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RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO AND SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO UNVEIL ACTION PLAN TO GROW 21ST CENTURY INDUSTRIAL AND MANUFACTURING JOBS IN NYC

Mayor Bill de Blasio: We just had a wonderful tour. I was joined by our Speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito, and a number of our colleagues, visiting South Side Design & Building – a great, great example here of the work that’s being done to not just protect industrial manufacturing jobs, but to continue to build out this crucial part of our economy.

So, it is a beautiful day, and it is a very life-affirming day to see the new look of industrial and manufacturing employment in this city. And this is the beginning of a new phase in the work that my administration is doing, in close partnership with the City Council, to build upon these successes and really secure our industrial and manufacturing base for the future.

And I will say it at the outset, and I will say it in the course of this discussion – part of what’s so exciting about this initiative is this is about good jobs. From time to time, you may have heard me talk about income inequality. You may have heard me talk about the tale of two cities – just once or twice. This is one of the antidotes – quality jobs, good paying jobs – the kind of jobs that someone could actually take care of a family with. And that’s what we’re seeing in this building behind us today, and that’s what we intend to foster all over the city.

We saw in this building small firms doing great work, cutting-edge work, work that connects to the extraordinary economy of New York City and the metropolitan area. Part of the secret of the success here is the work that is being done feeds a huge economy in New York City and the metropolitan area with the kind of products that can only be provided here, locally, with high-quality craftsmen and craftswomen doing work that clients need in real-time. It can only be done in a place like this.

We see the innovation, the creativity, the ingenuity at work here – all classic New York City traits. And we’ve seen the concept of “Made in New York City” come to life today, and we look forward to many more examples like this.

I want to acknowledge before going forward a number of folks who deserve a lot of praise, starting with our hosts today, Brian Coleman and Cassandra Smith, of the Greenpoint MDC. GMDC Properties are literally a national model for modern manufacturing in urban communities, and their excellent efforts are paying off.

I want to thank our host at South Side Design & Building, Sam Morse, who told us the story of the work that they’ve been doing, and how all of their employees are well paid, all of their employees are from the five boroughs – which is exactly what we want to see.

I want to thank the members of my administration who are here, who worked very hard on this new policy – of course, our Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development, Alicia Glen; City Planning Chair Carl Weisbrod; the President of the Economic Development Corporation, Maria Torres-Springer; our Deputy

Commissioner of Small Business Services, Greg Bishop; and our Director of the Office of Environmental Remediation, Dan Walsh.

I want to thank the Deputy Borough President of Brooklyn, Diana Reyna – my former colleague from the Council. Thank you for joining us.

And, I have to tell you, this work has been going on for a substantial amount of time – a lot of hard work put in by advocates, by service providers, environmental organizations. A lot of people cared deeply about getting manufacturing and industrial policy right. Many, many people contributed to this product today – too many to name, but I do want to name the folks who are here today and thank them for being a part of this – Adam Friedman of the Pratt Center, David Ehrenberg of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Carlo Scissura of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, Ben Dalton of ANHD, Leah Archibald of Evergreen, and Liz Lusskin of the LI – Long Island City Partnership. Thank you to all of you.

What we saw in the building today – and this – this firm we visited has been in business since 2007 here. And they came over here because – a classic recent New York City story – their rent tripled where they were before in Williamsburg. And that story has become too common for industrial and manufacturing businesses. They are doing a good business, they're paying good wages, but they get knocked out by the high cost of rent. And when you think about what this city needs – there's many things we need. To make everything else work, we need good-paying jobs, so we have to always be able to find solutions for businesses that are ready, willing, and able to keep growing in New York City but need the right space.

This is something I know Speaker Mark-Viverito and all of our colleagues in the City Council care deeply about, because they've heard these stories from businesses, they've heard it from the folks employed by those businesses. Our team and the Council team have been very committed to getting this right

And we have a commitment, in part, also because we know the history of this city. For centuries, our industrial and manufacturing base was part of what made New York City great. It was what made possible this open city, this city for people from everywhere and all backgrounds to come together and find economic opportunity, especially immigrants, and including many people who didn't have the blessing of as much education as they might've liked, but they still were able to find a good, quality job. We face today the same challenge. We're working every day to make sure our young people get all the education that they look forward to. But we know there has to be a mix of jobs in any healthy economy, including for folks who don't happen to have a college degree. And this is part of how we do it – by keeping our industrial and manufacturing base strong.

We also are sober about the fact the world has changed. Technology has changed things. Globalization has changed things. Manufacturing today looks very different than it did even just a few short decades ago. Today, you're going to find a lot more 3-D printing shops than you're going to find sugar refineries. It's just a very different economy, but the imperative is the same – economic diversity and maximum opportunity for our people.

And we know that even with all these changes, our industrial sector is still crucial to the economy of New York City, employing more than half-a-million people – over 15 percent of our private sector workforce. So we have to protect this sector and build upon it.

And with our partners in the Council, we are proud to present today a ten-point plan to grow our manufacturing sector in every part of the city. And to look at and act upon the kinds of new imperatives we face – the new skills that need to be developed, the new technology that needs to be integrated, and the fact that there's only so much land to go around and real pressure in terms of rents – and that's crucial to how we've created a vision of protecting industrial spaces for the future – recognizing those challenges.

Our plan will generate more than 20,000 new jobs over the next ten years – 20,000 new jobs over the next ten years – and will support the jobs that exist already today.

Today we're announcing \$115 million dollars in new investments, building upon the \$400 million dollars already at work that has been previously announced – and that work is already paying off, creating new spaces for jobs at places like the Brooklyn Navy Yard and the Brooklyn Army Terminal, and allowing us to support businesses in their growth with a lot of tailored services and support.

That \$400 million dollars already at work – we're adding \$115 million more – and what's it going to allow us to do? First, it's going to allow us to strengthen our Industrial Business Zones, protecting them from falling prey to a hot real estate market. Again, we know what happens when protections aren't in place. You can just go a short ways away to Williamsburg and see what happens. In the space of just a few years, businesses supporting thousands of jobs were lost to developers. And what happened in the place was we saw luxury housing, we saw hotels; we didn't see those businesses get a space in that community to replace them – they had to look elsewhere. We have to stop that kind of undermining of our industrial businesses, and this plan will end that negative trend.

Because of this plan, Industrial Business Zones will remain and must remain havens for job-creating industrial businesses. It's as simple as that.

[Applause]

And I want to send a clear message to the developers of this city. If you're buying land in an industrial area, if you're buying land in an IBZ, plan on creating an industrial business, because that's our vision for these areas.

[Applause]

Now, if you're a developer and you want to build a hotel, or a mini storage facility, you will now need the permission of the city – a special permit from the city – to do so. It will be a very serious process, and a process that will come with a lot of rigor and a lot of scrutiny from the community. From here on out – and the administration and the Council are absolutely unified in this position – we won't support any private applications to build housing in IBZs. We will not consider private applications for housing in IBZs because we have to protect the jobs that exist – that's point one.

Point two – we're creating even more space for new and growing businesses. Among other initiatives, we're investing \$64 million dollars towards a new \$150-million-dollar public-private loan fund. We'll issue loans to non-profit developers, who will in turn create 400-square-feet of affordable space for industrial businesses. So the point is, just as we are committed to affordable housing, we know we have to foster more and more affordable space for businesses that will create good jobs. And outside of the Industrial Business Zones, we're pioneering ways for housing and industrial businesses to exist alongside each other in a live-work model.

Third key pillar here – we'll continue to train the city's workforce in skills that modern manufacturing demands – working with employers to determine what they need and building our training programs to match that need, and making sure that leads to, again, high-quality good-paying jobs.

This is how we protect the businesses. This is how we protect the jobs. And this is how we protect our future, and we ensure that New York City continues to be a place where there's evermore opportunity for people of all backgrounds, all skill levels to get the decent jobs they deserve.

You're going to hear from some of my colleagues in a moment, but just a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, again – she speaks much better Spanish than me – the Council has been adamant about the importance of putting together a forward-looking policy on these issues. The Speaker and I have talked many times about what it would take to craft a truly balanced policy. I want to thank her for her partnership and her commitment. The Speaker of the City Council, Melissa Mark-Viverito –

[...]

Mayor: Okay. First, we're going to take questions on this topic, then we'll take off. On this topic first – on this topic –

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: A little louder?

Question: I have a two part question. One is, is there a mechanism in place by which you say, like, no housing can be built in these zones, or is it just a matter of [inaudible] proposals to build housing in these areas? And the other one is, if you or someone [inaudible] could talk a little bit about the changing face of industrial – you know, what are some of the new, modern industrial [inaudible] companies?

Mayor: So, why don't Alicia and Carl come forward, and I will start with my framing, and you may add to it. Look, I think we're making a very simple statement of policy. We're not accepting private applications any longer. It's a fundamentally different approach. Anything that goes beyond the – the core strategic focus on industrial businesses will have to go through its own formal approval process, and we know that's a very rigorous process. So it's just changing the emphasis back to what it should be. And I think, again, Donovan's point about mission creed – we're restoring the core concept, and we could do that as a matter of policy. To the larger trends – Alicia, Carl, or any – and if any further articulation on the mechanism by which we're doing this?

Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Alicia Glen: Sure. And the mechanism, again, we – we're not banning through a zoning action all housing – any housing and manufacturing zones. What we are saying is that we will no longer look with any favorable – any favor on a private developer coming in and saying, we would like to convert this site to residential use. And so, again, it's not a banning. It's a – it's a signal to the market that the policy of the City of New York is that these are precious resources. And [inaudible] we have a very aggressive plan to appropriately densify neighborhoods where we think housing should be built. And so these two things don't need to cannibalize each other, and I think there's been a real misperception out there that one is at the expense of the other. And we think that's absolutely incorrect, and these are precious resources and we want to encourage great paying jobs in these districts. So, we will no longer – and [inaudible] process, obviously, and I think we're all pretty clear that nobody would want to approve that. With respect to the broader manufacturing and industrial space, I'd love to have Maria come up as well, because I think we're at a very interesting pivotal time, where technology is converging with some of our more traditional manufacturing industries to create new opportunities for the city to really redefine what it means to be a modern, 21st Century manufacturing capital. So I think it's really, really exciting data around the industries that we're seeing within the manufacturing and industrial space. So, Maria, you want to just talk a little bit about what's going on?

President Maria Torres-Springer, NYCEDC: Sure. As the Deputy Mayor mentioned, I think what we're seeing – technology really disrupting different sectors, including manufacturing, industrial – and for us, it's a real opportunity, because what that means is that technology has the ability to make industrial firms here in New York more competitive, and that it also increases the demand for high-skill jobs. And we see an advanced manufacturing subsector of this industry really continue to blossom in New York City – firms that rely on – that are enabled by different types of technologies, use 3D printing, use robotics, computer controlled machining.

And these are the types of things from – we have some firms here today, like Black Box, who is in the Brooklyn Navy Yard – they make carbon fiber types of products – or PowerClip, one of our – one of the businesses that EDC has helped over the years creating technologies to make places more resilient. And those are the types of investments, those are types of firms that we want to continue to nurture. And so as part of today’s announcement, you will see that we are launching a network of different types of services, plus a bricks-and-mortar advanced manufacturing center to do just that, and help those types of businesses across the city.

Mayor: On-topic questions. On-topic, yes.

Question: What would you do to help develop local bicycle manufacturing, and also just transportation technologies? You know, obviously, there’s been major progress in the city in terms of transportation, and I’d like to see it continue.

Mayor: Alright, bicycle manufacturing – I like that.

[Laughter]

That is a particularly honed question.

Deputy Mayor Glen: It’s a honed question, and I would say this is exactly why the city is making the kind of investments that we’re making today, which is to allow the next fabulous bicycle manufacturer to be able to not just prototype that new bike, but also then have the industrial space that they’ll need to grow and expand their business here and keep those jobs here. It’s one of the things, whether we’re doing it in the Brooklyn Navy Yard or at [inaudible], is to make sure that people who come up with great ideas like the world’s perfect new lightweight, you know, urban bicycle can then continue to make those products in New York City, and not be forced out when they are – when their businesses get to scale. So I would say this is exactly the kind of thing we’re focused on. It’s not just supporting the technology that would allow you to make that fabulous bicycle, but then give you the actual affordable space so you can hire more people to make those bicycles here in New York City.

Mayor: Alright now, press corps, we’re spending over \$100 million new dollars and we’re creating 20,000 jobs. Surely that must be of some interest.

[Laughter]

Last chance here. Someone have a question on this – there you go.

Question: For the loan fund, can you just describe – are there particular qualifications a business has to have to get it. In particular, examples of types of businesses that could get it, and what are they intended to with it? Is it start a business or –

President Torres-Springer: So, the fund is intended to address the issue of the lack of affordable real estate – industrial real estate. And so, it will be set up – we’re initially targeting not-for-profit industrial developers. And what they can access through this fund – it includes capital dollars as well as below market loans, and potentially even a grant. And what we believe is, by making those types of sources available, that we will actually spur the growth of close to 400,000 square feet of affordable industrial development. If you think about GMDC – a perfect type of organization – just the type of entity who this loan fund is intended to help, and they can use them, those funds, for acquisition, rehab, and construction.

Question: So it’s for the developers as opposed to –

President Torres-Springer: Non-profit real estate developers, yes.

Question: Mr. Mayor, what is the city going to do about bringing back those manufacturing jobs that they lost, and what lesson do we really learn from Williamsburg? Because this has [inaudible] effect – not only does this change the landscape of business, and as far as losing employment, but also change housing, because as these companies come in to buy these areas and turn into condos and hotels, nobody that lived in that neighborhood could afford it, so it drives people out. So what is the city going to do?

Mayor: Well, look, my simple answer would be – is, we're not trying to recreate the economy of the past. We're trying to respond to today's economy. And I think these kinds of spaces being protected now and the kind of efforts we're doing to improve the circumstances for these businesses – to get them the educated and prepared workforce they need, to get them other supports they need and investments to really create – I think Brad said it very well – there's been a history of government making smart investments that set up the next big thing in economic development. That's what we're trying to do here. As to the affordability, that's why we have the largest affordable housing plan in the entire country – to create and preserve 200,000 units, enough for half-a-million people. So we're – these are two parallel pieces that I think will work together – making sure we have affordable housing in this city and making sure we have good-paying jobs.

Question: [inaudible] Council Member Lander's particular concerns about the Gowanus – your old – that area that you represented for a long time in the Council.

Mayor: When you say his particular concern –

Question: Well, about making sure that it's not becoming all market-rate –

Mayor: Oh, absolutely. There's no question. And yeah, I mean, obviously it's a community I know very well and had the honor of serving in the Council. Look, we need to keep some of the key industrial uses there that really fit there and create jobs. There's – you know, we have to remember about every part of this city, there's still a lot of working people in that community who need good-paying jobs. And there's a lot of opportunity around the Gowanus Canal to do that still. So we have to protect that. And the beauty of this plan is it says, look, let's – let's use each part of our community for what the highest impact would be. You cannot have a strong, functioning economy if you don't have good-paying industrial jobs. That's a key part of our economic mix, and Gowanus is one of the places we can achieve that.

Okay, last call on topic – going once, twice. Off-topic – aw, look – like, flowers blooming.

[Laughter]

If – anyone who wants to leave can leave – go ahead.

Question: Mr. Mayor, I just came from Soho where residents told me that they've been repeatedly calling 3-1-1, and now they're calling on you. There's a homeless encampment set up right now right next to Vesuvio Playground – it's a very active playground with children, moms who go there for – to bring their breakfast in the morning. What's being done about the homeless population and how are these encampments able to pop up in these areas?

Mayor: We have had two kinds of realities, and they've been going on for many, many years. Encampments, which we do not accept, which means where there's actually a constant presence, physical presence – literally mattresses and other things there – we don't accept that, and we, with the NYPD and Homeless Services, very aggressively took down those encampments over the last month. Then we have some places that we call hotspots, where the people congregate and, in many ways, not appropriately, and we have to deal with that as well. So on this particular location, we'll follow up right away. I don't believe from what I remember from

NYPD this is one of the truly long-term encampments that we've dealt with for many years. Again, those have been dismantled and services have been provided to the people who were there. But any place that crops up as a new problem, we'll address very aggressively.

Question: Mr. Mayor, you were talking about economic inequality just at the beginning of this press conference. There are a large group of elected officials gathered in Upper Manhattan talking about how the delay to the Second Avenue Subway development is a blow to their neighborhood – is a blow to Harlem – and represents a blow in the fight against economic inequality. I'm wondering what your response is to that, and if you would urge your representative on the MTA capital plan to not support it and to urge them to continue developing the subway?

Mayor: Look, we invested heavily the MTA. In a way the city hasn't done before, we insisted on some key reforms. I think we were all surprised to hear some of the changes around the Second Avenue Subway, and I think that's a conversation that must continue. It's clear that we need it to continue to build out. The first phase, let's face it, has taken a very long time, and we have to be honest about the fact that it's a complicated endeavor, but I do think it came as a surprise to many people that there was a change in the funding, and I think that has to be reconsidered to make sure that everything is being done to move Phase Two – despite the challenges and the complexities to move Phase Two as quickly as it came be done.

Jonathan.

Question: Mr. Mayor, last week you endorsed Hillary Clinton for president.

Mayor: Mhm.

Question: Two-part question – first, can you just walk us through the process that you got to that moment – why you weren't able to do it in April and why you decided to now? And then secondly, have you spoken to the candidate after the endorsement or in the week or two prior?

Mayor: Yes and yes. The first is – you know, I stood with a group of progressive leaders from around the country in May. We put forward a 14-point program – the Progressive Agenda – and I said very clearly, to me, this was the baseline for what we had to do to address income inequality – and that meant a huge amount to New York City and the future of New York City – to see wages and benefits improve, to see supports for working families, and particularly to see progressive taxation that's going to allow for all the investments New York City deserves from the federal government, like mass transit, affordable housing, education. So from my point of view, our obligation in this year – and I think this is a very different year than any one I can remember in recent decades because there's so much focus on income inequality and so much focus on some of the fundamental changes we have to make – my view was that our candidates had to speak to these issues. And I think a lot of people who are progressive around the country felt the exact same way. When – I've been, obviously, throughout the process over the last few months in a constant dialogue with the Clinton campaign, and one by one, Secretary Clinton did put out very powerful stances on a number of these issues. And the one that I think was crucial for a lot of us to hear a definitive answer on was trade – and she did that a few weeks ago in a very forceful manner. And that, to me, was the final piece of the puzzle. And that – after that point, we started specific conversations with the campaign about rolling out an endorsement, and then at point I spoke to Secretary Clinton – we had a very good conversation about how the campaign's going and how to work together going forward.

Question: Mayor de Blasio, there's a matter of a wager with the Kansas City mayor –

Mayor: Yes! We will keep our wager. We will keep our commitments to Kansas City – as painful as that is.

Question: When do you plan to sing 'Kansas City' and have some of their great barbecue?

Mayor: Well, I – I don't know the mechanics of how we're going to do the exact transaction. I do know – I think there's a song I have to sing again – this is really becoming a bad trend – and we're going to celebrate the arts in Kansas City and our common commitment to the arts. So we'll be doing that probably sometime next week. But Mayor James has been a good partner in some of the national work we're doing, and his team won fair and square. I will remind you – wait until next year. I'm predicting we'll be in a position to make more wagers and to win them all.

Question: Given the unfortunate fatalities – pedestrian fatalities – this past weekend and again this morning, could you talk about how you're planning to seriously address pedestrian safety going forward?

Mayor: We are absolutely committed to Vision Zero. It is showing more success than ever. Year one, the success was extraordinary – lowest number of pedestrian fatalities since 1910. Year two, we've seen consistent progress on reducing traffic fatalities, and particularly pedestrian fatalities. Remember, this is a new initiative that is deepening all the time. We're making more changes to traffic patterns and road design. The message that is being sent to people all over the city – to be careful when you drive, to be mindful of the people around you – is being heard more and more. Obviously, the impact of the reduced speed limit and the speed cameras is being felt. So this is an effort that is growing and is become more effective. We're very committed to it, and every time we lose someone, we say, you know, this is something that we need to keep reiterating to people – the care they need to take with driving, and why all these standards matter – why that lower speed limit matters. And I think more and more people are getting it.

Marcia?

Question: Mayor, there's a new poll where 55 percent of New Yorkers say they think the city is going in the wrong direction. What do you say to those people, and do you think that they're – they're wrong?

Mayor: I say to them that we have an economy that is very strong. We have 177,000 new jobs since I took office 22 months ago – that's something this city should be very proud of. We have a city that is getting safer all the time. You heard just yesterday from Commissioner Bratton – the safest October in almost a quarter century. We have a city that is moving forward with full day Pre-K for every child. There are so many positive indicators about this city. We'll keep doing this work and showing people what it means for their lives, but there's no question that this is a time when the city's moving forward.

Question: [Inaudible] feel about the fact that your popularity has sunk to the lowest levels?

Mayor: I – I recommend you all see Karen Hinton's quote about cotton candy, which I think was an apt analogy – that polls come and go. There's no question about the work being done and the impact it is having on people. That's what matters, and I know it will be felt.

Rich?

Question: Mr. Mayor, Congressman Hakeem Jeffries wants to – wants the city or the housing authority to rename the Tompkins Houses for Officers Ramos and Liu. Do you support that? Do you think that's a good idea?

Mayor: Yeah, I think it's a great idea. We'll obviously speak to the local residents. We want to respect their voices in the process too, but I think that's a very good proposal.

Melissa?

Question: Mayor, what do you think about this, 1 and 1 percent deal [inaudible] from the PBA? They seem upset about it. Do you think they did better at the end of the day by going to arbitration, and [inaudible] do they deserve more money? And is there still a chance you could go back to the bargaining table?

Mayor: So, that is a process that's still going on, Melissa. So I'm not going to comment on it until it is completed. The arbitration process is still playing out. What I've said all along is I believe the pattern that we set for our uniformed services is fair. And, obviously, the vast majority of the uniformed unions and their members thought it was fair, because they voted for it.

Question: What has been the biggest mistake of your mayoralty?

Mayor: Matt, you ask cosmic questions, don't you? You know, I – I would have to think about that and come back with a coherent answer. I think one thing we have to do better is explaining to people how this vision is affecting their lives. And that's something we will continue to do.

Erin.

Question: Mayor, Governor Cuomo told a group of supporters that he sees it as his job to save New York City. Do you believe that he is correct that New York City needs saving, and if so, do you think that what he's doing is contributing to that, or is it interfering?

Mayor: Again, 177,000 new jobs since January 1st, 2014; the city getting safer all the time; the city with now 65,000 kids in full-day pre-k. The City of New York is doing very well. We've got a lot of work to do – there's no question. And we have a lot of work in this city, like in this country, to do to address income inequality. But in terms of any measure of how you judge a city and its success, there are a lot of areas where this city is literally doing better than ever. We have the most jobs – 4.2 million jobs – the most we've had in the entire history of this city – the highest population we've had in the entire history of this city. I think we're on the right track.

Thanks, everyone.

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