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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY OUTSIDE CITY
HALL R TRAIN STATION FOR NATIONAL STAND UP FOR TRANSPORTATION DAY**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everyone. It's a great honor to be here with Senator Schumer; with our transportation commissioner, Polly Trottenberg; our chair of the city council transportation committee, Ydanis Rodriguez; Kathy Wylde, president and CEO of the Partnership for New York City, who has done so much to help organize the business meetings to support our efforts today. We thank her for that. Two great advocates for our mass transit riders – the legendary Gene Russianoff, staff attorney at the NYPRIG Strangers Campaign; and John Raskin, executive director of the Riders Alliance.

I want to thank them all for joining with us today. This is happening all over the country today. In locations all over the country, elected officials, business leaders, labor leaders, civic leaders, gathering together, demanding that the congress act on the transportation bill. 60-plus of my fellow mayors all over the country are holding similar events today. They are Democrats. They are Republicans. They are Independents. Mayors are gathering the entire community to work for what we need in Washington for our metropolitan areas. Business, labor, civic organizations – faith – all working together in a bipartisan coalition. And I talked to so many of my fellow mayors, and they are focused on using their reach all over their metropolitan areas to bring people together in common cause to get what we need from Washington.

The bottom line is we need investment if we expect to have a society that works, if we expect to be able to get around, if we expect to be able to get to work. We need investment from Washington. And what we've seen in recent years is investment that has not even been close to meeting the needs of this city and so many other cities around the country. That's true for mass transit, that's true for investment in highways and bridges as well. This is our lifeline. It's a lifeline for all of us. It's make our – it makes our economy work. Particularly, mass transit is a lifeline for those of limited needs. It's their only way to get around.

So, the bottom line is this country has been going backwards in terms of investment in transportation and infrastructure because the numbers remain flat while the need has gotten greater and greater and our infrastructure gets older and older. Our counterparts are – competitors are investing more and more. Look at China. Look at India. Look at Germany. They're all investing. This country is not.

May 31st – and Senator Schumer will explain – is when this all comes to a head, when the federal highway trust fund runs out, and we need to create energy all over this country for change. We had a great meeting of mayors in Boston. Our Cities of Opportunity Task Force – a gathering hosted by Mayor Walsh in Boston. And mayors all over the country agreed on this plan of action – that we would have gatherings today around the country. And then the week of May 11th, go to Washington, again, with business leaders, labor leaders, and community leaders – go to the congress en masse and make the message that this has to change, that investment is needed. This is going to be a consistent, growing effort, and a bipartisan effort that we think will be heard in Washington. And if we get the support we need, we can keep investing in our infrastructure, we can bring it up to grade, we can keep making sure there's an expansion of mass transit – areas like bus-rapid transit that we know offer such great opportunity for this city.

We need momentum if we're going to change the dynamic of Washington. I'll turn to Senator Schumer after I give you a little bit of Spanish, but no one knows better than our senior senator the gridlock that could occur in Washington. And on this issue, this should be one where there's no debate – investing in our country's future – this should be one where's actually bipartisanship, and we aim at the local level to create the momentum that will help give Senator Schumer and others who want action in Washington the wind in their sails to achieve it. In Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, it's an honor to introduce our senior senator who is fighting for the investments we need for this city, this state, and his home nation – Senator Chuck Schumer.

[Senator Charles Schumer speaks]

Mayor: Thank you very much, senator. As I said, this is a coalition all over the country. It's bipartisan. It involves – not just elected leaders, but it involves business leaders, labor leaders, community leaders. We're thrilled to have Kathy Wylde here with us today on behalf of the New York City Partnership, representing a huge piece of our business community. Kathy, I'd like you to say a few words.

[Partnership for New York City CEO Kathryn Wylde speaks]

Thank you very much, Kathy. So, we're going to do questions on topic. I'll be seeing you later on for off topic. But we're going to do on topic now. The senator has just has a couple of minutes, so if you have any particular questions for him, let's get them in right now – or any other questions on this topic. Anybody? Yes, Grace?

Question: Some transit advocates locally have said that the city also needs to do more to fund the MTA. In the last 30 years, the city's contribution – \$100 million dollars – remains unchanged despite inflation. What's your response to that? And should the city also be stepping up and increasing its contribution?

Mayor: We're going to obviously be presenting our executive budget in about a month. And we're going to be saying more about what we can do in terms of the MTA, at that point. The city has a fine tradition of investing in mass transit. Now obviously, we have a huge investment we make in infrastructure, in terms of roads and bridges. We put a great deal of additional resources into our last executive budget for roads and bridges, and you'll see a continued commitment there. This bill, again, transcends mass transit as well as highways and bridges and roads. So I think the bottom line is the city is making a big commitment already. But in Washington, for 12 straight years, the number hasn't moved. Inflation has happened. Infrastructure has gotten older and older, but the number hasn't moved in Washington. So we're talking about a highway trust fund that may or may not be renewed for short-term, for long-term – may not be any more money. And that would have a hugely negative affect on this country if that number doesn't move.

Question: I think the point though was that it also hasn't moved in the city –

Mayor: Again, I'm trying to say to you – we're going to have more to say on the mass transit piece. But on the roads, bridges, highways piece, the city investment has gone up quite a bit in recent years.

Question: Mr. Mayor, the MTA – in its document for capital budget – is already relying on the city to pay \$125 million dollars a year. Are you saying they shouldn't – they're speaking too soon? They shouldn't be relying on that?

Mayor: Again, let me say two things. I'll answer the question, but if anyone has something for the senator before he has to go, I want to give him a chance on any questions that may be referred to him. So let me just come back to you in one second.

Question: Senator, can you describe what will happen if the transportation fund is renewed but not increased?

Senator Charles Schumer: Well, if it's renewed and not increased, we crawl along at a tortoise's pace. And that's not what highways or mass transit should be like. Our needs have been growing, as the mayor said. Infrastructure is getting older. We need to renew things. We need to build new things. We are trying in New York. We've gotten money for both East Side Access and for the Second Avenue subway, but we need more. And the needs of the nation will not be met if the fund stays flat. It'll be worst, of course, if it runs out – disaster, but even staying flat hurts us year, after year, after year, after year. And with the gas revenue – gas revenues from gasoline tax going down because cars are more efficient, because the price of gasoline – thankfully – has gone down, we need new sources. We need new dollars.

Question: Senator Schumer, forgive me if you've already spoken to this, have you seen the Jew for Rand Paul sign? I wanted to see what you thought of those.

Senator Schumer: I don't know. I haven't seen them, so I won't comment.

Mayor: Let's stay on topic here. Anything else on topic for the senator? For the senator – yes?

Question: Senator [inaudible] the mayor as well, have you taken a position on the MoveNY plan, which –

Senator Schumer: On which?

Question: The MoveNY plan? Which is to put tolls on the East River bridges?

Senator Schumer: I haven't – no I have not.

Question: And Mr. Mayor, if I could ask you as well – if you've had a chance to look at the proposal? If you –

Mayor: I saw the original proposal. I met with Sam Schwartz several years ago. I have not seen the updated one. As I said, I think it's a very meaningful proposal and worthy of debate. But I have not taken a formal position. For the senator – anything more?

Senator Schumer: Anything left for me? Because I've got to run. And by the way, I saw the INS guy putting in the CBS's guy's microphone. We need that kind of cooperation in Washington.

[Laughter]

Mayor: Beautiful. Beautiful.

Unknown: We're both owned by CBS.

[Laughter]

Question: Senator, there are some surveys that show that young people are moving away from cars and towards mass transit –

Senator Schumer: Absolutely.

Question: Do you think the people who oppose increasing these subsidies are missing the boat?

Senator Schumer: Yes, the people who oppose this are missing the boat, the train, the car. And they are – they're not with it. People are coming back to cities. Look at New York City. We've grown from 7 million people to 8.5 million in two decades. We need more mass transit in those situations and people like mass transit. I – you know, we need to help our roads, we need to keep our suburbs and roads here in New York strong, but mass transit's a particular need and will be hurt particularly badly if we don't have the funding. I'm going to go, is that okay, everybody?

Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you very much, Senator. If you want another follow-up – the other point that Chair Rodriguez made is, we – on top of the fact that we have a growing population, as the senator said – 8.5 million now – the highest we've ever been – on the way to 9 million – we also have the highest number of tourists we've ever had – 56.4 million, last year. Everyone depends on mass transit in the equation. They certainly depends – depend on our roads and bridges as well. So these investments are about building our economy. And if again – if the number doesn't increase, we're literally going backwards because of the age of our infrastructure. Go ahead – I'm sorry.

Question: Yeah, so the MTA budget materials for the capital plan already received \$125 million a year, and you're saying you'll have more to say when the budget comes out. Should the MTA not be banking on the city's increasing its contribution?

Mayor: Again, that's why we have a budget proposal. We always make this point to all of you. We give you the numbers when the budget comes out, not a minute before. So, the MTA's made its assumption – that's part of how they do their budget. We will have our budget within a month.

Question: Just on the question of funding [inaudible] significant capital budget gap for the MTA – about \$15 billion dollars. Is Governor Cuomo doing enough to support mass transit in this state?

Mayor: Look, I would argue the governor and the legislature have to focus on resolving the MTA issue, and we certainly want to work with them. But it can't be ignored. The federal piece of the equation matters a lot here. I think something we all agree on is, we need more federal investment for the future of this country. Again, this transcends just New York's needs. And if we get appropriate investment, that will certainly help the MTA. But Albany clearly has to come up with some bigger solutions. A \$15 billion dollar gap is too much to ignore, and we'll certainly partner with them in any way we can.

Question: Have you spoke to the governor about this yourself at all?

Mayor: A while ago. Not in the last two weeks, but at the beginning of the budget process, I did. Yes.

Unknown: A couple of more, guys.

Question: Following up on Gloria's question, two months ago you said you hadn't reviewed the MoveNY plan. Are you planning to review it?

Mayor: At some point, sure.

Question: What's taking so long?

Mayor: Just other things that we're working on. Anything else? Going once –

Question: Mr. Mayor, when was the last time you took mass transit to get someplace – to City Hall, an event – and there weren't any cameras around?

Mayor: And there weren't any cameras? Just a regular –

Question: A regular commute to work.

Mayor: A week or two ago. Alright, last call.

Question: Can we get a quick comment on the asbestos?

Mayor: No, we're just doing this. We'll get you later on. We're doing off-topic later on. Last call on this topic – going once – going twice – Rich?

Question: Mr. Mayor, some guy has been throwing metal down in the tracks to see the explosion. I don't know if you've seen this –

Mayor: No.

Question: Oh, you haven't seen it?

Mayor: No, we'll get you later on that then. Okay, thanks, everyone.

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