

New Direction

The City of San Diego

Commission

on

Gang Prevention and Intervention

Strategic Action Plan 2011-2012

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Introduction

The catalyst for the creation of the Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention happened on New Year's Eve 2003 with the murders of two innocent women – Carol Waite and Cynthia Burton-- at the corner of Logan Avenue and Euclid Avenue. The San Diego City Council, through the work of the late Councilman Charles Lewis, became aware that a more focused strategy was needed for gang prevention and intervention.

City Council President Anthony Young worked with the City Manager and the Chief of Police to develop a collaborative process to engage the whole city around this issue including City Schools, law enforcement, youth and former gang members, as well as representatives from all over the City of San Diego.

In April 2006, with the support of the Mayor and fellow City Council members, Council President Young authored legislation that created the Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention in response to the community's concerns and the overwhelming sense that in order to have an impact on youth violence, the community and law enforcement should be working together.

The purpose of the 21 member Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention is to:

1. Develop a strategic collaborative effort between various agencies who work with gang related issues.
2. Make policy recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on issues of gang prevention, intervention, diversion and suppression methods, identify local, state and federal funding sources, and identify best practice efforts
3. Advocate, formulate, and recommend for adoption proactive gang policies, ordinances and guidelines.

The Commission developed a Strategic Action plan in 2007 and updated it with a Workplan in 2008 which was reviewed and updated again for 2009-2010¹. The Commission implemented collaborative initiatives and legislation support as detailed in the attached work plan. The success of the past years and current initiatives have continued the strong foundation built by Commission during the last five years.

Looking forward, Commission members realize that "Gang prevention is not enough". The consensus of the Commission is that gang prevention really is a product of communities working together, agencies integrating services and multi-agency/cross-disciplinary conversations about providing comprehensive support within the community.

Further, the Commission believes that the new direction outlined in this plan must go forward despite the current decrease in violence in our communities.

¹ <http://www.sandiego.gov/gangcommission/pdf/09workplan.pdf>

Research reminds us that we have opportunities to make a difference early in a child's life (the Washington State Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory committee): *"serious delinquent behavior often starts with authority conflict behavior around age 7, moderately serious behavior at age 9.5 and serious delinquency at age 12. The average first contact with juvenile court is at age 14.5."*²

There are approximately 1,743 youth "on probation" in San Diego. One hundred-thirty seven of these youth are documented gang members though many more in the system are gang involved. We must focus attention on these youth in order to impede their trajectory toward violence and the prison system. The Commission is continuously working to facilitate collaborations to interrupt this pathway as demonstrated in our collaborative curfew sweeps with the San Diego Police Department, our work with County Mental Health, Child Welfare and San Diego City Schools.

The Commission would also like to extend its appreciation to the Ad Hoc Team who spent hours on building this New Directions Report.

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This document reflects the Commission's commitment to the youth of the City of San Diego and the new direction we are taking over the next two years.

Thank you for your support.



Pastor Harry Cooper, Jr.
Chair

² Washington State Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee's Policy Brief: "Community Based-Based Gang Prevention and Intervention (2008)

City of San Diego

Commission on Gang Prevention & Intervention

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Community Scan

There are nearly 4,000 registered gang members in the City of San Diego. Only about 100 are juveniles. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), no one has been able to adequately define the term “gang” and there is little consensus among researchers about the term. Law enforcement’s definition of street gangs is used for criminal cases. The California Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention (S.T.E.P.) Act California Penal Code Section 186.22 states:

As used in this chapter, “Criminal street gang” means any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one its primary activities the commission of one or more of the criminal act enumerated in paragraphs (1) to (25) inclusive or subdivision (e), having a common name or common identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal gang activity.

Gang related violence happens all over our city. In 2007, the city was rocked by the ongoing retaliation and anger demonstrated by 28 murders. Many of these homicides were of young people under the age of 30 with some of them juveniles.

In 2009, the total number of homicides for the year was nine, compared to 21 in 2008. There were 245 aggravated assaults, including one shooting, which was a 22% decline. There were 74 arrests for gang related crime: 29 were for probation violations, and nine were for parole violations. In December, six fire-arms were recovered from gang members. This is the largest drop in crime since crime has been recorded in the City of San Diego (17.9%).

Communities and agencies working together have gotten a foothold in decreasing gang violence. The decrease is the result of not only the San Diego Police’s aggressive suppression efforts - including an initiative called Red Sky which netted 93 gang members - but also the efforts of the community and their involvement with the twice monthly collaborative curfew sweeps; the extended hours, on Fridays, at three recreation centers – Mountain View, Southcrest and Memorial (funded by the CALgrip grant); Project Safeway which monitors 15 corners in Southeastern San Diego; the Hire A Youth Summer program which gave jobs to 3,000 youth county wide. Ongoing programs which enhanced these strategies included programs at the Jackie Robinson YMCA, the Encanto Boys and Girls Club; mentoring programs at Gompers (Metro United), the Urban League and O’Farrell (Social Advocates for Youth); California Wellness’s support of community outreach interns to facilitate initiatives and support the work of the commission; the community outreach work with youth by Inner City Youth, New Harvest Churches and Overcoming Gangs & Beyond. The Commission’s next step strategies will strengthen these collaborative efforts.

New Direction

The Commission feels that the basic ingredients required for gang prevention and intervention include a wide variety of initiatives. After five years of intensive learning, the Commission intends to continue baseline programs that have provided critical and impactful services while

simultaneously adding new elements that respond to changing trends, challenging circumstances and identified unmet needs.

The Commission's vision has been modified for continued effectiveness and relevancy as well as to support its implementation strategy and goals. They are:

1. Pursue strategies to prevent the growth of gang activity and violence in San Diego neighborhoods through multi-dimensional collaborative efforts.
2. Facilitate Community involvement through strategic guidance and leadership.
3. Identify necessary funding to accomplish goals.

The vision and priorities will guide the implementation of the following five strategic action goals and collaborative efforts:

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

Goal 2 Develop joint partnerships to help address the gang issues within the City of San Diego

Goal 3 Establish a data and research analysis process to keep the Mayor, City Council and Commission aware of key gang trends and anti-gang research on an ongoing basis

Goal 4 Build capacity for existing, effective and promising gang prevention and intervention programs/strategies on a neighborhood basis with current funding level.

Goal 5 Develop a sustainable funding strategy for implementation of the Strategic Action plan.

The Commission' goals reflect a researched strategy that demonstrates:

*Preventing violence is a top-down (**high-level leadership**)—bottom-up(**Community engagement**) venture. In the middle, strong **collaboration** is supported by on-going attention from dedicated **staffing**.³*

Emerging Trends

1. *Gang violence is sophisticated and the bad effects on gang involvement need to be reacted to rather than just focusing on reducing gang involved homicides.*

Gang violence is complex. It includes homicides, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny/theft, and drug sales.⁴ It has been difficult to track the impact of prevention or intervention programs on this dimension of gang violence in our community. We do know that despite the decrease in homicides, (only 2 as of May 2010) which resulted from our community collaborations, there has been little impact on other gang related crimes, with auto

³ Unity's Road Map: "Partnerships" page 1

⁴ National Youth Gang Center *The Impact of Gangs on Communities* pg. 4 (2006)

theft up by 8% and other crimes up by 9%. There were 78 gang related assaults as of May 2010; with a total of 213 assaults in 2009.

2. *The long term impact of early exposure to violence impacts our youth.*

Any type of violence is as detrimental to the community as homicides. Young gang members who witness violent attacks or are victims of attacks or participate in burglary or robberies are at risk of following the path to incarceration. School performance and school attendance are often indicators of these types of behaviors.

The following facts are from the July 2010 brief distributed by the Justice Policy Institute:

*Research shows that while up to 34 percent of children in the United States have experienced at least one traumatic event, between 75 and 93 percent of youth entering the juvenile justice system annually in this country are estimated to have experienced some degree of trauma.*⁵

3. *The State and Federal governments are funding collaborations of community based organizations or agencies.*

The Commission will continue to support and facilitate collaborations applying for funding. Collaborations strengthen the efforts and focus of initiatives within the community.

4. *Philanthropic organizations and Federal agencies are also specifically focusing on neighborhood based strategies.*

The California Endowment has made a 10 year commitment to 14 communities throughout the state to concentrate efforts towards building healthy communities through policy, systems, and environmental change. In San Diego, City Heights is one of these focus communities. The Endowment's vision is that a long term investment is key to building strong communities and impacting violence, which is one of the priority issues identified in City heights through surveys and community dialogue.

A collaboration of residents, non-profit agencies and government representatives has developed a road map of how they want to move forward in impacting violence and health issues. The Commission participated in the Peace Promotion planning group.

To date the collaborative has solidified a governance structure and decision-making process; facilitated networking and relationship building; established

⁵ [Healing Wounds](#)

trust; fostered a spirit of collaboration among individuals, agencies, and groups involved; as well as mobilized resident leaders and conducted house meetings in which residents identified their needs, interests, and priorities related to the health of their community. Funding for specific programs will be distributed in the fall.

The U.S. Department of Education recently released application for its discretionary and competitive grants called Promised Neighborhoods. The program is:

Intended to significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of all children in our most distressed communities, including rural and tribal communities, and to transform those communities⁶.

5. *There is an increase interest at many levels of government to only fund “evidenced based” programs.*

Programs that reach out to young people to help them make better choices and move away from gang involvement and violence are important in our community. Many of the most impactful programs in the community are not evidenced based programs. Evidence-based programs are researched based programs that through research and evaluation demonstrate effectiveness and can be replicated to continue to show effectiveness. Sometimes state or federal agencies will consider promising practices which have limited outcomes and may not have strong evaluation components because they have not been sufficiently replicated to prove consistent success.

Determination of evidence-based programs is very costly, long term, and is often focused on populations that are dynamic or irrelevant to a community most interested in affecting results. Small agencies often do not have the knowledge or sophisticated infrastructure to track and measure outcomes that can lead to a compelling rationale as to why they should be funded.

6. *State and local governments and some philanthropic organizations are having budget issues and are cutting funding to critical violence prevention programs.*

The costs of not supporting the efforts of these organizations and of not facilitating these collaborative initiatives amount to the cost of loss of a young person’s life plus the cost of the burden on society. According to the Center for Disease and Control, the average cost of a firearm related death is \$33,000. Gun-related injuries total over \$300,000 for each occurrence. Eighty percent of gunshot victims are uninsured. As a result, taxpayers and insurance holders are left with the burden and massive health care cost associated with firearm violence. Taxpayers alone pay about 85% of medical costs for victims of gun violence.⁷

⁶ [Promise Neighborhoods](#)

⁷ Gunderson, Linda. Citing Website. *The Financial Costs of Gun Violence*. 2006. Retrieved June 21, 2010 from <http://www.annals.org/content/131/6/483.extract>

Further, the cost of incarcerating a gang member in California has now risen to \$43,000 a year.⁸

7. *Our 2010 Listening Tour also provided additional trends from the community perspective.*

Gang prevention research underscores that prevention means addressing the following factors contributing to violence:

- Lack of social opportunities,
- The degree of social disorganization present in a community,
- Poverty,
- Institutional racism,
- Deficiencies in social policies, and
- A lack of or misdirected social controls.⁹

A community wide strategy should include prevention, intervention and suppression. But what does that mean to San Diegans? Since December 2009, the Commission invited youth and communities through-out the City of San Diego to provide input, to share their concerns and offer solutions to these issues from their perspectives.

We want to thank Dr. Ami Carpenter, of the University San Diego University Peace and Justice Studies for providing the listening tour data in a format that has helped the commission craft its work for 2011-2012.

Approximately 120 participants attending (listening tour) meetings in several neighborhoods including: Logan, City Heights, Clairmont, Lincoln Park, San Ysidro, Golden Hill and Sherman Heights. Attendees expressed their ideas and concerns. The findings from these meetings helped determine our next steps. The detailed report is attached. Here are some highlights of the report:

- *The majority of respondents (81%) view schools as the most important place for preventing and transforming gang membership.*
 - This number includes both youth and adult respondents. Highlighted in particular were classes on conflict resolution, communication, social skills, and leadership as well as school cultures that empower young people.
- Respondents felt that “Community Centers” and after-school programs are very effective, and that Physical Infrastructure (streetlights, zoning restrictions to remove liquor-stores) reduce crime and drug sales.

⁸ Urban Strategies Council, *The Rising Costs of Incarceration: Criminal Investment Decisions* (2007)

⁹ The UNITY Urban Agenda for Prevention Violence Before It Occurs (pg. 2, April 2010)

- The top priorities for services and resources for transforming gangs were :
 - Job Placement (46%)
 - Community Centers (38%)
 - Physical Infrastructure such as lighting (11%)
- The community felt that the most effective social interventions were described as:
 - o Programs that link youth to New Social Networks (new people, voices, and ideas)
 - o Community-Based (i.e. Overcoming Gangs, Turning Hearts)
 - o School-Based
 - o Prison/Probation-based (i.e. Jolt)
 - o Mentoring Programs
 - o School-Based Crisis Intervention Programs/Holistic Family Therapy
- According to several respondents, the Commission on Gang Prevention & Intervention has effectively raised awareness of the problem & built trust between community members and public agencies. Curfew sweeps have been another effective strategy that brought police together with other community members to monitor after-hours activity by young people.
- Protective police presence was identified as an important role in keeping neighborhoods safe. Respondents in Sherman Heights emphasized the importance of rapid police response to 911 calls. Youth respondents in Lincoln Park emphasized police presence as a factor in feeling safe walking to and from school. Several respondents requested greater police presence in high-crime neighborhoods.

Building on Our Successes: New Direction

The Commission has identified these four primary focuses for 2011-2012:

1. Jobs (training as well as placement)
2. Supporting integration of services
3. Facilitating Youth Activities
4. Early intervention strategies

The four focus areas offer both existing and fresh opportunities to address gang prevention/ intervention and correspond to the following goals and implementation initiatives of the Commission:

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

2009-10 Focus: Working with Multi-agency teams across the City (Mira Mesa, Linda Vista, South Bay and Southeastern) continued to facilitate initiatives:

Collaborative Truancy/Curfew Sweeps are Citywide. Southeastern and Mid City are currently working together with community based organizations on this strategy within their Divisions.

Commissioners are involved in San Diego Unified's 10 to Succeed in 16 schools; staff participates on Truancy Task Force.

Work with Police Department, Park and Recreation, SANDAG and Metro United Methodist Ministries on the CALgrip grant to serve 2000 youth at three Recreation Centers.

Facilitate Safe Passage at Montgomery Middle School, Mann Middle School (in collaboration with Local Initiatives Support Corporation - LISC) and Nestor Elementary.

Commissioners have participated in youth events around the city and the Listening Tour youth events.

Commission staff teamed with Workforce Partnership on connecting programs with youth.

Six churches and organizations formed the Compassion project which outreaches to families impacted by gang violence as well as suicides and other types of deaths. Eighteen families have been helped.

2011 New Direction:

(Priority Focus #1) The Commission will partner with the Housing Commission in educating and outreaching to community based organizations about the Section 3 Program.

(Priority Focus #1) Work with the District Attorney's Re-entry Roundtable on employment issues.

(Priority Focus #3) Collaborate on a five school Youth Resource week with City Schools and community organizations to facilitate a focus on attendance and social services that can help youth.

(Priority Focus #4) Broaden network to include new partners to work on prevention issues such as:

First 5 Commission

Commission on Family, Youth and Children

Institute for Public Strategies' Gang Task Force
Health and Human Services
County Mental Health

Goal 2 Develop a multi department partnership within the City Organization to focus on information sharing and training regarding gang issues within the community.

2009-10 Focus: Park and Recreation, Library Services, City Attorney's office and the Police Department meet regularly. Training and information sharing are the purpose.

2011 New Direction

Set up briefings with departments and commissions to share information and concepts.

Work with the Southeastern Division and community organizations to discuss issues as part of a communication effort to build community relations.

Goal 3 Establish a data and research analysis process to keep the Mayor, City Council and Commission aware of key gang trends and anti-gang research on an ongoing basis

2009-10 Focus: Reach consensus on data that reflects ongoing gang trends.

The Commission now has Probation and Parole adding to the dimension of data collected by the Commission on a regular basis. This is included in reports to the City Council.

2011 New Direction

Track the numbers of youth in diversion as a result of the Collaborative Curfew sweeps is data that needs to be evaluated.

Goal 4 Identify, capacity building, funding sources for agencies and organizations with existing, effective and promising gang prevention and intervention programs/strategies that they can apply for on a neighborhood basis.

2009-10 Focus: Identify funding sources for agencies and organizations in order to build capacity.

Staff sent out weekly emails concerning grant opportunities. Using Ecivis, the Commission alerts those organizations on its Community list about opportunities. A total of 100 emails have been sent to 75 organizations and written 15 support letters have been written for this effort.

2011 New Direction

Educate organizations regarding grant opportunities. Facilitate information meetings and send out important materials to help small organizations understand the process to apply for funds such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

Work with County Mental Health on Proposition 63 Funding for supporting the collaborative curfew sweeps.

Goal 5 Make policy recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on issues of gang prevention, intervention, diversion and suppression methods, *identify* local, state and federal funding sources, and *identify* best practice efforts.

2009-2010 Focus: No general focus statement notes a change in previous format.

- Recommendation forwarded to Mayor on supporting SB 151- letter sent to State Senator Ducheny via Mayor's Office.
- Commission recommended that the Mayor support Federal funding of Hire-A-Youth and urged that the Commission's letter of support be used.
- Commission recommended that the Mayor support County Probation's strategy for working with youth and dealing with the state funding cutbacks.
- Mayor supported Assembly Joint Resolution 40 which passed in June 2010 that: urged the federal government "to leverage comprehensive local gang violence reduction plans that reflect promising and best practices and that combine gang prevention, intervention and suppression strategies, by providing greater flexibility in the use of federal funds for multi-jurisdictional and cross-disciplinary purposes.

2011 New Direction

(Priority Focus #2) Monitor and research legislation that supports integration of services on both the federal and state level through organizations like the 13 California Cities Gang Prevention Network and the Prevention Institute's national UNITY network.

Goal 6 Develop a sustainable funding strategy for the Strategic Action plan.

2009-10 Focus:

Conducted workshops with community groups on specific grants such as the Weed & Seed Grant and the CALGrip grant to facilitate a learning of grant application processes.

2011 New Direction

Continue to support applications and outreach to organizations to build collaborations to apply for funds.

Partnerships are the Primary Key to Success

As the Commission embarks on its fifth year of working in the community, it is evident that collaboration and community involvement are the key actions that impact violence in San Diego. Partnerships among the members of the Commission (the San Diego Police Department, San Diego Unified School District, County Probation, the District Attorney's office, San Diego Workforce Partnership, Parole, and county Office of Education along with the community organization members like Harmonium, Metro United, Reality Changers, Unity Tech, California

Endowment, and Second Chance) and agencies/Departments such as the City Attorney's office, Park & Recreation Department, County Health and Human Services, County Mental Health and the numerous community based organizations make it possible for the City to impact the gang related issues facing our communities.

Acknowledgments

The following organizations have collaborated or facilitated collaborations that have made a difference and impacted the gang violence in our community. The Commission is appreciative of their work and commitment.

ACE Program/Alliance of Community Empowerment	Overcoming Gangs & Beyond
Bilateral Safety Corridor Coalition	Pazzaaz
Bethel Community Church	Praise Chapel Christian Fellowship
Center for Community Solutions	Price Charities
Church of the Brethren	Principal Cross (Porter Elementary)
Copley YMCA	Principal Higa (Cherokee Point Elementary School)
Encanto Boys and Girl Club	Prison Ministries
Family Outreach & Community Intervention Services (FOCIS)	Project Safe Way/Jacobs Foundation
Greater Apostolic Faith Temple Church	RSVP - Mid City Division
Harmonious Solutions	San Diego State University
Inner City Youth	San Diego Urban League
Jackie Robinson YMCA	San Diego Youth and Community Services
Jacobs Family Foundation	Social Advocates for Youth (SAY- SD)
La Mesa Methodist Church	Southeaster Christian Fellowship
Lean on Me	The Children's Initiative
Local Initiatives Support Corporation - San Diego	Tariq Khamisa Foundation
Mental Health Systems, Inc	University of San Diego - Peace and Justice Studies
New Birth Kingdom Covenant Fellowship	Youth Opportunities Employment Program (CNC)
New Harvest Mid-City Christian Fellowship	Youth Voice
New Harvest (FOCIS)	Youth Advisory Board

Attachments

- 1. Listening Tour 2010**
- 2. 2011-2012 Work plan Matrix**
- 3. Prevention Discussion/Dana Nurge, Ph.D. SDSU**
- 4. Letter from Probationer**
- 5. 2010 Probation Map**

There is more research on the Gang issue used by the Commission at www.sandiego.gov/gangcommission. Please visit this location for any grant or information about the commission.