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<https://therealdeal.com/2017/03/31/are-you-there-jared-its-me-bill-mayor-chats-with-kushner-somewhat-regularly-edc-head-says/>

**Are you there, Jared? It's me, Bill: Mayor chats with Kushner "somewhat regularly," EDC head says**

*City is facing slew of potentially crippling cuts in federal funding*



*Jared Kushner and Bill de Blasio (Credit: Getty Images)*

By Kathryn Brenzel

Having a New Yorker in the White House — even one who wants to cut millions of dollars in federal funding to the city — seems to at least get Mayor Bill de Blasio's phone calls returned.

"The mayor does actually speak somewhat regularly to Jared Kushner. They do talk," James Patchett, president of the city's Economic Development Corp., said during a panel held by the New York Building Congress on Friday. "We do have a line to the White House."

Patchett was responding to a question posed by an audience member, who asked how the city can work with the federal government rather than being “combative.” Kushner, one of New York’s most prominent real estate developers, would seem a valuable conduit for the city as a senior Trump adviser who is increasingly being tasked with more responsibilities. It’s not clear exactly how often these chats take place, and a representative for a mayor declined to comment on Patchett’s statement.

Patchett noted that certain policies and proposed budget cuts coming out of the White House are legitimate causes for concern.

“It’s his job to protect our immigration populations, our terrorism funding and the tremendous budget cuts that are really a threat,” he said.

The New York City Housing Authority, for example, has said that it will potentially lose at least \$75 million in federal funding.

“Pretty much everything that makes community development possible is gone,” Patchett said, referencing this and other [proposed funding cuts](#). Marisa Lago, director of City Planning, picked up on Patchett’s “parade of horrors,” saying she’s concerned about how the federal budget will impact resiliency projects in the city.

Friday’s panel featured all new faces — Carlo Scissura, who took over as [president of the Building Congress](#) earlier this year; Patchett, who was just named head of the EDC in January; and [Lago](#), who was appointed director of City Planning in January. Along with a few mentions of the president, the discussion mostly centered on [EDC](#) and City Planning’s ongoing projects.

Lago noted that last week marked the one-year anniversary of the City Council approving Mandatory Inclusionary Housing and Zoning for Quality and Affordability. She said the city has approved MIH projects in every borough, except Staten Island.

Patchett mentioned several projects that the EDC is working on, including the Brooklyn-Queens Connector and the potential development of [Sunnyside Yards](#), which he referred to as “the next Hudson Yards.”