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November 17, 2021

«City_» City Hall
«Address»
«City_», CA «Zip_code»

RE: Public Safety Reform Virtual Reality (VR) technology for Crisis Intervention Training

Dear Mayor «Mayor» and «City_» City Councilmembers:

Following the murder of George Floyd, nationwide protests erupted that called for police reform in the United States. In the past year this has led to new laws, proposals, and public directives at all levels of government to address the key issues of police misconduct, systemic racism, racial bias, and police brutality. In collaboration with the Santa Clara County Police Chiefs Association, we strive to rebuild trust between our police departments and members of the public through accountability, transparency, and community engagement.

The law enforcement agencies within Santa Clara County have been diligently working towards police reform that works for the safety of both the community and the officers. Though they have made much progress, there is still much left to do, especially in terms of addressing the crux of the issue that has led to deaths of civilians at the hands of police officers: Use of Force.

Thus, as a collaborative effort with the Santa Clara County Police Chiefs Association, the Cities Association of Santa Clara County (CASCC) strongly supports advancing training for our police officers through the utilization of Virtual Reality (VR) technology for Crisis Intervention Training. Per the Board of Directors Meeting of Thursday, October 14, 2021, the CASCC Board of Directors encourages all public safety departments within the County to complete it.

This technology is considered new and is being used in Sacramento to recreate real-world police encounters and incorporate lessons learned into the training curriculum, such as cultural competency, de-escalation, critical decision-making, peer intervention and implicit bias training. This technology would allow for controversial police incidents that occur across the country to be turned into virtual reality simulations almost instantaneously after they occur, allowing officers to learn from real life mistakes, and train for real world situations.

VR technology increases efficiency in scenario-based training and allows officers to train with all of their tools – handgun, taser, rifle, OC (pepper) spray, and flashlight. Additional benefits include decreasing the need for instructor's/role players during real life scenario drills, alleviating the need for different training locations, and introducing an array of virtual environments with different environmental factors at play.

Four departments have applied (and received) the technology, including Palo Alto, Santa Clara County Sheriff, and Sunnyvale through California's Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). The City of Sunnyvale has expressed a willingness to host the training of other departments. This new technology is a critical tool that all departments should utilize as an effort to improve the training of our police officers and further reform policing in Santa Clara County. We urge your public safety department to participate in this training.

Thank you for working with us to build a safer Santa Clara County. We appreciate the leadership of cities that have invested in police VR technology and look forward to seeing more cities implement this crucial training tool.

Sincerely,



Vice Mayor Chappie Jones, San José
2021-22 President



Andi Jordan
Executive Director

cc: City Managers
Santa Clara County Police Chiefs Association