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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
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**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT FROM SUNDAY, JULY 10, 2022: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS, CTO FRASER, AND LINKNYC UNVEIL FIRST LINK5G KIOSK IN NEW YORK CITY**

**Matthew Fraser, Chief Technology Officer and Commissioner, Office of Technology & Innovation:** Good afternoon everyone. My name is Matthew Fraser. I'm New York City's Chief Technology Officer and Commissioner of the Office of Tech and Innovation. I'm thrilled to join you today in the Bronx for this historic Link5G event. We are honored to have with us Mayor Eric Adams. I thank the mayor for his outstanding leadership, vision and collaborative spirit in our shared quest to transform New York City into a global tech and innovation hub. I also want to recognize CityBridge CEO Nick Colvin and his team for making Link5G into a reality. And to say a special hello to our local elected officials in attendance, including Assembly Member Tapia.

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**Chief Technology Officer Fraser:** Today's Link5G launches a mark in the next evolutionary step for Link New York City, a project that approximately seven years ago into its existence continues to fill a profound need in the daily lives of millions of New Yorkers and visitors to our great city. But more importantly, today's Link5G launch represents a dramatic leap forward in New York City's efforts to bridge its long standing digital divide.

**Chief Technology Officer Fraser:** During the pandemic, New Yorkers who lacked access to internet faced significant obstacles signing up for vaccines, staying in touch with family members, completing virtual assignments for school. Activities for those of us who, with reliable connections, might otherwise take for granted. And the key here is bringing technology and bringing this commodity-level service to a community and to people that need it. Imagine kids who went to school who couldn't do schoolwork when they went home after the pandemic because they didn't have access to the basic service. In a city as wealthy and technologically advanced as ours the pandemic revealed the price of inaction to the individual aspirations, community wellbeing, and our city's ongoing economic recovery is too costly and too conscious. Link's 5G ultra-fast network and expanded coverage area will go a long way towards clearing the technological barriers so many New Yorkers encountered during the pandemic. It's also potential to lift the entire neighborhood and communities that have languished as digital deserts amid this century's rapid tech advances.

**Chief Technology Officer Fraser:** Today's unveiling in the Bronx, and very near future will be bringing the same promise to the residents of Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and Northern Manhattan, 90% of the 2,000 kiosks that will go live will go to the areas that's been historically underserved. Equity's at the heart of the Link5G rollout, and at the forefront of this administration's larger tech vision. I credit Mayor Adams for recognizing New York City must empower the people who have access to the least, to borrow one of the Mayor's favorite New York City catch phrases, the city of yes.

**Chief Technology Officer Fraser:** So, now to introduce a man who needs no introduction, the mayor of this great city, the Honorable Mayor Eric Adams.

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Good stuff, good stuff. Good day. Good day for our city. I just don't want to miss that picture. During COVID we remember the lack of having access to Wi-Fi was a real issue and so there's a lot of learning moments out of COVID. If you didn't have Wi-Fi you could not do telemedicine, you were not able to stay up to date on what was happening around the services that were provided, you were not able to use translation services for those who speak English as a second language. You were not allowed to do so many things and stay in communication with your loved one and family members because you were isolated from home. And so we knew that one of the missions we are to accomplish was how do we find a way to use our existing infrastructure to ensure that we have access to Wi-Fi, high speed broadband, and that's what we're doing today.

**Mayor Adams:** So this is a great day, not only for New York City but it's a great day for communities like the Bronx, Brooklyn, Staten Island, Queens, many of these historical areas that have been denied access to the power of the internet. And so I say this over and over again, I'm a five borough mayor. I spent more time in the Bronx in six months than probably other administrations have done throughout their entire administration. I can say the same for Queens and parts of Brooklyn. I am all over the borough. And so New York Times got it right, this is a mayor that just doesn't sleep. I am out speaking on behalf of New Yorkers and this new LinkNYC 5G kiosk is going to expand and improve mobile technology coverage all over the city.

**Mayor Adams:** This amazing tower is the next generation from the first generation we had with LinkNYC with free Wi-Fi and free phone service for those who need it the most. Something that we often take for granted, but the reality is that too many people don't have access to the phone service and don't have access to free Wi-Fi. Accessible broadband and phone service, it's just not a luxury, it's a necessity. Just as we need electricity and heat and water, these same services play a vital role in being able to carry out our function. So too is Wi-Fi. What telephone service was to our grandparents, Wi-Fi is to this generation right now.

**Mayor Adams:** So we're stepping up, working with our partners to make sure that communities in every borough has access to free Wi-Fi in the service. As the CTO mentioned, we are focusing on those areas. 90% of these kiosks will go to areas that need the services the most and have been denied. These digital oases have existed for far too long, and we need to zero in and be intentional as we focus to get the equity that we need. Long range plan, that is what we want to accomplish. And when it comes to digital services, we know that too many are left behind and this administration is committed to in ensuring that all New Yorkers have access.

**Mayor Adams:** So I want to thank our partners. I want to thank LinkNYC for their partnership, for helping to provide us with this essential digital infrastructure. They have been great partners. All those who are here, Nick, Rob, Borough President Vanessa Gibson who's not here with us right now, the Assembly Woman Tapia, Clayton Banks, CEO and co-founder of Silicon Harlem. The partnerships are coming together to make this happen, to link us up together, these kiosks from LinkNYC is going to assist us accomplishing this task. This is a campaign promise made, campaign promise kept, and we are going to continue to keep those promises we made on a campaign trail. Love you, Bronx. People don't know it, but I'm a BX guy. All right.

**Chief Technology Officer Fraser:** So, as the Mayor just said, it takes partnership to do this and we can't do it on our own. So I'd like to introduce the CEO of LinkNYC and CityBridge, Nick Colvin. Nick?

**Nick Colvin, CEO, LinkNYC:** Yep. All right. Thank you, CTO Fraser and thank you Mayor Adams, and thank you everyone for joining us today.

**Colvin:** Now today marks an important milestone on the path to fulfilling our mission to bring digital connectivity for free to everyone in New York City's five boroughs. As the mayor said, seven years ago LinkNYC was founded on the belief that access to the internet is a fundamental human right necessary to participate and access opportunities in today's modern society. And as both the CTO and the mayor pointed out, the COVID pandemic really underscored the truth of that belief. But not only that, it laid stark the disparities that still exist in so many, too many parts of our city. LinkNYC's vision to create the world's largest, fastest free Wi-Fi system and telecommunication system in the world has been upgraded to include the equitable deployment of 5G, the next generation of mobile wireless connectivity. I'm proud to stand here with all of our partners, celebrating the launch of the Link5G right here in The Bronx. Link5G will bring all the free services of LinkNYC. Free super-fast Wi-Fi, free nationwide phone calling, free device charging and access to city and nonprofit services and social support systems, as well as host 5G equipment. And as they both said, 90% of these new kiosks will be deployed outside of the Manhattan core, above 96th Street and in the outer boroughs. Just in those communities that need the access the most. Just like building roads and bridges, investing in broadband infrastructure is absolutely critical to ensure long term economic prosperity.

**Colvin:** And with Link5G, when it comes to neighborhoods, it brings new fiber infrastructure, fiber that can be used to provide high speed, high quality broadband service options that don't exist today. And together with 5G and LinkNYC's digital safety net, this system is truly a comprehensive digital connectivity platform and a key component in bridging the digital divide in our city. Thank you to Mayor Adams and CTO Fraser for all of your support, and thank you to all of our partners, including Borough President Gibson, Assembly Member Yudelka Tapia, Clayton Banks, our old friend, the City of New York, the Office of Technology and Innovation and everyone who's really been a partner in our mission to provide this service.

**Colvin:** I'd like to thank everyone who believes that connecting our communities is absolutely fundamental to providing social and economic equity in our great city. And of course, we couldn't do this without ZenFi Networks, our fiber and wireless connectivity partner. Together we will build the pathway to a more equitable digital future for all New Yorkers. And with that, I'd like to hand it off to Rob Sokota, our president of the wireless division to say a few remarks.

**Robert Sokota, President for Wireless, CityBridge:** Hi. My name's Rob Sokota. I'm the President for wireless at Citybridge. I'm also at ZenFi. Two of the entities who made this Link5G possible. I'd like to thank all the people who made this event possible, including all the employees at ZenFi, CityBridge, Comtech, who worked many, many long hours the last couple of years to make this happen. I'd like to thank our local partners, The Bronx Community Foundation. I'd like to thank the Hunts Point Community Network, who's going to help us out with the second Link5G, which is also right here in The Bronx, over in Hunts Point, in the 700 block. We'd like to thank our partners in the city, the Office of Technology and Innovation, the mayor's office, the Bronx borough president's office. They had the foresight to know that we could deploy this innovative structure here in New York and make a difference. They have truly made this the City of Yes.

**Sokota:** At CityBridge, and also I'd like to thank Clayton, who's here with the first gig center we created and the Andrew Freedman House, which is our second gig center. We're hoping to set the third in the Brooklyn and the fourth in Queens, shortly. At CityBridge, it is our mission to spread free public wifi across New York City, but we just don't talk the talk. We walk the walk.

**Sokota:** We've deployed over 2,000 kiosks to date. That forms the largest public free Wi-Fi system in the United States. But we're just getting started. Over the next few years, we're going to double that from 2,000 to 4,000. But that doubling of the number of the kiosks, because we're going to deploy our new upgraded Link5G and because we're going to optimize the deployment for Wi-Fi coverage. That doubling in the number of kiosk is going to quadruple. That is four X increase the area that has free Wi-Fi here in New York City. That means more free Wi-Fi for New Yorkers walking down the street. That means more free Wi-Fi for New Yorkers standing over at bus stops like that one across the street.

**Sokota:** In many instances, that means more free Wi-Fi for New Yorkers in their workplace, in their homes, depending where they are. If you're here at the New Andrews Deli Grocery, you're going to get awesome, free Wi-Fi. You can also get one of the best breakfast sandwiches around, so I recommend it highly. If you live in any of these apartments overlooking us here today, you're going to be able to get free Wi-Fi. That is an awesome achievement. And that leads us to a next point, which is for Link5G deployment, we can't just do it in the commercial areas. We need to go to residential areas as well because the digital divide in New York City is the biggest in the residential areas.

**Sokota:** That's why we're planning to ask the public design commission for approval to deploy Link5G in residential areas, so that we can bring more free Wi-Fi to the people who need internet access the most. Today is the kickoff for the Link5G. The Link5G is going to provide all the same services as the existing Link. The free Wi-Fi, the free phone calling, the access, the tablet that provides access to city services, 911. We're going to continue our program that allows local businesses to advertise for free. We're going to continue our program that allows local artists to display their works. But Link5G is going to do more than that. Link5G is going to provide the underlying infrastructure necessary for the deployment of the fifth generation of mobile phone services here in New York.

**Sokota:** What many of you know as 5G, 5G is going to enable you to get connected better. 5G is going to enable you to get connected faster. 5G is going to enable you to get connected more reliably than you can today. 5G is going to be a revolution in mobile technology and we, at

CityBridge and ZenFi, we want to make The Bronx a leader in 5G here in the city, and we want to make New York City a leader in 5G in the United States. Following the lead of our mayor, at CityBridge and ZenFi, we plan to get stuff done and the stuff we are going to get done is ensuring there is more equitable access to internet across New York City and making sure that New York City is the example that other cities in the US follow for 5G deployment. Thank you very much.

[...]

**Chief Technology Officer Fraser:** And to get this effort done, we can't do it just from City Hall. It requires partnership across the entire city and state. I have the honor and privilege of introducing Assembly Member Tapia, who will give us a few words today.

[...]

**Chief Technology Officer Fraser:** Thank you very much. So one of the first things that we did at the start of the administration, when we looked at digital equity and how we brought technology out is we also looked at how we bring technology to the youth and build skills and capabilities so that they can be competitive with the rest of the world and have a spot in the future workplace. So to do that, we partnered very closely with Silicon Harlem. It's my pleasure to introduce you to Clayton Banks, who's going to give us a couple words. Clayton, please.

**Clayton Banks, CEO, Silicon Harlem:** Yes. Thank you. Thank you very much. And it says Silicon Harlem, but I love the Bronx. Let's get that straight. I just want to quickly say you've heard a lot already and I hope you really did absorb it because it's rare that we are able to put this kind of infrastructure in a community that often gets it later on in the process. So you're the first, that's a big deal. Here's the important thing. You heard a lot about what has happened in the past and sort of almost a little bit about the present, but what's really interesting, what I think our mayor and our CTO has really thought a lot about is, not only solving some of the issues right now, but thinking about what's coming next. Everybody hear me? What's coming next? And for us to be prepared for things that are coming next, you've heard of things like metaverses, you've heard about NFTs.

**Banks:** You've heard about all types of new technologies and there's much more coming, Web 3.0. We need this type of infrastructure to be prepared, what I call future readiness. So it's not only going to do a tremendous amount for our community here and around this city, what our ongoing problems we've had around connectivity and mobility and all these type of things, but this kind of infrastructure starts to secure your children, your grandchildren, our seniors, everyone's going to be prepared and not fall behind in this country. New York is going to lead the way under the guise of the mayor, our great CTO, and me. Anyway, this is a big honor to be here. I'm very proud that the cohort of people that came up with this Link5G, that will be a game changer and certainly will secure our future. Thank you everybody.

[...]

**Question:** Hi, Mayor. How are you?

**Mayor Adams:** Quite well.

**Question:** I was wondering if you have a timeline for these new 2,000 kiosks to be deployed. I know it starts in the summer, but when will we have all 2,000? And then secondly, is there any kind of surveillance technology on these? Like, is it collecting people's data? Is it filming people? Is it reporting people? Do we know anything about that?

**Mayor Adams:** No, let's answer that part. And that's a good idea to have cameras on here. I'm a big camera guy. I believe public safety is important. We're not doing surveillance, but right now we have police cameras scattered in different places. I think it'll be cheaper to do here. So I'm going to take that idea and explore it, but we're not abusing, we're using tools to keep us safe. They want to know the timeline.

**Chief Technology Officer Fraser:** So the timeline for completion for the franchise is 2026. By the end of 2026, we're looking at that 4,000 kiosk deployment and of the second 2000 that's going out now, like I said, 90% of that is going to be focused on the equity districts. In terms of surveillance technology, the cornerstone of this administration, the cornerstone of city is privacy. That's why part of the Office of Tech and Innovation is the Mayor's Office of Information Privacy. We want to ensure that the public feels safe leveraging these devices, and their information is only used in ways that's acceptable. In terms of surveillance tech, there's nothing in the devices outside of a camera, right? It's activated in the event that, periodically, it's not on 24/7, but there's nothing other than that.

**Question:** This is a question for a young lady here in the crowd, I guess there's a senior center on Lawrence Avenue. And she was asking if this tower or maybe one that's coming up soon, they have tablets that were given to the seniors that had Wi-Fi that stopped working June 30th. And so she's wondering will this help them get back on?

**Mayor Adams:** Yes. Yes. Great, great question. And those free Wi-Fi's came from our Department of Aging because we wanted to put that technology in our older adults' hands. And so having something like this would give you the free Wi-Fi. The original deal allowed Wi-Fi for a period of time, but now it's going to be free Wi-Fi. When you go into those senior centers in other places, you're going to be able to use the free Wi-Fi.

**Question:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor Adams:** Thank you.

[...]

**Mayor Adams:** Yes. Sounds like a plan.

[...]

**Mayor Adams:** Okay. Let's do a few off topics.

**Question:** Hi, mayor.

**Mayor Adams:** How's it going?

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

**Mayor Adams:** Good.

**Question:** After six months now, what are maybe one or two things you would change about working at a City Hall?

**Mayor Adams:** What? I'm sorry.

**Question:** Just one or two things that you would change about working at City Hall.

**Mayor Adams:** Probably have Room Nine be kinder to all the successes that I have for them to acknowledge them. When you take our ongoing fight of crime, when you take that out of the room and you start to look at what we have done, you have to say this administration really has figured out how to improve this city. When you look at what we have done with Earned Income Tax Credit, increase in 100,000 summer jobs, dyslexia screening, childcare. When you start to look at what we have done and not the crime battle that we are fighting because of the over proliferation of guns in our streets, you have to say that this administration is really moving the needle on those things that have been impacting us for a long time. So, I think that if there's one thing I would change, I would move Room Nine closer to my office, so they can see how we're doing some good stuff.

[...]

**Question:** Last night there was an incident where the police shot down a man in Queens and neighbors were reporting that he had mental health issues. Do you think officers were justified in their response?

**Mayor Adams:** In the shooting in Queens?

**Question:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Mayor Adams:** Heck, yes. The guy called the 911. And as the investigation's going to show, he said some things that clearly advertise violence. Those officers responded, a gun was displayed. From my preliminary review, rounds were discharged. These officers responded to save the people that live in that community. I say, yes. And I thank those officers for placing themselves in harm's way of a person who was clear that he was going to harm people.

**Mayor Adams:** Now, when a police officer responds to a scene, he doesn't have the individual's medical records. He doesn't know if he's dealing with someone with a mental health crisis. They can go to the information they have in front of them. And in front of them, they had an individual with a gun, willing to use that gun, and they took appropriate action based on what they are trained to do. And because of that action, I think they saved the lives of residents in that community

**Question:** What about the shooting in Brooklyn, [inaudible]...

**Mayor Adams:** Listen, let me tell you something. That shooting in Brooklyn, the officer that carried out that shooting, it was part of our Neighborhood Safety Teams. The teams that have the numerical minorities said that we shouldn't do, but we listened and we did it anyway because we knew we were right. They did a car stop. One person hops out the car and runs. Because of their training, they knew the others would stay with the suspects. One officer fled, ran for blocks, for blocks chasing this guy. This guy turns around and discharged a shot at that officer. That officer was able to discharge his firearm and terminate a threat. I stopped by the 88 to see that officer and just really thanked him.

**Mayor Adams:** When I looked at that body cam footage, it was unbelievable that he was willing... Number one, he ran for several blocks. He was able to meet that threat and terminate that threat so other innocent people were not killed and shot. This is by BAM that's crowded during the week. That officer did an amazing job. That whole team did an amazing job. We don't hear how well these officers are doing. He ran towards the gun violence. Not too many people who are standing here and sitting here right now will run towards the gun violence. That officer did it. And because of his actions, people in that area went home and his entire team went home. He's a real hero and I thank him for the job that he did. And I went to the 88 precinct last night and stopped and I spoke with him and his team and told him, thank you and New Yorkers thank him for his job.

**Question:** Yeah. Mayor, quick follow up on that one and then I have a separate topic as well. You mentioned the police body cam footage you saw, will the city release that and of the other incident as well, in Queens?

**Mayor Adams:** Yeah. It's my belief. I'm hoping we can just release... People need to see what these cops are up against. I know there's a time delay for whatever reason beyond our administration. But these tapes, I think if the public start to see the footage, you would be shocked what these ladies and gentlemen are doing every day. And so, whatever the procedure is, we're going to follow the legal procedure to do so. But I think we should show these tapes. People need to see what these cops are up against. So whatever the rules are, I'm going to look over the rules and see what we can do to get it in the hands of people in a more expeditious fashion. But right now the procedures are the procedures.

**Question:** My second one was about the New York City ferry system. There was this big...

**Mayor Adams:** Hold on one moment. I got to finish.

**Question:** There was this big comptroller audit that came out last week about the ferry system. Your office told me they kind of blamed de Blasio for rushing the system through. I was wondering, have you given any thoughts how you want to change the ferry system so it doesn't keep eating into taxpayers' money? What kind of changes would you like to make to the system?

**Mayor Adams:** Well, one thing for sure, the comptroller's report was not this administration. We need to be clear on that. I know it's hard for people to believe. But I've been the mayor for only six months and ten days. So we are looking at the previous administration's... They rolled out a very complex system, building out their piers, providing services. I was out in Queens the other day in a transportation desert and speaking to the residents, it's the NYCHA development. The pier is right there. And they say that ferry is a life saver for them. So we want to look at



how, number one, we can make it more cost effective for those in transportation desert, particularly in poorer communities and make sure we improve the services. So we're looking at his report. We're going to learn from that report, but we have some ideas on our own on how to have this system move at the level that I expect. Andrew Kimball from EDC, he has done a briefing for me, and we're going to roll out our next gen of the ferry system.

**Question:** Going back to the Queens shooting.

**Mayor Adams:** Yes.

**Question:** Chief Maddrey said that this individual that was shot and killed had prior contact with police. Where is... Even at the point of the 911 call, when he's calling in and making these obvious, very violent threats in crisis, where's the mental health person, worker that is there to not only help with the 911 call, but also with officers and how to deal with someone that's clearly in crisis? Of course, yes, they used their judgment. They went in, he had a gun, but six officers or more walking up in uniform with a guy that's clearly in crisis. He has a gun. Got it. But I thought, in 2019, we decided going forward we were going to handle these specific calls very differently.

**Mayor Adams:** No, what we do, we have Be Heard, an excellent program, where in those cases, when you're dealing with non-life threatening incidents. We are using and we continue to grow it, but we're using mental health professionals in those non-threatening incidents. I would not support a call stating, "I'm going to harm someone in an imminent way," that we're going to send in a civilian. When you look at, listen to those tapes, those 911 tapes, it would be irresponsible if we would have sent civilians to respond to that. This gentleman was very clear on what his actions were going to be. And he lived out, step by step, what he stated he was going to do.

**Mayor Adams:** So those non-threatening are using Be Heard, which is a great program, that is going to incidents where we could send a non-police personnel. But remember, Mora and Rivera, they were going to a domestic violence complaint. You don't know, when you walk through that door, a person can call you for one thing but what you walk into after is totally different. And so the way those officers responded yesterday, tactically, they did an amazing job saving the public, saving the lives of people and terminating that threat. This guy was a bad guy. And when you listen to those tapes, it's clear he had one role he wanted to accomplish, and they terminated that role. And that's really, I think it's commendable. Okay?

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