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## **PRESS RELEASE-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **SPECIAL EVENT SECURITY - COMMUNITY MESSAGE**

Based on requests received from numerous community members and media outlets related to special event security and specifically, the St. Patrick's Parade, the Naples Police Department thought it would help to provide background information for a deeper understanding/context.

We, the Naples Police Department, take due notice that within Naples' '*small-town charm*' there is a very real and rapidly changing threat landscape in America. Over the past decade, the United States has experienced a surge in high-profile violent incidents, revealing the evolving challenges facing local governments and police departments (specific to open public events).

These incidents, ranging from targeted attacks on individuals to mass shootings and ideologically driven violence, highlight systemic vulnerabilities which demand innovative strategies to mitigate risks; and courageous decisions to adjust/adapt to the real-world threats in the face of pushbacks.

NPD (*in partnership with our local, state, and federal partners*) has a standing practice of analyzing these incidents and creating security plans based on national standards/best practices. In that manner, we can uncover patterns and understand critical lessons to better protect special events, attendees, and our City.

#### **Sample Incidents:**

In recent years we have seen a series of violent events that underscore the breadth of modern security/safety threats:

- On January 1, 2025, New Orleans' Bourbon Street vehicle attack and the Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas were targeted in ideologically motivated attacks, demonstrating the persistent influence of extremist ideologies.
- This past year we have seen political figures murdered, as well as places of worship, synagogues and churches, schools, parades/outdoor festivals as targets of attack.
- We have protestors from every spectrum of the issues of today, acting out and increasing disturbances.
- Businesses, stores, and corporate figures have been attacked which further illustrates the persistent and varied nature of these threats.

Today, incidents often involve lone actors or small networks radicalized online, as exemplified by the Bourbon Street and Trump Hotel attacks from 2025. These perpetrators exploit decentralized platforms, making threats more unpredictable and challenging to counter.



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Naples' *small-town charm* and what these incidents reveal:

These incidents emphasize the pressing need for comprehensive mitigation plans (national standard/best practices), especially at open air events (3<sup>rd</sup> Street South, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, and Cambier Park). To that end, sufficient police staffing and barricades/bollards are a staple of mitigation plans to safeguard the public at such events.

- The phrases '*we have always done it this way*' or '*this is Naples, nothing ever happens*' or '*security is too much/cost*' are not real strategies and ultimately leave attendees vulnerable.

In the past, weaker barricades or obstructions made of either wood or light metal were allowed but ultimately only served as a visual deterrence. These efforts did nothing to address the vulnerability of a vehicle incursion and therefore fell below safety standards.

- The Naples Police Department prioritizes the welfare, security/safety, and trust of the community above all; and because of that, we ask event promoters to recognize the realities of this era we live in.

We have been asking event promoters to use Archer-style vehicle barricades at all access points (for open-air events). Archer-style barricades are the ones that would have prevented the 2025 New Orleans truck attack if they were deployed properly. Many event promoters have understood and have complied while others have hesitated and/or complained about costs.

- In addition, some requested the City to fund the barricades (taxpayers to underwrite their event) or for NPD to use our vehicles for barricades for their event, which we do not do.
- The responsibility and cost for renting/deploying proper barricades along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street South events is the event promoter's; that is the cost of doing business in the era we live in.

Promoters of events have been notified of this requirement, specifically to have vehicle incursion prevention barricades at their cost and most understand that it is the cost of doing business.

We certainly understand the need for a return on investment; but for us, NPD, we prioritize the welfare, security/safety, and trust of the community above financial considerations.

- Security/Safety requires a real cost which the promoters of an event must carry. We live in different times, and the cost of safety/security has gone up; as housing, commodities, insurance, medical costs, etc. has also risen.



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- We are hopeful for a future that has the public safety infrastructure we speak of in place, the installation of bollards/safety systems in areas that host open-air events, on a more permanent basis.

In short, mass open-air gatherings are vulnerable to attacks and are considered soft targets with potential to inflict high numbers of casualties; Cambier Park, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street South, have many large gatherings throughout the year with attendees into the thousands.

The concerns we prepare for at community events (*Farmers markets, Holiday parades, and all open Community celebrations*) are many and include, but are not limited to:

- Individuals using firearms to cause mass casualties (active shooters).
- Individuals using a vehicle to cause mass casualties.
- Individuals using homemade bombs to cause mass casualties.
- Other methods used in mass attacks may include knives, fires, drones, or other weapons.
- Open carry of firearms, a relatively new concern.

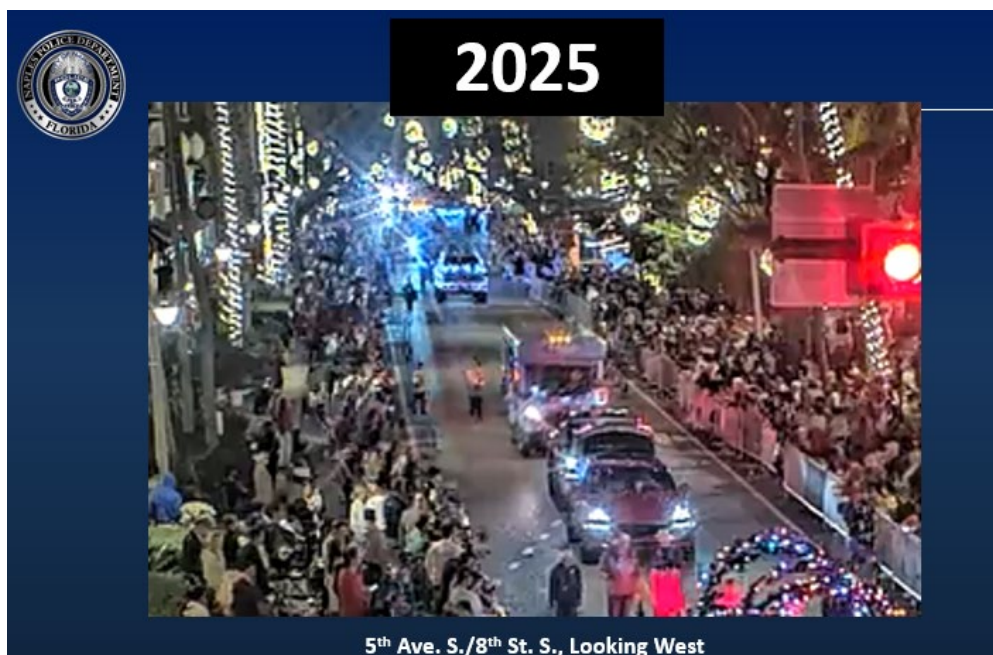
NPD is committed to maintaining national standards for special event-open air public gatherings; this standard is to be prepared, prevent, and if need be, quickly mitigate a violent attack/event.

- We look to have a welcoming environment but not a defenseless one.
- Community events thrive when people feel safe.
- Event promoters can mitigate and prevent deaths during an attack by employing target hardening techniques to secure venues *before* and attack (investment in barriers/bollards).

Specifically related to the St. Patrick's Day Parade, all the Police Department has requested is crowd safety barricades to ensure attendees are safe. The same request was made for the Christmas Parade, and the barricades were in place this past year. Please see the photo below highlighting the 2024 Christmas Parade crowd, unsafely pouring into the streets while floats, bands, vehicles were moving because there were no barricades. Then turn your attention to the 2025 Christmas Parade photo which clearly depicts the effectiveness of the deployed barricades in ensuring the safety of all attendees alike.



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We hope this statement offers clarification, understanding, and confidence in our efforts to continuously protect our community.

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