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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, good morning, everybody. Let me tell you, this month of January has been a time of tremendous transformation, and I'm very, very hopeful about the future of New York City. And I'm going to be talking about that tonight when I give my State of the City presentation. Why would I say January has been so extraordinary? For so many reasons. First of all, we got the hell out of 2020, and that is something we all wanted to do – just leave it behind. But then, we've seen the most amazing things happen in the course of January. Obviously, the vaccination, the miracle of the vaccine itself – even if we need more supply, the very fact that it's here is extraordinary; the fact that the election led to the new presidency of Joe Biden; the fact that the Senate is a Senate – a U.S. Senate that now is focused on the needs of the cities of this country. There are so many things that have happened just in the course of weeks that give us a tremendous opportunity to move forward. I'm optimistic about the future of this city. And I'm going to be a lot more optimistic when we get the federal stimulus we deserve. But I wanted to give you a quick sense of what we'll be talking about in the State of the City tonight. And the theme is so crucial and it's so basic, it is about recovery, bringing the city back, but doing it in a way that really includes everyone – a recovery for all of us. And those simple words express so much. This city will recover. I'm going to talk about why I am so convinced and what it means to have a recovery for all of us, to make sure that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past, that we do something different and better. We address the inequalities head-on. We use the strength and the power of the city to move forward, but do it in a smarter and better way. That's what a recovery for all of us means.

Now, I'm going to talk about the economic front. I'm going to talk about jobs and small business. I'm going to talk about all of the things that will allow us to be whole again and be better. Certainly, going to talk about bringing back our schools strong in September, so many of the challenges we face and how we can take this moment and turn it into a transformative moment. Now, a recovery for all of us means making sure our communities are safe and that life in our communities is fair. A recovery for all of us means focusing on the way to create safety with the community fully participating. It means deepening the bonds between police and community. It means doubling down on neighborhood policing. In the State of the City presentation, I'll go over a number of reforms and changes we're going to make to do that. But I want to affirm, the way to a safer city runs through the hearts and souls of the people of the city, the involvement of the folks in our neighborhoods. Our police work so hard, but they cannot do it alone. It has to be a collaborative effort between police and community for it to work.

So, just to give you an idea of one of the changes we're going to make – I'm announcing today, a change in how we select the most important frontline leaders of the NYPD. When you think

about life in our neighborhoods, the local precinct commander for the NYPD is an absolutely pivotal leader. The precinct commander sets the tone. The precinct commander gives the men and women who patrol that neighborhood a sense of direction and the values they should bring to the work – absolutely crucial role. Now, we're announcing today a major change that will bring the community into the process of selecting precinct commanders. And I'm very excited about this, because, as someone, who started out as a local school board member and a City Council member, I saw the amazing work of our police precinct councils, really dedicated neighborhood residents who care deeply about making communities safe, but also holding police accountable and bringing the voices of the community forward. Well, from now on, police precinct councils will be interviewing candidates for precinct commander roles. When a precinct commander spot comes open, the Department will provide, the Commissioner will provide to the police precinct council in that area three to five candidates, folks who are ready to serve and lead, folks that represent the diversity of this city, and the precinct council we'll interview each of them and provide feedback to the Commissioner. The Commissioner will make an ultimate decision and then work with the precinct council, going forward, to make sure that new leader takes over effectively. Then, the precinct council will have an ongoing role, as always, but formally as well in evaluating the work as that person goes to the important task of making the community safe and bringing the larger committee in. This is unprecedented in the history of NYPD. We're bringing the voices of the community forward to determine who would be the right leader. And that's going to, I think, help in a myriad of ways – it's going to improve dialogue, it's going to improve accountability, it's going to give folks a sense of real, real buy-in. I think it's going to help us improve the work on the ground and deepen that bond.

Now, I like to give credit where credit is due. And this idea is something that I heard first with passion from the Borough President of Brooklyn, Eric Adams, who, as many of you know, was a police officer for over 20 years, and cares deeply about changing the paradigm, changing the culture of policing. And so, I want to thank him for planting the seed, offering this idea that has now come to fruition and will be the policy of the NYPD from this day forward. And I want to welcome him to offer his thoughts on this important announcement, welcome Borough President Eric Adams.

[...]

Thank you so much, Borough President. And, look, again, thank you for – as always, you've offered many important ideas to me over time. Thank you for putting this idea forward with great energy and helping me see what it could mean for our communities. And yes, this is one of many reforms to come in the coming weeks and months. This is just the beginning, I assure you. Thank you so much.

And now, I want to turn to a leader who has really had her finger on the pulse of our communities in so many ways in the extraordinary advocacy work she does and the extraordinary work of making sure people get the social services they need, but also in her recent work, leading an effort to bring the voices of communities forward to talk about what they need to see in the NYPD, going forward – what kind of reforms, what kind of relationship, what kind of changes, what's working, what's not working – and constructively creating the pathway forward. So, Jennifer Jones Austin has been a leader on so many fronts and she's played a

particularly important role in the last months, helping to bring forward the voices of communities so we could hear what we need to do to make these changes. My great pleasure to introduce Jennifer Jones Austin.

[...]

Thank you, Jennifer. And thank you for doing so much to bring the voices of communities forward and for really working with us in so many ways to craft the reforms and changes we need in policing and so many other areas. You've been an invaluable partner. Thank you so much.

And I want to now turn to Commissioner Shea, and I want to say that it's interesting to me when I've talked to Commissioner Shea over the years, a special warmth comes into his voice when he talks about his own time as a precinct commander. Everyone looks back on their life's work with feeling. Dermot Shea is someone who has given his whole life to keeping our city safe, but I can tell that his time as a precinct commander was particularly cherished because of the direct impact he was able to make on the lives of people in communities in the Bronx. And we talked about the value of this change, of this reform. And the Commissioner talked about the incredibly important role he experienced from the leadership of police precinct councils, the voice they brought, the ideas, the critique, the accountability, and how it made him a better precinct commander. So, this idea of now bringing the police precinct councils directly into the selection process stems from the powerful role they've been playing for years, but this will make the role even, I think, more important and more helpful to communities.

With that, to offer his thoughts on this important reform, Police Commissioner Dermot Shea.

Who may be on mute –

[Laughter]

Police Commissioner Dermot Shea: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. And thank you. And thank you to everyone on the call. Mr. Mayor, you know, I have a cartoon on my desk, and the cartoon, basically, is two business people talking – one says to the other, that's a great idea, very innovative, but I'm afraid we can't do it, because it's never been done before. And, you know, I've had it there since my time running CompStat, and it's the opposite of what we think and how we think here at the NYPD. When you talk about today's announcement and the discussions that we've had, you know, I want to start out by thanking Jennifer – and Jennifer, as well as Eric. But Jennifer, Arva, and Wes, you know, I asked them to take a chance and trust us a couple of months ago and I'm so glad that she, and Wes, and Arva did. I think that, you know, we've already started to see some positive things come out of this reform process as we go around the city. And Jennifer was literally shoulder to shoulder with us, as we heard New Yorkers concerns. And this announcement today is one of the things – and that's why I was so behind it – it's one of the things that we heard over and over in New York City. People want to feel a connection to their NYPD and especially at the leadership positions. And this, I think, really goes very far into building that trust both ways. I think from the PD perspective and from the executive perspective, it really lends to an environment where it's a team process. And you've talked about

it and we've certainly talked about it for years now about that shared responsibility, police and community, working together. You've heard Rodney Harrison, Juanita Holmes, Terry Monahan – this is exactly what we're trying to build here and I think this is going to be a real, real positive step.

So, from my perspective, it's a win. It's an opportunity for precinct commanders to really, from the ground floor, speak to the community that they're working so hard to protect and serve, and get to know them from an early step. One of the things that we hear at those reform meetings are, don't take our precinct commanders away – we want to know them longer and we want to work with them longer. I think this is a win-win. I think it's a positive for New York City. You know, I think it's one more positive thing that comes out of those reform meetings. You spoke about my time with as a precinct commander. I had the privilege to serve twice in two different precincts in the Bronx as a precinct commander. And, in many ways, you are like a miniature mayor of that command. The bonds that you develop to this day exist. People want to get to know those precinct commanders, as well as the police officers and those commands, and they want to know that they're working towards a common bond, if you will, to solve problems in the community.

Eric, I know that you, you know, had mentioned this in the past. But let me tell you, this is something that we heard not only from you, but from communities across the city. So, happy to put it into action. It's the latest thing, you know, with the discipline matrix, as one other example. Many things more to come as we move forward and I think it's a positive time for not only the NYPD, but the city as a whole. So, thank you. Thank you all.

Mayor: Thank you very much, Commissioner. Appreciate that reflection very much. And I want to say, I appreciate the process you put together with Jennifer Jones Austin, and Wes Moore, and Arva Rice, the really deep community process to hear people. And, again, to hear the range of ideas, critiques – the real sense of the people, and that you put your heart and soul into that. I appreciate that deeply. And I want to say, the point you made about the questions people have about whether the precinct commander should stay on the job longer if they're effective, if they're bonded with the community – that's a real question. I've heard that for years, a community really gets to know a precinct commander, really feels in sync with them, and then, you know, they go on to another command. There's a sense of let-down. We understand police leaders need to keep developing their career and some of them will ultimately end up being chiefs or even commissioner one day, but we also understand communities are really looking for the right fit. And so, this process, I think, fundamentally changes the reality for the better and makes sure that with that community input we're constantly saying who is ready to work with this community most productively, because that's how we get safe. Bringing the neighborhood into the process of safety so much more deeply. That's what neighborhood policing is.

So, again, everyone, this is one example of some of the things you'll hear about tonight in the State of the City. This is a major step forward. It's going to be implemented right away, let me make that clear. I've spoken to the Commissioner about the selections he'll be making in the weeks ahead and the months ahead for precinct commanders during the year 2021, this will be the process that will be activated right away.

Okay. Let's turn now back to the issue we deal with every single day, of course, the challenge of the coronavirus, and, specifically, the vaccine and the supply question. We are constantly fighting for more supply. This all comes down to this, everyone: supply, supply, supply. The City of New York, right now, we are abundantly clear – we will be able, with proper supply, with sufficient supply, we'll be able to vaccinate half a million people a week starting in February, but we need the supply. We've seen some good progress this week on the federal side, we need to see a lot more, and I'm going to keep pushing that we do even more creative things. I've talked about freeing up second doses that aren't going to be used for a while. I've talked about calling upon the federal government to use the Defense Production Act more aggressively to get all pharmaceutical companies involved in the effort to create more vaccine supply. We'll look for every opportunity to make an impact.

We've also been working closely with the state, and pushing, and working together for anything that will free up more supply. One of the things I talked about last week was the long-term care facility plan – the specific supply of vaccine that had been held apart for long-term care facilities. Clearly some of that vaccine wasn't being used in the here and now, whether it was folks not being ready to accept vaccine yet, and who worked in those facilities or whatever other reason, it simply wasn't moving as fast as one would like. I asked the state to free up that supply, so that it could be used in the here and now. 18,000 doses have now been freed up, and I want to thank the state for that. That's going to help in the here and now to vaccinate more people, and I'm particularly thinking about those seniors for whom the vaccination is a life and death matter. So, 18,000 more doses now come into play immediately and thanks to the State of New York for the partnership on that, and look, we're going to make sure those doses are used in the communities hardest hit by the coronavirus. This is the crucial issue to make sure that we're prioritizing the places hardest hit. I will always say and remind people the vaccinations are available to all, but everyone has a choice in whether they want the vaccination or not, whether they want it now, whether they want it later. We respect that choice. But our job is to make the vaccine available, and encourage people, and inform people and to make sure that that work has done particularly in the places that borne the brunt of the crisis, and that's what we're going to do.

Okay, now, let me give you a little update on how many people we have vaccinated today as of today. From the beginning of our effort, 699,524 New Yorkers have received vaccination or doses, I should say, I always want to put it in doses terms. That's the exact accurate – because some of those, not most, but some of those are second doses. So, 699,524 doses given, vaccinations given since this effort began. Since I like to make comparisons, here's your comparison today: that is more people than the total population of Boston, Massachusetts. So, that's fantastic that those folks have been reached. We want to reach so many more, so much more quickly, but since we have had some progress on the vaccine front, we have seen a little bit better news, obviously on the federal side, in terms of the Moderna vaccine, we're now able to take at least one more step towards the kind of real grassroots vaccination effort we want to have, and we're bringing back the 15 Department of Health vaccination hubs. Those have been incredibly effective, fast, efficient. I've heard just great feedback from folks who have gone to them. Those are going to come back. There's going to be some additional hours that we can put in play as we get more supply. This is going to be one of the pieces that really helps us pump up this effort. But again, we can't go to full strength until we have the supply, and when we do, then

we get to go deep into neighborhoods, deep into the grassroots with the kind of vaccination effort that is convenient and encouraging to people, particularly in the neighborhoods hardest hit by COVID.

All right, I'm going to go to our indicators in a moment, but I want to just take a personal moment to talk about the passing of a really great New Yorker, and I'll say to folks at the outset, you know, there are some people who are just full of life and spirit, and maybe even a little bit was a little mischievous. This is a great example. George McDonald, guy with so much heart, so much personality. I got to know George about 20 years ago when I first became the Chairman of the General Welfare Committee in the City Council, working on issues like homelessness. This guy, all heart, all creativity – he didn't start out as career assuming he'd be helping the homeless, but his heart was moved, and he made it his life's work, and over the years had tremendous impact helping homeless folks get their lives turned around, back on their feet, always with real respect and devotion for everyone's humanity. A funny, warm guy. I liked – I have to say I liked George McDonald's so much, even though we ran against each other for Mayor, and this is maybe a little point about the civility that needs to be a part of our lives.

We happen to both be candidates in the same contest for Mayor in 2013, but it didn't interfere with our friendship one bit. Amongst the amazing things George did was the creation of the Ready, Willing, and Able Initiative. I think most New Yorkers have had an opportunity to see these good men and women out there making our city cleaner, helping our communities while turning their lives around. This is a great New York City success story. In the State of the City, I'll be talking about taking some of the inspiration we got from the Ready, Willing, and Able Initiative and turning into something that will be an important part of our recovery. But, look George McDonald, a great New Yorker who made a great impact, a great human being and a real friend. George, rest in peace.

Okay, let's talk about our indicators for the day, and I'm going to make sure that we highlight something that had been a part of our indicators for a long time and ended up being left out. We're going to put it back in cause it's an important piece of information for people to know. So, indicator number one, daily number of people in New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, that number today: 279 patients. But the point – this was really a prevalent question some months ago, back during the summer, was what percentage of those folks are COVID positive? Well, the most recent information, about 66 percent, and then the hospitalization rate, we'll go to that as well. The hospitalization rate: 5.15 per 100,000. Number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average: 4,621 cases. Number three, the percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, the seven-day rolling average: 8.08 percent.

Okay, a few words in Spanish. Hold on.

[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 not begin our Q and A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Dr. Chokshi, by Dr. Katz, and by Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. First question today goes to Andrew Siff from WNBC.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, and everyone on the call. I'm not sure I follow the math in terms of getting to half a million vaccinations a week in February, based on the allocation that you're currently getting, and even with the 17 percent or 16 percent increase next week. How do you get anywhere even close to what you're shooting for unless there's some kind of dramatic increase that we're not currently seeing?

Mayor: Yeah, Andrew, I appreciate the question, but I've known you a long time, so you won't take it personal, if I say, I don't want you thinking too small here, and just thinking in the moment. Goals are goals, visions are visions, plans are plans. We're not stuck in the moment right now. Our country is not providing us with enough vaccine, but we have a new President of the United States, just days into his administration, who's totally devoted to changing that situation. He is activated the Defense Production Act. He is already freeing up more supply. I am convinced you're going to see, and I've had multiple conversations with members of the Biden administration. You're going to see major changes in the supply reality in the coming weeks. I also know that the Johnson and Johnson vaccine is a double game changer. It could be here in a matter of weeks and it's single dose, changes the whole reality. So, I'm saying we are ready to give half a million vaccinations per week. We need the supply, but we're ready to do it. We're having all the pieces in place to do it, and I believe that supply of vaccine will grow constantly over the coming weeks. It has to, just based on the vision the president's put forward, he and his team have to find a way to make supply grow, and so I'm confident it's coming, and we better be ready for it. Go ahead.

Question: Medical experts to weigh in on this, to clarify. Separate and apart from the extra doses, you've now identified with the state allotment in the nursing homes, how many doses are there each day at city sites that get discarded because for whatever reason, people aren't showing up for their appointments, or there's extra doses in the bottles, whatever it may be. We've seen reporting that there are waitlists at your Worth Street site, and people get last minute calls. So, what we're trying to get at here is, even with the scarcity right now, aren't you also discarding doses every single day.

Mayor: I'll turn to Dr. Katz, and then Dr. Chokshi, but I'll say this, Andrew. Obviously, our goal is to use every single dose and there's been clear contingency plans put in place to make sure that happens, and I know the health care professionals in these vaccination sites are adamant about wanting to use every dose. I'm sure sometimes things don't work as planned, but I know there's real commitment there. Dr. Katz, first talk about your sites, then Dr. Chokshi, talk about yours.

President and CEO Mitchell Katz, NYC Health + Hospitals: Mr. Mayor, you're absolutely right. We have not had a problem with having to waste doses. We maintain an appointment system, so we know how many people are coming in, how many vaccines we're going to get out of each vial, and then we book additional appointments. We look toward the end of the day, we figure out how much we have left for the rest of the day, and we get additional people who fit the criteria so that we don't miss any doses. Also, sir, of course, at the 24-hours centers that you have

set up, that isn't even a problem because they can keep running all of the time, and that's why it was such a great idea to do 24-hour centers. Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you. Dr. Chokshi.

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Yes, sir, and thank you. That's exactly right. I'll just reiterate – the goal, of course, is to use every single possible dose that we can, because each shot brings us closer to our goal of beating back this terrible pandemic. The three ways in which we have operationalized this, as Dr. Katz alluded to, is number one, for any extra doses in vials. Number two, for the rare circumstances when someone doesn't show up for their appointment, and then number three at the end of the day, you know, when there are doses remaining in specific vials that have been open. So, those are the pool of extra doses that we always plan to match up eligible people to, and that's the standby or the wait list, and other means that we have to ensure that that we take advantage of every single dose.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: The next is Emily from NY1.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey, Emily, how've you been?

Question: I'm well. I hope you're well too. Some questions on behalf of my colleagues. [Inaudible] NY1 investigation that was conducted found discrimination against families experiencing homelessness when they sought to use the voucher to seek housing. Your reaction to this discrimination, please, and whether you support a bill by Council Member Levin, to increase the voucher to Section 8 levels?

Mayor: Thank you, Emily. I have not seen Councilman Levin's bill. I'll take a look at that for sure. I know the bigger solution, in terms of making maximum housing available, is to follow through on the state level with the housing stability plan that's been before the legislature several years – Assembly Member Hennessy's bill. That's the area that we've been focused on, we think will make the biggest impact, but I'll certainly take a look at Council Member Levin's bill as well.

But the discrimination point is real and it's unacceptable. In fact, when I was a council member, we passed legislation, I sponsored it, to end discrimination against people based on what kind of income they had, horrible contradiction. If someone has a Section 8 voucher, if someone has some kind of government support, any landlord or broker who discriminates against them, that's illegal in New York City because of the law that I sponsored, and we passed years ago, we've tried in many ways to innovate ways to enforce this law. It's a problem that's real and has to be dealt with forcefully, and this is something I know the Human Rights Commission has been deeply involved in as well as Homeless Services. So, I want to make sure that law has taken seriously. Anyone who is a victim of discrimination should throw call 3-1-1, because we need to

follow up on those cases, and there are real penalties. If someone's been discriminated against, one of the most obvious penalties is they get the apartment in question, as well as penalties, meaning penalizing the person who did the wrong by making sure that the applicant gets the apartment they wanted, and then other consequences and penalties for them as well. So, real issue that I want us to continue to deepen enforcement on. Go ahead, Emily.

Question: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Additionally, in a rare move, the Panel for Educational Policy voted against a contract with a test company for this year as a G and T program. Your reaction to that very rare move. Additionally, what comes next for families who are applying now to kindergarten are worried about the Gifted and Talented program?

Mayor: Yeah, for the families and there's thousands and thousands of families. I think it's about 15,000 each year, typically, that want to get their kids in those gifted and talented programs. I'll tell them I'm a parent. I was a public school parent. You will have an opportunity to apply for those programs this year. We'll work on the right methodology and we'll announce it soon. But families can hear directly from me. Yes, you will be applying for the opportunity for your kids to be in those gifted and talented programs, and we'll get an update to folks soon.

Moderator: The next is Amanda from Politico.

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

Mayor: Good, Amanda, how you been?

Question: I'm good. Thanks. I'm glad you could still hear me accomplishments throughout the pandemic.

Mayor: Yes, Amanda. I think it's a metaphor for we went through a difficult time and now a new day is dawning.

Question: I hope so. I wanted you to weigh in on the mayor's race heating up. I was wondering if you plan on endorsing Eric Adams?

Mayor: Amanda, thank you for the question. I do not have a plan at this moment to get involved. I don't rule out getting involved. It's early, you know. Remember, we're still in January and the election is quite a ways away. I'm not sure we even have all the candidates on the playing field yet. So, no plan at this moment to get involved, but I'm going to watch carefully and reserve my right to decide what I want to do later when things get clearer. Go ahead.

Question: Great, thank you. And I also wanted you to weigh in on a report that Attorney General Tish James released this morning that found that the state severely undercounted the number of nursing home deaths – by as much as 50 percent, that I think it's a number, so severely undercounted, and so I wanted you to weigh in, especially as there's been so many issues around data and how that works between the city and the state. So, I'd love to hear your thoughts.

Mayor: Yeah, my first thought Amanda is a very human one. These are our loved ones we lost. You know, it's someone's grandma, someone's mother or father, aunt, or uncle. I mean, this is families missing someone dear to them, and, you know, for so many people, I talked to them. The fact that they – you know, people I've talked to people all over the city who have lost folks and they could not be with them. It made it much more horrible. So, this was just – you know, among all the other pain that we went through in 2020, this was arguably the very worst part of it. We have to make sense of this. We have to get the full truth, and we have to make sure it never ever happens again, nothing like this happens again, and we have to be honest about the numbers. I do want to give a lot of credit to colleagues in my administration, our health leadership. They've always strived to really put out not just the obvious numbers, but we've been talking about probable deaths and probable cases. I mean, we try to be as clear and honest as possible and I appreciate that. And I think that's the way we all have to understand this crisis and make sure nothing like that happens again.

Moderator: The next is Kristen Dalton from the Staten Island Advance.

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

Mayor: I'm doing well, Kristen. How are you?

Question: I'm good, thanks. I wanted to ask you about the closure of the Mount Loretto Sportsplex Site that's supposed to happen mid-February. Has the city identified a permanent site that can replace it and will it have the rapid testing capabilities that the Mount Loretto site did have?

Mayor: I need to get an update on that. Let me see if Commissioner Chokshi has that update. Do you happen to Dave?

Commissioner Chokshi: Sir, no, that is something that we can follow up on.

Mayor: Okay, great. Kristen, I owe you an answer on that. We'll make sure to get that to you today.

Question: Great, thank you. And the second question is about the 24/7 vax sites. You know, you said that last week the city would not open those sites until there was an adequate supply which you estimated to be about a week's worth? If you keep moving goalposts and how many vaccines the city wants to do in a week, do you think those sites will ever open, you know, you believe that that's really coming?

Mayor: Oh, yeah. Of course. No, Kristen, look, I – as New Yorkers, we are not patient people and we also have a little bit of a cynical streak and that's part of what makes us great. But I want to assure people this is – we had a very good story, which is the City of New York was able to ramp up vaccination at the high point, we got close to a quarter million in a week. We proved to ourselves we could get as high as half a million in a week and that was the exact time when the supply started to lag instead of increasing. But that was before we learned the plans of President Biden that I'm absolutely convinced his vision will result in a lot more vaccine coming and

again, huge difference maker reality when Johnson and Johnson comes, that vaccine comes in a matter of potentially just of weeks. So, we're going to get there. I don't have a doubt in my mind we're going to get there. We just don't know exactly what day. Definitely looking forward to the big 24-hour sites being up and running in addition to all of those neighborhoods sites. We need both, Kristin, we need the big 24-hour sites, those are going to work great for some people. The neighborhood sites are really where we're going to have the biggest impact and particularly making it convenient and giving people trust and faith in the process. So yes, it is coming, and we'll keep you posted as soon as we know when.

Moderator: The next is Juliet from 1010 WINS.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor, and everybody here on the call. I wanted to ask about the commanding officers, so for you and Commissioner Shea. Who nominates the candidates for precinct commander and how much weight does the Precinct Council have in the final decision?

Mayor: Yeah. Juliet I'll answer that because I know the Commissioner had to go to another engagement, but here's the bottom-line. The Commissioner in this process, and again this process starts immediately. So, for all new precinct commander selections going forward in the year 2021 and for the future, this is how it's going to happen. The Commissioner sends between three and five names to the Precinct Council. So, I'll use my own precinct just as an example. If let's say that precinct commander role was about to open up in the 78 Precinct in Brooklyn, the 78 Precinct Community Council would receive from the Commissioner between three and five nominees. Again, we want to see nominees with a skill and the talent and the readiness to run a precinct, as the Commissioner said, like a mini mayor for that community. We want to see a diverse range of nominees. The council receives those nominations, sits down with each of them, evaluates them, interviews them, provides their input back to the Commissioner on each of them. The Commissioner makes a selection. Let's the Precinct Council know who will be the new precinct commander and then there's an ongoing process to make sure that the Precinct Council keeps updating the Commissioner on what they're seeing in that new leader, does a regular annual evaluation, for example. This has never happened before and it's really different because it puts the community front and center in the process, and I know it will help everyone to do their work better. For anyone who would be that precinct commander, they have to sit in that chair, talk about what they know already about the community, how they'd approach the issues, listen to the questions and concerns, have real answers. It's a good audition, you want that. You want to see who can work well with those community members, who has answers and ideas, who really gets what the community is saying. That feedback then becomes crucial in making the final selection. Go ahead, Juliet.

Question: Okay. On a different topic, yesterday the Governor said he was going to reach out to you to have a conversation about indoor dining. Has that taken place and how do you plan to advise on indoor dining and how it can be viable?

Mayor: Yeah, the Governor and I spoke yesterday morning. You know, I think the bottom-line here is I really do respect the State's role. The State has to make decisions. There's clearly a division of labor here. They make that decision. What I believe in is focusing on the data and the

science, I know the Governor does too. What I also feel as a human being, as a New Yorker, of course I want our restaurants to come back strong. I – the restaurants are a big part of my life. I love our restaurant community. I think about the restaurants in my neighborhood that I miss going to, and I want to see them survive, and I want to see the people who work in the restaurants have their livelihoods. So, we all want to see indoor dining come back. It has to be governed by the data and the science. So, the State will make that decision. Look, we're all hoping we're on the verge of a much better situation with the coronavirus. We're all hoping the tide's about to turn, but we're going to keep a close eye on the actual indicators day by day, going forward, because we still have X-factors out there, like the variant that we have to be really, really careful about. Go ahead.

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

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor, following up on that, would you eat indoors right now given the arrival of the new variant and its higher level of transmissibility?

Mayor: Yeah, look, I would, because if indoor dining's brought back, I'm certain the State will do it with careful restrictions and our Health Department as the agency that does the enforcement is going to be really strong in doing that enforcement. So, if that's what comes to pass, certainly I would have confidence in it. Go ahead, Dana.

Question: Thanks. And secondly, you know, there's been a series of stories about the Washington Heights Armory vaccination site and how though it was intended for underserved local communities, it was largely doling out vaccines to out of towners. Are you seeing other similar phenomenon at other State vaccination sites?

Mayor: Let's just start with that and then I'll answer your question for sure. Dana, this just is exactly what should not happen. What happened in Washington Heights is the exact opposite of what we need. If a site is in a community, particularly a community hard hit by COVID, it should be all about reaching out to that community and bringing people in. I heard – I haven't confirmed it myself – but I heard the, the application for appointments was only in English, in a community where so many people speak Spanish, if that's true, that's ridiculous. So that's kind of the poster child of what not to do. I think the challenge is if a site is not community-based, of course it's not going to get the kind of the clientele, the folks coming to it, that we need to engage in this effort. So, if a site is based in a community hard hit by COVID and is reaching out to communities, that's going to make the difference. If it's not in the community hard hit by COVID or doesn't have that kind of outreach effort, it won't work as well. The only one I've heard very specific reports on is Washington Heights, Dana, but I want to emphasize, we all know bigger sites have a role to play, but the difference makers will be the very localized, community-based sites, that clinics, the H + H clinics, the clinics working in, you know, the clinics that community organizations have, the pop-up sites in public housing. That is where we have to go to make this effort work.

Moderator: We have time for two more for today. The next is Abu from Bangla Patrika.

Question: Hello, Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Good, Abu, how you doing?

Question: Good, good, how are you?

Mayor: It's fine. What's going on?

Question: I have a question which is since the Trump become the president, how much money, public money, is spent for Trump Tower and all of his infrastructure to –for the security reason?

Mayor: It's a very good question and let me emphasize to anyone who hasn't heard that the security approach around Trump Tower has been greatly reduced. NYPD working with Secret Service have changed the protocol there deeply, so it's much less extensive. The costs of security, we did get an agreement with the administration, with the Congress years ago to ensure that we got reimbursement for the security costs, and that was at a time where we thought the then president was going to be here a lot. Obviously, he turned out not to be, so that made it better. But I don't have a number for you, we'll follow up today to see what that number has been and to confirm that we've been getting our federal reimbursement. But again, it is thankfully a lot smaller than what we originally thought it would be. Go ahead, Abu.

Question: Yeah. So, the [inaudible] second stimulus package, how the city will get the benefit and how the community will be benefited by this second stimulus?

Mayor: The federal stimulus. I just – I missed the last words. Did you say the federal stimulus?

Question: Yeah. How the, of benefit and how the community would be benefited by the second stimulus?

Mayor: Yeah, and that's a great, great question. That's the – I was going to say the million-dollar question, I think it's the multi-billion-dollar question. So, look, the next stimulus has to be a real stimulus. What we saw a few months ago was more of a short term stop gap COVID relief plan. What we need now is a true stimulus that makes us whole, in terms of the city and the state's ability to provide services to people, that all sides direct aid for everyday New Yorkers. One of the things that Senator Schumer has been talking about is adding to that earlier \$600 check, making it additional \$1,400. That's the kind of direct aid we need to see. So, I think the answer to your question is the direct aid to everyday people, to small businesses, you know, that needs to be a part of it because people are still hurting and that money is good for families and it also does help stimulate the economy. The direct aid to the city government is absolutely crucial, so we can close our budget gaps, provide services, protect our workforce, that's how you recover. If the city is doing all the things that we need to do, opening our schools up strong in September, you know, making the city cleaner and safer, all the things that are the foundation for economic recovery, all that costs money. That's what we need to see in the next stimulus.

Moderator: Last question for today goes to Jake from Gothamist.

Question: Hey, Mr. Mayor, can you hear me?

Mayor: Yeah, Jake, how you been?

Question: I'm okay. So, when the DOI issued their report on policing last month, you said you were sorry for how the police handled protests. One of the things that the report found was that the NYPD acted disproportionately in Mott Haven, that the mass arrest protestors there severely damaged the NYPD which legitimacy in neighborhoods. But as recently as October, Commissioner Shea has said that he would refuse to apologize for the NYPD's actions there. So, given your focus on improving trust in neighborhoods, will you ask Commissioner Shea to apologize to the people for the NYPD's violent arrests in Mott Haven?

Mayor: Jake, I'm going to say it a little differently. I think Commissioner Shea is very committed to a better dialogue. You know, just what we talked about earlier, bringing the community in to the selection process for precinct commanders, that has never been done by any other Police Commissioner. This is a really good step. But I think there is a dialogue that needs to happen with the people of Mott Haven and I certainly think that's something he should do. We've been real honest, and the DOI report, Jake, I really respect your reporting and I also would say clearly you have a worldview and I respect your worldview, but I also ask you to, you know, be objective about the DOI report and what it expressed about the many challenges that day and night in the Bronx and the threat of violence, and the Commissioner has spoken about that, I've spoken about that too. That was a deep and real dynamic, but I think we have to move forward and we have to turn the page, but with a real acknowledgement. So, I think that's the right way to do it for the Commissioner to have that conversation with people from the community as part of moving us forward.

Question: So, one of the things we reported this week actually was that there there's this effort to establish this reparations fund within the community, and they're seeking with a meeting with you and with the Comptroller Scott Stringer, and I'm sure they'd also like to speak with Dermot Shea. Would you commit to meeting with that group about, you know, what happened here furthering this dialogue, as you're saying? And then also if I could just add we were hoping to sort of get these questions to the Commissioner today, he seemed to have left. Why is he not here? No – why can't you guys take questions together it seems?

Mayor: Yeah, Jake, we often have, and we will many times. Today, as I said, he had another engagement, but I really wanted him to be part of expressing his views on this announcement we're making tonight because it's such an important matter for the city. I don't know the specific proposal for a meeting. I'm happy to look at it. I certainly want to keep meeting with people throughout this year, but I need to see specifically what's being proposed and I can give you a clear answer. But look, my – I think you saw it in the remarks I made once the DOI report came out – I want to do things better and I want to do things differently and I want to make sure we're learning lessons. And I am absolutely devoted to making a host of reform, not just what the DOI report said. Those, again, I've been – I've seen many, many critical reports where recommendations were not accepted, the Commissioner and I accepted every single one of those recommendations to and from the Law Department as well. But on top of that, the disciplinary matrix, which has been two years in the making and is an extraordinary change, and the MOU that went with it from the police department and the CCRB, and now the announcement about

bringing communities and the precinct commander selection process. These are big changes and as I said and the Commissioner said, a number of additional reforms are going to be announced starting tonight in the State of the City. So, more dialogue for sure, more reform throughout this year.

So, everyone, just finishing where I began on the State of the City, again, airing tonight on our digital platforms, you can go to nyc.gov, and I really urge everyone to see the many new ideas and approaches that I'm going to outline tonight. This is a transformative moment. I really want to emphasize this. We understand that crisis sometimes just comes with pain, but crisis also can be the gateway to fundamental change, and I am convinced that 2021 will be a year of fundamental change and progress for New York City. And the message tonight is a recovery for all of us, not a recreation of the status quo pre-pandemic, not something where we just stay in place and we're stagnant, no, a recovery, progress, a recovery for all of us, for every community, including the communities hardest hit by COVID. Tonight, I'm going to lay out a range of new actions we're going to take, but they all come back to that central concept. The city is going to come back. This city has got to come back strong. It will be fair. It will be better. You're going to see amazing things happen in 2021 in New York City. Thank you, everyone.

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