

**Draft Report of the
PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE**



City of Brockton, Massachusetts

Prepared for Linda Balzotti, Mayor of the City of Brockton

March 29, 2010

INTRODUCTION

In January of 2010 the Public Safety Task Force (“The Task Force”) began a series of weekly meetings, at the Law Offices of D. Sean Noonan at 71 Legion Parkway in Brockton. The Task Force was one of five that were established by Mayor Linda Balzotti to address those issues most important to the Brockton Community. The prime insight that gave rise to the establishment of the Task Force was the notion that Law Enforcement, acting alone, cannot meet the public safety challenges facing the City of Brockton; the City’s residents must work together with law enforcement to solve what has become a significant and increasing problem facing Brockton.

The goal of the Public Safety Task Force, therefore, was to identify ways that the law enforcement community could work more seamlessly with its own various and diverse branches. The Task Force also sought to identify existing gaps in law enforcement’s serving of the community. The Task Force’s ultimate goal was to propose strategies for enhancing communication between the City’s diverse population and the existing enforcement authorities.

The Public Safety Task Force was chaired by Attorney Joshua J. Wood, a Brockton resident and partner in the law firm of Benzaken & Wood, LLP. The remaining members of the group were all Brockton Residents and represented members of the Law Enforcement Community, Non-Profit agencies, local business leaders, representatives from the District Attorney’s Office, the Criminal Defense Bar and representatives from the Courts. For a complete list of members see the roster of Task Force Members listed *infra*.

The Task Force met weekly from the beginning of January until mid-March. The Task Force reviewed existing data, compiled a list of experts and consulted with identified experts in weekly meetings lasting from 1-3 hours. The Task Force spent the balance of its time attempting to

identify challenges facing law enforcement outreach and generating a list of recommendations to meet those challenges.

This report (“The Report”) constitutes the end result of this deliberative process. The report is divided into five (5) sections. Section one (1) contains an overview of the challenges identified by the Task force and a summary of the recommendations proposed by the Task Force to address these challenges. The first section addresses challenges that the Task Force identified. Section two sets out the Task Force Recommendations that relate to Community Policing. Section four sets out the Task Force Recommendations that relate to Outreach. Section four relays the Task Force recommendations that relate to Community Building.

TASK FORCE DRAFT SUMMARY

The Task Force identified the following challenges that faced the city as to its public safety issues.

- 1) **COMMUNITY APATHY & LACK OF INFORMATION:** The Task Force found that law enforcement offers a number of social programs including a “Weed and Seed program” that helps to reach out to communities where children and/or families may be at risk of criminal enterprise. The Task Force found that many of these programs are unknown by the general Brockton population.
- 2) **DISTRUST OF AUTHORITY:** The Task Force found that many citizens are unwilling to discuss at risk youth with law enforcement, as they believe the only role law enforcement possesses is to arrest. These “negative experiences” with local law enforcement portray the police as enforcers of the law with no interest in building positive relationships in the city. This viewpoint of police intervention is rooted in cultural differences with some of the population. Ultimately, the police are often perceived as an organization to be feared and not as a sort of assistance.
- 3) **LACK OF COMMUNITY:** The lack of a tight knit community results in fractured social units. Households turn inward and do not seek to involve themselves in the problems of their neighbors. This results in a lack of social pressure that exists in a tight knit community. Citizens then begin to turn to social groups that provide an alternative source of support, including gang membership.
- 4) **FEAR OF RETRIBUTION:** Many citizens do not report violence in their neighborhoods for fear of retribution or have no incentive to come forward to law

enforcement, as they do not view the police in a favorable light. Some citizens have the impression that the police cannot protect witnesses from retribution, which is often based on their own experiences.

- 5) **LACK OF URBAN PLANNING:** The Task Force concluded that lack of urban planning has led to a concentration of pockets of crime in the city. At this time it does not appear Brockton has a comprehensive plan as to how to allocate resources to address both commercial and residential districts.
- 6) **ECONOMIC ISSUES:** Much of the Task Force's discussions centered on the lack of available jobs for the city youth. This joblessness has resulted in an increase of crime, as it offers more opportunity for young men and women with idle time to engage in criminal behavior.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. **Neighborhood Councils:** Neighborhood councils should be created to increase a sense of community within each precinct and ward. Each neighborhood council should have a community police officer serving as a liaison. This community police officer will attend regular meetings of the neighborhood councils and advise the council as to public safety initiatives that it may undertake. This will result in a more constructive relationship between police and communities. The Task Force recommends that each of these neighborhood councils appoint one member to a city-wide council. The city-wide council should have communication with the Mayor's office to address the various issues related to those areas of the community.

- B. **More Visibility for Police “Walking the Beat”:** The Task Force recommends that officers be regularly assigned to “walking beats”. This will increase their visibility and develop relationships between the business and residential citizens and that officer. This will increase trust in that officer as an invested member of the community.
- C. **Crime Watch:** The Task Force found that crime watch organizations can be a very effective tool in addressing neighborhood crime. The Task Force also recommends a centralization of the Crime Watches through the Mayor’s Office.
- D. **Outreach:** The Task Force recommends the creation of a website listing all outreach programs. In this way, it is hoped that Brockton citizens will have better access to information regarding social programs to meet the needs to their families and neighborhoods. The Task Force also recommends the installation of a telephone hotline when Brockton citizens identify any at risk family member or friend. This hotline should not be handled by the Brockton Police Department but rather should be manned by volunteers through the Mayor’s Office. The Task Force found that a citizen-based hotline would have more favorable results, as there would not be any trust issues regarding the police. The Task Force also recommends that Cape Verdian, Haitian and Spanish hotline volunteers be available.
- E. **Educational Programs:** The Task Force recommends an educational program for parents and neighborhood leaders to focus on parental involvement,

F. **Meetings:** The Task Force recommends periodic meetings between the city and neighborhood counsels. An increase in communication is likely to help reduce crime and address citizen issues.

G. **Other Key Recommendations:**

- **SUMMER JOB PROGRAMS:** The Task Force was overwhelmed by testimony and evidence showing that the summer jobs program for its younger population works to reduce crime. The Task Force recommends that the summer jobs program be extended from the current initiative. The Task Force recommends that these be paid for by donations by local Brockton businesses as a way to keep as many young citizens employed throughout the summer as possible. The Task Force recommends an increase in grant requests along with these donations.

- **JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS:** The Task Force strongly recommends job training programs and extended internships. One example would be for high school aged kids in Brockton to work in the printing, healthcare, office management and trade industries. The focus would be to develop a work skill to increase their marketability and long-term job prospects.

- **EXTENDING “BROCKTON AFTER DARK”:** The Task Force recommends extending “Brockton After Dark” program throughout the calendar year.

- **RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP:** The Task Force recommends increased involvement with religious leadership as part of a wider city outreach initiative.

II. CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

A. COMMUNITY APATHY

In the Task Force discussions with the police and District Attorney's office, there was a constant lament that the community was resistant to help. The general sentiment was that there were several fine programs that currently exist¹ that attempt to address crime through prevention, suppression, diversion and outreach but that these programs were under utilized.

It was acknowledged that there were identifiable segments of the city that were most in need of the services that these programs provided. The identified communities were the very same communities that were least likely to take advantage of the programs. Much of the reason for such apathy was a lack of connection to the community. Furthermore, the Task Force noted a wide-spread ignorance of the programs offered. Finally, even among those who know about the programs, there is a sense of hopelessness, i.e. no outreach program can possibly stem the tide of violence sweeping the city and protect its citizens from the most violent elements of the community.

B. DISTRUST OF AUTHORITY

In the Task Force Discussions, we became aware through statements of city residents that many in the community held law enforcement in deep distrust. There appear to be many reasons for this.

First, many Brockton citizens have negative feelings toward law enforcement, for reasons that are wholly unrelated to experiences in this country. Some of these feelings relate to a

¹ See attachment A.

cultural bias against law enforcement generally. For residents who have emigrated from other nations, some negative associations were built into their own early experiences. While these associations may have little, or nothing, to do with the actions of Brockton or Massachusetts State Police, these associations create obstacles to successful police collaboration with members of the community. These barriers must be understood before they are overcome.

Secondly, many citizens of Brockton have had negative experience with local enforcement. For some, their only contact with law enforcement has been negative, e.g. seeing a neighbor arrested, being arrested themselves, being stopped or otherwise inconvenienced, sometimes unfairly, by the actions of an officer. These residents do not associate police contact with good outcomes. These residents have little incentive to contact the police when things go wrong in their lives, or even when they have information that might help the police. Because there is little contact between law enforcement and the community, residents do not have the opportunity to forge positive relationships with officers. Culturally speaking, the police are perceived as an organization to be feared and not as a source of assistance.

Finally, the Task Force came to understand that there are communities that felt that law enforcement, with some exceptions, did not care about them. There is a generalized feeling in some communities that the police have made no lasting relationships with the community, until there was a need for that community's cooperation relative to an open investigation. When things go wrong in these communities, they are much more likely to turn to socially credible institutions, that are themselves insulated from the police, than they are to turn to the law enforcement community.

C. LACK OF COMMUNITY

It was generally recognized that poverty and the very severe economic crises that many Brockton families are facing is one of many factors adversely affecting its citizenry. The demise of Community leads indirectly to a series of undesirable social consequences including gang involvement and crime. The logic is as follows. Economic problems give rise to social upheaval and joblessness, which in turn can lead to a fracturing of the most basic social unit, the family—this can happen through divorce, depression, drug use, and other social problems. The basis of community action is the family unit, or the individual household. The result of the fractured social unit is that the people who comprise the individual households turn inward and do not seek to involve themselves with the problems of their neighbors. The result is that the community begins to crumble internally. The Community itself does not impose its own standards on its own residents through the type of social pressure that exists in tight-knit communities. Without the organic social pressure of the Community, citizens begin to act in ways that are cynically self interested. In the alternative citizens, especially young citizens, turn to social groups that provide the type of support that was once provided by the community, namely gangs.

Gang membership is particularly troubling because gang members prize membership in the gang above their membership in the community. To the extent that any particular gang exists to further criminal enterprises in the City, the members of the gangs become involved in crime. The only social force to counteract the criminal behavior is fear of getting caught. This fear, standing alone, is an insufficient disincentive to commit crime.

The answer to the problem of public safety in Brockton cannot, therefore, come merely through hiring a greater number of police officers and making more arrests. Sentencing more people to more time in jail is not, ultimately, a solution. Arrests and prosecution merely treat the

symptoms of social problems. To solve the problem we must do nothing short of building tightly-knit communities of concerned citizens.

D. FEAR OF RETRIBUTION

The Task Force recognized that many citizens are aware of violence in their neighborhoods, know who committed the acts of violence and the means used to commit those acts, but are afraid to come forward for fear of retribution. Others, who are not afraid, feel no incentive to come forward, as they do not view law enforcement favorably. The impression that the police cannot protect witnesses from retribution is not entirely false and must be addressed before progress can be made.

E. LACK OF URBAN PLANNING

The Task Force concluded that the lack of urban planning has led to a concentration of crime in pockets of the city. The city of Brockton does not have a comprehensive plan, nor does it have a City planning department that can be used to make some very basic and forward-looking decisions about how to allocate commercial and residential districts. One member of the Task Force, who practiced extensively as a municipal lawyer has said that the lack of a plan has caused confusion and piecemeal growth.

Because these crime pockets exist in the downtown area, in what was traditionally the commercial district, very few businesses wish to locate downtown. The result is that there are few businesses that can survive downtown.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS: COMMUNITY POLICING

A. NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

The Mayor should create a set of Neighborhood Councils. These Councils will meet regularly in each Precinct of the city. The councils will consist of 10 people, who live in each of the Precincts. The 10 people will serve for a two year period. Membership on the council will be voluntary. There will be one chairperson for each of the Neighborhood Councils. The meetings should be open to anyone in the neighborhood that wants to attend.

Each of the Neighborhood Councils shall have one community police officer that acts as a liaison to the Council. The community police officer will attend the regular meetings of the Neighborhood Councils and advise the council on public safety initiatives that it may undertake. The community police officer will make him/herself available to the Council to answer questions and facilitate the council's ideas.

The Neighborhood Councils will be charged with planning area events relative to neighborhood quality of life issues. The Councils will also be charged with the responsibility of organizing the neighborhood crime watches, which will be described in greater detail below. The Councils themselves will have the freedom to determine their agenda.

The proposed Councils would be supervised by seven council supervisors, who would be elected by a majority vote of all the Councils in each ward. Each of the council supervisors would report directly to, and be accountable to, the Mayor's office. The Mayor's Office would not be involved in the running of meetings, but the Mayor would be briefed on meeting minutes and events. The Mayor would have the contact information for each of the Council members.

The Mayor's office should identify areas which would be served by the proposed Council. Furthermore, there should be a meeting in each proposed neighborhood precinct that is announced in advance. The Community Police Officer should run the meeting and should take

volunteers' names for membership on the Council. The neighborhood will then vote and elect the ten members. The meetings of the Council should be held in public places in the Precincts. The Mayor's Office should work out ahead of time where the meetings can be held in each Precinct.

The result of the Neighborhood Councils will be to increase community involvement in solving the Public Safety problems of the city. The citizens will feel more invested in the city's progress. The citizens will be involved in their neighborhoods in a healthy way. The result of these Councils will ultimately lead to a greater sense of Community.

B. RECOMMENDATION #2: POLICE OFFICERS WALKING REGULAR BEATS

The Task Force determined that police officers in the city were not walking regular beats. The officers were not known by the neighborhood residents. One Task Force member, who lived in an area where a recent murder occurred, noted that a marked Brockton Police cruiser was constantly parked just outside of her neighborhood. The cruiser would drive through the neighborhood every couple hours, the officer inside would not speak to any of the residents. Not having the same police officers assigned to the same neighborhoods night after night, means that the police officers are not known personally by the residents. The fact that the police officers are not out of their cars constantly interacting with the communities they serve means that the Officers cannot get to know one particular community very well. Likewise, the community never gets to know and trust the officer.

The Task Force recommends implementing a community policing plan that includes officers walking regular beats. The Police Department should schedule at least one detail in each neighborhood. This plan need not be immediately implemented in all neighborhoods. As a trial run, the Police Department might identify six or seven high-crime neighborhoods where this

might be implemented immediately. After a sufficient period of time, the data can be reviewed relative to the communities where the program was implemented. If crime rates fall, and there is no other explanation for their decrease in the test neighborhoods, then the program can be expanded.

The program will be overseen by the Brockton Police Department. It is believed that there may be Federal Community Policing grants that can ease the financial burden of implementing this program. Furthermore, the Brockton Police and District Attorney's office already dedicates resources to compiling crime statistics within the city. Therefore, determining the success of the program can be easily derived from data that is already being collected.

C. CRIME WATCH

The Task Force found that there were no longer extensive citizen-based crime watch programs which once existed in the city. The crime watch programs, to the extent that they now exist, are largely ad hoc and are not organized through any central authority. This means that the citizens of Brockton are not taking an active enough role in policing their own communities. The result is that the citizens do not feel invested in solving the Public Safety problem and are more likely to feel that the problem is insoluble because it is beyond their own control.

The Task Force recommends starting a Neighborhood Crime Watch program in every neighborhood in Brockton. The Neighborhoods can be divided and defined by the Mayor's office. The previously proposed Neighborhood Councils will control and monitor the Crime Watch program. The citizens involved in the Crime Watch Program will be volunteers. The Crime Watch participants can report their observations to the Community Police Officer that is assigned to their Neighborhood Council, or if the citizens live in a neighborhood with regular

beat officers they can report their observations to those officers. A successful Crime Watch Program would require the creation of both a Community Police Officer and the Neighborhood Councils. The program would also require a training session to be held in each precinct for those taking part in the Crime Watch Program.

The Crime Watch Program would indirectly, but ultimately, be overseen by the Mayor's office. The Mayor's office would oversee the Neighborhood Councils, which in turn would oversee and supervise the Crime Watch Program. If there was a problem that arose in the program, at any time, which could not be handled by the Neighborhood Councils, the Mayor's Office could step in to resolve the dispute.

The result of the Crime Watch Program would be increased community involvement, increased sense of community and, ultimately, a deterrence of crime in the neighborhoods. This is a program that has already been implemented, in a less systematic way, in the past. As it has been successful; in the past there is every reason to believe it will continue to be successful.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS: OUTREACH

A. A TELEPHONE HOTLINE AND WEBSITE LISTING ALL OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The Task Force determined that the public is largely unaware of the programs that currently exist to serve them. There are several extremely helpful programs that exist, but participation levels are low. One reason that the public is unaware of city outreach programs is because there are so many programs and there is no single place that a citizen can call or look to find out about all of them. Many of the organizations that engage in outreach to the community are private non-profit companies. Many more are run through city agencies or Departments.

Some coordination between these various groups could increase efficiency by reducing duplication and overlap. The first step toward a unified approach would be to compile a list of programs that could be accessed by both telephone and the internet that can connect a concerned citizen with the appropriate program.

The hotline and website could be implemented fairly quickly. It may require that an ordinance be passed whereby any company that engages in community outreach purchase a \$10.00 license. The application for the license would require the company to describe its program. Once that is completed, the names of the companies could be added to a list of known City programs that address similar needs. By combining this information the City could create a Master List of programs. The Mayor's office could be in charge of updating the list periodically. The list could be published on the city website, or its own website linked to the City website. The hotline could be little more than an automated recording, which can be navigated remotely by the caller. The hotline could be available in multiple languages, to serve Brockton's diverse population.

The result of such a simple list would be to provide a direct link between the public and the City's outreach programs. This would serve the community by efficiently directing citizens to the programs that are most appropriate for them. Furthermore, there would be minimal cost involved. If the City adopts the idea of a licensing fee, the creation of the list may even be cost neutral.

B. PARENT AND COMMUNITY LEADER TRAINING COURSES RE: HIGH RISK BEHAVIOR (DRUG USE, GANG INVOLVEMENT)

The Task Force found that the public safety threats derive, in large part, from criminal enterprises. The criminal enterprises that most effect public safety are, very often, carried out by young people. Many of these young people are not in school, are not involved in community groups but are still living at home. In large part, the adults that supervise them are unaware that these young people are engaged in criminal wrongdoing.

With this in mind, the Task Force recommends creating an educational program for parents and neighborhood leaders. This program could focus on parental involvement, noticing signs of gang involvement, drug use and dependence. The educational program, as presented by representatives from the police department, should focus on parents of children in early middle school. The Task Force was informed that once children become gang involved there is little that authorities can do to reverse the trend. The Task Force was informed that the crucial period was before the age of twelve (12).

These educational programs could be implemented within a reasonably short period of time. They could be conducted at public school facilities during the weekdays, during the evening hours. The advertisement and staffing for these educational programs would necessarily require expenditure; however, the expenditure would likely be modest. The teachers of these programs could be police officers, at first, particularly the officers that have already been involved in G.R.E.A.T. program in the public schools. To reduce expenditure further, the first training course could focus on teaching religious and civic leaders, along with teachers. These leaders could then be encouraged to run their own education programs at their own expense passing on what they learned to parents in their parish, community or school district respectively.

A further means of educating parents would be educational pamphlets surrounding gang violence and prevention sent home with all school-age children. As many parents cannot attend educational programs due to competing demands, educational material and resources should be made available to all parents. One proposal was making this educational material mandatory for parents or guardians of all students enrolled within the Brockton Public schools, requiring signed consent similar to current school vaccination programs. Gang violence is a significant health threat to all young people it is proposed that this be handled by the nurses office in review of all vaccinations of entering middle schoolers.

A byproduct of such a program would be engaged and knowledgeable parents. Armed with relevant information parents would notice warning signs and intervene in their own children's lives in a proactive manner. Creating engaged and empowered families would be a significant benefit of this type of training. Trained, empowered and engaged families will, it is believed, be more willing to work and communicate with law enforcement and will be able to communicate in a language that the law enforcement community can understand.

C. PERIODIC MEETINGS BETWEEN THE CITY AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

The Task Force found that many city residents feel disconnected to each other and to the city itself. The Neighborhood Councils will go a long way to engage more people in their community by decentralizing the neighborhood decision-making authority. However, the Neighborhood Councils will provide only an illusory link with Brockton City Hall, unless the city government meets regularly with the Neighborhood Councils.

The City/ Neighborhood Council meetings could be implemented in any number of ways. Someone in the Mayor's administration could be assigned to meet with Neighborhood Council

Chairmen, once a month. The Chairmen could then communicate their concerns and their problems directly to City Hall through the Mayor's representative. There could, in the alternative, be several people in the Mayor's administration each one responsible for meeting with a single Chairman and communicating the concerns back to the Mayor.

The result of such regular meetings would be that City Hall would create a city-wide atmosphere of inclusion in the decision-making process. Such inclusion would breed, it is believed, a more responsive Mayor's Office. The more aware and responsive the Mayor's Office and her Departments are to the ever-evolving situation in the neighborhoods, it is believed, the more that can be done to stem the tide of violence that is currently washing over the city.

D. OPERATION HOMEFRONT

Operation Homefront is a national award-winning collaboration strategy that is already being employed in other cities and towns in Massachusetts. It is a collaboration between the Police Department, the Schools, and Faith based organizations. Operation Homefront operates under the premise that the family is the first line of defense against gang/criminal activity among youth. Home visits are conducted on a weekly basis via referrals from various Police Officers, Public Schools, law enforcement agencies, community based service providers and clergy. Parents are informed about their son/daughter's negative behavior and are educated on the warning signs of criminal and/or gang involvement. This collaborative effort sends a strong message to the students involved that their actions will not be tolerated at school, in the community and most importantly, in the home. In situations that warrant more services than a home visit can provide, the School Police or Guidance Councillor makes referrals to a clinical staff of social workers.

Such a program would not, take much time to implement. The program could be started as soon as religious and civic leaders become willing to take part, and the referral service is in place. Brockton Police Department officers are already doing probation “ride alongs,” where officers travel with probation officers while the probation officers conduct home visits. Therefore, Operation Homefront will not be a major cultural shift for the department.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS: COMMUNITY BUILDING

A. SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

The Task Force concluded that the demise of the sense of community is a major reason for the current public safety crisis, and the breakdown ultimately affected the city outreach efforts. One reason for the demise in the sense of community is the economic desperation that many people feel and the lack of connection that these people have to the community. One way of increasing the connection with the community is by giving people a stake in the community by providing jobs working for both the City and private area companies.

The Task Force recommends implementing a Summer Jobs initiative. The Summer Job initiative would take students and young people from the city and partner them with area businesses. For those young people that could not be partnered with an area business, the Task Force recommends forming city work crews that would go out into the community and work on community beautification projects under the supervision of city employees. The program should focus on the 8-10 weeks of Summer vacation and should give these young people full-time work.

The Summer Job initiative could raise some of its money through private donations from area businesses. The Task Force proposed that local businesses may be willing to donate if they received something in return. The Task Force proposes that there be some type of recognition of

the private donations, e.g. a list published in area newspapers of businesses that agreed to donate. Furthermore, for contribution levels that were above some pre-designated threshold, the work crews could advertise the sponsorship. This advertisement could be in the form of work crew members wearing shirts with the name of the sponsoring business printed on them.

In all probability, the Summer Job program will require additional funding. The Task Force is aware that there are, or have in the past been, federal grants to fund Summer Jobs Initiatives. There may need to be additional funds allocated to the program, which can perhaps come from fund raisers.

The Summer Job Program would need to be overseen by the Mayor's Office. However, much of the day-to-day management of the program could be undertaken by the local business owners and city employees, who, depending on the nature of the assignment, will act as supervisors to the individual worker or work crew.

The result of such a program would be forming relationships between young people and participating businesses. Young people would feel invested in the future of the city and their community. The program will have the collateral result of keeping young people productively occupied. Furthermore, the program will help to beautify the city, and in some cases could lead to longer-term employment.

B. JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS: EXTENDED INTERNSHIPS

The Task Force was made aware that those who are most likely to commit crimes are unskilled young people, who have an incomplete education and are unemployed. Many more

offenders are older people that fit a similar description. The insight is significant, when one realizes that economic options for people in this group are extremely limited.

The Task Force recommends working with local businesses to create extended internship programs. The extended internship programs could focus on work that would create lasting job skills. The internships could focus on local businesses that engage in automotive, electrical, plumbing, HVAC and other high-skill trades. The city, perhaps through grant programs, could subsidize the cost of hiring these employees. The young employees could be paid a modest wage, with the idea that they would be trading off slightly higher wages in favor of developing and learning lasting skills. These positions could be marketed as “paid internships.”

This program would take some time to get running. The details relative to funding would have to be worked out in advance. It will also take time to reach out to city businesses that would be appropriate for the program. The oversight structure for the program would also need to be determined in advance.

The Extended Internship program could be funded, through grants and other funding source, and overseen by the City. The program would be largely overseen, on a day-to-day basis, by the local business owners and supervisors. The business owners, the Task Force felt, would have an incentive to take part in the program in that they would be given a cheap labor force.

The result of such a program would be young people that have skills that are necessary to support families in this community. It would invest these young people in the city and would foster a relationship between area businesses and the city in which they do business. This would, ultimately, it is felt help to rebuild a sense of community.

C. ARTISTS FOR HUMANITY

Artists for Humanity (“AFH”) is “a paid apprenticeship and leadership program employing inner-city teens. Youth are partnered in small groups with professional artists, designers and young artist mentors to create, market and sell fine art and design services. With fully equipped, staffed studios in Painting/Murals, Sculpture/Industrial Design, Screen-Printing, Graphic Design, Digital Media, and Photography/Web Design, youth and mentors collaborate on creative projects, many specifically commissioned by clients. In the process, young artists develop entrepreneurial skills as they participate in planning, product development, outreach and marketing of projects. The paid apprentices meet during their out-of-school time: Tuesday through Thursday from 3:00-6:00PM during the school year, and Monday through Friday from 12:00-5:30PM during the summer.”²

AFH, the Task Force was given to understand, has interest in expanding beyond its Boston home. It has considered Brockton, in the past, as a possible host city. The program would be completely independent from city government and would be independently overseen. Likewise, the program would not require, (it is believed), ongoing city funding. AFH, however, would have a massive impact on the city. The Task Force believes that the City of Brockton could reach out to AFH and seek to connect them with a viable but cheap property downtown for use as a studio. AFH, the Task Force is given to understand, is still interested in moving to Brockton, but would not be willing to give up control over how it is run to the city. The Task Force believes that this is a promising program and that the city should go out of its way to lure the program to the City.

² For more information regarding the “Artists for Humanity” program, see Exhibit 2.

The result of bringing the AFH program to Brockton would be not only to employ young people in the city thereby engaging them in positive manner, but would also give them positive skills that could be used to positively give back to the city. Positively engaged young people will not have to time to engage in criminal activity, and thereby free the police to focus on more important matters. There would be a further benefit to having artists in the downtown area, organizations such as Artspace USA³ have shown that the introduction of artists residences have a transformative effect on the neighborhoods that surround them. Although, these would not be artist residences, it is believed that there would be a similar transformative effect on the neighborhood surrounding the AFH studio. The result of such a program, it is believed, would be entirely positive. It is believed that the program would be inexpensive and would require very little work by the city to encourage.

D. EXTENDING “BROCKTON AFTER DARK” THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

The Brockton After Dark Program is a summer-long program that provides a variety of socio-recreational programs to area youths at several sites in the City of Brockton. The activities that Brockton After Dark organizes are free to the participants. The Task Force was made aware that the program was held in very high esteem by everyone who was aware of it. It was universally lauded as a great tool for creating a sense of community and for providing a positive alternative activity for the youth of the city.

The Task Force therefore recommends that the Brockton After Dark program be extended throughout the year. That the program be administered in a manner that is more or less consistent with the manner it is currently administered during the summer months. The extension of this program would also,

³ For more information regarding Artspace USA, see www.artspace.org

it is believed, compliment nicely the recommended Internship and job programs in diverting young people from criminal activity. An extension of the program would also create a sense of community and personal investment.

The Task Force realizes that the extension of Brockton After Dark would require an expenditure of money. The Task Force realizes, further, that the extension of the program could not, in all probability, be completed immediately. However, the Task Force has a sense that the extension of the Brockton After Dark program is an important element of overall crime reduction. Crime reduction efforts will, it is believed, eventually increase city revenues by raising property values and attracting businesses to the area. A long view is required, but the Task Force believes that the extension will pay dividends in the future.

E. POST-WORSHIP COFFEE HOUR

The Task Force came to realize during the course of its deliberations that there were many city residents that have no contact with city and have nothing tying them to others, who are similarly situated. These communities of disenfranchised and voiceless residents have no credible social or community groups that can advocate for them, and no link to the greater part of the city community. The Task Force determined that for many of these people, the only regular social group that they belonged to was a church or a worship community. However, some of these worship communities do little, if anything, to bring people together after the ceremonies are over. The Task Force determined that some effort could be made to involve the worship communities in the Community building project.

The Task Force recommends that the City encourage faith leaders to hold regular Coffee Hours after worship ceremonies, where the church can serve free pastries and coffee and where the communicants can get to know each other. The City could sweeten the deal by offering to

help fund these Coffee Hours. The Coffee Hour periods could also serve as an impromptu forum to communicate with the parishioners regarding important city initiatives. The churches could also organize events around major sporting events, such as the World Cup or the World Series. The goal would be to make area churches more than a just a venue for worship. Rather, to turn them into places where people can come together as a community.

This Task Force realizes that the viability of such an idea requires the cooperation of the churches and their leaders. However, it is believed that this would go a long way to strengthen and build the community.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Task Force studied and reviewed the current manner in which law enforcement, broadly conceived, communicates and reaches out to the city's communities. The Task Force realized many opportunities for improvement and made several recommendations that the Task Force believes would positively serve the community and would, ultimately, help bring under control the public safety problem currently facing the city.

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