

**ALAMEDA COUNTY VIOLENCE
PREVENTION INITIATIVE:**

PHASE II WORK PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

In 2005, the Board of Supervisors adopted the *Alameda County Violence Prevention Blueprint* which provided a broad plan for preventing and reducing violence throughout Alameda County. Based on the goals outlined in the *Blueprint*, the Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI) was established to begin working on a plan that would implement the *Blueprint* strategies. However, despite the efforts and activities that have taken place since the adoption of the *Blueprint*, violence still continues to plague neighborhoods and cities throughout Alameda County. (See Appendix A for a more detailed description of the background and key accomplishments of Phase I of the VPI and for trends in Alameda County crime rates.)

To accomplish the original goals of the *Blueprint*, the Board of Supervisors engaged three agencies with diverse skill sets including Prevention Institute, Urban Strategies Council and Hill & Company Communications, to form a Violence Prevention Work Group. The Work Group was charged with developing a Work Plan for Phase II of the VPI. Based on planning and assessment of the situation, the Violence Prevention Work Group recommends that the VPI should now focus on two major objectives:

1. Accelerating the implementation of the neighborhood strategies that are currently being implemented in the county, with a special focus on youth and those reentering the community from incarceration.
2. Ensuring that a structure for community education, communications and technical assistance is available to support the neighborhood strategies as well as other activities that county agencies, city officials and community partners undertake to prevent and reduce violence.

In the following sections, the Violence Prevention Work Group has identified the role that the county should play in reducing and preventing violence, and has outlined programmatic priorities, service delivery methods, and action steps that are recommended as the foundation of Phase II of the VPI.

ROLE OF THE COUNTY

Alameda County, which provides “safety net” services for cities and municipalities, has a vested interest in harnessing its resources to prevent violence. The county hosts and delivers most of the services that are received by people who are victims of violence or who are at risk for violence. After-the-fact responses are expensive. A preliminary estimate of current levels of spending on violence by the Alameda County Administrator’s Office found that approximately 25% of the county’s budget is dedicated to addressing violent crime (\$546.7 million). This estimate takes only public safety programs into consideration and does not include the human services costs, such as removing a child from the home after an incident of domestic violence.

Putting resources upfront into effective prevention is an investment that can save precious resources “downstream,” such as those devoted to trauma and hospitalization, shelters, and criminal justice. Further, given the wide range of county functions (e.g., probation, behavioral health, public health, and social services), the county is uniquely positioned to leverage its expenditures in a way that can reduce

violence through direct services and coordination with other jurisdictions like municipalities and school districts as well as partners such as the business sector. The Violence Prevention Work Group has identified the following roles for the county:

- **Coordination:** Facilitate the coordination and collaboration of violence prevention programs and services among Alameda County agencies and departments, with municipalities and other jurisdictions, as well as among the six designated neighborhoods. The majority of the public services that people who are at risk of violence need and receive, are provided by various county agencies and departments. However, the lack of coordination among the different agencies and departments may result in duplications or gaps in services, without ultimately addressing the underlying reasons that people need these services. With increased coordination, the county can maximize its resources and ensure that the underlying reasons for violence are being addressed upfront.
- **Communication:** Design and implement with municipalities and other partners strategic communications initiatives that support the VPI with key audiences.
- **Contribution:** Engage existing resources, including staff, funding and commitment, in ways that are aligned with overall violence prevention strategies and raise new revenue to be used strategically.
- **Capacity Building:** Provide the skills training and organizational support that will inspire and enable county agencies and other key stakeholders to make violence prevention a top priority and implement solutions.

By fully engaging in these roles, the county can accomplish the following two objectives delineated in this Work Plan during Phase II of the VPI.

OBJECTIVE 1: REDUCE RISK AND BUILD RESILIENCY OF RESIDENTS AND POPULATIONS IN NEIGHBORHOODS AT RISK FOR VIOLENCE

Based on Alameda County crime data (see Appendix A), it is clear that certain neighborhoods and specific populations in Alameda County are at higher risk for experiencing violence than others. Accordingly, the VPI will focus on reducing risks and building the resiliency of residents in at-risk neighborhoods by accelerating and expanding the neighborhood-based violence prevention strategies that currently exist.

To make the biggest impact on reducing and preventing violence, the VPI will concentrate its efforts and resources on six prioritized neighborhoods and on two populations within these neighborhoods including 1) individuals returning to the community from incarceration, and 2) youth. The county will continue building on the *Blueprint's* recommendations for fostering youth resiliency to ensure youth have the necessary skills and resources to help protect them against violence. Similarly, the VPI will build on current efforts to reduce recidivism among those returning from incarceration as a strategy for reducing violence in the target neighborhoods.

1.1 REDUCE VIOLENCE IN HIGH-RISK NEIGHBORHOODS

Goals

1. Reduce violence in six prioritized neighborhoods that include: Sobrante Park in East Oakland, Fruitvale, Hoover Historic Neighborhood in West Oakland, Ashland-Cherryland, South Hayward, and the Irvington District of Fremont.
2. Reduce recidivism among formerly incarcerated individuals in the six prioritized neighborhoods.
3. Provide opportunities for meaningful participation by youth in the planning and implementation of the neighborhood and communications strategies.

Background

The Alameda County Public Health Department and the City of Oakland have partnered in a violence prevention effort, known as the City County Neighborhood Initiative (CCNI), working with two of Oakland's most at-risk neighborhoods—the Hoover Historic Neighborhood in West Oakland and Sobrante Park in East Oakland. More recently, to build on the success of the County-City partnership, the VPI and Supervisor Nate Miley's office have begun to support similar neighborhood-focused efforts in the unincorporated areas of Cherryland and Ashland. In addition, Supervisor Steele's office has staffed and convened the South Hayward Neighborhood collaborative which developed and is implementing a two year violence prevention plan for 2008-09.

Reentry

Even before the adoption of the *Blueprint*, Supervisors Miley and Carson recognized the importance of addressing the issue of reentry of formerly incarcerated persons and they both engaged in a variety of activities geared to increase public safety and prevent violence. Supervisor Miley has convened and staffed the VPI Reentry Committee, which has brought together stakeholders to plan and implement improvements in the reentry system, with a special focus on those released from county jail. More recently, various stakeholders in the county have come together to form the Alameda County Reentry Network to provide comprehensive coordination of reentry services, focusing on those released to the county from state and federal prisons and county jail. Both Supervisors Carson and Miley have been involved in the Alameda County Reentry Network. Currently, Rodney Brooks (Chief of Staff for Supervisor Carson) is a Co-Chair of the Reentry Network's Coordinating Council. (see www.acreentry.org)

Youth

In order to achieve the goals of the *Blueprint*, the county identified promotion of positive child and youth development as one of its key objectives. By supporting local city and neighborhood efforts, the county has engaged in youth development in various ways. Particularly in the unincorporated areas of Ashland and Cherryland, Supervisor Nate Miley has engaged youth from the Youth Leadership Council to identify priorities for the area around violence prevention and safety and has put them in a leadership position in the planning of a youth center. Similarly, through the City County Neighborhood Initiative, the county's Public Health Department has engaged youth in community forums and community-wide assessments to identify priorities and successes for its two sites. (See Appendix A, for detailed information on the county's efforts to prevent violence.)

Recommended Approach

Violence prevention efforts should be continued and/or initiated in the six prioritized Alameda County neighborhoods. These efforts will be implemented in partnership with local municipalities or through the Board of Supervisors and county agencies in unincorporated areas. The neighborhoods will benefit

from coordinated support from multiple county agencies and departments, working with local government and community-based organization partners. County agencies and departments will support cities and neighborhood stakeholders in the planning and implementation of neighborhood level strategies for violence prevention. In this supportive role, Alameda County will convene Neighborhood Planning Groups, connect neighborhoods with existing services and resources, and provide other support required to plan and implement neighborhood strategies. In addition to addressing the needs of the community at large, these neighborhood strategies will pay particular attention to the specific needs of youth and the formerly incarcerated.

Reentry

In order to support the successful reentry of the formerly incarcerated and decrease the likelihood they will re-engage in criminal activity (especially violent crime), the VPI will work in neighborhoods to increase availability, access and effectiveness of reentry services. Reentry services include healthcare, income, education/training, employment, housing, and social services. The VPI will work through the Alameda County Reentry Network to develop, coordinate and implement reentry programs and services to address the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated individuals and their neighborhoods as they transition back into the community. The Reentry Network will assign representatives to the Neighborhood Planning Groups to help them address issues of reentry and to connect them to programs and resources through the Reentry Network and other county resources. Specifically, the VPI leadership will work through the Reentry Network to convene community forums in the six neighborhoods, and work with relevant county agencies to increase availability and access to reentry services for the formerly incarcerated.

Youth

By focusing some of its efforts at building resiliency amongst youth in the neighborhoods, the VPI can prevent and reduce violence. The VPI will work in the neighborhoods to ensure that youth are actively involved in the planning and implementation of neighborhood plans and the communications strategy (see Communications, Sections 2.1.1 and 2.3 below). In doing so, the youth not only become socially connected to their neighborhood efforts, but also develop skills and gain the knowledge and expertise to become leaders rather than victims or perpetrators of violence.

Strategies for Implementation

1. **Plan and Implement Neighborhood Initiatives to Reduce Violence:** Plan neighborhood level strategies and implement action plans for violence prevention in partnership with Alameda County agencies and departments, cities and neighborhood stakeholders.
2. **Coordinate County, City, and Nonprofit Services:** Increase coordination between multiple Alameda County agencies and departments, cities, nonprofits, businesses and neighborhood stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of programs and services delivered in the selected neighborhoods.
3. **Build Capacity to Increase Safety and Prevent Violence:** Build the capacity of government, residents, community-based organizations and other stakeholders to improve the education, economic and social opportunities of residents in the neighborhood in order to increase safety and prevent violence.
4. **Utilize the Reentry Network to Support Neighborhood Reentry Strategy Development and Implementation:** Working in conjunction with the Reentry Network, the VPI will:

a) build the capacity of neighborhoods to plan and execute neighborhood level actions aimed at promoting a healthy reentry for formerly incarcerated residents and b) ensure that neighborhoods are informed of and prepared to utilize existing and future resources for supporting their local efforts.

5. **Engage Youth in the Six Neighborhoods in the Planning and Implementation Process and Communications Plan:** Invite young people to provide input into the decision-making and implementation of the neighborhood plans and ensure that youth meaningfully participate in the implementation of the Communications Plan.

1.2. INDICATORS AND TARGETS FOR SUCCESS

Long Term Results

- Violence in each of the six prioritized neighborhoods decreased by 50 percent.
- Recidivism in six prioritized neighborhoods decreased by 50 percent.

Intermediate Results (in six selected neighborhoods)

- Percentage of students with a caring adult in the community increased (California Healthy Kids Survey).
- Percentage of students reporting meaningful participation in their community increased (California Healthy Kids Survey).
- Percentage of formerly incarcerated people in VPI neighborhoods who are employed 2 months after release increased.
- Percentage of crimes committed by formerly incarcerated people in VPI neighborhoods decreased.

Program Performance

- Perceptions of violence decreased in six prioritized neighborhoods.
- Violence prevention priorities identified in six prioritized neighborhoods.
- Residents (youth and adults) participate in efforts to prevent violence in six prioritized neighborhoods.
- Residents are familiar with their local plan and are involved/engaged in the process.
- Residents are more aware of the neighborhood planning groups and the resources that are available to them from the city, county, and community based organizations.

1.3. SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM (for detailed action steps see Appendix D)

NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIES¹

- | |
|--|
| 1. Confirm neighborhood selection: Confirm and/or modify selection of six prioritized neighborhoods: Sobrante Park, Hoover Historic Neighborhood, Fruitvale, Ashland-Cherryland, South Hayward, and Irvington |
| 2. Establish agreements to collaborate with municipalities: In incorporated areas, establish |

¹ Neighborhoods will choose a starting point that allows them to move their current efforts forward.

compacts/MOUs with municipalities to collaborate on joint violence prevention efforts in prioritized neighborhoods. [see Appendix A for Sample Count-City Compact]

3. **Identify partners in six prioritized neighborhoods:** Identify municipal (law enforcement, health/human services, parks and recreation, schools, elected, etc.) and community partners (community-based and grassroots organizations and adult and youth residents) in each neighborhood as appropriate.

4. **Conduct a needs assessment:** Conduct a community needs assessment/survey to identify key concerns related to safety and violence prevention and input about solutions along with a youth-led survey that addresses the specific needs of youth in the neighborhoods.

5. **Collect neighborhood data:** Collect and map multi-jurisdictional data on each of the neighborhoods

6. **Facilitate a prioritization process:** Convene partners (including county departments and agencies, community groups and members, city departments, Reentry Network, youth participants) for a prioritization process in each neighborhood, based on the process described below:

Meeting A- Orientation and Identification of Initial Priorities: Presentation of needs assessment and data collection; community members discuss their concerns and needs (with an emphasis on risk and resilience factors -- Although each group will have its own priorities beyond violence prevention, initial efforts will focus on violence prevention.); participants discuss efforts currently in place and receive brief overview of *Blueprint* strategies; community members complete a preliminary poll of the strategies that the community wants to address during the next phase of the VPI based on the *Blueprint* [see Appendix B for list] with added reentry strategies as appropriate.

Meeting B – Selection of Priorities and Activities: Present the results of the preliminary poll, affirm outcomes with community members, and have a discussion between community, city, and county partners about existing resources and potential solutions. (Sample county-level activities that could support neighborhood efforts are delineated in Appendix C.) City and county agencies can share constraints and determine their commitments accordingly. Based on the outcomes of the meeting, a preliminary set of priorities and activities should be synthesized into a plan. (Note: In neighborhoods where a plan already exists, partners should work with the current plan to expand and bolster the current violence prevention efforts.)

Meeting C – Commitments and Selection of Neighborhood Planning Groups: Presentation of the local plan, modification and affirmation from participants, delineation of commitments from county agencies/departments and others, and selection of neighborhood planning group members (5 members: 1 community member, 1 city representative, 1 county representative, 1 representative from the reentry roundtable, representative from the BOS office that serves that district).

7. **Neighborhood Planning Groups Coordination and planning:** Convene neighborhood planning groups for each neighborhood that will meet regularly to ensure communications, implementation, maintenance of the neighborhood priorities and accountability among all participants in VPI. The planning group will include: a representative from the Neighborhood, City, County, Reentry Network, and BOS office that serves that district. The planning group should generally be focused on

implementation of the plan and individuals should serve as liaisons to the group they represent.
8. Identify Technical Assistance and Communications needs of each neighborhood and negotiate with the County for the delivery of services.
9. Select measureable outcomes for each neighborhood plan and determine the data collection and evaluation efforts needed to show progress towards outcomes.
10. Evaluate efforts: Establish an evaluation framework and a plan for evaluating the Violence Prevention initiative as a whole and each neighborhood specifically. Work with independent evaluator to conduct evaluation.
11. Implement the local plan: Based on activities identified through the prioritization process, engage partners, garner commitments, convene players as needed for coordination, and take actions.
12. Convene neighborhood stakeholders: To keep community stakeholders informed and engaged, convene those involved in initial planning process and other interested individuals.
13. Hold county-wide meeting for Neighborhood Planning Groups: Convene neighborhood planning groups from the six neighborhoods to discuss learnings, challenges, progress, data collection, and evaluation.
14. Present progress: Present progress reports to the Steering Committee, Public Protection Committee, and BOS. Have youth representatives at these meetings, when possible.

OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCE THE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT THROUGH COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

All evidence indicates that reducing violence is a long term commitment. In order to make this long term commitment, the VPI must ensure that those most impacted by violence are aware of and receiving all the resources that are available to support them. The VPI should establish a clearly defined mechanism by which all stakeholders can access the necessary support and information they need to address violence in Alameda County. The following three programmatic priorities have been developed in order to establish a system of support that is available to the entire county.

2.1 PROGRAMMATIC PRIORITIES

2.1.1 COMMUNICATIONS

Goal

Goals of the VPI communications campaign include: 1) building awareness among the various target audiences of county-wide violence prevention initiatives, including available resources, success stories and where to go for help; 2) providing residents in the six target neighborhoods with an understanding of the role they can play in violence prevention; and 3) developing and disseminating clear, consistent messages that engage the community and the county staff members in violence prevention initiatives and programs.

Background

The long-term reduction of violence in our communities will require implementing effective communications strategies that inform key audiences of the violence prevention programs that currently exist or are being introduced in their neighborhoods, and that engage these audiences in becoming invested agents of change. Communications can help shape a sense of ownership for community members and service providers, creating much needed hope and encouragement and inspiring positive change. Based on the VPI Communications Assessment (provided in Appendix F) that was conducted with internal county key informants and with adult and youth residents of target neighborhoods, it was agreed that “a strong, powerful story about violence prevention needs to be told.” Some of the key messages of the VPI include: “*violence is preventable*”; “*everyone has a role to play in prevention*”; “*violence prevention is a long-term community investment*”; and *Alameda County programs provide “a path to public safety.”*

Recommended Approach

Target audiences for VPI communications include: 1) residents of the six target neighborhoods; 2) county leaders, department heads and staff involved in violence prevention programs, and 3) other key stakeholders including community based organizations involved in violence prevention; media partners and the general public. Because there is significant diversity among the key audiences, a broad cross-section of communications tools and approaches will be required.

One of the key findings in the VPI Communications Assessment was the need for better internal communications related to violence prevention in Alameda County. Improved coordination and collaboration among service providers would offer greater awareness of relevant activities in other departments and agencies; sharing of best practices and opportunities to work together to address systemic issues. We recommend that the approach to internal communications be more action-oriented and less strictly information sharing, with a focus on problem-solving and accountability for results.

Strategies to accomplish that approach include using the Technical Assistance Teams, as described below, to help facilitate internal communications as needed. Other strategies to improve internal communications include developing a website; providing periodic updates with email blasts; and providing small, interactive forums for county service providers to meet as a group with neighborhood residents in Town Hall meetings.

Another major finding of the Communications Assessment was support for branding the VPI— that is, bringing the various resources, programs and activities related to violence prevention in Alameda County under a single brand as a way to communicate the benefits of the VPI, and become known as a trusted source of information and assistance. Based on findings from the Assessment, the RAP brand – **Respect and Peace. Live it. Give it.** – was developed and tested in discussion groups with middle and high school aged boys and girls. The youth responded very positively to the brand and became fully engaged in how RAP could support violence prevention activities in their neighborhoods. It is recommended that RAP be the primary brand under which all communications and information about the VPI is placed.

It is also recommended that activities promoting the RAP brand be test marketed and “tweaked” in the Ashland/Cherryland neighborhood, before rolling them out to the other five target sites. The objective of the RAP campaign is to introduce various communications vehicles throughout the community, develop support and buy-in for the RAP/VPI concept among adults and youth, and to give young people opportunities for ownership of the VPI efforts in their own neighborhoods. Recommended promotional activities are detailed in the Service Delivery System, Section 2.3 below.

Another recommendation is that a VPI website be developed as a major component of the communications strategy, targeting two audiences: 1) neighborhood residents, and 2) county leaders and staff, community based organizations, the VPI Data Committee, organizations dedicated to reentry efforts, and others directly involved in violence prevention (such as cities throughout the county). To address the needs of neighborhood audiences as well as service providers and other stakeholders, the site will reinforce violence prevention techniques and best practices, provide relevant crime and prevention data, provide a list of violence prevention resources by neighborhood, highlight success stories, promote the RAP brand, and also may serve as a community outreach tool to immediately publicize neighborhood events and activities and respond to critical information needs of residents.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. **Develop A Communications Plan:** Develop and implement a comprehensive Communications Plan that supports the work of the VPI by educating the public about violence and ways to prevent and reduce it; by communicating what is happening programmatically in the six neighborhoods; and by creating systems to facilitate information sharing among county agencies and others participating in the VPI.
2. **Test Market the RAP Brand:** Using the Ashland/Cherryland site as a test market, utilize a variety of communications vehicles that support the RAP brand. Following brand adjustments, introduce the campaign in other VPI neighborhoods.
3. **Develop a VPI Website:** Create a website that serves as an information resource and community outreach tool that supports the needs of the various VPI audiences.

2.1.2 COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Goal

The goals of the VPI Community Education strategy are to: 1) establish a system for long-term violence prevention education and skills building in VPI neighborhoods 2) increase the ability of VPI neighborhood residents to avoid and prevent violence and 3) increase opportunities for residents to develop skills for preventing violence in the settings where they already learn, work, play and worship.

Background

The long term success of the VPI ultimately rests in the ability of residents to prevent violence within their own communities. Unfortunately violence ridden neighborhoods often lack opportunities for residents to develop the skills and knowledge they might need in order to prevent violence. A community education campaign can provide residents with these opportunities. The county and the Oakland Unified School District have made an effort to incorporate the Second Step violence prevention curriculum in many of their schools. However, the same opportunity to acquire these skills has not been extended to adults and young people outside of the school setting. In order for the VPI to be successful, the county needs to extend these opportunities to all residents of violence ridden communities within a wide range of settings.

Recommended Approach

Creating an education campaign that helps people develop the skills to work effectively to prevent violence is extremely important. Nowhere is this more crucial than with young people, although skill development is not a need of young people alone. We need to educate and train young people and adults to better manage anger and conflict, and provide them with specific skills in how to avoid and prevent violence. This education and training should be provided through the schools and the youth development programs in which young people participate; and for adults, through churches, voluntary associations and community organizations and in the work place.

The VPI will work with local school districts, the County Office of Education, community-based organizations and other sites where young people learn and play, to ensure that schools and other organizations have violence prevention curricula in place across Alameda County, and especially in schools and with organizations located in VPI neighborhoods. Additionally, the VPI should work with local stakeholders to ensure that violence prevention curriculum is available to adult residents, families and young adults who are not directly connected with a local school.

Strategies for Implementation

- 1. Identify and Support for Adoption of Validated Violence Prevention Curricula:** Collaborate with the County Office of Education, local schools and community organizations to identify validated violence prevention curriculum, and advocate and support schools and other learning places for youth to adopt and implement the curricula appropriate to their population. Pilot the identification, adoption and implementation in schools and organizations located in VPI neighborhoods.
- 2. Expand Skills Building Programs:** Collaborate with local stakeholders to ensure that violence prevention curriculum and instruction are available to residents, families and young adults who are not directly connected with a local school. Ensure that these opportunities are embedded within churches, local businesses and other places residents frequent.

2.1.3 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

Goal

Provide a structure that can be used by Alameda County residents, cities, and staff to access violence prevention related support and services.

Background

Those engaged in the VPI and those interested in working to prevent violence should have access to the best available information and knowledge about violence prevention and access to technical assistance and support to plan and implement effective actions. The VPI should focus on developing Alameda County's capacity to provide information and technical assistance, including data and evaluation, around violence prevention to county agencies, cities, neighborhoods, service providers and other stakeholders. By focusing on the following strategies, the county can build its capacity to provide information and technical assistance on violence prevention.

Recommended Approach

As the county offers external support and technical assistance on violence related issues to neighborhoods, it must build its internal capacity to understand what successful violence prevention strategies are, what it takes to effectively work with neighborhoods and cultivate a relationship, and how best to deliver assistance and resources to neighborhoods dealing with violence. The county should identify which staff members have the skills and understanding to do this type of work, and then create a Technical Assistance Team that provides technical assistance and support to the VPI. The Technical Assistance Team should receive continuous training and meet periodically to discuss violence prevention efforts throughout the county. The Team will work with the prioritized neighborhoods to support their local violence prevention efforts and will offer training and assistance to any county staff on violence related issues.

By providing assistance to the six neighborhoods as a first priority, the Technical Assistance Team can then offer the promising approaches and strategies to other sites that are having problems with violence and/or seek to start their own violence prevention effort. Ultimately, the Technical Assistance Team should offer its services and resources to all of Alameda County through direct technical assistance via deployment teams, by contributing to the VPI website on promising strategies, funding, and other resources that are available, and/or by convening city and neighborhood leaders to discuss successful violence prevention efforts.

In addition to the Technical Assistance Teams, the VPI should continue to convene the Violence Prevention Data Group which brings together representatives from county agencies, community based organizations and service providers to discuss violence related data and information. The Data Group should serve as the primary resource for data and information on violence and violence prevention in Alameda County. This work will include conducting regular evaluations of the VPI programming, providing data and information to the Technical Assistance Teams and VPI neighborhoods and in publishing regular reports on current levels of violence.

Strategies for Implementation:

1. **Establish Technical Assistance Teams:** Develop Technical Assistance Teams—comprised of individuals that have expertise in preventing violence, working with neighborhoods, building youth resiliency, providing reentry services and the workings of the county structure—to respond to violence prevention related requests for information and support anywhere in the county.

2. **Contribute to the VPI Website:** Develop the necessary structures and procedures to ensure that information on best practices, services and other relevant information around violence prevention in Alameda County, especially in the VPI neighborhoods, is available and accessible via a website.
3. **Build Local Capacity:** Provide county agencies, cities and unincorporated areas in the county with readily available information and services around promising practices, potential funding sources, educational materials, and other content as necessary to enhance and better coordinate their violence prevention efforts.
4. **Institute Ongoing Data and Evaluation:** Provide regular reports on current violence trends across Alameda County and especially within VPI neighborhoods, support the TA and Neighborhood Planning Groups by meeting requests for specific data and conduct ongoing evaluation of programming associated with the VPI.

2.2 INDICATORS AND TARGETS FOR SUCCESS

Long Term Result

- Decreased violence in each of the six prioritized neighborhoods by 50%.

Intermediate Results

- Increase in amount of resources and services dedicated to violence prevention within six prioritized neighborhoods.
- All students in prioritized neighborhoods participate in Violence Prevention curriculum during middle school.
- Increase the number of residents participating in violence prevention programming within the six prioritized neighborhoods.
- Increased use of conflict mediation within schools and community organizations in six prioritized neighborhoods.

Program Performance

Communications

- Residents in high-risk neighborhoods are aware of the VPI and fully utilize its resources.
- Increase media coverage of VPI and use of RAP brand in media coverage.
- Town Hall Meetings become forums to promote the RAP brand, recruit RAP Ambassadors, identify media opportunities for success stories, and create linkages among violence prevention–related service providers.
- Residents and other stakeholders use VPI website, Facebook, and MySpace sites as “go-to resource” for violence prevention related best practices, information and communication.
- Increase county leaders and staff awareness of county-wide violence prevention programs.

Community Education

- Increase the amount of and participation in violence prevention programming in non-school settings for both adults and youth.
- Increase youth and adult understanding of how to reduce and prevent violence in their neighborhoods.

Technical Assistance

- Residents throughout the county are aware of the TA and Deployment Teams and utilize them.
- County staff receives regular professional development training on violence prevention.
- The VPI website is used by residents as a go-to resource for all violence prevention related requests and concerns.
- Data group conducts annual evaluations of programming in VPI neighborhoods.
- Data group publishes annual reports on violence trends in Alameda County and VPI neighborhoods in particular.

2.3 SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM (for detailed action steps see Appendix D)

Communications

1. Hold "RAP Talk" Sessions/Identify "RAP Ambassadors": Hold sessions with middle and high school students in Ashland/ Cherryland to engage them in the VPI and assess their feelings and attitudes about the proposed youth center. At the RAP Talks, identify youth leaders who will work with the VPI planning group to create positive buzz for RAP and the VPI in their neighborhoods.
2. Provide Communications Training: Train youth and adult RAP Ambassadors to effectively communicate key messages and talking points about the VPI for media interviews and community presentations. Also provide communications training for county leaders and staff.
3. Create a RAP Speakers Bureau: Develop a PowerPoint presentation and support materials for RAP Ambassadors to use in their outreach efforts. Assist youth in creating a plan to target specific audiences for these presentations.
4. Create RAP FaceBook and MySpace Pages: Build a RAP community with on-line communications. Facilitate youth buy-in by engaging them to create content and maintain the sites that communicate RAP messages; special events, etc. Consider developing a Twitter site as well.
5. Publicize RAP in a "Political-style" Campaign: Engage the youth to distribute collateral materials that would include yard signs and door hangers that promote the RAP brand. Also consider buying radio spots (and creating PSAs) and outdoor advertising that would include bus shelters and exterior buses. Use "real people" from the six VPI neighborhoods in all promotional materials to reinforce pride and ownership in the campaign.
6. Create RAP Resource Sites: In each of the six neighborhoods, identify a location to be the information center for violence prevention (i.e., a community center, public library, church, or a county facility), where residents can access resources about violence prevention in their neighborhoods. The site can also host violence prevention-related community meetings and trainings.
7. Develop a RAP Urban Guide to Violence Prevention/RAP Video: Work with the Ashland/ Cherryland youth to write poems, essays, spoken word pieces in their own words that address "... filling the hood with good, beginning with respect and peace." Publish these works in the <i>RAP Urban Guide to Violence Prevention</i> and distribute it throughout the neighborhoods and on the website. Pitch the <i>Urban Guide</i> to Bay Area media as a positive example of what young people are doing to bring peace and respect to their neighborhoods. Also support the youth to create a video that tells the RAP story from the perspective of the people who live it. Videos would be used in

neighborhood meetings, at school presentations, and as a mini-film festival at a select neighborhood facility.
8. Email Blasts to All Target Audiences: Distribute quarterly email blasts to key stakeholders, elected officials, community residents, county leaders, CBOs and the media to reinforce that violence is preventable (demonstrate successes) and highlight the RAP campaign activities.
9. Participation in Special Events: Develop a customized RAP booth that is used at various county events and activities to provide information and resources about violence prevention. Distribute the <i>RAP Urban Guide to Violence Prevention</i> at these events.
10. Develop a VPI Website: Create a state-of-the-art website to assist neighborhood residents, county leaders and staff, nonprofits, the VPI Data Committee, organizations dedicated to Re-Entry efforts, business representatives, and the general public in identifying information on best practices and local resources to support violence prevention efforts. Design the website to promote the RAP brand and also use as a community outreach tool to publicize neighborhood events and activities and respond to critical information needs of residents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify existing resources to incorporate into the site including such as violence prevention techniques and best practices, relevant crime and prevention data, success stories, and promotional materials for the RAP brand. • Create a resource guide that provides violence prevention programs and services by neighborhood.
11. Provide Support for Town Hall Meetings: To support and engage residents in the six neighborhoods (with special focus on Ashland/Cherryland, the test market), work with the Technical Assistance Teams to use the Town Hall Meetings as a forum to promote the RAP brand, invite residents to be RAP Ambassadors; identify media opportunities that may arise out of the work they are doing in the neighborhoods; and create linkages among violence prevention service providers, both from the county and from community-based organizations.

Community Education

<p>1. Identify and/or develop violence prevention curriculum and programming for use within schools and other community settings:</p> <p>a. Explore current violence prevention curriculums used within schools and identify any other models that may contribute to or inform those already in use.</p> <p>b. Explore current violence prevention programming for families and adults (e.g. anger management, conflict resolution, etc).</p>
<p>2. Identify potential sites for implementing violence prevention curriculum and skills building programming in six VPI neighborhoods: Identify and meet with potential school and non-school sites that are either already for offering violence prevention curriculum and skills building programming (local community groups, churches, business associations).</p>

<p>3. Work with potential sites in six VPI neighborhoods to implement and expand Violence Prevention curriculum and skills building programming: Implement violence prevention curriculum within all schools in the six VPI neighborhoods and support schools with all aspects of implementation, including local adaptations of the curriculum to the particular circumstances of the community. Work with leadership at these sites to implement and contour curriculum to meet their needs.</p>
<p>4. Expand violence prevention curriculum and skills building programming into new school and non-school settings: Expand violence prevention curriculum into schools outside of the six VPI neighborhoods that also exhibit a high level of violence.</p>
<p>5. Work with VPI communications consultant to promote violence prevention curriculum and skills building programming – Use website, RAP planning groups and other components of the communications plan as well as targeted promotional activities to inform residents of skills building opportunities. Use RAP planning groups to promote violence prevention curriculum within schools.</p>

Technical Assistance

<p>1. Identify the people within the county that can provide the Technical Assistance: Identify up to (12) individuals from the county that have expertise in violence prevention, youth resilience, public health, community outreach, and county structure and can be part of a Technical Assistance Team.</p>
<p>2. Set agreements on participation: Establish an agreement between the individuals selected to provide technical assistance and the county regarding their responsibilities and commitment.</p>
<p>3. Establish and communicate the standards of services: Confirm the types of services that the Technical Assistance Teams can provide to the neighborhoods, county agencies/departments, and County at large. Develop a process to make that information available; particularly to the six VPI neighborhoods.</p>
<p>4. Train Technical Assistance Team members: Provide training to the Technical Assistance Teams on violence prevention strategies, best practices, and orient them to the <i>Blueprint</i> and local efforts.</p>
<p>5. Provide services to the six neighborhoods: Based on the identified priorities and technical assistance needs of each neighborhood, work with the county to coordinate efforts, deliver services, and provide technical assistance as needed.</p>
<p>6. Participate in the county-wide Neighborhood Planning Groups meeting: Technical Assistance Team members will attend neighborhood meetings to discuss learning, challenges, progress, data collection, and evaluation, and provide updates.</p>
<p>7. Integrate violence prevention efforts into existing functions of county agencies/departments: Identify 3-5 functions and/or services that 5 of the high priority county agencies/departments provide where violence prevention can be integrated to better serve the neighborhood plans.</p>

8. Train county staff on violence prevention: Develop a violence prevention training and deliver it to county staff.
9. Develop Deployment Teams: Identify the types of requests the Technical Assistance deployment teams will be able to respond to and the procedures for obtaining a deployment team.
10. Contribute to the website: Submit information on promising practices, resources, funding opportunities, etc. to the website to better serve all the neighborhoods in the county on violence prevention.
11. Convene Technical Assistance Team: The Technical Assistance team should meet regularly to share learning, progress, and challenges, and to reinvigorate their commitments and update their trainings and skills.
12. Expand capacity of VPI Data Group: To ensure that the Data Group is composed of representatives from all county agencies and is capable of meeting the various data and evaluation needs of the Technical Assistance Teams, Neighborhood Planning Groups and of the VPI.
13. Develop an evaluation plan: Based on this Work Plan, the Data Group should develop an evaluation plan designed to measure the stated indicators/targets for success.
14. Evaluate efforts: Assess efforts on a regular basis to ensure progress and report findings to the Executive Committee and the Public Protection Committee.

APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND OF THE VPI AND SUPPORTING DATA

BACKGROUND

Like many other counties, the County of Alameda has traditionally relied on *after-the fact* interventions and services to deal with violence, relying on county functions such as probation, prosecution, parole, law enforcement, child and adult protective services, and trauma care. To advance a complementary prevention focus, Supervisor Miley initiated a county planning process to develop a *Violence Prevention Blueprint* for the county.

The *Blueprint* planning process included participants from multiple county agencies and departments, city representatives, and several local non-profit groups and was informed by interviews and a vetting process with grassroots and community-based organizations, additional municipalities, and county officials. The process prioritized specific risk and resilience factors for multiple forms of violence in the county, identified research-based strategies designed to achieve the following objectives: 1) promote positive youth and child development; 2) ensure supported and functioning families; and 3) foster safe and vibrant neighborhoods, and highlighted the following **Violence Prevention Principles**:

- Violence is preventable
- Violence prevention is local
- Honor what's working
- Diversity must be respected
- Prevention is not the same as containment and suppression
- We are all stakeholders
- Violence prevention is a long-term effort

PROPOSED VIOLENCE PREVENTION INFRASTRUCTURE

In recognition of the county's role in supporting efforts to prevent violence, a majority of the planning process focused on developing a structure within the county to increase program and government effectiveness, as outlined below:

I. Strategy and Coordination

- a. Create an Alameda County Violence Prevention Coordinator position.
- b. Establish and maintain a public-private Leadership Council.

II. Training, Communications, and Information

- a. Enhance violence prevention skills through interdisciplinary training and conferences.
- b. Provide information about effective and promising models and approaches.
- c. Establish campaigns designed to shift norms about violence, build understanding that violence is preventable, and foster hope that violence will be prevented.

III. Resource Alignment and Allocation

- a. Identify gaps and priority areas (e.g. specific populations or locations) and align and allocate existing resources to serve major priority needs and gaps.
- b. Establish stable funding sources to support effective violence prevention efforts in the county and develop resources for special projects and efforts.

IV. Assessment and Evaluation

- a. Establish data systems that are coordinated and enable effective tracking of associated risk and resilience factors, violence indicators and milestones, and that will enable good decision-making across departments and agencies while informing policy.
- b. Ensure that county departments and agencies and service providers are held accountable for violence prevention efforts in the county.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In July of 2005, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the Alameda County Violence Prevention Blueprint: A Lifetime Commitment to Violence Prevention (the *Blueprint*). The *Blueprint* was a first step toward enhancing the county's role in preventing violence. Since the adoption of the *Blueprint*, multiple activities and accomplishments have taken place in the county that build on the recommendations of the *Blueprint*, including supporting localized efforts through a neighborhood focus and addressing structural recommendations.

Supporting localized efforts through a neighborhood focus:

The county prioritized five neighborhood sites: Historic Hoover Neighborhood in West Oakland), Sobrante Park in East Oakland, Ashland/Cherryland, South Hayward, and Irvington District in Fremont. These neighborhood efforts have manifested very differently throughout the county.

- In partnership with the City of Oakland, Alameda County Public Health Department has been working with the two Oakland sites to effectively reduce and prevent violence. These efforts, known as the City/County Neighborhood Initiative, have strengthened the communities in West Oakland and Sobrante Park. More significantly, this initiative has documented the reduction of crime and blight in these two neighborhoods and an increase in community involvement as a whole.
- In the unincorporated area of Ashland and Cherryland, a collaborative has been formed and meets regularly. A Youth Leadership Team was formed and supported by a full-time staff member. Youth conducted a needs assessment which identified the need for a youth center, which young people have been advocating for since. In the Eden Area Livability Initiative, residents of the unincorporated area prioritized its construction as one their top five priorities and there are plans in place to build it.
- The South Hayward Collaborative, which has been in existence for more than a decade, has been the focal point for the County's effort in that community. Primarily through the leadership of Supervisor Gail Steele's office this group brings together service providers, county and city agencies and other stakeholders to collaborate and develop strategies for reducing violence in South Hayward.
- Efforts in Fremont have included participation from Alameda County Public Health in partnership with local schools and limited coordination with local community groups. To date, the City of Fremont and the county have not established a formal collaboration in a specific neighborhood.

Five community-based groups in the prioritized neighborhoods received a mini-grant and youth stipends through additional revenue brought in through OCCJP to support programming and participation in local efforts and coordination. Overall, city/county partnerships have strengthened in some of the neighborhoods, though typically the relationship is not with multiple, coordinated county agencies and additional cities interested in joining as selected sites.

Structural Recommendations:

In addition to neighborhood site focus, the county has concentrated its efforts on bolstering structural recommendations to increase program and government effectiveness. In particular, the following activities took place:

I. Strategy and Coordination

- Violence Prevention Coordinator hired.
- Reentry Committee formed and operationalized, building upon efforts of K. Carson and A. Perkins.
- Data Committee formed and operationalized, in alignment with Public Health’s work on health disparities.
- Leadership Council formed and meetings conducted, “spreading the word” and strengthening collaboration among county agencies and departments.

II. Training, Communications, and Information

- Interdepartmental trainings conducted, enhancing engagement in VP efforts throughout county staff.
- Communications Assessment conducted — communications strategy development initiated.
- Joint Convening with San Francisco and Contra Costa counties held to strengthen inter-county collaboration.

III. Resource Alignment and Allocation

- Outside funding brought in to implement selected projects including neighborhood mini grant program, joint convening and interdepartmental training.

IV. Assessment and Evaluation

- Process Evaluation conducted by UCSF.
- The Public Protection Committee requested report backs from each county agency and department on what it was doing to prevent violence and implement the *Blueprint*.

Evaluation:

While the *Blueprint* has not yet been implemented across the county, there is an increased awareness of what risk and resilience factors mean both in the county and in the community. However, there is also a widespread perception that actual reduction in violence or an increase in resilience factors has not occurred. Still, many recognize the infrastructure of the *Blueprint* as an important agent towards achieving these outcomes.¹ The process evaluation emphasized that improvements could be made to ensure that reducing and preventing violence in Alameda County becomes a reality and not just a vision.

¹ Alameda County Violence Prevention Blueprint: Process Evaluation 2005-2007.

In his 2008 process evaluation of the Violence Prevention Initiative, Dr. Howard Pinderhuges made several recommendations for improving the efficacy of the initiative in upcoming years. Dr. Pinderhuges noted that there is "widespread perception that reduction in violence or increase in resiliency factors has not occurred in Alameda County." As the data above indicates, this perception is consistent with reality.

The county faced a number of challenges and learned several key lessons in Phase I. The lessons learned were based on the experiences of those involved in the implementation of the *Blueprint*, as well as the Communications Assessment, conducted by Hill & Company Communications, and the Process Evaluation, conducted by Howard Pinderhuges at UCSF. Some of the most important lessons are:

- The commitment of high level leadership is critical to the success of the VPI.
- With increased communication and coordination, the incidence of violence decreases.
- Everyone needs to understand the role they play in violence prevention, whether they are a city, a county or an individual.

Despite the efforts and activities that have taken place since the adoption of the Alameda County Violence Prevention *Blueprint*, violence still continues to plague neighborhoods and cities throughout the county. Some in the county recognize the importance of the *Blueprint*, however, the county as a whole lacks a shared commitment to successful implementation. The process evaluation offered a great deal of insight into what has been successful and what has failed, and where the gaps can be filled to enhance the county's contribution to reducing and preventing violence. In particular, it revealed the tremendous lack and need for seamless coordination and leadership from the county which is essential to make any violence prevention effort a success. With that in mind, Prevention Institute along with Urban Strategies Council, and Hill & Company Communications were brought together to develop a work plan which reevaluates the role that the county needs to play in preventing violence and provides a structure from which the *Blueprint* can be moved forward and violence can be reduced in the county.

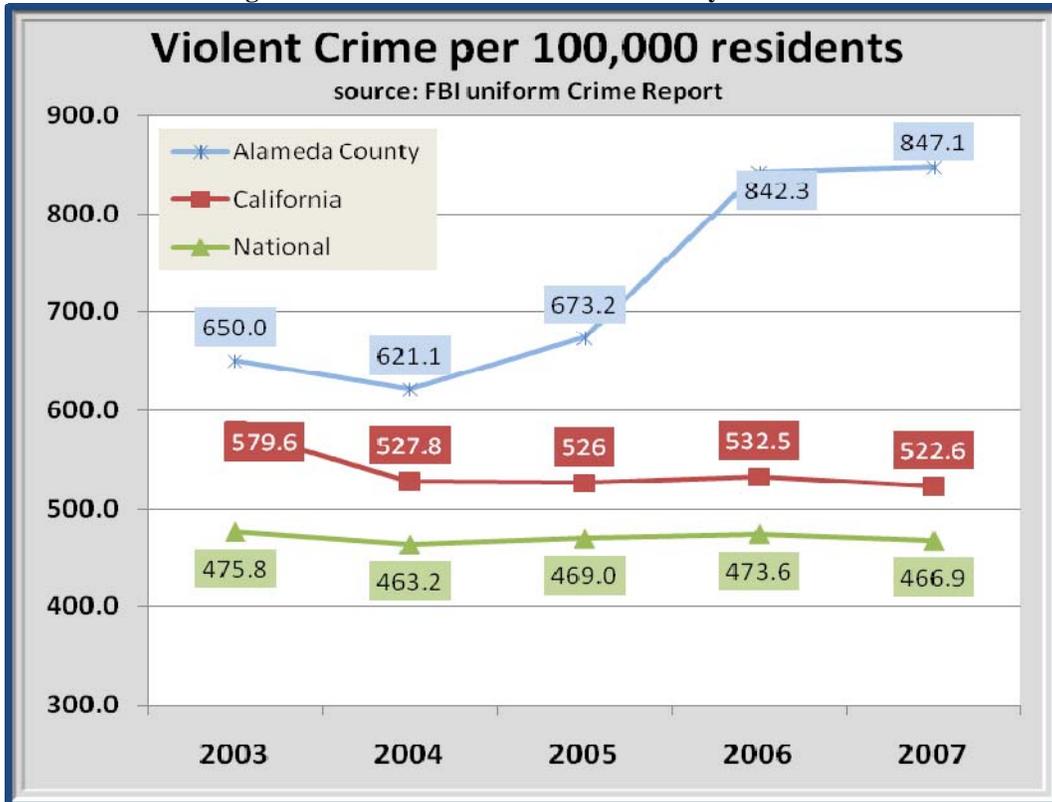
The following information provides a context for the need for the initial development of the Blueprint and the continued implementation of Phase II of the VPI.

ALAMEDA COUNTY TRENDS IN VIOLENT CRIME

Alameda County, like many urban counties across the nation, has been confronted with fluctuating trends in violence over the past 20 years. The decreases in rates of violence crime experienced during the 1990s and early 2000s have been replaced by increases since 2003. Alameda County has experienced a dramatically different trend in the level of violent crime when compared to both national and state trends. As Figure 1 indicates, in 2007 violent crime in Alameda County was 181% of the national and 162% of the state rates of violent crime per 100,000 residents.²

² For all data mentioned in this work plan it should be noted that no data was available for the unincorporated areas prior to 2004.

Figure 1: Violent Crime in Alameda County 2003-2004



These exceptional levels of violent crime are not evenly distributed across Alameda County; they disproportionately impact poor urban communities of color – often the communities least capable of impeding these rising levels of violence. Recognizing the uneven distribution of violence across Alameda County, the VPI choose to focus its efforts in Phase I on neighborhoods that were experiencing high levels of violence crime. Figure 2 and Figure 3 below indicate the rise in violent crime within those Alameda County cities where the VPI is currently working. Figure 3 shows that Oakland accounts for 60% of the violent crime in Alameda County. However, as Figure 2 indicates, Fremont, Hayward and the unincorporated areas have all experienced substantial increases in recent years. Hayward experienced a 46% increase in violent crime between 2003-2007, while the unincorporated areas experienced a 32% increase between 2004-2007. **Combined, those cities where the VPI is currently working account for over 75% of the violent crimes reported in Alameda County between 2003-2007.**

Figure 2: Hayward, Fremont and Unincorporated Areas Violent Crime 2003-2007

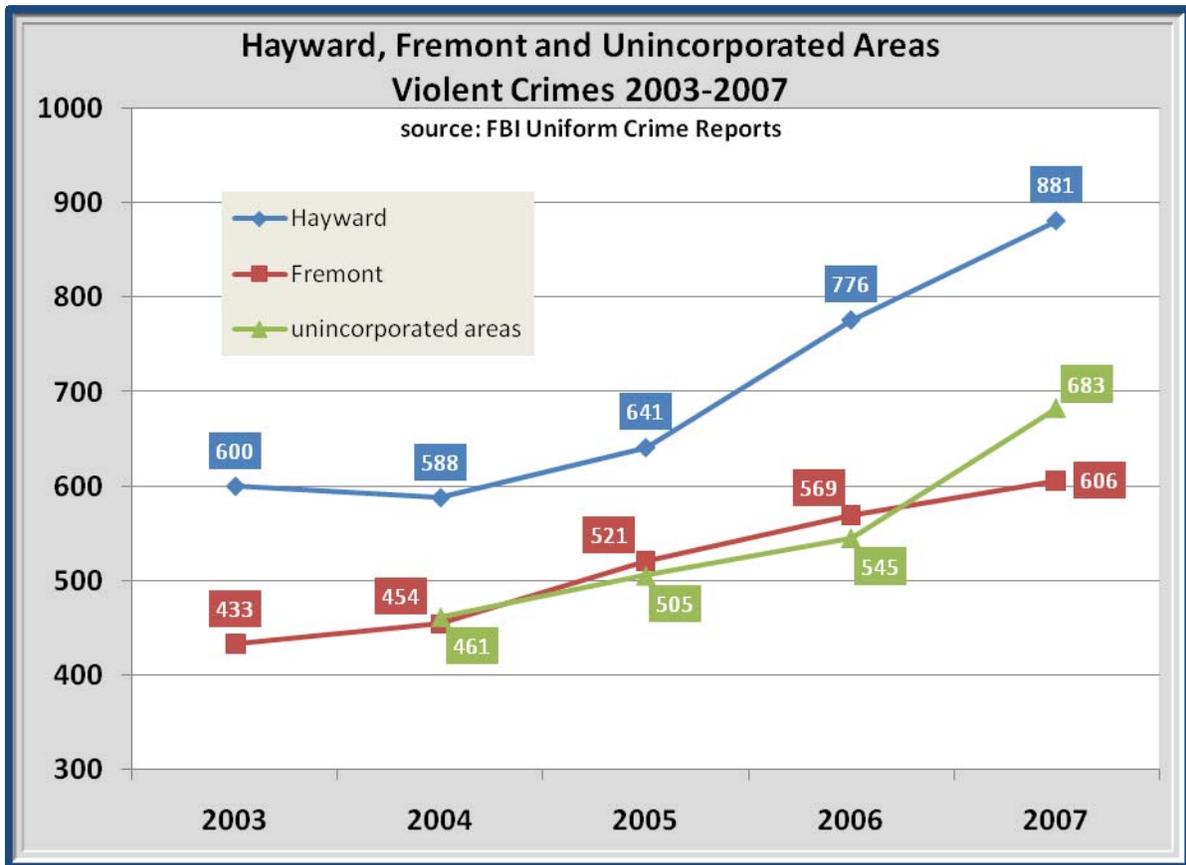
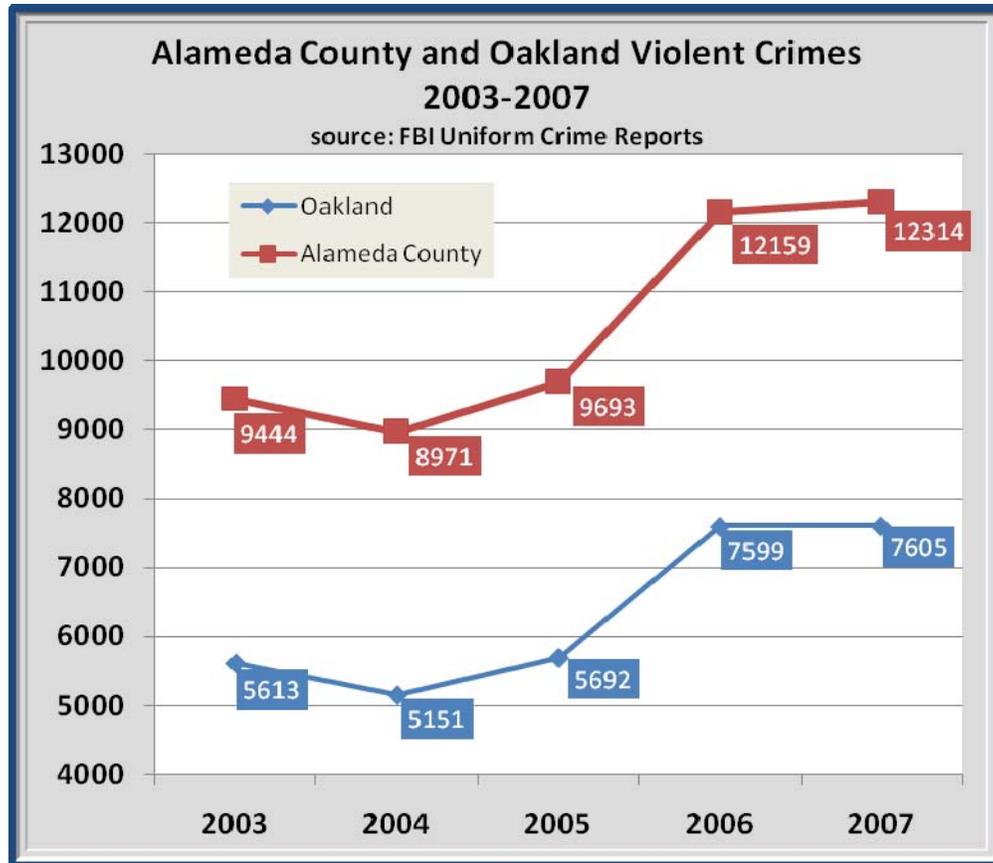


Figure 3: Alameda County and Oakland Violent Crimes 2003-2007



One result of high levels of violence is a concentration of the negative impacts of violence. Regardless of the violent crime, the consequences are that both the victims and perpetrators require a wide range of supportive or rehabilitative services. Most of the services and supports needed are provided by county agencies. As the chief provider of indigent health care, mental health care, child protective services and public benefits across the county, increases in violence inherently place an increased demand on these public systems. In addition to the demand for human services, the county is also faced with the additional policing (sheriff), incarceration, crime justice supervision and legal costs that stem from violence. Thus, not only does violence wreak havoc on families and communities, but it also overburdens our already overextended public systems for health care, child protection and public safety.

In a preliminary estimate of current levels of spending on violence, the Alameda County Administrator's Office found that approximately 25% of the County Budget was dedicated towards addressing violent crime (\$546.7 million). This estimate only took public safety programs into consideration and did not include the human services costs, such as removing a child from the home after an incident of domestic violence. While the VPI Data Group is working on a more precise and comprehensive analysis of the cost of violence to Alameda County, one thing seems clear, we spend an incredible amount of money dealing with the aftermath of violence and almost certainly do not invest nearly as much trying to prevent violence. The VPI is not only an effort to promote a safer Alameda County but also to redirect the ways in which we pursue that goal.

Ultimately, violence leads to unstable and unhealthy neighborhoods. For the residents of these neighborhoods the impact of violence is always intimate and sweeping. In Alameda County's most violence ridden neighborhoods, the most overwhelming and immediate impact of violence is on the residents who are experiencing this violence on a day to day basis. In attempting to understand why the county should remain committed to violence prevention, it is important to remember that violence is preventing us from achieving our ultimate goal of healthy and productive communities across Alameda County.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE COUNTY/CITY COMPACT

**City of Oakland and County of Alameda
VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMPACT
Draft #3: 5.26.09 from Alameda County VPI (under development)
Preamble**

WHEREAS crime and violence in Oakland constitute a public health crisis. Effectively addressing this crisis will require a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional approach sustained over time. Effective prevention and intervention strategies, partnered with strategic law enforcement and a sustainability plan, will eliminate the root causes of crime and violence and lift up our community.

WHEREAS the City of Oakland and other jurisdictions and agencies including: the County of Alameda, Oakland Unified School District, Oakland Housing Authority, State and County Legislative offices, among others are committed to working together and with Oakland residents to improve their quality of life, prevent crime and violence, and increase public health and safety; and

WHEREAS the City of Oakland has developed a Public Safety Plan that focuses on developing a multi-jurisdictional, collaborative problem solving process utilizing the principles of Prevention, Intervention, Enforcement and Sustainability also known as the PIES model, and

WHEREAS the County of Alameda has developed a Violence Prevention Blueprint - an action plan that coordinates, supports and strengthens community assets and resiliency while reducing risk factors for violence, and

WHEREAS the undersigned support a collaborative effort, and will take specific actions to prevent violence, and increase public health and safety as outlined in both the Public Safety Plan and the Violence Prevention Blueprint; and

WHEREAS the development of effective multi-jurisdictional collaborative efforts require concerted action, commitment and time to develop working relationships; and

NOW THEREFORE, with the understanding that this is a flexible working compact among the signatories, the purpose of this compact is to facilitate collaboration among jurisdictions for the purpose of identifying, accessing, coordinating and evaluating the delivery of services to Oakland and Alameda County residents, to solve problems, stabilize the social structure, and increase the living standards and the overall health of Oakland and Alameda County residents.

The undersigned hereby agree to identify and invoke the participation of agencies under their jurisdiction in the following:

- 1. Mutual Endorsement by Governing Bodies of Oakland's Public Safety and Alameda County's Violence Prevention Plans.** The City of Oakland agrees to officially endorse the Alameda County Violence Prevention Blueprint and the Violence Prevention Initiative, the vehicle for implementing the Blueprint. The Alameda County Board of Supervisors agrees to officially endorse the City of Oakland's Public Safety Plan.

2. **Mutual Participation in Oversight and Planning Bodies:** Both the City of Oakland and Alameda County have or are developing various planning and oversight bodies for their respective public safety and violence prevention plans. The parties agree to designate an official with appropriate authority to serve as members of the planning and oversight bodies. Specifically, Alameda County shall designate the Chair of the Public Protection Committee to serve as a member of the Oakland the Public Safety Policy Council. The City of Oakland shall designate the City Council Public Safety Committee chair as a member of the County's Violence Prevention Executive Committee.
3. **Mutual Participation in Neighborhood Initiatives:** A major focus of the County's Violence Prevention Initiative is to expand targeted interventions into neighborhoods most at risk of violence. Currently, the city and county have partnerships working with the Hoover neighborhood in West Oakland and in the Sobrante Park neighborhood in East Oakland. Current plans propose to expand the neighborhood strategy to include the Fruitvale neighborhood and, possibly other neighborhoods in Oakland and across the county. The parties agree to continue and expand their collaboration in these neighborhoods by assigning staff to participate in the teams of residents and staff who plan and coordinate implementation of violence and crime prevention as well as community development activities and services in these neighborhoods.
4. **Articulation and Coordination of the Oakland Public Safety Plan and the Alameda County Violence Prevention Blueprint:** The City of Oakland's Public Safety Plan and the Alameda County Violence Prevention Blueprint have many common elements and strategies for effectively preventing and reducing violence. Consequently, both jurisdictions will be undertaking research and evaluation, program development, communications, resource development and related activities to further develop and support their violence prevention plans. The parties agree to meet and identify these areas of common activities and interests and to develop specific plans on how the activities can be done jointly to reduce costs while maintaining the integrity of each plan. Specific areas of articulation and coordination include, but are not limited to the following:
 - A. **Participation in a Communications Group:** The parties agree to participate in a joint effort to develop communications plans and activities for their respective plans and, where possible, to develop common messages, communications, and media tools.
 - B. **Data sharing plan:** The parties agree to work together and with other jurisdictions to develop a data sharing plan that will provide agencies with up-to-date and accurate data on violence for purposes of planning, prevention and evaluation. Among the many challenges to multi-jurisdictional efforts related to safety and violence prevention is the multiple sources and custodians of data needed to develop a comprehensive and accurate picture of the various forms of violence across the jurisdictions. One of the important goals of the Violence Prevention Blueprint is to develop a repository for data from various law enforcement and correctional agencies that can be used for assessment and planning, program evaluation and tracking progress on reducing crime and violence.

The City of Oakland and Alameda County shall work in a collaborative manner on the above identified and other areas of possible cooperation and shall commit to writing the specific agreements reached regarding joint work in specific areas.

C. Coordinate on fundraising activities where a county-wide effort does not conflict with the specific priorities of cities or other jurisdictions.

D. Agree to information sharing through the Alameda County Office of Violence Prevention when initiating violence prevention activities to ensure that existing knowledge and information is used in formulating new strategies and actions.

OVERSIGHT

The City will provide sufficient oversight, management and facilitation of the Compact which will include:

1. Providing an annual work plan that details how the specific goals, objectives, and actions of the Public Safety Plan and the Compact will be achieved; and
2. Reports to the Mayor, City Council, County of Alameda and other signatories at least annually on the degree to which the specific goals, objectives, and actions of the Public Safety Plan and the Compact, as detailed in the annual work plan, have been achieved during the reporting period.

The County will provide oversight, management and facilitation of the Compact which will include:

1. Providing an annual work plan for the Violence Prevention Blueprint that details how the specific goals, objectives, and actions of the Blueprint and Compact will be achieved;
2. Reports to the Board of Supervisors, County Administrator, Oakland Mayor and City Council, and other signatories at least annually on the degree to which the specific goals, objectives, and actions of the Violence Prevention Blueprint and the Compact, as detailed in the annual work plans, have been achieved during the reporting period.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. This compact is not intended to, and does not create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the signatory parties, their agencies, departments, entities, officers, employees, or any other person.
2. All provision of this Compact are intended and shall be interpreted to be consistent with all applicable provision of Federal, State, and local law.
3. Nothing in this Compact shall have the effect of changing any existing provision of applicable Federal, State or local law, regulations, or other agreements between the signatory parties.
4. Nothing in the Compact limits the discretion of the signatory parties in carrying out their statutory and regulatory obligations.
5. This Compact shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2011, and as of that date is terminated, unless extended by agreement of the parties.

APPENDIX C: ACVP BLUEPRINT RECOMMENDATIONS

ACVP Blueprint recommendations to be used as basis for community poll on priority strategies

Promoting positive child and youth development

- Violence prevention skill development:* Adopt evidence-based, developmentally appropriate curricula in child care settings, preschools, schools, and youth detention facilities aimed at fostering social-emotional development, resolving conflicts, violence prevention skills, violence-free relationships, bullying-free campuses, and racial relations and understanding diversity.
 - Mentoring:* Establish and support mentoring programs that link young people at risk of violence or school drop-out to their communities, such as adopt-a-school initiatives.
 - Positive environments:* Foster preschool, child care, school, classroom, after-school, detention, and extra-curricula environments in which violence is intolerable, children and youth feel safe, and trust and communication is strong.
 - Meaningful activities:* Develop and expand recreational, artistic, and civic opportunities for all young people.
 - Career paths:* Establish opportunities for all young people to learn about multiple career paths through information exchange, internships, and apprenticeships and bolster literacy and vocational skills to maximize entry into desired careers and fields.
 - Trauma reduction:* Provide appropriate mental health and case management services to children and youth who have been traumatized, particularly through witnessing or experiencing violence.
 - Other:*
-

Ensuring supported and functioning families

- Parenting skills:* Integrate parenting skills and child development classes into pre- and post-natal healthcare and other settings for parents.
 - Risk assessment:* Develop diagnostic systems and practices for identifying families in which child abuse, elder abuse, and/or intimate partner violence is occurring or may occur.
 - Support services:* Provide appropriate services for families in which violence is identified as a potential risk or problem including counseling, therapy, case management, anger management, home visiting, and substance abuse treatment.
 - Male responsibility:* Infuse fatherhood and male responsibility programs into settings with men and boys whereby men teach males about gender norms and gender roles with an emphasis on preventing sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and dating violence.
 - Other:*
-

Fostering safe and vibrant neighborhoods

- Firearms:* Reduce the availability and usage of firearms through policy and norms change.
- Conflict resolution:* Create pro-active dispute resolution structures and support at the neighborhood level.
- Gang prevention:* Reduce gang violence through appropriate services, programs and outreach to those at risk of gang participation and to those already involved.
- Alcohol availability:* Decrease the density of alcohol outlets and advertising in neighborhoods afflicted with high crime and violence.
- Drug markets:* Shrink drug markets by simultaneously decreasing the demand side through appropriate economic development, health and human service efforts and decreasing the supply side through targeted criminal justice approaches.

- Restorative justice*: Implement restorative justice programs with community organizations and the justice system.
- Reentry*: Create more viable connections between communities and inside detention facilities, provide incentives for hiring ex-felons, and support transition from detention to the community through mental health services, substance abuse treatment, job training and employment services, and supports for family members.
- Employment*: Tie job training and placement programs for community residents to neighborhood beautification/maintenance, infrastructure and commerce development, and female economic empowerment.
- Physical appearance*: Improve the physical appearance of neighborhoods by fostering arts programs and community gardens, improving park and neighborhood maintenance, and removing graffiti and blight.
- Social connectedness*: Support communities to foster strong social connections and to heal from community violence while translating fear and anger into action to prevent future violence.

Other: _____

APPENDIX D: POTENTIAL AGENCY/DEPARTMENT STRATEGIES

Introduction

We have identified high priority agencies and departments whose missions are core to advancing the proposed programmatic priorities of the Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI). Although every county agency and department will have a role to play in the VPI, these identified departments and agencies will play a core role in the next phase of the VPI. As the initiative evolves, more agencies and departments will become engaged.

The prioritization of these county agencies and departments came after a series of meeting with Alameda County staff and others who are involved in neighborhood work to prevent violence, including representatives from the Oakland and Ashland/Cherryland sites. The purpose of the conversations were to identify prioritized potential strategies for county agencies/departments to enhance violence prevention efforts, particularly for agencies and departments within the county that have a core function and mission associated with preventing violence.

Alameda County Agencies and Departments (* indicates a high priority department/agency)

Behavioral Health *
Child Support Services *
County Administrator Office *
County Library
District Attorney *
Fire Department
General Services Agency *
Housing/Community Development *
Human Resources
Indigent Care (school based health centers) *
Information Technology
Probation *
Public Health *
Public Defender *
Public Works
Redevelopment *
Registrar of Voters
Sheriff *
Social Services *
Tax assessor
Tax collector

Potential Strategies for County Departments and Agencies

The remainder of this memo includes specific potential strategies for those agencies and departments that were identified as high priority. These strategies are intended to help begin discussions with leadership from the specific agencies and departments.

I. Direct Services Providers

Behavioral Health Department

Background: Access to quality mental health and substance abuse treatment are key opportunities for the prevention of violence. In neighborhoods most impacted by violence, community members are seeing even higher rates of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and substance abuse and the lack of services and treatment to help people. There is growing momentum that the mental health of a neighborhood is just as important as the physical health. This is supported by the authorization of the Mental Health Services Act

which bolstered accessibility to funding for treatment, early intervention, and preventive initiatives for mental health.

Potential Strategies:

- Provide (walk-in) psychotherapy in highly impacted neighborhoods and ensure a low threshold for access to these services.
- Enhance and expand community-based health centers delivering mental health services (much like the school-based health centers).
- Integrate community outreach workers with the community health centers. Especially community outreach workers focused on recruiting the formerly incarcerated for services.
- Expand participation in school based health center to the family of the students and/or the school community (Model: Roosevelt Elementary School where the door to services is on the street side, not the school side).
- Offer Crisis Response Teams for highly impacted neighborhoods to ensure residents have an opportunity to heal and prevent further violence.
- Apply for Mental Health Services Act funds for mental health approaches such as crisis response, grief support, and services for indigent populations that support mental health and the prevention of violence.
- Ensure that mental health professionals are included in youth development and work training programs throughout the County as appropriate (such as the Bayfair Employment Training Academy), and particularly in prioritized neighborhoods.
- Improve information sharing with community based organizations and local law enforcement around BASN and Prop 63 clients living in the prioritized neighborhoods to avoid recidivism.

Public Health Department

Background: There is a great opportunity for coordination and outreach through public health. Currently, staff report different agencies in the County are offering different/similar services to the same neighborhoods and by sharing data and strategy they can collaboratively address the bigger issues at hand. Healthy Living Councils in schools was given as an existing, successful model for this approach.

Potential Strategies:

- Assign community health outreach workers to highly impacted neighborhoods to ensure dedicated staff.
- Identify which public health staff (nurses, community workers, clinic staff) are active in the identified neighborhoods and integrate violence prevention efforts into their job functions (e.g. home visiting nurses can assess for risk of violence, need for mental health services to reduce trauma, etc.)
- Link with the probation department to refer youth to the job training opportunities that PH offers. Can also be expanded to include the re-entry population.
- Coordinate the different agencies to collect and share data in specific neighborhoods.
- Provide data to other County Agencies on which areas are most impacted by violence.
- Work with CDCR and Santa Rita jail to develop an electronic “Continuity of Care” that would serve as an electronic “health passport” for inmates upon release
- Work with CDCR to ensure that all positive communicable disease cases are reported to the Public Health Department prior to release back to Alameda County

Indigent Care System

Background: The Indigent Care system manages both the Alameda County Medical Center (including Highland Hospital) and the School-Based Health Centers. As such the Indigent Care system is both the provider of health care services for the victims of violence and a part of the delivery of health care services to family and children at risk of violence.

Potential Strategies:

- Work to expand with intervention programs such as Youth Alive’s *Caught in the Crossfire* program to connect with the victims of gun violence while they are receiving care at highland hospital and ensure that these programs are well connected to the full spectrum of county services
- Incorporate relevant components of the violence prevention curriculum into the school based health centers
- Expand school based health clinics into schools in all VPI neighborhoods
- Utilize School Based Health Clinics to incorporate violence prevention services into neighborhoods

Probation Department

Background: In this time of banked case loads and crowded detention facilities, there remain opportunities to adopt policies that can support the prevention of violence. Primarily through community connections, county staff felt that re-entry would benefit from an overt connection to community in highly impacted neighborhoods.

Potential Strategies

- Assign a Probation Officer to each of the high impact neighborhoods who carries a case load of local community residents.
- Probation Officers assigned to a specific geographic area are briefed about and able to refer to local community resources (job trainings, educational opportunities, community service, etc) for the probationers on their caseload.
- Explore link to Public Health’s Urban Health Male Initiative.
- Increase use of the data driven assessment based system.
- Ensure that youth on probation are linked to youth development and job training programs particularly in prioritized neighborhoods.

Housing/Community Development Department

Background: Although housing isn’t usually seen as playing a role in preventing or reducing violence, research and evidence would suggest that housing is highly interlinked with the issue of violence. In a 2002 report by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, 44 percent of the cities surveyed identified domestic violence as the primary cause of homelessness. Providing affordable housing or temporary housing would allow many women to get out of abusive relationships and raise their children in violent-free homes. Some research has documented a relationship between housing design/orientation and improved mental health and reduced violence. Other models point to an emphasis on ensuring mixed income housing. More generally; foster children, re-entry population, and individuals suffering from mental illnesses are at high risk of becoming homeless and simultaneously at risk for violence. It is necessary to ensure that these individuals not only have a violence-free home to stay, but that they can receive services while they are there. Staff identified Alameda County’s “EveryOne Home” as a model program for its coordination between Cities and County and of services (individuals in the program receive mental and physical health care along with skills building services).

Potential Strategies

- Work with the re-entry population and foster kids as part of the EveryOne Home initiative, since they are part of this “homeless” sector, particularly in prioritized neighborhoods.
- Work with municipalities to identify housing options for the formerly incarcerated, esp. sex offenders.
- Enhance collaboration with Probation Department and Health Departments.
- Oversee licensing and certification for transitional housing for clients from probation and social services (foster care).
- Develop a campaign (positioning, talking points, etc.) for the county to reduce community outrage about and resistance to transitional housing in order to enhance transitional housing options throughout the county.

Redevelopment

Background: For the unincorporated areas, redevelopment provides key funding and resources. Staff identified the construction of a youth center in Ashland and a community center in Cherryland as recipients of these resources. The teen center was identified as a major priority when youth conducted surveys in the area as part of local violence prevention work, and both centers were affirmed as major priorities through the Eden Area Livability Initiative’s community planning process. Although on a city level, redevelopment agencies might function differently, it was agreed to explore this role further.

District Attorney

Background: Primarily through community connections, County staff felt that prosecution and sentencing done in a creative way—moving away from usual criminal justice response—would benefit both the person being prosecuted and the community as a whole.

Potential Strategies

- When appropriate, seek alternative sentencing such as doing community service or community supervision.
- The AC Family Justice Center can serve as a place for people to be represented and get services, but also potential avenues for District Attorney to connect with the community’s needs.
- Dedicate staffing resources to function as a satellite coordinator for each prioritized neighborhood to assist in community connections and receive community input on prosecution and sentencing that is based on neighborhood goals and needs, especially in juvenile cases.
- Take organized community input into account in prosecution and sentencing decisions related to individuals in specific neighborhoods.
- Develop a county program modeled after the Neighborhood Justice Corps, in which attorneys work with communities to identify problem spots (e.g. blight, etc.) and remediate them. The county program could include, for example, training, sample actions, etc.
- Promote and expand diversion programs such as Prop 63
- Work with community based organizations and elected officials to expand services to assist the formerly incarcerated in rehabilitating, and otherwise cleaning, their criminal records under the clean slate practice.
- Work with state policy makers to expand the number of offenses eligible for clean slate remedies.

Sheriff

Background: The Sheriff’s office, as the lead county authority for law enforcement, plays an integral role in violence. They can play a role of coordinating law enforcement and ensuring that best practices are practiced throughout the County. They can also be advocates for prevention-oriented strategies.

Potential Strategies

- Coordinate sheriffs, probation officers, police officers, and first responders to collaborate in their line of work.
- Incorporate prevention and intervention into responsibilities as possible, such as during domestic violence calls, coordinate with mental health and social services to ensure that children in the home are linked to appropriate services.
- Focus on re-entry; work with Public Health and their Re-Entry Task Force to link them with services.
- Offer violence prevention programming to juveniles in county detention facilities.
- Work with public health and other health departments to provide Mental Health screening and support as part of re-entry [and while in detention].
- Ensure that the Crime Prevention Unit has a presence in the identified unincorporated neighborhoods.
- Expand current partnerships with school districts through the Deputy Sheriff’s Activities League to ensure more after school programs and activities are available to students, especially in high crime areas, and particularly in prioritized neighborhoods.

Social Services Agency

Background: The Social Services Agency plays a key role in preventing violence as their mission is to work with families experiencing violence and families at great risk for experiencing violence. Because of their

connection to community members and on the ground workers, the social service department can play a role in identifying individuals and families that would benefit from prevention services and coordinating appropriate services. Social Service Agency is also well poised to coordinate and share data across sectors.

Potential Strategies

- Link individuals receiving public assistance to job training and educational programs so they can obtain meaningful jobs. Ensure they have access to counselors and mental health services to ensure they're going to be able to thrive.
- Partner with youth serving organizations so that when they enroll families into publicly sponsored health coverage programs, the children receive other benefits such as daycare services or after school programs.
- For families where a social service worker has been sent out to investigate abuse but a case is not opened, offer community resources and referrals to other family support programs.
- Develop system for beginning enrollment in public benefits prior to release from Santa Rita and San Quentin

II. Supplemental

General Services Agency

Background: One of the county's core functions is to provide services—often through contracts—and manage the materials used in providing those services. Both the contracts and materials were identified as potential resources for preventing violence

Potential Strategies

- Offer surplus computers and office furniture to nonprofit groups working in highly impacted, prioritized neighborhoods.
- During the proposal review process, award additional points to contracts that propose service delivery models in highly impacted neighborhoods.
- During the proposal process use public health data to identify zip codes the County has prioritized for service delivery.
- During the bidding process, award point to business located in highly impacted neighborhoods.
- Expand involvement of youth in Art Commission public art projects
- Incorporate violence prevention into the planning and policy recommendations of the Childcare Planning Council
- Incorporate data and research into the evaluation of the VPI

County Administrator Office

Background: To ensure that resources – including staff time and funding – are spent strategically, the County Administrator Office plays a critical role in countywide coordination and strategic action—and in recommending organizational changes to improve County operations

Potential Strategies

- Provide a vision for all the agencies/departments and keep focus on results in highly impacted neighborhoods.
- Ensure accountability on agreed upon actions for each agency/department.
- Coordinate with the East Bay Economic Development Alliance to address business concerns as it relates to violence and identify corporate opportunities for investment in the highly impacted neighborhoods.
- Complete a Cost/Benefit analysis indentifying the amount of the County's back end spending as a result of violence and potential savings to the county from front end investment in prevention.
- Ask/require all county agencies and departments to invest a specific amount in a county violence prevention pool to support coordinated efforts and/or to dedicate in-kind staffing at a minimum level
- Provide supervision and support for a violence prevention coordinator.

Technical Assistance Delivery System

Action Steps	Year 1										Year 2										Responsibility
1. Identify the people within the County that can provide the Technical Assistance: Identify up to (12) individuals from the County that have expertise in violence prevention, youth resilience, public health, community outreach, and County structure and can be part of a TA team.			*																		VPI Coordinator, Program Manager + Exec Committee
2. Set agreements on participation: Establish an agreement between the individuals selected to provide TA and the County regarding their responsibilities and commitment.			*																		VPI Coordinator, Program Manager + Exec Committee
3. Establish and Communicate the standards of services: Confirm the types of services that the TA teams can provide to the neighborhoods, County agencies/departments, and County at large. Develop a process to make that information available; particularly to the six VPI neighborhoods.			*																		VPI Coordinator, Program Manager + Exec Committee
4. Train TA Team members: Provide training to the Technical Teams on Violence Prevention strategies, best practices, and orient them on the ACVP Blueprint and local efforts.			*		*		*		*			*		*		*		*		*	* VPI Coordinator + Consultant
5. Provide services to the six neighborhoods: Based on the identified priorities and TA needs of each neighborhood, work with the County to coordinate efforts, deliver services, and provide technical assistance as needed.				*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	TA Teams
6. Participate in the Countywide Neighborhood Teams Meeting: TA Team members will attend neighborhood meetings to discuss learning, challenges,					*		*		*			*		*		*		*		*	* TA Teams

Violence Prevention in Alameda County:

A Communication Study

April 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Methodology

Hill & Company Communications was retained by the office of Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley to explore how communications strategies could be developed to better position and further promote the county's violence prevention initiative with internal audiences (i.e., city and county managers and staff as well as representatives from several community-based organizations that are currently engaged in violence prevention programs) and external audiences (i.e., youth and adult community members, especially in those neighborhoods that have implemented violence prevention as a key initiative for creating a healthier and safer Alameda County).

Additionally, this report focuses on the following objectives:

- Identify a marketing communications approach that promotes the benefits of the violence prevention initiative.
- Assist the county in identifying and recruiting representatives from the business community to play a major role in the initiative.

To assess current attitudes and opinions about branding and marketing communications and the role they could play in the violence prevention initiative, Hill & Company conducted a series of internal key informant interviews with leaders from law enforcement, criminal justice, public school administration, public health, city and county government, community-based organizations, and the business community. All the interviewees are either directly or indirectly involved in the county's violence prevention efforts. Participants were recommended by Supervisor Miley's office and by Andrés Soto, Alameda County's violence prevention coordinator.

Additionally, Hill & Company conducted discussion groups with adult and youth residents of several of the neighborhoods targeted for violence prevention initiatives.

The interviews explored the roles the key informants played in violence prevention; examined attitudes toward the county's violence prevention initiative; identified barriers to more effective communications and collaboration around violence prevention; determined what could be done to move the initiative forward; and identified marketing approaches and ideas that could be used to better position and communicate the initiative.

The community discussion groups were designed to engage adults and youths in at-risk neighborhoods to determine their attitudes toward and need for violence prevention programs, and to test communications approaches that could be used to brand and position the initiative.

Key Findings — Key Informant Interviews

Expanding Marketing Communications and Branding — The key informants support the need for wrapping an effective communications strategy around the violence prevention initiative. They sometimes mentioned the need for and the importance of communications before the topic was even brought up by Hill & Company. They said that “a strong, powerful story needs to be told” to both internal and external audiences. The respondents identified major roles for communications including building awareness of where to go for help and general information about the violence prevention program; developing clear, consistent messages about violence prevention; and promoting successes to “generate hope in the community and inspire agencies to keep doing what they are doing.”

The respondents also supported the concept of branding, which would bring the various resources, programs and activities related to violence prevention in Alameda County under a single brand as a way to communicate the benefits of the initiative and become known as a trusted source of information and assistance.

They were particularly enthusiastic about creating a media partnership with KTVU-TV (Channel 2) as an avenue to educate the public and provide “good news” about violence prevention. They also indicated a need to educate the media about how to report on violence prevention in order to bring messages of hope and possibility, rather than negativity and fear.

Understanding and Supporting the Violence Prevention Initiative — The key informants are very supportive of the initiative and see the collaboration as a way to make an impact on the complex and extensive problem of violence in Alameda County. Despite this support, however, respondents cited barriers to effective collaboration such as the need to move beyond the theoretical framework of the *Blueprint* to develop an action plan that focuses on implementation of priorities, outcomes and results. They suggested that the plan also incorporate strategies for funding that might involve pooling resources to accomplish major strategic priorities.

Another major suggestion to promote a more action-oriented approach includes having fewer large information-sharing meetings and instead scheduling more small interactive meetings that provide an atmosphere for free-flowing ideas and problem solving and that hold participants accountable for follow-up.

Program Leadership/Role of Coordinator — Respondents said that more clearly defining the role of and expectations for the violence prevention coordinator and providing more guidance and direction to the position to maximize its effectiveness would benefit the initiative. They suggested that the role of the coordinator should include being a central clearinghouse for information about the initiative, serving as spokesperson for the initiative and being a driving force in implementing strategic priorities and action plans.

Role of Business Community — The key informants said they believe that business leaders can play a significant role in the initiative (e.g., providing funding, jobs, job training) but

that the county must work differently to keep them engaged. They noted that the business mindset of “we’re going to make things happen” is very different than the county’s tendency to “sit around the table and discuss it.” They prefer to respond to specific requests and want the county to provide direction to businesses. They also cited the need for more follow-up, including giving assignments, setting deadlines and holding people accountable for completing tasks. Finally, they suggested that a business leader serve as chair of the business sector activities and that the county provide sufficient staff support.

Key Findings — Community Discussion Groups

Youths — Discussion groups were held with young people who participate in community-based leadership development programs in two of the county’s target neighborhoods. The group in the Ashland/Cherryland neighborhood of San Leandro was composed primarily of African-American middle and high school youths living in subsidized housing, and the group from La Familia Counseling Center in Hayward consisted of Latino high school students, some of whom were formerly gang members.

Participants painted the picture that living in a violent community is a way of life for them. Most of them have become indifferent to the constant violence that surrounds them. Despite being able to recite a litany of what they see as causes of violence in their communities, the youths in both groups were optimistic that violence is preventable. They see the need to “start young, before kids go in the wrong direction”; to create job opportunities; to talk to kids about what is the “right way”; and to give everyone a “chance to change.” They requested a voice on the county task force to offer their understanding and experience of violence firsthand — “We have a lot to offer. We live it.” Finally, the youths discussed the need for adults to respect them and to care about them and the contributions they can make in preventing violence in their communities.

Adults — Discussion groups were held with adult residents of the neighborhoods of Sobrante Park and Ashland/Cherryland. The group in Sobrante Park was Latino and the group in Ashland/Cherryland was a diverse group that represented the ethnic mix of the community. Most of the participants were members of the Resident Action Councils and have been involved in city/county programs for violence prevention.

Some of the adults remain optimistic that violence is preventable, but many expressed discouragement with the lack of progress toward peace in their communities. The key finding in both discussion groups was that residents are getting tired of waiting and are anxious to see results. They perceive that progress toward implementing promised improvements is slow or nonexistent and is impacted by the economic status of the neighborhood. They are asking that public officials keep their promises and speed up the process. They believe that successes will help to engage more residents in violence prevention efforts, and without successes people are “getting tired and losing hope.”

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The lack of a well-defined communications strategy has impeded knowledge of and support for the county's violence prevention initiative with the general public as well as among key city and county internal audiences. Hill & Company Communications has been retained by the office of Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley to create a communications framework that will better position and further promote the initiative with key internal and external audiences. Hill & Company has recommended a two-phase approach to provide strategic communications for the county's violence prevention initiative, as outlined below:

Phase I

- Conduct an assessment to identify and test effective communication messages.
- Develop a brand that positions violence prevention as a key initiative for creating a healthy and safe Alameda County.
- Assist the county in recruiting representatives from the business community to play a major role in the initiative.

Phase II

Provide comprehensive, ongoing marketing communications support that include actions such as the following:

- Develop a strategic communications plan that uses media to help change attitudes and shift norms, engage communities and support the county's programs.
- Create communications materials that support the campaign brand.
- Communicate best practices, effective models and approaches, and information about public resources.
- Identify and cultivate Bay Area media partners.
- Explore free and paid advertising opportunities.
- Develop a violence prevention website.
- Train a cadre of community "ambassadors" to help deliver key campaign messages.

This report focuses on activities conducted in Phase I, including development of a communications assessment and creation of a brand strategy.

METHODOLOGY

Communications Assessment

Hill & Company conducted a series of one-on-one interviews with key informants as well as discussion groups made up of community residents living in neighborhoods where currently violence prevention initiatives are being implemented. Participants in the interviews and discussion groups were selected through recommendations from Supervisor Miley's office and by Andrés Soto, the county's violence prevention coordinator.

The key informants included a broad cross-section of leaders from law enforcement, criminal justice, schools, public health, city and county government, community based organizations and the business community who play leadership roles in the county's violence prevention efforts. Many of the individuals interviewed are Alameda County department heads or members of the Violence Prevention Leadership Council and Core Planning Group. The purpose of the interviews was to

- Understand the role of each sector in violence prevention and the major programs and activities that are currently underway.
- Explore attitudes toward the county's violence prevention initiative.
- Examine barriers to effective collaboration and engagement, and determine what can be done to move the initiative forward.
- Understand communication needs and priorities relating to the initiative.
- Identify communications approaches that could be used to brand and position the initiative.

The community discussion groups included adult and youth residents from neighborhoods targeted for violence prevention initiatives. Rather than conduct these discussion groups in traditional formal settings, Hill & Company met with people in community centers, private homes and the local YMCA. This "in-community" approach (meeting at familiar, conveniently located sites) enables participants to feel more comfortable sharing their opinions and also increases the likelihood of their participation. The purpose of the discussion groups was to

- Engage adults and youths in at-risk neighborhoods to determine their attitudes toward and need for violence prevention programs.
- Test messages and communications approaches that could be used to brand and position the initiative.

A discussion guide was created to help shape the interviews and group discussions (see Appendix A). Appendix B lists the participants in the key informant interviews and the discussion groups that were conducted for the communications assessment.

KEY FINDINGS — KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with individuals representing a wide range of programs and services related to violence prevention in Alameda County. Despite the diversity of the respondents, the views they expressed were remarkably consistent. Several key findings emerged and are summarized in the following four sections.

1. Expanding Marketing Communications and Branding

There was significant buy-in and acceptance of the need for a communications strategy that would include clear messaging and branding of the initiative. Several respondents said that the general public would benefit from knowing how to get help when needed and from knowing that there is a comprehensive, coordinated approach to violence prevention underway in Alameda County. As one person stated, “A strong, powerful story about violence prevention needs to be told.”

Based on feedback from the respondents, the need is not just to communicate with external audiences but also to share information with the numerous internal audiences involved in the initiative. Professionals said they want to “know what their colleagues are doing” in order to enhance collaboration, avoid duplication of services, share best practices and instill a sense of hope and optimism in the face of difficult challenges. According to several respondents, “There is a need to engage county staff at all levels so people understand their connection to the initiative.”

Communications

The respondents identified the following three specific roles for communications:

- *Build awareness of where to go for help and information about violence prevention programs.* The respondents believe that a primary role for the county is “to educate the public regarding the array of services that are available.” One person suggested positioning the county “as the path to public safety.”
- *Develop clear, consistent messages.* The respondents felt that messages can be used to interact with the media and to promote the initiative internally as well as throughout the county. According to several respondents, it is particularly important that youths “hear the same positive, consistent messages about violence prevention from everybody” to counteract the “bombardment of messages found in popular music and video and even from some news sources that encourage violence.”
- *Promote successes.* Several respondents agreed that that it is time to identify and publicize violence prevention successes to maintain momentum. They support working in partnership with the media to let the community know that “good things are happening.” They believe that focusing on success will “generate hope and inspire agencies to keep doing what they

are doing.” Additionally, it will “create a sense of ownership and allow people to take credit for being part of the solution.”

Through the interviews, Hill & Company learned about many of the programs and inspiring success stories connected with the initiative that are not yet known to the public and, in some cases, to professionals. Just a few examples of programs that could be introduced to or revisited by the media include the following:

- The new Family Justice Center
- The Mentoring Center in Oakland
- Annual Open House at Juvenile Hall
- Safe Passages program
- Youth Uprising
- Reduction in violent crime rates in Sobrante Park and other neighborhoods
- Reduction in violent crime rates in Oakland in general
- Pathways to Change program
- Peacekeepers
- Youth Leadership Groups in Hayward and other targeted neighborhoods
- The Second Step Program in schools
- Measure Y’s successful programs

Branding

The concept of branding was introduced to the respondents as a way to extend the awareness and overall breadth of the programs. The idea is to develop a campaign brand that is easily understood and identifiable, and that communicates the benefits of the initiative and becomes highly known and respected as a trusted source of information. By branding the initiative (i.e., providing both a name and values under which violence prevention programs reside), it will be easier to accomplish the communications goals of building awareness, creating consistent messages and promoting successes.

The respondents were enthusiastic about the concept of bringing all the various resources, programs and activities related to violence prevention throughout Alameda County under a single brand. When Hill & Company outlined how each violence prevention program or service would continue to operate independently and retain its own name and individual identity but would benefit from having the same brand equity and identity, the respondents felt it was an approach that would work. One respondent expressed, “I am concerned regarding the lack of organized marketing and propaganda for this initiative.” Another stated, “Labeling and building a presence for violence prevention in the communities is important, and we need to work together to do so.”

Potential Vehicles for Communications

Key informants suggested specific vehicles to communicate issues about the violence prevention initiative to internal and external audiences. In particular, there was enthusiastic support for a potential media partnership with KTVU-TV (Channel 2) as a means to inform and engage the general public in issues and success stories about violence prevention.

Other ideas and suggestions include the following:

- “Create partnerships with Oakland’s KTOP and other local cable television stations to run PSAs as well as news items.”
- “Publish articles in the newly created newsletter from the Oakland Mayor’s Office.”
- “Use Police Service Area Yahoo Groups” for internal communications.
- “Create a violence prevention website” that could be accessed by the public and by professionals involved in violence prevention.
- “Identify role models with charisma, that young kids look up to” (e.g., musicians, sports figures) to be spokespersons for the initiative and to publicize the brand.
- “Engage the residents in targeted neighborhoods” (e.g., through Neighborhood Watch groups, Resident Action Councils, churches) to disseminate information about violence prevention resources and “act as ambassadors,” advocating to expand participation in the initiative. “The more people that can be engaged and trained, the better. They can become a force multiplier.”

In the neighborhoods, most communication about violence prevention resources and activities currently occurs by word of mouth. “We get information and pass it along.” Some families have computers, but many do not have access to e-mail or the Internet. Other possibilities for communication that were mentioned include television and radio.

Potential Messages to Communicate About Violence Prevention

There was considerable support for the idea of pursuing media partners to tell the story of violence prevention in Alameda County. Some of the themes that the respondents proposed as important components of the story include the following:

- “We need to figure out how to educate the media. To explain what’s the cause of this violence. Put a human face to the problem and the solution. One negative incident can kill an entire reform effort. We have got to educate reporters to see the bigger picture.”
- “Reporters need to understand how the criminal justice system works, what are the root causes of violence, and understand the fears and challenges poor people face from the perspective of people living in those communities.”
- “If we don’t show up and prove violence prevention works, we won’t get voter support again [referring to \$6 million allocated for Measure Y]. The voting populace is uneducated about what violence is all about and what is being done about it. We need to raise the consciousness of the average voter regarding urban realities.”
- “There is a growing sentiment of fear in Oakland regarding crime. Even though the crime rate is lower, the hysteria is higher. We need to tell stories of what’s working in violence prevention. Tell stories of how it changes lives for young people and families and decreases the need for police. People want to feel safe.”

- “You can create hope in communities. Bring messages of peace and hope and possibility. Make it about humanity and not fear.”
- “You can get in the door to teach parenting skills to residents of high crime neighborhoods by telling them how to keep your kids safe. Start with let’s talk about how to keep your child out of prison.”

2. Understanding and Supporting the Violence Prevention Initiative

Hill & Company was particularly struck by the passion, determination and optimism shown by each person in discussing his or her work in preventing violence and dealing with the effects of violence in Alameda County. Everyone showed a genuine willingness to be part of a collaboration that makes an impact on the complex and far-reaching problem of violence. They see several benefits of collaboration on the county’s violence prevention initiative, including

- Sharing information.
- Developing best practices.
- Creating partnerships to address specific concerns.
- Approaching funding sources in a cohesive manner.
- Being part of a bigger vision.
- Increasing the ability to generate positive media attention.

Barriers to Collaboration

Despite understanding the potential synergies that can come from working together, many of the respondents are frustrated with the initiative’s progress in facilitating effective collaboration. One of the basic difficulties with collaboration on such a broad scale is the multitude of agendas and funding sources that people bring to the table. As one respondent said, “We can’t do it alone, but it’s tough to collaborate. When joining the larger violence prevention initiative, we’re still struggling with our own issues too.” This complexity makes the need for effective internal communications even more significant.

According to several respondents, some of the barriers to collaboration are based on long-standing issues between Alameda County and the City of Oakland and within city and county agencies. “There is a huge amount of territorialism,” one person commented, and so there is “duplication of efforts,” “lack of coordination” and “resistance to partnering” between the city and county. Another talked about the “fundamental distrust” that exists “between city and county, within city or county, and between residents and government.” A third respondent stated that “turf issues among professionals are a major reason why programs fail.” Despite concerns that collaboration is difficult, those interviewed universally support the concept and recognize that “a bigger vision is needed” to address violence prevention. They also expressed hope that by branding the initiative and bringing successful programs “together under one umbrella” and “acknowledging the partners for their contributions,” many of these barriers to collaboration will dissolve.

The respondents view the *Blueprint* as a great starting point and a solid theoretical framework from which to move forward. There is universal concern, however, that a more effective infrastructure is needed to make collaboration successful. They believe that the *Blueprint* “is not on the ground,” and therefore it is important to go beyond the *Blueprint*’s theory and to develop an action plan that focuses on outcomes and results. They proposed the following specific ideas on how to proceed from this point.

Move to Implementation

Many respondents believe that “it is time for a strategic check-in,” to more clearly define and prioritize the original goals of the initiative and to identify strategies to implement and monitor them. As one respondent said, “Meetings by themselves don’t do anything. We need to take the theory and develop an action plan with outcomes and results.”

Some suggested that this check-in could take the form of a leadership retreat at which attendees would assess what has been accomplished to date, what has been successful, what have been the barriers to success and what can be accomplished going forward. “We need to first start with taking a look at what we have done in the last two years. And then ask ourselves: Are we doing what needs to be done?”

It was recommended that a facilitator assist the county in developing action plans that clearly delineate a) manageable priorities, b) roles and responsibilities, and c) realistic time frames for implementation.

Focus on Outcomes and Measurement

As part of the action-planning process, several respondents discussed the need to define and achieve measurable outcomes and results. “We know the major indicators of violence. We can set our priorities and determine strategies to reduce the impact of those indicators, and then measure the effectiveness of the strategies.” According to the respondents, the public as well as professionals in the field need “some tangible results.” Therefore, the action plans should consider: “What is the measure of success?”

Creatively Use Funding Sources

Several respondents mentioned that an important part of the initiative’s planning process is that “budgets need to reflect the strategic priorities and action plans.” In order to implement strategies and achieve results, the respondents noted, “There needs to be buy-in from the top to deliver resources in a focused manner.”

They also commented on the complexity of funding sources related to violence prevention and the “need to look at how resources can be pooled to be more effective.” One idea was to identify priorities and make dollars flexible to be pooled for those priorities. Another suggestion was to look at available funding and allocate some toward a grant writer and other outreach/marketing activities. Another idea was to look into the possibility of working with schools and law

enforcement to obtain State Proposition 63 funds for gang prevention that “could be used in connection with violence prevention in the schools.”

Structure Meetings to Be Smaller and More Interactive

In order for the initiative to become more action-oriented, several respondents suggested changing the structure of the major meetings, such as the Leadership Council, which brings together more than 50 people, each representing different aspects of violence prevention. They said that the large-meeting format, which primarily emphasizes information sharing, does not seem to be the best way to develop and implement strategies and action plans. Many participants requested smaller, more interactive meetings, with a specific focus. Suggestions for the composition of the smaller groups included the following:

- Bring together groups with a regional focus, such as North, South, and Central county program meetings, to discuss barriers and successes in their particular regions and to address regional problems. For example, respondents suggested that in South County, the Hayward Police Department could hold discussions with local youth leadership programs. “We are always looking at ways to build relationships with the community and incorporate law enforcement at the street level into new programs.”
- Others suggested a “sector” focus, such as education, which could include participation from behavioral health, law enforcement, schools and other programs that focus on violence prevention as it relates to education. As one respondent said, “To solve problems and keep schools safe, we need to work in teams.”
- In a similar vein, some respondents recommended a program focus, such as bringing together all the youth-oriented program leaders so that related groups can share information on best practices.

In general, respondents want to sit down with leaders from other programs who are creating and implementing programs that have similar goals, objectives and audiences, and create an atmosphere for free discussion and brainstorming “so ideas will freely flow.” They identified a need for “frank talk and facilitation” to solve problems and explore what can be accomplished. Again, the recurring sentiment is: “We can’t do it alone.”

3. Program Leadership/Role of Coordinator

The respondents said that good work has been done publicizing the *Blueprint* and creating a leadership forum to address key components of the initiative. At this point, however, there is a lack of clarity about the overall role of the initiative’s coordinator. Many felt that the coordinator position needs much more definition and more specific guidance, direction and support from county leadership than it has received to date. This direction would include clearly defined responsibilities and expectations and an ongoing evaluation to make sure that explicit results were being achieved.

The following ideas were suggested as important components of the coordinator’s role:

- *Be a central clearinghouse for information about the initiative.* The coordinator would keep informed about the current status of violence in the targeted areas and would know what is being done to address it. He or she would create and maintain a comprehensive, up-to-date database of the violence prevention resources in Alameda County that could be accessed by residents and professionals. This person would also be a central point for collecting and disseminating success stories.
- *Be a spokesperson to publicize the initiative.* The coordinator would be responsible for disseminating clear messages about the initiative to let members of the public know the purpose of the initiative, what is happening currently and how they can help. As one person suggested, the coordinator should “get out into the community and make the initiative known.”
- *Be a driving force in implementation.* Once the strategic priorities are determined and the action plans developed, the coordinator would work closely with the leadership team to coordinate people and the prevention programs being implemented. An important element of implementation is monitoring progress and “making sure there is an avenue for follow-up.”

4. Role of Business Community

The key informants agreed that there is a major role for business in this initiative, but it is also clear that there is a need to work differently with business leaders in order to keep them engaged. The business representatives who were interviewed are very committed to the idea of violence prevention, but they do not have time to “sit around the table and discuss it.”

To harness the power of the business community, respondents said that the county needs to have a better understanding of the business mindset and to recognize that “we are different than government and nonprofits.” For example, in business it is critical to have an attitude of “we’re going to make things happen,” and then to *make* them happen — *fast* (that is, faster than the county typically operates). As one respondent commented, for business people to participate, “they need to know they are going to make a difference.”

According to the respondents, one way to make things happen is to “be more clear about what businesses are being asked to do and by when.” Is the county asking for money, job training, jobs, volunteers? Business leaders said they would respond to specific requests and are looking to the county for direction on how to proceed. They also see the need for better follow-up, including setting deadlines, monitoring assigned tasks and holding people accountable for timely task completion. One respondent summed it up by saying, “Government needs to provide a road map to business.”

The respondents also suggested that in order to accomplish this shift in mindset and to maximize the recruitment of additional business leaders, the business sector meetings and activities be chaired by an influential, committed business leader and staffed and sufficiently supported by county personnel. One of the key informants interviewed by Hill & Company is Janet Egler, a senior vice president with Greater Bay Bank in Santa Clara at the time of the interview. Ms. Egler has played a key role in the business sector meetings, continues to be very supportive of

the violence prevention initiative and has expressed interest in leading the business community efforts going forward. Hill & Company believes that she is an excellent candidate for the role of business community chair and recommends that the county engage her in discussions regarding this possibility.

KEY FINDINGS — COMMUNITY DISCUSSION GROUPS

Youth Discussion Groups

The youth discussion groups consisted of young people who participate in community-based leadership development programs that support them in leading productive lives and in being an asset to their communities. The group in the Ashland/Cherryland neighborhood of San Leandro was composed primarily of African-American middle and high school youths living in subsidized housing. The group from La Familia Counseling Center in Hayward consisted of Latino high school students, some of whom were former gang members.

To the young people in these discussion groups, living in a violent community is a way of life. Almost all of the youth participants personally knew at least two victims who died from violence in the past year. Most of these young people have become indifferent to the violence that closely touches their lives. As one middle school boy put it, “If it happens to someone I know well, then I care. If it happens to an acquaintance or a stranger, I don’t care.” A high school girl said, “When we hear about another murder, my mom is very scared. But I have adjusted to it. I think, oh well, here’s another one. It’s part of life.”

The youths voiced what they believe to be the major causes of violence in their schools and neighborhoods:

- “Fights over drugs and fights because people are on drugs.”
- “It is probably possible to get rid of drugs, but nobody does anything. There is no real penalty in schools if you get caught with drugs. They suspend you five days — then kids come back and start over.”
- “A lack of jobs and information about jobs — people get frustrated and sell drugs instead.”
- Lack of communication and support from parents — “Sometimes parents are the biggest problem.”
- Gangs — “Gang violence is everywhere in our lives — at schools, in the streets, at stores.”
- “The cops are not doing their job. They don’t do anything, just take you away from your parents.”
- “Most kids keep domestic violence to themselves. They have nobody to trust. The person giving you life disrespecting you is shocking.”
- “A lot of crime happens when people are bored and they don’t have enough. When someone wants something it starts out by them asking for it. But then, when they don’t get it ... people start taking it.
- “Give us something to do. There is nothing to do — so kids get in trouble. We need a place where everybody can go.”
- “Now violence is a fad. You can’t stop it.”

Despite these major obstacles, most of the youths in the discussion groups believe that violence is preventable. When asked what is needed to prevent violence, they responded with the following powerful suggestions:

- “A teen center with sports, games, mentoring and counseling would keep kids busy and reduce crime.”
- “Create job opportunities for young people.”
- “Talk to kids. Tell them what’s wrong. Tell them what happens with violence and what it’s going to cost them [e.g., let them tour Juvenile Hall]. Then show them the right way.”
- “Get famous people like rap stars and sports heroes to be role models and speak about violence prevention. Famous people will get their attention.”
- Bring kids and parents together “so more parents can see what they’re doing to their kids.” Let kids invite their parents.
- Give gang members a chance to change. “They need the opportunity to see there’s another way. Nobody’s ever included them before.”
- “Everybody deserves a chance. Provide that in any way possible.”
- “Get to kids while they’re young, before they go in the wrong direction.”
- “Schools gave up on us already. They cut art, music and more. The bathrooms are a mess. That sends the message to us that we aren’t worth it. Fix the schools.”
- “Give us a voice on the county task force. We have a lot to offer. We understand violence; we live it.”
- “We need to get others involved in our program. *This* [Hijos del Sol] is our family ... a safe environment.”

The Hayward leadership group (Hijos del Sol) has a particularly successful peer counseling program in which high school youths teach leadership skills to middle school students. As one student described it, “We go into middle schools and teach kids how to be powerful.” While presenting their program at a conference in Florida, adults asked their advice on setting up programs in their communities. In the discussion group, these young people told a story of being scheduled to make a presentation on violence prevention to city officials and school board members and being “stood up” more than once by these adults. As a result, they want to convey the following message to county leaders:

“Keep your word. When you say you’re going to show up, be sure you do. Listen to us. Care about us. Treat us with respect. Every one of us has a story. We’re experiencing the violence firsthand. If we all get together and work on it there is hope.”

When asked about the best vehicles for communicating with youths about violence prevention, participants in both the Hayward and Ashland/Cherryland groups responded:

- “Use the Internet, especially MySpace and e-mails.” (About half the participants have Internet access at home.)
- “Put brochures in doctors’ offices.”
- “Make it part of the school curriculum.”
- “Create a teen newsletter with topics that interest kids.” (The Ashland youth group is doing this.)
- “Talk to someone you’re close to and you can trust.”
- “Get kids involved in painting community murals. We learn from that.”

The youths pointed out that the style used to communicate with them about violence prevention needs to catch their attention. They said presentations should look interesting and be colorful. Messages have to be believable, and scaring people can also get results. Because young people have a hard time staying interested, they suggested putting a dance sequence in the middle of a YouTube video on violence prevention, or in a similar vein “trick them” by inserting educational messages in something they like to read about.

Adult Discussion Groups

One discussion group was held with adults in the Eden House Apartments, a subsidized housing complex in the Ashland/Cherryland neighborhood of San Leandro. The group, consisting of eight residents and the Resident Coordinator, included African-American, Latino, Chinese and Caucasian participants. Two of the attendees were men and seven were women. Most were parents of young children.

The other discussion group was held in Sobrante Park and all of the participants were Latino. The group comprised two adult women, one adult man, and one male and one female high school student. For part of the time, a 10-year-old-boy (the son of one of the participants) was also part of the group.

Several of the adults in both discussion groups are members of Resident Action Councils; they care passionately about keeping their neighborhoods safe and being champions of violence prevention. They recruit others to join the initiative and remain optimistic that violence is preventable. Other participants are not activists and tend to feel more discouraged by the violence in their communities. In the Sobrante Park group, about half of the participants said they are planning to move out of neighborhood as soon as they can, “hoping for something better for themselves somewhere else.”

People in both groups told stories about various incidents of violence in the neighborhood and talked about the realities of living in a community where violence is the norm. They believe that most violence occurs with young people using drugs but that the root causes of violence “start at home.” Respondents commented that many parents in the community “have serious problems of their own,” and so “are not good examples for their children,” that is, they do not set boundaries and discipline them when necessary. When asked if they thought violence is preventable, both groups expressed discouragement with the lack of progress toward peace in their communities. “A lot of parents won’t do anything until something drastic happens in the home.”

One of the most important findings in both adult groups is that the residents are very frustrated with the slow pace of change in their communities. Despite the significant city and county resources for capacity building that have been provided to the Sobrante Park and Ashland/Cherryland neighborhoods, residents perceive that “improvements are made faster in other places; different communities get more action than we do — it’s a question of economics.”

According to the respondents, their city has promised many improvements, such as putting public restrooms in Sobrante Park, and yet these upgrades “take forever” and are still not implemented. Another example cited was the Gateway to Sobrante Park project, which residents were told would not be completed for at least 10 years. They are concerned that violence will not be reduced in their communities until infrastructure improvements are made. Without tangible results, people in the Resident Action Council are “getting tired and losing hope.”

The Sobrante Park residents were asked what messages they would like to convey to the leaders of the violence prevention initiative, and these were their responses:

- “Keep your promises.”
- “Put more police here to patrol streets and respond to calls in a timely manner. We need a consistent police presence.”
- “Improve community safety. Start by putting lights in the alley.”
- “Speed up the process”

In Ashland, the responses were similar. Residents stated, “We need to see data and we need results. This would get more people to commit to violence prevention.” One person posed this question to the county: “Are *you* serious about preventing violence? How serious are you?” This is based on concern that despite “meeting after meeting” of the Resident Action Council, “nothing has really changed since I’ve been here. We still need a place for kids to go.”

The Ashland residents want to know that things are getting done consistently, that there are successes and that “follow-through is 100 percent.” As one resident stated, “We need you to stay on it. Violence prevention has to be ongoing.”

Adults in both community discussion groups said that the best vehicles for communicating with them about violence prevention are as follows:

- Word of mouth
- E-mail/Internet (about half use it)
- Radio
- TV news
- Phone calls
- Text messages

Recommendations and Conclusions

- Pursue a media partnership with KTVU-TV (Channel 2) to create “an avenue for good news.”
- Conduct a leadership retreat to establish the following:
 - What has the initiative accomplished in the past two years?
 - What are the successes? Barriers to success?
 - What are the priorities going forward?
 - Measures of success
 - Action plan with milestones
 - Review of funding sources
- Once priorities are determined, create a system to monitor progress.
- Work with business leaders to secure and maintain their participation.
 - Recruit a business leader to chair the business sector team.
 - Focus on specific projects and follow through.
 - Create an event to convene government leaders (Supervisor Miley, Mayor Dellums, State Senator Perata) and business leaders.
- Include youth representatives on county task forces.
- Follow up on promises to residents in targeted neighborhoods. Develop a system to track implementation of improvements for public safety.
- Define the role and expectations of violence prevention initiative leadership. Provide guidance and direction to the coordinator position to assist with implementing strategic priorities.

Appendix A

Discussion Guide

1. Tell us your name and the things you enjoy doing most in life.
2. What are the biggest problems facing your neighborhood?
3. What things need to be done about violence in this city?
4. What do the words “violence prevention” mean to you when you hear them?
5. What are some of the ways to prevent violence?
6. Do *you* have a role to play in preventing violence? If yes, what is your role?
7. Do you have any resources to help you deal with violence in your community? Tell me about resources you have — what are they?
8. What are the best ways to let you and your neighbors know about those resources?
9. What kinds of things are needed for a less violent community?
10. I have a few slogans that could be used to excite people about violence prevention programs — which ones would you use?
 - “Increase the Peace!”
 - “Silence the Violence”
 - “Safe Neighborhoods. Safe Families”
11. Do you have any additional suggestions for slogans?
12. Thank you very much for talking with us.

Appendix B

Key Informants and Community Discussion Groups

Key Informants

- Lenore Anderson — Violence Prevention Coordinator, Oakland Office of the Mayor
- Don Blevins — Chief Probation Officer, Alameda County
- Ralph Cantor — Office of Education, Alameda County
- Dean Chambers — Clinical Program Specialist, Behavioral Health Care Services, Alameda County
- Joe DeVries — City/County Neighborhood Initiatives Supervisor, City of Oakland
- Janet Egler — Senior Vice President, Greater Bay Bancorp, Santa Clara
- Sheila Jordan — Superintendent of Schools, Alameda County
- Dave Kears — Director, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
- David Manson — Deputy Director Violence Prevention Initiative, State Senator Perata's Office
- Lt. Kelly Miles — Sheriff's Office, Alameda County
- Nancy O'Malley — Chief Assistant District Attorney, Alameda County
- Andrés Soto — Violence Prevention Coordinator, Alameda County
- Kit Wall — Government Relations Director, Eli Lilly Company

Community Discussion Groups

- Adult Resident Action Council, Sobrante Park Neighborhood, Oakland
- Adult Residents, Eden House Apartments, Ashland/Cherryland Neighborhood, San Leandro
- Youth Leadership Group, Eden House Apartments, Ashland/Cherryland Neighborhood, San Leandro
- Youth Leadership Group, La Familia Counseling Center, Hayward

APPENDIX G: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Alameda County Violence Prevention Initiative

**Communications Plan:
A Test Market Approach**

June 2009



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hill & Company Communications was retained by the office of Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley to explore how communications strategies could be developed to better position and further promote the county's violence prevention initiative with internal audiences (i.e., city and county managers and staff as well as representatives from several community-based organizations that are currently engaged in violence prevention programs) and external audiences (i.e., youth and adult community members, especially in those neighborhoods that have implemented violence prevention as a key initiative for creating a healthier and safer Alameda County).

To assess current attitudes and opinions about branding and marketing communications and the role they could play in the violence prevention initiative, Hill & Company conducted a series of internal key informant interviews with leaders from law enforcement, criminal justice, public school administration, public health, city and county government, community-based organizations, and the business community. All the interviewees are either directly or indirectly involved in the county's violence prevention efforts. Participants were recommended by Supervisor Miley's office and by Andrés Soto, Alameda County's violence prevention coordinator.

Additionally, Hill & Company conducted discussion groups with adult and youth residents of several of the neighborhoods targeted for violence prevention initiatives.

The interviews explored the roles the key informants played in violence prevention; examined attitudes toward the county's violence prevention initiative; identified barriers to more effective communications and collaboration around violence prevention; determined what could be done to move the initiative forward; and identified marketing approaches and ideas that could be used to better position and communicate the initiative.

The community discussion groups were designed to engage adults and youths in at-risk neighborhoods to determine their attitudes toward and need for violence prevention programs, and to test communications approaches that could be used to brand and position the initiative.

Key Findings — Key Informant Interviews

Expanding Marketing Communications and Branding — The key informants support the need for wrapping an effective communications strategy around the violence prevention initiative. They sometimes mentioned the need for and the importance of communications before the topic was even brought up by Hill & Company. They said that “a strong, powerful story needs to be told” to both internal and external audiences. The respondents identified major roles for communications including building awareness of where to go for help and general information about the violence prevention program; developing clear, consistent messages about violence prevention; and promoting successes to “generate hope in the community and inspire agencies to keep doing what they are doing.”

The respondents also supported the concept of branding, which would bring the various resources, programs and activities related to violence prevention in Alameda County under a single brand as a way to communicate the benefits of the initiative and become known as a trusted source of information and assistance.

They were particularly enthusiastic about creating a media partnership with KTVU-TV (Channel 2) as an avenue to educate the public and provide “good news” about violence prevention. They also indicated a need to educate the media about how to report on violence prevention in order to bring messages of hope and possibility, rather than negativity and fear.

Understanding and Supporting the Violence Prevention Initiative — The key informants are very supportive of the initiative and see the collaboration as a way to make an impact on the complex and extensive problem of violence in Alameda County. Despite this support, however, respondents cited barriers to effective collaboration such as the need to move beyond the theoretical framework of the *Blueprint* to develop an action plan that focuses on implementation of priorities,

outcomes and results. They suggested that the plan also incorporate strategies for funding that might involve pooling resources to accomplish major strategic priorities.

Another major suggestion to promote a more action-oriented approach includes having fewer large information-sharing meetings and instead scheduling more small interactive meetings that provide an atmosphere for free-flowing ideas and problem solving and that hold participants accountable for follow-up.

Program Leadership/Role of Coordinator — Respondents said that more clearly defining the role of and expectations for the violence prevention coordinator and providing more guidance and direction to the position to maximize its effectiveness would benefit the initiative. They suggested that the role of the coordinator should include being a central clearinghouse for information about the initiative, serving as spokesperson for the initiative and being a driving force in implementing strategic priorities and action plans.

Role of Business Community — The key informants said they believe that business leaders can play a significant role in the initiative (e.g., providing funding, jobs, job training) but that the county must work differently to keep them engaged. They noted that the business mindset of “we’re going to make things happen” is very different than the county’s tendency to “sit around the table and discuss it.” They prefer to respond to specific requests and want the county to provide direction to businesses. They also cited the need for more follow-up, including giving assignments, setting deadlines and holding people accountable for completing tasks. Finally, they suggested that a business leader serve as chair of the business sector activities and that the county provide sufficient staff support.

Key Findings — Community Discussion Groups

Youth — Discussion groups were held with young people who participate in community-based leadership development programs in two of the county’s target neighborhoods. The group in the Ashland/Cherryland neighborhood of San Leandro was composed primarily of African-American middle and high school youths living in subsidized housing, and the group from La Familia Counseling Center in Hayward consisted of Latino high school students, some of whom were formerly gang members.

Participants painted the picture that living in a violent community is a way of life for them. Most of them have become indifferent to the constant violence that surrounds them. Despite being able to recite a litany of what they see as causes of violence in their communities, the youths in both groups were optimistic that violence is preventable. They see the need to “start young, before kids go in the wrong direction”; to create job opportunities; to talk to kids about what is the “right way”; and to give everyone a “chance to change.” They requested a voice on the county task force to offer their understanding and experience of violence firsthand

— “We have a lot to offer. We live it.” Finally, the youths discussed the need for adults to respect them and to care about them and the contributions they can make in preventing violence in their communities.

Adults — Discussion groups were held with adult residents of the neighborhoods of Sobrante Park and Ashland/Cherryland. The group in Sobrante Park was Latino and the group in Ashland/Cherryland was a diverse group that represented the ethnic mix of the community. Most of the participants were members of the Resident Action Councils and have been involved in city/county programs for violence prevention.

Some of the adults remain optimistic that violence is preventable, but many expressed discouragement with the lack of progress toward peace in their communities. The key finding in both discussion groups was that residents are getting tired of waiting and are anxious to see results. They perceive that progress toward implementing promised improvements is slow or nonexistent and is impacted by the economic status of the neighborhood. They are asking that public officials keep their promises and speed up the process. They believe that successes will help to engage more residents in violence prevention efforts, and without successes people are “getting tired and losing hope.”

COMMUNICATIONS GOALS/ CHARACTERISTICS

Communications supporting the county’s Violence Prevention Initiative should be constant, timely, honest, concise and comprehensible. The communications goals, include:

- Increase the awareness of county-wide violence prevention initiatives with the target audiences.
- Position and frame violence prevention with the target audiences living in the six target neighborhoods so they understand the role they can play in reducing and preventing violence.
- Create communications vehicles that will engage the community in violence prevention initiatives and programs.

PRIMARY AUDIENCES

Based on our Phase I communications study, three very important audiences emerged. They include:

- ***Adults and youth living in the six target neighborhoods***

Based on the discussion groups conducted with adults and youth, we discovered there was very little awareness of violence prevention initiatives that exist throughout the county or in their neighborhoods. It will be important

to use communication to help frame violence prevention with this key audience so they understand that it is preventable, they have a role to play in its prevention, and that there are programs and initiatives that are working hard in their neighborhoods to help prevent and reduce violence.

- ***County leaders and department heads***

Communications about the Violence Prevention Initiative needs to be maintained with county leaders and department heads. Many of the one-on-one interviews conducted with this key audience revealed that there was little awareness of key violence prevention initiatives being conducted throughout the county outside their departments.

- ***Leaders of community-based organizations with violence prevention programs***

Although there are numerous violence prevention programs operating throughout the county, there is not most collaboration or sharing of best practices. Communications can provide the linkage between programs operating in the six target neighborhoods so that CBO leaders in West Oakland, for example, are not only made aware of successful violence prevention program operating in Hayward, but are encouraged to implement all or portions of the program.

SECONDARY AUDIENCE

Bay area media outlets are an important secondary audience for the Violence Prevention Initiative. One of the strategies (see “Strategies” below) for the Initiative is to identify a media partner—preferably a television outlet—that can help spread the “good news” about violence prevention efforts in Alameda County and the Bay area.

STRATEGIC APPROACHES

Strategy 1 – Alameda County should create and coordinate a county-wide communications plan that supports the Violence Prevention Initiative. A coordinated plan will be cost effective, eliminate duplication of effort, and assure consistent messaging.

Strategy 2 – The Violence Prevention Initiative should be branded. There are several components that are important for building a powerful violence prevention brand. We refer to those components as the Three Rs—Relevance, Renown, and Respect.

Relevance simply means that the Violence Prevention Initiative—has importance in the daily lives of Alameda County residents. **Renown** means that people throughout the county must know what the Initiative is. The more relevance the brand has, the easier it is to achieve renown.

importance in
throughout
has,

The final R is **respect**. By building a solid violence prevention brand that is and renown, it will gain and maintain respect from Alameda County residents who rely on its services. The brand’s respect will also come from the county’s ability to deliver violence prevention-related services that are affordable, accessible, believable, cultural appropriate, timely, and responsive.

relevant
ability

Subsequent to our communications study, we developed and tested a communications approach that would brand the Initiative and assist in meeting the communications goals outlined above.

We developed the RAP brand – Respect and Peace. Live It. Give It. Creation of the brand was guided and informed by the communications study, especially the discussion groups with the youth. They talked about the need for respect at several different levels (i.e. respect for each other, respect for themselves, respect from adults) and a desire to live in peace.

In discussion groups with youth (middle and high school aged boys and girls), the RAP brand was understood and supported. The young people became fully engaged in how RAP would support violence prevention programs. We recommend using RAP as the primary brand under which all communications and information about the Violence Prevention Initiative is placed.

Strategy 3 – We recommend test marketing the RAP brand in Ashland/Cherryland prior to rolling it out to all six target neighborhood. The test market approach will give us the opportunity to tweak the program making necessary adjustments to the RAP campaign before introducing it in the five other neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES/TEST MARKET

The following communications activities are designed to be implemented in the test market neighborhood, Ashland/Cherryland.

1. Hold several "RAP Talk" sessions with middle and high school students to probe feelings about gangs, violence, and to assess feelings and attitudes about the proposed youth center for their neighborhood. From the sessions, identify "RAP Ambassadors" who are leaders and can assist in creating positive buzz in the neighborhoods about RAP and its efforts around violence prevention.
2. To engage Ashland/Cherryland residents, continue to hold Town Hall meetings in the neighborhoods as described in the Violence Prevention Initiative plan. The meetings will (see Prevention Institute plan)
3. Create RAP FaceBook and MySpace pages for youth. They will help create the content for the pages and if necessary will be taught how to

navigate the two web-based pages. We also will consider developing a Twitter site for youth.

4. Web site – A web site will be designed that targets two key audiences: neighborhood residents as well as county leaders, community-based organizations, the Violence Prevention Initiative Data Committee, those organizations dedicated to re-entry efforts, youth organizations and others who are directly involved in violence prevention. The site will not only reinforce violence prevention techniques and serve as a community outreach tool, it also can be instantly changed to respond to events and activities in the neighborhood and respond to information needs that residents may have.
5. Blast Emails – Once a quarter, RAP email blast will be distributed to key stakeholders, elected officials, community residents, county leaders, CBOs and media. The blast will reinforce key messages that violence prevention is preventable and the importance of the RAP campaign.
6. RAP Resource Sites – Our research indicated that people were not aware of violence prevention programs that existed in their neighborhoods or

where to get information about prevention. The RAP Resource Site addresses that concern. In each of the six neighborhoods, a location (i.e., a community center, an Alameda County facility, a public library) will be identified as an “official” RAP Resource Site that will be the neighborhood’s information center for violence prevention. (The future RAP site in Ashland/Cherryland will be the proposed youth center.) In addition to resource information, the site will host community meetings and training sessions.

7. Communication training – Developing key messages about the RAP campaign is important, but developing a cadre of community ambassadors to deliver the messages is a must. We will train adults and youth to effectively communicate key messages and talking points for media interviews and community presentations. A series of trainings also will be presented for key county leaders.
8. Speakers Bureau – Youth and adult RAP Ambassadors will attend the communication training and will be equipped with the key messages. A PowerPoint will be developed to support the Ambassadors’ presentations.
9. The *RAP Urban Guide to Violence Prevention* – In the words of youth from each of the six target neighborhoods (beginning with Ashland/Cherryland), we will help them write poems, essays, spoken word pieces that address “...filling the hood with good, beginning with respect and peach...” Their works will be published and distributed throughout their neighborhoods and will also appear on the website. Additionally, the *Guide* will be pitched to Bay Area media as a positive example of what young people are doing to bring peach and respect to their neighborhood.
10. Event Booths – There are special events and activities throughout the county that invite organizations to participate with a booth. A customized RAP booth will be created that highlights the logo and has for distribution information and resource materials about violence prevention, including the *RAP Urban Guide to Violence Prevention*.

APPENDIX H: BUDGET

Still in progress

APPENDIX I: VPI STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

In order for the work described in this work plan to be implemented in an effective way, a structure must be put in place by the County to support and move forward the Violence Prevention Initiative. The County must reinvigorate its commitment to preventing violence by establishing an Office of Violence Prevention which will be charged with the task of advancing the VPI and coordinating all the violence prevention efforts taking place throughout the County. This level of involvement and coordination requires dedicated full time staffing to ensure that the needs of the County and the neighborhoods, as they pertain to preventing and reducing violence, are met simultaneously. This section will outline the structure and staffing that needs to be instituted by the County to concretize the work plan and any ongoing VPI efforts. Realizing that certain circumstances may cause the County to shift its focus or restrain the level of commitment they can make to staffing, this provides the base for which to start.

Office of Violence Prevention:

The Office of Violence Prevention will be developed with the mission of reducing the level of violence in Alameda County. This Office may be situated within a County agency to elevate its significance within the County. However, if the County decides that it does not want to house the Office of Violence Prevention within one of its agency or departments, making an agreement with a community based organization to house the VPI, but with funding provided by the County is also a viable option.

Staffing the Office of Violence Prevention:

Effective and sustainable violence prevention efforts require a high level of commitment from counties and cities; this commitment needs to be manifested in the investment of full time staffing. Without full time staffing, the VPI structure will not yield sustainable or effective results, thus the County needs to make a commitment to have full time dedicated employees working within the Office of Violence Prevention. At a minimum, 5 full time employees—with occasional support from external consultants—would be required to implement the VPI work plan, including:

- a. VP Coordinator
- b. Program Manager
- c. Content Specialist
- d. Criminal Justice System Representative
- e. Program/Administrative Assistant

VPI Coordinator: The VPI Coordinator position will be responsible for the coordination, planning and resource development of the VPI.

Coordination: The Coordinator will serve as the primary contact between the VPI and county agencies, municipalities and the VPI Executive Committee. The Coordinator will be charged with establishing and maintaining productive working relationships with these various stakeholders and connecting them with the neighborhood level efforts of the VPI. This person will be the “face” of the VPI.

Planning and Oversight: Working in conjunction with the Executive Committee the Coordinator will be responsible for the implementation and overall direction of the initiative. This will involve the supervision of VPI staff and oversight of program implementation and progress. When needed, the Coordinator will work with the Executive Committee to conduct strategic planning and identify new strands of work for the VPI. This position will also be responsible for all required status reporting and budget management to the Board of Supervisors.

Resource Development: The Coordinating will also have primary responsibility for resource development to support the work of the VPI. This will include identifying and pursuing potential public and philanthropic funding opportunities, developing and implementing a strategy for corporate and individual donors as well as identifying current county and city resources that could be used to support the VPI.

Program Manager: The Program Manager will be responsible for managing and supporting the implementation of the Phase II Work Plan within the 6 VPI neighborhoods.

Management and Coordination: The Program Manager will be the primary VPI staff member working in the neighborhoods and will be responsible for the implementation of the Work Plan within the 6 neighborhoods. They will regularly attend community meetings in each of the 6 neighborhoods and provide each neighborhood with updates on the work happening across all 6 neighborhoods. Where relevant the Program Manager will play a coordinative role by connecting similar efforts within the various neighborhoods as well as organizing events that bring stakeholders from all 6 neighborhoods together. The Program Manger will provide the Coordinator with regular updates on progress and strategize about ways to improve the implementation of the Work Plan.

Neighborhood Resource: The Program manager will serve as the primary contact for residents and local leaders within each of the 6 neighborhoods. In this role the Program Manager identify and address issues, problems and opportunities within each of the neighborhoods and work with the VPI Coordinator to address them. Specifically, the Program Manager work with county and municipal staff within the neighborhoods and connect community based organizations to the work of the VPI in each neighborhood.

Content Specialist: The Content Specialist will serve as the “resident expert” on current research and programming around violence prevention.

County-Wide Resource: The Content Specialist will stay abreast of current violence prevention research and programming from across the country and will serve as a resource to neighborhood groups and county/city agencies/department on this research. This position will be required to have both a broad based understanding of violence prevention as well as the capability to conduct in-depth research into topics identified by neighborhood groups and public agencies. The Coordinator and Program Manager will work closely with the Content specialist to identify topics for examination and disseminate the final products. In certain cases the Content Specialist will work in conjunction with the Technical Assistance Teams to conduct trainings and make presentations to relevant stakeholders. This position will also provide the Coordinator and the Executive Committee with regular updates on promising research and programs to inform overall VPI planning.

Participate in VPI Data Group: This position will serve as a member of the VPI Data Group and participate in VPI program evaluation and the production of Alameda County specific research and materials. As a member of the VPI Data Group the Content Specialist will play a leadership role in gathering and collecting relevant data from County and City Agencies.

Criminal Justice Representative: The Criminal Justice Representative will serve as the primary contact between the VPI and the Criminal Justice System. This person should be an employee of either the Alameda County Probation Department or the Alameda County Sheriff's Office. .

Represent County Criminal Justice System: The Criminal Justice Representative will serve as the VPI's representative on the Reentry Network and as a member of the Neighborhood Teams in all 6 VPI Neighborhoods. In addition, they will be called upon to participate in other collaborative activities where a Criminal Justice Representative would be beneficial.

Community Liaison: Criminal Justice Representative will be charged with increasing the level of coordination and collaboration between the VPI neighborhoods and the Criminal Justice System. This will entail developing better systems for connecting prisoners and probationers with community resources as well as helping communities to prepare for and support people under criminal justice supervision.

Program/Administrative Assistant: The Program/Administrative assistant will be responsible for the administrative and support duties associated with the VPI.

Administrative: The Administrative Assistant will work under the Coordinator and provide administrative support for the Office of Violence Prevention. This will entail managing all correspondence, staffing for internal meetings and scheduling.

Program Support: In addition to their administrative role, this position will work with other VPI staff to support community and neighborhood level work. This will entail staffing of neighborhood meetings, note taking, compiling of meeting materials and other tasks as deemed necessary by the Coordinator.