



Memorandum

TO: MAYOR'S GANG PREVENTION
TASK FORCE POLICY TEAM

FROM: Councilmember Nora Campos
Supervisor George Shirakawa

SUBJECT: ADDITIONS TO THE TASK
FORCE WORK PLAN

DATE: February 26, 2010

Approved

Nora Campos

[Signature]

Date

2-26-10

INTRODUCTION

The Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force has played a critical role in responding to violence in our community over the last year. City and County staff, the Police Department, and community-based organizations worked together with the community to make our schools and neighborhoods safer. As our families continue to struggle with a lack of jobs, educational advancement, and unsafe environments, we know the Policy Team remains dedicated to improving its practices and strategies.

In this spirit, we have drafted the following recommendations to be added to the work plan for consideration. These recommendations include items we ask the Policy Team to move forward with immediately, such as the renewal of the gang injunctions, as well as longer-term efforts, such as improvements to the Safe Summer Initiative and BEST, aimed at increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force's efforts. While we believe that these strategies will make a marked improvement in the City and County's approach to gang violence, our intent is to encourage a dialogue among the members of the Task Force on the most effective ways to implement these strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Renew and Expand Gang Injunctions
 - a. Utilize gang-related crime statistics to identify potential hotspots to be targeted for expanded gang injunctions.
 - b. Direct the City Attorney and County Counsel to work with the San José Police Department, County Probation Department and the Sheriff's Office to actively gather relevant information that would be needed to institute injunctions.

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2. Focus BEST Resources
 - a. Refine the gang prevention and intervention definitions to clarify and focus BEST eligibility on early intervention, intervention, and re-entry services.
 - b. Tie the Hotspot Exercise and police statistics to the deployment of BEST resources.
 - c. Measure the effectiveness of the MGPTF at a Hotspot level.
 - d. Increase accountability for BEST-funded Agencies.
 - e. Improve the ability to deploy resources swiftly in response to crises.

3. Expand the Safe Summer Initiative
 - a. Include a job training and placement component for older teenagers and young adults (16-21 years old). Priority should be placed on securing green job opportunities for participating youth and young adults.
 - b. Waive permit fees for the utilization of parks for social activities related to the Safe Summer Initiative.

4. Highlight a Re-Entry Working Group as Part of the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force
 - a. Under the leadership of the Task Force's Interagency Subcommittee, this committee should be charged with crafting recommendations and policies aimed at decreasing rates of recidivism while increasing the health and productivity in lifestyles adopted by ex-offenders.
 - b. The Committee should also be charged with developing strategies to decrease youth crime and victimization perpetuated by adult offenders.

ANALYSIS

Renew and Expand Injunction Areas to Hotspots Throughout the City of San José

The City of San José was one of the first in the nation to implement injunctions as a means of combating gangs. These injunctions, while used selectively, have been extremely effective in limiting the proliferation of gang activity in those neighborhoods where they have been implemented. This is a strategy that has been largely overlooked in the last few years, but one that should be revisited.

In order to effectively implement a gang injunction, the City Attorney must be armed with an extensive array of documentation regarding the gang activity occurring in a specific neighborhood. We recommend that the Police Department, County Sheriff's Office, and County Probation Department coordinate with the City Attorney's and County Counsel's Offices to begin compiling the necessary documentation in those areas identified through the MGPTF Hotspot Exercises.

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Focus BEST Resources

Tie the Hotspot Exercise and police and probation statistics to the deployment of BEST

The Hotspot Exercise is an invaluable tool, along with the San Jose Police Department's statistics, in driving resource allocation decisions. Currently, funding allocated towards gang prevention and intervention strategies are spread throughout the City and are not directly tied to where incidents of gang violence are being documented. While it is important that these services are available throughout the city, in every community, the bulk of our resources should be focused on those communities consistently experiencing a dangerous proliferation of gang activity. As City staff develops criteria for future cycles, we recommend focusing resources on neighborhoods where incidents of gang violence are occurring. In addition, we recommend that the Police Department include hotspot-specific crime statistics in its reports to the Policy Team. These reports will assist the Policy Team in measuring the effectiveness of intervention and prevention efforts in hotspot neighborhoods and in identifying potential service gaps.

The Tech Team is an integral component to how hotspots are identified and the mechanism for rolling out solutions to resolve hotspot issues. At a division-wide level, many hotspots are consistently discussed and resources deployed based on need. On an annual basis, the Tech Team and division leads should provide the Policy Team with hotspot outcomes and work plans for the coming year. Some needs are the same year in and year out, without little overall improvement to the neighborhood. We believe that hotspot work plans will result in more focused effort and community improvements.

Increase accountability for BEST-funded Agencies

BEST-funded CBOs that provide critical gang intervention services are charged with implementing many of our core strategies in the fight against gang violence. Given the importance of their role, the Task Force must take steps to ensure accountability for the City's funding, as well as ensure that future funding agreements with CBOs establish clear expectations of both CBOs and City staff.

In anticipation of the next funding allocation cycle, we recommend that the MGPTF Policy Team discuss strategies designed to implement these recommendations.

Expand the Summer Safe Initiative

The Task Force is rightly focused on providing at-risk youth with safe summer activities as a strategy to prevent an escalation of youth violence over the summer months. However, the primary focus of this effort should be placed on providing youth with summer employment training opportunities. By partnering with various stakeholders throughout the City and County, such as Work2Future, Center for Employment Training, Center for Training and Careers, and the San José Conservation Corps, the Task Force

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should identify businesses and service agencies able to employ and/or train at-risk youth during the summer. While not only serving to provide youth with safe activities, this strategy will also provide at-risk youth with a source of income, job training, and a tangible alternative to gang life.

In an effort to maximize the resources dedicated to the Safe Summer Initiative, stakeholders have suggested eliminating City fees associated with the Initiative's events. While it is counterintuitive that the City would both fund the summer program but also charge park fees for its events, the budget implications of waiving fees is understood. By waiving those fees, more of the appropriated funding can be dedicated to fulfilling the Initiative's goals.

Include Re-Entry Collaborative under the Interagency Subcommittee

More emphasis, both in effort and funding, needs to be placed on reducing the County's recidivism rate for offenders ages 18-35. In order to accomplish this goal, the Interagency Collaborative Subcommittee has added this to its work plan. As part of its work, the Committee should also work to develop creative strategies aimed at decreasing youth crime and victimization perpetuated by adult offenders.

Currently, the City of San Jose Housing Department is leading an effort with the County's Department of Corrections to apply and compete for funding from the federal Second Chance Act grant. With the MGPTF partners, we have formed an impressive re-entry collaborative aimed at targeting offenders in the county jail aged 18-35, who may have children, may be homeless, and gang involved. By reaching into the jail and building relationships among the offenders prior to release, we believe the re-entry plans will lead to reduced recidivism, more stable and healthier families, and safer communities.

By aligning the good work of Destination Home's Discharge Planning Committee with the MGPTF and key providers of intervention and crisis services, we are leveraging our resources and targeting those most at-risk of re-offending.

CONCLUSION

While the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force has become a nationally recognized model for combating gangs, many of our communities continue to suffer a seemingly never-ending cycle of violence. There will always be improvements that can be made to the Task Force's policies and practices. As we enter into a new year, and a new decade, it is time to reestablish our focus on our existing challenges and explore solutions in light of the current gang environment.

We look forward to working with the members of the Task Force to implement the recommendations contained in this memorandum. Most importantly, we hope to have

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laid the foundation for creative and productive discussions in the year to come as we work collaboratively to protect our communities from gang violence.

