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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES A RECORD-BREAKING 20,325 AFFORDABLE APARTMENTS AND HOMES FINANCED IN LAST FISCAL YEAR, ENOUGH FOR 50,000 NEW YORKERS**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** All right – people have shown up for good news, which we commend.

Well, good morning, everyone. You see behind me the work going on to create the Summit Ridge Apartments, which, when completed, will contain 58 units of affordable housing. That’s something to clap for right there – 58 units of affordable housing.

[Applause]

Now, that 58 units is part of a very important number I want to announce today, and that is the number of units that we secured in the fiscal year that just ended. Fiscal Year ’15 ended on June 30. The way we do this – we say if we have put together the financing, if we have everything locked down to build housing and to preserve housing, that’s when we lock in the number. So the number of units that were secured and put on the pathway to completion in Fiscal Year ’15 is 20,325 units.

[Applause]

I should’ve asked for the envelope, please. I had a dramatic moment there.

Now, for you history buffs, that is the highest number of units that has been secured in this city in the last 25 years – highest single-year achievement in affordable housing in 25 years.

[Applause]

Here’s another fact – it is enough housing for almost 50,000 New Yorkers.

[Applause]

Now, the very best year ever, in terms of securing and starting affordable housing units, was 1989 – it was the height of Mayor Koch’s affordable housing plan, which is something that has gone into the record books as having been an amazing contribution to this city – and I give Mayor Koch such credit for an affordable housing plan that really did so much to turn around this city, and did so much for the Bronx in particular. So the high watermark was 1989. This is the second best in history in terms of overall units that have been secured and begun – and we continue to work on that and continue to go farther.

It represents a city investment of \$618 million dollars. And I remind you –talking about another predecessor, Mayor Bloomberg, who had a very substantial affordable housing plan – we doubled – we doubled the capital commitment of city dollars to affordable housing, even compared to the Bloomberg plan.

[Applause]

And as always, I want to thank my colleagues in the City Council – Speaker Mark-Viverito and all of our colleagues in the City Council for your support for that affordable housing plan.

[Applause]

Now, those big numbers are good to hear, but in each and every case, we have to turn them into action – and what you see behind us is an example of that. It's one thing to put together the financing, put together the plan, get the land. What we like seeing is when the construction begins and we move towards the day when a family can move in.

And again, our plan is predicated upon both preserving existing units of affordable housing and creating new ones.

When it comes to creating new ones, we are now proud to say we have 8,500 new apartments – brand new apartments underway right now as we speak – 8,500, which is the most at any given point in the city's history in the last four decades. Literally since the Department of Housing Preservation and Development was created, this is the most units that are being produced at any one time.

So –

[Applause]

– we know – and I always say this – think about one unit. One unit means one family that has a good place to live they can afford, that has the number one expense in their life under control, because it's affordable.

And what we're doing is for that family and so many other families – and it's not just for today, it's for the long-term. And let me give you an example here at Summit Ridge. 100 percent of these units will be affordable – that's a good thing to begin with.

Now, many people say, what is affordable? Different definitions – and there are different definitions in different places, different buildings – let's talk about this building. This building will be affordable to families that make between \$23,000 and \$46,000 a year for a family of three – \$23,000 and \$46,000 a year. That's a lot of people in this city. That's a lot of people who are at the lower side of the income level and need help and need affordable units. This is going to reach them. And for every family that gets one of those units, these units are guaranteed affordable for the next 60 years – six-zero – the next 60 years.

[Applause]

And this is what we're doing to make sure that people can stay in the neighborhood they love, in the city they love, that they have helped to create and build. This is our commitment.

Now, success has many fathers and mothers. A lot of people have gathered with us here today. I'd like to thank them and acknowledge them. Let me start by thanking, of course, Speaker Mark-Viverito, who we're going to hear from in a moment.

I want to thank the elected officials who are with us – and I'm going to try and get everyone right. You're going to hear from several of them, so if I don't say your name, it's because you're one of the people that's going to be speaking, but I want to thank also Council Member Vanessa Gibson; I want to thank –

[Applause]

– yes, you can clap for her.

I want to thank Assembly Member Walter Mosley.

[Applause]

Assembly Member Luis Sepúlveda.

[Applause]

Assembly Member Michael Blake.

[Applause]

Thank you to all of you.

I want to thank our brothers and sisters in labor who are here, including from 1199, the Hotel Trades Council, and the New York State Nurses Association.

[Applause]

We have many of our non-profit development partners here – and so much of this work is done with non-profit organizations around the city that are in the forefront of creating affordable housing – let’s thank all of them.

[Applause]

So many community and housing organizations that make a big difference.

Also, members of the clergy are here, including members of our Clergy Advisory Committee – let’s thank all of them.

And finally, the hard-working members of my administration who have been part and parcel of making this very ambitious affordable housing plan come to life – I’m going to name them all and you can clap for them all. Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen; HPD Commissioner Vicki Been; HDC President Gary Rodney; and Buildings Commissioner Rick Chandler – we thank you all.

[Applause]

Now, again, housing – you know, we have to keep saying this – it’s the number one expense in people’s life by far anywhere – in New York City even more so. If you address the challenge of housing, a family can get by – they can make ends meet. If they can’t address their housing expenses, so many other things are not possible. That’s why we have created the most affordable – excuse me, the most ambitious affordable housing plan in the history of this country.

We released this plan a little over a year ago – the Housing New York plan. In case you need a visual, I have one. Here it is – released last May. And the goal was 200,000 units created or preserved over ten years. We’re proud to say we are on pace – in fact, we are ahead of pace – to meet this goals, because this plan will make a huge difference for almost half a million New Yorkers.

Now, some of you have been at my press conferences before. Let’s do a little audience participation. A half million New Yorkers – that’s as many people as in the city limits of which American city?

**Unknown:** The Bronx?

**Mayor:** No, which American city. Good try, though.

[Laughter]

You haven't been at enough of my press conferences. Miami, Kansas City – within the city limits of those cities, there is a half million people or less. So, this is enough housing that we will create over the next ten years – the size of a major American city worth of affordable housing. And it will serve people across the spectrum of folks who need affordable housing – folks who have the lowest incomes, folks who are working hard to get to the middle class, everyone in between.

I talked about this back in my State of the City speech in February – how we're going to make sure this plan reaches our neighborhoods. And I want to give you physical evidence behind me.

This is not a plan on paper. This is a plan that's taking life right now.

Summit Ridge is an example. The Beach Channel Senior Houses in Queens are an example – part of 1,544 new units for seniors that are secured in that 20,000 plus this year – 1,544 units for seniors. The Glenmore Development in Brownsville, Brooklyn is among the 1,247 new apartments for the formally homeless that are part of that number I mentioned before. The Compass Residence in East Crotona – here in the Bronx – amongst the 1,164 apartments planned for the lowest income families. That means a family of three that makes less than \$23,000 a year – meaning at or below the poverty level. All of these apartments are part of this 200,000 unit plan, and they're moving right now.

That is one piece of our approach to affordable housing. And I thanked the Council for their extraordinary support. It's also an important moment to thank our members of the Assembly who, despite all the challenges in Albany – and there are many, brothers and sister – the members of the Assembly can be very proud of what they did in this legislative session because while the rest Albany was watching, the Assembly actually passed legislation and moved the ball. The Assembly called for the strengthening of rent regulation and did something about it.

[Applause]

The Assembly helped to get the 421-a plan back on track, thank you very much. The Assembly has been there every step of the way. So, we thank all the Assembly members who are here. And we thank the Democrats in the Senate – Senator Serrano, for your steadfast support as well.

But, meanwhile, more has been happening here at the city level. The rent guidelines board, for the first time in its 46-year history, decided there should be a rent freeze based on the facts. And that's having as hugely positive impact for people who are trying to make ends meet in this city. We're using every tool we have to ensure that the development process is more fair to communities – demanding more of developers in terms of community needs for affordable housing and so many other things.

Obviously, working with landlords as well to increase the amount of affordability in their buildings and to protect the affordability we have. And, when we're dealing with an unscrupulous landlord, using the tools we have to fight harassment and fight any effort to displace tenants – so, a lot of different pieces that come together. And I mentioned 421-a – more work to be done there, but the good news is we are now moving towards the day when there will no longer be tax breaks given to developers without affordable housing attached. And that is crucial.

[Applause]

So, I'll finish in English, say a couple words in Spanish, and then I want you to hear from some of my colleagues. But the bottom line is – I've said, this city cannot be great – we cannot be as great as we've always been, we cannot be great in the future, if we're not a place for everyone. There is a secret formula to New York City. There always has been. It only works because it's a place for everyone. That is the magic of this place. This plan is how we keep it a place for everyone. And we're proud of this plan, and we're going to keep it moving forward.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

Sounds good in Spanish, too. It's a good achievement in Spanish, too.

[Applause]

And now, my partner in so much of this work – and I can't thank her and the City Council enough. They have pushed us to go as far as possible, and they have supported our efforts every step of the way. The speaker of the New York City Council, Melissa Mark-Viverito.

[Applause]

[...]

**Mayor:** Well, I know a man who constantly makes sure that I'm focused on the Bronx, and he does it in a forceful and righteous way. And I know his constituents appreciate that a lot. The Borough President of the Bronx, Rubén Díaz, Jr.

[Applause]

[...]

**Mayor:** Well, I mentioned before the challenges of our brothers and sisters who serve in Albany – there is one place even harder to serve, and that is Washington DC. And for years, Congressman José Serrano has spoken up for a strong government role in affordable housing. Lately, unfortunately, falling on deaf ears too often in the Congress – but he keeps up the fight, and we look forward to better days when the federal government truly becomes our partner in this work. Congressman José Serrano.

[Applause]

[...]

**Mayor:** Thank you, Congressman. And I'd like to now call up someone with a shockingly similar name who, again, fights the fights for us in Albany – and the State Senate Democrats have stood by this agenda of affordable housing, and the progressive agenda, throughout. I'd like to invite forward State Senator José Serrano, Jr.

[Applause]

[...]

**Mayor:** I'd like to call forward two more speakers. Again, I praise the Assembly – and I cannot praise the Assembly enough for their support for the affordable housing agenda across the board, and their vigorous support. It's my honor to call forward Assembly Member Latoya Joyner.

[Applause]

[...]

**Mayor:** Finally, it's my honor to introduce William Bollinger of Spectrum Development.

[Applause]

[...]

**Mayor:** Now, leadership is acknowledging the obvious. So I'd like to note it is hot out. I'm going to be taking questions in a moment on this topic, and then I'm going to be taking off-topic questions. So, for anyone who is feeling the heat a little bit too much, this is a good time if you want to sit down or take a break. And for those of you who want to stand by me during this fuselage of media questions, you can do that too. Whatever you prefer – make your choice. The time is now. First, on-topic. On-topic.

**Question:** How much money will HPD be putting towards this project to keep it affordable?

**Mayor:** How much money will HPD be putting towards this project to keep it affordable – Vicki Been?

**Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Vicki Been:** The total development cost of this project was – is about \$17 million dollars. That comes from a range of sources, including bonds from HDC, four percent tax credits, private leverage, etcetera. So, it's a – you know, it's a terrific project.

**Mayor:** On this topic, yes.

**Question:** Your city planning commission is redoing their zoning –

**Mayor:** On this topic of this announcement. Go for it.

**Question:** And it's why we see lovely four-story, five-story – and currently, six-story is the maximum height on buildings. We're now seeing seven and eight-story building plans. I know this is going to be – what? – five stories? Okay.

**Mayor:** [inaudible] six. [inaudible] six. Six it is.

**Question:** Any comment, though, about your city planning commission raising the height on buildings? And this one should have been seven or eight stories.

**Mayor:** Alicia Glen, would you like to speak to this matter? Because I'm not sure I understand the context of the question.

**Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen:** I think what you're referring to is a series of zoning amendments that we've proposed where, in certain districts – and this may be one of them, I'll have to double check – where we would be permitting an additional floor, perhaps two, in order to assure that we could have more affordable housing. So that, in fact – as a developer mentioned, land prices are escalating, and so to the extent that we can add a floor or two and still be within the same general context of the neighborhood – we think it's very important that we maximize every opportunity to develop affordable housing. And so, those zoning [inaudible] amendments are currently starting the land use review process. And we're working with the City Council to make sure we get the right results.

**Question:** [inaudible] There's a building on Southern Boulevard that I have the notes on that's going to be eight stories, 27 units, with six affordable units on the bottom floors next to the parking lot. Is that the aim of city planning?

**Alicia Glen:** Well, I'm not aware of that particular project, and we'll get back to you on that.

**Mayor:** On-topic. On-topic. Yes, sir?

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** I'm sorry, are you a member of the media [inaudible], yes? No. Sir, I'm – my apologies, we're doing media questions. I thought you were a member of the media, my apologies. Media questions, on-topic. Yes?

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** Well, this – you mean, in terms of the 20,000 plus? Okay, do you want to just – does someone have a quick summation. Come on up, come on up so they can hear you.

**Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Vicki Been:** It's a little more than 11,000 preserved and about 8,500 new. Okay?

**Mayor:** On-topic, on-topic. Right down the middle.

**Question:** So I wanted to know – how can people access these units, and when?

**Mayor:** How can people access these units and when – who wants to do it? Don't – don't go away until we're off [inaudible].

**Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Vicki Been:** So, all of these units will be allocated through the lottery. The lottery is usually begun when the project is about 70 percent complete. It's now about 20 percent complete. So, Bill – do you have an estimate?

**Unknown:** About another year.

**Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Vicki Been:** About another year. It will cut the lottery – it will come online on the lottery.

**Question:** It will be all for extremely low [inaudible] residents or [inaudible]?

**Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Vicki Been:** No. So they are – 12 units are for people who make between zero and 30, 31 and 40, and then 45 are available for people who make between 50 and 60 AMI. So it's all very, very low, extremely low.

**Mayor:** Don't do AMI [inaudible]

**Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Vicki Been:** I'm sorry. For people who make less than \$46,000—

**Mayor:** There we go.

**Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Vicki Been:**—for a family of three, total.

**Mayor:** Banish AMI from your vocabulary when you are in public.

**Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Vicki Been:** Sorry.

[Laughter]

**Mayor:** Yes, Grace?

**Question:** Mayor, I was hoping we could get your response. Earlier this month, there was a lawsuit filed challenging the community preference policy for your affordable housing plan whereby you designate – let's say half of the units in a development for local residents. What do you make of this lawsuit, and what would it mean if they won when it comes to sort of winning local support for projects like these?

**Mayor:** First of all, I don't comment on the details of lawsuits. You should talk to the law department if you want to talk about that process. But I can talk about our current policy, which we think is very fair. Our current policy is leading to a huge amount of new affordable housing and preserved affordable housing. We believe this policy is going to increase the likelihood of a more integrated city. We believe it's fair, also, because it recognizes the opportunity for local residents to receive some of this affordable housing, but also maintains a share of the affordable housing for anyone in the city. So we think it's a very balanced plan that maximizes opportunity and will help us move forward on fair housing. So we stand by it. But as to the lawsuit – again, any questions about a lawsuit, I'd refer to the law department.

**Question:** Even though that it leads to less integration because—you know, you have to be—you have a preference if you're local, [inaudible] there's less movement of people around the city.

**Mayor:** Well, you're talking about a Community Board District. And a Community Board District in New York City – that's the basis for the part of the housing that is designated locally. Community Board districts are very diverse, in and of themselves. And it's also important that people who are part of a neighborhood have an opportunity to access affordable housing in that neighborhood. So we think our current approach is fair and it's the right way to go.

[Applause]

**Mayor:** On-topic. On-topic going once, on-topic going twice and we are off-topic, off-topic. Off-topic – Jonathan?

**Jonathan:** Mr. Mayor, in just a few days it'll be the one-year anniversary of Eric Garner's death – just a couple of questions on that. First, do you personally have any plans to sort of mark that occasion? And then secondly, could you just tell us a little bit about how you think the police department has changed in that year, and how the city as a whole has changed from that moment?

**Mayor:** Well, look – obviously, the anniversary is on my mind. I think it's on the mind of many New Yorkers, and we, you know, mourn the death of Eric Garner. And I think the important thing is to stay focused on the work of reform. I think we've come a long way, even in the last year, in terms of bringing police and community together. The whole police force is being retrained. We're moving forward on body cameras. The number of unconstitutional and unnecessary stops obviously is greatly, greatly reduced. And yet, at the same time, we continue to drive crime down. So, I think we are striking the right balance, and I think the – the new vision that Commissioner Bratton has put forward, that Speaker Mark-Viverito and the City Council and I agreed to and agreed to put resources behind, is going to really open up a new era of neighborhood policing in this city, that's going to draw people closer. I think what's going to happen in the next few years are – community residents will get to know their officers personally, and vice versa, and it's going to be something very different and much better than we've seen in the past. So, a lot has changed in the last year, but I'm particularly hopeful about where we're going. Matt?

**Question:** I'm just curious to get your reaction to the state revisiting some elements of the SAFE Act. Do you have a sense yet of how this might affect the city?

**Mayor:** We're all trying to understand what's going on in Albany on this issue, so I can't pretend to get into the nuances. I can say this much – that law was passed by the legislature, signed by the governor. It was the right thing to do and we just can't go backwards, especially after Newtown, which was the inspiration for that law being passed – which I thought was going to lead to a lot more in terms of sensible gun regulation than it did around the country. But obviously, after Charleston – Charleston, I think, was another wake-up call for this country and we just cannot go backwards on gun safety. That's the bottom line. Yes?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor. So this weekend, the Post actually ran a story about homelessness in our community and how it's just being – it's grown visibly. Do you have any thoughts on what we're doing in the sense of creating



a New York City that maintains our lifestyle? A lot of New Yorkers feel like because there's so much homelessness, our cost of living is going up, but really our quality of life has gone down.

**Mayor:** Well, I think that's factually wrong, so let me differentiate what I think is a valid concern from, I think, inaccurate portrayal of the facts. Homelessness is not going up, thank God. The number of street homeless has gone down a little. We have a long way to go. The number of folks in a shelter has gone down about two or three thousand. We have much more work to do. And I've said – we are dealing with a crisis in terms of homelessness, in part based on the high cost of housing, the effects of the Great Recession and other much bigger factors – gentrification and other factors. But we continue to come up with new tools, like this affordable housing plan, to address it. That's a different question than what people, I think, have experienced – at least in some parts of the city – in terms of homeless individuals who are mentally ill. I think this is the core of the problem. It's not there is more people. It's that there is a sub-set of the homeless who have mental issues that cause them to engage in behavior that's not good for anyone – themselves included. We've said we were going to address this. I take this very seriously. We're going to have a very different approach to mental health in this city going forward. And we're going to engage folks who are homeless and need mental health services in a much more aggressive fashion. I've also said that I do believe in the core concept of quality of life policing, often summarized as the Broken Windows theory. I think it has to evolve with the times. And one of the things we have to do is focus on this particular challenge, but do it in a way that recognizes that this is largely a mental health challenge.

**Question:** On Eric Garner, [inaudible] story today about a \$5 million dollar settlement [inaudible]. And also, Eric Garner's wife and widow were saying that they don't feel as though there was justice and that they've lost [inaudible]. Do you want to comment [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** I think there's a lot of change happening in this city. And I think it's going to make it a safer city for everyone – for community residents and officers alike. And I think you're going to see a lot more fairness because we're going to bring police and community together. I think that will take some time, but I'm very satisfied we're well on the way. As to the settlement question – now, look – the Comptroller obviously has, under the charter, the right to attempt to seek a settlement. He's in the middle of that process. I'm not going to comment on that because that process is underway. If that does not reach a conclusion, obviously, a lawsuit will proceed. And I'm not going to comment on a lawsuit. So, we'll see how that plays out.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, Hillary Clinton was in town today outlining her economic vision. I know you've said that you [inaudible] economic – to income inequality. She's echoed a lot of the ideas [inaudible]. What do you think of [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** I haven't seen the speech. I heard there was a comment on closing the carried interest loophole. I think that's fantastic. I think that's one of the things that a lot of people are looking for action on. I think it's very gratifying she's speaking to it, but until I've seen the speech I can't comment further.

**Question:** The Post has been writing about this homeless man urinating in city streets for the past few days. What is impeding the city from removing this guy from the streets to get the mental health services he needs and how is it beneficial to have him out on the streets?

**Mayor:** Again, with all due respect to your publication – which is well-known for fearmongering – let's look at the facts. We have had a reduction in crime and we've had a reduction in street homelessness. And we are going to deal with problems related to mental health much more aggressively. There are still laws which dictate that if someone has the right to be on the street, there are conditions under which we cannot interfere with that. There are other conditions where we can. We're going to look very carefully at that situation to make sure that we are maximizing the – excuse me – taking maximum advantage of our opportunity to act where we can. But it is a nation of laws, and we have to work within those laws. Any individual who – and rights – but any individual who breaks the law will be penalized. It could be an arrest, it could be a summons, it could be other activities. So – suffice it to say – I believe in quality of life policing. In fact, I've gotten a lot of criticism for the fact that I

believe in quality of life policing, but I do adamantly believe in quality of life policing. And we will follow up on each and every instance.

**Question:** Some Council members [inaudible] have changed their minds and are now opposed to it after one of the groups [inaudible] sent out a mailer to [inaudible]. Do you have any comment on the mailer itself? Is that an appropriate tactic to use? And how do you plan on [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** I haven't seen the mailer, so I can't comment on it. On the overall issue, I think my position is clear. I think the goal should be a full ban. Obviously, there is an ongoing dialogue with the members of the City Council. And there's a wide range of views in the City Council. The speaker and I have spoken about this. There's obviously a host of different opinions and we're working it through. But I – you know – I know where I want to get us, ultimately.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor – Univision – we were wondering if you could comment on the fiscal crisis in Puerto Rico. Today there is an [inaudible] meeting between [inaudible] creditors and Puerto Rican officials. [inaudible] your take on that situation?

**Mayor:** I think the federal government has to take responsibility for the situation in Puerto Rico. I think federal decisions led to this crisis, and I think the federal government has an obligation to resolve this crisis. And it clearly has the capacity to resolve this crisis. I'm someone who loves the people of Puerto Rico and the island of Puerto Rico. I've spent a lot of time there. And I think it is absolutely inappropriate for the federal government to look away in Puerto Rico's hour of need. Hold on.

[City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito speaks in Spanish]

**City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito:** That I'm saying – as the mayor said – and I want to thank him for being as vocal. And I'm heartened by what I've heard from some of the presidential candidates when it comes to Puerto Rico, but this cannot wait. We need this federal government to act. We have, unfortunately, heard from a White House spokesman saying that Puerto Rico is not to receive a bail-out. Puerto Rico is only asking the ability to restructure its debt. Also, when it comes to the hedge funds – and yes there are meetings happening – the hedge funds, I think, have been extremely irresponsible. They are vultures. They're actively advocating in Congress for Congress not to help Puerto Rico because they are personally benefitting from the misery that they are creating – and that is unacceptable. So those hedge funds also need to be at the table and they need to be willing to sacrifice. And if they are not willing to sacrifice, we will demand that they do that. And I know that there was some sort of manifestation happening yesterday at a fundraiser that was held on Long Island that sent that message as well, and I hope it's being heard.

**Mayor:** Alright. Last but not least, in her new role – well, a whole different kind of question – Sally Goldenberg.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** Please

**Question:** Do you think that – you know the [inaudible] have been talking about raising the interest rates in September – is that going to have any impact on your affordable housing [inaudible]?

**Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Vicki Been:** Over the ten year period of the plan, things will go up, things will go down – and that's why it's a ten year plan. So, you know, we will be just fine over the total period.

**Mayor:** Thank you, everyone.

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