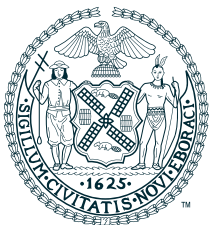


# NYC Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

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Strategic Plan  
Fiscal Years 2019–2021

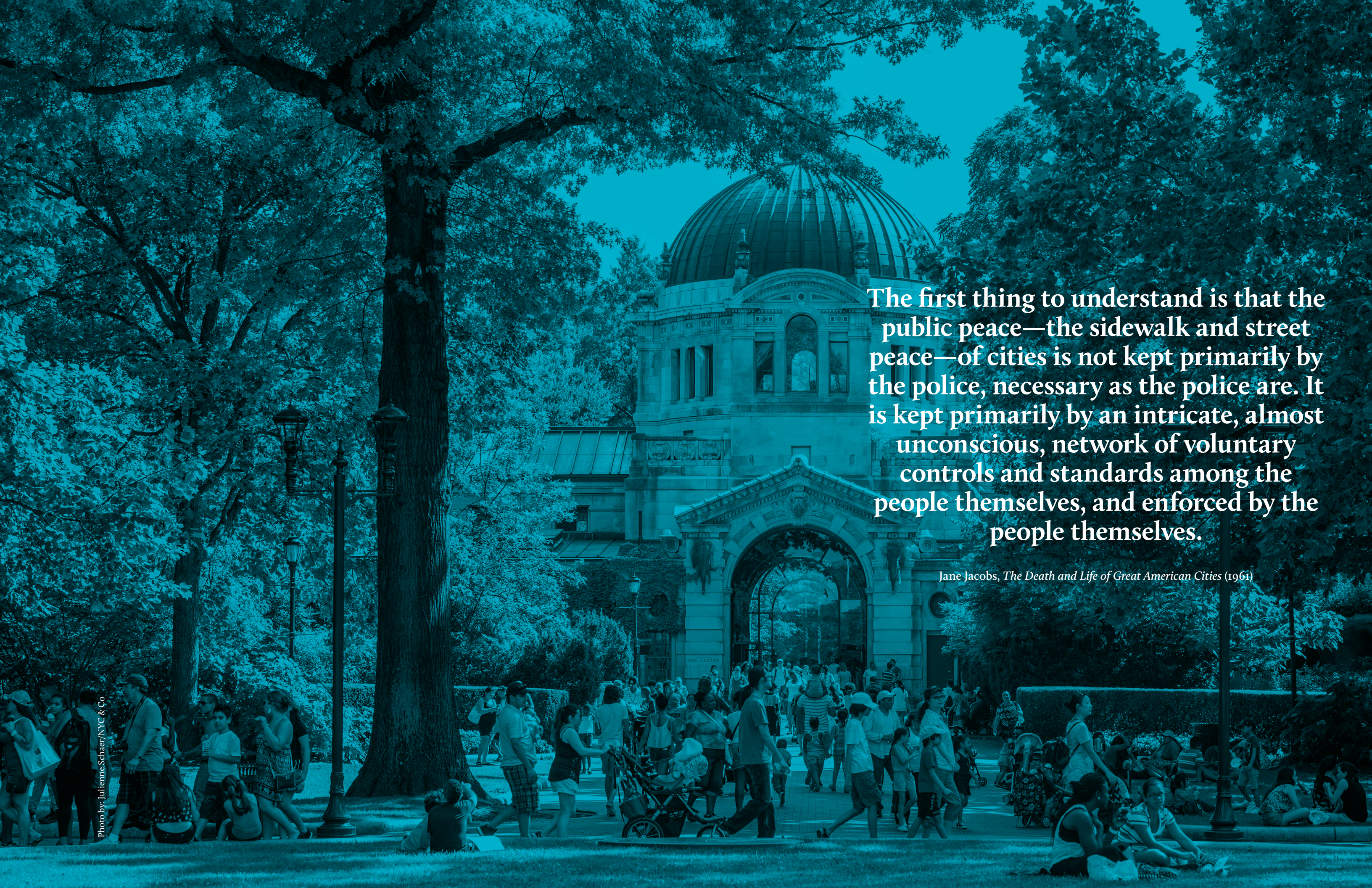
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The City of New York  
Mayor Bill de Blasio

Elizabeth Glazer  
Director





The first thing to understand is that the public peace—the sidewalk and street peace—of cities is not kept primarily by the police, necessary as the police are. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves.

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961)





## Letter from the Director



When it comes to crime, incarceration and inequality, our city is at a reckoning point. New York is safer than it has been in decades, and with the number of people in our jails dropping as well, we have learned how to have more safety with less jail. No doubt, we still have a distance to travel—but we have come far. For all that good news, a fundamental inequality overhangs these successes: who is safe and where it is safe is distributed unevenly across the city. The urgent question now is how we create more safety with more equality. This plan offers an answer, rooted in building safety from the neighborhood up and understanding safety as more than the absence of crime.

New York City has the lowest crime and incarceration rates of any large U.S. city. Today, our jails hold 27 percent fewer people than when the mayor took office in January 2014. Crime continues to drop, while the touch of police enforcement has lightened significantly. It is an accelerating virtuous cycle, attended by meticulous scrutiny by every decision-maker to each point in the justice system.

But meticulous attention to the justice system, while necessary, is not enough in the face of a persistent knot of intersected issues. Crime concentrates in the same neighborhoods now as decades ago, along with poverty and privation. Here, also, unemployment is high, school achievement low and health outcomes poor. In these predominantly African-American and Latino communities, crime intertwines with a history of both discrimination and disinvestment in every aspect of life in a way that has estranged neighborhoods from engagement in civic life and diminished hope and opportunity.

Democratizing how we keep the peace will make our neighborhoods and our city even safer and fairer. This means tipping the balance from relying primarily on law enforcement to sharing this work with residents of all ages, community-based organizations and city agencies as diverse as the Parks Department and the Department for the Aging. It also means acting on the decades of research and experience demonstrating that safety is the organic result of access to learning, work and play, along with revitalized physical environments that bring people together and promote civic engagement.

Some of these ideas are already showing results. Through the Crisis Management System that currently operates in 17 historically distressed neighborhoods, credible messengers are drawing on their own life experience to defuse potentially violent encounters. An infusion of jobs then provides a realistic pathway out of trouble. The Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety is bringing together residents of public housing, local organizations and city agencies to identify and solve problems—a process that little by little also builds trust in government and cohesion in neighborhoods.

Untying the knot of poverty, race and justice is our challenge. We hope this plan will produce a durable safety by identifying solutions with and beyond law enforcement alone; engaging every New Yorker; and ensuring that a clear and common understanding of history and the facts on the ground form the foundation of progress.

Elizabeth Glazer  
Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice



WHO WE ARE

As the Mayor's advisor on public safety strategy, we shape and fund justice strategies at every stage.

We work with New Yorkers, law enforcement, the courts, city agencies, non-profits, foundations and others to ensure that each part of our public safety system works well and works together so that every New Yorker is safe and treated fairly.

We bring together a team with diverse experiences and areas of expertise to achieve these ends. With our staff's backgrounds in prosecution, defense, research, advocacy, clinical work, direct service provision and non-profit and government management, we are uniquely positioned to develop durable, multi-disciplinary solutions to system problems.

THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE (MOCJ) INCLUDES:

- The Office to Prevent Gun Violence (OPGV)— Launched by Mayor de Blasio in February 2017, OPGV serves as the backbone of innovative strategies that include law enforcement and engage residents and neighborhoods as partners in driving gun violence down further.
- The Office of Special Enforcement (OSE)—Established by Executive Order No. 96 in 2006, OSE addresses quality-of-life issues citywide.

We serve in leading and coordinating roles on several key multiagency task forces, including:

- Justice Implementation Task Force
- Raise the Age Implementation Steering Committee
- Marijuana Legalization Task Force
- New York City Diversion and Reentry Council
- Domestic Violence Task Force
- Behavioral Health Task Force
- Crisis Prevention and Response Task Force

For more information about our work and impact, visit our website at [www.nyc.gov/criminaljustice](http://www.nyc.gov/criminaljustice).

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(Left Page) Photo by: Julianne Schaefer/NYC & Co



# PUBLIC SAFETY IN NEW YORK CITY

## We are at a turning point in New York City's history.

As jurisdictions across the country are grappling with ways to reduce growing jail and prison populations while keeping crime low, New York City is continued proof that it is possible to have both increased safety and fewer people behind bars.

### NEW YORK CITY'S UNIQUE PUBLIC SAFETY LANDSCAPE

In the last four years, we have seen an acceleration of the trends that have defined New York City's public safety landscape over the last three decades.

### FALLING CRIME

Major crime has fallen by more than 70 percent in the last thirty years and by 13 percent in the last four.

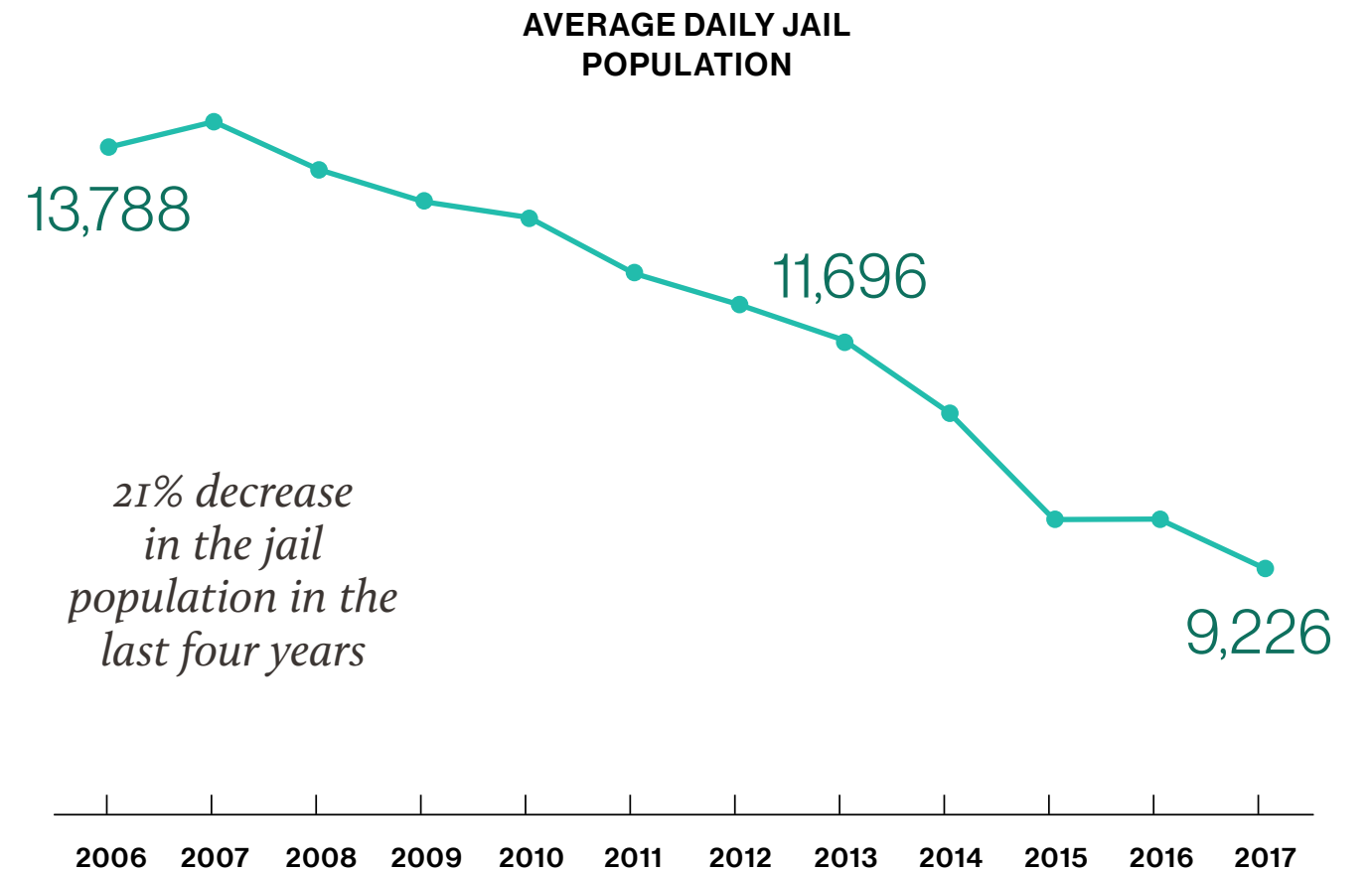
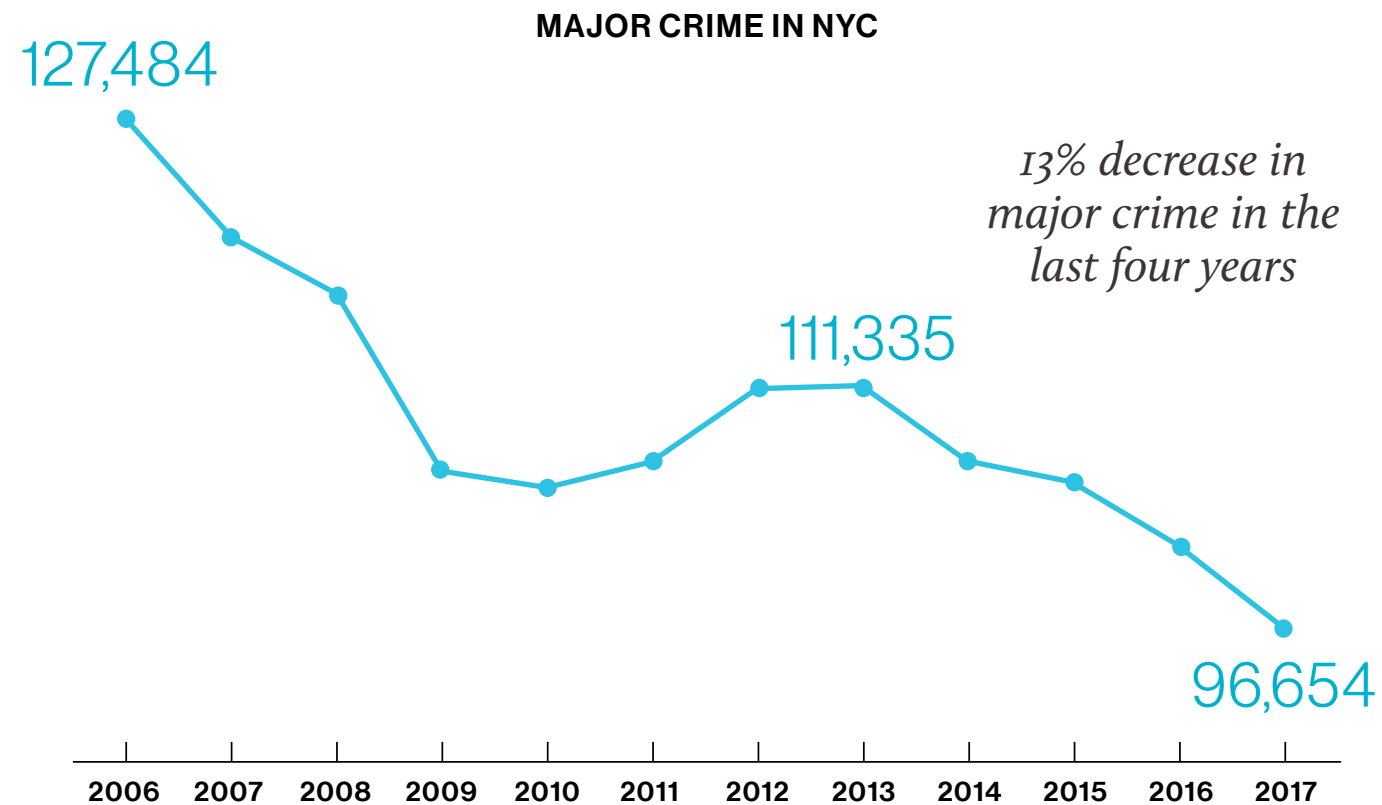
### FALLING INCARCERATION

New York City's jail population has fallen by more than 50 percent since 1990 and by 21 percent in the last four years. New York City has the lowest incarceration rate of any big U.S. city.

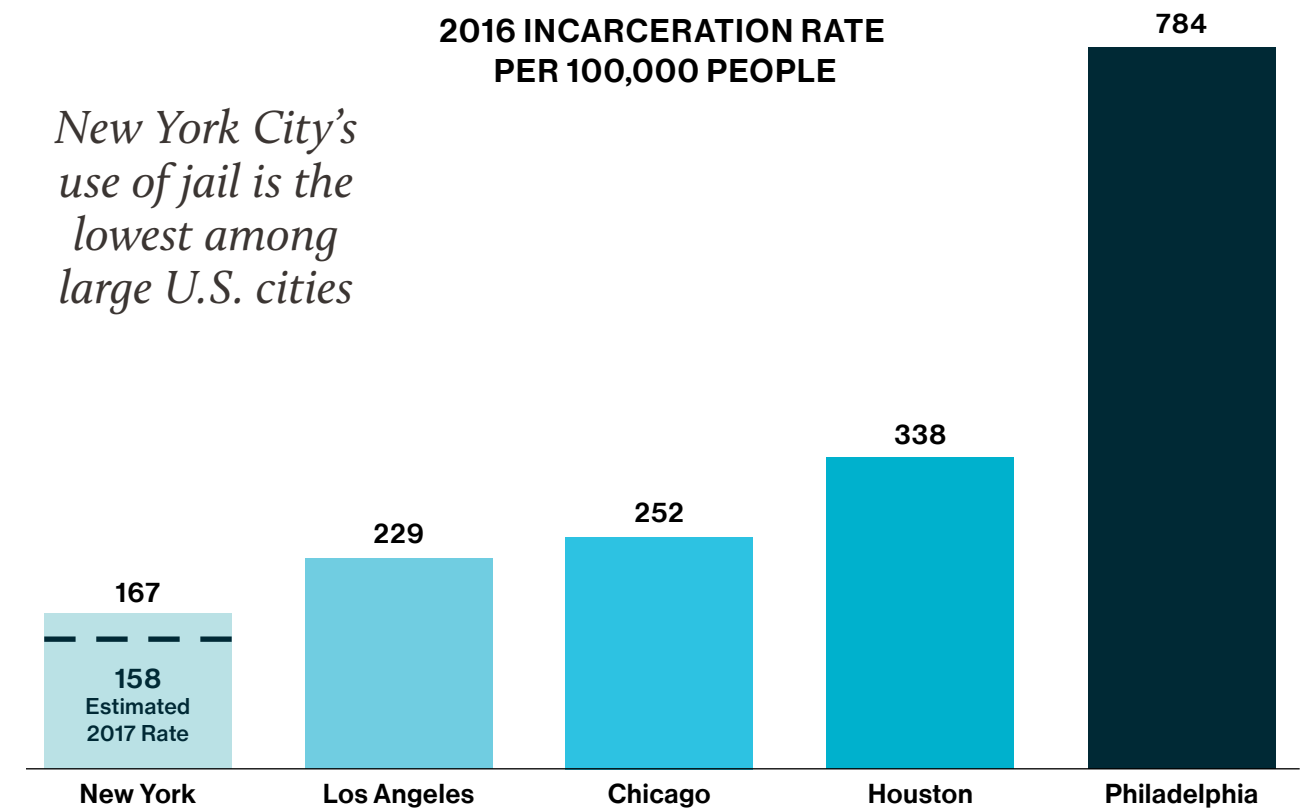
### LIGHTEN THE TOUCH OF ENFORCEMENT

In the last four years, police enforcement has lightened with stop and frisks down 94 percent, criminal summonses down 61 percent, and arrests down 27 percent.

This strategic plan will help guide the creation and implementation of programs and policies to ensure that these trends endure. We will continue to develop with our partners new and promising strategies to create the safest city possible with the smallest and fairest justice system.



Source: NYC Department of Correction (DOC)



Source: Local Sheriffs' Offices, 2016; Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice analysis of DOC data, 2017



# PRIORITY 1

## Improve Public Safety

Partner with New Yorkers to produce a safer, more inclusive city

Historically, jurisdictions across the country have relied primarily on police to provide safety. But as Jane Jacobs has noted, and as New York’s own experience attests, police enforcement alone cannot create safety. Over the past four years, we have worked to ensure that the creation of safety is a joint venture with all New Yorkers. In the coming few years, we will redouble our efforts, starting with promoting civic engagement, enhancing trust between government and New Yorkers and being attentive to the physical design of neighborhoods and expanded opportunities for work and play.

Over the last four years, our office has organized a number of these strategies while also working to enhance the effectiveness of traditional law enforcement. Over the next few years, we will expand proven strategies while ensuring rigorous measurement to refine our approach and bring together our partners.



### STRATEGY 1.1

#### Support safe, healthy and vibrant neighborhoods

##### Action Items

- Reduce gun violence by expanding the New York City Crisis Management System (CMS) and innovative community-centered public safety initiatives to additional neighborhoods
- Increase neighborhood cohesion by launching NeighborhoodStat in all 15 public housing developments in the Mayor’s Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP)
- Increase neighborhood well-being by implementing public space design solutions in all 15 MAP public housing developments and surrounding neighborhoods
- Understand what’s working by:
  - Evaluating MAP’s collective impact as a neighborhood-based public safety strategy
  - Evaluating the CMS model of reducing violence, which combines Cure Violence and its supportive “wrap around” components with engaged residents and community-based organizations

### STRATEGY 1.2

#### Ensure equal access to safety for all New Yorkers

##### Action Items

- Address domestic violence by developing an overall strategy combining services and enforcement, including implementation of Domestic Violence Task Force initiatives and Interrupting Violence At Home community-based programs to address abusive behavior and reduce abuse in intimate partner relationships
- Help improve the City’s response to emotionally distressed New Yorkers as part of the Crisis Prevention and Response Task Force
- Reduce the number of people who are most frequently admitted to jail, shelters and hospitals, by developing and implementing strategies through a special subcommittee of the New York City Diversion and Reentry Council
- Help address issues of opioid overdoses by linking multiple pilot projects into a citywide learning cooperative to evaluate programs and replicate them where appropriate
- Increase protections to housing, safety and livability and reduce repeat illegal hotel offenses by enhancing the activities of the Office of Special Enforcement

### STRATEGY 1.3

#### Enhance law enforcement’s ability to address violent and serious crime effectively

##### Action Items

- Reduce gun violence by enhancing data collection and implementing effective gun prosecution strategies developed as part of the Anti-Violence Innovation Challenge
- Share information on what works by evaluating the impact of Project Fast Track in reducing gun violence, and publishing reports on gun crime in New York City
- Understand and collectively address human trafficking by forming a Human Trafficking Law Enforcement Task Force to strategically tackle prosecutions of human traffickers, facilitators and promoters

#### HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

- The Office to Prevent Gun Violence oversees the Crisis Management System, which includes teams of credible messengers who use the Cure Violence model to mediate conflicts on the street, interrupt violence and connect victims and high-risk individuals to services that can reduce the long-term risks of violence. This work—launched in 2015 in the 17 highest violence precincts in NYC—contributed to a 31 percent decline in shootings (see *Denormalizing Violence*, a John Jay College evaluation of NYC Cure Violence programs).
- The Mayor’s Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP) works to create safe, strong neighborhoods through cooperative problem-solving approaches focused on resident and agency partnership with the goal of reducing violent crime and victimization and increasing safety. Launched in 2014, MAP focuses on 15 public housing developments and their surrounding neighborhoods. The MAP model has contributed to a 14 percent reduction in major crime from 2014 to 2017, outpacing the four percent decline in all of the City’s public housing developments during the same period.

(Above) Photo by: Edwin J. Torres/Mayoral Photography Office, NYC



## PRIORITY 2

# Safely Reduce Unnecessary Incarceration

### Rethink and remake the City’s justice system

The Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice is working every day with multiple partners to create a smaller, safer and fairer jail system in New York City. This is a matter of justice: no one should be detained who could safely remain in the community. But it is also a matter of pragmatism: the smaller the population in our jails, the easier it will be to close Rikers Island and create a justice system that rethinks and reshapes the culture, purpose and location of jails.

In 2017, New York City announced that it would close Rikers Island and move a smaller population into borough-based facilities that reflect the values of our city. This is now the everyday work of the government of New York City and the many other entities responsible for moving us with urgency toward a smaller, safer and fairer justice system. Over the next few years, we will accelerate safe reductions in the number of people in jail while moving toward the construction of modern facilities in the boroughs and a reform of the culture inside.



#### STRATEGY 2.1

### Accelerate safe reductions in the number of people in city jails

#### Action Items

- Bring the jail population down at least 15 percent from 2018 to 2020
- Reduce the number of people unnecessarily entering jail through diversion, reentry and bail reform:
  - Launch a new release recommendation tool for judges to assist with their assessment of a defendant’s likelihood of returning for scheduled court appearances
  - Launch at least three new programs aimed at safely diverting adolescents from jail
  - Reconfigure the City’s alternative-to-jail programs, based on an analysis of the risks and needs of the current justice-involved population, conducted in conjunction with the Diversion and Reentry Council
- Increase access to permanent supportive housing for people who most frequently cycle through jail on low-level charges, stay in city shelters and struggle with behavioral health needs
- Increase behavioral health diversion by expanding citywide the Enhanced Pre-Arrest Screening Unit, which assesses individuals’ behavioral health needs and documents appropriate diversion programs for defense attorneys to consider and present to a judge, in addition to triaging individuals for immediate health risks
- Evaluate Supervised Release, an alternative-to-bail program that allows defendants to wait for trial in the community instead of in jail, and assess options for expanding its use
- Develop additional data-informed strategies to help the individuals who are most frequently admitted to jail
- Reduce the length of time people stay in jail by continuing to:
  - Work with justice partners—including prosecutors, defenders and courts—to shorten case processing times, identify delays and implement systemic solutions



Mayor Bill de Blasio with former City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito at City Hall, announcing a plan to close the jails on Rikers Island, March 31, 2017.

Photo by: Sam Hodgson/The New York Times/Redux

- Coordinate with justice partners—including defenders, the courts and the City’s Department of Correction—to reduce the number of defendants who are not seen by a judge on their court date

- Reduce re-offending by implementing dedicated reentry planning before discharge and support after returning to the community to everyone in city custody, and tracking and assessing the effectiveness of these efforts
- Provide evidentiary rigor to our efforts to reshape the culture and purpose of jails by creating, launching and managing a research group to advise the Justice Implementation Task Force

#### STRATEGY 2.2

### Change the culture, purpose and location of city jails

#### Action Items

- Coordinate with justice partners to implement Raise the Age effectively, transferring all 16- and 17-year-olds off Rikers Island and into a more developmentally appropriate justice system
- Coordinate with city partners to develop a master plan for a borough-based jail system off Rikers Island
- Reduce returns to jail for incarcerated women through a package of in-jail mental health, domestic violence prevention and family programming as well as extensive re-entry support services

#### HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

- The average daily jail population fell to 8,402 in May 2018, the lowest it has been since 1980.
- The number of people detained on misdemeanor charges is down nearly 40 percent since 2013.
- The number of people detained on bail of \$2000 and less is down by nearly 65 percent since 2013.
- The number of people in custody with cases pending for longer than three years is down by 50 percent since April 2015, when the City and courts launched Justice Reboot, an initiative to reduce case processing delays.

Source: DOC; data through May 2018.



## PRIORITY 3

# Promote Fairness

Ensure a high quality of justice for all and increase New Yorkers' trust and confidence in the justice system

A successful public safety system is assessed not only by quantity (how much crime or how many people in jail), but also by the quality of justice. Our goal is for all New Yorkers to be safe and to be treated fairly and with dignity.

### STRATEGY 3.1

#### Lighten the touch of the justice system on low-level offenses

##### Action Items

- Work with our partners to identify opportunities to lighten the touch safely and to explore modalities beyond enforcement to change behavior to promote safe and healthy neighborhoods
- Launch and lead the Marijuana Legalization Implementation Task Force
- Pilot approaches to inform, encourage and assist New Yorkers to clear their outstanding low-level warrants
- Expand diversion options for people who use substances
- Partner with agency leaders on the School Climate Task Force to reduce the number of arrests and summonses in schools safely

*Brownsville residents participate in a public space design workshop sponsored by the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, 2017.*

### STRATEGY 3.2

#### Reduce racial disparities in the justice system

##### Action Items

- Conduct racial equity impact assessments to aid in systematically identifying, reducing and preventing inequities in the justice system on an ongoing basis
- Establish a community engagement framework so that neighborhoods and constituencies can provide input on MOCJ projects and contribute to equitable decision and policy making
- Make racial equity an explicit element of MOCJ task forces through, for instance, adding members who have lived experience and/or are from affected communities and using racial equity impact assessments as part of decision making processes
- Reinforce our values with contractors by establishing funding guidelines that promote racial equity

Photo by: Hester Street



Photo by: Edwin J. Torres/Mayoral Photography Office, NYC

### STRATEGY 3.3

#### Put into practice principles of fairness and procedural justice

##### Action Items

- Convert fairness and procedural justice principles into practical guidance and activities
- Develop an action plan to incorporate fairness and procedural justice, including related metrics, into MOCJ's and the City's work
- Identify issues about New Yorkers' perceptions of fairness of the justice system through surveys, other feedback mechanisms and engagement

##### HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

- The Criminal Justice Reform Act (CJRA), which became effective on June 13, 2017, gives police the option to issue civil summonses instead of criminal summonses for some common low-level offenses like drinking alcohol in public or entering a park after hours. CJRA has reduced criminal summonses for these offenses by more than 90 percent.
- MOCJ worked with four district attorneys, defenders, the courts and the NYPD to dismiss 644,000 outstanding warrants older than 10 years for minor, non-violent offenses.



# PRIORITY 4

## Strengthen Justice System Coordination

Increase the effectiveness and legitimacy of the justice system

The complexity of creating a safer city with a smaller and fairer justice system is heightened by the multiple and independent parts of the criminal justice system, each answering to a different “boss.” The court system is a separate branch of state government. The District Attorneys—one for each county in New York City—are elected. The Police Department and the Department of Correction are mayoral agencies. Defenders are dedicated by ethical canon to the zealous defense of their clients.

Addressing system problems requires common goals and sustained partnership among all parts of the justice system if solutions are to endure. The Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice convenes partners across the justice system—along with New Yorkers themselves—to help set joint goals, measure progress and shift culture.

### STRATEGY 4.1

#### Build and enhance justice partnerships inside and outside government

Action Items

- Convene a regular, ongoing working group of justice partners
- Establish an interdisciplinary research advisory group to inform the office’s current and future work
- Launch a strategy to provide New Yorkers and policy makers with information about the operations and effectiveness of the justice system, and innovative approaches to promoting safety
- Create a data and analytics strategy to help agencies and partners plan and execute common goals and to support interdisciplinary research and analysis

### STRATEGY 4.2

#### Provide New Yorkers with data on justice system operations and results

Action Items

- Work with justice partners to establish performance metrics
- Institute key data sharing agreements
- Publish data and performance reports on the justice system to help system partners and New Yorkers understand how their justice system works and where there are opportunities for improvement

### STRATEGY 4.3

#### Use the office’s funding and contracting capabilities to ensure effective programming and to attract additional partners and investments

Action Items

- Calibrate and enhance performance monitoring and metrics
- Fund projects that promote fairness and are informed by, for instance, human-centered design guidelines, open and inclusive public space design guidelines and/or racial equity impact assessments

Members of the City’s Crisis Management System rally on the steps of City Hall for Peace Week, January 2018.



In accordance with the New York City Charter, MOCJ reviews the budget requests of all agencies for programs related to criminal justice and recommends to the Mayor budget priorities among such programs.

MOCJ invests public resources to help create the safest possible New York City with the smallest and fairest justice system. It oversees funding and contracts for a wide variety of programs, projects and key services related to prosecution, indigent defense, crime victims, domestic violence, mediation, legal services and courthouse capital projects. Examples include:

- \$22 million recurring annual funding to support crime reduction strategies in District Attorneys’ offices
- Over \$27 million in Fiscal 2018 to support the Crisis Management System’s comprehensive strategies to reduce gun violence, operated in partnership with a network of non-profit providers in 17 precincts
- Over \$20 million in Fiscal 2018 to Safe Horizon for crime victim services, including counseling, legal representation, advocacy, restitution and other supports



## CONCLUSION

# Legitimacy in Action

This strategic plan was developed so New Yorkers know how we are investing our energy over the next two years and to ensure public accountability for delivering on our goals. We invite your participation in this process—in fact, we need it. Public safety is a shared responsibility. Together, we have an opportunity to continue to make our city the safest possible with the smallest and fairest justice system.







Cover photo by: Several Seconds / Paul McGeiver (Flickr)

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