we begin the
9 revocation or the suspension process.

10 Now, we also have separately,
11 we have a separate collections -- the
12 City has a collections sort of -- for
13 lack of a better word, it's a process.
14 Like after we've gotten somebody who has
15 been fined a bunch of times, they haven't
16 appealed, their fines have been absolute,
17 they're referred over to the collections
18 agency, who will pursue them individually
19 or however it needs to be in order to
20 collect.

21 Now, so the first step here in
22 going forward is to expand that to all
23 license holders, whether that's a rental
24 license or like a food license, whatever,
25 so -- to expand that same program. We

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2 know it works. We know how it's set up.
3 We know what the challenges are. We know
4 what our collection agencies can handle.
5 So that's one thing.

6 The other one that gets more
7 difficult and the one you might be seeing
8 more regularly is when there's fines
9 associated with violations to a property.
10 The problem --

11 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes.
12 We are seeing this issue mostly with
13 property violations. We may be fining
14 and fining and fining, and then the
15 person -- the owner, whether it's an LLC
16 or a property owner who lives outside the
17 City but owns property here, they're just
18 ignoring us, and meanwhile the people who
19 live on a particular block, they have to
20 deal with whatever condition that
21 property is in.

22 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Yeah.
23 So where we go after the license holder,
24 I think that's a helpful way to do it,
25 and I think the courts are more

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2 understanding of that, because they can
3 see it too just like we did. This is
4 your business model. This isn't an
5 accident.

6 The problem we have with like
7 properties, actual physical properties,
8 is it really looks bad for us to issue
9 fines and get paid and the property is
10 still a mess. And so what we don't have
11 is that other disposition, because,
12 remember, L&I only seals it or demolishes
13 it.

14 In the past, we might make
15 referrals to like a sheriff sale or
16 something like that. So I don't know if
17 that's a viable option, but I think at
18 least for the next step is to start to
19 concentrate on the license holders,
20 because by the fact that they're a
21 license holder, they're expected to have
22 a higher level of responsibility.
23 They're not just the average person. A
24 license holder is expected to be aware of
25 the rules around a condition of that

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2 license.

3 So I think that's our next
4 phase, to build that out. We still got
5 to do some work. This is done in our
6 Audits and Investigations Unit. As I
7 mentioned earlier, they are due some
8 additional staffing to sort of help carry
9 out these kinds of things.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.
11 I have two more questions that I want to
12 get out and then let you answer them
13 before my time runs out.

14 So, one, our city's Law
15 Department plays a crucial role in
16 prosecuting short dumpers and nuisance
17 business operations and other code
18 violators whose actions negatively impact
19 the health and well-being of their
20 neighbors.

21 Knowing that around 30 percent
22 of all L&I cases end up needing to go to
23 court, how does the Administration intend
24 to strengthen the Law Department's
25 ability to prosecute these bad actors?

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2 And then my second question is
3 around nuisance establishments. The Five
4 Year Plan references the creation of a
5 list of nuisance establishments citywide,
6 which would be very helpful in keeping
7 track of repeat code violators.

8 Can you describe which nuisance
9 practices will land a business on this
10 list and whether this list is already --
11 whether this already exists?

12 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Sure.
13 So --

14 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Those
15 two questions.

16 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Sure.
17 So quickly with respect to the Law
18 Department, certainly I can't imagine
19 they would say no to additional
20 personnel. I don't know that that's
21 additional terms in the Code Enforcement
22 and Public Nuisance Unit.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: They
24 said no to additional personnel last
25 year. This is coming around for the

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 second budget cycle, getting the Law
3 Department more capacity to do this.

4 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: So, I
5 mean, I can't speak for them, of course.
6 I don't know what exactly it looks like,
7 but for our purposes, I mean, that's one
8 of the things we talked about, resourcing
9 Police and the other agencies that we
10 deal with.

11 When it comes to like the
12 nuisances, there's a couple different
13 things that happen here. There's that
14 overarching nuisance committee, and while
15 they consider specific addresses, they
16 also consider sort of larger ideas about
17 what is a nuisance and what applies to
18 that.

19 I think you'll probably see
20 some changes to the nuisance ordinance
21 that -- I think I referenced this at the
22 Five Year, some changes to the nuisance
23 ordinance that allows us to go after
24 places where there's been violence, you
25 know, where both there's been violence

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2 and the violence has a nexus to the
3 property, to the actual owner. I think
4 that's -- some changes there will help.

5 The majority of the nuisance
6 bill is sort of -- it was crafted because
7 we really didn't have anything. I mean,
8 I don't want to speak for Councilmember
9 Bass, but we really didn't have anything
10 that sort of codified nuisances in a very
11 specific way.

12 So building that out I think is
13 one way to get to what's really happening
14 in a lot of places, which is, you know, a
15 lot of violence around drug dealing and,
16 you know, all the things that go on and
17 certain businesses sort of contribute to
18 the climate in the community.

19 So I think changes to the
20 nuisance ordinance is probably pretty
21 helpful. Helping us to sort of share the
22 burden with the Police Department, and
23 they're 100 percent on board with us in
24 this regard, I think will go a long way.

25 But typically when you're about

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 nuisance activity, there's a bunch of
3 different things listed, public
4 drunkenness and all these things, and the
5 code prescribes how often they have to do
6 a thing before they react or at least
7 initiate the nuisance thing.

8 We're adding some violence
9 level to that too, because we have to.
10 It has to be done. We can't allow that
11 to continue the way it's going, because
12 the stores remain open and then you have
13 additional violence.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: And can
15 you just clarify whether there will be a
16 specific list of nuisance establishments
17 and what and how we will populate that
18 list?

19 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Yeah.
20 So the way this works is nuisance -- the
21 first line of defense or the first sort
22 of initiation with nuisance properties is
23 going to the Police Department. So if
24 the captains have -- are aware of a
25 particular nuisance in their district,

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2 they'll start tracking how many times
3 they've issued violations to them. So
4 the gateway to the nuisance properties is
5 to get -- start to get cited for a
6 variety of different real nuisance
7 behavior, public drunkenness, fighting.
8 You know, there's a list of things.
9 That's the first step.

10 Once you've gotten through
11 that, it goes to -- you actually get a
12 letter from the police captain basically
13 saying, look, we're going to take more
14 aggressive action if you don't clean your
15 life up and come in here and talk to us.
16 That's how you get on the nuisance thing.
17 And then it goes from there, it can come
18 over to L&I for a revocation of license,
19 whatever licenses they hold, a cease
20 operation or maybe some code enforcement
21 as well for fine purposes.

22 Many of the nuisances do get
23 handled at the Police Department level,
24 but there are some that persist, and
25 that's usually where you have an owner

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 who just doesn't care, quite frankly, and
3 an operator that's indifferent as well.

4 So a couple different ways to
5 get into that nuisance process, but then
6 it takes off and becomes its own separate
7 enforcement role and then leads --

8 ultimately leads to either us ceasing or
9 revoking a license, depending on the
10 activity that's going on. The part that
11 was missing from that was violence.

12 Violence didn't trigger it. It was all
13 the other nuisance behaviors, which are
14 nuisances nonetheless but certainly not
15 as problematic as violence, shootings and
16 fights and such.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
18 you so much.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
20 Member, for that line of questioning. We
21 share a border on Market Street. I don't
22 have to remind you of some of those
23 businesses on both sides of our districts
24 that you can buy liquor by the drink.
25 You can buy single cigarettes. There are

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 gambling machines in some of them, and
3 people die near them or get stuck up or
4 get shot near them. That qualifies as a
5 nuisance if you ask me. So thank you for
6 those questions.

7 Is there anyone else for
8 Commissioner DiPietro?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Anyone?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Seeing none,
13 thank you so much for your testimony and
14 your endurance in the questions and
15 answers. Thank you so much.

16 COMMISSIONER DIPIETRO: You're
17 welcome, sir. Have a good afternoon.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES:
19 Mr. McDermott, who do we have next?

20 THE CLERK: Next to testify is
21 Blanche Carney, Prisons Commissioner.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
23 much.

24 Are you there, Commissioner
25 Carney?

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes, I
3 am.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.
5 Thank you. Before you get started, I
6 just want to say the other day when you,
7 Commissioner Outlaw, and the Sheriff
8 Bilal were in our Chambers, that was a
9 powerful picture, the three of you
10 standing there in uniform for Women's
11 History Month. It just spoke volumes,
12 and I hope you have a copy of it, and if
13 not, we'll make sure you get one. It was
14 powerful.

15 And with that, state your name
16 for the record and please begin your
17 testimony.

18 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank
19 you, Councilmember Jones. Name is
20 Blanche Carney, Commissioner of the
21 Philadelphia Department of Prisons.

22 Good afternoon, Council
23 President and members of City Council. I
24 am Blanche Carney. Joining me today is
25 Deputy Commissioner Xavier Beaufort, and

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 I'm pleased to provide testimony on the
3 Department of Prisons' Fiscal Year 2024
4 Operating Budget.

5 The Department of Prison
6 continues to support the Administration's
7 goals of criminal justice reform and
8 reinvestment in the community by working
9 in partnership with the Office of Reentry
10 Partnerships to foster pre-release
11 engagement and post-release services to
12 support successful reentry. The Office
13 of Reentry Partnerships serves as the
14 City's lead agency to work with private
15 and public service providers and City
16 departments to serve people released from
17 custody.

18 PDP continued its partnership
19 over past 24 months connecting
20 soon-to-be-released individuals with the
21 Office of Reentry Partnerships for
22 post-release services and one-time
23 payment to assist with transitioning
24 during the pandemic.

25 PDP continues to provide

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 services and programming to individuals
3 with substance use, mental health and
4 behavioral health disorders and literacy
5 needs. PDP's delivery of such services
6 and programming provides treatment for
7 medically vulnerable and underserved
8 individuals during incarceration in
9 preparation of their release to their
10 community for post-release care and
11 continuation in literacy programs.

12 PDP is a 24-hour-a-day carceral
13 operation which requires continuous
14 staffing and routine, emergent upgrades
15 to modernize its infrastructure to its
16 facilities and equipment. PDP continues
17 to address staffing challenges in
18 collaboration with the City's central
19 Office of Human Resources to attract
20 candidates to fill vacancies that have
21 been severely impacted by attrition
22 during the height of the COVID-19
23 pandemic, which mirrors nationwide trends
24 in corrections and competitive labor
25 market. PDP will continue its aggressive

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 hiring efforts to fill vacancies and to
3 increase retention.

4 PDP's spending largely stems
5 from the policies, professional
6 standards, and operational priorities
7 established by its contracted medical,
8 behavioral health, food, maintenance
9 contracts, and associated staffing costs
10 for collective bargaining agreements.
11 PDP's budget supports required services
12 for the incarcerated population and
13 aligns with its operational goals of
14 providing food, medical care, and
15 ensuring the maintenance of its
16 facilities while presuming the resumption
17 of full operations.

18 Our plan for Fiscal Year 2024
19 and beyond are broad-based, consider most
20 areas throughout the Prison Department,
21 and support our primary goals, which
22 include:

23 Housing on average of 4,500 to
24 5,000 incarcerated persons throughout
25 Fiscal Year '24 ensuring meals,

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 educational programming, and medical
3 services are completed as prescribed;

4 To continue to provide our
5 medication opioid use disorder treatment
6 program to all opioid-addicted
7 incarcerated individuals;

8 To continue our MOUD patient
9 care to community MOUD providers upon
10 release;

11 Continue making post-release
12 appointments for chronically ill
13 sentenced individuals with community
14 providers;

15 Utilization of our Class 100 to
16 fill vacancies and reduce overtime costs;

17 Continue strategic phased
18 reopening toward resumption of full
19 operations by increased in-person
20 civilian visits and the resumption of
21 programs;

22 And to continue to provide our
23 correctional staff with professional
24 development and continuing education
25 opportunities. This will allow us to

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 maintain the highest level of
3 professionalism among our correctional
4 staff, supporting current theories and
5 practices while interacting with
6 incarcerated individuals and their
7 personal safety.

8 And with that, I am happy to
9 answer questions, Councilmember Jones.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
11 much, Commissioner, and we have spent
12 quality time working on issues related to
13 our prisons up on State Road and so,
14 therefore, I have a pretty good
15 understanding as Chair of Public Safety
16 some of the things you've had to address,
17 going as far back as the actual pandemic
18 and what challenges both for staff and
19 for those people incarcerated in your
20 facilities and how you managed through
21 that, and I'm thankful that we were able
22 to get through that.

23 I also note that you had
24 challenges as it relates to, like now the
25 rest of the City is undergoing, with

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 hiring and retention. So I want to start
3 with that.

4 How are we doing with hiring
5 and retention and the number of vacancies
6 you once had? Can you speak to that?

7 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes. So
8 we continue to work with the central
9 Office of Human Resources to fill
10 positions, and we are in the process --
11 normally we would have four announcements
12 throughout the year. We've increased by
13 two more, so that will give us six job
14 announcements throughout the course of
15 the year, and they will be open longer.
16 Historically they were open for about two
17 weeks. They'll be open for about four
18 weeks now, so that will give us a greater
19 opportunity to get respondents.

20 We've taken a number of
21 approaches to attract people to
22 corrections. We did a one-time digital
23 billboard advertisement, which gave us
24 ten digital billboards, five in the City,
25 five in the surrounding counties.

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 We did the public safety job
3 announcements at the MSB. We're in
4 person engaging prospective applicants.
5 And this is all in our efforts to fill
6 these vacancies, but I'm happy and
7 pleased to announce that we just received
8 the Local 159 arbitration award
9 March 31st, and that came with
10 significant incentives to attract people.
11 So we were doing a 12-hour pilot schedule
12 here at CFCF, which is the largest
13 facility, and the other facilities
14 remained on the three distinct eight-hour
15 shift.

16 The 12-hour pilot schedule
17 proved to be very beneficial in staffing
18 the largest facility with the population
19 that we have, and it supported our
20 continuation to really press upon a
21 work-life balance.

22 Corrections is changing. The
23 workforce that was once interested in
24 corrections, people have just so many
25 opportunities in the broad labor market,

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 but with the 12-hour schedule and still
3 maintaining the eight hours, that gave us
4 the ability to now offer a hybrid
5 schedule. Not only are we able to expand
6 the 12-hour schedule to all of our
7 facilities, but it came with incentives
8 in labor-negotiated wage increases,
9 salary adjustments, retention and hiring
10 bonuses.

11 So I anticipate with the
12 additional job announcements, the wage
13 increases, we're going to attract more
14 individuals for corrections.

15 So just to give you an example,
16 for Step 1, individuals that decide that
17 they want to work the eight-hour schedule
18 will start at 44,165. Individuals that
19 want to work the 12-hour schedule will
20 start at \$57,370. That's a significant
21 increase, and that's to attract folks
22 back to corrections for us to fill these
23 vacancies. So all of those factors are
24 working together.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: How many

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 vacancies do you have at this present
3 time, Commissioner?

4 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: We have
5 820 vacancies, uniform vacancies. Our
6 attrition rate has decreased. We were
7 averaging between eight to ten per pay
8 period. We're down to four.

9 We are also seeing
10 reinstatement requests for those
11 individuals that are responding and
12 reaching back to us in the year. Based
13 on the civil service regulations, we're
14 able to onboard them and bring them back.

15 So we're getting some
16 reinstatement requests, and we also
17 reached out to our retirees for part-time
18 employment at one point, and we had four
19 individuals that took us up on that
20 offer. That offer is still open.

21 So we're using all of the
22 avenues that we can to fill those
23 vacancies, but I really believe with that
24 significant wage increase, we're going to
25 see and attract folks back.

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2 Also, when I talk about the
3 work-life balance, we implemented with
4 that 12-hour schedule what we call a two,
5 two, two. So individuals work two days
6 on, two days off, three days on over a
7 weekend. The very next weekend they get
8 a three-day weekend, which is huge with a
9 work-life balance. So we're trying to
10 incorporate not just the financial
11 incentives but staff wellness and
12 work-life balance.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: That's good
14 news, and I'm optimistic that we will
15 attempt to be competitive and compete
16 with other job types in other counties.

17 Let me shift a little bit to
18 something that we were challenged with.
19 How are we -- and then I'm going to turn
20 it over to my colleagues. But how are we
21 doing on some of the physical plant
22 repairs? I remember us trying in a
23 desperate way to deal with supply chain
24 issues as it relates to the locks. What
25 is the status of the locks on the cells

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 in our facilities?

3 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So RCF
4 has 100 percent completion of the cell
5 locks. Philadelphia Industrial
6 Correctional Facility has 90 percent of
7 the completion of the locks. We had 10
8 percent that required significant
9 framework before you could install the
10 new locks. So those are the outstanding
11 10 percent at PICC. And I'm pleased to
12 announce we were proactive. CFCF was not
13 part of the initial lock replacement, but
14 we took opportunity. That work started
15 in January of 2023 and they've completed
16 10 percent of the locks here at CFCF, and
17 we'll continue until we complete the
18 entire facility, which is projected to be
19 completed by August of 2023.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. One
21 last question and I'm going to turn it
22 over.

23 Mr. McDermott, you'll let me
24 know who is teed up first.

25 But I guess what I would ask

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 is, how are we doing by way of some of
3 the issues that were related to some of
4 the coverage, particularly we took tours
5 up there and it was the brave people that
6 are under your employ. Have we been able
7 to take care of some of the kinds of --
8 when we walked up there, me, Member
9 Brooks, and Gym. Have we been able to
10 get more people to do those shifts with
11 some of the female employees, I'll just
12 put it that way, up there to make sure
13 that they are safe?

14 The pods were 60 to 1, and I'll
15 never forget, Commissioner, feeling like
16 if -- you know, I don't know if I could
17 do that. And so how are we tackling some
18 of those obvious concerns for your
19 employees?

20 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So I'd
21 just like to commend the staff that hung
22 in there with us. You know, being
23 stretched and maintaining three shifts
24 versus two shifts really stretched our
25 resources, and I just commend publicly

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 the hardworking men and women that just
3 stood with us, stood with me during the
4 pandemic, because without them, it
5 wouldn't have happened, so --

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: I applaud
7 them as well.

8 Who was first up,
9 Mr. McDermott?

10 THE CLERK: Councilman, the
11 only Councilmember currently queued up is
12 Councilman Harrity.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilman
14 Harrity, please ask your questions, sir.

15 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: It looks
16 good on you, my brother.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN HARRITY:
19 Commissioner, first, I'd like to say, you
20 know, I have a lot of respect for the
21 things you do. Of course it's a very
22 hard job, very thankless job, so thank
23 you for your service.

24 I'd like to ask a few
25 questions. Number one is, what is the

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 number of social workers employed by the
3 Department of Prisons? What is the
4 prisoner-to-social worker ratio? And is
5 there enough help returning citizens
6 after serving their time, is there enough
7 help to serve the citizens? Also what is
8 the psychologist-to-prisoner ratio?
9 We'll start there.

10 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Okay. I
11 will defer just for the number of social
12 workers to the population. I have Deputy
13 Commissioner Terrell Bagby on with me,
14 but I can give you the overall.

15 How we normally assign a social
16 worker, Councilmember Harrity, is one
17 social worker is assigned to a housing
18 unit, and that is -- each housing -- each
19 facility is different. So it can be 1 to
20 100, it could be 1 to 64 for our smaller
21 facilities, or it can be less than that
22 if they're in a treatment program. So
23 after I finish speaking, Deputy
24 Commissioner Bagby can speak to that.

25 Also, we have one psychologist

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2 assigned to one of the larger facilities
3 and then we have three smaller units
4 where a psychologist then meets with
5 those individual satellite facilities
6 such as ASD, Center Unit, Mod 3, and the
7 Detention Center. We also have
8 contracted psychology and behavioral
9 health services as well that work
10 alongside the City folks to provide
11 services depending on the treatment
12 level.

13 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Okay.
14 That's good.

15 Since we're talking about the
16 treatment too, how does the Department
17 help fulfill court-mandated treatment
18 programs, including the anger management,
19 sex offender services, and counseling
20 without adequate staffing?

21 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So those
22 folks -- and you're touching on a point,
23 because right now our pretrial population
24 outpaces our sentenced population, we
25 give the sentenced population the

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2 priority. Right now we're at about
3 15 percent sentenced population, and I
4 would prefer that it be higher, because
5 then you can better plan, but those folks
6 because they are mandated are engaged in
7 treatment first by the City side for
8 anger management. Those folks that have
9 been charged with human trafficking or
10 sexual-related services, our City side
11 psychologist handles those cases. The
12 behavioral health treatment or clinical
13 treatment is done by the contracted side
14 by certified clinicians.

15 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Okay. And
16 it's my understanding that the
17 Philadelphia Prisons are being monitored
18 by the court-appointed monitors, which
19 issued its report November 2022, the
20 monitor's report that the Department of
21 Prisons should evaluate which PDP
22 functions currently performed by sworn
23 personnel can be performed by civilians.
24 Has the Department taken steps to shift
25 duties from COs to civilians? If so,

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2 what are they?

3 COMMISSIONER CARNEY:

4 Councilmember, we did issue a Notice of
5 Intent to discuss civilization with
6 District Council 33 Local 159. That was
7 March the 17th we issued that letter, and
8 they have 30 days to respond.

9 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: And those
11 positions are in our record room and our
12 Office of Information Technology Unit.

13 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: And I just
14 have one more. Are there opportunities
15 for internal promotion within the
16 Department? In other words, what
17 training programs are offered to help
18 current employees become qualified for
19 internal positions?

20 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So we
21 have a longstanding process, while not
22 formal, and we were trying to formalize
23 that pre-pandemic, where we would have a
24 table talk where individuals could get
25 together and meet with the rank that they

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2 wanted to promote up to, and it was
3 halted when the pandemic hit. We are
4 working to establish that and get that
5 underway. But there is ample -- I mean,
6 this is the best time in the Prisons
7 where people can promote up.
8 Historically what took people 15 to
9 20 years to make rank is much quicker now
10 because of our vacancy rate. So this is
11 the time, and people are seizing that
12 opportunity. So we just did a round of
13 promotions for sergeants, lieutenants,
14 and captains.

15 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Great.
16 And how many employees total are you
17 short?

18 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: We are
19 short 868 employees, and that's across
20 all of our uniformed and some other
21 positions.

22 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Okay. All
23 right. Is the PDP behavioral health
24 treatment programs offered to the inmates
25 in long-term segregation units contracted

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2 out? What prompted the decision to
3 contract out the essential service?

4 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So those
5 services were in place for over 20-plus
6 years. We've had contracted behavioral
7 health services for those individuals in
8 restricted housing or segregation. It's
9 been over 20 years that we've managed
10 that through contracted services, and
11 that's because there are certified
12 clinicians that are providing medication
13 in the associated groups and programming.

14 The City side has been
15 historically providing anger management
16 treatment for those folks who are in the
17 sex -- Better Minds, Better Men program,
18 which are folks that are involved in
19 sexual-related offenses, and they do not
20 administer medication. So that's the
21 distinction between contracted and City
22 side, but that's been over 20-plus years.

23 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Okay. And
24 is the problem with the staffing, does
25 that have anything to do with the

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2 advertisements distributed among the
3 other departments or anything like that?
4 How are you advertising to fill
5 vacancies?

6 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So we did
7 our spiel with the digital billboard, in
8 person with the City, Temple University.
9 We also flood our social media accounts,
10 but one of the things that we were not
11 able to do and now that we received the
12 arbitration award, we will be able to
13 highlight the service, the wage increases
14 for the positions in the schedule, which
15 I think will attract individuals, because
16 people want choices and options. They
17 want work-life balance. We weren't able
18 to advertise that. But this will be our
19 first run at it, and I'm hoping we can
20 start to advertise that with the next job
21 announcement scheduled in May.

22 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: So did I
23 just hear you say salaries are actually
24 going up?

25 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Salaries

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2 are actually going up, so we have --

3 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Wow. Good
4 stuff.

5 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: -- a
6 substantial increase for these positions.
7 We didn't have that. This is going to
8 make them very competitive, and I am just
9 anticipating we're going to attract a
10 number of applicants.

11 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Beautiful.
12 Okay. Thank you, Commissioner.
13 Appreciate you, as usual, and
14 Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner Bagby,
15 I'm sorry we ran out of time, but, you
16 know, you can let me know what the
17 numbers are, if you can.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BAGBY:
19 Sure. I'm prepared to provide that to
20 you, sir.

21 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Thank you,
22 sir.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BAGBY:
24 You're welcome.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good

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2 questions, Member.

3 Before I turn over the virtual
4 gavel back to President Clarke, did I
5 understand you to say that our population
6 up there is less than 5,000 now?

7 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: It's less
8 than 5,000, but it's remained static at
9 about 4,300 on any given day. We do have
10 to work to reduce that population,
11 because the population is static. So
12 we'll need the help of the criminal
13 justice partners, and I know there are
14 some resources and staffing up for those
15 departments. But your releases really
16 should be outpacing your admissions and
17 the sentenced population should be
18 greater than your pretrial service --
19 pretrial population, because we're
20 looking at the average length of stay, so
21 we have about 500 individuals that have
22 already been here over 400 days. So
23 we're looking to, you know, get that
24 process going, working closely with the
25 criminal justice partners so cases can be

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2 heard and a disposition can be rendered,
3 and that will either be -- they'll be
4 sentenced to the county, sentenced to the
5 state, or released back to the community.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
7 for that.

8 President Clarke, I turn over
9 the gavel, sir.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
11 Thank you, Leader, Leader Jones.
12 Appreciate it.

13 Good afternoon, Commissioner.

14 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Good
15 afternoon, Council President.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
17 Good. Yeah. I just had one quick
18 question, and I'm assuming that this was
19 asked, but you just referenced some part
20 of it, the compensation increase. Was
21 that based on contract or were you able
22 to do that in another matter? Because we
23 had asked the question earlier about the
24 ability for an interim increase; i.e.,
25 compensation.

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2 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So --

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Was
4 this a part of a contract award or were
5 you able to do that --

6 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: There was
7 a portion that was done outside of the
8 contract award and then we received that
9 solid compensation. We've had several
10 supplemental awards to this contract, and
11 the one that just came out was about the
12 12-hour hybrid. The award that was
13 disseminated, I believe, January the 22nd
14 was about the incentive. So we were able
15 to attach the incentive to the 12-hour
16 schedule. But prior to that, in October,
17 November, we were able to do incentives
18 for retention and hiring.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
20 Without a contract award?

21 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes. We
22 have been working that for a number of
23 months, about eight months, to talk about
24 what could be offered, and it ended up in
25 the award, but there was a lot of work

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2 that pre-dates the actual award and how
3 it was rolled out.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
5 right. And I only ask that because this
6 question came up earlier with another
7 department about being able to enhance
8 the compensation for employees, and it
9 was said because they were civil service,
10 it had to be a part of a contract award,
11 but I guess this might be some public
12 safety waiver or something. Is it
13 something that the Mayor did in executive
14 order or --

15 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So before
16 we were placed under the settlement
17 agreement and we had the monitor, there
18 was the ACLU lawsuit, and we were
19 working -- and that's how we were doing
20 all of that work, which pre-dated award,
21 and then it just landed in the award.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
23 Okay. So this was a part of an external
24 settlement award for the lawsuit by the
25 ACLU. Okay. I was wondering. Okay.

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2 Now I got it. Thank you.

3 I don't think anybody else is
4 teed up for you, Commissioner.

5 Am I missing any colleague?
6 Councilman Thomas. Wait a minute.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: It looks
8 like Councilman Thomas.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
10 Councilman Thomas. I'm sorry.

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
12 afternoon, Council President.

13 Good afternoon, Commissioner.
14 Like everybody else said, thank you to
15 your team for all you do.

16 Can you hear me, Council
17 President?

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Yes,
19 sir.

20 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay. A
21 couple quick questions, Commissioner, and
22 then I'm going to submit the rest in
23 writing.

24 The first question is about
25 morale. I listened to you talk a little

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 bit about the flexible schedule, and I
3 would assume that that's something that
4 helps morale. What other things have
5 been done to help morale as it relates to
6 our staff in the Prisons? I heard what
7 you said about retention and attraction,
8 but do you feel like we moved past some
9 of the places we were as it relates to
10 staff morale?

11 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes, I
12 do. We started engaging -- how we got to
13 those shifts, we did two surveys, and so
14 the response came directly from the
15 workforce. Also, the facilities are
16 getting back to some pre-pandemic
17 activities, not full-fledged but we're
18 doing some celebratory or acknowledgment,
19 small tokens of acknowledgment to the
20 workforce.

21 We also are -- the wardens are
22 in place at those respective facilities,
23 are engaging the workforce. So I think
24 that's really starting to help.

25 We've announced to the

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2 workforce our hiring efforts and trying
3 to share with them all that we have done
4 to try to bring people to come and join
5 them and work alongside them. We put our
6 announcements out systemwide so we can
7 attract.

8 So I think that is all going
9 into people not feeling like they're
10 alone and they're just stuck. So we're
11 sharing as much information as we can and
12 all of our efforts and encouraging them
13 to partner with us to invite other folks
14 to come as well.

15 And just so you know, the first
16 full week of May is Correctional
17 Employees Week, which is major for us,
18 and while we cannot do what we used to do
19 pre-pandemic even though the COVID
20 pandemic will be lifted, the emergency
21 will be lifted, we're trying to work
22 through how we can acknowledge and
23 celebrate our staff. So I just wanted to
24 let you know. Those are all the things
25 that are going into the morale.

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2 We did have some competitions
3 between the facilities over the holidays,
4 and staff are really committed to
5 representing their facilities. So we did
6 some holiday competitions, and as always,
7 staff rose to the occasion. We gave
8 awards, some acknowledgments with
9 trophies, and then some other small
10 tokens of appreciation.

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So I would
12 assume that these changes are also having
13 an impact on some of the safety issues
14 that we're seeing -- that we've seen in
15 the past during the pandemic, both safety
16 of the prisoners, safety of the staff,
17 but physical safety as well as COVID
18 safety. Are we still giving PPE
19 equipment to folks? Has this helped with
20 some of the safety issues, both on the
21 COVID side as well as altercations?

22 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes. We
23 still are providing the PPE to the
24 workforce. Also, staff are looking for a
25 partner. They historically had a

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2 partner. We're trying to build that back
3 up, and that's why we're really sharing
4 all of our efforts and compensation to
5 try to do that. That's important to
6 staff, because they want to be able to
7 get in, do their job, have a partner, do
8 it safely, and perform their job safely
9 with interacting with the population. So
10 we're doing that, and we are also -- the
11 continuation of the PPE to the workforce
12 as well.

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay. And
14 that would definitely put us in a
15 position where we're not seeing the
16 number of cases that we've seen in the
17 past. Have there been any outbreaks or
18 anything like that?

19 And then also transparency, how
20 are we doing with transparency with all
21 parties and stakeholders? I know we have
22 a lot of stakeholders who are concerned
23 about things that happen up there,
24 whether it's family members or advocacy
25 groups. Those will be my last questions.

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2 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So we are
3 sharing information, the monitor's report
4 being fully transparent. I post that on
5 the Prisons' website for all to see so
6 that everyone -- when I see the report,
7 it's posted on the Prisons' website.
8 People can see that.

9 Also, the monitor who is
10 assigned to us, there are proof of
11 practices that we have to provide. That
12 information is shared. But we encourage
13 everyone to go to the website. If people
14 call into the Prisons, we're
15 communicating with them as well, and
16 that's our role in the transparency.
17 That way, it's open to everyone to read
18 and review, but we still take individual
19 calls and engage with the various
20 stakeholders.

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay. And
22 outbreaks, no significant issues around
23 COVID outbreaks or anything dealing with
24 COVID as of recent?

25 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: No. Just

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2 last week we had zero COVID-related
3 cases. Zero. And for a population to be
4 managed at 4,300 on any given day, we
5 didn't have significant spread and
6 outbreak.

7 When the community spread went
8 up, we went up slightly, but our numbers
9 have historically remained below the
10 community spread, and that's because of
11 all the hardworking staff that are in
12 here. They get tired of me hearing "wear
13 your mask, wash your hands, do what you
14 can to social distance," but our numbers
15 have been very good considering when
16 compared to the community.

17 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: It's still
18 mandatory for staff to wear masks?

19 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes, it
20 is. It is still mandatory. We work
21 closely with the Department of Public
22 Health and we work in conjunction with
23 them and then recommendations by the CDC,
24 and we have not received any further
25 guidance to remove masks at this time.

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2 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Do you
3 anticipate keeping that in place after
4 federal restrictions are lifted in May?

5 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: I will
6 confer with the Department of Public
7 Health and see and defer to their advice
8 on that, because I want to make sure if
9 we do remove that, that we have consulted
10 with the Department of Public Health, and
11 we'll also continue to monitor CDC
12 recommendations. If I see that the CDC
13 recommends that masks continue for
14 carceral settings, it's in our best
15 interest to do so.

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay. I
17 was wrong. That wasn't my last question.
18 Let me just ask you this: So we're
19 experiencing some issues with the CJC.
20 How is that impacting the work you're
21 doing as it relates to young people who
22 might have been deferred there that now
23 might be coming to you? Clearly you can
24 only get folks that are of a certain age,
25 but we know judges have discretion when

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2 they're at that late teen age. So I'm
3 wondering if the issues that we're
4 experiencing at CJC is impacting you and
5 the work you're doing. And I don't have
6 a choice, this has to be my last question
7 because I heard the buzzer.

8 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Okay.

9 I'm going to defer to Commissioner Kim
10 Ali regarding JJSC. I'm not sure about
11 the operations of her operation at JJSC.

12 We have 15 incarcerated male
13 youth currently, and they are -- in order
14 to be committed to our custody, it was
15 the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, and with
16 that Act, it now requires that there's an
17 interest of justice hearing. So that's
18 the only way we're getting those
19 individuals. So they are -- if they are
20 arrested and they're brought in, they'll
21 first go to JJSC. I don't have any
22 involvement until that interest of
23 justice hearing is heard and then the
24 judge is then committing them to the
25 custody of the Philadelphia Department of

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 Prisons.

3 So right now our number is
4 relatively low with 15. We were up a
5 couple months ago up to 18. That was in
6 late 2022. Hopefully that number will
7 continue to trend down, but they're
8 separated site and sound in their own
9 facility. So right now we're able to
10 manage our population.

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank you,
12 Commissioner.

13 Thank you, Council President.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
15 Thank you, Councilman.

16 Commissioner, I want to thank
17 you so much. It looks like that's our
18 last question for you today. As always,
19 please be prepared for callbacks as we
20 move towards this process. Thank you,
21 Commissioner.

22 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank you
23 all. Thank you, Council President.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
25 Thank you for your service.

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2 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank
3 you.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
5 Okay. Next up we have the Department of
6 Fleet Services.

7 How are you doing, sir?

8 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: Good
9 afternoon.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
11 Good. Good. Are you ready to proceed?

12 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: I am.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
14 right.

15 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: Good
16 afternoon, Council President Clarke and
17 distinguished members of City Council. I
18 am Joseph Rosati, Commissioner for the
19 Department of Fleet Services. Joining me
20 today are Dr. K Wilson, Deputy
21 Commissioner for Administration, and John
22 Deleo, Deputy Commissioner for
23 Operations. Thank you for the
24 opportunity to present testimony in
25 support of FY24 Operating Budget request

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 for the Department of Fleet Services.

3 The Department of Fleet
4 Services' FY24 General Fund budget
5 request is \$70.6 million, which is
6 18.1 million less than FY23 estimated
7 obligations. FY24 Operating Budget
8 request includes 21.1 million in Class
9 100, 6.4 million in Class 200, and 43
10 million in Class 300 and 400.

11 DFS has completed 30 years of
12 high school internship program. Since
13 the program's inception in 1993, DFS has
14 enrolled 147 high school students, 112 of
15 which have graduated, 70 of these
16 graduates have accepted permanent civil
17 service positions with the City. In
18 FY24, DFS plans to enroll 25 high school
19 students into the internship program.

20 Students who are enrolled in
21 this paid internship receive \$15 per
22 hour. DFS encourages and focuses on
23 hiring minority students, and
24 historically 88 percent of the interns
25 were hired from minority groups, which

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 has reduced the racial disparity amongst
3 automotive technical staff.

4 The Department of Fleet
5 Services has 321 dedicated employees who
6 work diligently to provide safe and
7 reliable vehicles and equipment to the
8 operating departments to better service
9 the residents of the City of
10 Philadelphia.

11 You have my detailed written
12 testimony, and I would be happy to answer
13 any questions. Thank you.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
15 Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner.

16 Commissioner, electric
17 vehicles, I think we have had a pilot
18 program. Talk to me about electric
19 vehicles as we transition into these
20 lowering our fossil fuel.

21 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: So we
22 have a Clean Fleet Plan that we put
23 together, and it has a hierarchy. So by
24 2030, all procured vehicles will be
25 alternative fuel vehicles. So the

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2 hierarchy starts out as fully electric,
3 BEV, battery electric vehicles, plug-in
4 HEVs, which are -- PHEVs, which are
5 plug-in electric hybrid vehicles, and
6 then there is the HEV, which is a hybrid
7 electric vehicle. And then after you go
8 through that hierarchy, you know, then
9 there's natural gas, hydrogen, you know,
10 and then the ICE vehicles, the internal
11 combustion engine vehicles.

12 So now, you know, we have to be
13 careful when we're implementing the Clean
14 Fleet Plan not to impede operations of
15 operating departments. So, for example,
16 heavy trucks, you know, there's no viable
17 electric trash compactors. So, you know,
18 we've purchased compressed natural gas
19 trash compactors and, you know, we're
20 actually exploring doing hydrogen for --
21 switching over from diesel to hydrogen.
22 If we were participating in this hydrogen
23 hub, it's called a MACH H2 Hydrogen Hub,
24 and it's a tri-state thing with SEPTA,
25 City of Philadelphia, PGW, if we get the

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2 hub and the fuel is delivered, PGW will
3 deliver it to us.

4 So right now we have 15 percent
5 of the fleet is alternative fuels. We
6 have 234 battery electric vehicles, fully
7 electric; 726 hybrid electric vehicles;
8 31 plug-in hybrid electric vehicles; and
9 30 compressed natural gas compactors.

10 So we're doing really good.
11 We're on pace. You know, out of 6,000,
12 vehicles, we have 1,021 are alternative
13 fuel vehicles.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
15 Okay. Where are our charging stations?
16 Strategically located or do we utilize
17 non-public owned charging stations or
18 that Fleet owns?

19 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: So in the
20 beginning when we first started out with
21 the fully plug-in electric vehicles, we
22 did one vehicle, one charger. So the
23 operating departments would work with me,
24 get the building maintenance people to
25 install a Level 2 charger, and it would

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2 work well with a vehicle that was parked
3 in the yard at night and used during the
4 day. So we had to find operating
5 departments that could handle having a
6 charger installed on their property and
7 then accepting the vehicle.

8 So currently we have 71 Level 2
9 chargers throughout the City on City
10 property, but as a stop gap, in order for
11 us to really, you know, move forward
12 quickly, I had to get a contract with a
13 fast-charging company, and that was a
14 game changer for us. Then we could --
15 because the electric vehicles are being
16 built and put into service faster than
17 infrastructure.

18 Recently San Francisco just
19 reached out to us. Apparently they found
20 out what we were doing and, you know,
21 they want to have a meeting with us.
22 They want to find out, you know, our work
23 flow and how we put it together and how
24 we got it going. So I was surprised to
25 hear from them.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Okay. Our CNG, I know we talked about
4 this a couple years ago about our
5 conversion for our larger vehicles, and
6 we were using PGW as a supplier?

7 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: Yes.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

9 Conversion to hydrogen, talk to me about,
10 one, is it less expensive or is PGW used
11 as simply a passthrough? I don't think
12 we can produce hydrogen, right?

13 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: No. So
14 the hydrogen would be delivered. PGW
15 would be, I guess, the vendor that would
16 supply us with the hydrogen.

17 PGW is planning to make the
18 Tioga location, which is right next door
19 to one of our sanitation yards at
20 Delaware and Wheatsheaf. So I have, I
21 think, 110 diesel trucks in that yard.
22 So in the perfect situation, if PGW is
23 able to deliver hydrogen to us through
24 their Tioga yard through a pipe and we
25 have the hydrogen station installed at

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 that facility, over time I can convert
3 all of those diesel trucks to hydrogen.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Are
5 they less expensive, and why the
6 conversion?

7 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: Right now
8 the compressed natural gas trucks would
9 be similar to the hydrogen. They're a
10 little bit more expensive than a normal,
11 you know, legacy vehicle. They're
12 probably about \$50,000 more than a legacy
13 vehicle. But that's the trade-off to
14 move to, you know, cleaner fuel.

15 Hydrogen is cleaner than
16 natural gas. Like right now we have a
17 natural gas fueling station and we have
18 30 trash compactors that are natural gas
19 at 3033 61st Street. Right off of 61st
20 and Passyunk there's a sanitation yard
21 there. So there's -- that fuel site can
22 handle 70 trash compactors, but right now
23 we have 30. So we're buying three a
24 year, and eventually that yard will
25 eventually be changed over from diesel to

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 natural gas.

3 So the vision is that if
4 hydrogen is delivered to us and we're
5 able to purchase it, that would be the
6 vision. As soon as manufacturers start
7 building some heavy-duty hydrogen trucks,
8 trash trucks, we want to buy a couple and
9 do a pilot on them and see how Streets
10 Department likes them.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
12 right. Can we convert our CNG vehicles
13 to hydrogen?

14 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: I
15 wouldn't touch them. I would leave that
16 alone, because that fuel site is brand
17 new. It's in motion. And so I would
18 continue on with that, because it's
19 clean. We would stick with that, that
20 particular site as is. But, you know,
21 all the other sites throughout the City,
22 you know, the heavy equipment throughout
23 the City, we would want to move towards
24 hydrogen.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 Okay. So --

3 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: As long
4 as the manufacturers start building these
5 trucks and putting them out there for us
6 to be able to purchase them. So we're
7 waiting on that. We're waiting for
8 International and Freightliner and, you
9 know, some of the big truck companies to
10 build some hydrogen trucks, especially
11 the work trucks that we need, you know,
12 like our dump trucks, our trash
13 compactors, bucket trucks, you know, like
14 our typical work vehicles.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Let
16 me understand. The hydrogen purchased,
17 that we will purchase, will be used in
18 what vehicles? In future purchases or
19 will they be able to be used in existing
20 vehicles that are currently CNG? I just
21 want to --

22 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: No. No.
23 The CNG vehicles are standalone. They'll
24 use natural gas. Hydrogen vehicles will
25 be different.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Okay. So now do we have any hydrogen
4 adaptable vehicles now?

5 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: No. No.

6 We would have to purchase hydrogen
7 vehicles and replace our aging fleet. It
8 would be a part of our vehicle
9 replacement policy. So as vehicles age,
10 we would phase them out and replace them
11 with hydrogen.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So
13 we don't have them now. We're waiting
14 for the manufacturers.

15 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: We're
16 waiting for the industry to start
17 building some heavy trucks that we can
18 test out and pilot.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So
20 the hydrogen purchases are down the line.
21 I got you. I just wanted to make it
22 clear. I thought that's what you were
23 saying. Okay. I'm good.

24 Thank you, and thank you for
25 always keeping the vehicles -- the PMs

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 are -- if people maintain their vehicles
3 like you guys do, I'll tell you, it would
4 be a lot of people in the new car
5 industry complaining about the lack of
6 sales, I'll tell you. You guys and those
7 PMS, you don't mess around. Come in, get
8 the oil change, get all the things done,
9 the fluids changed, and that's why the
10 fleet continues to move and has racked up
11 those miles without a lot of challenges.

12 Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: My
14 maintenance team is terrific. You know,
15 they're really good with trying to stay
16 on schedule. They bug you too, right?

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You
18 think, right?

19 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: Get that
20 vehicle in for service, you know.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
22 Yeah. Come get it, right, if you don't
23 bring it in?

24 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: Yeah. I
25 mean, our philosophy is, you know, let's

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 take care of the preventive maintenance
3 and then we won't have any breakdowns,
4 you know.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

6 Smart, very smart. Thank you.

7 The Chair recognizes Councilman
8 Harrity.

9 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Thank you,
10 Council President.

11 Commissioner Rosati, thank you
12 for everything you do, and you're right,
13 your people are on the ball. They got me
14 last week. I was a little late. They
15 stuck John Fenton on me to come down and
16 grab me and say, you got to take your car
17 today. So, yeah, they're on point.

18 Just on a personal note,
19 Rosati, are you related to any of the
20 Rosatis in South Philly?

21 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: Yeah.
22 Yeah.

23 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: I fought
24 out of Rosati's gym on Chadwick Street,
25 Mickey, Uncle Mickey.

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2 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: Yeah.

3 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: So we may
4 be related somewhere down the line.

5 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: I've been
6 in that gym when I was younger.

7 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Yeah.
8 Yeah. Yeah. Well, a lot of us in the
9 family been in that gym. Good stuff.

10 My question is -- Council
11 President asked most of the questions I
12 wanted to ask about the hybrid vehicles
13 and all that stuff, and it's good to hear
14 that you guys are actually already
15 looking at the hydrogen vehicles before
16 they're even incepted. That was part of
17 my thing, because I know that a lot of
18 the construction and heavy machinery
19 vehicles have to have the hydrogen.
20 Electric just won't power it. So I'm
21 glad to see that you guys are looking
22 into that.

23 My question really that I have
24 left is just about staffing and your
25 staffing levels. What is the total

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.
2 number of employees you should have and
3 how many are you short?

4 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: So we
5 should have 402 and we're short 81.

6 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: All right.
7 Now, what's the -- so I guess it's kind
8 of like an apprentice program you're
9 doing with the kids coming out of high
10 school? Are they coming from the
11 mechanics training or anything that we
12 have left? I don't know how many of them
13 we have left.

14 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: Yeah. So
15 the students that, you know, we currently
16 have gotten are from Audenried, Edison,
17 Mastbaum, Randolph, and The Workshop
18 School. We've partnered with the School
19 District and -- Audenried is a charter
20 school. They're shop schools. They
21 teach automotive technology.

22 So we recently modified the
23 program so we can bring in 25, because
24 the kids were coming in at night and I
25 wanted to get away from that. I wanted

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2 to try and get them full days at the shop
3 so they can experience, you know, the day
4 workshop operations, the beehive of
5 activity, the business, everything that
6 we do during the day. So I wanted to get
7 them in there for that and also for
8 retention.

9 You know, it's tough working at
10 night after school, traveling on buses,
11 and it's not -- you know, you want to get
12 away from that. It's safer for them to
13 just come and spend a full school day
14 with us. They get credit for it.

15 The 11th graders, they spend
16 one full day. The 12th graders spend two
17 full days with us. And then as long as
18 they complete the program and they meet
19 the School District's criteria on the
20 School District side, they get a
21 full-time civil service job with Fleet.

22 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: I'll tell
23 you what, I love that. That is a home
24 run. Anything we can do to get these
25 kids started and working out of high

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 school is something I'm for. You know,
3 it's a harsh reality that not every kid
4 is going to go to college, and I was a
5 big fan when I was in high school of the
6 schools having the shop classes. I have
7 a lot of friends that started in the shop
8 class in high school and ended up working
9 at a mechanic shop and now owning their
10 own mechanic shop. It's a job where a
11 kid can actually make some good money,
12 learn, and be certified and move up.

13 So I commend you on that, and
14 I'd like to know how we can help to get
15 more kids in a program like that, because
16 that's right where we need to be, getting
17 these kids involved and helping them to
18 be able to take the civil service test.
19 So I commend you on that, and I thank you
20 for that.

21 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: That's
22 why we modified it. That's why we
23 modified it to get them in the shops
24 during the day, you know, so that it
25 doesn't disrupt their evening schedule,

1 4/3/23 - WHOLE - BILL 230144, ETC.

2 you know, and that will -- I think that
3 will give us better retention and -- you
4 know, it's just good stuff.

5 You know, we have a nice career
6 ladder. One of -- I have a high school
7 intern that's a good mentor to the kids
8 coming in. He came in like 25 years ago.
9 He's a district manager in charge of nine
10 facilities. He's in charge of all
11 Streets Department equipment, Parks and
12 Rec. You know, he's a good mentor for
13 the kids to look up to, because he
14 started out as an intern.

15 So, you know, the idea is,
16 we'll get 25 a year, and hopefully we'll
17 shrink that vacancy rate that we have
18 with growing our own technicians.

19 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Love it,
20 love it, love it. Let me know how I can
21 help. Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: Thank
23 you.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
25 Thank you, Councilman.

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2 Commissioner, thank you so
3 much. I think that's all for today.
4 Appreciate your work, appreciate your
5 product, and thank you for ensuring that
6 our fleet continues and thank you for
7 being creative in terms of moving us to
8 the next generation of vehicles that will
9 be fully utilizing alternative fuel
10 sources. We really appreciate you.
11 Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER ROSATI: Thank
13 you.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
15 right. Okay. There doesn't appear to be
16 any additional questions or comments from
17 members of the Committee.

18 There being none, this
19 Committee will stand in recess until
20 Tuesday, April 4th at 10:00 a.m., at
21 which time we will reconvene in a remote
22 manner using Microsoft Teams.

23 Thank you all very much. See
24 you in the morning. Thank you.

25 - - -

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2 (Committee of the Whole
3 adjourned at 4:45 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter, and that this is a true and
correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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