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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. Well, first of all, I hope all the moms out there had a wonderful Mother's Day. To the moms of New York City, thank you. Thank you for all you do for all of us. Thank you for seeing our families through this extraordinarily tough time in our history and onto a better day. So, what a difference Mother's Day a year ago versus Mother's Day yesterday. Thank God, we've come a long, long way and we're about to go a lot farther. But thanks to our moms for always being there for us.

All right. Talk about going farther, we have a big milestone today with our vaccination effort. We have now surpassed 7 million doses from the beginning of our vaccination effort. It's extraordinary to see this constant growth. Even with challenges, people keep coming out, getting vaccinated, and we're going to make it easier and easier, better and better all the time. So, the exact number – 7,048,270 doses since the beginning of our effort. Now, here's another really important milestone. As of today, we're at just about two percent for COVID positivity in New York City. That is really, really good news. We've seen tremendously – really helpful, really good results for weeks and weeks now with our indicators. We'll go over them again later on today. But now, right around two percent – the lowest we've been in over six months. You have to go back to November 2nd, 2020 was the last time the level was this low and it keeps going down. And this is because of the amazing work of all New Yorkers, helping us to move forward. But, right now, it's all about vaccination. Boy, if you ever needed an object lesson, look at how with every additional vaccination, the numbers keep going down and down for COVID. We're pushing COVID back all the time. That is the best evidence in the world to keep getting vaccinated.

Anyone who's not gotten vaccinated, now is the time. And we want to make it easier and we want to make it fun, and we want to give you some incentive. So, today, we announce incentives that I think are going to really encourage some of the folks who just haven't gotten around to it or have been waiting for the right moment. Here's the right moment – free tickets. Free tickets to some of New York City's most iconic attractions. You'll get them when you get vaccinated. We're talking about the New York Botanical Garden, the New York City Aquarium, the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, the Bronx Zoo, a membership to the Public Theater – the extraordinary Public Theater – events at Lincoln Center. All these things are free when you get vaccinated. Tickets to Brooklyn Cyclones games, tickets to NYCFC – professional soccer, New York City Football Club. We're going to be giving out the details in the next few days, but, from this point on, there'll be many, many opportunities to get great, great prizes when you get vaccinated. And we want people to know it's time and it's going to just make it so much better

for everyone else too. Each additional person that gets vaccinated helps us move everything else forward. So, you're going to hear about these exciting incentives and more over the coming days.

Now, more exciting recovery news. A recovery for all of us means making sure that this whole city comes back to life, making sure that the places that people love to go come back, making sure the amazing resources we provide in this city – this city does more than any city in America to reach our people, to serve them, to make their lives better. And one of the great parts of this city that people just love is our libraries. So, our libraries are now coming back. Starting today, our libraries are back – libraries back for people to come in, spend time reading, check out new books and materials. This is another one of these turning-point moments to have the libraries back for everyone. And we know they really matter to a lot of kids, it's where they do their best studying after school. It's a great, safe place for kids to be. We know for a lot of seniors, it's a wonderful place and someplace they look forward to visiting every day. So, the New York Public Library, the Queens Public Library, the Brooklyn Public Library, all of them coming back. And I want to thank them all, because throughout the COVID crisis they helped in so many ways. They were there, always flexible, creative, finding different ways to serve the people of this city. So, our libraries have really done wonderful work during this crisis, but what we really wanted was just for them to be back and for people to be able to go to the library and their neighborhood again. And now, that day is here.

Now, I want you to hear from a New Yorker who can tell you what the library means, what it has meant in her life. And she is an award-winning author. She is a Queens native. She's known for her extraordinary work, Pachinko. And she is someone who from the libraries gained a lot of the hope and spirit and energy to become a writer. And it's a true New York story. My pleasure introduced Min Jin Lee.

[...]

Mayor: Thank you so much. I love what you said. You're so right, people need a chance to come together again. And I loved what you said, to become friends again. And this city is the place where people connect with each other from every possible background, in a way that's pretty unprecedented around the globe. This is a place where it happens. And you're right, the library is one of those beautiful crossroads meeting places. But I just love your story too, I love your – that's such a New York story, your story of coming here with your family, and then growing up as a New Yorker and experiencing the best of this place. And congratulations for all you have achieved, you make New York City proud.

Min Jin Lee: I love New York. It is the greatest city in the world.

Mayor: Well, we all agree on that.

[Laughter]

Lee: Thank you for your work, Mayor. Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you very much. And see you at the library. All right, now, that's one piece of recovery for all of us, but there's lots of different pieces we have to bring together. So, when we think about a recovery for all of us, we think about the life of the city, we think about the streets of this city, we think about the energy, the vibrancy of this city. In the toughest moments of COVID, the people of the city came together and found a way to do something positive, even amidst the pain. And that was Open Streets, Open Restaurants, saving 100,000 jobs, bringing life and energy and vitality to the streets even when we were up against so much. That was a beautiful example of the New York City spirit and it continues to be. So, throughout this week, we're going to be talking about the streets of this city and the things we're going to do to make them safe and vibrant for the months and years ahead. And this is crucial to our recovery. Street's Week, this week – all week, Streets Week, we're going to talk about our streets and making them better all the time.

Now, every time I go around the city, I get inspired. I really do. I'm just always watching, whether I'm walking around, driving around, whatever it is – I'm watching to see how things are changing and evolving for the better with Open Streets, with Open Restaurants. And I know all of this has to be done in the context of safety, and that brings us to Vision Zero. Vision Zero, we started it in 2014. It was considered by many at the time radical, unprecedented, untested in the United States. It had worked in other parts of the world, hadn't been tried here. We decided to be audacious and try it in the biggest toughest place in the country right here in New York City. A lot of folks said, oh, New Yorkers are not going to take to Vision Zero, they'll be against it. No. What actually happened was, the more people experienced the value of making streets safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, everyone, the more people bought into it. They started thinking about their own families. They started thinking about the people they love and making sure they were safe. And we also heard such painful stories from families who lost loved ones because of the horrible reality that we had faced for years and years of crashes could have been avoided. So, Vision Zero is crucial to everything we have done, and it will be even more crucial going forward. But Vision Zero depends on constantly adding more tools, strengthening it, being creative. And this is why we need help from Albany.

I've talked about this a couple of times, I want to talk about it again. We need our colleagues in Albany, who have done great work on this. I really want to give credit where credit is due, the Legislature has done great work on Vision Zero. The Legislature brought us the speed cameras around the schools, and then they helped us do even more with them – that's been a huge step forward for the city, but we've got to go farther. We've got to pass the Crash Victims Rights & Safety Act. This act is one of the things that will be part of closing the missing links here, the gaps in the law that still leave too many New Yorkers unsafe. And there's a series of reforms, and it's about remembering those who we lost, and that's why part of this act is Sammy's Law. A 12-year-old from my neighborhood in Brooklyn, who was lost to a crash by a dangerous driver. It's about making it harder and harder for people to drive while intoxicated, which still too many people get away with. It gets rid of some of the real inconsistencies in the law that just aren't tough enough on folks who endanger others with their vehicles. And it allows for speed cameras 24/7. And look, speed cameras have just been proven to work, and we need to use them more, we need to use some better, because then it says to everyone there are consequences if you're speeding and you put other lives in danger.

So, all of these pieces are part of this extraordinary legislation in Albany. We need it passed between now and June 10th when the Legislature goes out of session. I really ask every New Yorker who cares about safety, every New Yorker who wants to protect your family, wants safe streets, let your legislators in Albany know how important it is to pass this act. We need it now. We're also going to take action here in the meantime. And Vision Zero means using our tools and constantly refining, constantly adding to them. So, now, we're going to be lowering speed limits on additional streets. We've done this over the years. It's worked. I know some people gripe about it, I respect the concerns, but this is about safety. This is about saving lives. This is about protecting kids, about protecting seniors. So, we're lowering speed limits on over 45 miles major streets in this city. And we're focusing on some of the areas where we've seen the most crashes, and this is a way to create safety and accountability. You lower the speed limit, you send a message to everyone – these are the rules, you have to live by these rules. If you don't, there will be consequences.

This week, you'll be seeing the NYPD out doing a blitz for traffic safety. They'll focus on protecting pedestrians and cyclists all over the five boroughs. They'll be targeting drivers who speed and who failed to yield to pedestrians and cyclists. And the message will be clear, dangerous driving has no place in New York City. So, you will see a strong NYPD presence this week as an example of what we'll be doing in the weeks and months ahead to protect New Yorkers. Later on, today, there'll be a press conference with our Department of Transportation Commissioner Hank Gutman, and our NYPD Chief of Transportation Kim Royster, they'll go into all the details. But the bottom line is, Vision Zero has done so much for us, it's time to double down on it. We need help in Albany. We're going to use a lot of our tools here even more, and we're going to make our streets safer.

Now, our comeback depends on safety. The comeback in New York City depends on safety. That certainly main street safety. It also means safety from violence. We saw a really painful incident in Times Square on Saturday – horrible and unacceptable. And I want to thank all the men and women of the NYPD who immediately on the scene to protect everyone there and to address the situation. Thank God, the three people who were hit by the gunfire are all out of the hospital and it looks like they'll make a strong recovery. But look, this kind of thing should not happen in our city and there's a lot of ways we can address it. Some of them we can do here, some of them we need help from elsewhere, just like with Vision Zero. We need the Congress to help us to stop the flow of guns into New York City. This is one thing that we've needed for the longest time. It always looked impossible, now it actually looks possible in a country where tragically every day we read about mass shootings. We might have the moment in history where the Congress finally acts and gets guns out of the hands of people who should not have them.

So, that step would help us change the overall reality. But we're going to keep using all of our tools at the same time as we try and get bigger changes on the national level. Our Safe Summer NYC initiative is about investing in communities. It's about bringing back the court system and close collaboration between prosecutors, courts, NYPD. It's about using precision policing. Look, we saw last week, just a few days ago, an extraordinary example of the strategy coming to fruition with the gang takedown in Brooklyn, including the horrible individual who shot Davell Gardner Jr. We saw that as our courts are coming back to life things are starting to change. We've got a lot of work to do. We have a lot of work to do, but we know what works, and NYPD

is out there constantly making adjustments, sending officers where they're needed most, but also working together with all of us on investments in communities. We saw it Friday, at Wagner Houses, an example of vesting in the community, investing in young people in the community, a positive example that's going to help us to move young people in the right direction. We saw it with the anti-gun violence event that the NYPD sponsored at the Polo Grounds Towers over the weekend, helping to connect people to what they need, helping to keep young people moving towards positive influences. These kinds of approaches are going to be used in neighborhoods all over New York City. So, it comes down to a lot of different pieces. Always precision policing, we know that works. Always neighborhood policing, we know that bond between police and community works. Constantly working to increase that bond, because with that bond comes the ability to get those who have harmed their fellow New Yorkers. And what we do know constantly is, anyone who does harm to another New Yorker will be brought to justice. Courts are back. The NYPD is constantly finding those who have used gun violence against others, and they will be prosecuted, and they will pay the consequences. That is how we move forward. We move forward with communities. This is what we learned from years and years of success with neighborhood policing. We move forward with communities. That's our future.

Okay. Now let's talk about the indicators. I mentioned them upfront. We do it every day, but today is a very special day for our indicators because we have now hit the six-month low. As I mentioned, this is really big news. And I like to see us keep setting some more records going forward. Let's go over what we have today. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, today's report, 88 patients, 88 patients. Look at that number. It looks really good, that graph there. Confirmed positive level 30.68 percent. Hospitalization rate continues to go down as well, 1.27 per 100,000. So, so far you're seeing really, really great numbers across the board. Now let's look at new reported cases on a seven-day average. Again, listen to this, today's report 799 cases. I mean, that is a perfect downward slope right there. And let's keep that going. And number three, percentage of people testing citywide positive for COVID-19. Here it is. Today's report, on a seven-day rolling average, 2.01 percent and continuing to go down. And what do we need to do? Everyone who hasn't gotten vaccinated gets vaccinated and we drive COVID right out of town. Few words in Spanish about the vaccination effort.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

Moderator: Good morning. We will now begin our Q and A. As a reminder, we are joined by Deputy Commissioner Eric Beaton from the Department of Transportation, Health Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi, and the President and CEO of New York City Health + Hospitals, Dr. Mitchell Katz. Our first question of the day goes to James Ford from PIX 11.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor and to everyone on the call.

Mayor: Good morning, James. How you doing?

Question: Doing great. Thank you. Thank you very much. First of all, you had said to me on Friday, to stay tuned for Monday to hear more about incentives for people to get vaccinated. You have delivered in part today with free tickets, et cetera. You'd also said though there'd be more information about efforts, like the one at which we saw you on Friday, with the mobile vaccination unit. Are we likely to see more efforts like that? Can you give us more details about how you have said you intend to be more into communities? How that's going to be going forward? If it's expanding at all?

Mayor: Yeah, no. James look we're constantly learning what works and then we lean into it. So, you saw with your own eyes on a Friday, in the Bronx with Congress Member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Assembly Member Karines Reyes. There was great energy, great energy in the community. We were talking to people up there about why they decided to come get vaccinated. People kept saying, because it was right here, it was easy. We talked to people who hadn't yet gotten vaccinated. They said they didn't know this happened, that this was happening. Now, they want to be a part of it. We're going to be doing these mobile units around the city. We're going to be doing pop-up sites and places we still haven't gone to. We're going to be doing a lot to draw attention to it. And the incentives. So, I think really James, it is the combination of the two that's going to help supercharge the effort going forward. We've given people proof, absolute proof, that vaccination works. Because you can see with your own eyes, how COVID is going down and it's allowing people more freedom and they want that freedom. We got to make it easier. We've got to make it more fun. We got to make it more local. That's what we're doing now. Go ahead, James.

Question: Thanks. We've talked some about the emergency use authorization of the Pfizer vaccine being extended to 12 to 15-year-olds. It does appear that that is going to happen by mid-week. Can you give us a clear idea of what efforts the City is making for when that designation is made? Will people be able to just take their kids in on a walk-in basis to vaccination centers? Will schools be offering vaccinations? Can you just give us more information regarding that please?

Mayor: Sure. I'll start James, and then I'll welcome Dr. Chokshi and Dr. Katz to add. We do expect authorization very soon. We want to immediately get to work vaccinating young people who now can get the vaccine. We'll use all the existing centers that have the right vaccine, for sure, including on a walk-in basis. We're going to constantly look for the right ways to do things. So, right now we do not have a vaccination effort directed to schools, but we might do something with that going forward. Right now it will be based on the vaccination centers. And very crucially on pediatricians and the role of pediatricians as well. So, I want Dr Chokshi to start and speak about that.

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Yes, sir. Thank you so much, Mr. Mayor. And to recap, we have a three-pronged plan as soon as that emergency use authorization is extended to 12 to 15-year-olds for the Pfizer vaccine. The first is to use our existing sites that are already administering Pfizer. You can find what those are by going to nyc.gov/vaccinefinder. And you can just search for all of the sites that are currently administering Pfizer. As soon as the EUA is expanded, anyone with a teenager, anyone between the ages of 12 and 15 will be able to take their child to that site to get vaccinated as well. Second,

we are working very closely with pediatricians. We've been planning and preparing for weeks with our colleagues in pediatrics to get them ready. Both to answer questions about the vaccine specific to children and also in many cases, being able to directly administer the vaccine in pediatrician's offices, because we know how important that is to parents. And then third to build a little bit on what the Mayor has said. We're working very closely with our Department of Education partners to communicate to parents, to communicate to adolescents as well. And to work with them, to both get the word out, but also actually ensure that people know how to access vaccination. And I'm sure that we'll be able to build upon those efforts as we get you know, more Pfizer vaccine and have a chance to expand upon those activities that I've described.

Mayor: Thank you. Dr. Katz, you want to add?

President and CEO Mitchell Katz, NYC Health + Hospitals: Thank you, sir. Just to say that the 11 hospitals of Health + Hospitals all have Pfizer vaccine. And we look forward to welcoming the 12 to 15-year-olds as soon as that approval happens. We're ready. Thank you, sir.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead.

Moderator: Next we have Andrew Siff from WNBC.

Question: Good morning, everyone on the call. Happy Monday to you. I was hoping the Mayor, that your medical team can weigh in on this. Obviously, vaccines are having a tremendous impact on the reduction of the COVID rates, the hospitalizations, et cetera. But to what degree is seasonality a part of this? Because a year ago in May and June, we had a dramatic drop and the vaccines didn't even exist. So, to what degree might that be a factor and how concerning is it because we then would be facing return to colder weather this fall?

Mayor: As we turn to Dr. Chokshi and Dr. Katz, Andrew, it's a really fair question. I would say big difference clearly with massive amounts of vaccinations and a lot of folks who have been exposed to COVID have the antibodies. I think there are a number of differences this point in 2021 versus the same point in 2020. But you're absolutely right. Seasonality has always been an issue of discussion and concern around the coronavirus. So, Dr. Chokshi, Dr. Katz, what do you think?

Commissioner Chokshi: Yes, I'm happy to start on this, sir. You know, it is a complex picture as we've alluded to in the past. It's the public health precautions that everyone has worked so hard at over the last few months that have worked to help drive the rates down. It's also the immunity as the Mayor has pointed out, both the immunity that people build up after they've been infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. As well as now, very importantly, the immunity from vaccination. And it's likely that seasonality plays some role which is you know, not completely well understood scientifically. We think that one component of it is certainly that as the weather warms, people are spending less time indoors. And we know that that does affect COVID-19 transmission. But looking ahead to the other part of your question, Andrew. The big difference between now and last year is the protective buffer that vaccination provides. And that's why we're going to work so hard even as the weather warms up to get as many people

protected as possible, because we know that that immunity will extend for several months and certainly into the fall and winter of 2021.

Mayor: Thank you Dr. Katz, you want to add?

President Katz: I think Dr. Chokshi did a great job. I would just add that if you think about where we were last year in May, while it's true cases were dropping, the city was closed. I mean, we were completely closed down. And the fact that cases have been dropping despite the fact that we've been able to reopen much of the city, I think goes to the effectiveness of the vaccinations. Thank you, sir.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead, Andrew. My second question has to do with the incentives. Not that there probably aren't New Yorkers out there who would appreciate a free ride New York City Ferry, I'm wondering whether or not you have a plan to move to cash incentives or something that really gets to the hesitant population? And, or whether there might be a stick component of this where you would recommend that employers penalize people who don't get vaccinated.

Mayor: Very important questions, really. I don't – I'm not yet seeing the stick component as the way to go. I think things will change month by month. And I also respect that each employer and each private space has to make the decisions that work for them. I think this is still about accentuating the positive, the incentives, the convenience, and also answering the real questions that people have. So, one of the things that Dr. Katz and Dr Chokshi have talked a lot about is getting more and more conversations between doctors and their patients directly. I think that is going to bring a lot more people into the pool who will get vaccinated. I think the incentives will help and the convenience helps. I think they kind of go hand in hand. Folks, many, many folks I think have been ready, they just haven't found the right moment, or it wasn't easy enough. I think this gets everyone's attention, helps them move. But we just see Andrew, steadiness in the vaccination effort. I mean, we're still putting up really good numbers. It's not quite the land rush it was, you know, at certain points a month or two ago. But it's still very strong and steady. I mean, as of now, we've got three million New Yorkers, fully vaccinated. 3.8 million who've gotten at least one dose. We continue to move towards our goal. It's gotten tougher, obviously because of some of the curve balls we were thrown. But we continue to stay on it. I think these new elements will help focus people. I don't at this moment, see cash incentive. I won't take anything off the table, but at this moment, I think we want to try make it convenient, things like the mobile vaccinations, the incentives, more and more outreach. That's the way we're going to go for now.

Moderator: Next we have Dave Evans from ABC-7.

Question: Hi, Mayor. Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yeah, Dave. How you doing?

Question: I'm doing fine. I'm at an event with Eric Adams. And I wanted to ask you about something that he has been proposing – oh before I forget, if Min Jin Lee is still there, I love Pachinko. I'm glad you invited her.

Mayor: There you go.

Question: She may be gone. I love – great, great, great book. But as you know, Eric Adams, he has asked for the street crime, plain clothes units to be brought back. The unit that you disbanded, I think last year. Your concerns about what he is pushing for, for a crackdown on crime, your thoughts about that, especially in light of everything that happened over the weekend at Time Square?

Mayor: Yeah, look Dave I haven't seen the very specific ideas or comments that Eric's put forward. But I'll start with this. I have a lot of respect for Eric Adams. I've worked closely with him over the years. I happen to disagree with him on this issue. You know, Commissioner Shea felt strongly last year, that there was a better way to go. Taking the same highly motivated officers and applying them in a different way. And really focusing on making sure everything led to quality prosecutions. And that was exemplified last week with the takedown of the gang members in Brooklyn, including the individual who killed Davell Gardner Jr. That example, that approach is what we need more and more of. So, I agree with Commissioner Shea, I think there's a better way to do this. We know in the end that we need a combination of precision policing and neighborhood policing. And we need approaches that bring neighborhoods closer to the police. And that was one of the motivating factors among several for this change. And I think the Commissioner made the right decision. Go ahead, Dave.

Question: Mayor, that's my only question because I got to pay attention to whoever wants to replace you.

Mayor: All right. You take care. Thanks, Dave.

Question: All right.

Moderator: Next we have Julia Marsh from the New York Post.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor. I just wanted to add that another of Ms. Lee's books that's actually about New York City, that's a great read is Free Food For Millionaires.

Mayor: Okay. That sounds very pertinent. I'll read that. Thank you, Julia.

Question: Yeah. So, I'll get to my questions and they are about the Times Square shooting over the weekend. I just want to read you a quote that we got from a family member of one of the victims. She said, if he's able to do it in a place where there's so much people like Times Square and not care, what's going to stop him from doing it again? So, can you speak to what it is about the current environment in New York City, that people are able to brazenly carry guns and fire them in a crowd? And the fact that you said, you know, when people come back, the streets, the

subways are going to be safer, yet this was broad daylight in Times Square. There were crowds of people and yet bystanders are still getting hurt?

Mayor: Yeah, Julia, obviously, first of all, what happened was unacceptable. And this individual is going to be found and found soon, and he's going to pay the consequences. We got to understand there are some individuals who do the wrong thing. And there's still too many guns available to too many people and that needs policing solutions and community solutions, but also needs a change in Washington. We need better laws to stop the flow of guns in this country. But overall, there's no question in my mind – we saw how well we did for years and years getting violence down, working with communities. A lot of that got disrupted by global pandemic. The answer is, bring back jobs, bring back activities, and keep refining our policing strategies. There's no question in my mind, as the city comes back, that's going to help us to reduce crime and violence. No question. Go ahead, Julia.

Question: What impact do you think this shooting will have on tourism? If it can happen in the city's most iconic locale?

Mayor: I don't think it will, Julia. Honestly, I think it was a horrible incident. We never want to see one like it again. We're putting additional NYPD resources in the Time Square area to add an extra measure of protection. But in the end people want to come to this city. It is an overwhelmingly safe city. When you look at New York City compared to cities around the country, around the world, this is a very safe place and there's more and more activity. The city is clearly coming back. People are starting to come here much earlier actually than I thought they would. We're starting to see tourism come back already. I thought it would go into the summer before we'd see that kind of come back. It's happening now. And in the end, our job's just keep bringing back this city and showing people what a great place it is to be.

Moderator: Next, we have Gersh from Streetsblog.

Question: How are you doing, Mr. Mayor, and everyone on the call?

Mayor: I'm doing well, Gersh. How you doing?

Question: Well, it's a big day for the street safety community, as you've announced, Streets Week! – with the exclamation mark, I might add –

Mayor: You have to include the exclamation mark. It doesn't work without it, Gersh.

Question: Oh, I did. I did. I did. I'm big on punctuation. Anyway, you mentioned in your remarks that some elected officials blast speed limit reductions as a money grab by the City, but your own DOT has shown that crashes decline and fatalities decline, and of course, speeding itself declines when speed limits are lowered and enforced with speed cameras. So, let's make this personal and make some news. What do you personally think about elected officials, such as Council Member Joe Borelli on Staten Island, who would dispute the data on road safety and claim that, for example, 40 miles an hour is just fine on Hylan Boulevard.

Mayor: I actually can say this from the heart. I've gotten to know Joe Borelli over time, and we don't agree on many things, but I do respect him as an individual. And he's someone you can have a dialogue with. So, this is what I would say to him. I would just raise the facts. Hylan Boulevard in the last years, even with Vision Zero, we've seen too many people hurt and we've seen lives lost. And it's clear you have to do something differently when you see that. So, no, you cannot have a higher speed limit. In the end, lowering speed limits creates accountability and saves lives and it's time. The facts point to it. It's time. Go ahead, Gersh.

Question: Okay. I appreciate that. Let's go – on the second part of the announcement today was focusing on enforcement. Now you mentioned the NYPD you might do – is going to do an enforcement blitz on failure to yield tickets, but we've found during even their blitzes we've reported that it ends up amounting to about four failure to yield tickets per precinct per day during the blitz. And then it goes back to basically nothing after that, as the NYPD writes very few failure to yield tickets. And it's also funny because it's coming at a time when many in the Council have called for the NYPD to be entirely out of traffic stops anyway, in favor of better designed streets and automated enforcement because of the agency's long documented racial bias in traffic stops. So, why not do – instead of more enforcement, why not do what cities like Oslo and Copenhagen have done when they reduce road deaths to zero, which is, as I've asked before, create massive car-free spaces, such as Manhattan below Canal Street or 34th Avenue in Jackson Heights, which is your gold standard Open Street?

Mayor: Gersh, you have asked, and I'd say to you, we're looking at any and all options. But what I would think is the right – we're not, I mean, God bless those other cities. I respect them. We're a different city than they are. But I think what we have found works is a combination of approaches. I clearly am a believer in speed cameras, but I also am a believer in police enforcement. It makes a difference and it achieves something different than a camera. And I think the fact that since this administration began, we focus the NYPD more and more on speeding, on failure to yield. I do think it's had an impact, and I think we have to do more of it. It's been hard in the last year-plus because of COVID, but we're starting to come out of that more and more, and we can get back to more enforcement on things like failure to yield. And we have to break the sort of psychological phenomenon that too many New York City drivers think it's okay to not yield. And we all know that was like the reality for decades that people could get away with it. They have to know they can't get away with it. So, this blitz by the NYPD is going to send a message, but I look forward to seeing more of that as we go along, and the city gets back to normal.

Moderator: Next, we have Roger Stern from 1010 WINS.

Question: Good morning, Mayor. How are you doing?

Mayor: I'm doing well, Roger. How you been?

Question: I'm good. I'm good. Thank you. So, I have a couple of questions about the pandemic and COVID. First one is, are we at the State or near the State as some areas find themselves that we now have access to more vaccines than we have people willing to take them?

Mayor: Yeah, Roger, it's true that the supply has finally gotten to a point that it exceeds the demand. That is true. But I also want you to see that the demand continues to grow in a good way, meaning it is steady, it is constant. We have sites all over the city, a lot of them really busy. So, in the end, when we got to the point where we had enough vaccine that it wasn't a struggle, that was actually a really good thing in my view. When we went through weeks and weeks, where people had to struggle to get an appointment, had to wait a long time, they got very frustrated, they got very worried – the fact that now, you know you can get an appointment right away or you can walk up is actually what we would have loved to have had all along. And every day I give you the numbers. They keep climbing because people keep coming out. I do think the key piece here now is we have to do more and different outreach. We have to use the incentives. We have to get the doctors and the pediatricians into it more. I think that will keep demand constant. Go ahead, Roger.

Question: Yeah. My second question is, you know, when it comes to these incentives, there isn't really a great system for proving you have the vaccine. You get these large pieces of paper that are too large for a man's wallet. They're not terribly secure. Do we need better technology for people to document their vaccination status?

Mayor: That is a real interesting question. I'm going to turn to the doctors because I think, you know, as we think about that issue, Roger, there's definitely a value in that documentation. There's also obvious concerns about privacy, accuracy. There's a lot of different pieces to this. So, let me ask the experts what they're thinking. Dr. Katz and then Dr. Chokshi.

President Katz: I suspect that in time we will be documenting in a more secure way, more similar to how we do driver's licenses or passports. I think that will become part of life. As people want to travel on planes, want to go to busy places, people will require proof of vaccination status. But I agree very much with the Mayor that we are not yet at the point of mandatory. I still see every week in my clinic, I see patients who I say, have you gotten vaccinated? And they say, no. And I say, can I send you down for vaccination, we have it available right downstairs, we can do it right now? And they say yes. So, I very much believe that we will be able to continue to vaccinate people using incentives and making it easy as the Mayor says. And that the time for more, sort of, enforcement, more documentation is in the future, not now.

Mayor: Thank you, Dr. Katz. Dr. Chokshi, do you want to add?

Commissioner Chokshi: Just to add briefly, sir. I agree with Dr. Katz that, you know, we will have to continue evolving our approach to vaccine verification. We have the CDC vaccination cards. We have some technological tools, you know, that have been developed for verification purposes. And I think that, you know, there will be more conversation about exactly how that should happen, you know, using private systems but always making sure that the fundamental point, which is whether or not someone has received a vaccine, is connected to the City and State immunization systems of record. And so, these are things that we're actively working on. But our focus right now remains getting as many people vaccinated as quickly as possible.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead.

Moderator: We have time for two more questions today. The next question goes to Yoav from The City.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. I wanted to ask you, it looks like you managed to watch one of the videos involving a civilian death at the hands of the PD, the Kawaski Trawick one. You also projected you might see a few others. I had asked specifically about George Zapantis and Delrawn Small. Have you had a chance to watch either one of those yet?

Mayor: Yes, I have, Yoav –

Question: Yeah –

Mayor: Go ahead –

Question: And can you share your thoughts on what you saw?

Mayor: Yeah. Each video is very, very different. And obviously one of the challenges, and I know, you know it – I know you've looked at this stuff very closely, is sometimes we get only a piece of what happened from the available video. I think in each case it's very appropriate that the CCRB is looking at these matters, deciding if there needs to be further action. Obviously, they did decide that in the case of Officer Isaacs, and I know they're looking at the other situations as well. And that's – you know, this is why we have a CCRB to have a civilian look at these things and determine if further action is needed. So, I think each one is very different. I think in every case, I feel the same thing – is there something more that could have been done to keep that individual alive? I would say that in every case. And we have to keep looking for what changes we have to make, but in terms of the follow-up, I have a lot of faith in the CCRB, especially now that we have the discipline matrix and the MOU to ensure that if there's a prosecution and there's an outcome through due process, that it's very clear what the penalties will be. Go ahead, Yoav.

Question: And just following up, having seen the videos do you see any value in having watched them sooner? In the Zapantis case, the official NYPD story was that he was Tased because he came at cops with a sword which the video disproves. And in the Delrawn Small case, you've had advocates asking you for a long time, can you please essentially ensure a speedy trial because the NYPD's taken a long time to schedule the case. And you do have the power to tell the NYPD, I want this done quickly. So, do you see any value in viewing these videos in a more timely manner in the future so that you could kind of detect some of these things that advocates have been talking about?

Mayor: Yeah, Yoav, I think the problem with the videos, again, is they give you a small piece of a much bigger story. There – and again, I respect, truly respect, journalists and advocates who are moved by a video and because of what they see and what they think is the story push for the changes or the accountability they believe is right. I think it's still a very different thing than a full investigation that looks at a lot more than just video and due process, which is something, every good person – I would say to all my fellow progressives, every progressive should believe

in due process, you know, whether it gets you the outcome you want or not. But the videos are just one piece of the puzzle. What I want to make sure always happens, Yoav, is that we move things as quickly as possible. We had obviously huge disruption because of COVID. Trials weren't happening. And it wasn't simply a matter of me ordering a trial forward when the whole process was disrupted. And a lot of other trials had been scheduled before that also were important. And even if they weren't getting as much fame, they still matter. So, I think it's really important to say what we need to do is get everything back on track, get the city back on track, get the disciplinary process moving fast, and ensure there is due process and full investigation. And then if something's wrong, the penalties are, for the first time in our history, extraordinarily clear and consistent because of the discipline matrix and the MOU. And that I think has, is actually a very tangible step forward.

Moderator: Our last question of the day goes to Shant from the Daily News.

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

Mayor: Good, Shant, how you been?

Question: Pretty good. Pretty good. So, I wanted to follow up on the Times Square shooting, and if I caught you correctly, you said there would be an extra presence there. Can you give details of that as in number of officers, and will that extra presence be only at Times Square, or do you have any other locations in mind?

Mayor: So, I spoke to Commissioner Shea about this yesterday. It will be use of our CRC officers in Time Square. You'll see additional presence. I think there may be some other areas as well where you'll see that. And it's important to show people that presence, I think it is reassuring and helpful. But that's the way we'd go about it. Go ahead, Shant.

Question: Yeah. So, thanks for that. And as I'm sure you caught, and you know, a number of mayoral candidates sounded off on the shooting over the weekend, it sounds like you had some criticism of Eric Adams' approach, but I wanted to ask if there's anything that you've heard that maybe you did like from some of the people who want to succeed you in office. And I guess maybe more broadly, what would your advice be to the next mayor on balancing the need for public safety with continuing to address demands for police reform?

Mayor: Thanks for the question, Shant. And again, I – look, I have a lot of respect for Eric and Eric is someone who brings a lot of experience obviously having been a police officer and knowing the neighborhoods in the city. We happen to disagree on that one unit. I haven't looked at each and every candidate's specific positions. I'm going to be evaluating that more and more as we get closer. But, look, my advice to them is double down on neighborhood policing. For six years we had an extraordinarily clear pattern. Crime was going down constantly. And the relationship between NYPD and community was improving. It was based on dialogue. It was based on creating human relationships, connections between officers who worked in a small part of a neighborhood and really got to know neighborhood residents. It really revolutionized policing in the city and we have plenty of facts and numbers to prove it, but also I've just heard from so many neighborhood residents, what it meant to them to know their officers personally.

And it led to a lot more sharing information. It led to a lot more partnership. I think it was also more gratifying for officers to have those human relationships. I certainly saw it again at Wagner Houses on Friday. Absolutely beautiful to see the NYPD out there helping to get, you know, a new basketball court in a public housing development that's gone through its share of challenges, and officers connecting with the community, connecting with the kids. That is the way forward. So, we're coming out of COVID. We got to sort of get our minds into the post-COVID era more and more. And it will be going back to what we know works. That bond between police and community, that real dialogue, including honest, tough dialogue, it still cleanses things. It allows people to open up to each other. That is the way forward. And I truly believe we will get back to that and quickly, and that is essential to the recovery, but much more so to what happens well beyond COVID and New York City of the future, which I'm very, very hopeful about. Thank you, everybody.

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