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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Well, good morning, everybody. New York City continues on our road back. New York City, every day, taking step after step as we fight back this disease and we start to bring back our economy and our lives. And really, again, I'll say it every single time. The credit goes to all of you who have done such a remarkable job, doing what we needed to do to fight back this disease. And you're going to see, once again, with the day's indicators that it's working. So, a lot is happening now, a lot of work being done as we speak to get things ready for the start of school, good work being done by thousands and thousands of City employees to get everything ready for our kids. So much other important work going on. We see real progress – again, businesses bringing back more employees, museums opening up, our youth sports leagues opening up, so many things that show little by little we're taking those steps in the right direction.

Now, I've said many times, for us to really come back – for this city, this state, this nation to come back, we have to have a strong public sector. We have to provide all the services that people need as part of our recovery. That's why it's been so important to fight for a stimulus from the federal government. We haven't gotten that and that's put us in a really tough situation where we had to in our most recent budget prepare for something we really don't want to do, which is widespread layoffs of City workers, which would literally take us in the wrong direction. It would be horrible for those good, hardworking City employees and their families, and horrible for our city. But time has been ticking and there has been no resolution from Washington, and we've looked to Albany as well, so far without result. So, today, was the day when layoff notices were going to be sent out. Now, our municipal labor unions have come to me in the last few days in the asked for more time to see if they can resolve this issue. They've come in good faith, and I've worked very closely with municipal labor now over the last seven years in partnership, and they've asked for an opportunity to convince the State Legislature to reconvene immediately to address long-term borrowing. I think it's a fair request, but it's one that has to be acted on very, very quickly. And so, what I've said to our colleagues in the municipal labor movement is we will hold, but it will be on a day to day basis. We won't send off the layoff notices today, but each day we will reassess, because we have to address our fiscal crisis. Again, no one wants to see a single layoff, but we have to address our fiscal crisis. So, I am hoping that this pause will lead to more progress in Albany because of the intense commitment of labor to getting this done. And I want to say, in the last few days, we've seen more and more signs of support for long-term borrowing. I want to thank our colleagues in the City Council. They're preparing to vote on a resolution in support of long-term borrowing in a matter of days. I want to thank Speaker Cory Johnson and UFT President Michael Mulgrew – they authored an op-ed recently in the Daily News, making the case for long-term borrowing. Many, many unions have been reaching out to Albany, telling them how important it is for New York City, but not just from New York City –

the New York State Association of Counties has weighed in and made so clear that all over New York State there are localities that need help with long-term borrowing, given this horrible, horrible reality thrown at us by a pandemic no one ever expected. So, we'll pause now, and we'll do the work together to convince Albany that we need them. We need them to step up and pass long-term borrowing. That's what would avert the layoffs instantly and that's what we'll be working on over these next few days.

Now, while we're doing this work to try and preserve our workforce, to try and protect the services that people need, try and keep our budget strong. There's so many other things we have to do at the same time, all in the midst of this incredibly challenging moment in history. So, what we do every day, of course, number-one concern every day is a health and safety of all New Yorkers. And when we focus on public safety, we do it in a way that regards both the importance of protecting people's lives and the importance of bringing police and community together. I've said literally since the time I ran for mayor that safety and fairness must walk hand in hand. There's no contradiction between a safe city and a city that is about justice. So, we have throughout been showing that these two crucial, crucial imperatives can be acted on simultaneously and the concerns – the deep and real concerns that people have raised all over the city, all over this country in recent months, the Black Lives Matter movement, all the calls for justice and fairness, we hear them and we are acting on them. Now, recently in June, we got a request from the Obama Foundation, President Obama's foundation, to consider taking a pledge, which would focus on continued reform in criminal justice, and particularly reform when it came to the use of force by police officers. I want you to know, I appreciate President Obama and his foundation for leading the way all over the country, asking localities to take this pledge, to look again at our policies and find new ways to move reform forward. And I very happily and willingly took the pledge, because I knew we had done a lot, but we could do even more. And the question as always was, how can we bring police and community closer together? How could we make sure there's real accountability, real transparency? How could we make sure, as we have for the last seven years, that use of force is the most minimal possible?

So, today, where we are publishing our response to this pledge, that specific actions will be taken, and among those actions are new initiatives to bring the voices of the people of this city into our police academy as our recruits are being trained and as our officers are being retrained to literally bring neighborhood voices in as part of the training process; to have local efforts with community committees to develop new policies that will work for police and community alike, to have a deeper dialogue to change some of the ways we do things so that everyone can work better together; to use CompStat in new ways – CompStat has been the underpinning of our success now for a quarter-century in fighting back crime, but CompStat can be used in so many powerful ways to also measure how the NYPD is doing and its relationship with communities and how to improve that relationship. And crucially, we will be publishing a disciplinary matrix – and this is a big step forward for transparency, accountability – user-friendly data that will allow a clear understanding of how we are approaching discipline. We want discipline to be a very straightforward matter. We want it to be clear that when certain actions are taken and certain mistakes are made that there will be accountability. And it is so important for the public trust in our police – and that we've proven over the last seven years – when that trust grows, when that relationship grows, as it has in the city so many times, it allows us all to be safer. The matrix will be publicly available today at [nyc.gov/nypdmatrix](http://nyc.gov/nypdmatrix). There'll be a public comment

period of one month and that information we get back from the public comment period will lead to the finalization of the policy. But the bottom line is this, the NYPD every day does an extraordinary job protecting the people in New York City. The NYPD has also shown its ability to change and reform, and more change reform is needed. The culture of policing needs continued improvement. That is something obvious, but we can simultaneously say that we appreciate that the vast majority of officers are in this work for a profound reason – they want to help people, they want to protect people. We need to make sure that the culture of policing continues to improve as well to be just as good as the motivation that led so many people into this crucial work. And these measures will help us take an important step forward.

I want to now turn to our Police Commissioner, who has, over his last seven years, continued to improve this department – whatever title he held, continued the effort to make the Department both better at protecting New Yorkers and better at listening to the people in the city and working with them and respecting their rights. Now, I'll turn to our Commissioner Dermot Shea.

**Police Commissioner Dermot Shea:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. So, when I first heard, going back a month or so, about the Obama pledge and dug into what it involved, it was a no-brainer from my perspective. In fact, I have to give some credit to Jimmy O'Neill, the former police commissioner. If you think back a couple of years, when he empaneled and asked for outside experts to come in and take a look at our discipline process – the Blue Ribbon Panel, as it was called – when you look at the Obama pledge and many of the concerns and the Blue Ribbon Panel, there's a tremendous amount of overlap here. And the good news is that many of the items that are contained in the pledge we've been committed to doing for several years now. The Mayor mentioned the discipline matrix, which I can tell you has been worked on for approximately 12 months now. It went online today. I encourage everyone to go to the NYPD's outward facing website, and you could read all about the matrix. And it's correct – there is a 30-day period where we're asking for the public's comments on this. And that's something that seems intuitive, but it hasn't always been done. But it's something we truly believe in, in terms of knowing who you work for – and we work for the public – and asking them for their comments. What can we do better? What do you think about particular aspects of the discipline matrix? And hearing their perspective – and hearing is the keyword there. We anticipate taking those results in, we've already consulted with experts in nearly every field. We've examined other matrixes that exist across the country in law enforcement's major departments. We feel good about the matrix. I can tell you that I've sat around a boardroom many times discussing this matrix, and there are always heated discussions about different things. It's very detailed, but I am very curious how the public comment session will be, and we expect it to be finalized by this coming January.

None of this is new to what we're trying to do. If you look at our NYPD outward facing website, again, you'll see a new page that's gone up probably the last month, maybe three weeks, explaining what we do. I think that's my key takeaway, whether it's the Obama pledge, whether it's the Blue Ribbon Panel. One of the key points to Blue Ribbon Panel said was the NYPD has a strong discipline system. It's not perfect, but it's strong, and we do a lot of things well. What we did not do well was tell others what we do, and that transparency aspect is behind a lot of what we're doing. And about, as I said, three weeks ago, we started putting more and more information up on that outward facing page, telling people about our discipline process, telling

people and giving them examples of how seriously we treat discipline in many cases. And we think that that will, as the Mayor alluded to, continue to build trust. And trust at this point is critical.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, Commissioner. And Commissioner, I appreciate the fact that it has been a long and ongoing effort to continue always looking for the next reform that's needed, the next way of bringing police and community together. And I think the last point the Commissioner made is crucial – it's important to show the work that's going on every day. That's something we want to do more and more effectively, because everyone understands the way forward for the city is with police and community working hand in hand. And I think the items in the Obama pledge will help us to take that big step forward for the city.

Now, let me turn you to another crucial matter – obviously, less than two weeks until the beginning of school. So much work going on – we've talked about all of the work that's happened since June by our custodial engineers in the schools, the School Construction Authority, Division of School Facilities at DOE – so many thousands of people working together to get our schools ready, June, July, August – now, as we get ready for September. So, to-date 1,321 school buildings have been inspected. And that is about 88 percent of the buildings that needed an inspection. We will be continuing those inspections today and tomorrow, and then we will have gotten through the entire school system. We'll be publishing the results of the inspections on a rolling basis to update parents and the community on where each school stands. So far, what we're seeing is overwhelmingly, because of the hard work that's been happening over the last three months, that schools are ready. But we'll be very clear if there's any specific school with ongoing work that needs to be done, any even individual classroom that has work that needs to be done. And we'll be publishing that shortly.

Now, we're also moving ahead in some other key areas. Last week, we talked about the outdoor learning plans. The response from principals was outstanding. So many of them had ideas ready to go. And I want to make really clear that principals at any point can put in an outdoor learning plan. We said to them, any plan that was put in last week will get an answer by this week, but they are invited to continue to put in plans at any point. So far, 247 schools have had their outdoor learning plans approved. And again, that will be on a rolling basis. And another ongoing effort that started in the spring, but it will continue, is to make sure that all children who need devices to participate in the remote learning that they'll be involved in, whether it's in a blended learning format or all remote format, we want to make sure that every child that needs technology gets it, who needs internet service gets it. So far, in the New York City public schools, 324,000 iPads have been distributed for free to kids who need them. And that distribution will continue as there are needs. We want to make sure our children get what they need and get it quickly.

So, we continue this work every day with the folks working in the buildings, with our administrators, with our educators, with our custodial teams, with our building staff, the food service staff, you name it, everyone's in this together and we are working constantly with the unions that represent the people that do the work. We're all working to resolve issues and get ready for what will be one of the most pivotal school years – I think, the most pivotal school year in the history of New York City, and we have to get it right for everyone.

Let's talk about our indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold is 200 patients. Today's report, 47 patients – that's one of the lowest we've seen in months. And the positivity rate among those patients, 12.5 percent. Indicator number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average, that threshold 550 cases. Today's report, 222. And number three, percentage of people testing citywide positive for COVID-19, threshold five percent. Today's report, again, one of our lowest, 0.59 percent. Again, outstanding work by New Yorkers now as we come off the summer and move into the fall, double down on those efforts to stay safe because they are clearly working. And we can get safer – I want to drive that infection rate down much further, because we'll be able to do more and more and open up more and more as we do that. So, it's not just stay the course, it's double down. Let's go farther at making this city safe.

A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, let's turn to our colleagues in the media. And 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 First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan, Police Commissioner Dermot Shea, School Chancellor Richard Carranza, Commissioner of the Office of Labor Relations Renee Campion, and Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. The first question today will go to Juliet from 1010 WINS.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor. How are you doing?

**Mayor:** Good, Juliet. How are you?

**Question:** I'm fine. and too all on the call. So, my question to you is, why aren't you on board for a mandatory testing for teachers, students? Don't you think that's at least a baseline or a blanket protection applied to everyone for safety?

**Mayor:** Well, Juliet, I appreciate the question. You know, you remember about a week ago, we laid out what's being done around the world and the approach that's being taken in many, many nations, including nations that are very much like ours and nations that have had a lot of success in fighting back the coronavirus and the mandatory approach has not been the way that that's been done in other countries. And it's something that we've looked at, but believe, for a variety of reasons, it is not the best way to get to where we need to go.

**Mayor:** Well, Juliet, I appreciate the question. You know, you remember about a week ago, we laid out what's being done around the world. And the approach that's being taken in many, many nations, including nations that are very much like ours and nations that have had lost success in fighting back the coronavirus. And the mandatory approach has not been the way that that's been done in other countries. And it's something that we've looked at, but believe for a variety of reasons, it is not the best way to get to where we need to go. What we're trying to do is to

constantly make testing available for free, over 200 locations around the city, constantly encourage everyone to get it. We're going to have regular testing in and around our schools. We're having ongoing conversations with the unions about the best way to do it. But the important thing here is to put together a variety of measures. And again, that's what we talked about last week. It's the social distancing. It's the face masks, it's the constant cleaning. So many things that really make us the gold standard for bringing school back. Because we're layering every approach on top of each other. And then the regular testing available to all and encouraged for all. That to me is the best way to get it done. Go ahead, Juliet.

**Question:** Okay, thank you. Different topic. The Police Commissioner was on live with us 1010 WINS, this morning and he's planning to meet with bodega owners this week or soon, to discuss persistent robberies, theft, and vandalism. He's suggesting that with the repeat offenses and offenders, it's time to reevaluate the Bail Reform law. How do you feel about that?

**Mayor:** Well, again, Juliet, I start where I always want to remind people – I start this way every time, that we have dealt with something absolutely unprecedented. This perfect storm of pandemic health crisis, economic crisis, schools shut down, work, shut down, houses of worship shut down, court system shut down. There's nothing we've ever experienced like it. The good news is where I started today. Little by little, we see progress. Court systems starting to come back. We want to see a lot more. Obviously schools coming back. Work starting to come back. I think that's what's going to change the reality most foundationally. The Bail Reform bill was acted on this spring. Improvements were made, which we appreciated certainly. And I think that was the right thing to do to give that updating to the law. And that was something we all worked on together. Now, I think we need to work on the hard work of bringing this city back because that's the best way to improve public safety. And of course, to continue to see our court system, our DAs maximize their activity. Because we have to create those consequences again for anyone who commits a crime or does violence in this city.

**Moderator:** Next up we have Todd Maisel from AM New York.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor. It's funny because the question before me was similar to mine, but I'm going to ask it anyway. Because the Commissioner said this morning the reduction of overtime, reduction of cops, the recidivist criminals are big reasons for the shootings and violent crime rise. Case in point, the guy arrested for the attempted rape on the subway platform the other day. I was going to ask about criminal justice, but I'm going to go further. Are you, are we considering maybe revisiting of incarceration, possibly looking at this behavior as maybe being more about mental health? And therefore dealt with not in a public, but no more confined institutional setting?

**Mayor:** Todd, it's an important question. What is the interconnection of mental health and criminal justice? And I think you're raising a really, really important point here. Historically, unfortunately in this city, this country for decades there really was no functioning mental health strategy. And in many ways our jail system, our prison system became the place where people who had mental health challenges were sent, which made no sense whatsoever. Doesn't make sense today. We've obviously done a lot to try and change that, which is why there's a heavy emphasis on mental health in this city. Which is why we've seen some important reforms in

criminal justice. But there's a long, long way to go. I think the point you're raising gets to if we're really going to have a full mental health strategy, it requires not only a State component, but a national component. I think a national health care system that puts mental health and physical health on the same standing is the way to actually ensure that a lot of people never end up involved with the criminal justice system and never end up involved in incarceration. So you're raising a really big point. I think it's going to take a really big strategy to address this issue far beyond what we can do locally. But if it is addressed appropriately, I actually think it's going to reduce levels of crime and levels of incarceration profoundly. Go ahead, Todd.

**Question:** Okay, on another matter, I've spoken to a number of pub restaurant owners who say that if indoor dining is not restored after the October 31st deadline of the outdoor dining, that 99 percent of the restaurants will be closed. We'll all be drinking it Applebee's. They say the COVID numbers are so low that by then we should be okay. Do you agree?

**Mayor:** Well, listen, I think New York City has so many great neighborhood restaurants that I don't think in the end, we're only going to be going to Applebee's. I really don't. I believe it's been really, really tough on folks who own restaurants, who put their life into those restaurants. It has been really tough on the people who work for them and are trying to get their livelihoods back. We're working every day. Our Health team is looking at this issue all the time, and we're going to be working closely with the State on this as well. Is there a point, is there a way where we can do something safely with indoor dining? So far we have not had that moment, honestly. We've been really straightforward about it. We have not had the opportunity to do it safely. We're going to keep looking for sure. Now I would say to you, I've talked to a lot of restaurant owners as well. I think some are in really tough shape. I think others because of takeout, delivery, outdoor dining are going to be in a position to keep going for a while. I do expect, pray for and expect a vaccine in the spring that will allow us all to get more back to normal. But, I will absolutely tell you at Todd, we're going to keep looking for that situation where we could push down the virus enough, where we would have more ability to address indoor dining. We'll have more to say on that in the coming days. But it's going to – it would take a huge step forward to get to that point. That's the truth.

**Moderator:** Next up, we have Jillian from NY1.

**Question:** Hi Mayor. Thanks for taking my question. I have actually two questions on labor issues. The first – the United Federation of Teachers is holding an executive board meeting today and a delegate assembly tomorrow. And there's been a lot of speculation that there could be a strike authorization vote on the agenda this week. Of course, that wouldn't necessarily mean a strike would happen, but I'm wondering if the city is doing any preparations for what happens if there is movement in that direction or the direction of some other kind of job action by the UFT?

**Mayor:** The UFT has spoken to this over the weekend. They made clear that a strike vote is not planned. I've spoken to Michael Mulgrew. It's clear to me that is not on the agenda for this meeting. Go ahead.

**Question:** Okay. And on the municipal labor savings and layoffs, how much time are you giving municipal labor unions to find these savings? And if there's not a timeline, is this just a negotiation tactic?

**Mayor:** Listen, Jillian, we – unfortunately the layoff notices are ready to be printed. And I hate telling you that because I don't want to ever see this happen to hardworking City employees. And I don't want to see the results affect all the people who need the services they provide. It would be horrible for this city. What our labor partners asked for is time to bring back the Legislature, to talk to the Legislative leaders and members and ask them to come back on an urgent basis. I've said we will work with them on that, but it's going to be a day to day basis. So we have to see some real proof quickly that the Legislature is willing to come back. That will determine how we handle the next steps. It's clear, we've got a clear request, give us a little time to get the Legislature back. I want to honor that request, but we only have a little time.

**Moderator:** Next up is Rich from WCBS Radio.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Hey Rich. How are you doing?

**Question:** Okay. So I'm tempted to follow up and say what's a little time? Is it a couple of days? Is that the end of the week or what?

**Mayor:** Well, as I said, Rich, fair question. It's day to day. I'm literally going to mean that every day we'll be talking to labor leaders about what they are achieving in their conversations with our representatives in the Legislature. And we'll be talking of course, to the Legislative leadership. If Albany is definitively, the Legislature's definitively coming back and is willing to authorize long-term borrowing. I mean, that's what we've been asking for since June, that would allow us to settle this issue with no layoffs. So we're going to assess every single day. And if there's progress, that's obviously we would prefer nothing more than to avert the layoffs. If there's not progress, then we're going to have to proceed. Go ahead.

**Question:** Okay. So in regard to the discipline matrix, interested in that term itself. Are these tougher rules for cops? Are these – what does this mean? Does this mean that they're going to have a little more difficult time or this is purely about transparency?

**Mayor:** Well, I'll give you just a layman's opening and I'll turn to the expert then. Look, I think the notion here is what the Commissioner said. This is something that was worked on for quite a while in the department, well before this summer. The question of how to make the discipline process more transparent, more clear to the public, more consistent? And one of the things that all three of the police commissioners that I have had the honor of working with, all of them have said that we needed more transparency, including the ability to be transparent in the discipline process, which wasn't allowable under the law that previously existed on the State level. That changed in June. And that was an important step forward to allow for more openness and transparency. But the idea of the matrix to me is to say, here's how certain offenses correlate to certain outcomes. We hope and pray Rich that it is something that's rarely used because of



continued work to make sure we have the best possible police force and address issues internally before they turn into any bigger problem. But I think ideas to have a clear public statement of this is how discipline is going to work for certain types of offenses. Go ahead Commissioner.

**Commissioner Shea:** Yea Rich just to boil it down I would say, clearly transparency is a big piece of this. Informing the public and consistency. You know, no two incidents are completely the same and there is room for mitigating factors. But just having a roadmap, if you will. The public knows what to expect when an officer – and again, I have to, you know, I have to say that, you know, we talk a lot about discipline and we talk a lot about reform. And I think that's a healthy topic to talk about. But you also have to be fair that by and large officers are out there every day, doing God's work in many ways, with no need for discipline. But invariably in any occupation there will be, there will be incidents that happen that shouldn't happen. And when those incidents happen, we want to have a roadmap where both our employees, as well as the public knows what to expect. And that's the consistency we're looking for here.

**Mayor:** Go ahead.

**Moderator:** Next up we have Jillian from WBAI.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you?

**Mayor:** Good Jillian. How have you been?

**Question:** I'm okay. I'm okay, thanks. So I've got a quick question and a not so quick question. I'll start with a quick one. Early this month the Trump administration moved up the deadline for census data collection to September 30th. I think they say it's unexpected. I don't think anybody really didn't expect something like that to happen. So how has the City adapted or will adapt? Have you considered putting a countdown clock next to your election clock in your briefings? And are you using other kind of very visible means to get that word out? Because we are really running out of time here.

**Mayor:** I think you're exactly right. We are definitely running out of time. Look, it was very cynical to move the goalposts after a pandemic when there was so much dislocation. To tell people they had a certain amount of time and then, you know, yank the football out using the Lucy and Charlie Brown analogy here. And suddenly tell people you've only got 30 days less. I'm very, very disturbed because the notion here should be, we want to count everyone. Well, what good does it do to have an inaccurate count? Unless someone has an agenda that causes them to want to see an inaccurate count. We did adjust immediately and just front loaded our efforts. And, you know, I got to say to everyone on the census team, Julie Menin and her whole team, and then many, many community partners. Folks are really, really going very intensely into communities to reach people. And it needs to be supercharged over this month. And that's what we'll do. I think you're right. I think it's important to show people the timeline to the election. I think we'll start doing that as well with the census in this final push. And I'll be talking about it regularly as well. But look, we have no choice, but to adapt Jillian. We have no choice but to throw everything we have at it. I will, one last point, we have seen some results for all this effort. We have seen that this year's comparison of New York City's rate to the national rate is

better than at the same point 10 years ago. So people are getting the message and we just got to double down on it. Go ahead.

**Question:** Okay, thanks. You've talked a lot over the months about how differently the City is going to have to do business post pandemic. Fairer, more equitable. And you've also talked about all these layoffs, including today up to 22,000 and hundreds of first responders, depending on what happens in Albany and DC of course. The public is having a difficult time reconciling these points with the fact that the City is plugging ahead with current rezonings based on premises, priorities and a fiscal outlook that are no longer applicable. Especially the millions in potential taxpayer money to private developers and wealthy corporations. It's especially true because the rezonings target neighborhoods considered affordable right now, comprised predominantly of people of color and immigrants. The very people that you're talking about earlier. There's also opposition within these communities as they believe these rezonings aren't for them, but for incoming higher income populations. They're worried about displacement, which has already been evident. And with a potential eviction crisis looming maybe is it time to go back to the drawing board and instruct DCP to cease pursuing the endeavors indefinitely until the City can reevaluate based on the new fiscal situation and the actual need?

**Mayor:** Well, Jillian, it's a thoughtful question, but I would argue that the very process allows for that kind of consideration. I think it does not make sense to freeze our efforts in place because a lot of housing and a lot of jobs are on the line, at a time where we need more affordable housing. We need more jobs to come back and I'm talking both construction jobs and permanent jobs which are as you know, overwhelmingly union jobs. You know, in fact, I would argue the market dynamics are changing, but I think they're changing away from some of the things that you are rightfully concerned about, as I am. I worry about the negative impacts of gentrification. I don't think gentrification is one thing or another. I've always said it's a double edged sword, but there are negative impacts. But I think that we're going to go into a different reality here where those impacts are going to be different as we make our comeback. I don't think we're going to see that, you know, we're going to immediately go back to where we were in February overnight, it may be many years, I think.

On the budget front – yeah, there's real serious budget questions. Although a lot of what we do in rezonings is with our capital budget where there's less stress. But where we put our dollars into affordable housing. And, you know, I just say we desperately need more affordable housing in this city. I think there's going to be a huge uptick in the affordable housing market, as private development slows. You're going to see more affordable housing development. We've seen that before, we need it. And I just don't agree entirely obviously, with your characterization of the rezonings, I think they've consistently produced affordable housing. And if they didn't happen, market forces would have only created market housing and no affordable. So I think we need to keep moving, but be real about our budget and our priorities and our priority will continue to be affordable housing.

**Moderator:** Next up we have Marcia from WCBS.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor, hope everything is well with you. I want to talk to you about the disciplinary matrix that you've announced, and I also want to ask the Commissioner

this question. So, I know that the goal is to increase the trust that people have in the NYPD by being more transparent. But I wonder how you do that at the same time that there's a public perception – and I stress the word, perception – that there is some kind of a job slow-down. Now, I know the Commissioner has said that the Police Department is stretched thin with all the things it needs to do and no overtime. And I get that and I'm sure that people understand that, but still there's the perception that the police are not responding properly. I wonder how you increase trust and also deal with the perception that the police aren't there for people.

**Mayor:** Well, Marcia, I think that's a really important question and I want to thank you for underlining the word perception. And you're absolutely right. If the implication is perception matters a lot in this world, absolutely right. But I am still a believer that reality matters even more. Commissioner will give you his assessment, and he and I have spoken about this many times. Again, we're dealing with a perfect storm to begin with. That was going to make it hard on the NYPD and every City agency to somehow compensate for all the challenges we're facing together simultaneously. But what we have seen is tremendous work over the last few months. The NYPD, working with community members, clergy, elected officials, Cure Violence movement, Crisis Management System, all together to address some of the places where we're seeing the biggest violence problems. That we've seen with our own eyes, that consistent, intense effort. It is helping.

We've seen gun arrests go up consistently to the point now that they are equivalent essentially to where we were a year ago. That's a crucial indicator. Again, court system, beginning to move. We need that to move even more so there'll be more consequences. So, I think when you think about everything the NYPD is dealing with, and as you said, less overtime to work with, fewer officers, I think what's clear is, officers are out there every day, doing their job. I was talking to the Commissioner yesterday about officers who went – four officers went into a burning building a week or two ago in Queens. They're not firefighters. They didn't have gear. They went into a burning building to save lives and they did. This happens every hour of every day in New York City. So, I'm not going to allow the perception to overcome the reality. The reality is our officers are doing their job under very adverse circumstances and, actually, community members want to more and more work with them to help them get that job done. Commissioner –

**Commissioner Shea:** Yeah, Marcia, the press conference isn't long enough for me on this one. Thank you for the question. It's a topic that's come up a number of times. I mean, some of the numbers that are indisputable, the arrest levels are down, the response times are up. I think the Mayor touched on a couple of things. You know, some of the other numbers that haven't been mentioned is, you know, the overtime has come up, the attrition is certainly up higher than I would like in terms of officers retiring and other cuts. But I think the Mayor mentioned it. I mean, I see on a daily basis, you know – he mentioned that running into a burning building – every day police officers are running through the streets of this city lately and chasing down people with guns. That's a fact. Taking dangerous guns off the street, putting themselves into harm's way. What else they're doing is what they did on 96th and 1st yesterday, mentoring kids across the city. You know, going into their own pocket and spending their own money to put a sports league and drills together like I saw in Far Rockaway last week, but the Rockaway Colts. A program that doesn't get enough attention, but officers, detectives dedicated to literally changing kids' lives, and working with teachers in that community to make sure that you can't

participate in this program, unless you show up the school and seeing attendance records skyrocket for these kids. There is a lot of things I don't know, but one thing I definitely know, New York city police officers and detectives are as dedicated today as they ever have been. They put themselves into harm's way every single day. And they are out there for the residents of New York City.

**Mayor:** Amen. Go ahead, Marcia.

**Question:** Well, I guess I have – I just have a follow-up question because when you look at the numbers, the two statistics that trouble people, which are that arrests are down and response times are up, how do you convince people that the work is getting done? And how frustrating is it that your message isn't getting down to the level of people, especially when every weekend there's horrible instances of gun violence?

**Mayor:** Yeah, no, Marcia, the violence is so painful, and Dermot and I have spent time with the families who lost loved ones to that violence and Davell Gardner Jr. immediately comes to mind. We spent time with his mom and his grandma, and it was one of the most painful things I've experienced in a long time. We are feeling this violence deeply. Communities are feeling it deeply, but I want to, again, say to you, I just don't think the perception is that which you may think it is. I believe in the political class, and in the media that perception is very prominent. I think with everyday people who are experiencing both the challenges and seeing the work of the NYPD, I think it's a different reality. Everyone saw with their own eyes in June that we ended up with a budget, in the middle of this crisis, where there were going to be fewer police officers. There was going to be less overtime. New Yorkers are smart people. Don't ever underestimate them, Marcia. They can count. They know if there's fewer officers and less overtime, there's going to be challenges. They understand we're in the middle of a pandemic. They understand there's no school, there's no work for so many people. Everything's been thrown into disarray and we have to build it back. So, I think the bottom line is to – we just have to steadily do the work. The gun arrests coming up, the cooperation with community members to stop crime coming up, showing those instances of the hard work that officers are doing. We just have to do it every single day. But I learned a long time ago, the people don't buy the hype. They believe what they see with their own eyes and they will see more and more of these issues being addressed in their neighborhoods.

**Moderator:** We're now onto our last two – first up is Dan from ABC-7.

**Question:** Good morning, Mayor. Thank you for taking my question.

**Mayor:** How are you doing, Dan?

**Question:** Good, thank you. I have two quick questions for you – when it comes to education, do you have concerns about taking online attendance during this pandemic? How will that be measured and will that information be released publicly?

**Mayor:** Yeah, look, I think it's a real challenge and I'll certainly let the Chancellor speak to this. I've been real clear about the fact that our mission over time, of course, is to bring back our

public schools fully. We're going to need some real success on the health care front to get there to that day. But nothing replaces in-person education, nothing replaces the ability of educators to reach kids right there in front of them. And obviously you take attendance much more effectively in that situation. I think we saw a mixed bag in the spring. We saw some really extraordinary work by our educators under incredibly tough circumstances to put together remote learning and make it worthwhile for kids. But we also knew we were not reaching every kid, we were not reaching them every day, and there were challenges with attendance. I think we'll do better because there's been more time to prepare. But I think it's an intrinsic problem with remote learning. Chancellor, do you want to add?

**Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza:** Yes, Sir. So, different from March, we've had much more time to prepare. We've actually been able to build out the capacity to not only get devices into the hands – the Mayor announced this morning, how many hundreds of thousands of devices are in students' hands now. That wasn't the case in March. In addition, we will be monitoring attendance, we'll be tracking it, we will make it public. And there's going to be more to say about that this week, as we give more specific guidance as how we go forward, as it pertains to attendance.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Dan.

**Question:** Thank you so much. My second question for you is, can you discuss the City's plan to inspect gyms virtually? Will this be an effective way of ensuring that they're safe and in compliance at the same time?

**Mayor:** Yeah. Dan, look, it is a necessity in this moment. We worked with the State on this. The State's decision related to gyms, which I know they took in good faith, but their timing happened to correlate exactly to the moment where we were getting ready to open school and open child care. And we needed to focus the Department of Health inspectors first and foremost on those locations, there's a lot of locations. So, the gyms are coming back with serious restrictions under the State rules. So, we know those restrictions are going to help protect health and safety. But we worked with the State on the virtual as a way to get started because the timing was just so tough that the virtual inspections at least will allow our health inspectors to get an initial sense of things, make sure the things are okay, or if there's a problem, address it immediately. We'll then be doing ongoing in-person inspection as those inspectors' time free up after school and child care gets going.

**Mayor:** Go ahead.

**Moderator:** For our last question, we'll go to Yoav from The City.

**Question:** Hi, everyone. I wanted to ask about the security situation around City Hall. Last I saw – and this might've changed – but there were roads [inaudible] barricades in front of Surrogate's Court, Police Plaza, and the municipal building. There were also barricades blocking off the entire plaza east of City Hall where the Occupy Movement had been, and City Hall Park has been shuttered for nearly three months. So, my question to the Mayor and the Commissioner is

what's the specific security concern that's driving this response and why is limiting to – why is limiting or entirely eliminating public access, the appropriate solution?

**Mayor:** I'll start and turn to the Commissioner. Look, I think with all the things that have gone on in this crisis, we've always tried to balance the different pieces of the equation. What I've seen with my own eyes, since I'm here every day, is that those different measures have been reduced over time. And, obviously, they'll continue to be reduced. I think the bottom line here is always, you know, to think about what will keep everyone safe and help us move forward. So, for a period of time, it made sense to have more. I think, as we move forward, you'll see less and less of those measures. Go ahead, Commissioner.

**Commissioner Shea:** I think that's exactly right. It's a situation where there have been occurrences where we peeled back some of the barricades or restrictions and then had to put them back into place because of either protests or intelligence that we had specifically. So, it's a constant process of measuring. If there are areas that we can do better and can safely pull back on some of the restrictions, that's exactly what we want to do.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Yoav.

**Question:** Okay, thanks. On the disciplinary matrix, I wanted to ask about the false statement penalties, the matrix calls for termination for intentionally false official statements by police personnel. That's essentially been the policy until now, but there have been concerned voices both by the Commission to Combat Police Corruption and the independent panel that Commissioner Shea mentioned about the difficulty – they include provisions, you have to prove intent of a false statement and you also have to show that something is material. And in the past, there's been great difficulty in proving those two things. So, there's actually been very few terminations for false statements. I'm wondering, how does the new matrix address those concerns? And, Commissioner, should we expect to see more terminations as a result of the matrix for false statements?

**Mayor:** Let me start and turn to the Commissioner. First of all, there's a public comment period. So, we want to hear the comments and concerns. We want to hear proposals, and that will be part of what we think about before finalizing this matrix. But I would also say when you think about intentional false statements versus accidental false statements, Yoav, I would be careful there. I think sometimes people believe they've been given accurate information, they repeat, it turns out not to be accurate. It's not the same thing as choosing to lie in an official proceeding. So, I do think there's a line there we have to be mindful of. I do think the intentionality is crucial. To the point about, will there be more or less – I will just offer my view. I think the clearer the standards are the more sense of consequence – I think it's true of all humanity, if there's a clear sense of consequences, people adjust their behavior. And if folks understand that their entire career rides on doing something the right way, I think the vast, vast majority will do things the right way unquestionably. And anyone who doesn't, they shouldn't be on the force anyway. So, I don't think that clearer, more transparent standards necessarily lead to more negative outcomes. I think in many cases, they lead to people understanding and acting better. Go ahead, Commissioner.

**Commissioner Shea:** Yeah, regarding false statements. I think you brought up many of the things that we've taken a look at, and we've tried to strike a balance there in terms of changing behavior, getting officers – excuse me, getting conduct that is trusted by the public. When you take a look at – I think that the Mayor just touched on it – there are occurrences where something is said that was believed at one point in time, but, you know, I wouldn't want to fall on that. I think that we've taken into consideration here, everything that we know, you mentioned that to combat police and other agencies, that we've consulted on this. The Blue Ribbon Panel came out and overwhelmingly, I would categorize it, their words will speak for themselves – and we've actually included on our external website, their report with their links so people can read that as well – what they said about the NYPD discipline process. I think we're in a good place here, but we are, as the Mayor said, we want to hear what others think because we don't have all the answers. And we constantly try to strike that balance.

In terms of, do I anticipate more people being fired? Well, I would hope that no one has to be fired, quite frankly, but the world that we live in, you know, we are not immune. As it's been said many times, we recruit from the human race and show me a population or show me a, you know, any occupation that is without fault. We make mistakes. What we're trying to do is, here, constantly improve. Some would maybe use the word reform. I would say, improve. And also, to gain trust and tell the public. And I say it, and it's probably the most important thing that's been said here, we work for the public and if we don't have the public trust, it makes all of our jobs harder. So, that's exactly what we're striving for. We think we're in a good place, but we're going to constantly try to get even better.

**Mayor:** Amen. Amen. Well, everyone, as we close up today, just to say this, look, we've covered a lot of different topics today, and it just shows how much is going on in the city, how much we are working on simultaneously to bring this city back. I mean, think about what we would have all been talking about a year ago today, versus what we're talking about today. Everything simultaneously that we're trying to address in the context of the greatest crisis this city's ever faced, and yet here's the good news. The good news is New Yorkers, keep fighting back. You can see it with your own eyes. You can see more and more happening in our city. You can see people out there starting to reestablish the life of this city. You can see people doing the right thing to make us healthier and safer, and you can see it in these indicators we go over every day, and they're objective and they tell us we're doing the right thing.

So, people should be proud of that. But also remember that this is a historic reality about New York City. We have faced crisis before, everyone knows that. We've faced change before. I actually think there are few places in the world better at dealing with crisis than New York City. And there are few places in the world that handle change better than New York City. We are always ready to improve. We're always ready for something new. New Yorkers are not afraid of change. New Yorkers are not afraid of new ideas. We're not afraid to be bold. And so, that's why we can say we will defeat this disease. We will come back. We literally will back stronger and fairer. I believe it. We have learned powerful lessons and the people of the city want to see change. We don't dwell on nostalgia. We're going into a new world, but we actually can make it a better world. And there is no place better at that than New York City. Thank you, everyone.

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