Alameda County Violence Prevention Core Group Synthesis Notes
April 15, 2004

Participants
Meeting participants: Junious Williams, Theresa Johnson, Jessica Pitt, Tim Sbranti, Josh Thurman, Lucas Daumont, Valerie Street, Sandra Witt, Dale Amaral, Mario Robinson, Deane Calhoun, Gary Thompson, Bruce Kern, Steve Walsh, Amanda Brown Stevens, Darryl Stewart, Anna Gee, Seth Kaplan, Tony Crear, Supervisor Nate Miley, Larry Cohen, Rachel Davis, and Danice Cook.

On April 15, 2004, the Alameda County Violence Prevention Core Group had its fourth Phase II meeting related to the blueprint development process. The Core Group is the body responsible for defining and shaping solutions to the recommendations delineated in Toward a Lifetime Commitment to Violence Prevention in Alameda County: Background and Preliminary Recommendations. In addition, members of the Core group serve as ambassadors of the project, spreading the word and obtaining participation, input, and buy-in.

Opening Remarks
Supervisor Nate Miley welcomed participants and opened the meeting by going over the agenda. He emphasized the importance of getting the county violence prevention plan to public officials and community members before it’s finalized. The Supervisor also underlined the need to iron out the structure for violence prevention efforts in the county.

Ratification of March 4th Core Group Meeting Summary
Core Group members ratified the meeting notes from the March 4th core group meeting. These notes can be found at: www.preventioninstitute.org/alameda.html.

Update on Youth Orientation
In response to the Core Group and Advisory Board’s decision that youth should be involved in this planning process, Prevention Institute facilitated a youth orientation with eleven youth from Project YES. The orientation consisted of a brief overview of the project, introduction to the Spectrum of Prevention, and overview of the risk and resilience factors. Participants confirmed the risk and resilience factors that have been prioritized by the Core Group and Advisory Board, and highlighted a few in particular that they see as playing a particularly powerful role, such as lack of employment, lack of access to education, substance abuse, and lack of role models. Overall, youth participants were very engaged in the discussion. However, youth also at expressed their frustration at having been a part of numerous meetings around violence prevention, and not always witnessing progress on the issues. They expressed a desire to see concrete actions come out of this process to decrease violence in their communities. The youth will be invited to the upcoming Advisory Board meeting.

Data Efforts
Junious Williams of Urban Strategies gave a brief overview of the data efforts Urban Strategies is working on regarding violence in Oakland. The Core Group decided to form a data working group to develop a plan to ensure data is shared and accessible. Some Core Group members
signed up to participate. Others that want to be a part of this group or know of others who could contribute should contact Junious Williams at juniousw@urbanstrategies.org. More information on Urban Strategies’ data efforts is also available at: http://www.infooakland.org/

**Community Engagement: Getting the word out and soliciting input**

Supervisor Nate Miley provided an overview of the community engagement plan, which will begin this summer and is based on outcomes from the March 4th core group meeting. In July, meetings will be conducted in five regions of the county: tri cities, tri valley, central county, north county, and Oakland. This will be an opportunity to present the county violence prevention efforts to elected officials such as city managers, mayors, city council members, school board members, and other public officials to get their reaction and input; foster county-wide understanding of and buy-in to the plan; and get their suggestions about community groups in their area who should be informed. Supervisor Miley emphasized that when meeting with Oakland public officials, the discussion would also include helping to craft language for the violence prevention measure that is going to be on the November ballot. After meetings with public officials, there will be meetings held in September with community-based organizations throughout the county to get their feedback on the plan. Eventually, there will be a town hall meeting, or comparable forum, for the general public to hear about the plan and ask questions and provide input. Core group members agreed that the forums are important and expressed a desire to be involved. They will identify participants, help shape the event, and participate in the meetings. Core group members signed up to participate. Others who are interested should contact Anna Gee at Supervisor Miley’s office.

Core group members suggested that outreach also be integrated into existing meetings of associations and professional organizations such as the Alameda County Chiefs meeting, the Juvenile Justice Forum, and Alameda County schools.

As ambassadors of this effort, core group members asserted the need for a common message about the violence prevention plan that describes the efforts to date and the major outcomes. This description will be disseminated by the upcoming Advisory Board meeting.

**Violence Prevention Structure**

Gary Thompson, Alameda County Interagency Children’s Policy Council (ICPC), and Bruce Kern, Economic Development Alliance for Business (EDAB), gave a brief presentations about the structures of their organizations, including information about coordination, accountability, and strategic planning. These presentations enabled Core Group members to consider various structures for violence prevention efforts in the county.

*Alameda County Interagency Children’s Policy Council (ICPC):* ICPC was established to improve outcomes for high-risk children and families through major interagency systems reform and a county sponsored collaborative of agencies. ICPC consists of a general body, which includes county staff, CBO’s, public sector representatives, private sector representatives, youth, school district representatives, and community members. This body addresses countywide systems and community issues and is a venue to prioritize, recommend action and make policy recommendations. There is also an executive committee that includes the executive director, Districts 2 and 3 Board of Supervisors, Health Care Services Agency, Probation, County Administrator’s Office (CAO), Presiding Juvenile Judge, and the Oakland Unified School district Superintendent. The executive committee is responsible for implementing policy recommendations, providing communication linkage for Board of Supervisors, and strengthening city-county relationships. The Executive Committee develops a strategic plan every year. ICPC
has three working groups: neighborhood policy, school linked services, and operational mid-management. The work groups help to inform the tasks and responsibilities of the general body and executive committee.

**Economic Development Alliance for Business (EDAB):** EDAB is a regional organization with a goal to push economic vitality in Alameda County and Contra Costa County by growing business, promoting sustainable development, addressing infrastructure challenges and building economic prosperity and social equity. The organization is made up of an executive board that has 40 members that represent a variety of sectors and has four officers that represent environmental interest groups, CBO’s, corporations, and labor. There is also a board that consists of 600 members. Strategic planning occurs every five years and there is an update developed every year. To ensure participation and accountability EDAB executes MOU’s.

Following the presentation, Core Group members engaged in a thoughtful dialogue about what would be the best violence prevention structure for the county. The discussion was based on previous conclusions of the core group, the ICPC and EDAB models, and what would make the most sense for violence prevention in Alameda County. The Core Group agreed on two concentric circles and an office for violence prevention. The concentric circles were called ‘core group’ to refer to the inner circle and ‘advisory/coordinating council’ to refer to the outer circle. These are renamed here to ‘Executive Committee’ and ‘Coordinating Council’ respectively, as that seems to fit what was suggested by presentations from ICPC and EDAB. These terms are depicted in the diagram to the right. This language change reflects the Core Group’s input that the word ‘advisory’ sounds passive or only advisory and needs to be engaged in a much more meaningful way.

The Core Group discussed participation, staffing, training, and accountability. The major outcomes are described below.

**Participation in the structure**
The core group confirmed that a two-tiered model would best serve violence prevention planning and efforts in the county. Several options came out of the group’s discussion. All options include a smaller executive committee made up entirely or primarily of county level directors or high-level representatives. The various options are summarized below. The coordinating council would include the Executive Committee and representatives of a number of city and county groups. This includes: schools/school districts, cities/municipalities, parks and recreation, youth, community members, business, labor/unions, media, faith-based organizations, and grassroots and community-based organizations.

**Executive Committee Discussions**
Core Group members were in agreement that the Executive Committee should include agencies and departments whose budgets are controlled by the Board of Supervisors and whose work is related to violence prevention and public safety and/or the major risk and resilience factors. This option would provide a small forum for straightforward dialogue, and coordination/communication among county agencies. Particular agencies could include: Probation Department, Public Health Department, Social Services Agency, Sheriff’s Department, District Attorney’s Office, Public Defender’s Office, CAO representative, fire fighters, etc., and other county funded departments that have a stake in violence prevention, the
underlying risk and resilience factors, and/or successful implementation of the blueprint such as libraries and GSA.

Additionally, two suggestions regarding this Executive Committee were made by Core Group members. The first expressed the importance of including other county-wide agencies whose budgets are not controlled by the Board of Supervisors. For example, a suggestion was made to include the Alameda County Office of Education to ensure that an education entity was at the table. The second suggestion was the possibility of including an Oakland representative on the Executive Committee. The group emphasized that no matter what happens the plan needs to be supportive of Oakland’s plan and that the city and county efforts need to be coordinated. However, there was no consensus about whether or not Oakland should be represented on the Executive Committee. Several members expressed concern that this would reduce opportunities for the kind of county level coordination that needs to take place and that having Oakland as the only municipality representative on the executive committee could alienate other municipalities.

**Executive Committee Leadership**
The Core Group advanced the idea of implementing the plan with existing leadership – that is, those who are willing and able to take it on. Donald Blevins, Chief of Probation, and Arnold Perkins, Director of the Public Health Department, have volunteered to play leadership roles and this could take the form of co-chairing the committee. Such a partnership could make a lot of sense given the breadth of their combined mandates. Chairing of the Executive Committee is, however, yet to be determined. Given the broad range of partners that need to be at the table, it could make sense to name Supervisor Miley as the first chair while the focus is on getting something generally right in place as soon as possible, engaging the necessary partners, and adjusting the structure as necessary.

**Meeting Frequency**
A final recommendation about the frequency of meetings for the Executive Committee and coordinating council was not made. However, building on the successes of the models presented, and the need for on-going high-level attention to the implementation of the blueprint, it was suggested by the Core Group that coordination of violence prevention might be best served by holding monthly meetings. This issue will be followed up with at the next Advisory Board meeting. It was also generally accepted that the Coordinating Council would meet less frequently than the Executive Committee, with the understanding that it would still need to meet regularly in order to ensure ongoing communication and coordination as well as to provide ongoing input to the executive committee and the Advisory Board. Therefore, it was discussed that this group should meet at least quarterly.

**Staffing**
The group agreed on the need for a high level Executive Director to staff this project. Initially, the only additional staffing would likely come from particular departments and agencies as an in-kind contribution. The Executive Director salary would eventually be fixed in the county budget. Once adequate funding is established, it may be appropriate to add at most 1 or 2 additional violence prevention office staff to support the Executive Director and to carry out the activities of the office. The Executive Director would staff the Executive Committee and Coordinating Council and report to the CAO. After dedicated staffing is in place, staffing from relevant agencies and departments would continue to play a role in the coordination, collaboration, and implementation of the blueprint. The group agreed that it’s critical that there are venues for interagency interdepartmental coordination such as regular meetings and training opportunities.
Training
In-line with the recommendation from the preliminary report, *Toward a Lifetime Commitment to Violence Prevention in Alameda County: Background and Preliminary Recommendations*, on the need for training in violence prevention, the group supported the idea of incorporating on-going professional development opportunities for county staff and others who are key in ensuring successful violence prevention outcomes in the county. Several possibilities were discussed including regular (e.g. every 6 months) interdisciplinary forums as well as annual/bi-annual conferences modeled after the Los Angeles County Violence Prevention Coalition. Such conferences would not only provide opportunities for skill development, but would also reinforce and reinvigorate the county’s emphasis on violence prevention and provide networking opportunities.

Accountability
Consistent with findings from the preliminary report, the group reiterated the need to assure accountability within the structure. Supervisor Nate Miley emphasized his intention to include violence prevention achievements as a key consideration for hiring and assessing department and agency directors. Further, the group asserted the importance of having the Executive Director report to the CAO as part of accountability.

Blueprint development
Prevention Institute has taken an initial cut at organizing the range of activities that the Core Group and Advisory Board have developed to address the county’s risk and resilience factors. Although the final factors will be addressed at the May Advisory Board meeting, there are some major emerging themes that the group briefly reviewed. The major categories that encompass all of the recommendations to date include: strengthening families, youth development, neighborhood development, improving career opportunities and paths, addressing reentry, fostering hope, and improving government effectiveness. Core group members received a sample of one of these categories, neighborhood development, which included recommendations to date, as well as comprehensive activities delineated by the Core Group, with an emphasis on systems change that the county can play a role in or support.

Revised Project Timeline

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Board Meeting</td>
<td>Thursday May 20, 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core Group Meeting</td>
<td>June 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Forums for elected officials</td>
<td>July 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Forums for CBO’s</td>
<td>September – October 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft Blueprint</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core Group Meeting</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advisory Board Meeting</td>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
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<td>Final Blueprint</td>
<td>December 2004</td>
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<td>Blueprint to Board of Supervisors</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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