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August 2, 2011

ADOPTED
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

10 August 16, 2011

SACHI A. HAMAI
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL GANG VIOLENCE REDUCTION INITIATIVE (ALL AFFECTED) (3 VOTES)

SUBJECT

A recommendation from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to extend through June 30, 2012, the implementation of the Gang Violence Reduction Initiative (Gang Strategy) in four demonstration areas and to continue the authority of the CEO to execute agreements with non-County partners in order to implement provisions of the Gang Strategy. No additional funds are being requested.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Extend through June 30, 2012, the implementation of the Gang Strategy in the four demonstration sites.

2. Continue the authority of the CEO to execute agreements with non-County partners in order to implement provisions of the Gang Strategy.

3. Request the Sheriff's Department to continue coordinating and implementing regional and multi-jurisdictional suppression strategies in the four demonstration sites.

4. Continue the temporary assignment of staff from Probation, through June 30, 2012, to assist with implementation of the Gang Strategy.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

On April 6, 2010, your Board instructed the CEO to implement a set of recommendations to address gang violence. Specifically, the CEO was directed to develop strategies that sought to: 1) prevent individuals and families from becoming involved in gang and/or delinquent activity; 2) intervene in the lives of individuals and families who have had contact with gangs or the justice system, and provide sufficient services and resources to redirect them on a path towards self-sufficiency and mainstream integration; and 3) to more strategically collaborate with law enforcement to proactively target violence and identify individuals and families who may need and desire assistance. These overarching goals were to be implemented through community and individual level interventions that would also inform both current and proposed policy development and decisions.

Your Board received a status report on December 15, 2010, which provided an update on progress made towards implementing the Gang Strategy. This letter highlights the major accomplishments of the Gang Strategy to date and provides your Board with a rationale for continued implementation.

BACKGROUND

In 2009, the CEO led a data-driven, multi-dimensional planning process to formulate a strategy for addressing gangs and violence and increase the successful community reentry/reintegration of high-risk/high-need and gang-involved juvenile and adult offenders. A diverse group of County and community stakeholders participated in various planning meetings and work groups to define priorities and develop a comprehensive strategy for reducing gang involvement and violence.

This resulting Gang Strategy relies heavily on the belief that the County maintains a consistent, but often uncoordinated relationship with both individuals and communities most impacted by gangs and violence. While these communities often receive large quantities of County resources, the resources are siloed and disconnected from each other.

The Gang Strategy has focused on coordinating efforts in each of the four demonstration sites (Florence Firestone, Harbor Gateway, Monrovia Duarte and Pacoima) at both the community and individual level through prevention, intervention and suppression activities. Each site coordinator has worked to strengthen community networks and actively engage with existing local efforts addressing violence and gangs. Their efforts have been instrumental in the Gang Strategy's accomplishments and have also provided useful promising practices for how the County might better coordinate efforts to address gangs and violence countywide going forward.

COMMUNITY LEVEL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In each demonstration area, efforts were developed and implemented that reinforce our premise that community efforts to prevent, intervene and suppress gangs and violence collectively impact the entrenched nature of gangs and the normative tolerance to violence that pervades these communities. These types of efforts are critical in shifting the collective community view of violence and their responsibility in addressing violence and related issues. These efforts included:

Community Prevention Efforts

Parks After Dark (PAD)

- PAD was developed and implemented in three County parks (Pamela, Watkins and Roosevelt) to build stronger communities by increasing the use of the parks as social and community resources, and to enable residents to envision their communities and neighbors as robust and empowered. Additionally, it was hoped that youth would be provided with sufficient productive activities to decrease the likelihood of participation in at-risk, gang-related behavior. Over 30,000 community residents participated in PAD activities and the areas around each PAD park experienced a reduction in gang-related crime during those summer months.

- Partnered with City of Los Angeles to hold Summer Night Lights (SNL) activities at Normandale Park (Harbor Gateway) and Humphrey Park (Pacoima). The areas surrounding the two SNL parks also experienced reductions in gang-related crime during those summer months.

- A five-year funding strategy has been developed and proposed as part of the Department of Public Health Community Transformation Grant application that will continue PAD at current parks and expand to two additional parks in East and South Los Angeles.

County Library Programming

- Developed programs and events aimed at attracting older teenagers and increasing access to and awareness of libraries. Visual arts activities, DJ and Poetry Writing workshops, educational/literacy programs, drumming, and resume assistance were offered at libraries in Florence Firestone, Monrovia Duarte and Carson. Over 1,500 youth participated in these activities and over 200 additional library cards were issued to youth and community residents.

Florence Firestone Boxing/Tutoring Center

- Partnered with the County Library, Sheriff's Department and Florence Firestone community leaders to renovate the tutoring room located in the Jerry Ortiz Memorial Boxing Center. The center provides a popular alternative to at-risk behavior. Renovations will be completed by July 2011, and tutoring services will be maintained by Library personnel.

Harbor Gateway Neighborhood Effort

- Partnered with Harbor Gateway residents to find creative solutions to several crime-related issues affecting the community. Effort led to the development of a community-based non-profit organization dedicated to raising funds to develop small neighborhood parks in Harbor Gateway.

- Partnered with County Human Relations Commission and Toberman Neighborhood Center on the continued implementation of the Gang Reduction and Community Engagement Project in Harbor Gateway.

County and Municipal Partnerships

- Collaborated with Probation, City of Los Angeles Gang Reduction and Youth Development Office (GRYD), City of Los Angeles Community Development Department (CDD), Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and community providers to partially outstation a DPSS eligibility worker with a Pacoima community provider to increase access to CalFresh and Medi-Cal applications. Over 105 applications for both CalFresh and Medi-Cal have been processed to date. Planning has begun to place an additional six DPSS eligibility workers at offsite locations including Probation offices, GRYD, and CDD community providers.

- Strengthened partnership with Monrovia Arcadia Duarte Town Council to identify community issues and provide expeditious remedies. An example of one such successful effort was the removal of shoes from power lines in an unincorporated area of Duarte. The placement of shoes on power lines is often used to identify drug sale areas.

Suppression Efforts

- The Sheriff's Department created task forces in Florence Firestone and Harbor Gateway comprised of Probation, Parole and neighboring law enforcement

agencies to conduct unannounced checks on probationers and parolees. The checks accounted for seven parolee at-large arrests and two new arrests.

- Several sheriff units were also formed in Florence Firestone and Harbor Gateway to more aggressively patrol known gang areas in order to highlight law enforcement presence. These actions resulted in six arrests.

- Part 1 Crime and gang-related crime are down 10 percent in all Sheriff patrolled areas and down eight percent in areas patrolled by the Los Angeles Police Department, over a six month period between 2010 and 2011. However, collectively across all four demonstration sites, gang-related crime is down 26.7 percent and all crime is down 3.9 percent over the same six month period.

- Gang-related Crime in Florence Firestone is down 31.2 percent, while there has been small increase in Part 1 Crimes of 6.4 percent, over a six month period between 2010 and 2011. Harbor Gateway saw a 13.4 percent reduction in Part 1 Crime from 2010, with a 39.4 percent reduction in gang-related crime, from 33 incidences to 20, over a six month period between 2010 and 2011. Monrovia Duarte saw a 17.1 percent reduction in Part 1 Crime, and a 73.9 percent decrease in gang-related crime from 23 incidences to six. Pacoima also saw a 4.1 percent reduction in Part 1 Crime along with a 4.2 percent reduction in gang-related crime, from 97 incidences to 93, during the first six months of 2011.

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In each demonstration site, efforts were also developed and implemented with the intent of impacting individuals and families who may have a higher susceptibility to gangs and violence. These efforts included:

Pacoima Truancy Prevention Program

- Partnered with school staff from Pacoima Charter Elementary School to develop a Truancy Prevention Program for youth and parents. Over 40 targeted families (70 percent) attended the resource meeting where community partners and County agencies provided assistance, including information related to parental responsibilities, public assistance information, mental health services, and child care services. Replication of efforts is being considered for both elementary and middle schools in Pacoima and Florence Firestone.

Ex-Offender Employment and Resource Fairs

- Employment and Resource fairs were held in each of the four demonstration sites targeting both juveniles and adults with criminal backgrounds or former gang affiliations. Over 2,800 Probation youth and ex-offenders attended eight fairs. Approximately 100 employers and resource providers participated in the fairs, and preliminary data indicates that more than 30 individuals were employed as a result of these fairs. Additionally, youth from neighboring continuation schools were brought in to participate in workshops for expunging criminal records and how to be removed from gang injunctions.

DPSS Expedited Referral Program

- Development of a protocol between Probation and DPSS to "fast track" the referral of youth released from the California Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) for public assistance and services. To date, five of the nine young adults released from DJJ have received expedited referrals and services.

Probation Youth Community Transition Project (PYCTP)

The PYCTP was developed to assist youth and families living in the four demonstration site areas with coordinated and meaningful services in order to reduce recidivism and strengthen the entire family unit as they transition back into the community.

While the youth was residing in camp, a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) led by each Site Coordinator and including representatives from the departments of Children and Family Services, Probation, DPSS, Mental Health (DMH), Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), community providers and Los Angeles Unified School District, reviewed and coordinated the delivery of County and partner services to the youth and their families. This process provided an opportunity to determine what County and partner services the family might benefit from and to coordinate the delivery of those services with the family. Monthly updates allowed the MDT to assess the services being delivered and confer with partners about changes to the families' circumstances. As a result of the MDT process:

- Twenty project youth (59 percent) were enrolled in school within three days of camp release. Reasons for delayed enrollment for the other 14 youth included potential gang associations at the school to be initially enrolled in, inconsistent admission processes by school administration, and failure of parents or camp transition staff to schedule an appointment with the school. Advocacy efforts from Site Coordinators were instrumental in ensuring the enrollment of several youth within three school

days. Partner agencies such as Public Counsel were also helpful in assisting with school enrollment issues.

- Twenty-seven project youth (79 percent) have not received a new petition/conviction since release from camp.

- Thirty-three project families (89 percent) were referred to clinical and/or in-home services. These services included Functional Family Therapy Treatments (FFT) designed to reduce family-related criminogenic risks for recidivism and Social Learning In-Home Curriculum, which assist with anti-criminal modeling, social skill development, aggression replacement training, and problem-solving skills interventions. In at least two instances, the intervention and involvement of the FFT providers was critical in the Court's decision not to place youth back in custody.

Through the PYCTP process, several essential elements of effective community re-entry were identified. They include:

- The need for greater communication and cooperation between camp and aftercare probation staff to assist each youth and their family with re-entry transition.

- The importance of in-camp multi-disciplinary assessments as drivers of both the minor's progress in camp and aftercare case planning.

- The necessity of family engagement prior to the minor's release and its continuation once the minor is released.

The Site Coordinators have assumed these identified roles and responsibilities. Their facilitation work with camp and aftercare probation officers has increased the level of service being provided to youth and families, and the diligence of camp and aftercare probation officers. The extension period will allow for the development of a series of "checks and balances" that assure case planning begun and reviewed in camp continues into aftercare and remains a meaningful part of the youth's engagement with aftercare deputies.

Non-County Funding Opportunities

- Continued the implementation of a $750,000 grant received from the Department of Justice (DOJ) to assist with juvenile re-entry. Grant funds provide both clinical treatments and in-home services for probation youth and their families who are part of the PYCTP. Services to these families are unique in that they begin while the minor is detained and continue through the minor's release. Grant award continues

through April 30, 2012. The CEO will be requesting an additional year of funding from DOJ.

- Partnered with various County and non-County agencies to develop federal grant proposals in the amount of $5,725,000 to continue the work of the Gang Strategy.

COUNTYWIDE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

The implementation of both the individual and community-focused strategies has already begun to inform County policies related to service delivery, coordination of services and re-entry. Examples include:

System Opportunity Review Team (SORT)

The SORT, a component of the PYCTP, has proven instrumental in identifying systemic issues common to all demonstration sites and resolving them quickly. Examples of identified issues and resolutions include:

- To address a pattern of camp youth returning home unable to maintain their psychotropic medication regimen, DPSS provided outreach workers at every camp where psychotropic medications are dispensed or family planning services are provided, to enroll minors in Medi-Cal so that they have access to their prescribed medication once they are released from Probation camp.

- To ensure that minors are immediately enrolled in school once released from camp, effective this month, LACOE Camp Returnee Counselors will identify the minor's home school district and determine if the minor may return to it at the Initial MDT meeting held within ten days of the minor's camp stay. At the Transition MDT meeting held 45-60 days prior to the minor's release, LACOE will review the minor's education plan and inform the minor and their parent(s) of their scheduled appointment to register at the receiving school district or provide school contact information that has been confirmed by the Camp Returnee Counselor.

- Effective this month, the Probation Department has revised its camp early release policy to include a checklist verifying that the minor has participated in the camp Transition MDT meeting and that a home assessment has been processed before the request may be sent to the Juvenile Court.

- To ensure that minors referred to community mental health services access the services once released from camp, the Probation Department will ensure that probation aftercare officers follow up with youth where a referral has been made,

and continue to engage the minor while DMH staff work to educate youth and their families about mental health services to reduce cultural sensitivities and stigmas.

In the event our request for an extension is approved, SORT will continue to identify systemic issues and develop policy solutions to them. SORT has already identified the following issues needing attention:

- Development of a protocol to ensure camp youth have access to vital records to assist with employment pursuits and the issuance of governmental identifications;

- Automation of camp documentation to allow for greater continuity and accountability in camp and aftercare case planning;

- Further development of a protocol to ensure that educational record keeping identifies partial credits and reconciles records to avoid repetition of classes already taken; and

- Development of a protocol to ensure a single mental health referral is made and that appropriate prompts trigger follow-up inquiries.

Countywide Juvenile Re-Entry Efforts

Gang Strategy staff have participated in the Camp-to-Community Transition Task Force convened by Juvenile Court Judge Donna Groman, which coordinates the transition of juveniles from two Probation camps back into their respective communities, in partnership with the largest school districts in the County. The Task Force has concentrated its efforts on the development and use of case plans to engage with youth during camp stay and through their transition back into the community.

The Camp-to-Community Transition Task Force and the PYCTP are similar in nature yet have remained largely separate efforts. Given the similarity in scope and the overlap in populations, we are considering merging their administrative and functional oversight into one body, with the new body responsible for juvenile re-entry efforts Countywide. CEO staff, Probation, community stakeholders, and the Juvenile Court continue to meet to discuss the formation of this juvenile re-entry body, which would be chaired by Judge Donna Groman.

Adult Re-Entry Efforts

The Service Integration Branch has been instrumental in the development of the Los Angeles Regional Re-Entry Partnership (LARP), which seeks to coordinate re-entry efforts of adults in both local and state custody. Building on the work of the 21st Century Report, and the County's Homeless efforts, LARP has provided a much needed forum for discussing local adult re-entry issues and is developing Countywide goals for effectively addressing them.

Next Steps

If granted a year extension as requested, our efforts will focus on identifying additional opportunities to strengthen County interdepartmental collaborations, better coordinate efforts related to juvenile and adult re-entry and continue the development of policies, informed by components of the Gang Strategy, that lead to more efficient services, information sharing and safer communities. The requested additional year of implementation will ensure that:

- The efforts funded through the Second Chance Grant to more effectively transition youth from incarceration back into the community are fully utilized to develop protocols related to replication and scalability of transition effort;

- The formation of comprehensive juvenile and adult re-entry bodies is finalized and that both bodies address operational and policy issues impacting re-entry;

- Ensure that a sustainable funding infrastructure for Parks After Dark is secured and a plan for expansion is developed; and

- Collaborative suppression efforts between law enforcement agencies throughout the County continue to be aligned with prevention, intervention and re-entry efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The requested Board actions are consistent with the Countywide Strategic Plan Goals as follows: Goal 1 – Operational Effectiveness, maximize the effectiveness of the County's processes, structure, and operations to support timely delivery of customer-oriented and efficient public services; Goal 2 – Children, Family and Adult Well-Being, enrich lives through integrated, cost-effective and client-centered supportive services; Goal 3 – Community and Municipal Services, enrich the lives of Los Angeles County's residents and visitors by providing access to cultural, recreational and lifelong learning facilities programs, ensure quality regional open space, and recreational and public works infrastructure

services for County residents; Goal 4 – Health and Mental Health, improve health and mental health outcomes and efficient use of resources by promoting proven service models and prevention principles that are population-based, client-centered and family-focused; and Goal 5 – Public Safety, ensure that the committed efforts of the public safety partners continue to maintain and improve the safety and security of the lives of the people of Los Angeles County.

FISCAL IMPACT

Your Board appropriated $1,051,000 to fund components of the Gang Strategy. Of that amount, funds provided to Parks and Recreation ($413,000) and the County Library ($245,000) have been fully expended. As part of the supplemental budget, the CEO has requested authority to carryover approximately $226,000 to continue implementation efforts in the four demonstration sites. Therefore, no additional funds are being requested.

CONCLUSION

The impact of the Gang Strategy can be seen in each of the four demonstration sites. Collectively across all four demonstration sites, gang-related crime is down 26.7 percent and all crime is down 3.9 percent over the same period in 2010. Gang Strategy components such as Parks After Dark are becoming fixtures in the demonstration site areas and juvenile re-entry efforts are improving the depth of collaboration among County and non-County partners. The additional year of implementation will further ground the Gang Strategy in the four demonstration site areas, identify additional policy changes and issues needing to be addressed, and allow for the development of more focused re-entry efforts.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

WTF:TP:CDM
VH:eb

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Los Angeles County Regional Gang Violence Reduction Committee