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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES FUNDING TO REDESIGN THE
PUBLIC SPACES OF FOUR PRECINCTS IN BROOKLYN**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Digna, thank you very, very much for not just what you said, but everything you have done and for – I loved what you said about seeing an opportunity to make things better and not passing it by. I really admire that and I really appreciate that about you, and I hope you feel satisfaction today that what you did, and what everyone here is doing is making a real big difference. Let's thank Digna for everything she does.

[Applause]

And I want to say a lot of old friends here, a lot of people that I have had the honor of working with over many years and this community is I think such a powerful important community in our whole borough and our whole city, because the people behind me were doing important work not just this year but for years and years before to bring the whole community together, and to bring police and community together. This is one of the neighborhoods where we see some of the most powerful work by community members to improve people's lives and to improve the relationship between police and community. And I've watched this community closely for years and it hasn't always been easy to do this work, but this group of leaders here has persevered. And this is a stronger better community today because of it. So I'd like to ask everyone to give some applause to your neighbor.

[Applause]

Everyone here has done good work. I want to note something, because I was at a meeting yesterday that was very moving to me with members of the Crisis Management System also known as the Cure Violence Movement. And folks who are working at the grass roots in neighborhoods now all over the five boroughs who have a lot of support from the City to stop violence before it happens and to stop any incident from turning into something worse. They do extraordinary work, essential work and they're part of the reason that crime has continued to go down and our streets are safer. And I think we have folks from S.O.S Crown Heights. Are you here with us today? S.O.S Crown Heights, let's give them a round of applause.

[Applause]

And also I want to say that the folks who work here from the NYPD – the uniformed officers but also the civilian employees doing an outstanding job. And also have built that bond with the community. And what we're announcing today is important not just for the folks who come in for their community but also for the folks who did this crucial work to have a better space to work in and to have a better connection to the community. So I want to thank Inspector Frank Giordano for his leadership, and I appreciate it.

[Applause]

So here is the idea, it's very simple. And I am going to give credit where credit is due when we bring up Eric Adams, and Alicka Samuel who are going to speak about their vision and how it's coming to fruition here and we're honored to support it. But the bigger vision of this administration has been to heal the wounds of the past, not let them continue to plague us. And we knew from the beginning we could bring police and community closer together. It just needed a new approach and it needed focus, and it needed energy, and that's what neighborhood policing has been. And it's working, it's working more every day, it deepens every day.

I want to emphasize, because at every moment we see things that really grab our attention and make us feel something and like so many New Yorkers I've been very, very troubled by some of the videos I have seen recently and it's only a very few people out of a city of 8.6 million people but it's not acceptable to show disrespect to our officers. And the folks who do that, they're not helping us move forward, they're not helping us heal the wounds of the past, they're not helping to create a safer community. The folks that show disrespect to our officers are hurting all of us. And they should not be accepted or tolerated. They need to hear from all of us that it's unacceptable. Because so many good people here around me have spent a life time trying to change and improve their communities and change the relationship between police and community. And we are not going to let a few people with the wrong ideas to stop the progress we have made. So today I think in fact speaks about the exact opposite. How we're going to create the kinds of facilities that really foster dialogue and respect, that's what this city needs. And it is part of keeping us the safest big city in America and making us safer. Because I'll tell you, I've heard it from so many officers. When they have that kind of respectful relationship with community members when it's a two way street, when people know each other by first name, when they share information – people get safer.

But I want to pick up on Digna's point. The buildings themselves haven't helped because you don't want to go in. You don't have a good experience. It's not that the folks inside aren't trying their best, it's that they weren't built to look welcoming and to feel like a place where someone can come and deal with a very difficult moment like Digna explained. You know, deal with that moment the right way. We are trying to create a reality in every precinct that community members and police feel that they are on the same side, they are on the same team. And we want the precinct to be the home ballpark where everyone can gather and feel comfortable and feel like they are on the same mission together. So this plan we are announcing today will provide a makeover to four Brooklyn precincts here at the 7-1 also the 7-3, 7-5 and 7-7. The whole look is going to be different. It's going to be updated, new furniture, new paint jobs, ATM machines, a whole host of things that are going to make it a positive, welcoming environment. We are going

to get to work on this right away and it will be done soon. And it's going to change how people interact with the police. We are all human beings, if we go into some place and we feel welcome, we feel comfortable, it's going to change everything else that happens there. That's what neighborhood policing is all about.

And I want you to hear now from one of the people we depend on to put this idea into action every day, he is one of the architects of neighborhood policing and in his role now as Chief of Patrol he has seen all over this city, the good that a growing bond between police and community can achieve and he knows how this is an important part of it. My pleasure to introduce Chief of Patrol Rodney Harrison.

[Applause]

Chief of Patrol Rodney Harrison, NYPD: Good afternoon, so believe it or not I actually had the pleasure of working here in the 7-1 precinct back in 1997, as well as the other –

[Applause]

As well as the other precincts that are benefitting from this reconstruction. I worked as a sergeant in the 7-3 and I was part of the narcotics modules in the 7-5 and the 7-7. So Brooklyn is my home away from home. And if you just take a look at the crime that we had to deal with back in 1997, it was a tough time. I remember coming into work, signing in and maybe a short time afterwards we were heading out, having to deal with some type of crime that kind of plagued this beautiful community. And if I could just read off a couple of numbers – from 1997 compared to now, the 7-1 precinct is down 65 percent in crime. If you just take a look at the 7-3, 7-5, and 7-7 –

[Applause]

Those three commands are down over 70 percent in shooting incidents. That is not by accident. That is great work done by the men and women that put this uniform on today as well as the responsibility that we've taken advantage of working with such a great community here in Brooklyn. And that's from neighborhood policing and that's what it's all about – shared responsibility, working together to make sure we make it a safe environment for everybody here. But we didn't just stop there just doing neighborhood policing. We didn't just say hey crime is down. What's next? What do we do? So now we want to try to open up our homes, open up our precincts and make it a lot more attractive for people to want to come in and talk to us, engage us, make it friendlier for the residents here. Because we still have a lot of work to do. We've done a great, great job and if you just take a look at New York City compared to all the other major cities throughout the country. We are one of the best, if not the best. But we do not rest and we are going to continue to work hard to continue to build those relationships. And it starts with taking a look at ourselves, what can we do to make things better and making sure that people want to come work with us, want to come into the precinct and talk to us, as well as the cops being in an environment where it's a lot more comfortable with them as well. And it starts with this idea of making the precincts better for everybody that lives and works here in Brooklyn.

So I want to take this opportunity to thank Borough President Eric Adams, I want to thank –

[Applause]

Councilmember Ampy-Samuel for the great work and their investment –

[Applause]

Into this idea and putting it forward. So thank you ladies and gentlemen, thank you Mr. Mayor for all the great work that you do supporting this police department and I look forward to continuing to build our neighborhood police. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

[...]

Mayor: Well I just want to conclude with real appreciation again for all the folks here who have done such important work in this community. This is a special place and one thing I have always loved about Brooklyn, long before the do it yourself movement became popular, Brooklyn was a do it yourself place and when there was a problem people didn't wait for someone from outside to fix it. They got together and when I hear the words Crown Heights, I think of these leaders who took a situation that once was so strained and created a place of unity and understanding. That is what Brooklyn epitomizes to me and this neighborhood in particular. And if that could be done it should remind us that everything else can be done – that this is another step in that same direction, peace and understanding and mutual respect. It's happening every day in this city and this borough and we have only just begun. So congratulations to all and thank you for all you are doing. Well done everyone.

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