

Date: August 2, 2024

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



From: Teresa Chandler, Deputy City Manager



For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Update on S.T.R.O.N.G. Beach: Summer of Opportunity and Violence Prevention Efforts**

This memorandum provides an update to the Standing Together to Reach Our Next Generation (S.T.R.O.N.G.) Beach: Summer of Opportunity Initiative, as outlined in the [memorandum](#) dated May 16, 2024.

Background

The S.T.R.O.N.G. Beach initiative focuses on promoting positive youth development and reducing youth violence. It unites City programs and community partnerships to engage youth during summer, involving service providers, neighborhood associations, faith groups, coaches, mentors, employers and more.

The impetus for the initiative was to ensure that the City's youth are actively engaged and that violence across our City is reduced, especially during the summer months when most youth are out of school. As such, an interdepartmental team consisting of the City Manager's Office, Health and Human Services Department, Police Department, and the Offices of Civic Innovation and Equity, met to discuss a coordinated effort to provide engagement opportunities for youth throughout Long Beach.

To achieve optimal health and safety, addressing violence requires a comprehensive, multifaceted approach involving all sectors. Long Beach employs the Advancing Peace Public Health Framework, addressing systemic issues like racism, economic disparities, poverty, and access to weapons, along with generational trauma. This public health strategy emphasizes collective impact, community focus, and partnerships, integrating prevention, intervention, and accountability to create sustainable change.

On Saturday, May 2, 2024, Mayor Richardson announced the S.T.R.O.N.G. Beach initiative at [Youth Day in the LBC](#), where young people engaged in conversations about mental health, housing, and addressing the root causes of violence. The City Manager's Office with the Long Beach Police and Health Departments [presented](#) to the City Council on June 4, 2024, to provide information on the S.T.R.O.N.G. Beach Initiative, and a press conference was subsequently held on June 5, 2024.

The goals of S.T.R.O.N.G. Beach Summer are to 1) to decrease violent incidents for opportunity youth (individuals between 16 and 24 years of age who are neither in school nor working, as well as teens and young adults involved with foster care, juvenile justice,

and homelessness systems) in areas across the City that are most impacted by violence; and, 2) building bridges to opportunity.

S.T.R.O.N.G. Beach Opportunities – Departmental Updates

Health and Human Services

In alignment with the S.T.R.O.N.G Beach Initiative, the Health Department's [Long Beach Advancing Peace Initiative](#) (LBAP) launched their Summer Activation Events. In total, \$67,000 was awarded to 27 organizations to host events that promote safety, social connection, healthy neighborhoods, and/or economic development in Long Beach this summer. The LBAP Steering Committee, which includes nonprofit leaders, neighborhood associations, resident leaders and City staff, assisted in developing the application, eligibility criteria, and selection process for free summer activation events. To date, four events have been launched:

- **Mind-1-1: A Summer of Mental Fitness.** Four events, each with one physical activity and one mindful component. Beginning Saturday, July 20, at Bluff Park (2500 E. Ocean Blvd.).
- **Developing Future Leaders: Unity in the Community Multicultural Festival.** Saturday, July 20, at Martin Luther King Jr. Park (1950 Lemon Ave.).
- **Long Beach Filipino Festival: A&F Market Westside Mural Celebration.** Saturday, July 20, at A & F Market (2569 Santa Fe Ave.).
- **BOSS, Inc.: BOSS Summer Academy.** Summer enrichment programs for people grades 6 to 10. July 22 through August 2 at California State University, Long Beach (1250 Bellflower Blvd.).

On July 11th, the Health Department's [Office of Youth Development](#) (OYD) convened partners from across the City to discuss the re-launch of the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Initiative, focusing on supporting boys and young men of color. At this convening, community-based organizations, City staff, and educational institutions came together to brainstorm what collective action could be developed to better support young men of color in Long Beach. The history of MBK in Long Beach was discussed along with what is needed to recertify the City under the MBK alliance. The group explored the different barriers young men of color face in the current landscape. In addition, potential solutions for mobilizing leaders in the boys and young men of color spaces were explored to build a sustainable and intentional oasis of positive youth development. This is the first of many future meetings needed to revive the space that MBK formerly brought to Long Beach, which understands young men of color are disproportionately involved and impacted by violence and transformative systems change work in this space directly correlates with safer neighborhoods.

The Office of Youth Development continues to innovate and partner with various organizations to support youth. Recently, OYD collaborated with the LA County Youth Commission to host a Youth Listening Session in the 90805 zip code area, which historically has one of the highest numbers of youth on probation in the county. This session focused on connecting system-impacted youth to resources and highlighted the experiences of current and former foster youth. Additionally, OYD canvassed North Long Beach, including the Carmelitos affordable housing development, and knocked on over 600 doors to recruit participants and raise awareness about the Futures First program. Further, during the initial S.T.R.O.N.G. Beach conversations, City staff emphasized the need for more youth representation on advisory bodies focused on addressing youth violence. In response, OYD partnered with the Office of Equity to measure the number of system-impacted youth on both youth-led and adult-led advisory bodies. This effort focuses to guide a collaborative outreach strategy to engage more youth who are disproportionately affected by violence.

Through the Measure US [Youth Fund](#) and Youth Power Participatory Budgeting process, nine organizations were awarded funding and all organizations have launched their programming, including West Coast Credible Messenger's [Artful Resistance](#) program which began on July 13th at Billie Jean King Library and Lincoln Park. The program addresses the physical, mental and emotional wellness of youth and gives them opportunities for creative expression, explores themes related to the school-to-prison pipeline, and develops skills to resist oppression and advocate for change. These efforts have helped to mitigate some of the youth issues in our downtown neighborhood; and given the success of the program, Library Services is looking into opportunities to continue programming in the fall.

Library Services

At Billie Jean King Main Library, the SEED STEAM Summer Camp has engaged approximately 70 teens so far this summer. Additionally, the library's Teen Lounge provides a safe space for about 10-15 teens daily, where they can connect and express themselves through art. The library staff supports this by offering activities and snacks throughout the day, fostering engagement and building positive relationships. In addition to these programs, staff at Billie Jean King Main Library have invested significant time in modifying their approach to interacting with teens, including a revised method for applying consequences so youth are redirected when the Library Code of Conduct is not followed.

Parks Recreation and Marine

As stated in the [memorandum](#) issued on July 10th, The Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine (PRM) has extended the hours of its teen centers to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays for ten weeks, ending on August 23, 2024, in six parks across Long Beach. The program offers activities like arts and crafts, fitness, music, games, and movies. Funded by \$65,000 from City Manager Critical Reserves, this program has the potential to engage over 1,500 teens. The additional summer funding has also afforded teens a few special aquatics themed field trips and other exciting trips have been scheduled through August.

PRM is also offering free Mad Science Stem Workshops to youth this summer. These workshops began in July and will continue through August 23, 2024. They allow youth and parents to experiment with materials under the guidance of a trained scientist, playing with slime, magic tricks, plasma balls, and space rockets.

For the City's Be Safe Series, as a reminder, programming is taking place at Coolidge Park, Houghton Park, Ramona Park, Scherer Park, Pan American Park, Orizaba Park, Martin Luther King Jr. Park, Bixby Park, Drake Park, McBride Park, Admiral Kidd Park, Seaside Park and Silverado Park. These locations have extended hours and offer family-friendly outdoor games, art and crafting programs, and athletic offerings. Each of these locations also offer a free weekly fitness class. Movies in the park are also hosted at the Be Safe sites and Captain Carl pays visits to the parks with his mobile aquarium on a regular basis.

Economic Development/ Workforce

On June 26, Future LB hosted a Summer Kickoff with Council Districts 1, 6, and 7 to encourage young people to sign up for career development-focused summer opportunities, including internship placements, direct job placement opportunities, and work readiness training. To date, 204 youth are in attendance and 131 youth have signed up for workforce services. The LA County Youth @ Work program provides Future LB the flexibility to engage in-school and opportunity youth to employment in internship placements within Long Beach businesses, nonprofits, and public agencies. As of July 17, 2024, 134 youth have been enrolled in the Youth @ Work program. Californians For All funding from the California's State Volunteers office supports the coordination of several Future LB initiatives, including the Public Service Corps, Youth Climate Corps, LBPD Ambassador's Program, and internship opportunities with the Long Beach Prosecutor's Office.

- For the Long Beach Public Service Corps, 50 youth served in the first cohort and there are currently 149 applicants in the application process for cohort #2.
- 365 youth are currently enrolled in Climate Corps, with 220 who are currently participating.
- 36 youth are enrolled in the Police Ambassador Program.
- 18 interns are currently participating in the City Prosecutor's internship program.

Workforce also hosted a successful kickoff event for Space Beach Camp on July 17, 2024. Various aerospace companies were at the event, including Vast Space, Spin Launch, Jet Zero, Rocket Lab USA, Relativity Space, and Space X. Space Beach camp focuses on strengthening access to job training and/entry level employment opportunities, increasing knowledge of careers in aerospace, and creating mentorship opportunities between youth and the aerospace industry. The program is scheduled to run from August 12 to August 30, involving about 40 opportunity youth ages 16-24.

Police Department

The Long Beach Police Department held a Youth Leadership Academy at Cabrillo High School from June 17 through June 21. This weeklong, free program provided Long Beach area high school students a platform to develop essential leadership skills while fostering positive relationships with law enforcement. In alignment with the Mayor's vision for investing in Long Beach's future, this program provides youth with the tools and mentorships needed for future success. Participants gained valuable insights into leadership principles, conflict resolution techniques, and community engagement strategies through engaging workshops, interactive discussions, and team-building exercises. Participants had the opportunity to interact with law enforcement professionals to enhance interpersonal leadership development and increase career awareness in the public safety sector. Each day was focused on specific LBPB values: Respect, Accountability, Compassion, Integrity, and Service. This initiative was made possible by partnering with the Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine, the Civil Service Commission, the Arts Council for Long Beach, Youth Leadership Long Beach, and the Neighborhood Resource Center.

Another program under the Police Department is the Explorer Program, a program that prepares youth for potential careers in law enforcement by offering firsthand experience in the criminal justice field. Participants engage in community service and disaster response, becoming active and contributing members of society. In June 2024, 33 new Explorers graduated from the Academy, and in July 2024, 44 were sworn in as Disaster Service Workers. Through hands-on training and experiences, Explorers gain valuable insights into police work, fostering trust between youth, law enforcement, and the community. They receive weekly instruction in law enforcement practices, including lectures, demonstrations, physical fitness training, and guest speaker presentations. Activities such as ride-alongs, DUI checkpoint support, and competitions help develop teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. Explorers also participate in community service and civic engagement activities, promoting social responsibility and building positive relationships with Long Beach residents. By investing in youth development, the LBPB seeks to build trust, inspire future leaders, and strengthen the bond between the department and the community.

Fire Department

The Long Beach Junior Lifeguard program serves over 1,000 Long Beach youth every year. Between the Junior Lifeguard Prep Classes and the Junior Lifeguard summer program, the program's mission and outreach continue to be taught to students across Long Beach. Over the past five years, the Junior Lifeguard program has sought to widen their impact by establishing new community partnerships, creating a career pathways and implementing lifelong lessons throughout the program. Partnerships with Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach Parks, Recreation and Marine, and the Aquarium of the Pacific have allowed the Junior Lifeguard program to connect with more families and youth across the city. The partnership with LBUSD has allowed the program to offer the Prep Class at three locations: Silverado Park Pool, Jordan High School Pool, and Cabrillo

High School Pool. As a result, attendance numbers at the Prep Class have grown tremendously since its introduction in 2018. The LBUSD partnership has also doubled the number of program scholarships given out to students every year and allows the program to offer bus transportation from both Jordan and Cabrillo High School down to the JG program on the beach.

The Long Beach Junior Lifeguard career pathways program offers youth the opportunity to develop leadership skills and prepare for careers in public service, particularly as lifeguards. Starting with the Cadet summer group, the program has expanded to include the Junior Lifeguard Cadet Internship, focusing on youth aged 15-17 who demonstrate leadership and physical abilities. Cadets receive advanced training in first aid and rescue techniques, shadow lifeguards, and assist instructors. Established in 2020 through a partnership with LBUSD, the Cadet Internship is available to high school students who have completed at least one year of the Cadet Program. Interns work from January to June, gaining insights into public safety careers and the operations of the Junior Lifeguard Program. Both programs enable students to continue their training year-round, helping them stay connected to their community and focused on their personal goals.

Upcoming Events and Next Steps

On August 19, 2024, the City Manager's Office will reconvene representatives from various City departments to gain a deeper understanding of the current challenges faced by the City's youth affected by violence. This meeting will serve as a planning space for departments to align their work, commitment and focus, ensuring continued engagement beyond initial S.T.R.O.N.G. Beach Summer efforts. The plan begins with an internal meeting to discuss current strategies and identify areas for improvement in serving youth. Following this, a series of follow-up meetings will be held to include youth, various agencies, and community partners. The goal of these meetings will be to gather insights and collaborate on ways to enhance services for the youth in our community.

For more information on all future events related to S.T.R.O.N.G Beach, detailed information, including times, are available on the [City's Summer Activities calendar](#). For more information, please contact Teresa Chandler, Deputy City Manager, at Teresa.chandler@longbeach.gov at (562) 570-5116.

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