South County Youth Task Force

Project II

THRIVE

Strategic Plan 2023-2026
November 16, 2022

South County Youth Task Force
Gilroy, CA

Dear Gilroy Community Members,

South County Youth Task Force (SCYTF) was established in 2012 as a regional partnership focused on promoting a safe and nurturing community that creates and ensures South County youth and families have sustainable access to positive opportunities, resources, and services and, to empower their voice and support their growth and overall success. As a founding agency, the Gilroy Unified School District has worked to advance SCYTF’s mission as a contributing partner.

The Gilroy Unified School District serves almost 11,000 students in 14 elementary, middle, and high schools. Operating in the southernmost city of Santa Clara County, we recognize that our schools alone cannot make the biggest positive impact with our students and families. It takes true collaboration with our regional community and government partners to promote a community that is safe, flourishing, and free of youth violence, where young people are strong, thriving and connected to their families, schools, and neighborhoods.

South County Youth Task Force has had a focused approach strengthening a coordinated continuum of care services. The COVID-19 pandemic raised many challenges for South County youth, families, and educators, as well as the greater community. These challenges also reaffirmed the need for the SCYTF as a collaboration that unites our South County partners to collectively meet basic life needs, overcome the barriers to youth engagement in school, address mental health needs, and eliminate youth recruitment into gangs and juvenile street violence.

Part of overcoming these challenges is through building community—in our neighborhoods and in our schools. In 2014, SCYTF introduced restorative practices to South County as a means of building strong social connections in our community. I believe that implementation of restorative practices across our schools is a significant way to ensure positive and safe school campuses that can allow for necessary conversations, resource sharing, and most importantly, student learning.

We have crucial work ahead of us, and I am confident that the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan will coalesce resources, systems and positive caring adults around youth and family needs so that youth can achieve lasting success.

The Gilroy Unified School District remains committed to participating as a dedicated partner in the South County Youth Task Force as we meet and overcome the challenges ahead.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Dr. Deborah A. Flores, Ph.D.
Superintendent, Gilroy Unified School District
November 16, 2022

Morgan Hill Community Members,

Supporting children, youth, and their families to thrive at home, in school, and in their community is a collaborative effort – it takes everyone, from schools to parents to local government to community and faith-based organizations to local law enforcement. The South County Youth Task Force understands this and works to unite collaborative partners from a wide spectrum of organizations and agencies.

As Morgan Hill Unified School District’s Superintendent arriving in 2021, I quickly learned of SCYTF’s expansive efforts. The collaborative focuses on providing youth with supportive services and positive socialization opportunities. It works to maintain a continuum of care model meant to link South County youth and their families to essential or important services. The collaborative also offers MHUSD, and other organizations that serve youth and families, valuable community resources and trainings.

SCYTF has been, and continues to be, a leader in advocating to close the gaps in local services by bringing different providers and systems together in times of need, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic and its immediate aftermath, while also unifying them to better serve youth and families.

SCYTF’s has a strong history of championing youth to thrive, and MHUSD has been there to further the work along with its SCYTF Team Members. MHUSD has participated as a contributing partner of the SCYTF since its creation in 2012, and MHUSD participated in the inaugural strategic plan of 2013-2016 and the subsequent strategic plan update of 2017 to 2022.

With the 2023-2026 Project II THRIVE Strategic Plan, I look forward to working collectively with our partners to cultivate more safe places for youth to recreate and continue learning after school and during the weekend. We will keep improving our neighborhoods by engaging community members. And, what better way to improve our partnerships between the community members and the schools and local government that serves them than with activities and events that celebrate dialog and foster trust.

We have critical work ahead of us! MHUSD remains committed to being a dedicated SCYTF partner as we move into this next important chapter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carmen Garcia
Superintendent of Morgan Hill Unified School District
November 16, 2022

South County Youth Task Force
Gilroy, CA

Dear Friends,

It has been my pleasure to have served as the Chair of the South County Youth Task Force (SCYTF). Since its beginning, the SCYTF partnership has fostered a collaboration among agencies, organizations, and communities. Through collaboration, SCYTF pursues its purpose to connect youth with their families, schools, and community, while also empowering the voice of youth and families.

As I reflect on our collaborative journey, I can vividly remember discussing the Task Force as an idea back in 2011 with City of Gilroy and City of Morgan Hill leaders, the Superintendents of Morgan Hill Unified School District and Gilroy Unified School District, Community Solutions, and County representatives. They sought to curb gang membership while growing services and supports for youth and families. “We cannot arrest our way out of this problem,” stated former Gilroy Chief Denise Turner, “we need funding, we need more activities for our youth.”

In the same year, Morgan Hill Police Department’s Chief Shane Palsgrove, who was a Police Captain then, helped write the first SCYTF grant draft to California’s State Board of Community and Corrections’ (BSCC) California Gang, Intervention, Reduction and Prevention Program (CalGRIP). Through that grant we sought-out community input to create our first community assessment and collaborative strategic plan focusing on service delivery, education and public awareness, intervention and crisis response services. It gives me great joy and pride to see the Task Force grow into a robust Technical Team with many community-based partners and South County residents, and to hear the many reports of action-driven committees making a difference, working to respond to and anticipate community needs.

Over the years, SCYTF supported thousands of youth and families. The collaboration provided training to hundreds of educators, local community and government agencies in evidence-based, community-centered, and culturally responsive practices and programs. And, importantly, it provided positive alternatives and meaningful opportunities for youth and families to develop leadership, voice, and agency in our community.

Now, ten years later, and with SCYTF embarking on its third Strategic Plan, I remain committed to the SCYTF as we address the challenges ahead. I proudly pass my Policy Team seat to the incoming Supervisor for District 1, and I look forward to hearing of great things from this collaboration.

Sincerely,

Mike Wasserman
Supervisor
President, Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
Chair, South County Youth Task Force
There is no more precious resource than our children – a critical statement of value that guides the work of the South County Task Force’s public agency and community members, who have “committed to serving, supporting, and uplifting our youth so that they have the opportunity to thrive.”

Working in youth intervention and child development before entering public services, I’ve seen firsthand the challenges that families in our community face every day. Additionally, I have personal experience with childhood poverty, and come from a farm worker family. I plan to bring that experience and voice to this work, while trusting those we serve to tell us what their needs are.

The South County Youth Task Force’s 2023-2026 Strategic Plan is grounded in the voice and experience of the most vulnerable children and families in our community. I applaud the immense work of the Task Force, community leaders, and local residents in ensuring that this document uplifts the voices of our young people.

As established in the Task Force’s 2nd Guiding Principle: “We empower youth, parents, and families with meaningful engagement, contribution, and leadership opportunities in an effort to build trust, develop healthy relationships, and increase capacity to create a thriving community.”

Historically, our systems have failed our children and youth. Adopting this strategic plan provides each participating agency the opportunity to join a coordinated effort to fight a history of injustice and institutional racism that has for too long been an obstacle to the success of our young people.

Each agency must work to put this plan into practice internally, while coordinating this effort collaboratively.

I look forward to this important work ahead!

Sincerely,

Sylvia Arenas
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, District 1
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Message From Our Community Leaders

- Rosy, Mom & Promotora

- Jonathan, South County Youth

- Amalia, Mother of child with special needs

- Jesse, Morgan Hill Youth

- Daniel, Morgan Hill Youth

- Edit L. Nueva Vida/Gilroy Community Leader
The South County Youth Task Force (SCYTF) is a regional collaboration of local governments, school districts, community and faith-based organizations, community members, and law enforcement agencies in South Santa Clara County who are committed to serving, supporting, and uplifting our youth so that they have the opportunity to thrive. SCYTF strives to fulfill the collaborative’s Mission and Vision:

**Mission:** To promote a safe and nurturing community that creates and ensures sustainable access to opportunities, resources, and services for South County youth and their families, while empowering their voice and supporting their growth and success.

**Vision:** A community that is safe and free of youth violence where young people are strong, thriving and connected to their families, schools, and neighborhoods.

Five Guiding Principles describe the values and beliefs that frame how SCYTF pursues its Mission and Vision. The principles highlight that SCYTF supports youth to promote their well-being, uplift them, and encourage them to reach their full potential. (Guiding Principle 1.) SCYTF empowers youth, parents, and families to build trust, develop healthy relationships, and increase capacity to create a thriving community. (Guiding Principle 2.) SCYTF members strive to work collaboratively through a multi-disciplinary lens. (Guiding Principle 3.) SCYTF creates, improves, and reimagines systems that support youth, and while doing so, SCYTF members also improve their own interactions among one another at the community, organizational, and governmental levels. (Guiding Principle 4.) Acknowledging historical and present-day inequities, SCYTF works to reduce and eliminate disproportionalities in our community and its institutions that negatively affect youth of color. (Guiding Principle 5.) For the complete Guiding Principles, see page 23.

Since its inception in 2012, SCYTF has developed and carried out an inaugural Strategic Plan and an update, which built upon each other as the collaborative grew and the needs of the South County community changed. In the last few years, our community and the world has undergone significant challenges and changes, including those as a result of a mass shooting in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic that started in 2020. In this context, SCYTF embarked on creating a new Strategic Plan to transition the collaborative into this new phase and our new shared reality.
South County Youth Task Force

The SCYTF Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2026, entitled Project II THRIVE, continues to realize the core Mission and Vision of the collaboration through a plan that responds to and anticipates the challenges and opportunities of today, tomorrow, and the future. Central to the Strategic Plan’s development was a comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement process. Using restorative “listening circles” – a common practice within SCYTF – a wide spectrum of South County community members and stakeholders uplifted their needs, concerns, hopes, and goals, which provided invaluable voice to this Strategic Plan. Across the listening circles, multiple topics consistently emerged.

In pursuit of the Mission and Vision, and framed by the Guiding Principles, the 2023-2026 Strategic Goals for Project II THRIVE include the following:

**GOAL 1: ACCESSIBLE AFTER-SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES AND SAFE PLACES FOR YOUTH**
Provide safe places for youth to gather and make positive connections with peers and caring adults. Provide leadership and development activities that are pro-social, diverse, inclusive, and gender responsive. (Four Objectives accomplish Goal 1.)

**GOAL 2: SUPPORT FOR YOUTH THROUGH LOCAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS**
Support youth and their families through the development of a collaborative network of services coordinated with local education systems and the communities they serve.
(Five Objectives accomplish Goal 2.)

**GOAL 3: COMMUNITY SAFETY, ENGAGEMENT, AND EMPOWERMENT**
Changing and improving neighborhoods is a partnership between the communities that live there and the local government that serves them. Engage and empower neighborhoods disproportionately affected by crime, blight, poverty, and distress so they can advocate for themselves with local leaders and law enforcement, and actively participate in making positive changes in their community. (Five Objectives accomplish Goal 3.)

**GOAL 4: SCYTF GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE**
Re-connect the Policy Team to its Mission, Vision, and Objectives as delineated in the SCYTF Charter. Narrow the Policy Team’s annual focus to maximize its efforts and outcomes and make improvements to its meeting agendas that can revitalize its function as a policy driven entity. (Three Objectives accomplish Goal 4.)

**GOAL 5: FUNDING AND SERVICES SUSTAINABILITY**
Pursue on-going funding to maintain SCYTF current and basic service levels. Measure program or community indicators that provide data to convey needs and articulate the contributions and successes of the SCYTF, which is needed to pursue additional funding opportunities. (Four Objectives accomplish Goal 5.)

For a list of the Goals and their Objectives, see page 21-25. SCYTF will achieve these Goals and their Objectives through a separate Strategic Workplan that will detail specific steps the Policy Team, Technical Team and committees will take from 2023 to 2026.
Introduction

The South County Youth Task Force (SCYTF) strives to support and empower South Santa Clara County’s youth, families, and communities. The SCYTF’s Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2026, Project II THRIVE continues to fulfill the core Mission and Vision of the regional collaboration through a plan that responds to and anticipates the challenges and opportunities of today, tomorrow, and the future.

### Mission

To promote a safe and nurturing community that creates and ensures sustainable access to opportunities, resources, and services for South County youth and their families, while empowering their voice and supporting their growth and success.

### Vision

A community that is safe and free of youth violence where young people are strong, thriving and connected to their families, schools, and neighborhoods.

SCYTF developed and carried out a community assessment in 2012 and held large community forums to gather community feedback for its original Strategic Plan in 2013. The inaugural Strategic Plan created a Continuum of Care model that sought positive, culturally responsive, and evidence-based interventions and support for youth and their families locally, within the South County region. In preparation of the 2017 plan update, SCYTF took inventory of programming offered, changing needs of the community and programming gaps in South County. The Strategic Plan update of 2017 used the Continuum of Care model and merged it with “Project THRIVE” – Transformation, Hope, Resilience, Integrity, Voice, and Engagement – which moved from SCYTF’s inception of second and third-tier intervention supports and gang-suppression model into an expanded focus of building personal skill sets, community advocacy, and leadership traits. Project THRIVE broadened its focus to include prevention and earlier interventions that inspire personal and community Transformation and encourage Hope, support Resiliency and Integrity and give more room and power to Voice and community Engagement.
In recent years, SCYTF has witnessed significant changes and developments in South County, but the region’s communities continue to experience violence, poverty, and distress. More recently, South County has shown its resilience in the wake of two traumatic events, a local mass shooting and the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic. These events required SCYTF to respond to the current and pressing needs of South County youth and families, however the ripple effects of the events still continue to be felt by both youth and adults.

The Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2026, Project II THRIVE, transitions SCYTF from its prior plans to its next phase as it is informed and shaped by community and stakeholder voice and evolving current needs. During March and April 2022, the SCYTF Strategic Plan Committee and its volunteers held 30 listening Circles with over 350 South County community members. Youth, adults, parents, local residents, students and educators, and many others, uplifted their issues and concerns as well as their hopes and goals for South County. What emerged from their powerful voices were common themes that appeared throughout the many listening circles.

Those themes shaped the Five Strategic Goals and Objectives of the Strategic Plan for 2023-2026. The Strategic Goals and Objectives focus on safe spaces for youth, support for youth through education systems, community safety and empowerment, SCYTF governance, and funding and service sustainability. These Goals and Objectives provide the high-level markers that will steer a Strategic Workplan. The Workplan, which the Strategic Plan Committee will craft, will enumerate the specific steps and outcomes needed to fulfill the Goals and Objectives.

With this Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2026, and through its defining collaborative efforts and passion for youth, families, and community, SCYTF will advance its Mission and Vision for a South County that THRIVES!
South County Youth Task Force

The SCYTF is a volunteer-based, non-political body in South County that encourages information and resource sharing, advances evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies, and unites South County involved entities towards empowering the community’s youth.

The SCYTF is a collaboration of local governments, school districts, community and faith-based organizations, community members, and law enforcement agencies in South County who are committed to serving, supporting, and uplifting our youth so that they have the opportunity to thrive.

The SCYTF seeks to increase the community’s access to services, support, and activities that promote the educational, social, and physical well-being of all South County youth and their families. The SCYTF provides a forum for information sharing and collaboration and acts as an advisory body for grants submitted by the City of Gilroy on behalf of the SCYTF. Acknowledging the role of historical and present-day inequities, the SCYTF also works to reduce and eliminate disproportionalities in our community and its institutions that negatively affect youth of color.

The SCYTF is organized into the Policy Team, the Technical Team, and working Committees. The Policy Team provides leadership and policy direction, generates and approves the collaborative’s Strategic Plan, evaluates emerging trends, and evaluates and monitors the Technical Team. The Technical Team elevates issues to and carries out the direction set by the Policy Team, uplifts and responds to issues and trends from youth, families, and community, and implements the Strategic Plan through tangible work plan strategies and actions. SCYTF Committees focus on specific goals and issues and are composed of Policy Team and Technical Team Members. All SCYTF members are united through a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines guiding principles and agreements.
South County Youth Task Force

Since 2012, SCYTF has had significant developments and successes. Some notable achievements include the following:

- Forming a regional collaboration in South County,
- Creating a SCYTF Policy Team and Technical Team,
- Uniting members around a single mission and vision to help youth thrive,
- Conducting a local assessment of South County community issues (2012-2013, 2017, and 2022),
- Seeking-out and implementing proven, evidence-based and culturally responsive approaches to violence prevention and positive youth development,
- Establishing relationships with organizations under a collaborative funding structure to further the SCYTF Mission,
- Applying for and receiving significant grants, including California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention (CalGRIP) grant and California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) grant,
- Receiving funding from the Santa Clara County General Fund and member contributions,
- Engaging community and stakeholders to create the 2013 Strategic Plan,
- Engaging community and stakeholders to create a 2017-2020 Strategic Plan Update,
- Establishing a formal Memorandum of Understanding for Policy Team members,
- Generating systems and protocols, and
- Serving over 13,000 unduplicated youth and community members in South County.
Background

The SCYTF Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles (SCYTF’s values and beliefs), and Strategic Plan, along with the Charter, steer the collaborative’s efforts. Every three to five years, the Policy Team reexamines its Guiding Principles and updates the Strategic Plan to ensure that the collective responds to and anticipates the challenges and needs of South County’s youth, families, and community. SCYTF has had a prior Strategic Plan in 2012, which was then updated in 2017.

Prior to 2011, South County experienced a growing presence of gangs and gang activity that affected families, schools, and community. In 2011, and in response to these gang movements, a small non-profit, Gilroy’s Drug and Alcohol Prevention Council, evolved into the Gilroy Gang Task Force. Due to the alarming growth and predominance of gangs, the Gilroy Gang Task Force initiated steps to form a regional, South County collaborative for which the City of Gilroy served as the backbone. This collaborative included local government (including County of Santa Clara, City of Gilroy, City of Morgan Hill and unincorporated Town of San Martin), school districts, and community and faith-based organizations. The group’s primary goal was to disrupt the cycle of generational gang involvement and to dissuade at-risk and gang involved youth from the gang lifestyle through prevention and intervention services. The group also began advocating for grants and funding to grow local efforts.

In 2011, the collaborative met and began a strategic planning process and grant-writing efforts, which led to its inaugural Strategic Plan in 2013, a plan that formalized the group as the South County Youth Task Force, a multi-agency organization with a sustained commitment of coming together in the best interest of South County’s youth and their families. Under the leadership and support of the SCYTF membership, the plan united the collective missions of the individual members around a single mission, vision, and set of common goals to positively influence the lives of South County youth and re-connect them to their families, schools, and communities.
After its formalization and in furtherance of the inaugural Strategic Plan, the SCYTF utilized the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention (CalGRIP) Program and other leveraged funding and resources to establish a local, community-based “Continuum of Care” model – a comprehensive service delivery model that began to develop new capacities and confidence for positive, culturally-responsive and evidence-based interventions and support for youth and their families.

Then, in 2016 SCYTF met with community and gathered more feedback to narrow and further the direction of the SCYTF. In the Fall of 2017, the SCYTF adopted and updated the SCYTF Strategic Plan update, titled THRIVE – Transformation, Hope, Resiliency, Integrity, Voice, and Engagement – to serve as the blueprint for SCYTF’s work for the next three to five years. THRIVE built on the foundation established by the successful efforts of the 2013 inaugural plan and moved towards individual and community transformation. Utilizing new grant funding from the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Program and matching funding from contributing members, the Task Force launched “Project THRIVE.”

Project THRIVE focused on expanding community knowledge in violence prevention strategies and efforts, connecting families who felt marginalized to larger collaborative existing efforts, and enhancing the relationships and communication between those who felt marginalized and the local public servants and law enforcement stakeholders who serve them. The ultimate objective was to develop a greater confidence of the community (residents and local public servants) and its youth to be connected, empowered, vocal, and part of their community’s solutions.
Between 2019 and 2022, significant and traumatizing events stunned South County. In 2019, South County suffered a mass shooting at the nationally recognized but local event, the Gilroy Garlic Festival. The shooting affected not only those who were killed, or injured, or the thousands that were there, but countless others including the larger South County community who love this local festival. Task Force members immediately mobilized to assist the victims and their families, open community safe spaces, and lead healing circles and activities.

As the community began the slow road to recovery, South County, along with the world, was inundated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the deadly virus. People struggled to stay employed, remain engaged in school, and keep family and social bonds. Previous ways of life were upended. Distance learning, for example, replaced in-school instruction and strained students, families, and educators. Ultimately, the pandemic exacerbated previously existing inequities and challenges for South County communities that already were affected by crime, poverty, and other distress.

Also, during the time of this pandemic, significant racial tensions could be felt throughout the nation, including locally in South County. The murder of George Floyd was a catalyst that thrust issues of race and equity into a national spotlight. This movement generated conversations about leadership in racial equity, and SCYTF was able to hold and facilitate those meaningful conversations through trained consultants.

During this time marked by significant, traumatic events, the needs of South County changed. The Task Force membership and Project THRIVE worked alongside community to continue to address the known gaps within the Continuum of Care services while simultaneously discovering new ones that needed to be immediately addressed. Rebuilding community confidence and relationships appeared differently because during this time it took the form of unprecedented efforts to meet current community needs like new food distribution sites, digital platform tutorials for parents during distance learning, Chromebook distributions, and COVID-19 testing sites. Attempts to help residents work through compounded trauma and foster a new sense of security also looked differently than originally envisioned in prior years. Service providers, educators, local governments, families and youth all encountered the common stressors of traumatic violence and the pandemic collectively and simultaneously.

As South County emerges from these traumatic events and others, new challenges, needs, and opportunities revealed themes that sculpted the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan Project II THRIVE.
In early 2021, SCYTF and its Strategic Plan Committee began the process of developing the foundational work for the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. The Committee was composed of a spectrum of SCYTF organizations and agencies that shared trends, experiences, and information about South County occurrences, strengths and needs, as well as collected and reviewed relevant data.

Central to the Strategic Plan’s development was a comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement process that occurred from the winter of 2021 to spring of 2022. By sifting through the rich and thorough community and stakeholder input, the Committee identified key themes that naturally emerged, which would later be used to inform and craft the Strategic Goals and Objectives.

Engaging Community and Stakeholders

A comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement process was crucial to the development of this Strategic Plan. Community and stakeholder input on needs, concerns, hopes, and goals provided invaluable voice to this Strategic Plan. That voice determined whether the SCYTF has achieved prior Strategic Plan goals and objectives, what still needs to be accomplished, and what new priorities will direct the group.
The Strategic Plan Committee engaged community and stakeholders to:

- Gather input and perspectives on the current strengths and weaknesses of the SCYTF,
- Assess the effectiveness of its programs and services,
- Identify key issues impacting South County communities today and into the future, and
- Identify key strategic themes for the Task Force to focus on in the next several years.

Due to the pandemic, the stakeholder engagement process was modified to adapt to the current restrictions. In the past, the strategic plan community engagement process consisted of five to seven large community meetings covering South County. However, to abide by County health and safety protocols, multiple smaller sessions were conducted in live and virtual settings and where appropriate, augmented by SCYTF stakeholder surveys.

For live sessions, participants were divided into smaller “listening circle” groups consisting of approximately five participants per group. Virtual sessions used Zoom breakout rooms to divide the participants into smaller listening circles as well. For both in person and virtual breakout rooms, listening circles often lasted 90 minutes. The design of this engagement processes allowed for greater engagement and dialogue by the participants and provided an environment that resulted in open, candid, and robust discussion by all participants.

Engaging community through listening circles was imperative as they followed a format guided by Restorative Justice principles, which had previously been woven into South County. In 2014, and as part of the CalGRIP grant, SCYTF annually began bringing Restorative Justice instructors to train organizations and stakeholders in restorative practices and how to utilize Restorative Justice in communities and schools. Therefore, it was essential to hold listening circles that followed the restorative paradigms to listen to community in safe and caring spaces.
Prior to holding these listening circles, SCYTF held trainings for Committee members and volunteers on how to facilitate a listening circle that created a space for open and candid dialogue. The trainings identified the roles and responsibilities of the facilitator and scribe, techniques for creating productive circles as well as the agreements abided by circle participants. The listening circles, held in person or remotely, typically would have about five participants, in addition to the facilitator and scribe. The facilitator would open the circle with a community-building question to build buy-in. The facilitator would also tailor the circle agreements to the particular circle and explain the talking piece and its role for in-person circles. Then, the facilitator would prompt the circle participants with pre-set, non-leading question rounds. The talking piece ensured everyone had time to share their voice with the listening of others while the scribe would note answers anonymously on a chart or a digital document shown on the screen for the virtual circles – no names were recorded.

The Committee conducted significant outreach to engage a wide spectrum of community members. Community members included youth, adults, local residents, students and educators at South County schools, youth program participants, neighborhoods supported by SCYTF efforts, and general community members.

With the multifaceted and ever-evolving challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, compounded by the rigors of daily life, community members could find it difficult to dedicate time and space to participate in the listening circles. The Committee, therefore, engaged community at times and places that sought to accommodate their schedules, including in the evenings, during existing programs, and in locations where they worked, attended school, or met.
In March and April 2022, SCYTF team members held 30 circles that received input from 367 community members and stakeholders. Circles occurred in English, Spanish, or both. Ages of participants ranged from children as young as six years old to adults. Local schools, youth groups, community groups, and general community members, to list a few, provided input.

Given the limitations imposed by COVID-19, the Strategic Plan Committee sought to obtain the input from as many community members and stakeholders as possible. A comparison to the prior Strategic Plan community engagement process highlights the similarities. For the 2017 Strategic Plan update, the entire process included the participation of approximately 300 members of the community, policy makers and stakeholders from South County. SCYTF held four community forums, two in Morgan Hill and two in Gilroy. The engagement process for the 2013 Strategic Plan was very similar to that of the 2017 engagement process.

A significant difference between prior community engagement processes and the current one included the number of forums or listening circles that occurred as a result of limitations on large gatherings because of COVID-19. Holding smaller listening circles of 5 to 6 participants, however, did not limit the quantity or quality of information; rather, there was significantly more information to process. Over multiple weeks, Strategic Plan Committee members aggregated the mass of data and synthesized the input into common topics.
The following topics consistently arose during the listening circles:

- Accessible After-School Opportunities and Safe Places for Youth
- Support for Local Schools
- Family Support Services
- Local Government Services and Amenities
- Funding and Sustainability of Programs and Services
- Pro-Social Youth Activities
- Youth Prevention and Intervention
- Mental Health and Drug Prevention Education
- School/Tech Team Coordination
- Parent Engagement
- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Community Safety
- Tech Team Priorities and Focus
- Future of SCYTF Governance and Structure
- Support for Youth Through Local Education Systems – Assistance for Local Educators

The Five Key Themes

From these common topics, five key themes emerged, which represent a synthesized summary of all community and stakeholder input. The following key themes emerged:

1. After-School Opportunities and Safe Places for Youth
2. Support for Youth Through Local Education Systems
3. Community Engagement and Safety
4. Future of SCYTF Governance and Structure
5. Data Performance Measurement and Sustainability
Youth receive important support through local education systems. As a result, community and service providers should re-think the service “Safety Net” to coordinate with local schools and provide comprehensive services that get youth back in school, help engage them when they are present, and provide positive connections and outlets. These services and activities should support and complement the efforts of educators – administrators, teachers, and counselors.

The mental health crisis affecting youth in our community must be addressed. While services are available, primary needs must focus on promoting mental health awareness and education. Often, there is a perceived stigma around mental health which is compounded by accessibility barriers, such as a person’s language, culture, or location.

Basic needs of youth and their families continue to be a concern. Many of the youth and families served by SCYTF live in poverty. While support and services may be available, the connections to the families or “pathways” must be improved. Improved outreach and education about the supports and services can provide meaningful gains in meeting basic needs.
Community Engagement and Safety

Positively improving neighborhoods occurs through partnership between the communities that live there and the local governments that serve them. This partnership occurs when there are opportunities for community to learn about their government and representatives while also developing community confidence and voice. Partnership includes dialogue that occurs through safe spaces and intentional opportunities for communication between community and local government, including law enforcement. Local government must engage underrepresented communities when providing meaningful, intentional, and targeted opportunities to learn, develop confidence, and opportunities for dialogue. Then, there must be an agreement for shared power, vulnerable conversation, and genuine problem-solving as an end goal for this learning, confidence, and dialogue.

Community safety continues to be a priority and concern. There is an ongoing emergence and existence of gang activity, and vigilance is required to address it. The presence and accessibility of drugs is on the rise in the community and schools with a frightening uptick of fentanyl use. Community shared how firearms are increasingly present in the community, and there is a call for actions and incentives to get guns off the streets. They repeatedly shared how positive police presences can enhance safety in the community and schools.

Future of SCYTF Governance and Structure

SCYTF shifted towards responding to new youth and community needs that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, this was important and necessary work as the Task Force occupied an important position to meet and address these needs. As communities adjust to a new normal, SCYTF should reconnect to its Mission and Vision. Parallel to this, SCYTF must revitalize the Policy Team’s function as a policy-driven entity that engages in substantive policy discussions and examines key issues and trends that require decisions and actions. Moreover, SCYTF should narrow its annual focus of specific activities, efforts, and outcomes to the core mission of SCYTF. This narrowed focus can be accomplished through improved agendas. Agendas should align to (1) an annual work plan or calendar, (2) the Policy Team’s (or the Strategic Plan’s) adopted goals, objectives, and strategies, and (3) monitoring the work in progress of the Technical Team.

Data Performance Measurement and Sustainability

SCYTF needs on-going and new funding opportunities to continue its success. When pursuing funding opportunities, SCYTF must quantify and articulate its advancements and successes. Quantifying successes will require a capacity to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data related to programmatic and community indicators that the Policy Team chooses to evaluate. Moving forward, SCYTF should focus services on identified areas of mutual impact and incorporate community indicators that can be measured.
Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles

SCYTF members strive to fulfill the collaboration’s Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles.

Through the Charter, the Policy Team reaffirmed its commitment to the SCYTF Mission and Vision, modifying the Mission statement only slightly. In 2020 and 2021, the Charter Committee, with representation from a diverse spectrum of SCYTF member agencies, drafted the SCYTF Charter, which outlines the Policy Team, Technical Team, and Committees, including their objectives and membership. In May 2021, the Policy Team adopted the initial Charter. The Policy Team subsequently amended it in September 2021, and the amended version included modifications to the Mission statement. The Vision statement remained unchanged.

The Guiding Principles highlight SCYTF’s values and beliefs, and they frame the work of the SCYTF. The Strategic Plan Committee generated updated Guiding Principles, which the Policy Team adopted. The Committee first reviewed the guiding principles from the prior Strategic Plan and its update. They examined what principles and ideas were still relevant, what needed to be updated, and what was missing. Through this examination and discussion, the Committee drafted the updated Guiding Principles.

In June 2022, the Policy Team adopted the Mission, Vision, and the updated Guiding Principles.

**Mission:** To promote a safe and nurturing community that creates and ensures sustainable access to opportunities, resources, and services for South County youth and their families, while empowering their voice and supporting their growth and success.

**Vision:** A community that is safe and free of youth violence where young people are strong, thriving and connected to their families, schools, and neighborhoods.
South County Youth Task Force

**Guiding Principle 1:** We support youth, as they are – physically, mentally, and emotionally – to promote their well-being, uplift them, and encourage them to reach their full potential. We strive to: (1) Offer services that are relevant and accessible, (2) Provide opportunities to connect and contribute to one another and the community, and (3) Challenge them with high expectation to be their best so that they can excel and thrive.

**Guiding Principle 2:** We empower youth, parents, and families with meaningful engagement, contribution, and leadership opportunities in an effort to build trust, develop healthy relationships, and increase capacity to create a thriving community.

**Guiding Principle 3:** We strive to work collaboratively and through a multi-disciplinary lens, which is critical for our work of promoting restorative and positive behaviors, intervening in the lives of youth, and transforming the community so that it fosters, uplifts, and empowers youth voice.

**Guiding Principle 4:** We create, improve, and reimagine systems that support youth's well-being, voice, and leadership roles in the community. When doing so, we are also committed to improving our personal, family, and community well-being, including our interactions among one another at all community, organizational, and governmental levels.

**Guiding Principle 5:** We acknowledge the role of historical and present-day inequities. We work to reduce and eliminate disproportionalities in our community and its institutions that negatively affect youth of color. We strive to serve all youth, parents, and families through equitably accessible services, spaces, and opportunities.
Strategic Goals and Objectives

Using the lens of the Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles with the themes that emerged from the community and stakeholder voice, this Strategic Plan outlines Five Goals and Objectives that focus on safe spaces for youth, support for youth through education systems, community safety, SCYTF governance, and sustainability. While these Five Goals do not address the root causes to all South County’s challenges, the Goals seek to make meaningful progress to address issues through collective efforts that support youth, families, and community.

WITH THESE FIVE GOALS, SCYTF IS GUIDED BY COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER VOICE AS IT STRIVES TO MEET THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF TODAY, TOMORROW, AND THE FUTURE.
GOAL 1: Accessible Afterschool Opportunities and Safe Places for Youth

Provide safe places for youth to gather and make positive connections with peers and caring adults. Provide leadership and development activities that are pro-social, diverse, inclusive, and gender responsive.

1. **Pro-Social Opportunities**
   Objective 1: Expand, increase, and diversify pro-social and recreational opportunities for youth that are free/low-cost.

2. **Youth Input**
   Objective 2: Include diverse youth input in program development.

3. **Outreach to Youth**
   Objective 3: Improve outreach to youth about program offerings.

4. **Safe Places**
   Objective 4: Assess, create, and provide greater access to physical safe places for youth in existing and/or new facilities.
GOAL 2: Support Youth Through Local Education Systems

Support youth and their families through the development of a collaborative network of services coordinated with local education systems and the communities they serve.

1. Youth in School
   Objective 1: Assist youth and their families with overcoming barriers to school engagement by partnering with education systems to provide full access to education and services.

2. Provide Services and Connect
   Objective 2: Provide services and support systems to connect or re-connect youth to their schools, teachers, friends, families, and communities.

3. Mental Health Awareness
   Objective 3: Support youth and families with mental health awareness, education, and access.

4. Ensure Access to Basic Needs
   Objective 4: Support and enhance pathways for youth and families to access basic needs.

5. Equitable Services Across Communities
   Objective 5: Facilitate and lead conversations with partners and schools about prevention and intervention activities to ensure equitable services across communities.
GOAL 3: Community Safety, Engagement, and Empowerment

Engage and empower neighborhoods disproportionately affected by crime, blight, poverty, and distress so they can advocate for themselves with local leaders and law enforcement, and actively participate in making positive changes in their community.

1. **Open Dialogue**
   Objective 1: Create spaces and opportunities for positive engagement and dialogue between community and the local government that serves them, including administration and elected officials.

2. **Positive Relationships**
   Objective 2: Foster restorative and positive relationships between communities and law enforcement to open dialogue and collaboration to create safer neighborhoods.

3. **Create Opportunities**
   Objective 3: Create opportunities for community building, cohesion, and inclusivity through events and activities that celebrate neighborhood richness, identities, and cultures.

4. **Offer Preventative Services**
   Objective 4: Engage communities, schools, youth, parents/caregivers, and families and other stakeholders to design and offer prevention and intervention services, activities, and events that support the reduction of crime, including but not limited to offenses related to illegal drugs, firearms, and gang activity.

5. **Ensure Access to Basic Needs**
   Objective 5: Make efforts to promote the well-being of South County communities and support their ability to meet basic needs, reduce blight, eliminate poverty, and overcome distress.
GOAL 4: SCYTF Governance and Structure

Re-connect the Policy Team to its Mission, Vision, and Objectives as delineated in the SCYTF Charter. Narrow the Policy Team’s annual focus to maximize its efforts and outcomes and make improvements to its meeting agendas that can revitalize its function as a policy driven entity.

01. Develop Workplan

Objective 1: Annually, develop a Policy Team calendar or work plan that furthers the SCYTF Mission, Vision, Charter Objectives, and 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

02. Align to Plan

Objective 2: Align Policy Team meeting agendas to the annual calendar or work plan.

03. Provide Direction

Objective 3: Provide direction to the Technical Team, support and monitor their work, and respond to trends and challenges elevated by the Technical Team that can be addressed and acted upon at the Policy Team level.
GOAL 5: Funding and Service Sustainability.

Pursue on-going funding to maintain SCYTF current and basic service levels. Measure program or community indicators that provide data to convey needs and articulate the contributions and successes of the SCYTF, which is needed to pursue additional funding opportunities.

1. **Pursue Funding**
   Objective 1: Pursue and maintain funding opportunities for SCYTF programs and services.

2. **Build Capacity**
   Objective 2: Build SCYTF capacity to gather, share, and analyze relevant and identified data that is used to direct SCYTF resources.

3. **Community Outcomes**
   Objective 3: Identify community outcome indicators, and then gather, share, and analyze relevant and identified data to support SCYTF strategic decisions and placement of resources.

4. **Dedicated Staff**
   Objective 4: Obtain dedicated SCYTF staff to support with the management and analysis of SCYTF data.
Strategic Workplan

SCYTF will achieve the Strategic Goals and their Objectives through a separate Strategic Workplan. The goal of the Workplan is to transform the needs of the South County community into specific steps, milestones, strategies and actions that the Policy and Technical Teams and various committees will focus on between 2023 to 2026. This workplan will ground our collective focus and direction while allowing the Task Force to quantify and measure results, identify gaps and needs for more services and resources, and capture success.

The SCYTF committees will stay rooted in community as they gather and generate input for the Workplan, which will be approved by the Policy Team.
South County Youth Task Force

Acknowledgements: Policy Team

We are grateful to the following individuals and their respective organizations. Their time, expertise, and commitment to the development of the 2023-2026 Project II THRIVE Strategic Plan and to the larger South County Youth Task Force is invaluable.

SCYTF Policy Team Members

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<td>Aguirre, Javier</td>
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# Acknowledgements: Policy Team

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**Acknowledgements: Technical Team**

We are grateful to the following individuals and their respective organizations. Their time, expertise, and commitment to the development of the 2023-2026 Project II THRIVE Strategic Plan and to the larger South County Youth Task Force is invaluable.

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<td>Torres, Mike</td>
<td>Prevention Program Analyst</td>
<td>Santa Clara County Behavioral Health</td>
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<td>Tucker, Jennie</td>
<td>Recreation Manager</td>
<td>City of Morgan Hill</td>
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<td>Weller, Nicole</td>
<td>Opportunity Youth Partnership Project Coordinator</td>
<td>Planned Parenthood Mar Monte</td>
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<td>Wexler, Michelle</td>
<td>Program Manager II</td>
<td>Santa Clara County Public Health Department</td>
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<td>Wolfe, Barbara</td>
<td>Public Defender South County</td>
<td>Santa Clara County Public Defender's Office</td>
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<td>Wong, Cassandra</td>
<td>Community Librarian</td>
<td>Santa Clara County Library District</td>
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<td>Young, Kelly Brennan</td>
<td>Supervising Librarian of Adult and Teen Services</td>
<td>Santa Clara County Library District</td>
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We want to extend our deepest gratitude to the community members and parents that gave of their time and actively participated in the Listening Circles. The below mentioned community-based agencies and community members opened their doors and allowed us to hold Listening Circles during their programming and communal circle time.

- Boys and Girls Club of Silicon Valley
- Carry The Vision
- City of Gilroy
- City of Morgan Hill
- Community Agency For Resources, Advocacy and Services
- Community Solutions
- Department of Family & Children’s Services
- Empowering Our Community for Success
- Gilroy Library
- Gilroy Police Department
- Gilroy Unified School District
- Gilroy Youth Center After School Program
- Living Above The Influence
- Morgan Hill Library
- Morgan Hill Teen Center
- Morgan Hill Unified School District
- Mt. Madonna YMCA
- Neighborhood Safety/Services Unit
- Park Place Apartment Complex EAH Housing
- Rebekah Children’s Services
- Sacred Heart Community Services Resilient Families Gilroy
- San Ysidro Nueva Vida
- Santa Clara County Catholic Charities
- Santa Clara County District Attorney’s Office
- Santa Clara County Juvenile Probation Department
- South County Collaborative
- South County Youth Task Force Technical and Policy Teams
Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC): The California Board of State and Community Corrections provides services to the county adult and juvenile systems through inspections of county jails and juvenile detention facilities, technical assistance on local issues, promulgation of regulations, training standards for local correctional staff, and the administration of a wide range of public safety, re-entry, violence reduction, and rehabilitative grants to state and local governments and community-based organizations.

California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention Program (CalGRIP): The Program provided grant funding to cities that committed to using a local collaborative approach to support prevention, intervention, and/or suppression activities. CalGRIP was a state-funded grant program, appropriated annually through the State Restitution Fund. Cities could apply for up to $500,000 with a 100% match requirement. To ensure that applicants undertook a collaborative approach, legislation required that cities pass through a minimum of 20 percent of grant funds to one or more community-based organizations. Activities funded through CalGRIP could include early prevention and intervention initiatives, reentry services, education programs, job training and skills development, family and community services, and targeted law enforcement suppression efforts. The City of Gilroy received $500,000 for grant period 1/1/14 – 12/31/15, and $500,000 for grant period 1/1/15 through 12/31/17.

California Violence Intervention and Prevention grant program (CalVIP): The State Legislature established the CalVIP grant program in 2017 to replace the California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention (CalGRIP) grant program that began in 2007. CalVIP provides funding for cities and community-based organizations with the goal of reducing violence in the city and adjacent areas. In October 2019, Governor Newsom signed the Break the Cycle of Violence Act (AB 1603). AB 1603 codified the establishment of CalVIP and defined its purpose: to improve public health and safety by supporting effective violence reduction initiatives in communities that are disproportionately impacted by violence, particularly group-member involved homicides, shootings, and aggravated assaults. The Break the Cycle of Violence act specifies that CalVIP grants shall be used to support, expand and replicate evidence-based violence reduction initiatives, including but not limited to: hospital-based violence intervention programs, evidence-based street outreach programs, and focused deterrence strategies. These initiatives should seek to interrupt cycles of violence and retaliation in order to reduce the incidence of homicides, shootings, and aggravated assaults and shall be primarily focused on providing violence intervention services to the small segment of the population that is identified as having the highest risk of perpetrating or being victimized by violence in the near future. The City of Gilroy received $500,000 for the grant period 9/1/18 through 8/31/21.

Compounded trauma: Exposure to multiple traumatic events, often of an invasive and interpersonal nature, and the wide-ranging, long-term effects of this exposure. It can also be a build-up of traumatic incidents, which can be more traumatic than the events individually. Also called “complex trauma.”
Continuum of Care: Model of comprehensive service delivery that delivers positive, culturally-responsive, and evidence-based interventions and support for youth and their families.

Disproportionalities: Refers to a group’s representation in a particular category that exceeds expectations for that group, or differs substantially from the representation of others in that category.

Evidence-Based Intervention and Prevention: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDCP) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) provides a comprehensive technical guide to the working definition of “evidenced based interventions” in relation to youth violence prevention and interventions strategies. According to the CDCP’s definition, evidenced-based interventions are scientifically proven interventions or strategies that effectively reduce youth violence. The effectiveness of evidenced based interventions is determined based on “findings and recommendations on systematic reviews of the scientific literature. With oversight from CPSTF [The Community Preventive Services Task Force], scientists and subject matter experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conduct these reviews in collaboration with a wide range of government, academic, policy, and practice-based partners.”[1]

In addition, the CDCP supports a comprehensive approach to funding evidenced based interventions that focusses on primarily strengthening youth protective factors:

A strong and growing research base demonstrates that there are multiple prevention strategies that are scientifically proven to reduce youth violence victimization and perpetration and associated risk factors. Strategies are available that benefit all youth regardless of their level of risk as well as individuals and environments at greatest risk. Because youth violence results from multiple individual, family, and environmental factors that can accumulate over a child’s development, the use of one strategy will have limited effects on an entire community’s level of violence and its ability to sustain initial program benefits. A comprehensive approach that simultaneously targets multiple risk and protective factors is critical to having a broad and continued impact on youth violence. Stopping youth violence before it occurs and sustaining this proactive approach throughout childhood and adolescence can be done with available programs, practices, and policies.[2]

Gang Suppression: Encompasses a broad range of criminal justice activities in which law enforcement, prosecution, probation and parole focus their resources to limit and assure accountability for the criminal activity of gangs and gang members.

Gender Equity: Differential treatment that is fair and positively addresses a bias or disadvantage that is due to gender roles or norms or differences between genders.

Intervention Strategies: Plans for action that outline methods, techniques, cues, programs, or tasks to enable the successful completion of a specific goal.

Listening Circles: Provide people an opportunity to speak and listen to each other in an atmosphere of safety, decorum, and equality. Listening circles have roots in indigenous cultures around the world. Listening circles emphasize storytelling for cultivating empathy. To help people gain a shared sense of understanding and emotional connection, these circles can be used in communities, workplaces, schools, organizations, neighborhoods, universities, and families.

Multi-Agency Organization: Multi-agency organization: Partnership where practitioners from more than one agency work together jointly, sharing aims, information, tasks and responsibilities with the goal of providing comprehensive services to the community.

Policy Team: Provides leadership and policy direction, generates and approves the collaboration’s Strategic Plan, evaluates emerging trends, and evaluates and monitors the Technical Team.

Racial Equity: Eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone. It is the intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems, and structures by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of people of color. When equity is in the center of community life, citizens are allocated the resources and opportunities they need to create equal outcomes for all community members to thrive.

Restorative Justice: An approach to justice that focuses on repairing the harm done by socially unacceptable behavior rather than just punishment for breaking rules or laws. It combines accountability, an attempt to repair damaged relationships, and practices led by a trained professional. Restorative justice revolves around living in alignment with other individuals to create and uphold a community.

Restorative Practice: An emerging social science that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities. Restorative practices have deep roots within indigenous communities throughout the world.

South County Youth Task Force (SCYFT): The SCYTF is a volunteer-based, non-political body serving the South Santa Clara County cities of Morgan Hill, Gilroy, and San Martin, California. SCYTF encourages information and resource sharing, advances evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies, and unites South County involved entities towards empowering the community’s youth.

Tiered interventions: Tiered intervention represents a model in which the intervention delivered to youth varies depending on the nature and severity of the youth’s needs. Tier 1 intervention, prevention, and proactive practices are universal and support everyone. Tier 2 interventions are in addition to Tier 1, not instead of, and they are limited term prevention and remediation interventions targeted to youth who need extra support. A few youth may need Tier 3 intensive and individualized interventions in addition to the other help they may be receiving, in order to target more severe needs.
South County Youth Task Force

Charter

I. The South County Youth Task Force Purpose, Mission, and Vision

The South County Youth Task Force (SCYTF) is a volunteer-based, non-political body in South Santa Clara County that encourages information and resource sharing, advances evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies, and unites South County involved entities towards empowering the community’s youth.

The SCYTF is a collaboration of local governments, school districts, community and faith-based organizations, and law enforcement agencies in South County who are committed to serving, supporting, and uplifting our youth so that they have the opportunity to thrive.

SCYTF members strive to fulfill the collaboration’s Mission and Vision:

Mission:

*To promote a safe and nurturing community that creates and ensures sustainable access to opportunities, resources, and services for South County youth and their families, while empowering their voice and supporting their growth and success.*

Vision:

*A community that is safe and free of youth violence where young people are strong, thriving and connected to their families, schools, and neighborhoods.*

Through its Mission and Vision, the SCYTF seeks to increase the community’s access to services, support, and activities that promote the educational, social, and physical well-being of all South County youth and their families. The SCYTF was originally created by former Gilroy Police Department Chief Denise Turner-Sellers to provide a forum for information sharing and collaboration on a California Gang Reduction Intervention and Prevention (CalGRIIP) grant. The SCYTF continues to be a forum of information sharing and collaboration and acts as an advisory body for grants submitted by the City of Gilroy on behalf of the SCYTF. Acknowledging the role of historical and present-day inequities, the SCYTF also works to reduce and eliminate disproportionalities in our community and its institutions that negatively affect youth of color.

The SCYTF is organized into the Policy Team, the Technical Team, and Committees. The Policy Team provides leadership and policy direction, evaluates emerging trends, and evaluates and monitors the Technical Team. The Technical Team carries out the direction set by the Policy Team, uplifts and responds to issues and trends from youth, families, and community,
and implements the Strategic Plan. SCYTF Committees focus on specific goals and issues and are composed of Policy Team and Technical Team Members.

II. The Policy Team

A. Objectives

The objectives of the Policy Team are to:

- Unite, align, and leverage the contributions of SCYTF agencies and organizations toward a collective vision of improving the health, safety, and success of youth and families in the most challenged neighborhoods in South County.
- Provide leadership, development, and policy direction to advance the long-term goals and outcomes of the SCYTF.
- Regularly review and evaluate emerging strategies and trends to address the needs and issues that may affect the health, safety, and success of South County communities.
- Review, monitor, and revise the SCYTF Strategic Plan to best reflect the needs of South County youth and their families every three to five years.
- Monitor the infrastructure and administration of the SCYTF to ensure the implementation of the proposed programs, services, and strategies outlined in the Strategic Plan.
- Provide direction to the Technical Team as needed and consider recommendations from the Technical Team in areas that may include, but are not be limited to, policy, service delivery, emerging trends, and funding opportunities.

B. Structure

The Policy Team consists of all members identified in Section C(ii).

The Policy Team may assemble committees, workgroups, and ad hoc committees for specific initiatives. Committees, workgroups, and ad hoc committees shall report to the Policy Team about their work and progress.

The Financial Leadership Committee is a standing committee within the Policy Team. The Financial Leadership Committee shall consist of the Policy Team Chair, Vice-Chair, and all Policy Team Members from the financially contributing agencies. A financially contributing agency is an agency that provides monetary funding contributions, funds key SCYTF leadership and coordination personnel, and/or serves as the fiscal administrator to the SCYTF. The financial contributions ensure ongoing operations and fiscal sustainability of the SCYTF. The Financial Leadership Committee convenes as needed. The Financial Leadership Committee shall contribute to key funding and membership representation decisions. The Financial Leadership Committee may propose for the Policy Team’s consideration key policy actions that pursue the SCYTF’s Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan.
C. Policy Team Membership

i. Membership Qualifications

Policy Team Members shall be committed to furthering the SCYTF Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan.

All Policy Team Members must have an executed Memorandum of Understanding with the SCYTF and approved by their organization’s agency.

The size of the Policy Team membership may be increased or decreased upon the recommendation of the Financial Leadership Committee and a two-thirds vote of the Policy Team. A Policy Team Member may be removed for cause by the Financial Leadership Committee.

Policy Team Member agencies shall provide support to the SCYTF by, including but not limited to, being involved in one or more committees, workgroups, or ad hoc committees, volunteering for SCYTF sponsored activities or events, contributing financially to the SCYTF, working to seek funding for the SCYTF, or any activity that furthers the Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan. This support to the SCYTF shall be in addition to regular Policy Team meeting attendance.

Members of the Policy Team shall be executive level, managerial level, or of a similar level or position in the Member’s agency and able to make decisions on behalf of the Member’s agency at Policy Team meetings.

Any entity represented at the Policy Team by a Policy Team Member shall ensure that a representative of the entity also participates in the Technical Team.

Policy Team Members are expected to regularly communicate with the Policy Team Member’s counterpart Technical Team Member or Member(s) as to matters that pertain to the SCYTF.

Any agency, organization, or government entity seeking to join the Policy Team must be nominated by a current Policy Team Member and submit a SCYTF Policy Team Application to the Policy Team Chair, Vice Chair, and Program Manager. The Application will be considered by the entire Policy Team. The voting members of the Policy Team will then vote on whether to grant Policy Team membership to the Applicant. *Ex officio* members of the Policy Team (as described further in Section C.ii, below) do not have any voting rights.
ii. Policy Team Members

Members of the Policy Team shall include:

1. City Government Officials from Gilroy and Morgan Hill.
   a. City officials shall include executive level administrators that may include but are not limited to:
      i. The City Manager/Administrator, and
      ii. The City Parks and Recreation Department Director.

2. Community-Based Organizations and Faith-Based Organizations.
   a. Community-based organizations and faith-based organizations shall be allotted a combined five seats on the Policy Team. At least one of the Policy Team Members from all the community-based and faith-based organizations shall be from an organization that predominately serves the Latinx community.
      i. The representation of these organizations may be increased or reduced by a majority vote of the Policy Team.
      ii. A staggered rotation formula may also be instituted to provide the Policy Team with organizations that provide new community insight to the Policy Team and to serve as a vehicle for growing the capacity of local community and faith-based organizations.
      iii. Community-based and faith-based organizations shall be Policy Team Members for one year with the ability to reapply at the end of each year term.
   b. The representative from the organizations shall consist of the organization’s Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director, Pastor, Chief Financial Officer, or a similar executive-level representative.
   c. These organizations shall demonstrate the following:
      i. A historical or planned commitment to communities and populations sought to be served by the SCYTF;
      ii. The capacity to provide services in the areas of youth and family violence prevention and reduction, youth gang membership prevention or intervention, mental and public health, trauma-informed care, and other relevant services identified by the Policy Team; and
      iii. Cultural competency when delivering youth prevention and intervention services.

3. Santa Clara County Government Officials
   a. County officials shall consist of representation from:
      i. Behavioral Health,
      ii. Department of Family and Children Services,
      iii. District Attorney’s Office,
      iv. Public Defender’s Office,
      v. Public Health Department,
      vi. Reentry Services,
      vii. Social Services Agency,
      viii. Children and Youth Educational, Dependency, Immigration and Rights Advocate (LACY)

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b. County Departments or Agencies shall be represented by a manager level position or higher of programs or units that service SCYTF targeted communities and populations in South County.

4. Educational Institutions
   a. The Superintendents from the Gilroy Unified School District and Morgan Hill Unified School District and the Santa Clara County Office of Education shall each hold a seat on the Policy Team.

5. Local Law Enforcement
   a. The Chief of Police from both the City of Gilroy and the City of Morgan Hill shall each hold a seat on the Policy Team.
   b. The Santa County Sheriff’s Office shall hold a seat on the Policy Team to represent the unincorporated town of San Martin and other unincorporated parts of South County, and the Sheriff’s Office may be represented by the Senior Command Officer for the South County region or a higher official.
   c. The Santa Clara County Probation Department shall hold a seat on the Policy Team and may be represented by a designated executive official or appropriate management-level officer.


Ex Officio Members of the Policy Team shall include:

1. Mayors and City Council Members from the Cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill.
   a. The Mayor and an elected City Council Member from the City of Gilroy and the Mayor and an elected City Council Member from the City of Morgan Hill may maintain seats on the Policy Team.

2. Board of Education Members
   a. An elected Board of Education representative from the boards of education for Gilroy and Morgan Hill and the County Board of Education may maintain a seat on the Policy Team.

3. Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.
   a. The Supervisor from the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors that represents the South County area may maintain a seat of the Policy Team.

4. Santa Clara County Juvenile Court Judge or Judicial Officer.
   a. A Judge or Judicial Officer from the Juvenile Court shall hold a seat on the Policy Team.

As described below, the SCYTF strives to reach agreement by consensus. In matters calling for a vote, ex officio Policy Team members will have no voting rights.

iii. Meeting Attendance

Consistent attendance at Policy Team meetings is required. A Policy Team Member shall not be absent for more than two of the regular bimonthly meetings. Being absent from specially scheduled meetings will not count against the Policy Team Member’s attendance.
Each Policy Team Member may select a Designee from the Policy Team Member’s organization who may attend Policy Team meetings in the Policy Team Member’s absence. The Designee may also regularly attend the Policy Team meetings with the Policy Team Member. Each Policy Team Member shall notify the SCYTF Program Coordinator of the Member’s Designee at the beginning of the year.

If a Policy Team Member is not present at the Policy Team meeting, the Policy Team Member’s absence shall be entered into the meeting’s minutes.

If a Member misses more than two meetings of the regular, bi-monthly Policy Team meetings per year, without good cause as determined by the Policy Team Chair and Vice Chair, the Member and the Member’s Organization shall receive notification of the absences, and it may result in removal of the Member and the Member’s Organization from the Policy Team.

In the event of a major business commitment, international travel, personal necessity, or emergency, a Policy Team Member may notify the Chair or Vice-Chair and the SCYTF Program Manager of the need for the excused absence. Such notification must be made in advance of the regular scheduled meeting, if at all possible.

D. Policy Team Operating Guidelines

i. Communication and Structure of Meetings

The Policy Team is not open to the general public.

To maintain confidentiality to sensitive information and discussions, only Policy Team Members, Policy Team Member Designees, and invited presenters or guests may attend. Guests are to sit in the designated section for guests, outside of the Policy Team meeting table.

The Policy Team shall designate a Chair and a Vice-Chair. A Vice-Chair shall be elected every year. At the completion of the Vice-Chair’s year term, the Vice-Chair will become the Policy Team Chair for one year.

The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be chosen from the City of Gilroy, the City of Morgan Hill, the Gilroy Unified School District, the Morgan Hill Unified School District, and the County of Santa Clara.

The role of the Chair shall include, at the minimum, presiding over Policy Team meetings, providing leadership in developing the annual calendar and work plan, and approving meeting agendas. The Chair is responsible for receiving input and setting the agenda in coordination with the SCYTF Program Manager. The Vice-Chair shall support the Chair and Program Manager and chair Policy Team meetings in the Chair’s absence.

The roles for the Policy Team’s leadership and coordination and the fiscal administration for the SCYTF shall be determined and designated by the Policy Team.
The Policy Team shall develop and approve an annual calendar and work plan.

The Policy Team shall convene bi-monthly or 6 times per year, and more frequently as needed.

Meeting agendas and minutes will be prepared and distributed in advance of the meeting and no less than seven days before the meeting.

Policy Team Members may request that an item be added to a Policy Team meeting agenda. Such a request should be made during a Policy Team meeting that precedes the meeting for which the agenda item is to be added, unless the requested agenda item relates to an urgent and time-sensitive issue that has arisen or becomes known before the Policy Team meeting and after the immediately preceding Policy Team meeting, and the item can or should be addressed at the meeting. The Chair, Vice Chair, and SCYTF Program Manager retain discretion to add items to the agenda. If the agenda has already been set before a request is made, the requested item should be considered for placement on the next available meeting agenda.

Meeting locations will alternate between the Cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill. Each hosting city shall assume site responsibilities for securing location and site logistics. Policy Team Members may also appear remotely to all meetings when remote appearance is available. The hosting city and the SCYTF will strive to make remote appearances an option for all Policy Team meetings.

ii. Decision-Making

The SCYTF is a voluntary-based, non-political, advisory collaboration. In those areas pertaining to the SCYTF’s organizational operations, Policy Team Members will strive to reach agreement by consensus. SCYTF Policy Team Members will work expeditiously and try to avoid revisiting decisions once they are made.

The financially contributing agencies will retain final decision-making authority for programmatic and financial aspects of the SCYTF.

In all other matters, Policy Team Members have equal voting rights. Ex Officio Policy Team Members do not have any voting rights. A Policy Team Member Designee can attend the meeting with the Policy Team Member, but the Designee does not have a voting power.

E. Funding and Sustainability

The Policy Team shall serve as a model of collaboration for seeking funds for sustaining the SCYTF collaboration, the safety service net of programs and services, and for attracting and securing new funding sources for emerging trends and issues.

The Policy Team shall collectively seek-out opportunities for funding and resources from external sources, and as warranted, serve as the governing body for external grants. Individual Policy Team Members are encouraged to include the SCYTF collaboration in their own fundraising and grant-producing efforts.
Funding contributions and resources may be provided to the SCYTF by the Member organizations of the Policy Team. Contributions may be in the form of direct funding and in-kind direct staffing contributions that provide direct leadership and coordination or business and fiscal administration. Such a member would be designated as a Financially Contributing Member and also serve on the Financial Leadership Committee.

Funding from financially contributing member agencies will be conveyed by agreement or memorandum of understanding to the fiscal administrator on behalf of the SCYTF.

The financially contributing agencies and the Policy Team shall designate a Fiscal Administrator to oversee SCYTF funds. The Fiscal Administrator shall prepare and present budget and progress reports to the Policy Team in a schedule agreed upon with the Policy Team.

III. The Technical Team

A. Objectives

The objectives of the Technical Team are to:

- Fulfill the Mission and Vision of the SCYTF and implement the Strategic Plan.
- Carry-out the policy and directives of the Policy Team.
- Elevate the on-going work of the Technical Team to the Policy Team and provide recommendations as needed in areas that may include, but are not limited to, policy, service delivery, emerging trends, and funding opportunities.
- Discuss current and long-term climate and trends affecting the health, safety, and success of youth and the South County community and work collaboratively to identify, explore, and pursue actionable responses.
- Hold Multi-Disciplinary Team and Crisis Response Team meetings to support youth.
- Use data to guide strategies, responses and decision-making.
- Highlight and share resources that are available for youth and families in South County.
- Provide Technical Team Members opportunities for collaborating, networking, and learning.
- Seek additional resources and funding opportunities for the SCYTF to support youth and the community.

B. Membership

i. Member Qualifications

Technical Team Members shall be committed to furthering the SCYTF Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan.
Technical Team Members must have an executed Memorandum of Understanding with the South County Youth Task Force and approved by their organization.

Technical Team Members shall provide support to the SCYTF by, including but not limited to, being involved in one or more committees, workgroups, or ad hoc committees, volunteering for SCYTF sponsored activities or events, working to seek funding for the SCYTF, or participating in any activity that furthers the Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan. This support to the SCYTF shall be in addition to regular Technical Team meeting attendance.

If an agency, organization, or government has members on both the Policy Team and Technical Team, Technical Team Members are expected to regularly communicate with the Technical Team Member’s or Members’ counterpart Policy Team Member as to matters that pertain to the SCYTF.

Those interested in being a Technical Team Member may attend three Technical Team meetings over a consecutive, four-month time-period. After the third meeting, if the prospective Technical Team Member wants to become a Technical Team Member, the prospective Technical Team Member shall sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the South County Youth Task Force. After signing the Memorandum of Understanding, the Technical Team Member shall partake in an on-boarding process designed by the SCYTF Program Manager or Program Coordinator.

An applicant to become a Technical Team Member may be denied membership if the mission, vision, values, and/or objectives of the applicant’s organization do not align with those of the SCYTF.

A Technical Team Member may be removed for good cause by the Policy Team Financial Leadership Committee.

ii. Technical Team Members

Members include, but are not limited to, officials, administrators, clinicians, case workers, and employees of the following entities:

- City Governments and Agencies,
- Community-based Organizations,
- County Governments and Agencies,
- Faith-based Organizations,
- Law Enforcement Agencies,
- Local businesses,
- School Districts and Educational Institutions or
- Any agency, organization, entity, or business that serves youth and families and aligns with the Mission and Vision of the SCYTF.
iii. Meeting Attendance

Consistent attendance at Technical Team meetings is required. Technical Team Members shall attend three-quarters of the Technical Team meetings per year. If a Technical Team Member is not able to attend the meeting, the Technical Team Member may have another Technical Team Member or someone else from the same organization attend the meeting in the Member’s place.

A Member who misses more than one-quarter of the total number of Technical Team meetings per year, without having a Designee attend in the Member’s absence, and without good cause as determined by the Policy Team Financial Leadership Committee, may result in removal of the Member from the Technical Team.

In the event of a major business commitment, international travel, personal necessity, or emergency, a Technical Team Member may notify a Technical Team Co-Chair and the SCYTF Program Manager of the need for the excused absence. Such notification must be made in advance of the regular scheduled meeting, if at all possible.

C. Communication and Structure of Meetings

The Technical Team shall meet regularly. Technical Team meetings are open meetings.

The Co-Chairs of the Technical Team shall be the SCYTF Program Coordinator and a Santa Clara County District Attorney Community Prosecutor. The Co-Chairs preside over Technical Team meetings, provide leadership in developing the annual calendar, and are responsible for receiving input and setting the agenda. The agenda will be sent to Technical Team Members five days before the Technical Team meeting.

Regular Technical Team meetings may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Discussions about community and school climate and trends related to youth, school attendance and discipline, gang-related activity, violence and crime prevention, mental health and wellness, or any topic that relates to the health, safety, and well-being of South County’s youth and their families;
- Matters related to SCYTF committees;
- Matters related to the SCYTF Strategic Plan;
- Programming and services for youth, families, or the community in South County; and,
- Announcements.

Meeting locations will, when possible, alternate between the Cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill. Each hosting city shall assume site responsibilities for securing location and site logistics. Technical Team Members may also appear remotely to all meetings when remote appearance is available. The hosting city and the SCYTF will strive to make remote appearances an option for all Technical Team meetings.
IV. Committees

The Policy Team and the Technical Team may form separate or joint committees that focus on particular goals and issues that further the Mission, Vision, Strategic Plan, or operations of the SCYTF. The committees may be standing or ad hoc committees. A committee may be open, closed, or a hybrid based on the need of the committee. If a committee is closed, all committee members must have a current Memorandum of Understanding with the SCYTF.

The request to create a committee must be approved by the SCYTF Program Manager or Program Coordinator.

Committees, workgroups, and ad hoc committees shall report to the Policy Team about their work and progress. An updated list of all committees, workgroups and ad hoc committees shall regularly be provided to Policy Team and Technical Team Members.

V. Amendments to the Charter

This Charter may be amended at any meeting by a two-thirds vote of the Policy Team Members, provided that the Policy Team Members are notified in writing thirty days in advance of the meeting of any proposed amendments.

VI. Ratification of the Charter

The South County Youth Task Force Policy Team ratified this Charter on May 19, 2021.

VII. Dates of Amendments to the Charter

On September 22, 2021, the Policy Team amended this Charter.