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

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everybody. Happy Tuesday. Happy Election Day, New York City. This is it. We've been waiting a long time for this moment, and this is the day that determines the city's future in so many ways. Obviously, there's a general election in November, but this primary looks particularly decisive. And here is an opportunity to build a recovery for all of us. We've been working now over this last year-and-a-half to overcome this crisis and move the city forward. Now, the people decide on the future direction and how to build that recovery out and make it permanent for this city. So, everyone, you've got to get in the game. We need to see the people in this city come out and express their views and rank their votes. Polls were open today at 6:00 AM. They will close at 9:00 PM. A reminder, if you are in line by 9:00 PM – if you're in line, the line is allowed to vote no matter how far it stretches. It's allowed – everyone is allowed to come in and vote until every vote is cast.

Now, remember five votes per office. You get to rank your top five. It makes a huge difference. Do not just rank one person and go home. Unless you literally can't stand anyone else, do not do that. Do your best to choose the five in order of your preference, it makes a real impact. Go to [voting.nyc](http://voting.nyc) for more information about ranked choice voting and the whole process. If you need to find your poll site, go to [findmypollsite.vote.nyc](http://findmypollsite.vote.nyc). We all know it may take a while to get formal final results. I think we'll know something in the next 24 hours, but we won't know for sure probably for weeks. But this is – of course the primary – general election is not until November. We have time. The most important thing is, get your vote in while it counts. We need every New Yorker to go out and vote today.

Now, a recovery for all of us, of course, depends on vaccination. We talk about it every day, vaccination effort going strong. We've now past 9 million. It's unbelievable. Officially, as of today, 9,012,233 vaccinations. We're going to keep going, going, going. This is how we build an amazing summer for this city and a recovery for all of us. And so, the incentives, the referral bonus, the grassroots efforts to bring in community organizations, they are all working, they're helping us deepen the vaccination drive. So, vaccination drive moving full speed ahead as a crucial part of our recovery.

Now, also full steam ahead, the Staten Island ferry – how's that for a segue? The Staten Island Ferry. So, proud to announce that something we started in this administration, overnight Staten Island Ferry service, every 30 minutes, to serve the needs of Staten Islanders in a 24/7 city, we will be bringing that back. We had to with so many cut back during COVID. Well, it's time to bring it back fully. Starting August 16th, Staten Island ferry trips, every 30 minutes, overnight, and even more throughout the day. The Staten Island Ferry is a lifeline for Staten Islanders. It is

the way that people connect to so many things. It is crucial that the service be there for Staten Islanders. Also happens to be one of the great attractions of the city, an amazing part of New York City life, an incredible tourist attraction. There's so many things to say about the Staten Island Ferry, so many reasons to love it. You've heard some of mine, but you're going to hear from an even more enthusiastic voice who has probably reminded me that we need to do more for the Staten Island Ferry about a thousand times in the last eight years. My pleasure to introduce the Borough President of Staten Island Jimmy Oddo.

[...]

**Mayor:** Thank you, Borough President. Borough President Jimmy Oddo, I always have been impressed that you manage to tell your tale with such colorful elements, including, for some reasons, starting with the number-one prospect of Major League Baseball. I am very, very impressed how you linked that just seamlessly to the topic of 24/7 services.

**Staten Island Borough President Jimmy Oddo:** Mayor, obviously, I'm coming to you today from the cavernous room here at borough hall and I was worried about the quality of the sound. I was going to wear this headset so that I could ensure the sound quality was pristine, so I could work in my inevitable and well-warranted criticism of your City Planning. But I had bad flashbacks of Mr. Gazoo, and it looked like I should be landing planes at Teterboro. But I hope the sound is good. And I want emphasize, yet again, while I'm appreciative of everything that you have done, City Planning is a disaster.

**Mayor:** I also admired the fact that you always express your views on City Planning, regardless of the subject matter. That's quite consistent, but Borough President –

**Borough President Oddo:** Is it fair to bring the conversation full circle and say that City Planning is sort of the Boston Red Sox pitching equivalent of City agencies?

**Mayor:** It's getting weirder and weirder your attempts at analogy, but I do admire it. Borough President Oddo, thank you for constantly advocating for the people of Staten Island. And, you know what, your voice gets heard every time. And I'm really glad we're going to go back to 24/7 service for the ferry because that – you're right, that's part of what our recovery for all of us looks like. So, you did your job. Thank you, my friend. Thank you.

And everyone – so, Staten Island Ferry, back 24/7. What's better to do on a summer day than take the Staten Island ferry and see those beautiful views. Well, we are well into now the Summer of New York City. It is happening, amazing, wonderful things happening out in the streets of our city. A sense of celebration, a sense of hope and possibility. Those are the things that are coming back in New York City. But what we do not want to come back in New York City is illegal fireworks. And so, we know, illegal fireworks are not just – it's not just are illegal, they're dangerous, they're disruptive, they're noisy, they really bother people on so many levels. So, we launched last year the joint Illegal Fireworks Task Force, made some big efforts last year, some real successes. But, this year, we started earlier with more intensity, with more effort, and we've had some big busts in the last few days, some real great efforts by our law enforcement

colleagues going out there and seizing illegal fireworks – it's making a big difference. I want you to hear about it from our own, Sheriff Joe Fucito.

**New York City Sheriff Joseph Fucito:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor. So, since June 9th, the fireworks task force, which is comprised of NYPD, FDNY, and the Sheriff's office has made 31 arrests for a variety of offenses related to illegal fireworks. This also includes the charges of reckless endangerment, parole violation, and vehicle and traffic law offenses. You can't traffic fireworks and have unregistered vehicles, it all starts adding up. So, some of the highlights to this, on June 12th, NYPD did an undercover operation where they were able to seize 600 fireworks from one garage that was a trafficking location. Fire marshals on June 12th also seized a large load of fireworks, about \$8,400 worth, and made three arrests. And then, over the last four days, the Sheriff and FDNY have arrested over 10 people and seized approximately \$15,000 worth of fireworks, all part of large trafficking operations. If you want to look at the progress of the task force, you can go to Twitter. It's a #NYCfireworkstaskforce, and you can see our operation on a daily basis. And with that, I'll push it back to the Mayor, but enjoy legal fireworks, that's really what we're trying to encourage you to do this year.

**Mayor:** Amen. And, Sheriff, thank you to you and your team. You guys have done a great job and all of your colleague agencies have done a great job, getting these illegal fireworks, stopping them. I know you're going to keep doing it nonstop in the weeks ahead and it's making everyone safer. Thank you very, very much. And, as the Sheriff said, there's legal fireworks if you want to see them. Of course, July 4th, the Macy's display is the biggest in America. It's coming back full strength. That's going to be amazing. And then, right after that, Coney Island on the boardwalk. Plenty of great opportunities to see the most beautiful fireworks in the world, let's do it the legal way and the smart way and the safe way.

Okay, let's go to indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19 – today's report is 80 patients. Confirmed positivity of 14.29 percent. Hospitalization rate per 100,000, that has continued to go down, that's fantastic – 0.32. Number two, new report cases on a seven-day average – today's report, 175 cases. That's great. And number three, percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19 on a seven-day rolling average – today's report 0.53 percent. As we said yesterday, the lowest we've had since we started testing for COVID. So, that's great, great news. I'm going to say again, though, if you have not yet gotten vaccinated, no time better to do it than now. Incredible incentives, go take advantage of them and make us all safer in the process. Let me say a few words in Spanish about Election Day and how important it is for everyone to rank their votes.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, turn to our colleagues in the media. And please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

**Moderator:** Good morning and happy Election Day. We will now begin our Q-and-A. As a reminder, we are joined by Sheriff Joe Fucito, Department of Transportation Commissioner Hank Gutman, Health Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi, and Dr. Mitch Katz, President and CEO

of New York City Health + Hospitals. Our first question for today goes to Kristin from the Staten Island Advance.

**Mayor:** Kristin, can you hear us? Kristin? She's on mute. Kristin, you may be on mute.

**Question:** Can you hear me?

**Mayor:** There we go. The mute button is – you know, Kristin, you are the vast majority of people as we've found during endless zooms and conference calls, who struggle with the mute button. I am one of them as well. How are you?

**Question:** I'm good today. How are you?

**Mayor:** Good. What's on your mind?

**Question:** Obviously, great news about the Staten Island Ferry being restored overnight every 30 minutes. Were additional staff needed to resume this service? I kind of remember DOT saying at one point that, you know, it would need to hire additional staff to get the trips going again?

**Mayor:** I'll turn to Commissioner Hank Gutman, but I'll just say this. We have had at different press conferences, conversation about the fact that some of the positions they've been trying to hire for, they've had some challenges with. But the bottom line is we're going to do whatever it takes to get this back to 24/7. The Borough President's right. This is one of the ways that we make sure the recovery reaches Staten Island fully. People need this. So, we're going to make it happen one way or another. But let me, on the details, turn to Commissioner Hank Gutman.

**Commissioner Hank Gutman, Department of Transportation:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And you're right. The issue has always been – can you hear me?

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Hank.

**Commissioner Gutman:** Thanks. The issue has always been staffing. We need appropriate staffing in order to run the boat safely. We lost people during the pandemic. And as the Mayor pointed out, some of those folks require specialized skills and Coast Guard certification. But I'm pleased to report that our ferry group has worked very hard to address this issue. We have found some additional people. We've got others in the pipeline and it's on that basis that we're delighted today to be able to say that we will be restoring full service every half hour overnight by August 16th. And I would just add while we're doing that, we're also bringing on the newest class of boats. So, not only are we restoring the service on Staten Island, but we're going to be introducing some new, better boats. So, we're all in favor of making the Staten Island Ferry as great as it can be. And our team's hard at work on that.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much. Go ahead, Kristin.

**Question:** And I wanted to ask a question about the City approaching Richmond University Medical Center about a public hospital deal? You know, as of right now, they've, you know,

they've said that they're declining the offer. They're willing to negotiate. If the City isn't able to reach a deal with the hospital, would the City still provide resources if, and as necessary to RUMC going forward?

**Mayor:** Kristin, let me start and I'll turn to the Borough President who's been deeply involved in these discussions as well. What we've said very clearly to everyone at RUMC over months now is the way we can provide an extraordinary level of resources is to create an affiliation with Health + Hospitals. There are a variety of reasons, legal and otherwise, why that is the methodology that works and unleashes a huge amount of capital funding. Also allows RUMC to get tremendous benefits, a better malpractice insurance rate, medical record system that's already built out that they wouldn't have to pay for, so many pieces that count for tens of millions of dollars each. So, this would protect RUMC for the future, give it permanence, give it stability, and a lot more support to serve the people of Staten Island. That's what we've been trying to achieve. And that can only be achieved by creating this kind of affiliation. But again, the Borough President's been working on this issue for years and years, long before this idea. Let me have him speak to it as well.

**Borough President Oddo:** Yeah, thank you. Well, Mr. Mayor, you're such a so-and-so, offering half a billion dollars to Staten Island and complicating our lives. I want to thank you for these last few months and putting this idea forward. And the fight for equity from HHC, now H + H has been decades old. And the offer that you have put on the table is unprecedented. I want to thank Dr. Katz, as quick as I am to criticize City planning, I am as quick to compliment partners in government and Dr. Katz has been wonderful. I want to thank Lydon Sleeper from your team in allowing this conversation to happen. And I have my notes here from our working dinner at Gracie Mansion with the leadership at RUMC. And you called it an act of justice. And I believe you, and I believe your heart was in the right place. A half of a billion dollars in help for RUMC or half a billion dollars in general, coming from City government to Staten Island is unprecedented. It doesn't happen. I can't speak with certainty if RUMC's decision to reject the offer is the right one or wrong one. I can speak with certainty it's a whole lot of money. I have tremendous amount of respect for Kate Rooney, who's the chair of the board. All of us involved in this want to do the right thing. I'm going to hold out hope that there's still a pathway to get RUMC some help from the City so that we have two hospital systems on Staten Island that are viable and sustainable. And it's been an amazing few months. Mr. Mayor, again, I appreciate your team for starting this. Let's see where this goes before the budget is adopted.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Borough President. I'm going to say one more thing about it and I think it'd be important to hear from Dr. Katz, who has been deeply involved in this discussions and cares deeply about making sure there's quality health care for New Yorkers all over the five boroughs. And I would remind you H + H started on our watch, the Vanderbilt Clinic as an important effort of Staten Island. But what we really wanted to do was make a bigger impact. And protect RUMC's future. And what became clear to me last year during the pandemic, where I had a lot more working opportunity to you know, see what was happening inside RUMC. The needs were profound during the pandemic. I spent time talking to the Borough President and the CEO Dan Messina, and it became clear to me just how tenuous the future of RUMC was. And as Health + Hospitals has gotten stronger and stronger, how there could be an opportunity to work together for the good of Staten Islanders and to ensure that RUMC is there for the future. Which is not

certain now. So, that's what we endeavored to do. We're going to keep these conversations going. I believe a good idea is a good idea. And it's worth pursuing further. But Dr. Katz, I'd just like you to speak to why this has been something you focused on and the ways you think it would help RUMC and the people of Staten Island?

**President and CEO Mitchell Katz, NYC Health + Hospitals:** Thank you so much, Mr. Mayor, Mr. Borough President. It's been a pleasure to work with you on this. I think this is a great opportunity for RUMC, by being part of the Health + Hospitals umbrella. Immediately, they would get \$20 million more a year in Medicaid billing from the federal government, simply because the rate of payment to public hospitals is appropriately higher than to private hospitals. We, as you mentioned, Mr. Mayor, we get better rates on malpractice insurance. I could extend my ethics electronic health record system to them, which would save them \$50 million. And more importantly, provide a higher level of care to everybody who goes to RUMC. We've also been able to work out what I think would be a really unique arrangement affiliation, where the nonprofit RUMC would be able to continue to run the hospital, to employ the workers. So, really we're not talking about renaming the hospital. We're not talking about changing the employment. It will continue to be RUMC. But now it will have the support of a whole system. Very few hospitals anymore can make it alone. We saw that profoundly during the pandemic where systems were able to help each other, but hospitals that were by themselves were very precarious. And so, I can update you and say that even since the Borough President has spoken, the board has contacted me and said they want to have more discussions. So, the hopes of the Borough President seemed to be fulfilled. And we look forward to working out an arrangement that would be very positive for RUMC and all of Staten Island. Thank you, sir.

**Mayor:** Thank you so much, Dr. Katz.

**Borough President Oddo:** Mayor, can I say one other thing?

**Mayor:** Yes. I just wanted to say, Borough President. I was handed a note. It's a note I could have been handed anytime in the last 20 years of knowing you. It says Jimmy Oddo wants to say one more thing. It's – the floor is yours.

**Borough President Oddo:** So let's – so since you opened the door, let's go down memory lane a bit. When you and I were in the City Council together, I was driving to City Hall for budget hearings. And I heard a commercial on the radio for HHC, then HHC. And it was about the advantages, the health advantages to moms for breastfeeding. And it talked about services that were provided and it listed four of the five boroughs. And of course, it didn't list Staten Island because there is no acute care facility on Staten Island. So, when I got to Borough Hall and Mitch Katz is, one of his predecessors, Dr. Aviles was testifying. I asked him a question, which took my colleagues, our colleagues by surprise. I said Dr. Aviles, do you support breastfeeding? And he looked at me as if I had lost my mind. And I went into a rant about the inequities of HHC in Staten Island. And they had a gavel the committee out of order because I was out of order. I use that example, because just one of many about this long-standing inequity and unfairness that we have felt on Staten Island. I have another problem. This is again -- Staten Island Advance article, it is from October 2009, and it says Island hospitals to get \$10 million loan from the City. It was during your predecessor's term. And we thought it was this great victory. We got a loan

for SIU H and lone RUMC for \$10 million. And in this corner of the article, every elected official on Staten Island is quoted about how glorious this was to get a loan of \$10 million. P.S. neither hospital was able to draw down a penny of that loan. I use this example again, to put into context, the scope and the breadth of the offer that has been put on the table. When you at that Gracie Mansion working dinner said \$197 million in debt RUMC, the City will absorb it. I almost fell out of my chair. My job was to make sure that we aggressively vetted this. And I think that's what we've done. But the RUMC board and RUMC leadership has to come to peace with a deal that they could live with. I really hold out some hope that there is a path because this is an unprecedented amount of money. And again, I'm just grateful to you and Dr. Katz and your team for even allowing us to have this conversation late on these terms.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Borough President. I'm stunned to think you were ever gaveled out of order. I can't imagine such a thing ever having occurred. A man of your calm bearing. But thank you as always for the partnership to try and get something done for Staten Island. And we'll keep working on this. I think we have a real opportunity here. Okay, who's next?

**Moderator:** Our next question goes to Dana Rubinstein from the New York Times.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Hey, Dana. How are you?

**Question:** I'm well. How are you?

**Mayor:** Good, good. Thank you.

**Question:** So, I'm curious who you'll be voting for today at noon?

**Mayor:** Dana, I just want to tell you privately, but no one else. No, I'm not doing that. Dana, thank you for asking. I know you're doing your job. I made a decision that I do not want to share my views at this point. I thought about it long and hard, came to the decision that whoever wins for all the different offices, I want to work with them. And I think the best way to do that is just keep my personal decisions to myself. Go ahead, Dana.

**Question:** Thanks. And then relatedly, I'm curious how you're feeling today and sort of what could be construed as the official beginning of the end of your mayoralty?

**Mayor:** I feel that New York City is coming back. And that was my job to bring us back. I feel very good about the path we're on as a city. So, I have a sense of, you know, soul satisfaction that we're moving in the right direction. I'll be able to pass the baton to the next mayor with the city, you know, coming back strong. And, look, I just hope people come out and vote. I think it's been a weird election year. You know, you've been deeply involved in that, Dana. I think you could attest that especially because of COVID, ranked choice voting, June primary, so many factors, I'm just worried that people haven't felt as connected to this election as some in the past. And I just hope New Yorkers realize how important it is and come out and vote. But for me

personally, you know, it has been an amazing run and still six months to go. We're sprinting to the finish line. And I just got a lot of energy to finish this mission.

**Moderator:** Our next question goes to Sophia Chang from Gothamist.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Good morning, Sophia. How are you doing today?

**Question:** I'm doing great. So, my question for you is, there's a new CCRB report that recommended departmental charges against many NYPD officers for their conduct last summer at the protests. What do you think should happen to one particular officer, Enrico Lauretta, who had a substantiated complaint for flashing what seemed to be a white power sign during a BLM rally?

**Mayor:** It's a real issue, Sophia. Look, there has to be a really consistent scrupulous adherence at the NYPD to never acting in a political fashion, whatever anyone's personal politics. And overwhelmingly I think NYPD officers really understand that and honor it. I don't know what the facts are of that specific case, and that's why we have a CCRB to look for situations that need to be addressed and then ensure there is thorough investigation, due process, etcetera. But I'll tell you, if it is confirmed that someone tried to bring their own personal politics into a rally while in uniform, that's wholly unacceptable and there have to be clear penalties. And that's why we have a discipline matrix, which we will honor to the T. We will absolutely honor the discipline matrix in any decisions that come out of this. Go ahead, Sophia.

**Question:** Thank you. And do you think that discipline matrix and any kind of consequences should apply to members of the department who have since retired or resigned since last summer? Including like the chief of department?

**Mayor:** I don't know enough about the law and the personnel policies that once you've left the department what happens in certain cases. I just don't know enough about it. I think what is obvious is we have looked really carefully at what happened last year with the very, you know, the exhaustive efforts of DOI and the Law Department, thought very fair accounting of what happened, criticisms that were fair and important, reforms and recommendations that are all being acted on literally across the board. I think that was the right way to do it. For folks who are still in the department, of course discipline has to be applied as due process dictates. But I don't know enough to tell you how the law treats people who have left the department in terms of their personnel status. We will certainly have folks follow up and try to get you more on that.

**Moderator:** Our next question goes to Nolan from the Post.

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

**Mayor:** Good morning, Nolan. Happy Election Day.

**Question:** Happy Election Day to you, Mr. Mayor.



**Mayor:** Are you out on the hustings, Nolan?

**Question:** No, I am behind the desk covering your administration, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Oh, well, it's – you know, we all have our cross to bear. Go ahead, Nolan.

**Question:** It's true. And speaking of crosses, I was wondering if you could pick a particular cross you hate to bear the most, that Andrew Cuomo was governor or that the Red Sox have the pitching staff.

**Mayor:** This blatant attack on the Red Sox pitching staff, I just want to speak to this formally. The last – I literally looked at the standings yesterday and they were leading the American League East. So, I'm a little confused why this is a theme of the morning, but I have more faith in the Boston Red Sox pitching staff than I do in the Governor. I can tell you that for sure. Go ahead, Nolan.

**Question:** Sure. We're sort of facing a very interesting situation here in the city, one that we haven't faced in quite a while, where we'll have the prohibitive favorite to be the next mayor selected in the next couple of weeks after the Board of Elections gets the votes tallied. How do you see your administration working with the democratic nominee – and obviously Democrats outnumber the city, you know, Republicans by an eight-to-one margin – between June and November? Or is that something that has to wait until after the general election is done?

**Mayor:** I think it's a little bit of all of the above. The formal transition – again, I said this last night, we have to recognize that we have seen every unexpected twist and turn imaginable in political life in this country in the last few years. So, you can't say, oh, someone's won the primary and then we guarantee what's going to happen in the general election. That just doesn't fit. We have to recognize that until the people speak formally, there are elements of transition that can't be finally and firmly put in place. On the other hand, you're right. A democratic nominee, overwhelmingly likely to succeed. So, we'll start on an informal level doing work together, I'm certain and, you know, helping to get whoever it is ready. But we haven't worked out the details. I think it's really going to depend on who's chosen and how they want to approach it. Then we'll work with them as best possible to find the right balance. Go ahead, Nolan.

**Question:** In speaking of a matter that is not of your direct control, but is a matter of great frustration to everyone in the subways, riding the subways getting around the city. There apparently is a massive shortage of train drivers which is causing all sorts of untold delays and service cancellations. What does it say about the Governor's management of the MTA that they can't find enough train drivers to run the schedules?

**Mayor:** It raises a real question. Look, Nolan, as we look back on my administration, I think one thing that we did achieve that had to be achieved was finally getting the public debate in this town to recognize that the State had been controlling the MTA for years, therefore the Governor controls MTA and that there had to be real responsibility taken by the Governor, by the State for that ownership, that leadership of the MTA. For years the State evaded responsibility and it hurt

the MTA and it hurt the riders of the MTA. I think something very good is happening – has happened now in finally assigning that responsibility where it belongs. But with that responsibility comes an obligation to the riders. Clearly the State of New York is now doing very well financially. That's a big turnaround because of the stimulus. Clearly there's nothing more important to New York City and New York State than the MTA, and the subways in particular, running well. If they've got to find a way to recruit more personnel whether it's bonuses or whatever it is, that's their job to figure it out and get it done. So, I think all New Yorkers should be calling upon the State to fix this immediately. We can't go without train service. We can't have a strong recovery if the subways aren't working.

**Moderator:** Our last question for today goes to Gersh from Streetsblog.

**Question:** How's everybody doing, Mr. Mayor? Are you all right?

**Mayor:** I am doing well, Gersh. I hope you appreciate the constant baseball theme that's been running through today's questions.

**Question:** Yeah. As long as you don't say I should be checked for performance enhancing drugs, I think we'll be fine.

[Laughter]

**Mayor:** No sticky substances. We got to check your cap for sticky substances.

**Question:** You can indeed. Hey, listen, I know there's a lot going on today, but I do – I just received the latest statistics from the Department of Transportation. And unfortunately, the news is kind of grim, 61 pedestrians have been killed on New York City streets so far this year and 120 people total have been killed, which puts us far ahead of the pace from even the pre-Vision Zero years. I actually wish Borough President Oddo was on the line because on the rock collisions are up 15 percent and total injuries are up 12 percent in Staten Island. But – so in his absence, I'll ask you and maybe Commissioner Gutman could jump in. We know the success of Vision Zero is not a straight line. There have been ups and downs during the course of your seven-plus years. But this is historic levels of road [inaudible] death. So, I'm going to ask you what is going on, on the streets of New York City?

**Mayor:** It's really troubling, Gersh. And thank you for raising it. It's sad, but I'm glad you raised it. And I will turn to Commissioner Hank Gutman in a second. People turned back to their cars in this pandemic, and then they started driving recklessly and that's unacceptable. And at the same time, the NYPD had to move a lot of resources into dealing with a whole host of other challenges that came up from COVID, including the gun violence problem. This will all be worked through. I know it will. Vision Zero works. It has to be applied more and more and more. So, all of the street redesigns, the protected bike lanes, all of the things we're going to keep doing with Vision Zero, but Vision Zero also requires more and more speed cameras, more and more enforcement by the NYPD. As we knock down violent crime, we're going to shift resources back to things like Vision Zero more and more. I also think people will start getting out of their cars. I think they will start going back to mass transit. It's happening more and more. We need to keep

pushing that and the recovery is going to help address this, but it has been horrible, Gersh, and we got to fight it back. Commissioner, do you want to add?

**Commissioner Gutman:** No, I would just – I would just agree, Mr. Mayor. The source of the problem is a dramatic, you could say an epidemic, a dramatic increase in reckless driving and it's not unique to New York. It's going on all across the country. It happened during the pandemic. Some of us hoped that as we emerged from the pandemic and traffic levels became more normal, it might subside, but so far that hasn't happened. So, at the DOT, we're expanding and accelerating our data-driven approach to street improvements to help with safety. We're doubling our investment in education. We've been pushing Albany as hard as we can for expanded use of automated enforcement methods, but at bottom it's reckless driving. And you know, I'm hoping that the trends, we're all hoping that the trends the mayor pointed to will pan out and we're working closely with our partners in the Police Department on enhanced enforcement. But you know, this is a serious problem and all of us are concerned about it. It's our top priority at the DOT.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, Hank. Go ahead, Gersh.

**Question:** Okay. I'm going to go in a different direction following up on Sophia's question. So, yesterday the Civilian Complaint Review Board put out an update that detailed some of the challenges that is having getting justice for people who say they were mistreated by cops last year, including cops cut – who had covered their badges, officers who had worn protective equipment that didn't belong to them, misusing body cameras, or what the CCRB calls, euphemistically quote, severely delayed paperwork. And 38 officers still haven't been interviewed for these investigations. So, is that acceptable to you? If so, why? And if not, what are you doing about it?

**Mayor:** Look, everything has to speed up, Gersh. The whole idea of a functioning disciplinary system, both within the PD and via the CCRB, requires more and more speed. For a long time, we were making some progress on that. Everything unquestionably in the COVID era got pushed back and a whole host of challenges existed. We are now going to, I think, get everything back on track. CCRB is stronger than it's ever been. I was here in this building when the CCRB law was passed, after 30 years of fighting the city to get it done. It was a very proud moment for the Dinkins administration and then promptly, the CCRB was defunded and held back by the Giuliani and Bloomberg administrations. We have been in the process now for eight years of building back up the CCRB, giving it more resources, giving it more power. The discipline matrix, which is revolutionary in this country in terms of the clarity of punishments and the publicness of it. The CCRB is crucial to the future of New York City, but the faster things go the better for everyone. So, we definitely have to go faster, but I do think the fact that the CCRB has looked at these cases, bringing forward charges that they're acting on, shows what we need, those checks and balances in place, and we're going to keep building upon it.

And everyone, as we conclude today, you know, again, all of the things we've talked about today are a part of how we bring this city back. It is encouraging, in these last days we've noted that more and more questions are about something other than COVID, that's a good sign. We're coming back. We're addressing a lot of the things that COVID brought us, a lot of the horrible

consequences and starting to turn the corner towards something better. And that's because everyone in the city participated in this comeback and it will be a comeback for the ages. Thank you, everybody.

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