

Jefferson EDGE 2020

CRIME ABATEMENT

Status Report 5: June 2012

Prepared by JEDCO and GCR Inc.

JEDCO
Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission



Crime Abatement

In response to concerns about quality of life in Jefferson Parish and its impact upon the community's economic competitiveness, JEDCO initiated the Jefferson Edge 2020 Quality of Life initiative. This initiative has produced eight "strategic implementation plans" which include a series of action items to address particular quality of life issues. Implementing the action items requires the total cooperation and keen interest of all involved, including JEDCO, the Jefferson Parish government, numerous other entities, and frequently State and Federal agencies. In 2008, JEDCO retained GCR & Associates, Inc. to prepare semiannual reports outlining the status of each of these action items and overall progress toward implementation.

The following table summarizes the progress made toward each of the crime prevention (CP) and anti-blight (AB) action items.

CP = Crime Prevention AB= Anti-Blight

Action ID #	Action Item	Progress as of June 2012		
		Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
CP1	Seek additional local resources to support the JPSO, District Attorney's Office, and municipal police departments	No longer applicable and removed from crime abatement action items.		
CP2	Work with the State to design and implement an overhaul of the corrections system			
CP3	Work with the State to provide additional funding for juvenile justice reform, after care programs, and truancy intervention			
CP4	Work with the State to secure additional resources for Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) for non-violent offenders and juveniles			
CP5	Initiate a major public outreach campaign to inform the public about new anti-crime initiatives and crime fighting successes			
AB1	Adopt the International Property Maintenance Code			
AB2	Adopt state legislation to enact more severe penalties for certain code violations			
AB3	Adopt state legislation to direct minor building code violations to administrative adjudication rather than to the court system			
AB4	Adopt stronger local ordinances to limit illegal activities in motels			
AB5	Appoint a conviction verification officer to assist apartment owners in obtaining background information on tenants			
AB6	Work with the Jefferson Parish Housing Authority to conduct more stringent pre-occupancy inspections of Section 8 housing units			
AB7	Secure additional administrative staff for the Parish Attorney's Office			
AB8	Develop a comprehensive redevelopment strategy and secure funding for the revitalization of certain areas			

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					Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
CP1	Seek additional local resources to support the JPSO, District Attorney's Office, and municipal police departments	Identify surplus resources or submit ballot proposal in 2008	Action item tabled. For more information, refer to October, 2010 Status Update.	No further action at this time. Continue to monitor the personnel needs of local law enforcement agencies and evaluate the need for a revenue measure of this kind in the future.	No longer applicable and removed from crime abatement action items.		
CP2	Work with the State to design and implement an overhaul of the corrections system	Assemble State committee/task force in 2008; pass legislation in 2009	<p>In recent months, prison reform is a topic that has garnered much greater interest than in years past. A series of articles published in May 2012 by the Times Picayune highlighted a number of major shortcomings in Louisiana's corrections system. These include the for-profit status of many prisons (thereby encouraging incarceration), the prohibitive cost of incarceration, and the fact that Louisiana's prisons often fail to rehabilitate inmates. Many prisoners quickly return to a life of crime after they are released.</p> <p>Governor Jindal and State Representatives Lopinto and Moreno have been aggressive advocates for being "smarter on crime." In the most recent legislative session, Governor Jindal signed a number of reform bills. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 521 by Rep. Moreno – expands re-entry courts in order to reduce recidivism and facilitate transition to productive work. • HB 432 by Rep. Lopinto – repeals "risk review panels" simplify the clemency process and utilize resources more efficiently • HB 994 – Simplifies calculation of "good time" for prisoners to clarify when they could be released. • HB 518 – Merges parole and probation board • HB 512 by Rep. Moreno – Allows for more rapid, effective use of administrative sanctions by parole officers • HB 1026 by Rep. Lopinto – Allows well-behaved, second time prisoners to be released after serving a third, rather than half, of their sentence. • HB 1068 by Rep. Lopinto – Increases discretion in sentencing and reduces mandatory, minimum sentences. 	<p>Monitor effectiveness of alternative sentencing strategies and specifically the effectiveness of legislation passed over the last two sessions.</p> <p>Continue to push for even more comprehensive changes that reduce the financial incentive to incarcerate, that reduce prison costs, and that focus on rehabilitation and prisoner re-entry</p>			

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CP3	Work with the State to provide additional funding for juvenile justice reform, after care programs, and truancy intervention	Secure supplemental funding for TASC in 2008; secure increased funding and recurring State appropriation in 2009	<p>In the 2012 legislative session, funding for TASC was preserved. Thus, it will be in operation for the 2012-2013 year. Once again, Senate President Alario and House Appropriations Chairman Fannin were instrumental in securing an adequate level of funding and avoiding a \$1 million reduction.</p> <p>Jefferson Parish has not received any financial assistance from the school system, but Jefferson Parish Public Schools did allocate one employee to assist in the TASC operation, at no cost to Jefferson Parish and the TASC program.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the current fiscal and economic climate is not conducive to securing recurring funding for TASC. As a result, it continues to operate on a year to year basis.</p>	Continue to work with Senator Alario and Representative Fannin to secure annual appropriations for TASC. Work with Jefferson legislative delegation to map out a strategy for a secure, stable revenue source for truancy intervention and other juvenile programs.				
CP4	Work with the State to secure additional resources for Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) for non-violent offenders and juveniles	Secure designation in 2008-2009	Action complete. For more information, refer to March, 2009 status update.	No further action required.				
CP5	Initiate a major public outreach campaign to inform the public about new anti-crime initiatives and crime fighting successes	Unveil website and issue newsletter in 2008	<p>The public outreach campaign to support Jefferson EDGE 2020 has stalled in the past year due to budget shortfalls. Jefferson Life magazine, after a promising start, saw its advertising revenue wane. As a result, the magazine is on indefinite hold. Attempts to find a new publisher to purchase Jefferson Life have been unsuccessful to date.</p> <p>In the meantime, the Parish continues to maintain a Facebook presence.</p>	<p>Continue to maintain a social media presence.</p> <p>In an era of declining print publications, determine whether it makes sense to continue to pursue the concept of a community magazine.</p> <p>Continue to advocate for marketing dollars from past supporters—the Parish, school system, and Sheriff's office.</p>				

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AB1	Adopt the International Property Maintenance Code	Adopt code in 2008-2009 depending on enforcement capacity	Action complete. For more information, refer to March, 2009 status update.	No further action required			
AB2	Adopt state legislation to enact more severe penalties for certain code violations	Adopt legislation in 2008	Action complete. For more information, refer to October, 2009 status update.	No further action required.			
AB3	Adopt state legislation to direct minor building code violations to administrative adjudication rather than to the court system	Adopt legislation in 2008	Action complete. For more information, refer to March, 2009 status update.	No further action required			
AB4	Adopt stronger local ordinances to limit illegal activities in motels	Research best practices in 2008; adopt ordinance(s) in 2008-2009	Action complete. For more information, refer to October, 2009 status update.	No further action required.			

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AB5	Appoint a conviction verification officer to assist apartment owners in obtaining background information on tenants	Create position and hire officer in 2008	<p>As discussed in prior status updates, the JPSO continues to conduct criminal background checks of prospective Section 8 tenants through its "cop link" program in partnership with the Jefferson Housing Authority.</p> <p>For market rate apartments, the Parish's crime prevention and quality of life enforcement coordinator has researched the feasibility of instituting a similar program for market rate units; but for a variety of legal reasons, it has been determined that such a program would not be feasible.</p>	Continue to monitor success of criminal background check program for Section 8 tenants and ensure strong communication between the Parish, the Housing Authority and the JPSO. Because a background check for market rate tenants has been deemed infeasible, this action item is marked as complete.				
AB6	Work with the Jefferson Parish Housing Authority to conduct more stringent pre-occupancy inspections of Section 8 housing units	Improve inspection protocols and formalize relationship with Inspection and Code Enforcement in 2008-2009	Action item complete. For more information, refer to the October, 2010 Status Update.	Continue to monitor this collaboration between Code Enforcement and the Parish Housing Authority to determine its effectiveness in improving the condition of Section 8 units and to ensure open and meaningful lines of communication between the two agencies.				
AB7	Secure additional administrative staff for the Parish Attorney's Office	Hire additional staff in 2008	Action complete. For more information, refer to March, 2009 status update.	No further action required				

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AB8	Develop a comprehensive redevelopment strategy and secure funding for the revitalization of certain areas	Issue pilot redevelopment plan RFP in 2008-2009; select developer in 2009-2010; initiate implementation in 2010	<p>The principal obstacle to the implementation of this action item is the absence of a significant funding source. However, a newly available funding source is HUD's Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI). The CNI competitive grant process awards planning grants for up to \$300,000 for high poverty, "distressed" neighborhoods. The neighborhood that is to be the subject of the planning study must contain some form of HUD-assisted housing (e.g. public housing) that is in need of revitalization. CNI planning grants can potentially pave the way for CNI implementation grants from the federal government. New Orleans recently received over \$30 million in CNI implementation funding for the redevelopment of the Iberville Housing Project and adjoining neighborhoods.</p> <p>The CNI process is competitive, and it requires a champion and lead agency. Thus far, identifying that champion and that agency has proven to be elusive. As a result, there has been no movement to date on submitting a CNI grant application or the pursuit of any other funding source for a community revitalization plan.</p>	Identify a potential champion and implementing agency in Jefferson Parish that would lead a CNI application effort and/or the identification of other external funding sources			



700 Churchill Pkwy.
Avondale, LA 70094
504 875 3908 fax 504 875 3923



GCR Inc.

2021 Lakeshore Drive, Ste. 500
New Orleans, LA 70122
504 304 2500 fax 504 304 2525
