



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jon Cicirelli

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: May 22, 2024

Approved

Date: 5/23/24

SUBJECT: OPTIONS FOR INCREASING VIOLENCE PREVENTION EFFORTS

BACKGROUND

The City of San José currently implements a robust set of violence prevention strategies, which include the most common and well-studied violence prevention and intervention approaches along the continuum found in other jurisdictions. The Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) Department operates public recreation services such as camps, afterschool, and teen centers and, through the Youth Empowerment Alliance, provides gang intervention services and community-based youth violence programming for children and youth ages 6-24.

On May 10, 2022, the City Council accepted the report of the Reimagining Public Safety Community Advisory Committee (“Committee”), a community-led advisory body that developed 50 recommendations for reforms within the San José Police Department as well as for alternative approaches to public safety. In early 2023, the City Manager’s Office engaged the Racial Equity Action Leadership (REAL) Coalition to discuss advancing the Committee’s recommendations. These discussions led the City Manager’s Office to produce a research report¹ on violence prevention approaches across the country.

On February 6, 2024, the City Council accepted the research report and directed the City Manager’s Office to prepare a Manager’s Budget Addendum as part of the 2024-2025 Budget Process laying out potential options for the City Council’s consideration for increasing the City’s investment in violence prevention efforts: (a) in the form of increased investment in the City’s existing programs; or (b) through the creation of new efforts to prevent violence in San José.²

This Manager’s Budget Addendum responds to that direction, providing three options for increasing the City’s investments in violence prevention programs.

¹ <https://sanjoseca.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=c507720d-dad2-4ca5-bde0-9d0954d02f9f>

² <https://sanjoseca.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=14afa611-ee82-491b-92e0-cbceb2ac4844>

ANALYSIS

The following options would strengthen the City’s continuum of violence prevention programs. Option 1 describes opportunities for increasing funding for two existing programs: recreational scholarships for City-operated children and youth services, and BEST community-based services. Options 2 and 3 would add additional staff in PRNS for violence prevention work beyond youth violence and could be implemented over several consecutive fiscal years.

Option 1 – Expand Existing Violence Prevention Programs

Expanding investments in the City’s existing violence prevention programs avoids administrative costs associated with hiring additional staff and/or starting a new City initiative while enabling our programs to expand coverage to additional at-risk youth and meet identified needs in the Youth Empowerment Alliance Strategic Plan 2023-2026.

Increase Ongoing Children and Youth Recreation Scholarships by \$500,000

Access to public recreation for youth is a key aspect of a strong community violence and gang prevention strategy. In addition to the positive physical activity, public recreation programs also provide safe, supportive environments and act as quality childcare during summer and afterschool periods. PRNS is committed to broad access to children and families that are already facing inequalities based on income level, disabilities, residential zip code, language, race, and ethnicity.

In 2022-2023, PRNS provided a record level of \$3.6 million in scholarship funding and was able to provide the necessary support to residents and families. This was from a General Fund allocation of approximately \$1.2 million plus American Rescue Plan funds in the amount of \$2.4 million. This allocation resulted in 3,376 scholarships issued to eligible families already participating in a Low-Income governmental subsidy program (e.g., Medical, Electronic Benefits Transfer, Women, Infants and Children, Section 8). Analysis of recipients receiving a 2022-2023 PRNS scholarship indicated that 43% live in a recognized Qualified Census Tract (QCT) and that communities of color were positively impacted. The American Rescue Plan funds for scholarships have been fully expended and are not available for 2024-2025. For 2024-2025, the budget for scholarships is \$1.4 million and is estimated to serve 1,500 unduplicated youth participants.

An increase of \$500,000 in children and youth recreation scholarships will fund the participation of approximately 200 additional children at no cost in a variety of services (e.g., preschool, afterschool, camps) with differing price points.

Increase BEST Grant Funding for Community-Based Organizations by \$400,000

The Bringing Everyone’s Strengths Together (BEST) appropriation represents the funding allocated to the San José Youth Empowerment Alliance (Alliance) youth violence prevention and intervention efforts. It funds two operational areas: 1) PRNS Youth Intervention Services

Unit (YIS); and 2) the BEST Grant Program, which funds non-profit partners in priority neighborhoods.³

If the BEST appropriation was increased by \$400,000, PRNS would expand BEST grant funding in the eligible service areas of youth development and leadership, family and neighborhood strengthening, and individual and whole support. This action would increase BEST grant funding from \$2.8 million in the 2024-2025 Proposed Operating Budget to \$3.2 million.

Fund and Appropriation	2024-2025 Cost	Ongoing Cost
General Fund – Fee Activities	\$500,000	\$500,000
General Fund – San José BEST and Safe Summer Initiative Programs	\$400,000	\$400,000
TOTAL	\$900,000	\$900,000

Option 2 – Expansion to Coordinate and Pursue Additional Violence Prevention Efforts and Resource Development

If the City Council prioritizes funding to pursue the expansion of violence prevention efforts beyond the current gang-related violence focus of City services, PRNS recommends the addition of a Senior Analyst position as a foundational component for policy or program development/research and resource brokering in the broader categories of youth and adult-related violence prevention areas, as well as:

- Interpersonal/Family/Teen Dating Violence: Pending development and funding of a domestic violence prevention service model, this position would manage related programs in the portfolio.
- Coordinate violence prevention programs with systems change initiative in the two demonstration sites per the City Council’s direction for implementation of the Children and Youth Master Plan.
- Providing capacity to allow the Alliance Division Manager to engage in higher level inter-agency coordination and achievement of Objectives/Key Results, Strategic Plan oversight.
- Engage in resource development efforts aimed at generating non-General Fund revenue sources to enhance and expand violence prevention services and programs.

³ Priority Neighborhood Map: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/parks-recreation-neighborhood-services/sjyca>

Fund and Appropriation	2024-2025 Cost	Ongoing Cost
General Fund – Personal Services	\$195,032	\$195,032
General Fund – Non-Personal / Equipment	\$2,000	\$1,000
TOTAL	\$197,032	\$196,032

Position Changes

Position Classification	2024-2025 FTE	Ongoing FTE
Senior Analyst	1.0	1.0
TOTAL	1.0	1.0

Option 3 – Create an Office of Violence Prevention

The Violence Prevention Report studied how other jurisdictions approached violence prevention programming and policy, finding that many other jurisdictions centralize such work in a dedicated “Office of Violence Prevention.”⁴ These offices are located within a broad range of different locations within their respective organizations.

If the City of San José were to pursue this approach, the Administration recommends locating such an office in PRNS. This option differs from Option 2 listed above by adding a Deputy Director-level position in PRNS, to provide greater focus and expanded capacity for County-wide coordination of violence prevention work, as well as the Senior Analyst position described in Option 2. A Deputy Director level position would manage the totality of an “Office of Violence Prevention” as the current Deputy Director who oversees the Alliance also manages the growing and complex efforts of BeautifySJ. Under this scenario, one Deputy Director would oversee the Encampment Management, Illegal Dumping, and the updated neighborhoods association engagement model, while the other Deputy Director would focus on leading the Alliance (Policy and Technical teams), San José BEST grants and evaluations, Youth Gang Prevention and Intervention programs, as well as the new Office. Building such an office would:

- Foster, promote, and supervise community-centered approach to violence prevention programming and police, including community-based approaches to preventing domestic/intimate partner violence.
- Evaluate efficacy of existing violence intervention and prevention services and make policy recommendations.
- Promote research, data collection, and analysis of violence intervention and prevention strategies.

⁴ <https://sanjoseca.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=14afa611-ee82-491b-92e0-cbceb2ac4844>

- Coordinate and integrate violence prevention activities across the City with the Children and Youth Master Plan.
- Coordinate with local, regional, state, and federal partners to exchange best practices, advocate for relevant policy changes, and pursue grant funding for violence prevention programming.
- Pursue alternatives to police intervention and co-response intervention models to facilitate more effective responses to 911 calls for service.

Fund and Appropriation	2024-2025 Cost	Ongoing Cost
General Fund – Personal Services	\$452,395	\$452,395
General Fund – Non-Personal / Equipment	\$4,000	\$2,000
TOTAL	\$456,395	\$454,395

Position Changes

Position Classification	2024-2025 FTE	Ongoing FTE
Deputy Director	1.0	1.0
Senior Analyst	1.0	1.0
TOTAL	2.0	2.0

COORDINATION

The Manager’s Budget Addendum was coordinated with the Police Department, the City Attorney’s Office, and the City Manager’s Budget Office.

/s/
JON CICIRELLI
Director, Parks, Recreation, and
Neighborhood Services