

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 11, 2020, 1:00 PM

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON 1010 WINS

Juliet Papa: We are back live with our 1010 WINS special broadcast — New York City Reopen, Restart, Rebuild. And if you'd like to call in with a question to the Mayor and our panel of experts, the number is 1-8-5-5-4-7-5-1-0-1-0. Or tweet your question to hashtag #WINSReopenNYC. Our special guests, this segment Mayor Bill de Blasio joined by Small Business Services Commissioner Jonnel Doris, Consumer and Worker Protection Commissioner Lorelei Salas and Dr. Ted Long of Health + Hospitals in charge of the Test and Trace program. But first I am pleased to have him with us Mayor Bill de Blasio. Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor, and thank you so much for joining us. I know you and I have spoken at your daily briefings, but it's really great to have you now one on one with us today.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Hey, Juliet. Listen, thank you so much for doing this broadcast because first of all, New Yorkers have a lot to be proud of. That we've all fought back over the last a hundred days against an extraordinary adversary. And you know, I think back Juliet, six months, eight months ago, whenever it was, we had never even heard the word coronavirus, and then it's become this dominant reality. But New Yorkers just really engaged this fight. And you'll forgive me if you hear some background noise of New York City as I'm out on the street for a few minutes here. But New Yorkers took it on, face coverings, the social distancing, shelter-in-place, you name it, people did it. And it's been turning the tide Juliet. We're not, we're not everywhere we need to be. And we are going to be fighting for a while. But the fact that we're in phase one, and this is the hardest place in the United States of America to have gotten to phase one. But New Yorkers earned it. And I was over, you know, and when I talked about the first day, the people coming back to work, I was at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. And to see those businesses coming back to manufacturing businesses coming back, the construction coming back, it's so exciting. And it's so hopeful. People are getting their livelihood back. Now we got to make it work by keeping it safe. Safety for all the working people. And Juliet, just one last point, to get to phase two, we can do it. We can get to phase two really soon and open up a lot more. But it's about safety first and if everyone sticks to safety, that's what gets us there.

Papa: All right, Mr. Mayor, first of all, we're thrilled that you have all that going on in the background, because this is radio. And obviously you're out in about, which is fantastic. But of course, this city is battling back a pandemic. We have demonstrations and unrest, concerns for our economy. So today New Yorkers, however, are pushing forward. Or is it more like they're dipping their toe into the phase one reopening. This is day four now. We know that about 800,000 people were back on the subway on Monday. How many people are returning to work or are you aware of how many businesses are actually open for business?

Mayor: Juliet we're doing that count right now. I'm pretty certain based on the information we have that at least a 100,000 to 200,000 people are back. I think that number grows as people watch and see things that are safe, that are working. The grand total potential of phase one is about 400,000 workers. But we did not assume by any stretch that everyone would come back in the beginning. We thought it would take days or weeks for people to feel comfort. I think if we keep showing it to be done safely and we're giving businesses free face coverings, we're going out, we're educating, monitoring the departments, my colleagues on the phone here. Their teams are doing a great job, getting out and making sure things are safe. You know how it's going to be Juliet. If people see it's working, then they're going to come back.

Papa: Okay. So, you know, plywood is still on many stores all over the city and some stores are slow to take it down and to start up. What do you say to them? When is it safe to start taking that down? Start fixing up their storefronts and their windows?

Mayor: Look, I think right now, Juliet, we see more and more that people are doing the right thing in terms of safety. Those indicators I go over every day are moving in the right direction. I think the situation in the city is stronger every day and in every sense. So I believe what you're going to see is more and more businesses in phase one coming back literally each day. And then phase two is now literally, could be two weeks away, three weeks away, and it's much bigger. So from talking to business owners, what I'm hearing is overwhelmingly optimism that they're getting ready, that they think it's going to work. They know there's a huge amount of pent up demand and that they want to serve their customers. So, I don't think anything is standing in the way of that, honestly. So long as the health care situation continues to be strong. That's really what matters here. We got to prove that to people every day.

Papa: So how do you balance, or let's say maybe reconcile the desire of demonstrators to change policing and the desire to keep safety and stability for the residents and the businesses that want to come back up and reopen and move into phase two?

Mayor: Juliet, at this point, look, we went through a very painful moment in this country for over a week. And I think what people have seen is that issues that were historic – decades, centuries old, actually are being responded too. The actions the Legislature took in Albany, the actions we are taking here, people are responding to it. They're seeing it's real. You obviously see there's still some protests, but it's a lot less than what we were seeing just days ago. It's peaceful. It's not disrupting life in the city. It just isn't. And look, I'm very confident that there's a real tradition in the city, of respecting peaceful protest and then still being an incredibly vibrant, strong city. And a city that you know, has the biggest strongest economy in the country. We're going to get back to that. It'll take time, but I have no doubt we can do it. And my view is that if you — look, basically second half of last week, as the protest got more and more peaceful. And then everything we've seen this week has been peaceful. And the folks in the business community get ready to reopen it. We see it all before our very eyes. We saw it on Monday, how many people were immediately open for business. So, I am confident that things are going to keep moving in that direction because people want it. I think Juliet, that's the most important thing. The owners of the businesses want to come back. Their employees want to come back. The customers want to come back. I think people are going to vote with their feet. They want this and they're going to make it work.

Papa: Now you just mentioned a minute or two ago, phase two could be a couple of weeks away. And I know the other day, during one of your news conferences because I pay very close attention, you said the conversation could start about beaches and pools. So, do you see that happening? And when do you see that happening or if it happens?

Mayor: Oh, it's happening right now. So, first of all, you do pay close attention. I've watched –

[Laughter]

So, all of your listeners – give you credit because the media plays a sacred role in our society and the media so often recognizes a problem that's happening to real people and brings it forward for government to solve. And you've had a string of successes in the last month or two of helping us see things that need to be fixed. And I'm pleased to say, I think every single one we were able to address quickly. So, look, I think the important thing to recognize here is phase two. First of all, the State has stipulated a timeline. Everyone understands the City of New York is the most sensitive part of the whole state in terms of the dynamics of this disease. The earliest phase two could be, officially is June 22nd. We're going to be in touch with the State to decide, is it that day, is it a little bit later? I don't think it would be a lot later if it's delayed. I think you're talking about, I still believe the most – you know, the best estimate is the beginning of July. But look, if the health care situation continues to prove positive, you know, obviously I want to go as soon as we can go safely.

And then on the pools and beaches every one of us would love to get them back up and running. The beaches, we have the lifeguards being trained as we speak. Now, the beaches present a particular challenge and I – Juliet, I bet you've been to Coney Island on a hot summer day. And you know that we're not talking –

Papa: Yeah.

Mayor: We're not talking thousands, we're not talking tens of thousands, we're talking hundreds of thousands of people. We're not ready for that. So, if we ever get to the point – I'm going to be hopeful we do. That requires the disease not to reassert. Remember that. We cannot have a boomerang of this disease if we want to get the beaches. So, everyone's got to stay tough and disciplined [Inaudible] beaches –

Papa: So, do you have a –

Mayor: – Beaches, it's going to have to come initially with real limitations and restrictions to ease our way.

Papa: So, what's the conversation about that? Is there a plan for social distancing, you know, where you have lockers on the sand or maybe 20 people in the city pool at a time? How would you work that?

Mayor: Yeah, it's complicated because we're all humans and you're talking about a lot of people and a lot of habits that we all have from, you know, our whole lives of how you go to a pool or a beach. But I think you're in the right direction there. I think, first of all, it's limiting the number of people who would be allowed onto a beach or allowed into a pool. Where you can do markings, absolutely you do markings. It'd take personnel to educate people, remind them to keep distancing, remind them to wear a face mask. The State has very clear standards on how to manage beaches that would clearly govern us as well. A lot of the particular approaches and restrictions, but, you know, the problem is the vast, vast areas, our beaches, particularly Rockaway, you know, there's a lot of territory. So, I've been always concerned that if you try it, that it doesn't degenerate quickly into something else that really, unfortunately, allows the disease to spread, again, not with thousands, but tens of thousands or more people. So, we got to figure out what that balance is.

Pools are a more controlled environment and that's sort of the blessing and the curse. You have more ability to control it, but it's also closer quarters. You know, the locker rooms are challenged because that's a lot of people in close quarters. We'd have to be really smart about that. Lines would have to be distanced. So, we're working all that through. Those are the conversations that are happening right now in our Parks Department and at City Hall. But again, Juliet, my job is to tell people – give them a sense of the options, but I also always tell you when we're there yet. We're not there yet. We are not there yet on beaches or pools, but we are getting into position so that when we think it is safe enough, we can move quickly.

Papa: Okay. I think we have time now for a couple of questions. We actually have, let's see, Alex from Sunnyside, Queens. Now, I don't know if he's going to ask or I'm going to ask this question. Can we go to Alex from Sunnyside?

Question: Yes.

Papa: Okay. Alex, are you there? Hi Alex, you can ask the Mayor a question. Go ahead.

Question: So – I'm sorry.

Papa: You can go ahead.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. So, you're very optimistic about phase two happening in two weeks. After we enter phase two, when would we be able to see phase three and four happening in the city?

Mayor: So, Alex, there's a constant conversation with the State. So, I want to be very clear that again, unlike the other regions of the state, the city is always based on the specific things we see happening and specific conversations between the City and State. In theory, you can move from phase to phase in a matter of weeks, if you are successful enough. But the challenge here is phase two is a lot bigger than phase one. I want people to understand that. Phase one is a great, you know, toe in the water here to see how things will move. And I like what I see over the first four days so far. Phase two is much bigger. It's going to tell us a lot more about whether we can keep reopening while avoiding a resurgence of the disease. And, Alex, I think you know, Juliet, you

know, that unfortunately we have a bunch of states in this country that are seeing serious resurgences because I think the bottom line is they rushed it. They didn't have some of the safeguards they needed. So, the answer, the clinical answer, Alex, is you can move from phase to phase in a matter of weeks. The more precise answer about just the truth of how things really work is it will be a watch-and-wait during phase two to see if we can sustain it and if we feel real comfortable taking the next step.

Papa: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I know you've joined us for this particular time and we are thrilled that you are with us in traffic or wherever you are right now. Thank you so much for joining us. We actually had a couple more questions, but maybe you'll come back with us another time and we can continue this conversation. Thank you again. And we'll probably talk to you tomorrow as well.

Mayor: Thanks, Juliet. You take care and thank you for doing the show. Very, very important for this city that people are getting to have this conversation.

Papa: Alright. That's Mr. Mayor Bill de Blasio, joining us for the first 15 minutes or so of our show.

###