



Office of
Chris Ford

1st District Councilman

Memorandum

To: *Jim Gray, Mayor*
Council Members

From: *Chris Ford, 1st District Council Member*

Date: March 15, 2012

Re: Commission on Youth Development & Public Safety – Work Session Presentation

In early 2011, Lexington experienced a number of violent crimes, including the homicides of some of our youth. In the wake of those crimes, the community requested that city officials do something to prevent future crimes committed by or involving youth. Furthermore, it was determined that Lexington youth needed more positive activities to do outside of school, year round.

In June 2011, Councilmember Chris Ford, Mayor Jim Gray, Commissioner Beth Mills and Police Chief Ronnie Bastin, met to discuss how to go about addressing these important issues. From those discussions, the Commission on Youth Development and Public Safety was formed. Fifty-three (53) individuals from various professional backgrounds, including Lexington youth, met multiple times to discuss these issues.

From these meetings, the Commission has drafted a list of recommendations on how to move forward in our efforts to address the youth development needs in this community.

Attached, please find the draft recommendations proposed by the Commission. The final report, in its entirety, will be submitted in late March / early April 2012.

Youth Development & Programming – Recommendations

1. **Establish forums for broad-based periodic input by young people on youth development, youth attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and public safety issues. To be conducted through town hall meetings and/or group discussion sessions at schools, community centers, churches, etc. where youth live and gather.**

Point of Contact: Mayor's Youth Council and Youth Advisory Board (still to be formed)

Funding Option: Determined that specific funding is not needed.

Timeline: April 12, 2012 - Speak Out Lexington; similar event at a different location in Fall 2012.

2. **Expand current summer youth employment program, to include an increase in the number of students accepted into the program and potentially expand the program to year-round.**

Point of Contact: Division of Social Services / Youth Services

Partnerships: LexTran, Fayette County Public Schools, local businesses, Bluegrass Area Development District

Funding Option: Grants, federal funding, local businesses and civic groups

Funding Amount: Increase program by 75 students for Summer 2013, totaling \$75,000 (1,000 per student); increase program by an additional 75 students for Summer 2014; by Summer 2014, a total of 300 students will have summer employment. Budget impact: \$75k in FY13 and \$150k in FY14. If additional Support Staff is required (not including interns), approximately \$75k will be needed for personnel costs.

Measures: Advertisements (web, email, churches, schools and by word-of-mouth)

Implementation Strategies: Budget request to be made for FY 2013

Timeline: Increase number of students in program by employing 75 additional students in 2013 another 75 students in 2014.

3. **Enhance and coordinate the expansion of our current youth recreational facilities and programs, to include partnerships with community partners to provide and implement new programs in city-owned community centers and city-maintained parks/playgrounds.**

Point of Contact: Division of Parks and Recreation and Division of Youth Services

Coordinator: Youth Community Project Coordinator / Liaison between Parks, Youth Services and outside partners; lead on the formation of a "Youth Advisory Board on After-School & Vacation Opportunities"

Partnerships: Faith-based organizations, non-profits organizations, neighborhood associations, local businesses, Fayette County Public Schools and philanthropic groups

Funding Option: LFUCG and community partners (still to be determined)

Timeline: Spring Break Week 2012 – day programming at Dunbar Center and evening programming at William Wells Brown Community Center (elementary through high school). Summer Months 2012 – 8-week day & evening programming at William Wells Brown; 3-week evening programming at four (4) additional parks (middle and high school students).

Some partnerships (still to be determined) and programming possibly implemented by Summer 2012. Coordinator to be a full-time position and be filled by or before March 2013; salary for coordinator to be included in FY13 budget; Youth Advisory Board to be created once Coordinator position is filled.

Possible Locations: Various parks and community centers (Dunbar, Carver, Gainesway, Winburn/MLK Park, Woodhill Park and William Wells Brown); some programming to occur year-round and to include extended hours for teens during on weekends and during summer break.

Potential Programs: Activities for aggressive/combative/disruptive youth (mixed martial arts, boxing, football, drill teams); Activities that promote important life and social skills as well as good decision-making skills, money management, social media etiquette, and anti-bullying prevention.

Youth Violence – Recommendations

1. Enhance and expand existing “Youth Anti – Violence Initiatives” as part of community policing strategy; “Prevention through education and diversion”

Point of Contact: Division of Police, Fayette County Sheriff’s Office & County Attorney’s Office

Funding Options: Funding through community partnerships; minimal funds required

Timeline: Gradually, one neighborhood at a time (1 per month)

Targeted Locations: Eventually all of Lexington, but initially, the top three areas are:
1) Woodhill, 2) East End and 3) Winburn

Potential Partners: Police Activities League (PAL), Citizen’s Police Academy/Alumni Association, Neighborhood Associations, Fayette County Neighborhood Council, faith-based organizations (example: Southland Christian Church)

2. Re-Activate and employ Neighborhood Coordinators recently removed due to budget cuts (CLEAR Unit)

Point of Contact: Division of Police

Funding Options: General Fund appropriation and/or reassignment of staff and resources, including the implementation of new officers

Targeted Locations: Winburn, Hollow Creek, Centre Parkway, Eastland & Woodhill

Timeline: Summer 2012 – Move school officers to neighborhoods while school is on summer break; Fall 2012 – Addition of newly trained officers to the street.

3. **Develop and implement an offender / community support model that outlines a network of support for juveniles that exhibit behavior that is at risk of being referred to court for status and low level public offenses, specifically, the “Teske Model / Models for Change.”**

Point of Contact: Various Stakeholders (Judges, Police, FCPS, Neighborhood Assoc.)

Funding Options: No funding needed for implementation of the model; however, funding is necessary for training. Division of Social Service applied for a federal grant for technical assistance on March 8, 2012.

Timeline: Grant Letter of Intent being processed now. Apply for grant immediately; once grant is secure, contact various stakeholders for training.

Potential Stakeholders / Work Group: District and Family Court Judges, Rebecca DiLoreto (Children’s Law Center), Division of Police, Fayette County Sherriff’s Office, Fayette County Public, Schools, local elected officials, mental health/social work professionals, faith-based organizations and concerned citizens/mentors.

4. **Convene & host an Annual Training & Community Solutions Conference for youth advocates, criminal justice professionals, and community leaders (combine existing conferences and host one large conference w/workshops, i.e. firearms)**

Point of Contact: Department of Social Services & Partners for Youth

Funding Options: Private sponsorships and outside contributions

Timeline: Summer 2012 – Begin to assemble Steering Committee for planning; Fall (September 2013) – Host event in Lexington