

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CITY OF OAKLAND

AGENDA REPORT

2007 MAY 22 11:3:45

TO: Office of the City Administrator
ATTN: Deborah Edgerly
FROM: Department of Human Services
DATE: May 22, 2007

RE: **Informational Report On The Development Of Oakland Youth Centers**

SUMMARY

This informational report provides background on the possible development of youth centers in Oakland.

FISCAL IMPACT

This is an informational report so there is no fiscal impact.

BACKGROUND

The City of Oakland, Department of Human Services provides funding for programs for older youth through Measure Y Violence Prevention programs and through the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY).

The goal of Measure Y is to increase public safety and to dramatically reduce violence among young people. Measure Y is a comprehensive effort to address the root issues of violence including, poverty, unemployment, discrimination, substance abuse, educational failure, fragmented families and domestic abuse. The Department of Human Services, in close collaboration with the Workforce Development Unit, implements approximately \$6.1 million annually in violence prevention programs focused on five broad areas: Youth Outreach and Comprehensive Services, Special Services to Children and Youth Exposed to Violence, Diversion and Reentry Services, Employment and Training, and School-Based Services.

The Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) is administered by the Department of Human Services and provides a broad spectrum of child and youth development programs including youth empowerment programs, college and career transitions programs, and after school activities for older youth.

In September 2005, staff was instructed to identify strategies to expend one time Measure Y carry forward monies. Specifically, staff was asked by City Council to examine the concept of teen centers as a way to reduce violence among Oakland youth. Staff recommended funding

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Youth UpRising in East Oakland and funding the development of two youth centers in Central and West Oakland through unspent carry forward funds from fiscal year 2005-06. City Council approved \$1.5 million to support a portion of operating costs at Youth UpRising in East Oakland over a five year period (\$300,000 per fiscal year). However, \$2 million in funding for the development of youth centers in North/West Oakland and Central Oakland was not approved by Council. While supportive of the general concept of youth centers, Council did not feel there was adequate funding to create two entirely new youth centers. Carry forward funds were instead appropriated for demonstration projects for gang intervention and prevention programs and a homicide crisis response model that addressed more pressing and immediate violence prevention needs.

At the April 21, 2007 Rules and Legislation Committee, the Mayor's Legislative agenda was presented to City Council and it included recommendations to support youth centers. City Council requested more information about youth centers and this report responds to that request.

KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS

Best Practices in the Youth Center Model

In May of 2006, a group of students from the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley provided the Department of Human Services with an analysis of the validity of youth centers as a youth violence prevention method for a class project. The analysis determined that there are different types of youth centers in urban areas across the country offering an array of services to youth of many ages. However, for the purposes of their analysis and this informational report, the definition of youth center is a physical center that offers programming to youth between the ages of 13 and 24 and operates, at a minimum, during after school hours. This definition excludes facilities that are solely shelters, overnight group homes, or health clinics.

The analysis determined there is a lack of quality evaluation of youth centers to determine if they reduce violence. This may be due to the fact that youth centers vary in the services delivered. Also, a center model open to all youth of a certain age cannot limit services only to those at high risk for violence. While many youth centers initially planned to serve a large age range of youth, they found that younger teens (ages 12-14) were more likely to use their facility. In addition, the analysis determined that youth centers are expensive to develop and operate. Providing quality on-going services that are attractive to youth takes a great deal of commitment and what works in one center is not easily replicated in another center.

However, there are some examples of youth centers working as effective pieces of a larger youth violence prevention effort. The City of San Antonio, Texas developed five youth centers in the mid-1980s and they are now the core of their youth prevention programs. One of the important aspects of the Boston violence prevention strategy was using community centers in neighborhoods as a hub for their youth programs. The federal government also funded youth centers through the Department of Labor's Youth Opportunity grant program. The program is

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no longer funded even though participants in the program experienced positive outcomes correlated with youth violence prevention. Overall, the elements of successful youth programs are:

- Staff highly dedicated and experienced in working with youth
- Operational hours that meet the needs of youth (after school and on weekends)
- A location that is safe, turf and gang neutral and also accessible by public transportation
- Programs that are attractive to the youth targeted for services
- Youth who are involved in development of programs and operation of the center
- A center which is part of a larger violence prevention or youth development effort

One of the best examples of a successful youth center is Youth UpRising (YU) in East Oakland. YU is a 25,000 square foot multi-agency, multi-service youth center located next to Castlemont High School. YU opened in 2005 and offers comprehensive, fully integrated health, wellness, educational, career, arts and cultural programming to over 1,000 Oakland youth and young adults aged 13-24. Alameda County Health Care Services Administration (HCSA) and the City of Oakland are partners in the effort to build and sustain YU. At the onset of the project, HCSA provided the land and building, valued at approximately \$2 million, and an additional \$3.4 million for capital improvements. YU has a budget of over \$5 million a year which primarily covers health care services to youth and supports youth programs. HCSA provides YU with approximately \$700,000 annually to support some programs, facility expenses and some core staffing support. Measure Y funds \$300,000 a year in operational support and \$175,670 for a Measure Y: VPPSA street outreach and recreation program. OFCY provides \$175,000 per year for the development and implementation of a youth to youth grant making program. There is no doubt that YU it is an important part of the overall spectrum of violence prevention services in the City of Oakland.

Cost of Youth Centers

As stated earlier, youth centers are large facilities that are expensive to develop and operate. It is estimated that youth centers require \$2,500 to \$5,000 per youth per year to operate. This would equal at least a \$10 million commitment to operate two sites every year. This does not include planning, development and possible construction or renovation of a facility. The analysis discussed above also concluded that outside funding sources dedicated specifically for non-profit or government facility operational and capital costs are difficult to find.

However, there are a range of different options to consider in creating a new youth center. For example, it may be possible to utilize current facilities such as Parks and Recreation buildings, school buildings, or other non-profit buildings that are already equipped to provide services to large numbers of people and this would reduce the development costs. The cost of running a youth center includes offering a variety of youth friendly programs. It may not be necessary to create new programs for the center, but instead partner with existing organizations already funded for specific programs and offered them at the new center. This would also reduce costs.

Model for Oakland Youth Centers

Despite the high cost of building and maintaining youth centers, Oakland residents -- particularly youth -- have consistently and repeatedly requested such facilities over the last decade. There are many youth-serving organizations throughout Oakland that provide quality services and programs for older youth. However, both Central and North/West Oakland lack an organization with the sole mission of providing a comprehensive spectrum of programs and services to youth and young adults in a youth friendly manner in one location. There are still active efforts to develop varying types of youth centers in both areas by different community based organizations and groups. The Department of Human Services has determined that creating a network of youth centers in different Oakland neighborhoods would foster collaboration among organizations serving high risk youth.

An Oakland Youth Center network could be a "one stop" location for Measure Y, OFCY and other youth serving organizations attracting over 2,000 Oakland youth per site a year. The neighborhoods with the highest level of need for a youth center are Central and North/West Oakland. Programs may include jobs and job training, outreach, case management, recreational and enrichment activities, support groups and mental health. One important aspect of creating new centers would be the inclusion of youth in the development and planning process.

Current Funding Requests for Oakland Youth Centers

- In the Department of Human Services' budget request to Mayor Dellums for fiscal year 2007-08, the development of two new centers, one serving Central Oakland and another serving North/West Oakland youth was proposed at a cost of \$2 million in seed money from the City.
- Mayor Dellums requested \$3 million each in federal funding from Rep. Barbara Lee and Senators Feinstein and Boxer to fund a youth center in one of the FY08 appropriations bill.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic:

Providing at risk youth with programs will further the City's violence prevention efforts and assist young people in becoming law-abiding, responsible and stable contributing tax paying residents of the City of Oakland. These programs also reduce the costs (including police and court cost as well as direct damage cost) of crimes prevented.

Environmental:

No known impact.

Social Equity:

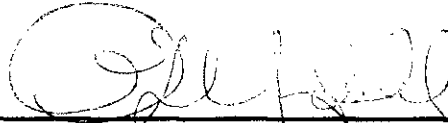
By working with at-risk youth to prevent violence, a youth center can help this population to complete school and avoid arrest and incarceration. These programs assist young people in obtaining social equity.

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ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff request City Council to accept this informational report.

Respectfully submitted,




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**APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE
LIFE ENRICHMENT COMMITTEE:**


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