



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO MAKES ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING
UPGRADES TO TOMPKINSVILLE PARK**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you. Well, Emanuel, thank you, thank you for being a part of this important change today and thank you for your leadership in the community as well. And there is a lot of people – I want to thank everyone who’s here, who cares, and a lot of people for particularly these last weeks and months who have been saying we need to do something different here in Tompkinsville Park. The whole idea of listening to communities and acting on the concerns of communities – that is what City Hall in Your Borough is all about. And I got to tell you, it’s been a wonderful week because it’s not just about showing how much all of us at City Hall care about the people of Staten Island, it’s also about getting ideas and insights from the people of Staten Island, and trying to solve real problems in real time. I want to thank my colleagues in government who are here, the Staten Island Parks Commissioner Lynda Ricciardone.

[Applause]

And the Borough Commissioner for Transportation for DOT, Tom Cocola –

[Applause]

And they are both going to be part of the solution. You know a lot of times what happens is a problem starts to fester and people are trying to figure out how to break through and get something done. Well I want to tell you it was just on Tuesday, two days ago, that we were at the resource fair and a group of us gathered together to talk about this problem and try and figure out what it would take to address it. And it became clear, literally just getting everyone in a circle together, talking it through that there were a lot of solutions available to us and that we needed to move forward aggressively. This kind of park means a lot to a community – every patch of green matters in New York City. It’s a refuge for people, we want it to be a refuge, we want it to be a place that people feel good about and we know that hasn’t always been the case in this park. We

know that people didn't feel that it was clean enough and welcoming enough, and safe enough, and we need to do something different.

So today we announce that we are going to return Tompkinsville Park to the people of the Tompkinsville community.

[Applause]

And we are going to return it to its former glory by updating it for 2018 and making it a space that people want to use, that families want to use, that parents feel good about their children using. One of the problems and that became really clear to me Tuesday is that there is a building right here that's part of the problem and has been creating a barrier in this park. This park is not going to work unless its open and the sight lines are good and people feel welcome and invited. It's not going to work unless it's spruced up and feels new and energetic. So we are going to knock down this comfort station – I've never heard of this before, it has been used in 20 years, we are going to get rid of it, we are going to open this place up. We are going to add more positives and that's going to help get rid of the negatives. Like every part of our city, sometimes there are some bad actors. We want to make this a place where the bad actors don't feel welcome and the good people of the community feel it is part of what makes their neighborhood great.

Now it doesn't work again unless you can see all through the park. And it's not going to work unless we put in some new amenities. So we are going to start with the things we can do right away. We are going to do some new plantings to make it even greener, we are going to paint the benches, we are going to repair the fountain.

[Applause]

And we are going to put in new lighting all around this park. And that will be coming soon and thank you DOT because that lighting is going to make a world of difference. That's how we begin. But then we are going to work with the community, with the leadership of Council Member Debi Rose to determine what would make this the most vibrant possible space. And I'll finish before I turn to Debi and say we are New Yorkers and we understand this is a place that changes a lot, the beauty of today's New York is that it can change for the better. When we got something that's not working for a community we don't leave it be, we don't accept a status quo that's broken. We say how do we roll up our sleeves and create something newer and better? In a short period of time we are going to turn this space into something that everyone feels proud of and everyone wants to be a part of. And it's something that's going to make you proud to be a member of this community. And we are going to do it with you. And with that it's my honor to bring forward someone who has been raising this issue with real energy and I know she wanted us to get to this day where we could make a formal announcement – I want to give her all my thanks, Council Member Debi Rose.

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