

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: All right. Good morning, everybody. We had a little bit of technical problems here at City Hall over the last few minutes, but we are back. So, good morning to all. So, you know that thing where people say to you, I've got good news and bad news, which one do you want first? So, I am always, always the kind of person who would rather hear the bad news first and get it out of the way. So, I'm going to first give you the more difficult updates and then we're going to go into some really good news. So, let me talk to you about the reality that we're facing right now in the midst of this massive economic crisis. So many people have lost their jobs. So many people have lost their livelihoods. And, of course, on top of that, a huge negative impact on the City's finances and the City budget and what that means for all of us. For our ability to provide services and support to New Yorkers, which we do every single year, but this year has taken on, to say the least, added meaning. So many people need so much more help. Many more people need healthcare support. Many more people need help with food. There's so many things that have gotten amplified, and that's the focus of our city budget now because we're in a crisis, so it's a crisis budget. The focus is on health. It's on safety. It's on food. It's on shelter. Those four things are the essence of what we are doing.

You know, now we are serving for example, every single day, 1.5 million meals for free to New Yorkers who need them. And we're talking about a lot of people who just weeks ago, had a job and were doing fine and never thought they would need free meals, but now they do. Got over 2 million people in this city now who need food support. That's just one example, but everything's about those four key needs. Health, safety, food shelter. That's what the budget's about. But here's the problem. Since February, the city of New York has lost \$9 billion in revenue and you can see why, the economy is obviously so, so troubled right now. So much what we depend on for people's livelihood, also is where we get our revenue. It's not there now. \$9 billion gone. So, what have we done? In April, we cut two point \$7 billion from city agencies. It wasn't easy. It wasn't fun. We had to do it. \$2.7 billion, then another billion is being cut right now, but that still leaves a short. And the places that we had hoped to get help from, we still haven't gotten the help yet. There's no stimulus from Washington.

We're still working on a borrowing plan with Albany, a lot of conversations going on, working hard there, but we don't have anything yet to tide us over. And we're still another billion dollars short. And what I announced this week, I hate to have to say this, but if we cannot close that billion-dollar gap, then we're talking about laying off up to 22,000 City employees, a staggering number – 22,000 city employees. That's 22,000 families and their livelihood. 22,000 people who serve us, who make the city run. We have not seen City layoffs of that level since the 1970's fiscal crisis. I hope we never see them, but right now we have to fill that budget gap. We're

working with labor. We're looking for alternatives, but if they can't find the resources, those layoffs have to be in on October 1st. So, I've had extensive conversations with the State Legislature, with the leadership, with a number of members, we're working on a plan. We've heard really important feedback from the state legislature. We changed our plan – originally asked for \$7 billion in borrowing. Now, it's \$5 billion over two years, specifically \$3 billion for the coming fiscal year, \$2 billion for the year after that. We hope to borrow none, if we actually got the kind of federal stimulus support we deserve. Maybe that will come, but we need the fallback of borrowing. We will have a monitoring process from the financial control board. That's what we propose to look at the proposed borrowing comment on it before we make decisions, give us feedback, but still respect the City's ability and right to determine its own budget and the needs of our people. And one thing, a lot of the State Senators and State Assembly Members asked about, need to know that will not be a property tax rate increase. And I can tell you there will not be. So, those are the things we've talked about with our colleagues in Albany. I want to thank Speaker Cory Johnson for his statement yesterday, supporting the borrowing vision. We are all united in wanting to find a way to avert those layoffs and keep the city moving forward, and actually make sure we can have a recovery. So, that's the focus right now.

So, that's one thing that's tough. I want to tell you about the other thing I'm really worried about is the problem of evictions. So, the fact is so many people are hurting. So many people just don't have money for rent. Keeping a roof over people's head is crucial right now. Now, the state of New York had an eviction moratorium in place. They've started to relax that. I'm concerned about that. I do want to say that the office of court administration has stepped in and made sure that evictions are going to be handled very carefully because we cannot have, here's the bottom line. Anyone who can't afford to pay the rent, because we're in the middle of a crisis, they lost their job because of the coronavirus. The economy has been shot. They don't have money to pay the rent. Anyone who can't pay the rent should not be evicted, period. Let's be clear, we've got to be honest about the extent of this crisis. So, I think what the state should do is make clear that those who can't pay the rent should be given a grace period, should be given the ability to have a payment plan, should be given a whole year to catch up and pay whatever rent they owe when they finally have a livelihood again, but not until they have a livelihood. You can't ask people to create money they don't have. We need the federal government to step in, because that would be another solution. Give people rental support, help, avoid foreclosures. All of the things that the federal government could do as part of the stimulus to keep people whole. So, look, if you cannot pay the rent, we got to make sure you have a roof over your head. You should not be evicted. If you can pay the rent, of course you should pay the rent, because you know what? The building owners need to keep the buildings up. They need to pay bills too. A lot of them are struggling as well. So, we need the state to act, to give people that ability to make it through this crisis. And I'm going to keep working on that with our colleagues at the state level.

Okay. Those were the challenging pieces today. Let's talk about good news now. Phase three to the restart. We're looking good again. Good indicators this morning. I'll go over them again in a moment. Phase three, we are on track from Monday, July six, and that's exciting. It means more people coming back to work, more businesses coming alive. 50,000 workers is our initial estimate of how many will come back. And these are businesses that a lot of people care about. They are everyday businesses in your neighborhoods that really help you take care of yourself.

Of course, nail salons, spas, so many things that people care about and have missed. Those are coming back, and for restaurants so much a part of who we are as New Yorkers, our culture identity [inaudible] restaurants will come back with indoor dining at 50 percent capacity, and that's going to be on top of the outdoor dining, a great boon to the restaurants. There'll be safety precautions in place, distancing, face coverings, but they'll be able to come back. Now, we have to help businesses come back. We've been doing it in phase one, we've been doing it in phase two. We're going to keep doing it. Here to tell you about it, our small business services commissioner, Commissioner Jonnel Doris.

Commissioner Jonnel Doris, Small Business Services: Thank you, sir. Since reopening I've had the opportunity to be at every business corridor in all five boroughs. And what we see is a sense of optimism, a sense of excitement from our business owners. I was up in Washington Heights just yesterday speaking with barbershops and salons. One particular— salon zoo salon, she told me about 10 years as she's been there and was excited about the opportunity of phase three because only half of her business was operational— at the time. So now she can actually engage with the massage part of our business, the nails part of our business. And we able to provide the services she's been providing that community for some time. And so that's what we're seeing, that's what we're hearing about the businesses who are ready to go, who are excited. Also, as we walk these corridors, a new door lane in Staten Island, you see our posters in the windows, you see the flyers, the educational materials we've distributed. We walk into the stores, we hear from the businesses, thank you for the PPE that you've given to us, we're giving it to our customers, we're giving it to our employees. Look, we are excited about phase three on every other phase to come after that, I think our businesses are ready to do what they've been waiting to do for several months.

So, what are we going to do? We're going to continue to help them, we're going to continue to provide the face coverings that they need. We've already distributed 5 million of those face coverings and we will continue to do so by adding 2.5 million more face coverings to our small businesses. So, that will bring us a total of about 7 million of those phase coverings. We are also going to continue to show that we have the resources available to our small businesses with our marketplace online marketplace. You can get PPE or from our online marketplace, if you need it for the restaurant, the Open Restaurant Program— or just a regular face covering that you may need. We're also going to be able to continue to provide services from our hotline by the way, we've got 17,000 calls to that hotline already, and we were able to help our small businesses. 70 percent of those calls are about reopening and the rest about PPE and financial services that they need.

So, look, we're continuing to help you. If you are a small business owner, our hotline is, you know, is 888-SBS-4NYC. We're here to help you and we look forward to helping every small business as we can. We have 230,000 small businesses in the city, and we want to make sure all of them come back and all of them do well.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you so much, Jonnel. Excellent report and thank you. 17,000 calls, that's a lot of calls and thank you for all that you and your colleagues are doing to help small business. And one of the greatest boons to small business lately has been the open restaurant initiative as of this morning, 5,500 plus applications to open up that outdoor dining, it's been a

great success. We're going to go farther with having outdoor dining on open streets and here to tell you about it, our Department of Transportation, Commissioner Polly Trottenberg.

Commissioner Polly Trottenberg, Department of Transportation: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And you can see from the slides, we're going to be opening up an application process on Monday, and we've already heard interest from a lot of BIDs and community-based organizations to allow restaurants to take an entire block. And it will enable them to have to expand further into the street, they need to do it safely with good setups, and obviously we will want to work with PD and FDNY to ensure emergency vehicles have access, but we think this will – this will give yet another chance for restaurants to get even more outdoor space. And we've already again, heard a lot of interest from a group of partners we do our weekend walks with. We're hoping we'll get that first group up and running before on July 4th and the next group a couple of weeks later.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Commissioner. And then, you know, another big milestone that we are now coming up as today, the last day of school and what a difficult challenging school year it's been, but our kids have come through with flying colors. Look at the beautiful kids there on the slide, you're seeing on your screen. You know, our kids have been asked to do something very, very difficult and stay focused this year, despite this crisis do the online learning. Our educators been amazing, our parents. I want to thank everyone, I want to thank everyone for finding their way through the school year, finding a way to keep educating our kids helping to support our kids to those who are graduating. The graduating seniors' class of 2020, Congratulations to you. This is a triumphant moment, you have fought your way through, you have done some things that no other class have been asked to do before, and you've done it with a lot of perseverance, a lot of strength. We honor you for that, and we're going to have a great celebration of you, the virtual graduation next Tuesday, Tuesday, June 30th at 7:00 PM. I want to thank our colleagues at WPIX for broadcasting it live, and you can see it online NYCclassof2020.com.

Okay, let's go to our daily indicators. First indicator one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19, the threshold is 200 today's report 61. And then number two, daily number of people in health and hospitals ICUs, the threshold is 375 today's report, 312. And finally, percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19 threshold of 15%, and once again, today coming in at 2%, congratulations, New York City, we are holding the line. Let's keep doing it.

Now, a few words in Spanish to conclude.

[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: Hi, all, just a reminder that we have Sheriff Fucito, Transportation Commissioner Trottenberg and Small Business Commissioner Doris – sorry, excuse me. Sheriff Fucito is on the phone, in person we have Transportation Commissioner Trottenberg, and Small Business

Commissioner Doris. And also, on the phone we have Senior Advisor, Dr. Varma. With that, I will start with Marla from WCBS 880.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, you talked about the bad news of the city facing this giant budget deficit and the need for federal stimulus money. But this morning we saw a tweet from the President who is angry that the City will be painting the words Black Lives Matter outside of Trump Tower. Is that a good decision given that you really need the President's help on this stimulus?

Mayor: Marla, the President's been missing an action on the stimulus. I have spoken to him about it multiple times, I have appealed to him publicly, I have appealed to Senator McConnell. The Republicans are not moving. Let's be clear, I spoke to Senator Schumer about this recently, Donald Trump has not said a word in favor of a stimulus that would truly help cities and states. Senator McConnell has not scheduled a vote, let's get real here. They know there's a crisis, it's gotten worse. In fact, the coronavirus is surging around the country, they're doing nothing. They are choosing to do nothing. So, painting Black Lives Matter outside his home is a message to him that Black lives in fact do matter that black people-built New York City, that they never have been compensated for all they did. That all the mistakes, the sins, everything in American history that has afflicted black people have not been accounted for and must be accounted for something he does not understand. So, it is right to take the eyes of the world, the attention of the world right there on Fifth Avenue and focus on Black Lives Matter. I think it has no bearing on the stimulus because he's done absolutely nothing about the stimulus either way.

Do you have a follow-up?

Question: No, I, at this time I don't.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: Next we have Luis from New York [inaudible].

Question: Hey there. Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: I'm doing great Luis. How are you?

Question: I'm pretty good. The Archdiocese of Brooklyn has stated that mass can begin at its churches on June 29th, of course, at limited capacity. And I imagine the Archdiocese of New York, might soon follow suit, considering how you've in some way, participated in a number of faith-based events over the past two weekends, might you be attending a mass sometime in the near future?

Mayor: Luis, thank you for the question. Look, I really want to thank Cardinal Dolan and Bishop DiMarzio and all the religious leaders of this city who made clear to their congregants, how important it was to hold back from services during the worst of this crisis. The religious leaders, the faith leaders of this city have actually been heroes and unsung heroes in too many cases, helping to make some of the toughest decisions, but all about the health and safety of their

congregants and they did the right thing. And I'm glad that they're finally getting a chance to bring people back, but as you said, the right way with capacity. I'll absolutely be going out. As time allows, I look forward to returning to faith services and joining with people, but the important thing is we all have to do it, the safe and smart way.

Question: That's great to hear. My next question is a sort of a sticky one. For phase four, Governor Cuomo stated that houses of worship would be allowed a capacity increased from 25 percent to 33 percent and group gatherings would go up from 25 percent to 50 percent, yet repeatedly – repeatedly one sees the 50 percent capacity guideline over and over again for the sake of social distancing adherence. It's mighty hard for the economy to improve under the constraints of 5 percent% capacity rules. My question is this, does anyone know what lies beyond phase four where that's concerned? I mean, if we're able to get onto the subways, which eventually will be packed once again, then, you know?

Mayor: Yeah. Luis, it's a really good question. So, first of all, it's a big open question what happens after phase four. And I want to emphasize we are not yet to phase three. We have to get there to smart way, which is based on the data. Today the indicators look great, but we still have, you know, quite a while until July 6th, so knock on wood and everyone keep doing the right thing here. But then phase four, you know, that's a whole other ball game. We have to really be careful about the decisions around that. I'm worried about what I see around the country. That's not comforting to see this disease making such a strong surge around the country. So, it's going to be about health and safety first and we're going to be smart and we're going be cautious.

I don't know if I agree with you on the subways. I think there'll be increased ridership steadily. I don't think it's going to go anywhere back to the levels we saw in February for a while. I think eventually it will, but that's probably more when you see more progress on the disease. So, I think it's going to be a day-by-day thing, Luis. I do believe New Yorkers are being smart and careful. This is the number one thing as I've been reading about what's happening around the country; one of the biggest factors the public health folks point to is the level of buy-in by the local population, understanding the crisis, taking it seriously, doing the right thing. New Yorkers have been outstanding and that, that's the thing that keeps me hopeful.

Moderator: Next we have Yoav from The City.

Question: Mr. Mayor when, when Commissioner Shea, disbanded the Anti-crime Unit you went on CNN and you said of that unit that it was “particularly aggressive” and also that it was, “exacerbating some of the tensions between police and community”. So, I'm wondering what led you to form that assessment of the unit? When did you form it and why hadn't you said anything publicly previously about those concerns until after it was disbanded?

Mayor: Yeah, Yoav, it's been an ongoing discussion. Look, I had heard concerns in the community. I also know those officers did a lot to get guns off the streets. It was a balance that needed to be considered at all times, but really the commissioner came to me and said, look, I think that we can do this in a better way. We can fight crime in a more modern way using technology, using precision policing and not have the negative of some of the concerns that have been raised by the community. So, it's something that evolved over time, but I am convinced that

the decision the commissioner made is a very good decision for this city and will help us move forward.

Question: Thank you. I also wanted to ask you about the announcement. I think it was last week that any incidents between police and civilians that, that lead to “substantial injury to a civilian” will be investigated in two weeks. I just wanted to see how formally are you defining substantial? You know, is that a concussion, a broken bone? What are the parameters and is it being applied to some of the injuries of the protesters that would be retroactive? Or is it just going forward from the date of the announcement?

Mayor: Look, obviously it was from the day of the announcement, Yoav, but I want to see a very fast follow-up on any outstanding issues from recent protests. We know a number of officers were suspended or modified and there will be additional disciplinary proceedings. There are still issues being looked at for sure by Internal Affairs Bureau as well as the different outside investigations. But the important point and you saw it on Sunday; I think Sunday was a signature moment that deserves being recognized. An officer did the wrong thing, using the chokehold – another officer intervened made him stop. The Commissioner within hours announced that suspension. That's the way things need to be – fast, clear disciplinary process, clear accountability. That's what we'll do going forward.

Moderator: Next we have Jeff Mays from the New York Times.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor. I had a question about schools; the Comptroller criticized the lack, or what he called the lack of a plan or roadmap for a re-opening of schools. So, I'm wondering if you could touch on this issue again. What are the plans for re-opening schools? Do you think schools are going to be opened in September? And I have a follow up question.

Mayor: Sure, Jeff, I think I've been clear, the Chancellor's been clear; we've put out a lot of written material. We've talked about it here. We want as many kids in their classrooms as possible on September 10th. We still have quite a ways to go – well over two months until then and everything's going to be about health and safety. That is the first consideration. Now looking at our testing numbers, it's really encouraging; looking at how much more testing is available, really encouraging. I think there's a lot of teachers, educators, a lot of parents who want to get their kids back. So, the maximum number of kids who can be in school that is a goal. Some schools can do that much more easily than others because of the number of kids they have. And we have to be flexible, Jeff, and this is the unsatisfying but truthful answer; I can't tell you what's going to happen in two months. I can tell you, plan-A is the maximum number of kids in schools. We're going to also keep a distance learning capacity because some parents won't be ready yet. And if the disease situation gets better, more and more kids in schools, God forbid it gets worse, more and more kids on distance learning. But we are, right now, retrofitting the schools so they will be ready to handle the maximum number of kids in-person September 10th.

Question: And do you know if what – you know, can you talk a little bit more about how you specifically plan to do that? Or, are we talking about staggered schedules, afternoon classes, weekend classes? And, you know, have you had any discussions with the teacher's union? Is this

going to cost the City more money if you, kind of, go to some of these more inventive schedules? You know, where are you at in terms of determining any of that?

Mayor: Many, many conversations with the teacher's union and with the union represents administrators – constant dialogue. We're looking at all the options, because we're dealing with a huge amount of unknown and something that's over two months away. But I think the simplest way to think about it is that most educators want to come back, most parents want their kids to come back. We're planning on that assumption. Of course, we have to have options, not only different levels of remote learning, depending on the disease, but we have to have options where there are schools. For example, a school that was overcrowded back in February, by definition, cannot put six feet between kids. So, they can only handle a certain amount of their kids at a given time. So, we're working out schedules to work for those schools. Some other schools are not overcrowded, they can do it more easily. We're taking gym space, auditorium space, whatever it takes to use as classroom space. Look, we're still in a crisis, we're in a crisis footing. So, we're going to use every available space, set up for the maximum number of kids, be ready for staggering, where it's needed. I don't think there's so much talk about weekend, but we're going to look at, of course, anything and everything as we get closer. We'll come back to you on the budget ramifications, can't speak to that yet. That's still being looked at. But what we do know is, it's constant dialogue with the folks involved and serving parents to hear what they want. So, employees and parents, and we're going to get there. We're going to get there. We're going to make it work. We'll adjust according to health dynamics. And one day, there's going to be a vaccine, and I think that's the day when you're going to see things go back a hundred percent to every kid in the classroom as normal.

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

Question: Hey, good morning, everyone.

Mayor: Good morning. How are you doing?

Question: I'm well, thank you. I wanted to follow up and ask you, I know that, you know, given the fiscal – dire situation, the City is facing the conversation is centered largely around cuts. But I wonder if you could return to the topic of SYP, particularly as reopening has commenced and it seems to be on track to, to be successful. You've got nonprofit organizations and businesses, private businesses, already having to reimagine and meet the challenge of all that this entails. Wouldn't it be the moment to look at SYP now and make a commitment to doing the same for the remainder of the summer?

Mayor: Yeah. Debralee, there's been very productive conversations on Summer Youth Employment with the Council. It's a central, central issue in the budget discussions. Obviously, the health situation has improved greatly over recent weeks, and that's opening up the door to different options. So, I feel confident that we're going to figure out a way to do something substantial on SYP for this summer, but we'll have all those details literally in a matter of days, as we conclude the budget process.

Question: And a separate issue. You have Commissioner Shea recently speaking in a private setting about the criminal justice system imploding, and then in a related matter – or perhaps unrelated, but the commander at 46th Precinct in the Bronx has indicated that he's going to be stepping away from his post because he's not received guidance on how in fact to help quell crime now that the anti-crime unit has been disbanded. And there seems to be murmurs, as we've heard before that, you know, the police aren't happy [inaudible] receiving the kind of guidance. I wonder if you could speak to the concerns that they are feeling unmoored, that's not necessarily coming from the police unions, but that there is a lack of guidance. And that, in fact, they're not feeling the confidence to be able to handle the strictures of their jobs.

Mayor: Yeah. Listen, Debralee, we're in a moment where there's a lot of challenges. For a long time, the NYPD had a lot of its members out sick. They've come back. We're absolutely dealing with a criminal justice system that isn't fully functioning right now. The courts aren't fully up and running, obviously, at all. I mean, there is legitimate reason for frustration on all that, but, at the same time, the NYPD has a tremendous history of making adjustments, and that's what CompStat is all about. That's what precision policing is all about. No one understands that better than Dermot Shea. So, adjustments are being made as we speak to deal with the circumstance. We don't always get to choose our circumstances, so we're dealing with it. The choice on the anti-crime unit was the right one. But, as the Commissioner said, it's going to be the same officers. Their abilities are going to be used in different ways with more precision policing, more technology, more targeting to achieve new outcomes. And that's something that was announced just days ago. So, I would say to any and all commanders, of course, this is something that's to be worked through with them down to local level. I think anyone who has committed to the work of public safety will understand that this work can and will be done. There'll be a transition time, but it will be worked through.

Moderator: Next we have Brigid from WNYC.

Question: Hey, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey, Brigid. How are you doing?

Question: Doing okay. I want to follow up just a little bit more on Jeff's question about the school. I really appreciated, kind of, the additional details that you're providing in terms of how you're thinking about it. But I'm wondering, given that Connecticut and New Jersey are already announced seeing their plans, do you have a specific target date for when the City will make its school plans totally clear?

Mayor: Brigid, look, we are – totally respect to other states and everything they're doing, everyone's doing their best. We have the most complex dynamic of any school system in the country, by far. We have a massive number of overcrowded buildings in normal times, we have 1.1 million kids, we were the epicenter, and, in many ways, remain the epicenter of this crisis because we're still feeling the effects. Our decision is the toughest one, and it's going to have to come with a certain amount of options in place that we activate as we get closer – conversations with the unions, as I said, constant surveying of parents, constantly getting feedback. But plan-A is as clear as a bell, every school determine the maximum numbers of kids you can have with

social distancing and the right precautions, that's the number of kids we want to get in the classroom. I know a certain number of parents are not going to be ready to come back to work yet. I mean, it's, we need to send our kids back to school yet, or they're not going back to work and they might want their kids at home. The fact is, we'll be ready for the maximum number of kids, but, Brigid, as we're seeing from around the country, if the health conditions change, we may need to go to a different approach. So, the answer, when do we have an exact plan? It's when we feel we have enough information to lock one down. But we have a plan-A, that's what every school has been instructed – figure out what's the maximum number of kids you can get in this school safely and all the protocols – the constant testing, cleanliness regime, you know, the hand washing stations, all of that is being laid in to be ready for the maximum number of kids.

Moderator: Brigid, do you have a follow-up?

Question: Yeah. My second question is, and I know you touched on this a little bit yesterday, but lots of enthusiasm about moving into phase three, but when we see what's happening in places like Texas, I'm just wondering how you feel? Do you feel anxiety? And are you concerned about people getting lax about wearing that and social distancing? And, you know, how do you maintain the right messaging to New Yorkers? Because, certainly, when I look out my window, I see people getting a lot more lax and it certainly raises my own anxiety. So, given the decisions that need to be made for the City, how do you balance that?

Mayor: It's a great question, Brigid. I still go to the glasses more than half full. The vast majority of New Yorkers have been doing the right thing. I, of course, see a certain amount of laxness, but I see much more a devotion to sticking with the rules. I think in workplaces, we've seen a very high level of compliance. I think people are sober. They've been through a lot. Unlike – look, we went through much more than any place else in the country. I think we're scarred by the experience. I think people were woken up to the dangers of this disease. I think it's affected our behavior very deeply. I think a lot of the places that are having these horrible resurgences, they reopened very quickly, people really didn't necessarily understand or feel the full extent of the danger, and now, tragically, they're paying for it. We're the exact opposite, Brigid. We walked through hell and back. Vast majority of New Yorkers got the message. I'm going to keep telling it to them. We're going to keep giving them free face coverings. We're going to keep showing them what distancing looks like. So, I feel good that we can keep things disciplined and the numbers keep proving it. If that ever changes, I'm going to tell people we're in danger of having to stop and pause our restart and even go backwards. I'll be honest with people about it, and I think they're listening. But, no, overall, I think New Yorkers get that they have to participate if they want to keep things moving forward.

Moderator: Last two for today. Next we have Seth from City Journal.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. I'm concerned about the uptick in shootings and violence around the City, and I know you are too. This seems like it's like a direct result maybe of the police pulling back from being, you know, like disbanding the anti-crime unit – someone was killed at Madison Square Park last night. I wonder if you could address this new state of shootings and killings. How exactly are you going to take this on if police are pulling back from proactive anti-crime work?

Mayor: No, Seth, they are not in the least. Look, if you have watched the work of Commissioner Shea and the work of the NYPD, no one's pulling back from anything. They're approaching it in a different way. We need to have a deep, strong relationship between police and community to fight crime. That is the entire concept of neighborhood policing. We have got to get that relationship to be bonded so that there's common cause, there's a flow of information that helps officers to stop crimes. There's a lot of things we need to do that will be the long-run solution to violence. The anti-crime work is being done in a different way. And I think a way that will be more effective, ultimately, because it's going to be a more modern approach. We have a problem that's profound with the court system not functioning. We have issues that I've raised before, and I'm going to talk to the DA's about that we need gun prosecutions to happen consistently. We have the problem of the parole system and individuals coming out of State prisons, coming back to their communities without proper support. We got a lot of structural problems that are all hitting simultaneously and are hurting the dynamics, but we take it all seriously. We're going to fight our way back. I don't have a question about it. We got to make sure that we – with the tools we have in the city – that we keep that pace strong and then get the help we need from the other parts of government, and of course, get out of this crisis. This crisis is holding us back. So, it goes right back to all the health questions. Until we can get the court system up and running fully, that's going to stand in the way of fighting back crime in some of the ways we need to go ahead.

Question: Yeah. My other question concerns the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Commission, looking at the statues and so forth. I mean, it was only, I think two years ago that you and paneled like a whole commission of experts and art historians and regular historians to look at all the statues in the city and they pretty much said they were all kosher except for the J. Marion Sims statue which was removed. So, I mean, did they not do a good job? I mean, why do we revisit this issue so quickly?

Mayor: Yeah, they did a fine job, but Seth, that's not the purpose of the commission. The commission will look at that issue. That's not the central purpose, the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Commission, the central purpose is to identify an official manner where it – clear institutional racism, systematic racism exists in New York City, to literally delineate as a matter of official record where we have structural racism and inequality, and then to specifically indicate the changes that we need to make here and now in our policies, in our approach as a government to address that racism. It is not about statues. Yes, they'll look at that question too, but that's, you know, the symbolic issues matter, much more profound is the policies that actually affect every-day people's lives, and unfortunately in many ways we're based on racist assumptions, that must be torn down. So that's the real work of that commission.

Moderator: Last question for today, we have Gersh from Streetsblog.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor, everyone on the call. I appreciate you taking the call.

Mayor: Hey Gersh.

Question: It's actually a pretty basic one. I want a little more information about the open restaurants, because what Commissioner Trottenberg said was great, but not very clear. So, the first question is just can you give me more information? I'm not sure why this is starting on July 4th Weekend rather than this weekend, and I'm not sure why the applications have to go through bids and community-based organizations, because as you know, bids only cover like three percent of the city. So that's the basic question and I will have a follow-up.

Mayor: Go ahead, Commissioner.

Commissioner Trottenberg: Yeah, happy to answer. I think Gersh, what I said is we'll try get some up and running before July 4th, if we can. And the reason we want to work through bids or community-based organizations, if you have a block that has 20 restaurants on it, we just thought it's not going to work for 20 different restaurants to all be applying separately. We need to have some cohesion within a given block, a restaurant area, and it could be a different type of organization, but it's just, I think we'll get overwhelmed if those groups of restaurants don't come together, agree on how they want to set up, hours, handle sanitation, security, et cetera. So we will try and do this as expeditiously as possible, but it's a little more complicated than, you know, our initial program which is just your piece of the sidewalk or curb.

Mayor: Go ahead, Gersh.

Question: And, and the follow-up would be okay, so that's – I get that. How many restaurants do you think, since you got about 5,500 now doing - the lower hanging fruit for lack of a better term – how many do you think will actually be participating once you open up? I guess it looks like you're going to open up to 40 streets by July 17th.

Commissioner Trottenberg: Right. I think, Gersh, the first group we're looking at is a group you're probably familiar with a lot of our weekend walks partners, a lot of the sort of major bids and merchant associations and some of the big restaurant districts. I think a lot of those will get up and running quickly. And then I think we're going to have to see how many other applications come in. I'll confess, obviously the open restaurants program is producing maybe more applications even than we had anticipated, and I – we'll see how popular the sort of open street restaurant concept proves.

Mayor: I think it's going to be – my editorial view is it's going to be very popular and I think it's going to be great. And I want to give credit to both these Commissioners, Commissioner Trottenberg, Commissioner Doris and their teams. They did something amazing with those open restaurant applications. They made it fast. They made it easy. It's working and I know we're going to do something great with the open streets as well and make it a great amenity for the people of the city and bring back a lot of jobs in the process.

Look, I'll conclude with a simple point today. Good questions, important questions today about where we're going, what the health situation is, what it means for us. We're making a lot of progress on the health front because of all of you. We got to keep doing it. But even as we make that progress, unfortunately, the challenge is affecting millions of New Yorkers, the loss of jobs, the loss of livelihood, the economic pain. That's not going anywhere anytime soon. So as we

decide the city budget for the next year, and we're going to decide all these issues in the next few days, the focus is going to be on your health, your safety, making sure you have food on your table, making sure you have a roof over your head. It's a crisis moment. This city is going to be there for our people in this crisis moment. We're always going to find a way through because we're New Yorkers. We're going to make sure that the basics are there for every New Yorker. We're not going to let anyone be left out because we have to, as a team, as one New York City, fight our way through to a better day. Thank you, everybody.

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