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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Meeting: September 21, 2021

Subject

Consider adopting a resolution establishing a Suicide Prevention Policy

Recommended Action

Adopt Resolution No. ____ establishing a Suicide Prevention Policy

Background

In June 2010, the Santa Clara County Suicide Prevention Advisory Committee presented its Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan. The Committee and Plan were formed as a result of a recommendation from the County Mental Health Department, now known as County Behavioral Health Services, to create a local planning group for the purpose of developing a local suicide prevention plan. The issue of suicide was brought to the forefront of communities' attention in 2009, when four adolescents died by suicide in a less than a six-month period. The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan was adopted by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors in August 2010 and revised in March 2011. The Strategic Plan identifies the following five strategies:

Strategy One - Implement and coordinate suicide prevention and intervention programs and services for targeted high-risk populations

Strategy Two - Implement a community education and information campaign to increase public awareness of suicide and suicide prevention

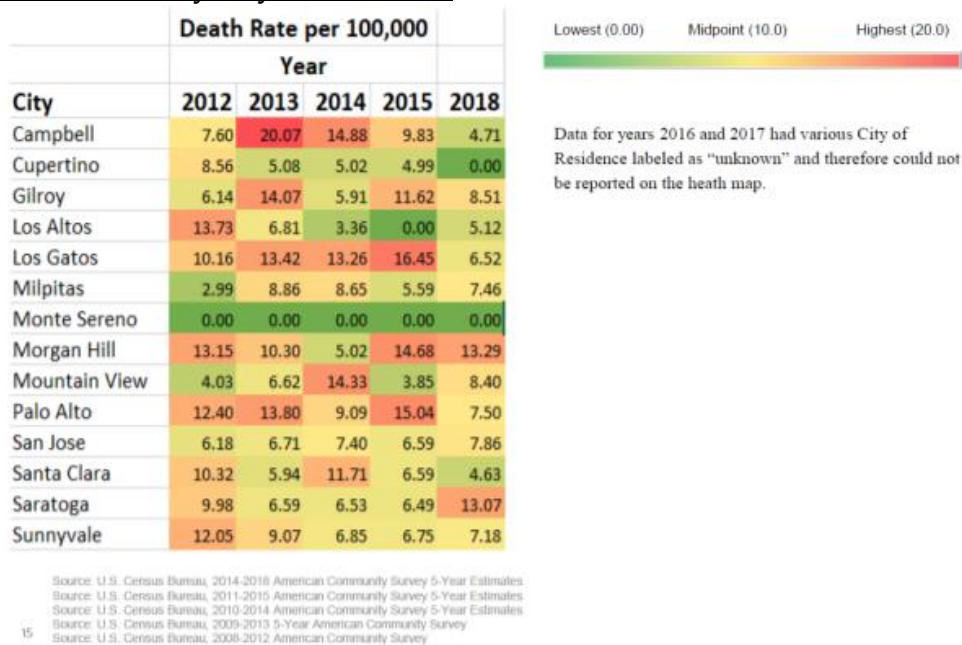
Strategy Three - Develop local communication "best practices" to improve media coverage and public dialogue related to suicide

Strategy Four - Implement policy and governance advocacy to promote systems change in suicide awareness and prevention

Strategy Five - Establish a robust data collection and monitoring system to increase the scope and availability of suicide-related data and to evaluate suicide prevention efforts

Annually, County Behavioral Health Services publishes a Suicide Prevention Annual Report to measure the effectiveness of its Strategic Plan. The most recent annual report includes the following table, which shows that Cupertino's reported suicide rate has been declining since 2012 and in 2018 it had a reported suicide rate of zero per 100,000 residents.

Suicide Rates by City of Residence



By adopting the proposed resolution, the City Council can support the County's Strategic Plan in its vision to prevent death by suicide and create a healthier and safer community.

Discussion

In support of the County's Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan, eight cities in Santa Clara County have adopted Suicide Prevention Policies, including Morgan Hill, Sunnyvale, Milpitas, Palo Alto, Mountain View, Los Gatos, San Jose, and Campbell. The City of Cupertino understands the significance of its role in implementing policy to raise public awareness, promote resources and support mental health care. The City Council is committed to supporting mental health as demonstrated by the Mental Health Support item in the Council-approved FY 2021-2022 City Work Program, as well as in the City's 2021 Legislative Platform which includes support for state and federal legislation that provides services to those experiencing mental health challenges. Drawing upon the best practices and policy models in nearby cities, the attached policy is presented to the City Council for review and consideration.

Under the proposed policy, the City will promote strategies and resources provided by Santa Clara County and directly outreach to City employees and residents. This City policy will also formalize public safety protocols governing the City's response to a suicide attempt in City facilities. Specifically, the policy calls for the following actions:

City Employees

Annually, the City Manager or designee will share with its current employees information that helps staff gain a better understanding of the causes of suicide and learn the appropriate methods for identifying and preventing the loss of life. The Human Resources Division will work with the County's Behavioral Health

Services Suicide Prevention Program to ensure that information shared reflects current research. The City shall provide a copy of this policy to all employees.

City Facilities

The City Manager or designee will develop public safety protocols governing a response to a suicide attempt on City facilities and will ensure that those protocols are reviewed annually. This review of protocols will seek to update internal procedures and address any needed support for employees that may witness such events. The City Manager or designee will further ensure an appropriate communications strategy is in place if a suicide attempt occurs in a City facility. The communication strategy will reflect best practices for reporting on suicide, as provided by the County.

City Residents

The City will link to the [County's Behavioral Health Services webpage¹](#) and actively collaborate with the County to disseminate information including event information and resources as they become available. The City Council will also raise awareness by recognizing National Suicide Prevention Month annually in September and support state and/or federal legislation aimed at increasing awareness and reducing deaths by suicide.

Implementation of this policy will occur through regular communication with the County's Behavioral Health Services. Employees will be provided the following resources to learn more about suicide prevention:

- Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Services – Suicide Prevention & Crisis www.sccbhd.org/suicideprevention
- Santa Clara County Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/bhd/Services/SP/Documents/2018/sp-strategic-plan-rev-03-2011-final.pdf>
- California Mental Health Services Authority <https://calmhsa.org/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Violence Prevention – Suicide <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/index.html>
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services – Office of the Surgeon General <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/suicide-prevention/index.html>
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center <https://www.sprc.org/>
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention <https://afsp.org/>
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255 (800-273-TALK)
- Suicide Prevention Chat Services (www.SuicidePreventionLifeline.org)
- Veterans Crisis Line 800-273-8255, 1, Text: 838255

¹ <https://bhsd.sccgov.org/home>

The existence of several established resources will facilitate implementation of this policy. County Behavioral Health Services agency will be a key partner to assist with the identification of mental health resources and safe messaging practices. City staff will reach out to Behavioral Health Services staff to coordinate a training / education session that can be offered to all City staff. Additionally, the City Council will recognize via a proclamation that September is National Suicide Prevention Month and thus provide a relevant opportunity to launch the City's suicide prevention and education efforts.

Sustainability Impact

No sustainability impact.

Fiscal Impact

This policy will require additional staff time, particularly within the Human Resources Division, to implement the addition of a new policy to review during employee onboardings, as well as the gathering and distribution of suicide prevention information to staff. The City Manager or designee will also require additional time to develop the public safety protocols and communication strategy. These costs can be absorbed by the departmental budgets.

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Katy Nomura, Deputy City Manager

Approved for Submission by: Greg Larson, Interim City Manager

Attachments:

A – Draft Resolution Establishing a Suicide Prevention Policy

B – Santa Clara County Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan