

New York City aims to 'fully reopen' on July 1

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New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said Thursday that the city hopes to "fully reopen" on July 1.

The mayor did not specify exactly how or when pandemic restrictions would be lifted, which is actually a decision for New York state Governor Andrew Cuomo, with whom he has a difficult relationship.

"We are ready for stores to open, for businesses to open, offices, theaters, full strength," de Blasio told MSNBC.

For his part, Cuomo said making projections was "irresponsible" but hoped that the Big Apple might be able to end restrictions earlier.

"If we do what we have to do we can reopen earlier," he told reporters.

De Blasio said there was still "work to be done" and said the key to reopening would be getting everybody vaccinated.

New York has been subject to various restrictions since the coronavirus first engulfed the city in March last year, going on to kill around 32,000 people.

Some 6.4 million doses of the vaccine have been administered in the Big Apple, according to city figures. Around 2.4 million New Yorkers out of 8.5 million have been fully vaccinated.

The goal is to reach 5 million by the end of June, said the mayor.

Cuomo has loosened a number of restrictions in recent weeks, allowing restaurants, stadiums, cinemas and performance venues to reopen with limited capacity.

Broadway theaters are not expected to reopen until September.

Despite the vaccination drive, a vast majority of New Yorkers continue to work from home, and offices remain deserted.

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