

# CITY OF OAKLAND



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January 18, 2013

An open letter to the Oakland City Council  
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza

## **RE: Strategic Policy Partnership Contract Amendment as concerns Bill Bratton**

Dear City Councilmembers,

When it comes to public safety, Oakland deserves and needs the best. Whether it's strengthening the police force, improving community partnerships, or bolstering prevention strategies we use to fight crime, the bottom line remains the same: we must always work toward and demand the very best.

Bill Bratton is internationally recognized as among the best minds in modern policing. His record is clear: as a chief in New York City and Los Angeles, he oversaw record drops in crime that were consistent and sustained. During his time in Los Angeles the police department completed reforms required by the federal courts, a challenge not unlike the situation in Oakland.

Bratton now wants to come to Oakland as part of a team of top advisors to our own police chief, Howard Jordan. I welcome Bratton's ideas and enthusiasm for making our residents and businesses safer. An important focus of his work would be improving OPD's CompStat system, which is a means of tracking crime data and predicting trends. This system is being used nationwide as a means to make policing effective and accountable. It gives officers a crucial tool in fighting crime. As one of the system's inventors, Bratton is uniquely suited to helping us perfect how that system works here.

Again: Oakland residents and businesses deserve the best, and I support Chief Jordan in his request to bring on one of the best advisors he could have.

I know many community members are concerned about the idea. We've been hearing worries that Bratton's past policies could be used in Oakland in a way that contributes to racial profiling. I want to address those concerns in the clearest words I can find: racial profiling will not be tolerated in the Oakland Police Department. Period.

Bratton's work in Los Angeles showed him to be an advocate for strong outreach and collaboration between police and their local community leaders and civil rights groups. He's also argued for years that police departments benefit greatly from hiring minority officers who reflect the communities they serve.

The American Civil Liberties Union approved: when Bratton stepped down from LAPD in 2009, local ACLU Executive Director Ramona Ripston told the Los Angeles Times it was "a terrible loss for the city," adding, "We used to get over 10,000 complaints a year. In the last couple of years, it's decreased to a trickle."

The goals of fighting crime and improving police relationships in our communities are not at odds with each other. Instead, they are crucial to one another, and one cannot be done without the other.

I believe Bratton can help us improve the department on both fronts, but in the end, the responsibility for OPD policy is not his: it is Chief Jordan's and mine.

Bratton's job, if the City Council approves on Tuesday our proposed contract with him, would be to give Chief Jordan the best information and the smartest advice he can. Chief Jordan's job will be to consider that advice and take accountability for the final decisions about our police department and how to make best use of the limited resources on hand. And my job, together with the City Council and City Administrator Deanna Santana, will be to find more ways to build those resources.

All this work is of the utmost urgency. We saw an absolutely unacceptable rise in Oakland violence last year, and burglaries and robberies afflicted far too many of our residents. We need immediate action for quick results and a long-term strategy to sustain and build on those results. In both respects I believe Bratton can bring much-needed help, and in working together we can make a real difference.

I hope the City Council and the broader community will support us as we ask for this important assistance, but whatever happens, Chief Jordan and I continue our pledge to the City: we will do anything and everything we can to make Oakland a safe and prosperous place for us all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean Quan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mayor Jean Quan