

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

June 13, 2017

Partnering with the City of Los Angeles’ Gang Reduction Youth Development Program to Enhance the Parks After Dark Program and Improve Public Safety in South Los Angeles

The Parks After Dark (PAD Program) was launched by the County of Los Angeles (County) Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) in 2010 at three parks as a prevention component of the County’s Gang Violence Reduction Initiative. It extends the hours of park operations in the summer when crime rates are highest, partly because youth have fewer recreational and social opportunities in the surrounding communities. The PAD Program provides a safe and welcoming space for participants to engage in numerous recreational, educational, and cultural programs, and creates access to much-needed health, economic and legal aid resources.

Since 2010, the PAD Program has expanded to 23 parks Countywide and has evolved into a critical prevention and intervention strategy that utilizes cross-sector collaborations to achieve positive broad social and health outcomes. Multiple evaluations, including a 2014 Health Impact Assessment conducted by the County’s Department of Public Health (DPH), and a 2016 evaluation conducted by University of California, Los Angeles, have confirmed that the operation of the PAD Program correlates with decreased crime rates in the surrounding neighborhood and increased rates of perceptions of safety, family/community cohesion and physical activity for

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participants. Furthermore, the majority of participants surveyed each year indicate a strong desire for the continuation and expansion of the PAD Program.

The objectives of the PAD Program closely align with DPH's Trauma Prevention Initiative (TPI), which is managed by the Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention, Injury and Violence Prevention Program. The goal of TPI is to reduce the burden of trauma center visits, initially focused on the disproportionately high level of violence-related trauma in Service Planning Area (SPA) 6. In SPA 6, homicide is the leading cause of premature death, accounting for 7,214 of potential years of life lost. The overall County homicide rate for 2013 was 5.7 per 100,000 deaths, but for SPA 6, it was nearly 3 times higher at 15.2 per 100,000 deaths. In 2014, there were 545 homicides among County residents, of which 168 were SPA 6 residents. The homicide rate for SPA 6 in 2014 was 15.8 per 100,000 residents, or three times higher than the overall County homicide rate of 5.2 per 100,000.

TPI has conducted a criteria-based assessment to identify several unincorporated communities in SPA 6 that have the highest burden of violence. Many of these communities overlap with where PAD Programs are being spearheaded.

DPH has incurred a surplus from unspent fiscal year 2016-2017 funds and proposes using \$190,000 of this surplus to fund community violence intervention strategies associated with County parks in SPA 6 over the next fiscal year. DPR proposes partnering with the City of Los Angeles (City) to utilize the \$190,000 to hire community violence intervention workers through the City's Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) Office. The City's GRYD Office works with the GRYD Foundation, a non-profit organization, to help stabilize and strengthen communities that have been adversely affected by high rates of violence and poverty. Community violence intervention workers may help increase the safety of the PAD communities by directly reducing gang violence and providing holistic, integrated human services. Specifically, they will promote peace, respond to and mediate conflict, control rumors, and outreach to at-risk youth and families to participate in the PAD Program.

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Initially, DPR proposes assigning community violence intervention workers to Jesse Owens Community Regional Park and Ted Watkins Memorial Park. As deemed appropriate, community violence intervention workers may also be deployed to other Second District PAD parks located in SPA 6. The Director of DPH intends to make further recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to fund other community-based violence prevention and intervention strategies in the future.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1) Authorize the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to utilize \$190,000 of grant funds from the Department of Public Health's (DPH) Trauma Prevention Initiative for community violence intervention services and youth development programming in coordination with the Parks After Dark (PAD) Program at Jesse Owens Community Regional Park, Ted Watkins Memorial Park, as well as additional parks in the Second District, as deemed appropriate;

2) Authorize the Director of DPR to enter into an agreement, approved as to form by County Counsel, with the Los Angeles City Gang Reduction Youth Development (GRYD) Office to fund community violence intervention services at Jesse Owens Community Regional Park, Ted Watkins Memorial Park, and additional Second District parks, as deemed necessary, through Fiscal Year 2017-2018; and

3) Direct the Director of DPH, in collaboration with the Director of DPR and GYRD, to identify metrics for success associated with the community violence intervention services (potentially including, but not limited to, public safety incidents, outreach and mediation activities, and community perceptions of safety) and to report back to the Board of Supervisors in writing in 180 days with their preliminary assessment.

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