



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** August 30, 2018

**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY REGARDING  
NEW SECURITY MEASURES FOR THE UPCOMING J'OUVERT CELEBRATION**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to the Brooklyn Public Library, a place I have spent many a fond day. I want to welcome everyone. I want to thank all the leadership of the NYPD who is here. I want to thank the elected officials, you'll hear from them in a moment. I also want to do a special shout out upfront to a member of my administration who's being honored this coming weekend, Harold Miller, who has been with me a long, long time, going back to –

[Applause]

Those humble Public Advocate days, now our Deputy Commissioner for Community Engagement at City Hall and one of the grand marshals of this year's J'Ouvert Parade. I knew you when Harold Miller, alright.

[Laughter]

As we prepare for this weekend and especially for Monday, we celebrate one of our biggest, strongest communities here in this city – the Caribbean community. We had a fantastic reception at Gracie Mansion a few nights ago celebrating the community. And it's a reminder of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers with heritage in the Caribbean who contribute to this city every day in so many ways. Hard working New Yorkers, small business people, folks who are active in their community and make this city a better place and the community celebrates and honors its history and its heritage with of course the parade on Monday, one of the biggest events every year in this city and with the J'Ouvert celebration. And we've said over these last years, we honor every culture that makes up New York City. We want to give people every opportunity to celebrate their heritage and the same time our job always is to make every community safe. And we know that in every community there are unfortunately some bad apples and our job is to make sure that they never ruin a celebration for everyone else. The goal that we continue to work on all the time, we are the safest big city in America and we intend to stay that way but in the safest big city in America you should not have to choose between your safety and celebrating your heritage. People should be able to have both at once and we believe they will once again on J'Ouvert.

So last year after a lot of work and after some very painful moments as well in the last few years, I want to commend all the leadership of the NYPD, all the members of the NYPD who participated with the community in determining a better approach. It was done with a neighborhood policing philosophy. So instead of just saying here's a plan, accept it – months and months of dialogue took place, elected officials, community leaders, NYPD officials, thinking together, how can we do something better, how can we do something different? And the plan that emerged came from the voices of the community and it really was of and by and for the community and that's so much of why it worked. It was also important to think about not just a few hours on a certain early morning, but to think about a bigger approach and the NYPD has had a very respectful relationship with the Crisis Management System, the Cure Violence movement. And members of that movement played a very important role in thinking about the best way to approach this weekend and doing so much to create a more peaceful, positive community and to help young people on a better path. That engagement, the block by block, you know, person by person engagement, well before J'Ouvert made a big difference last year.

So this is a very different kind of approach than we've seen in years past and last year we saw the model work. We saw of course things we want to learn from, things we want to do better but in essence we saw a model that was community based and worked. So we are building upon that and what we did last year of course was also with the recognition of the kind of security approaches that had worked in other major events like most notably New Year's Eve in Times Square. That was brought to bear. The combination of different strategies, we found to be what we want to do going forward and what we are going to do this year.

So like last year the parade route will be closed to the public the night before and also like last year the parade will not start until it becomes light out around 6 am. There will be very substantial number, over 300 light towers activated. There will be thousands of NYPD officers along the route. On top of that it's not just going to be light towers on the parade route but in some cases, on the surrounding blocks as well to create a safer environment. And there will be more mobile patrol units to help cover a broader area. There will also be an additional entry point added and Chief Rodney Harrison will talk about that in a moment but to help ease the flow of crowds and make the day go a little bit better for people. But look, the bottom line is huge number of people come to J'Ouvert in pride, in respect of their heritage, to be with each other, to abide by the law and to celebrate peacefully. Unfortunately in the past, a very small number of people have come to make trouble, we will not tolerate that. We will not tolerate violence, we will not tolerate people who in anyway undermine everybody else's celebration. And it will be obviously a huge, vigorous NYPD presence working with community leaders to make sure this is a safe event.

I would finish in English by saying the J'Ouvert celebration has always belonged to the people. It has always been a positive expression of the people. This year as last year, it will be a celebration that the people can enjoy and they can enjoy safely. And that's what we intend to make the norm for years to come. With that just a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that I want to turn to our Chief of Patrol and I want to thank Rodney Harrison for the exceptional work he did in last year's preparations, one of the architects of last year's successful strategy, now carrying it through in his new position. Chief?

**Chief of Patrol Rodney Harrison, NYPD:** So good afternoon. Before I get started I would like to acknowledge our new Borough Commander for Brooklyn South, Brian Conroy – a former school safety chief and now taking over the helm for soon to retire Steve Powers so congratulations Brian.

[Applause]

So I'm here today to share with you the NYPD's plans for the annual J'Ouvert celebration and the 51st annual West Indian Day parade on Monday, September 3rd. And the J'Ouvert celebration consists of steel band parade from the various Caribbean countries, and event organizers are projecting 26 bands and over 300,000 spectators. Participants in J'Ouvert will start lining up at 2 am on Flatbush Avenue from Empire Boulevard to Grand Army Plaza. And the parade will begin at 6 am by going south on Flatbush, turning east on Empire, proceeding south on Nostrand and ending on Midwood Street. Approximately two miles in length and it's going to end around 10 am.

For the 51st annual West Indian Day parade, floats and participants will start lining up around 10 am in the morning and the march itself will formerly step off at noon. The parade will run on Eastern Parkway from Schenectady Avenue and end at Grand Army Plaza. Event organizers are expecting at least 40,000 participants and more than 1 million spectators. We will be deploying a thousand of uniformed officers throughout the route and the surrounding areas. We will also be utilizing hundreds of light towers and numerous blocker vehicles. J'Ouvert and the West Indian Day parade is one of the largest cultural parades the city offers and we want everyone at J'Ouvert and the parade to have an enjoyable event. And the men and women of the NYPD are committed to ensuring the safety of all participants and attendees at the event. And if anybody sees anything suspicious please let our officers know or feel free to call 9-1-1. By working together we can make Monday and everyday safe for all New Yorkers. Thank you very much.

[...]

**Mayor:** Okay, we're going to take questions about J'Ouvert, and the preparations, and anything else police related, and then we will take questions on other topics. Yes.

**Questions:** In terms of J'Ouvert and the parade, you said you drawing from what worked last year [inaudible] do you think you could [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** I'll start and let the experts weigh in. I mean, from my point view what worked was a very strong consultative process with the community. What worked was the parallel efforts of the Crisis Management System and the Cure Violence Movement. The earlier start time, that – the use of the checkpoints, all of those things I think worked. Clearly, as we've indicated, we wanted to do better on a number of checkpoints because there were some lines, we want to see if

we can improve that. So from my point of view, most of the strategy worked, but it's clearly going to be refined every single year.

**Chief Harrison:** So, you know, I'm pretty much going to piggyback off what the Mayor was saying. I think moving J'Ouvert back, I think helped the event go a little bit smoother. Also having light towers in certain areas where it was very dark I think helps us do a little bit of a better job policing certain areas. As well as having the officers that somewhat mirror the people participating also helps as well. So, a couple little nuances that we've always evaluated ourselves and took a look at. I truly believe helped the events to get better throughout the years.

**Mayor:** Okay, yes?

**Question:** It sounds like from the plan and the press release that the aside the additional checkpoints, or checkpoint, that that seems to be the major difference, is there anything else that is going to be super different for this year than last year? As well as I know there have been some reports of shootings last year, I [inaudible] before the start, was there anything – can you remind us of those crime stats from the actual day?

**Chief Harrison:** Okay, so, there was – just want to make sure this is very clear – there was no violence on the route and during the route, which is very, very important, I want to make sure that – there was no violence during the parade or J'Ouvert last year. That's very important. And once again is the relationships that we are building with the community, to get people to want to share information with us, I truly believe is helping the events become much more successful this year and as well as going into the future.

**Mayor:** Okay –

**Questions:** Oh and the differences? Sorry.

**Chief Harrison:** Oh, I'll let the Borough Commanders talk about some of the differences, I'm sorry.

**Borough Commander of Brooklyn South Brian Conroy, NYPD:** Again the extra entry point – again the extra entry point is a difference this year and that's a response to meetings – numerous meetings – we had with the community on this event, and, you know, that's something I requested and we're doing that. We're pushing – a little bit – a little bit more light towers, a few more light towers, we're going to push them a little bit farther away from the parade route, so that's another difference that we've learned from last year. But, you know, we were very successful last year, so that's why most of everything we're is the same and a lot of the officers that work at the entry points will be from the Patrol Borough Brooklyn South area so that's part of using the neighborhood policing strategy, so they'll know the community, they'll know many of the people coming into the event. So you know, that's another part of it and we're making sure that we have this year also.

**Question:** On the [inaudible] murder, [inaudible] the 9-1-1 call [inaudible] is this accurate? And what [inaudible] say on the 9-1-1 call?

**Chief of Detectives Dermot Shea, NYPD:** Can you just repeat the middle part?

**Question:** On the [inaudible] murder, one of our reporters was told that the 9-1-1 call [inaudible] to kill her, is that accurate, and what did she say on the 9-1-1 call?

**Chief Shea:** Yeah, that's certainly one of the theories that's being looked at. On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, I believe, which was a Wednesday, there was a 9-1-1 call placed from the residents that we believed the murder took – occurred. That call was placed by Velasquez and it was essentially the call starts out – it's about five minutes in length – starts out that she wants report to the 9-1-1 operator what she calls a kidnapping. What it was, was a custodial interference type situation between what turns out to be the two that were charged with murder.

**Question:** Now on the [inaudible] is there any domestic violence history between the two subjects? [Inaudible].

**Chief Shea:** Between the two people that were charged.

**Question:** Yes.

**Chief Shea:** There were a number of prior calls to that apartment of a domestic nature. I would categorize it as at least four calls.

**Question:** Alright, thank you.

**Unknown:** [Inaudible] on-topic please –

**Mayor:** Yeah please, go ahead, hold on second, let's do that. Let's finish up on anything J'Ouvert related.

**Question:** I just wanted to ask the NYPD, are they going to enforcing no public drinking, the selling of alcohol, the Kool-Aid alcohol on the streets, and also smoking marijuana in public places?

**Chief Harrison:** Okay, so, the officers will be able to have the ability to use discretion, if you haven't heard, September 1<sup>st</sup>, we have a new policy regarding with how we are going to deal with marijuana. One of the things we will be doing this year is if we come across an individual that is smoking marijuana in public, we – the person will more than likely be receiving a criminal court summons in contrast to placing them under arrest because we want to try to keep the officers out there on post so they can keep the event running smoothly and safe. Are there certain carve outs that someone maybe placed under arrest? Yes there is, but overall we are going to start our new policy September 1<sup>st</sup> regarding issue and criminal court summonses.

**Mayor:** Can you speak to alcohol?

**Question:** Yeah –

**Chief Harrison:** Oh and regarding alcohol, once again is if we come across somebody that is drinking, discretion will be used, but if need be, we will issue a summons for that as well.

**Question:** What about if they are minor and they're selling alcohol on the streets from coolers?

**Chief Harrison:** Then that's – we will confiscate that alcohol and as well as issue that person a summons.

**Mayor:** I want to remind everyone, two things. One, it's always depending on the specifics of the incidence, arrest is also an option. If there is outstanding warrants or other factors involve. And second that we really value the presence of the officers who are there that evening, as you heard from Chief, the officers more and more now come from the local commands, know the community, we want to keep them on duty there, and one of the things that we have emphasized is being a virtue of the new marijuana policy is, does not take an officer off patrol to go through the whole procedure of arrest, which is many hours, and by definition, the officer is no longer on patrol. The summons is the reverse, you give the summons, and right back on patrol, and there to help keep people safe. So this is an important factor in the equation, but the bottom line, I think the underlying point to your question, we're not going to tolerate marijuana smoking, we're not going drinking, we're not going to tolerate the sale of any drugs or alcohol. Yes – well – just one more second, anything else on J'Ouvert, just want to clear up, go ahead.

**Question:** [Inaudible] I know that last year safety obviously is very important, but there is also a lot of resentment in the community [inaudible] and changed the spirit of the event, but I would like the two of you talk to what changes did you ask for, did they do that? What changes are there, did you feel like you were returned the event more to the previous spirit? The only thing we've heard about is one addition [inaudible] point. Is there anything else [inaudible].

**Yvette Rennie:** We had several meetings with six or seven [inaudible] and Chief Conroy and we worked very closely with him on certain measure that we took to make the atmosphere more friendlier than it was last year. One of the things that we – we're looking at is true, the entry point by the library should put more areas so it would not be congested like it was before – like it was on year of 2017. We would not be starting as high up as the zoo, we'll be starting right by the [inaudible], right in front of museum, right in front of Rite-Aid, the library, and Flatbush Avenue. So that will take – that will take away that congestion that took place right by the zoo, so all of those things are in place. Mostly it's very few people complain about what we did last year, we get more positive feedback, and we are hoping to do the same thing. Our people have received it well, and yes you always have a minute of people who will say something against what we have done. However, it was safe and that's number one to all of us. And we are happy that it went that way.

**Council Member Jumaane Williams:** First I want to make sure to life up a couple people's names. Bill Howard who passed away and Ellie Mannette who was 91 from Trinidad, a famous steel pan performer, I just want to make sure we keep their spirit alive when we discussing this. I also want to make sure to point that this is not and has never been the most violent weekend of the year and so I always want to make sure we point that when we have these discussions. When

I was there last year, it was a new – also – so off the bat, change is going to make people uncomfortable, so we always have to make sure that we point that out. Having participated in all of these for many years, there is not much sleep that happens, so I think Thursday to Monday is one day, but I think when people finish from Sunday, they were used to going straight to J'Ouvert and when I first got there, I was very concerned because at the beginning no one was there. I think people, understanding that there was going to be change, maybe went home and tried to get a nap. If you have ever participated in the weekend, a nap is a dangerous thing at that moment in time, so I think people may have slept a little longer than I expected, but I did see people finally begin to come out and so I was very happy about that.

My hope is with the additional information of what's happening, we'll see even more people. The biggest complaint I got was the amount of police presence and the long lines, the checkpoint. Some people don't want any checkpoints at all, I leave that in support to the J'Ouvert City International, they are comfortable with it, there are more checkpoints now so it should go quicker. The police presence, it looks a lot harsher when there's nobody there, like when I was there, when it is filled it doesn't look as much. I am not sure if they're going to be deployed differently, so at least it doesn't look like as much heavy police presence in one concentration, and so I hope that is something that is going to be looked at as well. And I haven't seen even as many – as much police presence I've seen in the days leading up to it, so I think that's all beneficial.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

**Question:** So just one follow up to that, last year my recollection is that many days ahead of J'Ouvert, already the lights were in place, they were turned on at night, there was barriers were already set up. It gave the appearance that the police department was trying to send a message ahead of the event, this year is different. Now I don't see that see that same scene this year, and [inaudible] decided to wait before deploying some of these things?

**Chief Harrison:** If I stand corrected, I believe we started doing it maybe two days before the event. It wasn't four days before it, so you'll see it up there within next 48-hours at least.

**State Senator Kevin Parker:** Right, so I mean part of the context that everyone needs to understand is that J'Ouvert is not just a parade, right? It's a time, right. So if Carnival is happening on Monday, then Monday morning, you know Sunday night, is J'Ouvert, by definition. Just like if New Year's Eve is – I mean New Years is Monday, then Sunday night is New Year's Eve, period. It's happening, right? And so there are lots of activities that are happening, as you heard the Councilman talk about, this stuff actually, we've been doing stuff since last Wednesday in the community, the Mayor just had something on Tuesday that has become an institution as part of the celebration of it in terms of his acknowledgement of it as an important cultural activity here in the state, as he does with many other parades and many other cultural activities that he hosts at Gracie Mansion.

But tonight, you know down the block, behind the museum, they're going to start going hard with, you know, reggae tonight, and then you know Lady's Night, and Brass Fest, and Panorama. So every night there's going to be something going on and typically around Friday – because

again, most of this happens in my district which is Flatbush and East Flatbush, Midwood, Ditmas Park, Windsor Terrace, and Park Slope – so I’m dealing with all – you know, all those communities are engaged in this in various ways. On Church Avenue, which is kind of unofficial parade route, the 67<sup>th</sup> Precinct has done an excellent job at making sure that community and that area is safe, but – and at the same times respecting, you know, noise complaints and other issues that may arise from the large number of people who are congregating to revel. So again we want to thank the police department, not just for the work, but for the partnership and the fact that we are now all engaged in a process that allows folks to enjoy themselves, to have cultural expression, and at the same time do that in the most safe way possible.

**Question:** Can we get if the Detective [inaudible] and Detective Joseph to talk about what he or she did interacting with police officers [inaudible] instructing them about the way—

**Mayor:** Does someone know about that?

**Chief Harrison:** Yeah, she’s here Rocco, but maybe can it – if you don’t mind I’ll have her speak to you afterwards regarding some of the great things that she’s been doing.

**Mayor:** Anyone want to typify it, just?

**Chief Harrison:** I just know that she’s been going into the East Flatbush and Flatbush area and meeting with a lot of the merchants, talking about some of the upcoming concerns and putting them – and making sure that people are aware of what’s – what the Police Department is going to be looking for in regards to making sure that it’s a shared responsibility, to make sure that this event runs smoothly.

**Councilman Williams:** Just to add. Detective Joseph is from the community and so I think it was one of the best decisions that was made. She served in the 67<sup>th</sup> Precinct with many of us so she has all the connective tissues whether it’s the bands, the Police Department, the elected officials, so it was a natural choice and I’m glad that that happened this year. I hope it’s something that continues.

**Mayor:** Ok, way back.

**Question:** What time does the [inaudible] close Sunday night? What time do [inaudible] do we know yet?

**Chief Brian Conroy:** That’ll be around 10:30 to 11 PM that night. Start telling people, you know, that we’re going to be strict in the area, that they’ll have to come in in the back and through the entrance.

**Question:** Can you turn the mic up?

**Mayor:** Yeah, we got to get you this mic.

**Chief Conroy:** Oh, oh.



**Mayor:** It needs to be lit. Okay do that again.

**Chief Conroy:** Yeah, so about 10:30-11 PM that – the evening before we’ll be telling people that and we’ll put notice out to that, we’re putting information out and – so the community knows that.

**Mayor:** So is there anything else on J’Ouvert? Yes?

**Question:** So there was a comment, I don’t think I understood. At 2 AM, people get to line up? I heard that a little while ago?

**Mayor:** The contingents in the parade.

**Question:** Oh the people that are in the parade—

**Chief Conroy:** Are participating.

**Question:** 2 AM in the morning—

**Chief Conroy:** Right the bands, the bands—

**Mayor:** Yes.

**Chief Conroy:** will be escorted from their yards over to the formation area and we’ll be escorting them over there—

**Question:** And how many of the [inaudible] officers are you going to have compared to last year?

**Chief Harrison:** We pretty much have the same number of officers that we had last year.

**Mayor:** I just note, any of the big parades, you know, there’s staging. Think about Manhattan parades, staging areas on the side streets – hours in advance so everyone gets ready. Okay on J’Ouvert last call, going once, twice. Other police matters, just want to see if we got anything else. Police? Police, go ahead.

**Question:** Chief Shea, just regarding the Bronx murder. The suspect, Wheeler, the male suspect, can you tell us what you know [inaudible] is there prior attempted murder conviction [inaudible] with that as well.

**Chief Shea:** Yeah Daquan Wheeler is a male, 31 years of age. He has several prior convictions, he’s currently on parole. Prior arrest in 2006, I believe resulted in a conviction and that was a robbery case and then most recently in 2015, a burglary case where he plead guilty to attempted burglary, was sentenced to a year and a half to three years.

**Question:** Not attempted murder?

**Chief Shea:** Um, that's what I have in front of me here Rocco, could have been part of the plea.

**Mayor:** Okay, go ahead.

**Question:** Chief Shea, just on that 9-11 call, can you clarify what was that 9-11 call about?

**Chief Shea:** Yeah, so again, last Wednesday, the 22<sup>nd</sup>, we believe our victim called 9-11 from the Longfellow address, 1006 Longfellow, from the apartment where ultimately she was killed. She called reporting what she claimed to be a kidnapping and the kidnapping turned out to be the father of the child removing the child from the apartment. The call lasted approximately from my recollection about five minutes. And that was a domestic dispute that the victim of the homicide was not involved in. She's reporting a domestic incident regarding essentially, her friend. As I said earlier, there are a number of prior domestic incidents coming back, from my recollection, at least four, but that's – this is still ongoing, that has to sorted out in terms of were all of them involving the same two people, some of them, as you know, people can call and have a domestic incident and refuse to give their name. So that all needs to be sorted out, but it – there appears at this time that there were some prior incidents between the two people that ultimately were charged with Ms. Velasquez's death.

**Question:** Did the police respond that day and make contact with her in the house, the victim?

**Chief Shea:** On the 9-11 call? I don't have that in front of me right now.

**Mayor:** Okay, any other police matters, yes?

**Question:** Was Wheeler there when she made the call?

**Chief Shea:** Yeah this is a – so when Wheeler – on the – it's a lot of different days, it's been a busy week, Rocco. On nine – on 8/22 when she makes that call, Daquan Wheeler has already left the residence and she states that in the 9-11 call. Police do respond that day, to the earlier question, and take a report. But I don't recall whether it was the 9-11 caller or the woman that lives there, that was there to provide the information at that time. So that has to be sorted out.

**Question:** What time of day was the 9-11 call, and you said that the child was not associated with Velasquez, but a friend of hers. Who was the friend?

**Chief Shea:** So I'll go back a little bit and the time of day I do not have in front of me but two people have been charged in Ms. Velasquez's death: Kiara Martinez and Daquan Wheeler. Both at this time charged with murder in the second degree. The child that I'm referencing, which was the subject of that particular 9-11 call, it's believed is the child of Ms. Martinez and Mr. Wheeler.

**Question:** So you referred to a friend. Martinez is the friend?

**Mayor:** Okay, let me see if there's any other police matters, yes?

**Question:** Yeah do we have any update on the – I think it was pizza delivery incident in Harlem?

**Chief Shea:** Last night on the overnight in the 30<sup>th</sup> Precinct. Very fresh in terms of this incident, on Amsterdam Avenue, I believe it's around the 1700 Park and Amsterdam Avenue, we have an individual, a male Hispanic, who is a pizza delivery man, pulls up to the location, goes inside, comes immediately outside, there's a scaffolding in that area, it's believed he's chaining up his bicycle. And then, from a short distance away, it appears at this time that one shot is fired, striking the deliveryman for a Papa John's pizza place, in the head causing his demise.

**Question:** Do you think this was an attempted – [inaudible]—

**Chief Shea:** There's a couple different theories that we have, at this point, I won't go into, but it's a little preliminary.

**Question:** Was he robbed? Was he missing anything?

**Chief Shea:** I won't go into anything else beyond that at this time.

**Mayor:** Okay, anything else police related, going once – yes?

**Question:** Chief Harrison, Mr. Mayor if you want to, just regarding the new marijuana policy effective September 1. You talk about what you hope to – what you to hope to achieve with the number of less arrests [inaudible] are making and can you address the issue of racial disparity, how that might change, or if it will change at all in terms of who gets summons and who gets arrested?

**Mayor:** I'll just start and say look, when we went down this road which really begins with the decision a few years ago to end arrests for low-level marijuana possession and now ending arrests for smoking in public, again, not in every instance and I want to always remind people there can be extenuating circumstances where there's still an arrest. But over as a question of policy, ending arrests, a number of goals in mind: one was to reduce unnecessary arrests and this has been a very central concept, certainly during Commissioner Bratton's time and Commissioner O'Neill's leadership, the concept of ensuring that the NYPD was using the right enforcement tool for each situation and respecting officer training and officer discretion. Remember in 2017, 100,000 fewer arrests than in 2013, with better public safety results. So we're committed to reducing unnecessary arrests, we're committed to reducing disparity. And that work is going to be ongoing. There's a lot that goes into reducing disparity that I want to argue from the very beginning; if you are not arrested, you are not experiencing the reality of arrest. The highest form of reducing disparity is to reduce the overall number of arrests. And that's what we've proceeded to do. But we believe we can do all that while continuing to deepen public safety.

**Chief Harrison:** And if you don't mind Mr. Mayor, you know, I don't have the numbers in front of me, Rocco, but our new policy, we're going to a humongous drop in people in the

communities of color, being arrested for marijuana and that was one of the whole goals of this whole new policy.

**Mayor:** That's exactly right. Any other police related questions, going once. Police related, yes?

**Question:** Can you talk about the drowning in Orchard Beach? [Inaudible] yesterday?

**Mayor:** You got that? Ok, I think we're going to have to get back to you on that, we'll have some one follow up, our folks will follow up with you right away. Police related, yes.

**Question:** [Inaudible] attacks on the MTA bus drivers in Brooklyn. I think they have a wanted poster out in the 88 for a series of attacks. [Inaudible] all connected or are they separate incidents?

**Chief Shea:** No, we're seeing – and it is troubling, we're seeing a number of different attacks when you look at the 60,000 foot view, if you will, of MTA workers, whether they're bus and train operators. The numbers are down, but that's little consolation as somebody said earlier, if you're the victim of that particular attack you don't care to hear statistics about crime. We don't see any correlation between the different ones at this point in time but if you go onto our twitter page we have – we have retweeted, if you will, an MTA poster, we're still looking for information, we've made a number of arrests recently, on different attacks, two different attacks. One, two individuals, and one separate attack with one individual, but there are several more that we still need to identify the perpetrators so I ask anyone with information view that twitter page @NYPDdetectives. And you can see, please call Crime Stoppers. Let me just say with this horrible, horrible tragedy in the Bronx from this past week, it was a Crime Stoppers tip called in which led to us identifying Ms. Velasquez. So the system works, it works great and has been said many times before, it's a shared responsibility and this is a team effort so we need the public's help.

**Mayor:** Amen, go ahead.

**Question:** This overlaps a little but [inaudible] there's been some stories in recent days about officials within your security detail, Commissioner O'Neill a couple of days ago said he would let the IAB investigation play out, [inaudible]. Are you comfortable with that and so what is your assessment of how detail is working and some of the allegations raised in these stories?

**Mayor:** I'm definitely comfortable with the approach the Police Commissioner is taking. Of course any matter that is brought to his attention should be looked at and it will be but if you are talking about now four and a half years of working with my security detail, I think it's been well run. I think it's provided excellent approach to security and worked well with me and my family so I'm very satisfied. And I have a lot of respect for the members of the detail and the leadership of the detail so you know again, any details, any specific issues will be looked at and then we will speak to it once that's completed. Last call on police matters, okay non police matters, Andrew.

**Question:** Mayor, last night in the gubernatorial debate, Governor Cuomo said I love Mayor de Blasio, I think he loves me too. So my first question is –

**Mayor:** It's like a valentine.

[Laughter]

**Question:** So my first question is do you love Governor Cuomo?

**Mayor:** I have known the Governor since 1995, I respect him. Obviously we've had times when we were closer and times when we've had differences but I respect him. I have some real philosophical disagreements with the Governor, I have a very different understanding of what it means to be a democrat. I have some real differences on how he has addressed some of the issues related to New York City. But of course I respect him and there's a long standing connection and you know I talk to him on a regular basis and even when we disagree we still can talk to each other.

**Question:** And as a quick follow up to that, Cynthia Nixon this morning indicated that perhaps the reason you either won't or haven't endorsed her is because you are fearful of the reaction from the Governor and perhaps a vindictive response towards the city. Is that the reason you are not endorsing Cynthia Nixon?

**Mayor:** So first of all, we New Yorkers don't live in fear. That's the nature of being a New Yorkers and obviously when, you know I always quote the Ed Koch approach to governors in New York State, when they do something good for New York City, you know praise them and support them, when they do something that hurts New York City, address it, take it on, challenge it. That's what I've tried to do. But look as to the Governor's approach when someone disagrees with him, I've spoken to that in the past, my views on that are well known.

**Question:** Are you not going to endorse him?

**Mayor:** Again when I have something to say about any of these elections, I assure you, you will be the first to know. Marcia, I think you were there last night.

**Question:** I think I was. So actually I have a question about the debate, surprisingly. So the Governor said that he would be willing to ask the MTA to postpone next year's fare hike, if you and he, if you would contribute to the short fall the MTA would have by not having a fare hike, which is \$325 million, but your share could \$160 million –

**Mayor:** So I will speak for my fellow 8.6 million New Yorkers, we are not suckers. You know, right now the people of New York City are paying the vast majority of the cost of our subways and buses. That's the fact. The City government provides a lot more direct funding to the MTA than the state government does from its budget. The State sometimes tries to claim the taxes that are there dedicated to MTA, those are already dedicated to the MTA, it's not new money. In fact one of my differences, to the point in the previous question, I'll call out the Governor when I think he is wrong, during his term as governor, almost half a billion dollars earmarked for the

MTA, was taken from the MTA and moved over to the State budget. That's part of why the MTA is having the trouble it's having. So no, I'm not falling for that. We need a permanent funding solution to fix the MTA. It can be done. I think Mr. Byford is doing a good job. I think his plan seems to be the right plan. I believe the price tag is \$30 to \$40 billion. That sounds right to me. We are not going to get \$30 to \$40 billion out of the City budget, the same City budget that has to pay policing, sanitation, schools – we are going to get it from either a Millionaire's tax or as some prefer congestion pricing or some combination of tools. But ask experts like Dick Ravitch who I think is one of the people who understands the MTA the best historically. He'll be the first to tell you, if you don't get a new funding source, we can't fix these problems.

**Question:** So I'll ask another question from the debate – Cynthia Nixon talking about state troopers who have been assigned here in New York City despite the fact that we have a robust NYPD.

**Mayor:** We have the finest police force in America, is that what you meant to say?

**Question:** That's what I meant to say. So she said we should be spending less on law enforcement. Now I wonder if you agree with that assessment.

**Mayor:** Look, I don't – that was a broad answer and I don't know what she specifically feels. I would say when it comes to the state police presence, I think what would have been smarter would have been to coordinate with the NYPD from the beginning and determine what the NYPD thought made sense. Of course there are some very specific roles for state police to play in New York City. But I don't know why on Earth the State and the Governor didn't reach out originally started under Commissioner Bratton and say we have this idea, how should approach it. That didn't happen and I think it's been part of a pattern of the Governor not having a positive vision for New York City and how to work with New York City and I certainly didn't hear it last night. I mean I've had this conversation with him. Why not, when you have a city that's 43 percent of the state's population, there's no state in America that has a single city with a higher percentage of its population than we have in New York City, New York State. We are almost half of the state's population. Why not start with a positive vision for how to help New York City, how to work with me as Mayor and my administration and how to get things done for New York City. That's not what I get. I get sudden announcements and plans that are often made without taking New York City's needs into account. So I would just say to you, we have the finest police force in America. They have driven down crime over the last four years. The state police have a lot to do around the rest of the state and my central question would be you know, for all of the rest of the state, are they getting all the policing they need because we have got the very best here, we've got the situation under control.

**Question:** DOJ last night made probably his firmest comments against safe injection sites, are you in any way changing the steps that you take, I imagine you're not backing off the sites but are you changing course at all?

**Mayor:** Look it's a brand new pronouncement. The overdose prevention centers to me are a part of addressing the opioid crisis and I think we have to be honest about this. The research in the United States and around the world is pretty clear, overdose prevention centers save lives and

give you a real chance of getting someone who's addicted to treatment and turning their life around. In the absence of overdose prevention centers, more people die. If we are really serious about ending the opioid crisis we have to have this tool as one of the options. The Trump administration has said some things about the opioid crisis that suggests they are focused. But I don't know why they wouldn't therefore look at the body of evidence from around the world and consider this as one of the ways to address the crisis. As to the legalities, you know we have heard this for the first time, we are going to have to assess what it means but as a matter of policy, we believe the overdose prevention centers really will save lives. Yes.

**Question:** So the New York Wheel has six more days to get the project back on track, last month at a town hall on Staten Island you said you would work with the Wheel to figure out how to work through some of the problems they are having getting the project off the ground. Have you met with them since that town hall and do you guys have a plan to –

**Mayor:** I have not but the Economic Development Corporation leadership has been in touch with the folks behind the Wheel trying to figure out an equitable solution. Remember this is a private sector development. We want to be supportive but we also, this is not something initiated by the City, it's something we want to find the right way to support, if there is such a way. That's what the conversation has been about. And I can have them give you an update.

**Question:** Do you want to meet with [inaudible].

**Mayor:** I personally do not plan to meet with them because my hope is that either than can resolve the issues on their own or EDC can figure out with them a way to move it forward. Yes.

**Question:** Horse carriages – so [inaudible] the DOT the rules will be put out tomorrow, why do it through the DOT and this whole process? Is it to avoid the City Council and perhaps you know the votes aren't there in the City Council to do this there again? And the horse carriage industry said they were not notified, consulted, etcetera about these rules. They are obviously against them saying that they don't take into the account the safety of the horses. There's no problems on Central Park South.

**Mayor:** I beg to differ. Come on, anyone with eyes to see knows there's a problem on Central Park South. Horses in traffic is a bad idea. I said that in 2013, I'd like to repeat it in 2018, it's a bad idea. Central Park South right now, you see it all the time, horses in close proximity to traffic. It is a location that we believe could be used much more effectively in terms of mass transit, in terms of our Vision Zero initiatives and helping people. It's a very, very busy area. People cross that area safely. We believe we have a much better way to use Central Park South while simultaneously providing the carriages with very good staging areas, where their customers can get to them. They will be running the same routes they've ever run. This is just a smarter way to go about it. It is within the rights of the City administratively to do this, that's why we are doing it, it does not require legislation.

**Question:** Did you think about going to the Council?

**Mayor:** It didn't require legislation so we decided to do what government does and we saw policy we thought made more sense and we put the policy into place. Gloria?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, I want to ask about the BQX, the Friends of BQX is largely backed by developers, why not ask them to pay for this project which would ultimately benefit them and the people living in the area of the projects they want to build?

**Mayor:** Yes, I think there has been a lot of misunderstanding and I understand why there has been misunderstanding because some of the voices that first came forward with the idea were developers. But that is not the reason the idea is a good idea. And in fact the routes we are looking at now are not the same routes that the developers proposed and going places are not necessarily what they wanted. And not related to their specific properties. What is now happened with the BQX, it is more and more become an idea that is important to everyday people. It's important to residents of public housing. There's about 40,000 public housing residents along the route. There's a whole lot of people whose lives essentially just take place within Brooklyn or just take place within Queens or between Queens and Brooklyn who see it as a real advantage to provide more transportation. We believe it can be done. It'll be a huge contribution to New York City's mass transit. Just easy fact, about 400,000 people, something like that live along the corridor and about 100,000 jobs so it's compared to any place in the country, this would be one of the most densely populated light rail corridors in the entire country. So we think it's a really good idea but to do it we would need the combination of the revenue that it would generate and federal funding. And that's the only way realistically you get something done on this level.

**Question:** If I could follow up on the federal funding, you spoke about how unlikely that might be. If there is federal funding that goes towards this project, shouldn't, why not put that funding towards the MTA which is –

**Mayor:** Because it's apples and oranges in my view. First of all, even today, this is an interesting one, infrastructure is sort of a tale of two cities right now. The big concept of an infrastructure plan, one that we thought we might see from the president is dead because of the huge give away to the wealthy and corporations in the tax legislation. It literally is a one for one, the infrastructure plan died the day the tax legislation was voted, won't be coming back. That said in the budget reconciliation, the congress did start to put more money into infrastructure as a beginning on top of what they did in the 2015 highway bill, which was also an expansion. So there are some good signs in the congress. Now I submit to you we are about to have two elections, 2018 and 2020 that could entirely remake the congress and the White House and then we will be having a very different conversation about infrastructure. In any competition for light rail funding, this proposal would go to the head of the line instantaneously. It would cover I would argue looking around the country, it would cover the most people in the smallest amount of area, it would be the most efficient use of money. It's clearly an area that needs a lot more mass transit. But on the MTA point, my vision, my hope – and I think it's a realistic one – is, under new political leadership, there's going to be a lot more money for subways and buses too, and we need all of the above. This City must have a whole range of new mass transit options. So, it don't think it's either-or, I think we need both.



**Question:** I also want to follow up on the BQX question. Looking at the time difference in the report that the City put out, the fastest time it will save is, what? 10-15 minutes? And in some cases – the route from Downtown Brooklyn to Red Hook – I'm sorry, from Red Hook to Hunter Point is actually longer on the BQX. Given the cost of this, and the delay, and how it [inaudible] be more expensive because it's taking longer – I mean, how do you justify spending this much money for such really paltry –

**Mayor:** You are editorializing, respectfully.

**Question:** It's only a few minutes – [inaudible]

**Mayor:** Let me say it this way, I don't know if you've been to New York City, but most New Yorkers, to save 10 or 15 minutes each way, every day?

**Question:** I take the train every day –

**Mayor:** Okay, thank you. So, 10 to 15 minutes is a very big deal to New Yorkers. Something that would be paid for by revenue that is generated by the very existence by this new mass transit and federal funding is clearly a good deal for New Yorkers. But, unquestionably, if you look at the whole route, you're talking about some areas that are really underserved, including areas with a lot of working people and a lot of residents of public housing. You're talking about naturally connecting a corridor that is more and more central to the future of the city, but doesn't have really easy, natural connections. If you're in Astoria, if you're in Long Island City, if you're in Williamsburg, Greenpoint, Red Hook, it's not so easy to get between those places right now. So, I think it's a good deal because it's the shape of things to come. We need more mass transit and the center of gravity of the City is moving to Brooklyn and Queens. And I think it's a good deal because it's created with a combination of federal funding and revenue that only would be there because this exists.

**Question:** Do you have information on – I know NYCHA keeps getting brought up – do you know how many people travel, for example, from the Astoria Houses to the Red Hook Houses that would justify such a specific –

**Mayor:** I don't think of it as how many people travel from one housing development to another. I think of it as, how many people travel from Astoria Houses or any of the other – Red Hook Houses – or any of the other developments to work, to school, to places that, right now, aren't so easy to get to for them, and this would make it easier. Now, I'll state the obvious – one day, the goal would be to have a cross-registration with the MTA. That's true for the ferry system as well, and I think that is really when this idea would become even more powerful and usable. That's going to take some time, but we believe it's doable. But do I know for a fact that people in a lot of those areas are under-served by mass transit? Absolutely.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, I want to ask you about a situation at the Throggs Neck Houses NYCHA development. It's been reported this week that there's been a bunch of parties that involve drinking and sex that were apparently happening while employees were filling overtime. The Department of Investigation says today that it's going to investigate that after previously sort of

kicking back to NYCHA [inaudible]. I just want to get your response to the situation there and the investigation.

**Mayor:** Yeah, it's unacceptable and there have already been some consequences for some of the employees involved. There are going to be a lot more when this is over. There has to be a full investigation. There has to be due process. But I strongly believe a number of NYCHA employees will pay a very steep price for what they've done. We do not tolerate this. Our new General Manager immediately initiated an investigation, but very clearly needed proof. That was the kind of proof that could lead to the ultimate kinds of consequences, like termination. And he has been pulling together that information. You're right, DOI originally chose not to get involved. They want to get involved now, that's great. But the bottom line is, not acceptable and anyone who participated will be really experiencing very, very serious consequences.

**Question:** I have a question about the ferries and the BQX. [Inaudible] subsidized, and you talk to someone, they got a good job. You might call them yuppies. And one the BQX [inaudible]

**Mayor:** Wait a minute, you're saying everyone on a ferry is a yuppie.

**Question:** I'm saying – c'mon –

**Mayor:** No wait, you c'mon, brother. Hold on, I'm just asking you to clarify.

**Question:** May I ask the question?

**Mayor:** I'm asking you to clarify.

**Question:** You are more likely – you go to the Williamsburg dock and talk to someone, they've got a good job. They're being subsidized. You look at the BQX for [inaudible] waterfront development [inaudible] I thought some yuppies might live there. I want to ask, what is your administration doing to make sure you're not segregating transit by income, because if you're going to take the BQX and you're going to take the ferry, you're raising their transit cost through the transfers that are not covered by the MTA.

**Mayor:** Respectfully, I think you're really missing your facts at the beginning of your question. I'm going to answer your question, but you can try and steer it all you want, but I'm going to answer it based on the facts as I know them. Go to the Rockaways, go to Red Hook, go to Soundview – I'm sorry, people would not define themselves there as yuppies or as people who are well off. It is a mix of neighborhoods. Guess what the neighborhoods have in common, my friend? They're all on the water. That's why the ferry system goes to them and we're looking at a whole lot of additional neighborhoods of all different demographic backgrounds. We have to take full advantage of the water. We need more mass transit options. So, what I see here is – and I've been on the ferries a number of times, I've talked to the riders and I see a whole range of people – this is opening up a world of possibilities. We have to see how far we can take it. The same with the BQX, which, yes, there's people along the BQX route who are doing well and there's people who are living in public housing and everything in between. We need mass transit for every kind of New Yorker. What would be a mistake is to try and stay [inaudible] with the

mass transit we have. We all learned a very valuable lesson on the Second Avenue Subway. How many years to get us three additional stops? So, there's none of us that think we're going to be seeing tons of new subway lines in our lifetime. Select Bus Service is a very important piece, probably the single highest-volume piece and we're going to be doing a lot more of that. Bikes are big piece. But we're going to need all of the above, particularly as the City moves towards 9 million people.

**Question:** The federal funding – you're saying now this banks on federal funding. You announced this two years ago. To be clear, you don't have an environmental review – when do you plan on applying –

**Mayor:** Everything is being moved now, so the first thing we had to do was to determine the route, and I believe – I haven't seen everything that was put out today, but you've seen an updated route – everything that would take to get it done, what we think the true cost would be. This is a big endeavor. As I said, it would instantly be one of the biggest light-rail projects in the history of the country. So, I know, and I respect why folks in the media always feel like everything should be done immediately. But I really want to put forward to you how complex these matters are. Now that we have a route, and what we estimate as a budget and an approach, we're going to move the process forward. We'll apply for federal funding at the appropriate time. There is some right now, again, I believe it becomes even more possible, depending on the results of this election and, again, the one in 2020.

**Question:** So, you're saying it's okay that for the past two years there's been no work on an environmental study that you would need to –

**Mayor:** Again, I'm very comfortable we've been doing the things we need to do in sequence. In the back?

**Question:** So, with the new timeline and the new cost, are you not just delaying the demise of this project? [Inaudible] that your predecessor doesn't just scrap –

**Mayor:** My successor.

**Question:** Your successor, I'm sorry.

**Mayor:** My predecessor was against it.

[Laughter]

**Question:** Yes – but if your successor doesn't just scrap this project after you leave?

**Mayor:** I think it's a great question about anything that any administration does, that these ideas survive if they're working and if they have a lot of support from the people. So you could ask that about Pre-K, you could ask that about the affordable housing plan, IDNYC, NYC Ferry. I believe they'll survive on their merits. This is a big part of New York City and a lot of people are going to want this. And so, we'll be moving it forward. As I said, I think the funding formula

we've discussed is a good one, a fair one to tax payers, and a smart one. So, maybe my successor comes in and says, I don't want to provide more mass transit to Brooklyn and Queens. But I suspect a lot of people in Brooklyn and Queens will say, hold on a moment.

Okay, let me get a few more. Willie?

**Question:** [Inaudible] lead press conference earlier today and he sends this question.

**Mayor:** It's like a telegram, I'm impressed.

[Laughter]

**Question:** After years of declines in NYCHA [inaudible] the numbers of kids in NYCHA with elevated blood levels flattened out since 2014. Dr. Bassett said in the press conference that she noted the trend and that it was related to the time period when NYCHA stopped their testing. So, you had said previously, discussing the [inaudible] lead testing, that thank God no child was harmed by lead because of the lack of inspections. Now, the data seems to show that improvements stopped [inaudible]. Do you still stand by your previous statement?

**Mayor:** Again, I'll say two things. One, my understanding of the data is what we see from 2005 until now, a 90-percent reduction citywide in lead exposure in children – 90 percent – and that we are taking a Vision-Zero approach. We're literally going to approach this with the vision of eliminating lead paint exposure for all children in the city. The numbers I've seen coming out with this report show that exposure continues to decline. We've got more work to do, but exposure continues to decline. The numbers I've seen also indicate that even when a child was exposed at a low level, the follow-up was strong – the health follow-up, the follow-up on the physical space to make sure there was no longer lead there. And a lot of young people saw their lead levels reduce and go back down again, which is crucial to making sure that they have a better future. I've also come to understand in this whole experience, because – I cannot tell a lie – I did not know everything about lead issues previously, that if there's exposure, it manifests very differently in each child. We rarely know exactly where the exposure was from, for how long. What we do know is, we've got to get the exposure level back down and that we can measure. We have to get the original source and I think we made a lot progress on those fronts. Ultimately, the big change here is that we're going to get a definitive answer about NYCHA, which we've never had in our history. And this is kind of amazing, when you think about lead paint being banned in the City in, I believe, 1960, this will be the first time when we go through all 130,000 apartments and we use much more advanced technology. We will have a definitive answer on which have lead and which don't. And then we'll be focusing on ending the lead presence in the ones that do. That's going to be the ultimate difference-maker. The other thing the report points out is that there's a much more real problem in private housing, proportionally, than there is in NYCHA housing, and we care about that too. So now, we've made very clear that DOH will go and investigate and inspect any apartment, public or private, where there's a child under six and there's evidence of lead exposure.

**Question:** Just first, I just wanted to get your thoughts about certain ideas that have been put out there that the MTA should not receive new revenue via congestion pricing or the millionaire's

tax, what have you, unless it undertakes substantial internal reforms to reduce its enormous cost. I have another question, but –

**Mayor:** Sure. Unquestionably, there needs to be further reform at the MTA in terms of spending its money more effectively, just look at the East Side Access. Now, I'm hopeful about Andy Byford, I really am. I think the plan he put forward makes sense and he seems to be an effective person. But it's like the lockbox idea that I've talked about a lot. Whatever form of revenue comes to pass, it has to be clear what it's going for and that it's going to be used efficiently.

**Question:** But no new revenue until –

**Mayor:** No, no – again, I want to say, I appreciate the question, but I want to put it in my own words. One, we need a permanent revenue source. I believe that should be a millionaire's tax. Some other people believe that should be congestion pricing. It could be whatever combination, but there must be a permanent revenue source. Two, the MTA has to do a better job at spending the money it has. Three, it has to have a lockbox mentality, that whatever the money is demarcated for actually is what it does. I'm not framing it the way you're framing it. I'm saying, I am hopeful that with the new leadership there, money will be used more effectively.

**Question:** Completely unrelated – speaking purely in the abstract, who do you think would be more capable of representing the needs and interests of New York City? A Councilman who comes to events like this or a Congresswoman from the Buffalo area in the role of Lieutenant Governor?

**Mayor:** That's a fascinating abstract question. I can't figure out who the people involved might be. Again, I'm not going to speak to the election coming up until I'm ready.

Marcia?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, I just had a quick question. I'm wondering who you think won the debate?

**Mayor:** I would say a couple of things. Cynthia Nixon was debating literally for the first time in her life, and when you factor that in – that she was debating against a career politician – unquestionably, she more than held her own. By the standard of how much experience how much each one had debating, I would say she won because her performance far exceeded expectation. I would also say, she offered some very powerful views that I thought resonated and I was surprised at some of the Governor's tone, I really was. I obviously felt some of what he said was patently inaccurate and I have made sure we've put that out in the public domain. But also, his tone was negative, and I didn't understand how someone who is doing well in the polls and has \$30 million, and is an incumbent, would take such a negative tone. It just didn't make sense to me.

**Question:** Mayor, I want to ask you about a story we had earlier this week about an EMT [inaudible] who is the son of a high-ranking [inaudible]. He's been arrested multiple times for impersonating a police officer. DOI has substantiated allegations that he's repeatedly blown off

EMS calls while he was on the job, yet he's still on the payroll and has been since that DOI substantiation last year. Just want to know what you think of that, whether this person should still be on the job?

**Mayor:** I want to see what the investigation shows. I'm not familiar with him or the specifics. Obviously, you know, I care deeply about the rules being followed and everything being done appropriately, but I need to see what the investigation yields.

Gloria, take it away, you will have the last word.

**Question:** Thank you. Back to your favorite topic, the horses –

**Mayor:** Horses –

**Question:** You had – when you came into office, you said – one of the things you said was you would ban this industry off the city streets. It's now getting confined to the park, they will continue to work.

**Mayor:** It's not confined to the park. The places where you purchase the service is confined to the park, but the routes are the same routes that they've been – in and out of the park.

**Question:** So, is this a sort of failure on that promise since you had initially said that you thought the industry should be done away with?

**Mayor:** You're covering some old ground, but I'm happy to speak to it. I'm not happy with what happened. Obviously –

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** Yeah, and I've been very open about it. I thought from the beginning there was a very strong block of Council members who had said publicly they thought that horse carriages should be banned. And I know there was a lot of pressure on them and I think some of that pressure was unexpected. And I do understand that, as an elected official, that can be a bit of a shock to the system. But I thought on the merits, in terms of safety for everyone, congestion on the streets, from an animal rights perspective and the safety of animals. I mean, you look at so many different angles, I just did not think it made sense to continue with horse carriages in New York City, and I thought there would be a Council majority, even if it would be a very contested issue. It proved to be a different reality. So, we've continued to look at ways to address the underlying issues. There are real safety issues, there are real animal welfare issues, real congestion issues. I do think this is a step forward. I think it improves how the industry connects to the rest of New York City. It opens up Central Park South for other, better uses. And I think it'll make the City work better, but it's not the same as legislation, obviously.

Thanks, everyone.

###

