



DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING  
CITY OF NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Statement from Daniel R. Garodnick, Chair of the NYC Planning Commission and Director of the Department of City Planning, before the Land Use Committee of the City Council, on the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2023 Preliminary Budget and Four Year Financial Plan

**March 23, 2022**

Good morning Chair Salamanca, Subcommittee Chairs Riley and Louis, and distinguished members of the Land Use Committee. I am joined by Edith Hsu-Chen, DCP's Executive Director, Susan Amron, DCP's General Counsel, and David Parish, DCP's Acting Chief Operating Officer. We thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the Department of City Planning's Preliminary Fiscal Year 2023 budget.

I am honored to have been appointed to lead the Department of City Planning and the City Planning Commission by Mayor Eric Adams – who is committed to ensuring we expand access to opportunity for all New Yorkers. It is also particularly meaningful to be testifying before the City Council, a body in which I served for 12 years. Council Members, I certainly appreciate the challenging tasks you have before you – and I am very much looking forward to collaborating with you.

You should know that some of my proudest Council accomplishments were in direct partnership with the City Planning Commission and the Department as we successfully worked to modernize the Greater East Midtown area, the business district around Grand Central Station. We did it to ensure that one of our City's largest job centers would continue to thrive well into the future, while also providing flexibility for residential development.

In my first Council term, I chaired one of the then-three Land Use Subcommittees – Planning, Dispositions and Concessions – and had the occasion to work directly with the Commission Chair and staff. Even back then, I admired the professionalism of the agency, and the City’s commitment to continuously engage the public in our important land use decision making process.

That said, nothing during my time in the Council compared to the challenging moment that we find ourselves in today. A moment where we face an affordability crisis, a housing crisis, and a health crisis all at the same time. In fact, there has been nothing quite like it in history.

I have been working with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer and many others to help get New York City’s economic recovery into high gear. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, we announced *Rebuild, Renew, Reinvent: A Blueprint for New York City’s Economic Recovery*, a five borough economic development plan that makes sure our economy -- and the infrastructure that supports it -- is flexible, resilient, inclusive and innovative as we move into a post-pandemic future.

To that end, I would like to thank the City Council on your efforts to make permanent the open restaurants plan. This is an example of taking a crisis and wisely adapting our policies to the city’s advantage – and I give you all a lot of credit for this accomplishment. Of course, City Planning will work shoulder to shoulder with our peer agencies and the City Council to wrap up the details, and to ensure its success.

At City Planning, we are working to create housing, to promote equitable growth, to prepare for a changing environment and to rise to the challenge of meeting the needs of every community in the City. When it comes to public engagement and creating opportunity, we will include everyone.

- That means communities across our five boroughs;
- And it means offering a positive user experience for elected officials, community board members and private applicants in New York’s public land use decision making process. For those projects that align with city priorities — *we will not only approve them, but we will be their champions.*

Working directly with our sister agencies, including the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development and the Office of Management and Budget, we will explore the future of work and its impacts on our central business districts and so many other job centers across our boroughs.

During the last two years, driven by COVID-19, we have seen challenges to our core central business districts as people spent time working from home. We also saw strength in smaller

business districts – located closer to where people live. We are building an economic plan that will touch every sector of our economy. It's a plan that will be nimble, and will focus on a broader and more equitable geographic distribution of economic opportunity.

We are laser focused on planning for inclusive and sustainable growth, in the short and long term. This means working with communities to implement the City's newly released Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, for example. Among some of the most pressing projects for the City are

- the development of offshore wind,
- advancing public access along the waterfront, and
- coastal climate resiliency.

This also means creating more housing opportunities at highly accessible locations where residents live closer to the city's extraordinary opportunities for jobs, education, and amenities. We need to bring more jobs closer to where New Yorkers live, supporting investment in the downtowns and job centers that exist and are growing outside of the Manhattan core.

It also means maximizing the capacity and user accessibility of a safe and secure transit system. The City has already prioritized accessibility advances at key locations through strategic contributions to the MTA capital plan.

In planning for the Jerome Avenue rezoning, for example, we heard loud and clear that improved subway accessibility was sorely-needed. After collaborating with DOT, the MTA and Bronx stakeholders, earlier this year the 170 St / Jerome Av Station was renovated to make the station accessible to all riders. Three new elevators were installed at this station located in Councilmember Stevens' district and just one block south of Councilmember Sanchez's district.

During my time at the City Council, I had the privilege of not only visiting all corners of the city, but also working directly with communities across all five boroughs. The diversity, energy and complexity of New York is what I love about it, and every unique neighborhood will play a critical role in our success.

This is why I am so excited to have joined the Department of City Planning, and to be taking the helm at a time of both incredible challenges, but also tremendous opportunity to use the levers of government to achieve a new vision of a fairer, more prosperous and safer city. City Planning stands at the crossroads of growth, change, and opportunity and it will serve as a major driver in turning the goals of this Administration into reality.

Let me turn now to the budget.

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

<b>DCP Financial Summary</b>						
<i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Preliminary Plan</b>		<b>*Difference</b>
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Adopted</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022 - 2023</b>
<b>Spending</b>						
Personal Services	\$ 28,207	\$ 26,262	\$ 30,629	\$ 30,456	\$ 29,678	\$ (950)
Other Than Personal Services	\$ 14,807	\$ 12,401	\$ 14,335	\$ 15,182	\$ 15,639	\$ 1,304
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 43,014</b>	<b>\$ 38,663</b>	<b>\$ 44,963</b>	<b>\$ 45,638</b>	<b>\$ 45,317</b>	<b>\$ 354</b>
<b>Funding</b>						
City Funds	\$ 22,437	\$ 20,180	\$ 26,642	\$ 26,213	\$ 29,629	\$ 2,987
Federal - Community Development	\$ 19,145	\$ 17,016	\$ 16,978	\$ 17,150	\$ 14,345	\$ (2,633)
Federal - Other	\$ 1,237	\$ 1,319	\$ 1,343	\$ 1,807	\$ 1,343	\$ -
Intra City	\$ 95	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State	\$ 99	\$ 149	\$ -	\$ 467	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 43,014</b>	<b>\$ 38,663</b>	<b>\$ 44,963</b>	<b>\$ 45,638</b>	<b>\$ 45,317</b>	<b>\$ 354</b>
<b>Headcount</b>						
Full-Time Positions - Civilian	301	278	348	340	332	(16)
<b>Total</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>(16)</b>

*\*The difference of Fiscal 2022 Adopted compared to Fiscal 2023 Preliminary Budget.*

DCP entered Fiscal Year 2022 with an Adopted Budget of \$44.9M and an authorized headcount of 348 full-time staff positions, of which \$26.6M and 162 positions are funded with City Tax-Levy dollars.

DCP's remaining \$18.3M budget allocation and 186 positions are funded by State and Federal grants, primarily through HUD's Community Development Block Grant Program. The \$44.9M Fiscal Year 2022 Adopted Budget allocated \$30.6M – a little over two-thirds of DCP's operating budget – to agency-wide personal services (including part-time staff and members of the City Planning Commission), and the remaining \$14.3M to non-personnel expenses.

In comparison to the FY22 Adopted Budget, DCP's FY23 Preliminary Budget of \$45.3M and 332 full-time staff lines, represents a \$354K increase to the overall operating budget and 16-headcount decrease. This is a small budget increase, even as we are down 16 staff including a PEG.

Let me explain how this comes to be. Focusing on DCP's Other-Than-Personal-Services, the Department's FY23 Preliminary Budget allocates \$15.6M to pay for agency operating expenses other than staffing, such as community outreach, environmental consulting services, and agency operations, and demonstrates a \$1.3M temporary, influx in OTPS compared to DCP's \$14.3M FY22 Adopted OTPS Budget.

The net \$1.3M increase in Other-Than-Personal-Service (OTPS) funding primarily driven by a new need to conduct a Citywide Building Elevation Study. This study stems from the tragedies that befell residents of below-grade apartments during Hurricane Ida. The Mayor allocated \$3M

in OTPS for us to conduct this impactful study. The agency hired consultants to perform a Citywide spatial analysis of building elevations throughout the City, including subgrade spaces.

The analysis is geared towards the City's resiliency efforts and will provide comprehensive data on community flood risk, allowing the City to better target proactive planning strategies, infrastructure investments, and outreach to residents and property owners. In addition to supplementing the City's knowledge of the geographic distribution of flood risk, the elevation measurements will allow the City to better model and estimate future flood damages. (I want to thank Chair of the Council's Resiliency and Waterfronts Committee, Ari Kagan, for his ongoing efforts on flood protection. We at the Department look forward to working with you on resiliency and climate change issues.)

The \$3M Citywide Building Elevation Study new need is offset in the budget by the expiration of \$1.7M in temporary Community Development-Disaster Recovery funding that had been budgeted for another resiliency-related project led by HPD, the Resilient Edgemere Community Plan within Councilmember Brooks-Powers' District. DCP is supporting HPD in its implementation of the Resilient Edgemere Community Plan by providing environmental consulting services through its on-call environmental consulting contracts to analyze the environmental impacts of the proposed land use actions and to advance the environmental review work. The Edgemere rezoning was Certified into ULURP in December of 2021 and is currently making its way through public review. Between the \$3M increase for the Building Elevation Study and the \$1.7M decrease in the Resilient Edgemere Community Plan, the agency has an increase of \$1.3M in OTPS.

However, at the same time, we have a net \$950K decrease in Personal Service funding that corresponds to the agency's decrease in staffing levels. The Department's FY23 Preliminary Budget allocates \$29.7M to Personal Services compared to \$30.6M in the FY22 Adopted Budget. The \$29.7M figure represents a \$950K decline in funding for agency personnel, attributed to a net loss of 16 positions. Headcount and associated funding reductions include the:

- Elimination of 9 tax-levy funded vacancies, and approximately \$500K, to achieve agency savings in line with the Mayor's Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG), and the
- Expiration of 8 short-term staffing resources (one tax-levy position, and 7 grant-funded positions), and \$600K funded in previous plans, that are slated to exit the budget at the end of Fiscal Year 2022. Seven of the 8 positions consist of temporary resources received to support the 2020 Census, the expansion of the agency's regional planning program, and the development of an online tool that automates analyses required by certain chapters of the CEQR Technical Manual. The last position is a CDBG-Disaster Recovery funded Resiliency Planner embedded in the Mayor's Office of Climate Resiliency (MOCR) whose funding coincides with the end of the CDBG-Disaster Recovery grant.

These 17 positions and \$1.1M reductions are offset by the addition of:

- One, \$75K temporary staff person that will be hired to manage and oversee the timely completion of the Citywide Building Elevation Study, and
- \$39K in contractual increases negotiated through collective bargaining, to arrive at the \$950K, 16-position reduction to Personal Services.

The increase of \$1.3M for OTPS and decrease of \$950,000 for PS result in an increase of \$354K but a decrease of 16 positions to the DCP budget. This establishes a FY23 Preliminary Plan of 332 full-time authorized positions and \$45.3M, of which \$29.7M is allocated to agency-wide personnel services and \$15.6M is allocated to other-than-personal-services.

DCP will continue to distribute its resources in the most effective way possible to advance the Department's work program and to meet the needs of New Yorkers, all while striving for optimal financial and operational efficiency.

With that, I would be happy to answer any questions.