

**STATEMENT OF POLICE COMMISSIONER DERMOT SHEA
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEES ON FINANCE AND PUBLIC SAFETY
ON THE FISCAL YEAR 2022 EXECUTIVE BUDGET
TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2021 – 10:00 A.M.**

Good morning, everyone. Chair Adams, Chair Dromm, and members of the City Council: Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Mayor's Executive Budget for the 2022 Fiscal Year. Before highlighting some key budget items, I'd like to discuss the challenges we are facing as we attempt to rebound and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

First and foremost among these challenges is the increase in shootings that plague our streets. Just several of the hundreds of victims last year include: a 7-year-old girl shot in East Harlem in June; a 1-year-old boy shot and killed in Bedford-Stuyvesant in July; a 7-year-old boy shot in Crown Heights in September, and an 8-year-old girl shot in Mott Haven later that month; and a 9-year-old girl shot in Central Harlem on Halloween.

And in addition to a 5-year-old girl shot in East New York last month, this past weekend's violence saw two adult tourists – and a 4-year-old Brooklyn girl shopping for toys with her family – shot in Times Square on the eve of Mother's Day.

In any of the shooting incidents we have seen so far in 2021 – which are at a nearly 20-year high, up 86-and-a-half percent since this time last year – it could have been any one of us, or our children, or our parents, or our friends, who could have been struck. Bullets do not discriminate. And we – the NYPD, this City Council, our state and federal legislators, and all of our law enforcement and community partners – need to do much, much more to stem the violence. Members of the NYPD have made record numbers of gun arrests this year, with fewer resources. But without meaningful consequences, existing laws are nothing more than an illusion.

The pandemic has taken a toll on, literally, everybody across our city, our nation, and the world. At the NYPD, the coronavirus claimed the lives of 10 uniformed members, 38 civilians, and seven volunteer Auxiliary members.

Regardless of their rank, title, or role in the police department, those 55 family members of ours – whom we vow to never forget – died in service to New Yorkers.

We at the NYPD see partners in those who control the budget. You share our responsibility to keep New York City safe. Our collective efforts are for all the people we serve: eight million-plus New Yorkers, and millions more people who are increasingly coming back to their office spaces, and the millions more tourists who will be returning to experience all our great city has to offer. I know that our cultural institutions, our restaurants, our vibrant nightlife, and much more, will roar back in time. But make no mistake: All of what makes New York City great is built on the foundation of public safety that all of us provide.

I am heartened by the fact that, at the end of last week, we graduated our first class of new police officers in nearly a year. That will help. Every little bit does. But, as you know, we lost nearly 1,200 cops in last year's budget, as well as significant funding for overtime that the police department has relied on for well over a decade to supplement staffing in locations where we see upticks in violence. Overtime is a critical tool in maintaining public safety because it affords us additional deployments in neighborhoods with increased levels of shootings and other violence, including in the transit system and in our many housing developments. While it enables detectives to fast-track many cases that can lead to convictions, other investigations are very intensive and can continue for months, often with uncooperative victims or witnesses. Such cases need a lot of resources, too, because great police work means relentless follow-up and not stopping until an arrest is made and justice is served. I can also report that in the past year, the NYPD has spent less on overtime costs than at any time in at least the past 15 years. The bottom line is: Less overtime equals less cops doing police work. It's really that simple.

This fiscal year continues to be unique and challenging: Uniformed overtime spending is down almost 40 percent and the budget for next fiscal year has been cut to bring the police department down to our current fiscal year spend. I must note that we have been without hundreds of New York City events, big and small, that we would normally see – from the West Indian American Day Carnival and Parade, to the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, to all of the other events that celebrate the rich cultural, ethnic, and religious heritages that make New York the greatest

city in the world. As we see those events return, the need for additional police officers will mean additional overtime expenditures. And our current overtime budget for next fiscal year – which is already underfunded based purely on our need to deploy officers to fight back against violence – will, even further, be insufficient to allow for adequate coverage at these events going forward.

In totality, the NYPD's Fiscal Year 2022 Expense Budget is \$5.4 billion, the vast majority of which – 92 percent – is allocated for personnel costs. The remaining 8 percent is dedicated to non-personnel costs, including technology that provides officers with immediate access to critical safety equipment, tools, and applications.

As I mentioned earlier, last year's adopted budget saw significant operating reductions of \$417 million, including: a recruit class cancellation that diminished our uniformed workforce by 1,163 officers (\$55 million); a uniformed overtime decrease (\$296 million); a civilian overtime decrease (\$39 million); the cutting of 100 civilian positions (\$12 million); a delay in Police Cadet hiring (\$4.2 million); and other, non-personnel reductions (\$12 million).

As part of the \$536.9-million reduction to the NYPD's Capital Budget taken at adoption, funding was eliminated for a new 116th Precinct and its station house, as well as for construction of a much-needed, consolidated Property Clerk's warehouse that would improve evidence and property storage. As part of this most recent budget, \$92 million in capital funding was restored for the construction of a new 116th precinct station house. This will be the second facility – after the new 40th precinct station house currently under construction – that will have a dedicated community space, in which residents and workers from neighborhoods can engage directly with the police officers who serve them.

In summary, our Neighborhood Policing philosophy – a proven crime-fighting model of policing – works when we have the necessary tools and resources. That is how we balance public safety. When tools are taken away, there are real-world consequences on the streets in the form of increasing crime and victimization. Of course, that extends underground into our subway system, too, where quality-of-life conditions – and whether riders feel safe – are of paramount concern. And that's an important distinction: People need to be safe, but they absolutely must feel safe, too.

Cause-and-effect applies to our highways, parkways, and surface roads, as well. I know I do not need to remind anyone that, amid a spike in traffic-related deaths and injuries this year, Detective Anastasios Tsakos – two weeks ago, today – was struck and killed by a drunk driver with a suspended license as he helped secure the scene of an earlier, fatal collision and investigation on the Long Island Expressway in Queens. In all instances, it is imperative that the people who commit crimes take responsibility for their poor decisions. And it is vital that the criminal justice system, as a whole, ensures accountability.

When I was sworn-in by the mayor nearly a year-and-a-half ago, I said that our renewed focus on our city’s young people was part of our evolution as a police department and a city. Despite the headwinds over the past year, we are staying the course. And the NYPD – with the entire city’s support – pledges to redouble its efforts in this area. Just last week, I joined the mayor and elected officials at the Wagner Houses in East Harlem to open new basketball courts where young New Yorkers can exercise and play.

The work we do must always be about sharing the responsibility for public safety – working together to reduce crime and violence. When these things happen together, we are building the bridge between the public’s safety and the public’s trust.

Post-pandemic, as we take Neighborhood Policing to the next level by way of our reinvigorated youth strategy, I want to thank you for your ongoing partnership. More than ever, New York needs even more of our ideas, and all of our actions – now. And that goes for the entire public safety spectrum: from traditional crime to terrorism, to the seedbed-activities that can draw young people down a path of criminality. This is our mission, and we owe every New Yorker nothing but our best efforts.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify this morning. And I welcome your questions.

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