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

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Well, good morning everybody. You, you may have the same feeling I often have a trying to remember in this new reality what day of the week it is or what week it is to begin with. We, we've all been through so much that's been disorienting and it's very, very strange the way it time flows together nowadays for all of us here at city hall and everyone has been fighting this battle, it just seems like one continuous day from the beginning of this fight, and we know there's a lot up ahead. And I know all of you are dealing with the frustrations of everything we used to think was a routine being disrupted, and we're all trying to make sense of it and everyone's doing their best and trying to help each other through. So, since it's hard to remember sometimes what day it is or what week it is, I thought at least I could do a service by telling you what month it is. Well, this is an undeniable fact, it is now May. Strange as that may seem, it is May 1st, and we are embarking on a new month, and I hope it will be a transcendent month. I hope it'll be a month when we make profound progress. March was a shocking month, like nothing we've seen in the history of this city. The beginning of April was extremely troubling, and it looked like this disease might grow and grow. Thank God, largely due to your good efforts, things started to change in April, and by the end of April we saw a much better situation. We've got a long way to go, but May I think is going to be a decisive month, and a chance for us to do something great here in this city.

So, understanding that May is here, we also know that with that comes the warmer weather, and that's what's predicted for this weekend. We all are noting that the weather reports are talking about temperatures in the seventies. So, the spring fever, we're all going to feel it more and more, and particularly our young people are restless, and I don't blame them, and it's been a tough few months, and now the warm weather is going to pull at them. So, the truth is May can be a great month for the city in terms of fighting back and really starting to turn the tide on this disease, but it's going to require us to be tough and disciplined, and the warmer weather will make that harder. But I've seen so much from all of you already, so much achievement in fighting this disease. I have no doubt that we all will buckle down together and get it right. The bottom line is we cannot let up now, and the indicators that we go over every day are telling us a really important story, a good story, but a cautionary tale too, and a lot of information that helps us understand why we can't take our foot off the gas just yet.

Let me frame this by saying that the indicators, indicators really are the evidence. Think of them as sort of the key to everything. The indicators help us to understand what's really going on, and how to make our decisions, and how we all need to act. And it keeps coming back to the things that you do show up in these indicators. When people practice social distancing and shelter in place, the indicators get better. If at any point people were to be less disciplined, you would see it

pretty quickly and start to come true, unfortunately, in those indicators in a negative way. Now, we believe in showing you this information, talking about it constantly. There's some other parts of the country that have not done that. They have not focused on the evidence as part of their reopening and fostered a community conversation about it, and I hope and pray for them that doesn't backfire on them. I hope and pray for the people in those States that their governments did not act in a hasty manner or an evidence free manner, because that creates tremendous danger to people's health, and that distinct possibility of the disease reasserting itself. We're not going to let that happen here. That's the bottom line. As I said yesterday, we do not expect a perfect linear march to exactly what we want in a way of normalcy. It won't be exactly perfect every day, obviously. There'll be some ups and downs, but what I do believe is that by being transparent, we can ensure that we stay on top of this disease and do not allow that kind of really dangerous, big kind of boomerang effect that I think happens if there's a decision to open up before the facts back it up. So, each day when I hold a press conference, we go over the indicators, and then every Friday what I'm doing is to talk about the big picture of what the indicators show us over a more expansive period of time, put it all in perspective.

Okay, so what do the indicators tell us when they look at them in big picture? The first thing they tell us is don't count your chickens before they're hatched. That this virus is tragically still alive and well, and living in this city. We have not beaten it, and we should not take it lightly. It's a fearsome enemy, and we need to understand this enemy if we're going to beat it ultimately. Today when I go over the indicators, you will see some good things for sure, we've seen that many days, but you have to put it in perspective of what's happening around us. So, yesterday in New York City, 2,637 confirmed new cases of the Corona virus in the five boroughs. That is a huge number. The number of people we lost yesterday, 202 New Yorkers lost their lives yesterday to the Corona virus. These numbers, when we look at them compared to where we were a few weeks ago, maybe we feel a little better, but we can't forget that each and every one of these cases, each and every one of these numbers is a human being. And we can't for a moment, forget what we would have thought about this. If I said these numbers to you three, four months ago, it would have been staggering that that's what happened in a single day in New York City. It would have been staggering. We can't get numb here. We have to realize that numbers like that tell us there's still a real fight ahead. Even if we're going to be tugged by that warm weather, even if we want it to be over, and Lord knows we all want it to be over. We got to look at those realities square in the eye.

So, everything I'm telling you is context. The biggest reality, and I fundamentally believe this, we will win this fight ultimately, is a matter of time. No one knows exactly how much time, but we will win this fight ultimately. But we have to be cognizant. We have to understand our enemy. If we're going to win this fight, we cannot forget these realities if we're going to win this fight. So, there's a direct correlation between acknowledging these realities, being honest about them, understanding what that calls all of us to do, and then how we ultimately beat this disease back and open our lives up. Anyone who wants to get back to normalcy, that toughness your displaying, that discipline is the way back.

So, let's talk about the indicators in the context of a longer period of time. So, on indicator number one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19, well this chart speaks volumes. It's very striking, and you see it and you get very hopeful, and you should

be hopeful. But you should always be sober about the larger reality at the same time. So, this is how many more patients we needed to care for each day in our hospitals. Now, when you look at the progress, the peak that we experienced with this disease, we now know that on March 31st 850 new cases one day, 850 new admissions to the hospital for suspected COVID-19. On April 11th when we started putting out these indicators publicly, so basically three weeks ago, went down to 383 that's great. By April 22nd last Friday, 176, by today 136, fantastic. That's the good news. Real progress. However, remember the numbers I told you a moment ago. Overall, the number of new positive tests, the number of people who have passed away, and that 136 we feel good about that number, but we still have to remember why we shouldn't feel good about that number, because that's still the number of people every single new day that we're seeing go in to the hospital.

So, part of what I think is really important to contextualize this is to say, okay, that kind of progress looks incredibly steady and it is, but at the same time, what would it feel like if we opened up in an atmosphere where there were still hundreds of people each day going into the hospital. It was bad enough to have to go into hospital and be admitted to the hospital for COVID-19. If there were thousands of new positive tests each day. That means every single one of those people potentially could be spreading the disease. For losing people every day and in large numbers. What does it say to us? It says that if you open up too soon, you can pretty much guarantee a resurgence of this disease. That amount of activity immediately tells you that you opened the door a little bit for this disease, it comes back strong. That's what we will not allow.

Now, we've talked a lot about test and trace, and we're going to keep talking about it. This is going to be the game changer. The ability to go after each of these cases and find everyone else that might be affected and test widely, and we're building that up rapidly. But you can see, the numbers we're talking about now, how daunting a task that is, you're still talking about thousands of new positives each day. It just puts in perspective how much we have to do.

Now, let's go to indicator number two, the daily number of people in ICU's across our public hospitals for suspected COVID-19. Now, what does this tell us? Well, it tells us a lot of New Yorkers are still fighting for their lives. And it tells us that our public hospitals, which were born the brunt this crisis, are still experiencing a lot of strain. And we need to get to the day where there are almost no New Yorkers, one day we hope zero New Yorkers fighting for their lives. And we have to get to the day where our public hospitals can rest assured that they can handle whatever is being thrown at them, including all the many, many challenges they deal in normal with in normal times. So, this number is encouraging again, because there's some decrease, but you'll notice the difference between this chart and the last chart. There's decrease, but nowhere near as sharp a decrease. This causes real pause. You know, when we launched these indicators three weeks ago, our ICU's, our intensive care units and our public hospitals were basically at double their normal capacity. So, there's been improvement since then, but still not back to normal. And again, listen to the numbers, you all like progress, but then you still have to listen to the raw number. April 14th was the day where we saw the most people in these ICU's, 887. By last Friday was 786; by today, 704 – steady progress, obviously, but not sharp, sharp progress and 704 people is a lot of people.

So, more to do and a particular focus that this, this chart makes you think about the lives of the people right now who are fighting to survive but also makes you think about our healthcare heroes who are there every day supporting them back in them up. Yesterday I had the opportunity to thank some of the folks who came to the defense of our healthcare heroes. We had leaders of our military here at City Hall and General Terrence O'Shaughnessy who has been a key figure in providing help to New York City, he came with some of his other leadership and we talked about the impact that our military medical personnel have had in our public hospitals, which has been outstanding. I want to thank the Army, the Air Force, the Navy, deep thanks to General O'Shaughnessy and also to people I look forward to thanking directly Secretary Esper, General Milley, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They really came to the defense New York City, right now we have almost 700 military medical personnel in our public hospitals because remember this shows you that our public hospitals are still strained and our healthcare heroes are still fighting a really tough battle and it's been going on for two months, but they got an incredible boost when those extraordinary medical professionals from the military showed up and they're sticking with it. And we are getting the good news that we expect them to be here during the month of May as well to back up our healthcare heroes, so that's something really, really important. But you look at this and you say, okay, we're really not out of the woods, we got to say lives, we got to protect our healthcare heroes and this chart reminds me, if and it should remind all of us. If you jump too soon, that number starts to go back up, that number goes up too much then you're back into the challenge of trying to expand hospital capacity, you're talking about field hospitals and everything else. Again, that's a place we do not want to go.

Okay. Indicator number three, number of percent, percent of people who tested positive for COVID-19. Well, this obviously is the indicator that talks about how widespread this disease is in our City and we're going to get a better and better picture as we add more and more testing. So, this is a great story, the citywide percentage is really improving pretty steadily on April 11th when we started the indicators 58 percent, by last Friday 30 percent, today 23 percent – that's fantastic, a very, very hopeful sign. And the public health lab, which again is a particularly rigorous standard, we saw a real progress today, this is exciting to see as well. When we launched 78% of their tests were coming back positive, by last Friday 52 percent, by this morning 17 percent, now that's fantastic. Now, this number has gone up and down quite a bit so I want to note it's everyday based on the facts of that day it's been as you can see a much choppy pattern. So again, we should never get overconfident but we're happy to see this progress, it certainly shows we are still decelerating and decelerating is the name of the game and that gets us to that point where we can do that big handoff to test and trace and then take the next big step. We still cannot say with assurance that we're out of the woods when it comes to that point about plateauing. Right now, it looks really good, but we are not to a point where we can say we are absolutely sure we won't have some kind of level off and we do not want that level off. That prolongs this agony we're all dealing with cooped up in our homes and everything else, so these numbers we need to keep pushing down steadily.

Now, how do we get where we want to get? So right now, again, we're in widespread transmission by any measure. The numbers I've been over today, especially the number of new cases and the number of deaths that is clearly widespread transmission, I'm sorry to say we need to get to low-level transmission. Low-Level transmission is when you can trace an act on every single new case, period. So, the indicators tell us a lot about how we get to that point and how we

sustain that point. But the indicators again reflect action, it's very organic. It has to do with what you do— social distancing when it's honored, it has an amazing impact, shelter in place, staying at home has amazing impact. If it loosens up, it will show up in the numbers, we've seen some very, very unfortunate examples and we are just not going to tolerate them. We've seen gatherings, well there's not going to be gatherings, just want to be crystal clear. The minute NYPD knows about a gathering, that gathering is over. So, if you want to get to low-level transmission, you want to get to normalcy you can't participate in a gathering, you can't condone a gathering, you can't tell anyone it's okay, you look the other way. If you hear about a gathering call 3-1-1 immediately, report it.

So, the handoff that I want to get to, is we keep driving down these numbers just as the test and trace is building up and we hit sweet spot. Where the numbers come down, the test and trace comes up in terms of capacity and the test and trace becomes so strong that literally every single new case we can trace the contacts and— act on them with quarantine, with testing, etcetera. Now that takes the pieces coming together, we're making a lot of progress in terms of testing, but we have more to go and we absolutely need that federal role. We're making real progress in terms of building up a tracing apparatus, real progress in terms of building up by quarantine and isolation apparatus with the hotels. Everything needs to move rapidly in the month of May, it's going to be a huge logistical effort. Remember everyone who goes into a hotel for isolation or quarantine needs all the supports that have to go with it. They need the food, they need support from medical personnel, everything, all that has to be provided, that's what's being built right now.

So, all of that will get us where we need to go, and I want to see us rapidly make progress in the month of May. That big apparatus building and these numbers continuing to go down and we'll go over the indicators regularly and if they keep moving the right direction, we're going to make more, we have more and more ability for that handoff to go well. And then to get to that low-level transmission period, that is the gateway to starting toward normalcy. These numbers go in the wrong direction, we're going to stay tight, we're going to stay in a situation where we do not allow the disease to reassert. So, real transparency here and a real warning about what happens if we slip up, but a very positive reminder of how close we're getting to the point where we can start to make even more progress. So, today's daily indicators after all that context, today's daily indicators show you again just how it's still way too gray a situation and it's something we have to fight harder to overcome. Kind of a mix progress in some ways for sure and progress particularly with the public health lab, which has been— toughest measure but not overall progress that we need to see. So, on the first indicator daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID that went up. It went up only slightly 129 to 136 it's not horrible, but it's not what we need, we need it to go down. The daily number of people in ICU across Health and Hospitals for suspected COVID went down but only by one 705 to 704, 704 is not a good number, progress but not the kind we need. The percent of people who tested positive, unfortunately that one went up for citywide 22 percent to 23 percent but again a very small increase. So, we've got a lot of effective break-evens here. The good news, and this is very good news because it is the toughest measure, is that the public health lab went down and it went down markedly from 36 percent to 17 percent. So, that is the hopeful the hopeful reality today.

Now, we're going to do a lot of things in this next phase in May and when I say phase, I don't mean yet getting to low-level transmission, we're going to have to earn that, we'll have to fight for that. But I mean that May— May becomes the time, if March was the time we were dealing with that horrifying unforeseen, unheard of up— swing in this disease, April was the month we were beating back from the worst and making real progress. May is the month where we do something transcendent, particularly because we build up test and trace. Now we're going to use every conceivable tool. Yesterday, I talked about the fact that we're going to have stronger enforcement efforts, not just the NYPD but by a variety of other agencies that we're going to have people out there on top of enforcement, educating, providing the face coverings for free. We're going to do all sorts of innovative things to keep people helping each other through this crisis and supporting them and pushing them. And of course, enforcing, we're going to use all the tools creatively and assertively to keep making progress. So, whenever we have a new tool, we're going to talk about it and the impact it can make.

So, now, I'm going to talk about the open street's initiative, and this is something I want to thank the city council for their partnership. And it's been worked on, not just with the council but with of course, the NYPD and Department of Transportation. The open streets are going to be another way we help encourage social distancing, because the warmer weather tells us we're going to have a new challenge and we combine the fact that we have to meet that challenge by understanding where people are going to be. Again, we're going to require social distance distancing face coverings and people only being out for just a period of time they need for their exercise and then get back. But we do know warmer weather, it's going to draw more people, that's obvious. And we also know that, thank God, the NYPD and all our agencies are getting back their personnel and really great numbers. So, they're regaining their strength in terms of being able to enforce farther and farther across the City and better and better. So, with the city council, we agreed that we would put together a plan to open 40 miles of streets in May, a hundred miles overall in the course of this crisis. And the focus would be on those streets in their parks because we expect them to attract a lot of people in the warmer weather. We want to expand the parks, if you will, by opening up these streets. And of course, the hardest hit neighborhoods, the place where we've seen this disease have the most devastating effect. So today we'll announce the first seven miles over seven miles in fact, of these open streets and these will all be opening on Monday. 4.5 miles are inside parks, they are areas that will now be devoted to pedestrians, bicyclists. 4.5 miles and that's made up of Callahan-Kelly Park, Forest Hill Park, Fort Tryon Park, Flushing Meadows Park, Grant Park and Silver Lake Park. And then 2.7 miles of streets that are adjacent near parks that'll help to expand and affect the parks. And that will be a Carl Schurz Park, Court Square, Highbridge Park, Lieutenant William T. Triangle, Prospect Park, Stapleton Waterfront Park and Williamsbridge Oval.

That's the beginning and we're going to build out from there. So, this is a, an initiative where we think it's going to help a lot. It's going to go where people need it to go and again, this is an initiative that we can do with proper enforcement by the NYPD and the Parks Department and all our other colleague agencies. So, you can expect that this is going to help people to have some more space, but also with vigilant eyes to make sure there's no gatherings - there are no attempts by people to create a sports or group activities. We're not going to allow that; we're going to keep making sure people socially distance and keep making sure people have face coverings and

anyone that doesn't happen to have one, more and more someone will be offering you one out on the street if you don't have one.

Now, I'm going to close in a moment, but I want to talk about something very, very sad. This really, I heard about it late last night and it really hit me. We have lost someone who came to our aid, to our defense and there's something particularly painful when someone does the right thing; a fellow American comes from across the country to try and help the people in New York City and while working to save lives here, gives his own life. It's very painful, it's heroic. It's something we honor, but it's very, very painful that we've lost this good man. Paramedic Paul Cary from Aurora, Colorado, part of the FEMA relief effort has died of the coronavirus. For three decades he served the people of Aurora and then came very bravely to serve us – he did not have to do it - he made the choice to come here to save lives. And remember when he, and so many other paramedics and EMTs showed up from around the country, it was a very, very tough moment; we were having the highest number of 9-1-1 calls in the history of New York City and the disease was growing and its impact and lives were being lost and we needed every hand on deck and Paul Cary's one of those people who came. And I got to tell you it just hurts that such a good man has made the ultimate sacrifice for us. So, to the Cary family, we honor, we honor Paul's sacrifice; we honor what Paul did. He clearly saved lives while he was here. We honor all of you. We grieve with you and we're going to find a way to create a special memorial for Paul here in New York City to remember all those who came to our defense; the paramedics, the EMTs, members of the military - so many good people - doctors, nurses from around the country. So many people came to help, but Paul gave his life for us and we're going to honor him in a particular way. So, everyone, look, the – it's a reminder of the sacrifices that we've seen so many public servants, so many people who serve you have been lost. We've lost four of our own members of EMS. We've lost 10 members of the FDNY overall. First responders, heroes have been lost, healthcare workers, doctors, nurses, everyone who threw themselves into this battle. So right now, we need to be there for their families. We need to be there for the colleagues who are hurting. Imagine how tough it is to be fighting still this battle every day and have lost someone who served with you. We will do a lot to support their families and we will do a lot to remember them and honor them, but I want you to remember, if you really want to honor these heroes, then it's up to you to stick to the rules we're living by now. Every time you do, you help stop the spread of the disease. Every time you help stop the spread of the disease, you're going to save lives and the lives you save could include our first responders and our healthcare heroes. So I want to make it personal for you. I don't want anyone separating your own actions from what it means for the people around you. I want you to take it personally and realize that if we do what we're capable of doing, we're going to save a lot of lives and every time we don't, we could endanger someone like Paul and we can't have that.

So, look, we've talked today about the real progress we've made and the challenges ahead. The good news here is we are winning this fight. There's no question in my mind we're winning this fight. The bad news is we have not yet won - that's the honest truth. Declaring victory prematurely has been proven down through history to be a very dangerous thing. And when anyone from the President on down talks about liberating a city or a state without making sure that the facts support it and the protections are in place for people's health and safety, that's not liberation – that's actually damning people – that's damning them potentially to their deaths and we will not allow that here in New York City. We're going to come back, but we're going to

come back safely and 8.6 million people together have been doing something extraordinary. We got some more to do, but I have absolute faith we will get there together.

A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that we turn to our friends in the media and please remind me of the name and outlet of each journalist.

**Moderator:** Hi, all. Just a reminder that we have Commissioner, Health Commissioner Barbot, Transportation Commissioner Trottenberg, and Senior Advisor, Dr. Varma on the phone. With that, I will start with Sydney from the Staten Island Advance.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor. So, my paper has been trying to find out how many people have been tested at Staten Island's One Medical test site at Snug Harbor. We've heard that the site is empty, the Department of Health and One Medical have not been able to give us any information on how many people have actually been tested there since, since it opened. Can you give us some details about how many people have been tested at the site? Is it, is it really [inaudible]? And you mentioned that one that the One Medical test sites would be able to test 3,500 people a week. Is that still the goal?

**Mayor:** Sydney, I'll get you a, an update. I don't have those numbers in front of me. I don't know if Dr. Barbot happens to, but if not we will get you an update. Yeah, the goals we've set from everything I have heard, we're sticking to those goals. We want to, as you see, more aggressively build out testing all over the city. And this is again, just the beginning of what would be a lot more testing later on. So, in terms of One Medical and that effort with 1199, again if Dr. Barbot has the answer now, great. Otherwise, we will get that to you in the next few hours. Doctor, do you happen to have that?

**Commissioner Oxiris Barbot, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:** We don't actually we would need to get it from One Medical which operates this [inaudible] testing site.

**Mayor:** Okay, Sydney, we will get that to you for sure.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Melissa from NBC News 4.

**Question:** Hi, good morning Mr. Mayor. I have two questions for you, please. It's been two days since we asked you about whether you plan to start tracking symptoms of shock or Kawasaki disease as a possible complication of COVID-19 in children. Since then, what have you heard from local hospitals about what they're seeing and what, if anything, are you or your team doing differently to track this because we know there's some concern in the medical community? The other question is from my colleague Andrew Siff, and he wants to know with the forecast for such great weather this weekend, why not open those streets for pedestrians now, before the weekend?



**Mayor:** Thank you, Melissa. I'm going to turn to the doctors on the first question; on the second question, look, we have to set up obviously to be effective. So, we're opening up a number of locations and in terms of setting up the right physical structure and having the right enforcement. And I think I've been real consistent from day one; all of this requires enforcement and we have to believe it's situated properly. So that is the plan right now for Monday that we believe we can have everything in place and effective and I think we've seen from recent days enforcement is everything. So, that's what we have right now. I think it's a very fair question that being said, and certainly we'll consult with the NYPD and the Parks Department today to see if there's any way to speed it up in light of the warm weather. So tell Andrew please, very good question and I will take it to heart and see if there is a way to speed up, but that would only happen if we were sure we could enforce it properly. On the, the other question I think when we, when you asked a couple of days ago, it was clear from our medical, excuse me, our healthcare leadership that they were not seeing a trend - I should say as a layman - but let me have Dr. Barbot and Dr. Varma speak to that.

Doctors, can you hear me?

**Commissioner Barbot:** Yes, sir. [Inaudible] on mute. Let me start off by saying that we take very seriously any potential emerging trends regarding COVID-19, because, as we've been saying from the beginning, we're learning something new about this virus every day. That being said, my team has reached out to pediatric hospital providers to get more information about specific cases that they have concerns, maybe indicating an inflammatory cardiovascular response in children that had not been previously observed. Beyond that, I have personally communicated with our medical examiner who has put out the call to her international community to see what has been seen across the world. And we're compiling all of that information, again, to make sure that we've put the best science to work here in New York City. So, we are looking closely at this. We will continue to work with our pediatric providers and we will provide information as it becomes available and certainly guidance to the pediatric community.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

**Moderator:** Next we have Katie from the Wall Street Journal.

**Question:** Hey, good morning, everybody. I have two brief questions. The first is, you know, looking at the map that was released yesterday on where the masks will be delivered, I know will that map – I guess, first, how were those – how were those parks selected? And will there be an expansion? Because I know there's like entire sections of boroughs that are not included in it. And the second is looking at the plan to open up some of the streets within parks. One park that I have some questions about is Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, because inside, you know, there's a hospital there now, there's a food distribution site – which streets in that park will be shut down?

**Mayor:** So, I am going to on the streets issue turn in a second to Commissioner Trottenberg. I think that's a very fair point, that, obviously, we value opening streets where we can, again, with proper enforcement to keep everyone safe, and I've said before we want to make sure we're

additive here – we're not creating a new problem, but we're solving an existing problem and a growing problem with the warm weather – not ending up adding a new problem. But you make a really good point about places where there might be additional medical and other facilities, how we navigate around that. So, in a second, I'll turn to Commissioner Trottenberg on that. On the face coverings – and I'm going to always say everyone please promote that word face coverings, because it is profoundly different from the medical masks, the N95s, the other, kind of, more sophisticated masks that our first responders and our health care heroes need. This is face coverings, face coverings, face coverings – it's scarfs, it's bandanas, etcetera. Definitely, this is just a beginning, Katie. These efforts – everything's being built constantly. One of the things we've learned during this crisis is we just have to be in constant motion. The disease is constantly in motion and throwing us curve balls, we have to be in constant motion. So, this initial effort to really intensify the distribution of face coverings, it will just keep growing as long as we need it to and in more and more places. So, that's just phase-one, if you will. Okay, on the streets, particularly in Flushing Meadows Park, Commissioner Trottenberg? I think she's out there. Commissioner, can you hear us?

**Commissioner Polly Trottenberg, Department of Transportation:** Yeah, I'm here. Good morning. Just so you know in general how we picked all these roadways, we worked with NYPD, and Parks, and, in some cases, FDNY. So, all those agencies were involved in making the selections. In Flushing Meadows [inaudible] between Model Airplane Field and Meadow Lake Bridge parking lot – I think we will have later in the release all the details about the roads we picked. And this is where we picked – exactly as you were saying, Katie, makes sure we were not interfering with medical operations or any of the other things taking place in that park.

**Moderator:** Next we have Debralee from Manhattan Times and Bronx Free Press.

**Question:** Hey, good morning, everyone.

**Mayor:** Hey, Debralee. How are you doing?

**Question:** I'm well, thanks. I want to follow up, Mr. Mayor, on the conversation started earlier on the race equity task force. And I know that you had described it as really taking on the work of examining and addressing existing disparities and inequities, and, in some ways, looking to obviate a recovery that would neglect impacted communities and their experiences. So, I wonder if, in the interest of transparency, you can speak how the administration plans to apprise the public on the task force's meetings, it's progress, and to what degree will the public be invited to take part in those conversations before the June 1st deadline that you set for the roadmap? And then secondly, as you know, nonprofit groups and community stakeholders are extraordinarily concerned about SYP being canceled and have been lobbying of forcefully to have it reinstated in some way and are asking for the city and involved community groups to find a way, a creative, innovative way to engage the youth who were so concerned about having had their school year impacted. And now we're looking at this warm weather and really having these youth engaged in a way that makes sense for them this summer. And when you talk about some of the programs, whether it's contact tracing, the kind of field work that's being described at the city is taking on such an ambitious level, many of these groups point to that and say, particularly on the older spectrum, that many of the SYP participants could actually take up this work and

could be trained in ways that could be very, very supportive and helpful to that effort. Can you speak to that as well?

**Mayor:** Yeah. Debralee, it's – look, it's a very fair question and a question I've heard from a number of elected officials, but I'm going to have to put this in context. I feel deeply for our young people and what they're going through. And the young people who would benefit from the Summer Youth Employment program are of an age that, you know, my own children were not so long ago and I can relate to this reality. And during this administration we built up Summer Youth Employment constantly, year after year with the City Council, and the Council made it a high priority. So, I'm a believer, but I've got to be real about some of the key facts. First, you know, the historic notion of Summer Youth Employment requires people gathering. We don't know when we're going to be able to do gatherings. Second, it costs a substantial amount of money. We're in a massive budget crisis and, in fact, we're going to turn more and more of our attention in the coming days to talking about the budget reality, because the stimulus in Washington is starting to be debated and that's going to determine a lot of what happens. And if it's not fair to New York City, if the stimulus does not make New York City whole, then you're talking about really big cuts coming far beyond what's been cut already. And so, we have to be clear that right now we just do not have the money to do anything like we've ever done previously with summer youth. I think there are things we can do for young people for sure this summer, but I think, right now, we have to assume they are not – with young people being out in communities by and large, a lot of it may have to be from home. I don't know if contact tracing fits because of the level of expertise needed and I don't think it's something we'd think of in terms of someone so young. We want the contact tracing to be very much people who either have a medical background or existing city employees. That's where we're focused first. And I think we have to remember that there are hundreds of thousands of people responsible for their families who don't have a job right now. And as we try and create more employment, we're going to focus first on the people whose paycheck helps a whole family and that's going to be crucial. So, there's a lot of challenges there. I'm very sympathetic to helping our young people, but I think to the extent we can do it, it's going to look very, very different right now. I will also say, we're certainly going to look at private sources, philanthropy to see if there's other things we can do for young people, and I think there is a lot of interest in the charitable community to help fill some of that gap and we'll certainly be working on that. In terms of the different groupings, so, you know, quick refresher for everyone, we're going to have a group of advisory councils, sector by sector, small business, larger businesses, arts and culture, you go down the list. We're going to be naming some new ones and next week – excuse me – you'll start to see the people are going to be on those committees and they're going to start doing work immediately to advise us on the restart, and then for the longer term. We're going to have the fair recovery task force that will really look at both immediate framework for how we come back and do it in a way that's fair and addresses disparities – that's that June 1st report – but then they're going to be working with us, going forward. We're going to have the internal working group on equity and inclusion that's going to be made up of leaders of the administration from communities of color who are going to focus on the disparities in the work our agencies do to address those disparities. And that's going to be a very tangible effort to make sure agencies right here and now are acting on these issues. And then, as I said, later on down the line, I'm going to name a Charter Revision Commission. A Charter Revision Commission will undoubtedly do public hearings, that's part of that process. The other efforts are going to seek input from people a lot of ways, but I do not anticipate a

formal hearings at this point. The advisory councils are, in effect, me bringing in input from a variety of people. The fair recovery group is really eminent leaders of the city that are bringing their thoughts and their energy, but they also have massive networks they'll be turning to. And the internal working group is going to be people who are always working with communities and bringing that back. But down the line I think we're going to have an opportunity to get more into the kind of public hearing model through the Charter Revision Commission.

**Moderator:** Next we have Juliet from 1010 WINS.

**Question:** Hi. Good morning, Mr. Mayor. Good morning, all. First, Mr. Mayor, I want to thank you for resuming the rat patrol. We learned from your office that the inspectors will be out to check on the complaints and honor social distancing. So, we updated our story and we've heard from our listeners about that as well. So, thank you very much.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Well, Juliet, thank you for raising that issue. You have a really good batting average lately when you raise things that action happens. I thank you. But I want the rats to know they are not safe. We're coming for them.

**Question:** Yeah, that's good. Okay. So, my questions for you this morning, given that there had been differences between you and Governor Cuomo on the school closing issue, did you have any input or discussion with the Governor on the decision he's expected to announce today? And my second question is, what exactly is involved with the monitoring and enforcing of these closed streets? I'm thinking of, you know, will there be barricades for people to walk around or through, you know, will it be sort of like a definitive space or will it just be open space? How's that going to work?

**Mayor:** Thank you. Let me speak to the school issue and then I'll just say a word on the open streets, and then Commissioner Trottenberg can jump in as well. So, the Governor and I spoke yesterday, but when we did it was obviously a focus on the MTA issue before the announcement. We have spoken in the past on the school's issue. I think the Governor understands fully why I am – feel so strongly. And I'm a parent, you know, my kids went to public schools the whole way through and I feel very, very close to public school parents and educators. It was a big part of life, my life, the life of my family. So, you know, the Governor understands that I fundamentally believe it is not safe to bring back New York City public schools for this academic year, period. I respect, as I said at the beginning, he has to think about the whole state. He's working with the other governors in the region. There's a lot of factors that he has to put together. But I have certainly made clear to him that I believe fundamentally New York City public schools cannot be reopened until September. I've also made clear in every way, including publicly, that we're going to not only see what's happening right now with the online learning as something that goes to June, but we're going to stretch that through July and August in different ways for any kids that need it. Maybe some kids at the end of June have gotten everything they needed out of the school year. They've sure had a lot of time on their hands, Juliet, let's face it. Some kids have engaged distance learning very deeply because they haven't had anything else to do. Other kids that need more help, it's going to be there for them on an unprecedented scale during July and August.

So, I think we have more of a continuum reality of this school year going into the next one then we've literally ever had in the history of New York City and we're going to keep building that. As I said, the Chancellor and his team have contingency plans for how much we're going to crank that up depending on what's happening in the world. But we're going to be there for any student who needs continuing help over the summer with an online methodology. And our goal, of course, is just focus everything we've got on a clean, safe opening in September. So again, I think the Governor's quite clear on my position, I respect that. He's thinking about the big picture and look forward to his announcement.

On the open streets, the goal here is more space, more social-distancing, but safe, not creating a contradiction where we open up space and then it becomes a gathering place or we open up space and there isn't enforcement there, so people start to do things they shouldn't do, or we open up space but cars can still access it. And again, that was a critique I had of some of the plans elsewhere in the country is that they didn't really segment off the cars sufficiently. This is going to be, you know, well-protected and well-regulated space. And that's part of why we have to do this in stages to get it. But, you know, it should be the kind of space where a pedestrian can, you know, and a family can feel very, very comfortable that they're safe once they're there, but we can also make sure that social distancing is observed. Polly, you want to add?

**Commissioner Trottenberg:** I think you have it, Mr. Mayor and DOT, NYPD, FDNY, while we're working with parks and we hope to be working with local bids and neighborhood groups to use barricades and sawhorses and good signage to remind people that these are what we're now calling open streets for pedestrians and cyclists. They will be if emergency vehicles or deliveries need to get through, they can. The goal is to minimize any vehicle activity and agencies and other partners will help sort of man the barricades and keep an eye on them.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

**Moderator:** Next we have Jacob from Jewish Insider.

**Mayor:** Jacob?

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor, you hear me?

**Mayor:** Yes. How you doing?

**Question:** Good morning. I wanted to ask you a two-part question if you allow me.

**Mayor:** Of course.

**Question:** First of all, how would you ensure that the crackdown of the NYPD – [inaudible]

**Mayor:** Jacob, can you hear us?

**Question:** - I think that was what first of all taken consideration the observant Jews who do not carry IDs on Shabbat, who would not necessarily know –

**Mayor:** Jacob, you're coming in and out. Jacob, Jacob, we're not. Hold on Jacob. We're not hearing you. You're – something's causing your signal to come in and out. Could you start again the question please? And, and try and I don't know if you're moving around or something, but try and stay stable so we can hear you, Jacob?

**Question:** I'll repeat my question if you hear me.

**Mayor:** Yeah, there you go.

**Question:** So, my question is how would you avoid conflict with the Orthodox [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Yeah, we're going to come back to you, Jacob. We're not hearing you clearly. We'll come back in a moment. Try and call from a hardline if you can? Go ahead.

**Moderator:** Jacob, we'll circle back. Next step is Julia from the Post.

**Question:** Hey, good morning Mr. Mayor and everyone else on the call. Two questions, one for Dr. Barbot and one for you, Mr. Mayor. And actually, this first question for Dr. Barbot is from a colleague of mine after I tweeted the number of new confirmed cases. She's curious to know if we have any information on where and how people are getting newly infected, are there kind of central transmission points in the city? And then Mr. Mayor, there's a Reopen New York Rally planned for outside City Hall today by a group that vows to bring thousands out to protest the State's locked down. Yesterday you said any groups of over a hundred would be immediately find and those who refuse to disperse would be arrested. Can you guarantee that this group will face a fine and potential arrest if their numbers and behavior warranted?

**Mayor:** A 100 percent, and I don't want people to hear that 100 number, which I just threw out and as an example of my personal definition of what's a large gathering, but, you know, if you've got 50 people, we're not allowing that. If you've got 20 people, we're not allowing that. We're not allowing any kind of gathering, period. So, let me just make it easier on people. If you are in a gathering and a rally is a gathering, I'm very sorry that at a funeral, of course, historically people gathered to mourn, I respect that, but it's still a gathering when we can't allow gatherings. A party is a gathering. I don't care if it's 20 people or a hundred people or a thousand people, it's not going to be allowed. So the point is, if you gather, NYPD is coming there to give you a summons and if you resist too arrest you, period across all communities. So no of course this organization is not allowed to hold a rally that goes against every rule we've got. They can express themselves online. There's all sorts of other ways, but if they attempt to hold a rally, they will be summonsed immediately, and that's true for people of any viewpoint. We're not doing rallies at this point. They spread the disease and help to kill people. It's unacceptable. So as to the other question, Dr. Barbot, go ahead.

**Commissioner Barbot:** Yes, Mr. Mayor. So you know what I would say is that when we have more than 2,000 cases per day in the city, we are still in widespread transmission, and so what that means is that New Yorkers, even though a large number are staying indoors and we're seeing that reflected in our hospitalization numbers, we have to balance that with the fact that we still have thousands of people being infected - to me what that means - and happening all across the

city. So to me, what that means is when they're going out, hopefully just the essential activities, we need them to be even more diligent about it adhering to the use of face coverings and more diligent about adhering to the use of alcohol based hand sanitizer when they're not close to a water source. So the reality is that we're still seeing, you know, transmission across the city, and what – given the large volume of new cases, we can't track those back to a single point source.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Kathleen from Patch.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor and everyone. I have two questions. The first is that you've been saying repeatedly over the past three days, if anyone planning a large gathering endangering lives considering that people flocked outside to see that military flyover Tuesday, are you reconsidering your own plans for the 4th of July fireworks? And secondly, I was wondering if you could provide more information about what homeless people can expect if they are found to be on trains at 1 am [inaudible] and make sure that you are a person who doesn't have a home, you're sleeping on a train because you're frightened of catching this disease in a crowded shelter, and two armed cops are walking your way?

**Mayor:** Kathleen, again, that's one way of painting it. Let me paint it another way. Someone who is sleeping on a train needs help. We're here to help them. We're here to get them to a safe place, a safe haven. And again, we've had thousands of street homeless people in the last three years go into safe havens and find them to be safe. And how do we know this? Because they never went back to the streets. So I appreciate it and I think you're speaking from compassion, but the picture you're painting is one side of the story and it's actually not to me the productive way to look at because I don't want to continue a broken pattern. The fact that so many homeless people for years just went back and forth all night on a subway train, that's not what we should be aspiring to in our city. We should be aspiring to every single person who needs help gets help and safe havens were created in a new way to address the concerns that homeless folks had about safety and it's working and there's medical care attached. And if someone's thinking that the best option they have in life is to ride a subway all night, that's not good, that's not acceptable.

So what it means is that the – when it gets to 1 am, and stations are being cleared out, there'll be plenty of outreach workers there right away, able to get someone to help to get them to a safe haven, to get them the medical care, whatever they need, police officers to help. If someone is able and decides meaning that they are, you know, emotionally, psychologically, health wise able to make their own decision, there's no immediate threat to themselves or others and they decided to not want that help, they still have that constitutional right. If they are a threat to themselves or others as per usual, that's a different situation. But the help will be offered, but they will not have the option of just staying in the subway, period.

On the question of the fly over, look, I think there's been a very unfair parallel made. I don't have every fact of what happened everywhere in New York City during the fly over. I saw images that showed people watching the flyover and socially distancing. I'm sure there were some places where it wasn't good enough and I don't like that. That is very different than an organized gathering where people know they're going to be close together for a prolonged period of time. The fly over, if you watched it, went by very, very quickly. The – we're talking to this funeral the other night, but also parties, rallies, no, that's not acceptable. And when it comes to the 4th of

July, what I've said and Macy's has said, is we're going to make that decision as we get closer. It's May 1st, I understand everyone is anxious on so many things, everyone's looking for interesting things to write about, but it's May 1st we have two whole months to figure out 4th of July. The one thing I can guarantee you is the 4th of July will be honored and celebrated and it will be fireworks in some form or fashion. But we're going to have a lot, we have to decide about how to do that safely. Safety first, social distancing first, a long time to work it out. We'll have more to say when we come back, but no, no, no, let's be clear. Right now, we have a clear and present danger for New Yorkers, anytime people gather and especially a prolonged gathering, not acceptable, will not be accepted, will be broken up by the NYPD.

**Moderator:** We're circling back to Jacob from the Jewish insider.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor. Sorry for the miscommunication before. I appreciate your assistance. If I can ask two questions? First, how would you ensure that NYPD crack down on gatherings and on social - ensuring social distancing orders are being kept would avoid a conflict? With the Orthodox Jewish community, especially in Shabbot, you know, people don't carry IDs and are not the confined to the home, if they are on the street. And what do you say to those who are concerned that due to the media attention to recent incidents that – of this crackdown would be considered overpolicing? And my second question is have you reached out to Jewish community leaders to clarify and apologize for what they called scapegoating of the entire Jewish community?

**Mayor:** I have had a number of conversations, Jacob, with Jewish community leaders in the last few days, and I'm going to respect the privacy of those conversations. But a number of them said to me that they understood my frustration and they understood I was trying to protect lives and they understood how close I am to the Jewish community and how much of a personal connection I feel to the community. Some said, hey, you know, be careful – to be careful with your words. And I said I agree and I spoke out of passion and I regret that I, you know, used words the wrong way in terms of giving people the wrong impression, but I don't regret sounding the alarm and I don't regret saying we're not going to tolerate this behavior going forward and a very substantial number of the people who I spoke to agree with that.

And I think everyone heard my public comments and understood that I was trying to strike a balance and show that I cared and I spoke out of concern. The question of how we're going to address this, look, I'm pretty straightforward about this Jacob. If people are following social distancing and shelter in place, which means you only go out for a very limited period of time and you keep a part from other people while you're doing that, although of course family units can stay together when they're outside because they're already have been exposed to each other, but that, you know, in terms of, you keep moving, you think about just life on our streets. You keep moving, you have your face covering on, there's no gatherings, and you stay outside only for a minimal amount of time. No one's going to have a problem anywhere. If they do those things, if people start gathering, they're going to have a definite problem and that's going to be in every community. So we've all understood now this is equal opportunity. Any community, any faith, any ethnicity, any geography, same treatment – there's going to be a crackdown everywhere. If we see gatherings and on the question of Shabbes and, and people not having ideas, that's a very fair point. I'll talk to Commissioner Shea about what we can do in light of



that. But I have to be clear we cannot hesitate to enforce. So I do appreciate why people don't carry an ID on Shabbes, I really do. But that will not be a reason why we won't enforce. So I think the smart thing for everyone to do, and a lot of the Jewish community leaders I spoke to said they are spent spreading this word very aggressively, is don't even think about a gathering during Shabbes because it just can't be tolerated and IDs or no IDs, we will enforce.

**Moderator:** Last two for today. Next is Courtney from NY1.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor, can you hear me?

**Mayor:** Yes, Courtney, how are you doing?

**Question:** I'm good. Hope you're well. Thank you. You too. So I don't know if you saw, but last night we reported on New York 1 about a nursing home in Washington Heights that had close to 100 deaths even though they have only reported 13 deaths to the state. And I understand nursing homes are obviously State territory and under State oversight, but I'm wondering if the City has any responsibility at all when it comes to the deaths at nursing homes and where the City would investigate this particular facility called Isabella Geriatric Facility?

And then I have another question, which is about the homeless issue and Safe Havens. And I understand that you're going to be sending homeless individuals when the train shut down next week to save havens. The question I have is, do you actually have enough capacity at those Safe Havens and aren't those Safe Havens actually congregate dorm-like settings, which could essentially help spread the virus among the homeless population?

**Mayor:** You know, I'm going to give you my view, having been to Safe Havens and seeing them – I don't, I wouldn't say, I'm not going to use the sort of formal definition point here. I – what is exactly congregate versus other types of settings. A Safe Haven is a very small facility where I think certainly in many cases proper social distancing can be practiced. And again, I don't want any romanticization of what it means for someone to be living out on the street or sleeping on the subways, which I think one of the previous questions unfortunately could have been interpreted as – it's very unhealthy, not just COVID, we're talking about everything else in the world, all the other challenges. It's not healthy for people to be living on the street period. If you're in a Safe Haven, you're in a place where you're getting a lot of care and a lot of tension and there's medical care available to you.

But again, they are not they are not – when you say congregate, in my mind it talks about the much bigger facilities. I would not put Safe Havens in that same definition, but I'll have, you know, Commissioner Banks can talk to you to clarify that. In terms of capacity, yes. As we said, we added additional Safe Haven capacity just in the last days and we're going to keep at it. And there are folks who are willing to come in who prefer Safe Havens and prefer certain locations. There's also some folks who are willing to come in from the street who actually are willing to go to one of the traditional shelters if the location is right or it's someplace they know. So Safe Havens are not the only answer, but unquestionably everything we have is better than living out on the street or living in the subways. And we have ample options that we can accommodate people and we will keep adding to them. Courtney, it's not a fixed situation. The whole plan,

everything we said back in the Journey Home plan was based on more and more Safe Havens. We're going to keep doing that.

On the Isabella Geriatric Center. This is horrifying. I've been there – a few years ago I spent time there. I know that facility. I know that a lot of people will work there. I mean, it's absolutely horrifying. This is a staggering toll that we're hearing about now. And I'm shocked. And so look, first of all, the City has for the last, over a month since I believe starting on March 25th, we started delivering a substantial amount of PPEs, and the numbers I have is, for example, 12,000 N95s to that site. So this is to me, it's inestimable loss and it's just impossible to imagine so many people lost in one place. We all have to work together. It is the State's domain, but the City has been trying to provide help in every way we can. I want to provide more help in any way we can. I want to figure out what we can do better, all of us, and we'll certainly work with the State. I think the one thing we now know about the nursing homes is the status quo cannot continue to say the least and something very different has to happen. We'll offer any and all help we can to the State as we try and figure out a new way forward because it's just horrifying what's happened here.

**Moderator:** Last question for today, Matt Chayes from Newsday.

**Question:** Hey, good morning Mayo, how are you?

**Mayor:** Good. Matt, how are you?

**Question:** I'm okay. I'm wondering how specifically, please specifics, not generalities, are you going to stop gatherings beyond the status quo? What specifically are you going to be doing different from the policy that was in place on Tuesday in Williamsburg beyond the policy that was in place in Borough Park yesterday? And when you say that it will be summoned in gatherings, you know, ballpark a thousand, a hundred people, are you planning to issue a hundred summonses, tickets, and arrests? And secondly, can you go over whether there's any environmental impact of all of this PPE?

**Mayor:** I don't have an answer for you on environmental impact. If in a moment I'll turn to our colleagues, both doctors and see if they have an answer on that. Obviously I'm always concerned about any unintended consequences, but right now we're fighting a war and trying to save lives. So that's our first concern. But before I turned to the doctors, Matt, look, I think we couldn't be clearer here and I don't, again, I used a hundred to make an example of what anyone would regard as a large gathering, but if it's 40 people, if it's 20 people, it's the same standard. If people are gathering, they're going to be summonsed. Now, look, if the police started arriving and everyone's scatters and they don't come back, I'm sure a lot of policing experts will consider that a successful mission just to stop the gathering and get everyone to go away immediately. But if people try to continue their gathering, they're going to get summonsed instantly. As many people who are a part of that gathering. If anyone resists the NYPD, they'll get arrested. It's just really, really straight forward. I don't know how to be more than that. So don't gather and you won't have a problem. If someone tries gathering and enforcement starts to arrive, you better go away and not come back at all. But if you linger, you're going to be summoned, every single human being who lingers will be summoned to anyone who resists will be arrested. Every community,

period. Doctors, on the environmental impact of the PPEs. Any insights or else we can look into that and get back later?

**Commissioner Barbot:** Mr. Mayor, I would only say that I'm aware of people littering with discarded PPE and we would ask them not to do that. Right now I would have to get back to the question on the bigger impact – potential environmental impact of PPE.

**Mayor:** Okay. Well, everyone, look, as we close today, just want to offer a real simple concept. A word that we are all familiar with and maybe in some ways conjures up a positive and other ways conjures up a negative. But to me it's a bad word now. And that word is boomerang, and boomerang when it comes to the coronavirus is a dirty word. We cannot allow this disease to reassert itself. We've come a long way in a matter of weeks. You've been the authors of that success, but we take our foot off the gas, this ferocious disease can come back. We've seen it in other places and they certainly regret that they loosened up the wrong way and they paid for it and people lost lives because of it. We're not going to allow a boomerang here. So when we think about what we learned today, looking over those numbers, something to be proud of, the progress we've made, but also being really sober about the distance we still have to cover. And I think we can all be proud that we're moving forward and I think we'll be even prouder if we land this in the coming weeks and months, beat this disease, and never allow that boomerang to happen. I think that's going to be a measure of our success. So, everyone keep fighting and thank you for all you're doing. God bless you all.

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