



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES SHERIFF CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

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January 22, 2021

TO: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Supervisor Holly Mitchell
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FROM: Brian K. Williams, Esq.
Executive Director
Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission

SUBJECT: **Report Back on Motion by Supervisor Hilda L. Solis Regarding Measure R's
Comprehensive Public Safety Reinvestment Plan**

On November 10, 2020, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board), directed that *“The Civilian Oversight Commission to work in collaboration with the Alternative to Incarceration Initiative, Office of Diversion and Reentry, Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, County Counsel, other relevant County and community stakeholders, including those who are system-impacted, to develop a plan of how best to accomplish the drafting of the Comprehensive Public Safety Reinvestment Plan and present to the Board at the January 26, 2021 Board meeting.”* This report is in response to the Board’s motion.

Measure R

Measure R amended Title III, Chapter 3.79 of the County Code to require the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (Commission) to develop a *Comprehensive Public Safety Reinvestment Plan*. The plan is required to include a study on the feasibility of reducing the County jail population by redirecting \$3.5 billion previously expected to be spent on jail expansion to mental health programs, to youth centers and programs to prevent youth involvement in crime, to develop a holistic community mental health infrastructure to prevent crime, to create mental health alternative custody programs, and to increase the funding of the Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR).

County Involvement

In the time since Measure R’s passage, the Board has substantially advanced the County’s justice reform work in line with Measure R. Prior to the passage of Measure R, the Board commenced moving toward “care first, jails last” by establishing the Alternatives to Incarceration Work Group, Youth Justice Work Group, and similar initiatives within the Department of Mental Health, the

Department of Public Health and the Department of Health Services, including ODR.

After the passage of Measure R, the Board institutionalized the “care first, jails last” path by affirmatively establishing the Alternatives to Incarceration Initiative (ATI), the MCJ Closure Work Group, and voting to place Measure J on the November 2020 ballot.

Through these several actions and initiatives, the County has substantially advanced the work that Measure R directed the Commission to complete. For example, Measure R calls for the Commission to research and draft a Comprehensive Public Safety Reinvestment Plan (“Plan”) and Feasibility Study (“Study”) to reduce Los Angeles County’s jail population and to reinvest jail system costs into prevention and mental health treatment, including a timeline for resourcing and implementing strategies to meet this goal. This directive is already being researched by ODR through its MCJ Closure Work Group, the Auditor/Controller/Chief Executive Office’s (CEO) cost savings consultant, and CEO-Public Safety section.

Also, Measure R tasked the Commission to “reduce the population of people in jail experiencing mental health drug dependency or chronic homelessness issues to save county jail system costs....” This too is currently being researched and covered by several County bodies, including ATI, CEO-Public Safety, ODR, and Measure J.

Nevertheless, the people of Los Angeles County specifically directed the members of the Commission to exercise their independent judgment with respect to the reform of the Sheriff’s Department and reinvestment of public safety dollars in the County. As such, the Commission believes that it must play an important role in developing mechanisms to reduce the jail population and to support community-based public safety initiatives.

Commission Plan

Shortly after passage of Measure R, the Commission established the Measure R Ad Hoc Committee (“Committee”) to begin addressing the requirements of Measure R. Since that time, the Committee has been meeting regularly with County and community-based subject-matter experts.

Recently, the Commission has met several times, and has scheduled a recurring monthly meeting, with the central County representatives now largely responsible for advancing County coordination of the “care first, jails last” and justice reform missions: ATI, CEO and ODR. These meetings will help to further coordinate the County efforts as they relate to Measure R. Based on those discussions, the Commission will take a role in leading subcommittees of the Jail Population Review Council and examine areas that are currently not prioritized by other bodies for more in-depth analysis. In addition, the Commission will participate in and coordinate with other justice reinvestment initiatives and independently assess the data and recommendations produced by such bodies. To further these efforts, and meet our Measure R mandate, the Commission will seek to hire a full-time consultant with significant criminal justice and data analysis experience.

Also, since Measure R specifically tasked the Commission with drafting the Plan and Study, the Commission plans to independently review and analyze each report produced by the current County bodies performing Measure R related work to ensure that the work being done satisfies the requirements of Measure R, as well as assist in making recommendations to the Board. The timeline

for the completion of these efforts is partly dependent upon the progress made by the various County departments engaged in the multiple efforts.

Conclusion

In sum, the Board has invested substantial time and resources to reform the criminal justice system. The efforts of the Commission are not designed to compete with the efforts already made, but rather to enhance and better coordinate the County's collective efforts. The Commission will coordinate closely with the various in-progress County justice reinvestment initiatives and monitor and analyze the progress of those initiatives' aggregate research to help realize the requirements of Measure R in a substantive and timely manner.

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