

July 23, 2024

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

Speeding Up Youth Movement out of Los Padrinos

When a young person comes into contact with the juvenile legal system, and it is determined that they will be held in detention, there are a series of steps and procedures that take place to decide their ultimate disposition - whether it be to the home of a parent, a community-based placement, a Los Angeles County (County) Probation Department (Department) placement, a County camp, a County Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF), or whether they will be transferred to the adult system or placed on Probation supervision. The preliminary determination about where a youth will stay until the court makes a decision on their case is made at arraignment by the judge. The decision is based on a variety of factors, including the young person's offense, their mental health status and other conditions, and the availability of placement options. Ultimately, however, the California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 202 allows "removing the minor from the custody of his or her parents only when necessary for his or her welfare or for the safety and protection of the public." If the court decides to hold a youth, Section 202 requires that the youth "receive care, treatment, and guidance consistent with their best interest and the best interest of the public."

In Los Angeles County, if the court decides a youth should be held until the final disposition is made, youth are held in custody at the Department's sole juvenile hall facility, Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (Los Padrinos). Similar to a county jail, a juvenile hall functions as a locked facility

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where youth are held temporarily, until their disposition and placement location has been determined by the court. The stage prior to the judge's determination of a youth's placement is referred to as "pre-disposition," while the stage after a judge determines a youth's placement is referred to as "post-disposition."

When given a snapshot of the Probation custody statistics on any given day, it is clear that the vast majority of young people being held at Los Padrinos have not yet entered the post-disposition stage, meaning the court has not yet determined if they are responsible for the crime they are accused of committing, or where they will ultimately be placed. However, there are also many youth at the juvenile hall every day who are post-disposition and just awaiting transfer to their next placement facility - between 30 and 50 youth per day, or approximately 15% of the juvenile hall population. For these young people, their next placement location has been identified, but for a number of reasons, that transfer has not yet happened. At times, these youth move quickly through the clearance process and are able to transfer to a placement, camp, or SYTF facility soon after disposition, but at other times, young people languish at Los Padrinos for days or weeks longer than they should. This means for those youth, there is an unnecessary delay in getting to their next placement, and there is a burden on the Los Padrinos facility by increasing the daily population.

As a juvenile hall, Los Padrinos is not an ideal setting for young people to be for extended periods of time. It lacks the consistency in staffing, programmatic opportunities, and homelike environment that the Probation placements, camps, and SYTF facilities are more likely to have.

The staffing crisis that the Department has experienced for years has recently been most problematic at Los Padrinos, since the transfer of all pre-disposition youth to Los Padrinos from Barry J Nidorf Juvenile Hall and Central Juvenile Hall in July of 2023. While staffing levels have improved since then, young people at Los Padrinos lack the presence of consistent staff members due to high numbers of staff on leave and continued staff callouts. Because the length of stay at a juvenile hall is intended to be short, there are fewer opportunities for involvement in enriching therapeutic, vocational, or recreational programming. And while the Internal Services Department worked hard to revamp the facility prior to it being reopened in July, Los Padrinos is a children's detention facility that was originally built in 1957, a time well before the homelike vision of Youth Justice Reimagined was conceived. While the Department is working to resolve its staffing crisis, increasing access to programming, and implementing homelike renovations, the Department must simultaneously work to ensure youth are moving out of Los Padrinos in a timely manner, to decrease the facility's daily population, and ensure the least-restrictive placement for youth.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

Direct the Chief Probation Officer, in consultation with the Director of the Department of Youth Development, the Public Defender, the Alternate Public Defender, the Department of Health Services, and the Department of Mental Health, to report back in 60 days with the following:

1. Data related to the post-disposition movement of youth from Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (Los Padrinos) to their next placement. The report back should include data starting from

July 2023 to the present, and should include at a minimum:

- a. A breakdown of the percentage of youth dispositioned to each of the placement options (community-based suitable placement, Probation Camp, Probation Secure Youth Treatment Facility, Probation Placement - Dorothy Kirby Center, or other).
 - b. Minimum, maximum, and average length of stay at Los Padrinos for post-dispositioned youth, broken down by the facility or placement youth are dispositioned to;
 - c. Percentage of post-dispositioned youth whose transfers take more than three days after the judge's placement determination is made;
 - d. Breakdown of the various reasons youth transfers out of Los Padrinos are delayed, including the medical clearance process, mental health assessment processes, placement facilities waiting to accept youth, challenges with transportation, challenges finding an appropriate community placement, etc.;
 - i. Include average wait times for each of the above reasons for delay.
2. An outline of the steps required post-disposition and before youth can be transferred to their next placement, including which Department and/or bureau is responsible for completing each step;
- a. Include a description of different types of medical and mental health assessments and clearances, at what stages they are required, and any related policies.
3. An analysis of any barriers at each step required post-disposition that is impacting a

speedy transfer of youth out of Los Padrinos into their next placement;

4. A list of recommendations to speed up the post-disposition transfer process of youth out of Los Padrinos to their next placement. The recommendations should consider, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. Drafting a policy about the recommended and maximum allowable wait-time before post-disposition youth are transferred out of Los Padrinos and into their various placements (ex: three days);
- b. Streamlining the medical clearance process;
- c. Exploring efficient and timely transportation options for transfers to different facilities;
- d. Enhancing training for staff and partners at Los Padrinos to handle the transfer process more efficiently, including handling paperwork, coordinating with other agencies, and managing transportation logistics; and
- e. Implementing a system for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the transfer process with regular reports to the Board of Supervisors.

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