



“Community policing focuses on crime and social disorder through the delivery of police services that includes aspects of traditional law enforcement, as well as prevention, problem-solving, community engagement, and partnerships. The community policing model balances reactive responses to calls for service with proactive problem-solving centered on the causes of crime and disorder. Community policing requires police and citizens to join together as partners in the course of both identifying and effectively addressing these issues.”<sup>1</sup>

## **I. OVERVIEW**

On October 21, 2005, the San Francisco Legislative Analyst reported to the Board of Supervisors on the status of community policing in San Francisco<sup>2</sup>. When compared, the report displayed that San Francisco’s community policing programs were more comprehensive than other community policing programs that the Legislative Analyst researched from around the world; Los Angeles (CA), San Jose, (CA), Chicago (IL), London (England), São Paulo (Brazil).

In November of 2006, the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) released a comprehensive report that documented existing community policing practices, as well as ways in which the SFPD had institutionalized community policing through policies such as; appointing a Director of Community Policing within SFPD, monthly community meetings held within each district, maintaining community policing documentation and tracking of public safety issues raised at community meetings and events.

In March of 2007, Mayor Newsom directed the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice to organize and facilitate a community policing advisory committee. The Community Policing Advisory Committee was charged with accomplishing the following goals:

- Assess the strengths of community policing in San Francisco;
- Assess where changes are needed;
- Devise solutions to areas that need improvement; and
- Report back to the Police Chief and the Police Commission with the assessment and recommended solutions for improvements

## **II. BACKGROUND**

The San Francisco Police Department has made a clear commitment to the philosophy of community policing over the past 5-years. Currently, the SFPD has institutionalized several successful community policing strategies. One example of successful community policing are the monthly Captains’ meetings held in each district. The monthly meetings are the only meetings held by a city department on a monthly basis in communities throughout San Francisco. In addition to the institutionalized community policing strategies, there are also examples of district-specific community policing such as former-Ingleside Captain Paul Chignell’s Alemany Working Group. The Alemany Working

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing, *What is Community Policing?*, Retrieved January 15, 2008 from <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/default.asp?Item=36>.

<sup>2</sup> City & County of San Francisco, Office of Legislative Analyst, *Community Policing Practices: BOS File No. 050130, OLA No. 009-05*, October 2005.



Group concentrated on building a safer environment at the San Francisco Housing Authority Alemany development. The monthly Captains' meetings and the Alemany Working Group are examples of existing community policing practices that should be enhanced and referenced in the documentation of a departmental community policing strategy.

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

Although the San Francisco Police Department has made a commitment to adopt the philosophy of community policing, the challenges to design and implement a successful community policing strategy do not solely begin and end with SFPD. Historically, city departments have struggled to successfully implement neighborhood-based initiatives in communities of low social-economic status. These same communities have also experienced a breakdown of trust with city government as past promises have not been seen through fruition.

Community policing is known to be more quickly adopted and achieve greater success in communities that are more affluent and have high-functioning and readily available community resources<sup>3</sup>. The economic and racial disparities in San Francisco create disenfranchised and marginalized communities that have fewer community resources and therefore less social capital<sup>4</sup> than the neighboring communities with more social capital. The challenges that are inherent to developing an effective community policing model in marginalized and low-income communities must be taken into consideration by SFPD when developing a departmental strategy for community policing. However, SFPD is not the only city agency that must establish trust and a respectful relationship in marginalized communities. Each city department must establish a similar process to engage with community members that have been ignored and have therefore developed a distrusting relationship with city government. City departments must support community policing through increased residential involvement, through decentralized city services, in order for the SFPD to not be the sole department that disenfranchised communities are able to access. Establishing community policing practices in marginalized communities provides opportunities to heal these communities that have experienced distrust and betrayal from traditional policing models.

A key element of community policing is a governmental infrastructure that supports community-based planning. San Francisco Police Department has taken several steps to decentralize the department in order to be more responsive and accessible to communities throughout San Francisco. The most critical step taken to decentralize the police department was taken when 10 district stations were established with community-based captains and officers. While SFPD has worked to decentralize the department, San Francisco city government has made similar strides to decentralize and increase

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<sup>3</sup> Scott, Jason, D. (2002), Assessing the Relationship Between Police-Community Coproduction and Neighborhood-Level Social Capital, *Journal of Contemporary Social Justice* (Vol. 18, No. 2), Sage Publications, 147-166

<sup>4</sup> Jason D. Scott defines social capital and social capacity as, "Both terms are meant to represent the collective action potential of neighborhood residents."



community accessibility to several key public safety departments. The Code Enforcement Task Force is an example of decentralized city departments working together to respond to neighborhood concerns.

The Code Enforcement Task Force is a partnership between neighborhood-specific attorneys assigned by the City Attorney and community-based code enforcement SFPD officers based out of each district station. This team works together to respond to neighborhood public safety concerns in relationship to private property and city code violations. In addition to the City Attorney and SFPD, the District Attorney, Juvenile Probation Department, Adult Probation Department, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, as well as a number of city-funded community-based organizations, provide geographically deployed liaisons and resources. Each decentralized city department that provides geographically deployed resources have a role in community policing. At the heart of community policing is a philosophy of decentralized city resources that are accessible to community members to increase public safety through community-based planning.

#### LOCAL & NATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

Each member of the Community Policing Advisory Committee received a binder of research documents that describe national and local best practices of community policing. National research allowed for an opportunity to review different, as well as similar, approaches to community policing in jurisdictions outside of San Francisco. Representatives from locally led community safety initiatives gave presentations on effective strategies that could be implemented in neighborhoods throughout San Francisco. Both local and national research allowed the committee an opportunity to expand their perception of community policing and to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the differing dynamics of policing in the various neighborhoods throughout San Francisco.

#### *Planning Flexibility and Accountability to Address Changing Needs*

National research documented several cities instituting community policing through legislation. Portland and Oakland have both codified community policing through legislation. However, although the two cities chose to codify community policing, both cities continue to work to improve community policing within their jurisdictions. In conjunction with the codification in Portland, the Portland Police Bureau issued a three year community policing strategic plan. The strategic plan was an opportunity for the bureau to review current community policing efforts, while also describing the goals of the bureau to attain their newly developed vision for community policing. Accountability and performance measures were included in the strategic plan to ensure transparency of the bureau as they pursue the goals described in their strategic plan.

#### *Community Engagement*

Local research and presentations showcased effective community-led public safety projects. Presentations were led by The New Tenderloin, Community Partners United, Bayview Welcoming Board, Castro on Patrol and the Alemany Working Group. Each



presentation showcased unique approaches to public safety, establishing partnerships between police and community, as well as the different challenges that exist in each neighborhood.

Throughout the local and national research, heightened attention was given to examples of systems for community members to increase involvement and become pro-active in community policing and public safety. Boston and Oakland offered valuable community engagement models that enhance their jurisdictions community policing plan. The Boston, MA Safe Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) and the Oakland, CA Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils (NCPC) examples are described below:

**Safe Neighborhood Initiative – Boston, MA**

*Start Date:* February, 1993

*Involved City Departments:* Mass. Attorney General, Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, Mayor's Office of the City of Boston, Boston PD

*Geographic Implementation:* Two neighborhoods: Dorchester & Grove Hall

*Funding Source:* Weed & Seed Grant

*SNI Core Principles:*

**Coordinated Law Enforcement**

The coordinated law enforcement strand includes community policing, the establishment of an SNI neighborhood prosecutor in District and Superior Courts, and enhanced cooperation in special projects between the community and law enforcement agencies.

**Neighborhood Revitalization**

The neighborhood revitalization efforts of the SNI include the organization and education of local merchants, job training programs, expedited city services, and government priority of rehabilitating abandoned property.

**Prevention, Intervention & Treatment**

The prevention, intervention, and treatment principle of the SNI mobilizes community and government resources around all aspects of public health, from youth violence, to education, to physical health issues.

**Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council – Oakland, CA**

*Start Date:* 2004

*Involved City Departments:* Oakland Police Department/City Departments & Agencies

*Geographic Implementation:* Citywide (47 NCPC throughout Oakland)



*Funding Source:* Measure Y

*NCPC Core Principles:*

Community Policing

To be focal point or engaging & supporting neighborhoods in community policing

Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood watches bring community concerns that cannot be resolved to monthly NCPC meetings. Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils work on issues and have Oakland Police Department Problem Solving Officers work on issues and report back on progress at next monthly NCPC.

### **III. GOAL OF REPORT**

The goal of this report is to document the information gathered and the recommendations provided by the Community Policing Advisory Committee. This report is not intended to be a community policing plan or strategy. The recommendations generated through the Community Policing Advisory Council are informed insight that the SFPD may include in the development of a community policing strategic plan developed by the SFPD.

The Community Policing Advisory Committee was an opportunity for community members from across the city to meet on a monthly basis to research local and national community policing strategies, in addition to reviewing current community policing practices in place within SFPD. The Committee was an opportunity for community members to provide guidance through recommendations for the SFPD to consider in its continued development and implementation of community policing planning.

### **IV. PROCESS**

The Community Policing Advisory Committee met for 8-months and focused their recommendations in four key areas in relationship to community policing; Youth & Their Families; San Francisco Housing Authority: Language Access & Cultural Awareness; Overall Community Policing Structure.

Over the course of 8-months, current local efforts were reviewed, community policing national best practices were researched, and presentations of local best practices were facilitated at the monthly meetings. The Committee would then conclude by submitting recommendations for ways to build upon and enhance community policing in San Francisco to the Chief of SFPD and to the Police Commission.

The Committee was comprised of community members from neighborhoods across San Francisco and recommended by the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services. Participants of the Committee had experience working on public safety issues within their community and all had prior experience working with SFPD. Participants represented a myriad of San Francisco communities, such as, San Francisco



Housing Authority residents, home owners, faith-based community, youth, community-based organizations and subsidized housing private property management.

In addition to community members, SFPD command staff and captains attended monthly meetings in addition to San Francisco Housing Authority senior level staff. The monthly meetings were convened and facilitated through the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice.

The monthly meetings were used to host presentations from an array of local community policing strategies and local community-led public safety projects. The meetings allowed for a greater understanding of how community policing is integrated into SFPD, such as through presentations by SFPD Academy instructors. The monthly meetings also allowed for presentations of community-led efforts such as "Welcoming Boards" at district stations that have community members engage with new and incoming district officers.

In addition to the monthly meetings, committee members participated in working groups that focused increased attention on four core areas of community policing:

1. Youth & Their Families
2. Public Housing
3. Language Access & Cultural Competency
4. Overall Citywide Structure

Working groups were identified by committee members as core areas of community policing that require increased attention. Therefore, the working groups met outside of the monthly meetings to allow for in-depth research, analysis and to develop specific recommendations for each individual working group. The working groups facilitated citywide focus groups with community members at community-based organizations and residential facilities.

The Community Policing Advisory Committee concluded their work by presenting the recommendations of each working group to the entire committee. Upon reflection and insight from committee members, the recommendations were agreed upon and included in this report. The recommendations will be shared with Mayor Gavin Newsom, SFPD Chief Fong and the San Francisco Police Commission.

## **V. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Through its research, the Community Policing Advisory Committee determined that SFPD has established a philosophical commitment to community policing. This commitment to community policing is found throughout the department and through the work of each district station, but lacks a formal structure and protocol to ensure a comprehensive community policing vision and plan. Due to the absence of a comprehensive departmental community policing strategic plan, community policing occurs throughout district stations through isolated incidents rather than through a comprehensive community policing structure.



Although a commitment has been made to community policing, challenges exist to ensure a consistent continuum of community policing policies and practices that are connected from the Police Academy to beat officers to the Gang Task Force. Community policing within the SFPD must not be solely dependent on individual personalities, but rather on a codified strategy that is integrated in all aspects of the SFPD.

Consistency is of the utmost importance to establish effective community policing. However, consistency can maintain the flexibility to allow for community policing strategies to reflect the unique personality of each neighborhood. However, it is the personality of each neighborhood, not the personality of District Captains that should dictate local community policing strategies. One of the greatest challenges that SFPD faces is the need to move away from individual community policing visions and to move towards a unified departmental community policing vision that will provide leadership and direction for all officers throughout SFPD. An effective community policing vision is one that impacts decisions made by both SFPD command staff and by the local beat officer.

The Community Policing Advisory Committee has also learned that social capital impacts community willingness and ability to successfully adopt the philosophy of community policing. National research documents that high social capital equates to more sustainable partnerships between community and police, therefore, greater challenges exist in building partnerships between police and disenfranchised and poor communities. Knowing that social inequalities impact the success of community policing, the Community Policing Advisory Committee focused increased attention to recommendations regarding San Francisco Housing Authority and monolingual communities. In addition, the Community Policing Advisory Committee researched culturally competent community policing practices and overall departmental structures implemented in other jurisdictions that have developed community policing best practice models in communities with greater social inequities and fewer available resources.

Specific recommendations include:

Community Policing Structure

1) San Francisco Police Department produce a multi-year community policing strategic plan that; establishes a vision and framework for community policing; identifies departmental community policing infrastructure; accountability and performance measures; establishes goals to improve relationships between community and police. Develop a community and police joint body to regularly review implementation and accountability of strategic plan.

2) San Francisco city government should coordinate and increase decentralized city services. Decentralized city agencies and departments should increase their engagement within district-based community policing planning and engagement.



3) Establish a ranking position of commander or higher to direct and implement community policing strategic plan and oversee accountability performance standards.

4) The transfer of district station captains should be based upon rates of performance and community satisfaction, rather than on tenure at a specific district station. Currently, rotation of district captains is primarily based upon a captain's tenure at a district station and rotations occur after a captain has served at a station for 2-3 years.

The Committee recommends that a captain's performance and level of community satisfaction should be the deciding factors for the rotation of district captains. This recommendation is based upon the idea that a safe community translates to satisfaction among community members for their captains. If a captain is engaged in their community and is establishing a safe community, the captain, upon their approval, should remain at their district station.

5) Beat officers are the frontlines of the SFPD and engage with community members than most other district officers. Provide incentives for beat officer's tenure at a district station in order to build upon and maintain the relationships between beat officers and community members. In addition to incentives, district-base promotions should be reviewed and implemented in order to increase the longevity of an officer's tenure at their district station.

6) Monthly Police-Community-Relations meetings should rotate throughout district and not be solely based out of the district station. Increased utilization of the monthly meetings could be achieved by convening all decentralized city representatives for each district to strengthen dialogue and problem solving related to public safety.

Additionally, quarterly meetings should be held in each family Housing Authority site within each district. Boston's public housing police bureau conducts monthly on-site meetings at Housing Authority locations and finds the meetings to be beneficial in strengthening community-police relationships.

7) In order to increase recognition, uniformity and to showcase pride in their job, all SFPD officers' uniforms should be well maintained and include their service hats.

8) Enhanced communication between community and police. Communication can be increased through improving accessibility to technology among officers. Beat officers could use cell phones and all officers should have email addresses. Monthly newsletters should have consistent formatting and subject-matter from district to district.

9) Develop community policing outreach and education campaign. Implement community education on law enforcement's role in the community and the responsibilities of SFPD in addressing neighborhood issues, as well as defining the role of the community within community policing. Additionally, establish an educational



component within neighborhoods that is a collaboration between community and police that demonstrates how to build successful community-police partnerships.

10) Develop and build upon opportunities for civilian staffing for outreach and organizing on behalf of community policing. SFPD civilian outreach workers could work towards breaking negative opinions against SFPD, bridge the communication and encourage the community to work with SFPD in creating a safer community. This person must be culturally sensitive to the communities' multi-cultures and is fluent in at least one of the major languages within the district s/he serves.

#### Youth & Their Families

- 1) Increase positive interactions between youth and SFPD at times of non-emergency through activities such as Police Athletic League, Read to Kids, wilderness program, summer camps, etc.
- 2) Work with youth to develop an anti-"don't snitch" campaign.
- 3) Establish procedure to have School Resource Officers (SFPD) engage in neighborhood Safe Havens during out of school time.
- 4) Probationary Youth: Increase coordination and communication between local beat officers, geographically deployed Juvenile Probation Officers, Community Response Network, and School Resource Officers.

#### Public Housing

- 1) Establish "meet and greet" welcoming committees to introduce new officers and property managers to each other, residents and Resident Councils.
- 2) Institutionalize an adequately staffed Police Unit specifically assigned to public housing properties and assure that all public housing sites have designated public housing officers. Within that framework, develop centralized information sharing and reporting mechanisms, to include district stations and SFPD investigative units (homicide, gang, drug, domestic violence, etc.).
- 3) Provide cultural competency and administrative policies and procedures training at the Academy specifically related to public housing residents and sites.
- 4) In partnership with community and city partners, develop resident outreach, engagement and leadership trainings and activities available to all residents with a focus on enhancing and supporting Resident Councils.
- 5) Maximize relationship building, coordination and information sharing between SFPD, SFHA, property managers, probation, community partners and other agencies.
- 6) Develop enforcement strategies that address the problem of non-residents trespassing on properties and conducting illegal activities.



Cultural Competency & Language Access

- 1) Every district station should be able to communicate verbally and through written language that reflects the primary and secondary languages of a district. District station officers should be on staff that are able to speak major languages in the district and weekly newsletters should be multi-lingual to reflect the languages of the community.
- 2) Coordinate multi-language Police Community Relations Forums quarterly in neighborhoods where many residents speak languages other than English, rotating schedules possibly.
- 3) Establish relationships with ethnic newspapers to update the community on crime activity. Such reports can be in the form of police blotters commonly seen in English neighborhood newspapers and the Examiner. This may encourage more dialogue between the community and SFPD.
- 4) Coordinate for a multi-language Anonymous Tip Line – use translation service whenever necessary (possibly AT&T).
- 5) Encourage more minority youth to join the Cadet Program so they can learn more about SFPD and increase their interest in joining the police academy upon college graduation or 21 years of age.
- 6) Increase cultural competency training in SFPD Academy through presentations by community-based organizations.
- 7) Work with ethnic media in reporting on crime and current events. Ask media to promote on any resource fairs or access points for ethnic communities before and after each event.
- 8) Have bilingual officer speak on ethnic television, radio stations for a short segment (10 to 15 minutes) to address any issues or refer any useful resources to the community.
- 9) Design simple criteria and assessment to measure baseline level of officers' understanding for various major ethnic cultures and languages in San Francisco.
- 10) Staff at least one bilingual officer of each major language in the community by each district 24 hours a day.