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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everyone. I hope you had a great weekend. I had a great New York City weekend. And actually, the weekend started early for me, going to the In the Heights premiere on Thursday night. And I've got to tell you, this is an example to me of something really special about what's going to happen this summer. Here's a movie that's getting attention all over the country that celebrates Washington Heights especially, but it really celebrates all of New York City. It is a love letter to New York City. It makes you want to be here. And I know what's going to happen, people are going to watch this incredible movie all over the country and they'll want to come here, and that's what this summer is going to be about. It's going to be a great summer for New Yorkers, but you're going to see people from all over the tri-state area coming back to the city, you're going to see people from all over the United States, coming back to the city, because this will be where it's at. So, this movie in a sense is the appetizer for this whole summer and the whole nation's watching, and it's filled with the life and the passion of New York city. You can see the resiliency – incredible story about a community and about working people, every-day New Yorkers and how they fight through whatever's thrown at them. It's a perfect answer to what we've been through with COVID and how we're going to come back. So, everyone, go see this movie. A tremendous thanks to the Miranda family for all they've done for New York City. But this is a particularly powerful moment.

So, I got to see that movie. That was great. On Saturday, I went to the Festival of Flowers in the Meatpacking District – amazing, absolutely beautiful, and an example, again, of New York City coming back, people creating something brand new, beautiful, energetic, creative. We've never had it before. You would think in the midst of COVID people would have not thought about brand new, exciting things to do. But, in fact, that's what New Yorkers do, we take a tough situation and we create something amazing out of it. That was great. On Sunday, we had a smaller version of the traditional Puerto Rican Parade – the national Puerto Rican Parade. It was a beautiful get together. We're looking forward to a much bigger one next year when everybody's back.

But we also see tourists coming back. It's not just New Yorkers who are coming to these amazing events, it's tourists as well. And this last week, an important indicator – 400,000 hotel rooms sold in New York City – 400,000 hotel rooms in one week. That, again, is a very clear sign that tourism is coming back, travel is coming back. I did not expect it to be this soon. It's happening, and it's amazing to see, and this is going to be another one of the things that fuels the Summer of New York City.

Okay. Now, why do we even get to have the Summer of New York City? Why do we get to open up and enjoy this place again and be together again? Because people got vaccinated. They got vaccinated in amazing numbers. It continues every day and it's making a huge impact. So, as of today, here's the number of doses from day-one – 8,769,536 doses. Every additional dose makes us safer. Everybody who gets fully vaccinated makes us safer. You want evidence? Here it is today – another record setting day. We have the lowest COVID positivity on record from the very beginning of this crisis. Today is the lowest positivity we've ever had – 0.59 percent. We are driving back COVID, because people continue to get vaccinated and it's having more and more of an impact. So, we want to get everyone vaccinated, so what do we do? We continue to make it easier. We continue to reach deeper into communities. We continue to make it more and more fun. And we have our contests and they're just amazing. And people are starting to hear about these prizes and it's really getting exciting for folks. Last week's prize, 10 six-month unlimited MetroCards – that's pretty amazing. Six months of free subway rides. That was last week. This week, the staycations, they're very popular. People love the idea of being a tourist in their own city, staying in a great hotel – 15 more staycation packages. I want to thank the hotels that have been part of this. They've been really generous, really supportive of this effort to get folks vaccinated. So, thanks to AKA Hotels, Carlisle, Conrad, Dream, Equinox, the Dominick and Sheraton – all of them participating energetically, knowing this is going to help us bring New York City back and get people vaccinated. Also, we want the hotel industry, the hospitality industry to come back strong, and these hotels are helping to lead the way. So, 15 staycation packages every week for the next five weeks when you sign up to get vaccinated for the first time – great, great incentive.

Now, that's one approach, but we've come up with another approach now – a new approach, which I think is going to make a big difference. And we're going to be working with organizations all over the city – community-based organizations, public housing resident associations, houses of worship. We're going to working with the grassroots on a great new thing. It's a referral bonus. It's the New York City Vaccine Referral Bonus Initiative. This is going to be amazing. We have these great organizations all over New York City who can reach people in their communities like no one else can. They have tremendous reach, tremendous faith that people have in them. We want to incentivize these great community-based organizations to bring in folks who just haven't gotten around to it now, maybe had some hesitancy, need some more answers, but the time is right to get them now. They've seen their friends and neighbors, family get vaccinated. The time is right to bring them in, so we're creating a bonus program. And any organization that wants to be a part of it can sign up at vax4nyc.nyc.gov, starting on Wednesday. Here's how it works – for every person the organization brings in to get vaccinated, the organization gets a donation of \$100 per person, and that can go up as high as \$20,000. So, for a lot of amazing grassroots organizations, this is going to be something very, very appealing to them. They're doing such important work on the ground, serving communities. They need all the help they can get. They're going to use their reach to bring people in. They're going to get rewarded for it in a way that will then put resources back in the community to help people.

So, these incentives alone that I talked about a moment ago, the staycations, the MetroCards, we have Citi Bike memberships, Statue of Liberty tickets, gym memberships, you name it. The incentives are great. The new Referral Bonus Program is going to supercharge it. And, by the way, the people who get referred and come in and get vaccinated, they qualify for the incentives

individually as well. So, this is what we call a win-win. We're going to use these grassroots groups as partners in the areas with the lowest vaccination level. So, we're really going to focus on where the need is greatest. We're going to work closely with grassroots organizations, working with our Test and Trace team that's done an amazing job reaching the grassroots of the city. This is going to help us do things we haven't been able to do before right when we need to take vaccination up to the next level. I want you to hear from a partner we're going to be working with, and I'd known him a long time. He does great work in the community and knows how to reach out to the grassroots. He is the co-pastor of God Battalion Prayer Church and COO of God Battalion Prayer Ministries in Brooklyn. My pleasure to introduce Reverend Al Cockfield.

[...]

Mayor: Reverend, thank you. Thank you. I know what you do – every time it is energetic and makes an impact at the grassroots. I know you're going to use this new approach to reach lots of people, and I really want to thank you for that and for spreading the word. And, everyone, look talk about a win-win. Again, a Referral Bonus Program helps grassroots organizations, gets more people come and get vaccinated. And, again, whether you come in that way or any other way, you can get incentives when you get vaccinated at the time you book your first appointment. And if you want that list that's at any of the City-run vaccination sites, go to vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/benefits.

Okay? So, we said for months and months, go out, get vaccinated. Go out there, it will change things. It will make things different and better if everyone gets vaccinated. We kept telling people how transcendent it would be. And, look, it has happened. It has come to pass that, now, because so many people have gotten vaccinated, life in this city gets more and more energetic, more and more normal every day. This is what we've been waiting for, the chance for New York City to really take off. This is why we keep talking about the Summer of New York City, because once we get into July, it's a whole new ball game, and amazing things are going to happen.

Now, this year that we've been through, it has literally been the greatest crisis in the history of New York City. We were knocked down, but we got back up, and that's something to celebrate about this city. So, last year I got a question one day saying, hey, when are we going to bring back our big events, the things we love each year? When are we going to bring back the really big parades that people come to from all over the city? And I said, we will bring them back. And I felt very confident we'd bring them back this year, 2021. But I said the first parade back, the first true large parade in New York City will be one to celebrate the heroes of the fight against COVID, our health care heroes who were extraordinary and need to be remembered for the ages, our first responders, our essential workers, the people who kept us alive, that people who kept the city going no matter what. We are going to hold a parade to honor them, to thank them, to celebrate them. It's going to be an example of the great tradition of ticker tape parades – ticker tape parades up the Canyon of Heroes. They've happened for generations, but this one is going to have a special spirit to it, a special heart and soul, because it's about celebrating every-day New Yorkers who did something so heroic and need our thanks. It's time for the parade to celebrate our hometown heroes. So, I'm announcing today that parade will be on Wednesday, July 7th, and it's something you want to be a part of.

We're going to have essential workers celebrated, groups of essential workers, floats for health care workers, first responders, educators, municipal workers, transportation workers, grocery and bodega workers, delivery people, you name it – all the essential workers who made it happen, everyone who kept it together in New York City for all of us and brought us back. It's a day to celebrate and appreciate the heroes who often go unsung. We're going to sing about them this day. We're always going to remember the pain and the tragedy of COVID. No one is going to ever forget those we lost and what families are still going through. But we need a day to celebrate the heroism of every-day New Yorkers. Wednesday, July 7th, the Canyon of Heroes will be that moment – a parade you will remember for the rest of your life to celebrate people who we need to keep in our hearts, true New York City heroes who did something for the ages. I look forward – really look forward to being a part of that moment and thanking all of our heroes who saw us through.

Okay. Now, perfect time to go over indicators, because indicators today are good, and it's because of all those heroes who helped us fight through, and because you went out and got vaccinated. So, number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19 – today's report, 50 patients – 5-0, 50 patients – with a confirmed positive level, again, low – 9.62 percent. Hospitalization rate per 100,000 – 0.43. So, those are great. Now, new reported cases on a seven-day average – today's report, 193 cases. And number three – this is a great one – percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, seven-day rolling average is 0.59 percent – lowest we've ever been. Let's go even lower, go out and get vaccinated.

Okay. A few words in Spanish, and this is about our hometown heroes parade.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, let's turn to our colleagues in the media. And please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: Good morning. We will now begin our Q-and-A. As a reminder, we are joined by Health Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi, and Dan Gross, Executive Director of Citywide Events. Our first question for today goes to Derick Waller from ABC.

Question: Hi, good morning. We just spent the morning with Kathryn Garcia at this senior center reopening on the Upper East Side. And she has been critical of you and basically saying that these should have opened a long time ago. I'd love – I'd love to get your reaction, obviously, since she was critical of you and why it took so long for the senior centers to reopen.

Mayor: I'll turn to Dr. Chokshi, Derick, in a moment, but I want to state the obvious – our seniors, our elders are precious to us. They bore the brunt of COVID. They were the most vulnerable. Those are the people we lost the most. And our Health Department was adamant that before we brought people back into small spaces together it had to be very, very safe. After everything we went through, we had to get it right, and they got to the point, working with the

Department for the Aging in the last couple of weeks where it became clear it was time, and now people are coming back. But this was a safety-first decision, for sure. Dr. Chokshi?

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor. And I appreciate the degree to which you have made it clear that health and safety have to drive decisions like this one. It's why we did proceed using a methodical approach, you know, starting with outdoor activities at senior centers in May. I'm really delighted that, that has now advanced to where it's extended to indoor activities with the right public health precautions in place, because we have just seen too much suffering, particularly borne by older New Yorkers. And so, we will continue to do everything in our power to keep them as safe as possible.

Mayor: Thank you very much. Go ahead, Derick.

Question: I ask, you know, obviously, last week, Governor Cuomo said that once we hit 70 percent of adults getting one shot, that he's going to lift virtually all the restrictions, and it looks like yesterday was 69.7. So, that seems eminent. What do you think about lifting virtually all COVID restrictions, obviously, except for, you know, mask-wearing in certain instances, like public transportation, hospitals, that sort of thing, but what do you think about that?

Mayor: Derick, you know, I said many weeks ago that July 1st was the goal. I thought we would be absolutely ready. I'm really pleased with the progress the city has made. I'm pleased with the fact that so many people got out and got vaccinated and drove down COVID so consistently so it's close to July 1st. I'm very comfortable that we're on the right track, but again, as you said, remembering, there will still be some individual restrictions in certain places and individual companies and institutions will also make their own choices about how to keep people safe. But overall, I mean, look, we have done a great job, New Yorkers have done a great job fighting back COVID and it's a good moment for reopening, and that's why I keep talking about the summer of New York City. We're ready for it.

Moderator: Our next question goes to James Ford from PIX 11.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, as your recording says, when we're waiting for you to get on the call. It's another rainy day in New York City.

Mayor: It's a rainy day, James, but our hearts are happy. Good things are happening. How are you doing today?

Question: So far, really great. Thank you. Why don't I start with a question that was given to me by my colleague, Nicole Johnson. The MTA has mentioned that issues involving emotionally-disturbed people is part of the reason we're seeing an increase in soiled trains and crime in the subway. I'm wondering what your take is on this, and what role the NYPD can play in decreasing both crime and, as my colleague says, grime?

Mayor: Yeah, James, first of all, look, we've had some incidents that are very troubling, and we take them real seriously, and that's why we have the most officers in the subway right now, the

most NYPD officers in over 25 years in our subway, because it's really important to bring this city back, to give people confidence in our subway system again. Now, that said, overall crime in the subways has gone down. That's really good news, but we have more work to do. What works? The officers are out there doing their job, the homeless outreach workers who do amazing work are out there doing their job. They've gotten a lot of folks to come in who were homeless, and that's been more successful than ever before, truly, and we'll go over those numbers with you because it's really important to see this homeless outreach effort has now resulted in more and more people coming in and staying in shelter than ever we've seen before, and we have mental health teams out, and we're going to just keep doing that. It is persistent work, but it does work, and I also think last point that people coming back to the subways more and more, which is obviously happening. When I went up to In the Heights the other day on the A train, I mean, it's absolutely looked like a normal day in New York City. Plenty of people on the train, the more people come back, the safer we all get. Go ahead, James.

Question: Here also, can you talk more about the decision-making process that went into having this ticker tape parade in the Canyon of Heroes? I noticed by the way that the date of it, July 7th, is very close to the date that we had the World Cup winners, the Women's US National Team. Can you just talk more about how you all decided on the date, how you just came to a decision to have a tickertape for pandemic heroes in the first place?

Mayor: Yeah, absolutely. James, last year I said, you know, it would not be right to have the parades we love, the normal parades representing different communities. No, it wouldn't be right to have them come back, without first honoring our heroes, the people who saw us through COVID, and so for a long time, we've been thinking, okay, when we start to come back overall, that's exactly the right time to do the parade. I said many weeks ago, July 1st was when we were convinced we could come back fully. We started the planning then we've been working with a variety of organizations, labor unions, and others to get ready for this, and it's, it makes a lot of sense to me. If we get past July 1st of course, we're going to have an amazing July 4th, and July 4th we celebrate our country and celebrate our cities, come back and then a parade for the ages up the Canyon of Heroes. So, I think it's exactly the right time for it.

Moderator: Our next question goes to Juliet from 1010 WINS.

Question: Hey. Good morning, Mr. Mayor. How are you doing?

Mayor: I'm doing well, Juliet. How are you?

Question: I'm good, thank you. And, you know, I wanted to ask you about the early voting this weekend. There wasn't a really great turnout. So, I was wondering how you will encourage voter turnout, and also how confident are you in the Board of Elections to handle ranked-choice voting?

Mayor: Well, on the second point, Juliet, look and the experience we had with some of the local council races, it took a lot longer than I would have liked, or anyone would like. I am concerned that the count could take a while. You know, I think as soon as we hear who got the most number one votes that tells us a lot, and I hope they will be very fast getting that out, but I do have a

concern. We've been trying to work with the board to make sure that they had the support they needed. Early voting – it's not surprising to me, Juliet, I think this whole campaign year has been unlike anything I've ever seen. Of course, COVID taking away so much of the energy and attention. I think people are still, you know, connecting to the fact that it's an election and really, really examining the choices and trying to make sense of it. I think that in some ways, mitigates against, you know, massive early voting, I think early voting is an amazing tool, but it, you know, it really lights up when people are extremely adamant about their choices. I don't think we're seeing that yet. So, it'll probably pick up more and more as we get closer, and I expect a pretty strong vote on Election Day itself as a result. Go ahead, Juliet.

Question: Okay. Thank you, and just to follow up on the parade. Would you be having a ceremony at City Hall as you've done in the past for instance. Any particular people or groups that you would honor at the did the City Hall presentation?

Mayor: I am not going to give you a scoop right now. We are right now working on that, Juliet. We want to – we're going to honor overall again, the health care heroes, first responders, essential workers, and we're fine-tuning right now what kind of ceremony makes sense and who should be a part of that. But what I can tell you is the parade itself, I think, is going to be a joyous moment. I think it will be a moment of relief that we're coming back together in a great New York City tradition. But I also think it's going to be a moment of just pure appreciation for folks who did something heroic and who really deserved their moment to be praised by the whole city.

Moderator: Our next question goes to Andrew Siff from NBC.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, and everyone on the call on the COVID front, I got a question for your health team. Have there been any breakthrough cases at all, people who have been vaccinated who have ended up on the stats, the small stats and the encouraging stats, who are hospitalized in other words, have there been any serious breakthrough cases in New York City or is everyone in the hospital someone who was not vaccinated?

Mayor: I'll turn to Dr. Chokshi very important question. Dr. Chokshi?

Commissioner Chokshi: Thanks Mr. Mayor, and thank you, Andrew, for this important question. We are monitoring those breakthrough infections, both in New York City, as well as following the national and the global trends. Let me start with the big picture, which is that the number of serious infections leading to either hospitalization or death among vaccinated people is very small. We're talking about a minuscule percentage of both, you know, the overall number of cases, as well as the number of people who are fully vaccinated. To get to your more specific question, you know, when we look at people who are hospitalized across New York City virtually all of them are not yet fully vaccinated, meaning they're unvaccinated. We will see some cases resulting in hospitalization or even death among fully vaccinated people, but these are very rare exceptions to the overall rule. So, let me just sum it up to say all of the authorized vaccines offers strong protection, particularly against severe illness, and that's why we need to get every single person who is currently eligible vaccinated.

Mayor: Thank you very much. Go ahead, Andrew.

Question: Mayor, in the mayor's race one of the things that Eric Adams has been talking about on the trail is unequal pay in the Sanitation Department and other city agencies, and what he's talking about is clearly aimed at one of his opponents, Kathryn Garcia. But you're the Mayor, so if there were different pay rates for men and women in the Sanitation Department and other agencies, don't you bear responsibility for that? And what is your response to the charge that men and women were not paid at the same rate in your administration?

Mayor: So, Andrew, first of all, there's a lawsuit in that matter. So, whenever there's litigation I'm not going to speak in any detail. Obviously, throughout this administration, we've been working to improve pay equity in both public and private sector, and that's something we'll keep doing. But because again, there's a lawsuit in this specific situation, I'm just going to leave it to that.

Moderator: Our next question goes to Christina Fan from CBS.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, thank you so much for taking my question this morning. First, I wanted to address the gun violence again this weekend, there were 21 shootings, over 600 so far this year, including two people shot in front of a church and a man shot to death in an apparent robbery attempt. What does the city continue to do to tackle this problem?

Mayor: Christina, it's something we're building up more and more, begins with new officers. As I said, last month, 850 officers graduated the academy, hundreds more coming this month. It includes efforts to pinpoint where the problems are, get more guns off the streets. We've had record high levels of gun arrests in recent months. We're going to keep doubling down on that. The court system finally coming back, we're starting to see the gun prosecutions. We need to see more of that. We need to see the court system speed up and really get to full strength, but that's helping a lot. You're going to start to see more impact from that as violent criminals are taken off the streets by court decisions and sentences, and the community investments, of course, Cure Violence Movement, Crisis Management System, a lot more work between NYPD and community, building more trust, building more communication. These are all the pieces and they're all being deepened now, and I think it's going to really help us turn things around. Go ahead, Christina.

Question: Thank you, and then the other question is in regard to COVID numbers, wanted to know how many of those infected are people that are unvaccinated and how has the administration planning to manage the threat of the Delta variance, especially as key areas, namely schools, are set to open at full capacity this fall with vaccines being optional?

Mayor: Okay. So, I'm going to turn to Dr. Chokshi and I heard two things, how many of folks who have been affected are un-vaccinated Dr. Chokshi will speak to that, but on the Delta variant, obviously we're watching this very, very closely. This is the variant coming out of India. The bottom line, Christina, is as we've seen with other variants, greater transmissibility, we take that very seriously. But also, thank God, the vaccine is effective. This is what we always look for. Even at a variant, throws us some curve balls, does the vaccine work, and protect people? Is

that the right way to go? The answer continues to be yes. So, for anyone concerned about the Delta variant, go out and get vaccinated, that is your best protection, it's the best way to stop the growth of COVID and the numbers are speaking for themselves. We are continuing to limit COVID all the time through more and more vaccination. Dr. Chokshi?

Commissioner Chokshi: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. On the first part of your question, Christina, yes, the vast, vast majority of people who are currently being infected and particularly those with severe illness are people who are unvaccinated. So, what we're seeing now, not just in New York City, but around the United States is that the pandemic is primarily a pandemic among unvaccinated people. That's why the Mayor's message on the Delta variant is so important. If you haven't been vaccinated yet, now is the time. It is the single most important thing that we can do to keep one another safe and also to keep those safe who are not yet eligible to be vaccinated, including younger children. So, I do understand that some people have been waiting, they need to get their questions answered, but the Delta variant and you know, the fact that we do remain at some risk is the strongest motivation to get vaccinated now.

Mayor: Thank you very much, doctor.

Moderator: Our next question goes to Reuvain from Hamodia.

Question: Hi, good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey, Reuvain, how you doing?

Question: Good, good. Very well. So, I'd like to ask you about the Open Restaurants Program, specifically the seating that used to be parking spaces. There are neighborhoods where parking is a constant problem, and these restaurants are already allowed to seat at full capacity and have seating on the sidewalk, and I'm asking particularly because I've noticed that many of these outdoor structures are totally empty. Don't have any customers inside. I've even heard that some of them are being used just pretty much to store things, these sheds like really don't appear to be used in the hot summer or cold winter, maybe in the fall and spring. Should there be a like, a use it or lose it rule, or these things are going to be allowed to be around all year, whether they're used or not?

Mayor: I think that's a really good point. Appreciate the question, Reuvain. Yeah, look, the goal is to create jobs, preserve jobs, preserve businesses. You obviously have to use the space for that purpose. If you're not using the space for that purpose, you've got to free up the space. So, we'll clarify to the restaurants that they do need to use the space appropriately in a period of time that makes sense, or else they should just free it up. But I do want to remind you how important it is, saving our restaurant industry, you know, we already know last year we saved about 100,000 jobs through Open Restaurants, but there's many more we want to bring back, and it's also going to be a part of this amazing summer to have the open dining everywhere around the city, and that's part of bringing back tourists, that's part of bringing back our economy. So, I really believe in the approach, but I also agree if someone's not using the space properly, free it up. Go ahead.

Question: Well, you mentioned about saving the restaurant industry, but if restaurants are allowed to be open at full capacity indoors and have seating on the sidewalk, is it really necessary to have seating in the streets as well to save the industry?

Mayor: Well, think about it this way. It's a fair question. But think about the fact that they're coming back from behind here. I mean, you're talking about an industry, in many cases people lost a huge amount in 2020, and even the beginning of this year, because they couldn't be opened indoors fully. There's some catching up to do, and this industry is crucial to our city. Again, tourism, economy, everything, think about individual jobs. Think about people who we want to keep those jobs for them. Keep those businesses alive. Many of which people built up families built up for decades. Of course, we got to make sure to come back. That's just more important than parking. I don't have a question in my mind. So, this is the right thing to do.

Moderator: We have time for two more questions today. The next question goes to Kemberly from ABC.

Question: Good morning, everybody.

Mayor: Hey, Kemberly, how are you doing?

Question: I'm good. Quick question, Washington Square Park, what is or isn't, and why aren't the curfews, whether it's 10, whether it's midnight, being enforced down there? You know, people are still complaining about the gatherings, the crime, [inaudible] are kind of fed up. So, you know, we understand the Parks Department was saying without NYPD backup we don't really feel safe in enforcing these curfews, but now it seems like nothing is being done.

Mayor: Okay, Kemberly, that's just not accurate, respectfully. So, all parks have a closing time. Let's start with that. And we've seen historically that closing times are implemented pretty smoothly all over the city, Parks Department, and if sometimes they need some NYPD help, that's fine. We've had some particular issues for a limited period of time in Washington Square Park, and there's been an effort to figure out the right approach. When the park can be open a little later, that's great, as long as it's something that doesn't interfere with the quality of life of the community. So, that's being assessed constantly by the Parks Department of NYPD, but they simply determine the closing time that makes sense, and they act on it. Go ahead, Kemberly.

Question: Right. But, at the closing time – I understand that all parks have a closing time – but it seems like when they did try and enforce it, there was a lot of pushback from some of the kids, the young adults who were in the park. So, reassessing, reassessing, we've been dealing with this now for two weeks –

Mayor: Well, that's not a lot of time, respectfully. I really think that what the Parks Department and NYPD are trying to do is reset the balance properly. Obviously, do it in a way that involves communication and not conflict. They're experimenting with different approaches to get it right. And we've had a number of nights where things went pretty smoothly. We had a few nights where they didn't, but it's going to, I think, lead to a natural outcome here. We're going to keep

working on it, led by Parks Department, determine the right closing time, and I think we'll get into a pattern that works pretty soon.

Moderator: Our last question for today goes to Nolan from The Post.

Mayor: Nolan? Nolan? Nolan, are you there?

Question: I'm here. Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yes. How many cups of coffee, Nolan? How many cups of coffee have we had?

Question: Enough to know that we've unintentionally given Verizon a free plug. How are you, Mr. Mayor?

Mayor: There you go. Okay. It's okay, Nolan. These things happen on a Monday morning.

Question: I like to begin with sort of a policy piece and the mayor's race. Eric Adams came out Friday and said that he would oppose a future rent-freeze, saying that it is harmful to small landlords, particularly round and black business owners in the city. What do you make of that?

Mayor: I think it's important to think about everyone in the equation. What our Rent Guidelines Board does, which it didn't used to do in the past, is it looks at the whole picture. It looks at what tenants are going through. It looks at what building owners are going through, everyone's situation and challenges, costs, everything, and it's a methodical process. So, that's the way it should be done. I think it's important to do things based on the facts. Go ahead, Nolan.

Question: Well, it is – the rent freezes were one of the more significant, you know, things that you campaigned on in 2017, and you made a big issue of bringing it back this year because of the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic. What do you make of sort of a repudiation on the rent freeze policy from one of the leading mayoral candidates in the race?

Mayor: I don't hear it as that at all. I really don't. I think what I hear him to say is recognize a lot of the building owners are small building owners are people of color, in communities of color who have struggled to buy a building and keep it up and keep it going. A lot of these are family enterprises and that needs to be taken into account, too. And I think that's right, we got to think about everything. But look, I think the bottom line this year is New Yorkers have – and this gets back to sort of as we conclude – what we've been through and how people have seen their way through it. New Yorkers have done amazing work this year to somehow keep going, in all parts of the city, and all types of industries, everything that we do. And I think as we move forward, this is what we need to think about how to both celebrate – and that's why we're having this amazing parade on July 7th – and then how to restart everything deeply. I believe New York City is not only going to come back, it's going to surpass where we were pre-pandemic. Pre-pandemic, we had the most jobs in our history, strongest economy we ever had had. Now, we're going to go through a comeback time, but I think it would be a lot quicker than people realize, it's going to be something that really puts us where we were and then beyond. And that's exciting

to me. So, I will end where I started summer of New York City, everybody, everyone gets to be a part of it. Thank you very much.

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