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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. So, here's what we know after almost two months – New Yorkers are listening, following the directions, doing things right. And that's why for now – fully two months – we've had one of the lowest rates of coronavirus infection anywhere in the country, consistently below three percent over that entire timeframe. Now, how do you keep it that way? You keep it that way with vigilance and keep it that way with quick action if you see any kind of problem. We know New Yorkers take this disease very, very seriously, and they act when we tell them there's something they need to know. So, today, we're going to talk about something we need to address in one neighborhood in Southern Brooklyn, and we need to address it quickly. And this, in fact, it's going to be an example of the way we keep this infection rate low, by getting out there strongly into communities, making sure people know that testing is free and available, telling everyone you need to get tested, and following up consistently on those test results. Our Health Department, our Test and Trace Corps, everyone is focused on making sure that we get people tested and then we follow up individually whenever there is a positive case.

Now, we know that we have to focus very, very locally, because, when we see a challenge, the idea is to drill down and find out if we can identify the specifics of it by doing more and more outreach, more and more testing. And when we see any kind of trend that's unusual, that's when you double down, that's when you throw in more focus, more resources. So, right now, we're looking at Sunset Park in Brooklyn. This is a neighborhood I know very well. I actually used to represent it long ago when I started out in public life on the local school board. This is a community – a wonderful, vibrant community that, right now, we're seeing an uptick in. It's over a very limited period of time. It's a very limited number of cases. But we found it by doing exceptionally focused testing, what we call our hyperlocal testing. This is part of the test and trace program that says we have certain neighborhoods we want to know more about, we go and do extra testing. We now have a warning light. We have a sign there's something going on that we want to know more about, we want to delve into further. And the way we do that is by getting out into the community deeply, communicating with people at the grassroots, literally knocking on doors, talking to local organizations and leaders with a simple message – everyone needs to get tested. We want to get everyone tested as quickly as possible to see what is going on and if there's something further we need to do.

Now, this is a very finite area. This is a neighborhood of about 38,000 households, a specific piece of Brooklyn, and it's an area we can literally saturate. And that's what we're going to do, starting today. You will see door knocking, phone calls, lots of activity through local organizations. Our idea is to saturate Sunset Park over the next few days, literally reach every member of the community we possibly can, get as many people as tested as possible, as quickly as possible. Here to tell you about it and to explain why this strategy is so crucial to keeping our low infection levels low is our health commissioner, Dr. Dave Chokshi.

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Thank you, sir. As the Mayor said, we are constantly scanning the field to strategically direct personnel and resources. We've set criteria that will help us break the chain of transmission through a hyperlocal approach to outreach testing and enrollment in services. The first neighborhood targeted was the Treemont section of the Bronx, now followed by Sunset Park. In these areas, we've launched popup testing sites and community days of action. We've also enlisted key community partners, faith leaders, and primary care doctors to activate their networks, drawing community members and connect people to interventions that will keep communities safe. After every positive test, the Health Department has resource navigators standing by to immediately connect people to services that will allow them to safely take care of themselves, including food, prescriptions, and hotel services. In two weeks, in Sunset Park, we have tested over 3,300 New Yorkers. While the data we have thus far is limited, the early returns to support our targeted approach and show that we're drawing in the people who will most benefit from those tests and services. Thus far, we have identified 228 positive cases.

In a way, the ZIP code-wide rate was like the beep of a metal detector that told us where to dig. Now that we're getting deeper, we're finding what we're looking for and able to help the people we've identified. So, we'll turbocharge our activity in the days ahead. We'll bring two mobile testing vans, each of which can do 80 to 100 tests per day based at, first, 44th and 6th Avenue from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Wednesday through Friday of this week and all of next week too; and second, the Brooklyn Herald Gospel Center at 809 44th Street off of 8th Avenue for Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. And starting Monday, we will extend our rapid point of care testing at this neighborhood at the Brooklyn Army Terminal. We'll look for additional brick and mortar options for testing sites and partner with local health care providers to maximize resources, that includes local urgent care clinics. AdvantageCare Physicians is one provider in the ZIP code that will be more actively testing in the area by appointment. And we'll be stepping up our outreach, just as the Mayor said. We'll carry out robocalls in the 11220 ZIP code, flyer, door knock, and canvas the area. The Sunset Park community is going to see even more of us in the days ahead. This is what a data-driven hyperlocal approach looks like, one that strategically deploys testing resources and enrolls people in the critical services needed to allow New Yorkers to keep their friends, families, and neighborhoods safe. And catching those sparks before they ignite will help us to prevent a resurgence.

Most importantly, everything is being done by four and with the community. We're proud of this approach, and we're thankful for the partnerships that we've developed. New Yorkers continue to be the key to our response.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Dave. And yeah, that is the key – every-day New Yorkers. Look, it's up to the government to do a lot here, but the real heroes here are every-day New Yorkers. The people who have beat back this disease are the folks who have put on those face coverings, the folks who really – are really careful about social distancing, the folks who listened to us, when we say, hey, you've got to get tested now, this is important. There's a lot of people like that, but it really, really is necessarily to go out to communities, engage them in multiple languages, with a lot of compassion and a willingness to support people and show them that if in fact they have tested positive, we're going to be there for them to help them navigate it. So, that's what test and trace has been all about. And someone who has helped to build an effort that reaches deep to the grassroots with compassion and understanding for all our communities is the Chief Equity Officer of Test and Trace, Annabel Palma.

Chief Equity Officer Annabel Palma, Test and Trace Corps: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, it's always great to be with you and definitely in the trenches helping to get New Yorkers back on their feet. As the Chief Equity Officer for testing and trace, I'm leading a mission to fight the disparities exposed by COVID-19 and to help our hardest-hit communities to recover, such as Sunset Park. A powerful tool in our kit that we have is the hyperlocal response strategy, the one that the Mayor mentioned earlier. With our partners at the Department of Health and in the community, this tool will let us laser focus on areas with high need, this way we can make the biggest impact in the shortest amount of time. We are making progress in our focus neighborhoods, in Treemont, the Rockaways, and Sunset Park. And we'll be in more neighborhoods in, in the near future, so stay tuned. And we need all New Yorkers to do their part and get testing.

To keep moving forward, we must listen to what data and communities are telling us. In Sunset Park, that we need to fine tune and expand our efforts now to stay ahead of COVID and its transmission. Starting today, in Sunset Park, we are going to double down and reach deeper into our neighborhoods. We will be making [inaudible] calls to every resident, every single household. We'll reach everyone with robocalls and we will knock on every door. In addition to flooding the zone with outreach, we are also expanding our testing capacity with more mobile testing units and extension of rapid point of care testing. We are bringing testing to where the people are, and I got to experience this firsthand on July 31st, when we went out to the Rockaways and got tested myself. And we had an influx of individuals come out and participate in our day of action. In addition to flooding the zones with outreach, we're – sorry, and then we're going to follow up and keep following up and we will not stop until we make sure that all New Yorkers have been tested.

Every step of the way, the Test and Trace Corps is working with trusted messengers in your neighborhoods, like community-based organizations, faith leaders, local leaders, because we need the help of the community ultimately to win this fight. It is up to you to make sure that we can get ahead of this. If you test positive, we will connect you with all the resources and support. We need to safely separate from [inaudible] until you recover free and safety. That includes connecting you to the resource navigators on the spot at a rapid testing site and mailing a test, a take care package with PPE and other supplies to the door of everyone who test positive and their contacts. And so, today, I'm asking all New Yorkers to make sure that they get tested, but especially our residents, our New Yorkers in the Sunset area.

Together, we will know the transmission, stay ahead of COVID and protect the most vulnerable. It starts with us. It starts with our neighborhoods. It starts with you, New Yorkers. You have proven to be able to get ahead of it. You've heard the Mayor say time and time again, we've gotten to where we are because of you. And so, you need to continue to do your part and we want to make sure that you stay healthy.

[Chief Equity Officer Palma speaks in Spanish]

Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Annabel. Everyone, you hear the message loud and clear. We're going to focus on any place that needs that extra attention, and we're going to send in a lot of support, and you're going to see a lot of presence out there in Sunset Park over the next few days. So, when we talk about test and trace – two T's, test and trace, but we also have a third T – tenacity. We are going to be focused when we see even a warning light, even a hint of a problem, we're going to send in what it takes to address it and to find out the next steps that we need to take to keep people safe.

Okay. Now, speaking about keeping people safe, one more day, we have the heat situation continuing. So, I want to keep reminding people, do not underestimate this heat. Be careful if you go outside, don't go outside more than you need to. Stay hydrated. But especially folks who are vulnerable, take this heat very, very seriously. We've just got one more day. The heat advisory goes through 8:00 PM tonight, then, hopefully, we will have relief. Heat index values will go up to 97 degrees. Now, remember, if you need a cool place to be, we have cooling centers available in every borough for free. Everything is for free. They do have face coverings and social distancing. So, they're safe in every way. If you want to know a safe place to go to get cool, go to nyc.gov/chillout, or call 3-1-1. And, remember, look out for your neighbors, something New York City – the people in New York City do well – the compassion, the kindness towards neighbors, the folks on your block, the folks in your building, particularly seniors. If someone needs some help, if someone needs to get to one of these cooling centers, look out for them, we have the help there for them.

Okay, let's go over our indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold is 200 patients – today's report 81. Number two, daily number of people in Health + Hospitals ICU's, threshold 375 – today's report, 296. And number three, percentage of people testing citywide positive for COVID-19, threshold 15 percent – and today's report, only one percent.

Let me do a few words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

Moderator: We'll now begin our Q&A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Dr. Chokshi, the Chief Equity Officer of Test and Trace Annabel Palma, Commissioner Criswell, and Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. The first today goes to Al Jones from 1010 WINS.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey, Al. How are you doing?

Question: Very well. A friend of mine – a reporter friend was in Williamsburg this morning and he said he watched bus after bus pickup children, not a single mask, people walking into stores with no mask. So, I'm just wondering, if enforcement is not there, or if it's just not enough, is a bump in COVID-19 cases almost inevitable.

Mayor: I'll start as the non-doctor and let our doctors speak to it as well. It obviously depends on a lot of different things Al, but the bottom line is no nothing's inevitable, but what is clear is we need people to wear those face coverings. We need people to observe social distancing. If we've gotten to a place where that's not happening, we need to reach out to that community and work hard to get it right, because again, New Yorkers overwhelmingly have paid attention, and that's why we have the amazing results we've had for months now. But it is also about being vigilant, just like we're talking about today. If we see a problem with Williamsburg, we'll address it with community leaders and we'll get more activity there from testers test and trace as well. Dr. Chokshi you want to add or Dr. Varma, anything to add.

Commissioner Chokshi: Sir, I think you covered it.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead Al.

Question: That's it. That's it, sir.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: The next is Michael Garland from the Daily News.

Question: Morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

Mayor: Good, Michael. How about you?

Question: I'm good. So the first question I have is on where do you guys spoke about just before on Sunset Park? Do you have any sense of what is causing this increase in cases in that area? You know, gatherings, travel – what do you think is leading to this?

Mayor: It's exactly the right question, Michael, and that's what we're going in to find out. Right now, we have, again, it's a warning light. We see something, it may be aberrant or it may be something more. Now remember what we're talking about here is Sunset Park is kind of the geographical center. That's why we're focusing our energy there, but some of the testing that happened in Sunset Park was not Sunset Park residents. So it's not that we have a perfect, beat on exactly what's happening yet. The idea is to go and do much more testing to see if it either clarifies that that was an aberrant reality or shows us something that we can follow up on more distinctly. So we're going to be out there intensely to get that answer quickly. Go ahead.

Question: The second question is about the city's fiscal situation and, you know, talk of layoffs. I spoke with somebody yesterday who's pretty knowledgeable on this who said – who feels like there's a bit of fear-mongering here, that the kind of breadth of layoffs you've been talking about is not really what's necessary. There are other cuts that could be found in the city's budget, and I was wondering if you could address that? I mean, do you – I think 22,000 is the number you've been putting out there. Is there, is that – does that still hold and are you kind of looking at a range of other places you could cut? I mean, I know the budget just passed, but I was wondering if you could expand on that a little bit?

Mayor: Yeah, I mean, remember we took this budget down from what we projected in February to where we ended up, you know, we cut the budget by billions and billions of dollars already, and I want to be very clear. The overwhelming cost of local government is personnel, right? I mean, where we put our money as into the people who provide service to New Yorkers, whether they're first responders, healthcare workers, sanitation workers, educators, you name it, that's where the greatest impact comes from in terms of serving people. But that's also where the costs are. If you got to keep cutting and keep cutting, it has to, at some point reach personnel, that's just pure logic of budgets, and it's very sad logic. I don't like it one bit and I want to avert this at all costs. So that 22,000 number is painfully real, Michael, that's for October 1st, here's the reality. We all hoped and prayed there'd be a stimulus – that appears to be dead now. We're going to Albany to ask for appropriate long-term borrowing capacity that would stave off the layoffs. If we don't have that, we're going to keep working with labor, looking for every solution, every kind of savings. But if we don't have something else that stops it, we do plan 22,000 layoffs on October 1st. It's a massive, painful number. It resembles the kind of things we have to do decades ago, but the job here is to try and avert it if we can.

Moderator: The next is Gloria from NY1.

Question: Good morning. I want to follow up on Michael's question regarding the fiscal situation and the layoffs. We know that the agencies have received guidance on preparing for this. My question to you is the 22,000 layoffs. Do you expect them to be spread across all city agencies, including the NYPD?

Mayor: Every agency has to come back with a lot of savings. Every single agency. There's more than one way to do it. As I said, we're going to be, in the meantime, trying to get the long-term borrowing. We're in the meantime working with labor unions to see if we can find other types of savings with them. But if none of that is working, every single agency will experience cuts. Every single agency will have to save a lot of money, and generally that will take the form of layoffs.

Question: And so what are you doing in terms of the unions? Are you in the process of renegotiating those contracts, and are you telling the unions, you know, we're going to have to lay off city workers if we don't renegotiate these contracts?

Mayor: We've been having this conversation with unions literally for months, Gloria, it's not new to them. In the lead up to the June budget, we did attempt to get the borrowing authority from Albany that would have allowed us to put in the budget that the borrowing would address the problem. When that wasn't possible we put in the budget that there would be 22,000 layoffs. It is not a surprise to any municipal labor union. We've been in constant conversations with the biggest unions that represent the vast majority of the workers, and everyone takes it very, very seriously. So our job is to find savings. I wouldn't call it renegotiate contracts, because that sounds much broader. It is to find the kind of savings that could avert the layoffs, and I know the unions take this seriously. No one wants to see layoffs, but again, the best solution is to get the appropriate kind of borrowing authority from Albany, just like this city got after 9/11, so we can avert having to cut city services and having to

end up putting out, you know, we're talking about tens of thousands of families that would be affected. I don't want to see that happen, and I don't want to see New Yorkers suffer the loss of services. So we're going to do everything we can to avert that.

Moderator: The next is Reuvain from Hamodia.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. The NYPD tweeted a video this week from an incident on Sunday in Harlem, which reports to show a crowd hurling projectiles at officers, and then as a crowd moves closer and closer to the police seem to be moving further and further back. It's been discussed very much up that police are standing down more and more, at least partly because they're afraid of making the arrest due to reforms like the new diaphragm law. It just appears this video is a microcosm of what's going on now, the criminals are on the ascendancy and police are on the retreat. I'm wondering what you think when you see this sort of thing.

Mayor: I, again – you and I just have a different view of the world and I appreciate at least you put your editorial comments out front. No, this is still the safest big city in America. We're going to fight this back. We have the finest police force in the country. More and more gun arrests happening. No matter how difficult this has been. It's been a perfect storm. We have not had the court system functioning. We have not had the people in jobs and schools. We have had so many problems and yet the NYPD is fighting back and working with community members. So look, you can take any specific video and try and use it to justify a particular worldview. I'm very confident – I talk to the Commissioner every day about this – the NYPD is going to fight back this problem, working with communities, and then we're going to move farther because we will get the criminal justice system back that starting for the first time this week, and this is a crucial question. How quickly can it come back? Because we need that piece to create the consequences that will allow us to go farther. Go ahead.

Question: Yeah, I wanted to ask you about the 9-1-1 system, which apparently there were just maybe not enough operators during the storm. The storm was something that's, you know, that was predictable. Oftentimes when there are real emergencies, it's not predictable. Like, you know, God forbid a big terror attack. I'm wondering, you know, what happened then and what can be done in the future to ensure that this doesn't happen again?

Mayor: This was truly exceptional. We ended up differently than what was projected by the National Weather Service, and I say that with absolute respect, they're, you know, they can only project so much and we have to work with the best information we have, but we've got a different reality than expected at the last moment. Yet 9-1-1, 3-1-1 had beefed up their personnel substantially in advance. The problem was that for a very limited time of a few hours, the call volume just went off the charts and there was not going to be a way to accommodate that under any kind of construct we have, it was quickly augmented and addressed. But I think the issue here to follow through your question is when you see something coming, you throw everything you got at it. If you get a curve ball, you quickly regroup and send more help in, and what happened was 9-1-1 system kept going, 3-1-1 system kept going and they were able to reach people with problems more and more in the course of that day.

Moderator: The next is Rich Lamb from WCBS 880.

Question: Good morning to all on the line here. Mr. Mayor, so New Jersey schools apparently are going to reverse their reopening plan. Let me see – Murphy's office told CBS News this morning. He'll announce a plan later today to facilitate remote learning. The reason you know, a city like Elizabeth says it doesn't have enough teachers willing to go into the classroom. Now, the reason I bring it up is not for a comment about New Jersey, but to ask you about how does New York know, and I haven't seen any union leaders at any of your conferences about this, how do you know that you're going to have enough teachers who were willing to go into the classroom? I know that the Chancellor said that was something in the mid-eighties, but I don't know where that number came from. Is it just a subtraction from the teachers who are, who want to do all remote, or do we know for sure affirmatively that they'll come in?

Mayor: Rich, first of all, our educators are extraordinarily devoted to our kids and they understand there's just no way to serve our kids as well, remotely as when they're in the classroom, and even if they're in the classroom a few days a week, they're going to get so much more support, and I'm not just talking about academically, I'm talking about emotionally, I'm talking about mental and physical health, I'm talking about food. I'm talking about everything. Kids who go into the school building are going to get every form of support, and that means the days when they're doing remote learning are going to be much more effective. But if you didn't have any in person contact with adults, you're talking about really much less impact, positive impact for kids, and that's what we're cognizant of. We are here to serve our kids who already have gone through so much.

So the answer to your question is the 85 percent is based on a simple concept. Educators were given an opportunity to say if they had an accommodation they needed for health reasons, they could declare that, about 15 percent did, those are being reviewed right now. But the others are going to be at their schools in September. So that's why we know the staffing we have. We're going to augment that with additional staffing. That's been ongoing conversation with the unions, the best ways to do that. So we're going to watch every factor. I don't know the situation in New Jersey or Elizabeth. I can say in New York City, we have teachers coming back and we're going to have the resources to serve our kids.

Question: Okay. Completely different topic, and I have to ask you this one. So the president was, was on a broadcast last night, and said that he left New York four years ago. It was a wonderful place. You could see signs of badness, but it was a wonderful place. That's – those are his words, and he attacked you for doing a horrible job. So I thought maybe you'd want to respond to that.

Mayor: Richard, you are a kind – you believe in equal time. I like that. So when President Trump left New York City, I had been mayor for years, and I'm glad he recognized that what we did in this city was continue to make it the safest big city in America, add more jobs, improve our schools. It was a wonderful place. Then it was a wonderful place in February. We had the most jobs in the history of this city, February, this year. It's still a wonderful place and a place that's fighting back against this horrible disease. The sad reality is no one has done more to setback, New York City than Donald Trump because he failed New York City and he failed America with his handling of the coronavirus. If we had had presidential leadership, we wouldn't be in the mess we're in right now. So yeah, New York City is dealing with some tough times and guess what – a former New Yorker helped bring it to us by failing to address the crisis staring us in the face.

Moderator: The next is Gersh, from Streetsblog.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor, and everyone on the call. Thank you for taking the call. So Mr. Mayor, on Friday, we had a nice chat about NYPD residency statistics and the Police Department did finally provide that data. 51 percent of cops live in the suburbs, but yesterday morning Streetsblog obtained the breakdown for the 16,000 civilian NYPD employees who have a city residency requirement. As a result of that requirement, nearly 94 percent of civilian workers who are paying significantly less than officers who've had five years on the job, live within the five boroughs. So the question – and then I'll have a follow up – but don't, those numbers completely knock down the myth and your own rhetoric, frankly, that NYPD officers can't be forced to live in the city because city housing costs are too high?

Mayor: No, I think it's really apples and oranges. The fact is that not so long ago in this city we saw a reality where the police force was largely folks that lived outside the city. I said the other day to you we're now basically at a break-even point with the patrol force, I want to see more and more city residents, and that's what we have to achieve. We have achieved another crucial piece of the equation, which is now this is a majority people of color police force. And again, not so long ago in our history, that would have been very, very hard to imagine, but that's where we are now and I think that's a very good thing because it's representation, more and more of our officers who can connect with more and more of the communities of our city. I want us to figure out how to create a reality where more and more of our officers do live in the city. So one of the things to think about is what would help that happen? Is there some kind of way, some kind of policy, some kind of incentive, something that would help us ensure that more and more police officers live in New York City? That's what we are working on right now. Go ahead.

Question: Well, but you call it an apples and oranges, but as I said, 94 percent of civilian workers for the NYPD live in the city because of a residency requirement, they're paid significantly less than in NYPD officers. So clearly the cost of living in the city is not the issue. So what, what are you even talking about in terms of apples and oranges and these incentives?

Mayor: Yeah, I think it's a complex reality and we can get you more on it. But look, we're talking about folks – who to be a police officer in the city is a very high calling and we are trying to find the very best talent from the city, from the surrounding area, and also a lot of people who want to, need to in their view live in a place where they can afford more, especially if they have a family. The quality of our officers, the diversity of our officers, these are all factors we have to think about in this equation. Now I think you get to a crucial question, how do create a reality where more and more officers can live in New York City, more and more officers can afford to live in New York City, more and more people who want to be police officers recognize that they can do that here and live there. That is something we need to address. It's not something you just snap your fingers and do, but I think it's the right question. I want to see a police force that's more and more New York City residents going forward.

Moderator: The next is Abu from Bangla Patrika.

Question: Hello, hi, Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Good, how are you doing Abu?

Question: Thank you so much for asking. Mayor, I want to know about the commercial rent problem and the residential as well, because yesterday [inaudible] they will help the people who cannot pay the rent. Could you please explain how you can help?

Mayor: Yeah. It's such an important question. Look, first of all, let's separate eviction from not being able to pay the rent. Anyone faced with eviction, if they don't have a lawyer, if they don't know what to do, and I'm talking about the people who just don't have any money, Abu, have lost their jobs, lost their livelihood, have no way to pay the rent. If you think you're about to be removed from your apartment, please call 3-1-1 so we can give you guidance, legal support, different things we can do potentially to work with the landlord. Please, if you fear you're about to be put out of your apartment and your family's not going to have a roof over your head, call 3-1-1 so we can help you. The bigger question, the folks who may not be, thank God, in that situation, but are dealing with the fact that just simply can't pay the rent. There's two solutions to that. The best one is through a stimulus direct rental assistance for people all over the country. Another helpful piece would be for the State of New York to pass legislation and I hope they'll do it in the upcoming legislative session – which we're hearing could be very soon in Albany – to allow a payment plan. It's a simple concept that if you don't have any money, you don't have any more livelihood, you lost your job in March or April, can't pay the rent, that you can make an arrangement with your landlord for a payment plan, that it would be legally allowable and repay when you do have an income again, but keep your apartment in the meantime. So that's what we need the help from Albany to make that the law.

Question: My question is, as you mentioned, a few days ago about the global warming, which is concern of everyone, and since about the last 20 years, 15 years, that New York City is going through the construction, the other development, which is everybody's saying it is against the environmental protection, is destroying the ecosystem and the environment as well. Yeah, this is your last term of as a Mayor, what do you think about your legacy in terms of the protect in New York and keep the environment as safe for the people who are living in New York City?

Mayor: Yeah, listen, you're asking the most fundamental question and I always tell people this crisis with the coronavirus, thank God we believe it will be over. Is it six months, seven months, nine months? We don't know until there's a vaccine and it's widely utilized, but it will be over. And I say that Abu to say, once this is over and we all start to recover and move forward, attention is going to go right back to global warming, which is going to be the big existential question. So from my point of view, everyone should be focused on this going forward, especially folks in a coastal area like New York City. So what are we doing? We've divested our pension funds from fossil fuels. We've come up with the most aggressive law in the world on retrofitting buildings, which are a lot of our emissions problem and making them much more energy efficient. We're doubling down on electric vehicles, electric vehicle charging stations. There's a lot of things we're doing and we have to do a lot more. Certainly we're going to do a lot more in the next 17 months that I'm in office, but this will be the issue ultimately, and particularly for coastal cities, we better lead the way and put those resiliency measures in place that allow us to be safe while we're correcting the root cause, which is the use of fossil fuels.

Moderator: Last question for today goes to Jeff Mays from the New York Times.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor. I have a question for the Health Commissioner and the Contact and Tracing Team. I'm wondering how many of those people test positive, in Sunset Park and even in Tremont that you also mentioned an outbreak there, how many of those people actually gave their contacts to the contact tracers and how many of those peoples in both neighborhoods have begun isolating themselves?

Mayor: It's a great question, Jeff, and I know our colleagues here may have that at their fingertips. They may have to get back to you today, but what we do know, I'll start and then turn to my three colleagues. The fact is what we've seen is we can reach a very high percentage of folks. There is a recognition out there that participating in contact tracing is important. So I have to say so far, we've seen a high level of cooperation. It's not perfect by any stretch. Sometimes it is hard to track people down, but I do want to say when we started out we didn't know what the basic attitude in New Yorkers would be. It's been positive and surprising how much people do engage in the process, who wants to jump in, or, you know, starting here, and then Dr. Varma, who wants to jump in?

Chief Equity Officer Palma: We have to get you the numbers for Tremont, for those folks who tested and were contacted. But as of July 29th in Sunset Park, we had 104 cases and 80 of them completed the intake process. The 80 cases that completed the intake process gave us 130 contacts. And out of those contacts that they gave us, 82 percent of those contacts were household contacts, meaning they were individuals who lived under the same roof with the individual that tested positive.

Mayor: Thank you doctors. Do you want to add anything?

Commissioner Chokshi: Yes, sir. I would just underline the point that it's so important when a case is identified that we have contact tracing that's done to interrupt the chain of transmission. So this is how our outreach efforts link to our testing efforts and link to our contact tracing efforts and together that allows us to be proactive and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Mayor: Go ahead, Jeff.

Question: Yes, thank you. Mr. Mayor, the second question is what's the delay with the economic recovery roadmap that you promised a few months ago? And do you have any goals for what you'd like to turn over to the next Mayor of New York City, have you, you know, put any sort of mileposts in place that you'd like to see when you leave office?

Mayor: Yeah, it's a great question, Jeff, and that's exactly the way I'm thinking about it. You know, we're about 500 days until the end of this administration, and I like everyone to think on the kind of countdown system, and of course there's another example of that right here, that we're all very focused on. The idea is to work backwards from the last day and say, where do we want to leave things on a host of issues, but also what kind of blueprints do we want to leave in place? Now, you've probably had an opportunity over time to spend some cozy time with the OneNYC plan. That right now is our comprehensive roadmap for New York City and that was completed not long before the pandemic. We have to make some serious adjustments to that plan in light of the pandemic, but it still is the broad framework, and that's where we would begin. My goal with the new administration is be able to hand them, you know, a really clear set of specific plans that they can work with as they choose and show how we're going to keep building this recovery.

So then to your original question, look, we've got a bunch of different pieces we're going to bring together here. We're going to bring together everything we are hearing from the Sector Councils that got going very early on in this crisis, representing different industries, different parts of the economy, different parts of life in New York City. What we're going to get from the Fair Recovery Task Force, what we're going to get, which has been ongoing from the internal group that was put together, the Task Force on Racial Inclusion and Equity. All of these strands are being brought together. We're going to have a series of updates and reports as we go along. But I think when we get into the fall, the goal is to start laying out specific planks for the rebirth of New York City, and then try and provide really specific blueprints to the next administration as they prepare to come in.

So everybody, look, I want to just talk about the way we have attempted throughout this crisis to give people facts, to focus on data, to focus on science, and again, want to commend New Yorkers. This is what people wanted. We've been in pain watching the rest of our country. We've been in pain watching Americans suffer with this crisis in many cases because there wasn't a focus on data and science. There was no focus in the White House. There was no focus, unfortunately, in too many state capitals around the country, and what happened is when you deny the data and the science, the danger grows, but meanwhile, New Yorkers insisted on those facts, insisted on being led by the data in science, but more than that, New Yorkers decided to do something with that information. And this to me is the formula that works, give people the facts and then empower the people to act. And a lot of times, I think when we look around the country, there's been a misunderstanding. The idea of telling people, you can "liberate" yourself by not wearing a face covering or not social distancing was in fact damning people to become sick and endangering their families. The actual idea to empower people is to tell them you can be the agents of change, you can be the difference makers, and that's what we've done in this city. We said, here are the facts, here's the reality. Now we need you to play your role, only you can do that, and New Yorkers have answered that call. So every time we give you an update and we tell you we need New Yorkers to get in the game and help us out, I hear New Yorkers paying attention to that and following through, and that's what's going to see us through this crisis and beyond. Thank you, everybody.

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