

**PALM BEACH COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

Meeting Date: 05/23/06

[ ] Consent [ ] Regular  
[X] Workshop [ ] Public Hearing

Department:

Submitted By: PALM BEACH COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

Submitted For: PALM BEACH COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

**I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF**

**MOTION AND TITLE:** Staff requests Board direction on the Criminal Justice Commission's recommendation for implementation of the Youth Violence Prevention Project.

**SUMMARY:** On February 15, 2005, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) directed the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) to develop a Youth Violence Prevention Project which would address the increase in violent firearms crimes. A Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee was formed to bring local agencies together to create a comprehensive youth violence reduction program. The five targeted areas that became evident through violent crime mapping (GIS) analysis include Riviera Beach, West Palm Beach, Lake Worth, Boynton Beach, and Belle Glade.

The CJC recommends implementation of a Youth Empowerment Center with programs for teens and an Adult Justice Service Center with programs to be established for young adults on probation or re-entering from prison in each of the five targeted violent crime areas. The project emphasizes education and law enforcement strategies.

The CJC recommends implementation of one site at a time over the next three years. Funding for the Project will be shared among the county, municipality, and other funding sources. The targeted area (municipality) providing the highest level of financial commitment will be selected as the first site.

Countywide (DW)

**BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION:** Upon Board direction creation of a Youth Violence Prevention Planning Steering Committee to coordinate and research the development of a Youth Violence Prevention Project (Attachment 1). Palm Beach County experienced and continues to see a rash of shootings, generating tremendous concern on the part of the Board of County Commissioners, Criminal Justice Commission members, local law enforcement, educators and the community.

The CJC utilized a national model created by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. A comprehensive approach was developed using the research

compiled by Florida State University (Attachment 2) and by involving professionals from the criminal justice system, education, and human services, and local youth. Florida State University, Center for Public Policy in Criminal Justice, assimilated and analyzed local violent crime data which demonstrates, after a decline from 1994-2002, a significant increase in murders and firearms crimes. Four subcommittees, including crime prevention, law enforcement, courts and corrections, developed a strategic plan. A Youth Workgroup was formed with 25 youth from various areas of the county. The Workgroup surveyed over 500 youth, including juveniles in jail and on Department of Juvenile Justice probation. The recommendations made by the Workgroup have been incorporated into the overall plan. The research supports that a multi-agency comprehensive approach is the most effective. The project incorporates the model programs and the recommendations from the Subcommittees.

The components are:

1. **Crime Prevention:**

The establishment of a Youth Empowerment Center in each targeted area that provides activities and services to youth ages 13-18, including after school programs and activities, tutoring/mentoring, job training for in school and out of school youth, information on resources, gang prevention outreach, parenting classes, employment services, Safe Schools Programs and transportation.

2. **Law Enforcement:**

The law enforcement strategies are:

- a. Provide training for all law enforcement agencies on the collection of evidence by standardization of evidence collection policies, procedures and training
- b. Utilization of the newer technology "license plate recognition cameras" in each of the targeted areas
- c. Community oriented police officer in each targeted area
- d. Ad campaigns utilizing bus shelters and billboards to assist in cold case investigations, provide crime prevention tips, and to make people aware of the penalties for gun crimes
- e. Gun safety programs, including working with gun dealers to better secure the firearms
- f. Multi-Agency Task Forces
  - i. Violent Crimes Task Force
  - ii. Joint operations with Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives

3. **Courts:**

The strategies for the Courts component are designed to divert youth from the juvenile justice system and provide the judiciary with additional sanctions. Extend Youth Court within each targeted area. Aggression Replacement Therapy (ART) established as a specialized program for violent juvenile offenders. ART provides an alternative treatment program to stem the violence at an earlier age. Initiate judicial training on ways to involve the parents more in the judicial process to reduce the likelihood of recidivism. Fund new prosecutor to handle all gun crimes to work with

law enforcement on the prosecution of gun crimes.

**4. Corrections:**

Establish an Adult Justice Service Center in each targeted area to provide assistance to juvenile and adult offenders. The Adult Justice Service Center provides services either on-site or through referrals. These services include employment, substance abuse, mental health, legal assistance, re-entry assistance, life skills, and probation sanction assistance. (See Attachment 4) Youth Empowerment Centers and Adult Justice Service Centers in the five targeted areas would incorporate all four components of the plan.

Educational programs such as Safe Schools and Career Academies, and law enforcement strategies except for the cameras and the community oriented police officer, would be countywide. Each targeted area will have an Advisory Board of residents and a Teen/Youth Council. For each area, a Memorandum of Understanding will describe the participation of the local government, human service agencies, foundations and other funding sources. The centers in the targeted areas will be phased-in over three years based on the level of commitment and readiness of the sites. The CJC should maintain oversight until all sites have been established.