

City of Oakland
Police Chief
Response to Question One

More than a third of my law enforcement career has been as an executive—chief or second-in-command—revolutionizing policing as a reform-minded leader espousing, modeling, and reinforcing a shared vision. My overarching philosophy is that police are community guardians and problem solvers who exemplify procedural justice tenets in their interactions with internal and external stakeholders. The approach encourages officers to think proactively in identifying collaborative solutions to community problems and not rely on arrests as a barometer of success.

I have always been a progressive leader. Decades ago, I recognized that police responsibility was much more expansive than the myopic role of enforcer—with some basking in the statistical insignificance of arrests. I believed it more salient and efficacious to resolve the underlying issues, which give rise to criminal behavior rather than the specious end product defined as a crime. It was not until my position caught up with my perspective that I could drive impactful policy reform. In 2008, I collaborated with a social service agency to diminish the harmful impact crack cocaine had on community members. Officers connected users with agency counselors to wean them off their dependency. Our objective was to remedy the root causes of crime and not its symptoms. The same approach in Seaside has led to increases in juvenile referrals and diversions and decreases in crime and arrests.

According to the Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (Final Report), transparency and accountability are the fundamental building blocks of trusting partnerships. Transparency is the currency of trust, and trust begets legitimacy. I amplified organizational transparency when I promulgated Executive Staff Minutes to the entire department. Historically, Executive Staff Minutes were only circulated among Deputy Chiefs and above. I began uploading After-Arbitration reports to the department intranet as well. They contained arbitrators' rulings from officers' disciplinary appeals. Employees can read about misconduct, and corresponding declarations, to understand the consequences of aberrant behavior.

I strengthened external transparency by placing FWPD's General Orders online. Executive staff members argued that the information was sensitive, jeopardized officer safety, and did not want to make it accessible. I worked with the Legal Department, redacted the troubling verbiage, gained consensus, and ultimately shared the General Orders online. Citizens are now more informed and can hold the department accountable. Also, I had aggregate disciplinary statistics and racial profiling data displayed on FWPD's website.

Serving as the Liaison for the National Initiative for Community Trust and Justice (NI), I learned of the profound benefits which emanate from procedurally just interactions and institutions. The template for building and strengthening relationships between communities and police was proffered by the Final Report, with procedural justice vital to the first pillar—Building Trust & Legitimacy. Consequently, I endeavored to imbue procedural justice principles in every aspect of policing.

Designing a procedurally just workplace, where employees are respected, valued, considered, and listened to, is an ongoing priority. It begins with training officers in procedural justice. Research suggests that police departments that practice internal procedural justice are more inclined to provide citizens an opportunity to share their views. This practice goes a long way in increasing citizen satisfaction with the police. These same officers are also less likely to use force against the community.

The following non-comprehensive list of actions/initiatives are my efforts to embrace and amplify the principles of procedural justice:

- Created Policy Advisory Committee where citizens (felons eligible) helped craft policy.
- Prohibited release of criminal histories of persons involved in critical police incidents.
- Required that officers tell citizens they were under arrest to lower unfair resisting arrest charges.

Although I did not learn of the term procedural justice until I partnered with the NI, it described how I interacted with everyone I encountered—personally and professionally. Once I became fully aware of how procedural justice precepts could engender and fortify trust and cultivate legitimacy, I began in earnest to codify its edicts in policy and practice to bring communities and police closer together.

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Response to Question Two

Working well with all stakeholders is not only desirable but expected of a chief executive. I am highly adept at collaborating with broad and distinct groups. Living and working in culturally rich environments has prepared me to interface exceptionally well with people of diverse cultures, backgrounds, perspectives, and foster abiding relationships.

In 2012, I worked with a dozen distinct Fort Worth communities to create the Multicultural Committee. Group representatives met monthly to educate the police on their unique cultural histories and practices. They assisted in developing a culture-focused curriculum for police employees, which incorporated aspects of their traditions. The syllabus heightened understanding and improved our capacity to serve. A unique component of the training was that the class traveled to diverse communities where instruction took place.

Exceptional faith-based relations have been a mainstay throughout my career. In Fort Worth, I was responsible for improving the department's connection with Ministers Against Crime (MAC). The group consisted of Black faith leaders who had worked with police since the 1980s. They perceived a change in police leadership was minimizing their significance. The decision to eliminate a patch they had worn since their inception was a clear indicator in their view. I worked with MAC and city staff to ensure the patch remained. We preserved a powerful allegiance. My harmonious interactions with faith leaders have continued in Seaside. My ties with the Monterey Peninsula Ministerial Alliance are deep and meaningful.

The span and scope of the Blue Ribbon Panel for the Reduction of Youth Violence are immense. The Panel consists of intervention specialists, educators, social and community health services, grassroots organizations, probation, prosecution, local and county police, businesses, non-profits, faith and community-based organizations, public officials, and concerned citizens. As chair of the Panel, my working relationship with each of the members is exemplary. We often connect between monthly meetings to resolve emerging community concerns.

The Seaside Nutrition, Academics & Athletics for Cops & Kids (SNAACK) Van is emblematic of my desire and capacity to merge disparate and strategic partners to address community needs and strengthen bonds. A local university helped us conduct surveys and listening sessions to learn what the youth wanted the van to stock. They mentioned healthy snacks, sports equipment, and school supplies most often. The regional hospital was eager to join since its mission is to create healthier communities. One of our local supermarkets agreed to provide nutritious snacks as often as we needed them. Our youth named the van and selected three wrap designs. Residents voted on the winning design via social media.

I formalized my genial relationship with elected officials in 2002. As a lieutenant, I had responsibility around-the-clock for one of Fort Worth's twelve policing districts. Part of my obligation was to inform the elected city councilmember of any homicides or other significant events within his council district. As Seaside Police Chief, my interactions with elected and appointed officials at the local, county, and state level are more routine, protracted, and substantive. Over the years, I have developed relationships of trust with all officials.

Colleagues describe me as the consummate team player. Fifty-two years of combined military and police service, and a lifetime of participating in group sports, help me understand how significant my role is to team success. It means I recognize that the police department is part of a city-wide team. Other city departments add value and play a tangential role in crime reduction as well. All departments are necessary and essential for a city to thrive. Many years ago, as vice president of the Fort Worth Black Law Enforcement Officers Association, we did not support a meet and confer ballot. We believed the initiative would disadvantage other city departments and possibly harm overall city livability.

I have enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with the media. When I served as the Public Information Officer, I relied on the media to share critical public safety information and promote positive stories whenever possible. They depended on me to deliver accurate and timely information regarding high profile incidents. We had a great rapport and worked through some challenging disagreements. My honest, respectful, and responsive approach to the media is evident in Seaside as well. I met with many of the local media when I arrived. Our professional connection has grown stronger during my tenure. As a result, they have been willing to share some of our positive initiatives with a broader audience.

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Response to Question Three

My passion for protecting my community from crime—mainly the most vulnerable and underserved—is unslakable. Police prevent, deter, and reduce crime. Daunting tasks if one anticipates accomplishing them single-handedly. However, effective strategies leverage myriad stakeholders—none more important than citizens. Forceful and outdated approaches to reduce crime, which many lauded as revolutionary in their day, have correlated to diminished confidence years later. The dragnet indiscriminately ensnared criminal and righteous residents. Such antithetical strategies served to drive a deeper wedge of distrust between minorities and police. The efficacious tactics I employ buoy citizen trust and reduce harm.

In 2008, the department assigned me to West Division as Patrol Captain. I immediately assembled a committee—including community members—to brainstorm strategies to address crime. We devised a comprehensive and overarching plan. Every officer focused on gleaning information related to drug activity on every call. We worked with Narcotics and created a shared database. Narcotics also provided an expedited response to our requests for assistance. We sent officers to Narcotics for training to better identify illicit narcotic activity. We developed a list of "concerned citizens" who shared information related to drug activity. I met with my lieutenants weekly to review progress, successes, and areas for improvement/modification. By working closely with the community to create a shared vision for crime mitigation, we reduced violent crime by 13%.

I was assigned to lead the FWPD Patrol Bureau as an Assistant Chief in 2013. Again, we gathered key stakeholders and devised a comprehensive plan to address property crime. In addition to evidence-based tactics, prevention was a significant component of our strategy. When officers observed open garage doors or property inside a vehicle left in plain sight, they would stop to educate community members. The same would hold for keys left in running, unattended vehicles, but we had to add an enforcement component due to the practice's frequency. Neighborhood Police Officers would hold monthly meetings to educate residents on crime trends and provide steps to protect themselves and their property. We were successful in reducing overall crime by 4.1% in 2013 and 4.7% in 2014.

In 2016, I served as the FWPD Finance & Personnel Bureau Assistant Chief. One of the myriad responsibilities I had was to research and leverage technology that could help reduce crime. CrimeView Dashboard was a web-based analytical software solution that featured interactive maps, charts, and crime-related graphs. It also provided hotspot mapping and identified areas of increased risk for property crimes. Its analysis abilities are akin to CompStat, not prediction modeling. Over the course of 2016, I managed the integration of the CrimeView Dashboard for the police department. Front-line personnel had access to CrimeView from their in-car mobile data terminals. Property crime declined by 1.1% in 2017 compared to 2016.

Serving as Seaside Chief of Police has afforded me the platform to shape agency culture by increasing citizen engagement and building trusting relationships, indispensable in reducing crime. In a small city—with a commensurate budget—one cannot always leverage technology to reduce crime. However, one can undoubtedly advantage trusting relationships where citizens tell us who is committing crimes. I set the expectation early and often by communicating and demonstrating that police should create different opportunities to interact with our community in non-enforcement settings. Additionally, I stressed that we should address the root cause of crime and not its result.

I eliminated arrests as a category in our annual budget document. I had warning citations created for officers to have them as an option to use to improve driver behavior. They were also encouraged to use detention as a last resort and consider if confinement would make our city safer. Intervening to refer disadvantaged juveniles to social services was a stated priority. Opting to divert eligible youth for specific criminal behavior was anticipated.

Empirical evidence suggests that eliminating or reducing pernicious practices, bolstering trust, and reducing crime are achievable outcomes. This past year was our first measuring community trust, and next year we will be able to make year-to-year comparisons. The company conducting the surveys indicated the trust level among Black residents in Seaside is above average for cities they service. Anecdotally, minority residents have told me Seaside Police Officers have treated them better since I have been the chief. In 2019, as a result of our collective focus, we increased youth diversions and referrals 120% and 250%, respectively, decreased arrests 19% and lowered violent crime 14%.