



# City of Philadelphia

## MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### MAYOR NUTTER DISCUSSES PREPARATIONS FOR THE PAPAL VISIT AS PART OF WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

*Philadelphia, August 5, 2015* — As part of the ongoing preparations for the World Meeting of Families, Mayor Michael A. Nutter together with many of the City's partners discussed transportation plans for the event. The following are Mayor Nutter's prepared remarks, [please check against delivery]:

As Philadelphia and the region continue to prepare for the Papal Visit and the attendance of an estimated 1.5 million pilgrims during the World Meeting of Families, we want to provide the public with as much information about what they can expect during this incredible, once-in-lifetime event.

This is our third briefing. We are planning many more briefings as details are put in final form.

Before we get into specifics today, I want to set the stage. We are 7 ½ weeks away from an exciting, joyful, global event. We as a City and region should embrace and own this historic gathering, feel the enthusiasm and celebrate our shared beliefs in the central role that "Family" plays in our lives.

Philadelphia is the "Can Do" City and we can do and will do everything in our power, along with our many partners, to ensure a safe and secure event, a spiritual and joyful event.

It will also be one of those rare opportunities for Philadelphia to showcase on a global stage what we've been doing for quite some time – managing very large events or situations.

And this World Meeting of Families could well be the largest ever. In Manila in 2003, Valencia, Spain in 2006 and in Milan in 2012, the closing Mass attendance was estimated at 1 million participants. The current general estimate for Philadelphia is a one million to one-and-one-half million people or more

We believe Pope Francis and his message will encourage many more people to come to Philadelphia. We are all very excited about the prospect of so many women, men and children of faith coming to the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection.

At the same time, I understand there are many concerns. What



will happen? How will it impact me, my family, my business, my employer? I get it. We get it. Yes, our daily routines will be disrupted, sometimes in minor ways, sometimes in significant ways.

But just as soon as we have even more concrete details to announce, we will do so. And that will give everyone enough time to take the appropriate actions, make prudent plans and prepare for an event like no other in this City's history. This is an incredible moment in time for all of us.

Let me note that as we prepare for this historic event, we are working and coordinating with a significant number of partners, including:

United States Secret Service, Philadelphia Police, Philadelphia Fire, Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management, PennDOT, Philadelphia Parking Authority, Delaware River Port Authority/PATCO, NJTransit, Department of Homeland Security, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania National Guard, Pennsylvania State Police, and our regional suburban partners in Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties.

For today, we will provide details regarding vehicle traffic in and around Center City, as well as updates from SEPTA and DRPA on their services.

Our partners from the State will also highlight how they are working with us to ensure that the World Meeting of Families and Papal Visit run as smoothly as possible.

- We are working very closely with the Governor Wolf and the State as we move into the final weeks before the Pope's arrival, and we know that all of our State agencies will be a huge asset during this major event.
- PennDOT, Pennsylvania State Police and the PA National Guard will play major roles when it comes to traffic, transportation and public safety.

In short, there are many people and agencies working in concert to create the best, most thoughtfully executed plan for our City during the World Meeting of Families. All of the agencies here today will continue to release more detailed plans about their services as we get closer to the event.

The World Meeting of Families Congress will take place Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> through Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. The Papal Visit will take place that weekend, Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup> & Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup>.

Think of it: 1.5 million visitors in addition to our 1.5 million residents who have to move around the city in their daily lives.

Again, with these numbers in mind, folks should start thinking ahead and making plans now because this event will impact the everyday life of our city and our city government.

We are working to make sure Philadelphia is open and accessible to everyone who wants to be here. But there are a few things to keep in mind if you do travel downtown for the event or any other activity:

- Be prepared to walk at least a few miles or more, depending on where you are and where you are going
- Private vehicles will not be a viable option on the weekend in Center City
- Public transportation routes and schedules will be altered for efficiency and capacity – and SEPTA and the other agencies will tell us about their plans in just a moment.

As we have done with a number of our other special events, **the City of Philadelphia has established what we call a "Traffic Box"** for the Papal Visit.

- The “Traffic Box” is basically an area where private vehicles can exit but can’t re-enter.
- Within the Traffic Box there are **Authorized Vehicle Access Roads**, which are for emergency vehicles only and no other vehicles will be permitted to drive or park on them.

The “Traffic Box” established by the City will stretch from Center City to 38<sup>th</sup> Street in West Philadelphia. Depending on crowd size as it develops during the World Meeting of Families, it is slated to begin at 6 pm on Friday, September 25 with other parts west of the Schuylkill River at 10 pm.

**Boundaries are as follows for the Center City portion of the Traffic Box:**

- Northern Boundary: Spring Garden to Ridge, Ridge to Girard, Girard to Schuylkill River
- Southern Boundary: South Street river to river
- East Boundary: Delaware Avenue from South Street to Spring Garden Street
- West Boundary: runs along the edge of the Schuylkill River and cuts up Kelly Drive stopping below the Girard Street Bridge

**For the West Philadelphia portion of the Traffic Box, the boundaries will be:**

- Northern Boundary: Powelton Avenue from 32<sup>nd</sup> to 38<sup>th</sup>
- Southern Boundary: University Avenue to Grays Ferry
- East Boundary: Runs along the edge of the Schuylkill River and train tracks
- West Boundary: 38<sup>th</sup> Street from Powelton Avenue to University Avenue

Bicycle and pedestrian traffic WILL be permitted within the “Traffic Box”.

In addition to the announcements related to transportation, we’re also announcing that operations of the City Courts, the First Judicial District, will be closed Wednesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> through Monday, September 28<sup>th</sup>.

During this period, the City of Philadelphia will be open for services, but there will limited service plans from Thursday through Monday. We plan to provide more details in the days to come regarding city service levels and impacts.

One final note before we hear from our partners.

We all need to take a collective moment of reflection and pride. We as a City, we the people, were chosen for this event. We are the chosen city and with that comes certain duties, responsibilities and pride. Yes, we will face challenges for a period of time. But we will face them together as a City, as a region as a community.

In the past, we’ve had road closures, we’ve had areas of the city cordoned off, and we’ve had disruptions in service for short periods of time – from snow storms to heavy rain events.

We’ve had huge events that have closed the Parkway.

I guess what’s different here is that the proportions of this event are so large and the impacts are all going to happen at the same time. That’s unique, that’s different. But so is hosting the World Meeting of Families and I’m thrilled about that. This is our “one moment in time.” As the song goes, ‘You’re a winner for a lifetime, if you seize that one moment in time, make it shine.’

When William Penn designed this City Center, he created an eye-pleasing grid. Today, it’s an incredibly walkable, bikeable and manageable area. Folks will be able to get around.

We are doing the planning, we’re assembling the needed resources and we’ve begun a long and detailed discussion with the public about what to expect. Much more information is to come.

But let's not lose sight of the wonderful opportunity with which we've been presented. The Vatican looked all over the world and the United States and chose this city for this event.

We will be ready and we're going to open our City to the world and when it's over people we know what it means to be the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection.

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