County of Los Angeles
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, California 90012
(213) 974-1101
http://ceo.lacounty.gov

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Chief Executive Officer

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January 6, 2009

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

COUNTYWIDE GANGS AND VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGY (ALL AFFECTED) (3 VOTES)

SUBJECT

A recommendation from the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to approve the development of the Countywide Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy and the creation of a multi-jurisdictional committee to implement the provisions of the strategy. Approval of the recommendations will promote the development of prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies aimed at individuals, families, and communities associated with gang involvement and juvenile delinquency.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Approve the proposed "Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy" as outlined herein, in response to your Board's May 8, 2007 Motion.

2. Instruct the CEO to form a committee known as the Los Angeles County Gang Prevention, Intervention and Suppression Coordination Committee (Committee), with the CEO or his designee(s) as the chair. The Committee's duties shall include defining the target population (with emphases on probationers and their families, but not excluding others at-risk as well) in selected demonstration sites; development of baseline data for current levels of gang membership and violence; development of performance indicators and desired outcomes; identify information-sharing needs; and coordination of resources.

3. Approve Florence/Firestone and Pacoima as demonstration sites, and instruct the CEO to return in 180 days with a detailed plan of proposed strategies and implementation of said strategies in these sites. The intent of the demonstration will be to evaluate strategy effectiveness and viability for countywide expansion.

4. Request the Sheriff Department (Sheriff) to develop a coordinated, regional and multi-jurisdictional gang suppression strategy, addressing violence and crime, to be piloted in the demonstration sites.

5. Instruct the Auditor-Controller, using the Gang Funding Report prepared by the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC) as a starting point, to develop a comprehensive list of County programs that currently engage in gang prevention, intervention and suppression efforts, and to report back to the CEO within 120 days.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

On May 8, 2007, your Board directed the CEO to work with the CCJCC and key County departments and commissions as well as municipal, state, and federal jurisdictions to review the findings and recommendations in the Advancement Project Report, the Mayor's Gang Reduction Strategy and the Sheriff's Report, that sought to address the crisis of gang violence in Los Angeles County.

Furthermore, the CEO was directed to develop a comprehensive implementation plan, including review of CCJCC's final gang funding report, to produce a cost analysis to successfully implement the plan, and report back to your Board for final review and approval within 120 days. Based on the complexities involved in developing a long-term sustainable plan, an extension of the reporting deadline was requested and granted.

The CEO took the following actions during development of the above recommendations set forth herein:

- Established an Executive Steering Committee to assist in the development of recommendations. The committee is comprised of the following stakeholders: Sheriff Department, Office of Education, District Attorney, Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles Unified School District, County Police Chiefs Association, City of Los Angeles Deputy Mayor for Gang Reduction, and the Advancement Project.

- Convened a forum of local representatives from governmental, community and academic institutions to solicit their expertise and recommendations regarding solutions to the issue of gangs and gang violence.

- Examined the County-Cities' relationship with many of the communities affected by gangs and gang violence, and the affects uncoordinated service delivery has on those communities.

- Considered the lack of information-technology infrastructure that would allow County departments to share client information or better coordinate and leverage the resources that are being provided.

- Examined the County-Cities' relationship with youth involved in gangs and gang violence and considered the mandated role the County plays in the lives of youth who have been abused and neglected, as well those who engage in delinquent activity.

- Reviewed County funding of gang prevention, intervention and suppression programming.

- Determined that a coordinating body would be needed to develop the program specifications and provide recommendations to the CEO and Board of Supervisors.

Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy

After careful critical analysis and review of the Advancement Project Report on Gangs, the Mayor's Gang Reduction Strategy, the Sheriff's Report, local strategies, and the County's current service delivery models, the CEO proposes the development of a Gang and Violence Reduction Strategy (Gang Strategy) that will coordinate services aimed at at-risk youth, gangs and violence prevention. The need for information sharing and technology solutions that can be used to develop initiatives and programs addressing the target population will be considered. Priority will be given to gang involved youth who are a part of the juvenile justice system and family units where there is increased likelihood of contact with the juvenile justice system. This approach will ensure that our responses are integrated and aligned with County initiatives and programs (e.g. Section 236 of the Welfare and Institutions Code Informal Supervision, Camp Community Transition Program, Adult and Juvenile Day Reporting Centers).

County data suggest that a significant number of youth who are gang affiliated have or will have contact with the juvenile justice system. With this in mind, the Gang Strategy will

consider how to effectively reduce the potentiality for contact or reduce further contact with the juvenile justice system. Programs will be developed that ensure gang-involved youth transitioning back into their communities are connected to both County and community services with the intent of reducing recidivism, increasing family strengths and community protective factors. There are approximately 370 youth on probation after stays in camp, placement or other detention facilities returning to both the Florence/Firestone and Pacoima areas. There is an additional 38 youth returning to these areas from camp and placement in the next 120 days. Our ability to align both County resources with those provided by community agencies to address the needs of these youth, their care givers and siblings will impact recidivism, future system contact by siblings and promote greater parental involvement.

The Sheriff, in his report, "Changing the Paradigm," calls for the creation of a strategy that centralizes and coordinates all resources aimed at the prevention and intervention of gangs and gang violence into a single center referred to as the Gang Emergency Operation Center (GEOC). GEOC, described and envisioned, as a centralized repository of gang related prevention, intervention and suppression resources would serve as a regional information and referral coordination resource designed to service gang related inquiries from communities, educational and social agencies. Information sharing, analytical and evaluative components are included in this concept. While the concepts and elements outlined in the GEOC proposal are worthy of further exploration, we believe our initial emphasis should be placed on the development of a gang prevention and intervention strategy that can assess, develop and coordinate resources to address gangs and gang violence. As we move forward with the development of a countywide strategy, we will continue to explore the GEOC concept.

The Sheriff and CEO concur that no single service model or strategy can effectively address the root causes of gang involvement or gang violence, solve an individual gang member's problems or remove the entrenched culture of gangs from communities. The County's current uncoordinated service model ensures that current and potential gang members will encounter services and programs from various sources in no comprehensive manner. Consequently, our approach to the issue of gangs and gang violence must be multi-dimensional and consider the individual and their social ecology, including family, peers, school, neighborhood and other community settings and address risk factors across these life domains.

Most initiatives developed and directed at Probation supervised individuals are intervention efforts as these individuals have already made contact with the justice system. To prevent gang involvement and juvenile delinquency among youth not in the juvenile justice system, the Gang Strategy will develop outreach efforts that consider the County's array of services dedicated to family and community preservation and stabilization. The Gang Strategy will seek to collaborate with stakeholder resources outside of the County in addressing the

factors often associated with gang involvement and delinquency. The CEO recognizes the importance of preventing youth from becoming gang involved as an integral component of any strategy that seeks to systemically address gang violence and juvenile delinquency.

The following efforts will provide the framework for the strategy:

- Coordinated delivery of County resources that maximizes initial County contact with youth and families;
- Specialized intervention strategies for individuals who exhibit risk factors for hardcore gang membership or are gang affiliated;
- Reentry and reintegration strategies for ex-offenders returning into the community; and
- Targeted suppression strategies geared towards the most virulent gangs and offenders.

The *Los Angeles County Gang Prevention, Intervention and Suppression Coordination Committee* will manage the development of the Gang Strategy. The committee will have oversight responsibilities for the development of the strategy, be empowered to develop program specifications, evaluate outcomes of Board of Supervisor approved programs or pilots related to strategy to determine appropriateness for future expansion, and to provide leadership and direction related to resource integration of County and non-county agencies. The committee will also be tasked with reviewing the results of the proposed Auditor-Controller report and integrating those results into future recommendations. The committee may also consider the need for an independent evaluator and make such a recommendation to the CEO. The committee will be co-chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive Officers for Public Safety and Children and Families' Well-Being. As the Gang Strategy moves beyond the demonstration phase and begins to develop countywide expansion plans, we will consider the role of the committee and the possibility of re-structuring and reconstituting it as a subcommittee under an existing countywide body.

The following principles will guide the work of the committee:

- The strengthening of individuals, families and communities by addressing delinquent behavior and other risk factors at the earliest identification point.
- The development of safer communities by directing gang behavior away from crime and violence through holistic and coordinated services.

- The need for the coordination of all services provided to gang members and their families.

To determine current resources addressing gangs and gang violence, the Auditor-Controller will be instructed to develop a list of all the County programs involving gang prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts, including program description, funding source, and operational measures, if any. The report will update and expand upon the report conducted by CCJCC, which surveyed County departments for similar information in fiscal year 2005-06.

The Gangs Strategy will coordinate with initiatives that are underway within the Children and Families' Well-Being Cluster. These initiatives include:

- An effort to coordinate and maximize the delivery of County resources to families and communities to ensure that the initial County contacts with individuals and families is comprehensive, holistic, and maximizes the engagement opportunity.

- The Department of Children and Family Service's Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project to increase community resources and abilities to address factors related to child abuse and neglect.

- The enhancement of the Family Children's Index (FCI) that allows County agencies to share information and better coordinate the use of resources.

- The further development of an initiative to support increased employment opportunities for at-risk foster and probation youth.

Coordinated Suppression Efforts

Development of a coordinated, regional, and multi-jurisdictional suppression strategy to address gang violence and its affects on communities throughout the region is a major aim of the strategy. Two Sheriff lead initiatives that will be integrated into the suppression strategy include:

- The expansion of "Coplink" an information data warehouse to "Gang-Coplink" which will become the countywide gang intelligence analytical information system.
- Piloting the use of GPS surveillance equipment for high risk gang involved individuals returning to the County on parole from state prison.

Two sites have been selected to demonstrate the Gang Strategy initiative. In each demonstration site our goal will be the development of a comprehensive and coordinated strategy aimed at gangs and violence reduction. This requires the integration of prevention (primary and targeted), intervention, and targeted suppression efforts along with broad community support. In order to form a community specific solution and establish baseline measures, there must be an understanding of the needs and assets in that community. We believe a community level assessment is needed, and that we will be able to accomplish a significant amount of the assessment by using County resources. Additional consulting resources may be necessary.

Criteria for Demonstration Sites

Given the County's size and demographics, it is recommended that the County's Gang Strategy be piloted in two strategically geographic communities. Thorough documentation and evaluation of efforts undertaken in these two areas will become the blueprint to be replicated throughout the County.

Proposed sites are recommended based on the following criteria:

- Enhanced possibility for service integration due to co-location with other County initiatives.
- Ability of law enforcement agencies to allocate targeted suppression resources.
- Enhanced possibility of multi-jurisdictional collaboration.
- Differing levels and intensity of gang activity and violence and community resiliency (e.g. hot zone vs. tipping point communities) to allow for the comparison of strategies.
- Level of community assets, strengths, and readiness (e.g. existing community partnerships, leadership, and networks).
- Community profiles of needs (e.g. poverty, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, concentration of parolees, and probationers).
- Number of Department of Children and Family Services caseloads.
- Levels of violence and total number of children impacted.

Florence/Firestone Site

Florence/Firestone is comprised of approximately 65,000 residents living within a 3.6 square mile area located six miles south of downtown Los Angeles in the heart of the County's inner city and industrial corridor. An unincorporated area, Florence/Firestone straddles the City of Los Angeles, Supervisory Districts 1 and 2, and Service Planning Areas 6 and 7. In the past 20 years, a predominately African-American population has been replaced almost entirely by a Latino population; many of which are new immigrants.

Challenges faced by this community include:

- More than 130 juveniles living alone as head of household.
- 82-90 percent of school children have been victims or witnesses to violence, according to a 2007 report entitled *Florence/Firestone Juvenile Assessment Center Pilot Project Report*.
- 30 percent of the 65,000 residents live below the poverty level, according to statistics reported by various sources.
- 40 percent of the population is dependent on some form of public assistance.
- Low educational attainment: 71 percent of adults, 25 years of age and older, lack a high school diploma.
- Persistent high levels of gang-related violent crime.
- 235 youth currently under the supervision of the Probation Department.

The Florence/Firestone community is an example of an area in the County where a highly volatile gang dynamic coupled with high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage create and sustain unacceptable levels of violence. The community also presents a unique opportunity to coordinate City, County, and Federal efforts to reduce gang violence. Los Angeles City's Newton Gang Reduction Zone, Los Angeles County's Adult Day Reporting Center Project, and Federal Gang Reduction site are vertically aligned in the area. Recent community building efforts in the area, including that of the Florence/Firestone Community Empowerment Team, also present opportunities for partnership with community leadership.

Pacoima Site

Pacoima has a total population of 111,880 in a five square mile area, located in the northeast San Fernando Valley. The community is surrounded by Interstates 5 and 210,

and SR 118 freeways. Pacoima is in Supervisory District 3, Service Planning Area 2, and is part of the City of Los Angeles.

Challenges faced by this community include:

- 17 percent of the 111,880 residents live below the poverty level, according to statistical data.
- 35 percent of the population is dependent on some form of public assistance.
- Low educational attainment: 62 percent of adults 25 years of age and older lack a high school diploma.
- Statistics that indicate gang-related crime in the community and surrounding areas increased nearly 40 percent in 2006.
- 135 youth currently under the supervision of the Probation Department.

Pacoima experienced a significant rise in gang crime in 2006. Gang activity is concentrated in several areas within the identified zone, and had not yet engulfed the entire area. Ongoing efforts at reducing gang activity, including the Los Angeles City's Foothill Gang Reduction Zone, the San Fernando Valley Coalition on Gangs, in conjunction with new initiatives will benefit from the momentum and community engagement that has already been established.

In six months, the CEO will provide your Board with a detailed plan for your review and approval. The plan will provide an analysis of existing efforts, recommendations for the development of new efforts, and recommendations for realignment of existing resources.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The requested Board actions are consistent with the Countywide Strategic Plan Goals as follows: Goal 1 - Service Excellence, provides the public with easy access to quality information and services that are beneficial and responsive; Goal 2 - Workforce Excellence, enhances the quality and productivity of the County workforce; Goal 3 - Organizational Effectiveness, ensures that service delivery systems are efficient, effective, and goal-oriented; Goal 5 - Children and Families' Well-Being, improves the well-being of children and families in Los Angeles County; Goal 6 - Community Services, improves the quality of life for residents of Los Angeles County's unincorporated communities by offering

coordinated services responsive to each community's specific needs; and Goal 8 - Public Safety, increases the safety and security of all residents in Los Angeles County through well-coordinated and comprehensive response plans.

FISCAL IMPACT

The 2008-09 Final Budget contains one new position for this strategy. Additional staffing support will be provided by various County departments. These additional staff will provide the departmental links needed to implement the proposed elements of the strategy.

Any additional funding requirements will be determined and presented to your Board in a future request.

CONCLUSION

The Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy represents an opportunity for the County to lead a coalition of partners to develop a regional and centralized approach to address gangs and gang violence. This coordinated approach will foster structural and systemic change necessary to achieve identified goals and objectives.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

WTF:SRH:RDC
JW:VH:cc

cc: Sheriff's Department
County Counsel
Children and Family Services
Children's Planning Council
Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee
Fire Department
Mental Health
Probation
Public Health
Public Social Services