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CONTROLLER

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February 14, 2008

The Honorable Antonio Villaraigosa
The Honorable Rockard J. Delgadillo
The Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council

Dear Mayor Villaraigosa, City Attorney Delgadillo and Councilmembers:

Last year a New York Times editorial was stunning in its blunt assessment: "No city has failed to control its street gangs more spectacularly than Los Angeles." The editorial was jolting, but not surprising. The City of Los Angeles and our surrounding region have been grappling with the problem of gangs for over 40 years.

During the last two decades, there have been countless studies, reports, consultants, City Council ad-hoc committees, new programs and hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars spent to stem the gang crisis. And what do we have to show for it? The recent in-depth Advancement Project study painted a grim picture, which my report echoes, of a disjointed maze of services that don't reach the intended "at risk" youth population.

Now what? It is important to note what my report does not say. There is no call for immediate new dollars, but there is a plan spelled out on how to spend the money more wisely and efficiently. New programs are not advocated, but rather the redesign, refocus and merging of existing programs is proscribed.

Nor does it recommend the creation of a new department with additional layers of bureaucracy, but directs the creation of the Anti-Gang Office, which will operate directly under the Mayor. This will be a centralized, empowered entity that has the oversight and responsibility of our many anti-gang efforts. To ensure public transparency, the City Controller's Office will issue status reports beginning six months from today, along with conducting periodic fiscal and performance audits.

It is not only a question of reorganizing resources into the Mayor's Office, it is also about making key changes in how services are delivered. Many of the dollars now spent on prevention are not targeting the youth most at risk. In addition, as LAPD Chief William Bratton and Sheriff Lee Baca agree, we can not arrest and imprison our way out of the gang epidemic which plagues our region. Dollars and services must be redirected to effective prevention and also intervention and re-entry programs to reach youth already involved in gangs or the criminal justice system.

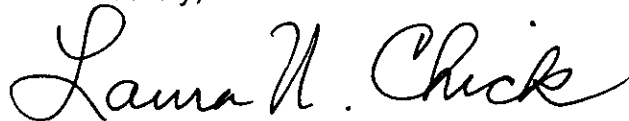
The City has traditionally overseen various gang programs by monitoring their compliance with contract requirements. Instead we need to move to an outcome based model where specific performance measures are tracked and evaluated. For decades we have not been asking and answering the right questions: "How are we doing in achieving the goal of eliminating gang violence? How can we do it better?" The only way to accurately answer is to write measurable goals into the solicitation for services end and evaluate performance regularly. We must go out to bid on our anti-gang contracts by December 2008.

Los Angeles has historically awarded agencies multiple contracts year after year after year without holding them accountable by tying the dollars to proof that desired results have been achieved. The era of social service dollars based only on political tradition and relationships must end.

While it is essential that the City get its own house in order immediately...it must also turn simultaneously to form effective regional partnerships. It is so plainly logical and clear that one very key partnership must be directly with the LAUSD. It is also important to build and expand upon the impressive, collaborative effort begun by Los Angeles County CEO Bill Fujioka with the Executive Steering Committee.

In closing, I am well aware of the challenges to create the Anti-Gang Office. The last thing we need to do is get bogged down in bureaucratic obstacles, turf and power struggles, and mistrust. No more studies... it is time for action and results...**NOW!**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura N. Chick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LAURA N. CHICK
City Controller

Los Angeles City Controller

Blueprint for a Comprehensive Citywide Anti-Gang
Strategy

Report Abstract

February 14, 2008



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Report Abstract

Blueprint for a Comprehensive Citywide Anti-Gang Strategy

There is a worldwide concern over the impact of gangs. The specific challenges caused by gangs in the City of Los Angeles brought the Mayor and City Council to request this study by the City Controller. This report provides a blueprint for the City to undertake a comprehensive citywide anti-gang strategy, and provides recommended approaches to address the City's gang challenges. A number of our recommendations these important steps envision new paradigms that require significant changes over the way the City has historically approached its anti-gang efforts. Changing some of these approaches will require the City's political leaders to support initiatives that favor a citywide solution to the gang problem, at times to the detriment of more parochial departmental or community interests.

Since it is widely known that gangs do not respect artificially set municipal or governmental boundaries, the City of Los Angeles' gang problem is really a regional problem shared with Los Angeles County, Los Angeles Unified School District and numerous other cities and school districts in the area. As such, the best solutions to the problem would be with regional partnerships and not limited to those undertaken solely by City government within its city limits.

While we are encouraging such regional partnerships, the blueprint also emphasizes approaches the City should take to address the problems within its own City-sponsored and funded anti-gang programs and activities. We advocate that both the regional and citywide initiatives be put in motion simultaneously.

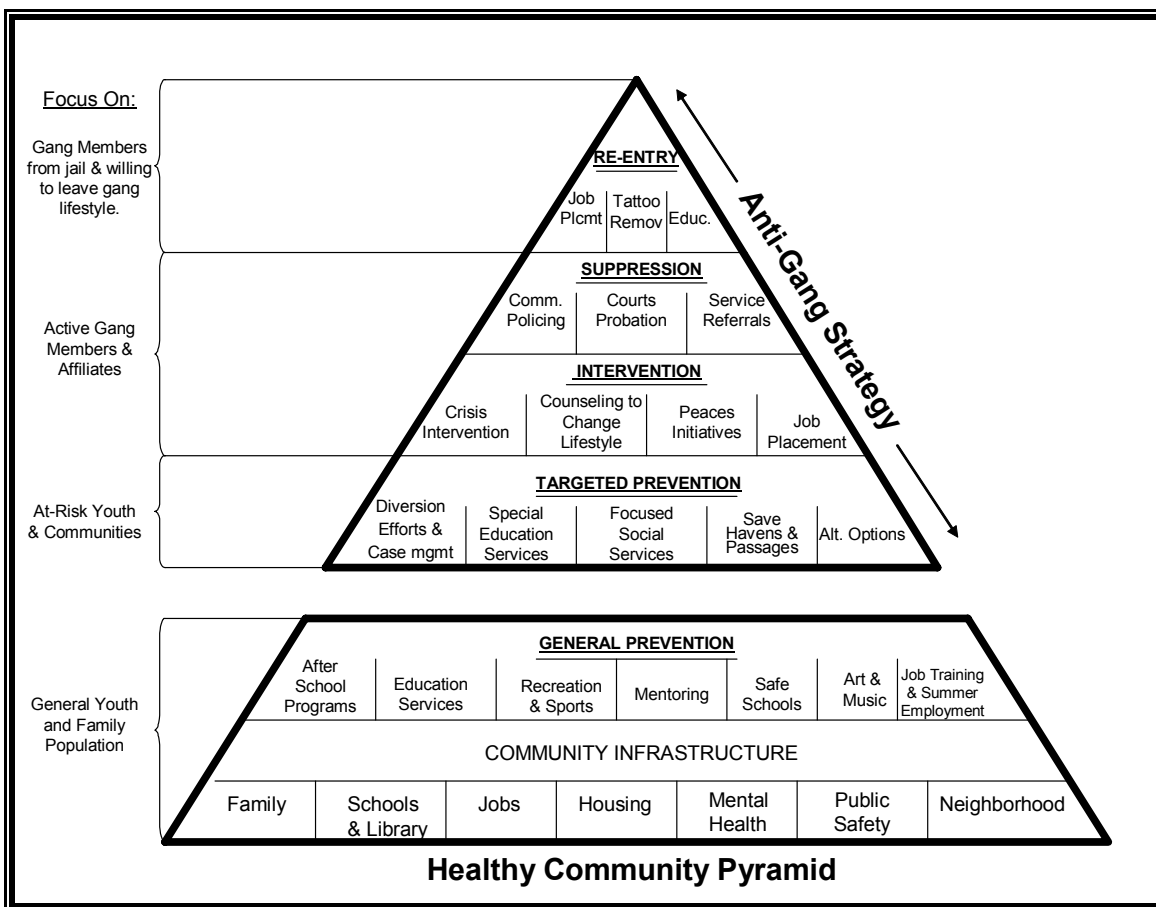
Moreover, since each of the City's communities affected by gangs are unique, the societal, infrastructure and individual needs of each area will vary. Only through a comprehensive, community-specific needs assessment will the City be able to marshal the correct mix of social and individual services to address the underlying causes of that community's gang problem.

On the following page, our "*Healthy Community Pyramid*" in Figure 1, melds the basic needs of the community and its residents at its base, with increasingly focused and targeted prevention, intervention, suppression, and reentry programs in its upper levels. In concept, communities' basic needs make up the foundation of the pyramid addressing the root cause of gang involvement, while each group of services provided up the pyramid focuses on youths with unique individual needs. The anti-gang strategy portion of the pyramid includes targeted prevention, intervention, suppression, and reentry programs for at-risk youths and communities generally experiencing a gang problem or transitioning to one. A brief description of the various program types follows:

- **Community Infrastructure**—Provide basic services necessary for a community including workforce development, recreation, public safety, housing, economic development, and family services.

- **General Prevention**—Address all members of a community and are intended to build healthy communities in which gangs are unable to flourish. Programs include education, recreation, arts, and job training.
- **Targeted Prevention**—Offer selective prevention and diversion strategies and are designed to impact high-risk *communities* and/or *individual* high-risk children and youth based on risk factors. The goal of targeted prevention is to preclude children and youth in at-risk communities from joining a gang or participating in gang activity.
- **Intervention**—Intervene during gang related conflicts (*community*) as well as impact *individual* gang involved youth typically through the use of community and faith based street outreach workers and school based intervention teams.
- **Suppression**— Target serious and chronic offenders and involve the use of the criminal justice system to officially sanction behavior through arrest, prosecution, and incarceration.
- **Reentry**—Focus on individuals that have decided to leave the gang lifestyle as a result of diversion, intervention, and/or suppression efforts and are preparing to reintegrate into the community.

Figure 1. “Healthy Community Pyramid”



The City will need to reposition its departments and redirect its funding priorities to provide the range of services covering the entire pyramid. Most notable will be transitioning the youth and family development efforts out of the Community Development Department into a new organizational structure responsible for targeted prevention, intervention, and reentry programming.

After considering several options for placing responsibility over implementing the City's anti-gang strategy, we concluded that creating an Anti-Gang Office within the Mayor's Office was the most viable option to immediately undertake the gang-related challenges facing the City. Our recommendation consolidates all of the City's critical youth development and gang reduction programs into an Anti-Gang Office, and provides that it will also facilitate collaboration with the other City departments. Moreover, the Mayor and the Anti-Gang Office will build upon the work already being done to establish regional partnerships, and participate in the resulting regional steering committee.

Not only does the Mayor's Office represent the most expedient alternative, but it offers the highest level of visibility, authority, and accountability in representing the unified voice of the City—thus reflecting the high-priority and urgency of a new gang reduction strategy.

In reviewing options for this organization's permanent placement, we considered the City's existing commissions and departments and found that none are currently positioned to take on this role, and we also analyzed the possibility of creating a new department. None of these options provided the level of transparency and accountability or the ability to immediately and expeditiously implement the needed changes.

To provide independent oversight of the Anti-Gang Office, the City Controller shall conduct follow-up audits of the progress of the new office and of the status of each of the recommendations contained in this blueprint. These audits will occur every six months after the beginning of implementation and throughout the first two years of implementation. Furthermore, the City Council can request that the City Administrative Officer and the Chief Legislative Analyst conduct interim or special reports as requested.

Implementation of these recommendations *will not* require additional funding, but will require redirecting existing funds to more targeted programs, eliminating duplication and streamlining programs, and implementing performance-based contracting and monitoring practices. In the end, the City can accomplish more with the resources it has if it strategically and organizationally focuses these resources.

The Los Angeles Police Department will continue its primary role of suppressing gang activity, and City departments such as Recreation and Parks, Housing, CDD job development, and Redevelopment will need to better coordinate their efforts in building community infrastructure in gang challenged areas and providing general prevention programs for at-risk youth. Also, to overcome past coordination and collaboration difficulties, City leaders will need to hold the various general managers to account for effectively bringing the City's varied resources to bear against the gang problem. Measurable outcomes and assessment will be critical part of this reorganization.

The key elements we recommend for the City's gang reduction strategy are as follows:

- I. Create a new organizational structure in the Mayor's Office to facilitate the expeditious consolidation, development, implementation, and coordination of citywide youth development and gang reduction programs. Through Executive Directive and periodic reporting to the City Council, mandate inter-departmental collaboration and accountability.
 - Transition all of the City's key youth development and gang reduction programs to the new organizational structure, including those currently housed in CDD's Human Services and Neighborhood Development Group, and other City departments and commissions. Certain programs—as they pertain to the primary missions of other departments—should remain with the departments they are currently housed.
 - Establish a coordination unit within the new office to coordinate, track, and leverage programming resources that remain in other City departments, such as the City Department of Recreation and Parks, the Los Angeles Police Department, the Housing Department, the City's proprietary departments, among others.
 - Enhance linkages between law enforcement and service providers through much-improved referral networks and joint programming.
- II. Continue to develop and build on existing regional partnerships with LAUSD, LA County and other local governments to improve current environment of conflict and non-cooperation.
 - Build partnerships between program practitioners, executives, and elected officials among the City and its regional partners such as LA County and LAUSD to create an environment of collaboration and coordination on anti-gang efforts.
 - Encourage regional cooperation and coordination to reduce unmet needs and duplication of services.
- III. Conduct community-based *and* department-level citywide needs assessments.
 - Identify, on a periodic basis, community needs and cooperatively determine which programs and services are lacking.
 - Require, through Executive Directive, City departments responsible for serving the City's youth or for building the infrastructure needed for healthy communities to conduct community-level needs assessments every five years, with annual progress reports to Council.
- IV. Increase funding for the gang reduction strategy by redirecting a substantial portion of the \$19 million allocated to programs that currently do not have well-defined strategic objectives or outcomes—specifically the Neighborhood Action, “Strategically Targeted”, and Neighborhood Development programs—to expand funding to targeted youth development and gang reduction programs.
 - Cease across-the-board funding allocations and reductions by ensure funding decisions are based on community needs and demonstrated performance of service providers.

- Identify, based on community- and citywide-level needs assessments, the best method of filling identified gaps, and reissue Requests for Proposals within six months to identify the best service providers to deliver those services.
- Negotiate new contracts with CBOs providing accountability and outcome measures, evaluate and oversee CBO activities to measure results, coordinate multi-agency collaboration, conduct research on best and leading anti-gang practices, and provide training to CBOs on how they can meet the new contract requirements and to City departments on anti-gang strategies.
- Establish contract provisions and monitoring practices that create incentives for optimal performance and accountability for service delivery.

V. Reinvent youth and family services in the new Anti-gang Office.

- Create streamlined youth and family development programs, and expand anti-gang programs that do a better job of targeting those most at risk of gang involvement.
- Expand intervention and reentry programming to ease the transition of those in gangs to society.
- Increase oversight of the implementation of this new strategy, given the challenges of implementing this model in other jurisdictions, by requesting the City Controller to conduct follow-up audits of the progress of the new office and of the status of each of the recommendations contained in this blueprint. These audits should occur every six months after the beginning of implementation and throughout the first two years of implementation.

VI. Conduct rigorous performance evaluations of both City and contracted programs.

- Develop an evaluation model as part of the redesign of youth development and gang reduction programs. This model must address both short-term reduction in risk factors and increases in protective factors, and long-term impacts on the program participants themselves.
- Evaluate the unique impacts of targeted prevention, diversion, intervention, reentry, and suppression efforts as distinct components to an overall strategy.
- Create a research and evaluation unit that relies on both City personnel and partnerships with the surrounding research community, and conduct both process-oriented and outcome-oriented evaluations on a long-term basis.

We provide a summary of each of the recommended action items in the following sections of this abstract.

I. Create a Single Office to Coordinate Youth and Family Services

Given the political priority and regional nature of the gang problem, the City must establish a new strategy that presents a single voice, possesses the authority and

responsibility to lead and coordinate the City's efforts, and can be held accountable for success or failure in furthering the City's youth development and gang reduction efforts.

For the City to more efficiently address its immediate gang problems, it will require a dramatic change to the current way anti-gang efforts are carried out. We believe that this can be accomplished by redirecting existing funds to more targeted youth and family development and gang reduction programs and through increased efficiencies, as discussed in Section IV and V of this report. To accomplish the goal of changing and improving the way anti-gang efforts are carried out, we recommend the following measures:

1. Reinvent the City's youth and family programs by consolidating and coordinating activities

The City's current approach to anti-gang programming is an uncoordinated and scattered mix of youth, family development, and social service programs, intervention and suppression efforts, job training and placement, and recreational programs provided at a reported cost of \$160 million. In fact, more than a dozen departments assert they operate anti-gang and youth development programs for the City's youth population. However, little coordination and communication exists amongst these city departments, which has resulted in some departments unknowingly providing services similar and likely overlapping with those delivered by other departments.

Because so few programs are specifically focused on "at-risk" individuals and communities and even fewer aimed at gang populations, effective coordination is especially critical to ensure that these programs are placed in City areas where the need is greatest and program efficiency and effectiveness can be maximized. The City's generally non-cohesive targeted prevention programs aimed at LA's youth population in *at-risk communities* include, in part:

- CDD's Family Development Network, Youth Advocacy Program, and OneSource Youth Opportunity System (including the three Youth Opportunity Movement sites, and Youth & Family Centers)
- RAP's Clean and Safe Spaces (CLASS) Parks Program
- LAPD's Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT)

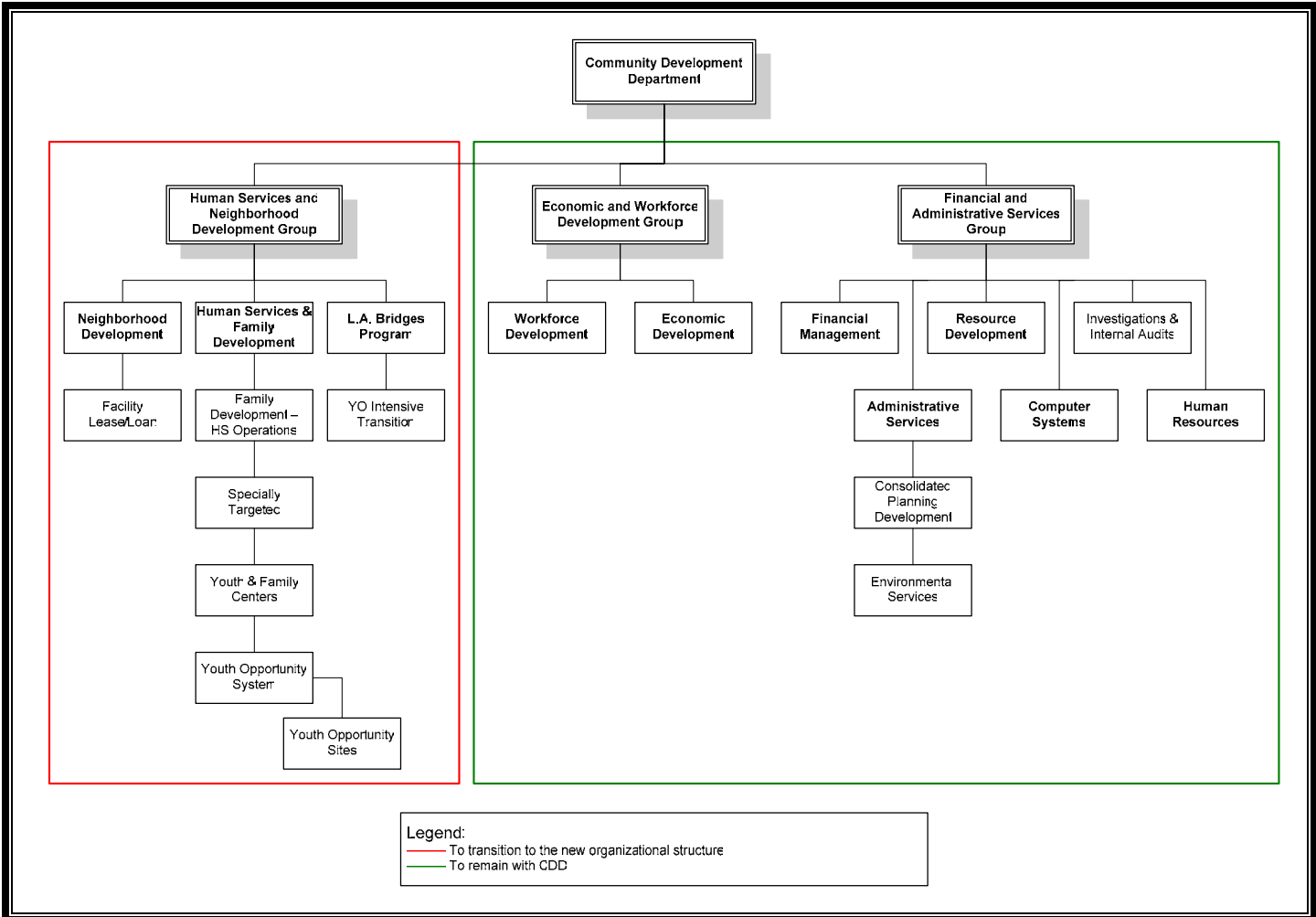
Moreover, the City offers even fewer programs intended to directly deliver targeted "individual" prevention, diversion, intervention, and reentry programs to reach those individuals at highest risk of either joining gangs, in the early stages of gang membership, or gang members wanting to leave the gang lifestyle and reintegrate into the community. Such programs are essential in order to reduce the attractiveness of gang life. The small number of programs that do exist include: CDD's Bridges I & II programs, the Bridges Intensive Transition program, LAPD's Jeopardy and Juvenile Impact, and the joint CDD-LAPD Youth Advocacy (YAP) programs.

2. *Create a new city structure to advance the City’s youth development and gang reduction strategy*

Because the City’s youth and family programs are administered in various departments that do not routinely collaborate, the City must reposition and unify its critical programs, including anti-gang programs. Los Angeles is not alone among US cities in this regard. As such, creating a new Anti-gang Office should neither be a reflection on CDD or its dedicated staff nor should it be considered a vote of no-confidence in their efforts. Rather, it is a reflection of a new era in the City’s challenge to fight gangs, to reduce their impact on the residents of Los Angeles, and, more generally, to serve the City’s youth and families. In keeping with this reality, the blueprint we suggest involves a dramatic change in the current way efforts are carried out. To create a centralized, single voice to represent the City in its anti-gang partnership efforts, the Mayor’s Office must establish centralized leadership to coordinate the City’s key programs administered through various city departments.

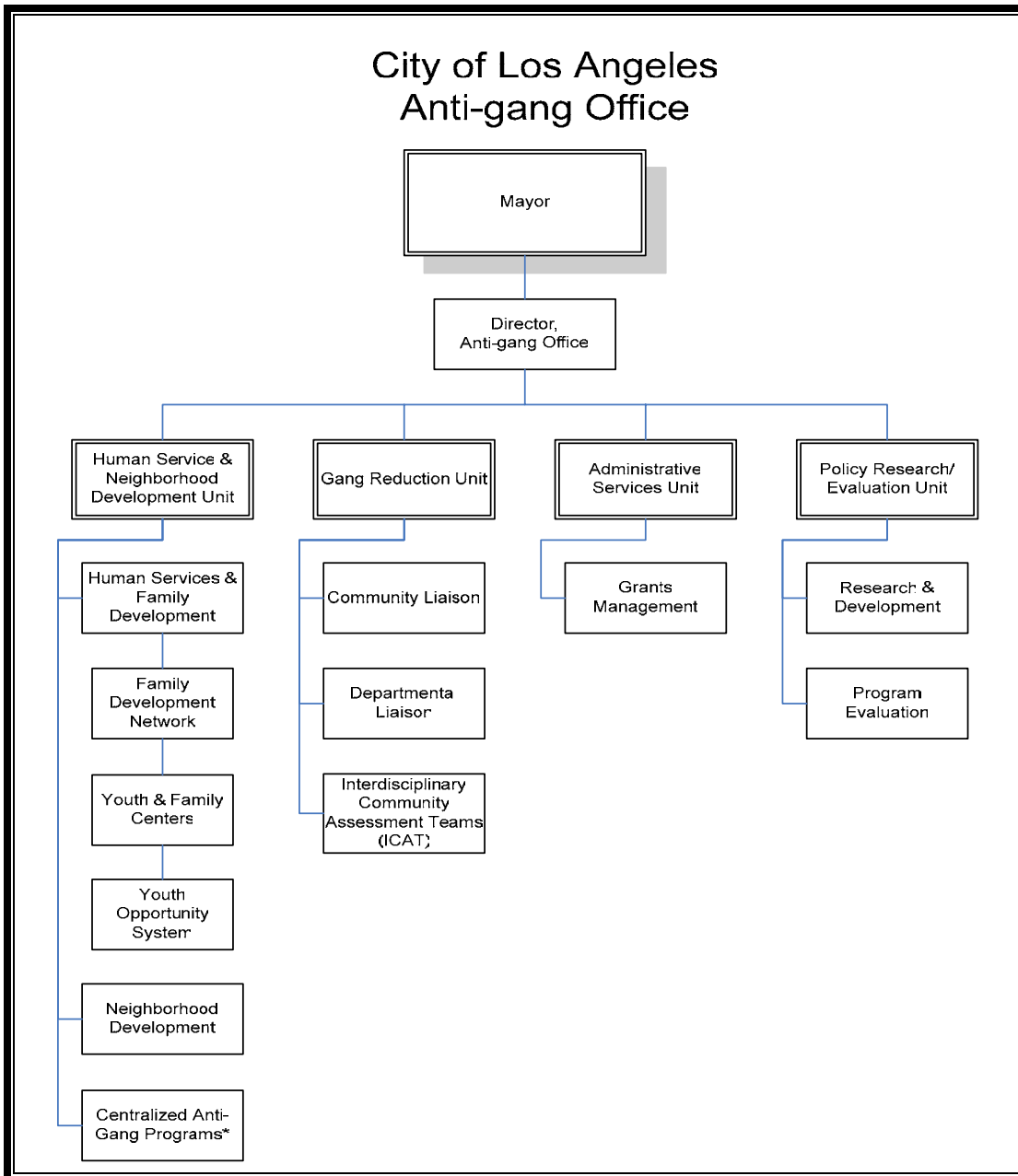
The bulk of this consolidation will occur with the transfer of the majority of the City’s youth and family development and anti-gang efforts out of CDD’s Human Services and Neighborhood Development Group and allow CDD to continue functioning with a focus on economic and workforce development—activities integral to a revised mission as illustrated in Figure 2. *“Current CDD Organization Chart with Proposed Transition.”*

Figure 2. *“Current CDD Organization Chart with Proposed Transition”*



To create a single voice, we also recommend that the City transition the City’s widely dispersed youth and family development and anti-gang efforts that are currently housed in CDD’s Human Services and Neighborhood Development Group as well as certain other youth development and anti-gang related programs in other City departments (as described previously in Section I of this report) into the Anti-gang Office as seen in Figure 3. “Proposed Structure of the New Anti-gang Office” below. Moreover, no other department in the City appears positioned to assume this role, as they all have primary missions that relate only marginally, if at all, to reducing gang activity.

Figure 3. “Proposed Structure of the New Anti-Gang Office”



* This includes Bridges I, Bridges II, Gang Reduction Zones, Boyle Height's Gang Reduction Program, Safe Havens/School Safety Plans, Parenting, LA's Best, and any other programs that should be transitioned to the new Anti-gang Office from City commissions such as Status of Women, Children Youth and Families, and Human Relations.

Creating a single office responsible for the City's gang reduction strategy will allow for better coordination of the City's youth, family, and anti-gang programs and services. It will also boost communication with other City department programs with similar goals and objectives, and is the first step toward ensuring consistency, stability, and an institutionalized commitment to addressing the City's gang problem. This new office will be led by the Mayor and some of its responsibilities would include:

- Providing a single voice and centralized leadership in youth development and anti-gang efforts.

- Developing a Gang Reduction Unit to coordinate, track, and leverage all of the City's programs.
- Building on current relationships with LA County and LAUSD executives and elected officials to create an environment of collaboration and coordination.

The new Anti-gang Office cannot fulfill its mission and create the intended results without the commitment of other City departments, such as LAPD, Recreation and Parks, CDD workforce development, and the proprietary departments. Each of these departments must be directed to positively and constructively participate in the City's new approach to coordinate citywide efforts in building community infrastructure as well as providing general youth development and targeted prevention programs for at-risk youth.

This new approach should also seek to bring together not only other City departments and agencies but also other Cities, Los Angeles County, LAUSD, and a multitude of regional entities facing similar challenges with gang activities. The new office should facilitate key city departments in coordinating efforts which will result in the City being able to strategically focus and leverage its resources citywide, identify community needs, and hold programs accountable for positive outcomes.

3. Link already existing city youth and family services resources

Even with the creation of a fully dedicated gang reduction, youth and family development organization, a wide array of youth-focused programs will remain in a number of different city agencies and all require coordination—something that has been seriously lacking in the past. The Anti-gang Office must proactively collaborate, coordinate, and integrate the related efforts of the other City department. This individual must have the authority to make this happen. Additionally, opportunities to leverage existing resources and programs throughout the City must be identified.

Overall, it appears that many of the City's existing at-risk youth and gang related services and programs are generally delivered in the appropriate locations; however, while these departments or organizations delivering such services may know where the problem areas are, they continue to place their individual programs and services in “silos” within those communities without coordinating or leveraging with other organizations providing similar services as well as lack of commitment to programs that are already linked.

Furthermore, any program designed to address the needs of “at-risk” youth should be part of a working “referral” system to identify and divert youth to social service programs and providers before requiring the involvement of law enforcement sanctions. Currently, there are many improvements that must be made in the City's referral network.

Of continuing concern is the recognition but lack of an effective continuum of services for most youth “at risk” of general delinquency or gang involvement. Youth must not be allowed to fall between the cracks, regardless of which program, which CBO, which governmental agency has jurisdiction—the City must ensure that each program and each agency serving the City's youth do not present a “wrong door” or a roadblock to other needed services.

II. Develop Regional Partnerships with LAUSD, LA County, and Other Local Governments

Los Angeles County has roughly 10 million people, which makes it the nation's most populous local jurisdiction, containing 88 cities (including the City of Los Angeles) with their own governments, a number of unincorporated areas, several school districts (the largest being LAUSD), and a county government system. Historically, the structure of numerous independent cities and a variety of unincorporated areas has made this region resistant to coordination across disparate communities. This dynamic makes dealing with issues surrounding split powers, responsibilities, and resources difficult and sensitive. Moreover, the Los Angeles Unified School District provides education to most of the City's youth through more than 700 schools. There have been additional challenges with integrating the school district into regional initiatives.

For various reasons, there has been a significant lack of communication and coordination between and amongst all partners regarding anti-gang and youth programs, including the City and County of Los Angeles and LAUSD. Unless there is cooperation, little progress can be made in addressing the full range of gang problems in the area. To accomplish the goal of developing regional partnerships, the following should be addressed:

1. Build relationships with regional partners to improve the current environment of conflict and non-cooperation

While relationships between all regional partners must improve, one of the most critical segments of non-cooperation that impacts Los Angeles' youth and families involves the City and LAUSD. Because the vast majority of the City's youth attend LAUSD schools, the youth and anti-gang programs undertaken by the schools directly impact similar services provided by the City.

Further, even as numerous examples of overlaps exist, it remains critical that the City to foster a cooperative relationship with LAUSD because such overlaps generate inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in both entities' efforts.

Additionally, the City and LA County have opportunities to see program improvements by better collaboration and cooperation. Whether it is on City/County workforce development efforts, county probation activities or court operations, better cooperation will result in improved services to gang challenged neighborhoods and their residents.

2. Continue to bolster recent successful efforts by the City and regional partners to collaborate and coordinate

While there have been some recent efforts and attempts at collaboration, such as LAUSD, RAP, CDD, Probation, District Attorney, and LAPD, these efforts have been localized, small scale, and ad-hoc in nature lacking structure, planning, and coordination. Nevertheless, examining these examples provides valuable insight and tools for building the City's new structure and approach for coordinating anti-gang efforts. These efforts also testify to the ability of the City, LAUSD, and County responsibility to work together

in a highly effective manner. Some of the best examples of cooperation appear to have grown between organizations operating within the areas of greatest need.

However, most of these efforts are informal, lack structured commitment, and operate mostly on a volunteer basis. Without a comprehensive structure, the results are limited, the impact is minimized, and ultimately the needs of communities remain unmet.

3. Coordinate critical service clusters with the County and LAUSD

General community development (including housing, commercial, industrial and overall economic development), social disorganization, social bonds among youth, and potential issues of inequity in service delivery throughout the City are significant factors to consider in how the City addresses the gang problem. While this report focuses primarily on one service cluster—youth and family services—there are three additional service clusters that are essential in any anti-gang and community development effort. The regional partners must ensure collaboration and coordination also occurs at these levels in order to reduce Los Angeles’ gang activity and creating safe communities for all Angelenos: workforce development; housing, economic and community development, and law enforcement involvement.

Overall, to better develop healthy communities, the City must leverage public investment dollars to create job growth, provide stable supply of quality affordable housing, and improve the quality of life by providing access to key social services in the neighborhood. These issues if properly addressed will have an impact on eradicating the gang problem in the Los Angeles community.

4. Ensure the participation of key regional stakeholders in deliberations to award contracts to service providers

While sufficient and objective needs assessments must be employed to determine which services should be implemented in various Los Angeles communities, City officials must ensure that all key stakeholders are invited and participate “at the table” offering input on how services will be provided and who will provide them. For example, when the City contracts for a service provider who will work within the LAUSD environment, it is important that the City consider the unique legal and operational constraints LAUSD faces before executing a contract.

5. Participate in a regional executive level committee to resolve communication and coordination barriers and advance the region’s gang reduction efforts

Because Los Angeles’ gang problem is shared with the County, LAUSD, and numerous other cities, the City should participate in a regional level executive committee to solidify efforts and overcome past barriers that have prevented successful communication and coordination of the region’s anti-gang efforts. A promising endeavor is the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors 2007 call for a comprehensive countywide public health strategy to gangs and violence. According to the Advancement Project, the Los Angeles

County Executive Officer assembled an Executive Steering Committee that includes representatives of the County CEO, the Advancement Project, the District Attorney, LAPD, the Sheriff, the LA Mayor’s Office, County Superintendents, and the Independent Cities Association. The head of the Anti-gang Office should act as the voice of the City in such a committee.

III. Conduct Community-based and Department-wide Needs Assessments

The success of a City-wide anti-gang strategy hinges upon developing a meaningful, comprehensive program for finding and delivering an optimal mix of services that target the gang problem at its root. A coordinated approach must include general and targeted prevention, diversion, intervention, reentry programs as well as suppression efforts—but these efforts must be based on the unique needs of diverse communities. In the past, the City has largely placed the responsibility of identifying needs on the service providers themselves. This not only distanced the program administrators from the people in need of services, it also encouraged a system of service delivery where supply dictated demand. In spite of this—or perhaps because of this—the City has begun changing its approach. Similar to the Boyle Heights Gang Reduction Program (GRP) implemented as a pilot project, our blueprint suggests that the City build and expand on this model and establish community-based Interdisciplinary Community Assessment Teams (ICATs) within a Gang Reduction Unit of the new Anti-gang Office.

It must be recognized that the community-based needs assessments are designed to address issues of those communities that have been designated by the Mayor as “top priority.” When conducting these in-depth needs assessments for the gang infested communities alone, there is a risk of neglecting the needs of other City areas. Therefore, we believe that the City should also coordinate the community-based needs assessments and department-wide needs assessments performed by each department providing general youth development, social services and community development such as RAP, CDD, LAPD, HACLA, among others. Specifically, we recommend the following:

1. Create Interdisciplinary Community Assessment Teams (ICAT) for selected communities

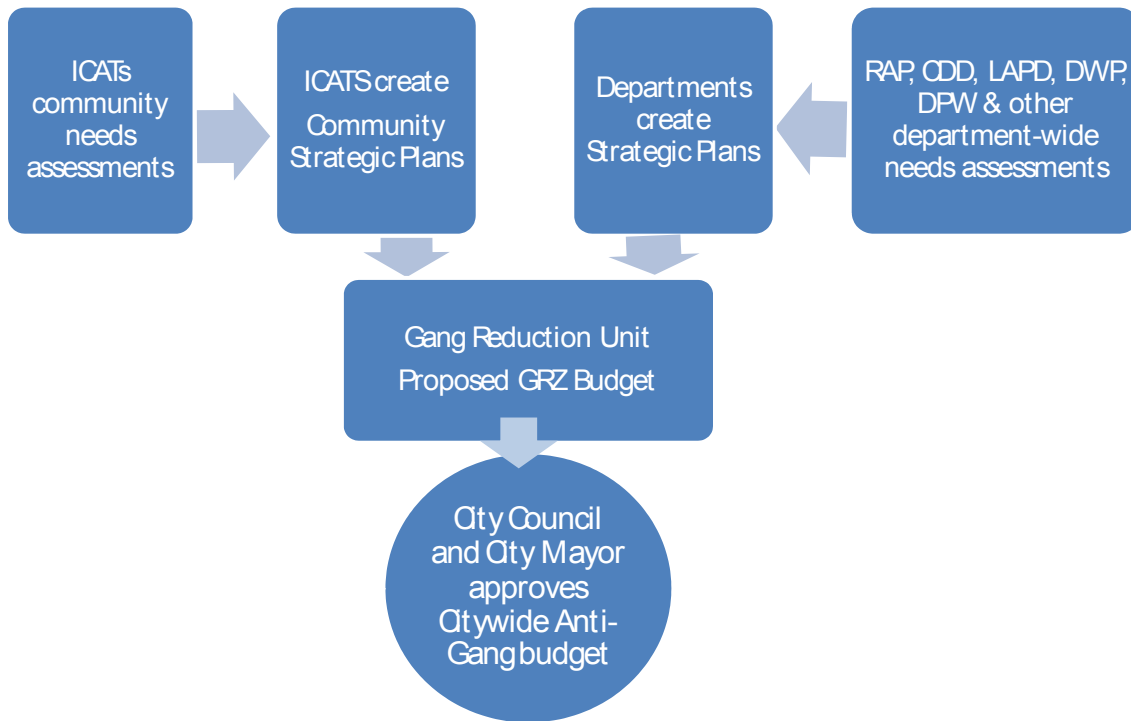
To ensure that the City-wide efforts at fighting gang activity are effective at a local community level, the City must conduct comprehensive assessments of gang activity and community resources in every highly impacted community. Our blueprint recommends creating Interdisciplinary Community Assessment Teams (ICATs) that will be responsible for coordinating and conducting needs assessments at a local level, and ensuring that anti-gang programs are tailored to the specific needs of every community.

These multi-agency teams will conduct community-based needs assessments, creating strategic plans to address the gang challenges in each community, making decisions related to services and programs, and agreeing on the roles and responsibilities of each entity in delivering services. ICATs will consist of key City and County department

managers, LAUSD, and existing task forces as well as community leaders and other stakeholders, and would work in conjunction with the Gang Reduction Unit.

While there are numerous other departmental-level needs assessments being conducted throughout the City, none will generate the comprehensive, community-wide assessments we envision. Following is flowchart of the needs assessment process steps.

Figure 4. “Citywide Anti-Gang Program Needs Assessments Process”



2. Develop community-based needs assessment methodology

Gang problems in individual communities call for different solutions, and the answer to finding the right strategy lies in understanding and addressing the unique needs of these communities. Moreover, as the needs of any community evolve, the City’s approach to addressing these changes must also evolve and remain fluid. Our blueprint recommends developing a Citywide comprehensive needs assessments methodology by identifying unique core community needs (basic community infrastructure—family, jobs, housing, etc.), and building on promising methodologies currently in use.

The Mayor’s current Gang Reduction Strategy describes a targeted effort of providing a mix of social services coupled with intense suppression efforts to facilitate recovery of gang-infested communities. The needs assessments model being employed for the Mayor’s proposed Gang Reduction Strategy includes important components, such as a thorough inventory of services available and developing an approach to assess whether the general prevention, targeted prevention, intervention and suppression types of services adequately cover identified Gang Reduction Zones. We recommend building on these to (1) develop an empirical understanding of gangs, including use of definitions,

tracking gang crime data, reliance on agencies that compile gang-related statistics; (2) construct an inventory of existing services and programs; (3) identify sources of information to gather gang statistics and data; and (4) ensure the right expertise is involved in the needs assessments.

The needs assessments should include qualitative and quantitative methodologies that address such indicators as demographics and urban overview, economic factors, educational factors, child welfare, health and mental health, law enforcement, gang intervention and street peace, criminal justice, public safety, community capacity, community infrastructure and leadership, and gaps and disconnects.

3. Mandate department-level needs assessments citywide

While these community-based needs assessments for the GRZs are essential, they alone would neglect the needs of communities outside the finite boundaries of the GRZs. Therefore, City departments performing key youth development services must also engage in department-level designed to assess their ability to serve the needs of the greater Los Angeles Community. Currently, however, we found that city departments generally lack coordinated and methodologically sound needs assessment processes; and found that when assessments do occur, they are conducted in silos without considering how their activities interact with the activities of other departments.

We believe that department-wide needs assessments should be conducted in concert with the community-level work of ICATs. Several examples we found in use by selected City departments can be used as prototypes, including RAPs current assessment activities.

4. Establish a process for identifying gaps in services

Based on hundreds of interviews and mapping of services, there is evidence that youth at highest risk for gang involvement may not have adequate access to appropriate services. Whether it is a problem with the location of service sites, or a limited number of program offerings, gaps need to be further identified and filled. Community-level needs assessments will be helpful, but such gaps in services also need to be the focus of departments and service providers as well. Moreover, in cases where unnecessary duplication of services exists, it should be eliminated.

5. Evaluate results and build community-wide strategic plans

After the Community-wide needs assessments have been performed, the City must evaluate results in the context of existing resources and citywide priorities. As noted earlier, the community-based needs assessments for the GRZ areas alone would generally neglect the needs of communities outside the GRZ areas. Therefore, the needs identified in each selected community should be evaluated as they pertain to the services provided by all City departments serving the needs of the general public, such as RAP, LAPD general youth programs, CDD, and others. The newly established Gang Reduction Unit within the new Anti-gang Office must review the needs assessments results for both, the GRZs as well as the needs assessments prepared by City departments. Once prepared, the Gang Reduction Unit must utilize the information from community-level and

department-level needs assessments, devise community-based strategic plans, and make overall budgetary recommendations.

IV. Redirect Funds to the Gang Reduction Strategy

With significant declines in Federal and State funding over the past five years, the City will have to make tough decisions regarding identifying community needs, and providing the resources to address those needs. Currently, many city entities find it challenging to clearly identify, define and distinguish core services to meet these needs. More significantly, we found that critical anti-gang program components, in particular targeted prevention, intervention, and reentry programs are grossly under-funded. If youth development and gang reduction is to be a top City priority, existing resources will need to be redirected toward these core service areas. Though implementation will not require additional funding streams, additional resources could dramatically enhance the ability of the City to combat its gang problem. Nevertheless, the recommendations incorporated in this report are focused on maximizing the impact of the limited (and dwindling) resources the City currently has.

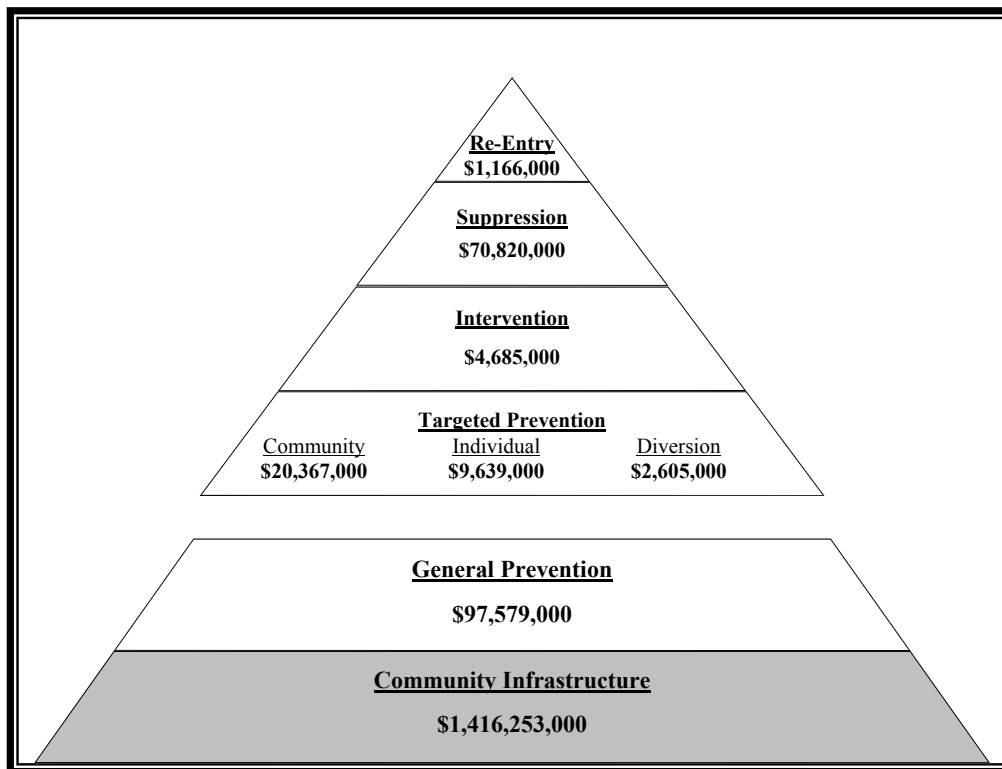
Redirecting existing funds will require difficult decisions, and will likely mean that some services—often valuable services, but not focused on gang reduction—may no longer receive City funding. However, if the City is determined to face the problem of gangs head on, such decisions will be necessary. It is true, as both the Mayor and the City Controller have recently implied that the City must also be more diligent and more coordinated in identifying and applying for additional grant revenues. However, immediate action to devise and implement a gang reduction strategy requires immediate funding, not the potential to identify grant sources that may yield additional funds. To accomplish this goal, City officials and the new Anti-gang Office should:

1. Redirect funding to core targeted prevention, intervention, and reentry services

Although the City has devoted substantial financial resources to address delinquency and gangs, our research suggests that these resources could be more effectively deployed by focusing on specific targeted prevention, intervention, and reentry services. Much of the funding classified for “anti-gang” programs does not actually have a specific gang focus, but rather concentrates on general prevention and community infrastructure. While these broader, non-core programs do provide significant benefits to the communities they serve, the amount allocated is not in proportion to what would be expected within a comprehensive anti-gang and youth development strategy. Specifically, Figure 5 illustrates approximately how much is currently devoted to each type of service within the City’s overall social service delivery framework.

Figure 5. “Healthy Community Program Funding”¹

¹ The funding amounts depicted in this pyramid represent program allocations among more than a dozen City departments, and were derived from City budgetary documents, departmental program reports and contract documentation, independent analyses conducted by the Chief Legislative Analyst, and the Mayor’s Gang Reduction Strategy. We excluded most funding associated with two agencies—HACLA and CRA—due to their independent control over funding resources; as a result, this pyramid does not reflect hundreds



As is clearly evident, even with targeted prevention, intervention, and reentry combined, general prevention, suppression, and community infrastructure efforts receive more than forty times the funding resources than the services currently comprising the City’s gang reduction efforts. A recap of current funding of specific anti-gang programs reveals:

- ✓ **Targeted Prevention: \$32,611,000** – Targeted Prevention receives the most anti gang money of any social service category. These programs include three distinct approaches to keep youth out of gangs, focusing on “at-risk” communities, “at-risk” individuals, and diversion services.
- ✓ **Intervention: \$4,685,000** – Intervention programs are designed to provide mediation, treaty negotiations and violence interruption, as well as to convince gang members to leave the gang lifestyle in favor of more positive and pro-social activities. LA Bridges II is one of only a few programs operated by the City with this specific focus. The program receives a combination of City General Fund and CDBG monies.
- ✓ **Reentry: \$1,166,000** – Reentry programs have been implemented to assist both previously incarcerated individuals and active gang members return to mainstream society. Since gang ties and affiliation are often initiated or reinforced during incarceration, reentry programs offer transitional services to individuals who want an alternative to the gang lifestyle. Services often include employment training, counseling, transitional housing, and tattoo removal.

of millions of dollars dedicated to the City’s “Community Infrastructure” development programs. Amounts were classified according to definitions described in Appendix A of the Full Report.

2. Refocus a Substantial Portion of Existing Neighborhood Action, Specially Targeted, and Neighborhood Development Program Funds toward the City's Gang Reduction Strategy

While restrictions on the funding sources used for the City's many anti-gang programs limit the City's ability to redirect these funds, the bulk of the youth development and anti-gang funding is more flexible and is largely included in the programs administered by CDD's Human Services and Neighborhood Development Group.

For some time, CDD's goal in allocating funds appears to have been driven by the need to sustain existing agencies rather than to achieve any specific, long-term, strategic objective. In several cases, it appears that the City's process for allocating funds has been less focused on identifying core programs and agencies that can *best* provide needed services to communities, and has emphasized funding the existing CBOs to allow them to continue to provide a broad set of services. As such, the City has adopted a "sustaining agent" role providing millions of dollars to over one hundred CBOs without a strategic objective. Further, because these programs do not purport to be designed to achieve any specific objective or outcome and are not subject to rigorous performance evaluation techniques, they have managed to escape the heavy scrutiny faced by several other, more focused programs, such as Bridges and the FDNs. In the end, the City must begin eliminating the expectation that contracts and funding will continue indefinitely.

In some cases, the criteria used to award funds to CBOs and departments under this umbrella methodology seems based on whether the agency "qualifies" under the provisions of the funding source—not whether the service offered by the agency represents the best and most strategic use of the funds. Funding allocations have been spread among agencies with little deference to strategic intent, and without critical determination to cull out programs that were ill-defined, ineffective, or unrelated to any specific purpose.

The following discussion of a selection of "umbrella" programs point to the reasons we believe approximately \$19 million should be reallocated in a more strategic manner. This is not to say that the agencies providing services under these three programs do not provide valuable services, only that the substantial funding allocated to these programs should be focused to achieve particular outcomes that correspond to the City's top priorities—of which gang reduction is only one.

✓ Redirect \$8 Million in Neighborhood Action Program Funding

Currently with these funds, the City hopes to offer "human services that target special community needs, or fill identified gaps not supported elsewhere." The identification of the gaps in City services has been left largely in the hands of contracted CBOs, thereby allowing broad discretion on how funds are to be spent, and funding the services CBOs offer rather than those most needed.

In early 2000, the City adopted an across-the-board funding strategy to distribute approximately \$8 million in grant funding at the rate of \$100,000 per agency. However, the "community needs" the funds were to address were never identified by

the City. Instead, the most recent RFP (issued in 2002) specified that the City would allocate approximately \$100,000 to each agency, and put the onus on agencies to identify these needs or service gaps.

The NAP umbrella program constitutes a broad array of agencies providing a wide range of services, coupled with little accountability to achieve particular outcomes demanded by the City.

✓ Redirect \$6 Million in “Specially Targeted” Funding

The “Specially Targeted” program umbrella is not strategically focused to address specific community needs or to achieve identified outcomes. The City allocated nearly \$6 million during Fiscal Year 2006-07 to fund 17 different agencies—none of which, according to CDD personnel, were competitively solicited or awarded, but were based on the recommendations of City officials. With these funds, the City has never established a specific goal or outcome it wishes to actualize. Instead, agencies funded under this classification receive stand-alone contracts that were executed with little justification. While many of the services offered by these agencies are focused on serving youth, the types of services vary widely.

With little justification for how these funds are distributed, and an overall lack of strategic focus, there can be little assurance that these funds were spent in the best interest of the City. Moreover, the funding for many of these contracts is simply renewed on a year-to-year basis—without any competitive RFP process—with new contract amendments extending the agreements.

✓ Redirect \$5 Million in Neighborhood Development Program Funding

Unlike the NAP and Specially Targeted umbrella programs, the Neighborhood Development Program (NDP) does not fund agencies to provide services; rather it grants funds to non-profits for capital acquisitions and improvements, for the purpose of building an infrastructure that allows them to provide services to communities for years to come. In return for these loans, the agencies are obligated to provide services to residents for a designated period of time. These service infrastructure loans could provide a substantial resource to communities in need only if they were targeted in a more strategic manner.

In contrast to more focused programs, the NDP does not function with any strategic objective or outcome in mind. Instead, it awards funding to agencies meeting its basic criteria: that the capital project will be completed in a specific timeframe and is eligible for the grant. The emphasis on these two minimal criteria and a lack of strategic planning result in an unbalanced approach to community development that render specific community needs subordinate to the ability to meet criteria that are not linked to a larger strategy. With a more strategic focus, we believe that this program could be harnessed to achieve specific, measurable, and long-term results focused on targeted anti-gang efforts.

3. *Some Consideration Should be Given to “Special Projects”*

The need to target the City's limited resources to those programs with measurable objectives and provide designated core program services to those most in need is paramount. However, we also recognize that this shift may result in the unintentional defunding of critical services that have a significant impact on communities outside the anti-gang focus. Indeed, many of the programs funded through NAPs, Specially Targeted, and Neighborhood Development provide services from which the City can benefit substantially. The City should establish a formal process whereby service providers can request special reconsideration to receive funds based on the significant citywide need they demonstrate. Consideration should be transparent, and these programs should be held accountable to demonstrate success on a go-forward basis.

4. Stop Citywide Proportional Funding Allocations and Reductions

Of CDD's programs serving youth and families, three of them (Bridges I, FDNs and NAPs) are consistently allocated equal funding to most of the agencies providing services within each program, regardless of the unique circumstances and/or barriers present in the communities in which the agencies operate.² Funding should reflect identified community needs, barriers to service delivery in communities most in need, and the demonstrated success of the programs and agencies being funded. In some regard, this process ensures that certain agencies are not perceived to be favored, yet the process does not allow agencies with greater capacity or better performance to receive additional resources, nor does it critically align funding with need or success.

5. Re-procure all Youth and Family Service contracts within six months

Many CBO contracts have not been put out for competitive bid since the programs were implemented. For example, the Bridges program has not undergone a comprehensive solicitation process since the program began 10 years ago; the NAP contracts have not been re-solicited since 2002, and it does not appear that the Specially Targeted contracts have ever been subject to an openly competitive and deliberative process. In the end, the City should reissue RFPs for all programs within six months, giving enough time to incorporate findings from this report, the Advancement Project's studies, the needs assessments that are currently ongoing, the findings of the City's Ad Hoc Committee on Gang Violence and Youth Development, and other ongoing efforts.

6. Incorporate Needs- and Performance-Based Outcome Measures in CBO Contracts

Once the City has identified a community's core needs and determined the core services required to meet these needs, it must establish mutually beneficial relationships with service providers that can best meet the unique needs of diverse communities. This entails both (1) identifying top-performing CBOs within communities in need—or, if there is a dearth of top-performing CBOs in a particular community, encouraging the establishment of CBOs with the skills and resources to succeed; and (2) establishing contracts that afford CBOs sufficient latitude to provide unique services to diverse

² It should be noted, that in the case of the FDN programs, some efforts are underway to incorporate funding criteria based on poverty levels.

communities and to implement innovative initiatives; and sustaining these critical relationships through performance-oriented monitoring, evaluation and consultation.

7. Revise the Consortium-Based Contracting Approach

Although CDD has incorporated the consortium-based approach to fund some of its targeted programs—LA Bridges & FDNs—weaknesses have been revealed whereby neither the City nor lead agencies were holding partner agencies accountable. Despite these weaknesses, however, this approach can have a positive impact on service delivery in Los Angeles. Since it is unlikely that one agency would be able to provide the wide range of services needed throughout the City, the consortium-based models should be expanded. Partnering CBOs and religious-based organizations with one another gives them an opportunity to leverage the resources each brings to the table and to learn from one another in a collaborative environment.

In order for this approach to succeed, contracts with lead agencies must incorporate incentives to build upon the strengths of this model, such as offering services in multiple locations, referring clients to other agencies, and achieving community-level goals and outcomes. However, the City must be a proactive partner with regard to monitoring partner agencies in order to hold them accountable for compliance and success. Moreover, we recommend that the City not institute a “minimum requirement” for consortium partners, but rather assess proposals on a case-by-case, community-by-community basis to ensure service delivery meets the diverse needs of specific communities.

8. Consolidate Monitoring and Evaluation Activities and Focus on Program and Agency Performance Rather than on Outputs and Compliance

Every department we met with recognized that some CBOs provide valuable services while others do not. Each has expressed a willingness to hold underperforming CBOs accountable and to award contracts only to those CBOs that demonstrate success in the communities they serve. But, it also appears that accountability is not built into most program designs and is sparsely executed. Although CDD devotes a substantial proportion of its staff resources to monitoring CBOs that have been awarded City contracts, the focus is very much on compliance rather than identifying whether those agencies and services are positively impacting the community in a broader context.

By enhancing the expertise of monitoring staff, streamlining the monitoring process, and balancing contract compliance with performance-based analyses, the City could enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the monitoring process. Moreover, the City should incorporate a direct relationship between funding service agencies and their related performance. At the same time, CDD should incorporate incentives for agencies to perform beyond minimum contract requirements.

V. Reinvent Youth and Family Services

Scrutiny of the City’s key anti-gang programs has increased since the implementation of Bridges over 10 years ago. More recently, concerns have been raised that the programs simply are not sufficiently reducing gang crime in City neighborhoods. Many of these critiques question the fundamental premise that the Bridges programs can even achieve their intended purposes. It appears that City officials have lost confidence in Bridges I and II. In addition, other anti-gang efforts, and youth and family development efforts do not sufficiently focus on youth at highest risk, as needed. Consequently, the City is at a crossroads and must devise a new strategy for combating gangs in a holistic way.

While we found that many of the youth and family services offered to those in need reflected some of the attributes of best or promising practices, several steps should be taken to improve its delivery of services to youth and families throughout the City, in general, and to “at-risk” youth and communities, in particular. To accomplish this goal, the City should:

1. Streamline General Youth and Family Development Programs

Many of the City’s key programs currently administered in CDD are disjointed and fail to leverage resources that are immediately available. A critical first step of the new Anti-gang Office needs to be to streamline the general youth and family development programs that currently exist within CDD, as this represents the bulk of all youth development and anti-gang programs in the City. As depicted in Table 1, many core services are duplicated between the major youth programs overseen by CDD.

Table 1: “Core Services Provided through Existing CDD Programs”

Core Services	FDN	NAP ¹	YAP	YFC	YO	LAB I	LAB II
Case Management	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Counseling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Financial Literacy	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Parenting Workshops	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Anger Management	✓	✓				✓	✓
Community Events	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Information & Referral	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Workforce Development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Crisis Response/Intervention							✓
Mediation/Peacekeeping							✓
After School Youth Programs							
Recreation Activities	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Homework/Tutoring	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Monitoring FTEs		11		N/A	5		5

¹ Since the services offered by the NAP agencies differ significantly, some agencies may offer these services, while other may not.

This current system of programs results in overlaps and inefficiencies that could be reduced, and gaps in service that could be closed. Each service provides the typical core activities that targeted prevention services would provide: case management, referral networks, mentoring, recreational activities, parenting services, etc. CDD's existing framework creates significant gaps among highly vulnerable age groups, such as elementary and high school-aged youth. Moreover, funding restrictions impact what services are offered by some agencies, especially with regard to undocumented residents. It appears that a melding of some of these programs would enable the City to reduce service gaps by providing a broad range of core services to broader range of residents. Specialized services, such as mental health and gender-specific programming, are also disparately available throughout the City. Finally, program accessibility vis-à-vis extended operating hours has also become an issue requiring attention.

2. Overhaul Targeted Prevention Programs to Effectively Address Both “At-Risk” Communities and the Youth that are at Highest Risk of Joining Gangs

Gang prevention programs must (1) target communities most at risk of gang activity, (2) target individual youth that are at highest risk of gang involvement, and (3) divert youth who are associating with gangs and minimally involved with gangs before they become “hard core” gang members. The Bridges I program, while providing several “core” services, does not sufficiently address each of these program components.

The Bridges I program and the current methods used to measure program performance do not compel service agencies to prioritize among clients who could be deemed more “at-risk” than others. Specifically, the effectiveness of Bridges funding is questionable because CDD has not reassessed whether the location of the Bridges I sites and their respective school locations are still among those most in need. Moreover, gang research suggests that the risk factors currently used by the Bridges program are not the most effective for identifying youth most at risk of joining gangs. By countering identified risk factors with a well-balanced mix of protective factors, the Bridges program could enhance its ability to demonstrate long-term prevention success.

3. Expand and Refine Intervention, Mediation and Peacekeeping Efforts

Intervention efforts represent relatively uncharted territory as there is less objective research on the subject. Intervention activities are innovative, unproven, and are primarily comprised of novel methods employed by individual practitioners. Even the interventionists themselves differ about what services they are going to provide. However, there are some “promising practices” that can facilitate further development of a constructive model for gang intervention. In general “street contacts” are meant to provide pro-social contacts with youth, engage youth in pro-social activities, link youth services and social systems, and provide a link between youth who are often estranged from the institutions of legitimate society and social institutions.

While the method of intervention will likely vary between communities, there is a need for standardized expertise, training and accountability. In our view, more important than past gang affiliation is the issue of what training and expertise the City will require of the intervention workers that it funds.

4. Increase and Enhance the Reentry Service Efforts

Reentry services represent one of the most significant—and problematic—service gaps identified during our analysis. Reentry services must be expanded in two key ways: services must be expanded to youth in the criminal justice system, beginning with County probation camps, and enhanced services must be provided to youth currently in gangs who wish to leave the gangs but who are not currently incarcerated. Both incarcerated and non-incarcerated youth wishing to leave the gang lifestyle require “wrap-around” services such as intensive case management, life skills training, employment services, tattoo removal, counseling, mentoring, and other core services during the transition period. Moreover, because different communities will inherently possess different resources and challenges, the City must ensure that the reentry programs created are flexible enough to provide the services needed in each respective community.

5. Increase Oversight when Implementing the Proposed Gang Reduction Zones

A preliminary review of the Mayor’s Gang Reduction Strategy and the Gang Reduction Zones (GRZs) shows that they incorporate some aspects that have been fatally lacking in the City’s previous programs. Specifically, they provide for a far more substantive, community-level needs assessment than any that has been conducted in the City’s anti-gang efforts. Further, they incorporate “steering committees” that formally institutionalize collaboration among key City and regional partners, and they incorporate a model of performance evaluation that exceeds what is currently available. According to the OJJDP, the “Comprehensive Gang Model,” used in the creation of the GRZs, espouses such a multi-faceted, multilayered approach. However, past efforts to implement this model have not always been positive. For instance, coordination among various prevention, intervention, suppression, and reentry service providers have been problematic in previous attempts to implement the model.

However, our research did reveal some strategies that should be incorporated when implementing the City’s new gang reduction strategy. Specifically, the City should work with unconventional partners, such as local hospitals and emergency rooms in order to demonstrate consequences of violence; expand participation of local schools; greater support for reentry services; enhance gender-specific programming; and partner with the volunteer and philanthropic communities.

6. Invest in Long-Term Training of Program Administrators and Monitors, and Contracted Service Providers

As the City enhances its youth development and anti-gang programs, focuses additional resources to provide more targeted services, and builds collaborative relationships with service providers, it will engage in activities in which it has little experience. Program enhancements will also require that additional demands be placed on service providers—demands to demonstrate success, deliver new or enhanced services, target additional subsets of “at-risk” populations, enhance case management and referral services, and in some cases demands to standardize service delivery models. These will require continued training, education, and staff development, which will in turn require that the City invest resources to reap long-term benefits.

In collaboration with academic and research institutions and other expert practitioners, the City will need to build this capacity within its ranks. In the short term, this may require some reliance on various external resources with expertise in the subject matters noted above. However, to avoid any long-term reliance on external contractors the City must utilize these resources to develop the expertise internally.

VI. Establish Rigorous Performance Measures and Conduct Evaluations of City and Contracted Programs

Despite the proliferation of gang prevention, intervention, and suppression programs throughout Los Angeles and the United States, there have been very few thorough outcome evaluations of these programs. Of the few that have, evaluations have largely measured short-term, community level outcomes, and have not addressed the long-term, individual level results for decreasing gang membership and gang-related violence.

In Los Angeles, the challenge of effective program evaluation is especially meaningful. Without a clear and consistent strategy for evaluating both current and proposed targeted gang prevention and intervention efforts, the City faces a situation in which there is no mechanism for determining what is and what is not working and making funding decisions on that basis. Only through systematic evaluation and measures that are directly linked to the goals of the funded program will the City be able to develop effective and efficient, evidence-based models on which to focus its efforts.

To meet the challenge of the Los Angeles gang problem, any new approach undertaken by the City must incorporate a robust research and evaluation unit housed in the Anti-gang Office would be responsible to:

1. Create and implement a comprehensive performance measure and evaluation process that extends beyond contract monitoring

Currently, the City does not have the data, tools, or program to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of gangs or other related social services. Rather, some small scale evaluations have addressed discrete issues such as delinquency performance measures, changes in truancy rates, or contract compliance. Further, some studies conducted have produced inconsistent results making it difficult to determine which results should be considered in redesigning or funding programs. Despite the absence of any reliable evaluative methods employed by the City, the efforts undertaken during the last decade alone (at a substantial cost) have revealed several weaknesses that the City can improve upon.

2. Develop a performance evaluation model for anti-gang & youth development programs

The City must incorporate a comprehensive program evaluation strategy within the framework of its anti-gang programs that would determine the specific goals and objectives of each program, delineate the specific related performance measures for each goal and objective, and require the collecting and reporting of the supporting needed data. Using information reported by departmental and CBO program providers,

assessments of outcomes and results can be completed. Providers should be held accountable to meet expected results or targeted goals and funding and program-continuation should be premised on meeting or surpassing such goals. While the new office's ICAT teams will be primarily responsible for performing in depth community-wide needs assessments at each of the proposed Gang Reduction Zones and other selected areas transitioning or challenged by gang activity, the new office will also be responsible for creating performance evaluation models for all of the City's anti-gang and youth development programs. The proposed GRZs are in the process of implementing a performance evaluation system that is based on OJJDP's model that guides many gang reduction efforts across the nation and appears to capture many key components that would be represented in a good evaluation model.

It is crucial that the City commit to a full scale evaluation of all of its efforts to respond to gangs. However, the City can not fully build the evaluation model before it develops its programs. Such a backwards strategy would allow the evaluation model to dictate the development of the program components. At the same time, the City cannot develop programs with the hopes of developing an evaluation model down the road. As has been aptly demonstrated, this results in perpetual delays in creating any evaluation model at all. Instead, the City must devise the two in conjunction with one another. Undoubtedly, some external expertise will need to be consulted during this process, but the City must ensure that the City personnel involved in the new programs are fully engaged in both aspects. One approach would be to build into every new contract the requirement that specific data elements be collected and made available to the City for use with an evaluation, whether that evaluation was ultimately conducted by a City or external entity. This is being done in a limited capacity with many of CDD's contracted agencies. This approach would provide timely data to program evaluators for assessment, who in turn must be assured that the data collected is accurate and reliable—part of the role of program monitors.

3. Create an independent research and evaluation unit within new Anti-gang Office

The City must utilize independent qualitative and quantitative methods in developing and assessing the performance measures for each of the City's anti-gang programs. Staff hired by CBOs and the city may not have the necessary skill sets to accurately collect or calculate performance metrics and may need training to do so. Such expertise includes knowledge of current subject-specific research, program evaluation, program management, performance measurement and various administrative and practical experiences necessary for implementation, such as expertise in case management. Nevertheless, internal expertise must be enhanced in the long-term.

A new Research and Evaluation Unit should be dedicated to creating performance evaluation models for the City's anti-gang and youth development programs, interpreting the data and developing the findings, offering recommendations for improvement, and tracking follow-up. Additionally, the new Unit would develop the necessary expertise on sharing knowledge and information as well as developing strategies for needs assessments and program development. This unit would produce studies and reports sufficient not only to evaluate the performance of the City's anti-gang service providers and programs, but also to assist City departments and general managers in identifying

their desired program outcomes as well as developing performance evaluation procedures.

Further, given that the City will be implementing newly developed programs and service delivery systems, this proposed Unit should play a critical role in assessing the implementation of the program within the initial six months of implementation. It is recommended for many large projects that the project team initiate audits or assessments within the 25 percent completion/implementation milestone. By doing this, evaluators can identify potential pitfalls that could derail the implementation down the road. In implementing a new gang reduction strategy, we recommend incorporating implementation evaluations very early in the process, perhaps through the use of an “embedded” research partner—which is considered an outstanding way to address the need for regular evaluation feedback.

4. Incorporate performance measures of the City’s targeted prevention, intervention, reentry, and suppression efforts as part of a gang reduction strategy

As the City develops a comprehensive program evaluation strategy, several factors must be included and considered. The City’s mission to reduce gang violence must create the framework in which outcomes are determined, indicators are selected, data is collected and analyzed, performance is measured, and funding is tied. Any effective evaluation of the City’s anti-gang programs will seek to conceptualize and assess youth in their behavioral environment and their community.

5. Improve information sharing and data collection

An effective performance evaluation system requires that the City employ a comprehensive data collection system. The myriad of challenges already described throughout this report are compounded by an absence of reliable data to ascertain program successes and results as well as inadequate systems from which to share. One of the first challenges faced by the new Anti-gang Office is to ensure that the kind of data necessary for performance evaluation is gathered in an on-going, efficient manner. While CDD has been in the process for the last several years to develop a system to serve this purpose, it has not been implemented across all youth development and anti-gang programs throughout the City.

While employing a comprehensive and functional data gathering system is necessary, not all information needed will be collected by service providers. In some cases, information will need to be obtained through some of the City’s regional partners, such as LAUSD, Probation and the Sheriff’s Department, and other agencies. As observed by the Advancement Project, obtaining this information requires, as is discussed in the first section, effective coordination between the County, LAUSD, City, and other regional partners.

6. Foster partnerships with the independent research community to leverage expertise

In the past, a myriad of independent research has been conducted regarding children, youth, and their families in Los Angeles. However, many of the findings and

recommendations made have been ignored. In the future, the resources presented by Los Angeles' vast research community should be leveraged by partnering with universities and research institutions throughout the Los Angeles region. In the short term, the City needs to build its expertise in performance measurement and developing criteria and methods for longitudinal studies. Its goal should be to develop the internal expertise needed to operate a high-quality research and evaluation unit. The City should make a proactive effort to invite research—not necessarily the policy oriented research that it wants—but any proposed research that relates to city programs and processes.

7. Evaluate City department's efforts at delivering programs in addition to contracted agencies

A successfully implemented gang reduction strategy requires a great deal of effort on the part of program administrators and monitors: everyone is accountable for success. As such, we recommend that the City's evaluation efforts do not end with the evaluation of service providers; rather, they must extend to administering departments, whether in the Mayor's Office or elsewhere.

Through hundreds of interviews, we found only one program—CDD's Workforce Development Division (WDD)—that had incorporated a performance evaluation system that made a significant effort to evaluate the performance of program administrators and monitors in the same manner that program practitioners were evaluated. These efforts must be expanded.

To achieve the study objectives, we conducted hundreds of interviews with the key City, County, and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) officials; additionally, we conducted field visits to many of the service providers' sites, including schools, parks, recreational centers and community-based organizations. Moreover, as part of this project, we contracted with two leading experts on gangs studies to participate and assist in our review—Jorja Leap, PhD, from University of California, Los Angeles, and Scott Decker, PhD, School of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Arizona State University. Their extensive research on gang-related issues in Los Angeles and throughout the nation—such as the organization, activities and effectiveness of prevention and intervention responses—has been invaluable throughout our study. We have incorporated their work and comments throughout our report, including our recommendations. Numerous other academic, social service, community and justice experts and involved stakeholders also provided valuable insights and issues as we conducted the study.