



VILLAGE OF GREAT NECK ESTATES POLICE DEPARTMENT  
POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION COLLABORATIVE

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Mayor

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## **PUBLIC COMMENT COVER LETTER**

This draft document is being presented for public comment following collaborative meetings with community leaders and representatives. It is very important the Village and Police Department receive input on this plan for police reform. Positive change and reform can only be accomplished if our citizens review the plan and provide comment, suggestions and recommendations.

Comments and feedback must be submitted via email to [mayorwarner@vgne.com](mailto:mayorwarner@vgne.com) or dropped off at Police HQ in writing at One Cedar Drive, Great Neck NY 11021 by March 1, 2021.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Great Neck Estates Mayor William Warner and Police Chief Ricardo Moreno would like to acknowledge and thank the community leaders who participated in the collaboration with the GNPD that resulted in the formation of this draft plan.

### **Police and Community Stakeholder Meetings**

November 10, 2020

November 17, 2020

### **Police Reform Plan Announcement**

February 8, 2021

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Village of Great Neck Estates and the Great Neck Estates Police Department submit this plan pursuant to NYS Executive Order 203. This plan was developed after review of current policies and procedures and the subsequent meetings with community stakeholders.

NYS has been proactively adopting new legislation over the last few years that have changed the landscape of the criminal justice system that stood in place for decades. Reforms that took place pertain to juvenile justice, bail, discovery, and Police personnel records (Law 50a). In May of 2020, a police involved death of a Minneapolis man caused civil unrest throughout the country prompting many states to reevaluate their current legal and justice systems. Governor Cuomo signed the “Say Their Name” agenda which includes: a) Banning of Chokeholds, b) Repealing of Civil Rights Law 50a (blocks the release of most personnel records of Police and Fire Department members without consent of the member or court order), c) appointed the NYS Attorney General to investigate all police involved deaths and d) prohibits race based 911 calls.

In keeping with New York States sweeping redesign of our criminal justice system and in accordance with the mandates set forth by Executive Order # 203, each local government has been ordered to adopt a police reform plan by April 1, 2021. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that police policies and procedures foster trust and fairness within the community.

## **ABOUT THE GREAT NECK ESTATES POLICE DEPARTMENT**

The Great Neck Estates Police Department has been an integral part of the community since 1911. The Department began with one officer and in its 110 year history; the department has always strived to create a close and intimate relationship between the members of the community and the Police. Due to our geographical size and population, it affords us the opportunity to serve the members of our community on a more personal level. The department currently has 14 sworn members and 4 civilian employees. GNPD is comprised of three major divisions: Patrol Division, Detective Division and the Traffic Enforcement Division.

It should be noted that the Great Neck Estates Police Department requests and assists neighboring Departments from time to time including the Nassau County Police Department, Kings Point Police Department, Lake Success Police Department and the Kensington Police Department.

It is also important to note and acknowledge the close working relationship we have with the Nassau County Police Department. GNPD does call upon the Nassau County Police Department (NCPD) for assistance when needed, including: assistance with certain serious felonies, K9, Air, Marine and other specialized police functions. GNPD members are also sent to the Nassau County Police Academy for recruit and in service training. The Nassau County Police Academy is governed by the NYS DCJS.

Through the years the GNPD has continued to strengthen and expand its community partnerships. In 2020 Niche.com ranked Great Neck Estates #4 best places to raise a family in New York and gave Great Neck Estates an A+ in Crime and Safety.

## **MISSION**

The mission of the Great Neck Estates Police Department has always been evident through its actions and accomplishments. The department's mission is a guiding principal for achieving the law enforcement objective.

*"We, the members of the Great Neck Estates Police Department, exist to serve all persons within our jurisdiction with respect, fairness and consideration.*

*We are committed to the prevention of crime; the protection of life and property; the preservation of peace; order and safety; the enforcement of laws and the safeguarding of constitutional guarantees.*

*With community service as our foundation, we are dedicated in our efforts to preserve and enhance the quality of life which the Village of Great Neck Estates has long been known for.*

*Through training and excellence of duty we will provide police services that are professional, and respectful of the dignity of all. We will continue to utilize the diverse skills of our department to remain dynamic in our approach so we may maintain the highest standards of police service."*

## **GOALS**

The primary objective of the New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative is to bring the community and police together so they can work through issues and overcome obstacles together. This will reinforce a sense of trust. The Village of Great Neck Estates Police Department shall continue to follow the guiding principles of its Mission Statement.

## **PLAN SUMMARY**

In an effort to meet the requirements of EO203, the Village of Great Neck Estates Police Department developed the following plan which will meet all of the necessary mandates. This plan will seek comment and input from Community Leaders which will establish a solid foundation for further discussions pertaining to the expectations of the Police Department. This plan will also allow the police department to build upon and improve its continuing education program including but not limited to, use of force, de-escalation, reporting requirements, Implicit Bias Awareness and Hate Crimes. This plan and the process will be completely transparent and we will request and encourage continued dialog with the community this Department serves.

## THE PLAN

### Evaluate Current Practices and Review

#### 1) Review the needs of the Community

- a) Determine the expected role of the police department and define its primary activities
  - (1) Prevention of crime, protection of life and property, preservation of peace/order/safety, the enforcement of laws and the safeguarding of constitutional guarantees
  - (2) Provide police services that are professional and respectful of the dignity of all
- b) Determine the reasons why people utilize the 911 system and Non-Emergency Line
  - (1) In 2020, Great Neck Estates Police received 3904 calls for service. The top 5 categories for service were: Medical Assistance, Fire/Smoke/CO Alarms, Burglary/Panic Alarms, Parking Conditions, and assisting neighboring Police Departments.
  - (2) GNPD Dispatchers also receive and dispatch calls of service relating to medical emergencies. An integral part of that response is the Great Neck Estates Police Officers who are certified first responders and who respond alongside the paramedics to all medical emergency calls. Oftentimes, our police officers are the first ones to arrive at the scene of a medical emergency and are tasked with providing life-saving measures until the paramedic can arrive and the patient can be safely transported to a hospital.
  - (3) As a service oriented department, the Village of Great Neck Estates Police Department responds to any and all requests for assistance. For example, a request by an elderly individual to be lifted from the floor to the bed will be handled by a member of the GNPD. A neighbor having an issue with another neighbor will be handled by the GNPD. There is no assignment or call that is too big or small for the GNPD.
- c) Evaluate when and why members of the police department self-initiate interactions in the community
  - (1) Officers are assigned to visit local houses of worship and schools during their duties. Officers are in close contact with the leaders of these institutions. These officers, while not assigned as School Resource Officers (SRO), are available to address any needs the school or houses of worship may have.
  - (2) Park, Walk, and Talk – Officers are encouraged, as part of their daily routines, to park their vehicles and visit business owners, speak to visitors at our park, and to visit local houses of worship to speak with members. These discussions and interactions will allow us to hear from members of our community who might not have called us previously to alert us about conditions or crimes in the area. Gaining their confidence and trust will enable us to respond quickly to address any issues that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.
- d) Maintain and strengthen the civilian complaint and disposition procedure against police officers
  - (1) Increase the frequency of review for complaints against members of the Department
  - (2) Create a task force to review any future complaints to enable quick and fair investigations and dispositions

- (3) Investigation procedures and disciplinary conditions have been outlined in the most recent employment contract with the Great Neck Estates PBA.

### **Evidence based policing**

#### **1) Use of Force**

The **use of force** by members of this department is guided by the principals of objective reasonableness. The Supreme Court ruled in *Graham v. Connor* (1989), that police use of force must be “objectively reasonable”—that an officer's actions were reasonable in light of the facts and circumstances confronting him, without regard to his underlying intent or motivation. When faced with a situation where the use of force is reasonable under the circumstances, the guiding principles are set forth by law, department policies and their training.

The **use of Deadly Physical Force** is only justified when it is to protect him/herself or another person from what the member reasonably believes is an imminent threat of serious physical injury or death, or to stop a fleeing suspect where the member has probable cause to believe the suspect has committed a felony involving the infliction or threat of serious physical injury and the member reasonably believes that the suspect poses an imminent threat of serious physical injury to the member or to others.

#### **Reforms**

- a) Officers have been informed of the new law, Aggravated Strangulation New York State Penal Law 121.13-a.
- b) To ensure GNPD Officers are aware of the latest legislation and changes to policy regarding use of force, these topics will be included in the yearly in service training provided by the Nassau County Police Academy.
- c) The new police academy being constructed on the campus of the Nassau County Community College, will allow for more hands-on training and role-playing. The construction of the academy is set to be complete by the middle of 2021.
- d) Members of the Department who witness another member of the department using force that he/she believes to be clearly beyond what is objectively reasonable are duty bound to intervene to prevent the use of unreasonable force if and when he/she has a realistic opportunity to prevent harm. Members of the Department who observe another member using force that exceeds the use of what is objectively reasonable shall promptly report these observations to his/her supervisor. In every situation, Members of the Department are expected to act with intelligence and employ sound judgement.
- e) Members of the Department shall notify their immediate supervisor as soon as possible in instances involving the use of force. Following involvement of any such incident, members are required to complete GNPD Form 258, the Use of Force Report. Use of force incidents are reviewed by the Chief of Police.

## **2) Procedural Justice, Systemic Racial Bias and Racial Justice in Policing**

The Great Neck Estates Police Department understands that procedural justice and police legitimacy play an essential role in establishing a positive relationship with the community. GNPD has established long-lasting community partnerships with local houses of worship, civic associations and local schools to foster public confidence in the police and in its ability to safeguard the community. Members of the Department will not engage in racial profiling. Officers are trained in the inherent dangers of conscious and unconscious bias and prejudice that could affect decision making.

### Reforms

- a) In accordance to the NYS Criminal Justice reform laws passed in April 2019, as a general rule, when a person is arrested for an offense OTHER than a class A, B, C or D felony offense, or for a violation of Penal Law section 130.25 (rape in the third degree), 130.40 (Criminal Sexual Act in the 3rd Degree), 205.10 (Escape in the 2nd Degree), 205.17 (Absconding from temporary release in the first degree), 205.19 (Absconding from a community treatment facility), and 215.56 (Bail Jumping in the 2nd Degree), a Desk Appearance Ticket will be mandatory.
- b) To ensure the members of our community with limited English proficiency have equal access to services provided by our department, the GNPD has partnered with NCPD and has implemented a Language access Plan. Members of the department will use Department issued iPhone to give the citizen an opportunity to video conference with an interpreter to ensure both parties can properly understand each other.
- c) Great Neck Estates worked with the NYS State Police to enable and make mandatory the “Ethnicity Field” for every summons issued through TRACs. This data field is not mandated by law but this additional measure will increase transparency, accountability and data collection moving forward.

## **3) Implicit Bias Awareness Training**

Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. It is imperative that GNPD Officers are accepting and respectful of everyone’s principles and lifestyles. Respectful language, thoughtful and intentional dialogue, and consistent involvement, both formal and informal, during community engagements helps to ensure relationships of trust between police and the communities we serve.

### Reforms

- a) GNPD will now require all members to participate in yearly online anti-bias instruction. Immediately following the training, members must pass an exam exhibiting their understanding.

## **4) De-escalation Training and Practices**

GNPD recognizes the importance of de-escalation in safeguarding citizens as well as officers. Through effective communication and techniques, officers attempt to resolve situations which might otherwise escalate toward violence.

## Reform

- a) GNPD members will attend the Nassau County Police Academy's 8 hour course on de-escalation techniques. The De-escalation course centers on Dr. George Thompson's Five Universe Truths of Human Interactions.
  - (1) People feel the need to be respected
  - (2) People would rather be asked than told
  - (3) People have a desire to know why
  - (4) People prefer to have options instead of threats
  - (5) People want to have a second chance
- b) As part of the use of force reforms previously outlined, all use of force incidents are reviewed to ensure de-escalation techniques were utilized.

### **5) Law enforcement assisted diversion programs (LEADS)**

Diversion Programs recognize that incarceration or establishment of a criminal record may not be the most appropriate mechanism to address certain conduct. Education and/or drug or mental health treatment may provide a better alternative for both the individual and the community. NCPD Community Affairs unit has many LEADS programs including:

- a) Bullying/Cyber Bullying Program
- b) Bias Crime/Hate Crime Training
- c) Drug Awareness and Prevention Programs
- d) Bicycle Safety Demonstrations

Nassau County District Attorney's Office offers the following diversion programs:

- a) Mental Health Court
- b) Misdemeanor drug treatment court
- c) Treatment Alternative Plea Part
- d) Drug Treatment Alternative to Prison
- e) Veteran's Treatment Court

## Reform

- a) GNPD will direct members to frequently visit local schools and local parks to have genuine conversations with youth in the community. This will create an open dialogue between the police and the youth in the hopes it will breakdown any existing barriers, stereotypes, and biases.

### **6) Restorative justice practices**

Restorative justice seeks to change an offender's behavior by educating him/her on the consequences that his/her actions have on the community and the victim. The purpose of

justice is to restore the victim, the community and the offender so that they all may be integrated back into and enhance the community.

GNPD will request the assistance of Nassau County Special Victims Detectives when dealing with victims of family violence and sexual abuse. Nassau County Special Victims detectives work in tandem with the Nassau County Safe Center which is an advocacy agency that services those victims.

If allowed by law, when an arrest is made, GNPD Officers will inform the victims of their ability to have their case seen concurrently in criminal and family court. Family court may allow mediation between the parties as part of a resolution to the case. Domestic cases that might require resources beyond law enforcement capabilities are subsequently referred to the Safe Center.

In recognition of offender rights and avoiding the tendency towards incarceration-minded policing, in 2016, the GNPD instituted a new Appearance Ticket Protocol. In lieu of arrest, the offenses involving marijuana and larcenies, offenders are issued Appearance Tickets.

#### Reform

- a) GNPD will educate its Officers and Staff of the availability of offered programs from State agencies such as Probation, Department of Corrections, and Community Partnership Program. The Community Partnership Program employs former gang members as outreach workers to engage with groups and individuals involved in gang related activities. CPP workers assist people with efforts such as tattoo removal, job training and parenting workshops for individuals who leave gang life and want to become more involved in the lives of their children.

#### **7) Community based outreach and conflict resolution**

Community based outreach and conflict resolution allows police agencies to provide education to the communities to increase crime awareness, advise of services offered, and enhance collaboration and trust through proactive outreach. Increasing the availability of police officers in the community puts a focus on growing and strengthening community relationships to provide more comprehensive services and responds to citizens needs in the community.

- a) Officers are assigned to visit local houses of worship and schools during their duties. Officers are in close contact with the leaders of these institutions. These officers, while not assigned as School Resource Officers (SRO), are available to address any needs the school or houses of worship may have.
- b) Park, Walk, and Talk – Officers are encouraged, as part of their daily routines, to park their vehicles and visit business owners, speak to visitors at our park, and to visit local houses of worship to speak with members. These discussions and interactions will allow us to hear from members of our community who might not have called us previously to alert us about

conditions or crimes in the area. Gaining their confidence and trust will enable us to respond quickly to address any issues that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

- c) The Great Neck Estates Police Department partners with the Nassau County Police Department Community Affairs Unit which plays a critical role in achieving the Department's goals against crime by strengthening community relations and trust. Nassau County Community Affairs unit oversees the COPE unit, GREAT Program, Law Enforcement Explorers program, Too Good for Drugs Program, Nassau County Police Activity League and the Youth Police initiative.

#### Reform

- a) Officers while conducting their Park Walk and Talk patrols, will be instructed to speak to Business Owners, Houses of Worship, and Schools to have them fill out and update Business/Resident Questionnaire forms in addition to the NCPD Infrastructure form. These forms will be used in times of Emergency or if the department needs to contact business owners for any reason.
- b) GNPD will be implementing a new e-bike patrol. This will increase police presence and allow for a closer relationship to the community while still maintaining the response times the community is accustomed to.

### **8) Problem Oriented Policing**

Problem oriented policing replaces primarily reactive incident driven policies with strategies that proactively identify underlying issues that can be targeted to alleviate crime at its roots. NCPD POP unit has been utilized in the past and is available to us as a resource to help identify and coordinate a response to problems that range from minor public nuisances and quality of life issues to serious criminal actions.

#### Reform

- a) Assign an Officer to be a liaison between the NCPD POP unit and GNPD.

### **9) Hot spot Policing**

Hot spot policing focuses on intelligence gathered and crime analysis to focus resources in a particular area to reduce crime. GNPD detectives utilize information gathered from previous incidents to map patterns and deploy resources to that area. Types of resources include:

- a) Directed patrol assignments
- b) Vehicle and Traffic Enforcement
- c) The use of License Plate Readers

#### Reform

- a) Detectives will continue to monitor data to spot trends in crime.

- b) Detectives will work with NCPD 6<sup>th</sup> Precinct Crime Analyst to share data between Departments.

## **10) Focused Deterrence**

Focused Deterrence is a strategy whereby officers engage directly with offenders or groups of offenders based on their prior history, sometimes in partnership with community members. The purpose of focused deterrence is to alter the opportunities for crime in order to deter motivated offenders.

- a) Nassau County Police Departments Intelligence Unit identifies known offenders in each jurisdiction.
- b) In partnership with Nassau County Police, its Intelligence Unit provided and installed a Real Time Intelligence Terminal at GNPD HQ. This Terminal allows GNPD Officers to get up to date information on wanted individuals, known individuals with gang affiliations, intelligence bulletins, and interactive maps of major crimes.

### Reform

- a) GNPD Officers will exercise the best practices in implementing proper focused deterrence, this topic will be covered during the newly expanded yearly in-service training.

## **11) Crime Prevention through Environmental Design**

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design is based on the principle that proper design and effective use of buildings and public spaces in neighborhoods can lead to a reduction in the incidence of crime, and an improvement in the quality of life for citizens. GNPD creates plans for various community locations to help reduce and prevent crimes from occurring.

### Reform

- a) GNPD is in the process of acquiring additional License Plate Reader Cameras to be used throughout the village.
- b) Electronic gating system is being installed at the GNE Park to control entry.
- c) GNPD will educate the public on precautionary measures to secure their homes and property.
- d) Officers are directed to complete street light outage reports weekly.

## **12) Violence Prevention and Reduction Interventions**

Violence prevention and reduction interventions is the theory that focusing on prevention, intervention, and suppression, reduces crime. This theory calls for police departments to

proactively address potential criminal activity by facilitating or participating in community programs and connecting high risk individuals with needed services and other forms of community engagement.

- a) NCPD Community Affairs Officers report to local schools to discuss different forms of bullying. It has mentoring programs such as the GREAT Program and an Anti-bullying Program. GNPD Officers will continue to work alongside the NCPD Community Affairs unit to ensure a safe learning environment.
- b) GNPD has a zero-tolerance policy for any and all domestic violence, which includes pro-arrest policy when allowed by law and a proactive gun removal policy.

#### Reform

- a) GNPD will seek and implement increased training on Domestic Violence prevention and investigative techniques

### **13) Model policies and guidelines promulgated by the NYSMPTC**

- a) GNPD Officers receive training at the Nassau County Police Department's Police Academy which meets or exceeds the standards set forth by the NYS Municipal Police Training Council.
- b) Members of the Department have also attended training outside of the NCPD Academy, including the FBI, Suffolk County Police Academy, NYPD, Colt LE Armorers School, Sig Sauer LE Armorers School, IACP and the Southern Police Institute.

#### Reform

- a) GNPD will work with the Nassau County Police Department to determine if the training provided to our Officers is relevant to the mission of the GNPD and its community, and if any additional training is necessary.

### **14) Standards promulgated by the NYS Law Enforcement Accreditation Program**

Prior to EO203 and the civil unrest that took place throughout the nation, the Village of Great Neck Estates and the Great Neck Estates Police Department decided to begin the process of Accreditation. The Accreditation Program is comprised of a set of standards developed to further enhance the capabilities of an agency, and is divided into three categories. Standards in the Administrative section have provisions for such topics as agency organization, fiscal management, personnel practices, and records management. Training standards encompass basic and in-service instruction, as well as training for supervisors and specialized or technical assignments. Operations standards deal with such critical and litigious topics as high speed pursuits, roadblocks, patrol and unusual occurrences. Only a handful of Police departments have been accredited on Long Island. The Department is scheduled to complete its Accreditation process and submit its application for review by the end of 2021.

### **Offer the plan for Public Comment**

Involve the community

Make the plan available for review to:

- (1) Elected Officials
- (2) Employees (Police Union, Civilian Employees)
- (3) Residents
- (4) Commercial Establishments
- (5) Houses of Worship
- (6) Civic Associations
- (7) Office of the District Attorney
- (8) Legal Aid Society

Announce the plan at a public meeting

- Announcement set for February 8, 2021

### **Develop policy recommendations resulting from the review, evaluation and discussions**

Finalize policies that allow the Department and its members to effectively and safely perform their duties

### **Certify the adoption of the plan to the State Budget Director before April 1, 2021**

Present the plan to the board of Trustees to certify and submit to NYS

### **Implement the Plan**

Implement the plan and communicate progress reports to the public and community stakeholders.

## **Conclusion**

The Village of Great Neck Estates and the Great Neck Estates Police Department will continue to monitor and measure the success of our plan by reviewing data, expanding and modifying our training and by listening to our community. We again want to thank the community and community leaders involved in this process.