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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everybody. Well, right now, so much is happening in this city. So much work is going on to get ready for the weeks and months ahead. So much is coming back to life in this city and our focus, as always, as we bring New York City back – our focus is on health, it's on safety. That is the key to everything else. We get those pieces right, everything else falls into place. Now, right now, so much effort going on to prepare for a safe, healthy school year. So much is going on to continue to work to fight back the coronavirus and lower that infection rate even more. So much is going on to make this city safe, to make our streets safe. And there's a lot I want to talk about in terms of all those areas, but first I want to draw attention to something truly extraordinary, because it hasn't happened in the last 25 years, but it did happen last week.

You know, there's been so much, that's happened as a result of the coronavirus that's affected our public safety situation. I've talked about the perfect storm we've been up against, all the crises, layered one on top of another. And the work to bring our city back, to make our city safer – that has been the work of the NYPD and that has been the work of community organizations working constantly with the NYPD at the local level. This is a time to recognize that hard work and recognize when it pays off, when something extraordinary happens, and the men and women of the NYPD should be proud of this achievement from last week, because last week we saw 160 gun arrests in New York City – 160 gun arrests. That is the most gun arrests in a single week in 25 years, a record for the last quarter-century. That took a lot of hard work and a lot of bravery. And that is something that shows us how hard the men and women of the NYPD are working and what a difference it makes. Imagine that 160 more arrests means a lot of guns off the streets and a lot of people who will be safer in neighborhoods all over this city. So, I want to commend everyone at the NYPD, Commissioner Shea, and his team that worked meticulously on this strategy. And you're going to see a lot more progress in the weeks and months to come that come as we see more and more activity in precincts all over the city, as we see more and more activity in our criminal justice system with our courts starting to reopen, and more and more work together, the NYPD and communities, as we deepen neighborhood policing. This is the key. And I want to remind everyone, we became the safest big city in America over the course of years and, in fact, decades, because we increasingly understood that the most important work happens between police and community working together. You see a picture there, Chief Jeff Maddrey, head of Community Affairs – extraordinary work – he has been doing with his team out in communities all over the city, working with clergy, elected officials, community groups, the Cure Violence movement and Crisis Management System. It is making a difference. And so, we're going to forge ahead. So, this news from last week is a sign of things to come as the NYPD will succeed more and more, working with the community to keep us all safe.

Now, safety and health, as we've said, that's also the core to everything we're doing in terms of getting our schools reopened. And we need to make sure that kids are safe, adults are safe wherever they go, and that the school system works for every family. And so, one of the big questions that's been out there is school bus service, how we bring it back. And today, we announced that school bus service will be back and will be available to all children who need it. Now, this will start from the first day of school. On Monday, September 21st, we'll have 100,000 bus seats available. There'll be 6,000 special education routes, 2,500 general education routes. We're working with 60 bus companies to have everything ready in time, including extensive safety measures. That means there will be mandatory masks for everyone, adults, and children alike on the buses. That means there'll be social distancing. That means there'll be windows open and nightly cleaning. Every bus company will be provided with the PPE they need. And we're starting with a supply of 300,000 masks, 10,000 face shields, 30,000 bottles of hand sanitizer and electrostatic sprayers for every bus garage. And we're going to keep those supplies up constantly as we go forward.

Now, families will start to get notified today of the bus routes for their kids. Every route has now been completed and confirmed. So, family notifications begin today. All families will be notified by the end of the week. So, parents will have the information they need to get ready for September 21st, the first day of school. Now, we've talked a lot about our school buildings and making sure they are safe and healthy. A lot of conversation has been properly on the question of ventilation. I'm going to show you a video in a moment that will give you a sense of the hard work that's being done and the great work of so many public servants who care about our kids who are making sure ventilation is working in every school building. But I want to give you another update. First, we announced over the weekend that there were 10 buildings – 10 school buildings – and, again, this is out of well over 1,400 school buildings for our public schools – but 10 in particular had real challenges. We were holding back those buildings to see what could be done to fix some of those challenges. Happy to report now that in four of those 10 buildings, repairs have been completed and the buildings have been re-inspected and passed inspection. So, four more buildings coming back online and those inspection reports will be up on the DOE website later on today.

Now, again, I want to give you a sense of the hard work that's being done to improve the ventilation, inspect it, make sure it's right. Let's look at this video, they'll show you what's happening in our schools right now.

[Video plays in background]

Well, you can see there – and I really want to commend all the men and women who do this work, who care so much about our schools, care about our kids, care about our educators – thorough, thorough work by people who know their stuff – the engineers, the custodial service personnel, everyone who makes sure the school buildings are ready. What you saw is happening and has happened all summer in every single one of our school buildings. And that's why we will have our buildings ready in time for our kids.

Now, let me give you another update on something we're doing that is so crucial to fighting the coronavirus, and, again, is going to the grassroots, because that's where we make a difference. You know, the Test and Trace Corps has done such important work, reaching out to communities, really making sure that people know testing is available, take advantage of it, and particularly focusing on communities where the testing levels have been lower than they should be, and Soundview in the Bronx is a great example. I was up in Soundview yesterday, the test and trace team – a great experience talking to neighborhood residents, letting them know that testing was available. I want to tell you, people responded to this, knowing that the testing was available in their community, that it was free, that it was quick and easy. Folks want to take advantage of that opportunity. So, it was so important to be out there with people. And this is what the test and trace team does every single day. This is this hyperlocal effort, as we call it, focusing really intensely on particular communities. This has got to go on in Soundview all through September 15th. It's been going on for the last week. We'll continue September 15th. And the idea is, get that testing rate up. And it's all sorts of media outreach, of course, but grassroots outreach as well, knocking on doors. We've had now almost 10,000 doors knocked on, 4,000 direct conversations with people in the community, leafleting out in the streets. And the message is simple – get tested, because it makes a difference, and it helps you protect yourself and your family. Now, the hyper local effort continues wherever there's a need. Borough Park, Brooklyn, and another area where we still have concerns. We're addressing – a lot of outreach going on, efforts to make sure people know how important is to where the masks and to limit gatherings and to practice social distancing. And, of course, to get tested regularly. Let me now turn to the management, leading these efforts and doing a great job with this very grassroots approach, the Executive Director of the Test and Trace Corps Dr. Ted Long.

**Executive Director Ted Long, Test and Trace Corps.:** Thank you, sir. COVID is an invisible enemy. To fight COVID, we must do as much testing as we can [inaudible] in New York City, and we can't afford to develop any blind spots. The community in Soundview had one of the lowest per capita testing rates of any community in New York City, before we started our hyperlocal effort there. Now, since we've started our hyperlocal effort in Soundview, we've knocked on 10,000 doors, made 49,000 phone calls, and completed 1,600 tests for the coronavirus there. And the way that we've brought people out to get tested is by keeping this a local effort. We've worked directly with community-based organizations, such as the Mexican Coalition for the Empowerment of Youth and Families, and SCO Family of Services. Now, we're going to continue to build on the principles that made us so successful in Sunset Park, where we were able to drive down the percent of New Yorkers testing positive in that community by more than two-thirds through our hyperlocal effort there. Now, in Soundview, if you come to our site of the library, you can come in, get a test [inaudible] you'll have the result back within 15 minutes. And if it's positive, we have a team of tracers in person there that will do immediate contact tracing. They speak seven languages. And any contacts identified, they will reach out that day and bring them in for testing that day as well. And then, before you leave the building, if you tested positive, we pair you up with a resource navigator to work with you, to see if you'd benefit from things like free food delivery or even a free hotel stay.

Moving forward, we're going to continue to work with the community in Soundview, to drive up the test and levels to where they need to be, to keep the community and Soundview safe and all of New York City safe. Thank you, sir.

**Mayor:** Thank you so much, Ted. And, Ted, I want to thank you and your whole team at test and trace. It's just great to be out in the community and see the Test and Trace Corps in action, see how intensely people care about this work and how important it is to just have those direct conversations with people to let them know that testing is there for them and it's free and it's available. It makes all the difference in the world.

And this leads us to our daily indicators. And every day, it's actually a privilege to be able to tell you this information, because it's further evidence of the amazing efforts of New Yorkers that have taken us forward. So, indicator number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold is 200 patients – today's report, 79. And the percentage of patients confirmed tested positive for COVID-19 is only 3.8 percent. Number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average, threshold, 550 cases – today's report, 220. And number three, percentage of people testing citywide positive for COVID-19, threshold is five percent – and today's report, 1.04 percent. Another very good day.

A few words in Spanish –

With that, we turn to our colleagues in the media. Please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

**Moderator:** We'll now begin our Q-and-A. As a reminder, we're joined today by First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan, Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza, Executive Director at the Test and Trace Corps Ted Long, and Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. For the first question today, we'll go to Rich Lamb from WCBS radio.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Hey, Rich. How are you doing?

**Question:** I'm doing all right. So, I heard Dr. Varma, I think, mentioned yesterday and I looked it up a little bit – the transmissions in the flu season in the Southern hemisphere are apparently vastly reduced from previous years. Does that seem to predict anything for New York City? I wonder what his opinion is about that.

**Mayor:** Yeah. I'll start and turn to Dr. Varma. Yeah, it's a great question, Richard. It's an important one. We are seeing some hopeful signs. So I know Dr. Varma well enough to say he will probably tell you, we have to be careful not to over-read what we're seeing there or be too optimistic because we have to see how things play out here, but you're exactly right. The fact that people are so extensively wearing face coverings and practicing social distancing is not only a way to fight the coronavirus. It's also a way to fight the spread of the flu, and I have to say being up in Soundview in the Bronx, working class community, a community of all different kinds of people, lots of immigrants. I was really struck by how many people were wearing those masks and how seriously New Yorkers take this. So, with that, over to you, Dr. Varma.

**Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma:** Yeah. Thank you for the question. So, as I [inaudible] yesterday, we are cautiously optimistic that all of the measures that we're taking right now to prevent coronavirus transmission will have an impact also on flu transmission, and that's where the evidence comes from what you've seen in the Southern hemisphere. There was also data earlier this year from Hong Kong and Taiwan. With that said, I would also really urge New Yorkers though, to make sure they get a flu shot that year. We're going to be doing a lot of community outreach to make sure that everybody of all ages knows that flu shots are one of the really most important ways that you can try to keep yourself safe and healthy this year, and it's also going to be particularly advantageous for us because we know that, you know, flu symptoms and COVID symptoms are similar, and the more we can keep you out of the doctor's office or the ER due to flu the better we can handle any issues related to COVID.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Rich.

**Question:** Okay, different topic. I'm just wondering in regard to the schools, how many families, I think we heard something about this yesterday from the Chancellor, but I wonder whether they've been able to quantify it, how many families seem to be switching from in-person to remote learning and what does that mean regarding the number of extra teachers that need to be recruited?

**Mayor:** Yeah, I'll start and pass to the Chancellor. So we, as we talked about yesterday, Rich, we're fine-tuning the exact number of teachers we will need, but I'm quite confident we'll have the teachers we need. Remember, we have thousands of DOE personnel who are ready to teach in a classroom, even if their roles last year were something different. So those thousands of educators are being mobilized and move into, moved into classroom setting. We also have many thousands of substitutes that we've worked with in the last who can be mobilized as well. So there's a real talent pool to be tapped into. We'll be ready with those talented educators ready to go. The Chancellor will give you the latest on the number of students we expect in school buildings versus in full time remote. Go ahead, Chancellor.

**Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza:** Thank you, Richard. Thank you, Mayor. So, at this time, 61 percent of our students have elected blended learning, which means in-person learning and 39 percent have elected full remote learning. So that – and that's stabilized. So that means that two thirds of our student body will be at least for some portion of the week in person learning this coming school year.

**Mayor:** Okay, go ahead.

**Moderator:** Next up, we have Andrew from WNBC morning, everyone. Last week, the Chancellor indicated that there would be a 30-day supply of PPE in every school, every day. We did hear from a number of teachers yesterday saying they showed up. There were no face coverings, no PPE. I'm wondering if you can address that. If you think this was just some scattered outages or if perhaps schools are not yet stocked?

**Mayor:** I'll start and pass to the Chancellor. Andrew, we had some schools that should have honestly been caught, but there was a specific reality about them that are in some state-owned

facilities, and once the mistake was realized, they're being resupplied today with the PPE, it's very easy with the amount of PPE we have on hand to get a school supplied immediately. So there was a handful of schools missed. There's no question about that. That's being fixed right now. But overall and I've seen this around the school system and talk to a lot of folks involved, overwhelmingly the PPE is in place and any time there's a problem, we can supply it right away. Go ahead, Chancellor.

**Chancellor Carranza:** Yes, so just exactly what the Mayor said. In addition, some of our facilities are leased facilities. So when PPE was going to be delivered, in some cases the landlord did not accept those deliveries, but this is why, you know, we have more time and we've been spending all day yesterday addressing any issues where there wasn't a PPE and principals have been great about communicating that to us. We'd been in very close communication also with our unions. So, we're the information flow is strong and we're addressing those issues as they become identified.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Andrew.

**Question:** So, my second question has to do with indoor dining. Yesterday, the Governor said, essentially, he's ready to give it the go ahead as soon as you tell him what your specific enforcement plan is. So, have you had a conversation or your office with the Governor's office in last 24 hours and how close are you to announcing an enforcement and compliance plan for indoor dining?

**Mayor:** Andrew, a lot of conversations over the last few days between my office and the Governor's office, everyone is working together trying to figure out what's safe. There's been a lot of conversation among the healthcare leadership to make sure that whatever is done is done safely. I want to emphasize this. We've seen problems around the world with indoor dining. We take it very seriously and particularly problems with bars and nightclubs. Those need to be handled in an even more stringent fashion. But bottom line is we are making progress. We all need to come to an agreement on what will be safe, what the standards will be. Not just the enforcement, it's much more than that. It's how something should happen, when it should happen, what standards, what would indicate if there was a point, just as we've said, what schools – we've had a threshold that allows us to open schools and a threshold that if it were surpassing the wrong direction, we would close them. We have to really do that fine-tuning on indoor dining to see if we can get somewhere I'm hopeful. We will have an announcement as early as this week. But there's more work to be done, and then obviously we do the enforcement here on the ground and our resources are being stretched in a lot of different directions, but we'll have to figure out a way that we feel confident about the enforcement. So whatever vision we come up with we can make sure it is carefully handled every day here in New York City.

**Moderator:** Next up is Luis from [inaudible].

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you today?

**Mayor:** Hey, Luis, how are you?

**Question:** Good, good, good. A number of times since August you've outlined measures taken towards enforcing the DOH traveler form compliance. There've been checkpoints, hotel involvement, and recently you spoke at buses at the Port Authority yesterday. The Governor's talked about students coming back to colleges from some of the high-risk states, and he mentioned the outbreaks at colleges across the nation. So, I'm wondering, is there any future plan to involve colleges with the travel form compliance?

**Mayor:** I think it's a very fair question, Luis. We have been working in fact with a whole host of private and public entities to get the travel compliance, right. Not only public agencies, but travel companies, airlines, bus companies, Amtrak a host of rental car agencies. You name it. So yeah, I do think it makes sense to increase our coordination with universities. I think the – from what I've seen here in the city, the universities here have been really careful and meticulous. I think some of the problems you're seeing in other parts of the country, unfortunately correlate to a very high infection rate and mistakes that were made previously. But here my strong sense is our universities are being real cautious, but yes, I think the answer is simply, yes, we want to coordinate with them carefully in terms of people traveling to the city.

**Question:** Thank you, sir. That's it. Take care.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Go ahead.

**Moderator:** Next up we have David from the Queens Daily Eagle.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

**Mayor:** Good. How are you?

**Question:** Good. Thanks, I have a couple of questions about the decision to move people experiencing homelessness out of the hotel on the Upper West Side and back into shelters. So, there's a perception that if New Yorkers of one of the city's wealthiest communities, predominantly white community, complain enough the City will capitulate, override its own public health guidance, move people out of a hotel back into shelters. But what kind of precedent does that set?

**Mayor:** Well, I disagree entirely with that assessment, David. The first place where we had a hotel that we thought was something that had to be addressed. This was a month or more ago, it was in Southeast Queens. The announcement that was made in the last 24 hours is about the Upper West Side. It's also about the area around Queensbridge Houses. So this gets back to a much more fundamental reality. First of all, we want to always be focused on what's healthy and safe for the community, and for folks who are homeless. The entire impetus originally at the height of the coronavirus was to get people out of more crowded facilities into other environments, but the height of the coronavirus, thank God is long behind us. Years ago, we said very clearly we need to get out of hotels as a matter of policy, as a matter of just doing what's right for the people in New York City, having lots of homeless folks in hotels was not good for anybody. It wasn't good for homeless folks. We wanted to be in the kind of shelters that could actually provide the proper support. So this is the beginning of a larger effort to come back from

those hotels, get back into our traditional shelter system, continue moving people who are homeless to permanent affordable housing, and remember it's well over a hundred thousand New Yorkers who are homeless who have been moved to permanent affordable housing and want to keep doing that. But this is something that was clear from the beginning. It was a temporary measure, and now it's time to start going back to what we had before.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, David.

**Question:** What would those same conditions though, that we're generating a lot of complaints, getting a lot of tension on the Upper West Side, won't those just be replicated in another neighborhood, and what's the plan for providing long-term permanent housing for the people in those hotels?

**Mayor:** Again, David, I don't assume as you're suggesting, because look, we've had people in shelters – it's a painful reality in this city, it's been going on for decades – but we've had people in shelter in many parts of the city where the situation was handled properly. Where the shelter could provide properly for the homeless folks, help them back on their feet, help them to a better life, help them to permanent affordable housing. As I said, we've been doing that nonstop for years effectively, and we want to continue that, but I'll tell you the complaints I heard originally, as I said, Southeast Queens, I heard them at Queensbridge Houses when I was out there a few months ago, I went and saw for myself and the Upper West Side last week, and what I saw was not acceptable and had to be addressed because the idea is to always try and balance the need to serve homeless folks with the need for a community to continue to go about its life, and I think just, we had a reality here where we had to not have so many people in hotels. It's not what we wanted to begin with to have people in hotels. We said that three years ago, our policies get people out of hotels in fact. So, this was the right time to start to move away from hotels, and we'll be continuing to do that in a variety of neighborhoods going forward.

**Moderator:** Next up is Marcia from WCBS.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor. I have two questions. The first of – the first one does have to do with the homeless hotels. I'm wondering if you could tell me why it was necessary to move them out of the hotels and why you couldn't have identified the people who were causing the trouble and moved them out and kept the people in the Lucerne with the services and giving them the services that they would need?

**Mayor:** Again, Marcia, I think I said before, I'll say it again. We have said for years we do not want to be in temporary hotel facilities. We want to be, I think you may have even been there the day a few years ago, I announced the plan to create the 90 new long-term shelters built for the purpose of supporting folks who are homeless, helping them back on their feet, helping them forward to again, permanent affordable housing. The reality in this city is that for decades we were in hotels that were being paid by the night, we were in a cluster of buildings, substandard housing, we've been very clear, we need to get out of all of that, and we have been. For a few months because of the coronavirus, we had to do something different because it was actually more important to spread people out than anything else, but that is behind us. Now we want to

get back to the policy we stated years ago, fewer hotels, people in long-term appropriate shelter, and then ultimately getting them to permanent affordable housing.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, my second question is I'm intrigued by what you said about indoor dining and the fact that you seem to be working hard and diligently to come up with some way to reopen New York City restaurants for indoor dining. Can you, can you expand on that? I think it gives [inaudible] an awful lot of people who need the jobs, need to work, and are afraid of going out of business?

**Mayor:** No, listen, Marcia, I appreciate that point a lot. I've talked to plenty of restaurant owners and folks who love their local restaurants and last thing we want to see is anyone lose their business. It's been horrendous for the restaurant industry. That's why we did outdoor dining. That's why we try to do a lot of things to support the industry, but look for a long time, what we saw around the world was that indoor dining unfortunately could spark a much worse situation in terms of coronavirus. We're seeing it right now as one of the contributing factors in some of the resurgence in Europe. The question for us has been, is there some way to do indoor dining that can be truly safe and with standards that are very tight and that we have a clear sense of under what conditions we would allow it, and then also under what conditions we would not allow it if our situation where the coronavirus changes.

So, Marcia, I think the really important piece of this is our opportunity to do more than indoor dining's directly related to how well we do on the health picture overall. If we keep fighting back the coronavirus, more and more options open up. If the coronavirus starts to resurge, you're not going to see a lot of things, including indoor dining. So we're trying to figure out with the State right now, what is that balance point? What are those conditions that would be acceptable that would keep us safe? What is the kind of threshold that we would need to work with? And it's been productive conversations. I don't want to say anything more until we see if we can get to a final agreement. But we are trying our best. You're right. Diligently is the right word. We're trying our best to see if there's a way we can give some clarity to the restaurant industry so they can have some option to keep going. But remember, it will all be dependent on how we're doing with the coronavirus overall.

**Moderator:** Next up we have Yoav from The City.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor and Chancellor, I wanted to ask about the bus contracts and the bus service. You said there'll be busing for a hundred thousand students on the first day. Last year, yellow buses served 163,000 students. So, I want to ask about those 63,000 students, is that merely a reflection of the number of kids who are learning remotely full time, or are there some students who are eligible for bus service who won't be getting it?

**Mayor:** Yoav let me start and I'm actually going to turn to our First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan who is with us who's been really deeply involved in getting all this ready and working through the details with the companies. But let me start with your core question, which is why is the number different? You – what you said the end there is the reality. We've got not only kids who will be all remote, but because of blended learning, we've got days where, you know, one child will be in school and then the next day a different child will be in school. So obviously you

need a lot less in the way of bus service than you would if everyone was going at once. The kids in blended learning, both in-person and remote, and the all remote kids – if everyone's going at once, you need a lot more bus service. If all you're dealing with on a specific day is the kids who are actually in school that day, you need much less than you would have needed last year. But let me have Dean Fuleihan give you a little more of an update.

**First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan:** No, that's exactly correct. We are providing service and we will make sure that every child that's doing a part of the blended learning in school is served. The difference between last year and this year is exactly that, is the number of students who will be going completely remote. And I would add, I don't believe - that I believe the number, but we'll make sure to confirm this last year was closer to 140,000.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Yoav.

**Question:** Thanks. On another busing issue there, the DOE began piloting a GPS system for buses this past winter, the initial plan was going to be to roll that out at the beginning of this school year. I'm assuming that was derailed by the crisis. Just wondering what the status of that is, are –is the DOE still looking to implement system-wide GPS tracking system?

**Mayor:** I'll start and then turn to Dean. Yoav, we really – this is something I care about. I was the public school parent. My kids rode the bus. This is something, you know, for years it was a massive frustration for parents to not know what was going on with their kids, if there was some kind of problem or delay, and it's also on a managerial level so much better to have that kind of tracking. So, Dean, what is the latest on that?

**First Deputy Mayor Fuleihan:** So, we do have – you're absolutely right on the question. It has been delayed because of what happened during the pandemic. It will be operational starting the next school year. We do have GPS – we do have tracking systems on the bus, but they don't provide the kind of information and immediate response that we intended to give to parents. And we will be again, gearing that up, but it will not be available at the beginning of this year.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Go ahead.

**Moderator:** For our last two, we'll go to Gloria from NY1.

**Mayor:** Gloria?

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Hey, how you doing?

**Question:** Good. How are you? I wanted to ask you specifically about the [inaudible] decision? Is this something that came from you directly? Did you make the call and you said you visited the Upper West Side and what you saw was concerning, can you talk about that specifically and why you made this decision?

**Mayor:** Yeah, in many cases these issues come to me and this is certainly one of them, Gloria, and I mentioned the case, the situation in Southeast Queens a few weeks ago. I went to the Upper West Side because I had heard such concern from the community. I had gotten a specific list of sites that were a concern on the streets. I went and looked at all those sites and look, I've spent my whole life going around in neighborhoods in New York City and I know the Upper West Side really well, this is something - what I saw was just not to me acceptable, and it proved to me that there was a problem that wasn't being addressed and we needed to deal with it. But much more importantly, the whole situation has begged the question, wasn't it a time to start to reverse what was a temporary strategy from the height of the coronavirus, and this all has made clear to me the answer is yes. And what started in Southeast Queens, now Upper West Side, Queensbridge Houses area, we're going to keep doing that because we should not be in hotels unless we absolutely need to be, and I want to get folks back to shelters that I think are a better environment for them. Go ahead.

**Question:** I just want to specifically clarify that this was a directive that DHS got from you about moving the homeless population out of there?

**Mayor:** Again, I just said it. These things come to me, in many cases this one did. I had a conversation with a variety of members of this team, including folks from DHS, and we looked at all of the facts and including, especially the fact that we had said this was temporary. I really want to come back to this Gloria. The entire idea of what we experienced in the first few months of the coronavirus was to make sure that folks who were in shelter settings where there are a lot of people, spread them out. It was only for a period of time and the notion that we were using more and more hotels which was not our policy in the least, in fact, it was the opposite of our policy, it was time to ask a question, could we safely go back? It turns out there is substantial capacity in our shelter system allowing us to do this safely. So as we all talked it through with the health care folks, with the homeless services folks, it made sense to start with these cases and keep going, get homeless folks back to the setting where they can get the historic services they were provided, do it in a healthy manner, and stop being in hotels that were against the policy that we set years ago to begin with.

**Moderator:** For our last question, we'll go to Chris from Gothamist.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I wanted to ask you about an incident that happened last Thursday, when a car full of pro-Trump activists rammed a group of Black Lives Matter's demonstrators in Times Square. That crash is on video. Several people were injured. The pro-Trump activists later said they were [inaudible] by the NYPD but released without charges. Have you seen the video of this crash? Do you know about this incident? Do you know why there weren't arrests and does that seem right to you?

**Mayor:** Chris, I have seen the video. Obviously, it's painful to watch any situation like this, where you see this kind of confrontation and people in danger. There's still an investigation going on, waiting to hear more back on it. So, when I get fuller details, I'll be able to say more. Go ahead, Chris.

**Question:** Thanks, and another policing question for you. On Friday, Commissioner Shea tweeted, a video of a retirement ceremony for Chief Thomas Burns. The video shows what appears to be a large banquet being held indoors with far more than 50 people that are allowed at a gathering per state guidance. There appears to be very little mask wearing and this seems to be fitting a pattern that people can see all over the city that the NYPD doesn't appear to be adhering to the public health guidance that everyone else is expected to obey. So what would you tell New Yorkers who watch that retirement ceremony video, or who see a group of NYPD officers enter their bodega without wearing masks? And you know, what would you say to a teacher who decides to not wear a mask when they're teaching their class?

**Mayor:** Okay. A couple of different pieces. First of all, the Chief who retired did absolutely amazing work for the city and we're going to miss him. I want to say that because I got to know his work personally, in particularly what he did to support many families who had lost their loved ones. Second, I have not seen the video, from what I've heard described, sounds like a mistake that needs to be rectified going forward. Third, it's very, very clear, public servants need to wear face coverings. Again, there could be some valid medical exemptions, there could be valid moments like you're drinking water or something like that where there's an exception, but overwhelmingly anyone dealing with the public needs to have a face mask on. I was out in Soundview in the Bronx yesterday, talked to a number of police officers, they all had their face masks on, that's what we expect from police officers and everyone, certainly teachers, all educators and school personnel. So, the reality is it's a very clear standard. We need to protect each other and everyone's expected to do it. I know the NYPD has sent that message to its members many, many times, and they need to keep doing it and get it right. Okay. Did I do two there?

**Moderator:** These were your last two.

**Mayor:** I'm saying – okay, I want to make sure I got both of Chris'. Okay. So let me wrap up here at this point. I want to go back to the video that you guys saw earlier, and I want to come in Michael Gonzales, the Deputy Director of School Facilities, K298 Brooklyn. I love that video. When I first saw it, I really wanted to make sure that the people of this city got to see it, because you could tell how devoted Michael is to his work, and there are a lot of people, thousands and thousands of people like Michael all over our school system who want to get it right for our kids, want to get it right for our families, want to get it right for our educators and staff. And you know, there's a lot of criticism and concern in the world every single day but I like to celebrate, the people who do the hard work. The everyday New Yorkers who keep the city going, the everyday New Yorkers who do small and heroic things all the time, it never gets in the media, but it really should, because what you just saw is someone who really cares, making sure everything is right for the people he serves. And so, thank you, Michael, thank you to all the folks in our schools, custodial teams, all those engineers who did those inspections, everyone, school facilities, school, construction authority, everyone who's been working hard to get it right for our kids and our educators. I know you all care, and I thank you for what you've done for this city, and now we're going to move forward to a safe and healthy school year. Thank you, everybody.

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