City of Boston’s Youth Violence Prevention Plan
Executive Summary -- April 2011

Thomas M. Menino, Mayor

Background
The City of Boston was selected by President Barack Obama’s Administration to participate in a National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention. Under the strong leadership of Mayor Menino, the City of Boston has a long and rich history of collaboration, community involvement, and innovation to address youth violence. This planning process has clarified for partners what our strengths are, what challenges remain, and what our focus areas need to be for the next three years to achieve sustainable long term reductions in youth violence.

The Plan:
⇒ Builds on the strong foundation already in place
⇒ Takes a broad, comprehensive approach to problem-solving
⇒ Articulates key principles, goals and objectives
⇒ Identifies challenges and needs
⇒ Incorporates input from broad array of partners, stakeholders, community and youth
⇒ Acknowledges resource constraints
⇒ Lays out a framework and blueprint for achieving success in reducing and preventing youth violence
⇒ Includes accountability process for measuring outcomes
⇒ Incorporates national best practices and important lessons learned, but it also aligns and equips the unique collaborations already in existence

Challenges identified during process:
- Citywide coordination across various sectors
- Information sharing and communication across systems and neighborhoods
- Gaps in programming/services/coverage in some areas – Employment, Education, Family support and strengthening, Mental Health/Trauma
- Availability and use of firearms, which is being addressed in part by Mayors Against Illegal Guns legislation and advocacy work

Strategic goals:
1. Facilitate interagency Communication and Information Sharing
2. Promote citywide Civic Engagement focused on youth violence reduction
3. Enhance and coordinate multi-disciplinary, data-driven: PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, ENFORCEMENT, and REENTRY
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Vision
Youth and families thriving in safe and healthy neighborhoods, vibrant with opportunities for personal, spiritual, educational and economic growth

Activities:
Examples of activities to be undertaken over the next three years include:

- Create more comprehensive risk assessments that could identify youth for intervention much earlier
- Provide earlier detection of trends and patterns that could prevent violence and other risky behaviors
- Expand opportunities for quality information sharing and communication between agencies and with the community
- Formalize information sharing practices with an emphasis on institutionalizing individual-based exchanges
- Assemble and convene monthly a Community Advisory Board comprised of residents and other leading voices, including youth, from Boston’s neighborhoods most affected by youth violence
- Leverage existing relationships with business community, private and corporate foundations and colleges and universities to increase focus and support for youth violence prevention efforts
- Create social marketing campaigns to create a culture that does not accept violence as the norm
- Continue or expand identified prevention, intervention, and enforcement programs and strategies that work – i.e. Circle of Promise, Youth Options Unlimited, Boston Reentry Initiative, Streetworkers, and YouthConnect
- Introduce Community Policing 2.0: a more coordinated and strategically focused and enhanced alignment of key Community Policing efforts
- Continue Mayor Menino’s commitment to summer jobs for youth
- Continue to prioritize job skills training and employment readiness, apprenticeships and stipend employment for youth with criminal histories
- Address need for expansion of mental health needs by advocating and applying for additional resources in trauma response as well as continuing current efforts

Ongoing, coordinated resource development and advocacy in support of plan components will be critical to success.

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