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Mayor Lee & Board Announce Comprehensive Package Safety Reforms

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Mayor's Office Press Release 4/30/15:

Mayor Edwin M. Lee, Board President London Breed, other members of the Board, and SFPD Chief Greg Suhr announced a proposed package of initiatives to increase public safety and implement police reforms including accelerated hiring, increased civilian oversight, more training for officers and deploying body cameras for every SFPD police officer on the street.

“San Francisco deserves the best in 21st Century policing and this comprehensive package of public safety reforms will help our police officers further strengthen their ties with the community,” said Mayor Lee. “It is that community trust that has helped San Francisco remain one of the safest big cities in the nation and this plan will ensure that our Police Department has the resources they need to continue their work to protect and serve. “With increased civilian oversight, more training, accelerated hiring, and the latest technology, our sworn officer can do their job with even greater transparency and accountability.”

“We entrust the police to keep our citizens safe and as elected officials our citizens entrust us to ensure the police have all the tools, resources and education to do their job,” said Board President Breed. “This is a win-win for both the police and the community.”

“We have learned lessons from around the country, and we are responding to our residents’ requests,” said Supervisor Malia Cohen. “Investing in body cameras for our police force, and providing additional resources for the Office of Citizens’ Complaints are proactive and measurable steps towards strengthening community trust in the police.”

“San Francisco is embracing, acknowledging and promoting 21st Century policing policies every day,” said Chief Suhr. “More sworn officers, additional training, greater civilian oversight, and the use of body cameras on all our sworn officers will help protect the people of San Francisco and at the same time create a greater sense of community trust as police officers do the job they have sworn to do.”

Mayor Lee’s hiring plan will accelerate the hiring of 250 new police officers over the next two years. This will include two additional academy classes at a cost of \$10.2 million in FY15-16 and \$11.1 million in FY16-17. This proposal will allow the City to meet its mandatory staffing requirement of 1,971 officers in June of 2017, a full year ahead of schedule.

Additionally, the Mayor’s proposed budget will fund four new staff at the Office of Citizens Complaint (OCC) to fully fund OCC’s budget request which includes a new investigator, a senior investigator, attorney and a technician assistant.

Mayor Lee and Police Chief Greg Suhr have been working on the use of on-body cameras by SFPD for more than a year. Mayor Lee will provide funding in his budget for FY15-16 to acquire the between 1,600 and 1,800 body cameras needed to ensure all SFPD officers on the street will be outfitted, and the budget includes ongoing costs such as software, video storage, and staffing; a total of \$6.6 million over the next two years.

Mayor Lee today also formed a Working Group that will include the Police Officers Association, OCC and others to report to the Police Commission to develop appropriate policies and protocol for the use of technology and body cameras by SFPD.

Events recently in Baltimore and Ferguson have brought the use of body cameras to greater national attention. In an effort to strengthen community policing and strengthen trust among law enforcement officers and the communities they serve, President Barack Obama created a Task Force on 21st Century Policing to develop specific recommendations to improve law enforcement and community relations while ensuring public safety. The Task Force submitted an interim report with more than 60 recommendations to the President. The report and recommendations place significant emphasis on the potential of data and technology to improve policing outcomes and foster community trust.

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