

Mayor's SAFE Orlando Task Force

Dr. Stanley H. Stone, Chairman

Final Report to the Mayor

September 2007

This report may be accessed on the website of the Task Force at
<http://www.cityoforlando.net/elected/safety/presentations.htm>

Task Force Chairman Dr. Stanley Stone may be contacted at sstone@valenciacc.edu

Dear Mayor Dyer,

On behalf of the Mayor's SAFE Orlando Task Force, I am pleased to present you with our final report. The "Mayor's SAFE Orlando Task Force Final Report" was unanimously adopted by the Task Force.

Last fall you charged the 26 member Task Force to develop proactive initiatives that would help reverse the current trend of rising violent crime rates and enhance community safety. We believe that our work and recommendations contained in the Final Report accomplish that mission.

The Final Report represents the tireless efforts and wealth of experience of the diverse Task Force membership. Its recommendations also reflect this broad, community-based group of dedicated volunteers. For that reason, you will notice that the recommendations address key components of our entire criminal justice system, and not just those directly related to the City of Orlando.

To accomplish our work, the Task Force formed three subcommittees: Prevention, Law Enforcement and Re-integration. Each subcommittee operated under the premise that they were to seek solutions to the underlying root causes of violent crime and not to confine themselves to merely reducing crime and its resulting consequences.

The Task Force and its subcommittees met with leaders in their respective fields of the criminal justice system, conducted extensive research, and examined best practices in Florida and other states. The Task Force also solicited input from the public in order to learn firsthand how violent crime is impacting our citizens, and also to ensure that our recommendations conformed to community expectations.

The product of these efforts is a Final Report that consists of 36 primary recommendations. Some of the recommendations may be initiated immediately; indeed, I am pleased to report that 24 of them are already underway. Others will require substantial effort and resources to implement. Many of the recommendations will only succeed through strong partnerships among the City of Orlando, Orange County, local school districts, other government agencies, local business and civic organizations, faith-based institutions, and the nonprofit sector. All of the recommendations will require strong advocacy on the part of City leaders and the community partners.

While leadership from your office and the Orlando City Council is essential to the success of our proposed initiatives, one of the fundamental lessons we learned is that responsibility for reducing violent crime cannot rest entirely on the shoulders of government and law enforcement. Providing for a safe and sustainable hometown is the responsibility of the entire community. Everyone who calls Orlando home must be empowered to play an active and constructive role in keeping Orlando safe and secure.

We believe that the Final Report establishes a framework for guiding the City of Orlando and its citizens to reach such an outcome. Under your leadership, and that of the City Council, the members of Mayor's SAFE Orlando Task Force look forward to Orlando becoming the safest city in America.

Dr. Stanley H. Stone
Vice President for Human Resources & Diversity
Valencia Community College
Chairman, Mayor's Safe Orlando Task Force

Mayor's SAFE Orlando Task Force Members

Dr. Stanley H. Stone, *Chairman*

Prevention Subcommittee

Margaret Anglin, *Chair*
Mary Maxwell, *Vice Chair*
Father Miguel Gonzalez
Arrington Hicks
Rev. Charles Jackson
Beverlye Neal
Ramon Ojeda
Robert Pickerill
Annetta Wilson

Law Enforcement Subcommittee

Rev. Randall James, *Chair*
Greg Clendenin
David Glick
Douglas Kelly
Kelly Klatt
Ann Brown Payne
The Hon. Belvin Perry, Jr.
Randy Tuten

Re-Integration Subcommittee

Brandy Hand, *Chair*
Rev. Willie Barnes
Jerry Demings
Sarah Kelly
Dr. E. Lance McCarthy
Ronald Rogers
Martha Wright
Dean Louis Zayas

City Support Staff

Byron Brooks
Lisa Early
Jessica Eson
Marcia Hope Goodwin
Captain Jeffrey Goltz
Walter Hawkins
Officer Jessica Ingoglia
Brenda March
Reggie McGill
Attorney Natasha Permaul
Captain Charles Robinson
Kathy Russell
Captain Frank Smith
Captain Larry Zwieng

Volunteer Support Staff

Mercedes Bigelow
Dr. Jay Corzine
Dr. Lin Huff-Corzine
Mary Beth Elkins
Walter Gallagher
Dr. Joshua Kirven
Ken Swann

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Executive Summary

Last year, like many cities across our nation, Orlando experienced a troubling rise in violent crime. The number of homicides more than doubled, increasing from 22 in 2005 to 49 in 2006. Mayor Buddy Dyer immediately stepped forward and pledged that he would do everything within his power as Mayor to stop this current trend.

To succeed in this mission, Mayor Dyer engaged all the talent and expertise of the Orlando community by setting up a broad-based, community centered strategic partnership. The Mayor's SAFE Orlando Task Force was composed of a wide variety of Orlando's citizens including business owners, educators, community advocates, the Chief Judge of the Ninth Judicial Circuit, current and retired law enforcement officials, attorneys, and leaders of faith-based organizations.

Mayor Dyer charged the 26 member Task Force with developing proactive initiatives to address the current trend of rising violent crime and enhance community safety in all neighborhoods. He asked that they report back to him in 120 days: this was later extended by 60 days.

The Task Force members quickly realized there was no "quick fix", no single solution existed, and that they would have to explore the underlying complex factors causing violent crimes. To better address these issues, the Task Force created three subcommittees: Prevention, Law Enforcement and Re-integration.

The Prevention Subcommittee addressed issues causing the surge in youth violence and made recommendations to keep at-risk youth away from "lives of crime." The Law Enforcement Subcommittee developed strategies to improve community-policing efforts and enhance law enforcement patrols. The Re-integration Subcommittee examined the "revolving door" of criminal life and programs to assist ex-offenders to successfully re-enter the Orlando community.

The Mayor's SAFE Orlando Task Force, as well as its subcommittees, met with numerous program leaders, conducted extensive research and analysis and held public forums to gather input from citizens. With the information gathered from meetings, presentations and best practices, the Task Force developed 36 recommendations that were presented to Mayor Dyer and the City Council in a workshop on March 26, 2007. Some of the recommendations presented could be initiated immediately and are underway, while others might require substantial effort and resources to implement.

One of the fundamental lessons learned from the Task Force's findings is that the responsibility for reducing violent crime cannot, and should not rest entirely on the shoulders of government and law enforcement. Reducing crime and providing for a safe and sustainable city is the responsibility of the entire community. Each and every citizen must feel and be empowered to play an active and constructive role in keeping their hometown safe and crime free.

Therefore, the Task Force recommendations were developed with the understanding that the many integral parts of the Orlando community must work together to ensure increased public safety. Many recommendations require collaborations with the City of Orlando, the business community, faith based organizations, Orange County Government, Orange County Public Schools, and the State of Florida. To be successfully implemented, all of the recommendations will require strong advocacy from City leaders and all other collaborators.

The Task Force recommendations are arranged into three categories: Short term, Intermediate, and Long Term. Short term recommendations should begin development within 1 year. Intermediate recommendations should begin development between 1 and 3 years. Long Term recommendations should begin development within 5 years.

Currently 24 have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. The recommendations that have begun to be implemented are highlighted.

Short Term Recommendations

Prevention Subcommittee

- **Implement a community wide public safety mass media marketing campaign**
 - **Work with local media outlets to engage them to become part of the solution rather than just reporting criminal activity**
 - Develop a social marketing campaign to modify criminal behaviors and educate the community on crime prevention
- **Encourage business and community partnerships to address crime prevention and eliminate barriers created by economic poverty**
- **Ensure the availability of adult-supervised after school activities for all students**
 - Expand existing after school and mentoring programs
 - Solidify efforts to engage youth in Parramore via the Parramore Kidz Zone Project
- **Increase focus on the impact of faith-based organizations and job partnerships**
- Implement effective in-school suspension programs
- Establish educational scholarship programs for high-risk youth

Law Enforcement Subcommittee

- **Continue use of Patrol Tactical (TAC) Squads**
- **Partner with and assist SHO-CAP and JAM Unit to conduct unannounced spot-checks on serious, habitual offenders**
- **Continue the Citizens United for Safe Neighborhoods Initiative to build community relations**

Re-Integration Subcommittee

- **Secure funding to create a Re-Entry Council**
- **Secure funding through the Re-Entry Council to open a permanent HELP (Helping Ex-Offenders Live Productively) Center**

- Advocate for legislation implementing the Governor’s Ex-Offender Task Force recommendations

Intermediate Recommendations

Prevention Subcommittee

- Establish more incentive based youth and adult literacy programs
- Establish family-support-model pilot based on the Healthy Families America Program which will support families of school aged children
- Provide more effective life management skills classes for at-risk youth both in school and in the community
- Expand the OPD Super Kids and GREAT Programs
- Ensure availability of information on domestic violence in dating relationships to all middle and high school students
- Re-Establish OPD’s Gang Prevention Unit

Law Enforcement Subcommittee

- Re-Establish Community Policing (COP) Initiatives
- Re-district patrol divisions to redistribute “first responder” workload for increased proactive activities
- Implement an Illegal Gun Bounty Program
- Increase recruitment and incentives for hiring sworn police officers

Re-Integration Subcommittee

- Re-Entry Council to support and assist Faith Based Organizations in securing funding for the development of transitional housing
- Re-Entry Council to identify and recommend funding sources and opportunities to enhance existing local re-entry programs and to develop new programs to address unmet needs

Long Term Recommendations

Prevention Subcommittee

- Establish Teen Advisory Boards in communities

- **Fully utilize the Teen Court and other existing diversion programs**
- Establish a crime prevention council and coordinator

Law Enforcement Subcommittee

- **Establish a Central Patrol District**
- **Establish a “First Responder” initiative of bike officers to patrol the downtown area**
- Add staffing to the Uniform Drug Squad to increase their effectiveness in the enforcement of drug related laws
- Research the feasibility of implementing an impact fee for police services

Re-Integration Subcommittee

- Re-Entry council to secure funding and begin operation of mobile Mini-HELP Centers
- Re-Entry Council to secure funding for expansion of services including additional permanent HELP Centers

General Recommendations

- The Mayor’s SAFE Orlando Task Force shall reconvene in twelve months to assess the progress made and to offer continued support in the implementation of its recommendations.
- The Mayor shall continue to work with the Chair of the Task Force, Dr. Stone, and the Orlando Police Chief, Mike McCoy as needed.
- The City of Orlando shall develop a strong partnership with Orange County Government, local school districts, other governmental agencies, local business and civic organizations, faith based institutions, the non-profit sector and, most of all, the Orlando community.
- The Orlando Police Department shall update the Task Force through Dr. Stone on activities which support or challenge the recommendations.

Introduction to the Report

Establishment and Appointment of the Task Force

In August 2006, Mayor Buddy Dyer established the Mayor's SAFE Orlando Task Force in response to the increase of violent crime in the City of Orlando. Mayor Dyer tapped the talent and expertise of a broad cross section of business and community leaders to identify specific ways to: a. prevent crime; b. use police resources more effectively; c. stop repeat offenders. Mayor Dyer appointed Dr. Stanley H. Stone, Director of Human Resources and Diversity at Valencia Community College as chairman, based on his performance as chair of two previous task forces related to law enforcement issues.

The 26 appointed members brought a wealth of talent and experience to the Task Force. Membership included the Chief Judge of the Ninth Judicial Circuit, the Metropolitan Orlando Urban League, leaders of faith-based organizations, Orange County Director of Public Safety, members of the hotel and tourism industry, local business leaders, former police officers, neighborhood associations, community advocates, educators, representatives from the NAACP, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Minority/Women Business Alliance.

The Task Force was supported by an equally diverse group of city staff and dedicated community volunteers. They included representatives from the City of Orlando's Mayor's Office, Police Department, as well as City Departments of Economic Development, Families, Parks and Recreation, Neighborhood and Community Affairs, as well as local attorneys, probation officers, educators, ex-offenders, directors of public service agencies, public safety officials and ex-offenders.

Drs. Lin Huff-Corzine and Jay Corzine of the University of Central Florida, provided invaluable expertise to the work of the Task Force.

Goal of the Task Force

Research, identify and recommend proactive initiatives to address violent crime and enhance community safety.

Objectives of the Task Force

The main objectives of the SAFE Orlando Task Force were to:

- analyze current trends of criminal activity
- identify root causes and risk factors contributing to violent crime
- assess existing community resources, gaps in services and disconnects
- review best practices and model programs

- define the community “call to action “ to empower everyone to play an active and constructive role to reduce crime
- make recommendations for proper allocation of government and community-based resources, services and programs and create additional ones, if needed.

Work of the Task Force

Marilyn Crotty, Director of the Florida Institute of Government at the University of Central Florida assisted the Task Force in identifying over thirty issues that impact public safety (Appendix A). The Task Force decided that the best way to address these complex issues was to organize them under the components of Prevention, Enforcement, and Re-integration.

Many issues, such as community attitudes towards law enforcement, were assigned to all three categories. Others were assigned to just one. At the conclusion of the workshop it was agreed that the Task Force would create three subcommittees based on Prevention, Law Enforcement and Re-integration.

The three subcommittees worked diligently to address those identified issues by assessing current programs and gaps in services, examining best practices and model programs within the state as well as the nation. They regularly reported their findings to the full Task Force.

Each subcommittee recommended specific strategies, including short term, intermediate and long term goals, to be considered for implementation.

During the 180 day process, the Task Force met ten times. In addition to those full Task Force meetings the Prevention Subcommittee met ten times, the Re-integration Subcommittee met eleven times and the Law Enforcement Subcommittee met three times.

On January 10, 2007, the Task Force held a public forum located at the John H. Jackson Community Center. The Task Force members heard testimony and suggestions from more than thirty community members residing in all areas of Orlando. Task Force members also actively participated in Mayor Dyer’s seven Public Safety Information Series that were held in each district.

During their meetings, the members of the Mayor’s SAFE Orlando Task Force met with and reviewed more than forty service providers, programs and best practices. These meetings included Task Force meetings as well as subcommittee meetings. After careful considerations and thorough deliberations, the Task Force developed **36 recommendations** to prevent and reduce violent crime. These recommendations were presented to Mayor Dyer and the City Council at a workshop on March 26, 2007.

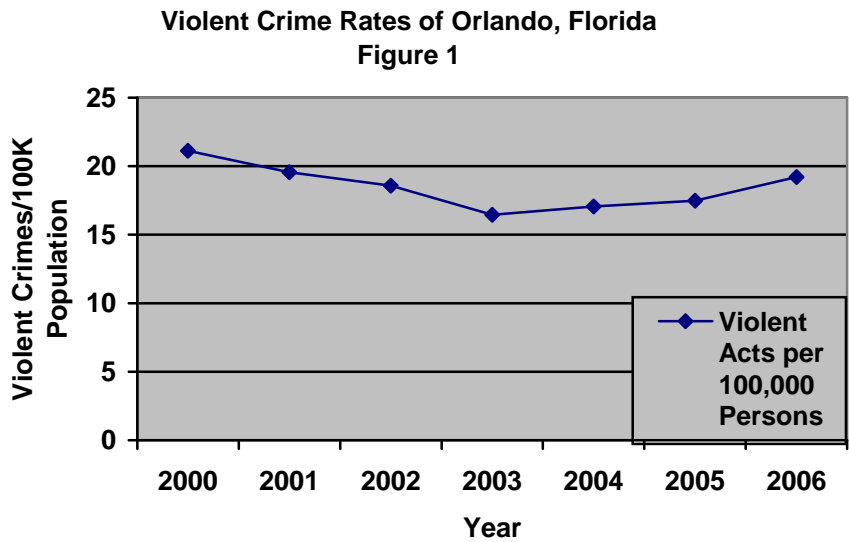
Organization of the Report

This report contains the Task Force's key findings, its endorsements of new and enhanced programs and initiatives and its recommendations. The body of the report contains the three subcommittee reports that have been divided into three chapters: Prevention, Law Enforcement, and Re-integration.

The addendum lists the progress to date on the implementation of the Task Force's 36 recommendations. The appendices contain a list of the identified root causes impacting violent crime, and a list of service providers, individuals, programs and best practices examined by the Task Force.

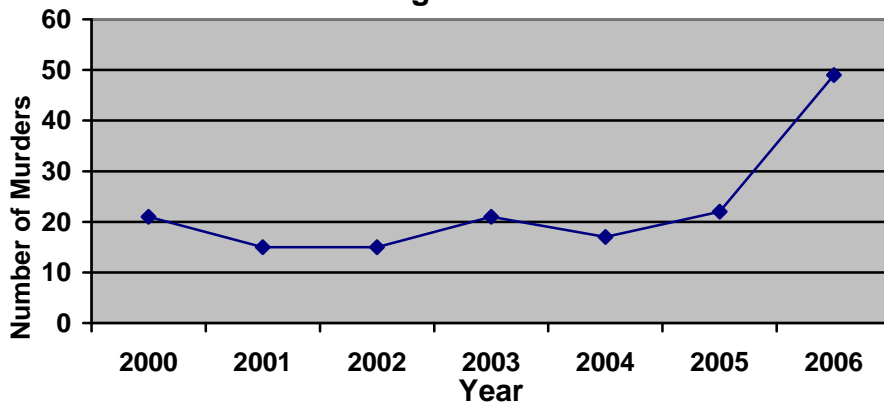
Crime Overview

Like so many other major American cities, Orlando experienced a rise in violent crime in 2006. Although there were some decreases in violent crimes, there were noticeable surges in homicides and robberies. This trend was not limited to adult offenders; there was also an increase in the number of youthful offenders committing violent crimes. As indicated in Figure 1, rates of violent crime had been declining overall in Orlando since 2000, falling from 21.11 acts of violence per 100,000 persons to 17.47 per 100,000. This trend reversed in 2006, when the violence rate increased to 19.21 per 100,000. It should be noted that these figures are still lower than the violent crime rate in 2000. Also these figures are based solely on residential population and do not take into consideration the City's large influx of tourist and visitors.

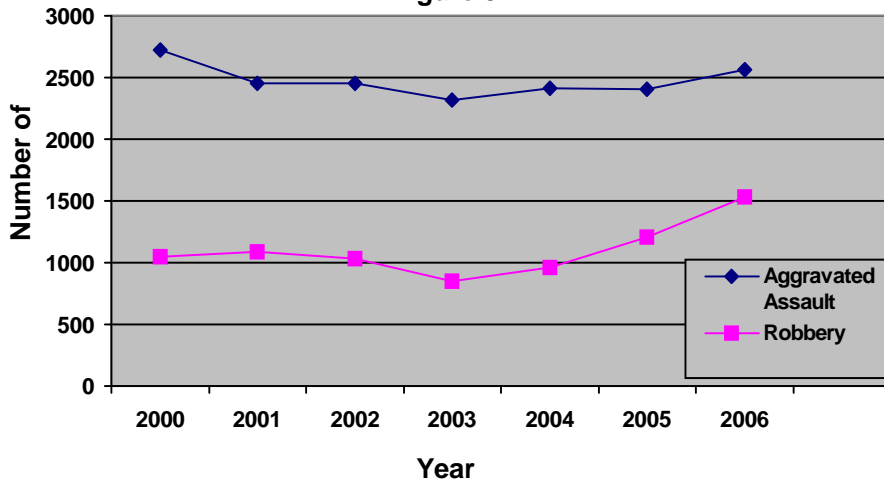


The upward violent crime in Orlando not only included murders, but also robbery, and aggravated assault. The trends in these specific violent crimes can be seen in Figures 2 and 3. As indicated, murders increased from 22 to 49, robberies rose from 1204 to 1528, and aggravated assaults increased from 2410 to 2560. Overall violent acts rose from 3801 to 4300 between 2005 and 2006.

Murders in Orlando
Figure 2



Robberies and Aggravated Assaults in Orlando
Figure 3



Adult violence in our nation has spread to young people. Numerous cities are reporting increases in gang violence, and violence against youth perpetrated by youth. Of the homicides in 2006, young people were often the primary victims and suspects. Of 46 murder suspects 18 (39.1%) were under the age of 21.

Of additional concern is the fact that the over-representation of people age 20 and under is due to the likelihood of their participation in murders involving more than one suspect. The 18 individuals under age 21 were involved in nine separate incidents. Additionally, Orange County saw an increase of 75% in juveniles referred for murder, an increase of 60% in juveniles referred for attempted murder, and an increase of 96% in juveniles referred for armed robbery. The number of juveniles transferred to the Adult Court system in Orange County increased by 39.3% in 2006.

Chapter One: Prevention

Methodology:

The Prevention Subcommittee met ten times to develop strategies to prevent violent crime in Orlando. The subcommittee initially focused on children up to the age of 18, but expanded its focus to young adults and some community-wide prevention initiatives.

In addition, the Prevention Subcommittee identified five areas of concern that must be addressed in order to create a safe environment for children and families to thrive:

- Intervening to disrupt early patterns of antisocial behavior and negative peer influences;
- Building assets in children, adults and the community;
- Identifying effective local programs and ensuring their sustainability and possible enhancement/expansion;
- Reducing poverty and increasing family economic stability; and
- Holding individuals accountable for their behaviors and the behaviors of their children.

Priorities:

The Prevention Subcommittee defined its priorities from the prevention list developed during the workshop facilitated by Marilyn Crotty as:

- **Attitude** - Respect for the law, respect for others and respect for criminal justice officials
- **Education** - Pre-School, Public school, home and community based, government and non-profit agency programs/resources
- **Neighborhoods/Community** - Crime prevention, faith-based involvement and community involvement

Research and Findings:

Research indicates that children who have positive adult role models in their lives are less likely to engage in criminal behaviors than children who do not have positive adult role models to count on. Many children in our communities who become involved in criminal behavior do not receive effective parenting nor have positive adults as role models in their lives. Recognizing this deficiency, most of the subcommittee's recommendations have parenting, mentoring or other positive adult involvement as a component.

Additional research shows that children need to be actively engaged in learning to respect and care about their schools. Schools provide an opportunity for many positive learning and social activities for children, therefore the subcommittee also recommended a number of school-based initiatives.

There is a high correlation between crime and poverty. One recommendation has been made in this area, but while reducing poverty results in crime prevention, the subcommittee decided that more research is needed to formulate viable recommendations. Generally, economic development opportunities that lift families out of poverty through partnerships with the business community, along with effective re-entry programs, are vital.

Research has showed that a large percentage of criminals in our jails and prisons come from violent homes. Therefore, children who have been abused or who live in homes where there is domestic violence are at particularly high risk for violent behavior. The need for comprehensive services for this population is very important.

Short Term Recommendations

1. Implement a community wide public safety mass media marketing campaign

The committee recognizes that the causes of crime are varied and complicated; therefore a comprehensive community response will be necessary to truly prevent violent crime. To that end, the subcommittee recommends two media strategies:

- a. Mayor Dyer and Chairman Stone convene a meeting with the general managers of local television stations and the editors of local newspapers to urge them to become part of the solution, rather than just reporting on violent crime incidents. These media outlets should be asked to cover not just the criminal acts, but also the causes of crime, the recommendations of the Task Force, information on successful efforts of programs and individuals to end crime, and request community members to help address the problem. For example, the efforts by the GREAT program and the Jobs Partnership of Central Florida Program could be highlighted.

One of the ideas for community empowerment is to keep the issue of public safety at the forefront as a primary community concern. To serve as a model for that recommendation the City and the Chamber of Commerce and other community organizations could set aside 10 minutes of every meeting to discuss public safety issues. The media campaign would aim to raise awareness about what individuals, businesses, organizations, and others can do and are doing to take personal responsibility for preventing and reducing crime.

- b. Develop a social marketing campaign that would be aimed at changing the behavior of the perpetrators of crimes. This strategy has worked with the

Truth Campaign in Florida, which reduced cigarette smoking in teens. In addition, the Cease Fire program in Chicago, which in a coordinated community response to violence, has at its core a strong social marketing campaign around the slogan “Don’t Shoot.” They reduced gun violence by 69% in the first year as a result of this campaign.¹ In addition, materials are distributed throughout the community constantly notifying high-risk individuals of viable alternative opportunities. Pressure against illegal gun possession and use has increased within the community and norms are changing about gun use. All shootings within the community, after notification by the media, are countered with rapid, coordinated, and sustained responses by the residents, clergy and police. “*Social marketing is a research-based process that adapts proven marketing tactics to raise awareness, change attitudes, beliefs and in the end, social behaviors.*” It is not the traditional Public Service Announcement, or information sharing.

2.1.* **Encouraging business and community partnerships to address crime prevention and barriers of economic poverty**

The rising crime rates are a problem for the entire Orlando community, not just the specific areas where most of the crimes are occurring. To address this community problem, the business community must be a major partner.

The subcommittee recommends that Mayor Dyer and Chairman Stone convene a meeting with local businesses and community partnerships to address strategies to prevent crime and remove barriers for economic sustainability. Some of the ideas addressed in the subcommittee were to urge businesses to offer child care services for wage workers, assist their employees in becoming aware of available services, and distribute information pertaining to those services, and donating time and money to the media campaign and existing programs and services.

2.2.* **Ensure the availability of adult-supervised after school activities for all elementary, middle and high school students**

In order for children to resist negative peer influences and to not engage in antisocial behavior they need healthy activities in a supervised setting before and after school and on the weekends. Parents, for a variety of reasons, are not always able to provide these activities and supervision. Therefore, a variety of resources for our City’s youngest residents must be made available.

a. **Expand promising after school programs in high crime neighborhoods**

Examples include the Village House Program run by the Center for Drug Free Living, the Police Athletic League (PAL) and others. Utilizing the Citizens

¹ <http://www.ceasefirechicago.org>

* The subcommittee viewed both recommendations in 2.1 and 2.2 to be of equal importance

Review Panel process, increase City funding allocated to non-profit organizations, and target the investment of these funds to organizations that will expand their youth development and after school programs, for youth ages 12 – 21, residing in high crime neighborhoods.

b. **Expand mentoring programs**

Currently, Orlando children benefit from a large variety of mentoring programs. These include mentoring opportunities at Orange County Public schools, including a handful of schools that employ full time mentor coordinators, an established Big Brothers Big Sisters program, and a wide range of businesses and churches that encourage their employees to serve as mentors.

c. **Expand the City's after school programs for middle school youth, and begin serving high school youth**

This should be initiated through the collaborative efforts of the City's Families, Parks and Recreation Department and the After School All-Stars program. The City has identified the following community centers and schools that would be priority sites for expanded and enhanced after school youth programming:

- i. Dr. J.B. Callahan Neighborhood Center
- ii. John H. Jackson Community Center
- iii. Rosemont Community Center
- iv. Northwest Community Center
- v. Englewood Neighborhood Center
- vi. Jones High School

As part of the expansion, After School All Stars, which currently operates programs at all middle schools within the City, would expand the programs at Howard and Stonewall Jackson Middle Schools, and begin operating teen programs at Jones High School and the aforementioned City of Orlando community centers. The program has been initiated at the Dr. J. B. Callahan Neighborhood Center.

The City strongly supports mentoring via its Apple Core program wherein, in partnership with Orange County Public Schools, City employees are allowed to volunteer one hour a week as mentors at school sites. Despite these existing programs, local mentoring programs typically have to contend with more children who need mentors and not enough available adults to assign to them. Therefore, a City-led public awareness initiative needs to be developed to encourage adults to serve as mentors, particularly African-American men.

d. **Continue the pilot project to engage youth in Parramore via the Parramore Kidz Zone project**

These efforts should be expanded in other high crime City neighborhoods, replicating the Roving Leader (RL) program, which has been employed effectively by several recreation departments around the country. Staff would work on the streets in high crime neighborhoods, reaching out to youth who are particularly vulnerable to gangs, drugs, violence and alcohol to build trusting relationships with these youth, guide them into healthy lifestyles and help them make good choices for the future. The RLs provide youths with access to a variety of resources for athletic activities, community service projects, field trips, teen dances, arts initiatives, special events, movie nights, leadership development and team-building exercises, etc. with youth taking the lead in planning and executing these activities. In communities where the program has operated, Roving Leaders have provided structure, encouragement, and personal attention to the participants, while serving as positive role models, and have been credited with significant reductions in juvenile crime.

3. **Increased focus on the impact of faith-based organizations and job partnerships**

The subcommittee recognized that the faith-based community plays a significant role in the prevention and reduction of crime. The subcommittee recommends that the City assist faith-based organizations and Job Partnerships of Florida to assist low-wage workers, the unemployed and their families. Many faith-based organizations are already providing these services but need additional resources to maximize their efforts.

The subcommittee recommends that faith-based organizations be encouraged to expand efforts such as “homework rooms” where children can go after school to receive help with homework, an after school snack and a safe place to work. These partnerships can provide the city with additional spaces and volunteers for after-school programs

The mission of the Jobs Partnership of Florida is to adequately equip people for a productive life. It is proposed that the model for a Life and Work class be developed through a collaborative effort between local churches, businesses and community organizations. The church provides a safe place to learn, inspiring instructors, faith-based curriculum, and trained mentors and counselors for support. The community partners offer expert employability skills instructors, vouchers for continuing education, transportation assistance, and removal of barriers to employment. The business partners could offer commitment to recruit qualified Life and Work program graduates, access to job listings for career opportunities, better starting wages and recruiting at the Life and Work Job Fair.

4. **Implement effective in-school suspension programs and eliminate out-of-school suspension programs**

Many children at highest risk for committing crimes are often left unsupervised in their neighborhoods. Last year, 80% of the juvenile offenders processed through the Juvenile Assessment Center had been suspended from school and end up on the streets.

Between August 8, 2006 and January 21, 2007 Orange County Public Schools suspended over 32,000 students. From this number it is estimated that OCPS will suspend approximately 60,000 students in the 2006-2007 school year. It is recommended that the less serious offenders (i.e. youths not involved in serious bodily harm to others) be kept in school through an In-School Suspension program. The recommendation takes into consideration the fiscal constraints of the school board's budget within the City's limits and provides a recommended annual budget to staff in-school suspension personnel with the training necessary to accommodate youth with dysfunctional behavior. Encourage and advocate for more truancy officers to ensure that youth are in school and not wandering the streets unsupervised. In addition to implementing an in-school suspension program, it is recommended that OPD reallocate positions to increase the number of truancy officers.

5. **Establish educational scholarship programs for high-risk children**

Many children in our community who live in areas of high poverty and crime often do not feel that they have many viable choices available to them. Therefore they turn to crime to gain status, a sense of belonging and money. It is proposed that a fund be established to provide opportunities for these children based on the successful model project that Harris Rosen developed for Tangelo Park residents. He has funded a program that provides post secondary education tuition for children who live in the Tangelo Park community. The tuition does not require exceptional grades and can be applied to a Florida public college or vocational school. We propose that our business community, individuals and governments establish a fund to be used in a similar manner for children in the Parramore community. Once established it could be expanded to other neighborhoods. Average costs would be approximately \$3,330 per student per year compared to a cost of \$18,108 per year inmate for our state prisons.

Intermediate Recommendations

1. **Establish more incentive based youth and adult literacy programs**

As reported by the Federal Department of Corrections, nearly 70% of inmates tested below the reading level necessary to begin GED training. Furthermore, 28.9% tested below the fifth grade reading level and 55.3% read at or below the

sixth grade level. Illiteracy poses a great barrier for furthering education and for basic job training. Also, consideration should be given the emotional impact that not “being able to read” has on one’s self esteem. To encourage residents, both young and old, to learn to read is not an easy task since often the immediate value is not readily seen or the task seems insurmountable.

Currently, the Central Florida Adult Literacy League is providing reading programs in conjunction with selected community organizations and Orange County Public Schools Adult Education Program provides classes for those who choose to attend. The subcommittee recommends funding be made available to provide three eight-week sessions at each of the twenty-one City community centers. A major focus of the program would be to teach parents to read so, in turn, they would encourage and teach their children to read. The programs at community centers would be staffed with a professional reading instructor supported by volunteers, childcare and refreshments. Incentives would be provided by community businesses, such as gift cards to restaurants, theme park tickets, etc. for those who successfully completed the eight-week course.

2. **Support families of middle and high school aged children**

There are children in our City who are not getting the supportive parenting and supervision that they need to be healthy, productive, safe and happy. The subcommittee recommends that the City develop a pilot family-support-model targeting parents of children over the age of five in high crime neighborhoods. The approach would be similar to the Healthy Families America program. Healthy Families services, including home visits, parent support groups, training of parents in child development and effective parent-child interaction skills, and other support services, begin prenatally or at the birth of a baby and continue for up to five years depending upon need. Research has demonstrated that this comprehensive approach produces improved parenting and healthier children. Families may often need the continued support of Healthy Family Services after the age of five. Families who recently move to the City or are facing a crisis may also benefit from this program.

Local programs provide family crisis intervention and counseling, but they typically only begin working with families after the child has entered either the child abuse and neglect system or the juvenile justice system. The subcommittee recommends expanding these programs into the prevention arena so that parents feel like they have ready access to the information and support they need to be more effective parents, before their children start engaging in delinquent behavior. In addition, it is recommended that a resource guide for parents of teens be developed to include information on parenting of teenagers, how to talk to kids about drugs and crime, helpful internet sites, local phone numbers and resources, easy reference sheets, etc. These guides should be available at targeted community centers and at other organizations serving families.

3. **Provide more effective life management skills classes for at-risk youth in school and in the community**

The life management skill classes should include information on personal finances, civic responsibilities, parenting practices/skills, etc. Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, Orange County Public Schools will provide a yearlong class to all new ninth grade students that address these issues. Half of the time will be spent on physical education and skills and benefits associated with active lifestyles. The remaining time half will focus on personal development issues related to healthy and positive growth.

It is recommended that each of the City's community centers provide eight session life skill programs that serve ten to fifteen youth (emphasis on high risk youth, perhaps even court ordered to participate). The accessibility of the community centers and the ability to provide them after school should make participation easier.

4. **Expand the Orlando Police Department Super Kids and GREAT programs**

These programs work to create a positive relationship between children and law enforcement personnel. Too often "cops" are not seen as "helpers" by children, but instead are perceived in a negative manner. These programs assure that children have positive interactions with law enforcement and create a unique partnership between teachers, parents, students and law enforcement officers. The Super Kids program, started in 1998, is in 28 elementary schools in the City. It places trained police officers directly on to the campus of the school where the officers assist students in dealing with everyday problems. The curriculum includes topics such as peer pressure, resistance skills, decision-making, and consequences for behavior, conflict resolution, anger management and gateway drugs.

The GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Training) Program is provided by the Orlando Police Department during the school year at 7 middle schools and 13 elementary schools as well as during the summer at 4 middle schools. GREAT has also recently incorporated an after school element into its program. GREAT teaches positive alternatives to violence and gang involvement plus provides a positive relationship between children and law enforcement to over 4,000 Orlando students annually.

5. **Ensure all Orange County Public School children in middle and high schools receive education about domestic violence in dating relationships and about healthy dating relationships**

This information is available through The Harbor House, Orange County Center Against Domestic Violence TEAR (Teens Ending Abusive Relationships) program. 40% of teenage girls, age 14 to 17 report knowing someone their age

who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend². By providing education early to youth about abusive relationships and healthy relationships, future domestic violence can be prevented. In addition, the program often identifies children who are living in homes where there is domestic violence. Children who witness domestic violence may suffer acute and long-term emotional disturbances, including nightmares, depression, learning difficulties, and aggressive behavior. Children also become at risk for subsequent use of violence against their dating partners and wives.^{3, 4} With parental permission, these children can be linked with additional community resources including support groups and counseling provided by Harbor House to address violence in their families and future families.

6. **Reestablish OPD's Gang Prevention program**

The OPD Gang Prevention Program will work to infiltrate power structures, create truces between rival gangs, cut down on drug trafficking and other violence due in part to gang activities. Gang units consisting of only police officers can be limited to arresting, supervising, and interviewing gang members. More effective gang units involve community members such as community and religious leaders, parents, teachers, college professors, and business owners. When the community is involved, members are more likely to support police efforts and even work shifts with police officers. With such a powerful commitment by the community, gangs are limited in their activities.

Long Term Recommendations

1. **Establish Teen Advisory Boards**

The subcommittee recommends establishing youth advisory boards on tiered levels of government including community centers, Commission Districts, and Citywide (Advisory to the Mayor), to give youth a voice in the design of programs and services, and build their leadership skills. Young people have fresh ideas and energy to contribute to community building, working toward social change, and addressing societal problems. Providing a forum for them to do so via civic engagement can be powerful and can also positively shape services so they are more relevant to the needs of youth.

The subcommittee specifically recommends that the City's Department of Families, Parks and Recreation establish teen boards at five targeted community centers. The boards would hold regular meetings to plan programs and special activities at the centers. These boards would also discuss teen issues and needs and endeavor to make the City's youth programming more relevant to youth interests. The subcommittee

² Children Now/Kaiser Permanente poll, December 1995.

³ *el-Bayoumi et al., 1998*

⁴ *Sisley et al., 1999*

also recommends holding district youth meetings with each City Commissioner in a roundtable discussion format, with the purpose of identifying potential district needs as it relates to youth. Finally, the subcommittee recommends the establishment of a Mayor's Youth Council and an annual citywide youth summit.

2. **Fully utilize early intervention programs like Teen Court, Pay-up, and Sanctioned to Read**

These programs have already been established in order to keep minor juvenile offenders out of the juvenile justice system and in the community. However some of these programs have been under-utilized or no longer exist.

Currently Orange County Court Administration runs one of the largest Teen Courts in the nation. It, along with other Teen Courts in the state, is funded by a \$3.00 charge on every traffic violation. This is a stable and substantial funding source for the program, however they would like to have more options available for the children who have to make restitution.

The Orange County Court Administration has developed an innovative program called Sanctioned To Read. This under-utilized program provides court ordered literacy tutoring to juveniles struggling in school. Juveniles are sanctioned to 40 hours of tutoring. Youths in the program are given a pre-test and a post-test to mark their progress. The program shows an average grade level increase in vocabulary and comprehension of 2.27 grades. Average age level increase in oral/receptive vocabulary is .66 years and the average grade level increase in language skills is 1.4 grades. This program is currently running with 2 staff members and an average of 5 new referrals each month. Juvenile Probation Officers and Juvenile Court Judges should better utilize this innovative and productive program by referring more youth.

Another Court Administration program runs the Pay Up Program, which provides a variety of community service and paid work opportunities for children who have to pay court costs and/or restitution. Currently, with the exception of Teen Court, these programs are only available to children who have gone through the court system.

There was a program called LEARN which was a collaborative effort of Goodwill Industries, the Department of Transportation and Orange County Correction. It provided an opportunity for children 12 to 15 years old to clean up along the roadways on Saturday and Sunday. The Department of Transportation made funds available for their restitution and court costs.

3. **Expand OPD's community oriented policing efforts**

Programs such as Citizens for Neighborhood Watch and Citizens United for Safe Neighborhoods should be expanded. Too often, community members view law enforcement officials in a negative context. By increasing community oriented policing efforts law enforcement will be able to build positive relationships with the

citizens they serve. Additionally, by re-establishing Community Policing Initiatives, officers will be better able to establish business and neighborhood liaisons and also offer assistance to existing TAC units.

4. **Establish a Crime Prevention Council and coordinator**

These individuals will work to oversee the implementation of prevention recommendations. Early in its work the subcommittee realized that there is little coordination of crime prevention and intervention programs and efforts. There is a need to monitor crime trends so that we don't wait until there is a crisis to take action.

The subcommittee recommends that the City fund the new position of a Crime Prevention Community Coordinator and establish a Crime Prevention Council. The Crime Prevention Council would monitor the successful implementation of the Prevention recommendations. The coordinator would staff the meetings and efforts of the Crime Prevention Council. Additionally, this individual would be responsible for keeping up with national crime trends. The Crime Prevention Community Coordinator would be responsible for networking with local businesses, faith based organizations, grass roots groups, and local media to assist with the community crime prevention efforts.

Chapter Two: Law Enforcement

Methodology:

In our meetings we have met with various divisions, staff and support officers who have supplied us with detailed reports and statistics about the workings of the department and how service is provided. Several members rode with officers during their night shift in various sectors and observed the day-to-day operations of the Orlando Police Department in the field.

Priorities:

- To assist the Police Department and the City in fulfilling their pledge to the citizens of Orlando to create a safe and secure environment in which to raise families and conduct business.
- To identify key elements that will allow this subcommittee to make appropriate recommendations for changes that will improve police work within our city to reduce violent crimes.

Research and Findings:

From the meetings that were held, data that was provided and the research that has been done, the Subcommittee has identified several areas that need to be addressed and feels comfortable with making the following recommendations that we would like to see implemented.

Short Term Recommendations

1. Continue use of Patrol Tactical (TAC) Squads

In mid September, the Orlando Police Department reallocated resources and created three Patrol Tactical (TAC) Squads to implement a permanent proactive approach to reduce homicides and violent crime in Orlando. Each squad consists of one supervisor and ten officers. One squad is assigned to each of the three uniformed Patrol Divisions. The TAC Squads were developed and implemented based on a similar best practice initiated by the Tampa Police Department in 2004. The TAC Squads use a combination of plain clothes and uniform officers to aggressively enforce street level narcotics sales, violent crimes, and other crime patterns in each of the three patrol divisions. The TAC Squads are based on the following principles:

- Placement of resources in each patrol division to quickly and efficiently respond to street level narcotics sales, violent crimes, and other crime patterns;

- Geographic responsibility for police mid-managers (Captains and Lieutenants);
- Availability of real-time statistical information;
- Proactive enforcement; and
- Accountability.

This strategy enhances the Patrol Division Commanders' ability to identify and customize resource mobilization to crime problems within their geographical area of responsibility, and allows for a higher level of accountability in problem response and eliminates duplication of effort. The tactical patrol approach by the Orlando Police Department shifts the organization from a general reactive strategy, to a targeted and focused violent crime reduction strategy.

Due to the drop in homicides since July 1, 2006, it is recommended that the TAC Squads continue their enforcement efforts and re-evaluate their effectiveness in the spring of 2007.

2. **Partner with and assist SHO-CAP and JAM Unit to conduct unannounced spot-checks on serious, habitual offenders**

The SHO-CAP (Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program) is a pro-active program conducted by the Orange County Sheriff's Office JAM (Juvenile Arrest Monitoring) Unit. The JAM Unit conducts unannounced, spot checks on juvenile offenders that qualify for frequent checks due to an extensive criminal history. Currently, the Department of Juvenile Justice contracts the JAM Unit to conduct the checks and many of the juvenile offenders in the program reside in high crime areas within the City.

To establish a more pro-active approach within the City's limits, the Orlando Police Department's Patrol TAC Squads will be assisting the JAM Unit by conducting spot monitoring of SHOCAP offenders who live in the high crime areas of the City. The JAM Unit will supply a list of SHO-CAP offenders in these areas on a weekly basis to OPD and the TAC Squads. The TAC Squads will conduct spot checks and will pick up all SHO-CAP absconders who live in the city. By the end of 2006, the JAM Unit will conduct training for the TAC Squads and the increased spot checks will begin. It is anticipated that the emphasis of increased checks on the SHO-CAP offenders will deter or stop criminal activity by these juveniles, especially in high crime areas.

It is recommended that the Orlando Police Department create an assignment within the organization to function as a liaison with the OCSO JAM Unit to ensure active involvement in this initiative.

3. **Continue the “Citizens United for Safe Neighborhoods” initiative to build community relations**

One of the most important components of crime reduction is community involvement and participation. Under the leadership of Orlando Police Deputy Chief Val Demings and Captain Charles Robinson, the Citizens United for Safe Neighborhoods initiative was developed. On October 26, 2006, many City employees organized this community rally and scheduled the event for November 11 in the Parramore area. This area has been plagued with illegal drug activity and violent crime, therefore Chief Demings and Captain Robinson solicited the assistance of local minister, Rev. Charles R. Jackson of Hurst Chapel Church, to generate community participation.

On November 5th, invitational flyers were passed out and a community meeting was held at Hurst Chapel Church three days later. With the assistance from Hurst Chapel Church, the Center for Drug Free Living, and the City’s Neighborhood and Community Affairs Office, a successful and well-attended event was held. This initiative was so successful that it will be moved to other high crime areas within Orlando. On December 2nd, another Citizens United for Safe Neighborhoods meeting was held at the Mt. Pleasant Church in the Richmond Heights area. Approximately 100 citizens attended each event. The next area of focus for this initiative is the Rosemont neighborhood. Citizens United for Safe Neighborhoods is a best practice from the West End Initiative in High Point, North Carolina.

In conjunction with the City’s Neighborhood and Community Affairs Office, it is recommended that the Orlando Police Department continue this community initiative over the next several months to continue to build community relations, and to improve information gathering at crime scenes.

Intermediate Recommendations

1. **Implement an Illegal Gun Bounty Program**

Based on a similar best practice in Jacksonville, it is recommended that the Orlando Police Department implement a “gun bounty” program in the near future. The program, which can pay for anonymous tips through Central Florida’s Crimeline, can solicit information that leads to the recovery of an illegal firearm, and an arrest for a weapons violation.

2. **Increase recruitment and incentives for hiring sworn police officers**

An additional challenge presented to the subcommittee is the recruiting and hiring of qualified police officers to maintain sworn staffing levels because of attrition and growth (recently approved staffing increase of 25 officers per year for the

next three years). Recruiting of qualified applicants needs to be a top priority. The following are proposed recommendations to enhance the recruiting effort:

- Raise starting salaries to Pay Grade III for lateral transfers of experienced officers.
- Signing bonuses and moving allowances should be utilized as a recruiting tool for potential applicants that live outside the Central Florida area.

These recommendations parallel the recommendations recently presented to City Council by the Community Recruiting Panel.

3. **Re-establish Community Policing (COP) initiatives**

Violent crime statistics and crime patterns indicate that the Parramore area, west downtown area, (boundaries: I-4 on the east, Orange Blossom Trail on the west, Kaley on the south, Colonial Drive on the north) may require further police initiatives beyond routine patrol and the TAC Squads. It is recommended that a new “community policing” initiative be established in the historic “Parramore Heritage” area (extra officers on bicycle patrol and in police vehicles). Along with “first responder” and community policing activities (youth involvement, residential, neighborhood and business liaisons), officers assigned to this area can also assist the TAC Squads with investigation and apprehension of violent, career criminals and juveniles in this area. Furthermore, increased use of the newer “City View” police office at Church St. and Terry Ave. is recommended as the base location for these officers and a supervisor.

It is recommended that a unit of one sergeant and 10 officers be assigned to the Parramore area for this COP suggestion.

4. **Re-district Patrol Divisions to redistribute “first responder” workload for increased proactive initiatives, including COP activities**

- a. In a workload analysis in 2004 called PCAM (Patrol Car Allocation Modeling), it was determined that the City’s limits required 54 patrol districts: six more districts than the current 48.
- b. In a recent PCAM study completed in January 2007, it was discovered that the day shift (from 6 AM – 6 PM) and the midnight shift (from 6 PM – 6 AM) have nearly equally balanced workloads and many patrol districts exceed their “busy time” capacity, thus leaving no time for patrol officers to conduct community policing activities on a regular basis.

This study indicated that 49 patrol districts are needed if patrol implemented a two-shift configuration (day and midnight shifts) instead of the current three-shift configuration (day, evening, and midnight shift). To increase pro-active

and community policing activities of the patrol officers, it is recommended that the police department redesign all patrol districts to balance the workload throughout the City and implement the two-shift deployment of patrol personnel. This redeployment will also make it possible to add COP officers to the Parramore area and additional bike officers to downtown.

Long Term Recommendations

1. Establish a Central Patrol District

By the year 2010, it is estimated that 265,000 square feet of commercial space, 1.2 million square feet of office space, and over 3,300 dwelling units will be added to downtown. Additionally, with the addition of a new events center, performing arts center, as well as the renovation of the Citrus Bowl stadium, the entertainment events in the downtown core will significantly increase thus adding corresponding increases to the demands on police services. Furthermore, the downtown nightlife activity has continued to grow and officers from nearly every sector of the City are needed each weekend night to assist with crowd control as entertainment establishments close at 2:00 A.M.

This weekly and regular re-deployment of police resources to the downtown area reduces available time for community policing and self-initiated activities to reduce crime.

Additionally, due to the expected growth and specific police service issues in central Orlando, a fourth patrol division in downtown was mapped out with seven districts. Proposed boundaries:

North - Colonial Drive

South – Grant Street

East – Mills Ave.

West – Tampa Ave.

Not only would the proposed Central Patrol District improve police service delivery in downtown, but it would correct and allow for an even distribution of calls for service and “pro-active” policing efforts in the other three geographic patrol divisions (North, West, and East).

A Central Patrol District would require the estimated additional police personnel based on the 2007 PCAM study analysis:

- 1 – Captain (may reassign existing division commander)
- 2 – Lieutenants
- 4 – Sergeants
- 40 - Officers (25 officers already allocated for upcoming budget year)

Recommendation #1 alternative: Reallocation of additional “first responders” bile officers to the downtown area

Due to the costs to establish a new Central Patrol District, reallocation of additional “first responder” bike officers to the downtown area is another recommendation. Currently, the Downtown Bike Unit has 3 sergeants and 20 officers. Due to the upcoming residential and commercial/business growth in downtown, it is recommended that the Downtown Bike Unit expand to up to 30 officers to adequately deliver police service to the downtown core as development continues. An expanded unit would lead to seven-day bike patrol coverage on dayshift and more officers during the late entertainment hours (thus relieving outside patrol units from nightly response into downtown to assist with crowds).

With the addition of 75 new officers announced and implemented over the next three budget years through the Mayor’s Citywide Public Safety Initiative, reallocation of personnel can make this possible without requesting additional staffing.

2. Increase Staffing of the Uniform Drug Squad

In 2006, 76% of the homicides in Orlando, 37 out of 49, were categorized by OPD’s Homicide Unit as “drug related.” Drug related means that the homicide occurred over a drug dispute, or the victim, and/or offender, had a drug history. Moreover, drug reported crime has increased by 13% (Jan-June 2004 compared to Jan-June 2006), drug arrests by OPD drug officers has increased by 39% (last quarter of 2005 compared to the second quarter in 2006), and the residential population in Orlando has increased by 17% from 2000 – 2005.

- Currently, the Uniform Drug Squad has 1 sergeant and 10 officers, and the Undercover Drug Squad has 1 sergeant and 8 officers. It is recommended that staffing be added to these units to increase their effectiveness in the enforcement of drug related crimes. Staffing of 1 additional sergeant and 4 additional officers is recommended. This personnel staffing increase can be added to either squad as determined by the OPD. This is a 24% increase in staffing for OPD’s local drug enforcement initiative.

3. Research Impact Fees for Police Services

Impact fees are most appropriate for communities experiencing rapid growth. Since impact fees were pioneered in states like Florida that lacked specific enabling legislation, such fees have generally been legally defended as an exercise of local government’s broad “Home Rule” to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community. The courts have gradually developed guidelines for

constitutionally valid impact fees. The standards set by court cases generally require that an impact fee meet the following⁵:

- a. The need for new facilities must be created by new development.
- b. The amount of fee charged must not exceed a proportional fair share of the cost to serve new development.
- c. All fee revenues must be spent within a reasonable period of time and benefit the fee-paying development.

Similar to Orange County's Law Enforcement Impact Fee, it is recommended that the City research the feasibility of implementing an impact fee for police services. The impact fee could offset the police capital costs of buildings, vehicles, and equipment.

⁵ Orange County Law Enforcement Impact Fee Update, Duncan/Associates, in association with Dr. James C. Nicholas, March 2005, pgs. 2-3

Chapter Three: Re-Integration

Methodology:

The subcommittee met 11 times and heard presentations from representatives from service providers, state and local agencies, the Chair of the Governor’s Ex-Offender Task Force, and an ex-offender. The subcommittee considered the minutes of the Task Force meetings, the information gathered at the Task Force public forum (held at the John Jackson Community Center), the issues raised by the presenters, and other significant information and documents.

Priorities:

Recommend strategies to build the capacity of the local community to successfully transition ex-offenders back into society, which will reduce the number of repeat offenders, the “Revolving Door” syndrome.

Research and Findings:

Re-entry involves the use of programs targeted at promoting the effective re-integration of offenders back to communities upon release from prison and jail. Re-entry programming is intended to assist offenders in acquiring the life skills needed to succeed in the community and become law-abiding citizens. A variety of programs are used to assist offenders in the re-entry process, including drug rehabilitation and vocational training, and work programs.⁶

Profile Information & Statistics:

Annual Releases to Orange County

Federal Prison ⁷	113
State Prison ⁸	1865
Orange County Jail	10625
Department of Juvenile Justice	341
Total Number Released	12,934

⁶ U.S. Dept. of Justice website <http://www.reentry.gov/learn.html>

⁷ Federal numbers reflect projected releases between April 2007 and March 2008, U.S. Bureau of Prisons

⁸ State numbers reflect releases to Orange Co. in Fiscal Year 2005-2006

Profile Information and Statistics (Cont.)

Adult Offenders:

- Nationally, the number of released offenders increased 350% over the last 20 years.⁹
- 95-97% of individuals who are incarcerated in Florida will return to the community at some point in time; 98.5% of inmates admitted to Florida Department of Corrections have sentences shorter than “life.”¹⁰
- Florida Department of Corrections information indicates that 44% of offenders are released to 7 counties, with Orange County ranking fourth behind Hillsborough, Broward, and Dade counties.¹¹
- For fiscal year 2005-06, 2,165 offenders were released to the 9th Judicial Circuit, which is comprised of Orange and Osceola counties.¹²
- In Orange County, four of the top five zip codes for released ex-offenders (32805, 32808, 32811, 32703) are the same as the zip codes with the most arrests, and also the highest poverty rates.¹³
- If the current pattern of recidivism remains, 31.33% of those released from state prison will be convicted for a new crime and 25.7% will be re-imprisoned.¹⁴
- Ex-offenders returning to prison will cost Florida taxpayers \$147,765,340 for their first year of reconfinement.¹⁵

Juvenile Offenders:

- Youths Referred for Delinquency (7/01/05 – 6/30/06)¹⁶

Aggravated Assault/Battery	676
Sexual Battery	53
Robbery with or without weapon	136
Stalking	-0-
Murder/Manslaughter	13

⁹ The Urban Institute 2001

¹⁰ Governor’s Ex-Offender Task Force Final Report at 7, citing FDC Annual Report 2004-2005 at 11.

¹¹ Governor’s Ex-Offender Task Force Final Report at 19, citing FDC Annual Report 2005-2006.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Presentation by Vicki Lopez Lukis to Subcommittee, January 17, 2007. Approximately 45% of households in 32805 have an annual income of less than \$25,000.

¹⁴ Governor’s Ex-Offender Task Force Final Report at 8, citing FDC, Recidivism Report, July 2003.

¹⁵ Governor’s Ex-Offender Task Force Final Report at 8.

¹⁶ Teresa Ponchak, Department of Juvenile Justice Chief Probation Officer, 9th Circuit

- Juveniles arrested in Orange County reside in 7 High Risk Zip Codes:¹⁷
[32808, 32811, 32805, 32818, 32839, 32822, 32810]

Primary causes for recidivism:

1. Lack of education – illiteracy, truancy
2. Lack of employable skills, work experience and work history
3. Lack of safe, affordable housing
4. Lack of mental health and substance abuse treatment
5. Lack of jobs available to ex-offenders due to limitations imposed by Florida Statutes
6. Lack of family structure and support; lack of mentors
7. Lack of community programs addressing ex-offender needs

These causes for recidivism exist prior to and after incarceration.

In order for ex-offenders to successfully re-integrate into society, they need the support of government, faith-based and community groups, service providers, employers, the business community, family, and mentors.

These strategies should begin on the first day of incarceration, whether at the local, state or federal level.¹⁸ The lack of effective re-entry programming during incarceration means the local community must step forward to provide services for ex-offenders.

Short Term Recommendations

1. **Secure funding, public and private, to create a Re-Entry Council within three months**

The Re-Entry Council will:

- Assess needs of ex-offenders returning to the community;
- Complete an inventory of existing services;
- Identify gaps and overlaps in those services;
- Recommend additional needed services;
- Develop a model for a comprehensive HELP (Helping Ex-Offenders Live Productively) Center, replicating best practices found in other re-entry programs;
- Develop a web site to provide an up-to-date, comprehensive list of service providers;
- Identify financial support, in-kind resources and funding sources to enhance existing local services and programs; and
- Develop new programs to address unmet needs of ex-offenders.

¹⁷ Teresa Ponchak, Department of Juvenile Justice Chief Probation Officer, 9th Circuit

¹⁸ Recommendation of the Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force Final Report, p.7.

Local re-entry council members and contributors should include a broad range of community representatives, including the following stakeholders:

Targeted employers/business organizations (e.g. executives, human resources directors, professional development specialists, Chambers of Commerce)

Workforce development/education specialists (e.g. Work Force of Central Florida, Orange County Public Schools, GED and ESL programs, Valencia Community College, University of Central Florida, Goodwill Industries, job training providers)

Public and nonprofit agencies that work with the target population (e.g. homeless shelters, public welfare system, faith-based organizations, Metropolitan Orlando Urban League)

Agencies that offer support services (e.g. childcare, food, clothing, housing, transportation, substance/alcohol abuse programs, anger management, domestic violence intervention, mental health, legal, medical)

Local government and criminal justice representatives (e.g. City of Orlando, Orange County Government, Florida Department of Corrections, Orange County Corrections, and county, state and federal Probation Officers)

Financial institutions

Ex-offenders

It is recommended that one person serve as the Executive Director of the program and that additional staff be provided “on loan” from other agencies.

2. **Secure funding, through the Re-Entry Council, to open a permanent HELP Center (Helping Ex-offenders Live Productively), in a user-friendly location in a non-government facility within one year**

The HELP Center will be a first stop for ex-offenders returning to the community. While some direct services will be offered at the HELP Center, the Center will also serve ex-offenders by providing the access to needed services, as well as a mobile outreach initiative that will offer at a minimum access to the following services:

- Mentoring
- Life-skills training
- Counseling to include: Anger Management and Conflict Management
- Job readiness, Job training and Job placement
- Driver’s license information including restoration of license
- Transportation vouchers
- Housing information
- Department of Children & Families services
- Information on food banks and clothing assistance
- Healthcare: medical and dental services information
- Mental health and substance abuse counseling/programs

- Legal services
 - Faith- based opportunities
3. **Advocate for legislation implementing the Governor’s Ex-Offender Task Force recommendations**

Request resolutions in support of these recommendations beginning with the 2007 legislative session.¹⁹

Intermediate Recommendations

1. **Re-Entry Council supports and assists Faith-Based Organizations in securing funds for the development of transitional housing and related services**
2. **Re-Entry Council identifies and recommends funding sources and opportunities to enhance existing local re-entry programs and to develop new programs to address unmet needs.**

Long Term Recommendations

1. **Re-Entry Council to secure funding and begin operation of mobile mini-HELP Centers**
2. **Re-Entry Council to secure funding for expansion of services including additional permanent HELP Centers**

¹⁹ Governor’s Ex-Offender Task Force Final Report, November 2006

Addendum

Implementation of Recommendations Progress To Date

The Task Force's 36 recommendations were presented to City Council at a workshop in March, 2007. Mayor Dyer pledged that these recommendations would be given serious consideration and appropriate steps would be taken to address them. Since that time the City has fully implemented a number of the recommendations, particularly those in law enforcement. Others, that require collaboration with other entities, have been initiated but additional work still needs to be done.

A brief description of the progress to date regarding each recommendation that has been implemented or initiated is listed below.

- ✓ Represents implementation.

Prevention Subcommittee Recommendations

- ✓ **Implement a community wide mass media marketing campaign.**
 - Mayor Dyer and Chief McCoy both regularly meet with news directors and report on the topic of public safety. Dr. Stone has represented the Task Force on television, radio and newspaper media. The Mayor, Chief and Dr. Stone are available to meet with the news directors to discuss Task Force recommendations.
 - Regular Public Safety Updates are given at City Council Meetings, on the City Website, and in CityNews, a weekly e-mail newsletter.
- ✓ **Encouraged business and community partnerships to address crime prevention and barriers of economic poverty.**
 - The Orlando Police Department has enhanced the availability of public information on Business Watch, a program that promotes crime prevention and communication between business owners.
 - The City has engaged the Orlando Chamber of Commerce to expand access to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) among Orlando's low income working families. The EITC is credited nationally as the most effective public policy tool available to lift families and children out of poverty.

- The Mayor’s Faith-Based and Community Matching Grant funding categories have been modified to focus on crime prevention projects.
 - Orlando is one of six cities that the National League of Cities’ Youth, Education and Families Institute has selected to provide technical assistance to help municipal leaders reengage disconnected youth through collaboration. Over the course of the next year, the Institute will make available national experts and exemplary models from across the county to enable City leaders to play a convening role in building a collaboration to transform the Parramore neighborhood into a healthier place for children.
- ✓ **Ensure the availability of adult-supervised after school activities for all elementary, middle and high school students.**
- The City offers after school and summer programs free of charge for children eligible for the free lunch program and \$5.00 per month for children on the reduced fee lunch program to thousands of children at 15 recreation centers located throughout the City.
 - The Village House program, funded through the Mayor’s Educational Partnership Grant, provides adult supervised safe havens and after-school activities for youth designed to reduce truancy, suspension and delinquency while promoting positive youth development among at-risk youth. The Village House offers a variety of positive alternative activities to help youth grow both academically and socially. The houses operate after-school, on weekends and during the summer months.
 - The Orlando Magic announced a \$250,000 contribution to fund The “Roving Leaders” program and expand the Orlando After-School All-Stars program at the Dr. J.B. Callahan Neighborhood Center, an initiative used in cities across the nation, to provide resources for athletic activities, community service projects, field trips, teen dances, arts initiatives, special events, movie nights and leadership development for youth who are vulnerable to drugs, gangs and violence. In addition, the Magic’s contribution will permit the Orlando After-School All-Stars program, currently implemented at City middle schools, to expand in the Parramore community to benefit more middle school aged children.
 - Parramore Kidz Zone is opening dedicated, after-school labs or “Homework Roomz” throughout the Parramore community to provide children with tutoring, access to computers, the Internet and supplies.
- ✓ **Increase focus on the impact of faith-based organizations and job partnerships.**

Since October 2006, the City has worked with staff and community venues partners to develop a comprehensive approach to ensure the economic impact directly benefits the local community through job creation and contracts.

- Modeled after best practices of cities such as Memphis, Nashville, and Newark, New Jersey and incorporated the input of groups such as the Workforce Central Florida, African American Council of Christian Clergy, the Urban League, Black Business Investment Fund and National Minority Supplier Development Council of Florida.
- The faith-based community played an important role in developing a local workforce initiative to provide trained workers for venue construction and retail venues created by development, including local residents, ex-offenders and the homeless population.
- **Implement successful in-school suspension programs.**
- **Establish educational scholarship programs for high-risk children.**
- ✓ **Establish more incentive based youth and adult literacy programs.**
 - In the summer of 2007, the Parramore Kidz Zone implemented the “Read to Win” educational reading program at the John H. Jackson Community Center and the Orlando Housing Authority. Three certified Orange County Public School teachers taught 140 youth reading, comprehensive skills during the summer school break.
 - The Mayor’s Educational Partnership Grant has provided funding and opportunities to elementary school children struggling in reading by delivering personalized reading instruction and providing specific instruction and recommendation for the parents of the children to continue their child’s reading development in the home through partnerships with the University of Central Florida.
 - The Mayor’s educational partnership Grant provides funding for math clubs at Washington Shores Ivey Elementary schools, which builds and strengthens skills in math literacy and FCAT preparation.
 - For the past two years, the Montsho Foundation has received funding through the Mayor’s educational partnership Grant to provide for the educational and literacy needs of disadvantaged preschool children and families, as well as the needs of the disadvantaged child-care centers where these children are cared for during their preschool years through their Parent and Child Together program.
- ✓ **Support families of school aged children.**

- For the past three years, the City has been a partner in the Central Florida's Extra Credit Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Campaign, which helps working families move out of poverty. In 2004 and 2005 this campaign assisted over 1000 families in Orange County. Tax returns from the program total over \$1,290,000.
- A network of volunteer Parramore residents who live in the targeted Parramore Kidz zone were recruited to serve as grassroots "Children Champions." Children's Champions will attend workshops and training classes to benefit the well being of families and participate in educational and cultural field trips, community outings, etc. to build neighborhood cohesiveness. This effort is funded through the Robert Wood Johnson's Parramore Kidz Zone grant.
- ✓ **Provide more effective life management skills classes for at-risk youth in school and in the community.**
 - Parramore Kidz Zone launched PURPLE (Powerful Urban Really Passionate Ladies Excelling) to educate and empower girls to become productive women of tomorrow by embracing a higher echelon of self-confidence, focusing on school and positive life choices, and discovering their purpose in life. Twenty-five middle and high school girls attend on-going life management and leadership development training during after school hours.
 - The Mayor's Faith-based and Community matching Grant has provided funding for projects that address drop-out prevention programs for underprivileged and minority at-risk high school students, programs that provide positive character development, life management, and mentoring services for high-risk students, and opportunities for service learning and community services for children of all ages.
 - The Ivey Lane Village House program, funded through the Mayor's Educational Partnership Grant, provides individuals and families within their community the skills to achieve and maintain healthy responsible lifestyles. This program offers after-school enrichment activities to at-risk youth in the community by developing and strengthening the protective factors among youth who are at risk for violence and its concomitant issues of juvenile crime, gang membership, substance abuse, and academic underachievement.
- ✓ **Expand the Orlando Police Department's "Super Kids" and "GREAT" programs.**

- The Orlando Police Department has applied for a GREAT grant. They have requested \$146,608 for technology, program and promotional materials, conference and training needs. These materials will better equip the School Resource Officers to teach students.
- ✓ **Ensure all Orange County Public School children in middle and high schools receive education about domestic violence in dating relationships.**
 - The Mayor’s Faith-Based and Community Partnership Grant funding categories have been modified to focus on teen dating violence, education and prevention.
- ✓ **Re-establish Orlando Police Department’s Gang Prevention program.**
 - OPD’s Gang Enforcement Team (GET) consists of 26 Police members including 1 Lieutenant, 2 Sergeants and 23 officers.
 - OPD’s Gang Enforcement Team (GET) has conducted community presentations, met with federal and local Law Enforcement about specific gang issues and attended an Orange County Gang Unit meeting. Intell created a database to document gang members. GET Officers will attend Florida Gang Investigators Association Training Conference in August 2007.
- ✓ **Establish Teen Advisory Boards in communities.**
 - Through the Parramore Kidz Zone, the “Teenz of Parramore” or T.O.P Advisory Council has been established. TOP consists of 15 neighborhood youth who advise PKZ staff on effective ways to engage youth who have been on the streets without adult supervision, in positive and productive activities. T.O.P will serve as a model to be implemented Citywide.
- ✓ **Fully utilize the Teen Court and other existing diversion programs.**
 - The Sanctioned to Read Program now has over 50 active juvenile participants and anticipates the need for a waiting list in the coming months.
- ✓ **Expand Orlando Police Department’s community oriented policing efforts.**
 - City Council approved a three-year, comprehensive Public Safety Initiative of more than \$100 million to increase the effective strength of the police officers by 11 percent, bringing 75 additional police officers online, new officers in the violent crimes section, two OPD sub-stations and a state-of-the-art, training center.

- In June 2007 the Orlando Police Department began implementation of Operation All Hands On Deck, which put 88 additional officers in City areas with higher levels of violent crime. Also, as part of Operation All Hands On Deck, OPD management, including Chief McCoy, are required to dedicate a certain percentage of their work week to patrolling and community involvement.
- Permanent staffing of the new Parramore Heritage Bike Unit has been authorized.
- ✓ **Establish a Crime Prevention Council and coordinator.**

Law Enforcement Subcommittee Recommendations

- ✓ **Create Patrol Tactical (TAC) Squads.**
 - Three Tactical Squads were formed in September 2006 and continue to actively patrol and report. One TAC Squad is assigned to the North, West and East Patrol Divisions.
 - An additional crime analyst was hired in July 2007 to analyze the impact and effectiveness of the TAC Squads. Each patrol division now has a designated crime analyst.
- ✓ **Increase SHO-CAP Assistance.**
 - The Orlando Police Department is currently working with the Orange County Sheriff's Office Juvenile Arrest Monitoring Unit to assign juvenile monitoring to TAC Squads.
 - OPD is working with Orange County Sheriff's Office to produce more information on absconders within the City.
 - OPD met with Orange County Sheriff's Office to produce a list of City offenders including juvenile offenders.
- ✓ **Develop "Citizens United for Safe Neighborhoods" initiative.**
 - In partnership with the Orlando Police Department and other City departments including Housing and the Office of Neighborhood & Community Affairs, Rev. Charles Jackson of Hurst Chapel and Rev. Black of Mt. Pleasant AME have each held "Citizens United for Safe Neighborhoods" events.
- ✓ **Implement an Illegal Gun Bounty program.**

- Modeled after a best practice from Jacksonville, the Illegal Gun Bounty program was introduced at the Safe Cities Summit called by Mayor Dyer with the mayors and police chiefs of Florida's seven largest cities. As of July 26, 2007, more than 476 tips have been called, resulting in the recovery of 69 guns across 6 counties.
- ✓ **Utilize recruitment and incentives for hiring.**
 - In May 2007 the OPD Academy pay was increased from \$12/hr to \$14.62/hr. The Academy pay will be increased again in October 2007 to \$15.07/hr.
 - Relocation incentives to more effectively recruit from around the state and country have been increased to \$2500 out of State and \$1500 in State.
- ✓ **Establish a Central Patrol District.**
 - During his State of the City Address, Mayor Dyer announced the addition of a Central Patrol District.
 - The patrol district will include an additional 21 bike officers (11 officers to downtown and 10 to Parramore).
- ✓ **Reallocate "First responder" bike officers to the downtown area.**
 - The Central Patrol District will also increase units for Downtown and Parramore.
 - Funding for the fourth patrol district and bike units will be included in the "year-2" budget of the multi-year Public Safety Initiative.
- ✓ **Reestablish Community-Oriented Policing (COP) initiative.**
 - In June 2007 the Orlando Police Department began implementation of Operation All Hands On Deck, which put 88 additional officers in City areas with higher levels of violent crime. Also, as part of Operation All Hands On Deck, OPD management, including Chief McCoy, are required to dedicate a certain percentage of their work week to patrolling and community involvement.
- ✓ **Redistrict Patrol Divisions to redistribute "first responder" workload for increased proactive activities – to include COP activities.**
 - Chief McCoy is currently in the process of redistricting the City's patrol divisions to implement a two-shift patrol deployment.

- **Explore feasibility of impact fees for Police Service.**
- **Increase staffing for drug enforcement.**

Re-Integration Subcommittee Recommendations

- ✓ **Secure funding to create a Re-Entry Council within three months.**
 - The City has received approximately \$15,000 in seed money from the First Baptist Church of Orlando and Charity Challenge for the development of a Re-Entry council and HELP center.
- ✓ **Secure funding, through the Re-Entry Council, to open a permanent HELP Center (Helping Ex-offenders Live Productively).**
 - The City has partnered with the Central Florida Regional Commission on Homelessness to develop a framework for the development of a permanent HELP Center that will serve the homeless and ex-offender populations as well as others in need of these services.
- ✓ **Advocate for legislation implementing the Governor’s Ex-Offender Task Force recommendations, beginning with the 2007 legislative session – Request resolutions in support of these recommendations.**
 - As part of the City’s 2007 Legislative Agenda, the legislative staff advocated for initiatives and funding for ex-offenders’ re-entry processes.
- **Re-Entry Council to support and assist Faith-Based Organizations in securing funds for the development of transitional housing and related services.**
- ✓ **Re-Entry Council to identify and recommend funding sources and opportunities to enhance existing local re-entry programs and to develop new programs to address unmet needs.**
 - A comprehensive “CommunityBlueprint” adopted by City Council has four primary goals:
 - Assist the development and support of local, small and historically disadvantaged businesses as an important aspect of the continuing growth and development of the community.
 - Develop a local workforce initiative to provide trained workers for venue construction and retail venues created by development, including local residents, ex-offenders and the homeless population.

- Collaboratively work with venue partners to identify and explore long-term business opportunities.
 - Explore the creation of local vendor development/mentor/protégé programs through partnerships with prime vendors and community-based organizations.
- **Re-Entry Council to secure funding and begin operation of mobile mini-HELP Centers.**
- **Re-Entry Council to secure funding for expansion of services including possible additional permanent HELP Centers.**

Appendix A

Brainstorming Session with Marilyn Crotty

Marilyn Crotty, the Director of the Florida Institute of Government at the University of Central Florida, facilitated a brainstorming session of the Task Force at its October 3rd meeting. The members were asked to identify issues they think should be addressed as the task force conducts its assessment and makes recommendations to the Mayor and City Council. The following issues were identified:

- Prevention (P)
- Enforcement (E)
- Re-integration (R)
- What's working/what's not working (P, E, R)
- Cause and effect/a wake-up call (E, R)
- Neighborhood involvement (P,E,R)
- Solutions (P,E,R)
- Education – school system (before school and after school) (P)
- Prevention programs for children (P)
- Attitude – towards the law, other people, and law enforcement (P,E,R)
- Post-school education – job training, etc. (P,R)
- City programs now in place or previously in place (P,E,R)
- Accountability for all – consequences (P,E,R)
- Awareness – Communication (P,E,R)
 - Prevention, enforcement, facts
- Available resources and resources needed but not currently available (P,E,R)
- Collaboration – partnerships (P,E,R)
- Focus – what, who (P,E,R)
- Use of current resources (P,E,R)
- Immediate opportunities (P,E,R)
- Action-oriented (P,E,R)
- Understanding/respect (P,E,R)
- Strengths and weaknesses in the current system (P,E,R)
- Drug and alcohol problem (P,E,R)
- Alignment – short term results and long term strategies (P,E,R)
- Prioritization (P,E,R)
- Reality (P,E,R)
- Community relationships – law enforcement, diversity (P,E,R)
- Best practices (P,E,R)
- “It's not my problem” (P,E,R)
- Ongoing effort/follow-up (P,E,R)
- Evaluation component – measurement, meaningful metrics (P,E,R)

The group agreed to establish three subcommittees: **Prevention, Law Enforcement, Re-integration**. All of the subcommittees will address the issues on the list that are appropriate for them (most will apply to all three subcommittees).

Appendix B

List of Service Providers, Presenters, Programs, and Best Practices

Wilbert Danner, Administrative Supervisor Inmate Programs and Support
Division, Orange County Corrections

John Rivers, Deputy Circuit Administrator for the Florida Department of
Corrections

Richard Pearce, Florida Department of Corrections

Lee Isbell, Manager, Inmate Programs and Support Division, Orange County
Corrections

John Richter, Youthful Offender Coordinator, Orange County Corrections

Dr. Gregory Thomas, Re-Entry Program, Orange County Corrections

Toni Hutchinson, Research Analyst/Professional Services, Orange County
Corrections

Teresa Ponchak, Chief Probation Officer/Probation & Community
Corrections, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice

Cathy Pearce, State Department of Corrections

Larry Strickler, WorkForce Central Florida

Rev. Willie Barnes, Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church, SAFE Task Force

Ike Griffin, D. Min, Horizon Communities in Prison

Karen M. Massey, OWDS, Metropolitan Orlando Urban League

William C. Daniels, United States Attorney's office, Middle District of Florida, Law
Enforcement Coordinator

Sterling Staggers, Bridges of America

Charles Brown, Bridges of America

Vicki Lopez Lukis, Chair, Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force

Delgado Royal, Ex-Offender
Mercedes C. Bigelow, J.D., Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association

Caretha Brown, Living Hope Ministries, Inc.

Patricia Rumph, The WEAVER Foundation, Inc.

Richard LaPratt, 2-1-1 Community Information Helpline

Mary Beth McKeen, Orange County Public Schools' Substance Abuse and Family Education (S.A.F.E.) Program

Officer Kenneth Pinkston, Orlando Police Department

Lisa Early, City of Orlando Families, Parks, and Recreation Department

Marc Stanakis, the Job Partnership of Florida

Frank Vandaloo, the Village House, Center for Drug Free Living

Sgt. Art Eld, Orlando Police Department, Super Kids Program

Greg Kurth, Family Services of Metro Orlando

Officer Amy Bretches, Orlando Police Department, G.R.E.A.T. Program

Tom Coudriet

Devin James

Pastor George Paulk, Jr.

Judge Roger McDonald, Circuit Judge, Ninth Judicial Circuit

Dr. Jay Corzine

Captain Jeff Goltz, Orlando Police Department

Chaz Allen, Ex-Offender

Orlando After-School All-Stars Program

Department of Juvenile Justice

Florida Department of Corrections

Local faith- based and community based groups
Living Hope Ministries, Inc.
The WEAVER Foundation, Inc.
Bridges of America

Pinellas Ex-offender Re-entry Coalition

Harris Rosen Tangelo Park Pilot Program

Hillsborough Ex-offender Re-entry Network

Jacksonville – Operation New Hope, Ready4Work, and Gun Bounty Program

Tampa- Patrol Tactical Squads

San Francisco, California – The Delancey Street Project

Memphis, Tennessee – Second Chances

State of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Northern San Diego County Community Resource Directory

The Fortune Society, New York City

Women’s Prison Association, New York City

The Urban Institute

Chicago, Illinois- Cease Fire Program

High Point, North Carolina- West End Initiative