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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. So, what a beautiful weekend in this city, it was. It was just lovely. People were out everywhere. Families were out. You saw folks all over the city, restaurants filled, just amazing, and that is the shape of things to come. You can feel New York City coming back and you could see it all over the city this weekend, and we saw a lot of other good news, vaccinations continue to go up, COVID continues to go down. We're going to talk about it in the indicator's section, more good news, COVID back on its heels. We're going to chase it out of New York City. So, good vibes all over the city this weekend, as we recover, as we move forward. Now, Chirlane and I had a great experience on Saturday morning with our new City Cleanup Corps, and this is a part of our recovery too, bringing back to the city, beautifying the city, making sure this city is ready for a full recovery. We were out there with a great team from the City Cleanup Corps, and seeing the amazing work they're doing already, and it's just begun, already 1,500 members of the 10,000 strong City Cleanup Corps have been hired. We want New Yorkers who are ready to come join us. Remember, this was based on the incredible, historic Civilian Conservation Corps of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. We took the idea, we updated it, using it for today's reality, employing New Yorkers who need work, who lost their jobs because of COVID, bringing back the city, cleaning it up, making it beautiful for the recovery. So, this is how we build a recovery for all of us, with these kinds of approaches, and it's really exciting. So, anyone who wants to join the City Cleanup Corps, you're going to be doing something great for your city and helping us move forward.

Now, more good news on the vaccination front, we are almost to 7.5 million vaccinations. I mean, this is a staggering figure, by far the biggest vaccination effort in the history of New York City, 7.5 million, almost today's exact total from day one, 7,495,978 doses administered. That's amazing. Now for the vaccination have to keep growing, it's going to take a lot of community outreach, a lot of smart grassroots action. In a moment you're going to hear from Dr. Torian Easterling who's been doing amazing work out in communities all over the city as our First Deputy Health Commissioner. He has led a lot of the grassroots efforts, but what we know more and more is that we need to reach younger New Yorkers. We need to reach younger New Yorkers who need the vaccination but haven't yet really been brought into this effort. So, in addition to Dr. Easterling, we've got a new special correspondent for our morning briefing. They're up by the vaccine bus at Fordham University in the Bronx. Let me see if our special correspondent can hear me and we're looking forward to his report.

Dante de Blasio: Thanks, dad. Coming to you live from Fordham Plaza in the Bronx with Dr. Torian Easterling, the Department of Health. We're here today to kick off a new initiative, designed to get new – young New Yorkers vaccinated. The vaccine is safe, effective, and easy to

get, and the sooner we all get vaccinated, the sooner the city can get back to normal. That's why over the next couple of weeks, I'm going to be going around in one of these elegant vaccination buses going across the city, talking to young New Yorkers and encouraging them to get vaccinated. So, keep an eye out in New York, might be rolling up to a block near you. I'm going to turn things over to Dr. Easterling.

First Deputy Commissioner Torian Easterling, Department of Health and Mental

Hygiene: Thanks so much, Dante, really great to be out here at Fordham University today to make sure New Yorkers know that the vaccines are safe and effective. They can just walk up to one of our vaccine's buses. We know that in the Bronx, you know, COVID-19 has really impacted these communities really hard. So, we really want to make sure that New Yorkers know that not only the vaccines are safe and effective, that you can just walk up, but you can also schedule appointments. You can log on right now to nyc.gov/vaccinefinder or call 8-7-7-VAX4NYC. And we know that the voices of young folks are really important, talking about health issues, social justice, and equity. So, we need you to share your experiences, post on social media, talk to your friends, talk to your college peers, speak to your family members. We know that it's really important, but back to the matter of hand. Hey, Dante, I heard you -- I hear you're going to be DJing at one of your next stops? What songs are you playing?

Dante de Blasio: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. All right. We're going to start off hype, right? And to play Body by Megan Thee Stallion. Alright, and then, you know, we're in the Bronx right now, let's keep it local, we're going to play some Cardi B.

Deputy Commissioner Easterling: Nice.

Dante de Blasio: Thank you. Thank you. All right. Back to you, dad.

Mayor: Thank you, Dante. A new career I see in the offing here. So, you heard it, everyone. The idea is go out to the people, bring the word to the people, go to the grass roots, make it easy, make it fun. Dr. Easterling is doing amazing work. Dante is going to be out there all over the city, talking to young people, encouraging the come over. You know, the bus really makes a huge difference. I was up in the Bronx with Congress Member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Assembly Member Karines Reyes, and we were talking about the "vacuna bus" and everyone was excited at the idea of the bus being right there in the neighborhood, getting people involved, making it easy. So, we're going to be sending the bus all over. Everyone, it's time to get vaccine. If you haven't yet, we're going to make it easier than ever. Dante is going to be right there to show you how to do it, and we're going to get many, many younger New Yorkers vaccinated, and that's going to be good for this whole city.

Okay, so we know, number one thing, getting people vaccinated. That's how we achieve our recovery. That is by far the single best thing we can do, and it is working. You're about to see it with the indicators, but we got to do a lot of different things to make this recovery work. And we're always focused on public safety. Public safety is crucial to the recovery. Recovery supports public safety as well. They go together. Now, as of now, subways back 24/7. So, we're going to keep focusing on safety in the subways. The NYPD is out there, and you can see it, because whenever, God forbid, there's a problem, the NYPD is there a quickly. We had a very troubling

situation a few days ago, the NYPD affected the arrest immediately, showing clearly the impact of their presence showing that there's accountability. Anyone that commits an offense in the subways will be found, will be prosecuted, will be held accountable. We have already put massive resources into protecting New Yorkers in the subways. To begin with, we had a 2,500 member police force in the subways. Weeks and weeks ago, we added 500 more minimum, and we said, that's going to be a crucial impact. It's going to make a crucial impact addressing some of the needs. We took officers from all different sorts of responsibilities. We said, we're going to get you out in the subways where you can make a particular difference. So, that took us to 3,000. Today, we're announcing an additional 250 officers on a special deployment on top of the previous 500, on top of the previous 2,500. We're going to take officers and put them in the right places and the subways at the right time, particularly at peak times of ridership. Combining all of these elements, this will now be the largest NYPD Transit Force, again, pulling all these pieces together. It will be the largest NYPD Transit Force in over 25 years. So, we are going to do the things we need to do to keep New Yorkers safe, to get them back to the subways, to move the recovery. And again, everyone comes back to the subways, makes us subway safer. This is just a really important, common sense point and our public safety professionals affirm it. More and more New Yorkers come back to the subways, the subways get safer, but we're going to send a very powerful message that we're putting in the resources every day, whatever it takes, get the job done.

Now, that's what the City of New York is doing. That's what the NYPD is doing. We need the MTA to pull their own weight as well. It is easy to criticize, how about simply contributing and helping achieve the mission together? So, over the past 17 months we haven't seen what we needed. 17 months ago, the MTA approved the hiring of hundreds of new MTA police officers, but here we are, basically a year and a half later, and they still haven't filled all those vacancies. Yeah, there was a pandemic, but guess what? We managed to fill police vacancies. We managed to fill firefighter vacancies. So, the MTA needs to step up. They need to hire, they need to fill those vacancies, and then they need to do another thing. They've got a substantial police force. They're got to focus the police force where the riders are. MTA has a variety of different responsibilities in the city and the suburbs, I respect that, and we want everyone to be safe, but the vast majority of the riders are in the subways, in the city. The subways are the glue for the entire metropolitan region. So, we keep contributing, but we need the MTA to contribute more as well. And we will sweeten the deal. We will provide NYPD training, the very best training in the world, to the new MTA officers, those MTA officers getting them acclimated to the subways. We'll do that for free. We will provide that and it's available right away to make this work for everyone. So, my message is really clear. We're going to do what it takes. We need the MTA to also do what it takes. We are focused on public safety and recovery. We're not interested in playing politics. We're not interested in scoring political points or distracting from other problems. We just want to make people safe, bring this city back, and we know we can do it. NYPD is stepping up, MTA why don't you step up as well?

All right, now, Recovery for All of Us, I keep saying it, and you can see it, you can feel it wherever you go in this city. You can feel the recovery happening, and it takes on many forms. We just talked about vaccinations part of it. Public safety is part of it, but obviously jobs coming back, businesses coming back, and even tourists coming back. We're starting to see that now. I think people didn't predict it when it happened so early, but it is. We need people in this city and

the whole metropolitan area to feel that hope, that spirit of New York City, because you can see it, but we want to show it to people in a vibrant, powerful fashion. So, we have a new ad campaign to send a message that we are back. We are coming back strong. We are going to be better than ever. The campaign is called No Stopping New York. It says it all, No Stopping New York. This is a message that any true New Yorker feels, you cannot hold New York City down, you cannot hold New Yorkers down. We're going to have this campaign and our \$30 million advertising campaign to bring back tourism, we're going to combine these together. You're going to see it all over the city. It's going to encourage people. It's going to help move us forward. I want you to see this new ad.

[...]

I think it says it all. I feel it. I hope you feel it too because that's who we are. You can knock us down, but we get back up every single time and we get stronger. So, there is no stopping the Bronx, where Dante and Dr. Easterling were before. No stopping Manhattan. No stopping Queens. No stopping Staten Island. And Lord knows there's no stopping Brooklyn. This campaign is going to send a powerful message and give even more energy to this comeback, and I'm excited about it. And I'll tell you what I'm even more excited about, I'm about to do the daily indicators, and once again, it's amazing and credit to all New Yorkers, because this is your work. This is your achievement. So here we go. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, today's report, 89 patients confirmed positivity, 23.6 percent, and check out the hospitalization rate continuing to go down: 1.01 per 100,000 – look at that line, go down, down, down. It's absolutely amazing. Now, let's go to cases and this is really striking as well. New reported cases on a seven-day average. So, right now here we are going below the ideal threshold in just days, it looks like – today's report: 570 cases. What an amazing decline has been in the course last few weeks. Let's keep it going, everyone. Let's get vaccinated. And number three, percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19 – today's report on a seven-day rolling average: 1.51 percent. Absolutely amazing, let's keep going.

Okay. A few words in Spanish, and I want to go back to the topic of the new initiative, the new campaign, no stopping New York.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

Moderator: We'll now begin in our Q and A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Dr. Chokshi and by Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. The first question today goes to Roger Stern from 1010 WINS.

Mayor: Roger, are you there?

Question: I'm sorry, are you talking to me?

Mayor: Roger Stern, are you out there?

Question: Yes, I am out here. Excuse me. I was listening on my computer and a slight delay. I'd like to pin you down a little more about your talking about the MTA Police Department having to step in. My understanding and correct me if I'm wrong is that they put their Police Department is aimed at the commuter lines and that's the Staten Island line, and primarily they are property police. If they were crime, let's say an attack on the Long Island Railroad. It would be the Nassau, Suffolk Police Department, which would respond, because there are not enough Long Island Railroad police, and yesterday the MTA Chairman said it's really the NYPD's responsibility. So how do you square that with your suggestion that the MTA has to do more and use its own police force to make the subway safer?

Mayor: Roger, you think back when they first said they were going to hire 500 more officers, they explicitly said a part of that mission was to help address the needs in the subway. So, point one. Point two, this is where the vast majority of the riders are. So, if we treat everything MTA the way it was historically, and we know for a long time the city didn't get its fair share, you know, we could, we could lean into that status quo, but I don't want to lean into that. I want to talk about what we need now to bring back the city, to recover fully which is going to help the whole metropolitan area. Everyone knows that I'm simply saying we keep adding, they could do something more. Why don't they step up too? They have a police force. We'll train them for free. They could help out. Why not join the effort? Go ahead, Roger.

Question: Yeah, my follow-up would be that you, I think you said 250 more in NYPD officers assigned to the subway. Chairman Floyd said he'd like to see 600 to 800 more officers. Is that reasonable?

Mayor: Again, we've got now the highest number of officers in the subways with this new announcement in over 25 years. So, we're clearly putting a big investment into making sure the subways come back strong. We're asking the MTA to show the same level of commitment. This is a historic number, largest number in over a quarter century, we think it's going to make a huge impact. We think it's going to make a huge difference.

Moderator: The next is Emma from the New York Times.

Question: Hi, good morning, Mayor. You may have seen the New York Times, my colleague had an investigation of Eric Adams and his fundraising practices. So, I wanted to ask you about that and given your own experiences involving investigations into fundraising, what is your advice for Eric if he becomes mayor? And are you concerned that he appears to have violated campaign finance law by failing to report that developers raised money for him?

Mayor: I have not seen the article, so I can't comment on the specifics. I think, you know, my experience is – clear continue to seek guidance, you know, continue to do whatever required disclosures. You know, I can only speak from my own experience. I can't speak to anyone else's because I just don't have the details. Go ahead, Emma.

Question: Thanks man, and I was curious, are you still considering a Mayoral endorsement? And do you think it would help the candidate? I saw a recent poll that actually said your approval

rating was way up, to 52 percent – I think it was in the 30s after your presidential run. So, are you considering a mayoral endorsement and what would the timing be?

Mayor: Emma, I'm watching this race closely? You know, to me, I'm going to watch what the candidates say and do. I'm going to decide if I think it makes sense to get involved. I don't rule it in, I don't rule it out. I'm going to watch carefully and make a decision. Obviously, you know, as we get closer, we're going to know a lot more. I mean, look, every day we're seeing more and more dialogue, more and more debate. So, I remain open to it, and when we get closer, I'll have something to say.

Moderator: The next is Andrew Siff from WNBC.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor and everyone on the call. Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yes, Andrew. How are you doing?

Question: Good hanging in there. Thank you. I wanted to ask a question about what some called breakthrough COVID cases. This is the folks who've been fully vaccinated, but they test positive for COVID after the fact, and maybe Dr. Chokshi and Dr. Varma can weigh in on this. The best of my understanding – New York City and New York State don't keep track who test and contract COVID after being fully vaccinated. Is that correct? And if so, why wouldn't the City want to keep better track of this?

Mayor: All right. I'll turn to Dr. Chokshi and then Dr. Varma.

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Thank you so much, Andrew, for the question. We are indeed keeping track of vaccine breakthroughs. These are the infections that happen very rarely after someone has been fully vaccinated. The investigations that we do they are a nuanced analysis in part because we have to ascertain that someone is indeed fully vaccinated and remember that's at least 14 days after your last dose of receiving one of the COVID-19 vaccines. In addition, we coordinate with our federal colleagues, particularly at the CDC so that we stay abreast of what they're seeing in their investigations as well. The major point that I want to emphasize is that all of the science to date indicates that such a breakthrough infections are very rare. We know now from the clinical trials, as well as real-world evidence that all of the authorized COVID-19 vaccines are not just safe, but astonishingly effective, particularly when it comes to preventing a severe disease but also asymptomatic infections and now growingly in terms of the evidence that the vaccines limit transmission of COVID-19 as well.

Mayor: Thank you. Dr. Varma?

Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma: Nothing else to add for me.

Mayor: Thank you very much. Go ahead, Andrew.

Question: Yeah. So, shifting gears to the topic of the mayoral election, I'm wondering if you've been briefed or have seen the report in The City alleging that candidate Dianne Morales was investigated for an outstanding water bill and whether or not you're familiar with that allegation and whether you think it's disqualifying?

Mayor: I'm not familiar with the details of the allegation. I mean, it obviously raises a concern, but I just don't know enough of the facts to give you a deeper answer on that. But I look, I think this is an example with many others where we want everything out in the table. The decision that people are making is you, who's going to take the baton from me at the end of the year and deepen and continue our recovery after the biggest crisis in New York City history. We'd better damn well know what we're getting here – who we're getting, who they really are, what they're about. So, let's get all this information out so the voters can judge.

Moderator: The next to Sydney Pereira from Gothamist.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. You spoke at the top about scaling up with additional officers in the MTA or in the subway system, and I'm wondering if that effort is also going to include scaling up and include a surge, I guess would be the word, of social services outreach workers for mental health resources, or housing. You know, there's been a lot of conversation on scaling up police and the subway system and with hundreds of officers, and is the city also going to look at that level of a scale up for outreach workers for social services?

Mayor: Yeah, Sydney, it is a great question. Yes, we have been scaling up and we'll continue to, well, I've already announced in the preliminary budget and the executive budget, more and more resources going to outreach, going to mental health intervention, on streets and subways. And look it didn't get enough attention, but even the height of the pandemic, our outreach workers were out there in the subways and they brought in an extraordinary number of homeless New Yorkers into shelter, and a huge percent of them have stayed in shelter. So, this is something we're seeing actual real progress on – the quality of the outreach, the quantity of the outreach, making a big impact. So, this is an all-of-the-above approach. Go ahead, Sydney.

Question: Okay. shifting gears as we get closer to Memorial Day, I know the beaches in the Rockaways they've suffered a lot of erosion over the winter. Especially in certain parts of the Rockaways, and I'm wondering is the city planning to add more sand to those beaches and is the entirety going to be able to open this summer as people still try to just stay, you know, gathered outdoors during the pandemic and such?

Mayor: It's a great question Sydney, given some of the history with challenges we face. Now a lot has been done to reinforce the Rockaways' beaches. The City has done a lot. The Army Corps has done a lot. We'll get an update on any particular measures we have to take for this summer, but right now, you know, full speed ahead, beaches opening on time, but we'll get you an update on if there's any particular measures we're taking.

Moderator: The next is David Evans from WABC.

Question: Hey Mayor, can you hear me?

Mayor: Yeah, Dave? How are you doing?

Question: Hey, I'm good. I wanted to ask you last week when the CDC came out with this new guidelines about masks, indoors and outdoors, and then the president talked about that back then you sounded as if, well, hold on a second. I'm not quite ready to go along with that recommendation for indoors in New York City. Now that you've had a few days to digest what the president and the CDC are recommending, have you changed, have you rethought it?

Mayor: I think you're – we go back a long way, Dave. I'm not sure I would agree with that particular characterization. I would say this: one, I like the guidance, I think it makes sense. It focuses on folks who are vaccinated are going to have more freedom. That's a tremendously positive, helpful message. It also focuses on outdoors where, clearly, we've said from the beginning, the situation outdoors is always better. But it's also clear about indoors – schools, hospitals, nursing homes, congregate care facilities, mass transit, any place you might be in close proximity to people that there has to be special care taken. So, I think it's balanced. Now, we're going to watch carefully, always – we're going to watch the data. If we think something needs to be adjusted, we'll say it and we'll work with the CDC and the State. But, right now, I think it's good guidance. Go ahead, Dave.

Question: [Inaudible] topic. I wanted to see your reaction to over the weekend, the Pride folks saying that they really don't want the police groups to be involved in the March and they want the police to stay at least a block away who are working the March – kind of stunning to me. What'd you think?

Mayor: Look, I fully appreciate the extraordinary history of Pride in the city and, you know, so much meaning, so much history, and I honor what Pride has achieved over the years. I think that decision's a mistake. First of all, we have to keep people safe and it's been an incredibly safe, positive event, and we have to be mindful of continuing that. Second of all, you know, I believe in inclusion and we're talking about – one of the issues is officers who are members of the LGBT community wanting to March and express their pride, and their solidarity of the community, and their desire to keep changing the NYPD and changing the city. That's something I think should be embraced.

Moderator: Next is Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor. How are you doing good?

Mayor: Good, Henry. How have you been?

Question: I'm very good. Thank you. I wanted to ask you about this initiative, if you will, about the subway, because it doesn't sound to me as if you're making a really all-out effort to [inaudible] this crime spike with a whole panoply of tactics, including plainclothes officers, better communications so that if there's an incident on a subway, someone can alert police either on their cell phone or some other way through the subway car. [Inaudible] officers, or even 500 officers on a system this large is really scattered and diluted, particularly if you're using them just

the times when the subway is at peak use. And a lot of these incidents are happening when the subways are not crowded. And a lot of these incidents are not being reported. I mean, I've seen them and I don't think they've been reported – not terrible slashings, but serious offenses against public's peace. So, I'm wondering why you feel that this is a sufficient response, considering the – kind of, the enormity of the impact that these incidents are having on the city.

Mayor: Well, Henry, again, what I see happening in the city, in the subways, people coming back. My experience with every-day New Yorkers is they are coming back all over the city. They're coming back to the subways. They're coming back to the buses. The numbers prove it. They don't buy into a culture of fear, but it's our job to do everything we can to both address the perception and the reality. We need everyone to be safe. This will be the largest number of police officers in the subway in over 25 years, including times when we had much more overall crime. And we also know we've had tremendous success pre-pandemic in driving down crime in the subways to the point of one index crime per million riders per day. So, I think the NYPD knows a lot about how to keep the subway safe and this is the deployment they think is going to make a big difference. Go ahead, Henry.

Question: Time will tell. And I think it made me misassumption to think that we can return to the previous pandemic days –

Mayor: Henry, I think it may be a misassumption to assume we can't. I think we will return and then surpass – truly, I really believe this. I'm not counting this as a question, I'm making an editorial comment.

Question: I appreciate it.

Mayor: I believe the city in terms of – across the board, schools, jobs, safety – over the next year or two, I believe we will meet the pre-pandemic reality and then surpass it. I really believe it. And anyone who thinks otherwise doesn't, in my opinion, understand the very clear patterns in New York City history and the will of New Yorkers to bring this city back. Just go walk around, you can see it happening already, but a lot more to come. Go ahead, Henry.

Question: Well, I'm going to use my second question to return to the subject, even though I had another question. And that is – you know, are you going to use plainclothes police officers in this? Are you going to increase the ability of people to communicate with law enforcement if there's an incident on the train? Are you going to – is it just a numbers question for you or are there other kinds of things that the city and the NYPD and the MTA could do working together to really increase the confidence level on the subway, aside from numbers?

Mayor: No – it's a great point, Henry. Yes. The answer is always, yes. We'll have folks on the NYPD talk to you about tactics that make sense to talk about publicly versus ones that might be best kept a little quieter and how people can register anything they see. But what we know is NYPD uses a variety of approaches. A recent example with our Asian Hate Crimes Task Force, where they started going to undercover officers and found that that was extremely effective, catching some of the folks who were perpetrators of hate crimes. So, I think a variety of tools make sense here. But, you know, as we saw the other day, folks did something absolutely wrong.

They were caught immediately. One thing that's true nowadays, that wasn't so true when I was starting out – you know, it used to be that folks got away. People don't get away anymore for a variety of reasons – video and other reasons. Everyone who commits a crime gets found, almost without exception. But it does require a variety of tactics and I think undercover is a good example of that. And, again, we'll talk about some of that. Some of that we may not highlight, but rest assured there will be multiple approaches taken.

Moderator: We have time for two more questions today. The next is Courtney Gross from NY1.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. How are you?

Mayor: Good, Courtney? How have you been?

Question: I'm well, thank you. So, I want to also ask about the cops in the subway. It has been several weeks, I believe, MTA officials have obviously been calling for more officers, hundreds of more officers in the subway. And, at one point, I think they even said that you had your head buried in the sand – that was a couple of days ago. But you had resisted up until this point – and I realized some people may not be as satisfied with the 250 officers, but it is officers nonetheless. So, what made you change your mind? Is it because of the recent attacks Friday morning?

Mayor: No, it's we have more officers is one of the key points. We just graduated a week or two ago 850 more officers. We have 600 more coming in June. So, that's giving us more ability to put officers where we see particular needs. I think this is just going to help us add an important point to turn the corner and move forward. And, again, it will be the highest number in 25 years. I feel confident that's going to make a big impact. Go ahead, Courtney.

Question: And you said the MTA has not filled – I'm going to actually piggyback two questions, cause this is just a quick fact check – you said that MTA has not filled all of its 500 positions that it promised. What's the exact number that you're missing there? And then, a separate topic – you've talked about the city of reopening, July 1st is obviously the goal. What – I knew you said last week on the radio that you're still, in the coming days, going to make an announcement about the homeless individuals, people experiencing homelessness in hotels. Are you any closer to sending them back to congregate shelter? And is there a timeline yet?

Mayor: We're working on that right now, Courtney. Clearly, the whole idea was get the city healthy, get the city into a state of full recovery. And we've always wanted to get folks back to the shelters where they could get support. Everything is moving on track in terms of the COVID numbers. It's as good or better than we ever could have imagined how quickly things are moving in our favor. The vaccination numbers are great. I feel very, very good that we'll be able to start moving people back, but we have to finish some specific planning. And as soon as we're able to affirm a timeline, we will. But, you know, things are moving a pace, for sure.

Moderator: Last question for today, it goes to Yoav from The City.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. I wanted to follow up on Andrew Siff's question about Dianne Morales. In May 2019, she was poised to be named the Chair of the City's Equal Employment Practices Commission. It was a joint appointment between City Hall and City Council. And I would just wondering, do you have a recollection for why that appointment didn't happen?

Mayor: I do not, Yoav. I heard about this in the last 24 hours and I don't think it ever got to me. I can't say 100 percent, but I don't remember it ever getting to me and I assume it is because the vetting process led to the decision not to bring the name forward. Go ahead.

Question: And just wanting to follow up, I asked you about – it's been about four weeks since I asked you about the outcomes of the 64 New York Times videos of alleged excessive force by the police in last year's protest and you said you would have your team look into it. I haven't heard nothing new on that front. Since it's been four weeks, I wanted to check back in with you.

Mayor: I thought that was all resolved, honestly. I thought I had gotten a briefing at one point that everything was now clear to release and it was going to be a case-by-case explanation of what happened in each case. If for some reason that didn't go out, we'll get that out today. I don't think there's any reason to hold back that I know of. If there's something else, we'll let you know for sure.

But, anyway, as we conclude today – everyone, look, the bottom line here for this city, look at today's indicators. Look at the amazing progress, again, ahead of any schedule we could have imagined. It's because people went out and got vaccinated. I'm going to continue to appeal every single day, go out and get vaccinated. If you haven't, if someone in your life hasn't been vaccinated, take them by the hand, get them vaccinated. Incredible incentives we're offering now, more and more locations. The Vaccine Bus, going around the city – it's literally the easiest it's ever been. And help us finish the mission and drive COVID out of this town. Thank you, everybody.

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