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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES ALL OF PROSPECT PARK WILL
BECOME PERMANENTLY CAR-FREE**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you. Danayri, that was fantastic. I want to thank you for kicking us off today and speaking so eloquently and also all you do for Prospect Park. I'm glad that you understand how great this park is for the people of Brooklyn and for the city but you're actually doing something to make it better and let's thank Danayri for all she's doing. Thank you so much.

[Applause]

So Danayri speaks about something that so many of us can relate to. Which is this is a park for everyone. That's the amazing thing about Prospect Park—if you spend any time here you see every kind of person and you see a lot of harmony, you see people coming here for peaceful moment, for a chance to enjoy this beautiful park, to be with their families – to just take it easy. And it's every kind of person enjoying this together and that's the beauty of this park and the beauty of Brooklyn. And as we kick off City Hall in Your Borough I can't think of a better example, a better metaphor for what's great about Brooklyn and Prospect Park and the way it gathers all the people of the world. You can clap for that.

[Applause]

And I want to thank everyone who is here with us. It's a really important day for Prospect Park. And it's an important day for Brooklyn. And joining in the celebration, I know she has anxiously looking forward to this day – our Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg, thanks for all your great work.

[Applause]

A guy I've known since I was a little league coach long ago, the Brooklyn Borough Commissioner for the Parks Department Marty Maher, thank you for your great work.

[Applause]

And also thanks to the Chair of Community Board Nine who has been waiting for this day anxiously as well, Musa Moure, thank you so much.

[Applause]

Now, I can't possibly describe to you how much Prospect Park has meant to my family. I think we are at the high end of the scale in terms of making the park the center of our lives. Some of you know that Chirlane and I were married under a tree in this park. We had our wedding reception in the picnic house right here. Our kids played little league on the fields in this park.

And we were on the playgrounds all the time, especially when they were smaller. And it meant everything to us. This is where our family grew up and we shared so many amazing experiences with other families. And any time Chirlane and I come back here we just feel tranquil the minute we walk in this park. It's crowded a lot of days but it's still a beautiful, peaceful place.

And it has meant so much to the families of Brooklyn for generations. And I always say to people — remember a park means so many different things. For some families this is the only green space they ever get. And this where they spend their summer vacation because that is their economic reality. And that's why the park is so important to everyone but for some people it's particularly important. This park's been here basically a 150 years, a century and a half. And it is part of what makes Brooklyn great and makes this city great.

And in fact, this park was built before the automobile existed. The park was not built with cars in mind, they didn't exist — the park was built for people. It was built to be an oasis. It was built to be a place of peace and safety and in the long arc of history, we saw the time come when the automobile became predominant, cars were let into the park and from that moment until today, cars were a part of this park for better or for worse. That's been that way for a long, long time but today that changes once and for all and I'm proud to announce a car-free Prospect Park.

[Applause]

Starting on January 2nd, 2018 there will be no cars allowed in Prospect Park 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

[Applause]

And this is really about getting back to the original idea of this park, restoring it to its original purpose. It needs to be a place for everyone and it needs to be a place that's safe and it needs to be a place that people can fully enjoy. I know as a parent myself I would always be looking over my shoulder when I was walking along the drive and cars were sharing that drive with my children. I never felt comfortable, and I know so many other parents felt the same way. And there were some horrible moments along the way and some tragedies because it just didn't make sense. This is very much connected to Vision Zero, to making sure people are safe, to changing

some of how we think. You know a lot of what we did over the years, we came to assume it was the only way to do things even when it wasn't the best way or the safest way. Vision Zero is all about disrupting that, changing those assumptions, making people safer, and we can see its working. And this is going to be another step in the right direction.

So, this is a very exciting way to begin this week in Brooklyn. I love this borough deeply. I feel such gratitude as a Brooklynite for all it gives to all of us. It's time to keep making this borough a better place to live. And think about it, this is also about a more livable borough, more livable city. Some things may seem small but they really have a big impact on peoples' lives. And you don't have those cars whooshing by it gives you a sense of peace. We need a little more peace in the city. People working really hard, long hours, a lot of stress, there's got to be some places that are stress-free and this is supposed to be one of them.

And I want to just say, personally like a lot of people here, a lot of us have been working on this idea for a long time, in my case going back to 2002 when I started in the City Council. And I want to thank everyone who has been a part of this effort. It took a long time and it went in stages, but we finally got to the goal that was dreamed of for years.

So, before I say a few words in Spanish I want to say this is kind of extemporaneous of everything we find during the City Hall in Your Borough weeks. We listen to people, we listen to the leaders of each borough, we learn a lot in terms of where we have focus, what we have to fix, what remains unresolved that we have to break through and resolve. Here's an example right away of something that has been needed for a long time and the day is finally here.

Just a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, I want to welcome the Borough President. I want to say the Borough President and I have had a very strong partnership over these last four years. And I am deeply impressed by all he has achieved for Brooklyn. And when we started talking about this borough week I knew he would have a strong agenda that he wanted to pursue together, as he always does. But his heart beats for Brooklyn. He loves this borough, he loves all the neighborhoods of it. He has served us in so many ways including as a police officer in a very distinguished manner and I can't think of a nicer way to start City Hall in Your Borough in Brooklyn than in this beautiful site and with this moment of success in the very first hour of the day. And I want to bring forward Borough President Eric Adams.

[...]

Well said Borough President. I want to also thank Sue Donoghue who is doing outstanding work as the President of the Prospect Park Alliance. Congratulations on this good day. And now I want you to hear from the two Council members who have been big believers in making this park even better for the people they represent.

First, the man who I'm proud succeeded me in the City Council in the glorious 39th District, Councilmember Brad Lander.

[...]

Thank you Brad. Finally, I want to welcome a man whose constituents are particularly benefiting from this action because the side of the park that he represents has been waiting a long time for this day, and it's going to make a better life for the people of his district. My pleasure to introduce Council member Mathieu Eugene.

[...]

Well done. Thank you, thank you to all my colleagues, thank you for all you do for the park. And the message is clear, starting January 2nd everyone come down and enjoy a car-free Prospect Park once and for all.

Thanks so much.

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