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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES EXTENSIVE PLAN TO INSTALL SECURITY BOLLARDS TO PROTECT NEW YORKERS, TOURISTS, AND CITY'S INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Welcome everybody. And thanks for coming out here, it's a very important announcement today. Even though it's very cold out we wanted you to see up close these new bollards and what they're going to mean for the safety of the people of this city.

I want to thank all my colleagues who are here. You will hear from a few of them in a moment. A special thank you to Deputy Commissioner John Miller, Chief Jim Waters, Chief Bill Morris, everyone who has been part of helping us get to this day.

On Sunday night the NYPD proved once again why they're the greatest police force in the world. Huge celebration of New Year's Eve here in Times Square and it came off beautifully, it came off without a hitch, people were protected. Once again the eyes of the world were on New York and the NYPD was up to the task. And we now are celebrating the safest year in New York City since the 1950s. We are so proud of that. We are celebrating a number of crime – amount of crime reduction that is absolutely amazing, the lowest number of homicides since 1951. And more clearly than ever we are the safest big city in America.

We know though, we have to keep working to make this city even safer. And we understand what's happened around the world and we even saw some tragedies here. The horrible attack in November on the West Side and the tragic incident here in Times Square in May. We know we have to do even more to keep people safe. And that's why we conducted a review on how best to secure our streets and public spaces. And we formulated a plan of action.

Over the past few months you've seen around the city in key locations temporary barriers. And that was necessary to immediately secure those areas in light on these new trends we've seen. But we knew we needed long-term solutions, we needed permeant barriers. And that they had to integrate into the life of the city. They had to still allow people to get around because these are some of the busiest streets in the world, people have to be able to get around but they have to be safe at the same time. These new bollards will allow us to do that.

We're announcing today a \$50 million investment in protective measures at key locations around the city. And that will include the installation of over 1,500 permeant bollards like the ones you see here behind us. And these bollards will make sure that the vehicles can never come into the places where pedestrians are.

I want to thank everyone in the City Council for focusing on this issue and passing key legislation that led to the study and led to this plan. And I also want to thank the Council for their support of the investments we need to protect ourselves against attacks. I want to tell you these are the most cowardly kind of attacks. When someone with a vehicle plows into a group of innocent pedestrians, it's disgusting. But we know there are some out there who mean to do us evil and we will protect against it.

It's also important to recognize that sometimes we've seen tragedies that were not based on an attack. We've seen cars that just spun out of control or reckless drivers, or someone who, God forbid, had a heart attack while driving. We've seen cars go into pedestrian areas. We want to make sure in some of the most heavily traveled areas of this city that these bollards protect against those kind of tragedies as well.

And this certainly is consistent with someone that we're so proud of which is the Vision Zero initiative, which also had a banner year in 2017 and saved more lives. It's also consistent with making sure we protect people in every neighborhood. It's another way of thinking about what we can do street by street, block by block to make people safer.

We are the safest big city in America and we need to make sure we have the safest streets and the safest sidewalks as well. And this major investment will help us to be even safer going forward.

I just want to say a few words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that I want to thank for his leadership, and I want to congratulate him today, and I'm going to be congratulating him a lot this week for an absolutely historic achievement in making this the safest big city in America. Our Commissioner, Jimmy O'Neill.

**Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill:** Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for coming out into the cold with us once again. If you worked on Sunday night or yesterday, you're probably still thawing out.

First of all, Happy New Year to everyone. We had a safe event here on Sunday night. Thousands of cops, once again, spent time away from their families to make sure they do what they do best and that's to keep New Yorkers safe.

Everything we do in the New York City Police Department is geared toward keeping people safe and that will always be our obligation. No matter how low, we're able to push down crime and violence. And the people who live in, work in, and visit New York City deserve to not only be safe they deserve to feel safe too.

We're a very busy city as you know – more than 8.5 million people plus the millions more who come in daily to work or to enjoy this great city. These additional safety bollards will allow us to better protect many of our landmark locations, and many of the areas most frequently used for recreation.

It will also help us keep – keep order as it relates to all the competing vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic that defines our great city.

We need to keep as many of our spaces as welcoming as possible while also making sure they're safe as possible too.

Thank you to the Mayor, Commissioner Trottenberg, and the City's Security Infrastructure Working Group for devoting some real resources toward this important plan.

We'll continue to work with our law enforcement and other partners at the state level too as we make our way forward together. Thank you very much.

Thanks.

**Mayor:** And a tremendous partner with the NYPD in this work has been the Department of Transportation, making sure that these bollards will keep us safe but also allow people to get around, again, in the busiest place in the world. I want to welcome our Transportation Commissioner, Polly Trottenberg.

**Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Good morning. Happy New Year. It's great to stand here with you and Police Commissioner O'Neill and Counterterrorism Commissioner Miller – maybe I'll wait until the siren goes by.

And we're thrilled, as DOT, to be part of the City's Security Infrastructure Working Group that is looking with the resources you've given us, Mr. Mayor, to improve the safety and security of so many of the iconic pedestrian spaces in New York City.

And from DOT's point of view, we obviously want to make sure that these spaces are inviting, that pedestrians can flow, that people feel safe, but can also enjoy the public spaces.

So, thank you so much for the resources and we look forward to continuing the work with these new resources.

**Mayor:** Thank you so much, Commissioner. We are working with our colleagues in elected offices at all levels because we understand this is a challenge facing this city but it's also a challenge facing our nation.

And I want to welcome a member of Congress who has taken the lead on this issue nationally in making sure that there be a federal strategy and federal support for these type of safety measures – Congress Member Adriano Espaillat.

[...]

Thank you, Congressman. We are in the district of Council member Corey Johnson. I also will note that I think tomorrow's going to be a very important day for the Council member and for the whole city.

So, I welcome him and I warmly congratulate him in advance – Council Member Corey Johnson.

[...]

Thank you. I finally want to bring up a man who, as you heard, originated the legislation to get the study done so we could lock down a plan and start getting these bollards in place. I want to thank him for his leadership and for everything he's done as Chair of the Transportation Committee in the Council – Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez.

[...]

Thank you, brother. Thank you very much. Everyone, this is an important day for the city, important progress. There will be more to come but we wanted you to see as this begins what this means for the people of this city.

With that, everybody, again, a very Happy New Year and stay warm. Thank you.

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