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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS BREAKS GROUND ON MAJOR COASTAL
RESILIENCE PROJECT**

Deputy Mayor Meera Joshi, Operations: Good morning, everyone. We're gathered here today to commemorate the 10 year anniversary of Hurricane Sandy. I'm Meera Joshi, deputy mayor for operations for the City of New York. I'm in charge of oversight of the city's infrastructure. That's the concrete, the steel, the roads, the parks, the beaches, the buildings, that were devastated. But more importantly, in the face of Hurricane Sandy, they failed to save lives. 44 lives were lost, and it's an utmost importance that we don't forget. So I'd like to take a moment of silence, so we can remember those lives that were lost and the open gap that still remains with the families of those who lost loved ones. Thank you. Please join me.

The devastation of Hurricane Sandy was of a scale never seen before. 70 percent of our land was flooded, 2.5 million residents without power, \$19 billion of damages and economic loss, 9,000 homes ruined, and 44 lives lost. New Yorkers showed resilience in the days after the aftermath. They helped each other. And now, we turn to different forms of resilience, over the years, in the decade that has passed. Long term coastal resilience, storm water sewer expansion, elevating hospitals, stopping emissions from our buildings, and reducing emissions. And now, we celebrate, today, the continuation of that resiliency work. And we've had many partners along that journey. I want to call out a few of them that are here with us today. Senator Leroy Comrie, City Council Member Christopher Marte, City Council Member Julie Menin, U.S. Congressman

Jerrold Nadler, State Senator... Ah, Leroy Comrie, your name was twice on my list. I think that means you're doubly important.

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards. I don't know if he's here, but I want to recognize him. City Council Member Carlina Rivera, City Council Member Keith Powers, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams. And I also want to recognize a few organizations that have been pivotal to the resiliency work the city's undertaken. Partnership for New York City and Kathy Wylde, the RPA, Battery Park City Authority, and the Downtown Alliance. Now I'd like to turn the microphone over to Trevor Holland, who will give his personal account of the struggles and the aftermath and the devastation and the work afterwards from Hurricane Sandy. Thank you. Trevor.

Trevor Holland, President, Two Bridges Towers Resident Association: Thank you for that introduction. As she said, my name is Trevor Holland and I'm the president of the Two Bridges Towers Resident Association. I actually live in that tan building right behind us, and I've lived there for the past 25 years. I'd like to thank and welcome everyone to my neighborhood. Nearly 10 years ago, to this date, I stood here watching the East River breach the water's edge. It was a frightful day, but it also made me realize our vulnerability and that we live on an island. Superstorm Sandy ravaged this community. The storm decimated my building. We were without power, elevators, and critical supplies for months, but we were not down.

This diverse working class neighborhood of Two Bridges showed our true resilience with neighbors and families alike, supporting and helping each other through difficult times. Our advocacy for storm and coastal protection has led us to this point. This path has been challenging, but we are elated to see this historic investment from New York City and the federal government of over a half a billion dollars. For many years, neighborhoods like Two Bridges, which is an environmental justice area, were traditionally underserved and underinvested, especially with respects to infrastructure projects.

Flood protection projects in tight urban constraints are difficult. But through many, many community meetings and with ongoing community engagement, we are able to stand here today, knowing that, upon completion, Two Bridges will be protected and fully resilient. This project will not only add neighborhood amenities, but will preserve our waterfront connection and our views to the waterfront. This groundbreaking is not just a celebration of this community. It is indicative of the city's overall responsive resilience, which is unmatched in the United States. Thank you.

Deputy Mayor Joshi: Thank you, Trevor. I'd like to now pass the microphone over to our mayor, Eric Adams, who continues to get stuff done to make our city the most resilient in the nation.

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you. Thank you, Meera. Thank you. And I really want to thank you, Trevor. Because sometimes, in politics, we look at the political aspects, but we ignore the human aspects of it. And his personal narrative of how the storm impacted his life is something we should all reflect on. And those stories we've heard over and over again, during my time as borough president, watching what took place along our coastal area. Just bring back so many memories of going out to Coney Island and watching just the total devastation of watching the bay reach the sea and just seeing the loss of homes and how it impacted us as a city. And we want to just thank all our partners. I think the deputy mayor is right. We are coming together and we're unified. No matter what political ideologies you may have, we are united around the resiliency of our city, to protect us against the uncertainties of storms that are impacting us every day.

So I want to thank all my partners who are here. The deputy may have mentioned their names, but I just truly appreciate the partnership that they're showing. And also, this administration, as well as previous administrations of Michael Bloomberg and Bill de Blasio, they dealt with the devastating, unprecedented storm that hit our shores. And one can look at it and do an analysis in the rear view. But the reality of no one knew what to expect and everything was not done perfect, but they were dedicated. And I want to thank both of them, former Mayor Bloomberg and former Mayor Bill de Blasio, for what they have done and what we will continue to do. And we're going to work hard to do as they did, and promote the recovery and resiliency of our city. And today, we want to talk about a couple of things.

One, we're going to talk about the problems we face as a coastal community in the era of climate change. Two, we're going to talk about the work we've done to make New York City more resilient. And we're going to talk about the work ahead. And finally, we're going to talk about the help we need, because this isn't a problem that can be solved on just New York City's dime. It must be a problem that must be faced by the entire federal government as we look at the coastal cities. 10 years ago this week, New Yorkers saw what a storm super-charged by climate change can do to a city. Flooded subways, week-long blackout downtown, riding downtown, seeing this city in darkness, both with lights off and just the spirit of the people were devastated. Thousands of New Yorkers without homes, without water, without utilities, billions in property damage.

And most importantly, as the deputy mayor reflected on, 44 New Yorkers lost their lives. And we still feel that pain, and the family members are feeling the pain. Even 10 years later, the pain

does not dissipate. It is as real each time we acknowledge this day. Sandy was not just a storm. It was a warning. It was letting us know what the future looks like. Storms like Sandy, they were once estimated by scientists to occur once every 100 years. That has changed. They're becoming stronger and more frequent due to our rapidly warming planet. We don't have another hundred years to prepare. We have to prepare now. Climate change is here. It's clear, and it is a present danger. And we're going to do everything we can to prepare our city and to protect New Yorkers. We know that another storm could hit New York City at any time, and it's something we must be ready for and we must be ready now. And every day going forward, that preparation must continue to grow.

That's why New York City has embarked on the single largest urban climate adaptation project in the country along our waterfront and just north of here. And to build on that, the Brooklyn Bridge-Montgomery Coastal Resiliency Project, which will exist right where we are standing. We'll be breaking ground on this in just a few moments, but this is how serious and how committed we are. Once this is in place, moveable flood walls will protect the Two Bridges neighborhood of Manhattan when needed while continuing to preserve views and access to the waterfront when they are not being utilized. We understand that we will not be imprisoned to the storm, but we must be prepared for the storm. We're also announcing a new initiative, Climate Strong Communities, a new citywide climate strategy that will boost resiliency efforts throughout the five boroughs, especially in high need areas that historically face deeper impact as a result of climate change.

Equity and environmental justice are essential to our climate strategy. For far too long, communities have been left behind, based on their zip code and based on their economics. The Climate Strong Community Initiative will lead to model projects that protect these neighborhoods and can be replicated across the entire five boroughs. Kizzy will talk about these efforts in just a moment. These efforts represent just some of the work we are doing all over this city to protect New Yorkers from the next superstorm. Just yesterday, our Department of Parks announced they've completed 100 Sandy-related capital projects, from boardwalk renovation to the replacement of 10,000 trees lost in the storm, installing floodgates at Asser Levy Park and launching FloodNet, which now has over 30 flood sensors citywide. But even as we continue to rebuild and recover from Sandy, we're working to build up new defenses in this new era.

I want to point out, we are creating an entirely new class of infrastructure to protect our city. These infrastructure projects, like the East Side Coastal Resiliency project we unveiled earlier this year, are complex, ambitious, and unparalleled in any other American city. Many of our other resiliency projects remain in various stages of completion. This kind of work is generational, and it involves significant long-term planning and needs regular and reliable resiliency funding. Every year, the federal government directs regular funding into items like highways and transit. We need the same for resiliency projects. It must be built into the capital

plan for the national and federal government, a dedicated, reliable stream that the entire country can tap into. We need the federal government to help shore up these resources, because we have at least \$8.5 billion in critical coastal protection projects we need to complete. It will cost more to bail out New York City than to protect it.

Let's think in advance. Let's act in advance. Let's build in advance. For every \$1 spent preparing for natural disasters, we save \$6 we spend picking up the pieces afterwards. So I'll say it again. We need regular, reliable resiliency funding to bolster our defenses, prevent damage, and save lives and money. We also need the federal government to take other measures to ensure city's better prepared. Projects should not be held up because of FEMA's funding caps or any other bureaucratic reason. We need to get out of the way of getting this work done immediately. That is why I'm also asking for our partners on the federal level to increase the maximum amount of funding allowed for projects under FEMA's Building Resiliency Infrastructure and Communities Program. No one has been a better partner for us than Congressman Nadler, who joins us. And we want to thank you, congressman, for your partnership and your work in this area.

The resiliency efforts work must continue and be in place when we need it. Hurricane Sandy damaged thousands of homes, as the numbers were indicated by the deputy mayor. We know the loss and loss were so significant. We cannot afford to have another Sandy-type damage happen to this city. Our state partners can help as well by granting progressive design-build authorization. We're working closely with our partners as always, and the significant leader in this area, and I guess that's why your name was mentioned twice, Senator Leroy Comrie has been just forward-thinking in this area and I want to thank him. State law currently does not permit us to sign with contractors until the design of a project is complete. Progressive design-build would allow us to cut through the red tape and hire and work with contractors from the beginning, making bigger projects more faster and more cost efficient.

Senator Comrie's legislation will advance this concept. We need to get it passed and we may need to make sure he gets the support he needs to get this done. The administration, however, is not waiting to take action. We're working on all fronts to protect our city and prevent future tragedies. Just a few days ago, the administration celebrated the announcement of more than a dozen initial recommendations. A team of experts from various fields that make up our capital reform task force brainstormed for months, led by Deputy Mayor Lorraine Grillo, first deputy mayor. We put together a plan of action and a list of recommendations. We came up with ways we can cut red tape, make progress, move faster, and ensure the process for large projects like these move forward in an expeditious fashion. We're fortunate New York City has been spared a direct hit from a coastal storm like Sandy. The damage and loss of life from Hurricane Ida, just last year, showed us just how damaged and dangerous these storms are.

Climate change is real and its impacts, they are also real. We need to stay focused and think ahead. We need help from every level of government: federal, state, and city. And we need it before the next coastal storm comes to our city. This is not the time for delay, not the time for debate, it's not the time for red tape or blue ribbon panels. It's time for New York City, New York State, and America to get stuff done to prevent the next devastation. Thank you.

Deputy Mayor Joshi: Thank you very much, mayor. This is a collaborative process. We're the focal point of the nation, so it takes federal, state, and city working together to make resiliency reality. Next I'd like to introduce Kizzy Charles-Guzman, executive director of the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice, a New Yorker who has dedicated her life to ensuring that all New Yorkers stay safe in the face of our climate crisis.

Kizzy Charles-Guzman, Executive Director, Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice: Good morning everybody and thank you deputy mayor. You know, 10 years ago today, as you've heard, Hurricane Sandy really devastated our city. It really was a wake up call for how vulnerable our city is to coastal storms, and a reminder that not all communities are impacted equally or have the ability to recover as quickly as others. In the years following Sandy, we that are gathered here today, our agency partners, our state and federal government partners, community groups and the scientific community, have made tremendous efforts to make sure that our city is safer and more prepared, not only for the next coastal storm but for all the risks that our changing climate is bringing to our city. Projects like the one we're breaking ground on today, BMCR for short, are incredible feats of engineering.

New York's Neighborhood-Scale Coastal Protection Projects are an entirely new class of infrastructure and among the largest and most ambitious and technically complex coastal infrastructure projects in the entire world. And we're initiating them in a dense urban environment, and that is not easy and it's not fast. BMCR will protect the vibrant and diverse Two Bridges neighborhood and includes vital play and recreation space that dramatically improves what we have now. Projects like this are a signature mission of this administration's resiliency work, and build on the tireless effort of every city agency and every mayoral administration since Hurricane Sandy. They are the work of generations, but there are many tools in our toolbox to confront climate change and we must use all of them. Climate resiliency is more than flood walls. We need to invest and plan projects that keep New Yorkers safe from all types of climate impacts. We need projects that protect people in the near term and that are tailored to meet community needs and community wants, projects that focus on environmental quality today.

This is why we are launching Climate Strong Communities. It is the next generation of adaptation planning for New York City. They're multi hazard, they focus on environmental justice, and they're proactive instead of reactive. We know far more about planning for climate hazards in 2022 than we did in 2012. New York communities must not only be Sandy-strong, they must be climate-strong. Our city, yes, is vulnerable to storms like Sandy, but also to extreme heat, which kills far more people than storms do, and also extreme rainfall like we experienced during Hurricane Ida, and chronic flooding during high tides as a result of sea level rise. Climate Strong Communities is considering all of those challenges and the unique ways in which they impact our communities.

It focuses on areas that were not addressed by Sandy recovery funding, and areas that face disproportionate impact as a result of climate change. These projects will be grounded in climate justice and understanding that the same communities that have been historically overburdened by social, economic, and health disparities are also the most vulnerable to a rapidly changing climate. When we take a one size fits all approach to resiliency, we leave people out and we leave out solutions that may not work for a particular neighborhood's risks and needs. This is why as we design these projects, we will be thoughtfully engaging with communities. It won't be top down. We commit to collaborate with them to find the solutions that they want to see and that will protect them. We will do this for the years ahead and for the months and the weeks and the days.

Finally, again, Climate Strong Communities is proactive. The federal government is releasing billions of dollars in infrastructure investment in JOBS Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, yes. And Climate Strong Communities is specifically designed to unlock that money. We have to be ready when those rules come out. So when Hurricane Sandy roared through our city causing this tragic loss of life and devastation of our homes, our hospitals, our neighborhoods, businesses and infrastructure, we were forced to be reactive. With Climate Strong Communities, New Yorkers, it's about becoming proactive, taking our city into the future, making sure the future generations will be able to continue to call New York City our home. Thank you.

Deputy Mayor Joshi: Thank you very much, Kizzy. As the mayor noted, we need federal formula dollars because resiliency work is infrastructure and it's reoccurring infrastructure. The need is not going away and it's getting more important every day. Kizzy noted what we can do as a city to ensure that we're poised to leverage all the competitive grant money that's out there by designing resiliency projects throughout the city, beyond the Sandy footprint. And now I'd like to welcome Senator Comrie who can describe the tools the state is able to provide the city so that we can get these projects up and running quickly, given what we know is an extremely complex construction environment, which is New York City. Thank you.

New York State Senator Leroy Comrie: Good morning everyone. I'm pleased to be here this morning. I want to thank the Mayor's Office and his team. I'm honored. I serve as a state senator for the 14th Senate district in Queens. Again, I want to thank Mayor Eric Adams, Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi, New York City DEP Commissioner and Chief Climate Officer Rohit Aggarwala, Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice Kizzy Charles-Guzman. I'm kind of surprised I'm speaking ahead of Congressman Jerry Nadler because I normally follow protocol and respect. So excuse me congressman, because you bring the money and we have to spend it wisely, but I just want to say apologizing to my other colleagues in government, the Council members, good morning to you also. And also I have to thank my former colleague and my brother from another mother, Jimmy Oddo, who is here this morning. Thank you Jimmy. Good to see you. Thank you for being part of this team also.

It's not given enough knowledge that the mayor has a diverse team of people, not just Democrats, but people that care about the city, Republicans, independents, people that want to see this city get stuff done, as the mayor says. So I also want to thank Trevor Holland, Two Bridges resident. And I have to shout out my main activist in Queens, Barbara Brown for the Eastern Queens Alliance for the everyday work they do to keep pushing the bar higher for us as public officials to address climate issues. They gave me a lot to say here, but I'm trying not to be repetitive. We already know what the BMCR project is doing. We know that the city is doing a lot of new work, so I'm going to jump right to what I'm trying to do and what I was honored to do as a state legislator.

The city is doing as much as it can to be back, but there's so much more that needs to be done by the state and federal government. One of the ways that I've been able to assist, I'm honored to be chair of the State Senate's Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions. I was able to advance the first design-build legislation back in 2019. I was able to pass the New York Public Works Investment Act, which allowed city agencies to use the first design-build iteration, which emphasizes collaboration, efficiency, and risk reduction, which is a fancy way of saying that we can open and build libraries, fire stations, and all construction facilities sooner and with much lower cost. It has also been able to accelerate all projects. In fact, the state and the city used... The state used design-build to replace the dilapidated Kosciuszko Bridge, which you know where that is, which saved over \$873 million. And that project came in under budget and nearly four years ahead of schedule.

And with design-build, the city's already saved \$1 billion in construction costs because of the efficiency of the design-build project. Eventually, in making sure that we can have more money and use our money more progressively and be able to do additional projects. Because we still have major flooding in Southeast Queens, throughout Queens, as you know, from the last two hurricanes. And any type of heavy water now you see flooding all around the city. We are pushing a new legislation, which is called progressive design-build, which will be passed, not if,

will be passed next year and signed into law, we'll have a more accelerated project completion tool in our toolbox. Progressive design-build has significant advantages that will make key city projects, which are critically needed for our resiliency goals, more achievable.

A few key points are: reduced change orders within the agreed scope of work after the contract is executed, the ability to expedite parts of the project due to having one entity working for and making decisions, and creating higher quality outcomes with reduced costs due to modes of efficiency. These are just a few of the advantages that would make progressive design-build a boon to our city and state as we prepare and prevent places like Staten Island, Lower Manhattan, Southeast Queens, and the Rockaways from facing the irrevocable havoc that these hurricanes have been heaping upon our city. It's been a tough two years for our city and our state as we recover from multiple crises. And I am greatly appreciative of the partnership and the willingness of the Adams administration to champion my bill, which is Senate Bill 9314-A for you detail geeks. You can take a look at it. And the Assembly version sponsored by Assemblyman Ed Bronstein, Assembly Bill Number 10467.

I hope to work with all of you and to meet with all of the leaders and people around the state so that we can gain more insight on how to keep New York City moving forward as we take on the challenge of climate change together. I want to thank again the mayor. I want to remind people that as we are commemorating the issues of Sandy and going to other events around Sandy and the personal issues that happened. Sandy was devastating for my communities. My home was without power. My office had no power. We had to work remotely for weeks. I had to work in different places that were open in and around. Sandy impacted us greatly. The Progressive Design Bill will save the city literally billions of dollars, creating more opportunity to use our federal dollars wisely that we will be getting, and creating the opportunity to do at least more formal additional projects that are surely needed to make sure that we can protect our city. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you everyone.

Deputy Mayor Joshi: Thank you, Senator Comrie. And now we will pass the mic over to Congressman Nadler, but we did want to set the stage, congressman, that we are prepared for the money that I'm sure the federal government will unlock. So you've heard our plans and now we'd love to hear how we can get support.

U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler: Well, thank you very much. There is no threat more existential to the future of New York City or the world than that posed by the climate crisis. Superstorm Sandy showed that 10 years ago here in New York City. The devastation and destruction by Hurricane Ian showed that on the west coast of Florida a few weeks ago. And Hurricanes Fiona and Maria showed how the threat of climate change is affecting Puerto Rico.

And the lesson that we must all learn is that we must act and make our city more resilient to handle not just hurricanes, but rising sea levels too. As dean of the New York Congressional Delegation, I have advocated and fought for recovery aid for New York City. I'm proud that Congress allocated \$50 billion after Superstorm Sandy, with about \$17 billion coming directly to New York City.

As I mentioned, I've long advocated for desperately needed resiliency measures to be implemented after Superstorm Sandy. And today's announcement on the 10th anniversary of that devastating storm is an important step in protecting New York City from future storms. As we enter the construction, design, and engineering phase of many of these projects, I look forward to working with our federal, city, and state partners to make our waterfront resilient and continuing to engage in robust dialogue with community members to make sure their needs are met. And finally, I want to thank Mayor Adams and his administration for continuing this important work and making these projects a priority. And I can only say I will continue to do everything in my power to see that the funding necessary is there. Thank you very much.

Deputy Mayor Joshi: Thank you, Congress Member Nadler, and we truly appreciate your advocacy. We will now turn over to on-topic question and answers.

Mayor Adams: Katie, how are you?

Question: Good, Mayor Adams. Good, thanks. I just have some questions. It's a two part question on these walls or dams. Sorry, I don't have the official title. The first is, why wouldn't this be implemented throughout this side of the coast? Especially I know the ESCR project, I know part of that is federal money as well. It was very controversial and the destruction of the park because of it. Why was this ruled out as an option? And secondly, what are the weather conditions that would trigger this wall going up? And can it be done easily or is there a certain company that could do it?

Commissioner Thomas Foley, Department of Design and Construction: Good morning. My name is Tom Foley, I'm commissioner with the Department of Design and Commission. We started north of here at East Side Coastal Resiliency in order to protect 110,000 residents, 28,000 of which are in public housing. We then, proceeding both north from a design standpoint, but also here at BMCR. It's a \$350 million project, federally funded, and it's also protecting over 45,000 residents. We're installing over 100 flip up gates. Just north of us here is East River Park, obviously, from a geographical standpoint, we have a lot of space. We're raising the park nine

feet here, we're using gates. So we're adapting obviously to the environment and to the landscape.

Mayor Adams: What conditions? What conditions...

Question: And then what would trigger... Can it all be done internally and can be done by DDC, or is there a third party that would be required to put those walls up?

Commissioner Foley: So as far as from an emergency response, it's going to be handled both with emergency response, with Zach and his team, and also Commissioner Rodriguez and DOT. So there's a set team that's going to be responding basically 72 hours out in the event of a storm event. 93 of the gates that are here are hydraulically powered. Literally press a button and the gate will come up within basically one or two minutes. The other 18 gates are manual. One is with a generator, and the mayor had closed that gate about two months ago in record time, both the mayor and the first deputy mayor in about 20 minutes. So each one's different, but in this area, it's going to be 72 hours out that it's going to be worked on by a city team.

Question: Question, on the funding. How much of the \$50 million allocated post-Sandy still exists? And if it doesn't, what's the funding mechanism to pay for this? And secondly, I've seen 2035 as the completion date to make this area fully flood protected. If 2035 is the actual date, is 23 years after Sandy really responding to the crisis in an urgent way?

Mayor Adams: Okay. First we'll get the funding, if you have that, Tom. Okay, we'll get that funding information. But I noticed you were a little late. I know it's your birthday, so you may have been hanging out late. If you're going to hang out with the boys, you got to get up with the men. (Laughter.) You know the rules. Know the rules. So happy birthday to you.

These are complex, unprecedented projects. And when you're building something of this magnitude, I know 72 percent of the money has been spent, I think 27 percent is still remaining. I think Brad gave a good report. We're going to look at some of those recommendations. But these projects have never been built before. And so we don't want to move at a rapid pace just to say, "Okay, we spent the money." No, we have to get it right. We have to get it right.

What we're doing here is going to set the course for other municipalities who are coastal cities. There's always a desire to say we're going to just spend all the money that was allocated. The previous administrations, they did the right thing by getting it right, we're going to get it right. And that 27 percent that's remaining of those projects have been identified, but it's about making sure these projects are done correctly.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Adams: How you doing?

Question: Okay. How are you?

Mayor Adams: Good.

Question: How tall are these walls and where are they when they're not in use? Do they come up out of the water? Do they come up out of the ground?

Commissioner Foley: So yes, the walls will be nine feet high. They'll be actually recessed, so 99 percent of the time they will provide the views and the access to the residents and to the community. And just to go back as far as the question from the birthday boy, the project will be complete by 2026, both here and also at East Side Coastal Resiliency. So \$2 billion worth of work, we're currently on budget and on schedule.

Question: Who presses the button to make them go up?

Commissioner Foley: Well, I would say the mayor. I don't want to put him on the spot, but by a dedicated city team that's going to be adapting that's already collected and going through exercises as far as from a resiliency standpoint, storm events.

Question: Hi mayor, how are you?

Mayor Adams: What's up, Steve?

Question: Good to see you. You mentioned in your remarks that this is not a time for debate. I'm sure the Council members behind you can tell you that these are often very contentious projects. How do you balance the need for community buy-in with the urgency that climate change demands?

Mayor Adams: I know Councilman Rivera and I, we were at the coastal gate together. She's from the previous administration. She served previously. Having someone with the insight that she brings, understanding that a lot of her district is around coastal areas, I think that experience is going to help. Good, healthy dialogue we believe is important. But we should not get in the way of something that we all agree that we need to protect our coastal areas. And when you look behind us from Julie Menin and others, we have really received some good support that we are in alignment on making sure we get this right, and we all understand the urgency of this moment.

Question: Hey Mr. Mayor...

Mayor Adams: Good God, man.

Question: How's it going?

Mayor Adams: How are you?

Question: I'm all right.

Mayor Adams: Those two beautiful children, they got their looks from their mom. (Laughter.)

Question: I told her that. She liked that remark. Lander's report on the resiliency efforts, it noted that the percentage of funding that's allocated, that hasn't been spent on East Side Coastal Resiliency, only 13.3 percent has been spent according to him. The raise shorelines, only 0.3 percent.

You talked about cutting red tape and Senator Comrie talked about design-build. Can you offer some more specifics as far as how those things and other measures you might have in mind are going to accelerate the process? What red tape do you think needs to be cut, and how much time do you expect design-build might shave off things?

Mayor Adams: You may want to talk about design-build, but we want to be clear that... And Leroy can go in the importance of his build. But what we need to wrap our heads around is the complexity of these projects. We are not talking about just building a highway or just building a building or just building a wall. We are going into unknown territory of building projects at this level of complexity. Even without design-build, there's a difficult challenge to do. And design-build is going to take away some of the historical bureaucracy that gets in the way and let us work directly with the contractor. But Leroy, this is your bill.

Deputy Mayor Joshi: I can also speak quickly to the pace of spending. These are complex design projects, so design does occupy a large portion of the time period to get to a final built product but it's actually the cheapest part. The heaviest spend part is at the end with construction. So as we get into construction, the pace of spending accelerates tremendously. Design is the most complex, but it's where the least amount of money is spent.

If you look at something like progressive design-build, you can see how that can cut that timeline down. Progressive design-build says the contractor and the owner, which is the city, rip up the street together, look in there, and decide what the scope is together. And that is something that's not done. It's now currently being used by Battery Park City for them to build their resiliency wall and it's the kind of tool that would make building our resiliency walls and all of our coastal resiliency much quicker. Because we could combine that scoping and design, collapse it into one by both being able to see, because Lord knows what's underneath our streets when we rip them up. It's spaghetti. So we need to be able to do that with information as we scope out these projects. And I want to turn it over to Senator Comrie, who could speak to the efficiency and savings of progressive design-build.

State Senator Comrie: Thank you, deputy mayor. She pretty much laid out the beauty of design-build and progressive design-build is it allows all the parties to be together and unified before they come up with a final bid on a project. And that the project's already been scoped, it's been thoroughly looked at, because as the deputy may have said, they're going to open up the streets or open up whatever the areas are and do a full scoping out of the project before we have to do pre-vis from construction people, pre-vis from architectural people. And as I said with the Kosciuszko Bridge, that one project saved over \$300 million between the original estimates and with the new design-build features that were in it. The city has already saved over \$1.5 billion using design-build projects since 2019. So that's \$1.5 billion that could go to new projects that are down the list to be done. That wouldn't have been done. It's a better use of federal dollars. It's a better use of dollars altogether for projects that are critical.

So to make it simple, design-build creates the opportunity to simplify the process to not have to do multiple pre-bidding, to do one bid that is worked on in conjunction with the city. And then once that... I'm not saying the technical terms right, because there's a pre-bid word, the EQA. I forget what the... There's a pre-scoping thing that goes out.

Commissioner Foley: PQL.

State Senator Comrie: PQL. So instead of having a PQL that has not really looked at exactly what the scopes are, what the costs are going to be, people with the architects, the contractors, the prime developers, and making sure these projects are done are working in one accord. And it saves a lot of money. It saves a lot of time. It cuts down on the repetitiveness, and it really cuts down on the scope changes that happen. Because a lot of times you open up these streets or you go underground and you find that what was there was not properly laid out in the beginning or it wasn't mapped out properly, and you see a whole...

The Second Avenue, the railroad project was a mess because they were not able to do that. And when they went in there and the contractors went in there, they found it was a whole different structural layout than what they bid on. So it required changes and just multiple changes. And that's one reason why the Second Avenue project took so long. Thank you.

Question: I was wondering, could you share more on the Climate Strong Communities? I know the idea is to use federal money, but with neighborhood project (inaudible) and is there going to be a budget commitment to it?

Charles-Guzman: Absolutely. So what the city is, what we're doing is committing to planning. And our position is that resiliency is the thing that we now have to do across every single city agency all of the time. So all of the capital dollars, all of the capital budgets for every agency, the question is how do they help advance the resiliency of New Yorkers? So it's not any one agency's job. And so when we're talking about climate strong communities, it's about really identifying the city into its typologies. And that's a wonky way of saying that the thing that is protective of a coastal community might not be at all the right solution for an inland community, one that experiences tidal flooding for example, or one that experiences extreme heat. And so the challenges are different community by community, and what we need to do is have projects in the pipeline at the design stage.

You just heard the deputy mayor say that that design process is what takes a very long time. We want to do it with communities rather than prescribe where we're putting our new investments. We want to have projects in a pipeline so that when the state funding opens up, (inaudible) from the Bond Act that is up for voters this election cycle right on the back of your ballot. When that opens up, when the federal funding opens up, we have projects ready to go. Whether it is planting trees in a targeted manner, expanding our sewer system or expanding our number of biosoils in communities that experience storm water issues. Or restoring our wetlands, which again, they are the first line of protection for those fence line communities.

So everything related to our green infrastructure, our natural infrastructure systems, it's supposed to complement and supplement the great infrastructure that you're seeing around here. A wall is not appropriate everywhere. It also takes a long time. We want to make sure that we have short term, medium term protective approaches for every community so that they're able to not only enjoy the environmental quality of life they deserve today, but also be safer from the hazards that are coming their way.

Question: Is there a time you want to identify these projects before...

Charles-Guzman: We have. So we are launching and what we've done, we've released Adapt NY today. It's on our website. What it does is it helps to map the city according to its climate risk. It is, again, a multi-hazard approach to thinking about climate risk, not just coastal storms. And we're able to see the city's typologies, the flats, the fence line, the heights, and you can see the different challenges.

So what we're trying to do is identify the projects that we have already in the capital process, and try to think about that delta. How do we make these things more resilient? And so those communities, as the funding trickles on, we will continue that planning process with communities to ensure that we are funding that delta. We don't want to build a greenway. We want an elevated greenway where it makes sense. That kind of thinking. Resilience is in everything that we must do for the future.

Mayor Adams: Lee, how are you?

Question: How are you? The wall that's going to go here, how long will that stretch? And I'm by no means a marine expert, but water's going to go somewhere. So while you may solve the problem here, are you then going to see DUMBO flooded or Down-Island flooded? It's got to go somewhere, right?

Mayor Adams: Did you hear the question? This is science here.

Commissioner Foley: A little science? All right. Let me put my science... Yes. I think the first question was as far as the length, it's actually going from Montgomery, which is north of here, which is the southern end of East Side Coastal Resiliency project Area One, and then it's going towards Brooklyn Bridge, so that's why it's called BMCR 0.6 miles. The total between this and the other is basically almost three miles of protection. And everything is designed, an amazing in-house design team here that's present. Everything is then compartmentalized as far as each one, each segment has the flood protections, but then obviously in its entirety, it'll be 2026, and that is almost three miles of flood protection.

Mayor Adams: So the question is... I got you. So when it's built, it's going to prevent water from coming in. Where's that water going to be displaced to other areas? That's the question. It's going to be displaced.

Commissioner Foley: Well, you're also working within the existing elevations that are... So there's also work that's happening south of here, as deputy mayor had said in Battery Park City Authority. There'll also be future resiliency projects in Lower Manhattan. We're also in the designs of over at Red Hook, which is a very low lying area in Brooklyn. So the city is looking

within all the work within the five boroughs. Not only the resiliency, but also green infrastructure and other things that Kizzy had mentioned.

Question: What contingency plans are in place in case the hydraulic gates, for whatever reason, heaven forbid, don't go up?

Mayor Adams: You're saying if the water goes over the nine feet?

Question: Oh, that's actually a worthwhile question.

Mayor Adams: I would say run. (Laughter.) Right.

Question: Ideally they work perfectly...

Mayor Adams: So you're saying if the gate doesn't open? Okay, okay.

Commissioner Foley: It'll be manual.

Mayor Adams: So, it's dual. We can push the button, but if that doesn't operate, you and I are going to have to do the manual role of getting it open. So it's manual and hydraulic.

Question: You also mentioned Battery Park City. The residents near Wagner Park have been asking the state to put a pause on it because they don't like the height raising and have other issues. Can you just respond to their concerns and talk about efforts to ensure that on this side, in the way unintended of this project, ensuring that the community has full buy-in?

Mayor Adams: I'm sorry, what was the last part? The what?

Question: Just similar to Wagner Park issues and Battery Park, what effort is being made to ensure that the residents on this side...

Mayor Adams: There will be slight concerns that are raised by residents. I love the waterfront also. There's going to be some give and take here. And as Kizzy stated, it's about engaging communities and it's about sharing. So we're not building a wall of nine feet that's going to remain in place all the time. It is recessed until it is needed. And I think everyday New Yorkers understand the goal is to be proactive and be prepared and make sure that we both continue our waterfront views, continue to beautify parks, but also to deal with that destruction that we witness. Close down our parks, close down our communities, it closes down our cities and it costs us billions of dollars. So there's a give and take here and many of us are willing to look to that give and take.

Why don't we do a few off topics before I bounce? Look, as soon as I say off topic, you see them? Okay. Thank you. Thank you all.

(Crosstalk.)

Question: Good. How are you?

Mayor Adams: Good.

Question: About crime, this morning again another stabbing on the 4 train. I just took the subway to get here from the Upper East Side, no cops on the platform. Got here, East Broadway, no cops, two mentally ill people were acting erratic. I mean, what's going on? You did talk about your plan on Sunday putting more officers on the platforms. Is that sustainable? And I mean, what do you tell New Yorkers who are saying, again?

Mayor Adams: Well, you mentioned the stabbing. I was briefed this morning. It was at, I think, the Brooklyn Bridge or Chamber Street Station. A horrific incident, an apprehension. It appears to have started from a dispute and we can continue to zero down. But, I can also tell you that 3.5 million people are going to use that system today and won't have any encounters. We're going to deal with those crimes that take place and we're going to continue to go after those six felony crimes a day that we're witnessing. But I know that 3.5 million people use our system every day without any encounters.

That's the combination. Those type of incidents are impacting people feeling unsafe. I was on the system throughout this entire last few days since the announcement. I saw the police officers. I saw K-9. I saw the trains making announcements when they were at district offices. I saw them making announcements when police officers got on the train. I saw our mental health professionals doing their job. I walked through the system to see where are the cops? They're there. Are they at every station in the city every day? No. We have the most complex transit system probably on the globe.

But we are strategically placing those officers during the ridership times, during where we see the crimes are taking place, we're properly deploying. And I see a complete all hands on deck. This morning I was brief on those mental health professionals that are part of the operation. This was a terrible incident and the police did their job of making the apprehension and that innocent person that was there that was from my understanding trying to stop the dispute, I'm going to reach out to him. But clearly, we are going to zero crimes on our subway system.

That is our fight that we are pushing for. But I want to be clear on this. The last time we had a passenger count that we can truly analyze was 2019. Index crimes in the subway system right now, this year, 2022, are lower than 2019, 2018, 2017 and the last 10 years. The index crimes right now are lower than what it was when we were having those train rides. So we are going to continue to have those 1,000 new cops, 750,000 station inspections, 5,000 officers arrests that were made, 19,000 ejections. Those officers are working. They're doing their job and we're going to continue to the next level of dealing with issues like this

Question: Are you going to keep them on for a long time?

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Question: Mr. Mayor, the first and only gubernatorial debate was last night. Did you watch and what do you think of the governor's performance if you did?

Mayor Adams: No, I didn't. I was at Gracie Mansion having my Diwali celebration. It's so important to the communities that I was there, but I don't need to watch the debate. I've been watching this entire campaign and Kathy Hochul has been a real partner. She stood with me on January 6th as we dealt with subway crime. She stood with me in putting in place to plan and remove over 5,000 guns off our street. I think that the congressman had a good opportunity to show how forceful he was on guns by signing a gun bill. That was important to New York.

Kathy Hochul is a partner. She's the best person for us as a governor in this state. And I think it's the New Yorkers that are happy to see the partnership that we have developed and we're working together on these important issues.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Adams: How are you doing?

Question: Good.

Mayor Adams: Great.

Question: So you've expressed a lot of support for the Biden Administration's decompression policies at the border, which has definitely slowed the flow of migrants to New York. But they also rely on the expansion of a Trump-era immigration policy called Title 42, which denies asylums for families fleeing poverty and violence. Do you support that reliance on Title 42?

Mayor Adams: I think the conversation on how we have a national immigration policy is going to take place with the senators, the Congress and the White House. It's not going to take place with the mayors. My job is to deal with the influx that we experience. Two weeks ago, I clearly

laid out to New Yorkers what we were dealing with, what we did in response, what we are doing now, and what we needed from the White House. The White House heard us. We needed a decompressing strategy. They put it in place. We went from 10, eight, nine, 10 buses a day. I think the mayor of El Paso called and said he's not sending any more buses.

Because of that strategy, we received I think one bus yesterday. Clearly, the decompression strategy is helping New York City, Washington and Chicago. We were receiving a brunt of those buses in the northern part of the country. And I believe figuring out a real national policy on immigration needs to be done. We cannot allow people to come into the country without proper vetting. We need to make sure that we are using the right methods to solve this problem at the source. And then those who come here, I believe 2,400 would be allowed at a period of time, they should have sponsors.

People should come to locales throughout the country where they have sponsors that could also support them navigating the system. So there's some broken parts of our policy. People can't work for six months, not doing the right dissemination of those who are coming to our country. We have to fix that and national government must do that.

How are you, Juliet?

Question: All right.

Mayor Adams: Good.

Question: Thank you. So my question, is the city seeing a rise in flu, COVID, and RSV cases and is there concern going into the winter months?

Mayor Adams: (Inaudible). Let's let this train go by. It's a long train. Yeah, you said a rise in COVID?

Question: Yeah. Is the city seeing a rise in flu, COVID, and RSV cases and is there a concern going into the colder months that there are going to be a lot more cases and hospitals are going to be busy?

Mayor Adams: I was on the phone this morning with our medical team. Yes, we're seeing an uptick. We want to continue to encourage people to get vaccinated. The booster is crucial. We want to continue... People, the new booster that's out. As Dr. Vasan always says, it's almost like the iPhone. When you have to upgrade new technology to fight off the viruses that hit our phones, we have to fight the viruses that are hitting our bodies. And these new boosters are able to adjust to that. We are not seeing any real threat based on hospitalizations and death.

We believe our healthcare infrastructure system, we're in a good place. We have it under control. And so there's no real alarms that we're seeing now, but we want to continue to encourage boosters, vaccines. That's the key.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. Back to the migrant crisis, are you able to give us updated numbers when it comes to how many migrants are on the Randall's Island relief center? What's the average amount of time that they've spent there? Also, I hear reports that some of the buses that are still coming from Texas are getting ticketed at the Port Authority. Do you have a comment?

Mayor Adams: One, we don't give numbers on ... We protect the rights of people that are going into our shelters and our two HERRCs and our 55 emergency shelters that we opened. We don't give those numbers, but we continue to manage. No child slept on the streets of the City of New York because of how we responded and our teamwork that we put together. We only heard one bus came yesterday. And we are going to continue to do the same things that we were doing. And it's clear the decompression strategy has helped us a great deal. And we're going to continue to advocate, make sure we get the resources we need for those who are here, 21,400 that are here that we need to make sure we get the resources for. But we have witnessed a steady decrease in the number of buses.

Question: Quick one. Why do you think the polling in the Hochul Zeldin race is so close? I mean, we had January 6th insurrection, Zeldin's been connected to that. Why is the polling so close in New York State?

Mayor Adams: I'm not sure if the polling is right. I mean, I remember that there was this guy in my race that was up 13 points so I'm not sure how accurate the polling is. We say this all the time, the only poll that counts is on Election Day. And I believe New Yorkers are hearing and they're seeing a clear difference in Governor Hochul. Governor Hochul took over the helms of a ship during turbulent waters. Her steady hand has been clear. The danger of being successful is that no one remembers the success. You don't see headlines of the good things.

You only see headlines of the bad things. The reality is this governor has navigated us through COVID, through monkeypox, through polio, through what she's doing around crime, through the economy. I mean, you look at the list, she has navigated us and created a partnership that all New Yorkers are saying. When I'm on the subway, people are saying, I like the way you and the governor are working together. This is a real win for the city and I am looking forward to walking into on Election Day and pulling the... or writing in the dash now for Kathy Hochul. Thank you.

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