

# Report on the Santa Clara County Community Summit on Firearms and Safety

November  
2018

Overview of the summit and summary of key topics, themes, and ideas from participants.



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# Background

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## About the Summit

The Santa Clara County Community Summit on Firearms and Safety was developed and hosted by Supervisor Dave Cortese to provide an opportunity to bring together a diverse group of county residents to connect, listen, share, and engage on topics related to firearms and safety in the County. The summit was held on April 28<sup>th</sup>, two months after the shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida in which 17 people were killed and 17 people were injured, and five weeks after March For Our Lives rallies were held throughout the county, including one in San Jose, as a call to action to address gun violence issues<sup>1</sup>. During this time of grief, fear, confusion, and polarization the summit was designed to allow participants to talk about challenging issues, talk through and understand differences, and discuss opportunities for action. There was also a hope that the emphasis on creating a space for safe dialogue and understanding amongst people with different values and beliefs could serve as a potential model for future community summits on complex issues in Santa Clara County.

## About the Report

This report is intended to provide an overview of the key topics that were discussed at the Santa Clara County Community Summit on Firearms and Safety. This report does not provide an exhaustive overview of every discussion, opinion, or view expressed by participants, but rather provides a summary of the more commonly raised topics while providing a summary of the views and beliefs expressed on these topics. The themes summarized in this report were identified from input forms that were provided to all participants and notes from facilitators; 220 input forms and 50 sets of facilitator notes were analyzed. Participants and facilitators may have not submitted a form or may have submitted multiple forms, so the number of forms does not necessarily reflect the number of people providing input. Additionally, if there were topics or ideas that were raised in conversation but were not shared on an input form they would not be captured in this report.

Many direct quotes from the participant input forms are used throughout this report in order to maintain the spirit of direct community input and conversation that was at the heart of this summit. These quotes are provided verbatim to preserve the language and emphasis used by the participant, any changes to the exact quote are noted in brackets and were only made when necessary to preserve clarity. Any statements of statistics or facts that are directly quoted have not been fact-checked, but are included to help with understanding that individual's beliefs and statement.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://marchforourlives.com/mission-statement/>

## Creating a Space for Open Dialogue

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Eighty people participated in three facilitator training sessions—two in person and one online—lead by the American Leadership Forum before the summit to learn how to facilitate round table discussions in a manner that emphasized productive dialogue and human connection. This training allowed facilitators to lead participants through three rounds of facilitated conversations. For the first round of conversations at the summit, facilitators led participants through exercises focused on building self-awareness, how to listen to understand, and how to have a productive dialogue. These exercises were helpful in setting the tone and goals for the day, which were sharing, listening, and understanding different views rather than debating, convincing, or even trying to find agreement.

After going through these exercises, participants chose a topic related to firearms and safety to discuss at the round tables for the second and third rounds of facilitated conversations. Participants were free to choose the conversation topic from a list and encouraged to move between tables to find a topic of interest to them. The facilitators' role in these conversations was to ensure high quality conversation and dialogue, ensure all participants had a chance to listen and to speak, and to take notes on areas of convergence and divergence within the group. The final two rounds of conversation for the day were not lead by facilitators, but were an opportunity for participants to select a topic of their choosing and self-facilitate these conversations in the same open, honest, and learning-oriented manner as the facilitated discussions. The Summit agenda and overview provided to participants are available in Attachments A & B.

The American Leadership Forum (ALF) was a key partner in planning and executing this event, they were hired to develop the agenda, do background research to develop and guide productive dialogue, and to facilitate the facilitators. ALF's experience in facilitating challenging dialogues and commitment to building diverse networks for community transformation was a large contributor to the success of the summit.

Participants were asked to complete input forms on any of the topics of their choosing to share their views and beliefs on the topic, in their own words, these forms and the facilitators' notes were the primary sources of information used to capture and summarize the themes of the day. These themes, presented in the following sections, reflect the dialogue-oriented goals of the day and are therefore not calls to action or concrete recommendations to policy makers, but are a snapshot of the values, concerns, and priorities of County residents who participated in the summit.

## Summit Experience

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Participants came to the summit with a variety of views on firearms, a range of deeply held beliefs and values, and with different life experiences—all of which helped to form their views. Despite these differences, many of the participants, facilitators, and organizers provided positive feedback regarding achieving the summit’s goal of fostering productive dialogue across diverse viewpoints. Although disagreements arose, tensions did not, and participants generally used disagreements as an opportunity to share their views while learning about what values and experiences informed views that differed from their own. One facilitator explained that while conversations could get contentious, it was in a healthy way, recognizing that it is important to talk through contentious issues rather than avoid them.

Some participants and facilitators noted that if a discussion group was perceived by a participant to be unbalanced in perspectives it felt frustrating or unwelcoming to those who felt outnumbered. Although not common, when these instances did occur the facilitator or other members of the group could help guide the discussion to be more inclusive or the participant could choose to move another discussion group where they felt more comfortable sharing their thoughts.

*“Although we all had diverse opinions and viewpoints, everyone at our table respected everyone’s views and were able to hold a productive group discussion.”*

The tone of the participant input forms reflected the diversity of opinions represented at the summit, but also reflected the sharing and learning-oriented tone of the day. About two thirds of the input forms completed by participants had a neutral stance on firearms, meaning the writer provided their views and opinions while not expressing views in favor of gun control nor gun rights. The remaining third were split between those expressing views in favor of stricter gun control laws, policies, or programs and those expressing views in favor of individual rights to bear arms.

*“I appreciated the opportunity to hear other parts of view, I appreciate that there are “responsible gun owners” but hope that this dialogue continues. There is a huge gap between extreme views and there needs to be ongoing dialogue to come to any middle ground, if that’s possible.”*

*“I was able to see my own bias around what militias are or more specifically, what my bias is around what kind of person would join a militia.”*

*“Very positive, all are free to express their views even if opposing.”*

## Discussion Topics

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This section of the report is a summary of the thoughts, beliefs, and values expressed by summit participants. This summary of comments is intended to capture a sample of the varied viewpoints on each topic discussed along with participants' suggestions, ideas, or requests for related next steps.

### Methods

The topics discussed during the facilitated round table discussions came from a list that was provided to the facilitators, with the group free to choose any topic from the list (this list is available as Attachment C). As a result, many of the themes on the input forms centered on topics from this list, so the list was used as a basis for identifying themes for this report using a deductive approach. Topics from this list that were not raised on the input forms are not mentioned in this report. Additionally, during the analysis of the input forms and facilitator notes themes emerged that were not on the topic list using an inductive approach, these themes are also represented in this report.

For a topic to be considered a "theme" for the purposes of this report the topic needed to be mentioned on four or more input forms. There were additional topics that were mentioned on fewer forms, however with the purpose of this report being to capture a summary of the more commonly raised topics a topic had to be raised four or more times to be included as a "theme." Additional topics that did not emerge as themes for inclusions in this report but are of particular interest to the summit sponsor are included in Attachment D. The quotes provided in each theme's section were selected to demonstrate and represent the variety of views and beliefs within that theme and are not intended to be an exhaustive example of the views expressed. After an initial draft of the report was developed the County Board of Supervisors reviewed the report and requested that additional, specific quotes they identified from the input forms be included in the report as well.

### Mental Health

The broad topic of mental health was raised in many of the community input forms and facilitator notes. The comments related to mental health expressed views on the relationship (or lack of relationship) between mental illness and gun violence, opinions on gun ownership for people with mental illness, and armed police responses to mental health crises. In addition to concern around these specific topics, many forms addressed the topic of mental health care in the community, specifically mentioning the need for more screening and treatment options.

### Access to Firearms

There were varying views expressed around the relationship between mental illness and firearm violence. Some participants expressed that people with identified mental health issues

should not be allowed to buy guns and if they do own a gun, the gun should be taken away upon diagnoses. Others felt that restricting or limiting gun ownership for people with mental illness would be discriminatory and believed that people with mental illness are no more likely to use a firearm for violence than a person without a mental illness.

*“Mental health may be an issue for a person who commits gun violence, but it may not be the actual reason they commit gun violence. People that have mental health issues should still have the right of gun ownership, but there are smart solutions to address the societal concern that mental health issues may raise. How do we address the issue of mental health without making judgments?”*

*“Add an enforcement team dedicated to removing firearms from mental health threats and domestic violence situations.”*

People with differing views or who did not express a specific view on this topic did share a common concern that mental illness should not be stigmatized and the focus should be on treatment and services, especially during discussions around the relationship between mental health and firearms.

*“Gun violence is a problem in our society. It has nothing to do with mental illness. The connection between mental health and gun violence leads to stigma and lack of treatment.”*

### Police Response to Mental Health Distress

Amongst those who provided comments related to police interactions with people with mental illness, all of the comments expressed a need for improved interactions between police and people with mental illness. Specifically, participants expressed a desire for police to have more training in responding to incidents involving a person in a mental health crisis so they can de-escalate the situation without the use of force.

*“I suggest that law enforcement is trained on mental illness, so that they do not react impulsively, especially when encountering individuals with mental illness.”*

*“The 5150 process needs more attention to protect family/individual with escalating for example, when coming to home reduce light/sirens. Use plastic restrains, not handcuffs etc.”<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> 5150 refers to an involuntary evaluation. Section 5150 is a section of the California Welfare and Institutions Code (specifically, the Lanterman–Petris–Short Act or "LPS") which allows a

*“We need the ability to respond to threat calls (suicide risks, active shooters, etc) as County Law Enforcement. Gun violence restraining orders are powerful but require a SWAT-capability AND mental health de-escalation capability. We need a County team comprised of multiple agencies to respond to active threats.”*

### Services to Support Mental Health

There was a unified expression for a need for more programs that address mental health needs in the community. Some comments were more general, mentioning a need for screening as well as treatment services for people with mental health conditions, while a number specifically mentioned a need for mental health and related support services to be provided at schools.

*“More mental health support in schools and communities. More social workers!!”*

*“Don’t just vilify people with mental health issues. Plenty of people without mental health issues shoot others....More services and alternatives for people with mental health issues would be nice. The police should not be the only option.”*

*“I’d like to see “Mental Health First Aid” training offered to all school staff and promoted to parents and community members in the county. In order to address prevention and early identification our youth need a lot more support around social skills and emotional health.”*

*“More services and alternatives for people with mental health issues would be nice. The police should not have to be the only option.”*

### Trauma

The potential traumatic impact of gun violence, and violence more broadly, on individuals and communities was another topic that arose. Comments about trauma expressed a need for community healing and community-oriented approaches to dealing with trauma as well as a need to have appropriate services for individuals who have had traumatic experiences.

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qualified officer or clinician to involuntarily confine a person deemed to have a mental disorder that makes them a danger to him- or herself, and/or others and/or gravely disabled.

Source: Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Services; <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/bhd-p/training/5150cit/pages/5150.aspx>

*“Address the impact of trauma. Community healing- prevent community trauma.”*

*“When gun violence hits communities, it can cause trauma to those who witness it (either in person or on news/video). It can also bring up past trauma for some. We also realize that some perpetrators of gun violence have trauma issues.”*

*“Brain development of youth is a concern what it comes to understanding the full impact/consequences of gun violence....Also youth ability to integrate violence after the fact can cause lasting trauma.”*

## Violence

In addition to the many comments related to safety, participants also shared a lot of views around the topic of violence. While many of the input forms contained views specifically on gun violence, there were a lot of forms that addressed thoughts and concerns on the topic of violence more broadly. The themes within this topic focused on “root causes” of violence and potential areas to focus on to prevent gun violence and violence more broadly.

## Culture and Media

Some participants expressed concern about what they saw as a culture that glorifies guns and/or normalizes guns and gun violence. These concerns crossed issues such as perceived high levels of gun ownership, youth violence, and violence in the media.

*“Engage alpha youth early. Try to reduce allure of guns as symbol of power.”*

*“[Topic] Entertainment Violence- movies, TV, internet. [My View] Raising generation after generation of youth who see violence as a norm.”*

*“Gun culture & lust of ownership...to know a tool’s power or purpose, and to lust for it, or to hold such strong fear the need to possess inescapable, does that really seem just? For all of us?”*

## Racial Inequities and Addressing Root Causes of Violence

Many of the facilitator notes mentioned that their group discussed factors that contribute to violence, how the amount and type of violence may be different between communities, as well as upstream or preventive factors, such as racial equity, that can be addressed to prevent gun violence and violence more broadly. The participant input forms provided more detail on these discussions, highlighting concern around social issues and racial and economic inequities that

lead to violence. These comments often mentioned racial disparities and the consequences of systemic inequities in communities of color and how they impact experiences of violence.

*“There is very little understanding around the data and the systemic root causes of the societal forces around the use of firearms in violent acts.”*

*“We ignore that gun violence is also a race issue. Homicides impact our communities of color. Gun violence is very prevalent in our communities of color. We also have an issue of racial profiling and police brutality. We need representation from our youth and communities of color. It was disappointing to see 4 empty tables that were reserved for Vietnamese and Spanish speaking community. What happened to the outreach? We need to do a better job at accommodating our community in particular those who are most affected by these issues.”*

*“What are the root causes of the increase in violence? Have the real issues that may lead to gun violence truly been addressed by government and law enforcement?”*

*“Gun violence affects communities of color disproportionately due to historic discrimination, [...], lack of employment opportunities & income inequalities! Government must acknowledge & address the role it has played in racial inequities in SCC.”*

## Youth Violence

In addition to the large number of comments addressing concern around perceived root-causes of violence more broadly, there were also many people who specifically addressed views about preventing violence in schools and among youth. A small number of comments focused on how to make schools safer by arming guards or teachers in the school or limiting the presence of guns in schools. However, the views that specifically addressed violence amongst youth and in schools largely focused on engaging youth in meaningful activities in their communities and on addressing and reducing bullying as ways to reduce violence amongst youth.

*“Addressing the source of violence by empowering youth to direct and develop their own lives in positive directions through mentorship by role-models.”*

*“Anxiety and pressures in kids (age 10/11). It exists! Pressure from social media to succeed. Bullies. The start of adolescence. Suicide rate up. Provide more programs such as clubs in elementary that are organized by kids.”*

*“After the Columbine tragedy the NRA donated \$1.3M to enable an independent study on how best to protect our students from ALL types of violence. This study examined school violence tragedy hindsight and resulted in the formation of the National School Shield program (nationalschoolshield.org). How might the Parkland tragedy have turned out if Stoneman Douglas had implemented these recommendations?”*

*“We find we don’t have any safe spaces for youth in our communities. No youth centers (designed by youth) or places for them to skate/skate board/scooter, meet up with each other, and find community.”*

## Personal and Community Safety

The desire to improve feelings of safety—at home, in the community, in public spaces—was a common and frequently mentioned concern, however participants’ views on how to work towards and achieve a greater sense of safety varied widely.

As some of the topics outlined in this section demonstrate, personal and community experiences of violence influence views on safety, which suggests that approaches to creating safer communities may not be one-size-fits-all, but will likely be more successful if they are neighborhood and community-specific. Santa Clara County’s Public Health Department has been leading efforts related to community-based understanding and approaches to violence and trauma prevention, this effort has highlighted the community-specific nature of issues like trauma, violence, firearm use<sup>3</sup>.

*“Community is scared to speak up and get involved with anything government. How do we change that and find the bridge... Violence in a community. What perpetuates all of this? Ask the why x5. Understanding community. Get to know the cultures within the community. How geography impacts community. Find/Empower community and members/leaders to speak and engage with the systems to build those relationships.”*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.preventioninstitute.org/sites/default/files/uploads/ESJPP.pdf>

## Police

The topics of police, firearms, and individual/community safety was mentioned a lot, but views on the relationship between these topics varied widely. Some participants expressed that a more involved and greater police presence makes them feel safer, and a lack of police presence makes them feel less safe. Alternatively, others expressed that a police presence made them feel less safe, citing instances of what they felt was use of excessive force by police.

*“Teach each citizen HOW to work WITH law enforcement.”*

*“With the uptick in residential burglaries and other crime since SJPD’s police force was reduced, more people have felt insecure in their homes and have probably purchased guns to feel safe.”*

*“Woman of color, growing up in East & negative interaction with police for community; working with law enforcement agency & in the community.”*

*“Black Panthers had guns for self-protection what happened => they were all killed by police/FBI...When a family is in crisis, 911 is called but a family member could be killed by police not to help if a BH problem in family.”*

*“In some communities law enforcement is viewed as hostile and dangerous.”*

## Firearms in the Home

The topic of safety and how personal gun-ownership contributes to an individual’s feelings of safety was also mentioned on the input forms. Specifically, some participants felt an increased sense of safety and control over their safety knowing they had access to a firearm or knowing that others had access to firearms to stop or prevent crimes. Those who viewed personal firearms as a way to increase safety also felt it allowed them the opportunity to protect themselves and/or others from “bad actors” and other dangers. There were also those who felt that ready access to a firearm was a threat to the safety of themselves, their families, or their neighbors.

*“Firearms are used to prevent crimes and protect people far more than for evil. This should not be forgotten...More ‘good guys with guns’ than ‘bad guys with guns’ would help. S.C Sheriff should issue more CCW permits as we would be better off.”*

*“[I] Feel safe around guns, not threatened.”*

*“Restricting law-abiding citizens just leaves these people defenseless and makes it safer for criminals.”*

*“Domestic violence, thefts, rage, burglaries become deadly with the use of one trigger. I believe that firearms relinquishments is a way to dissipate some of the violence or at least a good start to further escalation.”*

*“Close friend lost 22 year old son to death by suicide- his ability to get a gun, go to range and then complete suicide illustrates problem of access.”*

## Policy Ideas for Safety

The topic of enforcing, upholding, creating, and changing policies related to firearms was the most frequently noted topic on the participant input forms.

Within this topic, comments referencing and providing personal views on the Second Amendment were common. There were expressions of full support for the right to gun ownership, often mentioned along with views that laws that seek to limit or control gun ownership are felt to be an affront to the Second Amendment. Conversely, there were views expressing that the rights outlined in the Second Amendment do not provide a blanket right to gun ownership and that there is a need to limit firearm ownership and/or use.

While there were many comments providing a variety of views and beliefs on the meaning of, importance of, and application of the Second Amendment, there were also many comments related to firearms policy that got more specific. The previous section summarized themes from the community input forms about the importance of safety and what makes people feel safe, a topic that was raised on many forms, highlighting the importance of this topic to many participants. In addition to expressing the importance of safety and sharing insights into what makes people feel safe, many participants shared ideas they had about how policies could promote firearm safety. The ideas shared covered a range of topics related to firearms and safety, this section summarizes participant views on the more commonly discussed policy areas.

## Gun Purchase Process

Who should and should not be allowed to purchase a firearm as well as the role of background checks when purchasing a firearm was a common theme for policy ideas. Participants provided a variety of ideas about policies related to background checks and purchasing restrictions, and although the ideas provided were wide ranging, the common thread was an interest in exploring policies related to gun ownership.

*“I believe that gun use should be allowed but with heavy restrictions. The reason I believe this is because situations where a gun can be life saving are bound to happen, but restricting who gets those weapons will decrease such events in my opinion.”*

*“Reduce or eliminate waiting periods for pre-checked owners/buyers or persons that already own guns.”*

*“People convicted of domestic violence or have restraining orders against them should not have access to guns.”*

*“For those not mentally fit to own a gun, there ought to be a computer chip imbedded on their driver’s license, indicating that such person cannot own a firearm.”*

*“We need to close the loop on background checks. This means there need to be background checks for private sales. This is no different that when you sell a car and both the seller and buyer have to register with the motor vehicle department of the state.”*

### Access to “Assault-Style Firearms”

Terms such as “assault-style firearms,” “military-style firearms,” “high capacity weapons/magazines,” and “bump-stock” were used on multiple input forms, generally in the context of an expressed desire to limit access to these items by the general public. However, there were some forms expressing the view that limiting access to certain types of firearms would not reduce firearm-related violence or deaths and would be an unnecessary restriction on gun ownership rights.

*“How will a ban on “AR’s” realistically contribute to reducing gun deaths? What exactly is an “AR”? Is it Form or Function?...If all long gun deaths (ARs, hunting rifles, single shot, Bolt) are only 2.5% of the total deaths, how will banning “AR’s” realistically reduce loner gun deaths by a meaningful amount?”*

*“It must be recognized more and more lethal weapons are being out into private hands. Unless we stop this trend, we can expect more violence.”*

*“I do want to preserve people’s rights to protection and safety but I think that does not mean all weapons should be available to the public.”*

### Storage

Participant ideas around safe storage all focused on ways to either incentivize or mandate the safe storage of firearms in the home. While ideas about how to promote safe storage of

firearms varied, those who did mention programs or policies related to safe storage were all in favor of identifying ways to make safe storage more commonly practiced, through mandates, incentive programs, and/or education. Safe storage of firearms was often mentioned as a way to make sure children are not able to access firearms that are stored in a home.

*“If the state provided a tax break (or other financial incentive) for gun owners who purchase a gun safe, it would encourage gun owners to increase safe storage.”*

*“How about requiring guns be stored in bolted safes that will be more difficult to remove?”*

*“Requiring safe storage is a good idea...Education on why to safely store a weapon.”*

*“All weapons should be in a safe. All weapons should be in a place where children do not have access.”*

*“Let's make gun safes mandatory. I see no reason why my child playing at another person's house should get their hands on a gun. We should simply make certain that adults are responsibly locking them, as we are trying to protect the children who do not know how to use them.”*

*“Instead of buy-back programs that pay 50 to hundreds of dollars per gun no questions ask, which means if a person steals a gun they get paid to sell it, provide safes... In volume quick access safes/state certified cabinets for 35 to 100 [dollars] each you could give away at least twice as many that would store guns safe and secure.”*

### Gun Buy-Back Programs

Most of the comments that touched on the topic of gun buy-back programs were critical of these programs, expressing a view that these programs can be a way for people to legally get rid of guns that have been used for a crime or to sell stolen firearms. People expressing this view also felt that these programs were not a good use of money. Others had suggestions for how to improve these programs, focusing on offering market-rate or above market-rate for firearms through these programs to provide additional incentive.

*“Gun buy-back are a waste of public resources and enable criminals to have their guns used in a crime destroyed, with no questions asked.”*

*“Focus on funding purchases on guns used in crimes, statistically. Not to buy back all guns. For high value guns, play what they are worth to have them turned in.”*

*“Gun buy back. I’ve never heard of a criminal volunteering to surrender a weapon to make his community safer. We’re disarming the law abiding citizen”*

*“Use data on homicide + suicides regarding the specific TYPES of guns used, and target the buybacks in the effected communities- offering the MARKET rate for the gun plus a premium to motivate the turn-in. At the actual buy-back, have a gun-smith present to check if the gun being turned over is operable- if it is not, the buyback would be a salvage price”*

## Information and Education

The input forms were also used by many people to express areas where they would like to learn more, see more community education or input, or see community efforts and policies be more information driven. People shared ideas about topics for trainings in the County that they felt may promote safety, such as training police officers and other first responders on how to resolve certain situations; training gun owners on safety topics; training school guards and teachers on gun use for school protection; and training students on actions to take if there is a shooter in a school. Participants also shared the need for more information for themselves to make educated recommendations and decisions, but also expressed the need for this information to be shared with communities and with policy makers before decisions are made to ensure action taken in Santa Clara County would reflect the needs of Santa Clara County.

## Training for First Responders

In addition to the needs outlined in the first section about police responses to people in mental health distress, there were other suggestions related to training for police and other first responders. Some comments, from people who expressed a view that police encounters can turn violent quickly, mentioned a desire for police to receive training on de-escalation. Others mentioned a broader need for first responders and local policy makers to get information on best practices and what has worked in other cities and counties to help inform practices locally, while also making sure the implementation of these best practices are tailored to local communities and their needs.

*“I think better training of key culturally competent community leaders, public health and public safety members should take place. We need to create a culture of upstanding responsibility are being seen. Prevent suicide, stigma of reporting, can be referred but schools, public safety, 511 reports and mandated reporters need examples of best practices and debrief.”*

*“Continue to educate police office confrontational issues to “lessen” the “shoot to kill” action”*

### Training for Gun Owners

There was an interest expressed in holding gun safety trainings. The recommended audience varied—gun owners, first-time gun buyers, and/or potential gun owners—and there were different views on whether these trainings should be voluntary or mandatory. Although there was some variation around how this training would be implemented, those who expressed ideas about gun safety trainings felt that training around safe gun use and safe gun ownership would be beneficial.

*“Proper training is essential, to accidental gun injuries/deaths.”*

*“Anyone around guns should take a gun safety class (including kids).”*

*“[We need] access to free gun safety class.”*

### Diverse and Representative Input

There were many community input forms that praised the approach of this Community Summit on Firearms and Safety as a way to get input, ideas, and feedback on this complex issue from people with widely varying views and experiences. Additionally, many forms highlighted the need to continue to get this kind of input from all of the communities within our County, highlighting the fact that the more they can learn and the more decision makers can learn from different experiences the better informed their views can be.

*“We need more youth views in the next dialogue”*

*“Missing the voice/perspective of communities most impacted by violence. Specifically Latinos. We had (4) empty tables- 2 Vietnamese/ 2 Spanish. Need to design an inclusive community conversation at a time, place that works for working class families, and provide childcare/food with culturally relevant/linguistically appropriate facilitators/partner with CBOs, faith-based groups. There are 15 cities → go to places that instill safety, presence of officers induces fear/distrust to some”*

### Reliable Data and Information

The need for trustworthy information about firearms, violence, firearms deaths, and other closely related topics was noted multiple times, sometimes as a personal need and sometimes

as a more general need. The desire for more information often stemmed from a concern that the media does not provide reliable information or that the information from the media is not always reflective of Santa Clara County. Additionally, people expressed a desire for “un-biased” data and information that could be used to form decisions and policies around firearms and safety.

*“Too many misconceptions and misinformation. People are less afraid and feel safer about things/issues they have more information about.”*

*“Schools are building safety every day with building interpersonal skills and student supports. While every school and district are different there should be national expectations and validation of best practices and expectations...Let’s report what is working in schools.”*

*“More research on gun violence from CDC”*

*“I suggest an education + information dissemination campaign to alert people where the most violent crimes/gun crimes are occurring and the general cause/nature of such crimes (gangs, DV, etc.) We need to get more people behind the campaign to stop gun violence so that they will support the expenditure of tax dollars and other resources that will need to be spent in the effort to combat gun crimes”*

### Information to Address Root Causes of Violence

In addition to the need for more information about firearms and violence, there were also many people who expressed a desire for more information, data, and research about root causes of violence. This view was often expressed by those who were interested in violence prevention more broadly.

*“Have more conversations about race and privilege and how that influences experience and opportunity.”*

*“There is very little understanding around the data and the systemic root causes of the societal forces around the use of firearms on violent acts.”*

## Next Steps

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### Future Summits

There were 218 people who registered for the summit, although not everyone who registered for the summit decided to attend and some people attended who did not register. In addition, there were 21 volunteers, 78 facilitators, and representatives from multiple county office including Supervisor Cortese's office, the County Executive's Office, the Behavior Health Department, the Public Health Department, the Sheriff's Office, the District of Attorney's Office, the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Office of Women's Policy. The large turnout and overall positive feedback about the summit suggests that plans for additional summits would be well received and attended by the community.

### Ensuring Diverse Participation

The summit had translators available for monolingual Spanish speakers and monolingual Vietnamese speakers, however there were no participants who needed to work with a translator. Future efforts to engage community members on this or other topics may need to consider barriers to participation other than language to ensure that the voices that are heard are representative of Santa Clara's diverse population. Some potential barriers to this event that were noted were the location (Fairgrounds), the day of the week (Saturday), the time commitment (full day), and the visible police presence (see section on personal safety); future efforts to engage with additional populations within the County may consider holding events on a variety of days, times, and locations.

*"We can be allies to end violence. We need ongoing conversation; more representation from communities that speak Spanish, Vietnamese and other languages."*

*"It's interconnected, layered, and complicated to be in one space. Don't understand morality but I could see that being someone's issue...biggest issue [access] lack of representation of communities of color, monolingual and youth."*

### Policy, Programs, and Legislation

Summit participants' comments and ideas demonstrated a willingness and openness to discuss policies, programs, and legislation related to firearms, violence, and safety at the local level as well as at the state and federal level. Given the interest in this topic at the April 28<sup>th</sup> summit, future efforts to engage the community about policies, programs, and legislation are likely to be

well attended by engaged participants. The topics that emerged from this summit could be used to help guide discussions about these types of next steps to ensure these conversations are about the issues that matter most to the community.

## Education

As the discussion theme on information and education suggests, many summit participants expressed a desire for additional information and education on a variety of topics related to firearms and safety. Additional information would likely be needed to develop programs to address these needs, but the community interest and willingness to engage on this topic suggests that efforts to further understand and meet these needs would be welcomed.

# Attachment A: Summit Agenda

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY COMMUNITY SUMMIT ON FIREARMS & SAFETY**

**SCHEDULE**

9:00 – 9:55	Round 1: Overview, Ground rules, and Sharing views on firearms and safety
9:55 – 10:00	Supervisor Cortese Welcome
10:00 – 10:15	Video 1: Student Voices
10:15 – 10:30	Video 2: County: What We Are Seeing
10:30 – 11:20	Round 2: Dialogue - How do we see the issues?
11:20 – 11:30	Individual Input Process to Summit report
11:30 – 11:45	Video 3: County - What We Are Doing
11:50 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 12:45	Video 4: Elected Officials - Seeing & Doing
12:45 – 1:35	Round 3: Dialogue - What can we/should we do?
1:35 – 1:45	Individual Input Process to Summit report
1:45 – 2:45	Round 4: Self-selected topics – focused conversations and action plans
2:45 – 3:00	Thank you & Next Steps
3:00 – 4:00	<i>Optional Round 5: Continued for people who want extra time</i>

**Graphic View of Schedule**

The graphic view of the schedule is a vertical timeline of blue circles connected by a line. From top to bottom, the items are: Round 1: Context/Intros/View Sharing; Video 1 & 2 (with a play button icon); Round 2: Dialogue - Seeing; Video 3 & 4 (with a play button icon); LUNCH 11:50 – 12:30; Round 3: Dialogue -Doing; Round 4: Self-selected topics; Closing and Next Steps; Round 5: Self-selected topics (continued).

April 28, 2018

## Attachment B: Summit Overview Handout for Participants

### SANTA CLARA COUNTY COMMUNITY SUMMIT ON FIREARMS & SAFETY

#### VISION

Bring many departments of the County and diverse members of the community together for a summit on firearms & safety.

*"Bringing the community together is the only way to open up the dialogue and move forward from our polarized views on this issue. This summit should be broad-based both in its design and participation."*

*- Dave Cortese, Supervisor, Santa Clara County*

#### OBJECTIVES

- Increase shared understanding of Firearms and Safety in Santa Clara County
- Create time and space for residents to connect, listen, share, engage, and act
- Identify opportunities for future action
- Define next steps and available resources for community engagement - Call to action

#### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- At the end of the Summit, people will say they were able to talk about challenging issues – including across differences, understand each other and their neighbors, and find some pathways toward workable solutions.
- People will leave the summit with more hope and a sense of possibility that we can come together across differences.
- The process will allow residents to showcase their current activities and generate or support new ones.
- The process will inform community leaders and generate recommendations for new policies and legislation at all levels of society.
- The process will become a model for future dialogue and action in Santa Clara County and throughout the U.S.

April 28, 2018

## Attachment C: Topic List Handout for Round Table Discussions

**HOW DO YOU SEE THE ISSUES?**

*Firearms are  
mostly a threat to safety*

*Firearms are  
mostly a tool for safety*

*Firearms are  
mostly a tool for sport*

**WHAT'S THE BIGGEST ISSUE?**

<p><b>POLICIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2nd Amendment rights</li> <li>Mental health &amp; firearms access</li> <li>Access to assault-style firearms</li> </ul> <p><b>FAMILIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parental neglect</li> <li>Lack of moral or spiritual guidance</li> <li>Pressure, instability, at home</li> </ul>	<p><b>MEDIA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Violent media: video games, news, and films</li> <li>Lack of reliable data</li> </ul> <p><b>BAD ACTORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inappropriate use of firearms by police</li> <li>Ineffective policing of bad actors</li> <li>Hate group actors</li> </ul>	<p><b>MORALITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evil, sin, and moral degradation in society</li> </ul> <p><b>THREATS TO SAFETY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School safety</li> <li>Personal/family/safety</li> <li>Most gun deaths are self-inflicted/Suicide</li> <li>Gang violence</li> </ul>
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**WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT IT?**

<p><b>PEOPLE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep firearms from the few bad actors</li> <li>Consider diversity (race, ethnicity, religions) to create inclusive solutions</li> <li>Fortify schools and other public buildings</li> <li>Arm teachers and other professional staff</li> <li>Protect privacy of people who suffer from mental illness</li> </ul>	<p><b>POLICIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect 2nd Amendment rights</li> <li>Reduce access to firearms</li> <li>Enforce current laws</li> <li>Restore the 1994 Federal Assault Weapons Ban</li> <li>Expand "red flag" laws</li> <li>Implement universal background checks</li> <li>Raise the federal age of ownership to 21</li> <li>Close the gun show loophole</li> <li>Ban the sale of high-capacity magazines in the United States and ban bump stocks</li> <li>Expand /Keep/ Lessen existing California laws</li> </ul>	<p><b>RESEARCH/EDUCATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase people's awareness of "red flag" laws</li> <li>Educate police/first responders better about existing laws</li> <li>Expand support for people suffering from mental illness</li> </ul>
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**WHAT'S MISSING? WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS?**

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## Attachment D: Summary of topics of interest to the summit sponsor that did not emerge as themes from the community input forms

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While the major themes that emerged from the community input forms are presented in this report, the Office of Supervisor Cortese identified a list of topics of particular interest. These topics are listed below with a summary of any comments on the topic and all of the relevant quotes about the topic. It is worth noting that some these topics are not on the topic list provided to participants (Attachment C), which may be a reason they did not arise on the input forms. Comments verbally expressed to various county staff and stakeholders at the summit are also included in this portion. Additionally, some of these topics were included as a topic within a theme in the report.

### Suicide

Most comments related to domestic violence fell into other themes in the report. While mental health as a broad topic was mentioned on participants' input forms and noted as a topic of discussion on many of the facilitator notes, there were few input forms with comments specifically mentioning suicide and few facilitator notes noting suicide as a topic of discussion at the table.

Comments from community input forms:

*"Destigmatizing mental health so that people don't migrate or consider suicide/murder."*

*"Close friend lost 22 year old son to death by suicide- his ability to get a gun, go to range and then complete suicide illustrates problem of access."*

*"Anxiety and pressures in kids (age 10/11). It exists! Pressure from social media to succeed. Bullies. The start of adolescence. Suicide rate up. Provide more programs such as clubs in elementary that are organized by kids."*

Comments from facilitator notes:

*"Most agreed that banning gun is not a way to prevent suicide, but treatment [is a way to prevent suicide]. To treat the tool of the problem (i.e. treat mental health) instead of focusing on the means (i.e. gun)."*

*"4 out of 10 members are concerned about youth suicide & access to guns."*

## Domestic Violence

Most comments related to domestic violence fell into the themes of “Access to Firearms” (p.4) and “Gun Purchase Process” (p.11), with participants expressing views about firearm purchasing and ownership for domestic violence perpetrators and victims.

Comments from community input forms:

*“People convicted of domestic violence or have restraining orders against them should not have access to guns.”*

*“I feel that domestic violence after a restraining order is granted could be drastically reduced by allowing (encouraging?) the victim to purchase a firearm without having to wait 10 days. They should also be able to get a concealed carry permit. Maybe the county could fund training classes for the victims so that they can protect themselves safely. If the abuser knows that their victim will be armed then may be more likely to actually be by the restraining order”*

*“Enforcing existing laws that take guns from those convicted of domestic violence”*

*“If military and police have the largest frequency of domestic violence, how do you reconcile their violent nature with the job they are allowed to perform?”*

Comment from facilitator notes:

*“Respectful divergence re: Domestic Violence. -Does it have to get to a conviction/felony for an abuser to be prohibited to purchase/own a gun? (convictions are rare.) – Is there an appeal process for abusers to get access again?”*

## Zoning for Firearms Purchases

The only mention of this topic were related to gun shows.

Comments from community input forms:

*“Eliminate gun fairs, only allow gun purchases through state licensed facilities”*

*“Law abiding citizens are being punished for someone’s uneducated fear of firearms. My rights to self defense are being infringed by denying me access to purchase and sell firearms and ammunition. There is no connection of criminality to the gun show sales at the Fairgrounds.”*

*“Close parking lot sales of guns at gun shows”*

*“Close the gun show loophole so it’s not as easy to get guns”*

## Crime

While “violence” was one of the major and cross-cutting themes identified and outlined in the report, the topic of crime did not arise as much.

Comment from community input forms:

*“In all areas there has been a steady small increase of crime county wide. This could directly be related to Prop 47+57 that deal with early release and sentence reduction. There has also been a general decline in respect for laws. The feeling being if I get caught my sentence will be light if anything at all.”*

Comment from facilitator notes:

*“3 people were for making law changes in regards to burglary (burglary should be a felony)”*

## Ammunition Sales

Comment from community input forms:

*“Ammo Registration. Why? This will affect legal people. Bad actors will still get ammo either by black market or theft. Banning drug did not stop drugs”*

## Gun Amnesty Programs

A constituent approached a county stakeholder stating the need for a program that would allow the relinquishing of a firearm anonymously to the Sheriff’s Office all year-round.

Comment from community input forms:

*“Things Needed: [...] –Safe ‘no questions asked’ surrender (to discourage theft)!”*

## Gender

This topic was not specifically mentioned on any of the community input forms or facilitator notes.

## Sexual Orientation

This topic was not specifically mentioned on any of the community input forms or facilitator notes.