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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT URBAN LAND  
INSTITUTE'S GENERAL SESSION: THE CHANGING WORLD**

[Music plays]

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everybody. I did not realize it was such a long walk from over there to the stage. Thank you for sustaining the applause throughout.

I want to welcome everybody. First I want to say we are so blessed here in New York City, on many, many levels, but especially to have tremendous people who come into public service. When I first was honored to get this job, a lot of people said to me, are you going to be able to attract the kind of talent you need for this level of play, and I said I was convinced there were extraordinary leaders who wanted to be in public service at this point.

Our Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen has been moving mountains from day one. Imagine if you woke up in the morning and someone said to you, by the way, we need to build 200,000 units of affordable housing in the next ten years – while doing a lot of other things on the job – it would be daunting. She's taken on the role with tremendous energy and effectiveness. I think anyone who's worked with her has seen that drive and that ability to get things done, which is great for the people of New York City. Let's thank Alicia Glen for all she does for this city.

[Applause]

I want to welcome you all. You know, the gathering today is something exceptional because of the sheer intensity of the brainpower and the experience wrought around this room – and what it means when the Urban Land Institute meets is people who truly understand both the present and the future of development, gathered together to think through these issues, and figure out how we can all do more and better together. That to me is powerful. It's powerful for New York City – it's powerful for cities all over the world – to learn from the work of the Urban Land Institute. So, we are very honored to host you, and we understand the magnitude of what this gathering means, and what it achieves. In over 75 years, this has been an organization that's won respect because of the sheer intellectual heft, and experiential heft, brought to the table.

The leaders of the organization here in our city, are some great individuals, both in terms of what they've achieved in business, but also what they've done for the city as a whole. I believe that Bob Lieber couldn't be here for this session, but as chair of the Urban Land Institute of New York, he's doing extraordinary work. He served this city with distinction as a deputy mayor before, and we thank him for all he has done for this city.

Right now, I'm especially appreciative of the two folks – who I've had the joy of working with on a lot of issues here in the city – who are serving as the fall meeting co-chairs – Jeff Blau and Rob Speyer, both tremendously civically oriented. Rob has done a lot to help us with our Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, and a lot of

other key fronts. We work with Jeff all the time. These are two individuals who are real leaders in the industry, and partners in all we do. So, let's thank Jeff and Rob for their great work.

[Applause]

Now, I'm thrilled you're meeting here for a lot of reasons. We're thrilled to have you here. We're thrilled – for those of you who are not from New York, or haven't spent a lot of time here – we're thrilled that you're getting to experience New York. We hope you like what you see, we hope you will become a part of what we're doing here, choose to invest and become involved in many, many ways.

We're also proud of a long history of really focused work on determining what is responsible land use. Now, it makes sense, as a crossroads of the world, and a place that has changed so constantly and so intensely, and a place that's so relatively small and densely populated – land use issues take on a special meaning, a special power for us – we better get it right. It's a question every day that's urgent for us. Literally, every parcel of land has meaning. So the right policies matter for us in a very powerful way.

And I'm thrilled that people are here having these discussions. I know it's going to help us to think more effectively about what we're doing. I know these discussions spark a lot of great work all over the world. It's been ten years since you were last here in New York City. Again, welcome back. You've probably noticed a lot has changed. The city is more vibrant than ever. We're very proud of that fact. An important fact to begin with – we have now passed 8.4 million people, in terms of our population – the highest we have ever been to – and projections put us at at least 9 million people by 2040.

This is a city that is growing stronger all the time. And it happens to have a tremendous characteristic as the ultimate international city – obviously, a city of immigrants, a city of literally every culture, every language on earth represented here, and in an ever more globalized world, we think that's a tremendous blessing – not only culturally – we think that's a tremendous blessing for growth, and for development, for the business sector, because it means the ability to tap into the whole world – it's available here for all.

And the world is coming to us – immigration at its – excuse me, immigration at historic levels, and fueling an energetic entrepreneurial economy. Tourism at an all-time high level as well – more than – this is an astounding figure – more than 54 million tourists came to New York City in 2013. Something very powerful is happening here. People want to be here, they want to invest – they want to invest in all five boroughs.

You've seen the extraordinary renaissance of Brooklyn, and you've seen how more and more parts of our business community and cultural community are moving part of their work to Brooklyn. You're going to start to see that in Queens, and the Bronx, and Staten Island as well. It's truly becoming a five-borough city and a five-borough economy.

So, I want to speak to you for a moment about where we're headed, and why we believe – for any of you who are not already heavily involved in New York City, and heavily invested – we believe the time is now. I say that with absolute subjectivity, but I'm going to try and give you some facts, to back up the fact that this is the place to be. I think it's a true objective fact that we are one of the world's great cities, in terms of commerce, in terms of business, in terms of communications – in fact, more 500 – excuse me, more Fortune 500 companies located here than anywhere else in the world.

Less known is the vibrancy of our small business sector, and this is also an astounding number – more than 200,000 small businesses in this city, thriving, creating, many of them, of course, the spark that leads to something much greater. They represent people from all over the world, ideas from all over the world – and they employ more than half of our private sector workforce. And that workforce itself – another fact that's quite striking – is at its all-time high, with more than 4 million jobs present in the city – the most in our history.

So, a lot is moving, a lot is growing, and that leads us in the public sector to have to address those realities. They're wonderful, wonderful dynamics, but they come with challenges, and we have to address them. And so,

you heard, Alicia mentioned for a moment what she's working on – I'm, again, so appreciative of her efforts – I've asked her to undertake the largest affordable housing program that any city, any state has attempted in a ten-year time span in the history of the republic. I've asked her to lead the way in creating 200,000 units of affordable housing over the next ten years.

To give you a little perspective, if you think about cities – if you think about cities just within their city limits, not their metropolitan areas, but just within their city limits – 200,000 units is enough to house about a half million people. That is more than there are people in the city of Kansas City or the city of Atlanta, to give you a sense of the sheer magnitude of what's being attempted here.

Now, to be honest, I have met people who say, that's fantastic, go get 'em, that's noble. I have met people who say, that's difficult, that's challenging. I have met some very good experts in the field who use words like "ambitious." I have met a few people who use words like "crazy." But we believe it is necessary – it's necessary – and that with enough boldness, enough in the way of focused resources, leadership from City Hall, we can make this happen for all of us. And we are honored to be a place that dreams big and moves the agenda – because we have to. If we're going to grow, if we're going to be a place for everyone, if we're going to be place of opportunity, if you're going to be able to build businesses and know that there's a place for people to live they can afford, we have to achieve this. And we're doing the same with our schools – pre-k for every child by next year, doubling after-school programs, a new teachers contract that creates reform and flexibility at the school level – things that are really changing this city for the long haul.

So I'll finish with a couple of quick points. This is a city that some years ago you never would've associated with technology. Look at it today – one of the world's fastest growing tech hubs. The tech sector grew 21 percent in this city between 2006 and 2012, which is extraordinary. We're attracting the greatest companies in the industry to have a major presence here, including Google and Facebook. We have homegrown companies like Tumblr. We have extraordinary things happening in Manhattan, but also in the Brooklyn Tech Triangle. Things are happening that never were envisioned even a decade ago when you were here – extraordinary growth – and that's just one of many new growth sectors.

We know we have to sustain it. We know we have to sustain it in everything we do, including our ability to create the housing, the better schools system, to keep this city safe – and we're very proud of our Police Commissioner Bill Bratton and the extraordinary work of the NYPD – we have sustain it. And we have to sustain it environmentally, which is why we are now the largest city on earth to commit to the goal of an 80 percent reduction in emissions by 2050. We're providing leadership because for all of us to thrive, we have to get there to cleaner environment – we have to address global warming.

Finally, we have to address an underlying reality – and it's good for all of us – to find a way to create more opportunity for all. There's been more and more talk about challenging the issue of inequality, taking on the issue of inequality – and it's come from all sectors. Some of the most powerful statements on the need to tackle income inequality have come from Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs and Janet Yellen in the Federal Reserve and many others who are looking at this in terms of the sustainability of our economy and our society. All the things we're trying to do come down to investment – investing in all our people – creating economic growth and making sure it reaches deeply – all five boroughs, every kind of people – creating, again, the housing, the education, the pieces that reach deeply. I believe that what this organization stands for – smart, responsible development and growth – means we also have to invest in our people. We have to show people that that growth will be something that reaches them as well. I think if we do that, we build a stronger society for all, we build buy-in, we build commitment, we build a sense that everyone knows they can achieve – and that's what makes a strong and healthy society – and that's what we're trying to do in New York.

So I'll say to you that I am so appreciative that you're here. I hope you're enjoying it, I hope you're learning from it, I hope you're sharing your great ideas and experiences so we can learn as well. It means a lot to us that you are here. We hope you will be a part of our futures. If you're not already in it, we hope you will be a part of our future here in New York. We're building something extraordinary – all of us together – and your presence adds to that greatly. Thank you so much.

[Applause]

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