CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention

March 17, 2011

To: Commission Members

From: Ad-Hoc Committee on Crime Free Multi-Housing

William Lansdowne, Chief of Police, Commission Member
Represented by Shelley Zimmerman, Assistant Chief
Mack Jenkins, Chief Probation Officer, Commission Member
Represented by Stacy Adams, Probation Director Special Operations
Rosa Ana Lozada, CEO, Harmonium Inc., Commission Member
Alicia De Torres, Commission Member
Lynn Sharpe-Underwood, Executive Director

Priority Focus #2: Support integration of services

Goal 1 – Establish an effective, coordinated, collaboration process to impact gang activity citywide.

Action Item A:

Recommended Action

That the City of San Diego Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention support the implementation of the Crime Free Multi-Housing program throughout the City of San Diego as a strategy to impact the reduction of gangs and crime in our City.

Recommend Action 2: that the Commission also establish a new Ad Hoc committee to gather statistics and track impact of the CFMH and report back to the Commission in July.

Background

At the October 21, 2010 City of San Diego Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention meeting Commissioner Gore shared that the San Diego County Sheriff's Department had success with the Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH) program in the unincorporated areas of San Diego County addressing criminal activity at apartment communities.

Commissioner Gore introduced San Diego Sheriff's Department Commander Patricia Duke, San Diego Sheriff's Department Crime Prevention Specialist Alyssa Dean, and Richard Preuss from the Institute for Public Strategy. They presented information on the CFMH Program and its successful implementation in San Diego County. Highlights of the project include: a decrease of policies calls and law enforcement intervention in high risk multi-family residential apartments,

increase in community engagement in creating safer multi-family residential apartment complexes, and overall improved quality of life for the community.

The Commission established an Ad Hoc Committee to research Crime-Free Multi Housing as a strategy to impact gangs and crime in our city. These are the Ad Hoc Committee's findings:

- Safety is basic to personal and civic health, and gang violence and criminal activity has not only wounded and killed community members, but has rendered some segments of California's communities dysfunctional; and

- Gang violence and criminal activity is a plague that results in the tragic loss of life and serious injury, undermines families and neighborhoods, threatens the well-being of cities, including the ability of community members to be safe outside their homes, and affects an overall sense of community connectedness and hope, especially in residential multi-family housing facilities; and

- Residents living in multi-family residential rental housing facilities are frequently victimized when the complex in which they live is unsafe, and gangs have taken over entire apartment complexes and created an atmosphere of fear where residents feel hostage in their own homes; and

- Negligent apartment owners are not maintaining their properties at an adequate level creating safety hazards and environments where residents are afraid to leave their units and report crimes committed against them and their neighbors; and

- Rental property can be susceptible to higher incidents of criminal activity and nuisances issues due to higher density living, tenant turnover rates, and lack of community involvement by tenants. The City of San Diego has a high ratio of rental properties, 50.5% of housing in San Diego is rental property. Proper maintenance of these apartment communities can reduce criminal activity and improve the safety of residents; and

- The Crime Free Multi Housing, (CFMH) program has reduced crime and blight at complexes in the unincorporated part of San Diego county where it has already been implemented; and

- Properties that participate in the CFMH save local law enforcement agencies a significant amount of time and money. At the Woodglen Vista Apartments in Lakeside, calls for service in 2010 totaled $13,517, that's a 61% reduction from the previous year and a 73% reduction in costs over a two year period; and

- The International Crime Free Association, a non-profit organization of law enforcement agencies here in the U.S. and abroad, estimates that crime-free housing properties see, on average, a 37% reduction in police calls for service; and

- Managers representing 38 apartment complexes located in the City of San Diego have already completed 8 hours of CFMH classroom training. This training has already

created a positive impact for these 38 apartment communities and their more than 5,500 apartment units and an estimated 15,000 residents; and

- On December 18, 2010, the Ad-Hoc Committee met to discuss the structure of the CFMH program as it would be applied in the City of San Diego. They fleshed out the implementation of the program, the organizations that would be involved, and the steps needed to make the program successful. The Ad-Hoc Committee determined that the implementation of the program would be a collaborative effort on behalf of the City of San Diego Police Department, the City Attorney's Office, San Diego County Department of Probation, San Diego Unified School District and apartment complex managers throughout the City; and

- On January 19, 2011, the Ad-Hoc Committee members attended portions of the CFMH apartment manager training. Members of the Committee interacted with apartment manager attendees to find out what they thought of the program and the training it provided. The consensus amongst the apartment managers regarding the training was consistently positive. They mentioned the value of different topics presented at the training to improve their respective apartment communities. Many mentioned that the training provided them insight into apartment management components and resources that they hadn't heard or thought of before. The training also sparked creative thinking in the apartment manager attendees to improve their communities, e.g. beginning a community garden for the renters. Overall, after discussing the training with the managers the Ad-Hoc Committee recognized the positive impact of the training, and the potential for significant betterment of the community if the full CFMH program is implemented by the City of San Diego; and

- On February 3, 2011, at a meeting for the residents of the President John Adams Manor Apartment Community, a resident said that since the property management had attended the CFMH training class and the property hada CFMH safety/security inspection they have noticed increased lighting, better tended trees and shrubbery, and more cooperation between residents and management. Residents feel like their voices are being heard and their concerns are being addressed in a timely manner. Residents also report feeling they are more comfortable letting their children and grandchildren play outside; and

- Phase One of the CFMH program, Management Training, ensures educating managers on how to identify gang violence and criminal activity and other safety-related issues, how to build a positive partnership with the police, how to address tenants that engage in criminal activity, and how to improve resident screening practices; and

- Phase Two of the CFMH program, Security, Safety, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED),ensures managers learn about the CPTED principals that can immediately improve safety around their apartment communities including repairing broken locks, increased lighting and proper landscaping techniques to reduce blind spots and areas where criminal activity can thrive; and

- Phase Three of the CFMH program, Resident Participation, ensures that residents play an active role in their apartment communities, including a willingness to report crimes when they see them. As such, residents become more active in their apartment communities, and their perception of their community is changed from a tone of fear to overall feeling of safety and well being; and

- Some of the most problematic multi-housing complexes do not voluntarily participate in the CFMH program, the community can further benefit through the enactment of an ordinance that mandates nuisance properties to participate in the CFMH program; and

- CFMH is an inclusive process that creates collaborative and cooperative relationships within the community so that apartment residents should be able to live, work, and play in a safe environment;

The current Ad Hoc Committee having researched the Crime Free Multi-Housing program, recommends that the City of San Diego Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention support the implementation of the Crime Free Multi-Housing program throughout the City of San Diego as a strategy to impact the reduction of gangs and crime in our City.

Recommend Action 2: that the Commission also establish a new Ad Hoc committee to gather statistics and track impact of the CFMH and report back to the Commission in July.