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RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES 2015 WAS OFFICIALLY THE SAFEST YEAR EVER ON NEW YORK CITY STREETS

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Lizi, I have to tell you, I think for all of us who have children it is so painful to hear your story recounted again. And as you said, the loss of your son just destroyed your whole family, and left you all distraught. And as the father of a young man – just a little younger than your son was – I can only imagine the hole it left; the pain it left. But what’s amazing Lizi, is even with that pain you decided to fight back; and you decided that somehow we could properly honor [inaudible] with changes that will save other young men and women. And that is a nobility on your part that few people could muster through the pain that you did. And you believed, no matter what, there needs to be a bike lane on Queens Boulevard. And today, there’s a bike lane on Queens Boulevard because of you, Lizi.

Thank you.

[Applause]

Some of you are outside with us – we just looked at the wonderful work that our Department of Transportation has done; just a piece of it we saw out here on Queens Boulevard. And when we talked about Vision Zero, starting in 2014, one of the things we said in my team was we were not going to allow any – excuse me – any street in this city – we were not going to allow any street in this city to be called the Boulevard of Death anymore. That the notion that somehow that had been tolerated for years was absolutely unacceptable to us, and it had to be changed. It had to become a boulevard of life. And you can now see it taking shape day by day. Grand Boulevard that actually is safe for drivers, for pedestrians, and for cyclists alike. This is our mission. Go outside this school and – it’s so important that the changes were made right outside this school so children could be protected. You see the new protected bike lanes that truly give our bicyclists security.

You see a speed camera, you see widened crosswalks. And an exit ramp that drivers used to come off of very quickly right to where children were crossing the street; an exit ramp that actually couldn’t have been designed better, unfortunately, to create danger for our children. And now that is closed off because of the good work of the Department of Transportation. So, these are all fundamental changes that are being made to make this the boulevard of life – \$100 million dollars being spent to overall Queens Boulevard. And this one of the absolutely defining elements of our Vision Zero plan: take this most dangerous stretch of our city, and make it safe again.

Two years ago we said we would do everything in our power to prevent traffic fatalities, to keep families whole, to make sure that there’s not another mother like Lizi talking about her pain and her loss. So far, this plan is working. There’s a lot more to do, no doubt, but this plan is working. 2014 was the safest year for pedestrians on the streets of this city since 1910. That’s when the records were first kept. And we said we had to do better. So, now, I can tell you about 2015 – 2015 was the safest year for everyone on our streets – for cyclists, for motorists, and for pedestrians since 1910. So, we’ve gone farther just from one year to the next and success in this case has many mothers and fathers; and Lizi gets special credit, as do Families for Safe Streets, that have

been absolutely extraordinary in demanding change and organizing for change and making their voices heard both here and in Albany.

I want to thank the leaders of this administration who care so deeply – this is a personal mission for them. They get up in the morning thinking about how they can achieve this mission and the people of New York City should be very proud of each and every one of them – our Transportation Commissioner, Polly Trottenberg; our Taxi and Limousine Commissioner, Meera Joshi; our new Citywide Administrative Services Commissioner, Lisette Camilo; and of course, the man of the NYPD who has really led the charge and has done an extraordinary job, Chief of Transportation for the NYPD Tom Chan. This has been a team that has really shown how much can be done and how quickly it can be done – and I thank them for that.

I also want to thank our host today at this wonderful school, Dr. Ghassan Elcheikhali for allowing us to be here in this school and joining with us in the effort to keep the children here safe. Now, I want to go over just a little bit of the history here to show what's happened.

2014, 2015 represent the first two-year decline in traffic fatalities in over a decade. So, it's the first time in over a decade we've put two years together where traffic fatalities went down – a 22 percent decrease in traffic fatalities since 2013. Here's a way to think about it – 66 more people alive today because these policies changed drivers behavior, because it created – these policies created real consequences for reckless drivers because the physical changes were made, the speed limit was changed – all the pieces that contributed to 66 more New Yorkers being alive today. Pedestrian fatalities down 27 percent: that's 50 more children, 50 more parents, grandparents – everyday New Yorkers who don't have to tell a story like Lizzy's. This happened as our city has continued to grow. Our population continues to grow. There's more and more development. We've had a record number of tourists, so there's plenty of activity, but even in the busiest city in the country we're showing that these fundamental changes can take hold, and can affect everyday life for all of us.

It takes every tool we have: it takes engineering, it takes enforcement, it takes education, it takes a full court press to make this change. Vision Zero is the right approach. In 2015 alone we completed 80 traffic safety improvement projects throughout the five boroughs. And everyone at the Department of Transportation knows they have to move at break-neck speed because it's about saving lives. In fact, they completed 67 percent more than the average annual impact of these projects before Vision Zero. Just think about that for a moment, in a typical year before versus what they did in 2015 – 67 percent more as done to keep people safe.

We issued 39,751 failures to yield summonses. This to me is one of the things I'm proudest of, and I want to thank Chief [inaudible]. A 268 percent increase in failure to yield summonses – because if these summonses aren't being given it indicates to drivers that they don't have to pay attention to pedestrians, that the law doesn't mean anything. But the NYPD has done a great act of public education every time an officer pulls over a driver, every time a ticket – a summons – is given. It's a reminder that this change is real, and we mean business. We finished installing 140 speed cameras in school zones across the city in time for the school year to start in September. As I said, we're very proud of what's happened, but it's just the beginning because our goal is zero – zero deaths. And so, we're going to commit more resources, more focus, more energy to the fight to achieve Vision Zero. In the preliminary budget that I'll announce later this week, for fiscal year 2017, we're investing \$115 million in capital dollars to accelerate the transformation of our streets, and to improve the safety of our streets – \$115 million dollars to keep our people safe.

This will allow us to build out safe permanent pedestrian spaces, bike paths, and plazas in areas that need them like the – Tillary Street in downtown Brooklyn and Mott Avenue in Far Rockaway.

It's also going to help us to do something so important – to build new safe routes to schools. Here's an example right here – what it means to really protect our kids, it means installing things like speed bumps and high-visibility cross walks – all the tools needed to make sure our kids are safe.

In 2016, we'll continue safety upgrades of the most troublesome intersections and we're going to be doing something new, we're going to be improving left-turn configurations. This is a – an area where there's really been a problem over the years. Left-turns account for nearly 30 percent of crashes involving pedestrians. So, we're starting with a new design at a hundred intersections across the city and if it works well we think, we're going to start expanding from there. This is one of the best new ways to protect our pedestrians – and we'll expand the use of speed cameras.

There's no question that speed cameras work. Speed cameras cause people to stop speeding. We know it. The speed camera right by this school has contributed to a nearly 40 percent decrease in violations since the start of this school year. So, not only has it had an impact – it has had an impact very quickly and protects people right away but by law, the use of the speed cameras is restricted to day time hours when school is in session and they can only be placed on streets immediately surrounding a school. So, we're going to push to pass state legislation that will ease these restrictions that will allow cameras to operate overnight and on other streets so we can really maximize the impact of these cameras and protect lives.

Again, our vision is zero – a phrase people weren't talking about in this city two years ago, now, it's something that everyone knows. People value it, people understand. And the work is not over until no New Yorker loses their life, no New Yorkers loses a loved one walking, or cycling, or driving on our streets.

Just a couple words in Spanish.

[Mayor speaks in Spanish]

Mayor: Okay. I want to take questions on this topic, and then I want to give you an update on some of the weather issues we're facing over the coming days and take any questions you have on that. We're going to keep it to those two topics today. Yes?

Question: This question is for Commissioner Trottenberg. Commissioner, the Congressman referenced some of these measures making for more inconvenience for drivers. Have you quantified how much more inconvenient it is? And second, for the mayor, given your troubled relationships in Albany, how do you expect to pass this speed camera legislation?

Commissioner Polly Trottenberg, Department of Transportation: Well, I'll take the first question. And I think one of the things we've tried very, very hard to do in all our safety projects is very careful analysis; looking at traffic conditions and trying to do designs we keep the traffic flowing. Certainly, Queens Boulevard has been a big change. And a lot of people have embraced it. I think a lot of people are still adjusting to some of the changes. And one of the things we say in this project – it's still in its operational phase. So we're still working with the community board and the elected officials. To tweak some of the timing, we found a place where we're actually going to be adding another set of stop lights. So, you know, we continue with these projects to monitor them and make sure that we balance all the needs and that they work well for motorists, for cyclists, and for pedestrians.

Question: How much more [inaudible] going to be?

Commissioner Trottenberg: I'm not sure I would say that I find that they have been inconvenient for drivers. I think it's been a change, but in most of the projects we've looked at we find the traffic flows as well or better when the project's done and people adjust to all the changes. And again, these projects can be [inaudible]. If we find we're having a hotspot in terms of traffic we'll go back and look at signal timing and other things we can do.

Mayor: I think if the – you know – I drove for many, many years. I think of the concept as slow down and safe a life. I think comparing that convenience – I don't mean your question isn't a fair one – but I think people have

to think right about this. Maybe a little less convenient in their minds, but if they're saving a human life I think it has to clearly be the priority; we have to do things a new way. A point about how many more cars there are – I don't – that's an area where we really haven't quantified something that we've all experienced – a huge growth in the number of cars over the last couple of decades in this city, and that means more and more lives have been in danger. So, you know what? It is about safety, it's not about convenience anyway. To your second question, I don't agree with your characterization, but I can say it this way – we're talking about saving people's lives. We're talking about the exact reason why we're here in government – public safety first. I think that cuts across all partisan considerations. I think it's something that a lot of people in Albany of good will agree on, and we certainly have seen that, because a lot of the pieces we needed were supported in Albany. And I think the families, again, have been, you know, real voices of conscience, and they've pushed everyone in Albany to think about the full ramifications of these actions. I think that has a lot more to do with what's going to happen here than any relationships.

Yes?

Question: [inaudible] for Vision Zero [inaudible] that was something that the community – all the people on the community board were in favor of. What's an example of something where the community hasn't been [inaudible]. Do you think – I guess this is for the commissioner, sorry – do you think that the DOT has been doing a good enough job of meeting with the community and all those people [inaudible] cause the one thing that we reporters always hear is that they're getting shoved down our throats – the bike lanes – and do you think that's something that DOT can improve in the future – so everyone is aware of what the changes being made?

Commissioner Trottenberg: Yeah, I'll give a couple of answers. What I'm proud to say, as the mayor mentioned, our record for last year – DOT was able to complete 80 street-safety improvement projects; put in 12.4 lanes of protected bike lanes. And I think in those cases we worked very, very well with the local communities. And it's – look, it can be a very, very reiterative process where we spend a lot of time briefing community boards, working with local elected officials, working with community groups. We certainly get – we get criticism of both sides – that we're not moving fast enough and that we're moving too fast, but I think if you look at our record the past couple of years, I'm very proud of the work we've done. We've put in more projects than the department had seen in previous years, and I think the statistics show that we're having a real impact.

Mayor: Just a quick follow-up on that – I was a council member for eight years who worked with the community boards in my neighborhoods in Brooklyn. I think it's really important to listen to the concerns of the community boards because I think what we've found over the years was sometimes there are unintended consequences in the original design, and things that could be done better. But let's be very clear, we're going to make the changes. We're going to protect people's lives. We're going to put in the bike lanes, which are both good for bicyclists, but also have a traffic-calming effect. There's no question we're doing it. What I think is different than some of what we saw in the past is, we're trying to do a reality check with folks who know the local community best to make sure we're doing it the right way – the right, exact configuration, location. There's no contradiction between listening to community voices and getting it right, and, at the same time, being very resolute that we're going to keep putting in these bike lanes.

Yes?

Question: You talked about the importance of bike lanes, but the [inaudible] show that bike lane installation actually declined from FY '14 to FY '15. Can you talk about sort of how you think about the pace of installation and whether it should be sped up or slowed down?

Mayor: Again, I'm resolute that we're going to keep expanding regularly, but Polly can speak to the specifics.

Commissioner Trottenberg: I mean, I think our – I guess it's our calendar year installation for 2015 was 12.4 miles of protected bike lanes, and we've now gone well over the thousands-mile bike-lane network for the whole city. We've expanded Citi Bike into Queens, and further into Brooklyn and Manhattan, so I think we are doing pretty amazing work on the bike front and we're going to continue with that aggressive pace.

Question: Mayor, why do you think, as Council Member Rodriguez put it, the hit-and-run problem remains at epidemic levels? What needs to be done to change that?

Mayor: The answer is standing right there in a very handsome uniform.

[Laughter]

And, chief, come on over. Look, the enforcement that NYPD is doing now – again, extraordinary changes – the enforcement on speeding, especially the enforcement on failure to yield. There's checkpoints – there's all sorts of things NYPD uses to get the point across, and that's only going to keep growing. So, I think we have, again, the problem of a lot more cars than we've ever had. We have a history of drivers thinking that, you know, their needs were the only thing that mattered, and getting to their next appointment, you know, two minutes quicker was more important than protecting human life. Let's face it, that's what was going on. People had tons of steel at their disposal, and they thought it was more important to serve their own agenda than look out for the safety of the people around them. So, the answer to that is all of the above – the lower speed limits, the speed cameras with real consequences, the great work of the NYPD, which you're going to be seeing more and more of, creating both the positive education – that people start to change behavior because they understand that they could inadvertently take a life, but also consequences. Let's face it, we're human beings. Human beings change when they experience real consequences, and that's where the NYPD comes in. Chief, would you like to speak to this topic?

Chief of Transportation Thomas Chan, NYPD: Sure – and we certainly thank the mayor for his support in signing the bill – I believe it was 603 that increased the penalties for people who are leaving the scene of accidents. A majority, of course, of those leaving the scenes are property damage only. But nevertheless, the individual who collides with another vehicle, leaves the scene of an accident – the collision – we want to come into contact with that person, arrest them, if necessary, and, again, increase the penalties where they would not leave. So, certainly, this new legislation that's been signed by the mayor will help us. And we certainly will target other offenders, whether it be [inaudible] drivers, or people with suspended licenses. So, again, it's a collective effort. We're going to be targeting for hazardous violations. And together with all the agencies, the engineering changes, the education – we will make a difference out there.

Mayor: I also want to note, you know, over the last two years I've gotten to really understand the inner workings of the NYPD city-wide, and I can tell you one thing – now, with the use of technology, with the great use of video – both our own video and that which we can get from other sources – obviously with the expansion of the police force that's going to happen over the course of this year – 2,000 more officers in terms of patrol strength – anyone who is a driver and does a hit-and-run, we will catch them. It's as simple as that. And when you look at the evidence – anyone who thinks they're going to get away is kidding themselves. So, I understand sometimes people panic, and maybe in their guilt and their shame they act irrationally, but that's not my point. My point – and I would ask all of you to help get this point out – if you leave the scene, we will find you, we will catch you, there will be consequences, and people need to understand that.

Anna?

Question: You're using a lot of statistics to prove that Vision Zero has been working in the last two years, but the number of traffic fatalities has nearly doubled on Staten Island. Is Vision Zero not working there?

Mayor: Vision Zero is working, but we've got a lot more to do on Staten Island, there's no question about it. The basics that we're putting in place – more enforcement, speed limit changes, speed camera changes, the physical changes to our streets – they will work. But I'm not satisfied with what's happen in Staten Island. We need a lot more change and we need it quickly. I'd like both the chief and commissioner to speak to that.

Commissioner Trottenberg: Yeah, of course, and this is something I've spoken about before. We saw declines in fatalities in all the other boroughs except for Staten Island. And, as a result, I know that I've – Chief Chan and I have been there personally and talked about the ways we're going to redouble our efforts there. We're looking – particularly we talked about Hylan Boulevard, and doing more pedestrian fencing, more signal timing, looking at making safer pedestrian crossings, and potentially some bigger capital projects. We're also going to be doing some big pedestrian improvements on Bay Street in the coming year, working with the local community there. And we're going to continue our education and enforcement issues. And I'll turn it over to –

Chief Chan: We've had an opportunity to work very closely with the borough commander, Chief Delatorre, and also the four precincts that are on Staten Island. The officers there who continue to do speed enforcement – last year they increased their enforcement in terms of speed and hazardous violations. We expect them to do so this year also. Highways units will also be conducting additional enforcement. So, again, working collectively with the other city agencies – most recently there was a request given from Staten Island to get additional VMS signs to warn the public about the deer problem there. So, again, we provided additional VMS signs there to warn people where there are crossings, and things of that nature, to reduce the number of collisions. So, again, we're having an effect out there, but we're redoubling our efforts out there on Staten Island to make sure that we have less fatalities, and we'd certainly like to eliminate all of them on Staten Island.

Mayor: And just let me add – you're certainly going to see more enforcement on Staten Island, because we know where some of the problems are, and you're going to see plenty of police presence to address those problems.

Go ahead.

Question: Do you think that you guys could get all the – the reliance on cars is contributing to Staten Island's, like – I guess what's happening there versus the other boroughs?

Mayor: I think the central issue with Vision Zero is we have to change behavior. So, certainly, if a lot of people in cars – that's the beginning of the situation, but that's not the essence of it. The essence of it is we have to change behavior. We have to teach people that they have to use their cars properly, and if someone's drunk, someone else has to drive – all the basics. But, again, that's one part – the positive education – and that's a very big part – consequences. There's going to be real, serious, consistent consequences, and that will help people to change behavior – that's all over the city. And why is this working as quickly and as well as it is? Because there's plenty of stick to go with the carrot.

Yes?

Question: For Commissioner Trottenberg – this pilot program on left-hand turns from what I understand could eliminate some parking spaces. Do you have an estimate of how many spaces might be eliminated as a result? And overall – the Vision Zero program – how many parking spaces have been eliminated total?

Commissioner Trottenberg: Well, we're going to look at several different types of treatments that we can do to improve visibility and slow drivers as they're making left turns. The standard version of that is called daylighting where, yes, you take out potentially a parking space at the corner, but I can't give you a fixed number because it can vary from intersection to intersection. About how many spaces you can fit and what you can do to reconfigure – we're looking at some other treatments where we would potentially have raised median areas that would go in through the intersection. That might mean you would – there would be a little less of a

removal of parking. I can't give you a fixed number on how many parking spaces we have "removed," because there's no fixed number on a street – it depends on the size of vehicles. But I think – I think we have tried – and, again, speaking of the community process – to work closely with communities and look at those trade-offs. And in places where we think it's made sense for safety purposes, we've taken out parking, but we've looked where we can in communities to do our best to locate other sources of parking. So, I think on balance, you know, we've tried to be judicious in that regard. But certainly when it comes to important safety projects, we have been able to take out parking where we needed to.

Mayor: So, I spent many, many hours circling around my block and other blocks in my neighborhood looking for a parking space, so I am very sensitive to my fellow New Yorkers who are concerned about parking. We're obviously going to do everything we can to minimize any impact on parking. But, again, same exact mantra – saving lives comes first. So, if we, in the process of saving more lives – as we said, about 30 percent of the crashes come from these left-turn situations – the process of saving lives means we lose some parking spaces, that's a good choice. But we will work very, very carefully to minimize the impact on parking.

Question: This is related to Vision Zero – but the horse carriage announcement that you made –

Mayor: I want to see how you bring these together, Grace. I'm ready.

[Laughter]

Question: Well, one of the things you spoke about was that by taking the carriages off the streets you would potentially be reducing congestion –

Mayor: Yes.

Question: – it could be at times dangerous to have them on the streets. By having pedicabs – not allowing them to do runs in Central Park, I imagine that that would put a lot more pedicabs on the streets, maybe in Midtown. I'm wondering if that's something – if there's congestion concerns or any safety concerns maybe related to –

Mayor: We'll – I don't know if I agree with your assumption. We'll certainly look at each issue in turn. But again, from my point of view, because I spent plenty of time driving behind those carriages, and I don't think anyone who's driven in Midtown hasn't had that experience – there's no question, again, horses don't belong on the streets of the biggest city in the country in the middle of Midtown traffic. There were a lot of crashes involving horses and horse carriages, and we have a congestion problem we have to deal with more broadly in this city, particularly in Midtown. This will be one of the ways that we help to provide some relief there. But we'll talk about the pedicab issues separately as that issue's looked at.

Okay, anything else on this? Yes?

Question: Oh, not on this, sorry.

Mayor: Okay. We're not – we're doing this and we're doing weather. So, on this – okay, go ahead.

Question: You talked about investing more funding in capital projects. Will you also be increasing investing – investments in DOT's operational project budget, which allows for quicker and often less complicated street redesigns [inaudible]?

Mayor: So, the budget presentation for the preliminary budget is Thursday. For the executive budget – up ahead a few months. So, I don't want to preempt that. Look, again, it's very clear we've made massive investments in Vision Zero, and we don't get to do every single thing we want to each year because of

budgetary constraints, but it's one of our top priorities. So, a lot of resources have gone into DOT. That will continue to be true, but details will come out with the budget.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: I'm not saying there's any reason that data isn't important as well. I'm saying we've all experienced it. We know the truth. It's quite clear. And, again, there's more than one part to that issue, I just am not going to for a moment back away from the notion that horses do not belong on the streets of the biggest city in the country. It just doesn't make any sense. And I've said that for – my belief is that it's inhumane to the horses but it also is self-evident. It slows down the flow of traffic, and there have been a number of crashes. They just don't belong in the flow of traffic in the middle of a major city. Now, they'll be segmented away from that, which I think is better for everyone. So, you know, I'm happy to look at any data on top of it, but some things are just self-evident – to me, this one's self-evident.

Question: Are you going to be altering the number of police horses on the streets at all?

Mayor: Police horses are about safety. Vision Zero is about safety. So, police horses are used very specifically – very much according to a setup criteria that fit only very specific situation. And I have a lot of faith that NYPD is using police horses where they think necessary for the safety of all. I think that's obviously a very different matter than something that's done for profit.

Yes?

Question: [inaudible] city working with the MTA on bus routes, especially [inaudible] multiple bus routes on priority corridors [inaudible]

Mayor: So, in addition to her day job, Polly Trottenberg is on the board of the MTA, so I'd like for her to speak to that.

Commissioner Trottenberg: I will. We – the city has done a lot of work with MTA, looking at this issue. We actually did a big analysis, analyzing five years of data on where we saw fatalities and serious injuries related to MTA buses. And one thing we discovered is that we didn't really find hotspots. We found that it actually tracked with what we saw in general throughout the city. And if you look at our borough pedestrian safety action plans, you can see the key corridors. Those are the corridors where we're seeing crashes among all types of vehicles – buses, cars, etcetera – and those are the corridors where we're focusing our engineering efforts, our enforcement efforts, employment of speed cameras. We do also work with the MTA closely on bus routing, and we have worked with them sometimes to change the way buses are moving, to ban turns, to reroute them where we see a safety issue. But it's also something we're tackling in our city-wide efforts to make the streets safer.

Question: [inaudible]

Commissioner Trottenberg: You're right. We just select bus service up and running as of this summer, and obviously we're hearing some good feedback on it, but we're still in the analysis phase and looking at how the routing is working, and making sure that the operations are safe, and obviously taking input. If you have concerns – happy to hear them

Mayor: Okay, last call on this topic, and then we'll just do a couple of minutes on weather. Go ahead.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: Look, the vision we put out is preceding – you know, as we’ve talked about over the course of a decade. We want to move as quickly as humanely possible – that’s the bottom line. You know, this is – we keep throwing more energy, more resources, more focus into this – we’ll keep doing that. And we’re going to try things to see what works too, because there are some new approaches, such as what the commissioner was just talking about with left-hand turns – we’re going to find out what works and keep escalating this effort as we go along. But the plan we originally laid out in the beginning of 2014 was over ten years, starting from that point.

Last call on this topic – yes?

Question: Can Commissioner Trottenberg explain why the – why Queens Boulevard is no longer the Boulevard of Death? [inaudible] figures, if possible?

Commissioner Trottenberg: Actually, I do have figures – I’m going to pull out a chart. And I’m sure a lot of the journalists would love to see it. It’s hard to see from here – these are the fatality numbers along Queens Boulevard. Last year was the first time in long recorded history that we have zero fatalities on Queens Boulevard. And you can see – look, there has been a trend from, I think, what was the height of the notoriety of the street. Certainly, in 2013 we had a year of high fatalities. Since then, as you know, we’ve put a lot of work into this street. We’re very proud of the work we’ve done – the redesign, the enforcement, the speed limit changes, the cameras. And I think that, and the great visibility we’ve gotten with elected officials in the community – we’re hoping we’ve really – we’ve changed the profile of this street. That was our goal.

Question: Is there a new Boulevard of Death?

Mayor: There are places that are challenges, but we’re not accepting the notion – let me jump in.

Commissioner Trottenberg: Please do.

Mayor: We’re not accepting the notion – again, something was called the Boulevard of Death for several decades, and wasn’t fundamentally changed. That’s a stain on our city and we don’t accept that notion any longer. If we find a specific place with these kinds of problems, we’re going to go at it with everything we have – the physical changes, the enforcement by the NYPD, whatever it takes.

Alright, let me give you a little update on the weather – two points. First of all, our Code Blue effort continues to be in effect. We have – obviously, it’s bitterly cold and we have strong gusty winds. So Code Blue – in effect. Teams from several city agencies are fanned out across the city, bringing individuals off the streets who may be in danger and are homeless, and getting them to shelter. Last night, 103 individuals came in because of our outreach efforts. 101 of those were voluntary and two were involuntary. We also separately have a number for folks who are coming into our public hospitals, our HHC hospitals. That number’s being updated. What I have right now is 173 individuals who walked in seeking shelter and medical care. So – very rigorous outreach effort – it will clearly continue tonight and any night where it’s bitterly cold.

I want to remind my fellow New Yorkers, if you see something in desperate danger, if you see someone who you fear is in danger, call 9-1-1, please, right away, and report it. If you see someone who’s homeless on the street and you think they need outreach – if it’s not an immediate matter of life and death, but you think they need to be reached and provided an opportunity to get to shelter and get the help they need, call 3-1-1, and we will send people out right away.

We also know – a second related topic – that there is a storm developing. It’s still early, but the information we have now is it will be a significant winter storm – obviously, the first real storm we will have had this winter. And, at this point, it looks like it will hit Friday mid-day or evening and continue into Saturday evening. That’s preliminary – we’re going to keep updating you on this. We’re obviously preparing. We don’t have a firm estimate on the amount of snowfall. We’ve heard varying amounts, but it will certainly be significant, so we’re

preparing a major operation with the Department of Sanitation to keep out streets clear, and we'll be providing updates so New Yorkers can prepare.

I want to remind everyone over the course of this week with the very cold weather, please remember the basics: bundle up, lots of layers, don't leave skin exposed when you're outside, don't stay outside longer than you have to, wear particularly something on your head because that's where most of our heat is lost. And anyone who in their apartment loses heat or hot water should call their property manager immediately, and if they're not getting an immediate response – should call 3-1-1 so the city can make sure there is a response.

Finally, I want to remind people, sometimes when it's this cold, there is a temptation by some people to use their stove to heat their house. That is dangerous. People should not do that. You shouldn't use kerosene or a propane space heater. You shouldn't use charcoal or a gas grill. There are so many things that actually create real danger. So, if you need heat, and it's not being provided in your building, call your property manager or call 3-1-1 so we can get you heat. But don't use these other approaches that actually could endanger you and your family.

Just want to see if there's any questions on the weather situation – yes?

Question: Now, I know the city does not oversee the MTA –

Mayor: Correct.

[Laughter]

Question: – the question is for you – and I know Councilman Van Bramer – it's a big issue for him. Last year, the 7 train just didn't run during the snow storm. It was extremely detrimental to Queens, and there wasn't really many backup [inaudible]. As a city – what can the city do and what would you like to plan to create alternatives for people who still have to go to work, still have to go to school [inaudible]?

Mayor: Yeah, no, it's a very fair question. First of all, so far what we know about this storm – it's not the kind of level that would knock out train service. Second, you know, all of us, city and state alike – and thank you for noting that the state runs the MTA – but city and state alike were preparing for a storm last year that was projected to be one of the biggest we would have had in recent memory. That turned out not to be true. To the east of us it was true, in Boston it was true, but it wasn't true for us. I think we all learned a lesson from that – that we want to be, you know, very careful about any timing of a decision, because obviously the last thing we want to see happen is the closing down of the trains, unless it's absolutely necessary. So, I think we're going to be all communicating and being very careful in that decision, but I don't think that's something that's going to come up in terms of this weekend. You want to add?

Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer: Sure. Well, I think one of the first things I would do is make the city and the mayor have full control over the MTA, and I think, in all seriousness, the MTA would then be more accountable to the people of the city of New York. And you pointed out the issue with the 7 train last year – it wasn't the storm itself that caused the outage of the 7 train. It was weather, combined with other issues, and the MTA as usual not doing right by the people of this community and the 7 train. So, I think we all just have to remain as vigilant as possible, and continue to push for one day for the city to actually have the majority of the seats on the board of the MTA, and then the MTA will truly be accountable to the people of the city of New York.

Question: Jumping off that – last year, the governor and the MTA, I think, gave you 20 minutes notice when subways were shut down overnight. Are you – did you talk to them about maybe giving you guys a little more notice?

Mayor: Yeah, there was a lot of conversation at that point and since that we need to do things better next time.

Question: The two people that were taken involuntarily off the street, do you have any details on the circumstances surrounding –

Mayor: No, we'll get back to you.

Last call – anything on weather – going once, going twice.

Thank you, everyone.

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