



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 10, 2022, 7:00 PM
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT FROM THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2022: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS
HOSTS COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ON PUBLIC SAFETY**

Commissioner Fred Kreizman, Mayor's Community Affairs Unit: If everyone can have their seats, please, we'll get started. There are three parts to tonight's conversation. The first one took place already. The first hour, we had community conversations with community leaders sitting at the table with the executives at NYPD, superintendents or principals from the school system. We have had agency facilitators helping carry the dialogue at the table. We have also had the members of the mayor's office taking diligent notes, to ensure we hear your ideas, and pass it to the policymakers at City Hall.

We are also fortunate to have violence interrupters at each table. We appreciate the work they do throughout the year to help. We are going to get started with the second part. Just to know, there are Q&A cards on every table. If your question is not asked to the dais, we'll make sure to log in all the questions, and ensure that you get a call back, and that your time is not wasted by coming out here.

The third portion is asking your questions directly to the dais. One question per table if we have time. We'll see how long we could go on. The next portion is just to hear directly, to start off the run of shows, hearing from the mayor, and going straight to the Q&A.

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you, Fred. We normally do this at the end, but why don't we do it up front? Why don't we go down the line? This is our teams that's here. Normally we have the DA and the borough president, but Somos is going on in Puerto Rico, so I wanted to make sure I delayed my trip so I could hang out with you folks here, and the police commissioner's also at Somos as well, but I have the deputy commissioner here — first deputy commissioner — and I have the chief of department. So why don't we just go on down the line, so you'll know what team is here representing the various agencies?

Sadé Mc Intosh, Chief Human Resources Officer, Department for the Aging: All right. Good night, everyone. I'm Sadé McIntosh, representing New York City Aging. Nice to see you all tonight.

Tia Waddy, Deputy Chief of Staff, Administration for Children's Services: Good evening, everyone. Tia Waddy, ACS.

Jenna Mandel-Ricci, Chief of Staff, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Good evening, everyone. Jenna Mandel-Ricci with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Nice to see you all.

Dr. Eric Wei, Senior Vice President and Chief Quality Officer, NYC Health + Hospitals: Hi, everyone. Eric Wei, New York City Health and Hospitals.

Commissioner Keith Howard, Department of Youth and Community Development: Good evening, everyone. Keith Howard, Department of Youth and Community Development.

Commissioner Gary Jenkins, Department of Social Services: Good evening, Brooklyn family. Gary Jenkins, commissioner for the Department of Social Services.

Chancellor David Banks, Department of Education: David Banks, New York City schools chancellor.

Commissioner Kreizman: Fred Kreizman, commissioner of the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit.

Deputy Mayor Sheena Wright, Strategic Initiatives: Sheena Wright, deputy mayor of strategic initiatives.

Edward Caban, First Deputy Commissioner, Police Department: (Inaudible.)

Caban: Edward Caban, first deputy commissioner.

Jeffrey Maddrey, Chief of Patrol, Police Department: Jeff Maddrey, chief of patrol.

Marvin Walton, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, New York City Housing Authority: Good evening. Marvin Walton, deputy chief operation officer for the New York City Housing Authority.

Commissioner Kevin Kim, Department of Small Business Services: Good evening. Kevin Kim, commissioner of Small Business Services.

Yokarina Duarte, Chief of Staff, New York City Emergency Management: Good evening. Yokarina Duarte, chief of staff, New York City Emergency Management.

Sharun Goodwin, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Probation: Good evening. Sharun Goodwin, deputy commissioner for New York City Department of Probation.

AnnMarie Santiago, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Housing Preservation and Development: Good evening. AnnMarie Santiago, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, deputy commissioner.

Saloni Sethi, First Deputy Commissioner, Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence: Hi, everyone. Saloni Sethi, Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence.

James Miglino, Brooklyn South Borough Chief, Department of Sanitation: Good evening. James Miglino, Brooklyn south borough chief, Department of Sanitation.

Mayor Adams: Great, great, thank you, all. Cities are made up of agencies, and the relationship between taxpayers and government is — you pay your taxes, you're supposed to get back your goods and services through your agencies. And if the agencies are not aligned and coordinated, then it's a waste of your tax dollars. That is why it's imperative, under this administration, our trademark and Hallmark is going to be the coordination of agencies.

For far too long, we've had the siloing of government and everyone is stating, well, it's not their job and pointing fingers. Every issue that we have in this city, it is all about jobs. We have one team, and that's Team New York City. We wear one jersey here. But also want to say — I say this over and over again — that the person that sat down to get their portrait done and had a scar on their face, they told the artist that, "I know you notice my scar, but remember, I have a face." And I'm saying that to New York City. We have scars, but we have a face.

Every day, on average, we have six felonies on our subway system a day, but we also have a face. 3.5 million people use that subway every day and they get to and from their place of employment without any incident at all. We started this year, we wanted to go after the shootings and the gun violence and the homicides in this city. We put in place a plan regardless of those who thought we should not have. We put in place our anti-gun unit, and they, among other members of the law enforcement department, removed close to 6,000 illegal guns off our street.

We have a double digit [decrease] in homicide. Double digit [decrease] in shootings. You're seeing it different in our subway system every day. We started out dealing with encampments that were all throughout our subway system. We have removed all of those encampments. You don't see them in a subway system anymore. 2,000 people we put in some form of either shelter or safe haven so they can get the assistance that they needed.

We zeroed in on those who were sleeping on our streets, not because of any reason that we wanted to just remove people from sleeping on the streets, but when I started in January, I went out and visited those camps and those encampments and I saw inside there was inhumane: human waste, stale food, dirty clothing, drug paraphernalia. Some people were bipolar, schizophrenic. That is inhumane to allow people to live that way. And I said, as the mayor of this city, it's not happening under our watch.

We're number one in the hotel market on recovery in the top 25 major markets. New York is leading the way. 56 million tourists is coming to this city this year, 65 million next year. We just announced today operation get clean in the city, where we are going to make New York City the cleanest city in America, allocating millions of dollars of doing so. You told us about dyslexia problems. We're the first city of this size to have dyslexia screening for all of our children. And we go into Rikers Island to also screen those young men and women who are there that are potentially dyslexic. 30 percent to 40 percent of those inmates are dyslexic.

We were the first mayoral administration that had 100,000 summer youth jobs. Never been done before. And then you add that to the first time in history: five women deputy mayors, first woman police commissioner, first woman fire commissioner, a woman running the Department of Sanitation, a woman running Department of Probation. This administration is reflective of the city. First Korean to be the commissioner of Small Business Services. You see us breaking barriers.

We walk around this city with a hammer in our hand to crash glass ceilings, because that's what we are proposing to do. New York is not coming back; New York is back and we know it's back. And if you allow people to emphasize our scar and not our face, you're not going to realize how resilient this city is.

This administration lives under three words: get stuff done. And I only say the S part as stuff because I'm in a school building. We have another word for it. So we want to hear from you. We want to engage in a conversation. We don't want someone else to tell our story. We're going to do many of these town halls, because you need to hear directly from these commissioners and you need to hear directly from your mayor. I am comfortable on the ground. I'm on the subways. I talk to people. I engage with people. I want to know how we could run this city better. If you have some better ideas, we're willing to hear it.

Let me conclude with this. I was on a train the other day. I think it was the four train. Right in the middle of the car, there was a bunch of garbage and trash. A woman came up to me, yelling and screaming, and she said, "Look at this garbage on this train." And as she yelled and screamed. You know what I did? I walked over and picked it up. I put it in the garbage bag. This is our city. We can't simply sit on the sidelines and watch a city crumble apart and look for others to come up with the answers.

We need to do block cleanups. We need to do block watches. We need to volunteer in our schools. We need to get engaged, because this is our city. This is my city and your city, and together this city would be the city that we want it to be. That is our belief in this administration. So I look forward to this conversation and thanks so much for allowing me to come here. I spent many years here as the Brooklyn borough president, coming to the graduation ceremony with this amazing principal that's here, and I want to thank us for allowing us inside. We'll open the floor at this time.

Commissioner Kreizman: Excellent. We'll get started. We'll go to table number one. Patrick.

Patrick: Good evening. Mr. Mayor, the community members here say that they know and live many public safety issues that feel interconnected. From homelessness, gun violence, mentally ill, and also gang violence. A question they have is, what is your challenges to finding a comprehensive solution to the public safety challenges and how they can get involved?

Mayor Adams: It's a combination. When you look at the fact that we have a 27 year high in felony arrest. These officers have removed 6,000 guns off the street. In the subway system, they have conducted 750,000 subway inspections. We have combined our patrol borough with transit boroughs so that we ensure that the stations inside the precinct that we are conducting

inspections. 19,000 ejections from our system for those who are violating the system. We have cracked down on illegal plates. All of those motorcycles that you see running around? I don't know what your numbers are now, chief. You removed how many thousand?

Maddrey: About 10,000.

Mayor Adams: 10,000 illegal dirt bikes and ATVs that all of you told us about. But as fast as we arrest violent people, you know what happens? They're back on the street. Catch, release, repeat. That's what we see over and over and over again. We need your help to send a clear and loud message to Albany that we need to focus on innocent people of this city and the small number of repeated offenders should be held accountable. We had great reforms in Albany, but there's a small number of people who are repeated offenders and they're very violent, very dangerous, and they have no regard for everyday New Yorkers, and we need your help to send a message to Albany that this is not acceptable.

Commissioner Kreizman: All right, so next question. Hello, Pastor Monroe.

Pastor Monroe: Good evening to everyone. Question. What is your plan to create and support equitable community healing spaces that address mental, physical, social, economic safety?

Mayor Adams: Do we have anyone here from DOHMH is here? Okay, okay. We're going to turn it over to Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. But mental health issues are real. It was really escalated after COVID. The number of young people that contemplated suicide, the ages are so young. We were in the Bronx a few weeks ago, and the number of young people and just people who are not receiving the care that they deserve, and we can't continue to ignore it.

We are becoming very proactive in our approach. Doctor Vasani, who came from an organization called Fountain House, I met him when I was campaigning. They believe in the clubhouse model, giving people wraparound services. It's about community, support, and the care that people deserve. Governor Hochul announced with me a couple of weeks ago that we opened up new psychiatric beds. A large number of psychiatric beds were closed because of COVID, and we just really ignored the fact that people were walking the streets that can't take care of themselves.

We need a stronger Kendra's Law that will allow people to get the support they need. If a person is dealing with real mental health issues, you cannot expect for them to get the assistance on their own, and we want to zero in. We're going to need help from Albany, but we're going to do our job also, and we have the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene here to talk about some of the things that we would like to do.

Jenna Mandel-Ricci: Thank you. I'm better at mental health than technology. Hi, everyone. Thank you, mayor, and thank you for the question. I'm here on behalf of the Health Department tonight, and as the mayor mentioned, Commissioner Vasani — this is his number one issue. This is why he came to the Health Department and is working with this administration.

There are three major ... We want to help everyone in this city heal and be as healthy as they can, and there are three very specific populations that we're focused on. Those suffering from severe

mental illness, youth mental health, which, as the mayor mentioned, is incredibly, incredibly important — our young people have been through so much over the last couple of years and even before — and then, of course, managing and preventing additional overdose deaths and helping folks that are suffering.

And the commissioner says all the time, all of this comes from a place of suffering, and so we really need to help people be as healthy and well as they can. And specifically with youth mental health, which the mayor talked about a little bit, we are really looking at a comprehensive model where we can help children who are doing well remain well, help children who are at risk get the help that they need.

And as the mayor also mentioned, we're working with all of our city partners. We're developing three comprehensive plans, which we'll be releasing in the coming weeks, but we need to work with — just on both my sides — Administration for Children's Services, Health and Hospitals, and all of the other hospitals and all of the other agencies that you see here, in order to support all of these populations and all of us as New Yorkers. So, very excited and honored to be doing this work with this administration. Thank you.

Commissioner Kreizman: Excellent. Next question, we have Kenny Ringle.

Kenny Ringle: Good evening, mayor. The concern at this table was about school safety for the staff and the students. So the question is, what is being done to get more permanent schools safety agents into schools, and what is the timeline of getting it done?

Mayor Adams: Turn it over to the chancellor, but I am extremely concerned. I think this week... how many guns we found in schools?

Maddrey: Just two today.

Mayor Adams: We found two guns today. One in the Bronx and one in Brooklyn. 5-year-old child had a gun in their book bag. 5-years-old. Another 14-year-old — I think last week we found a gun in the classroom. Public safety for our children is crucial. These children are getting guns from adults, and we need to zero in on those adults who are supplying them with guns, but I'll turn that question over to former school safety agent, now, Chancellor David Banks.

Chancellor Banks: That's right, I was a school safety agent at Clara Barton High School many years ago. Yes, yes. So I have the greatest respect. When I walk into any school, the first thing that I do is to acknowledge the school safety agents. They've gotten a bad rap over the last several years. It's interesting. I would always say that the people who knock school safety agents are the people who don't work in schools.

Because anybody who works in schools knows how much value school safety agents bring to our children and to all the adults who work in the building. And in any good school, like you have here with Jodie Cohen, they recognize that school safety agents are part of the fabric of a great school and they are respected and they're valued members of the school community. And so I want to acknowledge that. We've been increasing the number of school safety agents since the mayor has come into office, and we're going to continue to do that.

So we're on the upswing. We're bringing in more agents. But school safety agents themselves cannot solve the problems that we continue to bear witness to. They are part of the solution, but they're not the entire solution, and we should never put that much on each one of them, as though all safety issues should be resolved by school safety agents. No, they're resolved by the culture of a school and of a school community. It's part of what the mayor was talking about when he said getting on the train. We can't always look to somebody else to do it.

And it's a community issue that we've got to deal with. That kindergarten student who had a gun, they didn't go out and buy a gun. It was somebody in their family who had a gun in their bookbag, and that kindergarten student went and told their teacher, "There's a gun in my bookbag." That's how they found it. But a lot of the students that we had found, this increase in weapons is because kids are still fearful, and they're coming and they're going to school, and that's the broader community.

NYPD has been working overtime to resolve those issues, but even they can't solve all of it. It's left to all of us to pay attention, to stay focused, to stay vigilant about what's happening. But we feel good about where we are. Mark Rampersant — is Mark Rampersant here somewhere in the room? Mark heads up our Office of School Safety. And those of you who know, Mark does a great, great job leading the entire division for us at the DOE and working closely with the NYPD. So we're working hard and we're going to continue to work to get it done.

Mayor Adams: Chancellor, if you can, could you just talk about the community doing it, please talk about your Project Pivot.

Chancellor Banks: Yes. Yes. So one of the things that we launched is called Project Pivot, which just started. We identified about 138 schools around the city in every borough that had been experiencing the greatest level of challenge where young people either have the highest rates of chronic absenteeism or incidents that we've been seeing. And in keeping what the mayor just said, engaging those groups to, and these are community groups, these are folks from the community who we clearly identified, introduced them to school leaders to say, let community messages, credible messages from the community be helpful. And it's not just safety, but it's about relationships. Folks who are serving as mentors, big brothers, big sisters, tutors, some are providing safe passage to and from school. It runs the whole gamut because if you really want to help school safety, it's about building the many programs that you can provide for kids after school, ways to engage them.

The police commissioner and I visited Evander Childs High School together in the Bronx and we were there to talk about safety issues and the kids wanted to talk to us about after school basketball and additional tutoring programs and math and music and science. And it was interesting to me that almost every question that they had was about how do we get additional resources for those programs? Because the more programs we get, the less engaged we are for all the other negativity that they might be involved in. So again, it shows you it's all connected. And if we work together across these agencies, which we are doing together with you as community, we'll continue to work really hard to solve these problems.

Commissioner Kreizman: Excellent. Next question. Next table. We have Lamona.

Lamona: Good evening, everyone. Mayor Adams, understanding that there are... initiatives are being developed that will be of great benefit to the mentally ill population, how can the community help push those initiatives?

Mayor Adams: No. So important, and there's probably three levels. Number one, we are going to need some real help in January from Albany, there's something called the Kendra's Law. The Kendra's Law allows the court to mandate someone get the necessary care that they deserve so they're not harmful to themselves and harmful to others. We're going to need that law strengthened and your voice is adding your voices to it. It's crucial. The second is community participation. We really want to encourage the community. If you see someone walking up and down the block talking to themselves, you see them acting violent. We can't continue to walk past these individuals until they harm themselves and harm someone else. Like we saw what happened to FDNY Lieutenant Russo stabbed in that manner. And we see these cases over and over again. It could be on the subway, it could be on the block of... That see something, say something, do something it's not only to terrorism, it's just really getting engaged and saying, I'm not going to wait until this person harms someone.

And third is what Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is doing. Everything from the B-HEARD initiative, this is a new initiative that we are allowing a specialized group to respond to calls for a person that is dealing with a mental health illness instead of always having the police that can aggravate the situation. We are finding that we're getting good results with that. But applying those resources, like I stated, the Fountain House clubhouse model, getting people with community, a medical assistant and the mental health assistance that they need. And we are just front and center on that to make sure that people get the assistance they need. But the community can play a vital role in the clubhouse model by volunteering, going in. Once people have community, they can identify someone before they reach the level of a crisis level. So that is such an important role for all of us to engage in this mental health crisis that we're seeing.

Commissioner Kreizman: Thank you. Next question, the next table we'll have Karen.

Karen: You know I'm in trouble, right? Good evening, Mr. Mayor. See they looking at me. You see how they looking at me? This was a very well diverse table. We have the merchants association, we have the violence interrupters, educators, and they talked about quality life. I know I have one — I'm getting in trouble. So I'm trying to sum this up so they could all be happy because they couldn't get this question here and I had to write it up. So they would like to know what kind of resources can be allowed to open up more community schools that will put, I see his head shaking, programs to address gang recruitment in middle and high schools and gun violence? For instance, like mentorship programs, safe space for youth to hang out instead of being out on the street, which affects the vendors and streets, which makes quality of life an issue. You all okay? You all alright? You all good?

Mayor Adams: I like that. Good job. Good job. Good job.

Karen: Okay.

Mayor Adams: Deputy Mayor Wright and I met with a group of young men, specifically today at City Hall. Actually the deputy mayor met with them first a month or so previously. And when they met with her and some of our other team members, organization's called NeON, they told her we would like to meet with the mayor at City Hall. And so they thought that she wasn't going to say yes and she said, well, bring it on. He'll meet with you. And so we met with them today and I was just really impressed with those young people. And they said the same thing that this table is saying. All of them are just as involved. All of them were involved with the justice system and they said we would have had a better outcome if we would've had some alternatives.

And so the chancellor and I, when I was Brooklyn borough president, we did something called extended use where we paid to use the school buildings and kept the school buildings open instead of the nonprofits having to pay for the school safety agents, the cleaning, the insurance. We said, listen, if the nonprofits are volunteering that time, we should be picking up the tabs. We're now re-looking at that to see if we can identify certain schools where we could have the extended use so this beautiful gym could be used, classrooms could be used, shops could be used, we could do HVAC training.

So we want to use this resource as a school building, not from seven to three, but to use it as a full focal point to the community. And so we see eye to eye. We need to have more spaces to have our young people to be in a safe space and get the skills they need so they are employable and they could feel as though this community is really behind them. So we agree 100% and that's what the chancellors attempted to do to identify how to expand the extended use project.

Commissioner Kreizman: Thank you. Next question, Angelica.

Angelica: Hi, sir. What are you doing to push interagency efforts to address public safety, food insecurity, and quality of life issues?

Mayor Adams: It's all about that. And I think the best words is if Chief Maddrey to talk about what they did around J'Ouvert and what they're doing continuously. Chief?

Maddrey: Yes, sir. Good evening and thank you for your question. One of the first things when I took over as a chief of patrol, the mayor told me, he said he wanted more collaboration. So throughout the summer, we worked closely with the sheriff's department, DEP, Department of Environmental Protection, State Liquor Authority, NYCHA, MTA, DOH, you name the city agency, we working closely with them. And throughout this summer, a lot of challenges that oftentimes we couldn't deal with as an agency by ourselves, we were able to get past those challenges because we had different levels of expertise along with us. Now, for instance, and I'll talk about J'Ouvert because we are here in Brooklyn south with Chief Kemper, who did an incredible job with his team making sure we had one of the safest J'Ouverts ever.

A lot of times we would go to locations, we have certain barriers where we can't just go into buildings and stuff like that, but with the Department of Buildings and with the sheriff's office, what they're allowed to do gave us access to these buildings. We were able to close down potentially dangerous parties. We were able to issue summonses. DEP was out there with the sound meter and we weren't out there just to do enforcement. We would go to people's homes and put the sound meter on and say, hey listen, you're about four decibels too high. And so many

people complied. So it allowed people to have a great Labor Day weekend. And throughout the summer, people were able to enjoy their homes without us being heavy handed with enforcement.

Through this collaboration with the sheriff's office, the things that we did with the sheriff's office, state office of cannabis, we took so many weed trucks that were out there throughout the city working with the DWCP, we were able to take counterfeit goods throughout the summer. We did so many different initiatives, the bikes, the ATVs — close to 10,000 ATVs. The paper plates, almost 4,000 cars seized. This wasn't the NYPD doing it alone. This was us working closely with other city agencies to help increase public safety, to help reduce traffic violence and to help get closer with the communities and work closer with the communities. We work close with the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs with MOCJ to do community events as well. So this is how we're working closely with other city agencies to help increase public safety.

Mayor Adams: Commissioner Jenkins, can you talk about our food insecurity?

Commissioner Jenkins: Good evening. So again, the mayor directed us not to work in silos and that's not something that we are doing. We are working with the Mayor's Office of Food Policy, we're working with HRA, we are working with the pantries across the city in soup kitchens — really understanding what are their needs. We have a new contract with a provider that is... folks will say what they need for the community. In the past administrations — folks, we would tell them what they can order, right? That didn't work. You know what's needed. So it's really going to the communities, understanding what are the needs, what type of foods are being requested by the folks that come visit so they can place that order as far as what they need. Fresh fruits and vegetables, right? Because our communities deserve it and now they're ordering those fresh fruits and vegetables in quantities that's applicable to the need within those communities. So that's what we're doing in that front. And we are going to continue to meet with communities, meet with the providers, understand what the needs are, and do our damndest to meet those demands. Thank you.

Mayor Adams: And the collaboration is just so important. The table who mentioned that today we did an announcement about Get Stuff Clean. We had Sue Donoghue, the commissioner of Parks was there. We had Department of Health and Mental Hygiene was there. We had DOT, Ydanis Rodriguez, the commissioner was there. We had Department of Sanitation was there. We had DEP was there, because if we are going to clean the city, what has happened previously is that there were pockets in the city that no one knew who was supposed to clean them up. Everyone was saying, well it's not Parks, it's not Department of Sanitation, it's not this... So we are alleviating that and saying the whole team is going to clean up the problem and this rodent issue. Everyone who knows me knows I hate rats and we will get rid of them. We are zeroing in on the rodents. But it was a whole team effort on how we are going to solve these problems in the city. You wanted to add something Sue?

Commissioner Sue Donoghue, Department of Parks and Recreation: I just wanted to add because I think it's relevant to both of the questions that were just asked in terms of youth and public safety. We have a wonderful collaboration with PD on our Saturday Night Lights program that happens in our rec centers across the city. And this administration has made a terrific investment in those rec centers. We are now able to open our rec centers. We have extended

hours at our rec centers recognizing that they are places in communities where youth can come. And in fact, our rec centers are free for youth, anyone 24 and under. So the kind of programming like the Saturday Night Lights program with NYPD, providing facilities in communities across the city and our rec centers are wonderful centers for people to come together, especially youth and have an alternative and a place to go. So it's just an important part of how we are enhancing public safety in communities throughout the city.

Commissioner Kreizman: And as Chief Maddrey also mentioned that not working in silos, our Community Affairs Unit works closely with all the agencies to ensure the concerns of civic groups, community boards and all the various leaders in the communities address the issues across all the agencies. But again, nothing's in silos. These community conversations and quality of life work throughout the year with working with the BIDs to ensure this dialogue. Chief Maddrey is personally on those phone calls together as leadership from all the city agencies. So this way it's a team effort and it's not one silo. One agency doesn't know who reports to who. It's a community. It's a conversation with everyone on the phone and the leadership positions under this administration in order to get stuff done.

So next question we have is — next table, Ed Jackson.

Ed Jackson: Good evening, sir. Illegal vending has become a major issue since it was taken away from the NYPD. The illegal vendors have become more brazen with large carts, open flames and poor health standards. They are fighting with each other and the legal business owners. The agency response has been poor at best. How can we work with your office to more effectively respond to these issues and to neighborhood response not (inaudible)?

Mayor Adams: Yeah, no, I agree. If I had to give us a grade, it won't be a good one. And I think it has a lot to do with the mixed messaging that we're getting around vending. There's a whole push of not to stop people from vending. There is a clear concern around those business corridors where they're having illegal vendors taking place, almost selling the same goods that people have inside stores that are paying taxes. And we have to refocus our attention and find the right balance. There's an organization called the Street Vendors Project, I think that we can coexist in a way that's not going to take away from those businesses that have brick and mortar businesses that are being hit with higher prices, high costs, paying taxes, they've been regulated to make sure their food and everything else is served appropriately. We need a better response and we have to figure that out.

It's going to be a combination of the NYPD, of the workers protection that used to be consumer affairs, as well as bringing folks from the Street Vendors Project at the table and come up with a real solution. We don't want to criminalize people, but we also don't want total disorder. And some locations that I have driven around to, it's not acceptable. It's not acceptable and we are not at the level that we ought to be. We got to do a better job and we are going to do a better job.

Commissioner Kreizman: Excellent. Next table, Mohammed.

Mohammed: Good evening, Mr. Mayor. How can the NYPD increase the attendance for the monthly council NCO Build the Block meetings, for instance, many officers use their own funds to provide refreshments to the attendees to try and increase those numbers.

Mayor Adams: Yeah, yeah, no, thank you. Thank you for that. And also just the vendor problem, if there's a particular location that you identify, please share with us and let us know if there's a particular location. Just let Chief Maddrey know, that's here. First, a couple of things. We should identify where they're using their own funds and the food because we have something called the Mayor's Fund and the Police Foundation, those officers should not be using their own money. And so we should coordinate with the precincts chief, we should coordinate and deputy commissioner and we should come up with some type of allotment where we are picking up the tab. We could give some of the nonprofits to pick up the funds so they're not doing that. And I'll make sure they have some good healthy vegan meal there at the meetings.

Commissioner Kreizman: Thank you. Next question, Malcolm.

Malcolm: Oh, got it. Good evening, mayor. First I want to thank the participants of this table. We have a great police officer, we got a district manager, educators, stop violence people, food insecurity people, and a constituent. I'd like to call this team power. One question, I have two, but when you mention the repeated offenders plague in our communities and the need for Albany electeds to get stuff done, is revisiting bail reform part of the solution? Because certain crimes and the level of crimes shouldn't have bail reform applicability. Right. That's one. Also we have a constituent here. Her name...

Commissioner Kreizman: Let's do one question per table and then this way we'll see as many tables as possible.

Malcolm: I know. I'm going to be real quick. I have a constituent. Sure. I'll sit down. I have a constituent that needed to talk to...

Mayor Adams: I'm sorry. The constituent what?

Malcolm: Sure. Imma be real quick, seriously. I have a constituent who has been working at DOE food service for 16 years and she was involved in an investigation that...

Mayor Adams: Okay. Hold on. I don't want to go into a private situation.

Malcolm: Sure.

Mayor Adams: When she finishes, she can come up.

Malcolm: Sure. Got you.

Mayor Adams: Okay. I don't want to go into a private conversation that someone has, particularly with them.

Malcolm: Bail reform.

Mayor Adams: Yeah. People use this term bail reform because it's an attractive term. There are many rivers that feed the dysfunctionality of our criminal justice system. We have to dam each

one of those rivers. Bail reform is just one of those rivers. You should not have someone sitting on Rikers for three years waiting to go to trial. You should not be bringing someone to court, having them sit there with a defense attorney waiting for four hours just to see the judge for 30 seconds. The system is broken. I know it's attractive just to talk about bail reform and I do believe we need to give judges the dangerousness standard to make a determination if someone will do imminent threat to a community. We should do that. But that is only a small part of it.

We had a meeting at Gracie Mansion with defense attorneys, judges, lawmakers, everyone that's involved in the criminal justice system, and you know what we discovered? There are 10 items maybe on the list that we're concerned about. Eight of those 10 we all agreed on. We were so busy highlighting the two things we disagree on. All of us wanted safe streets and justice for people in an expeditious fashion. We need to deal with the eight things that we agree on and then let's come back to the two things that we disagree on. That is where I want to go. I want to see where do we agree.

People deserve to have justice if you are a victim, justice if you're a person that's accused for a crime, and right now neither side is getting the justice that they deserve and we need to make sure that they do that by ensuring those who commit crimes are held accountable and those who are accused that did not commit a crime are not sitting on Rikers Island for years before justice prevails.

Commissioner Kreizman: Thank you. We want to be mindful just to be considerate to everyone at every table. We want to get as many questions, so we'll keep it short, to the point and one question please. Next table. Rodney.

Rodney: Good evening, Mayor Adams and esteemed members of the dais. In Brooklyn south there's many commercial vehicles that are double parked illegally. What is the city doing to provide heavy-duty tow operations in residential areas?

Mayor Adams: Imma turn it over to Chief Maddrey, but that is going back to his coordination. I know he has been really coordinating with DOT, but Chief Maddrey.

Maddrey: Yes, absolutely. We started a program and it started out in Queens south where we started towing commercial vehicles away, and it is a very lengthy process. First, one of the main things we need is space, because we don't tow the cars all the way down to the pound. If we did that, we'd only tow one or two a night, so we have to have some space. This is something that we'll work on for Brooklyn south, but we work closely with DOT, our traffic department and NYPD.

It's been a huge success in Queens. I think we already started in the Bronx as well, and we're going to be moving to all the boroughs. It's a big task, but I know Chief Kemp over here and his team will definitely find a space where we can store the large commercial vehicles temporarily until we're able to take them to the pound. It's something that we'll start looking at, Mike. We'll start taking a look at that and then we'll bring it to Brooklyn south.

Mayor Adams: And if there's a location that's particularly troublesome, please let us know. Chief Kemp is here. Let us know if there's a particular location you're talking about. But we have

been really zeroing in on those illegal trucks. We're in the Springfield area — went up to the Bronx because communities should not have to deal with that. But if there's a particular area that you identified as troublesome, please let the chief know and let's zero in on it.

Commissioner Kreizman: Excellent. Next question. Kevin.

Kevin: Good evening, sir. We had a substantive conversation here about crime in the city and lack of services in certain communities. The question which was asked is how does the administration expect to bring the necessary resources such as mental health, violence interrupters, after school programs, job creation and adult education into communities that need them the most?

Mayor Adams: Well, first of all, I see a lot of guys and ladies here from the crisis management team. I really want to applaud them for what they have done and how they have responded on the frontline for many years. This is the program that I really believe in and we want to continue. I know Deputy Mayor Wright is doing a lot with MOCJ to expedite payment to make sure that we give you the financial support that you need and the infrastructure because it's difficult when you are out trying to address gun violence and then you have to make sure your books are in order and all those other things, so we are coming up with real good ways to give you that infrastructure that you deserve.

One thing that the chancellor is doing, which is very interesting that he brought it to my attention, if you do an analysis to the schools that are struggling academically, you're also finding that those are the same schools that are dealing with violence, the same schools that are dealing with a large number of homelessness, the same schools that's dealing with food insecurity, that's dealing with health issues. We are pinpointing those schools and those areas and those precincts and we're applying additional resources because of that, because we have to go where the problems are, and that is something that the chancellor is doing. That is something that the police commissioner... identifying those 30 precincts that they have the highest level of violence and we need to pinpoint all of our resources in those locations. That question is dead on. We need to make sure the resources are going where the problems are.

Commissioner Kreizman: Thank you. Next question. Ito.

Ito: Good evening, Mr. Mayor. We wanted to ask you, how do you ensure greater accountability for those who commit the more egregious crimes in our city and ensure more accessible mental health services for our younger people? Thank you.

Mayor Adams: I know that that was a question that we dealt with. Mental health is huge, that we need to deal with and that's why the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene was talking about some of the things that Dr. Vasan, who's really extremely proficient in this area. We intentionally recruited him to come into the agency because we knew he was going to bring that level of concern. We're going to be rolling out some of the things we are looking to do in Albany and in the city. It's about creating and building those partnerships. There's no getting around that we're going to continue to build the partnership.

Those advocates who have been in this space for a long time, we are going through the same thing we did with the criminal justice issue we're going to do with the mental health issue. We're going to get everyone at Gracie Mansion, sit down, identify those areas we agree on and those small areas where we disagree on, we will work through them. But we agree on more than we think and we want to make sure that we collaborate together to come up with these real solutions around the mental health crises that we are facing in our city.

Commissioner Kreizman: Next question. Jerry.

Jerry: Hello. Good evening, honorable mayor and panel. Here at this table we'd like to know how can you ensure that kids and families can fully and safely take advantage of opportunities at schools when there is a lack of crossing guards, school safety agents at the school programs and save public transportation?

Mayor Adams: A couple of things, and the chancellor could talk about what's happening in the school. This is what I learned. There are a lot of programs that no one has taken advantage of because no one know of them. That was part of the conversation we had with Neon today. We must make it user friendly to know what resources are available. It is unbelievable how many people don't take advantage of all of these resources that are in this city. We send back billions of dollars in resources. DYCD has a host of programs that no one is taking advantage of. We have so many job training programs, et cetera. We have failed to communicate properly what resources are available.

We don't have a school crossing guard shortage. Our school crossing guards are there, they're assigned. We make sure that school crossing guards are at every crossing location that's needed, and as I stated, our subway system, we got to get better with those six felonies we have a day, there's no getting around it. I don't want any felony on my train. But these babies go back and forth to school. As I said, 3.5 million people use our subway system. Our goal is not to have one felony on our system, but we do a darn good job with the transit police personnel of making sure children and families are safely using our system. We want it to be perfect and that's what we're pursuing to make sure that you don't have to feel uncomfortable as you use the system, as we make sure it's a safe space.

That's why we put those thousand new offices down in the system. That's why we have them doing patrol, going to the conductor, letting them know to notify they're at the station and be visibly present in the system and engage with the public, walk through the train, talk to people, let them know that they're there. We have a job to continue to do and we're going to do that and it's a real job and we're proud of doing that.

Chancellor Banks: Let me also just piggyback off the mass comments as well, because the mayor and I talk about this quite a bit. We've been doing these forums all over the city, and it's not just these forums, but it's any general community forums. We're always very focused on just what's not working, but there's a lot of things that are working and working well. The mayor visits schools on his own. I'm not even with him and he'll contact me and say, "I saw this school and they got this phenomenal program or they got washers and dryers in the schools and taking care of the kids." But nobody talks about that.

I would love to see us when we have these forums, tell me something that's working, even as you talk about the stuff that needs fixing. There's a lot that needs fixing. But I think if we always focus on the negative, we miss the larger narrative around the stuff that works. There's a lot of great things that work in the city and people need to be inspired to do better by hearing more about those things that work as well. I wanted to just acknowledge and ask them to stand: Robert Quinlan is the principal of Midwood High School; John Banks, principal of Origin High School; superintendents Prayor, Chan, Esperance; and principal deCastro. If you would all just stand because these are leaders in our New York City schools. Superintendent Pretto I missed, absolutely, and some others.

I mean, I called some names, some I missed, but if you were here, the reason I wanted to do that is simply to say this, I salute you and I know the great work that you're doing and you need continued help and support and that's why the mayor's office and the chancellor and the deputy mayor, we are working hard every day to support the great work. But don't believe the hype that there's only craziness going on out here. There's amazing, wonderful leadership, inspired leadership, great things that are happening in our neighborhoods and our communities and we ought to acknowledge that as quickly as we acknowledge the things that are not working so well.

Commissioner Kreizman: Thank you. Next table. Next question. We have Tony.

Tony: Good evening, Mr. Mayor. I got to say the chancellor always sets it up for me the right way. Mr. Mayor, what can the community do along with the administration to collectively address the mental health crisis in our schools? Can a hotline be established to assist in this manner to link community with solutions?

Mayor Adams: We have a hotline, don't we? Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. I'm sure we have a hotline.

Mandel-Ricci: Thank you so much for the question. I just wanted to use this opportunity to talk a little bit more about youth mental health, and as I mentioned earlier, we're going to be putting out a comprehensive plan talking about what the city can do holistically to address youth mental health. Again, it's about recognizing kids that are doing great and thinking about the supports that they need, kids that may be at risk, and then kids that are suffering and need help. We're really thinking about this holistically, again, thinking about de-siloing, thinking about the role of the community, community based organizations, faith-based organizations, the healthcare system, my good friend Dr. Wei right here from Health and Hospitals and thinking about developing a youth mental health safety net and really training and working with all of the people in young people's lives that have the opportunity to help them, to recognize signs of distress, get them the help they need, help them have good, strong relationships.

We're very excited about this work. Again, taking a page from Chancellor Banks, there's a lot of amazing things that are already happening. Finding those things, growing them, expanding them, and connecting them and getting everyone rowing in the same direction with clear goals, that's what we want to do so we can make sure that all our youth have the supports that they need to thrive. Thank you.

Mayor Adams: Thank you.

Commissioner Kreizman: Thank you. Next question. Tiffany.

Tiffany: Good evening, mayor. How is the city planning to support teachers who work with youth who have been traumatized, exposed to violence in the community, domestic violence in the home, and living with parents who cannot address their needs?

Mayor Adams: I think we're going to let the chancellor touch that, but I think that's right. You're right. All city workers have been traumatized in general, but specifically our teachers. COVID knocked us down and city workers were not able to just close up. Our TA workers lost a lot of their colleagues, our police officers, firefighters, EMTs. Our teachers watched these babies come in. This was a hard one for us. When you are there for the city, you need the city to be there for you. Vicarious trauma is real. No one calls the cop to invite them to a party. They call them when the party was shot up.

If you were in the ER, you're not there because someone is saying, "Hey, I feel healthy." You're there because they're in a crisis. These teachers were having these children come to school day after day after day. There was a level of uncertainty. Is the school open? Is the school closed? That's why when I came into office, I said, "We are going to have clarity. Our schools are staying open. They're going to stay open." Parents had clarity, teachers had clarity.

But 320,000 city employees weather us through this crisis. I don't know if people realize it. You notice you're not talking about COVID anymore because we weathered the storm and we guided us through. You're not talking about monkeypox anymore because we weathered us through this. You're not talking about asylum seekers anymore. We weathered us through this. This has been a steady hand at the ship during storms in the city and we've normalized the storms and did such a darn good job that you're not even hearing about the crises anymore because of this team that's up here. It's hard. It's hard on your families, it's hard on your interactions. But we continue to do the job and yes, we have to be there for those teachers and give them the emotional and mental support that they need to do their job.

We were on the phone last week chancellor... I think it was two weeks ago. These educators had to bring in a substantial number of children who are asylum seekers. These principles were amazing.

Chancellor Banks: That's right.

Mayor Adams: You maybe want to share what they did, but talk about also what we're doing to give that support that they need.

Chancellor Banks: That's why I said it's important to lift up the voices of our educators and all those folks who work in our schools. From school safety agents, to the folks who work in the kitchen, the folks who keep our buildings clean. I mean, these are amazing, amazing people. They really are and I'm telling you, I have the great fortune as chancellor as I move around this city, the stories that I hear the best decision the mayor made was to keep our schools open. Because what that did was that gave us a path to normalcy and that's what everybody who works in the school needs.

You're right. A lot of times we talk about our kids and all the issues that they've gone through, but the adults in those buildings have gone through trauma themselves. But they also needed a return to normalcy, some degree of just being back connected. It gives them a joy to be around the kids, to be around their other colleagues. It's important and for those who do suffer from some extreme levels of trauma that need to be dealt with, the city has a whole host of supports through the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

But sometimes the great supports are just folks being with each other and not being home in isolation and suffering. We are human beings and we are not meant to be in isolation. We're meant to be with our brothers and our sisters and our people and your tribe. Your schools, that's your tribe. That means a lot to people. It means more than some folks even fully appreciate and that's why I salute the mayor because he's the one who made the hard call and said for better or worse, we're going to keep these schools open and there's going to be a path directing people back to a sense of normalcy.

We are still in that journey. We're not all the way back, but the love and the support that teachers, and educators and principals have in their schools, there's nothing quite like that. It's really necessary for the wholeness of everybody.

Commissioner Kreizman: Next table. Could we go to Valerie?

Valerie: Good evening, mayor. This table would like to know what is the city's strategic approach to enhance shelters for a better quality of life by addressing mental health, safety and a connection with schools?

Mayor Adams: We need to get out of the shelter business. We need to get into affordable housing and it's low-income and middle-income. A lot of times people forget middle-income, but middle-income folks are struggling. Our goal is, first we had to deal with the 20... I think we up to 23, 24,000 asylum seekers and migrants. We were very clear that we had to get the federal government to do something at the border. We were successful in doing so and it just really... We have the highest number of people in our care in the history.

Homelessness is a 40 year problem that has never been really dealt with face on. So we have to build more affordable housing. How do we do it? Got to get those who are saying build more houses to stop saying don't build in my district. That's one way to do it. Every time we come up with a good project and could build thousands of units of affordable housing, you have those who say, "Yes, we need affordable housing, rah rah rah but wait a minute, not in my district." No. We all have to deal with the housing crisis.

So we have a bunch of projects in the pipeline. We're going to fast track some of the projects. The method was just too antiquated. You have thousands of units of housing that people can't move in because the bureaucracy is in the way. We are looking at how to rethink this entire bureaucracy so we can get people in housing that we built, but we also need those local electeds to embrace the housing that they're all calling for.

I can't tell you how many calls I get from elected officials that on Monday they're rallying for more housing. On Tuesday they say don't build it in my district. Can't happen. Can't happen. Housing is a problem that the entire city must address and every neighborhood should be welcoming for housing for people. It shouldn't be destroying neighborhoods but we need to all know we need our share.

Commissioner Kreizman: Thank you. Next question, Alina.

Alina: Hi. Good evening, Mr. Mayor. What things are being put into place to provide a more positive perception of public safety as far as social media and commercials?

Mayor Adams: I know Chief Maddrey is doing some real positive stuff that he's doing, that he's putting out there. We have taken a different approach to all of our agencies. Agencies historically, they have been very defensive. They waited until someone criticizes them and then they try to find reason to respond to that criticism. We're not doing that. We are proactive. We want people to see our product.

Every week I put out my video of showing what I'm doing throughout the city. The police commissioner is starting to do it. The chancellor is starting to do it. We got a good product. We know we have a good product and we're not going to leave it up to the mass media to define our product for us. That's what the commissioner is doing and every agency is starting to do. Not only law enforcement, but every agency is starting to say here's what we are doing so we can sell our product. Using social media is something that the commissioner has really embraced and I know the chief of patrol has been embracing and doing the same thing. So we are going to use social media and other forms of communication to let you know how good our product is.

Commissioner Kreizman: Thank you. Next question. We'll go to Anastasia.

Anastasia: Good evening, Mr. Mayor. Our city is a very resource rich city, but there is a very poor access to those services. What are you as our mayor doing to change that? For example, recidivists reentering the society need more wraparound services or those who are afflicted with homelessness and mental illness desperately need services as well.

Mayor Adams: We have to make the services availability user friendly. That's the bottom line. If I were to ask anyone in this room, where do you go to give someone a job? That should be universal. We're going to open a universal connectivity to any employee that's looking for an employee and anyone that's looking for a job, you should be...

Just as we all know, if you want to see a video, you go to YouTube. We should know one place if you want to get a job, there's a place you can go to do so. We need to simplify government and stop making government this closed door that we all talking to each other. Has to become user friendly. There are so many programs out there for mental health of training, employment, of pantries, food pantries, of childcare.

We just increased the money allocated for childcare. But none of this is any good if everyday New Yorkers don't know how to get access to those resources. So we are going to create a user

friendly government so people can know how to get the resources they're looking for. That is not what has happened in the past and that's our goal.

Commissioner Kreizman: Last table we'll go with Andrew.

Andrew: Good evening, sir. How can we leverage existing school and social programs to increase interconnectivity between generations?

Mayor Adams: You sound like you a radio host or something. (Laughter.) Know what I'm saying? Oh, you want to get that chancellor? In the Department of Aging? Chancellor? You in the Department of Aging?

McIntosh: I'm sorry, could you repeat the question please?

Chancellor Banks: We just want to hear your voice one more time.

McIntosh: I got distracted with your voice.

Andrew: How can we leverage...

Chancellor Banks: You got a future in this man.

Andrew: How can we leverage existing school and social programs to increase interconnectivity between generations?

McIntosh: All right, thank you for your question. So the Department for the Aging has several services that we administer through community based organizations. So what you can do or the community can do to help leverage the resources is to basically reach out to the older adult centers, find out, you can tell us specifically what resources you need and we can look into providing the services that these older adults need.

We also have programs such as the Foster Grandparent Resources program that we connect the youths to assist older adults who are in need. We have various services that we provide where we allow the youths to basically give companionship to older adults just to name a few.

Mayor Adams: Yeah, I didn't realize you said intergenerational. We hire someone that we just brought on board, a sports and wellness director. We are going to elevate sports and wellness in the city and the goal is to do everything from pickleball, to gaming. We are going to allow our teens to be intergenerational. We're going to really encourage everything from video games to kickball to soccer. We're going to use sports and wellness to break down these walls and barriers.

Anyone who has ever played on a sports team know that's the best way to bring people together no matter what ethnicity you may be. So we are really going to lean into sports and wellness. We're going to get all of our professional teams on board. The Nets, the Knicks, the Mets, the Jets. We are going to really elevate sports and wellness in one way. We believe that intergenerational collaboration is using sports and wellness to do so because there's a disconnect

between our seniors and our young people, and we both can learn so much from each other. Sports and wellness is something that we are going to really lean into in this city.

Commissioner Kreizman: So I just want to thank everyone for coming together for these community conversations through our eight patrol boroughs. At these community conversations through eight patrol boroughs we've had over 2,000 residents come and participate in these conversations. Over 500 question cards so far before this one and the last seven were collected, intaked and got return phone calls. We've had over 145 questions including tonight asked directly to the mayor in these community conversations, but they're not over yet. These might be the eight patrol borough community conversations on the public safety, but we're going to continue these town hall type of conversations with our youth more specific neighborhoods.

We want to thank everyone on this day is for participating because the silos are no silos through city agencies. We work as a team to get this stuff done under this mayor's leadership.

Mayor Adams: I just want to acknowledge our law enforcement personnel. Law enforcement, can you stand up men and women of law enforcement that's here? Thanks for coming out and participating and we are going to do this throughout my three years and two months of this term. We're going to do this. We want to hear from you. I think one of the greatest questions that has ever been asked in this city came from Mayor Koch. "How am I doing?"

We want constant feedback. We did law enforcement now because this is an important issue. But we wanted constant feedback about how clean are your streets, quality of life issues, what's happening in the schools. How do we do different things to bring the city together. So this is not one and done, you will trust me. You're to are going to be tired of me by the time we keep coming back and hearing directly from you. We learn a lot at these conversations on things that we need to be doing, improving on and that's our goal.

I want to thank all of my representatives from all of my agencies because cities are made up of agencies, and if agencies are doing their job, the city will function as it's supposed to. Thank you for coming out. Appreciate all of you.

Commissioner Kreizman: I just want to thank Anastasia Yaskova, our Brooklyn borough director for Brooklyn south, and Tony Herbert, our other Brooklyn director who covers the six seven seven one for their work. If you have any issues throughout the year, they're our main points of contact in the Community Affairs Unit.

###