



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

Attached please find my report on proposed modifications to the Fiscal Year 2024 Preliminary Budget, per New York City Charter Chapter 10, Section 245.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Antonio Reynoso".

Antonio Reynoso
Brooklyn Borough President
May 17, 2023



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

**City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
Hearing on the FY24 Preliminary Budget 3.23.23**

Good afternoon Chair Rivera and members of the City Council and thank you for holding this hearing today.

I am here today to state unequivocally that this Council and administration must work together to close the Rikers Island jail by the legally mandated date of August 31, 2027. Despite DOC spending more than \$550,000 per incarcerated person per year, the conditions on Rikers are a humanitarian crisis. One death of an incarcerated person is too many; and 19 in one year last year, with yet another just last month, is a crisis that we must address with great urgency. Yet instead of moving us toward decarceration, the proposed FY24 DOC budget funds \$2.744 billion worth of the same broken system.

The most egregious spending is on staff salaries, benefits, and overtime. While I believe that these officers deserve fair wages, the over-staffing due to abuse of sick leave and reassignment of officers to non-jail duties needs to end. DOC's staffing ratio continues to hover near one officer for every incarcerated person, far exceeding the national average, yet the department also blows past its projected overtime spending every year. In a fiscal climate where we are debating cuts to essential City services like libraries, we absolutely must get this inflated spending under control. Eliminating vacant positions at DOC (as the Mayor is calling on other agencies to do) alone could provide the City with \$119 million (\$221 million if we take into account anticipated attrition) to reallocate to programs that support a future with a much smaller incarcerated population, without a jail on Rikers Island.

Some of these programs include:

- **Supportive housing and behavioral health programs:** About 50% of incarcerated people on Rikers Island at any given time have a mental health diagnosis, and thousands are homeless. We absolutely cannot keep using our jails in place of community-based treatment programs and affordable housing opportunities. The Mayor's office estimates that hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who could benefit from behavioral health treatment programs are not connected to care, and notes that there are racial and geographical disparities in access. The budget should reallocate funding from DOC staffing to community-based behavioral health programs targeted to the neighborhoods with least access to care. I also support advocates' call for reallocation of \$57.8 million of DOC's budget to fund creation of new supportive housing, providing

those in need with permanent homes and supplemental treatment and support services that improve outcomes and reduce recidivism.

- **Investments in youth:** Among its many recommendations, the Commission on Community Reinvestment and the Closure of Rikers advocated for investments in youth programs, including after-school, sports and STEM initiatives, adolescent skills centers, and summer jobs, as well as Cure Violence organizations that host youth prevention programs, teen relationship abuse prevention programs (RAPP), and Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIPs).
- **Alternatives to incarceration and faster trial:** Recent analysis by MOCJ has shown that many more people than are currently receiving it could benefit from supervised release. Expanding this and other ATI programs will help us safely reduce the jail population so that we can close Rikers by 2027. Another crucial step is to sufficiently fund programs and staff needed to reduce the time between arrest and trial, such as the Center for Justice Innovation's pilot program that significantly reduced felony case delays in Brooklyn.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this hearing today. I very much appreciate the Council's leadership in the efforts to close Rikers, and I look forward to working with Speaker Adams, Chair Rivera, and the rest of the Council to ensure that we keep our commitments made to New Yorkers to end the injustices and neglect at Rikers and to reinvest our public dollars into supporting our communities, not incarcerating them.



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ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

**City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries,
and International Intergroup Relations
Testimony on the FY24 Preliminary Budget 3.20.23**

Good afternoon and thank you to the City Council and Chair Ossé for holding this hearing today. I want to focus my testimony on three issues: libraries, Cultural Development Fund allocations, and the capital budget.

I want to start by being absolutely clear: the proposed cuts to our city's libraries are unacceptable. I understand that our financial future is currently precarious, and that some belt tightening may be necessary. However, cutting essential services that serve all New Yorkers, including our most vulnerable populations, in their communities is not the answer. Here is a list of FREE services that the Brooklyn Public Library provides, in addition to lending out books:

- Programs to promote early childhood literacy, including virtual and in-person storytime
- A 24/7 writing lab for students
- Live tutoring sessions and practice tests, including SAT prep
- Citizenship exam coaching and legal services for immigrants
- A safe space for teens to do homework and socialize
- Language classes and conversation groups
- Resume building, career coaching, and business development resources
- Skills courses in everything from crafting to podcasting
- Financial coaching and tax help
- Jail-based services for incarcerated individuals, and connections to re-entry services for the formerly incarcerated
- Emergency resources, such as providing test kits, PPE, and critical information during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Technology assistance and health resources for older adults
- Lending laptops and wi-fi hotspots, vinyl records, board games, telescopes, and musical instruments
- Virtual and in-person lectures, book talks, cultural performances, and historical programming

I could go on, but we'd be here all day. Yet the administration wants to cut \$8 million from BPL's budget over the next four years, which their CEO has said would mean, "agonizing choices about shortening hours, cutting programs and collections, and rolling back services." We

cannot in good conscience allow this to happen, especially with the NYPD on track to charge our city over \$800 million in overtime in this fiscal year.

Next, I want to address how DCLA prioritizes its allocations for the Cultural Development Fund. Last year in my testimony, I encouraged the agency to develop an equitable methodology that considers both organization size and populations served. While I know DCLA has taken steps toward this goal, last year's allocations have left many cultural organizations scrambling. Advocates A.R.T. New York conducted a survey of the groups they support, and found that the FY23 awards led to significant confusion and stress, especially among mid-sized organizations. According to their survey:

- 50% of respondents had their budgets cut, including 11% that were entirely defunded.
- These cuts disproportionately impacted organizations focused on arts education, presentation, and service; as well as more broadly, dance and theater production groups.
- While 90% of large organizations (budgets over \$10m) did receive funding, 88% of mid-sized organizations (budgets of \$500k-\$1m) also received reduced funding, while only about 45% of smaller organizations (budgets of \$50-99k and \$100-249k) received increases.

In short, the updated methodology deeply impacted many organizations, especially mid-sized ones. This added further stress to groups that were already struggling due to the pandemic. I would like to see more transparency around DCLA's allocation decisions and ensure that struggling institutions are made whole before it's too late.

Finally, I want to address DCLA's capital budget. One of my main priorities as Borough President is to help our borough's public-serving non-profit organizations find permanent homes. Being at the mercy of a private landlord in our competitive real estate market can make long-term planning difficult. These groups should be focusing on their work, not worrying about losing their space. That is why it is extremely disappointing that DCLA does not facilitate property acquisition with its capital dollars. My understanding of the reason for this is that DCLA does not have the resources it needs to manage a complicated acquisition process. I have substantial capital resources to allocate to Brooklyn, and I want to use it to help groups find permanent spaces. I find it extremely frustrating that I cannot extend this resource to cultural organizations due to this unnecessary limitation. I encourage the Council and administration to work together to address this in FY24.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I look forward to working with you to support our borough's libraries and cultural organizations as they continue to navigate uncertain times.



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

City Council Committee on Education Hearing on the FY24 Preliminary Budget 3.15.23

Good afternoon Chair Joseph and thank you for holding this hearing today. The office of the Brooklyn Borough President is here today advocating for families and students across Brooklyn and all of New York City. Our recommendations and priorities for the Department of Education (DOE) and School Construction Authority (SCA) budget for FY24 include continued adjustments and engagement around Fair Student Funding, expansion of 3K and Pre-K education, improved school safety oversight and further investment, and other programs our office hopes DOE will sustain.

Fair Student Funding

While we applaud the DOE for convening a variety of stakeholders in the Fair Student Funding Task Force, we believe the agency could have done more. Although multiple working sessions were open to the public, DOE failed to strategically target specific populations – including, critically, youth. The Task Force’s final report even references the lack of authentic partnership between adults and youth in this endeavor. We also urge DOE to reconsider the now-dropped fourth Task Force recommendation: increasing base foundation funding. It is unacceptable that the status quo only provides base funding in the amount of \$225,000 for a principal and secretary when we know firsthand that schools rely on many other administrative staff, including assistant principals, guidance counselors, and social workers.

With the Governor’s proposed State budget fully funding Foundation Aid as per the Campaign for Fiscal Equity’s lawsuit, it is NYC’s turn to close the achievement gap for schools – and it begins with how money is allocated.

Expansion & Oversight of 3K & Pre-K Education

Hearing directly from parents and community members, it is imperative that this administration commits to the expansion – and not reduction – of PreK and 3K programs across the city. Providing quality childcare that directly reflects community need is one of the many tools our city has at its disposal to increase equity. Prior to the pandemic, US Employers across the country lost an estimated \$12.7B due to the [impacts of childcare challenges](#). As the administration acknowledges in the *Blueprint for Child Care & Early Childhood Education*, parents of color are impacted the most. This report estimates that 375,000 parents left or downshifted their jobs because of lack of access to quality childcare during the pandemic.

Recognizing the need to baseline 3K funding, we hope the Council will champion the restored commitment to expand the total number of 3K seats to 60,000. We challenge the DOE to provide adequate outreach for seats that have yet to be filled in every neighborhood and to continue to expand preschool special education seats – as they did this past December with the creation of 800 seats. In addition, we particularly ask the DOE to refocus on expanding extended-day seats for families to align better with traditional work hours – reducing competition amongst providers and other institutions. We must also ensure that our childcare providers are paid on time and childcare workers are paid a livable wage.

Class Size

Our office stands in support of NYS's class size bill and urges DOE to expedite a plan to meet this new mandate, and to do so with robust engagement with the community and the volunteer task force. With a projected 7,000 teachers needed to comply with the law, we hope DOE accounts for this need along with further funding for non-pedagogical support staff. Our office will continue to call upon our State partners to fund this mandate and help our city be fiscally sound while supporting our students and their developmental needs.

Safety

Following the recent February PEP vote approving \$43M to install automatic door locking systems across DOE buildings, we urge the Council and DOE to be transparent and equitable throughout the installation process. The lack of transparency in the selection and prioritization of schools in the pilot has resulted in questions about the process. We hope that all 1,300 schools slated to receive this new technology receive them expeditiously and with fidelity. We applaud the rollout of Project Pivot and the approximately \$9M commitment; however, we note the lack of transparency around the ARPA project vendor service cost and the overall scoring of schools that received the SAM No.55 allocation. With a pilot operating since October, we hope the administration would also share adequate measures of success for these participating vendors. We hope to advocate for pilots such as this to be brought to scale, but with limited data, a \$9M commitment with limited accountability is concerning.

Additional Programs

In order to further develop capacity and meet student needs, and to be responsive to the desires of prospective families seeking a public school education, we encourage DOE to build out some of its most sought-after programs. This includes developing more Dual Language & Bilingual education programs, especially considering the recent increase in migrant families. This expansion should be coupled with financial incentives to encourage more educators who speak a second language to become certified. Constituents also continue to ask for more D75 seats and programs for our special education students, such as ASD Nest and Horizon.

SCA

With the City allocating \$380M in capital funding for air conditioning initiatives, there are continued gaps to properly servicing all schools. SCA's current designation of "instructional spaces" discounts other rooms utilized throughout the school building that are also essential to student learning, including libraries, gyms, dance rooms, and more. We ask that SCA revisit this designation to address potential loss of learning due to heat and equip spaces accordingly.

As our office continues to observe trends across Brooklyn communities, we encourage SCA to prioritize bringing new schools to overcrowded districts, such as District 15, where approximately 27 schools are over-utilized, and District 20, where approximately 40 schools are over-utilized.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to working with the Council throughout the budget process to ensure that DOE and SCA have robust budgets to meet the city's needs across all their programs.



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City Council Committee on Governmental Operations Hearing on the FY24 Preliminary Budget 3.22.23

Good afternoon and thank you to Chair Ung and the Committee on Governmental Operations for holding this hearing today. Like last year, I am here to submit testimony specifically on community boards and their budgets. Also like last year, I was disappointed to see that community boards were not on today's hearing agenda despite this committee having oversight. Community boards are a critical link between the public and City government, weighing in on important issues that impact everything from small businesses to street safety to the availability of affordable housing. I would encourage the Council to devote more attention to the needs of these critical City agencies, which serve as the most grassroots level of City government.

Now in my second year of overseeing Brooklyn's community boards, I have had the opportunity to administer two appointment cycles. My staff and I have truly been inspired by the enthusiasm that Brooklynites have shown for getting more involved in the decisions that shape their communities by joining the borough's 18 boards. Yet because of their extremely limited budgets, the boards are still struggling to maintain their basic Charter-mandated functions.

As my Director of Community Boards, Carol-Ann Church, testified at a hearing last month, staffing is a particular concern. The boards' existing budgets provide for no more than 3-4 staff lines, and leave little room for competitive salaries, making recruitment and retention of professional staff difficult. Increasing their staff budgets would allow them to improve service delivery and better fulfill their role as a liaison between the community and NYC government. The boards also need technical assistance that goes beyond what is currently provided, especially in land use and planning. The Civic Engagement Commission created a list of land use consultants that boards can reference, but these consultants don't work for free, and there is no indication of whether or how the boards are supposed to pay for these consultants with their limited budgets. The City needs to instead fund professional urban planners to work directly with the boards.

This is only one example of many wherein the administration has provided inadequate assistance to the boards. District Managers from across the city are asking for support for:

- **Identifying new spaces that are accessible to the public and large enough for in-person meetings:** Critically, two Brooklyn boards are currently facing displacement from their existing offices and DCAS has failed to provide adequate relocation assistance.

- **Human resources:** Chairs receive little guidance on hiring and firing staff and struggle to get positions approved. District managers also need support to prevent and/or address any issues with board leadership, such as discrimination or harassment.
- **Communications and technology:** to support holding and livestreaming hybrid meetings, as well as to produce website and social media content, flyers, and mailers in multiple languages.
- **IT support:** OTI currently has one staff member dedicated to all 59 boards, causing delays – some as long as two or more years --- to critical functions such as creating new email addresses for staff, upgrading websites, paying bills, etc. The way OTI prioritizes requests also leaves community boards at a disadvantage. A non-working desktop or issue with network connectivity is classified as low priority, but in a three-person office, this can mean that critical work simply isn't happening.
- **Equity and accessibility at meetings:** most critically translation services, but also food and childcare.
- **Real engagement from City agencies on the budget process:** Board members feel strongly that most City agencies do not engage in good faith, simply providing canned responses to their budget priorities. This is an unacceptable way for the administration to engage with the people doing the work on the ground in our communities.

Part of the reason for this lack of support is a constant debate about whose responsibility it is. My office is simply not funded to provide the full scope of the support and technical assistance that the boards need to meet and exceed their Charter-mandated functions. That is why I am calling on the City Council to join me in asking the administration to address this problem now.

In the short term, the easiest solution would be for every City agency to have at least one staff person whose sole responsibility is to be a liaison with the city's 59 boards. In the long-term, I support the Future of Community Boards Working Group's call for the creation of a "central staff" where community board staff and members can access a central resource for assistance with technology, policies and procedures, human resources, legal counsel, training, and other needs. I know this is a big ask in a time where we are looking at ways to cut back; however, it's a question of equity. Community boards have not had a baselined budget expansion since 2014. No other City agency goes without vital support services, and the community boards should not have to either.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I look forward to working with the Council and the administration on ways to support our community boards in serving all New Yorkers.



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Brooklyn Borough President

City Council Committee on Hospitals Hearing on the Preliminary Budget 3.21.23

Good afternoon, Chair Narcisse and thank you for holding this hearing today. I am here to speak about the staffing crisis within our hospitals, and specifically, Health + Hospitals. Health equity in our hospitals is ensuring that patients receive the quality care and attention that they deserve; we can achieve health equity when we properly staff our hospitals and have pay parity. Funding for our public hospitals this budget cycle must consider the following:

Safe Staffing Ratios: Nurses are the backbone of the healthcare system. They spend the most time with our patients and serve as health educators, caregivers, and clinicians. They were at the frontlines during COVID-19 and have not stopped serving as our healthcare heroes. Nurses deserve the same care and respect that they dedicate to their patients every single day.

It has been nearly two years since New York's Nurse Staffing Law passed, but implementation has been disheartening and our hospitals are still operating at unsafe staffing ratios. As of February 2023, the Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU) at H+H Kings County Hospital, for example, is operating at a 4.873 to 1 patient-to-nurse ratio,¹ far above the 2-to-1 ratio required by the State legislature and recommended by National Nurses United.² High nurse-to-patient ratios are related to a 7% increase in hospital mortality for each additional patient, as a result of infections like pneumonia, gastrointestinal bleeding, cardiac arrest, and 60-day mortality and readmission. Treatment costs for these issues could be mitigated when appropriate safe staffing ratios are put into place to prevent them from happening in the first place.³

Safe staffing also reduces stress, anxiety, burnout, and turnover among staff. This has the potential of saving costs for recruitment and training, which together can cost \$82,000 to \$88,000 per new hire. It reduces the need to resort to staffing agencies that may place temporary, less

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<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/nysna/research/viz/nysnawebsitedash/NYSNASTaffingCaptains?publish=yes%5D>

² https://www.health.ny.gov/facilities/public_health_and_health_planning_council/meetings/2021-10-07/docs/codes_committee_agenda.pdf

³ <https://www.nysna.org/experience-and-research-show-safe-staffing-ratios-work-0#.ZBkSg3bMLKQ>



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qualified staff within facilities that becomes an overall cost liability. The crisis we face is not just a shortage in nurses, but in safe work environments, and it puts healthcare in peril.

Pay Parity: Not only are unsafe staffing ratios a risk for staff attrition, pay gaps between nurses in the public and private sectors are forcing nurses to leave our public hospitals. At the heels of private sector nurses winning historic agreements that enhanced safe staffing ratios and raised their pay by 19.9% this past January, we owe our public sector nurses the same, or we will witness a growing pay gap of \$19,000 between the public and private sectors.⁴

NYC Health + Hospitals accounts for 17% of hospital beds across New York City but bears a disproportionate share of social responsibility for patients who are low-income, people of color, Medicaid recipients, or uninsured – a population that has been marginalized for generations. We need infrastructure that ensures health equity for our most vulnerable patients, especially a representative workforce that can offer linguistically and culturally sensitive care. This is the same workforce that has been traditionally subjected to wage gaps with their White counterparts; we cannot let history repeat itself. Health equity comes from treating our healthcare workforce equally. Right now, we're not paying our public sector nurses what they need and deserve, so instead they're leaving for private institutions that pay more and provide better contracts. This creates a detrimental cycle of staff shortages that in turn affect staffing ratios.

We need a coordinated effort from our City and State government to set a new standard for how we support our public sector nurses, and to provide the funding and resources to achieve pay parity. Expense-reducing personnel initiatives in the preliminary budget simply cannot include a cut in wages for our frontline nurses.

Midwifery Care: Currently, New York City faces one of the most severe maternal mortality crises, with Brooklyn having the highest rates. Black and Brown birthing people are dying at 9.4 times the rate of their White counterparts. When I was elected, I promised that I would make Brooklyn the safest place to give birth. During my first year, I invested my entire capital budget of \$45 million to three Brooklyn H+H hospitals – Woodhull, South Brooklyn, and Kings County – so that they could improve their NICU and Mother-Baby Units and build state-of-the-art birthing centers. I hope that these capital investments will allow our hospitals to in turn, invest in its personnel.

⁴ <https://peoplesdispatch.org/2023/01/18/following-wins-in-the-private-sector-nyc-nurses-shift-fight-to-public-sector-hospitals/>



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Of these personnel improvements, I want to call attention to our midwifery workforce. Midwives are critical to reducing maternal death rates. Midwives work with patients throughout their prenatal and postpartum experience to offer clinical assessments, guidance and support, centering a philosophy that encourages natural births instead of cesarean births, which is often. In fact, my wife had two successful births at Woodhull Hospital in large part due to the care of midwives. A 2021 report by Nove et al shows that a facility with adequate staffing of midwives can avert 41% of maternal deaths, while even a moderate increase in staffing can avert deaths by 22%.⁵

When I started my fatherhood journey, I was disappointed to learn that of our three Brooklyn H+H hospitals, Woodhull is the only Brooklyn H+H hospital that has centered midwives in obstetric care for our birthing people. In 2019, 68.1% of its births were attended to by a licensed midwife, while this number was disproportionately lower at Kings County Hospital and Coney Island/South Brooklyn Hospital at 15.8% and 17.3%, respectively.⁶ I was further surprised to learn that at Kings and South Brooklyn hospitals, midwives were not always playing a leadership role, and some Birthing Suites housed only one midwife.

Midwives need to be a part of a patient's care journey from Day 1. I highly encourage the administration to consider investing in expanding midwifery care and ensuring that midwives are holding leadership positions, so that we can put a stop to this preventable maternal mortality crisis once and for all.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to working with the Council throughout the budget process to ensure that our public hospitals have the support they need to provide equitable and quality care.

⁵ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33275948/>

⁶ <https://health.data.ny.gov/Health/Hospital-Maternity-Information-Beginning-2008/net3-iygw/data>



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ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Hearing on the FY24 Preliminary Budget 3.15.23

Good afternoon Chair Nurse and thank you for holding this hearing today. I am here today to speak about a few priorities to improve climate resiliency and quality of life in our city: Commercial Waste Zones (CWZ), organics, containerization, and the Brooklyn District 13/15 garage.

Commercial Waste Zones: A zoned system for commercial waste will improve public health, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect workers, and make our streets safer. I was very disappointed to learn that DSNY intends to postpone implementation of the first zone until the end of next year, with full rollout expected to take at least two years after that. This means full implementation will not happen until *at least seven years* after we passed this bill in 2019.

Last term, the City Council passed a budget that provided DSNY with funding for 38 staff specifically dedicated to CWZ, as well as funding for outreach and marketing. Yet at the hearing last month, Commissioner Tisch testified that the program is “fully funded based on need” with 20 civilian staff (three of whom had yet to be hired) and 10 uniformed staff, with outreach not slated to begin until Q3 of 2024. We’ve also heard from multiple sources that these staff have consistently been reassigned to other projects, such as the Queens compost rollout. As much as I support expanding compost collection, it should not come at the expense of this program.

I disagree with the Commissioner’s assessment that it would be “premature” to start outreach now. A small business owner recently contacted my office when a new carter took over their existing contract, concerned because they assumed that DSNY had chosen the new carter for them as part of CWZ. This speaks to the misinformation that is out there, which needs to be addressed in order to ensure a successful rollout. With full staffing dedicated solely to the program, we could begin outreach now, speed up the RFP review process, and begin implementation sooner.

Organics: I appreciate DSNY’s commitment to expanding organics collection citywide. Organic waste currently makes up about 1/3 of the City’s waste stream. Separating it keeps it out of landfills, where it produces greenhouse gases; brings down costs in DSNY’s largest budgeted area (\$478m in FY24 for waste export); and decreases the amount of waste that NYC dumps on environmental justice communities in other parts of the state and country. The smart bins and option for curbside collection will make it easier for New Yorkers to participate. However, I remain skeptical that the program will be successful in the long-term unless participation is

mandatory. This will require extensive outreach and education using multiple languages and platforms, as well as an investment in operations and staffing, and it is concerning that there is not dedicated funding allocated to this initiative in the FY24 budget. Especially given that a supermajority of the Council supports Intro 244 (which would create the mandatory program), the Council and administration must work together now to ensure there is sufficient funding for it to be implemented quickly once the bill is passed.

Containerization: Every New Yorker agrees: the rat problem is bad and only getting worse. Containerizing waste is a proven solution to this issue. Since I expressed my dismay last year regarding cuts made to the pilot program, the pilot was in fact implemented; however, with the residential portion limited to only one block in Manhattan. Meanwhile, I have constituents from Downtown Brooklyn to Coney Island complaining about unsightly garbage piles and the rodents they attract, and DSNY has spent \$4 million to pay McKinsey to study something we already know works based on many examples from other cities and countries. DSNY promised us a “market-ready Request for Proposals — including recommended commercial terms, performance requirements, and specifications.” It has been 23 weeks since the 20-week study was reported, and I am very much looking forward to seeing this RFP released.

Brooklyn District 13/15 garage: I included this in my testimony and budget response last year, and want to reiterate that Brooklyn Districts 13 and 15 are in dire need of a new sanitation garage, yet this remains unfunded in the Capital Plan. These garages are still operating from among the worst physical plants in DSNY’s inventory, with BK 13 located in a dilapidated building and parking its trucks on an HPD-owned site slated for affordable housing development, and BK 15 using trailers in an area plagued by flooding. A new garage was proposed at Coney Island Creek decades ago, and City Council approved site selection in 2006, but implementation was delayed so long that National Grid put the site on the private market in 2020. I want to again ask the administration to negotiate with National Grid to acquire the site before it’s too late, and to move forward with this new garage as soon as possible.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to working with the Council throughout the budget process to ensure that DSNY has a robust budget to meet the city’s needs across all its programs.



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ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

**City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Hearing on the FY24 Preliminary Budget
March 9, 2023**

Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for holding this hearing today.

As Brooklyn Borough President, I have many transportation priorities for our great borough, all of which are aimed at ending car culture and encouraging people who are able to walk, bike, and take public transportation. To that end, I want to echo what you will no doubt hear from many advocates today – that I would like to see more safety improvements happen faster. Council Member Restler and I are working on a legislative proposal, Intro 417, to help facilitate this, and I thank you for calendaring that hearing next month.

Along with policy changes, we need a robust financial commitment to implementation of the Streets Plan, to fixing dangerous intersections, and to promoting Vision Zero. I am also going to continue advocating for implementation of congestion pricing, for regulating last-mile delivery facilities, and for increased funding to support a full build-out of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, expansion of Summer Streets to the outer boroughs, and safe routes to schools.

But what I really want to discuss today is the future of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. The dire need to address current conditions presents us with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to undo the racist legacy of Robert Moses and deliver for environmental justice communities. This roadway not only split communities of color in North and South Brooklyn, but also subjected these working-class neighborhoods to decades of toxic pollution, poisoning generations of residents. Yet this administration insists on pushing a temporary fix that ignores community needs along the corridor. I am extremely disappointed by the lack of vision, and by the State's unwillingness to participate in good faith.

From Greenpoint to Brooklyn Heights to Bay Ridge, we are unified that there needs to be a full redesign of the BQE corridor that centers racial justice, equity, and climate mitigation, and that it needs to happen now. From a budget perspective, this means DOT must continue to work to secure funds from the Federal government through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and that the State must come to the table with supplementary funding and a willingness to participate.

Though I acknowledge the urgency with which we must address the state of the triple cantilever, I appreciate DOT's efforts to study maintaining two lanes in each direction, rather than reverting to

a six-lane highway. As they say, if you build it, they will come – more lanes means more cars and trucks every year, the opposite of what we want for a climate resilient future. I know the BQE is a critical truck route, but planning for fewer, cleaner trucks on our roads isn't magic. It's regulating last-mile facilities, and funding implementation of DOT's existing priorities outlined in the 2021 Delivering New York Smart Truck Management Plan.

As we consider a long-term vision, we also need immediate implementation of the truck weight enforcement system that was supposed to be completed last year, to ensure safety now. If this is a staffing issue, I am happy to work with the Council to see it addressed quickly.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I look forward to working with the Council on this effort. Together, we can transform the BQE corridor. This is our chance to deliver justice, and as I've said before, justice isn't free.



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ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

City Council Committee on Youth Services Hearing on the FY24 Preliminary Budget 3.22.23

Good morning Chair Stevens and thank you for holding this hearing today. The Office of the Brooklyn Borough President is here today advocating for families across Brooklyn and the greater New York City area. Our priorities for the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) FY24 budget include expanded After-school options, Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) seats, and the overhaul of Summer Rising.

After-School

Hearing from families across Brooklyn, it is clear there is a significant need for expanded after-school opportunities for our youth, especially for kindergarten through 5th grade students. After-school programs are critical for providing enrichment experiences for students, and for providing adequate childcare options for our working families. I recommend that the City funds a Universal After-School program for all elementary schools by increasing the number of COMPASS contracts awarded citywide. Our office also urges that there be parity in the awarded contracts for Cornerstone and Beacon sites which have unique needs that school-based sites do not.

Summer Youth Employment Programs

We applaud the Mayor and this Council for their record-breaking efforts in expanding and enhancing the SYEP program. It's only fitting that as we celebrate the program's 60th anniversary, we celebrate the strides made within the last fiscal year, including serving 90,000 young people; expanding Career Ready slots in partnership with DOE serving 21,000 students across 226 high schools; recruiting 18,000 new worksites; and this Council's very own commitment to taking on 119 youth from all boroughs.

While these are all great accomplishments, we still need more intentional, direct recruitment to reach some of our most disenfranchised young people. This can be achieved by expanding programs such as Career Ready, which factors important targets like economic need and graduation rates; and the SYEP Pride Initiative which identifies safe and affirming work sites for LGBTQ+ youth.

We also applaud DYCD and providers' outreach to NYCHA participants, expanding to 13,300 young people; however we believe the City and DYCD can make greater efforts to increase this number. Another area that requires more intention is the outreach to students with disabilities and District 75 students. There are concerns that many of these youth may be included in the general pool of applicants and therefore assigned to sites that lack adequate training and capacity to provide them with a quality experience. Our office also asks this administration and the Council to revisit existing contracts for providers – as we often see an inequitable experience for participants, where some providers offer more professional development opportunities for SYEP youth than others. While we understand DYCD is expanding its enrichment events across the city, and pivoting to virtual solutions, contracted providers should be able to demonstrate the

necessary capacity to offer their own professional development series for participants and exposure to the field.

Our office supports further investment in SYEP and hopes this administration will continue to baseline it and at minimum match its \$236M investment from last year. It is also important to note that our office was recently made aware that Metro Cards are not guaranteed at this time for participants – I echo the Council’s calls for this funding to be restored to ensure students can get to their worksites without the barriers of transportation costs. Our office also hopes this administration would explore this Council’s proposed year-long mentorship program through SYEP.

Summer Rising

We commend this administration and Council for the expansion of Summer Rising Programming across the city. With 82,000 seats out of 112,000 being filled within the first week of the application going live, it is clear that demand far outweighs availability. With the sunset of COVID_19 federal funding, I urge this Council and Mayor to explore sustainable funding for the projected \$277M program and expand the number of seats to better meet demand for families in need of summer childcare options. I would also encourage a larger commitment particularly to DYCD’s portion of the program to ensure providers can offer competitive rates and increase staffing – as this is an issue many providers are experiencing, impacting program capacity and number of participating providers.

While I will continue to advocate for such an invaluable program, it is not without its flaws. The decision for DOE to be responsible for enrollment resulted in many issues. Families who have received critical programming and childcare from their host CBO’s were suddenly unable to obtain a seat, providers were left at the mercy of principals that they may have never collaborated with, and overall parent confusion on something as simple as documents required to be submitted, arising from poor communication between the DOE and the providers. Constituents shared that in cases of multiples providers housed within the same school, students experienced vastly different programming, exacerbating inequity and impacting students' overall experiences. And lastly, students with IEPs and mandated busing experienced significant disruption throughout their program with early pick-up and a lack of properly trained staff is unacceptable.

I know Chair you’ve have shared many of these concerns and I hope DYCD has made better strides to improve this process both for the families as well as the partners for FY23. This is not something a biweekly meeting with over 139 providers, with multiple site operators, on one call can solve.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to working with the Council throughout the budget process to ensure that DYCD has a robust budget to meet the city’s needs across all its programs.