

# CITY OF OAKLAND

## AGENDA REPORT

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
2006

**To:** Office of the City Administrator  
**Attn:** Deborah Edgerly  
**From:** Police Department  
**Date:** November 14, 2006

2006 NOV - 1 PM 4: 08

**Re:** **An Information Report from the Chief of Police on the Programmatic Evaluation of the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative, Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Community Capacity Development Office**

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### SUMMARY


Attached is an information report on the programmatic evaluation of the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Wayne G. Tucker  
Chief of Police

Prepared by: Candice Jessie  
Fiscal Services Division  
Bureau of Administration

APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO  
THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE:

  
Office of the City Administrator

Item: \_\_\_\_\_  
Public Safety Cmte.  
November 14, 2006

**City of Oakland  
Oakland Police Department**



***West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative  
Evaluation Report  
2001 - 2005***

**JULY 2006**

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## **FOREWARD**

*Prepared by:*

***Oakland Police Department***

*Annie Sloan, Weed and Seed Coordinator*

*Neighborhood Services Division*

*and*

*Candice Jessie, Budget and Grants Administrator*

*Bureau of Administration*

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*With internal evaluation support from Community Solutions Network, Inc.*

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*"History demonstrates that improving both the physical and human infrastructure in neighborhoods creates vibrant, healthy communities that attract and keep strong families and business investment. It makes neighborhoods more livable..."*

*Kenneth D. Wade, CEO of NeighborWorks America.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

For the past decade, the rebuilding of inner city neighborhoods like West Oakland has been a priority for city, state, and federal governments because we all understand that urban communities are an important part of thriving cities, and all citizens have a right to safe and healthy neighborhoods. With the introduction of crack cocaine in the 1980's, on top of rising unemployment and declining business investment, many inner city communities, like West Oakland, have not been able to live up to their full potential as economically viable, socially vibrant, and safe communities for residents. This has led to a growing exodus of people out of urban communities into the suburbs. This exodus further weakened neighborhoods by leaving behind only the most vulnerable citizens – the elderly, the poor, the under-educated – and allows crime to rise unchecked.

Reclaiming urban communities requires a comprehensive effort because the social, economic and public safety challenges they face are all inter-related. The national Weed and Seed Initiative provides communities with a strategy to address these issues. In 2001, the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative set out to reclaim two key neighborhoods using the national Weed and Seed strategy as outlined by the Department of Justice (DOJ).

This report is a review for the past five years of the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative. In this report, we attempt to ascertain if the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative was able to reduce crime in its designated communities and improve the quality of life through its seeding activities. In addition to analyzing crime data, we chronicle the strategies used to address the issues of crime, safety, physical restoration, and community capacity.

**A Message from the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of California**



The United States Attorney's Office is responsible for representing the federal government in most of the litigation involving the United States in the Northern District of California (NDCA), including all criminal prosecutions for violations of federal law, civil lawsuits defending the government and actions to collect judgments and restitution on behalf of victims and taxpayers. These responsibilities have been entrusted to our office in what is undoubtedly one of the most exceptional districts in the Nation. The Northern District of California stretches from the Monterey Coast to California's northern border with Oregon, and from the Pacific Ocean to nearly Sacramento. We have three major metropolitan areas: San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose. In addition to confronting new types of crime – securities fraud, computer hacking, internet fraud and intellectual property theft – we also vigorously prosecute violent crimes, such as narcotics trafficking, bank robberies, violent gang activities and firearms offenses. To that end, we work very closely with federal, state and local law enforcement authorities.

The Oakland Police Department, with the assistance of the NDCA's Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (LECC) Coordinator, has developed two outstanding initiatives which are detailed in this publication: (1) the **West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative**, and (2) **Project Safe Neighborhoods: Project Exile**.

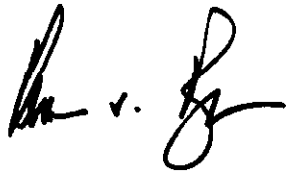
- **Operation Weed and Seed:** established by the U.S. Department of Justice in 1991, is a community-based, multi-agency approach to law enforcement, crime prevention, and neighborhood restoration. The goals of Weed and Seed are to control violent crime, drug trafficking, and other drug-related offenses in targeted neighborhoods, while providing a safe environment free of crime and drug use for residents and solidifying neighborhood restoration.
- **Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN):** is a nationwide initiative committed to reduce gun crimes in our cities by networking federal and state resources with existing local programs that target gun-related offenses. The goal of PSN is to create safer neighborhoods by reducing gun violence and sustaining the reduction. The program also intensifies the enforcement of federal firearms laws through the cooperative efforts of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, while simultaneously promoting community awareness and assistance in the apprehension of firearms

**West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative Evaluation Report**

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offenders.

The continued success of these initiatives is contingent upon the ongoing collaboration of law enforcement, prosecutorial and social service agencies, representatives of the public and private sectors and community residents and leaders. I commend the Oakland Police Department for its assistance in the development and ongoing sustainability of these initiatives. We remain steadfastly dedicated to these goals, and to the communities and citizens we serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin V. Ryan". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Kevin V. Ryan  
United States Attorney  
Northern District of California

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## **EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

### ***Scope of Evaluation***

The purpose of this evaluation is to look at the impact of the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative on suppressing drug related crime and improving the quality of life in the target area, namely Beat 6 and 7. The guiding questions addressed are:

- 1) What impact has the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative had on reducing drug related crime through its weeding strategies and improving the community's social and physical infrastructure through its seeding strategies;
- 2) How has the internal structure of the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative positioned the program to achieve the stated goals and objectives; and
- 3) What issues must the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative address in order to create sustainability beyond the program term?

To accomplish this task, we reviewed the eight (8) stated goals from the Initiative's initial strategic plan and the stated benchmarks that represent indicators of success; thereby evaluating to what degree the Initiative met its intended outcomes over the five-year program term.

In addition, we look at other weeding and seeding strategies that were added over the five-year period and their impact on the West Oakland target areas. We also examine the influences of other grant programs operating simultaneously in the target areas that intersect with the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative activities, such as Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). Evaluation components reflected herein were developed to represent the program accurately and fairly. Certain limitations inherent in program observations may have caused some program elements to be over- or understated

### ***Evaluation Methodology***

Data used for this analysis came from the following sources:

- Oakland Police Department Crime Statistics for Years 2000-2005
- West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative Strategic Plan
- Initiative's Six Month Progress Reports



- Steering Committee Minutes
- Interviews with 25 Steering Committee members, service providers, law enforcement officers, and other collaborative partners

***The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative Strategic Goals***

In its original strategic plan, the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative identified eight (8) key goals focusing on eliminating drug related crime, improving the physical appearance of the community, and creating a socially vibrant and safe community for residents:

**Goal 1**

*Reduce the level of drug-related crime within the community*

Benchmark: Reduce overall incidents of drug crimes by 10% in Year 1 and 2 and by 5% per year thereafter

**Goal 2**

*Reduce the number of drug hotspots and the conditions that promote drug sales and drug use in Beat 6 and Beat 7.*

Benchmark: Abate a minimum of 10 hot spots each year over the program term

**Goal 3**

*Reduce the level of prostitution in the community.*

Benchmark: Aim to have fewer than 156 arrests annually (as set in the 2000 baseline year)

**Goal 4**

*Reduce recidivism and increase safety for families who are the victims of domestic violence.*

Benchmark: Assist a minimum of 30 families per year with legal needs, including emergency protective orders, restraining orders, and child support orders

**Goal 5**

*Establish a community center where children, youth, and families feel safe (in each beat area)*

Benchmark: 25 students will be served through the Hoover Elementary Student Study Team

**Goal 6**

*Support and recruit parents to take an active role in their children's education and in school governance and support activities*

Benchmark: Recruit 250 adults to participate in adult education classes by December 2005

**Goal 7**

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*Provide children with safe after-school environments providing stimulating academic, cultural, and recreational activities*

Benchmark: Enroll 140 students enrolled in the Hoover After-School program by end of program term

### **Goal 8**

*Restore community by encouraging home ownership and rehabilitating dilapidated property*

Benchmarks: Assist 20 property owners with obtaining renovation funding; Help 20 West Oakland families with obtain federally-subsidized home loans

## **SITE HISTORY**

West Oakland is a community of approximately 12,000 residents located in a rectangular area south of Interstate 580 and west of Interstate 980. It is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Oakland, and has the distinction of being the final stop on the Transcontinental Railway, which opened in 1869. The vast majority of West Oakland residents are African Americans, who make up 62 percent of the population according to the 2000 U.S. Census. Despite the large Black population, West Oakland is growing in its racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity. Other groups living in the target area include Anglos (13 %), Hispanics (18 %), Asians Pacific Islander (8 %), and others identified as multi-racial (9%). Seventeen percent of West Oakland residents are immigrants. This number continues to grow each year.

West Oakland was historically one of the most vibrant and affluent African American communities in the San Francisco-Bay Area up until the late 1950s. For many, their destination was Oakland because it was the end of the line on the Trans-Continental Railroad, in the heart of West Oakland. West Oakland became a haven for Black workers who found lucrative work in the shipyards and ports of Oakland during World War II. They bought homes, established civic groups, and built businesses to serve the growing community.

As the economic prosperity following World War II began to wane, shipyards closed and the railroad ceased. By the late 1960s, West Oakland became an increasingly economically and socially distressed community. In an effort to stimulate the economy, the federal government built more industrial plants and freeways. These structures only expedited the physical fragmentation of the community that would continue to the present day. Freeways and factories broke up neighborhoods, with housing contaminated by lead because industrial facilities were built right next to residential housing.

By the 1980's, residents of West Oakland were living with contaminated soil, high lead concentrations, illegal dumping and massive heavy industrial activity that discouraged retail business. The neighborhood residents had the highest rate of exposure to toxic materials than in almost any other community in Alameda County. Asthma became epidemic because of exposure to soot from freeway car exhaust.

By 2000, more than 36 percent of West Oakland residents lived below the federal poverty level; thirty-five percent of the adult population lacked a high school diploma, and single mothers headed sixty percent of the households.

Over the years, the two community policing beats, which comprise the West Oakland Weed and Seed target area, Hoover/West MacArthur (Beat 6) and Clawson/McClymonds/Bunche (Beat 7) became littered with auto repair shops, an overabundance of liquor stores in residential areas, unregulated storefront churches and abandoned industrial buildings. Public housing was over-represented in both neighborhoods. Despite the high crime and physical deterioration in the community, West Oakland was still home to a number of homeowners and families with school-aged children.

***Crime in the Target Area***

Residents experienced high incidents of violent, drug related crime in West Oakland. According to early assessments during the initial planning phase of the Initiative, drug crimes in the target area doubled between 1996 and 2000, in a period when all other categories of crime were declining. At that time, well over twenty-five active drug hot spots were identified. Other crimes in the target area are closely associated with drug activity, namely homicide, assault with a deadly weapon, burglary, prostitution, and domestic violence. Community policing Beats 6 and 7 became home to some of the most notorious street gangs in Oakland. Prostitution and domestic violence were also closely related to drug-related crime in the area. A key stretch of San Pablo Avenue in the Hoover/West MacArthur area had become infamous for open prostitution trade.

In addition to drug-related crime, residents experienced a great deal of property-related crimes and code violations in the target area that encouraged criminal activity, namely abandoned properties in disrepair that are taken over by drug dealers and illegal dumping grounds that encouraged more criminal activity.

## **PROGRAM GOVERNANCE**

The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative is a comprehensive, multi-agency collaboration with the Oakland Police Department (OPD) serving as the lead administrative agency. An OPD Neighborhood Services Coordinator functions as the Weed and Seed Coordinator.

The Steering Committee manages the Weed and Seed budget and oversees the work of the sub-committees, which disperse funds to local programs aligned with the Initiative's goals. The Steering Committee serves as the liaison between the local initiative, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and the U.S. Department of Justice. *Within the Steering Committee is the executive committee.* The executive committee consists of four members of the steering committee who come together to manage more immediate administrative, fiscal and reporting duties. The Weed and Seed Coordinator serves as administrative support for the full Steering Committee. However, the Coordinator is not a voting member of the Steering Committee.

### ***Weed and Seed Steering Committee***

The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative is governed in accordance with the Initiative's Policies and Procedures (By-Laws). It is directed by a 25-30 member Steering Committee (see organizational chart below), which is co-chaired by two community residents from each of the two local Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils, as well as the Law Enforcement Coordinator of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California. The Steering Committee alternates bi-monthly meetings with its standing committees. A smaller subset of the Steering Committee, the Executive Committee, meets monthly to handle day-to-day management issues in between full Steering Committee meetings.

The Steering Committee in the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative is more than an executive body. It is the primary way that many participating agencies and residents gain a sense of what the Weed and Seed strategy is all about and provides an opportunity for residents to be connected to community efforts to improve the quality of life in West Oakland. It is also, where community-based organizations and civic groups seeking funding can demonstrate their commitment to the Weed and Seed approach to community revitalization. The Initiative's Policies and Procedures (by-laws) state that new potential partners must attend at least three (3) quarterly meetings in order to be eligible for funding.

*Composition and Size.* The steering committee is comprised of a mix of residents, community-based agency representatives, and community liaisons from city government agencies. The Steering Committee averaged 35-40 participants at the peak of the Weed and Seed Initiative between Years 2 and 3. In its fourth year, attendance averaged 15-20 members; with said attrition rate due in part to certain Committee members moving outside of the area/Oakland (7 members), the passing away of certain senior citizens on the Steering Committee (6 members), as well as other natural (and anticipated) attrition factors. Many of the Steering Committee members are also active in their local Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils. Most members are older, established members of the community who have been involved in community organizing or community development in the past. There is a growing desire to reach out to more young people to serve. There are few young adult residents (25 or younger) on the steering committee.

For agency representatives, turnover usually occurred when an individual left the position. Usually the next person filling that position would continue attending steering committee meetings, or the agency would identify a different person in the organization to step in and attend. Either way, the agency demonstrated on-going commitment to the Initiative by ensuring that there is a representative present at those meetings.

*Capacity Building.* There is a high resident participation rate in the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative. Yet, there is no training component for residents new to community development work. Most steering committee members interviewed noted they did not have access to basic training that might have made their transition into leadership roles easier. Instead, they said they spent a great deal of time learning basic meeting facilitation, basic principles of community development, and resident-driven community work on the job, which at times was very frustrating.

Agency representatives were at an advantage in this area because in their professional capacity, they had developed many of these basic skills on the job. This at times resulted in agency representatives and residents meeting on an uneven playing field.

***Weed and Seed Sub-Committees***

The Weed and Seed sub-committees oversee the implementation of activities within their specific area: approving proposals, doing outreach, and making recommendations to the Steering Committee on issues related to the Initiative's stated goals.

There are three active Sub-Committees in the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative: Prevention/Intervention/Treatment, Neighborhood Restoration, and the Safe Haven. The Community Policing and Neighborhood Restoration sub-committees were merged in the second year of the Initiative due to a great deal of overlap in each committee's programmatic focus.

The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative's Sub-Committees, as a subset of the Steering Committee, *adhere to a specific goals and programmatic objectives, as defined in the site's original strategic plan.* Focus areas include:

- **Law Enforcement Strategy:** targeting reductions in drug-related crimes, prostitution related offenses, and incidents of domestic violence within the community
- **Community Policing:** abatement of abandoned properties, and advocacy services to assist victims of domestic violence and their children
- **Prevention/Intervention/Treatment:** support and recruit parents to take an active role in their children's education and in school governance and support activities; provide children with safe after-school environments providing stimulating academic, cultural and recreational activities
- **Neighborhood Restoration:** restore the community by encouraging home ownership and rehabilitating dilapidated properties
- **Safe Haven:** The Executive Office for Weed and Seed defines a Safe Haven as a secure place that is free of crime and drug activity, where youth can go to access different types of educational, recreational and other supportive services after school and on weekends.

Residents from the target area chair each of the Sub-Committees. The Sub-Committees are expected to be the mechanism for carrying out the legwork of the Initiative – setting priorities,

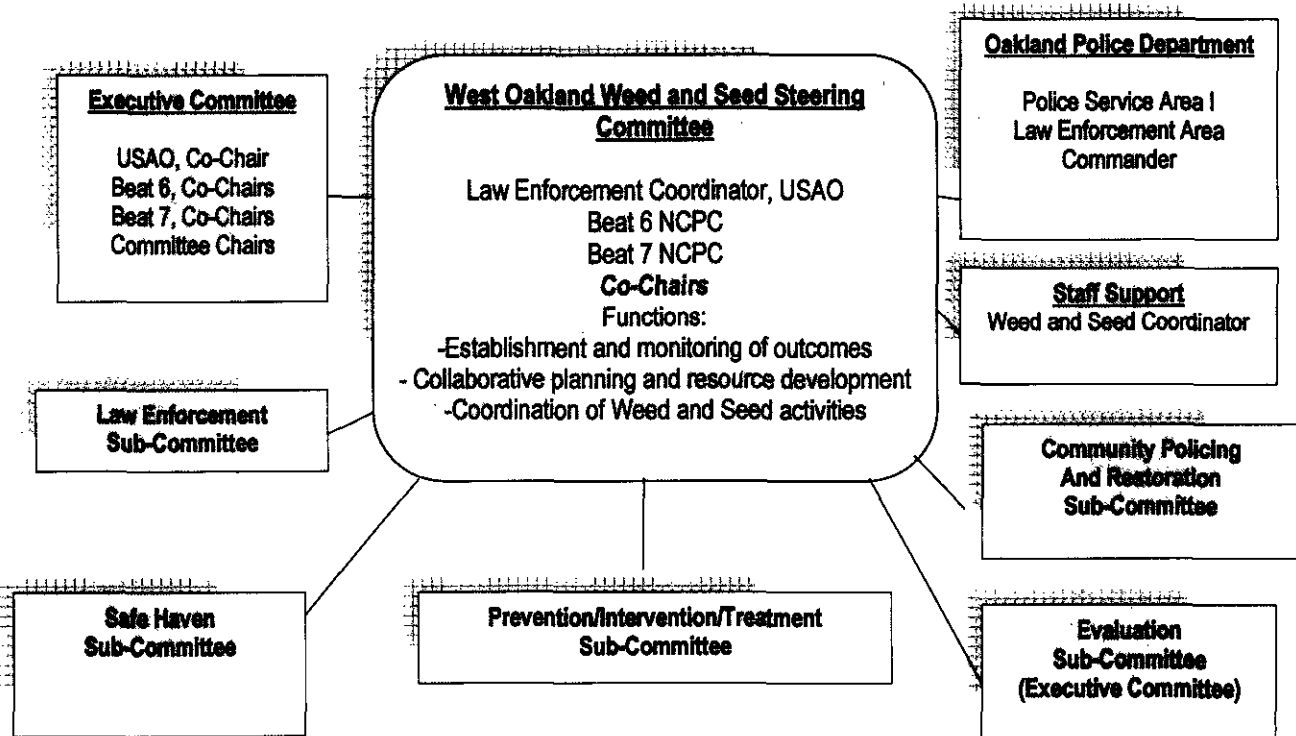
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seeking out resources, assessing potential grantees, producing strategies to address progress toward the goals of the Initiative.

The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative Sub-Committees focused a great deal of their time and energy in assessing potential grantees and distributing funds along with seeking out resources for the Initiative in their respective areas. They spent less time monitoring progress on the goals that fell into their area or strategizing ways to have more impact in the community.

Sub-Committees were charged with meeting every other month, in between Steering Committee meetings. Over the course of the initiative, Sub-Committees were sometimes uneven in holding regular meetings, due largely to the capacity and/or availability of a Sub-Committee chair to convene members.

### **West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative Organizational Chart**





## ***West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative Evaluation Report***

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### ***Program Partners***

The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative reflects a comprehensive collaboration of city, county, and federal agencies working along side residents, community-based organizations, and social service agencies. Below is a list of participating partners.

U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California	U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
Oakland City Council	Oakland Office of the Mayor
Oakland City Attorney's Office	Alameda County District Attorney's Office
Alameda County District Attorney's Office	Oakland Office of the City Administrator
Community and Economic Development Agency	Alameda County Public Health Department
Oakland Housing Authority Police Department	Oakland Housing Authority – Resident and Community Services
West Oakland Neighbors	Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils
Healthy Oakland	St. Andrews Satellite Senior Home
Attitudinal Healing	Oakland Department of Health and Human Services
Robinson Baker YMCA	East Bay Community Recovery Project
Project Pride	Home of Comfort
Oakland Unified School District - Hoover Healthy Start Collaborative	East Bay Community Foundation - Safe Passages
Alameda County Probation Department	St. Andrews Catholic Church
Covenant House	Alameda County Violence Suppression Team

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Boys and Girls Club of San Francisco	Boy Scouts of America
Oakland School Board	Donald P. McCullum Youth Court
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives	Family Violence Law Center
The Mentoring Center	The Center for Family Counseling

**Weed and Seed Management Team**



**Front row left to right:** Ms. Cynthia Perkins, Program Manager – Project Safe Neighborhoods/Project Exile; Ms. Annie Sloan, Weed and Seed Coordinator – West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative; Sergeant Danielle Ashford, Program Manager – Project Safe Neighborhoods/Project Exile. **Back row, left to right:** Lieutenant Paul Berlin, Law Enforcement Area Commander – West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative; Ms. Candice Jessie, Budget and Grants Administrator (Pre and Post Award Grants Administration)

**THE INITIATIVE’S COLLABORATION STRATEGY**

***Institutionally Coordinated Financial Support***

Throughout the Weed and Seed program term, the Oakland Police Department has strengthened its community policing efforts by increasing the degree of human and financial resources devoted to multiple internally developed, and externally coordinated community-based prevention and intervention projects, including the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative.

The following is a partial listing of the more than \$15 million dollars in Federal and state grants that the Police Department has utilized on behalf of, and in alignment with, the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative throughout the program term:

<b>Grant Program</b>	<b>Funding Agency</b>	<b>Program Purpose</b>
Law Enforcement Specialized Units	State of CA, Office of Emergency Services	Domestic Violence Advocacy
Gang Resistance Education and Training	U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives	Gang Violence Prevention and Education
Project Safe Neighborhoods	U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance and State of California, Office of Emergency Services	Gun Violence Abatement
Juvenile Accountability Block Grant	State of California, Correction Standards Authority (formerly the Board of Corrections)	Youth Violence Prevention and Intervention Services
Justice Assistance Grant (formerly Local Law Enforcement Block Grant)	U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance	Adult and Youth Violence Prevention and Intervention Services
Universal Hiring Grant Program	U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services	Law Enforcement Enhancements
Sideshow Abatement Grant Program	State of California, Office of Traffic Safety	Traffic Safety

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<b>Grant Program</b>	<b>Funding Agency</b>	<b>Program Purpose</b>
COPS in Schools Grant Program	U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services	Law Enforcement Enhancements
Racial Profiling Prevention Strategies	U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services	Racial Profiling Analysis and Prevention
Creating a Culture of Integrity Grant Program	U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services	Law Enforcement Enhancements
Alcohol Control Enforcement Grant Program	State of California, Bureau of Alcohol Control	Minor Decoy Tobacco Control Operations
Project First: Title V Community Prevention Grants Program	State of California, Correction Standards Authority	Youth Violence Prevention and Intervention Services
Interface Project: Title V Community Prevention Grants Program	State of California, Correction Standards Authority	Youth Violence Prevention and Intervention Services
Public Housing Safety Initiative Grant Program	U.S. Department of Justice, Community Capacity Development Office	Serious and Violent Offender Re-Entry
Weed and Seed Truancy Grant Program	U.S. Department of Justice, Community Capacity Development Office	Truancy Abatement in the West Oakland Weed and Seed Target Area
Operation West and Seed Grant Program	U.S. Department of Justice, Community Capacity Development Office	West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative

***Coordinated Programmatic Support***

The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative has taken to heart the Weed and Seed strategy of leveraging existing resources. This Initiative represents the confluence of several community-based, city-initiated, and federally funded initiatives, which have been underway in the target area for several years. West Oakland is a federal Empowerment Zone and a HUD Super Site. Additionally, there are numerous private/public sponsored initiatives underway in the target area. The designers of the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative structured the program to create synergy between these past and present efforts to improve the West Oakland community. They leveraged existing infrastructure, relationships, and processes to create a multi-level strategic plan that included the four basic Weed and Seed components: *law enforcement; community policing; prevention, intervention, and treatment; and neighborhood restoration.*

Referenced below are five other programs operating in the Weed and Seed target area. The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative has aligned its strategies and programmatic planning with these programs; consequently, this alignment enhances the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative's ability to create a comprehensive strategic approach:

• ***Oakland's Violence Prevention Plan***

The City of Oakland's Violence Prevention Plan was first development in 1993, and later expanded and adopted by Oakland's City Council in 1996. The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative is aligned with the guiding principles of the City's Violence Prevention Plan, and its six policy areas:

- Prevention and Positive Alternatives for Youth
- Breaking the Cycle of Family Violence and Sexual Assault
- Adult and Young Offender Initiatives
- Reduce Access to Illegal Weapons
- Reduce the Negative Impact of Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Community Building and Problem-Solving Strategies

- ***Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils***

A key component of the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative is the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council. Prior to the adoption of community policing, the police department was organized according to a patrol-based, 911-response model. With assistance from members of the Oakland City Council's Public Safety Committee, a task force was created to recommend changes to the departmental structure. The goal was to move them away from the patrol-based response model to a more proactive community policing model involving dedicated beat officers. Established in 1996, the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils were designed to be a common meeting ground for community policing officers and residents. Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils are an integral part of Oakland's community policing model. The two Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils in the target area were a natural starting point for the Initiative..

- ***Service Delivery System Team***

Established by former City Manager Robert Bobb in 2000, the Service Delivery System Team (SDS) coordinates the activities of key city agencies so that increased collaboration can focus manpower and fiscal resources on common community issues such as problem properties and illegal dumping. Members of the team include the Office of the Mayor, City Administrator's Office, the City Attorney's Office, City Council District representatives, Public Works Agency, Oakland Police Department, Oakland Housing Authority, Oakland Fire Marshall, Traffic Engineering, City Code Compliance, Americorp, Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils from all city council districts, and other agencies. The SDS team uses a case conference model to share information across agencies and strategize to develop a coordinated effort to address community problems like blight, safety, and other community issues that affect the quality of life in Oakland neighborhoods. Representatives of these agencies come together every two weeks to discuss problem areas in the city, as well as nuisance property owners that contribute to drug distribution or use. They also do "ride alongs", in which they go out into the community to see issues first hand.

- ***West Oakland Redevelopment Plan***

The West Oakland Redevelopment Plan, part of the City's larger 1998 Redevelopment Plan, was adopted in 2003. This plan represents a commitment of resources and manpower to West Oakland's revitalization, providing a much needed platform to carry out the Initiative's restoration strategy. The West Oakland Redevelopment Plan is coordinated through the Community and Economic Development Agency (CEDA), and its purpose is to 1) improve the quality of housing through new construction, rehabilitation, and conservation; 2) increase opportunities for homeownership; 3) implement renter stabilization strategies; 4) improve the maintenance of low income and moderate income housing in the area.

- ***Healthy Start Collaborative***

Administered by the California Department of Education, the Healthy Start Initiative provides local collaborations between schools, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and community residents with funding to provide comprehensive, school-integrated services and activities to meet the desired results identified for Healthy Start children, youth, and families. The goals of Healthy Start focus on ensuring that each child receives the physical, emotional, and intellectual support that he or she needs — in school, at home, and in the community — to learn well. In addition, Healthy Start focuses on building the capacity of students and parents to be participants, leaders, and decision-makers in their communities. Hoover Elementary School in the Hoover/West MacArthur target area is home to the Hoover Healthy Start Collaborative. The collaborative also includes the local community YMCA and other community-based organizations.

## **WEEDING**

In the following section, we first look at the weeding strategies employed by the Initiative and then attempt to address the evaluation questions being addressed in this report: 1) what impact has the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative had on reducing drug related crime through law enforcements strategies.

### **Law Enforcement**

The law enforcement component of the Weed and Seed strategy focuses on eliminating violent offenders from the community by coordinating and integrating the efforts of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

### ***Goals and Objectives***

The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative Steering Committee set out to address the high levels of drug related crime in the community. It set the goal of reducing the level of drug-related crime within the community by 10 percent in Year 1 and 2 and by 5% each year thereafter through its weeding activities.

In addition to reducing drug related crime, it specifically targeted prostitution in West Oakland. It set the goal of reducing prostitution arrests to below 156 annually, the base year figure set in 2000.

The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative developed a comprehensive drug intervention and crime suppression strategy to aimed at reducing the level of drug-related crime in the community. Their focus was to:

- Reduce “open air” drug markets
- Eliminate street gangs serving as intermediaries in drug trafficking
- Reduce drug-related crime that funds the illegal drugs trade (prostitution, burglary)



***“Open Air” Drug Markets Reductions***

The Oakland Police Department’s sworn personnel used a multi-prong approach to disrupt drug hot spots in West Oakland, which included:

- Increased police presence throughout the target area
- Conducting an increased number of special operations in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies
- Leveraging of the law enforcement aspects of community policing
- Strengthened pipeline between law enforcement and prosecution

The first weeding strategy employed in the West Oakland target area was to increase the police presence in the community. Community residents surveyed during the planning phase of the Initiative cited lack of police response to illegal drug activity as a problem to curtailing drug-related crime. With funding from the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative, the Oakland Police Department was able to place an additional 12 officers in Beat 6 and Beat 7 to conduct various operations. This was significant given on-going staffing shortages the police department experienced during this period.

Officers and agents from the Drug Enforcement Agency targeted the open-air drug markets, or “hot spots,” making undercover buys in and around drug hot spots, and then arresting the dealers. In addition, officers conducted month long video surveillance operations at several of the hot spots to identify specific individuals engaged in the distribution of drugs. With this videotaped evidence, law enforcement officers were able to obtain warrants from the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office. These strategies helped to eliminate the drug related violence in key areas along the San Pablo corridor.

Along with traditional law enforcement activities, officers are able to work with the District Attorney’s office to impose “Stay Away Orders” on those arrested or on probation in the target area. Under a Stay Away Order, the offender cannot come back into the area for 30 days on his first violation and for 60 days on second violation. West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative used warning posters with the offender’s photograph to alert the community that the individual is under a Stay Away Order and faced immediate arrest if caught in the area.

***Street Gang Elimination***

Rather than rely solely on buy/bust efforts to reduce the number of “hot spots,” the Oakland Police Department simultaneously employed a neighborhood-by-neighborhood effort to disrupt and dismantle the business activities of several of the decentralized local gangs rooted in West Oakland. Gang activity in West Oakland is not simply a problem of teenagers being rebellious delinquents. Gangs in West Oakland tend to be an adult enterprise centered on the drug trade. Gang members see drugs as a business that they must market and continuously recruit new customers. Often, drug-related gangs are also family enterprises, sometimes employing several generations of a single family.

This strategy to dismantle street gangs had the Oakland Police Department’s Gang Unit working together with officers in the target area to pay extremely close attention to particular patterns of behavior of gang members and to the internal structure of the gangs. Their strategy focused on knocking out the critical intermediary organizations that connect the street dealers with major drug distributors and importers. Street dealers are expendable, and product is replaceable, but the drug-gang infrastructure that hires the dealers and supplies the product is not so easy to rebuild. As a result, the Oakland Police Department in collaboration with DEA was able to shut down two of the most notorious local street gangs involved in drug trafficking and dealing in West Oakland - the Black Guerilla Family and Ghost Town. Law enforcement personnel are now focused on working closely with the community to prevent the gang members from reorganizing and rebuilding within the target area.

***Drug-Related Crime Reduction***

Over the course of the program term, the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative focused on creating a healthy community environment as a strategy to reduce residents’ complacency and tolerance toward crime in the community. The Initiative hosted several block parties and public safety fairs designed to increase community interaction and encourage residents to get to know each other. During these Weed and Seed sponsored events, residents who most often stay inside due to active drug selling or other drug-related activity congregated in large numbers to garner public safety and community policing information to address drug-related crime on their block. During these events, the Weed and Seed Coordinator, Steering

## **West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative Evaluation Report**

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Committee members, and other partners are on hand to share information about what is happening to reduce drug related crime. Members of the local Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils are able to recruit more residents to participate. In addition, local youth were paid stipends to distribute Weed and Seed brochures door-to-door to every home in the target area.

In addition to block parties, the Initiative sponsored several community clean-ups and fairs as a way to empower residents to take control of their environment. In collaboration with the Hoover Healthy Start Collaborative, the Initiative co-sponsored a community health faire. The fair provided medical screening, massages, healthy snacks, and bags of fresh fruits and vegetables to neighborhood families. Over 400 people attended that event. The Weed and Seed van was on site to provide information about the activities to reduce crime underway in the target area.

In addition to community activities aimed at reducing drug related crime, Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) collaborated with the Oakland Police department to address criminal activity near local public housing units. Working in collaboration with the Oakland Police Department's Law Enforcement Area Commander, the OHA provides the following law enforcement services:

<b>Special Operation Activity</b>	<b>Number of Officers</b>	<b>Hours Per Officer</b>	<b>Projected Outcomes</b>
Enhanced Patrol	8	10	Disruption of guns, gangs, drugs, and other violent crimes
Narcotic Surveillance	8	10	Arrest of offenders, information which will lead to future operations, possible lease and subsidy violations
Buy Bust Operations	6	10	Offender arrests, follow-up with possible search warrants, or parole and probation searches.
Surveillance Video taping Operations	8	10	Identification of offenders, information that will lead to future operations, possible lease and subsidy violations. The end result after future operations will be a collective mass arrest operation with OPD

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Surveillance Video taping Operations	8	10	Identification of offenders, information that will lead to future operations, possible lease and subsidy violations. The end result after future operations will be a collective mass arrest operation with OPD
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Mass Arrest based on Video taped Surveillances	10	20	Warrants shall be issue by the District Attorneys office. Mass arrest will be conducted based on the warrants.

***Prostitution Abatement***

Prostitution has been an entrenched problem in West Oakland for a long time, and is closely tied to drug use and drug sales. Many of the young women prostituting do so to feed their drug habits. Many of the men involved in pimping and pandering are also involved in drugs. In addition, the open and visible nature of prostitution – scantily clothed women standing on street corners, strange cars coming in and out of the neighborhood, and open sexual activity in residential areas -- negatively impacted the atmosphere of the community. People felt unsafe; children were not able to play freely outside, and other aspects of community life were curtailed.

***Law Enforcement Challenges***

The Weed and Seed Initiative experienced two major challenges in fighting drug related crime in the target area during the program period. The first challenge was the lack of a street level narcotics unit whose sole job is to monitor and combat neighborhood drug activity.

The second challenge was the citywide shortage of police officers. Most officers are required to do mandatory overtime, including officers who had been assigned as community Problem Solving Officers. This shortage affected the number of officers available for the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative’s weeding strategy.

***Leveraged Resources***

**Project Safe Neighborhoods: Oakland Homicide Task Force Program**

The Police Department also petitioned for (and was granted) an additional \$140,000 in grant funds from the State of California, Office of Emergency Services, serving as the fiscal agent for Project Safe Neighborhoods. A portion of the funds were used in direct support of the Oakland Homicide Task Force Program.

One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) of the grant funds were earmarked to offset base program expenses associated with the Oakland Homicide Task Force Program, which is designed as a collaborative enforcement effort to deter homicides in the City of Oakland.

***Oakland Homicide Task Force Program***

Since 2003, the Oakland Homicide Task Force Program has worked closely with the PSN Task Force to address the ongoing problem of homicides in the City of Oakland. Special emphasis has been directed toward:

- Targeting violent narcotics traffickers
- Developing a strong collaboration between the PSN task force and the Police Department's Homicide Unit
- Targeted intervention to reduce the supply of illicit narcotics and guns within Oakland's borders
- Developing a database to track enforcement efforts and offenders

**Community Policing**

Under Oakland’s Community Policing Program, officers are assigned to and responsible for specific neighborhoods. The City of Oakland instituted community policing in 1994. Since then, community policing has become an integral part of law enforcement in the 57 “community policing beats” across the city, including Beat 6 and 7 in West Oakland.

Through the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative, the focus of Problem Solving Officers’ work was helping residents solve everyday problems that affected their safety and well-being. In line with the OPD’s Law Enforcement and Community Policing program strategies, the Problem Solving Officers assigned to the target area focused on building trust and a solid working relationship with residents, while addressing immediate concerns about drug dealing and property vandalism.

As a part of the Initiative’s law enforcement activities, community policing played a key role in its strategy to reduce drug-related crime. Their specific focus was eliminating the conditions that promote drug hot spots, including blight and problem liquor stores

***Goals and Objectives***

The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative steering committee set out to reduce the number of drug “hot spots” that serve as the focal point in the community for drug sales and use. The Initiative set out to abate 10 drug hot spots in the community.

In addition to reducing drug hot spots, the Initiative also set out to reduce recidivism for domestic violence offenders and increase safety for families who are the victims of domestic violence. The steering committee set a goal of helping 30 families obtain counseling, restraining orders, emergency services, and child support orders.

***Increase Problem Solving Officers’ Knowledge of “Hot Spots”***

The Initiative employed a mix of community policing strategies to eliminate conditions that bred drug hot spots. Problem Solving Officers identified three conditions that promoted drug

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hot spots: lack of resident information about growing hot spots, blighted areas with abandoned cars and buildings, and excessive liquor stores in the community.

When surveyed, residents said they felt that pervasive blight, illegal dumping, nuisance buildings, vacant lots with refuse, run-down rental properties contributed to a feeling that criminal activity is tolerated in West Oakland. These very same conditions, they said, contributed to drug hot spots flourishing in West Oakland.

Problem Solving Officers in West Oakland began addressing these issues by increasing their presence in the community. At the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils, they met with residents and passed out cards with their cell phone numbers for easy access. Problem Solving Officers rode bicycles throughout the target area, as opposed to riding in squad cars, to facilitate more interaction with residents. The increased emphasis on community policing as part of the weeding strategy meant officers were able to encourage residents to report suspicious activities. They were able to gather information about the conditions in the community that were contributing to drug dealing and related crime.

Problem Solving Officers point to indications of improved police/resident communication and trust in the number of calls to the drug hotline and the increase in field contacts. These officers noted passing out well over 2,000 business cards and resource guides in a variety of languages spoken in the target area per year. This literature included officers' cell phone number as well as other helpful contact information. As a result, the police dispatch unit received over 700 calls from the target area to the drug hotline. Officers reviewed and investigated all calls. The high number of calls speaks to a growing trust between community members and police serving the area. Residents are more willing to get involved and more apt to turn to police for help with a nuisance property or criminal activity. Field contacts rose 236% between 2002 and 2004 as a result of Problem Solving Officers' presence in the community.

The second strategy the Initiative employed to decrease hot spots was to increase lightening on darkened blocks and street corners to discourage loitering and the creation of hot spots. Problem Solving Officers worked with the city's Public Works Agency to develop an action plan for increasing the lighting in and around identified hot spots. The increased lightening

served as a deterrent to drug dealing. They were able to negotiate for six months of increased voltage. The Public Works Agency is working with the Oakland Police Department and the District 3 City Councilperson to make these changes permanent.

***Problem Liquor Stores***

The third strategy to eliminate hot spot conditions was to address the disproportionate number of liquor stores in the target area. There were more than an estimated 53 liquor stores in Beat 6 and 7 in comparison to only 12 in the entire City of Alameda, the latter of which is twice the size of the entire target area. This information was further confirmed and expanded upon in the context of the informational report developed collaboratively by the Oakland Police Department's Alcohol Beverage Action Team (ABAT), and the City Attorney's Office: *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly: A Report Card on Liquor Stores in Oakland*. West Oakland has surpassed its allowable liquor license concentration by 28 licenses, more than twice any other community in Oakland. Acting on complaints from residents, Problem Solving Officers increased enforcement of new ordinances that require liquor stores to be "good neighbors" and active participants in combating crime by cleaning up problems in and around their property. Neighbors routinely complained that many liquor stores are magnets for criminal activity, ranging from minor infractions like litter and graffiti to more serious crimes like drug dealing, prostitution, and selling alcohol to underage teenagers. Any store that does not clean improve can have its license to sell alcohol revoked under the new ordinance.

Working with the City of Oakland's Code Compliance Office and the Neighborhood Law Corp from the City Attorney's Office, Problem Solving Officers targeted local liquor stores that sold open containers of alcohol, stayed opened passed midnight, and allowed drug dealing to go on in front of their business. The collaboration between the Problem Solving Officers, Neighborhood Law Corp, the City Attorney's Office, and Oakland Police Department's ABAT team resulted in increased pressure on local liquor stores to be better community partners by reducing the conditions for drug hot spots and open drug markets. Several community meetings have been held in West Oakland to address the problem and offer solutions that would satisfy residents, reduce crime, and maintain the business owner's livelihood. Some of the tangible results of this effort to eliminate the conditions that promote hot spots were:



- All liquor stores in the West Oakland target area stopped selling fortified alcohol
- 12 of 24 liquor stores owners investigated made a commitment to take responsibility for reducing loitering outside of their businesses and sign a No Loitering Pledge
- 10 liquor stores agreed to reduce hours of operation in order to reduce loitering
- 7 stores complied with removing bars and signs from their windows that obstructed in-store activity and discourage suspected dealers from taking refuge in stores when police are in the area

***Blight Reduction***

In addition to minimizing the negative impact of too many liquor stores in the community, the target area community policing activities focused on reducing blight and closing down abandoned buildings used as hideouts for drug dealers or crack houses for drug users. Residents at Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council meetings provided officers with first hand knowledge of the blighted conditions that exist in the community, especially blighted areas that are also crime hot-spots, such as the 25<sup>th</sup> Street Park and local Section 8 housing used as drug dens. The information that the Problem Solving Officers gathered from residents of the Neighborhood Crime Councils and through observation during the SDS team's "ride alongs" resulted in a high number of abated properties in the area. The collaboration between the City of Oakland's Service Delivery Team, the Code Compliance Department, and the Public Works Agency's Litter Enforcement division made it easier to gather information about which properties are in need of immediate action.

### ***Leveraged Resources***

#### **Public Housing Safety Initiative Grant Program: Gun Violence**

In the Spring of 2005, the U.S. Department of Justice, Community Capacity Development Office, in collaboration with the Office of Housing and Urban Development, selected ten "Super Site" cities throughout the nation to receive assistance in the investigation, prosecution, and prevention of violent crimes and drug offenses in public and federally assisted housing.

Each of these locations, which are also Weed and Seed program sites, received a minimum of \$400,000 to further implement crime prevention initiatives and expand existing strategic plans to address homicides, drugs, guns, and gang crimes, and prosecution efforts aligned with federal housing sites located in Weed and Seed communities.

#### ***Gun Violence***

Firearms are the leading cause of injury-related death in the City of Oakland, with guns readily available on most street corners and in many neighborhoods. The Oakland Police Department (OPD) has made significant progress in reducing gun violence by enacting several crime suppression and community-based crime prevention programs, yet gun offenses remain prevalent. For the period ended April 2005, 52% of all homicides in Oakland were drug/gang related, with 65% of all homicides committed with a firearm:

#### ***Program Goals***

The Department, through enactment of the Public Housing Safety Initiative, strengthened law enforcement and community-based services in the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative target area relative to crime abatement associated with gun and gang violence. Specific program goals included:

- Reduce the level of violent crime, gang activity, and drug-related crimes in the target area
- Reduce the level of prostitution crimes in the area
- Reduce the number of locations considered "hot spots" for drug sales and use, and in turn reduce violence associated with turf battles
- In a joint federal/local law enforcement group established through Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), develop a cohesive strategy to suppress gang activity and violence in the community
- Through PSN prosecutions conducted by the USAO, decrease gun possession, gun crime, and violent crime in the target area
- Provide increased health, social, and family services to improve the quality of life of residents in the target area
- Provide housing assistance to witnesses and victims associated with federal prosecutions arising from the program's law enforcement activities

## **ANALYSIS OF CRIME STATISTICS**

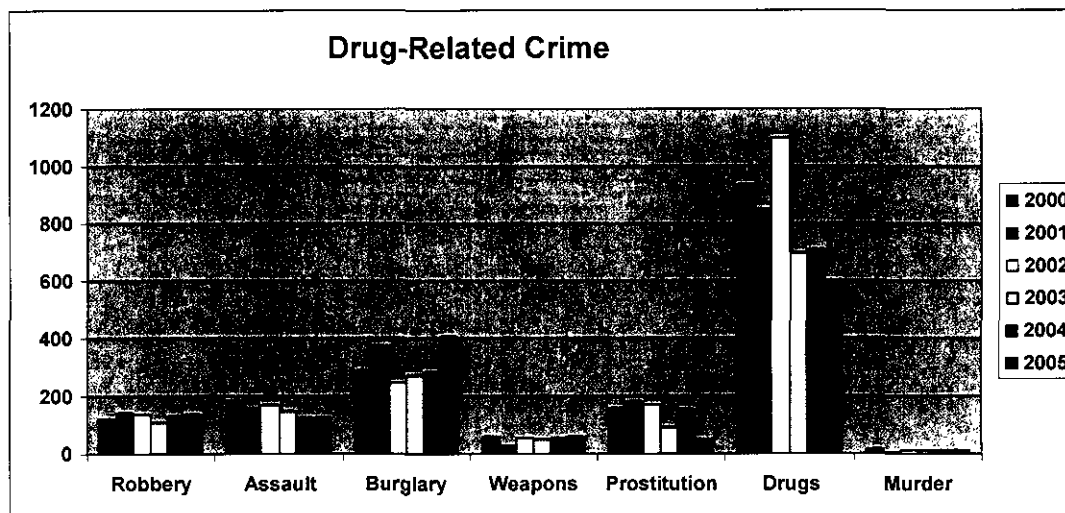
In determining if the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative reached its intended outcome of reducing drug-related crime in the target area by 10% in its first year and by 5% each year thereafter, the Oakland Police Department's crime statistics were reviewed for the program period, 2001-2005, using 2000 as the baseline. It is important to note that the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative selected to use arrest data to determine if it has met its intended outcomes in this area. There is a difference between crime rates and arrest rates that must be kept in mind. Crime rates reflect actual crimes that have been committed for which there may or may not be an arrest. Arrest rates reflect crimes for which there has been an arrest.

It is possible to have high crime rates but low arrest rates. That has been the situation in communities such as West Oakland in the past. In keeping with the Weed and Seed strategy, the increased presence of law enforcement and community police is expected to act as a strong deterrent to criminals. As a result, one would expect fewer crimes to be committed and, consequently, would expect arrests begin to fall.

Based on arrest data, the overall impact of the West Oakland Weed and Seed strategy has resulted in a modest reduction in crime. The Initiative set a bold goal to reduce all drug-related crime by 10% in Year 1 and 5% each subsequent year of the program. By Year 5, crime in four of the eight categories was down (drugs, assault, murder, and prostitution), crime in three categories was up (robbery, burglary, and domestic violence), and arrest levels in one category were unchanged (weapons). (See Figure1)

The following chart shows outlines arrest data, category, throughout the program term:

Figure 1



Source: Oakland Police Department

### *Drug-Related Arrests*

As Figure 1 shows, crime involving drug use and drug trafficking is still the most pressing problem in the West and Seed target area. The data in Figure 1 shows drug arrests are a disproportionate percentage of all crime in the target area. There were 935 arrests for drug possession in 2000. In Year 1, drug arrests fell by 9% (845 arrests). The following period, Year 2 (2002), showed a 30% increase in arrests. This spike is expected as the weeding strategy is fully implemented. To address this problem, the Oakland Police Department worked closely with the Oakland Housing Authority to curb drug-related crime in the public housing facilities.

After this increase, there is a steady decline in arrests in this area. By Year 4, drug arrests are down 36% over pre-Weed and Seed arrest numbers. Figure 2 shows how drug-related arrests over the life of the Initiative ebbed and flowed. What is most striking about this chart is the proportion of crime in the target area. With a few exceptions, which are discussed below, each year shows a smaller proportion of arrests.

By Year 5, arrests for assault and murder were down over pre-Weed and Seed levels. Murder arrests were down 29% over 2000 arrest numbers. There was an anomaly in Year 1 in which there were only four arrests for murder in the target area. There is no explanation for this anomaly. The following years show a steady decline in arrest numbers.

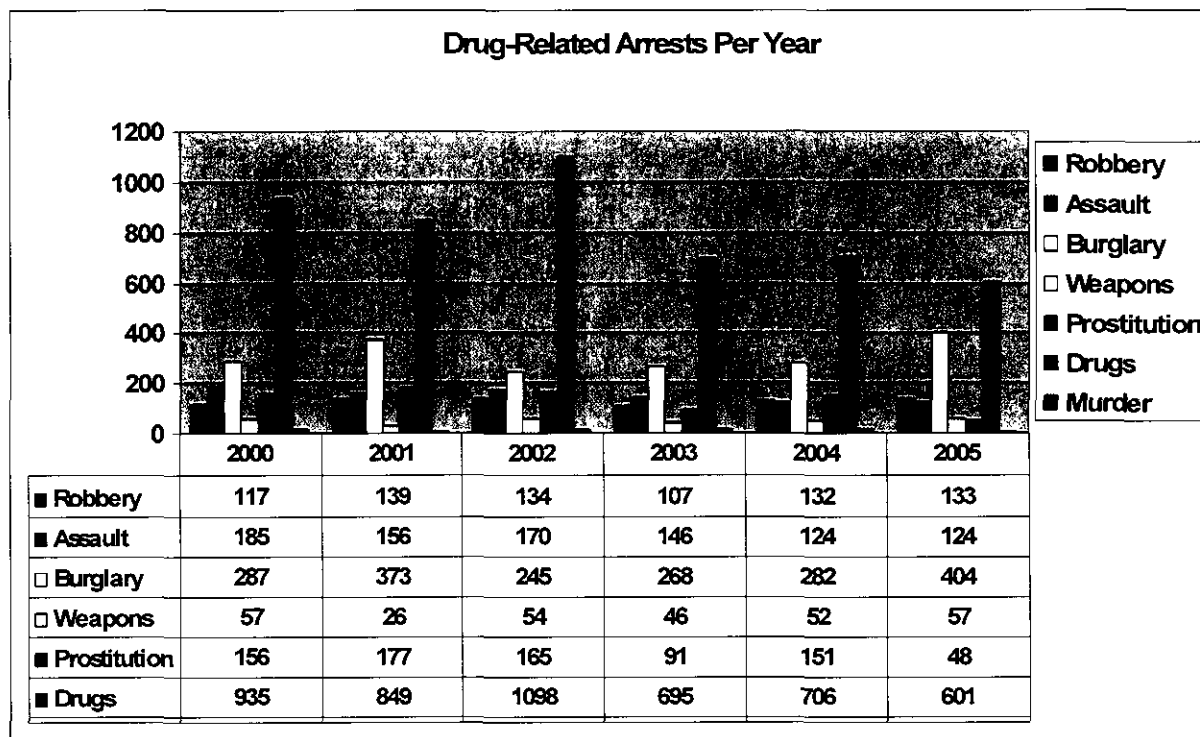
Assault arrests dropped by 15% in Year 1 of the initiative. After a spike in Year 2, arrests for assault show a steady decline. By Year 5, assault arrests were down 33% over pre-Weed and Seed levels.

Arrests in two categories rose: burglary and robbery. Both crimes are strongly associated with drug use and/or dealing. What is not clear is whether these increased numbers represent more criminal activity in these areas that is resistant to the weeding strategies employed by law enforcement resulting more arrests or better community policing and law enforcement resulting in the same level of crime but more arrests. It may also be some combination of these two of factors. In Year 1, robbery experienced an 18% increase in arrests. Despite decreases in Years 2 and 3, robbery arrest surpassed pre-Weed and Seed levels in Year 4 and 5 (133 arrests in 2005 vs. 117 in 2000). There is a similar pattern in the arrest numbers for burglary. By Year 5, burglary arrests had increased by 43%.

#### ***Weapons Arrests***

Weapons arrests were the only category that remained unchanged by the end of Year 5. Arrests did not stay static over the program period. In Year 1, weapons arrests was down by 54% (26 arrests) when compared with 2000 arrest numbers (57 arrests). By Year 2, arrests had risen 107% and then fell by 15% the following year (54 arrests and 46 arrests respectively). They rose modestly in the final two years of the Initiative, settling back to pre-Weed and Seed levels.

Figure 2

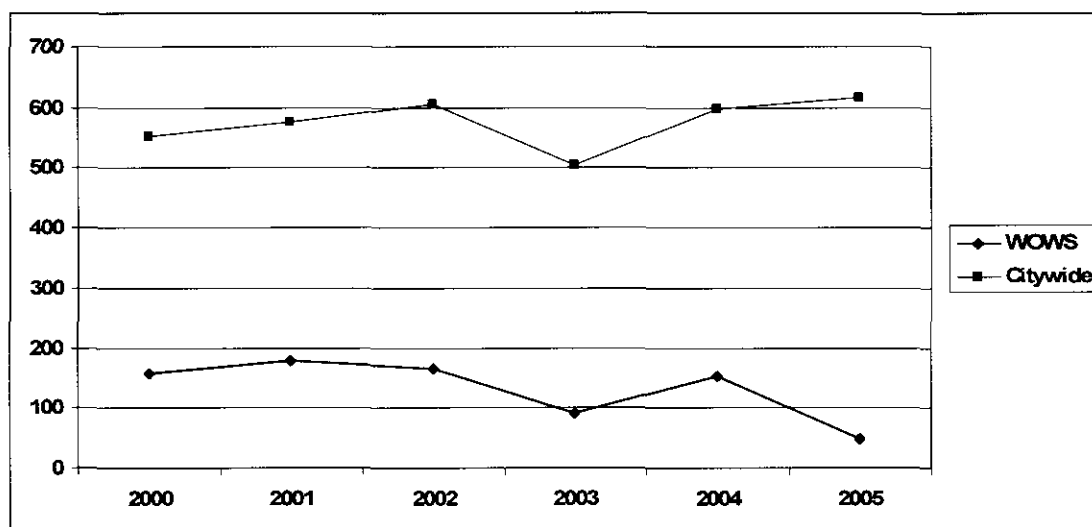


Source: Oakland Police Department

***Prostitution Abatement***

After an initial increase in arrests in Years 1 and 2 (2001 and 2002), prostitution arrests fell significantly, ending with a 70% decrease in arrests. The decrease in prostitution arrests, an entrenched problem in Beat 6, signaled a promising downward trend while citywide arrests continued to increase (Figure 3).

**Figure 3**



Source: Oakland Police Department

***Domestic Violence Abatement***

Incidents of domestic violence in the target area increased over the course of the five-year Weed and Seed implementation period; from the pre-Weed and Seed level of 59 arrests in calendar year 2000, to a peak of 96 in 2002, settling at 76 arrests in 2005. It is unclear whether the overall increase in domestic violence throughout the target area is attributable to more incidents of domestic violence, or increased perpetrator arrests associated with the City of Oakland - Oakland Police Department's zero tolerance policy associated with these infractions.

***Target Area v. Citywide Crime Rates***

Despite the fact that three of eight arrest categories in the West Oakland Weed and Seed target area have increased and one arrest category (weapons possession) has remained relatively unchanged by Year 5, overall arrests throughout the target area account for a small

## ***West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative Evaluation Report***

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percentage of Oakland's overall citywide arrests. The data in Table 1 gives an overview of how the percentages have changed over the course of the five-year period. Burglary, weapons, and domestic violence arrest data report slightly higher percentages over their pre-Weed and Seed levels. Drug arrests in the West Oakland target area have decreased from 14% of all citywide arrests, to 10.5% throughout the program term.



Table 1: Proportion of Arrests in Weed and Seed Area Compared with Citywide

	2000			2001			2002			2003			2004			2005		
	City	WS	Percent In WS Area	City	WS	Percent in WS Area	City	WS	Percent in WS Area	City	WS	Percent in WS Area	City	WS	Percent in WS Area	City	WS	Percent in WS Area
<b>Murder</b>	72	14	19.4%	87	4	4%	114	12	10.5%	114	11	9.6%	88	13	14.7%	94	10	9.4%
<b>Robbery</b>	2018	117	6%	2217	139	6%	2414	134	5.5%	2504	107	4.3%	2276	132	5.8%	2986	133	4.4%
<b>Assault</b>	2951	185	6.2%	2855	156	5.5%	2940	170	5.8%	2796	146	5.2%	2673	124	4.6%	2615	124	4.7%
<b>Burglary</b>	8022	287	3.6%	8724	373	4.2%	9200	245	2.6%	8922	268	3%	8575	282	3.2%	8228	404	4.9%
<b>Weapons</b>	372	57	15%	330	26	8%	389	54	14%	336	46	13.7%	362	52	14%	339	57	16.8%
<b>Prostitution</b>	552	156	28 %	575	177	30%	605	165	27%	505	91	18%	597	151	25%	614	48	8%
<b>Drugs</b>	6750	935	14%	4770	849	18%	6141	1098	18%	4137	695	17%	4266	706	16.5%	5686	601	10.5%
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	1045	59	5.6%	1197	68	5.7%	1431	96	6.7%	1128	66	5.8%	1098	68	6.1%	1295	76	5.8%

Source: Oakland Police Department

## **SEEDING**

Through its seeding strategy, the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative focused on addressing *those issues that impacted not only the physical conditions of the community, but also the rebuilding of the community's spirit and vibrancy.*

In this section, we review the goals, strategies, and activities in the focus areas of community policing, prevention/intervention/treatment, and neighborhood restoration.

### **Community Policing**

During the program term, community policing was not limited to law enforcement or weeding activities. Community policing as a seeding strategy was central to the overall effectiveness of the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative.

#### ***Goals and Objectives***

The community policing goals initiated by the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative steering committee focused on educating residents, business owners and community groups about the issues related to reducing drug-related violence in the target area. The primary goal was to increase the visibility of the Problem Solving Officers throughout the target area, improve resident access to Problem Solving Officers, and inform residents through public service announcements about the consequences of violence in their community.

#### ***General Strategies***

- Attend Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council meetings regularly
- Participate in programs and events at the Safe Haven site
- Engage in public information campaign to encourage residents to call officers to report drug activity

***Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council Attendance***

In Oakland, community policing has three components – Problem Solving Officers, Neighborhood Service Coordinators, and Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils (NCPCs). The NCPCs act as a liaison between the traditional patrol officer, city agencies, and community residents. The Problem Solving Officers attend community meetings, along with the Neighborhood Services Coordinator. The Neighborhood Services Coordinator in the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative is also the Weed and Seed Coordinator, thereby fostering a strong connection between community policing, the work of the NCPCs in the target area, and the Initiative. The NCPC setting is an opportunity for residents to talk with and get to know the Problem Solving Officers in their community. The officers have the opportunity to build rapport with residents in a relaxed setting. Problem Solving Officers use this setting to hand out business cards with their cell phone numbers so that residents can call them directly when there is a crime-related problem or issue that needs to be addressed.

***Public Information Campaign***

Problem Solving Officers reported passing out over 2,000 business cards during block parties, community clean ups, and other activities in the community. Regular attendance and participation at the Safe Haven, coupled with riding their bikes in the community increased their visibility and allowed the Problem Solving Officers to encourage residents to report drug-related activity throughout the community. The public information campaign worked to reduce the tendency of residents to withhold information about criminal activity out of fear of retaliation from drug dealers. The campaign was designed to encourage residents to report suspicious activities with confidence that Problem Solving Officers were there to support them. The Initiative reported that there had been a substantial increase in calls to the drug hotline after the first year of the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative, in comparison to the number of calls received prior to the Initiative's implementation.

## ***Leveraged Resources***

### **Project Safe Neighborhoods: Project Exile**

In 2002, the Police Department applied for and was awarded a two-year grant in the amount of \$250,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance's "Reducing Community Gun Violence Initiative: Project Safe Neighborhoods" program. The funds are used to support a media outreach campaign aligned with Project Exile as a means of discouraging the use of guns and reducing violence in Oakland.

#### ***Program Goals***

Through coordination from the Police Department's Public Affairs Unit (PAU), and in collaboration with the Weed and Seed Coordinator, the primary goal of the PSN-sponsored Project Exile initiative was to develop and foster community forums, educational venues and media messages in relationship to crime prevention. This was accomplished through the creation and implementation of marketing and promotional campaigns, which assisted in the overall reduction of crime, targeted at those who live, work and visit the City of Oakland – and throughout the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative target area. Project Exile leveraged media resources to enhance and expand marketing and promotional efforts, which resulted in increased public awareness of the program.

#### ***Marketing Campaign***

The following is an overview of the violence prevention and community outreach campaign, spearheaded by the Police Department associated with Project Safe Neighborhoods:

- **KMEL Radio (Clear Channel USA):** 30-second spots that speak out against violent activity and remind listeners of the penalties associated with the commission of gun related crimes. It is estimated that KMEL reaches over 600,000 listeners per week. KMEL's target audience is young adults between the ages of 18-30.
- **Oakland Tribune:** An 8-page special pull-out section of the Oakland Tribune, with featured articles from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California, the Oakland Police Department's Chief of Police, as well as several community-based providers associated with the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative. The special edition was delivered to over 65,000 homes throughout the greater Oakland/San Francisco areas.

- **Clear Channel (Outdoor) Media:** Bulletins/Billboards (14' x 48'), 30 Sheet/Poster Panels, 8 Sheet Poster Panels and Bus Shelters (6' x 4'), were used to send messages related to anti-gun violence.
- **Habiba Productions LLC:** Was hired to produce a 30-second public service announcement to run on local network television stations.
- **Other Video Presentations:** The U.S. Department of Justice, in collaboration with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California, also provided no-cost video presentations which promote gun violence abatement efforts aligned with the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative.

The following photos are examples of the public service announcements that appeared in newspapers and on billboards in the Weed and Seed target area.

**Look for our Insert!**



**In Tomorrow's Paper**

**OAKLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Community Outreach



Community Outreach

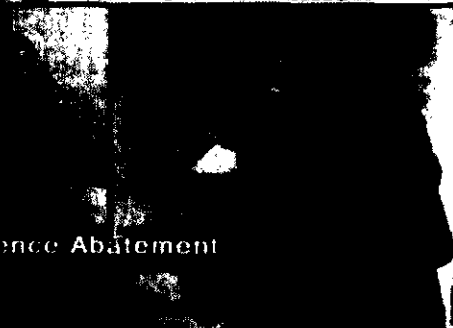


Crime Prevention

Accountability



Gun Violence Abatement



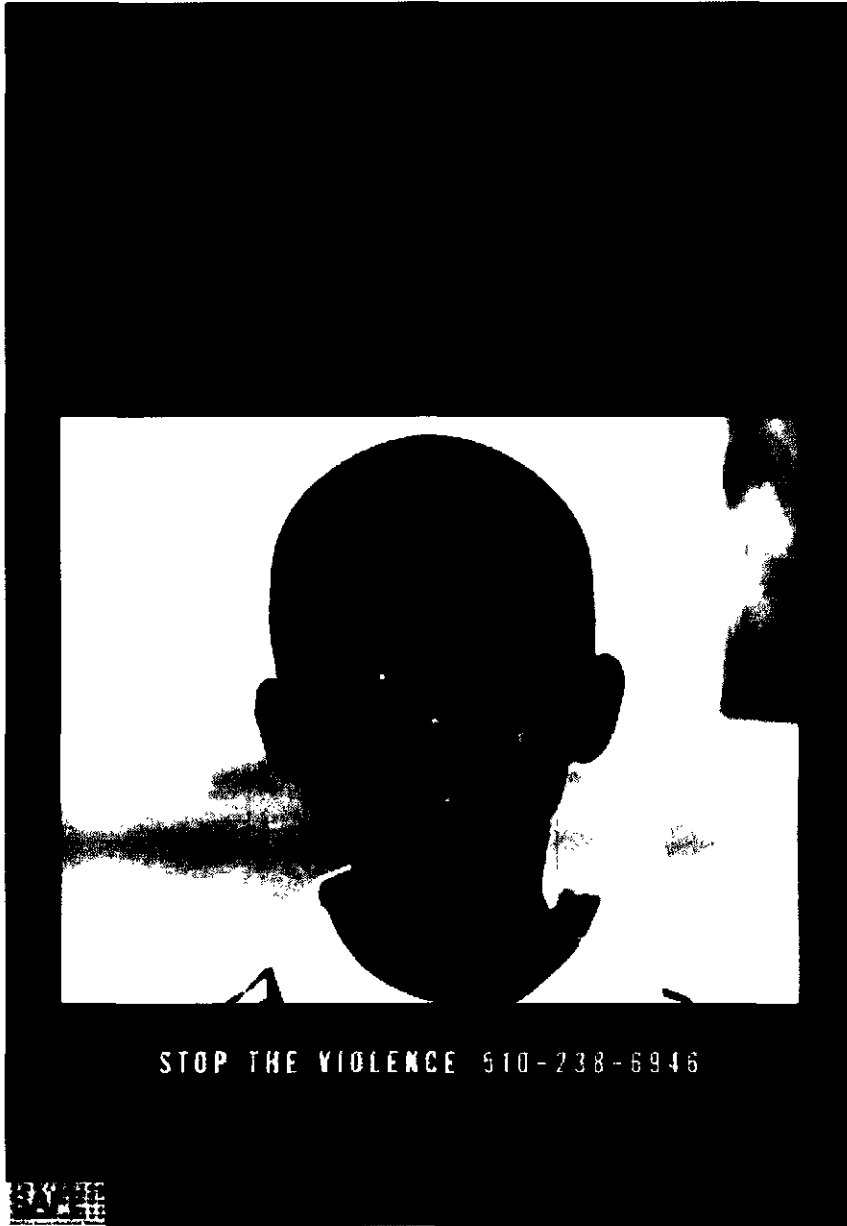
Strategic Planning



**THE POWER OF PREVENTION**

**Oakland Tribune**

TUESDAY May 3, 2005







### **Prevention/Intervention/Treatment**

The Prevention/Intervention/Treatment (P/I/T) component of the Weed and Seed strategy addresses the risk and protective factors associated with helping vulnerable members of the community avoid drug abuse and violence. The Initiative's strategic goals in this area were to create a safe community environment and high quality of life for residents.

#### ***Goals and Objectives***

The majority of the P/I/T Sub-Committee's goals and objectives focused on the work of the Safe Haven. The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative augmented its original goals to include a focus on community-based drug treatment services for the men and women of West Oakland. The Prevention/Intervention/Treatment Sub-Committee's primary work revolved around providing children with safe after-school environments that provide stimulating academic, cultural, and recreational activities. Specific goals associated with the Hoover Healthy Start Collaborative Safe Haven site included increasing the number of students and adults being served through various programs. Targets included serving 25 or more students through the Hoover Elementary Student Study Team, serving at least 140 students in the Hoover After-School program, and serving over 250 adults through adult education classes and other on-site activities.

In addition to serving children and their families at the Safe Haven site, the Initiative made a commitment to addressing the issues of youth at risk for incarceration, the needs of domestic violence victims, and the needs of residents with mental health and addiction challenges.

#### ***General Strategy***

. The Initiative used the following strategies to reach its goals and objectives:

- Create pro-social, family-oriented activities at the Safe Haven and other community sites
- Provide alternative routes for youth at risk for incarceration
- Improve treatment options in the target area
- Provide community support to families impacted by domestic violence

***Create Pro-Social Activities: Hoover Healthy Start Collaborative***

The identification and establishment of a Safe Haven is an integral part of the Weed and Seed program's seeding strategy. The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative partnered with Hoover Elementary School in Beat 6 to create its Safe Haven. Hoover Elementary School is home to the Hoover Healthy Start Collaborative, which is part of the California Department of Education Healthy Start program. The program is designed to ensure that low performing students and their families have access to services that are associated with improved academic performance. Through case management, selected students and their families are linked to such services as: food programs; health, vision, and/or dental care; family or individual counseling; English as a Second Language, nutrition, and/or parenting classes; economic assistance programs; job training; tutoring, and after school programs, among others.

***Healthy Start Collaborative***

Like the Weed and Seed strategy, the Healthy Start Collaborative leverages the resources of its partners. Collaborative members agree to provide some of the program's services and resources and help oversee program governance and operations. Active partners in the Healthy Start Collaborative are the Junior Achievement League of Oakland, Lincoln Child Center, and Harriet Tubman Child Development Center. Throughout the program term, the Hoover Healthy Start Collaborative had over \$100,000 in in-kind contributions at its disposal. Hoover Healthy Start serves as the hub for a wide variety of activities and programs that enrich the lives of students and adults alike in the community, such as swimming, computer labs, etc. In addition to services for elementary aged and middle school-aged children, the site provides adult services such as English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for adults.

A primary focus of the Safe Haven's work has been on providing more family-oriented activities that promote positive family interactions. In addition to its after-school program, the Safe Haven also sponsors a variety of special one-time events. One example of their goal to encourage more family and community interaction was the recent 100 Families Oakland project. West Oakland families were invited to meet at the Safe Haven site for a weekly for a 10-week period to make art centered on the theme of family in order to achieve a better understanding of self, family, and community.

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The event was organized by the Center for Art and Public Life at the California College of Art in collaboration with West Oakland-based Attitudinal Healing Connection and Hoover Healthy Start Collaborative, and the Robinson Baker YMCA. The partners wanted to engage parents and extended family members at the Safe Haven in the collective experience of learning about and creating art that promotes hope and action for community residents. The result, they believed, is that families and their neighborhoods would be uplifted and community spirit would increase.

The Safe Haven has exceeded expectation in attracting both students and parents to its various activities. The Student Study Team is serving 38% more students than originally targeted: 40 students participate in case management and/or group counseling. In addition, there has been a 200% increase in the number of children participating in the Hoover after-school program: 280 students participate in seven tutoring and enrichment activities. Over the life of the Initiative, over 1,500 children and their parents have participated in school-wide family events hosted at the Safe Haven site.

Over the program term, the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative added value to the overall effort of the Hoover Healthy Start Collaborative. The Initiative brought the Drug Education For Youth (DEFY) camp program to the students and families in the Hoover community. In addition, the Initiative provided direct funding in support of a multitude of activities that the Collaborative would not otherwise be able to afford.

### *Drug Education for Youth Program (DEFY)*

The DEFY Program was adopted from the U.S. Department of Justice's Weed and Seed DEFY Initiative. Forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) from Project Safe Neighborhood was used in direct supplemental support for West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative's Drug Education for Youth Program.

The DEFY program, renamed *Building Our Youth for Tomorrow* (BOLT), provides children living in high-risk environments with the values, support, and tools needed to resist the lure of illicit drug use, drug dealing and gang membership. The program provides opportunities for 90 youths, four teen mentors, and four adult chaperones/instructors to participate in two 3-part, 10-month programs aimed at educating youths (ages 9-12) and teens (ages 13-17) on the dangers of using drugs and gang participation. Sworn and civilian Police Department personnel worked

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with representatives from the Boys and Girls Clubs of San Francisco, Contra Costa County Housing Authority, the City of San Jose, and the California National Guard, along with assistance from the U.S. Attorney's Office, to fully develop and implement the DEFY program. The program includes a classroom curriculum, attendance at summer camp, and on-going mentoring. Since the implementation of West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative in 2002, 95 children from the West Oakland target area have attended camp.

Additionally, Safe Haven staff had an established relationship with the Problem Solving Officers, working collaboratively with them to reduce drug sales and prostitution in close proximity to the Safe Haven site; resulting in high levels of trust and a sense of safety among parents as evidenced by the consistent numbers of parents that attend local meetings and events. The Hoover Healthy Start Collaborative is routinely able to draw 35 or more parents to each of its community meetings, and over 200 participants on average to special events. In contrast, other similar organizations report very low turnout among low-income parents.

### *Safe Haven Activities*

Below is an overview of the various activities and services offered through the Safe Haven / Hoover Healthy Start Collaborative:

<b>Student Activities</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Offered</b>
<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century After-School</b> – after-school academic, recreation, and enrichment activities	5/week	After School
<b>100 Black Men</b> – ongoing mentoring for Hoover students	1/week	After School
<b>Art Esteem</b> – Art therapy and resiliency-building program.	3/week	After School
<b>Boy Scouts</b>	1/week	After School
<b>DEFY Camp</b> – Drug and alcohol abuse prevention; parent education.	1/week	During School/ Summer
<b>Case Management</b> – Ongoing services for at-risk students and families.	1/week or as needed	During School

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<b>First Wave Swimming (YMCA)</b>	1/week (16 weeks)	During/After School
<b>Circle of Care</b> – grief counseling	2/week	During School
<b>Uniform Support</b> – school uniforms for low-income students.	Ongoing	During School
<b>Sports 4 Kids</b> – recreation and fitness for Hoover students.	4/week	After School
<b>Super Stars Literacy Group</b> – literacy tutoring for kindergarten students	1/week	During School
1. <b>English as a Second Language</b> – classes for neighborhood members	2/week	Evenings
2. <b>Oakland Ready to Learn</b> – parenting workshop	1 Session	Morning
3. <b>Grandparent Support Group</b> – for custodial and non-custodial grandparents of Hoover students	1/week	During School

***Additional Resident and Community Services: Oakland Housing Authority***

The Oakland Housing Authority, through its Police Department and Resident and Community Services Division, provides a wealth of services for the direct benefit of the Weed and Seed target area. The Oakland Housing Authority’s Resident and Community Services Division works collaboratively with the Weed and Seed Steering Committee members, the Weed and Seed Coordinator, and other partnering agencies associated with the Program to conduct public education and community awareness campaigns for target residents of public housing/HUD properties. Services include:

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<b>Program Activity</b>	<b>Program Partner</b>	<b>Projected outcomes</b>
<p><b>Youth Documentary:</b>  <i>“Taming the West-Drugs, guns and Youth, Speaking our Reality in West Oakland”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Workforce Development Focus</li> <li>▪ Youth trained in video, web, music production</li> <li>▪ Youth earn 1<sup>st</sup> level multi media credits toward S.F. State Multi Media Accreditation</li> <li>▪ Youth design and facilitate charettes and focus groups with other youth in target area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Youth Sounds</li> <li>▪ Bay Area Video Coalition (BAVC)</li> <li>▪ Peoples Community Partnership Credit Union</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 10 to 15 youth ages 14 to 24 trained in multi media arts 1<sup>st</sup> level for certification</li> <li>▪ 10 to 15 develop banking habits, complete basic budget classes</li> <li>▪ Completion of a market quality youth design and development film documentary focused on PHSI and WOWSI target area</li> <li>▪ 20+ At-risk and un engaged youth and their families participate in structured programs including focus groups</li> <li>▪ 20+ Youth and their families referred to partner agencies for social service needs</li> <li>▪ 10 Youth Enrolled in Mayor’s Summer Jobs Program</li> </ul>
<p>“ Okay with Getting Help”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OHA Site Intervention Team, which includes a Services Coordinator and OHA Police Officer, will refer and assist with the enrollment of family members into crisis counseling for substance abuse, mental and emotional health needs</li> <li>▪ Services provided from community partners on a fee per service basis as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Center for Family Counseling (proposed)</li> <li>▪ Scotland Youth Center (proposed)</li> <li>▪ Alameda County Medical Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 30 to 40 Families needing counseling provided confidential support to find and enroll by Site Intervention team</li> </ul>
<p>Managing Frustration: Youth to Youth Mediation Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Youth and Young Adults trained in community mediation</li> <li>▪ Youth encouraged to volunteer in community to provide peer mediation</li> </ul>	<p align="center">Bay Area Mediation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 8 to 10 youth trained in “self” conflict resolution</li> <li>▪ 8 to 10 youth trained in peer conflict resolution</li> <li>▪ 8 to 10 youth express enhanced awareness of self responsibility in reducing community social conflict</li> <li>▪ 8 to 10 youth express change in social habits centered around conflict</li> </ul>
<p>Parenting/Adult Mediation/Anger Management Classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Site Intervention Team will enroll residents into classes (individual and group as appropriate)</li> <li>▪ OHA will “strongly recommend” to client enrollment in workshops as a remedy to “community disturbance” lease violations</li> </ul>	<p align="center">ACS Associates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Families with domestic/youth violence incidents receive individual case management</li> <li>▪ Parents learn appropriate parenting skills</li> </ul>

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<b>Program Activity</b>	<b>Program Partner</b>	<b>Projected outcomes</b>
<p>“National Night Out” Back to School packs for youth</p>	<p>West Oakland Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 80 school age youth in PHSI and WOWSI target area receive back to school packs with supplies to encourage excitement toward school attendance</li> <li>▪ 80 families receive “Where can I find it” information packs on public safety and other community resources in the PHSI/WOWSI target area</li> </ul>
<p>Site Intervention Team Supplies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Items used for community meetings</li> <li>▪ Documentation of incidents (camera)</li> <li>▪ Off site input into windows based case management data base (laptop)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">NA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community activities provided appropriate resources</li> </ul>

*Safe Haven Challenges*

Although the Safe Haven has, and continues to serve families with young children well, there is a lack of comprehensive services provided directly from the Safe Haven site (Hoover Elementary School) for youth most at risk for getting involved in drug related crime, youth ages 14-24. The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative was able to provide direct funding for the Oakland Midnight Basketball Program for adolescents and young men at the local high school for a limited period. However, it is extreme important to provide more intensive services to target youth in this age category as a deterrent to crime and selling drugs. Further, these youth need access to counseling, mentoring and opportunities to develop life skills, transferable job skills, and vital literacy.

More than one in four youth offenders in Oakland are not adequately served by the current juvenile justice system (i.e., not held accountable for their actions, and not referred to rehabilitative services). Consequently, many youth, including youth in the West Oakland Weed and Seed target area, re-offend due to lack of early intervention. First time youth offenders often had previous contact with law enforcement, but law enforcement did not make an arrest or the victim did not press charges. Many youth offenders in the target area fit a general profile of having a combination of truancy or out-of-school, involved in unhealthy risk-taking behaviors (e.g., substance abuse, early sexual activity, etc.), struggling with economic hardship, stressors

on family stability, special learning needs, and/or psychological issues. Hence, a first time youth offender in Oakland often brings a host of issues that the traditional juvenile justice system either does not have the resources to accommodate, and in some respects, is not intended to address.

To this end, since 2002 (as a supplement to the programs and services provided through the Safe Haven), the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative Steering Committee have worked collaboratively with a number of community-based groups focused on youth violence prevention. These programs target first time offenders throughout the target area and provide services to reduce the likelihood that these youth will commit future crimes.

***Creating Alternatives for Youth Offenders: Truancy Prevention Programs***

The Oakland Police Department determined that there was a direct relationship between the large number of truants and the high daytime crime rate. Truancy rates citywide and in the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative target area remain at high levels. According to the Alameda County District Attorney, Juvenile Division, youth encountered in the court system are often chronic truants. The impact on the Initiative target area is two-fold: 1) Escalation in criminal activity (from petty crimes to full blown criminal enterprises), and 2) Loss of productivity, quality of life, and (potentially) the loss of life itself, for youth caught up in this destructive cycle.

In 2003, the West Oakland Weed and Seed Steering Committee established its Truancy Prevention Program at Lowell Middle School and McClymonds High School. The Committee maintained and expanded intervention services through mentoring and other youth-based services, which helped youths to recognize and avoid destructive influences in their school, social and family lives centered around truancy, delinquency, violence, sexual behavior, drug use, and gang activity. Primary funding for the initiative was garnered directly from annual Weed and Seed grant fund allocations, as the Initiative's "Special Emphasis" efforts. The Executive Office for Weed and Seed allows implementing agencies, such as the City of Oakland, to focus on a chosen special emphasis component for up to two consecutive years.



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The Oakland Police Department focused on truancy prevention efforts as a Special Emphasis component for the period 2003-2005, to further enhance and ensure long-term consistency with this vital youth advocacy component. The goals of the program were:

- Goal 1: Identify and apprehend truants committing crimes in the target area
- Goal 2: Provide a menu of services and options to help youth recognize and avoid destructive influences, e.g. truancy, delinquency, and social and family lives centered around violence and drug use.

For more than three consecutive years, the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative -- in collaboration with the Oakland Police Activities League, the East Bay Community Foundation – Safe Passages and the Donald P. McCullum Youth Court has addressed the matter of truancy prevention through the Prevention, Intervention and Treatment Sub-Committee, as well as the Safe Haven Sub-Committee.

### *Safe Passages: Truancy Service Provider*

Safe Passages represents a dynamic partnership between the City of Oakland, Alameda County, Oakland Unified School District, the East Bay Community Foundation and the Community that works to reduce youth violence in Oakland by changing the way public systems and community based organizations work together. Founded in 1998, Safe Passages' mission is to use a "systems change" approach to break down barriers and unite youth-serving institutions serving children and families in Oakland through a shared commitment to collaboration, capacity building, and the use of data and best practices. The Safe Passages Board of Directors includes elected county and city officials, agency directors, high-level administrators, and community leaders.

Safe Passages has developed four violence prevention/intervention strategies:

- a Youth Offender Strategy to prevent youth from re-offending;
- a Middle School Strategy that provides a network of school-based services to steer vulnerable middle school youth from violent behavior;
- an After-School Strategy to sustain and expand quality after-school programs; and
- the Oakland Early Childhood Initiative (OECI), dedicated to creating a system to identify and support children 0-5 exposed to violence and their families.

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In 2005, Safe Passages provided truant youth in the target area with support for stable school attendance, tutorial, mentoring and homework assistance. The scope of their services included:

- Providing a minimum of forty (40) target area youth with one-to-one mentoring
- A minimum of forty (40) target area youth participate in the ArtGate education program to promote academic skills and well-being. Professional artists will provide art workshops at each of the proposed school sites at least twice per week, throughout the contract term.
- Provide workshops, per school site, on media influences, alcohol and tobacco use, body image, negative stereotyping, community violence prevention and school and family engagement, with the goal of creating a healthy lifestyle and self-esteem for youth.
- Provide three (3) student workshops, per school site, on anger management, impulse control and gang prevention.
- Ensured the delivery of ongoing homework assistance and/or tutorial services to a minimum of forty (40) target area youth
- Provided Parenting Workshops, per school site, to parents and other caregivers associated with youth in the target area throughout the program term. Subject matter for said workshops included basic parenting skills, academic achievement, and general well-being

**Leveraged Resources**

**Oakland Youth Court – Interface Project**

Since 2002, the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative has partnered with the Donald P. McCullum Youth Court in a further attempt to connect youth with alternatives to the criminal justice system. The goal of the Donald P. McCullum Youth Court (MYC) is to change young lives and impact communities by providing empowering opportunities for youth through collaborative peer justice in Alameda County. Founded a decade ago by a group of district attorneys, judges, and educators to address the lack of early intervention for youth offenders, MYC continues in its mission to interrupt intergenerational cycles of crime and incarceration with early intervention, diverting young people from the traditional juvenile judicial system, and increasing all young people's positive involvement with law and justice. Last year, the Youth Court served almost 350 youth offenders and their families, 65 Youth Advocates, and 700 youth Jurors (aged 10 through 18). Nearly 66% of those served were from Oakland.

***Donald P. McCullum Youth Court***

The Donald P. McCullum Youth Court focuses on under-resourced communities and underserved populations, especially communities with disproportionate incarceration rates, i.e. African American and Latino communities, and communities with persistent under-representation in higher education, law school, and the legal profession. Nearly 90% are youth of color, more than 80% are from low income households, approximately two-thirds show low academic performance, and at least 20% are involved or have been involved in the juvenile judicial system.

***The Interface Project***

For more than five years, the City of Oakland – Oakland Police Department has received grant funding from the State of California, Correction Standards Authority (formerly the Board of Corrections) to fund the Oakland Youth Court – Project Interface Project; with funding derived from the *Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program*, and the *Title V: Community Prevention Grants Program*. The Interface Project, as part of the Police Department's three-year Delinquency Prevention Plan, will amplify and fortify key elements of the Youth Court by addressing Oakland's need to serve youth offenders charged with "less serious" offenses.

The Interface Project represents an appropriate and timely response to Oakland youths' need for 1) a viable alternative to youthful incarceration, 2) purposeful, positive relationships with peers and caring adults, and 3) meaningful opportunities for knowledge and skills building and involvement in a community. The project also addresses the need for experiential learning and leadership/civic opportunities for all youth to build confidence and a sense of self-efficacy; to cultivate relationships across such boundaries as race, ethnicity, gender, and class; and to foster college and career aspirations particularly in households where primary adults have not graduated college.

The project's commitment to retain youth offenders in the Youth Advocate Program after they complete their sentence and the project's extension of services to middle school students aims to furnish consistent, quality interactions, over time, that are conducive to trust building and meaningful relationships. This will be accomplished by providing strength-based early intervention services that hold youth accountable for their actions, while connecting these youth to appropriate social services and positive youth development programs. Through the Interface Project, MYC will serve at least 709 unduplicated Oakland youth ages 10 – 19, including at least 150 first time youth offenders ages 10 – 17+. The program will also serve at least 150 Oakland families, specifically parent/guardians.

Interface Project's core components and services include:

**Youth Offender Program:** Uses a strength-based approach to divert first-time youth offenders from the traditional juvenile judicial system. Youth offenders are represented, counseled, and held accountable by their peers. With the support of an adult Case Manager, youth complete a "sentence" that includes 1) gender specific programming to build positive self concept and greater self understanding; a sense of self efficacy and social responsibility; and life skills and 2) connection to positive individuals and community through civic involvement in the form of community service and juror service. Other special services and programming (e.g. Conflict Management Class or Substance Abuse Education) are provided at MYC or accessed through referrals to other agencies and organizations.

Successful completion of an MYC "sentence" results in a clearing of the offense from the young person's police record. MYC operates under California Penal Code Section 1001.01 with the full authority of the law. The peer-determined sentence is binding.

**Youth Law Program:** Provides experiential learning to enable high school students to develop legal knowledge and the skills necessary to counsel youth offenders, as well as to prosecute and defend them in court – or serve as a Clerk or Bailiff at court. Youth participate in intensive basic training followed by ongoing after-school support in school-affiliated Law Clubs. These youth serve as peer support and role models for youth offenders. Youth offenders who successfully complete the program are encouraged to join an MYC Law Club and become a Youth Attorney.

**Juror Service:** Middle and high school students may participate as peer jurors, earning community service hours, after attending a Juror Service training held each Court Night before Juror Service. All program elements converge on semi-monthly Court Nights, held at the Wiley Manuel Courthouse in Oakland.

***Community Support for Domestic Violence Abatement and Advocacy***

Domestic violence is an outgrowth of families impacted by drugs and poor social and economic conditions in the target area. Research has shown a 15% decline in repeat domestic violence when a Problem-Solving Officer or other domestic violence advocacy personnel followed up on domestic violence incidents.

The Oakland Police Department's Family Violence Intervention Unit, in partnership with the Family Violence Law Center, has made a significant effort to educate residents about family violence issues. The Weed and Seed Coordinator and other OPD personnel developed and distributed a multi-lingual domestic violence advocacy brochure, which provides an overview of the resources available to victims of domestic violence and their children. Further, the Police Department's Family Violence Intervention Unit provides 24-hour domestic violence advocacy service, thereby ensuring that a domestic violence advocate is always readily available to assist victims with shelter, housing, legal matters, food, clothing and other resources, including:

- Crisis intervention services
- Safety planning
- Information on restraining orders
- Assistance with law enforcement response
- Criminal prosecution
- Court accompaniment
- Referrals to other social service agencies

Over the course of the five years of the Initiative, the Family Violence Intervention Unit:

- Provided domestic violence advocacy services to more than 1,000 domestic violence, sexual assault and/or stalking cases
- Contacted over 1,400 victims of domestic violence and provided on-scene crisis assistance to more than 800 victims of domestic violence and their children
- Provided assistance via the issuance of restraining orders and/or emergency protective orders to more than 300 clients
- Further, the OPD's Family Violence Intervention Unit staff developed a strong network of local service provider links for victim services

***Improved Treatment Options for West Oakland Residents: East Bay Community Recovery Project***

The East Bay Community Recovery Project (EBCRP) is a non-profit, drug and alcohol rehabilitation program, which has provided substance abuse treatment and relapse prevention, and domestic violence advocacy programs in Alameda County since 1989. The EBCRP's organizational philosophy is captured in the following statement, made by its Executive Director, Dr. Joan Ellen Zweben: "We have a broad view of our mission; successful treatment has effects which expand outward. The recovering person needs to take responsibility for his or her own life, and join in creating a new social environment. Staff and clients join in this task, influencing our families, neighborhoods, and the urban area around us."

Since early 2005, the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative has partnered with the East Bay Community Recovery Project (EBCRP) to provide increased services to target area residents under the auspices of Serious and Violent Offender Re-Entry. EBCRP provides enhanced crime prevention and intervention services through case management, community outreach, and other resources in keeping with the terms and conditions of the Public Housing Safety Initiative grant program and the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative.

EBCRP works collaboratively with representatives of the Oakland Police Department and other partnering agencies associated with the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative to conduct public education and community awareness campaigns for residents of public housing/HUD properties and surrounding areas to advise on the scope and availability of re-entry services

The EBCRP provides public housing residents and other target area residents with access to a Mobile Health Van on a monthly basis for general health screening and other medical services. These services are primarily focused toward adults currently on felony probation and parole in the target area. The scope of services provided by EBCRP includes:

*Case Management Services*

- a. Case management services, inclusive of substance abuse and mental health assessments, to a minimum of one hundred and fifty (150) individuals and their families throughout the Program target area

- b. Case management services rendered are inclusive of the development of individualized treatment plans, and, if necessary, psychiatric evaluation, medication management, and other follow-up services
- c. Individual and/or group case management, inclusive of mental health counseling sessions, to a minimum of one hundred and fifty (150) individuals and their families throughout the target area
- d. Drug treatment and other wellness services to a minimum of one hundred and fifty (150) individuals throughout the target area. Relative to drug treatment services, EBCRP ensures that all program participants are provided with urinalysis testing for substance abuse compliance on a routine basis
- e. Program participants are also provided with job training and/or job referral resources, and housing referral information throughout the target area and the City of Oakland.

*Project Pride*

In addition to EBCRP, Project Pride offers similar services to addicted women and their children. Project Pride, which is under the fiscal sponsorship of the East Bay Community Recovery Project, offers drug counseling and care for incarcerated women who are pregnant or the mothers of young children 6 years old and under in a residential setting. The facility has 45 beds and space for 25 children. The children stay on site with their mothers while the women learn parenting skills and receive drug addiction counseling. Project Pride is one of few programs nationally, which provide child mental health services in a community-based setting.

Project Pride is also licensed and certified by the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. Program staff and consultants in the context of peer support provide extensive clinical services. Project Pride enhances each client's success in mastering new skills by establishing stability in parent-child relationships, and achieving drug free lives. Each mother participates in individual and group counseling, designed to meet her specific recovery and personal needs.

Specialized groups/counseling sessions offered through Project Pride include:

- *Domestic Violence Abatement*
- *Addiction Education and Relapse Prevention*
- *Anger Management*
- *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Trauma*

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- Child Therapy and Parenting Classes
- Life Skills Training
- Family Therapy
- HIV/AIDS Education
- Abuse and Incest/Molestation Survival
- Vocational Exploration and Training
- Transitional Services for Final Program Phases

The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative was able to meet and exceed its stated outcomes as they relate to the Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment component of the Initiative. The Hoover Elementary Student Study Team at the Safe Haven served 40 students vs. its target of 25 students during each year of the program term. Further, more than 200 students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade are enrolled each year in one or more of the seven different after-school offerings. Over 250 adults have participated in adult language classes on site, exceeding the target of serving 250 adults by December 2005.

In addition, the Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment component had positive unintended outcomes as well, through the offering of greater access to drug abuse treatment in an effort to reduce the demand of illegal drugs. Community pride and sense of well-being increased because of community events that provided more pro-social activities in the community, including block parties, community clean-ups, and family events at the Safe Haven. The Initiative was able to demonstrate a tremendous ability to mobilize residents on behalf of the community.



**Neighborhood Restoration**

The work of the Neighborhood Restoration component of the Weed and Seed strategy is focused on revitalizing the physical environment throughout the West Oakland target area. Revitalization includes rehabilitating distressed properties, increasing homeownership, cleaning up blighted conditions in the community that lower property values and diminish quality of life for residents.

***Goals and Objectives***

The goal of the Initiative's Neighborhood Restoration Sub-Committee was to set up a process to encourage homeownership among current residents who would otherwise continue renting in the target area. In addition to increasing the number of homeowners, the Initiative aimed to rehabilitate dilapidated West Oakland properties as well. The Initiative's goal was to assist 20 property owners obtain renovation funding.

In addition to improving the housing stock, the Initiative's Neighborhood Restoration goals included abating 10 illegal dumping grounds, and towing abandoned vehicles.

***General Strategies***

- Improve the appearance of the community and the housing stock with the help of local city agencies and community volunteers
- Create a strong homeowner base and stabilize renter mobility patterns with the help of existing home assistance programs

***Improved Appearance of Housing Stock***

Improving the appearance of the housing stock in West Oakland is more than a cosmetic concern. Improving the living environment and housing stock is instrumental in eliminating conditions that are detrimental to the health, safety, and public welfare of residents in the target area. The Initiative focused on enforcing city ordinances against blight and illegal dumping to improve public and private areas in the community.

*Code Enforcement*

In the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative, the Service Delivery System team, led by the Code Compliance Office worked together to identify and eliminate problem areas in the community. Oakland's Code Compliance Office maintained a matrix of problem properties, citizen complaints and their status. Problem Solving Officers, residents, and the Litter Enforcement Officer provided tips on properties that are not being maintained. Bi-weekly, members of the Service Delivery System team rode through the target area to see first hand the issues related to poorly maintained residences and illegal dumping.

The City of Oakland's Code Enforcement Office is responsible for the preservation and improvement of housing and property standards through enforcement of the City Code of Ordinances and Regulations. The Office of Code Enforcement prevents and abates violations on private property such as vacant, poorly maintained, and dangerous buildings, illegal dumping, weeded lots, graffiti, junk motor vehicles and more. Code enforcement can be an important way to protect existing residents.

Results over the five-year program term were as follows:

- Over 70 blighted properties and properties used as crack houses have been abated in the target area
- Six major illegal dumping sites abated
- Over 300 vehicles, often used to store drugs, were towed

*Home Rehabilitation*

In addition to cleaning up blighted areas, the Neighborhood Restoration Sub-Committee carried out smaller, local efforts to improve the community as well as larger efforts to help residents maintain and improve their property.

One of its most successful local efforts was a curb painting project. Uniformed curb painting aids in making homes more visible to emergency service providers and creates a groomed professional look for homeowners. The Sub-Committee hired several local youth to paint

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addresses numbers on the street curbs. The youth were trained by a resident and paid a modest stipend.

Residents were able to take advantage of several CEDA Housing Rehabilitation Programs: the Emergency Home Repair Program, the Lead Safe Home Program, and the Minor Home Repair Program. The program offer residents support with the following:

- Improving disability access with ramps and railings
- Help removing dangerous lead paint from the home
- Provide resources for emergency home repairs
- Provide resources for minor repairs so that they do not become bigger problems
- Provide subsidized loan for necessary home remodeling projects

Several senior citizens in the target area who have owned their homes for many years were able to take advantage of this service.

The Initiative also worked with Rebuilding Oakland Together to repaint and repair homes in the community. Rebuilding Together Oakland rehabilitates the homes of low-income elderly and disabled homeowners so they may continue to live in safety, comfort and independence. West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative collaborated with Rebuilding Oakland to sponsor community clean-ups and organized volunteers from the community to help with the repairs of elderly residents. Because of working with CEDA and Rebuilding Oakland Together, the Initiative was able to help:

Four (4) families secure major repair work done through the Community and Economic Development Agency's (CEDA) its Residential Lending Services

- Five (5) families had their homes painted through CEDA's Lead Safe Housing Paint Program
- One resident's house received access improvements to accommodate an occupant with a disability.
- Over 500 volunteers have participated in community clean ups periodically in collaboration with Rebuilding Oakland

### ***Leveraged Resources***

#### **Rebuilding Together Oakland**

Rebuilding Together Oakland (RTO) rehabilitates the homes of low-income elderly and disabled homeowners, so they may continue to live in safety, comfort and independence. RTO utilizes the hard work of skilled and unskilled volunteers, and leverages financial and in-kind donations to make these improvements at no cost to the homeowners. RTO also rehabilitates nonprofit facilities that work directly within low-income communities.

Rebuilding Together Oakland was founded in 1992 as an auxiliary program of the Center for Independent Living. In 1995, the organization was incorporated as Christmas in April Oakland and received its 501 (c)(3) nonprofit status. Rebuilding Together Oakland now operates three main programs throughout the year: the flagship April Rebuilding Program, the Block Building Program, and the Ramps Program. Utilizing volunteer labor and in-kind contributions, Rebuilding Together Oakland is able to produce a very high return - each dollar donated is leveraged to produce \$3 of added value to the community.

In 2005, Rebuilding Together Oakland contributions to the local community included:

- 34 homes rehabilitated
- 11 community facilities rehabilitated
- Renovations valued at \$1.3 million
- More than 2,700 participating volunteers

***Expanding the Homeowner Base in West Oakland***

Efforts to promote low- to moderate-income homeownership have intensified over the past ten years. The Weed and Seed strategy actively promotes homeownership because it is seen as a way to help low to moderate build wealth and assets. Homeownership not only positively impacts the individual family; it is an important element of neighborhood restoration because homeowners become more invested in their neighborhoods and are generally active in keeping their property clean and secure from property damage and blight. Yet, because of the high housing cost of real estate in the Oakland-Bay Area, few residents living in the West Oakland qualify for a home loan. Yet, this has not dampened the hopes of many residents to become homeowners; it has led to a sharp increase in sub-prime lending in which potential homeowners pay high interest rates.

Oakland's Community and Economic Development Agency (CEDA) designed its First Time Home Buyer Loan Program to help potential homeowners in the West Oakland target area avoid less than desirable loans and to qualify for federal subsidies. The Community and Economic Development Agency has been offering residents homeownership education and counseling as well as financial literacy education. The agency, in collaboration with Washington Mutual Bank, offers several free First Time Homebuyer Seminar through its West Oakland Homeownership Assistance Center. At the seminar, participants learn:

- How the home buying process works
- How to qualify for assistance
- How to determine what price home one can afford
- Overview of special financing programs available to first time home buyers
- Credit analysis and counseling
- Overview of the loan application process
- Complimentary pre-approval

West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative in collaboration with the Community and Economic Development Agency helped approximately nine families secure loans for homes in the target area. This number fell short of the target of 20 families set at the outset of the Initiative, but still represents a positive accomplishment as there are now more new home owners in the target area.

It will be important to continue to build the number of new homeowners in West Oakland. As the homeowners in West Oakland grow older, not only will they need help with property upkeep, but other community organizations, civic associations, and agencies will need to ensure that younger homeowners move in the target area to take their place. Otherwise, it is highly likely that absentee property owners will buy these properties and turn them into substandard rental property that promote rather than inhibit drug related activity.

***Neighborhood Restoration Challenges***

A major challenge in actualizing the target numbers originally set for this goal is the lack of any mechanism to monitor or track those interested in homeownership. Strategies designed to offer a more hands-on assistance might be necessary since many residents may find it hard to qualify for loans based on their income, and maybe in need of credit counseling or may need to save for a down payment. One can become easily discouraged without support. The original strategic plan called for the Initiative to provide one-on-one consultations to interested potential homeowners, but it is not clear whether the Neighborhood Restoration Sub-Committee established a process to monitor residents who went through the CEDA process and offer continued type of support.

In order to realize greater homeownership in the Weed and Seed target area, there will need to be a more explicit strategy for shepherding homebuyers through the process. In addition, the Initiative will need to find community-based partners who are capable of providing on-going support to new homeowners who may not be prepared for the increased demands of servicing a mortgage, planning for on-going home maintenance, or dealing with unanticipated repairs. Without support, new low- to moderate-income homeowners are at high risk of foreclosure.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative is nearing the end of its funding cycle as an active Weed and Seed site. In order to continue to benefit from and build on the work of the past five years, the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative will need to lend further attention to the development of a strategic sustainability plan to integrate many of the various programs, relationships, and activities in the fabric of existing community. The Initiative's steering committee members have a clear understanding that the goal of sustainability is not met when organizations simply go back to doing what they did before they joined the Weed and Seed effort. Rather, sustainability of the West Oakland Weed and Seed strategy means the Steering Committee must continue to maintain collaborative relationships with collaborating organizations and civic groups; changing the way they operate by "institutionalizing" Weed and Seed strategic efforts. The Weed and Seed Steering Committee must also continue to help its partners readily identify what has worked well and determine how to incorporate these facets into its standard operating procedures.

While the Initiative's Steering Committee has discussed the need to develop a sustainability plan, members have not yet devoted substantial time to this task. The development a sustainability plan should involve assessing past performance of programs and services offered through the various Weed and Seed collaborations, identifying potential gaps in service once funding ends, and expanding the base of collaborative partners to fill these gaps. The Steering Committee will have to devote considerable time in the coming months to this task in order to produce a viable plan.

A sustainability plan should strive to do the following and address the accompanying questions:

- **Maintain an effective operating structure.** The foundation for sustainability involves institutionalizing some of the new ways agencies have collaborated and coordinated efforts. This infrastructure must live somewhere beyond Weed and Seed funding. The first step is to maintain the Steering Committee as a mechanism for ongoing implementation of the strategy beyond the life of the grant although its primary purpose and function will shift.

What will be the focus of the Steering Committee's work if there are not funds to distribute or budgets to oversee? The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative Steering Committee will have to re-define its work beyond the funding period.

- **Demonstrate a commitment to addressing unmet community needs.** Even though the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative is near the end of its funding cycle and has done a summative evaluation of its programming, there is a need for ongoing assessments of unmet needs in the target area, with continuing refinement of service delivery efforts and problem solving.

How will the Initiative continue to engage past partners on future efforts to address unmet needs when there is no money on the table? What incentives will help sustain the commitment of local agencies, community-based organizations and residents?

- **Secure ongoing resources to support strategies.** The Initiative will need to identify potential sources of funding to continue to support some efforts already underway such as activities at the Safe Haven site, as well as future programs in the community. The Initiative must identify and secure commitments of in-kind contributions, as well as restricted and unrestricted grant funds that complement the Weed and Seed strategy. The ability to do so is the key to sustainability.

## **CONCLUSION**

Since the beginning of the program, the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative fully embraced the Weed and Seed philosophy and strategy. The Initiative capitalized on the fact that the City of Oakland has begun to integrate the Weed and Seed strategy into many parts of the city government, from its Service Delivery System team to its Oakland Police Department's Juvenile Delinquency Plan. The West Oakland steering committee has taken full advantage of existing structures created from past initiatives and strengthened by current federal programs such as Project Public Safe Neighborhoods, and other programs. Consequently, the Initiative has had a greater reach and stronger impact on the West Oakland neighborhoods being served.

The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative has made significant progress toward its original goals, even though the goals have evolved over the program term. Analysis of programmatic



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and crime data indicate that drug-related arrests have been reduced and resident participation has increased. It appears that the efforts of West Oakland Police Problem Solving officers, the Initiative steering committee members and partners have contributed to some important short-term improvements in Beats 6 and 7, to name a few:

- Most drug-related arrests are down over pre-Weed and Seed levels
- Approximately a dozen hotspots where drugs are openly bought and sold have been eliminated in the West Oakland target area
- Residents are more inclined to share information about drug activity in their community
- Over 1,500 parents, children and other community members have participated in various events sponsored by the Safe Haven at Hoover Healthy Start Collaborative.
- Several blighted properties have been reclaimed, rehabilitated and put on the market
- More integrated mental health and drug treatment services for West Oakland residents

The next steps for the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative will be to translate these gains into successful long-term revitalization for the community. This means the next phase of the Initiative's work must focus on institutionalization – determine what works and make it a permanent part of the way West Oakland community-based organizations, associations, and businesses carry out their services.

This will necessitate the steering committee, sub-committees and partners working together to reflect on what worked over the past five years and develop a strategic sustainability plan during the coming year. Sustaining momentum for a broad-based community sustainability plan is often difficult, as issues, people, and priorities change.

Equally important to the success of the West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative has been its collaborative leadership model – residents, community agencies, and the Oakland Police Department working together. The West Oakland Weed and Seed Initiative is well positioned to continue its successful collaboration among law enforcement, prosecutors, social service agencies, community residents, and other neighborhood stakeholders based on the foundations laid during the past five years.