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**DOI'S OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR THE NYPD ISSUES REPORT  
FINDING INSUFFICIENT PUBLIC INFORMATION ABOUT NYPD'S COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM AND  
AN ABSENCE OF WRITTEN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO GUIDE ITS ACTIONS**

The Department of Investigation's ("DOI") Office of the Inspector General for the New York City Police Department ("OIG-NYPD") released a Report today concerning the New York City Police Department's ("NYPD" or "the Department") Community Response Team ("CRT"). In July 2022, NYPD created the Patrol Services Bureau Community Response Team, initially a single citywide specialized unit to respond to a rise in quality-of-life ("QoL") complaints from elected officials and community members. Since its creation, CRT has expanded significantly: 165 members of service currently are assigned to CRT and, in addition to the citywide team, a CRT team now exists in every Patrol Borough. OIG-NYPD reviewed this specialized unit due to community concerns about CRT and an absence of publicly available information about it. The review found that the unit lacked a mission statement, as well as written policies and procedures in key areas including selection and training of unit members. OIG-NYPD's review is continuing, and in its next phase will focus on issues including the disciplinary history of CRT officers and available data reflecting the impact of CRT's work. This Report provides transparency around the foundational aspects of CRT and makes seven recommendations. A copy of OIG-NYPD's report is attached to this release and can be found at the following link: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doi/oignypd/web/report.page>.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "NYPD's Community Response Team ("CRT") has been operating for over two years, and publicly available information about CRT and its enforcement activities is quite limited. This Report provides some transparency around CRT's formation, staffing and structure; exposes significant gaps in CRT policies and procedures; and raises important questions about how its effectiveness is measured. DOI's OIG-NYPD will continue to evaluate CRT's enforcement activities and the impact of its work in the next phase of our investigation."

OIG-NYPD Inspector General Jeanene L. Barrett said, "The lack of transparency regarding NYPD's Community Response Team ("CRT") risks non-compliance with the law, ethical breaches, and negative policing outcomes. Since its inception more than two years ago, CRT has expanded significantly, with a team in every Patrol Borough, without a corresponding expansion of publicly available information about the work of this unit. The recommendations in this Report encourage the creation of public policies and procedures that will enhance knowledge of and confidence in CRT's mission, as well as facilitate future oversight."

OIG-NYPD reviewed all NYPD policies and procedures and other materials pertaining to CRT, as well as available materials related to other active NYPD specialized units. The Office met with senior NYPD officials and active members of CRT to discuss the unit's policies and procedures, daily operations, organizational structure, and enforcement tactics. OIG-NYPD also engaged in discussions with several New York City-based advocacy organizations and community and violence interrupter groups to gain a broader understanding of the community perspective on NYPD specialized units overall, and CRT specifically.

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This Report provides previously undisclosed information on CRT, including details regarding its inception and growth, CRT's goals, its personnel and leadership, and the absence of mechanisms for tracking the success of the various teams that make up CRT. The investigation found gaps and inconsistencies in policies and procedures. For instance, while NYPD features select CRT action on its social media pages, it fails to describe CRT's responsibilities or even mention CRT on its public website. OIG-NYPD also found CRT has no written policies and procedures to guide its actions, and no list of specific CRT trainings required for officers within CRT. The lack of transparency with respect to documented policies and procedures for this specialized unit elevates the risk of non-compliance with the law, ethical breaches, and negative policing outcomes. Furthermore, while the unit is founded on the principle of "community response," the NYPD does not track and document the number of community complaints or other data to evaluate CRT's effectiveness and its community impact. Transparency with respect to policies, procedures and data is particularly important in light of anecdotal evidence OIG-NYPD received indicating public distrust of CRT and NYPD specialized units in general.

Based on its review, OIG-NYPD made the following findings:

- 1) Unlike other specialized units, CRT is not mentioned on NYPD's website, despite being frequently featured on NYPD social media pages.
- 2) There is no mission statement to inform and guide the work of CRT, despite NYPD leadership noting that CRT's mission is to enforce QoL issues and respond to community complaints.
- 3) There are no policies, procedures, or operations' guides specifically applicable to CRT.
- 4) There are no policies and procedures specifically related to training for officers in CRT.
- 5) There have been no trainings created specifically for CRT officers, and CRT officers are not required to complete any specific trainings prior to beginning CRT-related work.
- 6) There are no written procedures for recruitment for officers or supervisors in CRT.
- 7) Despite CRT leadership asserting that they personally track 311 calls, leadership does not have a mechanism or system to track community complaints, and thus to evaluate whether the number of complaints is decreasing in areas where CRT is active. CRT leadership also does not save or maintain the data that they personally track concerning community complaints.

Based on these findings, OIG-NYPD's recommends the following:

- 1) Update the NYPD website to include information on CRT under the Patrol Services Bureau.
- 2) Memorialize a mission statement in writing that includes the aims and goals of the CRT including its crime/offense focus and publish it on NYPD's website.
- 3) Memorialize in the Patrol Guide and/or Administrative Guide policies and procedures specific to CRT for the following areas:
  - a. Uniform requirements;
  - b. Statistics concerning CRT's work that will be maintained by the Department and the individuals responsible for recording/maintaining them;
  - c. Recruitment guidelines;
  - d. The requirements for CRT officers in supervisory roles; and
  - e. The training required to perform CRT officer duties.
- 4) Collect, analyze, and publish 311-related data, specifically pertaining to QoL categories, that fall under the Department's official QoL definition and CRT's mandate. Analysis should consider changes in 311-related data over time and be used to inform deployment and enforcement decisions.

- 5) Conduct a minimum of two inclusive and accessible meetings a year per Patrol Borough Command to gather community sentiments with respect to CRT and maintain a detailed agenda and minutes from each meeting.
- 6) Track and maintain a database for all CRT deployment on a weekly basis.
- 7) Publish the CRT-specific data that NYPD is already collecting for CRT (i.e. arrests, summonses, mopeds, etc.) on the NYPD website.

This report was prepared by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD, specifically, Investigative Policy Analyst Olivia Sykes under the guidance of Inspector General Jeanene L. Barrett with the assistance of Senior Investigative Policy Analyst McKenzie Dean, Assistant Inspector General Adrian Amador, First Deputy Inspector General Annette B. Almazan, Special Counsel to the Inspectors General Maria Paolillo, and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Special Counsel Rebecca Chasan, and was supervised by Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan and Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

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New York City Department of Investigation  
Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD



# A Review of NYPD's Community Response Team

November 2024

Jocelyn E. Strauber  
Commissioner

Jeanene L. Barrett  
Inspector General

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## I. Executive Summary

On June 21, 2022, the New York City Police Department (“NYPD” or “the Department”) announced a plan to rid the City’s streets of dirt bikes, all-terrain vehicles (“ATVs”), and other illegal motorbikes, and to raise public awareness of the safety risks of these vehicles to drivers and pedestrians.<sup>1</sup> Shortly thereafter, in July 2022, then-Chief of Patrol Jeffrey Maddrey, then-Executive Officer in the Chief of Patrol’s Office John Chell, and then-Detective Kaz Daughtry, who was assigned to the Chief of Patrol’s Office, created the Patrol Services Bureau Community Response Team (“CRT”), initially a single citywide specialized unit created in response to a rise in quality-of-life (“QoL”) complaints from elected officials and community members. Since its creation, CRT has expanded significantly. There are currently approximately 165 members of service assigned to CRT and, in addition to the Citywide team, a team now exists in every Patrol Borough.

Beginning in August 2022, media reports and social media posts focused on the unit’s seizures of illegal cannabis trucks.<sup>2</sup> At the end of 2022, NYPD released the first of two YouTube videos titled, “True Blue: NYPD’s Finest,” that followed CRT officers in their enforcement activities which included the seizure of illegal ATVs, mopeds, and unregistered “ghost cars” with paper license plates; the apprehension of suspects connected to a robbery pattern; and the removal of a vehicle involved in reckless driving at a car meet.<sup>3</sup>

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\* DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber and Inspector General Jeanene L. Barrett thank the staff of OIG-NYPD for their efforts in producing this Report, specifically, Olivia Sykes, Investigative Policy Analyst; McKenzie Dean, Senior Investigative Policy Analyst; Adrian Amador, Assistant Inspector General; Annette B. Almazan, First Deputy Inspector General; and Maria Paolillo, Special Counsel to the Inspectors General; as well as DOI staff members Rebecca Chasan, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Special Counsel; and Stephen Elin, Data Analyst. Appreciation is extended to the New York City Police Department as well as the NYC Law Department, Comptroller, and Civilian Complaint Review Board, for their assistance and cooperation during this investigation.

<sup>1</sup> See Mayor’s Press Conference Transcript: *Mayor Adams and Police Commissioner Sewell Crush Illegal Motorbikes and ATVs* (Jun. 21, 2022), <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/418-22/transcript-mayor-adams-police-commissioner-sewell-crush-illegal-motorbikes-atvs#/0>, last accessed Sep. 19, 2024. See also Daniel Katzive, *NYPD Details Summer Crackdown on Illegal Motorbikes*, West Side Rag (Jun. 22, 2022), <https://www.westsiderag.com/2022/06/22/nypd-details-summer-crackdown-on-illegal-motorbikes>, last accessed Sep. 19, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> See WCBS 880 Newsroom, *‘UP IN SMOKE’: NYPD Seizes 19 ‘Cannabis’ Trucks From City Streets*, (Aug. 17, 2022), <https://www.audacy.com/wcbs880/news/local/nypd-seizes-19-cannabis-trucks-from-city-streets>, last accessed Oct. 8, 2024. See also NYPD Chief of Patrol X account, <https://x.com/NYPDChiefPatrol/status/1559605511628247041>.

<sup>3</sup> See N.Y.C. Police Dep’t, *True Blue: NYPD’s Finest* (Dec. 2, 2022), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8UddDHZb1w>, last accessed Oct. 8, 2024. See also N.Y.C. Police Dep’t, *True Blue: NYPD’s Finest Episode 2* (Mar. 14, 2023), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZMgmeljLxc>, last accessed Oct. 8, 2024. NYPD noted that a car meet is a location where several cars park and drivers/passengers of those cars gather.

Early in 2023, the media reported that NYPD vehicle pursuits increased by 600% compared to the same period the previous year.<sup>4</sup> These pursuits were attributed, in part, to CRT in light of the unit's focus on apprehending illegal vehicles.<sup>5</sup> Chief Chell acknowledged the spike in vehicle pursuits in July 2023 at a press conference stating that, "With the enforcement of more moving summonses and car stops, and people thinking they can take off on us? Those days are over."<sup>6</sup>

OIG-NYPD began its review of CRT in part due to the lack of publicly available information related to the unit's work despite its high-profile nature. For instance, while NYPD features select CRT action on its social media pages, it fails to include any mention of the unit on its public website. OIG-NYPD also found CRT has no written policies and procedures to guide its actions and no mission statement. The lack of transparency with respect to documented policies and procedures for this specialized unit significantly elevates the risk of non-compliance with the law, ethical breaches, and negative policing outcomes. Formalized guidelines and standardized protocols can reduce these risks, and lead to better accountability and oversight of the unit's critical work.

OIG-NYPD's findings include:

1. Unlike other specialized units, CRT is not mentioned on NYPD's website, despite being frequently featured on NYPD social media pages.
2. There is no mission statement to inform and guide the work of CRT, despite NYPD leadership noting that CRT's mission is to enforce QoL issues and respond to community complaints.
3. There are no policies, procedures, or operations guides specifically applicable to CRT.
4. There are no policies and procedures specifically related to training for officers in CRT.
5. There have been no trainings created specifically for CRT officers, and CRT officers are not required to complete any specific trainings prior to beginning CRT-related work.

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<sup>4</sup> See Yoav Gonen, Suhail Bhat, and Harry Siegel, *NYPD Car Chases Up Massively Under Mayor Adams — With Sometimes Fatal Results*, The City (Jul. 5, 2023), <https://www.thecity.nyc/2023/07/05/nypd-car-chases-eric-adams-quality-life-community/>, last accessed Oct. 8, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

6. There are no written procedures for recruitment of officers or supervisors in CRT.
7. Despite CRT leadership asserting that they personally track 311 calls, leadership does not have a mechanism or system to track community complaints, and thus to evaluate whether the number of complaints is decreasing in areas where CRT is active. CRT leadership also does not save or maintain the data that they personally track concerning community complaints.

Based on these findings, OIG-NYPD makes the following seven recommendations:

1. Update the NYPD website to include information on CRT under the Patrol Services Bureau.
2. Memorialize a mission statement in writing that includes the aims and goals of CRT including its crime/offense focus, and publish it on NYPD's website.
3. Memorialize in the Patrol Guide and/or Administrative Guide policies and procedures specific to CRT for the following areas:
  - Uniform requirements;
  - Statistics concerning CRT's work that will be maintained by the Department and the individuals responsible for recording/maintaining them;
  - Recruitment guidelines;
  - The requirements for CRT officers in supervisory roles; and
  - The training required to perform CRT officer duties.
4. Collect, analyze, and publish 311-related data, specifically pertaining to QoL categories, that fall under the Department's official QoL definition and CRT's mandate. Analysis should consider changes in 311-related data over time, and be used to inform deployment and enforcement decisions.
5. Conduct a minimum of two inclusive and accessible meetings a year, per Patrol Borough Command, to gather community sentiments with respect to CRT and maintain a detailed agenda and minutes from each meeting.
6. Track and maintain a database for all CRT deployment on a weekly basis.
7. Publish the CRT-specific data that NYPD is already collecting for CRT (i.e. arrests, summonses, mopeds, etc.) on the NYPD website.

This investigation reviewed CRT's formation; policies and procedures; enforcement responsibilities; personnel selection; training; management; monitoring and



evaluation of data; and community engagement. This Report serves to establish and create transparency around foundational information about the unit. OIG-NYPD plans to release a subsequent report in late 2025 which will examine disciplinary history of CRT officers and available data reflecting the impact of CRT's work.

## Background

### A. NYPD's Community Response Team

On June 21, 2022, the New York City Police Department ("NYPD" or "the Department") announced a plan to rid the City's streets of dirt bikes, all-terrain vehicles ("ATVs"), and other illegal motorbikes, and to raise public awareness of the consequences of riding them—referred to by the press as the "Summer 2022 Motorbikes Plan."<sup>7</sup> Around the same time, in July 2022, then-Chief of Patrol Jeffrey Maddrey, then-Executive Officer in the Chief of Patrol's Office John Chell, and then-Detective Kaz Daughtry, who was assigned to the Chief of Patrol's Office, created the Patrol Services Bureau Community Response Team ("CRT"), initially a single citywide specialized unit intended to respond to rising numbers of quality-of-life ("QoL") complaints from elected officials and community members. According to NYPD, CRT was formed as a call to action on behalf of the community to focus on combatting these specific concerns. In August 2022, Chief Chell reiterated that CRT focuses on QoL, with an initial emphasis on illegal cannabis trucks, as well as ATVs, unlicensed vendors, and illegal license plates.<sup>8</sup>

CRT began appearing more frequently in media reports and social media posts throughout 2022, culminating in the first of two YouTube videos posted by NYPD in December 2022, titled, "True Blue: NYPD's Finest." The videos followed CRT officers in their enforcement activities. By mid-2023, media reports began to surface about NYPD's use of vehicle pursuits, which had increased by 600% during the first three months of 2023.<sup>9</sup> These pursuits were attributed, in part, to CRT given that the Department had described the unit's focus as apprehending illegal vehicles and had

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<sup>7</sup> See Mayor's Press Conference Transcript, *Mayor Adams and Police Commissioner Sewell Crush Illegal Motorbikes and ATVS* (Jun. 21, 2022), <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/418-22/transcript-mayor-adams-police-commissioner-sewell-crush-illegal-motorbikes-atvs#/0>, last accessed Sep. 19, 2024. See also Daniel Katzive, *NYPD Details Summer Crackdown on Illegal Motorbikes*, West Side Rag (Jun. 22, 2022), <https://www.westsiderag.com/2022/06/22/nypd-details-summer-crackdown-on-illegal-motorbikes>, last accessed Sep. 19, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> See NYPD Chief of Patrol X account (Aug. 16, 2022), <https://x.com/NYPDChiefPatrol/status/1559605511628247041>.

<sup>9</sup> See Yoav Gonen, Suhail Bhat, and Harry Siegel, *NYPD Car Chases Up Massively Under Mayor Adams — With Sometimes Fatal Results*, The City (Jul. 5, 2023), <https://www.thecity.nyc/2023/07/05/nypd-car-chases-eric-adams-quality-life-community/>, last accessed Oct. 8, 2024.

emphasized in its public statements that these pursuits were an aspect of enforcement of laws concerning QoL—CRT's mission.<sup>10</sup>

The Department uses the term “QoL” to refer to enforcement of laws concerning:

1. Illegal ATVs, dirt bikes, and unregistered motorcycles;
2. Illegal street peddlers;
3. Illegal ghost cars and temporary license plates;
4. Homeless encampments;
5. Noise complaints;
6. Brothels;
7. Unregistered smoke shops;
8. Campus protests; and
9. Persons wanted for multiple crimes.<sup>11</sup>

The purpose of DOI's investigation is to better understand NYPD's Community Response Team, with a specific focus on the unit's creation; recruitment and management; metrics and measurements of success; and its engagement with communities.

## B. CRT's Composition

At its inception in 2022, this specialized unit was comprised of 16 police officers and two sergeants, and the team operated citywide. Top NYPD leadership, including the Department's Chief of Patrol and Deputy Commissioner of Operations, selected individuals to join the original CRT unit, which partnered with a team in Patrol Borough Manhattan South to conduct enforcement activities.<sup>12</sup> The team was described by one senior NYPD official as “rag tag” in its early days given its informal nature and lack of official status within the Department. This same official noted that at the beginning, CRT was a “pilot program” staffed by officers who were not formally assigned to CRT but were asked to come out and conduct CRT-type operations two to three times a week.

CRT experienced significant growth in personnel beginning in January 2023 which led to the unit's formalization, including the receipt of its own unique official command code. A command code is given to precincts and units to track resources and personnel and is used to designate an officer's official assignment within the

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<sup>10</sup> *Id.* See also Yoav Gonen and Suhail Bhat, *More NYPD Vehicle Pursuits in Last Six Months Than Prior Five Years Combined*, The City (Jul. 21, 2024), <https://www.thecity.nyc/2023/07/21/nypd-car-chase-increase-chell/>, last accessed Oct. 8, 2024.

<sup>11</sup> This internal Department PowerPoint presentation was provided to OIG-NYPD, N.Y.C. Police Dep't, Patrol Services Bureau, *PSB Community Response Teams (C.R.T.)* PowerPoint (Jul. 2022).

<sup>12</sup> This selection process is not unique to CRT; other NYPD specialized unit staff are selected by NYPD leadership.

Department. Between January 2023 and May 2024, NYPD increased the unit's staff to its current size and operation and stationed its members in each of the eight Patrol Boroughs in New York City. The initial Citywide team still exists, based out of 1 Police Plaza. As of May 2024, there were 165 members of CRT, each of which are assigned to a specific Patrol Borough or to the Citywide team. On a weekly basis, CRT officers are assigned a precinct to work in within their Patrol Borough by their supervisor, either a sergeant or a lieutenant, and are typically given a partner to work alongside. Members of the Citywide team are assigned to precincts throughout the City on a daily basis.

CRT is led by NYPD Deputy Commissioner of Operations Kaz Daughtry and NYPD Chief of Patrol John Chell. The Citywide team is led by Commanding Officer Thomas Kaminski, who is based out of NYPD headquarters with the Citywide CRT team. CRT Patrol Borough Commands, for example Manhattan South or Queens North, are led by the Patrol Borough's Specialized Unit Commanding Officer.

### C. Specialized Units

A specialized unit is defined as “an officially designated component of a law enforcement agency requiring specialized training, skills, and mission” by the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services<sup>13</sup> (“COPS Office”) and the National Policing Institute<sup>14</sup> (“NPI”).<sup>15</sup> It is also defined by the International Association of Chiefs of Police<sup>16</sup> (“IACP”) as “a group of individuals, a team, or a subdivision whose efforts are concentrated on a specific mission complementing conventional police resources.”<sup>17</sup> Typically, as the IACP definition contemplates, “individuals who are part of specialized units undergo advanced training to enhance the skills and expertise that allow them to participate in more focused operations.”<sup>18</sup> According to the COPS Office and NPI, these units can be long-standing, providing particular resources for certain specialized law enforcement

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<sup>13</sup> The [COPS Office](#) is the federal component of the Justice Department responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information, technical assistance, training, and grant resources.

<sup>14</sup> [NPI](#) is a nonpartisan and independent nonprofit organization dedicated to creating excellence in policing through the development, translation, and application of research.

<sup>15</sup> See National Policing Institute, *Considerations for Specialized Units: A Guide for State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies to Ensure Appropriateness, Effectiveness, and Accountability* (“COPS/NPI Guide”), (Jan. 2024), <https://www.policinginstitute.org/publication/considerations-for-specialized-units/>, at 4, Sec. 1.

<sup>16</sup> [IACP](#) is the world's largest professional association for police leaders and is a recognized leader in global policing, committed to advancing safer communities through thoughtful, progressive police leadership.

<sup>17</sup> See IACP Policy Center, *Glossary* (Apr. 2024), <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/Policy%20Center/Glossary%20-%202024.04.1.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

functions or they can be provisional, serving temporarily as a response to specific issues or community concerns.<sup>19</sup>

The Department does not utilize or apply either definition when describing NYPD specialized units. When asked, one senior official noted that the Department views specialized units as “defined team(s),” but that NYPD does not have an official definition.

#### D. An Overview of the History of Specialized Units within NYPD

NYPD has a long history of creating and utilizing specialized units, most notably the Street Crime Unit that was active from the 1970s through the 1990s. Introduced in 1971, NYPD's Street Crime Unit operated in the evenings and was tasked with patrolling high-crime precincts.<sup>20</sup> By the 1980s, the unit had developed a “swaggering reputation” and a “We Own the Night” motto.<sup>21</sup> By 1999, the unit sparked public outcry when Street Crime officers fatally shot Amadou Diallo, an unarmed Black man, 41 times—leading to the unit's association with an aggressive style of policing that many community members considered to be disproportionately, and negatively, impacting young Hispanic and Black men.<sup>22</sup> The group was disbanded in 2002.<sup>23</sup>

While its inception date is less clear, NYPD also created and operated an Anti-Crime Unit from the early 2000s until it was disbanded in 2020. The unit's focus was recovering firearms and making arrests for illegal possession of firearms.<sup>24</sup> Anti-Crime officers wore plainclothes and carried less equipment than traditional patrol officers because of their anticipated involvement in foot chases.<sup>25</sup> The unit was involved in a disproportionate number of police shootings, despite only making up

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<sup>19</sup> COPS/NPI Guide, at 37, Sec. 4.

<sup>20</sup> See J.J. Breslin, *NYPD's (New York Police Department) Street Crime Unit*, Police Product News (Nov. 1979), <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/nypds-new-york-police-department-street-crime-unit-0>, last accessed Sep. 19, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> See Corey Kilgannon, *N.Y.P.D. Anti-Crime Units Still Stopping People Illegally, Report Shows*, The N.Y. Times (Jun. 5, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/05/nyregion/nypd-anti-crime-units-training-tactics.html>, last accessed Sep. 19, 2024.

<sup>22</sup> See William K. Rashbaum and Al Baker, *Police Commissioner Closing Controversial Street Crime Unit*, The N.Y. Times (Apr. 10, 2002), <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/10/nyregion/police-commissioner-closing-controversial-street-crime-unit.html>, last accessed Nov. 19, 2024.

<sup>23</sup> See Corey Kilgannon, *N.Y.P.D. Anti-Crime Units Still Stopping People Illegally, Report Shows*, The N.Y. Times (Jun. 5, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/05/nyregion/nypd-anti-crime-units-training-tactics.html>, last accessed Sep. 19, 2024.

<sup>24</sup> See Mark Morales and Peter Nickeas, *The NYPD Has Resurrected Its Controversial Anti-Crime Unit. Success Will be Determined by Avoiding Mistakes of the Past*, CNN (Jan. 27, 2022), <https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/27/us/nypd-anti-crime-unit-eric-adams/index.html>, last accessed Sep. 19, 2024.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

about two percent of NYPD's uniformed force.<sup>26</sup> The Anti-Crime Unit was reinstated by Mayor Adams in 2022 under a new name, Neighborhood Safety Team ("NST"), and remains active to this day.<sup>27</sup>

According to NYPD, it initially deployed NST to deter and counter violent crime, address QoL complaints, and reduce gun violence.<sup>28</sup> All officers serving on NST go through pre-deployment training which consists of tactical and risk management training.<sup>29</sup> Although officers serving on NST wear modified uniforms, they are fitted with body cameras and should be easily identifiable as police.<sup>30</sup> By the end of FY 2023, less than two years since NST was launched, the unit had grown to 176 uniformed members, working in 34 active NST units throughout the City.<sup>31</sup>

In 2015, NYPD founded the Strategic Response Group ("SRG"), tasked with responding to terrorist attacks, citywide mobilizations, civil disorder, and other major events.<sup>32</sup> SRG officers are highly trained, use specialized equipment, and are deployed based on the City's greatest need.<sup>33</sup> Most recently, SRG has been active at parades and protests, but they are also trained to respond to other events such as mass shootings, bank robberies, missing persons cases, and other significant incidents.<sup>34</sup> More information about NYPD's SRG—including serious concerns about its policing of protests, and a series of recommendations for reform—can be found in DOI's December 2022 report "Investigation into NYPD Response to the George Floyd Protests."<sup>35</sup>

NYPD also utilizes the Public Safety Team ("PST"), but public information about this specialized unit is limited. According to the most recent iteration of the NYPD Patrol

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<sup>26</sup> See Ali Watkins, *N.Y.P.D. Disbands Plainclothes Units Involved in Many Shootings*, The N.Y. Times (Jun. 15, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/nyregion/nypd-plainclothes-cops.html>, last accessed Oct. 21, 2024.

<sup>27</sup> See Corey Kilgannon, *N.Y.P.D. Anti-Crime Units Still Stopping People Illegally, Report Shows*, The N.Y. Times (Jun. 5, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/05/nyregion/nypd-anti-crime-units-training-tactics.html>, last accessed Sep. 19, 2024. See also Mark Morales and Peter Nickeas, *The NYPD Has Resurrected Its Controversial Anti-Crime Unit. Success Will be Determined by Avoiding Mistakes of the Past*, CNN (Jan. 27, 2022), <https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/27/us/nypd-anti-crime-unit-eric-adams/index.html>, last accessed Sep. 19, 2024.

<sup>28</sup> See N.Y.C. Mayor's Office, *The Blueprint to End Gun Violence* (Jan. 24, 2023), [https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2023/gun\\_violence.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2023/gun_violence.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

<sup>30</sup> *Id.*

<sup>31</sup> *Id.*

<sup>32</sup> See N.Y.C. Police Dep't, Special Operations webpage, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nypd/bureaus/patrol/citywide-operations.page>, last accessed Nov. 13, 2024.

<sup>33</sup> *Id.*

<sup>34</sup> *Id.*

<sup>35</sup> N.Y.C. Dep't of Investigation, *Investigation into NYPD Response to the George Floyd Protests* (Dec. 2020), <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/reports/pdf/2020/DOIRpt.NYPD%20Reponse.%20GeorgeFloyd%20Protests.12.18.2020.pdf>.

Guide (“PG”), PST seems to play a critical role in NYPD’s handling of unlicensed tow trucks.<sup>36</sup> However, in at least two different instances, NYPD leadership mentioned Borough Public Safety Teams when publicizing confiscated illegal firearms. In January 2022, the official account of the 67th Precinct posted on X.com: “The Brooklyn South Borough Public Safety Team started the new year by making back to back gun arrests.”<sup>37</sup> Similarly, in June 2021, the official account of the Brooklyn North Patrol Borough posted: “While you were sleeping, our Borough Public Safety Team arrested a person in possession of this firearm. Now there is #onelessgun on the streets of Bed Stuy today.”<sup>38</sup>

## II. Methodology

OIG-NYPD reviewed all Department policies and procedures and other materials pertaining to CRT, as well as available materials related to other NYPD specialized units, including the Neighborhood Safety Team, Public Safety Team, and Strategic Response Group. OIG-NYPD also conducted a review of past NYPD specialized units in order to obtain additional context with regard to the history of such units in New York City and their engagement with communities. The Office met with senior NYPD officials and active members of CRT to discuss the unit’s policies and procedures, daily operations, organizational structure, and enforcement tactics. OIG-NYPD engaged in discussions with several NYC-based advocacy organizations and community and violence interrupter groups to gain a broader understanding of the community perspective of NYPD specialized units overall, and CRT specifically.

The Office conducted research related to best practices pertaining to the formation and function of specialized units within law enforcement. Included in this research was a review of *Considerations for Specialized Units: A Guide for State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies to Ensure Appropriateness, Effectiveness, and Accountability* (“COPS/NPI Guide”), created by the National Policing Institute and the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Orientated Policing Services. The Office reviewed this guide as it relates to the formation, selection and supervision, management and accountability, and community engagement of NYPD’s Community Response Team. The findings and recommendations discussed within this Report are supported by the considerations advanced by the COPS/NPI Guide.

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<sup>36</sup> See N.Y.C. Police Dep’t, *PG 209-34 Tow Truck Enforcement/Common Summonsable Offenses* (Jun. 14, 2022), [https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nypd/downloads/pdf/public\\_information/public-pguide1.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nypd/downloads/pdf/public_information/public-pguide1.pdf), at 425-429.

<sup>37</sup> See NYPD 67th Precinct on X: “The Brooklyn South Borough Public Safety Team started the new year by making back to back gun arrests. These 2 firearms can no longer be used to harm our citizens. Thank you for protecting the East Flatbush community. @NYPDBklynSouth @NYPDChiefOfDept @NYPDChiefPatrol” (Jan. 10, 2022), <https://x.com/NYPD67Pct/status/1480585618811990023>.

<sup>38</sup> See NYPDBrooklynNorth on X: “While you were sleeping, our Borough Public Safety Team arrested a person in possession of this firearm. Now there is #onelessgun on the streets of Bed Stuy today @NYPD81Pct” (Jun. 12, 2021), <https://t.co/LfS0XaUBvZ>.

### III. Analysis

#### A. Creation and Policies

According to NYPD officials, CRT was created to respond to QoL issues citywide. One senior NYPD official labeled the group as “informal” and a “pilot program” at its inception in 2022. The group’s staffing and structure appears to have been formalized between January 2023 and April 2023.

While Department officials state that the unit was formed primarily as a result of complaints coming from community members and elected officials regarding QoL conditions, these officials did not provide any documentation of the complaints that led to the creation of the unit.<sup>39</sup> Without reviewing such documentation—including the complaints made by community members and elected officials—OIG-NYPD cannot assess the basis for the formation of the Community Response Team.

##### 1. Mission

According to senior NYPD officials, CRT does not have an official mission statement memorialized in writing. However, one official and several CRT members interviewed in the course of this investigation described CRT’s mission as responding to community complaints with a QoL focus. The absence of an official written mission statement, or other publicly available information defining the scope of CRT’s responsibilities, results in a lack of public transparency about the unit’s responsibilities. We note that other specialized units are described on NYPD’s website, but CRT is not. The absence of public information about a mission statement outlining the unit’s role also poses a risk that CRT may be deployed to address issues beyond QoL complaints—including matters currently handled by other specialized units. This could lead to the unit being deployed without proper training. One way to minimize risks related to CRT is for NYPD to create and make publicly available a clearly defined mission statement that is data-driven, specific, and measurable.<sup>40</sup>

It is also important to highlight NYPD’s use of the term quality-of-life. NYPD defines QoL policing in the context of CRT to mean enforcement related to, for example, illegal vehicles, unlicensed smoke shops, and street vendors. However, many equate QoL policing with the enforcement of violations such as fare evasion, littering, public drinking, and public urination.<sup>41</sup> Given the discrepancy between NYPD’s use of QoL and the traditional definition of QoL, it’s important for the Department to clarify

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<sup>39</sup> NYPD receives community complaints in a variety of ways, including via 311 and 911 calls/messages; Community Board meetings; meetings with elected officials and community members; and informal conversations with members of the public.

<sup>40</sup> See COPS/NPI Guide, at 10, Sec 1.

<sup>41</sup> See Andrew Golub, Bruce D. Johnson, Angela Taylor, and John Eterno, *Quality-of-life policing Do offenders get the message?*, Policing: An Int’l Journal, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3889019/>, at 4-5.

what exactly it means when it uses the term quality-of-life. If QoL offenses are the types of offenses that CRT is intended to enforce, the Department must provide a very specific and concise definition of QoL offenses and not one that is flexible and changing within CRT's mission statement.<sup>42</sup> In not doing so, the overuse of QoL when discussing CRT's work can lead to confusion and a lack of transparency for the public, and it also gives space for CRT to work outside of its mission when the definition of QoL is unclear or vague.

## 2. CRT Officer Responsibilities

CRT officers begin their tour at the precinct where their CRT unit is assigned, or in the case of the Citywide CRT unit, at 1 Police Plaza. For example, the Patrol Borough Queens North CRT office is at the 112 Precinct. However, they do not necessarily work in the confines of that precinct every day, as they work where they are needed. Patrol Borough CRT teams are given weekly assignments, which are subject to change at any time based on the needs of the Department, while the Citywide team receives daily assignments. These assignments are determined by the Patrol Borough leadership or CRT leadership, based on metrics including community complaints and crime patterns. The assignments are shared with CRT supervisors, who provide the assignments to CRT officers. OIG-NYPD requested examples of the metrics that support these assignment determinations, but it appears that NYPD does not maintain this data and OIG-NYPD has not received it.

Officers interviewed by OIG-NYPD were given a range of assignments as members of CRT. Some officers stated that they were given a particular violation to identify and to address while others noted that they were on the lookout for any QoL conditions that may be readily observable (e.g., public drinking, unregistered mopeds, fake license plates). Certain CRT members noted an even broader assignment that was less focused specifically on QoL issues, and more generally on any violations of the law that they encounter, meaning that they functioned like officers on patrol, but did not respond to 911 calls. Officers generally do not appear to be tasked with responding to 311 QoL complaints in real time, although at least one officer did review such complaints in their capacity as a member of the unit and on occasion would reach out to complainants for further information.

In addition to the types of assignments described above, CRT officers are also expected to conduct "operations" or "initiatives" (words were used interchangeably by CRT officers and leadership in conversations with OIG-NYPD). The location and focus of the operations are determined by Chief Chell and Deputy Commissioner Daughtry and are communicated to CRT supervisors. These operations typically occur overnight, on weekends, and in the Bronx and Queens North Patrol Boroughs.

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<sup>42</sup> During the Office's investigation, OIG-NYPD requested an official quality-of-life definition from NYPD and it was not provided.



Examples of operations include shutting down illegal brothels, breaking up car meets and drag races, and searching for illegal mopeds in a specific area. Any member of CRT can be pulled to participate in one these “operations” or “initiatives” regardless of their specific Patrol Borough assignment. DOI was not provided with data as to the number of officers who typically participate in these operations, or the number of operations that occurred, and as far as DOI has been made aware, these statistics are not tracked by NYPD.

Members of CRT provided overall positive feedback regarding their time in the unit. According to these officers, they are highly motivated with strong connections to the communities they serve. While the higher-ranking CRT members’ (sergeants and lieutenants) tone was less enthusiastic when speaking about their time in CRT, it was still overall positive—describing the unit as a “team” and a “family.” Police officers emphasized that they wanted to join the unit and were dedicated to addressing QoL conditions in the communities they serve.

### 3. Policies and Procedures

The Department confirmed that there are no official or written policies and procedures specifically for CRT. A senior NYPD official stated that the Department currently has no plans to create and document in writing any policies and procedures specific to the unit, and that CRT officers are simply expected to follow all established NYPD policies and procedures. One exception is a pending addition to the NYPD Patrol Guide which will outline the uniform requirements for a CRT officer.<sup>43</sup>



Figure 1: Example of CRT uniform (Image taken from [True Blue: NYPD’s Finest](#))



Figure 2: Example of CRT uniform (Image taken from [True Blue: NYPD’s Finest](#))

<sup>43</sup> CRT officers are required to wear khaki pants, to distinguish themselves from other officers or units. There are procedures in the Administrative Guide (“AG”) that outline NST’s uniform, which is similarly distinct from other officers’ uniforms. AG 305-17 defines NST’s uniform requirements and the purpose behind the requirements. See N.Y.C. Police Dep’t, *AG 305-17 Neighborhood Safety Team Uniforms* (May 20, 2022), [https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nypd/downloads/pdf/public\\_information/public-adminiguide1.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nypd/downloads/pdf/public_information/public-adminiguide1.pdf), at 131-133. Similar to the provision for NST, NYPD should include the purpose for CRT’s distinct uniform in the Patrol Guide provision currently being drafted.

In contrast, NYPD does have policies and procedures memorialized in the PG and Administrative Guide (“AG”) for the Neighborhood Safety Team. As explained above, NST is a specialized unit within the Department of similar size to CRT, but it is distinct from CRT in its mission and formation. Specific to NST, PG provision 202-05, entitled “Neighborhood Safety Team Officer” published on March 11, 2022, details the rules and procedures that all NST officers are expected to abide by. It explicitly lists the precincts that NST officers are authorized to work in, details all uniform and record keeping requirements, and notes that only officers who attended the Department’s Neighborhood Safety Team training could perform duties as an NST officer. Included in this Patrol Guide provision is language that guides the work of the unit, including:

*4. Employ creative crime reduction, precision policing, and community engagement strategies to effectively improve the quality of life, increase trust and build relationships with the people and communities of New York City.*

*a. Reduce violent street crime by identifying, investigating and apprehending individuals who possess(es) illegal firearms, jeopardize public safety, or erode quality of life.<sup>44</sup>*

Similarly, PG provision 202-20, “Supervisor of Neighborhood Safety Team” defines the roles and responsibilities of an NST supervisor, including ensuring officers have attended the requisite NST training, requirements for body-worn camera footage viewing, and the evaluation of officers by, “...determining success of crime reduction, problem solving strategies, case preparation, and engagement with other Department units and community residents.”

NYPD has developed procedures specific to other specialized units, like NST, whose officers are also expected to follow all NYPD policies and procedures. None of the NYPD representatives with whom we spoke explained why CRT does not have such policies and procedures. OIG-NYPD therefore recommends that the Department develop appropriate procedures that are specific to CRT. NYPD should consider the specific needs of and requirements for CRT and should memorialize in writing the policies and procedures applicable to the unit. Policies applicable to other specialized units, like NST, do not appear to apply to CRT, whose work goes beyond what is outlined in the Neighborhood Safety Team PG and AG provisions. Policies and procedures specific to CRT should include, at a minimum, details on CRT’s specific goals and mission; trainings required to perform its duties; officer and supervisor selection criteria and processes; areas for deployment and how they will be determined; and performance metrics that will be maintained and who will maintain them.

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<sup>44</sup> See N.Y.C. Police Dep’t, *PG 202-05 Neighborhood Safety Team Officer*, [https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nypd/downloads/pdf/public\\_information/public-pguide1.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nypd/downloads/pdf/public_information/public-pguide1.pdf), at 9.

The absence of clearly stated policies and procedures applicable to CRT specifically is a significant flaw in NYPD's approach to CRT. It is well-established that specialized units with unique and distinct missions benefit from clear rules that are known to both officers and supervisors. Without such rules there is a risk of officer misconduct, violations of law, and other failures that could compromise unit operations. An absence of clear rules limits NYPD's ability to effectively oversee CRT and to ensure its officers are accountable and increases their exposure to potential liability.

## **B. Personnel and Training**

### **1. Leadership**

As noted earlier, CRT is led by Chief of Patrol John Chell and Deputy Commissioner of Operations Kaz Daughtry. Both played an active role in the unit's creation, participating in CRT enforcement activities and discussing the unit with media outlets. Currently, Chief Chell and Deputy Commissioner Daughtry remain involved in the daily operations of the unit, determining the unit's focus and participating in the recruitment process.

### **2. Recruitment Process**

The unit has approximately 165 uniformed members of service assigned to it and is comprised of police officers, sergeants, lieutenants, and captains. CRT is divided into nine commands: Citywide, Manhattan North, Manhattan South, Brooklyn North, Brooklyn South, Queens North, Queens South, the Bronx, and Staten Island and each Patrol Borough Command is led by the Commanding Officer of Specialized Units. The Commanding Officer of the Citywide team is Captain Thomas Kaminski. Based on the rosters provided by NYPD, the number of CRT members has varied over time. The 2022 roster had seven people with a note that "CRT was at its infancy during 2022, ... numbers are approximate as MOS [members of service] assigned were not permanently assigned." In spring 2023, CRT teams expanded to all boroughs, with a roster increase to 171 members, and later a decline in 2024 to 165 members based on a May 2024 roster. Thus, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of officers in the unit at a given time, especially because many officers are temporarily transferred into the unit for the first 90 days of their tenure within the unit and it is unclear whether officers appear on the roster during these temporary transfer periods.

There had not been an official recruitment process for CRT. According to members, some officers applied, were interviewed, and were temporarily transferred into the unit to see if they were a good fit. Other officers worked with a member of CRT before joining, which enabled them to join the unit without an interview. However, while the process was less formal at its inception, it currently proceeds with potential new officers undergoing an interview, joining a member of CRT for three tours, and having

their Department record reviewed before being temporarily assigned to the unit for 90 days. After the conclusion of the 90 days, CRT leadership decides whether the member of service will be permanently assigned or will return to their prior command. While this may presently be the case for the recruitment of new members, there are no written policies and procedures outlining this process.

The application process to join CRT is not standardized, in the sense that there are no uniform requirements that must be met before an officer can join the unit, nor is the existing process memorialized or uniformly applied. Several senior NYPD officials, as well as members of CRT, noted that an officer's complaint history (i.e., Civilian Complaint Review Board and Internal Affairs Bureau complaints), sick record, and prior assignments are reviewed by CRT supervisors before they are offered a temporary or permanent transfer into the unit. But those officials did not identify any threshold requirements with respect to officer history for unit entry, however. Furthermore, the review of an officer's history prior to entry into CRT is not memorialized in writing. Additionally, according to officials, there is no performance assessment system unique to CRT. CRT officers are evaluated using the same schedule and categories that are used to evaluate all other officers in their rank across the Department.

Reviewing the work and complaint history of new members is central to selecting the best candidates; however, the standardization of this process is key to ensuring transparency and fairness in the selection and interview process of new members and also to ensuring that each new officer in CRT meets identifiable Department standards. Furthermore, it is equally important that officers selected for specialized units are not chosen based solely on their relationships with others within the Department, but rather are evaluated and selected specifically based on their qualifications and fitness for the role. For example, an officer who has a prior working relationship with a CRT supervisor should not be permitted to forgo a formal interview or avoid other aspects of the selection process, both for fairness and transparency purposes but also to ensure that all CRT officers meet the qualifications.

### **3. Training**

There are no official mandatory trainings that must be completed before an officer joins CRT, and no mandatory trainings during an officer's tenure with CRT. Many members of CRT stated that they took Neighborhood Safety Team training either before they began their role in CRT or shortly thereafter. Some understood the NST training to be a requirement for CRT officers; others did not. CRT supervisors also have discretion to assign CRT officers to particular trainings, after notification to a Patrol Borough Training Sergeant, which often include trainings such as Radio Motor Patrol (driving/vehicle) training, disorder control training, pickpocket training, and

surveillance training. Despite this, these trainings are neither required nor specific to CRT.

Trainings taken by CRT officers are tracked by the leadership in the Patrol Borough they work in, rather than by a CRT supervisor. CRT supervisors are charged with staying up-to-date with upcoming trainings and requesting that the officers that they supervise take the trainings, beyond those routine trainings required for all members of the Department. NYPD provided just one CRT team's training records (the CRT Citywide team, maintained by Captain Kaminski) to OIG-NYPD and the trainings taken appear to vary from officer to officer. The Office was unable to identify trainings that are common to all CRT officers or that appear to be designated specifically for those officers.

Specialized training is typically provided to "specialized" units, in order to ensure that each member has the necessary skills to achieve the unit's unique mission, and are typically mandatory for all officers within a specialized unit.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, it is best practice to establish written policies outlining the training requirements of the specific unit. The COPS/NPI Guide notes that specialized units can pose risks of liability for their departments if they lack proper training to achieve their mission and therefore recommends targeted training for that unit's officers despite the commitment of resources required.<sup>46</sup>

### C. Tracking and Accountability

To manage the unit and to ensure accountability, CRT leadership tracks a number of categories using activity reports (see Table 1 for categories). Statistics for each CRT team are compiled at the Patrol Borough level, typically by an administrative officer or by CRT sergeants and lieutenants, and included in weekly activity reports. These activity reports are then reviewed by the Patrol Borough's Specialized Unit Commanding Officer who oversees CRT, and later shared with Deputy Commissioner Daughtry and Chief Chell.

Table 1. Offense Categories

<sup>45</sup> COPS/NPI Guide, at 4.

<sup>46</sup> *Id.*, at 13, Sec. 1.

1.	Felony, Misdemeanor, and Violation arrests	10.	ROW (return on warrant)
2.	Gun arrests	11.	I-Card apprehension
3.	Gun recovered	12.	Pursuit forms
4.	A summonses	13.	Vehicles seized
5.	B summonses	14.	ATV/Bikes/Moped
6.	C summonses	15.	Paper plate summonses
7.	Oath summonses	16.	Vendor Operations
8.	Stop reports	17.	Vendor Interactions
9.	Vehicle stop reports	18.	Parties responded to

In addition to tracking categories, some of the activity reports reviewed by OIG-NYPD included a “Success story” for the week and a weekly deployment section. The weekly deployment sections tended to include the precinct that officers were assigned for a specific day, or arrests made on a certain date. That said, not all CRT activity reports provided to OIG-NYPD had complete weekly deployment sections and many were blank. This prevented the Office from fully understanding where within the City CRT operates, and how NYPD measures its success.

While arrests and summonses are one way to track the success of CRT, Chief Chell explained that he measures success principally by the community’s response to CRT’s work. He gave examples of community members applauding the work of CRT officers in public, including approaching CRT leadership and officers to say thank you. Several members of CRT also noted these positive interactions with the community. Deputy Commissioner Daughtry noted that he personally measures CRT’s effectiveness by how many calls for service (911 and 311) the Department is receiving and whether that number is decreasing. He noted that he personally “tracks” this information, but the particular data he reviews is not saved or memorialized in any way.

Tracking metrics that reflect the work of NYPD is critical to rigorously evaluating the success of the Department—as well as of specialized units.<sup>47</sup> Putting aside for the moment whether or not such data should be publicly released, metrics concerning the work of specialized units must be maintained, tracked, and analyzed in order to assess the unit’s success in a reliable way. It is challenging to properly monitor and evaluate the success of a unit without a mission statement defining the goals of the particular unit, and associated metrics to measure success.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> *Id.* at xii.

<sup>48</sup> *Id.*

Therefore, to the extent that community response is viewed by officers as a critical measurement of CRT's success, NYPD should make efforts to evaluate and track that response.<sup>49</sup> CRT's success currently is measured by specific *outputs* (i.e., arrests, summonses, unregistered vehicle seizures, etc.).<sup>50</sup> Tracking *outcomes*, such as community satisfaction with this unit is also valuable, given the focus of the group. OIG-NYPD acknowledges the difficulty in gathering and maintaining community responses to enforcement activity, but notes that NYPD can review community complaints via 311 calls. Several senior NYPD officials as well as members of CRT explained that they use 311 calls to direct enforcement decisions. Despite this, NYPD confirmed that this 311 information, even when it is used as a basis for enforcement activity, is not tracked or maintained in any location, and therefore cannot be used to assess the impact of CRT's work on the number or nature of community complaints over time. NYPD has already committed to using 311 data to identify top community concerns in its Community Solutions Program as part of the 2021 NYPD Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan, so OIG-NYPD is confident that the Department has the capability to apply this practice specifically to CRT.<sup>51</sup> Tracking 311 calls is one of many ways in which the Department can properly track community satisfaction with CRT's work.

In addition to tracking community responses, it is critical for NYPD to track CRT's deployment, that is, where CRT teams are sent and their assignments or enforcement goals. In the documents provided by the Department, OIG-NYPD found inconsistencies in deployment information—many weekly deployment sections were left blank within CRT activity reports. Also, NYPD was unable to provide complete information (i.e., location, date, enforcement focus) on all special operations conducted by CRT.

In an effort to assess the impact of CRT's work, the Office collected the publicly available 311 data both in the period relevant to the creation of the unit and since its inception. This public data is organized into broad categories without specificity relevant to the work of CRT. This inadequate 311 data, combined with the previously mentioned lack of deployment information, does not allow for a comparative analysis or any impact analysis of CRT. However, as part of the follow-up report, OIG-NYPD plans to explore different avenues for collecting and reviewing community response data in hopes of being able to analyze and compare it with NYPD's deployment details. A key requirement for the Office to be able to conduct this type of oversight will be for NYPD to begin tracking CRT deployment details, as well as 311 data. Failing to track this information means OIG-NYPD and the public are unable to

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<sup>49</sup> *Id.*, 27, at Sec. 3.

<sup>50</sup> *Id.*

<sup>51</sup> N.Y.C. Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, *New York City Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan: A Progress Report*, (Jun. 2024), <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/policereform/downloads/pdf/nyc-police-reform-and-reinvention-collaborative-plan-progress-060624.pdf>.

confirm that CRT is indeed adhering to its mission and operating in spaces where there are confirmed community complaints.

It is OIG-NYPD's position that NYPD should to publicize the data that reflects the work of CRT. Currently, none of the data kept by the Department regarding CRT is made public. While OIG-NYPD recognizes that it is standard practice for NYPD to release Department-wide data, but not data concerning specialized units, NYPD has been very vocal, both on social media and in media outlets, about the work of CRT and its accomplishments over the years. Presumably, this positive assessment is—and should be—supported by data, and in light of the public's concerns about CRT, and the historical issues that some specialized units have had, NYPD should make that data publicly available, to increase the public's trust in the work and value of the unit. That kind of transparency will also facilitate accountability for CRT officers, who should be held to high standards in light of the significant and specialized tasks entrusted to them. OIG-NYPD also has been told that NYPD is considering expansion of CRT to the precinct level in the future, which also indicates a need to support, with data, the value that CRT brings to the public. NYPD's purposeful exposure of CRT to media outlets has thrust the unit into the public eye, therefore demanding increased transparency for the public that includes enforcement aims and the outcomes of their work.

#### **D. Community Engagement**

NYPD informed OIG-NYPD that the community has responded positively to CRT. Several officers, as well as members of CRT leadership, provided anecdotal evidence of the positive response in the form of community members approaching officers to thank them for their work. However, OIG-NYPD's investigation revealed that this positive sentiment is not universal. As part of the investigation, the Office met with several community advocacy and violence interrupter groups who reported instances of intimidation, questionable stops by CRT, and fear of CRT by community members.

While OIG-NYPD was unable to speak with a fully representative sample of community members impacted by CRT's work, and while the groups with whom we spoke may not express the sentiment of the majority of community members, it is nonetheless important to recognize the community's concerns about CRT of which we are aware. OIG-NYPD understands the challenge of gathering complete community perspectives, but maintains that a specialized unit founded on community complaints must thoughtfully engage with communities. Members of CRT mentioned that they interact with community members in the course of their work, but these informal interactions may not be sufficient to fully engage community members and build a relationship with them.

Ideally, NYPD would have educated the public about CRT before or simultaneously with the launch of the unit, so that community members would feel informed and



have at least some opportunity for dialogue with the Department about the work of the unit.<sup>52</sup> NYPD did not provide information about CRT until the unit began its work. Especially for that reason, regular communication and engagement with community members about the unit's mission and successes, as well as how NYPD plans to address any community concerns, is vital to building strong relationships between the communities CRT serves and NYPD. OIG-NYPD suggests that members of CRT in each Patrol Borough meet with community members at minimum twice a year to share data, educate members of the public about CRT, and discuss community concerns.<sup>53</sup> These meetings must be fully inclusive and accessible to the public, aligning with the values laid out in the Department's own New York City Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan.<sup>54</sup>

OIG-NYPD received feedback from community advocacy groups that many New Yorkers, specifically Black and Brown youth, remain skeptical and hesitant towards NYPD specialized units given the concerns related to such units in the past. One powerful way to reduce these concerns is transparency about CRT's mission and data that reflects the nature of its work to date. Increased transparency is the first step in repairing NYPD's relationships with communities that are wary of specialized units and can contribute to mitigating public suspicion over CRT and its activities.

CRT has a unique opportunity as a "community response" unit to lean into its name, define a mission that is centered around serving the community, and make a commitment to members of the public to remain engaged with them and to hear their concerns and suggestions.

#### IV. Furthering the Investigation

This investigation reviewed CRT's formation; policies and procedures; enforcement responsibilities; personnel selection; training; management; monitoring and evaluation of data; and community engagement. The goal of this Report was to provide transparency with respect to foundational aspects of the unit that have not previously been publicly disclosed by NYPD, and to recommend policy and procedural changes intended to increase transparency about the unit's work and consistency in its practices with respect to assignments, training, and officer selection. OIG-NYPD plans to continue this investigation by exploring issues including the disciplinary history of CRT officers, both before and after joining the unit, the impact of CRT's

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<sup>52</sup> See COPS/NPI Guide, at 38, Sec. 4.

<sup>53</sup> *Id.*

<sup>54</sup> See N.Y.C. Council, *New York City Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan*, Res. 1584 of 2021, <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4890502&GUID=2CB9D744-6371-434F-8331-4A923FF529AB&Options=ID|Text|&Search=1584>.

work on available community complaint data, and various aspects of CRT's enforcement practices.

## V. Conclusion: Findings and Recommendations

OIG-NYPD's investigation determined that:

1. Unlike other specialized units, CRT is not mentioned on NYPD's website, despite being frequently featured on NYPD social media pages.
2. There is no mission statement to inform and guide the work of CRT, despite NYPD leadership noting that CRT's mission is to enforce QoL issues and respond to community complaints.
3. There are no policies, procedures, or operations guides specifically applicable to CRT.
4. There are no policies and procedures specifically related to training for officers in CRT.
5. There have been no trainings created specifically for CRT officers, and CRT officers are not required to complete any specific trainings prior to beginning CRT-related work.
6. There are no written and standardized procedures of recruitment for officers or supervisors in CRT.
7. Despite CRT leadership asserting that they personally track 311 calls, leadership does not have a mechanism or system to track community complaints, and thus to evaluate whether the number of complaints is decreasing in areas where CRT is active. CRT leadership also does not save or maintain the data that they personally track concerning community complaints.

While the Office considered several NYPD specialized units throughout its investigation (i.e. the Neighborhood Safety Team, Public Safety Team, and Strategic Response Group), this assessment focuses primarily on NYPD's Community Response Team, and thus, the findings and recommendations detailed herein are tailored specifically to this specialized unit. The Office encourages the Department to conduct similar reviews of its other specialized units to determine the relevance, if any, of the findings and recommendations resulting from this assessment.

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Based on those and other findings, OIG-NYPD makes the following recommendations:

1. Update the NYPD website to include information on CRT under the Patrol Services Bureau.
2. Memorialize a mission statement in writing that includes the aims and goals of CRT, including its crime/offense focus, and publish it on NYPD's website.
3. Memorialize in the Patrol Guide and/or Administrative Guide policies and procedures specific to CRT for the following areas:
  - Uniform requirements;
  - Statistics concerning CRT's work that will be maintained by the Department and the individuals responsible for recording/maintaining them;
  - Recruitment guidelines;
  - The requirements for CRT officers in supervisory roles;
  - The training required to perform CRT officer duties; and
  - Where officers can be deployed and how deployment will be determined.
4. Collect, analyze, and publish 311-related data, specifically pertaining to QoL categories, that fall under the Department's official QoL definition and CRT's mandate. Analysis should consider changes in 311-related data over time, and be used to inform deployment and enforcement decisions.
5. Conduct a minimum of two inclusive and accessible meetings a year, per Patrol Borough Command to gather community sentiments with respect to CRT and maintain a detailed agenda and minutes from each meeting.
6. Track and maintain a database for all CRT deployment on a weekly basis.
7. Publish the CRT-specific data that NYPD is already collecting for CRT (i.e. arrests, summonses, mopeds, etc.) on the NYPD website.