

Preamble

- **Immediate Need:** The County must immediately decide on an interim facility or facilities to house youth dispositioned to SYTF. As of February 15, 2023, there are already over 90 youth dispositioned to SYTF and returned from the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) being housed in Los Angeles County. More are being transferred back on a regular basis from the DJJ and being dispositioned from the courts. Probation expects the average number of SYTF youth and DJJ returnees to reach approximately 150 by July 1, 2023, though this estimate does not account for the number of youth who could or would likely step-down to a less restrictive setting or be released altogether. Fewer than ten (10) are expected to be girls, young women or gender expansive youth.
- **No Great Options:** All the current facilities in Los Angeles County are wrong, which perhaps explains the challenges in coming to a decision on a facility. Other than Campus Kilpatrick, all the facilities are in physical disrepair due to age and a lack of investment. The Juvenile Halls have been in a nearly constant state of crisis, implicating the safety of youth and staff, especially in the SYTF units in the compound at Barry J Nidorf Juvenile Hall (BJN). Even Campus Kilpatrick, a beautiful new facility built to implement the LA Model, does not have individual rooms, is located hours away from where most families and staff live, and has limited capacity and limited programming space. But the County must make choices among the facilities, invest in needed improvements, and immediately staff and program these units correctly.
- **Building Trust:** There is a lack of trust between Probation and the community and the Board that must be rebuilt in order to successfully care for our youth and young adults and provide an environment that is safe, healthy and rehabilitative for those incarcerated and for staff.
- **Conforming to Youth Justice Reimagined:** In adhering to the principles of Youth Justice Reimagined and the Board's "Care First, Jails Last" plans and vision, the Probation Department and its partner agencies must examine less restrictive alternatives for all incarcerated youth and provide pathways and support to SYTF youth to move into non-carceral settings whenever possible.

Recommendations:

IMMEDIATE AND INTERIM SOLUTIONS:

1. **Staffing**
 - a. **Special Recruitment** - Immediately and successfully implement the special recruitment for SYTF to staff the program with highly-qualified, motivated Deputy Probation Officers.
2. **Facilities**
 - a. **Campus Kilpatrick**
 - i. Campus Kilpatrick is recognized as the premier facility in the County. The "pilot" of housing eleven boys and young men there has met with measurable success and should be expanded to its full capacity. The success of Campus Kilpatrick will pave the way forward toward success for the overall SYTF program in the County. Thus, there is urgency to fully utilize the capacity of Campus Kilpatrick and, as a showing of good faith intent to do so, immediately begin the organized and purposeful transfer of youth from BJN to Campus Kilpatrick to reach a population of 36 by July 2023.

- ii. The Probation Department, with the support of the Board of Supervisors, must expedite the solution of the obstacles noted to moving more youth there including:
 - 1. Fast-track security enhancements requested and required by the BSCC at Kilpatrick and improvements at Camp Miller needed to address the need for staff sleeping quarters caused by the reliance on the 56-hour work week at the facility and the need for programming and recreation space.
 - 2. Find ways to provide programming without removing beds from the cottages.

b. Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall

- i. In recognition that approximately 85% of the youth dispositioned to SYTF are currently housed at BJN, the recommendation is to immediately invest in physical plant, staffing, and programming improvements to begin to make BJN a safer, more rehabilitative environment until a better long-term solution is planned and implemented.
- ii. Immediately begin the process to implement the following changes to BJN:
 - 1. Physically partition off the eastern portion of the campus and create a new and separate campus with 72 beds for boys and young men dispositioned to SYTF, as recommended by DLR architects in the attached renderings and proposal.
 - 2. Invest in physical improvements to the facility to create an environment conducive to safety, rehabilitation, and programming including and beyond the current “homelike environment” improvements.
 - 3. Staff and administer the new “East Campus” of BJN with DPOs assigned to the SYTF division, managed under the RTSB Bureau, and not on the 56-hour work week.
 - 4. Invest in programming to meet the needs of SYTF youth, many of whom will be with the County for years. Increase the number of Credible Messengers in the program and work with oversight bodies to hold partner agencies (especially DMH, LACOE, JCHS and CBO contractors) accountable for supporting the programming implementation, execution, and outcomes measurement.

3. Girls, Young Women, and Gender Expansive Youth

- a. Immediately identify and prepare a cottage at Dorothy Kirby Center to serve as the interim solution for housing for SYTF girls, young women, and gender expansive youth (where appropriate).
- b. As directed by the Board, the Probation Department must actively engage in efforts to decarcerate girls, young women and gender expansive youth in order to reduce the number of needed beds at Dorothy Kirby Center for this population and expand the number of available beds at Dorothy Kirby Center for other youth who would benefit from the services provided there.
- c. Examine the possibility of improving and utilizing another facility in the county for girls, young women and gender expansive youth.

4. Step Down and Less Restrictive Alternatives

- a. The Probation Department should immediately begin investing in and partnering with step down alternatives including Pine Grove and local supportive, transitional housing programs to identify options for youth and young adults who would be best served in non-carceral environments as they prepare for full re-entry.

CONTINGENCIES AND LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS:

- 1. Examine Dorothy Kirby Center and Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall as an alternative for boys and young men in the long term:** After years of research into the multiple facilities in the County, the model at Dorothy Kirby Center emerges as the most therapeutic and rehabilitative staffing, programming, and housing model among incarceration facilities, especially for youth living with the challenges of complex trauma, mental health issues, and other significant needs. While there is no desire to interrupt the services being provided to youth currently placed at Kirby, there is a desire to see the facility fully utilized and to examine the option of placing some SYTF youth there who would most benefit from the services provided. Los Padrinos is conveniently located to families and services, has some buildings that are relatively new and could be easily opened for housing youth, and is designed more “school-like” and less “jail-like” than the other juvenile halls.
- 2. Long-term Planning:** The Probation Department will, with significant input from community stakeholders and oversight bodies, engage in long-term planning related to facilities, staffing, and programming including selecting and investing in a more appropriate facility (or facilities) than BJN to house SYTF youth. This plan should include evaluation of other existing facilities in the and a significant focus on housing SYTF and all youth in less restrictive alternatives including step-down programs, fire camps, and community placements. The goals of the Department of Youth Development and Youth Justice Reimagined should guide the plan.