

Testimony of Superintendent David Brown
2021 CPD Budget Hearing
October 29, 2020

Good morning.

Thank you, Chairman Dowell, Vice Chairman Silverstein and members of the City Council for your support and your trust.

I arrived in Chicago in April and have found the members of this Council to be tremendous partners. You all care deeply about your residents, as do I. Together, we will continue to work to improve public safety throughout Chicago.

I am joined in this meeting by members of my senior command to speak about the Chicago Police Department's 2021 Budget. My team and I look forward to answering your questions.

2020 has been a challenging year for the Chicago Police Department, the City of Chicago and its residents. We look forward to having a strong finish to 2020 and turning our attention to 2021. As such, I am pleased to roll out our strategy today that will take us through 2021. This strategy focuses on five key pillars:

- Officer Wellness
- Community Engagement;
- Transformational Change through Reform;
- Ensuring Public Safety; and
- Strengthening Investigations.

These pillars and our corresponding strategies to make them a reality put the Department on a clear path to accomplish the Mayor's Comprehensive Violence Reduction Plan.

The first of CPD's five pillars is Officer Wellness. For too long, police officers have been told they need to be heroes, who respond to crime without being vulnerable themselves. Those days are over. I want Chicago to become a leader addressing the needs of our officers. This goes beyond their physical health. We also need to focus on their mental health, because officers that are strong both mentally and physically will lead to strong communities.

True wellness goes beyond an officer calling a hot line or occasionally seeing a therapist. It touches every part of an officer's life. A truly healthy officer has good relationships with co-workers and family members. They approach their jobs with enthusiasm and a positive attitude. Officers with good mental and physical health also find healthy ways to de-stress, and their interactions with community members reflect how they feel inside and out.

These interactions are key and lead us into our second pillar – Community Engagement. We need to give a voice – *and listen to* – those we serve and protect. Over the last year, we have made several attempts to gain input on our policies and plans. I want to thank those of you and your constituents that participated in the District Community Conversations in your wards. This process is meant to empower residents to set the priorities and direction for their respective districts.

The Neighborhood Policing Initiative is another step toward improving community engagement and seeks to forever shift the way Chicago police interact with residents. This initiative will revolutionize community policing by having officers work directly with community members to resolve public safety issues through collaboration and remedy neighborhood issues with the help of beat officers, detectives, area businesses and aldermen.

Under this initiative, District Coordination Officers are given time away from the radio to make real connections with residents in a specific area and are tasked with working one-on-one with residents to solve problems, which are often drivers of neighborhood crime, before they escalate to a 9-1-1 call. People trust those that they know, and these officers are tasked with getting to know residents within their communities on a personal level.

To build on this effort, the Department's newest DCOs are participating in a new community-immersion pilot called the Community Training Academy, which brings community members in as teachers so officers better understand the communities they serve.

In 2020 and as part of Mayor Lightfoot's 90-day reform efforts, the Neighborhood Policing Initiative was expanded to the 9th, 10th and 11th Districts. The initiative will expand to the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 19th, 20th, 22nd and 24th Districts next year. We expect the program to be in all Districts by the end of 2022.

Along with my commitment to both officer wellness and community engagement, I am equally dedicated to making the deep investments necessary to realize transformational change of our Department on behalf of our residents and our officers.

The consent decree provides a road map for implementing the reforms that respond to the voices being heard on our streets. I see the consent decree as a floor for improving CPD. We must set up a system of continuous improvement so that we can go beyond these mandates, particularly in the areas of accountability, transparency, impartial policing, and promoting diversity.

Of course, our fourth pillar, "Ensuring Public Safety" is the foremost duty of the Chicago Police Department. We are working to find the most efficient and effective ways to deploy our resources as well as coordinate our response. To that end, two citywide teams were created this summer — the Critical Incident Response Team and the Community Safety Team.

The first of these teams focuses on protecting the First Amendment rights of peaceful protesters, as well as the people and property along the way. The second team is built to respond to the immediate needs of District commanders throughout the city. Furthermore, the Community Safety Team works hand-in-hand with Community Policing officers every week on the District-level to connect with residents through events and activities like Operation Wake-Up, pop-up food pantries and youth programming initiatives.

Since the launch of these two teams a little more than 12 weeks ago, murders are down 29 percent and shootings are down 9 percent, compared to the previous 12-week period. Additionally with the help of these two citywide teams, our officers have recovered more than 9,000 guns so far this year.

Strengthening Investigations is our final focus area over the next year. It began in April with the addition of two new investigative areas - Area 4 and 5. These two new areas bring detectives

closer to the neighborhoods and residents they serve. It makes it easier for victims and witnesses to provide information and receive updates.

CPD's detectives and investigators are responsible for building strong cases against the dangerous individuals that hold communities hostage. Removing these offenders from our city streets requires a strong partnership with the community. We are all stakeholders in Chicago's public safety effort.

We need everyone to help us protect the people and places that make Chicago great. Residents and visitors alike are our eyes and ears. They deserve a Department that is a source of pride. I will not rest until the pride Chicagoans have in their city is reflected in their police department. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony, and I look forward to your questions.