



## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

As a city that is consistently named one of the safest cities in the country, Santa Clara is committed to promoting a living and working environment that allows for the best quality of life. Staff is monitoring and tracking legislation to ensure that proposed legislation is aligned with the City's continued interest in public safety.

### *Community Safety*

Crime prevention and enforcement efforts are integral to creating and maintaining a safe environment for residents and visitors.

Gun violence has become a grim reality of life in the United States. Gun-related homicides, suicides and unintentional lethal and non-lethal shootings dominate media coverage. Shootings have a devastating impact on communities – even when no one is killed. The City supports legislation that seeks to impose stricter gun violence laws and/or requires the safe storage of unattended firearms.

The City also supports legislation that toughens penalties for chronic criminals. Recent legislation has shifted responsibility for all sentences non-violent, non-serious, non-sex offenders from the State to local jurisdictions, reduced penalties for certain non-violent crimes and allowed parole consideration for nonviolent felons. Individuals that are apprehended for property crimes, among others, often recommit similar crimes after they are released after a shorter sentencing. The City supports efforts to reduce the list of who can seek early parole and re-classify some theft crimes from misdemeanors to felonies by reforming Proposition 47 (approved by voters in 2014) and Proposition 57 (approved by voters in 2016). The City also supports the expansion on the number of crimes where DNA is collected, a list that was limited when some crimes went from felonies to misdemeanors.

The City recognizes that crime prevention and enforcement efforts alone cannot foster community safety and wellness; education, intervention and prevention efforts on various public safety topics (e.g. gun violence, gang activity, alcohol and tobacco use, pedestrian, driver and bicycle safety, and driving under the influence) are equally important. The City's Police Department currently provides anti-bullying education through the D.A.R.E. program and would like to see similar efforts and measures to eliminate discrimination, bullying and harassment, and improve general safety at schools. Similarly, the Police Department develops and maintains partnerships with schools, businesses, places of worship and fellow law enforcement agencies to help reduce crime and enhance safety. Additionally, The City encourages lawmakers to continue preserving funding levels for existing public safety programs, services and equipment (e.g. Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant) and identifying new funding sources for law enforcement agencies to promote public safety, wellness and employee training, such as AB 680.

The City supports legislation that addresses crime trends and attempts to curb illegal activity, including but not limited to, illegal street racing and sideshow activity and thefts from automobile burglaries. The City also supports California's Zero Traffic Fatalities Task Force efforts to test speed enforcement cameras and corresponding legislation as a result of the pilot program to mitigate traffic-related injuries and deaths. Speed

enforcement cameras would snap a photo of the offending vehicle whose owner would get a ticket in the mail.

#### *Disaster Preparedness and Response*

As the State and region continues to experience an unprecedented number of natural and man-made disasters, the City recognizes the importance of a comprehensive risk management approach to emergency preparedness, fire prevention, fire suppression, and emergency medical services. The City supports community risk reduction strategies including but not limited to community education programs (e.g. CERT). The City would continue to benefit from legislation and initiatives that aim to allocate funding for staff training, interagency cooperation and enhanced equipment/technology.

The City also supports legislation that expands the implementation and testing of emergency alerts. Prior to the passage of AB 956 and AB 1079, there was limited access to unlisted and unpublished telephone numbers, which put thousands of Californians at risk of not receiving timely and critical information during an emergency. AB 956 authorizes public safety agencies to place calls through automatically dialing-announcing devices for the purposes of testing all modes of emergency telephone systems whereas previously they could only use autodialing systems to deliver actual emergency notifications. AB 1079 authorizes public safety agencies to test the systems that respond to 911 calls or communicate threats to life or property on unpublished or unlisted numbers without first obtaining the subscriber's express consent.

#### *Fines and Forfeitures*

The City has seen a gradual reduction in revenue from fines and forfeitures. The City supports measures that aim to return revenue generated from the enforcement of crimes back to the originating agency to sustain their efforts. In addition, the City supports measures that provide local agencies with financial relief (reimbursement) when the state legislature or any state agency mandates a new program or increased level of service (Proposition 4, 1979). These efforts provide the City's general fund with expense recovery.

#### *Infrastructure and Technology*

Many of the public safety efforts outlined in this document depend on reliable infrastructure and advanced technology. Improved interoperability is an important goal for public safety because it can assist first responders in any major incident. The City supports legislation that improves infrastructure and technology, which will enhance public safety professionals' ability to respond to all types of emergencies and communicate within and across jurisdictions. Examples of infrastructure and technology includes, but is not limited to, phone systems, radio interoperability, Text-to-911, wireless networks, emergency alert systems, and dedicated data communications networks and systems. Additionally, the City supports local regulation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAV), including the right to authorize use of UAV systems by public safety agencies and the right to restrict or prohibit UAV use that interferes with or poses a threat to emergency operations or public safety.

#### *Vulnerable Populations*

Human trafficking takes on a variety of forms and may intersect with domestic violence in multiple ways. When an individual is trafficked by an intimate partner, family member, or other member of the household, domestic violence often also occurs. Additionally,

domestic violence at home may become a 'push factor' that causes someone to become vulnerable to trafficking. Human traffickers are also often engaged in other crimes, which increases overall crime in the City. Other vulnerable populations that require additional attention include the homeless and mentally ill. Police calls for service involving the mentally ill, including those who are homeless, are on the rise throughout the State. First responders can benefit from additional training and tools to deal with the mentally ill including having Mental Health Specialists on staff to partner with responding personnel when an individual is in crisis. In addition, the City continues to rely on domestic violence and human trafficking victim resources in emergency situations for safe and successful outcomes to be reached. In general, the City supports legislation that aims to support individuals in crisis, reduce and address homelessness, human trafficking domestic violence victims and survivors, and other vulnerable populations.