

S.F. Chief of Police Bill Scott details significant progress on SFPD's ambitious, groundbreaking police reform efforts 21-015

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Collaborative Reform Initiative is a key element — with Mayor's Reform Roadmap, Racial Equity Action Plan — in SFPD's bid to be a 21st century policing model.

SAN FRANCISCO — Chief of Police William Scott today presented a detailed progress report to the Board of Supervisors on the San Francisco Police Department's groundbreaking reform efforts to date. The presentation, which aired on [SFGovTV's broadcast of the board's full weekly meeting](#).

SFPD also published extensive supporting documentation in tandem with the board presentation, which included the following PDFs:

- [SFPD Collaborative Reform Initiative 2021 Update](#): a 42-slide overview presentation (Jan. 26, 2021)
- [SFPD Collaborative Reform Initiative Recommendations Tracking Matrix](#): a 58-page document detailing the status of all reforms (through Jan. 25, 2021); and

- [SFPD Collaborative Reform Initiative Progress Charts](#) (through Jan. 20, 2021).

Collaborative Reform Initiative background

Chief Scott's presentation today focused primarily on the Collaborative Reform Initiative, or CRI, a voluntary program launched in partnership with the Obama Administration's U.S. Department of Justice in 2016 that aims to fulfill SFPD's aspiration to be a national model in 21st century policing. After then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions ended the U.S. DOJ's participation in collaborative reform partnerships in 2017, the San Francisco Police Department was alone among major city police departments nationwide in restarting the transformational endeavor as a voluntary state-level collaboration. SFPD made commitments to communities in San Francisco to move forward despite U.S. DOJ ending collaborative reform.

Since 2018, SFPD has worked in partnership with the California Department of Justice and Hillard Heintze, a leading global change management consultancy, to implement 272 recommendations and nearly 1,000 associated compliance measures to manifest progressive reforms envisioned under President Obama's 2015 Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

SFPD's CRI agenda, which touches virtually every aspect of the 2,979-member department's services to San Francisco's residents and visitors, strives to:

- Enhance police accountability;
- Eliminate biased policing;
- Expand community policing and improve police-community relations;
- Minimize uses of force; and
- Improve diversity and elevate professionalism in all of SFPD's recruitment, hiring and personnel policies and practices.

"Tragic events involving police encounters last year made plain to the whole world what we in San Francisco have known for some time: law enforcement agencies must embrace fundamental reform — not merely to preserve public trust where we have it, but to build public trust where we don't," said San Francisco Chief of Police Bill Scott. "I'm proud to lead a department whose members in recent years have been fearless in identifying areas for needed improvement, and united in our drive to accomplish it."

Hailed by the New York Times last year as a major city department “where police reform has worked,”¹ the San Francisco Police Department’s commitment to top-to-bottom reform is an ongoing department wide effort. Chief Scott’s presentation Tuesday detailed SFPD’s progress on CRI that to date includes:

- Completing 193 of 272 U.S. DOJ’s CRI recommendations (71 percent); and
- Completing 659 of California DOJ’s 996 compliance measures (66 percent).

Completion numbers reflect CRI recommendations SFPD has submitted to Cal DOJ or Hillard Heintze for review. Cal DOJ’s determinations on substantial compliance are in progress for 62 of SFPD’s submitted recommendations. Chief Scott anticipates that SFPD will surpass a 94 percent completion threshold by mid-2021, with the remainder of CRI’s recommendations largely contingent on needed investments in the department’s technological infrastructure.

“Although CRI is a key element in our comprehensive reform agenda, SFPD is equally committed to fulfilling the promise of Mayor London Breed’s ambitious Roadmap for Police Reforms and our Racial Equity and Inclusion Action Plan, which we are pursuing in partnership with the San Francisco Human Rights Commission,” Chief Scott continued. “We are grateful to Mayor Breed, the Board of Supervisors, the San Francisco Police Commission and numerous city agencies for their partnership with us in trailblazing reforms that police departments nationwide are watching closely.”

Mayor London Breed’s Roadmap for New Police Reforms

Building on SFPD’s CRI agenda, Mayor Breed last June announced a four-part police reform plan to: (1) reduce public reliance of police responses to non-criminal street crises; (2) eliminate biased policing and strengthen accountability; (3) demilitarize departmental operations; and (4) promote economic justice through budget reallocations that aid traditionally marginalized communities.

Mayor Breed’s ambitious reform roadmap reaches beyond the San Francisco Police Department alone to include city agencies and programs to remedy underlying racial and social inequities, and better address behavioral health problems on city streets that police are too often called upon to resolve.

SFPD’s Racial Equity Action and Inclusion Plan

Another major police reform endeavor currently underway is SFPD's Racial Equity Action and Inclusion Plan. The 96-page plan published late last month details more than 80 specific actions the San Francisco Police Department is undertaking to enact comprehensive improvements that will enhance racial diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. Phase I of the reforms — many of them already in progress — cover the full breadth of the department's institutional and structural realms, spanning hiring and recruitment; retention and promotion; discipline and separation; leadership and management; professional development and mobility; and organizational culture. Another 10 action steps detailed in the report will be led by the San Francisco Police Commission, the police department's civilian oversight and governing body.

National importance of SFPD's police reform efforts

The U.S. DOJ's COPS Office assessment of the San Francisco Police Department in October 2016 described its recommended implementations as "the most promising path forward for the department," adding that if "SFPD does so — with sustained diligence and in good faith — it will become a model policing agency in this country." The national importance for such an aspirational, voluntary, departmentwide endeavor to succeed was brought to the forefront in 2020 by the deaths of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minn. and Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Ky. at the hands of police officers.

Van Jones, the CNN national political contributor who in 1995 founded Bay Area Police Watch, spoke forcefully to that imperative in an online roundtable Mayor Breed hosted with Chief Scott and now-Police Commission President Malia Cohen on June 11, 2020.

"I cannot tell you how important it is for you to create a model, a reinvented police presence in San Francisco that can license people across the country to do the same thing," Jones said. "I don't want to go down memory lane, we got too many problems right now. But it is a trip to be sitting here 25 years later and seeing young people like you guys — including the Chief — doing the things that we had dreamed about, prayed about and fought for 25 years ago."

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