

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

March 18, 2025

Transparency in Planning During Probation’s Ongoing Crisis

On February 18, 2025, the Probation department presented a potential “[Facility Plan Update](#)” in response to this Board’s March 21, 2023 revised motion titled “[Adopting a Global Plan for the Probation Department’s Halls and Camps](#)” (Horvath-Hahn). That motion required, among other things, that Probation present a long-term plan for approval “that could be implemented in phases over 2-5 years of receiving approval from the Board, subject to all analysis required by CEQA.” (Emphasis added.)

As part of its plan, Probation proposed dramatic changes to its facilities and operations, including:

- Phase I: (i) relocating medical, clinical and pharmaceutical services to Los Padrinos or Barry J. Nidorf from Central Juvenile Hall, (ii) closing Central Juvenile Hall completely, and (iii) closing Camp Paige and consolidating populations at Camps Afflerbaugh and Paige.
- Phase II: Expanding the small community model by:
 - Moving the boys step-down program from Campus Kilpatrick to Barry J. Nidorf;

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- Moving all girls and gender-expansive youth populations to Campus Kilpatrick (intake, pre-disposition, post-disposition and SYTF);
- Creating a military-style “College Academy” at Barry J. Nidorf for a sub-set of the SYTF boys population;
- Transitioning Dorothy Kirby Center to a boys only facility for boys with special needs, including significant mental health needs;
- Rebuilding Los Padrinos into two separate juvenile halls with small community models in mind;
- Closing Camps Scott and Scudder to youth and converting them to a Probation staff training center and academy.

At the February 18, 2025, Board meeting, Chief Probation Officer Guillermo Viera Rosa admitted that the plan presented was not developed in collaboration with County stakeholders, or community organizations. For example, the plan did not consider staffing changes that the Department of Health Services (DHS) or Department of Mental Health (DMH) would need to make to serve the girls population if it is moved from more centrally located facilities in Downey and Commerce to Malibu, nor did the plan consider outreach to labor partners or the courts.

Asked how Probation would care for pregnant youth under the plan, Chief Viera Rosa wasn't able to give a clear answer other than that there tend to be very few pregnant girls in custody. Chief Viera Rosa also conceded there hadn't been any outreach to communities that surround Probation's facilities and noted that they haven't planned for, or worked out, things as critical as the best way to support visitation by families at

reorganized facilities. The lack of a plan for LGBTQ+ and gender-expansive youth is also concerning, as this Board has prioritized caring for this specific population.

Multiple supervisors indicated that in asking for a plan, they anticipated that Probation would work with County stakeholders to take into consideration their concerns, the challenges they and their staff might experience that need to be addressed, and communication with impacted communities and community members.

Chief Viera Rosa also noted that with respect to Probation's plan to convert Camps Scott and Scudder to a Probation facility were also not complete: Probation still needs to determine what permissible uses there are for the facilities before figuring out exactly how to use them for training and academy sites. Probation insisted that it would not have presented anything to the Board that another department head indicated was "catastrophic" that they could not do. At the same time, Probation conceded that the departments had not had time to weigh in. Instead, Chief Viera Rosa stressed that it was "Probation's plan" but that he is looking for County stakeholders to "operationalize" it.

These considerations are not insignificant. When the County has sought to build out medical and mental health care needs at adult jail facilities that are not centrally located it has had to engage in construction and offer pay incentives to attract sufficient staff. The County has also been sued by local cities directly impacted by changes to Probation's facilities and other jurisdictions have at least threatened to do the same.

Implementing a Care First, Jails Last vision requires prioritizing the health and supportive structures for youth in our care so that their interaction with the justice system is only a fraction of their experience with the County. Those services – including those of our County stakeholders like the Department of Health Services, Department of Mental

Health and Department of Public Health, have to lead for us to implement a Care First approach, they cannot be on the sidelines.

The Probation Department has a difficult history of failures and crisis, many of which include directly refusing to follow the direction of this Board. This Board previously directed Probation to stop using OC spray on young persons in custody. They have not done so. This Board also directed Probation to require that all custodial staff carry Narcan while working in the facilities. Probation treated that directive as though it were voluntary. Probation has been directed to decarcerate girls and gender-expansive youth. They have not done that. Indeed, in its February 18 presentation, probation also failed to mention gender expansive and LGBTQ+ youth. What's more, during the February 18, 2025, meeting, Chief Viera Rosa stated clearly, on the record, that he did not believe any of the proposals included in his plan required Board approval. *He made this statement despite clear and direct language in the Board's March 21, 2023, motion specifically tying the Global Plan proposals to Board approval.*

This Board has been very active in changing its procedures and processes to encourage public participation and transparent dialogue over this past year. On a [motion](#) by Supervisor Mitchell and Barger entitled "Encouraging Public Participation and Deliberation at the Board of Supervisors to Deliver a More Accessible and Community-Driven Approach to Policymaking," this Board began a process that ultimately concluded with most Board motions being considered at an appropriate cluster meeting before being presented to the full Board for adoption. In addition, the Board asked voters to approve Measure G, a comprehensive package of governmental reforms intended to increase transparency, accountability, and representation. With Measure G's victory, Los Angeles

County voters affirmed that communities want greater access and transparency to the actions taken by this Board and its many delegated departments.

With Probation's crisis and this Board's effort to improve transparency and communication with the public and relevant stakeholders, it is critically important that this Board set clear requirements for how Probation moves forward with major changes to its facilities, and how it presents those plans to the Board, County stakeholders, and the greater public.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Probation Department to seek Board approval, and review by an appropriate cluster meeting, in advance of the implementation of, or changes to, the Global Plan and/or Facilities Plan, including but not limited to:

1. Updates that require changes to the operations of any of Campus Kilpatrick, Barry J. Nidorf, Dorothy Kirby Center, or Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall.
2. Updates that require a change in the type of population served at a particular facility, including any facilities being considered for conversion from serving youth to serving staff or other County departments.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Probation Department to consult with the Department of Health Services, Department of Mental Health, Department of Public Health, Department of Youth Development, Los Angeles County Office of Education, and any other appropriate County stakeholders before submitting any further Global Plan or Facilities Plan update to the Board or appropriate cluster.

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