

MAYOR MENINO'S STRATEGIC CRIME COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2006

Overview

As the numbers of shooting and homicides surged in late 2005, Mayor Menino formalized and structured his crime fighting efforts by creating the Strategic Crime Council that began meeting weekly in January 2006. With this multi-faceted and inter disciplinary approach, Mayor Menino's administration is working to stop crime in our city from all angles.

The Strategic Crime Council, which is chaired by the Mayor, employs a six-pronged approach to addressing crime, which includes: a legislative agenda with regional and national outreach, a public health and healthcare agencies platform, targeted law enforcement strategies, education and awareness efforts, a wide variety of community outreach and engagement initiatives, as well as advocating for specific judicial system changes.

Membership and Meetings

Members of the Council meet weekly to address critical issues as they arise, discuss ways to reduce crime in Boston and coordinate on implementation plans and new initiatives. External partners such as the Sheriff, Probation or DYS are invited on an as-needed basis to discuss crime-fighting issues relevant to their agencies.

Members departments of the Strategic Crime Council include: the Mayor's Office, Police Department; Office of Human Services; Boston Public Schools; Boston Housing Authority; Department of Inspectional Services; Boston Public Health Commission; Boston School Police; Boston Centers for Youth and Families; Department of Public Works; and the Law Department.

Achievements and Initiatives Related to the 6 Strategies Include:

1) Legislative Agenda

- a. Mayor Menino hosted a session on guns at the US Conference of Mayors meeting in January 2006 to raise awareness and seek support for a coordinated strategy to address gun violence.
- b. Mayor Menino and Mayor Bloomberg launched a national coalition of *Mayors Against Illegal Guns*, which held an inaugural summit in NYC in April 2006 with 15 mayors. The coalition now includes more than 120 Mayors from 44 states and launched a website to coordinate activities and advocacy, check out www.mayorsagainstillegalsguns.org.
- c. The passage of the Gang Bill and the Witness Protection Bill that resulted in a \$3 million dollar grant to the City of Boston to do gang prevention, intervention and suppression work, as well as additional money and programming to protect witnesses.

- d. Advocated against numerous state and federal attempts to weaken gun safety regulation.

2) Public Health Platform

- a. Trauma Response - Expanded mental health services/access to treatment for violence-related trauma.
 - i. Numerous clergy and community trauma trainings to provide tools for effective intervention in their communities have occurred and 30K is committed to additional trainings in FY07, focusing on targeted groups for trainings (i.e. teachers, counselors in the DA's office, youth workers, etc.).
 - ii. The Commission worked with community partners to create a one page *Protocol for Assistance* to help direct Boston residents to services after a homicide or violent trauma.
 - iii. BMC: Almost 63% of the gunshot and stabbing injuries in the city are treated at BMC. Interventions made at the time victims, or perpetrators, are seen can have a positive effect in reducing future violent crimes. Two interventions to address this have occurred:
 - 1. A 100K grant to support hiring two paraprofessional violence interventionists to work with BMC ED staff and members of project ASSERT to better address the multifaceted needs of those effected by crime.
 - 2. Stronger linkage with BMC's B.E.S.T. team, mental health professionals who are available 24/7 to respond to the mental health needs of those effected by violence.
- b. Expanded drug treatment – New substance abuse prevention and treatment options were created to reduce behaviors that contribute to criminal activity.
 - i. Expanded services in Charlestown – The City collaborated with Partners HealthCare to successful identify the resources for a new residential treatment facility in Charlestown and provided the MGH-Charlestown Community Health Center with seed money and a new site for expanded outpatient services.
 - ii. New neighborhood-based anti-drug coalitions – The City expanded the Mayor's NO Drugs coalitions from 7 to 16 neighborhoods, leading to scores of community meetings and forums, customized grass roots planning and education and valuable partnerships of residents, local services providers, churches and City agencies.
 - iii. Increased treatment options – The City added 10 extra treatment beds at the Transition Program in Mattapan. It also added

outpatient screening and intervention services at community health centers and the central intake location

- c. Innovative Community-oriented Activities – The City funded and/or encouraged expanded anti-violent initiatives by a wide range of agencies and individuals, including the City’s health centers and hospitals.
 - i. The Mayor held a health care anti-violence summit in June 2006 at the Parkman House. The session brought together clinicians from across the city to discuss and implement best practices aimed at preventing violence.
 - ii. The Public Health Commission distributed more than \$100,000 for summer 2006 anti-violence projects to seventeen community organizations. Efforts ranged from a day care center educating pre-schools in conflict resolution skills to peer-led teen programs that used theatre and rap music to educate other teens.
 - iii. The Public Health Commission distributed funding through it Disparities Initiative to support additional violence prevention services for victims of violence – including funding to the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute and Roxbury Comprehensive Community Health Center’s groups for family members of victims

3) Law Enforcement Strategies

- a. Gun Buy Back took 1000 guns off the streets through a strong community based partnership and marketing campaign around the Gun Buy Back. Gave out approx \$130,000 in gift cards and received \$500,000 in donated ad space (286 TV hits, 81 newspaper stories).
- b. Misdemeanor Citation Books – In February 2006, BPD’s existing violation citation book was updated and reprinted and all officers were trained in the proper usage. Allows officers to issue a standard citation for misdemeanors in order to process those lesser offenses more timely and efficiently, not having to arrest for every offense, while aiming to address quality of life issues as they arise.
- c. GPS Bracelets - New partnership announced on February 14, 2006 to expand Probation’s GPS bracelet program to high-risk offenders on probation in the City of Boston.
- d. Renewal of Operation Ceasefire - a nationally recognized strategy that includes putting targeted impact players on notice regarding their behavior, offering alternatives to the criminal lifestyle, and following through with swift and severe consequences for those that do not heed the message of zero tolerance for violent behavior.
- e. Home Safe – high visibility saturation patrols and increased police operations, augmented by increased City services, in targeted neighborhoods.
- f. Citizen Observer – electronic notification system, where residents can sign up for police generated crime alerts specific to their neighborhood. Originally piloted in Districts B2, C6 and C11; this has since gone citywide; 8,150 registered users.
- g. Safe and Sound: Police and Property Managers Partnership Initiative – working with subsidized property managed sites to open up the lines of communication and more effectively target violent offenders who reside in these properties, or commit crimes there.
- h. Cameras – using technology to monitor and deter criminal behavior through an extensive network of surveillance cameras in high-risk areas. Includes cameras owned and operated by the City and Police Department, as well as many private sector businesses and other property owners/managers throughout the City (Dec. 19th operational date).
- i. Re-Entry Initiative – in addition to the refunding of the reentry programs of both departments through the Shannon Grant, Youth Opportunity Boston and the Police Department are collaborating in being a neutral

convener of reentry providers citywide, to better focus and coordinate resources among public, private, and non-profit sectors, through a Quarterly Service Provider Forum, Employers Group Recruitment Drive, and Resource Inventory and Mapping.

- j. South Boston Diversion Program – diversion program for first time juvenile offenders in South Boston focusing on substance abuse.
- k. House Parties – intelligence-driven interventions for after hours house parties with potential for violence and/or disorder.

4) Education and Public Awareness:

a. Schools

- i. Partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in their *Campaign Against Sexual Exploitation*.
- ii. Opening of Sobriety High School (didn't originate with SCC, but discussed there)
- iii. Review and Change of Lock Out Policy (didn't originate with SCC, but discussed there)
- iv. OHS and BPS's Unified Student Services have initiated an effort to review the state of our violence prevention and conflict resolution programming in the schools to determine how we can do more on the prevention side of this issue.
- v. School Opening T Hotspots Preparedness – A successful partnership between BPD, School Police, MBTA Police and Steetworkers to identify and target MBTA hot spot stations at school dismissal times.
- vi. Update of school by school Safety Plans coordinated with BPD and School Police.

b. Media

- i. Anti-violence PSAs featuring Mayor Menino and Red Sox star David Ortiz were aired on Sports stations throughout the summer.
- ii. The Mayor worked with local hip hop group, *For Peace*, appearing in their "Start Peace" video. *For Peace* is also collaborating with BPD on Project Safe Neighborhood Radio Spots.
- iii. OHS currently exploring issues of media ownership, disparities and access as a civil rights issue.

- c. Boston's Community Summit on Youth and Handgun Violence – Mayor Menino and Northeastern University hosted this daylong conference on March 10, 2006, which was attended by 300 people from government, law enforcement, community and academia.

5) Community Outreach and Engagement:

- a. Peace Building
 - i. Louis D. Brown Peace Institute Victim Assistance Initiative – BPHC provided \$25K grant to expand the work of the Louis D. Brown Institute and its outreach to families of victims of violence. Special emphasis will be on cooperating with the police and avoiding revenge-related actions.
 - ii. Peace Games Training Initiative – The Office of Human Services and nonprofit Peace Games partnered to provide a full day of conflict resolution and peace-making games and skills to 450 summer jobs youth assigned to BCYF sites and 100 BCYF staff.
- b. Summer Jobs for Youth with CORI – Mayor Menino raised funds for over 200 court-involved youth with CORIs to receive summer jobs and job readiness training modeled after the Winter Jobs Program, which the Mayor launched this year, which put nearly 100 youth to work from January through April 2006.
- c. Youth Forums - BCYF held 6 community youth forums throughout Spring and Summer 2006. The first Forum attracted 150 youth and parents who expressed their concerns and ideas around the violence issue.
- d. B-SMART teams in 8 of the City's crime hot spots are addressing the issue of crime from a quality of life angle, targeting human service needs and physical improvement priorities.
 - i. Youth-Police Dialogues Series was held in JP and South End B-SMART Teams this spring and summer (Grove Hall is currently in progress). Open lines of respectful communication gives police an insight into what youth are thinking and dealing with and vice versa; reduces stereotypes, increases mutual respect and begins to develop trust between youth and police.
 - ii. Teens on Stage Hot Spot-based Artist Residencies: The Strand Theater brought artists from around the country to do 3-week performing arts classes at community centers in B-SMART areas, providing area youth a vital connection to the arts and something exciting to do with their free time.
 - iii. Charlestown Connects – Building on the Charlestown B-SMART efforts, Charlestown Connects is a comprehensive network of support services targeted and designed for the residents of Charlestown that uses a collaborative approach to connecting all parts of this Boston neighborhood. Working to build a stronger Charlestown, the key focus areas include public safety, substance abuse, youth and families, jobs/training/alternative education and

community investment. Charlestown Connects has an office located at 55 Bunker Hill Street.

- e. Boys and Girls Club - In May, Mayor Menino called Linda Whitlock of the Boys and Girls Club about extending their summer operations, in anticipation of increased youth violence during summer weeks. Helping the Club to secure funds to do just this, the Club was able to increase programming hours by 35%, served over 400 new teens, and offer a host of additional services. Through the efforts of the Mayor, the Boston Police Department consistently providing a squad car at each Club at closing time every night. In addition, police officers have interacted positively with staff and youth, inside and outside the Clubs.
- f. Faith Community – numerous ongoing partnerships, including securing state grants for violence prevention work, Clergy focused trauma trainings, and gang truces.
- g. Mayor Menino’s Hip Hop Roundtable launched in March seeking to build a bridge with the hip hop community and rely on hip hop culture as part of the solution to youth violence, go to www.bostonhiphoproundtable.org. The Roundtable and the Strand Theatre held **Hip Hop Reconstruction**, an educational and interactive conference attended by over 500 young people at the Strand Theatre on August 4, 2006.
- h. Cape Verdean Initiative - City agencies are collaborating with Bowdoin-Geneva, Uphams Corner and Dudley Square service providers to assess the needs and current programs in the Cape Verdean community. Gaps that have been identified are being addressed including the hiring of a Cape Verdean Field Coordinator by BPS, assigned to the Family Community Engagement Team. In November, Mayor Menino hosted a regional meeting at the Parkman House with city mayors and police chiefs from Boston to Providence in an effort to improve communication on criminal activity and to develop prevention alliances.
- i. Girls Initiative – The Office of Human Services is leading a 10-department collaborative effort to focus on the highest risk girls involved in the criminal justice system, as well as improve gender sensitive programming for girls across the board.
 - i. ***No More Drama: Girls Violence free Summer Campaign***
activities included:
 - Ø Girls Night Out - 5 outings attracting up to 100 girls each with a variety of themes and mentors
 - Ø Girls Summit – Held at Northeastern University on August 12th, attended by over 300 young women.

6) Judicial System

Worked with the court system to achieve the following:

- a. Judges have agreed to police prioritization of criminal cases for the court's consideration in scheduling.
- b. Judge Mulligan issued a courtroom dress code and a no cell phone use in courtrooms directive.
- c. Creation of a second grand jury to focus on homicides and gang related incidents.
- d. Protections for grand jury witnesses parallel to federal grand jury standards.

For More Information Contact:

Lynne Lyman at 617-635-3329 or lynnelyman@cityofboston.gov