



24-5395

DATE: May 7, 2024 (Item No. {{item.number}})

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Kasey Halcón, Deputy County Executive
Rocio G. Luna, Deputy County Executive

SUBJECT: Countywide Community Violence Prevention Strategic Plan

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Held from April 16, 2024 (Item No. 23): Receive report from the Office of the County Executive relating to a Countywide Community Violence Prevention Strategic Plan for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, and a proposed development process including options for establishing a community violence prevention fund.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no fiscal implications with receiving this informational report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND

At the Board of Supervisors meeting on January 23, 2024 (Item No. 13), President Ellenberg and Supervisor Arenas requested Administration report to the Board on developing a Countywide Community Violence Prevention Strategic Plan for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, and a proposed development process including options for establishing a community violence prevention fund.

This report provides the initial framework for a comprehensive Countywide Community Violence Prevention Strategic Plan and incorporates related referrals to ensure a holistic and coordinated approach to violence prevention activities across County departments. Future updates on the Countywide Community Violence Prevention (CVP) Strategic Plan will incorporate evaluation and analysis from the referrals included in the table that follows.

Hearing Date	Referral
May 2, 2023 (Item No. 23)	At the request of President Ellenberg, the Board directed Administration to report to the Board on date uncertain relating to non-law enforcement community-led public safety strategies the County currently employs and potential areas of growth, including street outreach violence interruption, hospital-based intervention, community-driven violence prevention through environmental design, and safe passage programs.
September 12, 2023 (Item No. 28)	At the request of Supervisor Chavez, the Board directed Administration to report to the Board on date uncertain relating to community-led comprehensive violence prevention strategies, including whether these strategies should be implemented by cities within the County; and, that community-based nonprofit organizations be included in discussions, outreach, and implementation efforts for violence prevention.
February 6, 2024 (Item No. 36)	At the request of Supervisor Chavez, the Board directed Administration to include in the violence prevention and intervention mapping workplan for Board consideration on date uncertain information relating to the integration of Board directives at a policy level that does not require referrals requesting a coordinated approach, and instead promotes a unified culture that integrates priorities at a rapid pace.
February 6, 2024 (Item No. 17)	At the request of President Ellenberg following a report on Hate Crime Implementation Strategies, the Board further directed Administration to synchronize consideration of hate prevention work with development of the Violence Prevention Strategic Plan to seek opportunities for maximization and potential sharing of resources.

The Public Health Department (PHD) has previously presented reports to the Board of Supervisors and Board Policy Committees related to gun violence prevention activities, including the Cost of Gun Violence Study released in 2022. Most recently, on February 6, 2024 (Item No. 36), the Board received a comprehensive report from PHD on Violence Prevention and Intervention Mapping (Attachment A). This mapping focused on nine zip codes identified as areas with the highest rates of firearm injury or death and identified programs that address youth violence, gang violence, street violence, and other types of interpersonal violence that occur outside the home or in a community setting. This report did not identify programs that address domestic violence, hate crimes, gun suicide, self-harm, or accidental injuries. For purposes of a comprehensive CVP Strategic Plan, recommendations

included later in this report will build upon the work completed by PHD and expand mapping to include broader categories of violence.

The CVP Strategic Plan reflects two important realities. First, that there are community members experiencing violence in our neighborhoods today. Second, that the County of Santa Clara is deeply committed to preventing violence from occurring in the first place. The County currently has deep investments in tertiary violence prevention strategies, which primarily focus on supportive and rehabilitative services to impacted individuals, and assist community members who need help now. There is an opportunity, however, to enhance efficiencies to better coordinate and align current investments in primary and secondary intervention strategies to help prevent future recurrence of violence. Additionally, forthcoming Federal and State violence prevention grant opportunities, along with the \$1,000,000 Board allocation to PHD for gun violence prevention activities, provide the County with a unique opportunity to focus our investments on proven primary prevention strategies that improve the safety and wellbeing of our communities now, while safeguarding future generations.

What is Community Violence?

For purposes of this report, Administration utilizes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) definition of violence, namely *the intentional use of physical force or power—threatened or actual—against oneself, another person, or against a group or community—that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation*. This can include gun violence and other types of interpersonal violence, such as gender-based violence and child abuse, as well as violence that impacts entire communities, such as gang violence, hate crimes, and hate incidents.

Public Health Prevention Model

Administration recommends a Public Health Prevention framework be adopted for the CVP Strategic Plan. The public health model of prevention breaks down intervention strategies into three areas:

- *Tertiary or Downstream Prevention*, those efforts that primarily focus on providing supportive and rehabilitative services to the individual(s) impacted;
- *Secondary or Midstream Prevention*, or efforts focused on mitigating harm; and
- *Primary or Upstream Prevention*, which focus on identifying and responding to root causes.

The Public Health Prevention Model recognizes the necessity of all types of intervention strategies while noting the efficacy of primary prevention intervention strategies that aim to intervene at the societal, environmental, and economic levels rather than just focusing on individual behaviors or risk factors. By focusing on upstream primary prevention efforts, this model aims to create lasting and sustainable changes that improve the overall health and well-being of populations.

The Public Health Prevention model also employs a Social-Ecological approach to help policymakers understand the need to work across multiple impact levels—*Individual*,

Relationships, Community, and Societal—to help sustain prevention efforts over time and to achieve community-level impact. This approach will be utilized in the enhanced mapping efforts described later in this report to help further identify and frame current efforts, and to make recommendations on promising practices to ensure a more vigorous response to violence in our communities.

Counties and communities across the United States are increasingly adapting the public health model of upstream primary prevention to address the root causes of community violence and to prevent future violence, like this example from the CDC which utilizes the Public Health Prevention Model to address gender-based violence:



Dills, Jones, and Brown (July 2019), Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention

Furthermore, as noted in the PHD Cost of Gun Violence Study, African/African Ancestry and Latino communities residing in Santa Clara County experience disproportionately higher burden of gun violence, and violence at large. Also, among the top five zip codes with the highest firearm deaths rates, four were in the City of San José, and one was in the City of Gilroy. Therefore, considering this disproportionality, Administration recommends utilizing a racial equity lens within the proposed framework of the CVP Strategic Plan, and ensuring perspectives of subpopulations with high risks of victimization such as LGBTQ and disabled communities are included.

Current Landscape of Prevention Efforts

While the County of Santa Clara invests in prevention efforts, efforts have been heavily focused on secondary and tertiary prevention, as demonstrated by the PHD County-Level Gun Violence Mapping (Attachment B). These downstream investments focus heavily on a criminal-legal approach to violence that, while necessary and costly, does not address the primary causes of violence. For example, according to the mapping table, current County-led primary prevention efforts in gun violence include the PHD Safe Gun Storage Dashboard via the Healthy Cities Program, the District Attorney's Office Gun Violence Restraining Order

(GVRO) education campaign and legal efforts, and the Sheriff's Office Safe Firearm Storage Ordinance. These efforts seek to protect our community from gun violence before it happens but fall short of addressing the social determinants of health that can impact the likelihood of exposure to gun violence in the first place.

Improving the social determinants of health (SDOH), defined by the CDC defines as “the nonmedical factors that influence health outcomes, or the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life,” is a hallmark of evidence-based primary prevention. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, in their report *Healthy People 2030*,¹ establishes data-driven national objectives in five key areas of SDOH:

- 1) healthcare access and quality,
- 2) education access and quality,
- 3) social and community context,
- 4) economic stability, and
- 5) neighborhood and built environment.

Current County-led efforts to address these objectives include but are not limited to significant investments in community medical care through Santa Clara Valley Healthcare, expansion of specialized treatment services available through the Behavioral Health Services Department, increased access to affordable childcare, and our innovative Guaranteed Basic Income pilots for at-risk populations including foster youth and justice involved populations.

As summarized, however, in the California Department of Public Health publication, *Preventing Violence in California, The Role of Public Health*,² violence itself may be considered a social determinant of health, and violence may also be a result of the environments where people live and grow. For example, those who grow up and live in environments with limited social, educational, and economic opportunities and where violence, racism, and community and domestic instability are daily stressors, are at increased risk of multiple forms of violence. To prevent various forms of community violence, the underlying social determinants of health therefore need to be addressed, and corresponding investments made to improve conditions.

Currently, countywide prevention efforts—primary, secondary, and tertiary—are scattered throughout County departments, cities, and community-based organizations (CBOs), which makes it challenging to categorize resources across the continuum, identify gaps, and meaningfully evaluate outcomes. A thoughtful categorization and examination of services is therefore needed to develop strategies that reduce the occurrence of violence in our communities, but also decrease investment in costly law enforcement-led tertiary intervention.

¹ “Healthy People 2030, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, <https://health.gov/healthypeople>

² “Preventing Violence in California; The Role of Public Health”, California Department of Public Health, May 2017, <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDCPHP/DCDIC/SACB/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Violence%20Prevention%20Initiative/VPI%20Volume%201%20Version%201%2024%2019%20ADA.pdf>

Board of Supervisors: Sylvia Arenas, Cindy Chavez, Otto Lee, Susan Ellenberg, S. Joseph Simitian

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Strategic Plan

To better understand the landscape of current efforts and make informed policy determinations for future investments, Administration recommends the Board direct ***PHD to conduct a survey and analysis of primary and secondary violence prevention efforts in Santa Clara County***, beyond gun violence efforts, to include categories of community violence mentioned in this report, such as gender-based violence, child abuse, and hate crimes. To ensure the data collected will yield tangible recommendations, the mapping will be limited to those efforts designed or embarked upon specifically for the purpose of violence prevention. The results of this comprehensive analysis should detail which groups—whether the County, cities, or CBOs—are responsible for implementation, the types of violence targeted through each prevention/intervention effort, the level of financial investment, and outcome measurement design. This effort to map services should include a deeper assessment of SDOH primary prevention efforts and take into account neighborhood enhancement programs, such as blight reduction and green space development, which are increasingly demonstrating efficacy in reducing violence in the neighborhoods most impacted by community violence.

Parallel to the survey and mapping, Administration recommends PHD work with the Division of Equity and Social Justice, and violence prevention collaboratives such as the South County Youth Taskforce and the East San José PEACE Partnership, along with community-based partners including our local rape crisis centers, the YWCA and Community Solutions, to ***conduct community engagement with impacted groups, including focus group interviews that include those with lived experience***.

Furthermore, local schools are a critical partner in any comprehensive plan, and Administration and PHD will ***engage with the County Office of Children and Families Policy, local schools, and the Santa Clara County Office of Education, to ensure the voice and wellbeing of our youth are centered in any policy recommendations***. Involving community members, organizations, and stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of any future prevention strategies will help to ensure interventions are culturally appropriate and address the unique needs of the community.

The results of deeper study and stakeholder engagement would help to identify current gaps, and to inform future recommendations for potential areas of growth, including whether these strategies should be implemented by cities within the county, or community-based nonprofit organizations. Future recommendations may also include the ***reorganization of some County-led prevention and intervention services to maximize efficiency and streamline coordination and service delivery***. Given current budget constraints for the County and local communities, Administration anticipates any future proposals would ***evaluate recommendations using a Cost/Impact Matrix*** to ensure deliberate investment in proven strategies that demonstrate efficacy in preventing multiple types of violence—self-harm, harm to others, and harm to community—to ensure a focused approach capable of making a lasting impact.

Promising Practices

In addition to previously mentioned recommendations, Administration is working to evaluate

several promising practices including one at the *University of Chicago Crime Lab, Community Violence Intervention Leadership Academy*.³ This Academy trains local community members to become violence prevention advocates in their communities. During this eight week academy, participants (who are typically nominated by their local communities) are able to access learning opportunities at the University while also meeting with other community advocates and activists in other communities who are working with people with lived experience in their communities to reduce rates of violence.

Gun violence, including gun-related suicide, is the number one killer of children in the United States. Community leaders in cities like Detroit, Chicago, and St. Louis are increasingly making *simple and cost effective measures like gun locks available in non-traditional locations*, like hospitals and pediatrics departments. Illinois recently passed legislation enabling pediatricians and other physician offices to provide gun safes or gun locks to families who might need them. Administration intends to engage counterparts in Chicago to learn more about these efforts, and to better understand how measures like this can be deployed to sensitive populations in a trauma-informed manner.

Administration anticipates having more robust information on these and other promising practices available for Board consideration in the next report.

Community Violence Prevention Fund

Administration is currently evaluating options to create a CVP fund and cost-sharing opportunities with local cities. Administration is also seeking to engage the Los Angeles County Public Health Department's Office of Violence Prevention to learn more about its partnership with a local philanthropic and community-based organization, the California Community Foundation, which helps to fund and administer local violence prevention efforts in the greater Los Angeles region.⁴ The County and community-based partners have a smaller but similar funding model through the East San José PEACE Partnership and South County HEALS. Administration and PHD will explore strategies to scale up this model to meet the needs of a broader CVP Fund.

Additionally, there are several promising grant opportunities to expand primary prevention efforts available through the Federal Grants departments like the U.S. Department of Justice and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association, and in the State, through the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). Administration anticipates the results of a deeper study will help inform which intervention and prevention strategies should be considered for enhanced funding through a future fund or grant opportunities.

Upon receipt of this report and as directed by Board, Administration and PHD will report back at a future date with a detailed workplan, including a timeline for the survey and mapping, key objectives that will incorporate Board and stakeholder input, and an evaluation of any resource reallocation necessary to complete the work.

³ University of Chicago Crime Lab, Community Violence Intervention Leadership Academy, <https://crimelab.uchicago.edu/projects/community-violence-intervention-leadership-academy/>

⁴ "Office of Violence Prevention, California Community Foundation, Invest 25 Million in Violence Prevention, Intervention, and Healing Services", California Community Foundation, <https://www.calfund.org/25-million-in-violence-prevention-partnership/>

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CHILD IMPACT

The recommended action may have a positive impact on children. This report provides the initial framework for a comprehensive Countywide Community Violence Prevention Strategic Plan, and violence, including gun violence, has direct and indirect adverse effects on children. The collective efforts among County departments have the potential to prevent violence in current and future generations and improve access to programs and services to enhance protective factors to protect youth at risk for violence exposure.

SENIOR IMPACT

The recommended action may positively impact seniors by increasing awareness of programs that work to prevent community violence. Seniors are negatively impacted by harm to families and communities in which they live. Investment in communities may positively impact seniors by limiting unsafe access to weapons among unauthorized users, and providing options for investment in programs and services to develop protective factors among seniors at risk for gun violence.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A Data Report on Violence Prevention and Intervention Mapping
- Attachment B County Level Gun Violence Prevention Efforts