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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. Well, last night, we saw a situation in Brooklyn that really spoke volumes. I want to say we saw bravery, and courage, and heroism from the NYPD. Last night, members of the NYPD were positioned near a park in Brooklyn, because there had been some previous violence. This is what precision policing is all about, ensuring that officers are where they need to be to stop violence. An assailant nearby committed an act of violence and then literally ran right into the NYPD patrol. And this individual attempted to fire on NYPD officers and, thank God, our officer who was hit by that fire is going to be okay. Officer Brian McGurran, a heroic officer out there protecting us, out there making sure that anyone who aims to do violence against a fellow New Yorker is stopped. And he and his colleagues did stop this individual. This individual is now off the streets, and I expect them to be off the streets for a long, long time. So, this is an example of the dangers our officer's face, but also a profound example of the heroism and the courage they exhibit, how much we depend on them, but also the smart strategies of the NYPD to have officers where they are needed. So, this is a story that ends, thank God, with our officer – although he is wounded and we all hope and pray for a very speedy recovery – our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family. He is expected to make a full recovery and that's very good news.

Also, yesterday, very important – the individual who fired shots in Times Square has also been caught. He tried to run. He went out of state, but the NYPD always is able to find people. And this is something that everybody needs to understand and anyone who means to commit a crime better understand the NYPD, more than any time in its previous history, is doing an outstanding job tracking down anyone who commits an offense against New Yorkers. And the bottom line is if you create violence, if you harm a fellow New Yorker, you will be caught, you will be prosecuted, you will suffer the consequences. This is crucial to how we continue our fight against crime and we build a strategy for a safe summer in New York City.

Now, there are so many pieces that go into the recovery we are building every single day in this city. Public safety is crucial. Obviously, the thing we talk about every single day – vaccination. This is the gateway. This is the thing we have to get right so we can keep moving forward. And the good news is, every day, tens of thousands of people coming in to get vaccinated. The latest number, as of today, from the beginning of our vaccination effort, 7,277,505 vaccinations have been given, climbing every day. And now, that number will definitely increase because hundreds of thousands of more New Yorkers are eligible. We've gotten the formal authorization now that all providers who have the Pfizer vaccine can provide it to 12- to 15-year-olds. I think a lot – a lot of families are going to want to take advantage of this opportunity to protect their kids and protect their whole families. So, yesterday, Dr. Chokshi talked about our plan to reach our

Zoomers. And I'm going to keep sounding this message to parents – parents, let's get our Zoomers off of Zoom and back to life as normal, and you can help by getting them vaccinated. Sites all over the city – as always, easy, fast, free, safe. And if you want to make an appointment for your 12- to 15-year-old, go to nyc.gov/vaccinefinder, or call 877-VAX-4NYC.

Okay. Now, we need everyone to get vaccinated, so we know we have to make it convenient. We know we have to make it easy. We know we need the opportunities for people to speak to their trusted community voices, doctors, etcetera – we're doing all that. But we also know that incentives help, they really do. And so, we've been announcing free tickets, gift cards, all sorts of incentives to encourage people. A lot of people are ready to get vaccinated, they just haven't gotten around to it. They need a little extra incentive. We're doing that now. And we are going to have a live correspondent this morning talk about this and from a site that means a lot to all of us as New Yorkers, because one thing I think that does unite New Yorkers is a love of Shake Shack. So, live from the original Shake Shack location in Madison Square Park, the CEO of Shake Shack, and he is generously joining into this incentive effort, and I welcome him. My pleasure to introduce CEO Randy Garutti. Welcome, Randy.

[...]

Mayor: Thank you so much, Randy. Thank you to the whole Shake Shack team, this is really going to help us out. And did you say free fries when you get vaccinated?

[Mayor de Blasio eats French fries]

I got vaccinated. You're saying I could get this? These delicious fries? Wait a minute – but there's also a burger element to this? Let me check with Bill Neidhardt, is too early in the day to eat a burger? No?

Bill Neidhardt: You're good to go.

Mayor: This could be breakfast? Okay. I want you to look at this and think about – again, some people love hamburgers, some don't, really want to respect all ways of life. But if this is appealing to you, just think of this when you think of vaccination.

[Mayor de Blasio eats hamburger]

Mmm, vaccination. I'm getting a very good feeling about vaccination right this moment. Thank you to Randy Garutti and, of course, Danny Meyer, who is doing so much to help us with the recovery and the entire team.

I've got to finish chewing for a moment. I think that would be more dignified, don't you think? Yeah. So, everyone, we're going to keep rolling out incentives. We're going to keep making it easier. We're going to keep making it fun. We really, really need to get everyone vaccinated. So, keep watching, keep joining in. Choose the thing you love, choose the incentive that moves you and come on out and get vaccinated.

Okay. Now, this is pretty good that we will now go even higher up the vaccination scale here. I've said that one of the great reasons to go out and get vaccinated is to bring this city back, full reopening. And let's have something historic and amazing – the Summer of New York City, a summer of joy, a summer of culture, a summer of energy. We can do this. And one of the things you're going to see in New York City this summer is live music everywhere, it's going to be a big part of what gives us energy, what gives us hope. I am very proud to say the two of our biggest music festivals, outdoor festivals are making a major comeback this year in 2021, New York City. Global Citizen Live will be back and the Governors Ball at Citi Field will be back, and that is a very big deal. So, here's the latest incentive deal. If you get vaccinated, you will have an opportunity to win free tickets to these amazing music festivals. These are – literally, people wait all year for the opportunity to enjoy these festivals, and here's your chance. So, get vaccinated, get a ticket, get out there and enjoy something amazing.

Now, to hear about what this means, one of the artists who will be performing at the Governors Ball. I love all musicians, but I particularly love musicians who are true New Yorkers – in this case, a true Brooklynite. And she has done amazing work. I am particularly moved by one of her best-known songs, 1950, which is absolutely just enchanting and mesmerizing. And she is a great songwriter, singer, musician in every way. My great pleasure to introduce King Princess.

[...]

Mayor: Alright, thank you. There is the message, everyone – couldn't be clearer. I want to note that I have been refraining from eating the hamburger further during this press conference, but I will address the situation immediately following the press conference.

Okay. Now, what have we been talking about all week as part of our recovery, as part of opening up New York City, having everyone out, enjoying New York City? It's been Streets Week!!!! all week. Now, I want to note, Streets Week!!!! officially, because it's the fourth day of Streets Week!!!! There should be four exclamation points – that is correct on the screen, excellent work, everyone. Monday, we focused on safety enforcement and Vision Zero. Tuesday, we announced new busways, bike lanes, bike boulevards. Yesterday, we talked about Open Boulevards, amazing stretches, block after block, Open Streets, Open Restaurants, a festival atmosphere. And today –later on today, I will be signing the legislation to make Open Streets permanent. I'll be up in Inwood. It's going to be exciting. This is a historic change to the New York City streetscape, and it will be permanent, and it will make our lives better. So, this is a really good day. And, today, we're talking about how we move things around the city, reduce congestion, make our city more sustainable.

So, one of the things that we're working on that we started talking about last week is our cargo bike pilot. This is a really, really exciting new initiative to use a very different approach to get things around. And it's much, much better for the environment, much better for reducing congestion. Today, we're now talking about how to change our approach to trucks in New York City, how to make truck traffic safer, how to reduce it at the hours when we don't want it, how to make it more sustainable. We're going to take things to work. We're really excited about ways to get alternatives going, like the cargo bikes. We have the NYC Clean Truck program. We want to focus on sustainable approaches, different approaches. One of the things I've long believed we

could do more of is encouraging overnight deliveries by trucks, deliveries to stores, off-hour deliveries. So, we're making changes to make that easier, expanding certain loading zones, taking actions to support and provide resources to small businesses so it will be more appealing for them to get those off-hour deliveries. We can get trucks out of the way in the times when most people are out and get those deliveries to be off-hours, that's going to be better for everyone. And every time we reduce traffic, obviously, there's a Vision Zero impact too – safety first. This plan helps us move forward with it. Details – if you want to see the details, go to nyc.gov/smarttruck and get a look at what the future will be as how we create a more sustainable approach to this city.

Now, I said, Vision Zero and I'm keep saying Vision Zero. This is one of the things I'm proudest of. We started it in 2014, there were plenty of naysayers. There were plenty of people who said it wouldn't work. There are plenty of people said New Yorkers wouldn't stand for it. New Yorkers came to believe in Vision Zero. It has worked. We've got a lot more to do, but it's the right approach and we're going to keep building on it. And I have announcement today about the place that was synonymous – not just for a year or two years, for decades – Queens Boulevard, tragically, was synonymous with the problem of horrible deaths on the road, pedestrians, motorists, cyclists. Queens Boulevard – I don't have to remind people who've been here a while – it used to be called the Boulevard of Death and people would say it almost without even thinking about it, it had become so common, which is tragic unto itself. When we put Vision Zero into effect, one of the things that I knew we had to do, and it would take time, but we would get it done, is address Queens Boulevard once and for all. And as we've done each stage, it has had a remarkable impact.

The last stage, the fourth stage of the Queens Boulevard redesign was getting ready to go, but then COVID hit. There was an issue with federal approval. We believe now there's a much better environment in Washington and much more support for Vision Zero and bike safety. So much so that Vision Zero's now the template – our New York City Vision Zero has become the national template of the Biden administration for how to create a safer traffic environment for everyone. And, of course, our own former Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg is now the number-two official at the U.S. Department of Transportation. We're very, very proud of her. So, I think we're going to do well. We do need some additional State and federal approval, but I'm very hopeful. And our goal, announcing today, starting construction than the last phase of Queens Boulevard in July with completion in November. We want to get this done. We want to ensure a safe Queens Boulevard throughout. This is crucial to a recovery for all of us, to have safety, to have streets that work and that bring New Yorkers back to all the things we love about this place.

All right, time for our indicators. And, again, we have a good day for indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19 – today's report, 92 patients – 92. Confirmed positivity, 25.53 percent. Hospitalization rate keeps going down, 1.19 per 100,000. So, we're well below threshold. That's great to see. Now, number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average – today's report, 693 cases. This is just absolutely remarkable. Look at that change over these last few weeks. And it is because of vaccinations, period. And number three, percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19 –

today's report on a seven-day rolling average, 1.81 percent, continues to go down. Let's keep it going down.

All right. A few words in Spanish – and today's topic, one of my very favorite topics, the Summer of New York City.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, let's turn to our colleagues in the media. Please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: We'll now begin our Q-and-A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Dr. Chokshi, by Dr. Katz, by DOT Commissioner Hank Gutman, and by DOT Deputy Commissioner for Transportation Planning and Management Eric Beaton. First question today goes to Erin from Politico.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor: I'm just wondering if you could talk a little bit more about the vaccinations of younger people. Is that happening right now? Has the City already begun to give those vaccinations? And, you know, what are you seeing just in the first hours and day of, you know, this new population being part of the effort?

Mayor: Let us get a live-action update from our own Dr. Dave Chokshi. Dave?

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And thanks, Erin, for the question. We're very excited, of course, about this other hopeful milestone in our vaccination campaign. We've seen just overnight hundreds of appointments that have been made at City sites. And I expect that will get into the thousands over the course of today. And yes, people between the age of 12 and 15 have already been vaccinated as of this morning with the Pfizer vaccine. We're seeing lots of smiles, lots of happy parents.

Mayor: Excellent. Thank you, Dave. Go ahead, Erin.

Question: Okay, great. And then you know, in another topic, the first debate in the mayor's race is tonight. Are you going to be watching and, you know, have you formed any impressions or opinions at this point on how the candidates are doing?

Mayor: Erin, I will definitely be watching. I think it's an important moment. I think it's obviously time for New Yorkers to start focusing more intensely. The election's a little under six weeks away now, and this is the kind of thing that's going to give people a lot more information. So, I will keep my observations to myself for now. And at a certain point I might choose to share more, but I do think this is the kind of thing that will actually really start to focus people's energies.

Moderator: The next is James Ford from PIX11.

Question: And good morning, Mr. Mayor, and to everyone on the call.

Mayor: Good morning, James, how you doing?

Question: Doing great. Particularly, not only with the weather, but with this news about Shake Shack which actually is related to my question. Earlier in the week, as I recall, someone mentioned incentives for people who've already gotten vaccinated, as opposed to incentives to get people to get vaccinated. Can you talk a little bit more about that? My impression is, for instance, that this French fry initiative, when you show your vax card, is actually an incentive for people who've already been vaccinated. Am I right about that? And are there any plans to maybe have additional incentives for people who made the decision to get their vaccination?

Mayor: James, I want you to look at these French fries and just think about how great it is to get vaccinated. Yeah, look, we love what Shake Shack is doing. You know we have seen other examples that, you know, really encourage people after the fact. That's great when we have incentives like that. Krispy Kreme did that. I personally participated. I found it very rewarding. So, I love those kinds of incentives, but we also think there's ones where, you know, you get the opportunity, you get vaccinated and then that activates the opportunity. Those are particularly powerful. Like the idea of you go, you get vaccinated, that qualifies you for the opportunity for free tickets to these concerts that so many people want to get into. So, both have value for sure. What I want to make sure is that we constantly send the message that it's important to get vaccinated. It's a positive experience. It's a fun experience and there's lots of different ways to get rewarded in the process. Go ahead, James.

Question: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. My next question is on behalf of my colleague Nicole Johnson. Can you talk more about this shooting this morning of the NYPD officer and more broadly address people's concerns that the city is getting more dangerous? A lot of folks are feeling, especially in a case like this, when an officer gets shot, that despite the city's continued focus – messaging about still being safe overall, that in fact it just feels much more dangerous to be in and around the city in any location. Can you say more about that?

Mayor: Yeah. James, look, I really – one thing I heard a long time ago from then Commissioner Bill Bratton, which really is an important point, is there's facts about safety and then there's a perception, and they both matter. The fact is we've got 35,000 police officers out there doing an amazing job, getting guns off the streets, stopping violence, which we saw last night. Those officers had been pre-positioned in the right place to be able to stop violence. No one knew the specific thing was going to happen, but it was literally an example of why precision policing works. The local leadership of the NYPD in that part of Brooklyn knew where they needed to have officers and it made a huge difference. So, that's going to keep happening. That's going to keep growing. We just graduated 850 new officers who would be out in the streets. Last night, I talked to the DA of Brooklyn, Eric Gonzalez, about the fact that gun cases are finally, finally, finally being heard in the courts. We had a major takedown, gang takedown in Brooklyn. We are now finally able to bring to justice people who are using guns against their fellow New Yorkers. So, you're going to see a lot of things move now. The perception is something we also have to address unquestionably, and we address that perception by constantly showing the impact of the prosecutions, the gang takedowns, the precision policing, but we also address it by bringing back the city and all the other ways. Because I keep saying it and I really believe it. The rebirth of

New York City, the activity, the energy, the jobs, the economic recovery supports the public safety turnaround and vice versa. So, we're going to do them all together.

Moderator: The next is Katie Honan from the Wall Street Journal.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mayor de Blasio. How are you doing?

Mayor: I am doing okay, Katie. I got my little assist here from Shake Shack. So, I am prepared for your question.

Question: I heard you – you were going buy lunch for your whole staff today. That's so sweet of you. That's very nice.

Mayor: Katie. I want to deny those vicious rumors. You know, I think it's really – thank you Katie, for shedding truth on the fact that there is misinformation being spread and we're going to stop that from happening. I think what I heard was – I heard Bill Neidhardt is buying lunch for the whole staff and Bill Neidhardt is just an outstanding American. I want to thank him for that.

Question: I got my Bills mixed up. I'm so sorry.

Mayor: That's a perfectly natural mistake, Katie, fully understandable.

Question: My question is something that I know has come up and been asked, when do you think senior centers will reopen in New York City?

Mayor: I am very hopeful. I'm going to turn to Dr. Chokshi, who has been working very closely with our Commissioner for the Aging Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez. No one in New York City more than Lorraine wants to reopen senior centers. I definitely want to reopen senior centers. Now, as we've said from the beginning, the single most vulnerable group of people has been our seniors and putting people together in a small space, it has to be done very, very carefully, but it will happen because we're in the – well on our way to reopening everything. So, let's see if Dr. Chokshi has any more fine tuning on the decision timeline.

Commissioner Chokshi: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And that's exactly right. Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez and I, and our teams, have been in constant conversation about this. We have already announced that grab-and-go meals outdoors will be available for seniors and that's just the first step in the phased, methodical, reopening plans that we are working through. I expect we'll have something more formal to announce, you know, within the next few days but it will mirror what we do for all of the settings where we are most concerned about COVID risk. And that means starting with outdoor activities ramping up to indoor activities making sure that we have the public health precautions in place. Most importantly, making sure that as many of our seniors, as well as senior center staff are vaccinated. But with all of that taken together, I do expect that we'll have a timeline for that phased reopening over the coming week.

Mayor: Excellent. Thank you. Go ahead, Katie.

Question: And my second question is more fun. You know, you're nearing the, I guess, the twilight of your time as mayor. Is there anything you haven't done that you want to cross off your New York City mayor bucket list? I don't know if it's a few things that you were looking forward to doing that you haven't done.

Mayor: Wow, that's interesting. I think that's going to be a running series. I have to say, I am just entranced by this city. Always. I really am. I mean, every time I go around, I feel like I still keep discovering stuff in different neighborhoods. Is there something specific? I am going to think about this. Maybe I have to like, you know, join one of the bands at the Governors Ball. I think that's probably – you know, debut my musical stylings. I'm going to think about that. I'll come back, Katie, with a very, very specific answer. And, Katie, thank you for reminding everyone about Bill Neidhardt buying everyone lunch. That was really – that was a public service you did just there. Thank you. Go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Michael Gartland at the Daily News.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Good morning, Michael. How you doing?

Question: I'm doing good. I was talking this morning to a [inaudible] hearted Red Sox fan about these COVID cases the Yankees are experiencing. And now, you know, he raised, I think a very real concern though. You know, rivalry aside, you know, several of these cases are breakthrough cases where, you know, folks got the vaccine, but are testing positive for COVID. And I was wondering if you, or Dr. Chokshi, could, you know, talk about the implications of that and what the city is – what that means, right, and what the City is doing to kind of figure that out, you know, to address that. Yeah.

Mayor: Michael, I'll turn to Dr. Chokshi. I would say, you know, I would – I think it's always fair to ask about something that looks aberrant, but I'd also say at least to date when something is aberrant let's remember it's aberrant. So, overwhelmingly what we're seeing, and the numbers are screaming it, is vaccinations are working, they're greatly reducing COVID, they're working in people's individual lives. There's always exceptional situations, but, you know, we had such concern, for example, rightfully, about variants. We've had so many moments along the way where people really ask questions with tremendous concern and nervousness. And what we've seen with extraordinary consistency is the answer is vaccinations work and they changed the whole environment profoundly. But there's always exceptions and details to account for as well. So, Dr. Chokshi, why don't you speak to that?

Commissioner Chokshi: Thanks, Mr. Mayor. You covered the most important point here, which is let's not lose perspective about the truly astonishing effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines that we have. They're particularly effective to protect against severe disease, but we now have growing evidence that they protect against both infections as well as transmission of infections as well. So, that is the big picture, which we have to always keep our eyes very clearly focused on. We do know both from our own investigation in New York City, as well as coordinating with the CDC that vaccine breakthrough cases will occur. This is an expected phenomenon because the

vaccines are not 100 percent effective, even though they are nearly that. And so, what we do in those cases is we ensure that we have an understanding to detect any patterns that may underlie those vaccine breakthroughs in terms of epidemiological characteristics, associating it with different variants and thus far what we have found, again, both in New York City and nationally is that the rate of vaccine breakthroughs is very, very low. And I think that's the most important part that we have to remain focused on.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead, Michael.

Question: All right. Thanks, guys. Now that you've had a few moments to think about Katie's last question there, you know, you talked about your vocal stylings. Do you have any songs in mind that you'd like to sing for us at the Governors Ball? I mean, give us a little more specifics here.

Mayor: Absolutely. I want to, you know, I got – I was very, very pleased, you know, one of the great things about having the youths in your life is that they expose you to new music. And so, my kids helped me get to know about Princess Nokia, who will also be at the Governors Ball. And I think I need to join her for a song I love, “Brujas.” There's a particular line in there with the word, energy, in it that I think I want to join the chorus for that. So, that's one of my wishes right there. You can follow up and do your research on that, Michael.

Moderator: The next is Paul Liotta from the Staten Island Advance.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor, I had a question about –

Mayor: Hey, Paul. How are you doing today?

Question: I'm well, sir, how are you?

Mayor: Good.

Question: Great. I just wanted to follow up on my question regarding the ferry service yesterday – two days ago. I spoke with one of the guys from the union that represents the workers. His position is sort of that the hiring challenges go back over a decade. So, I'm hoping to get a sense of, you know, where we are with hiring and how long this has been an issue.

Mayor: Paul, we got two of our colleagues from DOT, Commissioner Hank Gutman and Deputy Commissioner Eric Beaton, here. So, I'll turn to them in a second. I would just say I always believe in a can-do approach. So, even though we're in a really unusual moment coming out of a pandemic and the whole labor market's been roiled and everything, I'm still working from the assumption, we're going to find our way forward. It may take a little bit of time, but we'll get there. But to your question of where things stand and how that compares to the history, either let me see if Commissioner Hank Gutman or Deputy Commissioner Eric Beaton, who wants to jump in here?

Commissioner Hank Gutman, Department of Transportation: I'm happy to. Good morning. Good morning, Mr. Mayor and Happy Streets Week!!!!

Mayor: That's four exclamation points, Hank.

Commissioner Gutman: Absolutely. Absolutely. And I'm a little disappointed not to be with you today, given the Shake Shack. But the answer on the ferry is that the requirement that we hire people who have particular skills and are certified by the Coast Guard is a long-term institutional issue. And, obviously, COVID set us back on all of this but the instructions we received from the Mayor and the instructions that I have shared with the team is that we're to do everything humanly possible within the limits of the law to get this back up as quickly as we can. So, yes, it's a long-term problem. But now we have new needs bringing on the oldest lines, obviously complicates things because people have to be trained on the new boats. But the instruction to the team is to spare no effort and do whatever we need to do. So, I appreciate the question. I appreciate the concern and we're doing – we will do everything we can, and we're optimistic. We're optimistic about an outcome.

Mayor: Thank you. Deputy Commissioner, do you want to add anything? I don't know if he's there. Deputy Commissioner Beaton, I guess that's a no. Okay. Paul, go ahead. Who is –

Question: Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yeah, go ahead, Paul.

Question: Yep. Okay. Just to follow up on that, for Commissioner Gutman. I'm hoping to get a sense of how competitive compensation is for you know, guys who work on the ferry compared to say cruise lines or other various systems around the country. Where does our compensation standing in comparison to other areas?

Mayor: Yeah. I don't know – I'll just jump in first, Paul. I don't know if Commissioner Gutman is an expert at this moment on that comparison. If he has an easy answer. Great. If not, he will get back to you after we do this. Hank, do you have anything to add there?

Commissioner Gutman: No, we'll get back on that.

Mayor: Okay. Thank you.

Moderator: The next is Julia from the Post.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

Mayor: I'm doing well, Julia, how are you?

Question: Well, you have us all craving burgers and fries this morning. So – and is that a large soda you have there?

Mayor: Look again, look again, Julia. I want this to be synonymous with vaccination. This is – this I, you know, I want to do full disclosure. This is a Shake Shack cup with water in it. I think soda would have been a little much for me this morning.

Question: Yeah. I would say your predecessor would be upset by that.

Mayor: That's true.

Question: Okay. Onto a couple more serious questions. There was a survey by the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce that found 64 percent of borough businesses were having trouble hiring. And 42 percent cited high unemployment benefits as government checks pay as much or more than the City's minimum wage. Business owners in Manhattan echoed that sentiment to us. So, I'm wondering how you get the city's economy up and running again if so many workers are choosing to stay home because of this situation?

Mayor: I think that's going to improve literally with every passing week, every passing day. The unemployment plan was based on the fact that none of us knew what was going to happen with COVID and with the economy. But people needed to have some kind of income and keep their families going. Now we've got a reality where the economy is coming back. And I think what you're going to see is more and more people taking jobs because unemployment is going to run out soon, but the jobs are here now. And if you want those jobs, you got to grab them soon. So, I do think there's an issue there, but I think that issue in many ways is going to resolve itself. Simply because of the sheer logic that folks who want to get jobs while they can get them and get jobs they want need to act pretty soon. Go ahead, Julia.

Question: Okay. On another topic, you've been a vocal proponent of legalizing recreational marijuana. What is your reaction to CompStat figures that show the unintended consequence of fewer gun arrests across the city? I'll give you some of those numbers. Last year, 33 percent of all gun possession arrests resulted from vehicle stops with the majority of those involving weed, a source told us. After the new law went into effect, that number went up to 45 percent this year. And during the five weeks that ended in May 9th, most of which were covered by the new pot law, there were just over 200 gun busts cutting the average by more than just 53 from a week ago, the week before.

Mayor: Well, Julia, look first, the idea that it was important to legalize marijuana, I think that's really strongly supported in so many ways, that this was the right moment in history to legalize marijuana. And obviously if you legalize marijuana you don't have a rationale for stopping a car if there's marijuana in it. So, the fact is we constantly need to keep innovating approaches. This is what the NYPD has done from the beginning of the CompStat era, continue to innovate new strategies and approaches. The NYPD has a really impressive record of being creative, switching approaches, adjusting approaches, finding what works. That's what precision policing is all about. And that's what they're doing now. So, I think it's as simple as that. It's a new reality, but it's a reality based in a larger truth. And now we make the adjustments we need to make.

Moderator: We have time for two more for today. The next is Jillian from WBAI.

Question: Hey, what's up Mr. Mayor? That's my new greeting for you.

Mayor: How you doing? Well, you know, you and King Princess both said what's up this morning, so you are in good company.

Question: Well, I was mimicking her basically. And you make quite a spokesperson. And I have to tell you some bad music related news. The New York Dolls did not get into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame –

Mayor; That's wrong. I want to condemn them for that, Jillian. I am condemning them.

Question: It's wrong. These bands – they're considered alt-rock bands, would not have existed without the New York Dolls. It's just wrong. It's a travesty and I'm not even a big Dolls fan anyway.

Mayor: You and I are in total agreement. I'm outraged. I'm going to storm off the set right now in outrage.

Question: You're not going to storm off with all that Shake Shack stuff around?

Mayor: No, I'm actually – I would take it with me, that's it.

Question: Yeah, okay. Wise enough. I have a whole bunch of questions that include Open Streets and congestion pricing. But I'm so backed up because I haven't been called on in a few weeks. So, I'm going to go back to what I was talking to you last about, which was you were going to do some noble homework. Do you remember correctly – looking into the issue of affordable supermarkets, the Save Associated campaign in Crown Heights and [inaudible] of the Fresh program. So, I wanted to know, you know, besides the fact that – I wanted to add rather, in Manhattan, which of course is considered the most expensive borough and it's not actually filled with rich people, in the last 10 to 15 years, it's lost a whole slew of affordable change, like Find Fare and Sea Town and [inaudible] Associated. So, it's a problem that goes on everywhere. It's not exclusive to food deserts. So, I wanted to know if you learned anything in conducting your noble research? And what can you do, and can you save the Associated in Crown Heights?

Mayor: We are working to save the Associated in Crown Heights. That, I had a conversation with the team. I do need a little bit of a refresher Jillian, but I had a conversation with the team. And I'm trying to remember the specifics, but I do know we have reached out to the owner of that building and made clear that we think this is a really important, a really important resource for the community. And we want to find a way to save it. And we want to work together to do that. I can get an update through the team to you, to tell you what the latest is. But we definitely want to find a way to save that. The larger point making, I really do agree with. And I have had a conversation with the team about what is a more holistic approach to protect affordable supermarkets, affordable laundromats is another area I would put into the equation. We're working on our approach. I hope to have something soon. On the Fresh program, again, the intention there, I think is the right one, to get fresh produce, quality food in places that don't have enough of it. But we are looking to see if we're achieving the goals and if any adjustments need

to be made. So, I did some homework, but I don't have – I have not completed my assignment. And we will get you further answers.

Question: I appreciate that since I also just lost, well, not just, but I lost my own laundromat that had been there for 25 years. So, it is a problem. Anyway, moving on, last week the City lost on two big development fronts. The courts ruled against the Gowanus rezoning and stopped the ULURP [inaudible] because of the issue of the virtual hearings. The same thing that's going on – you don't know about this?

Mayor: Well, I don't know if I agree with your interpretation.

Question: It happened Friday. No, it was based on, it was just based on the live hearing versus remote. Just like in the Crown Heights area that they are –

Mayor: Yeah, but Jillian, I'm just going to interrupt and then I will definitely let you finish your question. I don't believe anything has happened that's ultimately going to stop the larger timeline here. So, there's different – and I'll check all my facts. But I've been following it pretty well. The various actions by courts follow certain patterns. I don't see anything here that stops this rezoning from ultimately moving forward. So, put aside sort of procedural moves and short-term delays, I believe it's going to move forward. But continue, go ahead.

Question: Okay. Well that is ultimately my question. But let me get there first. The other one was that there are only two bidders for the East Side Coastal Resiliency Plan, which is kind of odd that there are only two. And one of them is suing the City now, because, specifically DDC, because they say that the agency didn't follow its own protocols. So, that's been delayed because the City has agreed for 30 days to not award a contract. And then another 30 days to not register it. And it's already been delayed five times. So, considering that this particular plan was chosen because it was supposed to be faster, even though it's more destructive and it destroys an entire park, the East River Park is it, you know, that's something to consider in the idea. But I wanted to pull these all together because you've got this almost rush as some of the community groups think, like Voice of Gowanus and East River Park Action to get this stuff done while you're still in office, while Brad Landler is still in office, while Steve Levin is still in office. But it doesn't look like they are going to start while you're still here, the last year. So, I'm sorry. I forgot one important point. The Gowanus issue hasn't even been discussed in the courts on its merits –

Mayor: Okay, help me get your question?

Question: Yeah, I am.

Mayor: Come on.

Question: This is it. So, at what point do you think it's better and fairer to allow the new mayor and new Council members to decide what goes on in the city or their neighborhoods?

Mayor: I think first of all, I have a – I don't want to do a back and forth. I'm just going to offer my understanding from my team as we speak, that there is not a hold on Gowanus. That a hybrid

approach to the hearing was approved by the court and everything's moving. And that's been my full understanding. That we feel we're on very firm ground. And that will move and that will be achieved. And that rezoning is going to bring a lot, a lot of affordable housing, a lot of protection of working-class jobs. I'm very, very hopeful about that. I think the fact that that rezoning has been worked on for years and years with a huge amount of community consultation. Of course, it should move forward. I think on the East Side Coastal Resiliency, I disagree obviously with your characterization of the plan. I think it is the right plan to protect hundreds of thousands of people who went through hell during Sandy, to protect them for the long term and create a beautiful park with more trees. So, no, I think it's right to go ahead – you know, lawsuits and temporary procedural delays are part of life in New York City, but we were going to move that plan forward. It is the right plan. It's time to go.

Moderator: Last question for today, it goes to Gersh from Streetsblog.

Question: Well, how are you Mr. Mayor on Streets Week!!!! Day four?

Mayor: Day four, we need like a big Roman numeral to come up, Gersh. I need like a graphic that comes up underneath me here.

Question: Like the Super Bowl, Super Bowl LIV.

Mayor: Correct.

Question: Anyway, I do have to say, I know it's [inaudible] in the press corps to make fun of you when you, when you're eating. But I actually like how much you enjoy eating New York food. So, I'll just throw that out there.

Mayor: Thank you, Gersh. Gersh, you know, even though sometimes we tangle, we see eye to eye on many things. I will always remember your kind contribution of sourdough bread at the height of the crisis. So, we agree on food. We may not agree on punctuation because as anyone knows, day four Streets Week!!!! should also have four, four exclamation points and you can see it's very graphically appealing. Gersh.

Question: I'm still only using one. Anyway, I did want to ask you about the Queens Boulevard announcement, which is for many people in the advocacy community, long overdue. I have to know though there weren't any details, initially Council Member Koslowitz in Forest Hills had wanted you to look at a different design for that, possibly put the bike lane in the middle, et cetera. Did you find a way to appease her or did you just decide to go ahead with the original, a long plan design that your professionals had come up with?

Mayor: I like your verb choice as always. The Council Member, I think honestly felt that what she was proposing was a better approach for the community. And we carefully, truly carefully listened to her, thought about it, looked at, but came to the conclusion that it wasn't workable and that the original plan was fair. I think there were some adjustments made, but it's based essentially on the original plan. We are, again, we need these last approvals and I know Streetsblog will be constantly monitoring to make sure other levels of government do their jobs.

But we are ready to go and look forward to starting in July and being done in November. Go ahead, Gersh.

Question: All right, fantastic. I'm going to shift to the big announcement about the trucking and, you know, the freight plan. Because as you know, freight is a huge issue. Commissioner Gutman has talked about the massive rise in freight deliveries. I'm going to – this is a bit of a real softball because we're at a bit of a loss because we've gone through the 103-page report this morning, and it's a little unclear what you, what the administration actually believes are the most crucial policies that are outlined there? And I ask this because it's a very aspirational document. It talks about all of the many ways the City must find, for example, more efficiencies in existing systems or promote industry innovation in modal shifts to marine and freight, et cetera, cargo bikes that we've talked about. But what do you think are that, you know, be the assignment editor, what's the top three lines that you think are the thing that every newspaper should carry tomorrow?

Mayor: Be the assignment editor. I love that. Look, to me this is about getting away from the way we have been doing things. So, more – and I want you to – here's my assignment editor approach. We're going to use more rail. We're going to use the water more. We're going to use bike cargo more. We're going to do things differently. And we're going to focus on getting deliveries out of rush hour, into overnights, reduce congestion, reduce pollution. There's a lot of work to be done. But what's important here is the City wants to push for all these alternatives and use every tool we have. Some of this I think will be achieved with, you know, technological improvement. Some of it, the private sector will start to achieve on its own. But really a lot of the best innovations that have happened in terms of fighting climate change and in terms of creating alternatives and transportation, they have to be sparked by the public sector. So, what we're saying is the current approach, lots of big trucks, middle of the day, focus incessantly on vehicles on streets, that is broken, that needs to change. Let's get to the rails, let's get to the water, let's get to the bikes, let's get to the off hours. Let's do things differently. That's what this strategy is.

And listen to everyone. As we conclude today, doing things differently, learning from incredible innovations, learning even from crisis and finding the good in it. That's what Streets Week!!!! has been all about. Bringing the streets in New York City alive, sparking the comeback, making New York City more vibrant than ever. I want to emphasize this. We've said from the beginning of recovery for all of us is not status quo comes back again. No, it's come back different, better, come back, more fair, more equal. But also do things we never dreamed to do before. And Streets Week!!!! And we're going to celebrate up in Inwood today is all about bringing our streets to life in a whole new way. This city is going to be even more vibrant after COVID than it was before. And that is what a recovery for all of us looks like. Thank you, everybody.

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