

**STATEMENT OF CHIEF RODNEY HARRISON  
CHIEF OF PATROL  
NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT  
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY  
DECEMBER 10, 2018**

Good morning Chair Richards and members of the Council. I am Chief Rodney Harrison, Chief of Patrol for the New York City Police Department (NYPD). I am joined here today by Oleg Chernyavsky, the Department's Executive Director of Legislative Affairs. On behalf of Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill, we are pleased to testify before your Committee about Neighborhood Policing.

What first began as a pilot in the spring of 2015 in the 33<sup>rd</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup>, 100<sup>th</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup> Precincts, is today our guiding philosophy. Other than the Central Park Precinct, it is implemented in every precinct and Housing Police Service Area (PSA), and six Transit Bureau Districts, with the remaining 6 districts scheduled to come on-line by the end of 2019. In addition, this year the School Safety Division began a pilot that integrates Neighborhood Policing into our schools through our newly created School Coordination Agents. To be clear, Neighborhood Policing is more than shaking hands and engaging neighborhood residents in friendly conversation. It is a comprehensive crime-fighting strategy, built on improved communication and collaboration between police and the communities we serve, aimed at reducing crime, promoting safety, mutual respect, and solving problems collaboratively, with the recognition that enforcement is not always the answer.

Neighborhood Policing divides precincts into geographical areas called sectors, which correspond to neighborhood boundaries, and staffs them with officers who patrol almost exclusively within their assigned sector. There are generally about four or five sectors in each precinct. By working daily in the same sector, sector cops become intimately familiar with residents and business owners, as well as the unique conditions in each such area. But more importantly, and what makes Neighborhood Policing different from prior attempts at community engagement or community policing, is that engaging the community is at the core of an officer's duties. Unlike ever before, our staffing plan ensures that sector cops are not spending their entire tour listening to the radio and running from one 911 job to the next. Instead we ensure that a third of an officer's tour is spent off the radio. Meaning, at least a third of each tour is spent engaging the community, problem solving, building trust and improving quality of life in this city through a holistic approach to policing.

Key to the success of Neighborhood Policing is the Neighborhood Coordination Officer (NCO). Each sector team includes two officers designated as NCOs. While applying to be an NCO is voluntary, those applying must demonstrate that they are not only stellar crime fighters, but also that they possess the skills and temperament necessary to promote ongoing collaboration and engagement with communities. Officers that demonstrate such characteristics are handpicked by Commanding Officers to be NCOs. Structurally, NCOs report to the NCO sergeant who in turn reports directly to the Commanding Officer. The NCOs serve as liaisons between the police and the community, and also as key crime-fighters and problem-solvers in the sector. They spend time familiarizing themselves with the community to better respond to neighborhood-specific crime

and conditions. The NCOs attend community meetings with neighborhood residents, leaders and clergy, visit schools, and follow up on incidents occurring in their sector. As a part of their community outreach function, NCOs run "Build the Block" meetings. These public forums are designed as working strategy sessions, with community members who raise issues, problems, and complaints and collaborate with the police in devising solutions.

NCOs receive specialized training focused on providing them with a variety of skills they can employ in their work. As part of the initial transition to becoming an NCO, officers receive four weeks of training. This includes a five-day NCO specific training course, which covers topics such as community relations, public speaking, domestic violence and child abuse, inter-agency and intra-Department collaboration, crime prevention and intelligence gathering. They then attend a four-day course on mediation and conflict resolution offered by the New York Peace Institute and a two-week Criminal Investigation Course that all detectives are required to complete. Because NCOs receive the same criminal investigation training as detectives, they are able to function as adjuncts to the precinct detective squads, responding swiftly to incidents and developing leads and gathering evidence that may have been lost or contaminated under the old model of specialized units and officers solely devoted to responding to radio calls. Recently, all NCOs received two days of training that focused specifically on outreach to the homeless populations in New York. This broad spectrum of training enables NCOs to use creative approaches, techniques and adaptive skills to solve problems both collaboratively with residents and via the use of resources within and outside the NYPD to address issues in communities where they serve.

As you may have noticed, Neighborhood Policing is a bottom-up approach, where day-to-day community engagement and problem-solving is led by officers, not supervisors. While it is true that Neighborhood Policing builds trust between communities and police, it is likewise true that Neighborhood Policing cannot work unless we, as Department executives, trust our officers. That is why we have committed to providing our officers with the training, technology, and tools they need to successfully perform their duties and affording them the latitude to make decisions and solve problems. Their success is not measured by the number of summonses issued or arrests made, but rather by the impact their performance has on making New York City residents' lives better and our city safer.

The ideals behind Neighborhood Policing are universal, and apply to any area of policing where community interaction is vital. Some may wonder how we apply the principles of Neighborhood Policing to something as literally transient as the subway system, but Transit cops see the same faces every morning and evening, and build the same kinds of relationships with citizens underground as their precinct counterparts do above-ground.

We see the benefits of Neighborhood Policing every day. Last January, an off-duty NCO in the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct received a tip from a local landlord on his Department-issued cell phone. A tenant in his building had been assaulted but was too afraid to come forward. The NCO and other 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct NCOs responded and were able to interview the victim leading to the arrest of a violent sexual predator. Last February, NCOs and the Field Intelligence Officer in the 9<sup>th</sup> Precinct worked together to break up a drug ring after a concerned community member attending a community meeting told them about drug sales on his block. These are the very types of community

relationships and partnerships that we strive to build and are the foundation of Neighborhood Policing. But our success is not just limited to crime fighting. In the 23<sup>rd</sup> Precinct, NCOs received a report of a vacant lot next to a school that was littered with discarded hypodermic needles. NCOs, working with the School Safety Division and the Parks Department, ensured that the lot was cleaned up and school children were taken out of harm's way.

I can spend the next several hours pointing to examples, similar to the ones I just described, which demonstrate the effectiveness of Neighborhood Policing and I can relay the numerous conversations I have had with both officers and community members alike, who recount the ways Neighborhood Policing has changed neighborhoods for the better. However, anecdotal evidence only goes so far and the NYPD is an organization that is committed to using proven strategies that work to drive down crime and increase trust and respect. To that end, the NYPD has commissioned a study to be performed by a respected outside research firm to tell us whether Neighborhood Policing reduces crime, increases respect and trust between the police and the community, and improves collaborative problem solving. This two year assessment will be objective, rigorous, credible, and most importantly, independent. We look forward to sharing those results with you as they become available.

As Commissioner O'Neill has repeatedly said, Neighborhood Policing is not merely a program or initiative. It is not just a few cops in some parts of the city trying to be nicer to people. It is an overarching philosophy intended to reshape our approach to fulfilling our core mission. Neighborhood Policing reflects a cultural change for the whole Department; for every cop, every civilian employee, every bureau, division and unit, and for everyone who lives, works, and enjoys New York City. It is about each of us sharing responsibility for public safety by working together.

Thank you for inviting us to testify today and we are now happy to answer any questions you may have.



December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018

From: The Urban Youth Collaborative

To: The New York City Council

Re: City Council Hearing – Oversight NYPD's Neighborhood Coordination Officers bka NCO's

Good Afternoon, my name is Roberto Cabanas and I'm the Coordinator for the Urban Youth Collaborative. The Urban Youth Collaborative has been led by youth, high school students from across New York City for over 10 years. Our youth leaders have come to many of these hearings to testify and share their experiences and hopefully be considered as the most valuable and knowledgeable change agents and stakeholders in education policy as they are experiencing it every day. Over the last two years they have organized and worked around the clock to help reframe the narrative of school safety to always start with what young people really need. When the Mayor held a townhall following the tragedy in Parkland. Our leaders and students of color from across New York City shared exactly what they need. They asked for more guidance counselors and social workers. The City Council has been important in increasing the number of guidance counselors and social workers, but we still have a long way to go to make sure schools all across the city have the number of guidance counselors and social workers based on need. There are more homeless students in New York City than all of the students in Boston. Every program or initiative about school climate and safety should begin with significantly increasing the number of support staff that has received years of training in how to meet the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students. Young people were clear they wanted more access to mental health supports in school. We understand there is a Thrive program in New York City but its not connecting many students to mental health support or resources in their schools. Students often don't see mental health support until after they are in trouble or have already been removed from a school.

All of the students of color in the townhall expressed their concern with the level of policing and surveillance they feel in and around their schools. That is reflective of how their communities have been

policed forever and new initiatives that are supposed to be more community friendly don't address the systemic issues. That is why are youth are asking the city to envision schools without a police force. We need the City Council to seek oversight on current policing practices. What about accountability and transparency in school policing has been addressed? Has the city addressed the recent report in Buzzfeed that demonstrates there are dozens of Officers/Safety Agents working in school that have substantiated cases of using excessive force or other forms of misconduct? Where are those officers? Are they still working around children? Has the city put in place changes in discipline for officers/agents who have misconduct incidents in schools? Over 20 years of research shows that if you want to end the school-to-prison pipeline you don't increase the role of law enforcement officers in school you reduce their role and make the line clear. This program is going to create a huge grey area where students could potentially believe they are sharing personal information with school employees when they are sharing personal information with employees for the NYPD. That feels like an intentional betrayal of trust of our students and families.

This feels like another example of the city ignoring the root of the issue and moving forward without addressing the changes that are really needed. I implore the City Council to urge the City to slow down on this program and move our schools towards centering staff trained in mental, social, and emotional health to build stronger relationships with students and their communities. Finally, listen to young people. Their vision might sound radical to you but its grounded in their belief in each other and their hope that we will always see their full humanity.

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Patricia Ann Grim

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I represent: myself

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Name: Roberte Cabanas

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I represent: Urban Youth Collaborative

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Date: 12-10

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Name: Chief Rodney Harrison

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I represent: NYPD

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Date: 12-10-18

Executive Director (PLEASE PRINT)  
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