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New Report Highlights Effectiveness of SFPD Foot Patrols 18-156

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Study Finds Foot Patrol Strategy Led to “Significant Decline” in Assaults and Thefts

A new study conducted by the California Policy Lab and researchers at the University of California, Berkeley reports a “significant” drop in assaults and thefts in San Francisco after the San Francisco Police Department doubled its foot patrols last year to address crime throughout the City.

“Having officers walking the streets helps prevent crime and allows the police to form relationships with the people they serve,” said Mayor London Breed. “The data backs up the results we have seen on the ground, which is why I included funding in the budget so we can train more officers and why we continue to increase foot patrols.”

In September 2017, the SFPD reassigned approximately 70 officers who had previously been working primarily in plainclothes investigative and special duty assignments to citywide uniformed foot patrol beats. The reassignments were in part a response to a rise in larceny theft (including vehicle break-ins) in San Francisco.

The California Policy Lab study found the increased SFPD foot patrol routes resulted in a significant reduction in larceny theft and assaults across the city and 10 police station districts:

- A 16.9 percent decline in larceny theft
- A 19.1 percent reduction in assaults
- The greatest reductions in larceny theft were in the Ingleside, Mission, Northern and Richmond police districts
- The greatest reductions in assault were in the Bayview, Central and Mission police districts

SFPD in November expanded foot patrols in the Mid-Market area by nearly 50 percent, assigning a total of 43 personnel to increase public safety in the heavily trafficked corridor.

“Our foot patrol strategy is based upon deterrence and engagement with the community and would-be criminals,” said Police Chief William Scott. “The data from this study supports our approach and shows that the greater number of visible, uniformed officers we are able to bring to our public spaces, the greater the benefit to public safety.”

The increased foot patrols are central to SFPD’s Strategic Plan 1.0. Key components of the plan include improving responsiveness to the public and measuring and communicating the effectiveness of safety strategies.

“The study suggests that a greater visible police presence helped reduce thefts and assaults in San Francisco in the two months following redeployment,” said Evan White, Executive Director of the California Policy Lab. “These improvements in public safety are distinct from trends in prior years, and suggest the Police’s redeployment made a difference.”

Findings from the report were presented November 30th at the *Policing Innovation and Reform: Making the Vision a Reality* conference in Los Angeles, California. [The analysis is available for review](#). Learn more information about the [California Policy Lab](#).

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