



**Amanda
SAWYER**
DENVER CITY COUNCIL ★ DISTRICT 5



Curtis E. Gardner
Council Member At-Large

Is a Gun Buy Back Program Right for Your City?



Agenda

- Welcome and introduction
- Why did we pursue a gun buyback program?
- Program goals and partners
- Event Logistics
- Results from our gun buybacks
- Is a gun buyback right for your city?
- Challenges
- Questions

Introductions

Councilwoman Amanda Sawyer
Denver City Council District 5



Councilman Curtis Gardner
Aurora City Council At-Large



Chief Ron Thomas
Denver Police Department



Matt Lunn, Ph.D
Director of Strategic Initiatives,
Denver Police Department



Chief Art Acevedo
Aurora Police Department



Why did we pursue a gun buyback program?

- Gun sales in the United States reached a record level in 2020
 - Industry data of firearms background checks show nearly 23 million guns were purchased
 - Background checks do not correlate directly to the number of guns sold and bought; we know additional guns were purchased illegally or stolen in addition to those purchased legally
- DPD data from 2020 highlighted five “Hot-Spot” areas that encompass 1.5% of Denver’s landmass but 25% of its homicides and 50% of its aggravated assaults
- The first quarter of 2021 saw Aurora’s violent crime rise 50% over the same period last year
- Crime data shows that many violent crimes result from firearms that have been stolen because they were not properly stored or secured by the owner
- Gun buyback programs in other cities – both inside of Colorado and other states – have proven to be successful

Program Goals

- To support the work of the Denver & Aurora Police Departments & other City Agencies in combatting gun violence
- To provide residents an opportunity to safely dispose of unwanted firearms so that they cannot be stolen and used in other violent crimes
- To mobilize communities, raise awareness of gun violence reduction strategies, and help shift the culture between the community and law enforcement
- To take a harm-reduction approach to gun violence



Partners



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Council Member At-Large



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DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

Event Logistics

Council District 5 Office and Aurora's CM Gardner's Office organized and hosted four events each in Denver and Aurora in 2022

Sites were identified by Councilmembers and each event had at least 30 volunteers

Funding went to purchase gift cards, exchanged for firearms at the event:

- \$50 for non-semiautomatic long guns or rifles, including double barrel shotguns

- \$150 for handguns and semi-automatics

- \$250 for assault style rifles (determined on site by a trained professional)

Firearms were destroyed at the moment of transfer, per ATF standards, melted down, and turned into garden tools and jewelry

Events were drive-through, voluntary, and anonymous

Results - Quantitative

2022 Denver Aurora Buyback Numbers

By City	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Total Semi (Type 2 and 3)	Vehicles
Denver	188	238	29	267	230
Aurora	201	228	22	250	218
Total	389	466	51	517	448

By Event	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Total	Vehicles
March	80	101	8	189	89
April	53	56	7	116	60
May	10	37	3	50	24
June	56	44	11	111	62
July	71	76	11	158	85
August	32	62	1	95	51
September	27	24	7	58	32
October	60	66	3	129	45
Total	389	466	51	906	448

- 55% of all weapons collected were classified as semi-automatic weapons

Results - Qualitative

- The Broncos won the 2022 ESPY Award for Sports Humanitarian of the Year for their work in the community, including our partnership
- Several volunteers had lost loved ones to gun violence
- At least one volunteer had been the victim of gun violence
- At least one life saved (self-reported)
- At least two attendees turned in the weapons their loved-one had used to take their own life



Anonymous Survey Results

Reasons for turning in Firearms (Multiple selections per participant possible)

General Comments:

The "don't need/want" category captured a lot of both yes and no for safety reasons

18 people felt the gun could be used against them, with a few making comments about suicidality

12% had no way of storing their gun safely

19% were concerned about children accessing firearms

36 had previously experienced gun violence related trauma

1 in 4 were afraid of theft

Most common "Other" Responses

Fewer guns are better/dislike guns/Enough!/too many guns/need to act (a lot after Buffalo/Uvalde)

Inherited/found in home I moved into

Need money

Because of Faith

Moving out of country

Want them destroyed and/or turned into tools

Anonymous Survey Results (cont.)

	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Afraid of gun	4	5	1	7	10	2	4	5	38	8.48%
Trauma	2	4	1	9	7	3	5	5	36	8.04%
Children	13	14	1	8	22	8	10	9	85	18.97%
Home Shooting	1	1	0	1	3	1	1	1	9	2.01%
Used against me	5	4	1	4	2	1	1	0	18	4.02%
Family asked to	8	4	0	9	14	4	3	4	46	10.27%
No safe storage	9	8	4	11	10	3	3	5	53	11.83%
No training	4	3	1	5	8	3	1	4	29	6.47%
Don't need/want	62	41	12	40	61	31	13	25	285	63.62%
Fear of theft	29	16	6	13	21	9	7	11	112	25.00%
Unsafe/old	26	10	2	15	18	7	7	10	95	21.21%
Other	7	4	3	11	14	2	4	7	52	11.61%

Is a Gun Buyback Right for Your City?

Considerations:

- Funding
- Costs
- Partners
- Insurance & Liability
- Legal landscape
- Event Locations
- Weather
- Ensuring Anonymity
- Volunteers
- Outreach



Challenges – The Legal Landscape

- Firearms were checked and emptied of ammunition prior to dismantling
- Serial numbers of all firearms were recorded and were turned over to the police for recordkeeping
- A volunteer dismantled the firearm in the presence of the owner, eliminating a transfer of ownership
- By disabling each firearm prior to the gun donor leaving, the RAWtools process did not break any transfer laws at the State or Federal level
- The legality of this process had been confirmed, in writing, by both the ATF & the Colorado Attorney General's Office
- Special event insurance was procured for each event from a vendor that insures firearm conventions

Challenges – Ensuring Anonymity

- No press allowed at a gun buyback event
- No law enforcement present at a gun buyback event
- Law enforcement knew the dates and locations of events for situational awareness
- Off duty law enforcement personnel welcome as volunteers
- Serial numbers recorded and turned in to law enforcement for recordkeeping
- All participants assumed to be over age 18
- Surveys were voluntary and anonymous
- Ghost guns, pellet guns or homemade guns were collected and disabled, but not compensated

Questions?

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THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

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