



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES COMPLETION OF
AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN TWO YEARS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: See Juliette? That wasn't so hard.

[Laughter]

Juliette, you did a great job. That was her first time speaking before all the cameras. Great job, great job.

[Applause]

And let's give mom credit, too. Let's give mom credit.

[Applause]

So Juliette, you – what you said was so powerful. It is hard to live here. We love our city. We love it so much, but it's hard to live here, and it's hard to afford. And our job is to make it easier for everybody, and I'm so happy that your dream came true. Your dream came true. You got housing you could afford in a beautiful building where you could really be at peace with your children. And I know you work hard every day, and this is the kind of thing we want to see for so many New Yorkers. This kind of step forward in their lives. So thank you. Thank you for telling everyone your story and for telling people to hang in there because more help is coming. Thank you so much, Juliet.

And Juliette grew up in Brooklyn, went to Paul Robeson High School – here, just blocks away from where she grew up. So she's a New Yorker. Loves her city. Loves her borough. Loves her neighborhood. Wanted to stay in the neighborhood that was hers, and that's what this affordable housing plan is all about – making sure that everyday people can stay in the city they love, in the neighborhood they love. And I always say so many people who helped their neighborhoods to stay strong even in the tough times – it wasn't that long ago in a lot of parts of Brooklyn, in a lot

of parts of this city that neighborhoods were struggling, and the problem wasn't that the cost of housing was too high. The problem was people were leaving the neighborhood in droves. No one would invest. Businesses wouldn't stay. And it was tough to hang on, but so many New Yorkers stood their ground. They hung on. They made their neighborhood strong, and now we come forward to better times. And the very people who stuck it out are the ones who should benefit when things get better, and Juliette is an example of someone who deserves this opportunity, and I'm so glad you got it.

Now this development – CAMBA Gardens II – was one of the very first construction projects we financed in this administration. It's a beautiful building. I want to congratulate everyone at CAMBA – you came up with just a beautiful, beautiful building here. Three hundred tenants are moving in now – some in, some coming in. And this gets to the simple question I am asked everywhere I go. You know, I've had about 40 town hall meetings, and I see New Yorkers all the time. We talk about affordable housing, the cost of living, and people always say 'what's affordable? Affordable to who?' They always want to know what it means when we talk about affordable housing. So I want to give you some real life examples from this building you're in right now. In this building, a one bedroom apartment rents for \$900 a month. A two bedroom for \$1,066 a month. That is affordable housing, and that's what we want to produce a lot more of for the people of this city.

I want to thank everyone who is gathered here. You're going to hear from a few of them, but a lot of credit to go around today for the announcement we're about to make. A deep appreciation to our housing commissioner, Maria Torres-Springer. She's done an outstanding job taking an engine that was already running fast and running it even faster to help more and more people. I give a lot of credit to her and her team. To Eric Enderlin the president of the Housing Development Corporation. HDC doesn't get the big headlines, but all the folks like Juliette who move into affordable housing they benefit from the outstanding work of everyone at HDC, so Eric congratulations to you and your team. I want to thank our budget director, Dean Fuleihan. He is the man that ultimately has to decide what are the smart investments for this city and where we put our priorities, and he has been a leader in determining that we are going to invest even more in affordable housing – that this is a central priority for the people of this city.

And I also want to thank a number of organizations who are with us, all of whom are part of the work we do every day to create more affordable housing and to make sure people like Juliette know about the opportunity to apply for it and have the help to apply for it. I want to thank Catholic Charities. I want to thank the National Action Network. I want to thank Breaking Ground, Gateway Housing, St. Nick's Alliance, UNO, and Enterprise. All of them doing wonderful work, and again a special thank you to CAMBA. CAMBA has done outstanding work – this building is something to be really proud of. Let's give them a special round of applause.

[Applause]

So four years ago, we began the administration. We put out the housing plan in May of 2014, and we were working from a very straightforward mandate from the people. It was simply this – this city had to become more fair. It had to be a place for everyone. It could not slip out of our hands. That's what we were all feeling – that New York City as we knew it was slipping away.

And it was going to be a place that was more and more exclusive instead of a place for everyone. And if we didn't do something really different to address affordability, it wouldn't be the same New York City anymore. And it certainly wasn't fair to everyday New Yorkers to see that they didn't have as many opportunities to stay here, especially after so many of them had stuck through the tough times. So we had to change things.

I remember in so many neighborhoods, even in the neighborhood I live in, which I first saw in the early 1980s, the problem was profoundly the opposite of what we had today. You know, we all remember across this city – we remember the neighborhoods that people left. We remember the buildings that were vacant. We remember the rubble strewn lots in the South Bronx. We remember a very, very different city. It's almost unimaginable how quickly things changed. And it's one thing to say we went from crisis to stability, but then something else happened. We ended up with an affordability crisis that we could never have imagined. Nothing like this has happened in the history of this city – where people in every kind of neighborhood are struggling to make ends meet. We're in a whole new era now, and I think we're still taking stock of the totality of it.

I remind people that probably the thing that had the biggest negative impact in recent years on people's economic capacity was the Great Recession. The Great Recession threw hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers for a loop. But even during the Great Recession, even the aftermath, the price of housing kept going up, which really – you know on first blush that just doesn't make sense. How is that possible? But that's what happened. There's a lot of reasons why. As this city became a global economic power and as so many people from around the country and around the world wanted to be here – and again that's in many ways a very good thing – but we had an affordability crisis we'd never seen before just after people had had their incomes knocked down and were struggling to make ends meet. That is what we experienced walking in the door, and we said we have to create a fairer city. We have to address this at its root.

Here's what I hear from everyday New Yorkers. I've been hearing it for the last four years. They worry all the time about the price of housing. They worry about whether they're going to be able to afford the next rent hike. They worry that they might get evicted. They worry that there won't be a place for them.

And we don't want good, decent New Yorkers across this whole city to live with that worry. We want to change that profoundly. So many people here work really, really hard. I don't think there's any harder working city on the Earth, and when people work that hard and put in so many hours and then find that their paycheck doesn't get them very far, it's incredibly frustrating. Our job is to step in and level the playing field to the maximum extent possible.

Now part of the problem also has to do with the way the government handled this challenge over the 20 years previous to this administration, and I want to be straightforward about it. The basic model for those 20 years was to let the market do pretty much whatever it wanted. Developers had a lot of freedom to do what they wanted. They were held to very few standards. There were very few requirements put on them. When there were plans made and announced there wasn't much ability to enforce them.

I was very, very frustrated when I was in the City Council, when I was Public Advocate watching all sorts of promises of affordable housing never happen because there wasn't any teeth in the deals that were made. And we came in here with the clear decision to change the rules of the game, to put a lot more resources into affordable housing, to put a lot more requirements into the process, and to finally change the trajectory – to build a lot more affordable housing, to preserve a lot more affordable housing while protecting the affordable housing we already had and stopping the evictions and rebalancing the whole equation. That's what we sought to do.

And you're going to hear from some of our colleagues in the City Council. I want to thank them because when they voted to have the most stringent rules in the nation for the requirement of affordable housing, when we did Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, that was a crucial moment in this city's history, that was a part of a big turnaround – changing the rules of the game to favor everyday people instead of what it was before which favored developers.

So, the City Council gets a lot of credit in the changes that have been made. Now, here's what we have set out to do. The original plan – build and preserve 200,000 apartments by 2024. So a ten-year plan, 200,000 apartments – enough for half-a-million people. I used to talk, before today, about that being enough people for the entire population of Miami, equivalent of the entire population of Miami having an affordable place to live.

That plan has been moving, and moving aggressively. And again on the question of affordable for who – when folks get into these affordable housing buildings or when we preserve their affordable housing in place with subsidies, people pay no more than 30 percent of their income in rent.

And that's crucial to understand. I don't think that's well-enough understood out there. Thirty percent of income is the standard – making sure that people can actually afford to live in this city.

So, when we announced the plan, a lot of you will remember, there were a lot of critics including some very sympathetic critics, people who actually liked the idea but said, "It's a beautiful idea it just can't be done that fast, and you can't build that many apartments, you can't preserve that many. We don't have any model for doing it that quickly." So people said, you know, great intentions, can't be done.

And in fact we're proud to say today that the critics were wrong. We are now producing affordable housing at a rate that has not been seen in decades. And when we walked in the door the assumption was you could do 15,000 apartments a year basically between what you built and what you preserved.

We believed we could go farther. To the great efforts of Alicia Glen and her team, we took that up to 20,000 apartments a year. And since we understood that this was the number one issue on the minds of New Yorkers and there was so much need, it immediately begged the question – could we go farther still?

And we felt urgency. We knew the future of the city depended on it.

So, here was the mandate that I gave the team. I said every additional apartment that you save, every additional apartment you build means one more family gets to stay in this city. One more family gets to live in the city they love. That's what it was about. It was literally one more then one more then one more. That was the vision.

So, today, we are announcing that after a series of important changes that we are making to our plan to improve it and a great experience over these last four years, we will be accelerating the pace of creating and preserving affordable housing in this city. We will be creating 25,000 affordable homes per year for the people of this city – 25,000 homes per year. That means we're reaching between 75,000 and 100,000 New Yorkers per year who need affordable housing.

Now, as we have found, we can go faster, we can do it better. It also begged the question, what should we do with our schedule? And we are doing something you don't see very often in government. We are accelerating our schedule.

So, the original goal of hitting 200,000 apartments will be reached two years earlier than planned. Very, very proud of this team for what they have achieved.

[Applause]

The 200,000 apartments will be done by 2022, two years ahead of schedule. Now, we further said, because the need is so vast, what more can we do? And I want to be straightforward. We had to think of the time, if the people choose us to continue four years ahead, but we had to think beyond that. And our predecessors understood that, particularly Mayor Koch 30 years ago who did such extraordinary work with affordable housing, set a plan in place that actually went into the following two administrations and continued to produce for the people of this city.

So, we are building out our plan now. We know that this housing crisis is bigger than any one administration. We need a plan that will take us into the future and a solution that will be here for the long term. And that's what we're putting in place.

So, we will be investing immediately to add 100,000 more apartments to our affordable housing plan. It will now be a plan that will reach 300,000 apartments over 12 full years.

I want to be very clear – there's a 50 percent increase in the affordable housing plan. So, to everyone here, if you liked 200,000 apartments, I think you're going to like 300,000 apartments even more.

[Applause]

But we will be investing \$150 million more per year in capital and we will extend the plan through 2026. So, this will be a continuous plan to get us to 300,000 apartments. It has already been a major budget priority. It will now be an even higher priority in the budgets ahead.

300,000 apartments. So, I want to put that in perspective. That's enough housing for 750,000 people. And you met Juliette today and you've got her three kids – that's four New Yorkers who now having affordable housing. Now, think about 749,996 more people who are going to be reached by this plan.

Since I like to give you comparisons, that is substantially more than the entire population of the city of Boston. That's how big this plan is.

So, we're going to be doing a lot to build out the plan, to continue the focus that we added in this last budget, a greater focus on seniors, a great focus on reaching deeper affordability, folks at lower income levels. That will part of the plan.

And we're adding another element which we call Neighborhood Pillars. And the idea here is to work with nonprofit organizations at the neighborhood level – and CAMBA is a great example. They do extraordinary work that know how to create affordable housing, that are great allies and partners, and that can help deal with a problem that has come with this affordability crisis which is the problem of speculators who see neighborhoods that are getting stronger, and come in and try take advantage of that for the wrong reasons.

And in some cases buy up rent-regulated buildings and then try to do the wrong things to get tenants out. Now, we are proving those legal services to stop that but we want to go the next step. We don't want these speculators to win the day. We want nonprofit organizations to be the ones who get these buildings. We know they'll take care of them right.

[Applause]

But the nonprofits, they know what they're doing. Their intentions are the right ones. They know the community. They only lack one thing – money.

So, we are giving a new impetus to the efforts of our nonprofits. We are creating a \$275 million public-private fund to make sure that nonprofits can buy these buildings and get there one step ahead of the speculators.

[Applause]

This will allow us to save thousands and thousands of apartments, and again, at a standard that people can actually afford to pay.

We have some other new elements of this plan we'll be announcing in the coming days. This is a major reset. It's not perfect. It's not a silver bullet. It's not going to achieve everything. But I want to thank this team and I want to thank so many people who worked with us.

You've proven that we can go farther than we ever imagined and we can reach a lot more people. And now we're going to do that.

Look, I'll conclude before saying a few words in Spanish with this simple concept. We all – we inherited the greatest city in the world. It's our job in this generation to keep it that way. It's our job to protect what makes it so special.

This is a city of everyday people. This is a city of strivers and people who have a lot of grit. And we got to reward that as has been rewarded in previous generations.

The New York City my grandparents came to was a place that anyone had a chance in. We have to be the ones to keep it that way. And I know we can create a fairer city and I know we can make sure that New York City is a city for Juliette and so many good people like her who give a lot to the city and just ask for a fair shake in return. So, that's what we set out to do.

A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that I want to bring forward Alicia Glen and I have to say she has a lot to be proud of today. I have asked Alicia to go on many challenging missions. She has never turned away from a challenge. She understood how tough the original plan was and she took it on with her team and said, "Even if it's never been done before, we're going to find a way." And now she's going to take us to a place that's far beyond what we ever could have imagined. Great credit to Alicia and her team – Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen.

[Applause]

Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen: Thank you that sounds like a galaxy far, far away where there is more affordable housing. That will be a terrific galaxy. Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for that really kind introduction.

I am going to brief, but I also do want to put some stuff in perspective for folks. I am going to start dating myself a little bit, because 30 years ago, I was an intern in college in the Koch administration. I got a chance to work on that landmark housing plan, and then a chance to work on that same plan in the Dinkins administration, and then ultimately for the Giuliani administration. And I think it's important to put that into some perspective, because even though in many respects these are plans that are started by one individual mayor and their vision. It's a real testament to how incredibly important this work and to the people who have been working in this field who transcended administrations, that this is a legacy that we're continuing to build on.

And I would also just remind folks that in those days everything was all smooth sailing and everybody loved everything everybody was doing. There were plenty of challenges, plenty of constituencies and communities that were unhappy with various plans, and so I think when we look back on history, this is going to be an extraordinary moment and we really have to put it in to perspective.

And so with that, I think it's also key to remember that nobody has doubled down in the same way that this administration, this Mayor has. This is a real, real game changer in terms of

affordable housing in New York City. And I think you can think of it as like a big engine, right, an engine that was built originally by Mayor Koch, and then improved on by subsequent mayors, and then the Bloomberg team also had to make adaptations to the machine as market conditions changed and New York City changed, quite frankly.

But when we took office, and we inherited that engine, as the Mayor said it was cranking at about 15,000 apartments a year. And I think any city in the country, and I think cities across the globe, thought that was pretty unbelievable, and were envying how we could do it. But that didn't stop the Mayor for saying, you know what, that's great, but let's put some more fuel in that engine and let's get it up to 20,000 apartments a year. And I think we knew we had to that, because at some level we have become the victim of our own success, and we had an obligation to respond in kind to that, and to make sure that we were the kind of city we wanted to continue to be.

So now, we're going to go to I guess go from regular gas to premium gas, if we continue that? We are going to go into overdrive or whatever that is in your car, we can go into overdrive, and we are going to go back and we're going to say you know what, now we can do 25,000 units a year. That we really owe it to New Yorkers and to ourselves to rev the engine even further.

And I want you to put to put this into some context for housers, that this is at a time when we have, not only no guarantee of getting additional resources, like more Section 8 vouchers or more tax credits, or any of the things that help fuel that engine, or any of the thousands of vacant lots and buildings that fed that engine in the 80s and 90s. So this is a real testament to putting in not just a lot more City resources but to ingenuity that has been necessary to get us to where we are today, and the continued level of creativity, ingenuity that we are going to need in order to be able to deliver on this promise. And that's why it really is an unbelievable team effort. I'm so lucky to work with Maria and Eric, and of course, if Vicki and Carl were here, I think they deserve a shout-out as well, and many of the folks who have gotten us to the place we are in today, and the team that works tirelessly. This is complicated stuff, but it is stuff that people bring extraordinary passion to, and that's why we're in a position to make the announcement we are today.

So in addition to the preservation effort that the Mayor spoke of, I just wanted to talk about a few things that we have accomplished to date, and so we see we are and where we are going to go. We are building and protecting more housing for the lowest income New Yorkers than ever before. Over 40 percent of all the affordable homes that we did last year served individuals making less than \$31,000 a year, or \$40,000 for a family of three. So we are serving more lower-income New Yorkers than ever. And we put more protections in place to help keep New Yorkers in their home. As the Mayor said, the one thing we cannot abide is the people who lived through all those tough years not being able to stay in the neighborhoods that they worked so hard to preserve and protect. And so we saw two years of rent regulated tenants having no rent increases at all, the City is funding legal services to make sure any tenant who is facing eviction now has an opportunity to present their case. And we worked on an anti-harassment task force, where we're not just like having a task force, bad guys are going to jail. That is a real serious message that we are sending to the bad guys.

We have absolutely changed the paradigm of how housing is going to get built in this city for generations to come. Affordable housing is now mandatory, it's not optional or voluntary, a developer must provide permanent affordable housing in newly rezoned buildings. Sexy ZQA, lots and lots of changes to the zoning resolution that we won't bore you with, are making it a lot easier to build affordable housing, and that's important too. We have been able to make our housing easier to build. And we are figuring out how to lower the cost of construction. And finally, and in many ways most important, from now on we've changed our tax incentive programs so that instead of just some percentage of the units having to be affordable in parts of the city, at least 25% of all new apartments must be affordable, and there are no more tax breaks for luxury condos.

These are big things that we have done in the past three and half years. And one of the things I'm most proud of and really excited about the team, is that we are building a bigger network. The network we see behind us is a little bit like the tip on the iceberg of all the people who are making this possible. Nonprofits are involved in about a third of all of our projects. We are doing special RFPs and special projects just for MWBE firms. Incredibly important that we broaden the tent and that more women and people of color get to be part of this extraordinary story. And we're piloting new forms of ownership, like community land trusts. And we have left no stone unturned, even when it's controversial, and let's be honest, a lot of this stuff is controversial. We squeezed more affordable housing into existing projects, whether it's a project like Lighthouse on Staten Island, whether it's the Domino Sugar site in Williamsburg, and we are leveraging places to put housing where maybe communities aren't sure if they want it, but we know why it's so important.

So we're doing it in the libraries in Sunset Park, we're doing it in Brooklyn Bridge Park. This Mayor was very clear, leave no stone unturned. And I remember when I first sat down for the interview for the job, and I told them that I thought pretty bluntly 200,000 units was a bit of a stretch, but I like stretch goals, but when he said I'll give you the team and the resources necessary to do it, he meant it, he delivered on his promise, and that's why today the 300,000 units are absolutely within our grasp. And we will leave this engine in better shape than we found it, and we will leave it for the next generation of city builders, so thank you.

Mayor: My memory is you were profusely sweating at that part in the interview.

Next I want to introduce the Borough President. And I have worked with a lot of public servants, I don't know anyone who has more of a finger on pulse on what everyday people are going through and he understands Brooklyn and what Brooklyn – the changes in Brooklyn have been so intense, so fast, and it left people really looking for answers. And I think today is a big step in that direction. Our Borough President Eric Adams.

[...]

Mayor: Next a crucial ally in the fight for affordable housing for New Yorkers, and he's done outstanding work already as Chair of the Housing Committee in the Assembly, Assembly member Steve Cymbrowitz.

[...]

Mayor: Well said. And now a tremendous thanks for the City Council – to the City Council for all they’ve done to help us move this program forward. First a man who represents this district and understands what his constituents need, Council member Mathieu Eugene.

[...]

Mayor: Okay, let’s start with this topic before we go to other topics. Questions about this announcement today? Questions – yes, Grace?

Question: What’s the breakdown in the new goal between preserved and newly-created units of affordable housing. And, additionally, this project, which is entirely affordable – why hasn’t the City, or is the City going to be doing more projects like that, partnering with affordable nonprofit, affordable housing developers – or, it seems like the overwhelming bulk has been with private developers who are setting aside a portion of apartments to be affordable.

Mayor: I’ll start, and then I’d like Alicia to come up. The first thing to remember is the basic structure of the program. It’s just being built out. So, the 60 percent preserved housing, 40 percent new housing – that continues. The amendments we made to the plan in June to focus on deeper affordability and more on seniors – that will also play out proportionally as we go forward. So, [inaudible] way to think of this is literally adding 50 percent more to this plan and speeding it up, but using the same ground rules as we’ve found work. The preservation – as you heard earlier, the preservation isn’t getting as much attention as the new buildings, but it’s actually the biggest part of the plan. It means you keep families right in their apartments and you make them affordable for the longterm. So, we’re going to continue that success. And then we do a lot that’s 100 percent affordable and it all depends on the specific site, but yeah we’ll keep doing a number of sites 100 percent affordable. Other sites, depending on the conditions, will be different configurations.

Deputy Mayor Glen: I’ll just add a little bit – as I said in my remarks, a third of our overall production or preservation to-date has been with nonprofit partners, and we expect that to continue and perhaps even grow a little bit more. This building is fabulous, but it’s also not one of its kind. We have closed several projects with non-for-profit developers in our new construction programs that serve a variety of very low and low income families. So, this is one of many projects that you’ll begin to see come online over then next couple of years that are in our programs, and also the production on affordable units, again, will continue to be a mix of working with for-profit developers, locally-based nonprofit developers. And increasingly what you’ll see is a lot more ow-income units being made available through the MIH program, and now the newly-adopted 421-a program, which you’ll begin to see the fruits of that come over the next couple of years as the market begins to produce those units for us. So, you’ll continue to see a huge number of new apartments coming online as well.

Mayor: Just one point to add to that – part of what allowed us to find a pathway here so we could add 50 percent more to this plan was we saw MIH working and we finally got the 421-a bill we wanted – basically the bill we wanted – and got away from those taxes that were used for

luxury condos and got much more of the focus onto affordable housing, and higher levels of affordable housing. Those are two X-factors in this – two things we have today that we didn't have when we started out. There are some other challenges out there, but we're really already convinced that those two developments are opening up a lot of doors for us to create a lot more.

Yes?

Question: What you just said – I would like you to expand on that. In other words, the question is – you're now adding 50 percent, so what's different here that allows you to add and accelerate. And you say that MIH is different, but in the original plan, as I understood it, MIH was anticipated in that plan because it was the proposal of your administration. So, you assumed there was going to be an affect on your housing plan [inaudible]

Mayor: Alicia talk about some of the fine tuning, but let me do the broad strokes. We are dealing with a combination of vision and then real-life experience here. Part of what was important at the beginning was to go down the road and develop, and see how quickly it could be done to figure out which partners we had and how we'd work with them to asses all the sites we could use in terms of public sites. Obviously, on preservation, to see how many partners we could work with on those preservation efforts and how quickly we could do it. Some of this was uncharted territory, and before we would have confidence in the approach and the ability to expand upon it. We had to actually experience it. So, that early point that you hard – 15,000 per year have been the standard. We got to 20,000, we saw we could exceed 20,000. That's the real-life reality – that is what taught us we could go further. Now, Alicia can speak to our early assumptions. I can certainly say on 421-a, we were tremendously concerned with the way it used to be configured. It was a major priority for us to change that. We also for a period of time weren't sure where that was going. Obviously, that extended out for a while, that fight. But the successful conclusion of that fight really did open up new possibilities for us. So, Alicia, why don't you speak to our early assumptions and how we evolve from there.

Deputy Mayor Glen: So, in the original plan we did have some projections as to what MIH would contribute to the overall 200,000 units. Again, it was always a range because we weren't sure where we were going to wind up on MIH in terms of the percentage of units required. I think we were thinking that we were going to be at about 20 percent of whatever the denominator was based on what we're seeing in the market and what the Councilmembers are choosing to do. As these buildings go through the process, we can now revise up our estimates to 25 percent over a new denominator – so, that's one factor. The second factor is that just the denominator itself, particularly in the new added two years – we've gone from a 10-year plan to a 12-year plan – the denominator, or the market activity is increasing, so the total number of units we'll get from MIH will improve as well – so, that's the basic assumption. We're not saying MIH is now going to be now the vast majority of our production, but we will see incrementally more of our new production come out of MIH than we have originally projected because the program's been adopted, it's being used for seeing the 25 percent option being generally the standard norm, and the denominator is going to grow in the last two years as market production goes up correspondingly.

Question: Can I just follow up, cause I didn't understand a thing you said –

Mayor: She was quite eloquent.

Question: Out of the 300,000 – or, the 225,000 that will have yet to be produced and generated, how many will come from MIH? How many will come from 421-a? How many will come from other sources?

Deputy Mayor Glen: Again, we don't have an exact box of each one, we have ranges that we project. As the Mayor said, the 64-day split is continuing, right? So, 40 percent of the overall plan will be new construction. Within that new construction bucket, if you will, of which projects like this fill that bucket and we continue to double down and do more and more of those kinds of projects. But the column, if you will, of production that we're going to get for free through the 421-a program or through inclusionary housing is going up a little bit more than our original projections, again, based on two main factors – one, the percentage of units in a new building that's going to be set aside is now going from 20 to 25 percent, so you have overall more units; and in the out-years – we've just added years – there's going to be more production, period. So, it's 25 percent of a larger number. So, when you roll that up, we're going to see more units as part of the overall new construction plan come from 421-a and MIH.

Mayor: So, rather than getting any weedier, what I'd say is this – I'm sure we can do a technical briefing for folks on a lot of the play-out here, but I want to go to the simpler point – and Willie, it is consistent with some of what we talked about yesterday. We determine what we can do based on actual experience. We put a plan on the table three years and five months ago that was very speculative. We were convinced it was the right direction. We believed it could be done, but we knew it was a stretch goal. A lot of the people we turned to for advice at the time said this is really, really tough. I didn't experience any one of the experts we've turned to say, you know, put it away, go away, drop it, it's never going to work. I heard a lot of voices saying, this is really, really tough. What we've found after three years and five months is the plan was the right plan, it works in practice, in fact, it could move faster than we originally assumed. The challenges always exist, but we feel very good about the tools we have. We also have – it's a business-partner dynamic, if you will. We had to work with a lot of folks, private sector, and public sector, and nonprofit sector to see how it would go. And in the doing of it, we found it could go faster than we even originally assumed. So, sometimes I think you start with a theory of the case, you start with a broad design, you go down the road. Sometimes the plan doesn't work as planned as you have to reassess and you have to alter. This is a good case where the plan actually worked and we saw an opening to do even more, and it was really through the lived experience.

On this – yes?

Question: Mr. Mayor, I have two sort-of related questions. The first one is, which neighborhood rezonings does this reform plan assume will go through over the next several years?

Mayor: I'll start and then Alicia can speak to any other specifics. I want to make it simple. We know there will be a number of re-zonings. My message to the City Council has been clear. We saw a very successful rezoning in East New York. We saw a very successful rezoning in the

Rockaways. A number are coming online now – in the process of beginning in a number of places. I think most of those are going to go through effectively. I'm never going to be shocked if a few don't. Any place where we think something's not going to work out, we're going to take those resources, take that time and energy, move it onto the next one because there's a lot of communities around the City that would like to see rezoning that understand it comes with a huge amount of investment in terms of community needs, that recognize that we can achieve multiple goals in a rezoning. I always say it's a once-in-a-generation opportunity to address a lot of community concerns simultaneously. We're not going to lack for places to go. So, this effort is just going keep moving and if we find a few places where it's not working – similar to the point I just made to Willie – if you start with a theory, you put it out there, you go, sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. But in this case, I can safely say if we ever find a location that doesn't work, we will move swiftly to the next one.

Question: So, generally speaking, you know, you say there's about dozen, let's say we get nine of those –

Mayor: Well, no, it's a little bit different. I'm not using numbers unless you can add the numbers in based on her latest estimates. I'm saying it a little bit differently. I'm saying, if one's not working you just switch up and move to the next – it's kind of a rolling thunder kind of situation because there's so much potential to create affordable housing through rezonings. My message to communities is very clear, we are doing rezoning to create affordable housing – that's the reason we show up. There's lots of other issues to be addressed, and it's a great opportunity to do it, but my interest in having the discussion and potentially putting in a vast investment is to create affordable housing. If we can't get to the kind of affordable housing we need, time to move onto the next one, and there's always more fish in the sea. Do you want to give any kind of range? Or do you want to get back?

Deputy Mayor Glen: I mean, the only thing I would add is that our production to-date has far surpassed our original projections and none of those units are attributable to the rezoning that we've already completed, so I think we feel extremely optimistic. And, as the Mayor said, we want to do these rezonings not just for housing production, but for a variety of important reasons around community planning and making investments. So, there's no correlation necessarily between the number of neighborhoods you rezone and the success of the plan because we've been incredibly successful to-date and we haven't had any of those as a result of the rezoning yet, so it's only going to continue to grow as e continue to maintain momentum and go where communities want to engage with us. So, there really is not a one-to-on correlation. In fact, as I said – surpassed our numbers without any additional production coming from a rezoning.

Question: Right, but then you increase the number – that doesn't assume more rezoning going through?

Deputy Mayor Glen: No, I think, again, as the Mayor said, we have a series of neighborhoods where we think make of a lot of sense. Right now we're in the process as you know of working on Inwood [inaudible] in East Harlem and we think those will be terrific opportunities, but we have not necessarily increased the pie of neighborhoods that we're putting into the machine.

Those are going to happen for all the right reasons, and if it doesn't work out we have other areas we want to work on. So, there's not a one-to-one correlation.

Mayor: I also want to just – on that one, I understand why there may be an assumption about what our batting average is on these, but when we actually look at it, we like our batting average. The ones that we fully engaged, we got where we wanted to go. There's been a lot of individual site rezonings to create a lot of affordable housing, including some that are 1,000 units a pop, which is huge. A couple of places it didn't work, we're going to come back to in terms of Washington Heights and in Councilmember Van Bramer's district. So, we feel good about the overall trajectory. We also feel good about the demand levels, meaning that a lot of Councilmembers are interested in having a rezoning. So, the resources are there, they're going to go somewhere, and we're going to find the right match in each case.

Question: One the [inaudible] fund there are some neighborhoods, obviously in Brooklyn, that have more speculation, more gentrification. Is this going to be used in specific neighborhoods or city-wide? How will it be determined where this money goes?

Mayor: Yeah, want to get that, Maria?

What is going on with my thing today – here we go. Maria definitely needs a step, she has a lot of skills – height is not one of them.

President Torres-Springer: Not one of them –

[Laughter]

Our anticipation is that the fund will be available, the program will be available citywide. But you're right, there are neighborhoods that are facing particular pressure and what we hope is to be able to combine this fund with other tools that we have that keep tenants in place, that provide them services, so that our work in each neighborhood is greater than the sum of its parts. So, it'll be available citywide, but we'll also work with community based organizations to see if there are ways where we can really concentrate that work to get to more impact.

Question: How will it be determined if there is more pressure on a certain place to give that money to certain organizations who are going to put it to better use? Will there be a determining factor?

President Torres-Springer: Let me just give some basics on the program that might be helpful. The idea is to really identify small to medium-sized buildings – so, 30-to-50 unit buildings – and these are usually going to be buildings that might have rent stabilized units, but aren't currently regulated by HPD or by government. And so – left alone, these are the types of buildings that would be attractive to – we have historically lost to speculators, bad-actor landlords. This provides us a tool. So, we'll work with not-for-profits. They have deep knowledge of these buildings on the ground. They will bring us the projects. We will work with them in order to put together the type of financing program that allows them to acquire the building, that allows them

to re-have the building, and, of course, why we're doing all of this, to ensure that the tenants in those buildings stay in place for the longterm and affordable rents.

Mayor: Any other questions on this? Anyone who hasn't gone – Gloria?

Question: Mr. Mayor, I don't think we got a clear answer on the breakdown between preservation and new housing –

Mayor: Continuing the same standard – 60-40.

Question: 60-40 – okay, and then my question question is, a lot of this is projected to happen when you're no longer in office. How do you – what can you do now to ensure these goals are met by the time you're no longer here? What do you do about a successor who might come in and say, we can no longer afford to build these, or we want to take it in a different direction. I mean, how do you plan for that?

Mayor: Good luck to that individual.

[Laughter]

I, again, the people are going to make a decision in two weeks about who should be the Mayor for the next four years, and if they choose me, we will move this plan very, very aggressively, and as Alicia said, using the example from Mayor Koch, we expect it to be a plan that will be moving so clearly, so well, that whoever the successor needs to continue it. I think if another Mayor comes in the future and says I'm going to stop building affordable housing, I mean god bless them, that's not going to be something in New York City are going to want to hear. Now, I hope they find ways to improve upon the plan, that would be great, but stopping an affordable housing plan, I don't think so.

Question: Mayor, where is the money for the public-private partnership coming from, how does that work?

President Torres-Springer: So, we will leverage, both private financing and philanthropic contributions. There's a model for this already. There currently is a fund that we work with a number of partners called the New York City Acquisition Fund. That's really helped us acquire and build or preserve affordable units about 11,000 over the course of the last several years. So the goal here is to expand that fund for the purpose of this new program, Neighborhood Pillars, and the focus, as we have talked about, will be different. The focus here is to be able to identify those small to medium sized buildings that would otherwise would be lost in order to ensure that if they get into the hands of not-for-profit organizations, we'll make sure that there not just – that repairs are made if necessary, but importantly to ensure affordability in the long run.

Question: Is any of it City money, I'm just a little –

President Torres-Springer: And so the way it works is that they – private financing is what will be used in order to essentially acquire, to serve as a bridge alone. Then City capital is what will be used for permanent financing, to take out that initial expense and for the rehab cost.

Mayor: So I'm also declaring again that there will be a technical briefing that Eric will create, where Dean, Alicia, Maria, Eric, everybody can help explain the nuances. Let me see if there is any other questions before we finish and go on to off-topic.

Question: Juliette made the point in her remarks, people should hang in there, they can win this housing lottery, what are the numbers in terms of applicants and people, I mean what is your actual chance –

Mayor: Sure

Question: – at getting an apartment?

Mayor: Hold on, hold on, don't jump too soon. You get to talk about that. I want to talk about the big picture because I think this is to first answer the question. There is a vast number of people competing for these apartments, so that's the reason it's important to meet Juliette. I meet a lot of good people around the city who have actually won and got an apartment, some of you may remember Luis Santiago from the video we showed at the State of the City a few years ago.

It happens every single day that people win the lottery, and end up with a new apartment. It happens every single day that people have their current apartment preserved for the long-term and subsidized for the long-term. There's always going to be more demand but the point is the amount of apartments coming into play are continuing grow. So imagine the waitlist as a huge waitlist, like for example, with public housing, we have a huge waitlist. The difference is that public housing isn't growing, it's a fixed asset. This is growing all the time, 78,000 already, but that means, using my math skills again, 222,000 not yet in play. That's a lot of apartments and we typically assume about three, average, three people or more to an apartment. So you are talking about hundreds of thousands of people who will be affected.

Will everyone be reached? No, I never said that. I don't want to give a misimpression. But the difference here I'm trying to get across is the supply keeps growing, growing, growing, growing. So even if you have a big pool of people trying more proportionally every year, more and more people are going to break through and get that apartment. And to Juliette's point, people should keep trying, we've tried to make the application process simpler with Housing Connect, we are going to keep always working on that. But you know, you don't even need a dollar and a dream, you just need a dream, you know? You just apply and for more and more people it's actually happening. Now in this one, you can tell us the astounding numbers, Joanne.

Unknown: So for this building there are 293 units, 60 percent for formerly homeless, 40 percent for low-income. There 110 low-income units which Juliette got. We had 60,000 – six-zero-zero-zero-zero – thousand applicants for those 110 units, that's how bad it is.

Mayor: Yup. Who else? Anyone else on this? Yes, Willie.

Question: There's a steady erosion of affordable units going on, so over the 12 years of your plan, where you are going to preserve 300,000 units, during that time what is the estimate for how many units are leaving that universe of affordable?

Mayor: So I will bring up Alicia with a preface, this is a big part of the equation, and we believe that the policies we put in place are changing that trajectory. We still do lose some, there's no question, but we are losing a lot less than used to be lost. The very fact that there's the legal services available makes a big difference, that's an X-factor that wasn't there before. The fact we are using resources using resources to preserve affordable housing in a different way is affecting that overall trajectory. Also, what has been achieved in Albany, and I think can be achieved going forward, we have seen some improvements in rent regulation, we need to do a lot more. And I know the chair is someone who is going to play a central role in this, strengthening rent regulation, I think the door is opening for that in Albany. That is a huge X-factor in the future of our ability to preserve affordable housing. So, as I turn to Alicia for any numerical frame, I like our chances of protecting against the loss of affordable housing a lot more today, than for example, five or 10 years ago.

Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen: I was going to wave a chart at you, but I realized I don't have the chart with me, but we will do it in the technical briefing, but it continues to be an issue, but the rate of loss of units from rent stabilization in the past four years has dramatically decreased from the prior two four year periods. So we are beginning to see the cumulative impact on our work, where obviously rents are not rising towards that vacancy decontrol threshold level. That's where you lose most of the units, when people are sort of angling to get to the vacancy decontrol. As the mayor said, that's why it's incredibly important at this moment at time we are doubling down on all of our efforts. Not just to reform and strengthen rent regulation, but to make sure that all these other services are in place. So we have something we can share with you in the technical briefing but the rate has declined, and so we would expect at that rate to continue to decline over the next couple of years, but again it is a little more of an art than a science because there are so many other pieces of this puzzle that we had to continue to work tooth and nail to get into place, mostly strengthening rent regulation and especially the vacancy decontrol threshold.

Mayor: I want you stay there and just use the real life example, I'm going to give you, Stuytown Peter Cooper and Rivington, where the previous policies were leading one direction and what you and your team did changed the trajectory.

Deputy Mayor Glen: Right, so in addition to just limiting people's rent freeze, rent going up by rent freeze, one the things we are doing that Maria talked about, is very strategically looking with landlords at places where there are still affordable rents subject to rent stabilization, and in return for giving them low-cost capital to fix up their buildings, we will provide them with incentives that allow them to extend those buildings inter-rent regulation, even if they would otherwise would be coming out of rent stabilization. So, between trying limit the ability of landlords to raise rents, so they get out of rent stabilization and actively going after every single landlord we can find who wants to work with us to keep their building in rent stabilization. Again we are beginning to see that rate of decline get much, much less severe, and so we would expect over time to be able to keep more buildings and more units in rent stabilization.

Question: I'm just asking for simple number.

Deputy Mayor Glen: We don't have a simple number going forward. It would be a projection. But we do have the numbers and will share with you on how many units we've lost in the past four years versus the prior two year four year periods and we will just share that with you after this.

Mayor: Last call on this topic. Yes?

Question: Briefly, the Neighborhood Pillars Program, is that sort of an acknowledgment that the housing plan, like in East New York and elsewhere, sort of triggered more speculation on land than, you know, what is –

Mayor: It's an acknowledgement that speculation was already a problem. I've said this a thousand times, including a town hall meeting in East New York, the speculation problem is separate from any question rezoning, we've seen massive speculation in Bed-Stuy, in Bushwick, in places that never had a rezoning, as well places that had a rezoning coming. It's unfortunately ubiquitous. So we have to approach it with new tools. Okay, so everyone who has been back here, thank you, you have been very patient, thank you for your great work, you are now free. My colleagues in government, stay, Steve if you want stay you are very welcome, but if you need to go it's understood, but my colleagues in the administration can hang around.

Mayor: Okay, places everybody.

Okay, other topics. Yes?

Question: Just a general policy question not about any specific case – can a person who is police custody consent to sex with a police officer?

Mayor: I don't see how that's possible, honestly. Any instance like this needs a full investigation so I'm not going to comment on a specific situation under investigation. But as a broad notion, I find it very troubling.

Question: The family of Matthew McCree has filed a \$25 million lawsuit against the City – stabbed at a school in the Bronx. Would metal detectors have saved his life?

Mayor: First of all, I'm not going to – on something that's a matter of a lawsuit – I'm not going to get into details. A lot of work has been done to reduce crime and violence in our schools. It is a fact, and I give the previous administration credit for starting it and we've continued it five straight years. Crime and violence have gone down in the schools.

Most schools don't have metal detectors by the choice of the school community and by the facts that have existed that they have not had a specific problem that triggered an interest in the metal detectors.

So, I'm not going to speculate. I will say metal detectors are not a perfect tool because we're still talking about human beings. Our job is to make the school safe.

It's a horrible, horrible tragedy. I was at the wake. It was very, very painful to see this young man we lost. We're going to just redouble our efforts to keep schools safe.

Question: As you said, you went to the wake. What kind of word can you offer a family that's lost a son?

Mayor: I – for Chirlane and I to spend time with Matthew's parents was a very powerful moment. Good, hard-working people suffered something horrendous. You know, they obviously took heart from the good life he did live and from, you know, the lives of their other children and each other.

But all we can say is we're going to be there for them and try and support them and try and make sure it never happens to another child.

Over here, anybody? Jillian –

Question: I guess we'll just do all of these Cuomo questions at once because why not? The Governor had criticism yesterday of your handling of homeless people on the subway and also of your congestion pricing –

Mayor: Well, why don't we do the first one first. I think there was a misunderstanding because on Sunday I was asked a question – and I'm trying to remember, was that you, Yoav? Or was that – I can't remember who asked the question. It was Michael. Okay.

And it was a perfectly fair question – we're comfortable with the situation where someone was sleeping under a subway bench? No. It's not acceptable. It's our responsibility to address which is what I said. So, I think some signals got crossed along the way.

I'm very comfortable – when I have a responsibility to address something, I'm going to address it. And that is the NYPD which patrols the subways and would never accept that kind of condition if they saw it. And obvious our Homeless Outreach Teams which have increasingly found effective ways to get people off the streets.

So, remember, even in times where I've had differences with the Governor on the MTA issue, I've said we want to do more in terms of NYPD presences in the subways wherever it's needed, Fire Department efforts to help in emergencies, Homeless Outreach efforts.

We're ready to do more and wherever we see a need we will put more resources on it. So, I don't know why he would criticize the NYPD which is, I think, doing an outstanding job but I also think there was some missed signals in what was presented to him.

I'm very comfortable saying that's something that we are going to take responsibility for addressing.

Question: And then congestion pricing versus your congestion plan [inaudible]. He was also critical of that. I mean –

Mayor: I didn't see all of it. I mean, again, I would love to respond to his congestion pricing plan if it existed. I've been very clear about what I felt about previous congestion pricing plans. If there's a new one we'll certainly assess it. I think the millionaire's tax is the right way to go. And you've seen from public opinion research a strong, strong majority of New Yorkers agree.

So, I would just say, "Hey, you know there's a plan on the table, why don't we go to that plan? Rather than a plan that doesn't exist."

Question: Do you think that your relationship with the Governor is deteriorating?

Mayor: No, it's pretty much consistent.

[Laughter]

Question: Staying with Governor Cuomo, he ordered some kind of review late last night about – involving a Marx Brothers playground. And it's a question of whether it's a playground or a park –

Mayor: I understand that review they're calling Groucho and Harpo to testify. Go ahead.

[Laughter]

Question: Do you understand what the issue is and what he's –

Mayor: Yes, I think this will resolve – I think this will work out. This is a – there is some nuance to this that can be worked through, I think, well. But the bottom line is there was a playground. My understanding is it actually had been out of service for a long time because of the Second Avenue subway construction. There's going to be a new playground created that's actually going to be as big or even bigger than the previous.

So, in the end the central concern, which is very fair, saying if we have a recreation space we can't lose that impact on our community. Yeah, they're going to get one that's as big or bigger and it will be new on top of that.

So, there will be a net gain for the community in fact. But meanwhile, the development in question comes with three schools and 300 units of affordable housing. It's a big, big deal. So, I think that, you know, the Governor signed the legislation. That was the most important thing. I think the review is perfectly fair and I think it will show that this is being done the right way and there's a way to address the concerns.

Marcia?

Question: Mr. Mayor, given all the chatter, the back-and-forth between you and the Governor and Joe Lhota on the homeless, both in the subways and in homeless housing, I wonder if you could give yourself a grade of how you've handled homeless –

Mayor: No, I can't.

Question: Why?

Mayor: I don't do grades. I can tell you what I think. I just don't do grades. I've said it very openly, I wish I had done better in the beginning in the administration in terms of focusing on street homelessness as much as we were focusing on shelter homelessness.

And I wish I had done better at getting a holistic plan forward. When we finally put forward the plan in the spring, I think there was a broad recognition in this city that it made some sense and it answered a lot of outstanding questions. I wish we had figured that out a lot earlier.

That's my responsibility. I will say on the plus-side, what we were focused on in the very beginning was the lack of any way to keep people in the housing that they had and not let them slip into homelessness and get people out of shelter and into housing. That – all that was lost when the advantage program got cancelled by Governor Cuomo and Mayor Bloomberg in 2011. Huge mistake.

We came in the door trying to figure out how to solve that and we did. We came up with a new link program that actually succeeded. And later the HOME-STAT program which has gotten 900 people off the street and kept them off the street. Those are great things.

But my mistake was not addressing both parts of the problem from the very beginning and not putting it in the form of a bigger plan. And I appreciate why people are frustrated because it took too long for us to give them a way forward.

Question: Mr. Mayor, if I could just follow-up in that. I wonder when you said you wished you had focused on the street homeless more if you are including the homeless in the subway in the broader –

Mayor: Sure.

Question: – category of street homelessness –

Mayor: Yes. Yes. Yes.

Question: Do you think you should have done more in terms of the homeless on the subway which people complain about both on the trains and –

Mayor: Yes, Marcia, there's no difference. It's the same problem. We treat that the same. I want to be really clear about that. When I say street homeless I mean permanent homeless folks who a

lot of the time are on the street, sometimes are in the subway. It's the same exact problem. We should have addressed it all across the board more clearly from the beginning.

The HOME-STAT initiative does work. That's the thing I want to get across. It's now a year-and-a-half old, 900 people have come in. Same thing – streets, subways, everywhere – 900 people have come in and stayed and not gone back on the streets. That's a very promising program. We've got to do a lot more of that.

We're going to address the whole picture. We have to.

Grace?

Question: When you were talking about congestion pricing, you said you'd love to respond to the Governor's plan if it existed. Yesterday, he invited you to be on a congestion pricing panel to come up with a plan, and your press secretary said you're not interested. Can you explain why?

Mayor: Yeah, because look, I think that panel was created for the Governor's purposes with a lot of people who are not necessarily going to be looking at all the factors involved. Let that panel do what it wants to do. We are here to address any plan that comes forward. I have not seen a congestion pricing plan I can support.

I have offered a plan. I mean this is the thing in life I think every public servant has to [inaudible] if you don't have an answer then you have to either come up with one or find another person's plan that you like. I have a plan. I like this plan. I would like us to move forward with a millionaire's tax. It would solve the problem.

Question: But the millionaire's tax wouldn't address congestion.

Mayor: The millionaire's tax would address the crucial issue which brought us all here, the funding of the MTA and fixing the MTA's capital problems, physical problems, and of course would pay for the Fair Fare, the half-price MetroCards as well for low-income folks. The congestion issue is a separate issue. We put forward a plan on Sunday that's a beginning. I said on Sunday it's not a panacea but I think it's going to make a big difference and also it has in it elements that if they work, we can expand on greatly like the off-hours deliveries.

And we're expanding mass transit options like the ferries and the light rail and the Select Bus Service. This, to me, is the right way to go at the congestion issue. We have a way to fund the MTA. The better the MTA is the more people will use mass transit. We have a way to start addressing congestion on the streets. We have a way to expand mass transit with the City's own approaches and resources.

These are real tangible things. By the way, a lot of them are happening right now. The congestion pricing idea literally is just a vague word without a plan attached.

Question: [Inaudible] wouldn't it be important for the Mayor of New York City to be at the table on a regional –

Mayor: If I thought it was going to be a real discussion but I don't think that's what it is. Let's be real. It's created to address his vision and his concerns. I have my own vision. I put forward my own plan.

Question: Yeah, Mr. Mayor, on the congestion pricing. How are you planning to deal with the ripple effect if hotels, restaurants, cannot get their deliveries during that busy hours that they're going to start delivering overnight –

Mayor: That would be great. Why wouldn't we want them to deliver overnight?

Question: For the people who live there and are living opposite these –

Mayor: I think – wait a minute, wait a minute.

Question: [inaudible] trucks at 3:00 am and 4:00 am in the morning.

Mayor: I want to put this in perspective. Right now we have a congestion reality that we have to change. So, the status quo is not working. And what's that definition of insanity? Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result?

We have to do something different. To begin with, we're saying at least don't make the deliveries in those areas during rush hour. So, we're saying six hours out of 24, don't deliver at the very busiest times of the day.

I think that's common sense. And we'll see how that works. That alone may make a big difference and if that works we'll then expand it to a lot of other places –

Question: But will there be a limit of when or how late they can deliver or how early they can deliver?

Mayor: Right now, people make deliveries in the city at all different hours as it is.

Question: Right, that's where you have a lot of noise complaints –

Mayor: Yeah, yeah, but again, let's do one thing at a time. The first thing is I'm trying to address the congestion problem and I think what we have put forward could be a major part of addressing it, to get the deliveries, first, out of the rush hour.

Now, some places are doing deliveries in the evening before people go to sleep, early in the morning. There's all sorts [inaudible]. Some do overnight. If there's noise problems we'll find ways to address noise problems.

But I think we can safely say the congestion problem requires a pretty major solution. And I'm not going to fail to try it because I'm worried about unintended consequences. Let's try it. Let's see what it does. We can keep adjusting. It's still a free country.

People can make their own choices beyond our stipulations as to when they want to do their deliveries. But I would deal with those pieces in kind. If we found some particular noise problems we would then move to address those.

Unknown: Last two.

Question: Mr. Mayor, an awful lot of people are saying that the sharing economy rides – the Uber and Lyft – have something to do with congestion. Do you believe that and do you think that ought to be taken into account in any plan somehow?

Mayor: Sure. Look, the – I do believe that. The initial study that we did showed it was less than expected. On the other hand, it's now been a couple of years more that those sectors have been growing.

It just stands to reason that there are more cars in use when we don't want more cars in use. We want people to more and more choose mass transit and every option beyond private automobile use. But I don't have specific facts and figures. I'm just going on common sense here. Of course, it's a concern.

Question: Should, should they be somehow limited?

Mayor: We need, look, we need to address the whole for-hire vehicle sector. We have – there's a bunch of issues out there – disability access, fair treatment of workers, how long drivers should drive, you know, safety considerations, consumer issues on pricing schedules, all sorts of things. What I think we need to do, and this is another lesson learned from a couple of years ago is, address the whole sector at once. We don't want to single out one company or one approach. I think we have to come up with a plan that addresses the whole thing.

Question: The Governor vetoed a bill that would reform the gravity knife law –

Mayor: Yeah.

Question: Tons of people of color have been put behind bars because of it. Can you just talk about your feelings on that?

Mayor: I think he did the right thing. The – I understand there are challenges we have to address in terms of criminal justice reform. And we've been doing that in this city for the last four years consistently, we'll keep doing that. But, I fully subscribe to the viewpoint of the NYPD that these knives should not be out in public circulation, that they present a danger. It's another weapon available to some. I understand there are some hard working folks who use these knives as part of their work. I think we have to change that, I think we have to make clear that there's got to be a different alternative for people to use in their work that is not something that therefore leads to them being sold on the open market and used by, maybe a few, but unfortunately a violent few to harm others.

I want fewer weapons in circulation, and I'm taking the exact opposite view unfortunately of the Republicans in Washington who are willing to see weapons in circulation in this country. Not here in this city. We have, across Democratic and Republican administrations, been really stringent about limiting the supply of weapons. Obviously we have some of the strongest gun safety laws in the country, well, gravity knives are really dangerous. So I don't want them in circulation. I think the Governor did the right thing.

Yeah.

Question: Mr. Mayor, I talked to a couple of folks who, about the Legal Defense Fund Legislation that you talked about in the past and you thought there was some interest in the City Council. Folks are a little bit worried about the notion of that legislation sort of being rushed through between Election Day and the end of the year. Do you have any update on sort of where that stands?

Mayor: I don't have an update, I mean obviously as we've seen previously, I think it is broadly acknowledged that there is something that needs a legislative solution and we don't have it. So how and when we get there I don't know but it requires legislative solution.

Okay, I'm going to do these last two or three with Rich okay. And then I am out the door. Gloria.

Question: Mr. Mayor, there is a, there was a proposal of East 58th Street to limit the height of a tower that is being built there. And you have expressed concern about that in the past [inaudible]

Mayor: I'm not sure which one you mean.

Question: It's the community group that wants to have a height cap on the tower on East 58th Street.

Mayor: Okay. Again, I'm going to be careful because I'm not sure we are speaking the same language. There is one group that put forward a plan for a 120 foot limit – I don't know if that's that or something else. And that was addressed at Dan Garodnick's town hall meeting.

Yep.

Question: They have come back now with a new application. It doesn't cap the building's height but it would subject it to new design regulations that would effectively limit the size. Is that something that sounds more palpable to you? Would you be willing to support that kind of a thing?

Mayor: I haven't seen it. I mean we will – I think the group is coming forward in good faith looking for legitimate ways to address a challenge. I didn't think their original plan made sense but we will look at the new plan if there is one. I'm happy to look at it.

Question: There's something that I think that's been done pretty –

Mayor: You can have that conversation with the Deputy Mayor.

Question: Mayor, Dick Dadey, the former Executive Director of Citizens Union, turned himself into police today and has been charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance. I just wanted to get your reaction.

Mayor: It's very sad. I've known Dick Dadey for a long time. I think he has done tremendously good work for the people of this city. I'm very sorry he is going through this but, you know, this gets back to what we have been talking about these last years. Substance abuse challenges afflict so many New Yorkers including folks you might not assume are facing a challenge. The same with mental health challenges. Our job is to embrace people in need and help them get the help they need. So he is a really good guy, and you know, I hope he gets the help he needs and we will support him in every way.

Last call.

Question: Mr. Mayor, are you losing weight?

Mayor: I love that question.

[Laughter]

Question: I mean, are you on a special, like, campaign diet or anything?

Mayor: Can you ask the question again?

[Laughter]

Mayor: Rich, thank you for raising this vital question with importance to people of New York City. I think I'm pretty similar to what I have been. I'm trying. I'm certainly trying to lose weight. I don't think I've gotten that far but I'm trying.

Question: You look skinnier.

Mayor: I like that. Thank you. This has been a great gathering. Thank you.

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