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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 19, 2015

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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO UNVEILS ‘NEXTGENERATION NYCHA’: A
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO SECURE THE FUTURE OF CITY PUBLIC HOUSING**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Okay. Welcome, everyone. It is an honor to be here at Johnson Houses. I want to thank all the folks who work at Johnson Houses, all the residents, who have joined us for this very historic moment.

We are unveiling a plan today to transform the New York City Housing Authority – to put it on a strong footing for the future, to protect the interests of hundreds of thousands of residents for the long haul. This is a historic day for our city and it’s taken a lot of work to get us to this moment, and I want to acknowledge in a moment so many of the people who worked hard to put this plan together.

But I can tell you – NextGeneration NYCHA – this is a game-changer – a ten-year plan to transform the housing authority, to bring it into the 21st century and make it strong for the long haul. It’s long overdue and it’s finally here.

NextGen NYCHA is going to be a difference-maker for the people of NYCHA.

It’s a strategic plan that will reduce costs, will generate more revenue for the housing authority, will make it more efficient, will make it more effective in serving over 400,000 New Yorkers.

Let me acknowledge so many of the folks who are here who are a part of the effort that led us to today, and have been extremely supportive in this effort of transformation.

First, want to thank our Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development, Alicia Glen – thank you. Of course, our Chair –

[Applause]

– our Chair and CEO of NYCHA who you’ll hear from in a moment, Shola Olatoye.

[Applause]

The General Manager of NYCHA, Michael Kelly.

[Applause]

The Chief of the NYPD Housing Bureau, Chief James Secreto.

[Applause]

You're going to hear from – in a few minutes – a young woman who has a great story to tell – Nahjee Cook. We want to thank Nahjee for being with us today.

We want to thank Council Member Corey Johnson for being with us and for his support. You'll hear from his colleagues – the speaker and Council Member Torres in a few minutes.

I want to thank some of our partners in this work. We worked very closely with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, represented today by Director for Public Housing for the Regional Office, Luigi D'Ancona – thank you very much for being here.

[Applause]

We always thank HUD.

I want to thank the NYCHA board members who are here, and thank them for their hard work on behalf of the residents of NYCHA.

We want to thank Kathy Wilde, with the New York City Partnership, for his – excuse me, her support for all – and the business community's support for all that we are doing to help the residents of NYCHA – and you'll hear, again, from some of my colleagues in just a few moments.

Let's go back to the beginning.

This is a story that has a definitive beginning – 1934. The greatest mayor we ever had, Fiorello La Guardia, believed that something bold and ambitious and transcendent had to happen to protect the interests of working New Yorkers. Remember – that was in the grips of the Great Depression. And public housing was a brand new idea, but to great – to the great credit of Mayor La Guardia, he embraced new ideas energetically, and he said New York City would lead the way in creating not just public housing, but a great public housing authority that would serve working people with quality housing for decades and decades to come. Only because of his willingness to take on such a huge challenge do we have today a housing authority that serves hundreds of thousands of our fellow New Yorkers. It's because of a bold idea that was followed through.

And we are humbling – humbly presenting NextGeneration NYCHA in that same spirit of building on a legacy that was initiated by Mayor La Guardia.

Now, over 400,000 people depend on the housing authority, and it is the core – historically, the core – of all the city's efforts to create affordable housing for our people. In good times and bad, NYCHA has been a constant.

But something else has been constant in recent years, and unfortunately it's a uniformly bad thing. We've seen years of – in fact, decades – of disinvestment from the levels above us in government – from the federal government, from the state government. Not in every administration, but we certainly saw it starting especially in the early 1980s at the federal level – we saw a huge step away from commitment to affordable housing.

And unfortunately, that momentum gained over the years so that just in the years of this century – since 2001 – this New York City Housing Authority has lost over \$2 billion dollars that would have been coming to it had the previous patterns of federal and state support continued – \$2 billion dollars over the last 15 years that wasn't here to repair the buildings and help improve the quality of life for residents. And it shows.

I have spent a lot of time in public housing buildings over the years – all the folks around me have as well. You can see the difference today versus ten years ago or 20 years ago, that disinvestment has taken a toll. And we realized we had to do something fundamentally different in light of this sad trend we've seen of lack of investment from above.

So many of our buildings have fallen into disrepair, and we don't find that an acceptable situation. We believe that there are tools we can use in new ways – and powerful ways – to address these problems.

This is, at this moment, the worst financial crisis in the history of NYCHA. That's what these years of disinvestment have taken us to. And I say that with pain. I wish I did not have to say that to my fellow New Yorkers, but this is literally the worst financial crisis that NYCHA has ever encountered. And we've watched carefully over these last 16 months trying to figure out a way forward and recognizing — the trend is so clear — that something very different had to be done. Let me give you clear picture of just how bad it is. So we want to level with people about the extent of the problem.

Right now, given how our buildings have aged — obviously, many, many buildings over a half century old. There are nearly \$17 billion dollars in unmet capital needs for our housing authority buildings. All types of repairs that need to be done for the long haul and the resources have not been there. But even if you think about the day-to-day operating expenses of NYCHA — just getting by, just having enough for the housing authority to make ends meet — that has become increasingly challenging as well as we've seen less federal commitment in particular.

Right now, NYCHA has approximately one month of surplus cash on hand — one month, and after that will go into deficit. It's clear that if we don't take a fundamentally different path, there is looming danger — which has happened to other housing authorities around the country — of going into federal receivership. That is not something that we will allow to happen here, but it has happened in other places where the warning signs were not recognized in time and the commitment to change was not fast enough, and thorough enough. Here, we will make the changes and we will make them swiftly and aggressively to ensure that we can protect our residents and the long term strength of NYCHA.

What have we done just in the last 16 months? Well, we took a tax payment that NYCHA had to make to the city of New York since 1949. And we just canceled that tax payment. There's no reason that our housing authority should have to shell out money it doesn't have to pay the city of New York. We've canceled that with the support of the City Council.

[Applause]

And starting last year, we relieved NYCHA of the responsibility of paying for policing by the NYPD.

[Applause]

And we have made that a permanent change as part of the \$210 million dollars that we have spent already on safety improvements for NYCHA and relieving NYCHA's budgetary stress. And I want to make very clear, NYCHA will not on my watch — and I think I can speak for the council speaker and the council members as well — on our watch, NYCHA will never have to pay for police services, and NYCHA will never have to pay taxes to the city of New York.

[Applause]

These efforts are working. We targeted much of our investment into some of the developments that have had some of the biggest challenges with safety. And in those developments we're already seeing, since last year, a ten percent drop in violent crime. The investments are working, and I want to thank the men and women of the NYPD and I want to thank Chief Secreto for your great leadership. It's working.

[Applause]

We've committed \$300 million dollars in capital funds for major repairs. We're particularly focused on the roofs of our buildings, which are the core of some of the other problems, and on security concerns.

That's what we did up until today, but now a whole new phase begins with NextGeneration NYCHA. It goes much farther, uses every tool we have at our disposal to address the challenges of the housing authority, and make this organization sustainable for the long haul. This plan will save over ten years — \$4.6 billion dollars in capital needs — a huge game-changing amount given the challenges that NYCHA face. \$4.6 billion will be saved in capital needs. And on the expense side of the NYCHA budget, in the course of this plan we will generate a surplus of \$230 million dollars over the next decade.

So we're going from an organization that's one month away from going over the edge, in terms of its expense budget, to one that, over the next decade, will produce a \$230 million dollar surplus.

By the way, if we didn't step in now, and right the ship in terms of the expense budget of NYCHA — if the deficits just kept building and building, and you added up ten years' worth of expense deficit, it would add up to \$2.5 billion dollars by ten years from now. That's how bad the situation is, if not addressed right now.

How do we make these changes? I think a lot of work — it will be fast, it will be bold. There's a 15 point plan to accomplish two basic things.

The first — to stabilize and sustain NYCHA. To do that, we have to diversify the funding streams of NYCHA. We have to generate new revenue. We're going to use every tool we have. At the same time, ensure that NYCHA is working hand in hand with our overall goals for creating and preserving affordable housing for this city. All of these pieces go together.

Protecting NYCHA for the long haul is one of the most fundamental things we can do to keep this city affordable. We also have to fulfill our goal of building and preserving 200,000 units. So these two pieces will work hand in hand.

To begin with, there will be 10,000 new units of affordable housing created on underutilized and unutilized NYCHA property. 10,000 units in buildings that will be 100 percent affordable.

[Applause]

On other properties, we will create mixed-income units — mixed-income buildings. These will be buildings that are 50 percent affordable, 50 percent [inaudible]. The affordable buildings will be available [inaudible] — excuse me, the affordable elements of these buildings, the affordable units will be available to lower income families making no more than \$46,000 dollars a year.

We know that, in this process, we will not only greatly increase the amount of affordable housing in communities that need it, and use this land effectively to address community concerns. We'll also be able to generate new revenue for NYCHA for its dire needs. This plan will generate approximately half a billion dollars in resources for NYCHA to address its ongoing capital and expense needs. That half billion dollars will be a game changer for a housing authority that's been starved of funds for a long time.

So this plan will fundamentally allow us to improve and strengthen the housing authority, while creating a great deal more affordable housing. It will contribute a crucial piece of our affordable housing plan — almost five percent of all the units that we create and preserve will be through this plan.

Now, the vision is clear. When we find an appropriate site to develop, we will do so when we can reach those affordable housing goals — when we can ensure there will be a significant return for NYCHA —and for the development immediately around the site, particularly the development, obviously, that the site is located in.

We want to ensure that any new development helps the residents of the surrounding buildings — and these new resources can go a long way to do things like fix elevators, improve security, improve roofs. We want to make sure those resources are there for the surrounding community.

We also will make sure that when we get this new revenue, we're working with residents to determine what they believe are the key concerns and needs for this — for their building. This is a process I want to thank our Chair of — I'll introduce her in a moment — but she's really worked with great energy over the last 16 months — meeting with residents, listening to their concerns, helping them understand some of the things we could do, and taking back their ideas about what will work. And that's going to continue. I think the Chair has done a great job at listening and connecting with people in developments all over the city — and that will continue as we develop these plans further.

Now, we also need more revenue for NYCHA. And we are going to take advantage of opportunities at the federal level — new forms of federal subsidy that we think that we can use, in this day and age, more effectively to provide revenue for NYCHA. We also have to make the NYCHA operation, in general, more modern, more streamlined. We will reduce costs. We'll partner with other city agencies. We're going to take some of the obligations that NYCHA now has, and take it off their hands. And other city agencies will handle some of the key administrative functions, like the call center and the fleet maintenance.

So that's all one bucket of stabilizing and sustaining NYCHA. The second — we've got to have a better quality of life for our residents. It's long overdue. And we have to provide more service — we have to provide better and faster repairs. This is an issue that I've worked on for quite a while, including back to my time as Public Advocate. I know my colleagues at the City Council care deeply about improving the quality of service to residents.

One of the things we're going to do is give the local development managers much more freedom to make decisions — to use their budgets effectively and to hire staff, so we can do things more quickly for the residents. We've got a new repair tracking system, which will create more accountability on repairs to be made. It will literally give residents the ability to go online and see what the status of the repairs they're waiting for for their building or their unit are.

Our goal, starting with a set of developments over the next year and then expanding out throughout all the developments of the housing authority, is to set a one-week timeline for basic, straightforward repairs — a one-week timeline. We think that's what NYCHA residents deserve.

[Applause]

We're going to do a lot to improve social services for residents, to make sure they get [inaudible] support from city agencies and nonprofits that they deserve. We are — we know there are so many pieces to this equation — and you'll see, this is — this took most of a year and half to develop. And — and you'll see what a detailed and sophisticated plan it is — because the folks who worked on it, led by the Chair, put a lot of pieces together to transform the lives of residents.

It will take a lot more work from this point on. To deal with a crisis of this magnitude and do a plan like this over ten years will take a lot of work, a lot of cooperation, a lot of teamwork — with residents, with community members, with other city agencies, and, obviously, with City Hall and NYCHA working hand in hand.

And that's an important point for me to end on, before I turn to my colleagues. We in City Hall believe we have an absolute obligation to support NYCHA in this transformation. The buck stops with me and City Hall. We have got to get this right. And it's our obligation to relieve, as we've done already, some of the unfair burdens placed on NYCHA in the past, and to support NYCHA as it goes through this positive transformation.

I believe that NYCHA began as a national model. I believe it began as an idea that was so powerful because it was a place for hardworking people to find a decent home in the midst of an economic crisis. Well, today, we find ourselves in a different kind of economic crisis for so many of our families — and they need to have a decent home, and they need it to be protected. And this plan will achieve it for all who live in the housing authority.

I'm going to say a few words in Spanish before I introduce the Chair.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, again, deep appreciation to the Chair for her extraordinary work. And I want to thank your soon-to-be new member of the family for waiting just long enough —

[Applause]

– Chair Shola Olatoye!

[Applause]

[...]

Mayor: All right – we will take questions on topic, followed by questions off topic.

Emily –

Question: [inaudible] Chair Olatoye about what [inaudible]

Mayor: Impressive pronunciation, Emily.

Question: Mine is also very hard to pronounce.

Mayor: There you go.

Question: [inaudible] council members [inaudible] what are some – how are some ways they're going to go about updating [inaudible]?

Shola Olatoye, Chair, New York City Housing Authority: The question is about rent collection. So one of the – NYCHA's about housing. We are about housing people. And the – one of the largest sources of revenue that we have is through our rent collection. We also recognize that with – we have to improve services to residents to do that. So one of the things that we have done, using data, is looking at how and when people actually pay rent, and adjusting some of our own internal procedures about when rent is due, making it easier for residents to pay multiple times a month, making residents – making it available to – for automatic deposit and things online – really trying to make it as seamless as possible for residents to meet their rental obligations; and then also coordinating and working very closely with our city agencies for families who are on public assistance, like HRA, and really ensuring that there's a seamless connection between their policies around supporting families who are on public assistance and paying their rent – their rent to the housing authority.

Question: [inaudible] you are a critic of the previous mayor's [inaudible] plan. [inaudible] looks very, very similar to his, perhaps a higher ratio of affordable housing.

Mayor: Perhaps? I would say quite a higher ratio. I appreciate the editorialization in the question – you’re very good at that. This is a very different plan.

Question: It’s increasing density – as you said, these developments [inaudible].

Mayor: This is a very different plan than was presented in the past, and my colleagues can speak to this as well. So let’s deal with the facts. The previous plan was built on an 80-20 model – 80 percent market housing, 20 percent affordable housing. This plan is based on two models – 100 percent affordable housing, and 50-50. And in the 50 percent model, that 50 percent will be, again, for families that make \$46,000 a year or less – so, very much connected to the reality of so many families in this city today. Our plan explicitly addresses creating job opportunities for NYCHA residents as a result of this housing development. Our plan explicitly indicates the half-billion dollars that will go back to NYCHA to shore up its finances, but particularly benefit the developments surrounding where we will be doing this work. So I think this is the kind of change we have needed for a long time, and it does respond to the many things that there were concerns raised about over the last years that were missing in the previous plan.

Question: [inaudible] because the way it’s written here, it says that you are [inaudible] on the 50-50, and – however, you also are saying that you have the 10,000 – I think it’s 10,000 for the 100 percent – [inaudible]?

Mayor: The plan is for 10,000 units, 100 percent affordable – meaning, in 100 percent affordable buildings, and then the 50-50 units as well, which will be about 3,500 affordable units. But the next step will be in August, when we identify the first specific sites that we believe are ready to begin the development process – and we’ll obviously begin that by sitting down with residents of the development to talk about the specific plans.

Question: [inaudible] high-value land?

Mayor: Again, we –

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: Again, what we’ll do in August is announce specific sites that are ready. We have a lot of potential sites, but we don’t have a firm, specific set to begin with. We’ll announce those in August, and it will come in waves – both the 50-50 model and the 100 percent model.

Question: Mayor, [inaudible] just to get her hot water fixed [inaudible] –

Mayor: I would be concerned if we weren’t watching that like a hawk. We need the response to be better on repairs. And, obviously, one of the first things that happened when we ended the practice of charging NYCHA for police services was to devote some of that money to speeding up repairs, and that was very effective. But we’re going to continue in that vein. That seven-day standard – again, it will start in some developments in the short term, but we want to build that out over the next couple years to be the standard for the basic repairs – not the very, very complicated repairs, but the basic repairs that so many residents need. We believe a seven-day standard for those repairs is appropriate, so much so that we’ll be tracking them online publicly and giving tenants the ability to track their individual repair. So, the point is we believe that the 3-1-1 system can very effectively handle that. But more to the underlying point, we have got to stabilize the finances of the housing authority or you know who will suffer? The residents of the housing authority. If we don’t get this right, the people who live in public housing will suffer. This is one of the ways, with shifting the calls to 3-1-1, that we think we can find cost savings for NYCHA that then can be plowed back into the everyday work of the housing authority.

Either one of you want to add?

Oh, good.

Okay.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: I don't know if I can do the answer in Spanish, but if either Melissa – or, Ricky, how's your Spanish?

Melissa. Melissa.

Melissa is nominated.

Whatever the question is, on any topic, Melissa's about to answer it in Spanish.

Get ready.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: Well, I'll start – can I start – is English okay?

I'll pass to you.

In many, many developments around the city where the typical parking fee for example is \$26 a month, which is obviously well below anything that would be available on the open market – in that instance, in most parts of the city, it would go up about \$60 a month. So it will be – right now about \$26, it will go up to about \$86 a month – obviously, again, much more affordable than other options typically are. Also, relatively few NYCHA residents have vehicles to begin with. It's a – a [inaudible] what was our quote?

Unknown: [inaudible] About half of our – half of our state [inaudible].

Mayor: Right, but how many residents per se. I remember seeing this number before. We'll check it out, and we'll give you that number. It's a very small number out of 400,000-plus people. And – but we think this is the kind of thing that will be necessary, again, to shore up the fundamental financial reality of the housing authority, so we can benefit the residents.

Would you like to –

[City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito speaks in Spanish]

Mayor: Just on the previous question – I'm sorry it took us a moment to check our notes – now 10,000 parking permits are currently in effect for NYCHA residents – again, out of over 400,000 people. So, it's a relatively small number who will be affected, but, again, their spaces will be guaranteed. But over the next few years that cost will go up, again, in most places quite modestly.

Dana.

Question: Your plan includes a lot more affordable housing than Bloomberg [inaudible]. So how does this – how does that work? [inaudible].

Mayor: Well again, this based on us analyzing a market today, and the possibilities today of what we thought made sense. I don't know if Shola or Alicia – if you want to make a star turn to describe this – this particular formula, but it is based on current market conditions.

You want to add? Okay.

Chair Olatoye: So, our plan has multiple components – and with regards to the rebuild piece, there's the new construction and then there's the 50-50 scenario as well as the preservation scenario. And so it – when you take all of the projected revenues of those three components, we actually do see a fair amount of revenue to the authority as well as – and I think this is a really important part – is we're reducing our capital needs, which is ultimately why we do all of this. We chart a path to financial sustainability, so that NYCHA can, by the end of 2017, deal with the larger what by at the point we estimate will be about a \$10 billion capital need. And so that's why we do this – so that we can really tackle buildings that – half our buildings are over the age of 50. And that's the reason why NextGeneration NYCHA is so critical.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: I'll start and Shola can join in. Look, we're trying to recognize that which we know we can achieve. And it's very similar to the view we take about our affordable housing plan in general. 200,000 units of built or preserved is the outer limit of what we knew we could get our hands on and achieve. Now, we will keep fighting for a different reality, particularly in Washington, when it comes to affordable housing. And I am adamant – and again, I borrow strongly from the great example of Fiorello La Guardia on this front too – that we have to change the national debate on affordable housing and infrastructure, and the federal government has to be much more of a key contributor again. I hold out the hope if we do that well, and if we join with cities around the country that we might be able to get more of the resources we have long been waiting for. And that would be a big game-change in the whole picture, but this is what we believe we can reach. And clearly what's going to happen is we're going to make the choices as to where to put the resources where the need is greatest and how to sustain ourselves over these next ten years looking for opportunities to do better thereafter.

Just to be clear, media – okay, I'm sorry we're just doing – I believe you, but we just got to do media first then we'll here from others. Okay.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: [inaudible] get back to others who haven't gone, and then we will come back around.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: Again, we – we have a reality where NYCHA has its own budget – has for decades. And we need to relieve pressure on that budget. That's why we stopped requiring the police payment. That's why we stopped requiring the payment in lieu of taxes. And when we identify services that we can provide effectively, like the call center activity going to 3-1-1 or the fleet maintenance, that is one way that we can take costs off of NYCHA right away. We also know that some of the personnel that NYCHA's had in the past we won't be able to support, in terms of some of the administrative personnel. And so, we are going to ensure that the work keeps happening, but not on NYCHA's payroll.

Question: On the 50-50 proposal, [inaudible] targeting for the 50-50 proposal, were there any [inaudible] luxury condos –

Mayor: The only model we will accept is either the 100 percent affordable building or the 50-50 model – 50 percent market, 50 percent affordable – and again, that 50 percent affordable, all units at 60 percent – six-zero percent of the area median income or below – roughly translates to \$46,000 for a family of three, which is a typical NYCHA family.

Question: The other 50 percent [inaudible] –

Mayor: The other 50 percent would be market, but the whole point here is there's only two development models. There's no such thing as a standalone, just market – we're not looking at 80-20. There's only two models. These are building that are 100 percent affordable or they're 50-50.

Question: [inaudible] market rate apartments, could they be [inaudible]?

Mayor: The market – whatever the market will bear.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: Again, we're looking at dozens of sites, but we are going to have to – there's a lot of work to make sure that a site will work. When we believe it work for either of these models, we will then publicly announce that. We'll meet with community leaders and resident leaders, and we'll go from there.

Question: You said that a lot of NYCHA residents don't rely on [inaudible]. On Staten Island, there is a lack of public transportation options, and there's NYCHA lots, and about four of those – four exactly – are full currently. So I was just wondering, like, for Staten Islanders, they rely on cars more than other [inaudible]. So you talked a little –

Mayor: Well, first of all, I respect the question, but I want to put again in perspective – about 10,000 parking permits citywide for a total NYCHA population of over 400,000. So it's to say, it's a meaningful issue, but I do want to be putting – I want it put in perspective of the overall situation. But the point is anyone who has space will continue to have space. In most parts of city, there'll be a modest increase, but the fact is the spaces will still of course be prioritized for NYCHA residents who need them.

Question: What are the reasons you rejected Bloomberg [inaudible]? [inaudible] you didn't get feedback, didn't get a proposal from NYCHA residents. Can you talk a bit about how do you gauge support from NYCHA residents [inaudible]?

Mayor: Sure. We – and there's been, obviously, over the last year and a half, with the Chair's efforts and a lot of other people's efforts, an ongoing effort to figure out what would work for people, which is why you see a very different design than the one presented by the previous administration. I would say my colleagues here from the City Council were people who issued a lot of concerns about the previous plan. They're standing here because it's a very different plan based on their feedback. So that's going to be going – ongoing. When we go into a specific development and say, "Here is a site that we think could be utilized for one of these models," the question will be what are some of the things that the surrounding development most needs, in terms of capital investments – obviously looking for job opportunities for people from the development. That's going to be something we do in each and every case.

Let me just get everyone who hasn't had a chance. I'll give [inaudible] at the end, but let me just get anyone who hasn't had a chance yet. Go ahead.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: I'll see if we have that breakout, but let me just give you the basic ground rule. The basic ground rule will be that people who are now in some of those administrative roles will have either another opportunity in a different city agency, or they'll have an opportunity for a buy-out. So we're going to make opportunities available. There's no lay-offs in this plan. We're looking for other alternatives for those workers. You want to add? Okay. Yes.

Question: [inaudible]

Chair Olatoye: I'm sorry, I didn't hear the last part of the question.

Question: [inaudible]

Chair Olatoye: So – so, we are – and the mayor has been very clear that we need to utilize every potential federal tool at our disposal to preserve some of – to preserve our most distressed aspects of the public housing portfolio. The criteria for some of these projects will be [inaudible] physical deteriorations. HUD actually has a very specific definition around that. We also have units that actually are formerly city-state units that receive absolutely no funding. So we actually cross-subsidize them now. We have a series of units that NYCHA actually inherited from the city when it was experiencing its fiscal crisis in the 70s and 80s. They're not part of the typical tower-in-the-park public housing development. So there are – there are – our portfolio is quite diverse. And the goal here is that we will utilize all of the tools – Section 8 as well as many others that HUD is encouraging public housing authorities to use across the country – to ensure that much needed capital is delivered, that the units remain affordable permanently, and that residents do not see their rent increase beyond 30 percent of their total household income.

Mayor: The speaker wanted to add.

City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito: I think the other aspect to take into account was the – the 1,000 employees that we're talking about – not only is there attrition, but also one aspect of it is the integration of NYCHA with existing city agencies. Right now, NYCHA has been operating kind of in a silo, and on its own. Yet there is some level of involvement that is needed of other city agencies. So the idea of integration so that there – it's more fluid and that they coordinate more closely – I think is a very creative aspect and something that I had not seen before in all the conversations we've had. So I really give credit – and see how that works out – you know, whether it's Department of Buildings or any other agency. So that's a really interesting aspect as well.

Mayor: Did you have one?

Question: Mr. Mayor, some [inaudible] given up on [inaudible] and walked away from it. Do you see any future time when New York will have to do this?

Mayor: No. We are absolutely committed to public housing for the long haul, and that's why this plan is so important. Public housing is one of the most important elements of keeping New York City affordable. It is one of the core positive realities of this city – protect a place that for generations has helped working people have a decent home. And we're going to protect it for the long haul – that's the bottom line. Other cities went on a very different path. We don't believe in that path. We believe in protecting the public housing we have.

Question: Where is the state of New York on all of this? And specifically, I don't know how many weeks ago it was, but you guys were all praising the governor for committing to \$100 million on the roof repair, but apparently that's not really true anymore. Can you just tell me what you think about that? And then tell me what's going on with –

Mayor: Well, I'll start, and if the Chair wants to add. Look, the governor put forward a commitment on \$100 million. We take him at his word, and we look forward to speedily acting on that. And as you know from my budget testimony back in February in Albany, I made clear that we were ready to do more going forward and we were looking for the state to match us. So we've already put in our budget \$100 million for each of the next two years as well, and we'd like to see the state match that. Look, this is one of the areas where the state needs to do more – and again, the federal government even more on top of that.

Okay, we're going go to off-topic – off topic.

Question: So there has been some discussion on Staten Island about what the next Staten Island Ferry will be named. And I was wondering, who you would name the ferry after?

Mayor: That is a very controversial question. And I think that my ace communications staff would not want me to just wing it at this point, but have a thoughtful discussion. So I will come up with at least one if not several exciting possibilities.

Marcia –

Question: Mayor, I wonder what you would say to some of your constituents who are angry that you're out of the city last week when there [inaudible]. And I wondering what you'd say to them when they say [inaudible]?

Mayor: A mayor of New York City has to walk and chew gum at the same time, and I've talked about, again, the man I think was the greatest mayor we ever had, Fiorello La Guardia, who started the U.S. Conference of Mayors to organize mayors from around the country to demand the policies that became a lot of the key elements of the New Deal, which we benefit from to this day. I've talked to a lot of mayors over time about this, both from this city and other cities. You can't exist in the modern nation that we are and ignore the fact that there are so many resources in Washington that we deserve and we have to fight for. I was down in Washington on Wednesday with a bipartisan coalition of mayors, meeting with top leaders of the Senate and the House, on the need for a larger transportation bill and a long-term transportation bill. What would that mean for New York City? Well, if the president's proposal were passed, it would mean \$1.2 billion more each year over six years – it would mean, for us, probably – for the metropolitan area, I should say. It would mean for New York City probably a minimum of half-a-billion dollars a year. Over that six-year plan, \$3 billion to fix roads, bridges, highways, mass transit. That is worth fighting for. And that is worth going to Washington for. And it's certainly worth doing as La Guardia did – organizing other mayors to make that demand. And we heard from congressional leaders that that was important to them. Equally, trying to change some of the discussion in this country so we can address some of the bigger challenges facing New York City and other cities. A higher minimum wage is a key example; progressive taxation. We can't do all the things we need on our own. We're trying with every tool we have. But listen to the story we're telling today – well, if you wanted the federal government to get back in the affordable housing business, one of the only ways to get there is with a more progressive tax system. The Buffet Rule I've talked about, proposed by Warren Buffet, that no millionaire or billionaire should pay a lower tax rate than their own secretary, for example – that is projected to net about \$70 billion a year in federal revenue if that simple change were made. And I think it's a change, by the way, probably the vast majority of Americans would agree with, that would make a huge impact on the federal budget and would be the kind of gateway to resources for affordable housing for New York City and other cities. So I have to fight for those things while working on issues like this right here, using our own resources to shore up our public housing.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: There will be an ongoing discussion, and, you know, we now have one budget under our belt. And we had a very good process last year with the Council. We're going through a good process now. I don't project the outcome — that's not responsible. I — I've said what I think, the Speaker's made her point of view clear and the Council's point of view, and we'll go into negotiations. And we'll have a result not in months — we'll have a result within probably 5 weeks. Stay tuned.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: You know, this is something I've heard so many times, and — and it frustrates me. There are many people who will tell you that we shouldn't change the minimum wage — as if we're living in a society that's economically fair right now, and we can just go with the status quo. This status quo isn't working for many,

many New Yorkers, and many people around the country. And the idea — the historic idea of the minimum wage was that it was a wage you could live on. Does anyone believe that about today's minimum wage? Does anyone believe that a family, you know, breadwinner working 40 hours a week at that wage could possibly take care of a family in New York City today? No. I've talked about a vision for increasing the state minimum wage — which, obviously, as we know here, the state and federal government get to make that decision. We don't. But, I've talked about a vision of increasing the state minimum wage, giving New York City an option to go up to 30 percent more. We would take that immediately to \$13 dollars an hour. We would have indexing under the vision that I have — and a lot of other people I know agree with this. That would get us to \$15 an hour within the next two years. That would finally allow us to offer working people a decent living — and only the beginning. We obviously have to do a lot to try and take people farther than that. But this notion that, somehow, we could just rest on our laurels — it's never made sense to me. It, bluntly, is part of the reality that's allowed a very small number of people in this country to do very, very well, and a huge percentage of Americans to struggle. That status quo is broken. And this fight for the \$15 dollar minimum wage all over the country is stirring. You know, a few weeks ago, 200 cities had simultaneous demonstrations for \$15 dollar minimum wage around the country. That is a — a major historical moment. Something is changing, and I think that the lie has been put — put to the argument in that advertisement.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: I don't know the wages for New Yorkers. I — I do not know the factual — hmm? Oh, our living wage law? I will get you the chapter and verse on our living wage law.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: I think Ritchie Torres is going to have strong feelings on this one.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: I think we need to educate our friends from Coors on the proper way to talk about the Bronx. They obviously haven't spent a lot of time around here. So they need to bring their cool refreshing beers here, and learn how to speak properly about the Bronx.

Thank you.

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