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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS, COMMISSIONER YDANIS RODRIGUEZ
ANNOUNCE EXPANDED PUBLIC SAFETY EFFORTS**

Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez, Department of Transportation: Good morning, everyone. Hope everyone has enjoyed this beautiful day, right? We are here standing with our leader, someone that everyone knows. He's committed to getting done, and that's why not only he has been having conversations with so many mayors across the nation where he also shared with them what we are doing here in New York City, but also learning from the city. The mayor is working so hard to be sure that we address traffic violence. We are here today to make an exciting traffic safety announcement and to celebrate the fantastic redesign that you see here on 8th Avenue in Manhattan.

DOT is working every day to end traffic violence, following Mayor Adams's vision to make New York City safer for everyone. Thank you all for joining us today. It is my great pleasure to welcome our leader, the mayor of New York City, Eric Adams.

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you. Thank you so much, commissioner. The commissioner came into office not only from the City Council as the committee of transportation chair — of his vision around open streets, his vision around bike lanes, his vision around redesigns of

intersections. It was the right pick and the right time for someone that fully understood the impact of traffic crashes. It's hard to believe when I think about how far we have come.

Back when I was a state senator, teaming up with some of the advocates, it was unheard of when we were advocating to decrease our speeding limit here in the city. Many people thought it was impossible, but we forged ahead, and I want to thank those early advocates who really understood how important it was to rethink how we use our streets. Our streets are different from today. It's not only a car centered environment. We have everything from bicyclists, walkers, our senior population, those who are living with disabilities. How we use these streets are really going to determine how we're defined as a city.

Traffic safety is public safety. There's no consolation when you lose a loved one due to a traffic fatality that we feel as though we have accomplished it. Thank you. You love, you love. This is great about New York.

So it's a real opportunity to keep forging ahead with ways of redesigning our streets. And that's what we did. Today a promise made, a promise kept. Earlier this year, Commissioner Rodriguez and his team and I announced that we will be fixing and making safety improvements at 1,000 intersections — the most dangerous intersections across our city. It was something we knew that was important and we wanted to accomplish, and we are proud to announce that we met our goals and are exceeding them.

We have completed upgrades at over 1,200 intersections, and this is a major victory for New Yorkers to save lives. And I want to thank everyone that's involved, particularly want to really thank Christine Berthet and Tom Harris from Times Square Alliance without whose initial vision and partnership this transformation project will never have occurred. Thank you very much for that.

We know if our streets aren't safe, our city cannot be considered a safe city and upgrading our intersections and making them safer is how we save lives. We want to save lives and ensure that our city is a safe place to walk and enjoy this amazing space and amazing city. And we're not done yet. There's so much more to do as we continue to send a clear message that we have a zero tolerance for traffic crashes. We're expanding our goal, we're meeting a new mark, we're raising a bar against ourselves. We are making sure that... Boy, you got to love New York, man.

We're making sure that we meet 1,400 intersections by the end of this year. So we are going to push ourselves forward. We are the city that never sleeps. I was out here last night and just watching thousands of people walking in the city, so traffic safety can never sleep if we are a city that never sleeps. In fact, we can't even take a nap. Crashes at intersections account for... Hey, listen to this number, because this is so important. This was what the commissioner and I looked at and really resonated with us. Crashes at intersections account for 50 percent of all fatalities and 70 percent of all injuries.

If we zero in on these dangerous intersections, we could have a real impact. Also, they also include 55 percent of pedestrian issues that we are facing and 79 percent of pedestrian injuries. So, often times we focus on the actual death, but so many people are injured, so many people are traumatized, and that is why we want to have a holistic approach to this issue.

This intersection right here, 46th Street and 8th Avenue is among some of the busiest in Midtown. This is the Theater District, Restaurant Row. I spend so much time walking these streets speaking to tourists. We want tourists here. And just as a side note, any tourists that's here that's listened to this, we only ask one thing of you, spend money, spend money, spend a lot of money. What's up brother?

We made changes here this year. Wider pedestrian space, safer crosswalks and shorter crossings, and a better protected bike lane as you see here. The vast majority of the people on 8th Avenue are on either two feet or two wheels, more and more people are biking, more and more people are walking, more and more people are getting their steps in, and we want to ensure their safety as we move forward.

But let's be clear. Here in New York City we have and will continue to have a zero tolerance for traffic violence and all violence. These upgrades and the intersections that we are upgrading are going to reduce the risk of traffic violence on our streets. These are real projects with real results. And we are not just stopping here. We are tackling traffic violence head on and continuing to ensure that we do the things that are important to make this happen.

It was a real victory in Albany. We got to 24/7, 24 hours a day, seven-day-a-week of cameras, traffic cameras, speed cameras. That was crucial. The results show speed cameras save lives, and it was a huge victory. We want to thank, again, the commissioner and his team. We are putting our money where the problem is. We have invested nearly \$1 billion to fund additional protected bike lanes, faster and reliable public transportation, and improved pedestrian infrastructure.

New York City must be safe for pedestrians, for cyclists, for motorists, for everyone that uses our system, as well as our mass transit system. And this is how we're going to do so, this is how we're going to continue to protect New Yorkers. This is possible, and we're going to continue to have our North Star as being a zero tolerance for traffic crashes. Again, a thank you, commissioner, you and your team that's here and all the advocates. I know we're in the district of just a great council person, and I don't know if you have him on the speaking order, but I want to make sure that before we conclude that we get Councilman Erik Bottcher to say a few words as well. (Applause)

Commissioner Rodriguez: Come on, let's give another round of applause for Mayor Eric Adams. (Applause.)

Mr. Mayor, there's two tourists here from London just waiting for you to finish. They wanted to hear what are we doing in New York City to improve safety. So thank you not only for passing by standing and hear the good work that we are doing here at DOT.

So you heard the most important things from the mayor, going to be just adding a few more things. We're here today as the mayor says, to announce that we have achieved in the city in our commitment to improve 1,000 intersections citywide. It is not easy. 8.6 million New Yorkers, 8.6 million different opinions, but we know that when it comes to achieving a goal, we work together, and that's why we are celebrating together with the advocate that we overpassed and we got the number, no it's not 1,000, but we went above 1,200.

We know that there is a lot more work to be done. This is just the beginning of this administration's commitment to driving down traffic deaths. DOT has redesigned 313 intersections, either with turn, common treatments that slow turning drivers, or through complete redesign as part of our street improvement project. One of the shining samples of this work is right here on 8th Avenue. We have this year reclaimed about half of these streets for pedestrians and cyclists.

As you will see on the mayor (inaudible), reimagining the use of public space. We have this year reclaimed again this area. We have dramatically expanded sidewalk space while reducing what was once a wide avenue to just two travel lanes. This project not only makes our streets safer, but

they create more welcoming and vibrance in the street. And in a city always concerned with noise, the streets is now even quieter.

Like Mayor Adams, I want to specifically thank Christine Berthet and (inaudible) and Tom Harris of Times Square Alliance for their leadership in partnership achieving this incredible feat and project. But we have done more than that. We have also improved nearly 500 more intersections with signal upgrades. A great job that advocates have been asking for many years and we've been able to do it.

This includes the installation of new traffic signals, the additional leading pedestrian intervals, which give pedestrians and cyclists a head start to cross the street. And the installation of new left turn signal treatment to create dedicated time for left turns at intersections.

This year... Yes, thank you to all of you. This year we have installed a stop sign at more than 340 intersections citywide. That's a record. This is the highest number of all-way stop sign installations in a single year. We have also installed more raised crosswalks than ever before, working jointly with the Department of Design Construction we are on pace to install 40 raised crosswalks in 2022. That's seven times the number we installed last year. A big change.

And finally, we are well on our way to daylight 100 intersections with new bike covers by the end of the year. This great initiative not only improves safety for all, but it provides dedicated space for convenient bike storage. We have completed 32 daylighting so far, and we will have many more installed as we near the end of our year. This work is saving lives, but we are not ready to celebrate.

We had a difficult year with overall traffic fatalities. This is what this administration inherited. But a bright spot has been that we have had among the fewest pedestrian fatalities this year in record history. Again, one loss is too many for this administration, but when we segregate the numbers of pedestrians and cyclists, their number (inaudible) lowers one to the lowest year. The number goes higher because drivers are speeding, especially on the highway.

We are doing everything we can to address reckless driving through commitments like this and other major efforts like the launch of 24/7 speed cameras this summer. Yes, we don't want a driver to get one ticket. And that's why most of them, more than 70 percent, when they get a

second ticket, they don't get a third one. We want to change the culture, we want to change the way on how they drive. So we are tackling traffic violence from all angles. Any loss of life on our streets is unacceptable and we are excited to build on these momentos going forward.

(Speaks in Spanish.)

I'd like to thank all DOT dedicated staff who all have in some way contributed to making this intersection safer in New York this year. Mr. Mayor, thank you for allowing me to put together the best leadership team that any agency can have. Having Margaret Forgione, my first day I pray, Paul Ochoa, Julie Bero, and having the great Ryan Lynch being my chief of staff, they're the ones that together with Eric Beaton and the whole planning group, they are doing all the work. So let's give them a big round of applause for the great job that they're doing. (Applause)

So now we will hear from, first of all, I would like to acknowledge Danny Harris, executive director of Transportation Alternatives, Tom Harris, the president of the Times Square Alliance. And now of course Erik Bottcher, who we work together in his previous role and now as a council member. And now let's hear from Christine Berthet, who has been a great leader when it comes to transportation.

Christine Berthet, Clinton Hell's Kitchen Chelsea Coalition for Pedestrian Safety: So CHEKPEDS, our organization for pedestrian safety, we've been working for with my co-chair Martin Treat, who is in a wheelchair. We've been working for 15 years to try to get more safety at intersections and wider pedestrian walking. This took this mayor and Commissioner Rodriguez to get it done, to get stuff done. So this is very, very impressive. This is an enormous amount of space. And what you don't know is at six o'clock at night or at five o'clock, this is covered with an enormous volume of pedestrians, which are all going to the bus terminal, and you can't move here.

So this is not luxury. This is a necessity, and it has been a necessity for a long time. And we're really, really delighted. We just want to give accolades to, and it's also very useful for our friends on wheelchairs, because this is all flat. You can go from end to end, and it is very comfortable to be on that surface. And finally, they have fantastic staff and the pedestrian unit has done a fantastic job and I want to give them an accolade. Thank you so much.

Commissioner Rodriguez: Thank you. Thank you. Now let's hear from the local council member, Councilmember Erik Bottcher.

City Council Member Erik Bottcher: Thank you very much. I really want to congratulate Mayor Adams and Commissioner Rodriguez. Being mayor is a tough, tough job. Mayor of New York City. Us New Yorkers, we're a tough bunch. We are not slow to talk about the things that we don't like, but we're sort of hesitant to give credit when good things happen. But this is a huge, huge accomplishment that should be celebrated. 1,200 intersections redesigned for pedestrians since this mayor took office in January.

I really want to thank the mayor and Commissioner Rodriguez for this great achievement. And the people here locally who've been helping to make progress on this issue, we got Kathleen and Martin Treat, Christine Berthet, I hear about these community boards around the city that are fighting pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure. But here in New York, in our district rather, it's the opposite. With Community Board 4, they're always pushing for more and more street safety. So we're really, really lucky.

I've been focused as a council member, just like the mayor has, like a laser on making New York a better place to live, work, and visit. We should be honing in on that as government on the basics, making New York a better place to be. And people aren't going to want to be here if the streets are dangerous, if the intersections are dangerous, if we're in four-lane, if each avenue is a four-lane highway. So look up and down 8th Avenue, we got room for pedestrians, cyclists, and cars. It's a much more pleasant corridor. Let's do this all over the city. Thank you so much, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Adams: Thank you.

Commissioner Rodriguez: Thank you. I want to acknowledge, also, the other members of DOT that have been doing a lot of great job on this place, on this project and many others. Chris (inaudible), Dan Wagner, Sarah (inaudible), Jennifer Harris, Hernandez (inaudible). That's getting a bit of applause. Great job, guys.

And Family for Safe Streets. As you know, they are the one who are leading this work. They are the ones that they have lost a loved one. So when anyone has any question about why are you

doing this pedestrian, why doing this open street, why are you making all those changes? For me, it's about going to hear the story of those members of the Family for Safe Street that they have lost a loved one, and you understand and you will change the way of how you think the use of our street. So with that...

Audience: Thank you.

(Laughter)

Mayor Adams: Going to bring you to all my press conferences.

Question: Commissioner Rodriguez had said that he sees a car free future for New York City. Is that something you agree with?

Mayor: I'm sorry? You're in New York, got to say that a little louder.

Question: Commissioner Rodriguez said that he sees a car free future for New York City. Is that something you agree with?

Mayor Adams: Yes. I love that concept and there's a way to do it. Number one, we have to have a safe, reliable, affordable public transportation system. Buses, trains, and so much new technology and method of movement that we're going to be rolling out. So yes, I think that you are going to see an evolution of how these cities operate. To clean our environment, to make sure it's safer, I believe there are more ways to do so, and I think long term, will it be in my time in office? I doubt that, but clearly you're going to see a more reliable transportation infrastructure, and you're going to really minimize the amount of vehicles that are used on our streets. I think that's where we're going. And when you look at other cities across the globe, they're leaning in that direction as well. Okay, thank you.

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