

**STATEMENT OF
DEPUTY CHIEF BRIAN McCARTHY
EXECUTIVE OFFICER, PATROL SERVICES BUREAU
NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND PARKS AND RECREATION
JANUARY 30, 2012**

Good morning, Committee Chairs and members of the Council. I am Deputy Chief Brian McCarthy, Executive Officer of the Patrol Services Bureau, New York City Police Department. On behalf of Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly, I am pleased to be here today to discuss the topic of public safety in parks.

In a dense urban setting like New York City, it is especially important for people to be able to enjoy the open space, natural landscapes, and recreational facilities provided by our public parks. It is part of the mission of the Police Department to ensure that the people of New York feel safe in their parks, as we strive to ensure their safety throughout the City.

As you know, the Police Department utilizes many strategies and initiatives to prevent crime and improve the quality of life in our City. A key element to all of our tactics is flexibility -- using new techniques and changing the deployment of resources to address crime patterns and quality-of-life problems as they evolve. Another key element is commander accountability -- giving local precinct commanders the authority and responsibility for making many operational decisions, and then holding them responsible for the results, evaluating their effectiveness on a regular basis.

These principles work for all aspects of policing in New York City, including the ways we address and prevent crime in parks. Our precinct commanders and their staffs keep close watch on their crime complaints and patterns, and it is their responsibility to know whether crime is occurring in a park, for example, as opposed to on a street outside. It is clear that, based on the knowledge and experience of our local precinct commanders, crime in parks occurs at extremely low levels citywide.

Over the past several years, the Council has received quarterly reports from the Police Department which provide data regarding the incidence of major crimes in the City's largest parks. This data confirms what our precinct commanders already know on a local basis.

The continuing effort to ensure the safety of the City's parks reflects the strong partnership between the Police Department and the Parks Department. You are probably already aware of the many ways in which we work in partnership, such as policing major events in the parks, providing extra deployment of officers during the summer months,

including at the City's beaches and pools, and conducting joint tours of parks to identify problems.

On an ongoing basis, the Chief of Patrol, borough commanders and precinct commanders meet with their counterparts in the Parks Department to plan for major events, such as concerts and the New York City Marathon, as well as to coordinate their strategies and discuss coming needs, especially for the summer months. In most precincts, the Special Operations Lieutenant is the point person for day-to-day parks issues, and he or she has a close working relationship with the local Parks Manager.

Because every public park in the City falls within a precinct's responsibility, each is part of the precinct's regular patrol duties, whether as part of a sector or assigned as a particular beat. Depending on the size and particular crime or quality-of-life problems which may exist, the park will be patrolled regularly, on every tour. Deployment is tailored to need, which may vary greatly according to time of day, day of the week, and season of the year.

The Department has resources such as bicycles, two- and three-wheeled scooters, and four-wheel drive vehicles which enable officers to reach every area within their assignment. In addition, the resources devoted to parks are not limited to the local patrol officers. Depending on the circumstances, a precinct commander may deploy anti-crime or other officers to address particular conditions, or the Patrol Boroughs may provide additional personnel if needed. In addition, precinct commanders maintain a constantly updated summary of precinct conditions, which briefs all of the personnel on special problems and conditions to be addressed.

On a broader scale, problems such as entrenched truancy, narcotics conditions, or graffiti vandalism, may require special attention by other Department commands. Extra help may be requested by the precinct commander, or may be provided by my office, the Chief of Patrol's Office, as a result of our own independent and comprehensive review of crime conditions and complaints, City-wide.

To ensure that the precinct commander and patrol personnel are fully informed regarding local issues, part of the precinct commander's responsibility is to participate in community meetings of all types, where issues of particular concern to the local residents and businesses are discussed in depth. We continue to strongly encourage the community to participate in Precinct Community Council meetings, where information about crime and quality of life issues, including crime levels in the precinct's parks, may be readily shared by the officers, and the community members, who are most familiar with them.

In conclusion, we appreciate your interest in the issue of safety in the City's parks, and will continue to work closely with the Department of Parks and Recreation to enhance the safety of the City's parks, for the enjoyment of the people of New York City. I would like to now turn it over to Commissioner Dockett.



**NYC City Council Committees on Public Safety & Parks and Recreation
Joint Hearing on Safety in Parks
January 30, 2012
Public Testimony of New Yorkers for Parks**

Good morning. My name is Holly Leicht, and I am Executive Director of New Yorkers for Parks, a citywide research and advocacy organization championing quality parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods. New Yorkers for Parks has closely followed the issue of safety in parks for decades and played a central role in advocating for the 2005 legislation mandating that the NYPD begin to track crimes in New York City parks.

Many New Yorkers are surprised to learn that until five years ago, crimes in parks weren't reported as occurring in a park; instead, the NYPD tracked them to the nearest street address. Responding to a strong advocacy campaign by New Yorkers for Parks and other groups, the City Council, with strong leadership from Council Member Peter Vallone Jr., and Mayor Bloomberg passed Local Law 114 in 2005, mandating that the seven Major Felony Crime Complaints be tracked in City parks. This legislation marked a first step toward increasing transparency, accountability and public awareness about crimes in parks.

The legislation allowed for a phased implementation, beginning with the city's 20 largest parks. In 2008, the tracking requirement was expanded to 30 parks, and the law called for it to expand to the 100 largest parks one year later, the 200 largest parks two years later, and all parks measuring one acre or greater three years later. The reality has fallen short in two important respects.

Most significantly, no expansion of reporting has taken place since 2008, and the NYPD is still tracking crime in only 30 City parks, reportedly due to technological constraints. With such a limited sampling of parks, it is difficult to accurately analyze crime trends and patterns in parks or draw meaningful conclusions about resource deployment or other safety initiatives.

Secondly, the City does not make the data publicly available. New Yorkers for Parks' website is currently the only place providing the public with the crime data collected on the 30 parks. It is our hope that making this data available to New Yorkers will help them assess the safety of their parks. NY4P will continue to act as a clearinghouse for crime data as it becomes available, updating our website on a quarterly basis as the NYPD releases new data, though its utility is limited until a larger sample size is tracked.

Reporting crimes in all large parks is in everyone's best interest: it will help New Yorkers better understand the reality - or perhaps fallacy - of perceived safety concerns about parks, both generally and specifically, and could lead to a more informed and efficient distribution of police resources. New Yorkers for Parks urges the Council to work with the NYPD to identify the technological issues hindering the full implementation of this mandate, to develop and release a plan and timeline for overcoming these constraints, and to work closely with the NYPD to ensure that the full program is implemented within that revised timeframe.



City of New York Parks & Recreation



**Hearing before the
New York City Council
Committee on Parks & Recreation
Jointly with
Committee on Public Safety**

Examining Safety in NYC Parks

January 30th, 2012

**Testimony by
Mike Dockett, Assistant Commissioner for Urban Park Service**

Good morning Chairs Mark-Viverito and Vallone, and members of the Parks and Public Safety Committees. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss how the Parks Department along with our partners at the NYPD work together to ensure that park users are and feel safe in our parks. My name is Mike Dockett and I am the Assistant Commissioner for Urban Park Service. Joining me is our First Deputy Commissioner, Liam Kavanagh. Additionally, we have with us our Deputy Commissioner for Community Outreach, Larry Scott Blackmon, and our Director of Government Relations, Karen Becker.

Over the last three decades, crime is down dramatically across the city. Keeping our parks safe requires partnerships and involvement on many levels from many different entities and we are proud of the work we are able to accomplish together. We are witnessing record attendance in our parks and at events that take place on parkland. We pride ourselves on providing a positive park atmosphere by first and foremost ensuring that our parks are clean and safe. Public safety in parks and playgrounds is one of our major priorities and our Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officers are where the people are, providing security where they are most needed, but we do not operate in a vacuum and we rely on our partners in government, and the NYPD specifically and most importantly, to ensure public safety. I will first discuss in detail how our two agencies work together on many levels to make parks and playgrounds safe and welcoming places and then I will describe the role and responsibilities of the Urban Parks Service in operating and maintaining the park system.

The coordination between our agencies in the interest of the public safety starts at the top. Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe has regular discussions, calls and meetings with Police Commissioner Ray Kelly to coordinate on major events that impact the public such as the New York City Marathon, the Thanksgiving Day Parade and major concerts like the Andrea Bocelli and Black Eyed Peas concerts held this past summer.

Each season, we meet with the NYPD at the highest levels to discuss every special event occurring on parkland so that the police are prepared well in advance and can provide sufficient

security and ensure crowd control. Our Assistant Commissioner who oversees our large events and her entire staff is in constant communication with all levels of the NYPD from central to the local precinct before, during, and after each event.

First Deputy Commissioner Liam Kavanaugh confers with the Chief of Patrol before the start of each beach and pool season to ensure that all areas are covered and the public can have a fun and safe summer enjoying our beach and pool amenities. Our PEP officers work extensively with the police during the summer months when the NYPD has units patrolling our 14 miles of beach and stationed at all of our outdoor pools. Every large pool is assigned at least one NYPD officer who assists with safety in the pools and managing the crowds. There is regular communication at our pool locations and frequently more officers will respond to assist with the large number of people who are exiting our pools after closing for the night. At our beaches, PEP and NYPD officers patrol to address illegal alcohol consumption and other illegal activities. Their support during the summer when our parks have the highest attendance, and our beaches and pools are open is invaluable and we thank them for their presence.

We communicate regularly with police commanders that have parks within their precincts. In addition, our Borough Commissioners have instituted an additional forum entitled "Park Network Meetings", where agency personnel meet on a monthly basis to address park specific concerns. These meetings are proving to be a valuable asset to address park-specific quality of life concerns. It is important to note that many of our parks are patrolled daily by the NYPD. Local communication and coordination happens every day and in all situations from special events to responding to emergencies. All of the Parks Borough Commissioners routinely meet with Borough and Precinct Commanders to discuss coordination and safety at the local level. There are regular operations meetings with NYPD and other stakeholders including the community board and community groups to ensure that we are all working together to protect the safety of the public in parks. We find that the local communication is our most important and effective tool for combating crime.

PEP and NYPD officers routinely work together at a local level to respond to specific incidents. This past fall, there was a string of robberies that were occurring in Fort Greene Park. Through constant communication between our two agencies, PEP and NYPD officers increased their uniformed visibility and the NYPD sent in their Anti-Crime Unit. With the full participation and support of Deputy Inspector Tasso of the 88th Precinct, a successful arrest was made and the suspect made a full confession of his crimes.

Daily cooperation with the NYPD is paramount and central to securing our parks. NYPD officers assist PEP officers with back-up in the event of a dangerous situation and they assist with prisoner transport when needed. All of our PEP officers' arrests are processed with the NYPD at the local precinct. The Police Department enforces Parks' curfew rules to ensure that our parks are safe and people are not in our parks when they shouldn't be there. Our PEP officers work very closely with the NYPD Homeless Outreach Unit (HOU) and Department of Homeless Services Outreach coordinators to not only secure our parks, but to also provide aid and services to our homeless population.

We do not and cannot secure our parks with PEP officers alone and we can't understate the importance of our partnership with the men and women of the New York City Police Department who are charged with the task of securing the safety of our resident not only in all our parks, but

across the city. Thanks to their hard work, the record numbers of New Yorkers in our parks not only feel safe and secure, but are safe and secure.

Let me now provide insight on our Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officers and discuss their responsibilities. Full-time PEP officers are NY State Peace Officers and NYC Special Patrolmen, a status granted by the NYC Police Commissioner. Parks Enforcement Patrol officers provide security and safety to park patrons, provide information about park rules and regulations, and protect the public, facilities, wildlife, and the environment. Their uniformed presence provides the public with a highly visible and identifiable resource at concerts, pools, beaches, recreation centers, parks, athletic events and other special events throughout the five boroughs. Shielded Parks Enforcement Patrol officers are empowered to enforce quality of life regulations, issue summonses for violations, and make arrests. A PEP officer can make arrests the same way a NYPD officer would. A very important distinction between a PEP officer and an NYPD officer, however, is that our PEP officers are unarmed. They also do not focus on or investigate what are classified as "index crimes" such as murder, rape, felony assault, burglary, grand larceny and grand larceny auto; their focus is on quality of life crimes and enforcing park rules and regulations.

While NYPD in coordination with our PEP officers protect our park users, they are not the only entities that assist with securing our parks and enforcing park rules and regulations. In addition to PEP, our Urban Park Rangers are sworn and shielded personnel that supplement the role of PEP. Our sworn staff is supplemented by our non-sworn staff known as the Parks Security Service. The Security Service is composed of City Seasonal Aides (CSAs), Work Experience Participants (WEPs) and Job Training Participants (JTPs). Like our PEP officers, they are tasked with focusing on quality of life issues. I'd like to take a moment to go through the different forms of Parks' security enforcement in our agency in more detail.

Urban Park Rangers: Our Urban Park Rangers have the same training and authority as our PEP officers although their focus is mostly on education, youth programming, New York City's wildlife and our nature centers. They are the Parks Department's law enforcement presence in the natural areas and issues summonses and make arrests in those areas under their purview.

Mounted PEP: This is a specialized unit of equestrian officers trained in horse care, and stable management in addition to Parks' Rules and Regulations. Mounted PEP officers patrol New York City parks on horseback, especially in areas that are inaccessible by vehicles, providing a visible presence to deter crime. In fact, one Mounted PEP officer is equal to ten officers on foot in terms of patrol coverage and at special events. Like other Parks Enforcement Patrol officers, Mounted PEP officers have Special Patrolman and Peace Officer status and can issue summonses and make arrests.

Mounted Auxiliary: In addition to our mounted PEP unit, we have an additional mounted unit comprised of auxiliary PEP officers. The mounted auxiliary is a group of dedicated volunteers who perform mounted patrols to assist in preserving public safety and in protecting our green spaces with a uniformed presence through education. We recently held a press conference in mid-December 2011 on Staten Island to announce our recruitment drive to increase membership in the Mounted Auxiliary Unit starting. We will offer multiple Training Academies in 2012, and a streamlined application process. During 2011 the Mounted Auxiliary Unit logged 554 patrol

hours, 444 Barn Hours, and 267 Special Event hours. The next Mounted Auxiliary Academy will start the first week of February.

Central Communications: The officers assigned to Central Communications, although they mostly work behind the scenes, play a primary role in maintaining the flow of information to the public through the City's 311 call system and to the first responders in PEP and the Rangers, as well as to the Forestry and Maintenance divisions. They are especially vital in times of emergency. These law enforcement officers work to ensure effective agency and interagency communications.

Harbor Patrol: While they are not year-round, they provide a unique, important, and specialized protection detail during the warmer months between April and November. This is a specialized unit trained in swift water rescue, marina and harbor patrol, and management of our nautical vessels. Harbor Patrol officers enforce Parks Rules and Regulations and NYS Navigation Law. Harbor Patrol is essential in protecting our waterfront parks and the marinas owned and operated by the Parks Department. Harbor Unit works closely with the NYPD Harbor Unit and the Coast Guard as they patrol New York City's waterways along the Hudson River. The Unit provides a visible presence and additional security both on land and on the water, working with the New York Field Intelligence Support Team (NYFIST) run by the U.S. Coast Guard, which shares current intelligence with local law enforcement entities.

At the height of our busy season, which runs from Memorial Day through Labor Day, there are additional seasonal security officers that supplement our year-round complement of PEP and Urban Park Rangers. These seasonal security officers are crucial during the summer months at our pools, beaches and recreation centers.

In addition to promoting the proper use of parks and ensuring the safety of our park visitors, our PEP Officers and Rangers issue summonses for violating health, traffic and sanitation codes. The top five summonses PEP issues, in order, are for unleashed or uncontrolled animals in park, failure to comply with pedicab restrictions, unauthorized vending, failure to comply with directions/prohibitions on signs, and consumption/possession of alcoholic beverage. Last year, PEP officers and Rangers issued 1,772 unleashed animal summonses, 1,187 pedicab violations, 1,097 summonses for unauthorized vending, 936 summonses for failing to comply with park rules and regulations and 890 for the possession of alcoholic beverages.

As I mentioned earlier, Parks' Central Communication Unit plays a vital role in relaying important information about what is happening in the parks. What is important to note is that our Central Communication staff regularly checks in with their counterparts at the NYPD known as DCPI so that any incidents are relayed and communicated between the two agencies to ensure that everyone has up to date information.

Enforcement isn't the only role the NYPD plays in supporting our PEP officers. The Police Department also provides our officers with crucial training for key skills. This training equips our officers to assist the Police Department with their larger mission and provides additional means and methods for our PEP officers to secure our parks and their patrons.

NYPD and Parks work together every day to not just keep our parks safe, but to keep them clean as well. NYPD and PEP officers join forces to combat graffiti and illegal dumping. There are

weekly graffiti vandal task force meetings, known as GraffitiStat, to work on various strategies to ensure that our users are able to enjoy a safe and clean park.

Besides joint enforcement and patrols, Parks has installed 23 high-tech security cameras across the city called FlashCams which we have had for several years and have seen them proven as an effective crime deterrent. Marcus Garvey Park and Highbridge Park in Manhattan particularly have seen a drop in vandalism and crime due to the presence of these cameras. After they are installed, a timer is set for when the park is closed which can be customized. When a person passes in front of the camera a light goes off and is then accompanied by an announcement alerting the trespasser that the park has closed and they are in violation of park rules. The flashing light causes the person to turn and then the camera goes off once again and captures the face of the person in our park after curfew. These cameras are installed with the full knowledge and support of the local Community Boards and the NYPD. The NYPD is able to use the information captured on our FlashCams to help them solve crimes. They have become so popular that we are now seeing requests pouring in from park groups.

Without the diligent work of PEP officers, Park Rangers, and our park partners at the NYPD, the park experience would suffer greatly. Our PEP officers are unarmed peace officers who are responsible for enforcing quality of life laws, the New York City Administrative Code, Parks Rules and Regulations, providing crowd control, and acting as Parks ambassadors, but we cannot do it alone. Every day the officers of the NYPD and PEP work to ensure that people who enjoy our parks are safe and we are truly thankful for our partners at the NYPD.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony, and welcome any questions you may have.

*Summary Testimony by Elaine Wong**

“A Walk In The Park....Or Is It?”

Public Safety & Parks NYC City Council Committee Hearing

January 30, 2012

Introduction

This hearing has been called to discuss how to stop and reverse the troubling increase in serious felony crime occurring in our city's parks, using tools such as Compstat to measure and report criminal activity justifying the deployment of police resources. As the spring and summer seasons approach, it is crucial that measures be taken now to protect the renewed vibrancy and popularity of New York's outer borough neighborhoods and parks, particularly in Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx.

Identified Problems

1. According to the latest statistics, there has been a sharp increase in felony crime in the City's "public" parks, including assault, sexual assault, and theft. This has been attributed in part to the decline in the number of PEP officers assigned to the City's ill-served public parks.
2. According to the Public Safety and Parks Committees, Local Law 114/2005 is not being complied with by the New York City Police Department. LL114/2005 states that, "on a quarterly basis, data about the safety of parks should be provided to the council". That this should include, "the total number of crime complaints, misdemeanor or felony".
3. According to the 2007 report, "Tracking Crime In New York City Parks" by the group, New Yorkers For Parks, 18 months after the enactment of LL114/2005, there existed the problem of where to categorize an incident taking place at a park street corner, as a park statistic or not, screwing down true park crime numbers. According to Public Safety and Parks, this problem still exists today.
4. There exist deeply obvious inequalities in park enforcement and coverage among privately funded parks, most notably Central Park, who enjoys the patronage of the Central Park Conservancy, and truly public parks that depend solely on city funding for security and maintenance.

Steps Towards Solutions

1. Increased park coverage can be provided by police cadets and auxiliary police, with park detail or rotation mandatory. Also, cameras, randomly placed patrol cars, and better attention paid by the community patrol officers on duty. Current formulas of police flooding and levels of maintenance may work with park crime and it does elsewhere.

Public Safety and Parks Hearing

January 30, 2012

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2. Why has the police department not been compliance? What would compel them to comply with Local Law 114? Who ultimately provides oversight for Compstat, the Mayor's office?

3. It seems that a crime taking place at a park's abutting sidewalks and streets constitutes a park crime statistic. Test of this? Who is responsible for cleaning those sidewalks and streets, park personnel? Perhaps an amendment to an existing local law can add clarification to this issue, or a new local law.

4. As stated in #1 of this section, other personnel from law enforcement can be deployed to the city's public parks such as cadets and auxiliary police personnel. Also, enforcement equipment including cameras, patrol cars, and increased community policing would all be helpful. To help protect our children it would prove helpful if personal safety education include a lesson on "Safety In The Park". This should start in pre-school. Pro bono ads could be placed at bus shelters and subways duplicating the success of the public education campaign, "If You See Something, Say Something".

Summary

An attempt has been made to suggest low cost solutions to park crime prevention using the deployment of equipment and reassignments of personnel. Livability, property values, and healthy long-term growth all depend on both the perception *and* the reality of zero tolerance for crime. Accurate and timely Compstat statistics are absolutely crucial to this goal.

**Elaine Wong is a former New York City urban planner and developer. Currently a realtor and a BOMA member, Elaine can be reached at 203-947-1288 or at ewong@nyls.com for any questions or comments.*

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in favor in opposition

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Name: Holly Leicht (PLEASE PRINT)

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I represent: New Yorkers for Parks

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Name: Elaine Wong (PLEASE PRINT)

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I represent: _____

Address: 203-947-1288

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I represent: Citizen of BATTERY PARK City

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I represent: Social Service Employee Union

Address: 817 Broadway 14th fl. NYC L37N

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Date: 1/30/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: First Deputy Commissioner Liam Kavanaugh

Address: 830 5th Avenue

I represent: Parks Dept

Address: _____

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Name: Assistant Commissioner Michael DeKett

Address: 80 5th Ave

I represent: Parks Dept

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Name: Michael Dockett (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

Address: 1234 5th Ave, NY NY 10029

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Name: geoffrey (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Park Advocates

Address: _____

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Name: Joseph Puleo (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 125 Barclay street

I represent: DC 37 Local 983 (Vice Pres.)

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(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: WILLIAM BAYER
Address: 515 E 88 ST 5D NY 10128

I represent: _____
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(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Deputy Chief Brian McCarthy
Address: 1 Police Plaza NYC
I represent: MPPD Chief of Patrol's Office
Address: 1 Police Plaza NYC

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