

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Political Mandate

Los Angeles City leaders must issue a strong and sustained political mandate to prioritize the mission of competently reducing gang activity and violence.

Recommendation 2: Comprehensive Strategy

The City should move from the current approach of small, uncoordinated, low impact programs to a strategy of comprehensive prevention, intervention, and community investment that is linked to strategic community policing suppression and designed to have neighborhood level impact. This comprehensive strategy requires:

- Jointly planned, highly coordinated, expertise driven, multi-jurisdictional, and interdisciplinary implementation.
- Expert design, extremely careful implementation, and a capacity for skillful coordination that the City currently does not have. The City must create a new framework that will permit innovative on the ground exploration and documentation of effective strategies.
- Public health and healing, child development, job development, and community development models to effectively address underlying conditions that spawn gangs and violence.
- Linkage to strategic suppression and community policing.
- Capacity to address the scope of the problem.

Comprehensive Strategy: Prevention

The comprehensive prevention strategy offers jointly planned and highly coordinated services that counter the conditions and risk factors that spawn violence and gangs, and alternatives to destructive lifestyles, while promoting healthy communities and families.

The comprehensive strategy should focus on both general prevention, intervention, and community investment as well as targeted gang focused prevention, jobs, and intervention programs that are not crime control oriented. It is important to distinguish between general and gang focused programming and it also is important that gang focused programs not reinforce gang identity and cohesion.

The comprehensive strategy should address precursors to violence that may originate in the home such as domestic violence, negative parenting, and acceptance of gang culture.

Comprehensive Strategy: Intervention

The comprehensive intervention strategy includes hard core gang intervention programs with fair evaluation and metrics systems, minimum qualifications for intervention workers, and differentiated exit strategies linked to robust job development for gang involved youth. Gang intervention leaders, like law enforcement, will need to cooperate in explorations of new approaches during the development of the comprehensive strategy.

Comprehensive Strategy: Community Development and Investment

The City must include a community development and investment plan in neighborhood violence and gang activity reduction strategy. Communities without jobs and basic infrastructure for economic, cultural, civic, and social development cannot sustain a long term violence and gang activity reduction strategy.

Comprehensive Strategy: Community Policing and Strategic Suppression

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), and other regional law enforcement agencies will be central partners in any comprehensive strategy. LAPD will need to accelerate its transition to problem solving community policing, develop the capacity to work with neighborhoods in executing a comprehensive gang activity and violence reduction strategy, and cooperate in developing better data and crime fighting and gang intervention models.

Action Items

2.1 Create an expert planning process to develop the comprehensive strategy and its components described above and to assess how existing City programs and resources can be coordinated and integrated to achieve violence and gang activity reduction.

Prevention:

2.2 Create a seamless prevention network that is school centric with after school opportunities for elementary and middle school students, extended community access at high schools, and around-the-clock operation of park facilities.

- 2.3 Substantially increase funding and resources for after school programs, building on and investing in existing programs that are effective and developing with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) additional resources.
- 2.4 Develop training for program staff and other City personnel to identify risk factors to facilitate prevention and early intervention.
- 2.5 Dedicate resources to ensure safe passages to and from school.
- 2.6 Focus gang prevention strategies that work on research identified risk factors for hard core gang activity, and specially developed prevention programs for young children and girls in gang saturated neighborhoods.

Intervention:

- 2.7 Create expert advisory and planning group to develop comprehensive strategies for intervention programs and a permanent Gang Intervention Advisory Board.
- 2.8 Increase investment for hard-core gang intervention programs to achieve 75% coverage of gangs in Los Angeles, equivalent to three times of the current investment.
- 2.9 Focus hard core gang intervention strategies on addressing gang group processes and the specific dynamics and culture of individual gangs.
- 2.10 Develop minimum levels of qualification and training requirements for gang intervention workers.
- 2.11 Develop tiered professional development and training for gang intervention workers with rigorous protocols for oversight.
- 2.12 Coordinate and integrate support services and programs to provide effective and safe exit strategies for gang members.
- 2.13 Coordinate and collaborate with law enforcement agencies.
- 2.14 Create a Chicago-LA collaboration that explores the experiences and expertise of gang intervention and violence interruption strategies used in both cities and that develops improved programs.

Community Development and Investment:

- 2.15 Create expert group to develop citywide short term and long term strategies to develop entry level and living wage jobs; industry based economic development plan for neglected areas and better use of Workforce Investment Act funds and similar resources.
- 2.16 Enact policy measures that require City hiring and contracting practices to prioritize hiring youth and contributing to violence reduction strategies.
- 2.17 Develop and allocate resources for a long term summer youth employment plan that matches the scale of jobs needed.
- 2.18 Examine and eliminate unnecessary barriers to City employment and education opportunities for ex-offenders and gang members, including unnecessary criminal background requirements.
- 2.19 Examine City development projects for opportunities to increase resources for community investment that aids violence and gang activity reduction strategies.

Recommendation 3: Scale and Scope of the Solution

City approaches to reducing gang activity and violence should stop focusing on small programs that address less than five percent of key populations and design a comprehensive strategy capable of confronting the size of the gang and violence problem.

Planning for implementation of a comprehensive strategy should be done in phases to eventually address the full scale of community violence with the goal of keeping safe areas safe, pull sliding communities with emerging violence back to safety, strategic intervention in tipping point areas to achieve safety, and saturating violent hot zones to achieve stabilization.

Action Items:

- 3.1** Establish a more accurate picture of the scale of the problem by developing and collecting standardized data variables and definitions of gangs, gang members, gang crime, spousal abuse, and child abuse.
- 3.2** Adopt a comprehensive, phased citywide strategy that is designed to address the scale of the problem.
- 3.3** Get a fuller understanding of the real scope of community violence and gangs by incorporating the impact of emerging trends such as the increased involvement of girls in violent behavior, evolving research on the impact of exposure to violence on child and youth development, and the apparent evolving trends in gang crime.

Recommendation 4: Entrepreneurial Department with Oversight

The City should create an innovative entrepreneurial Department of Neighborhood Safety to get accountability and results. *Accountability for results requires centralized responsibility.*

A new entrepreneurial governmental structure must be created because traditional bureaucracies do not have the agility, capacity, or freedom needed to carry out a comprehensive strategy. A comprehensive strategy requires expert design, extremely careful implementation, and a great capacity for innovation, exploration, rapid response, coordination, and cross-silo execution to have any chance of avoiding chaos and making a measurable impact.

The City needs an entity with sufficient power and institutional clout to streamline bureaucracy; command cooperation across City departments, external jurisdictions and LAUSD; and execute neighborhood based comprehensive strategy.

If the entrepreneurial department does not document substantial and sustained reductions in gang activity and violence in selected high crime neighborhoods within set time periods, the City should terminate it or change its strategy.

Action Items: Governance

- 4.1 Allocate resources to form the new entrepreneurial department.
- 4.2 Form an Expert Action Committee led by the City Administrative Officer (CAO), Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), and the City Attorney with outside advisors to develop this new entity.
- 4.3 Appoint a new Deputy Mayor of Neighborhood Safety.
- 4.4 Form a Permanent Oversight Committee.
- 4.5 Form an Expert Policy Advisory Board.
- 4.6 Enact a measure that directs all legislation and policies related to the mission of gang activity and violence reduction to be channeled through the new department for coordination and policy consistency.
- 4.7 Include provisions for a ten year “perform or end” clause and an expertly developed rigorous research design and evaluation framework.
- 4.8 Enact measures that create an agile operation framework that frees the entity from traditional City department constraints. Examples may include but are not limited to hiring specialized exempt staff at all levels, using accountable but much more flexible contracting and hiring procedures that ensure the right specialists will be hired, developing creative communications strategies, and experimenting to find out what works.
- 4.9 Include a Strategic Research and Initiatives section to drive continuous high quality research, program development, improvement, and evaluation, as well as capacity to adjust and change strategies.
- 4.10 Enact a policy measure to compel mission alignment, and contributions to and participation in the mission across all departments.
- 4.11 Annual review of departmental programs falling under the City’s Children and Family Budget with performance measures by the Permanent Oversight Committee.

Action Items: Operations and Service Delivery

- 4.12 Tailor solutions to each neighborhood.
- 4.13 Develop all plans in consultation with neighborhood leaders and civic groups.
- 4.14 Conduct neighborhood by neighborhood assessment of violence, needs and assets with community stakeholders.
- 4.15 Define service areas by high school clusters for most prevention and intervention services with flexibility for gang intervention services and for probation and foster youth.
- 4.16 Establish Community Violence Prevention Centers in each service area as the basic infrastructure to coordinate comprehensive prevention and intervention services, track children and youth served, coordinate with suppression efforts and develop community and youth organizing strategies.

- 4.17 Coordinate City and County services in a neighborhood through creation of Interagency Intervention Team.
- 4.18 Maximize use of existing, functional and effective resources, networks, service capacity, and assets in a neighborhood.
- 4.19 Create access to key service elements including health and mental health, child welfare, substance abuse treatment, life skills training, parenting education and support, crisis intervention, basic supportive services, and transition planning for probation youth.
- 4.20 Focus on helping to maximize services for families of high risk children and youth.
- 4.21 Acquire expert assistance to provide culturally competent, linguistically fluent, developmentally appropriate services that improve program performance, facilitate communication, and improve access to services for immigrant and/or isolated and alienated communities.
- 4.22 Integrate youth and communities in all phases of assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation.
- 4.23 Develop Community Action Teams in each service area, representative of those who live and work in the area with a concerted effort to include immigrant communities.
- 4.24 Maximize existing community networks, councils, and collaboratives where possible.

Recommendation 5: Leadership

The Mayor and the City will have to find and appoint a high powered, politically skilled, and independent leader for the entrepreneurial Department of Neighborhood Safety.

The leadership of this entity will have to be bold; unafraid to take risks; willing to explore or conduct carefully designed experiments; have extraordinary political skills; have credibility with divergent sectors ranging from law enforcement to gang intervention workers to academics; and possess working familiarity with the many points of contention in the multiple disciplines and areas of expertise that come to bear in the development of a comprehensive strategy. There are few individuals who can do this job and they are unlikely to be found on civil service lists.

Action Items:

- 5.1 The Mayor, Deputy Mayors for Neighborhood Safety and Homeland Security, and the City Council should jointly appoint a search team that has the help of outside advisers to develop the qualifications profile, job description, and parameter for the leadership of this new department and citywide comprehensive strategy to reduce gang activity and neighborhood violence.

Recommendation 6: Think Tank

The City and other entities should jointly create a state-of-the-art Research, Evaluation, and Policy Institute that offers accurate and independent data development, program evaluation design, and policy analysis support. The City must move from politically driven policy to research driven policy, must build evaluation into all programs, and develop greater capacity for policy analysis.

Action Items:

- 6.1** Enact a measure that funds an expert team to work with the CLA to develop a Research, Evaluation, and Policy Institute.
- 6.2** Direct the expert team and CLA to seek joint venture agreements with universities, foundations, and think tanks.
- 6.3** Ensure that the Institute develops reliable data, good research protocols and practices, excellent evaluation, and state-of-the-art program design.
- 6.4** Ensure that the Institute is designed to help develop training for City staff and service providers on youth development, child development, violence prevention, human relations, and family violence prevention to increase subject matter expertise needed for gang activity and violence reduction strategies.
- 6.5** Integrate the Strategic Research and Initiatives section in the new City department with the Policy Institute.
- 6.6** Standardize data variables and collection procedures (e.g. intake forms) across City departments.
- 6.7** Train and provide technical assistance for City staff and service providers on evaluation.
- 6.8** Develop reliable assessment tools to identify high risk youth and gang involved youth using best research on risk factors.
- 6.9** Develop an information management system to track children served across City and County departments.
- 6.10** Develop departmental ability to provide timely data release to Research, Evaluation, and Policy Institute for annual evaluation.
- 6.11** Develop program level evaluation templates.
- 6.12** Develop evaluation protocols for the comprehensive strategy.

Recommendation 7: The Money

The City's gang crime costs taxpayers and crime victims over \$2 billion a year, with many of those costs paid from State and County coffers. The City should maximize impact from and get documented results for current expenditures. After eliminating wasteful and ineffective approaches, the City should obtain new streams of funding for general prevention, intervention, and suppression and gang specific prevention, intervention, and suppression. Additional funds will be needed but should not be sought until competent strategies, rigorous oversight, and accountability frameworks for expenditure of new funds are in place.

Action Items:

- 7.1 Stop the dissipation and lack of impact with current funds by placing small and isolated programs into comprehensive and coordinated neighborhood violence reduction strategies that are efficient and generate results.
- 7.2 Conduct a thorough cost benefit analysis of the proposed entrepreneurial department's impact on governmental and victim costs.
- 7.3 Eliminate duplicative administrative costs.
- 7.4 Find and end practices that consume hundreds of thousands of dollars for relatively little benefit to the public—for example, the costs of subsidizing take-home City cars for hundreds of City workers, unnecessary round-the-clock staffing, wasteful overtime practices, and idle City owned properties—and redeploy those dollars into a gang activity and violence reduction strategy.
- 7.5 Reinvest cost savings into the comprehensive gang activity and violence reduction strategy and in increased support and investment for effective community based service providers, neighborhood organizations and other civic and faith based groups that can contribute to gang activity reduction, violence reduction, and community investment strategies.
- 7.6 Seek joint funding as well as joint investment and action with the State and County government to solve the gang violence problem. A joint investment among entities of the State, County, City, and LAUSD will increase the pooled funding and effectiveness for all government agencies.
- 7.7 Centralize efforts to determine whether the City is maximizing its eligible use of federal and state resources for youth development and other programs.
- 7.8 Examine existing funding streams for law enforcement and other specific funding sources to determine whether they would be better deployed into the comprehensive strategy.
- 7.9 Develop a coalition of national and local philanthropic organizations to fund strategic components of the comprehensive strategy.
- 7.10 Improve use of and levels of support for established local provider networks and the development of new local networks as needed.
- 7.11 Support, to the extent legally permissible, independent efforts to mount ballot initiative funding strategies for a regional comprehensive violence and gang activity reduction plan.

Recommendation 8: The Regional Solution

The City must design all gang activity and violence reduction programs in full recognition of the important fact that gangs and violence are a regional phenomenon that require regional strategies and cooperation with entities throughout the County.

Action Items:

- 8.1** Develop Memoranda of Understanding or other agreements for collaboration and joint planning with key County departments and other regional entities for continuous and structured collaboration at the neighborhood and inter jurisdictional levels.
- 8.2** Participate actively in developing a regional strategy for gang activity and violence reduction.
- 8.3** Actively support ongoing reform measures in LAUSD, LAPD, and County Probation.
- 8.4** Expand participation in and cooperation with regional efforts to improve information sharing between regional and local entities serving children and youth.
- 8.5** Improve monitoring of service provision for City's children and youth involved in the County child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice systems.
- 8.6** Help develop an initiative to create a Los Angeles County Violence Prevention Initiative with a dedicated stream of funding to carry out the comprehensive region-wide strategy that will be needed for sustained reductions.

Recommendation 9: Suppression

In some divisions, LAPD and LASD are beginning to make important transitions to problem-oriented community policing that will be needed if suppression is to be a productive part of the comprehensive neighborhood gang activity and violence reduction strategy suggested in this report.

Action Items:

- 9.1** Expedite community policing and problem solving approaches that facilitate effective officer collaboration with community members to reduce gang activity and violence.
- 9.2** Cooperate with experts, the neighborhood safety department, and the proposed Research, Evaluation, and Policy Institute to develop reliable gang data and other crime data.
- 9.3** Increase use of strategic, targeted crime fighting strategies that focus on violent offenders and avoid overbroad suppression tactics and aggressive policing that focuses on maximizing arrests across the board.
- 9.4** Increase resources to protect witnesses, and punish retaliation against and intimidation of community members who participate in gang activity reduction or law enforcement activity.
- 9.5** Develop partnerships with prevention and intervention programs under clear and consistent referral guidelines that do not hinder appropriate law enforcement and suppression.
- 9.6** Develop protocols with gang prevention and intervention networks to coordinate delivery of effective strategies that reduce gang activity, violence, and the numbers of youth ensnared in the broken juvenile justice system.

Recommendation 10: LAUSD as a Key Partner

LAUSD is a key partner for the City in gang activity reduction because schools are the one institution that has sustained contact with children, facilities, and the educational resources to develop the courses and counseling that are central to teaching violence prevention curriculum.

The City should begin immediately creating mechanisms and structures for joint planning with LAUSD on how to have schools play a central and leading role in several aspects of the comprehensive violence and gang activity reduction strategies recommended in this report.

Action Items:

- 10.1** Develop ways to assist LAUSD to transform schools into a central and strategic asset for violence and gang activity reduction, academic achievement, mental and physical health of children, and community vitality.
- 10.2** Form a team to begin discussions on the viability of potential funding for the LAUSD-City violence reduction collaboration.
- 10.3** Coordinate safe passage to and from school with the District.
- 10.4** Expedite facility joint use agreements with City, County, and community entities to allow access on schools during after school hours.
- 10.5** Develop age appropriate violence prevention curriculum for in school instruction.
- 10.6** Consult with district and charter school principals who have successfully developed campus-wide conflict mediation and violence reduction plans.
- 10.7** Develop comprehensive assessment strategies to identify and address needs of children facing multiple risk factors.
- 10.8** Facilitate timely and complete sharing of educational and other information with City and County entities to ensure delivery of appropriate services.

Recommendation 11: Juvenile Justice

The City's efforts will continue to be hindered by debilitating and counter productive fallout from failures in the State Corrections, County Probation and juvenile adjudication systems. The City should seek ways to expedite extensive reforms needed in the regional criminal justice systems for juveniles and adults.

Action Items:

The City should seek ways to encourage and/or facilitate:

- 11.1** Formation of a task force to develop a master reform plan of the County Probation Department facilities to address the severe problems highlighted in the 2001 United States Department of Justice investigation.
- 11.2** An implementation plan that shifts juvenile justice away from large scale adult prosecution system for large numbers of juveniles towards a community-based rehabilitative model designed to give young people the resources they need to change behavior.
- 11.3** Improved engagement with parents and caretakers of youth involved in the juvenile justice system.
- 11.4** Adequate transition planning and coordination with City, other County and community entities for follow-up services that seek to protect children who are re-entering from detention or face dangerous circumstances and obstacles to rehabilitation.

Recommendation 12: The Public Campaigns Against Violence and Youth Access to Guns

Public campaigns against violence and youth access to guns involving broad sectors of Los Angeles will be important in generating the essential public movement that will be pivotal in a region-wide strategy to end youth gang involvement and neighborhood violence.

Action Items:

The City should help coordinate, raise funds, allocate planning funds, and generally support the following campaigns:

- 12.1** Los Angeles' civic and faith-based sectors should be funded to lead a public campaign against violence and against youth access to guns—a civic movement against the culture of destruction that is engulfing LA's poorest areas will be essential to turning this problem around.
- 12.2** Los Angeles' philanthropic sector should help fund the formation of the independent Research, Evaluation, and Policy Institute, intervention training, and programs that develop neighborhood leadership and community organizations dedicated to creating violence-free, healthy neighborhoods.
- 12.3** The region's universities, think tanks and academic experts should contribute policy and evaluation expertise for the City's comprehensive strategy and policy, including the formation of the Research, Evaluation, and Policy Institute.
- 12.4** The Business sector should help provide jobs and technical assistance to the City as it moves to create a competent, entrepreneurial model of government.
- 12.5** The entertainment and media sectors should offer substantial help in countering the glorification of gangs, violence and guns that fuels attraction to gang life, by helping to design and fund public campaigns against violence and youth access to guns.

- 12.6** The City should allocate planning funds to help recruit and coordinate leadership from the different sectors needed for these campaigns and to work with CeaseFire Chicago which pioneered such campaigns to jumpstart the civic movement needed to counter LA's violence epidemic.